MASTERs Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2026

Fiscal Year 2026 (August 15, 2025 – August 14, 2026) was a landmark year for MASTERs: total revenue grew to roughly $138,000 — more than three times the prior year — athlete support reached about $81,000, and the fellowship expanded as High Noon athletes competed on national and international stages.

Mission Statement

Martial Arts for Social Transformation, Ethics, and Rights (MASTERs) seeks to build community through the growth of martial arts. Our work focuses on training instructors, supporting competitive athletes, and providing community support and mutual aid. MASTERs is working toward a world where the principle of “Jita Kyoei” — “mutual benefit and well-being” — is a common principle. We care about the fundamental worth of all human beings and the importance of community engagement. Judo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu have repeatedly demonstrated a remarkable ability to assist people in personal growth. Stories abound about individuals who cite these activities as having changed their lives. That said, these martial arts do not yet hold the same space culturally in the United States to fully realize these gifts.

About Us

MASTERs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to building stronger communities by promoting Judo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) training. We focus on training instructors, supporting athletes, and expanding access to martial arts for all, especially in underserved areas. Martial arts provide a unique path to personal growth, discipline, and community building. However, Judo and BJJ face challenges in the U.S. — from limited access to high-level training to socioeconomic barriers. MASTERs addresses these by:

- **Training Skilled Instructors:** Ensuring instructors have comprehensive skills to teach and the resources they need to inspire students of all levels.
- **Supporting Competitive Athletes:** Helping athletes compete on national and international stages while fostering leadership and professional development through mentorship.
- **Increasing Accessibility:** Offering scholarships and free training for low-income families.

Clinics

In FY2026, MASTERs expanded its clinic and training-camp programming, bringing world-class instruction to its community and the wider martial arts world. Highlights included:

- **HanpanTV Training Camps with the Cho brothers** — Olympic bronze medalist Cho Jun Ho and his brother Cho Jun Hyun, who run Wawa Judo in South Korea. MASTERs hosted a two-week camp and seminar and, in fall 2025, a weekend camp, drawing participants from across North America and Europe; the "Precision" instructional was produced during the two-week camp.
- **Megumi Ishikawa Camp** — All-Japan Champion at 57kg and a representative of the Global Kids Judo Network. A spring training camp was held at High Noon, drawing participants from across North America and Europe; the "Control" instructional was filmed during the camp.
- **Maia Matalon Self-Defense Clinic** — aimed at supporting women in the DMV area, as part of the organization's community-support efforts.
- **Partner clinics** supporting the broader community, including Spartan Judo Club and an Atlanta clinic, with a South Central PA clinic scheduled for FY2027.

Results

MASTERs fellows and High Noon athletes competed across judo and Brazilian jiu-jitsu events throughout the 2025–2026 season.

- **Chloe Williams** — competed at the 2025 Junior World and Cadet World Championships and won her first senior-level IJF World Tour medal at the Montreal Open, defeating multi-time world-team member Melissa Myers and U.S. #1 Yasmin Alamin; qualified in 2026 for her third junior world team and placed third at the US Open. The daughter of a disabled veteran, she also won the NHSCA national wrestling championship and the Virginia state wrestling title and earned a full scholarship — with MASTERs' support — to Delaware State University, an HBCU with a Division I wrestling program.
- **Marley Garland** — won the US Open and now represents the United States internationally.
- **Leana Nelson** — a new fellow this year, won bronze at the IJF Santiago Pan American Open (Chile) in June for her first senior IJF World Tour medal.

- **Viktoria Evdokimov** — placed second at the Youth National Championships, the Junior Olympic National Championships, and the Junior Olympic International National Championships (juvenile division), and — at just 14 — won the Junior Olympic International National Championships in the U18 category.
- **Paige Han** — won the Novice Youth National Championships, and also holds a win over junior world-team member Cameron Miller.
- **Timothy-Michael Spriggs** — placed fifth at the US Open.
- **Kaiya Johnston** — placed third at the Senior National Championships.
- **Rhadi Ferguson Jr.** — qualified for her second junior world and cadet world teams and won her first senior IJF World Tour medal in South Africa in June; placed seventh at the Cadet World Championships shortly after year-end (FY2027).
- **Rufus Ferguson** — competed at the 2025 Junior World Championships.
- **EJ Lynch** — took part in a unique high-level training opportunity in China.
- **Madeline Solis** — sidelined by injury this year; she has moved to DC to train full-time with High Noon and is set to return in fall 2026.
- **High Noon Judo** — won its third senior national title and was named the #2 club in the United States for 2025, and is on track for the top three in 2026.
- **Summer 2026 Japan training camp** — MASTERs heavily subsidized a training trip to Japan (August 2–14) so Janelle Lynch, Marley Garland, Leana Nelson, Viktoria Evdokimov, Paige Han, Emma Bragg, Ekaterina Petri, Rhadi Ferguson Jr., and Kaiya Johnston could train at some of the country's top facilities.

