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Christian Schnieders
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Blake Schrader
Austin Schuhmacher




Katie Scovel
Devin Smith
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Sage Sutter
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Jenna Utter
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Amanda Kupka

From training to competing, senior Amanda Kupka stays busy while participating in Jiu-Jitsu and kickboxing.

In September of 2014, Kupka started training in Jiu-Jitsu and kickboxing at Hard Drive Mixed Martial Arts in Cedar Rapids.

Kupka originally planned on training in boxing, but she was told that Jiu-Jitsu and kickboxing are often paired together. She now trains five to seven days a week.

Kupka cannot compete in MMA until she is 18 years old, but she has competed in Jiu-Jitsu. At one competition she won first place in Gi, which requires the competitor to wear a kimono, and second place in no Gi, where the competitor is not required to wear a kimono.

Training in Jiu-Jitsu and kickboxing, Kupka faces a lot of challenges. "The people I train with are twice my age and twice my weight," Kupka said.

Jiu-Jitsu requires a lot of physical strength and endurance. "You can't slack off," Kupka said.

Kupka has made a lot of friends through training in martial arts. "My team is my family," Kupka said. Not only do they train together, but Kupka and her team spend time outside of the gym. "We get together and watch UFC fights," Kupka said.

Kupka has been presented with job opportunities because of her experience in Jiu-Jitsu and kickboxing. She works at two different gyms in Cedar Rapids as an assistant trainer and as a receptionist.

On average Kupka spends 16 hours a week training. "I would probably go crazy if I wasn't doing this," Kupka said. "It keeps you in check; it humbles you."

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