

2022 California State Games Athletes of the Year

Athlete of the Year

Name: Malia Quirante

Town/City: La Puente, California

Age: 12

Sport: Judo

Bio:

Malia Quirante comes from a family who have been practicing judo for many years. Her paternal grandfather Antonio Quirante, Sr. and paternal great uncle Dionisio Quirante were the ones to introduce judo to our family. Malia's primary sensei is her father Lawrence Quirante, who has been a member of the Guerreros Judo Club for 40 years. Malia has two brothers, Marco and Lorenzo, who are also Guerreros. Malia began judo at the age of seven and competed in local small tournaments for the first two years. By 2019, Malia earned her first bronze medal at the Nanka West Coast Invitational held at Westminster High School. She fought in 5 more tournaments, increasing her skills with each. Then the pandemic hit and all the clubs and competitions ended for 2 years. However, since her father is also her sensei, the pandemic did not end judo practice at the Quirante home during these 2 years. Having a twin brother to practice with made this easier. Malia earned her green belt in 2021. When the Las Vegas Championship returned in February 2022, this marked the return of tournament season. Malia has participated and earned medals in 5 additional tournaments since then, with the latest one being Gold at the California State Games. We are very proud of all that Malia has accomplished in such a short time and look forward to seeing her progress. When Malia is not at judo, she likes to read, draw and watch creative videos on YouTube.

Athlete of the Year

Name: Emily Seleznev

Age: 10

Sport: Artistic Swimming

Bio: As to the Athlete of the Year, her name is Emily Seleznev and she is a 10 year old from the Splash team. She has only been swimming a couple of years, but is someone her entire team wrote about. She has developed her synchro abilities in a short time and even though she is not very old (team ability wise) she evidently is quick to help others, takes direction well and is a genuinely thoughtful and happy girl. She hasn't had enough exposure to have taken awards at National meets (she is not old enough to have participated in any), but having watched her swim I believe she will go far in synchro. I only had one other nominee and watching the two girls, I felt that Emily personified what synchro and team participation is about.

Sport Athletes of the Year

Artistic Swimming - Emily Seleznev, 10, Los Angeles

Judo - Malia Quirante, 12, La Puente

Track & Field, Track, Male - Isaiah Rodriguez, 10, San Diego

Track & Field, Field, Male - Brandon Cheeks II, 16, San Diego

Track & Field, Track, Female - Adyn Kinard, 14, Stevenson Ranch

Track & Field, Field, Female - Keleey Baker, 14, Orange