



**...A Message from the Presidents of the USJF, USJA, and USA Judo
Mr. Kevin Asano, Mr. Gary Goltz, and Mr. Lance Nading**

September 12, 2013

Since the beginning of this year we have been diligently accessing and reviewing the changes in the IJF rules governing judo tournaments and how that has affected our joint sanctioning process. To this end joint commission was formed consisting of representatives of our organizations from the executive, legal, referee, and insurance perspectives with the goal of making recommendations to the Presidents:

	USA Judo	USJA	USJF
Representative	David Smith, J.D.	Michael Goldsmith, J.D.	Richard Muller, J.D.
Selection Criteria	A level referee and member of the current USA Judo referee committee with a solid legal background	Standards Committee Chair and USJA general council	National Referee and general counsel of USJF, member of all three organizations standards committee.
		Steve Clemens USJA Insurance Committee Char	
	Neil Simon, Tournament director (multiple tournaments from local to national). PJC referee, former USJF president and advisor to the Tri-party presidents.		

Here is their report:

There are three judo Organizations in the United States: USA Judo, United States Judo Federation and United States Judo Association. The purpose of the three judo Organizations is to bring the international sport of Judo to the American public and to send competitors to participate in worldwide competition. Each Organization has a role in that task.

- USA Judo is the National Governing Body for the sport. It is recognized in that role by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), as authorized by an Act of Congress (Olympic and Amateur Sports Act of 1978). It interacts with the U.S. Olympic Committee as well as international judo organizations. USA Judo endeavors to grow, develop and promote the sport of judo at all levels from the initial core development of athletes through Olympic competition. In addition, USA Judo establishes national goals for the sport, serves as a coordinating body for the sport within the USA, conducts competitions, provides coaching and training opportunities for judo athletes, and selects and fields competitors to represent the USA in international competitions.
- The United States Judo Federation and the United States Judo Association are Grassroots Judo™ organizations that work, at the local, regional and national level, to develop and promote all aspects of judo, provide education, training and coaching for judo athletes of all skill levels, provide various opportunities for individuals to participate in multiple aspects of Judo, and, each works with USA Judo to identify, train and develop judo athletes. Each organization also serves their membership and communities by working to bring the benefits of judo to as many Americans as possible.

General Explanation of Rules Changes

IJF

The IJF is responsible for creating and maintaining rules for conducting competitions at the international level (i.e., Olympic and World Championship level events) and those tournaments leading to the qualifications for those events. Current practices for the IJF include rules reviews at the end of every Olympic quadrennial (post - Olympics), testing of those rules, and basic stabilization and dissemination of those rules. The IJF creates new rules and rule changes based on the following:

1. Safety
2. Ensure fairness of competition
3. Maintaining judo's status as an Olympic Sport
4. Promote sportsmanship and good will through regulated competition
5. Increasing the marketability and audience/spectator appeal of our sport

USA Judo

USA Judo is the National Governing Body for judo in the United States. Their Referee Commission is charged with reviewing the IJF rules and making recommendations for USA Judo sanctioned events (national, regional, & local). These recommendations are then reviewed by the USA Judo Board of Directors and, when adopted, become the USA Judo Standard. Tournament sanctioning is based on compliance with the adopted rules and standard business practices of USA Judo. The sport of judo has a keen focus on competitor safety and endorsing standards and practices that lead to safer judo.

USA Judo rules and standards are based on:

1. IJF rules
2. Safety
3. Ensuring fairness of competition
4. Promotion of sportsmanship and good will through regulated competition
5. Increasing the appeal of judo to the general public
6. Attracting and retaining leaders and members

USJF and USJA

These Grassroots Judo™ organizations are significant members (Group A Level) of USA Judo. Both organizations generally adopt the USA Judo rule modifications and rule recommendations. Insurance carriers for each organization allow for modifications in methods of dojo level education, training, tournament administration, and competition. Members submit their membership paperwork and applications for sanctions to their national office for review. The national office then reviews the paperwork and issues a sanction, if the paperwork is in order and reflects safe practices, policies and procedures. The sanctioning body insurance carrier maintains coverage so long as the tournament officials adhere to all the required standards (expressly stated and implied) upon which the sanction was issued.

