

Judo has its genesis in Trinidad and Tobago with the establishment of the United States army base at Chaguaramas in 1941, after the commencement of World War II. This base was in existence for twenty six (26) years, being disbanded in 1967.

The American soldiers at the missile site avidly practiced Judo as an integral part of their training routine and enquired of the local community whether there was an organization that governed and practiced Judo in Trinidad and Tobago. They were advised that the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service taught Judo and self defence to their recruits and other members of the protective services (Police, Coast Guard etc.). The instructor at the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service was Sensei Clyde Thomas.

In 1963 Sensei Magleo from the Chaguaramas base contacted the Commissioner of Prisons and held discussions with Sensei Thomas, upon the instructions of the Commissioner. This conference led to the agreement and arrangement of scheduled training between American army personnel and members of the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Services staff which took place at the base.

In 1963, a few weeks after this training commenced, the first Judo club was formed in Trinidad and Tobago and called the **Trinidad Judo Club**. It was located at the Carenage Catholic School in Carenage, under the auspices of the parish priest. The chief instructor was Sensei Clyde Thomas and some of the other members were Ben Raphael and the two Woo Ling brothers.

The Trinidad Judo Club had to relocate due to renovation work being conducted on the school building; therefore a new venue was sourced in a "back yard" in Maraval. Once again in 1965 the club had to move and a more convenient location was found in Woodbrook, opposite the Queen's Park Oval.

It should be noted though, that at this time Judo was blossoming throughout Trinidad and new clubs were being established in various parts of the country, especially within the southern region.

In 1966 all the Judo clubs came together and formally recognized the Trinidad Judo Club as the official governing body for Judo in Trinidad and Tobago; with Sensei Clyde Thomas being elected as the first president. The Trinidad Judo Club then negotiated with the Olympic Committee for inclusion as a member organization; since Judo became an Olympic sport in 1964.

Affiliation was also sought and obtained with the Judo Black Belt Federation Athletic Union which was responsible for Judo in the region. It was also around this time that Sensei George Hislop, 2nd Dan and now former Magistrate, returned from England and joined the club. At this time, Sensei Frank Hatashita 5th degree black belt visited Trinidad. He was then, the President of both the American Judo Union and the Canadian Black Belt Club. During his visit he graded three (3) members of the Trinidad Judo Club, they were Clyde Thomas, Ben Raphael and Charles Woo Ling.

In 1970 the Trinidad Judo Club was renamed the Trinidad and Tobago Judo Association and it was situated at Y.M.C.A., Benbow Road, Wrightson Road, Port of Spain. This was also the year that the association received formal recognition from the Ministry of Sport, thereby allowing the sport of judo all of the benefits of such recognition and inclusion.

The 1980's to the early 1990's saw a decline in Judo clubs, however the Trinidad and Tobago Judo Association still maintained a presence and it was during this period that the TTJA relocated its headquarters to Dorata Street, Eastern Main Road, Laventille.

From 1990 to 1996 the headquarters for Judo was moved to Belle Smythe Street in Woodbrook. Additionally in 1995, there was a resurgence in the sport that was fuelled by a desire to spread knowledge of the sport of Judo throughout Trinidad. In 1996 many black belts at the time moved on to establish their own clubs in areas such as Arima, Port of Spain and South. This resurgence was mainly attributed to a visiting sensei from France, Noel Le Hecho 6th dan who gave years of his life to selflessly teach and promote the judoka that would go out to spread judo out into the far reaches of the island.

In 2012 a new vision for judo in T&T was forged by its members whereby the organization would serve the judoka to help them reach their fullest potential in the sport. Since then the national body has made significant milestones in judo locally and internationally having re-engaged itself with the world and continental judo bodies. The most significant of those was the historical achievement of Christopher George who became the first citizen of T&T and of the English-speaking Caribbean to qualify in judo for the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro 2016, via the highly competitive route of continental quota.

In 2013 the governing body for Judo in Trinidad and Tobago was renamed and rebranded as Judo Trinidad and Tobago (Judo TT).