



YOU MAKE THE CALL

JENNIFER PARKER

What judo club do you belong to?

I am half of the sensei team at the Barracuda Judo Club, in Pincher Creek. When we moved to town, families and other sport coaches asked us when we would start teaching judo to the community. I felt underqualified because my role model had been the Senda family, who ran classes 6 days a week for decades. Sensei Russ (from Lethbridge) reminded me that the Lethbridge Club didn't start out that way, and we founded Barracuda Judo Club on the 60th anniversary of the Lethbridge Judo Club, and took the name from a fable Mr. Senda would tell young athletes about never giving up.

How did you start refereeing?

I went to compete at the Senda Cup in my twenties and there were not enough referees to run the tournament. The tournament director rearranged the order of the day so I fought first, then refereed the rest of the day in my judogi. We didn't get any breaks because there were no extra volunteers to cover. It was the best way to learn and I've enjoyed it ever since.

Judo Alberta Referee Profile

Fondest Judo Moment

There are so many! I love to connect with other judo lovers; I always appreciate meeting judo legends and how approachable they are to speak with and even practice with. I must say my most meaningful experience was grading for shodan while my brother Andrew graded for nidan, just before Mr. Senda got sick.

How long have you been doing judo?

I started in grade 5, a year after my brother. We were four kids in our family and judo is a fantastic sport for all siblings – much easier for my mum to bring us all to judo rather than each child to a different niche sport.

BEST ADVICE GIVEN BY A SENSEI?

Mr. Senda would say, "There are 24 hours in a day, 8 hours are for sleeping. 8 are for school. It is up to you to be use of the other 8 hours." (Usually told to an athlete who had missed practice). It is a succinct reminder about priorities and planning ahead, and applies to all aspects of life.