[Draft note: add specific placements, event names and dates, promotions, and photos. The FY2025 report highlighted Cadet/Junior World Team selections, Youth Nationals and Junior Olympic medals, and black-belt promotions — mirror that level of detail here.]

Staff

MASTERs' support team continued to grow in FY2026 to meet the evolving needs of its fellows.

- **Erin Herle** — Certified Mental Performance Consultant (M.S., Sport and Performance Psychology) and decorated BJJ competitor. She remains a resource to fellows as they navigate their martial arts journeys.
- **Janine Nakao Cotti** — Registered Dietitian (M.S., Nutritional Science) and 3rd-degree black belt in judo, supporting fellows' dietary needs and a healthy relationship with food.
- **Dr. Rhadi Ferguson** — Olympian and coach, providing strength & conditioning and coaching support across camps and competition (returning from FY25).
- **Diana Wang** — physical therapy and recovery support for fellows.
- **Nora Levy-Forsythe** — Executive Assistant (returning from FY25).

Athlete Fellows

MASTERs' FY2026 fellowship supported athletes pursuing the 2028 Olympic pathway in judo.

Returning fellow:s Chloe Williams, Rhadi Ferguson Jr., Rufus Ferguson, Ryan Vargas, Timothy-Michael Spriggs, Madeline Solis, EJ Lynch, Emma Bragg, Marley Garland.

New in FY2026: Kaiya Johnston, Viktoria Evdokimov, Ajax Tadehara, Janelle Lynch, Leana Nelson (U.S. National and U.S. Open Champion), Paige Han, and Aaron Decker.

Supported Athletes

Beyond its fellows, MASTERs backed athletes in judo and BJJ who needed support to compete at the highest levels.

- **Maia Matalon** — supported through MASTERs' work with High Noon; won the ADCC East Coast Trials.
- **Margot Cicarelli** — sponsored to the 2026 IBJJF World Championships, where she placed third.
- **John Jayne** — 2024 Paris Olympian; received a training grant from MASTERs and took part in its spring training camp.
- **Hiroshi Nakama** — 2025 Deaflympian trained at High Noon Judo in the lead up to the 2025 Deaflympics in Tokyo.

Coaching Development

In FY2026, MASTERs continued to build out its coaching mentorship and support program, investing in the coaches who develop its athletes:

- Brought four coaches to Japan to study the Japanese judo athlete-development pipeline firsthand.
- Supported one coach through certification under the IJF Academy.
- Provided a career-development grant valued at $950 to Lakea Vargas, backing his path toward becoming a full-time judo and BJJ coach.
- Expanded the coach-mentoring program to support disabled veterans, including Mathew Goulette and Jordan Stone.
- Added Stephanie Davis to the coach-mentoring program.

That IJF Academy certification now allows MASTERs to provide mat-side coaching support to athletes on the IJF World Judo Tour — at World Championship, Grand Slam, and Grand Prix events, and at the Junior World Championships — a new capability to support athlete development at the highest levels of international competition.

Access and Community Support

MASTERs prioritizes athletes who are not only talented but who need resources to display that talent, and extends that commitment to the broader community.

- Covered the entry fees for Brooklyn Barnes, a young athlete who otherwise could not have afforded to compete at the 2026 US Open, where he won silver in the Cadet Novice 81kg division.
- Through its partnership with High Noon BJJ, continued to provide free training to students in need, under the agreement by which High Noon BJJ runs the High Noon Judo program.
- For members of the High Noon judo program, an opportunity for low cost housing was provided for the Senior National Championships, Presidents Cup and Dallas Invitational.
- Supported members of the 2025 Deaflympic team in Tokyo. In particular, assisted Hiroshi Nakama and Riyoshi Nakama through several events in the lead up to the games.

Financials — Income

During the fiscal year (August 15, 2025 – August 14, 2026), MASTERs received approximately **$138,000** in revenue — more than three times the prior year — reflecting a landmark year of major-donor support alongside growing program revenue.

Source	Approx. amount
Contributions & grants	~$81,000
Program & event revenue	~$57,000
Total revenue	**~$138,000**

Contributions & grants included three major gifts totaling **$69,500** — from **Henry & Judy Hummel**, **Trimedxx**, **Heidi Holz & Evgenij Evdokimov** and **Josh Loh** — along with recurring donor support and online donation campaigns. Program & event revenue came from training camps, clinics, and instructional content.

