

Frank Dando

Frank Dando, 7th Dan, is one of the pioneers of Australian Judo. At 91, he has lost none of his passion or love for Judo.

Frank was born in 1930. In 1956, at the age of 26, he went to Japan as a Brown Belt to spend a year studying Japanese culture and Judo. He won his First Dan (Shodan) by defeating six brown belt opponents in a monthly contest.

After achieving his Shodan, he was selected for the Kodokan Kenshusin (Special Research Group) under Sensei's Daigo and Kawamura.

He practiced Judo six days a week, four hours a day and in October 1957 at the age of 27, he won enough fights in the monthly contest to earn his Second Dan (Ni Dan).

To help support his training in Japan, Frank acted in some non-speaking parts in Japanese movies where he played a pirate or some other foreign devil!

During this time he trained at the Dojo of Shinojima Yoshiaki (9th Dan) in Utenji and generally trained under his supervision.

Frank went back to Japan in 1970 at the age of 40 and was once again enrolled in the Kenshusei. He competed in the monthly competitions and was awarded his Third Dan (Sandan).

During this visit, he trained for two hours a day for six days a week and for two hours a day at the Utenji dojo.

At Shinojima's dojo, he studied Goshin Jitsu, Katame No Kata and Nage No Kata with Tony Orton, an English International player.

Shinojima Sensei felt that their Nage No Kata was of such a good standard that they performed at the opening of the annual Meguro Championships that year.

In 1975 at the age of 44 Frank returned to Japan and was still considered a very fit and effective Judoka. While in his younger days most of Frank's fighting was outside the JFA, he ultimately joined the JFA and was graded to Seventh Dan in 1997. He was also appointed to the JFA National Grading Commission.

Frank as the Educator:

Frank has a distinguished history of over 60 years as a teacher, Principal and Educator. He started as a trainee teacher in a rural school before studying at Monash and earning a Masters degree in Education.

After completing his Masters Degree, Frank specialised in teaching disengaged and challenging boys at Clayton Tech and then at his own private Special School - the Frank Dando Sports Academy.

Frank's curriculum involved intensive study of the 3 R's along with Judo, swimming and running every day. The curriculum includes skiing, surfing, scuba diving and horse riding.

Every student gets a Surf Bronze Medal. His students are not only very fit but have achieved a lot of academic success.

Frank's work has been featured in the media many times. While Frank has sold the school and retired at 91, his school continues and is going from strength to strength.

Why did Frank start Judo?

Frank's younger brother had a scholarship to Melbourne University and started Judo. Frank joined as well. His first coach was Jack Cox.

What was Frank's favourite technique?

As you might guess he had several. i) A right Deashi-hari. Frank says that in the beginning he used to practice on the dog! ii) Seoi-nage with a double sided grip iii) Tai-otoshi

What is Frank's advice for coaches?

To foster basics and avoid complications

Is Frank an adrenaline junkie?

No, according to Frank, but he has done:

Micro Lite flying

Skin Diving and Scuba Diving

Downhill Skiing and 70 years of Judo!

You draw your own conclusions.