Grassroots Judo™ organizational practices are based on:

1. USA Judo rules and procedures
2. Insurance company recommendation
3. Safety

4. Ensure fairness of competition
5. Creating and promoting developmental opportunities and activities
6. Promotion of sportsmanship and good will through regulated competition
7. Increasing the appeal of judo to the general public
8. Attracting and retaining leaders and members

Judo leaders at the local level (instructors, organization leaders (including Yudanshakai and/or regional leaders), coaches, referees, tournament official, volunteers, etc.) are responsible for knowing and following the standard practices and procedures. Failing to follow required practices and standard procedures, they jeopardize the insurance coverage relationship, which could cause those participating individuals to personally assume risk and liability that is not covered by the insurance carrier.

It is recommended that all judo leaders participate in training, continuing education, and receive advice and direction from their national bodies in regard to class and tournament policies, procedures, and standard practices.

Role and Benefits of the National Organization

Membership with insurance in any of the three organizations provides:

- Access to liability protection
- Access to participant accident medical insurance
- Dissemination of safety information, medical and legal information, and rule changes that occur at the international and national level
- A forum for dispute resolution for their members
- Set standards for the teaching and practice of the sport
- Act as advocates for the sport
- Sanctions for judo tournaments that provide minimal safety, technical and legal guidelines
- The establishment and publication of standards of proficiency and ethical conduct
- The coordination of judo activities and the standardization of administrative, coaching and ranking procedures
- Cooperation with each other as far as reasonably possible in matters pertaining to judo

The United States Judo Federation and The United States Judo Association serve their membership and constituencies within the United States, and each provides various services and benefits at the “grass roots” level.

International Judo Federation (IJF) rules are designed for the highest level of competition and may not be suitable for every local event. If there is to be modification of the IJF rules at the grassroots level, then the modifications must be based upon stated safety protocols which have been approved by the grassroots organizations, or by the National Governing Body, and set forth in the tournament announcements so all participants, coaches and referees, tournament officials, and volunteers are advised.

Modification of the IJF rules regarding choking, arm bars and certain throws deemed unsuitable for small children or less skilled competitors, may be adopted. All modifications must be within the generally accepted standards for our sport and scope of the sanction.

Modifications that compromise safety, or create less safe conditions, are not acceptable and jeopardize the participants and tournament insurance coverage(s). This could cause those participating individuals to personally assume risk and be exposed to liability that is not covered by the insurance carrier.

Non-tournament events such as joint practices or practice competition are covered under our insurance policies, provided that the rules and applicable restrictions set forth regarding the supervision and conduct of these events are observed. It is important that these rules are followed. A member or individual operating outside of organizational guidelines will void the liability insurance for such activity creating potential personal financial risk and liability exposure to individuals and organizations involved.

Based on this report we the presidents of the USJF, USJA, and USA Judo have concluded:

1. 'Contest Judo' as featured in the Olympics is defined by the IJF and needs to be adhered to for sanctioned events in terms of mitigating liability for the host.
2. Since implementation of the 'Dynamic Edge' having an adequate out of bounds area has become a crucial safety factor especially when it comes to hot issues like concussions. The sanction requirement as stated in terms of 4 meters between adjoining tatamis with a 3 meter boundary must be adhered to.
3. 'Scrimmages' are practice or exhibition tournaments held in dojos. In these instances a national referee is not necessary and the IJF 4 meters between adjoining tatamis with a 3 meter boundary does not have to be adhered to. Instead the use of a red warning/safety zone must be utilized to prevent accidents due to lack of space necessary to implement the 'Dynamic Edge'.

We hope this will clarify our joint sanction policy going forward.

In addition as your presidents we feel it is our responsibility to address some other issues that have arisen over the past six months regarding competitions.

In terms of code of conduct it is important to remember that we are all involved in judo for the purpose of improving ourselves and to give back to society. Towards this end safety and proper etiquette need to always be a priority.

Players, parents, and coaches should strive to show the respect to other players, coaches, and officials. Officials need to remember that these events evoke passions and emotions and should show respect to all players, coaches, parents and especially to volunteers such as table workers.

Behavioral outbursts can result in being banned from competitions and suspensions, even being expelled from our organizations.

We've also heard of the delays at many events due to players not having the proper gis, blue and white belts, etc. We suggest tournament hosts institute a pre-inspection of all players prior to the start of the event so that these delays do not elongate the work of their officials and volunteers.

With everyone's cooperation together we can continue to make judo a safe and fun sport for everyone, thanks.