[Draft note: figures are approximate pending final reconciliation. The contributions/program split can be refined once the revenue categorization is finalized.]

Financials — Expenditures

Expenditures for the year totaled approximately **$127,000**. The organization ran a modest operating margin, which it reinvested during the year into a capital improvement — a permanent sprung training floor — and into reducing obligations carried from the prior year. As a result, MASTERs' operating bank balance ended the fiscal year essentially unchanged: the organization put nearly all of the funds it raised back to work for its athletes and programs. Spending was allocated approximately as follows:

Category	Approx. amount
Athlete Support	$81,000
Events & Competition (camps & clinics)	$21,000
Operations & Administration	$23,000
Instructional Content & Coaching Development	$1,600
Total expenditures	**$127,000**

Athlete Support remained the organization's largest and most mission-central investment — covering competition travel, training-camp costs, athlete housing, coaching stipends, equipment, sports nutrition and physical therapy, and entry fees.

In addition, MASTERs made **capital investments of approximately $20,000** during the year — a permanent sprung training floor (approximately $6,900), camera and video equipment (approximately $8,700), athletic and conditioning equipment (approximately $1,400), and development of its website and instructional platform (approximately $2,900). These durable assets improve athlete safety and training quality and expand the program's capacity to create and deliver instructional content.

Of this capital, the roughly $11,700 invested in content production — camera and video equipment and the instructional platform — is the portion meant to generate direct revenue through instructional sales. In FY2026 those instructionals produced about $5,000 in sales, recovering roughly 43 percent of that investment; at the first-year rate the content capital is about $6,700 from breaking even — a little over two years out — a gap the organization expects to narrow as its catalog of titles grows. At this time MASTERs has released **seven instructional**

products. In addition, the **Skool Judo** platform has been launched successfully and is now making a profit. The remaining capital — the sprung training floor and conditioning equipment, about $8,300 — delivers athlete safety and training capacity rather than sales, and is recovered through program outcomes rather than revenue.

Beyond direct sales, the same production capability has driven the organization's digital growth: its Instagram following rose from roughly 700 to 4,900, and a dedicated Skool Judo community account reached 12,000. Subsequent to year-end it also stood up the Skool Judo platform, which came fully online in FY2027 and now generates roughly $200 per month in profit. Measured only in instructional sales, the break-even above understates this investment's return — which extends into brand reach, donor engagement, and a new earned-revenue channel. A collaboration with MMA YouTuber Napoleon Blownaparte further raised the organization's visibility with new audiences. An ongoing partnership with the BJJ Mental Models brand, originally engaged for marketing, has since grown into a joint podcast promoting the organization's projects, with the partner going well beyond scope to support its work.

At year-end, the organization carried two liabilities: an **interest-free bridge loan of $9,714** from supporter **Ray Wang** (which funded the training-floor build), and approximately **$31,646 in expenses advanced by Executive Director Dr. Christopher Round**, recorded as a reimbursable organizational liability. Dr. Round received no compensation for his role as Executive Director.

Looking Ahead

Going into FY2027, MASTERs enters the first competitive peaking cycle for the 2028 Olympic Games. Having outperformed expectations, the program is on track to field entrants in five to ten of the fourteen divisions that will be contested at the Olympic Trials — and it is sharpening how it invests its donor-funded support to get there, concentrating resources where they most help put athletes on the mat while keeping coaching, training design, and mental-performance support available to every fellow. Priorities for the year ahead include:

- Putting as many athletes as possible into the 2028 Olympic Trials, then running an intensive pre-Trials training camp to optimize each athlete's preparation.
- Allocating support through a transparent, need- and results-based framework — weighing financial need, proximity to the team, and training residency — with a shared dashboard so every fellow can see where they stand.
- Deepening the coaching-education pipeline, developing the next generation of judo coaches inside a live high-performance environment.
- Investing in younger development athletes with the 2032 Games in view.
- Growing earned revenue — instructional content and the Skool Judo platform, with four more instructionals in production (including a constraints-led-approach guide to teaching judo and a clock-choke instructional by Maia Matalon) — to build a more sustainable base.

- Supporting fellows at key qualifiers and a planned March 2027 training trip to Japan, and forming partnerships that elevate the program.

As we reflect on a year of significant achievements, MASTERs remains steadfast in its mission to use martial arts as a force for social transformation, ethics, and rights. We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, partners, and community for their support. Together, we continue to build a community where mutual benefit and well-being are at the forefront.

For more information about our programs and how to get involved, visit www.martialartsforsocialgood.org.

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