

United States Judo Federation, USA Judo, United States Judo Association
December 9, 2006 - Joint Meeting Minutes

The meeting was convened in Dallas, Texas at 9 AM on Saturday, December 9, 2006. In attendance were:

Ron Tripp, President, USA Judo
Jose Rodriguez, CEO, USA Judo
Jim Webb, President, United States Judo Association
Neil Simon, President, United States Judo Federation
Robert Fukuda, Executive Director, United States Judo Federation

The meeting was initiated by the three organizations to discuss the future strategic directions of the three organizations and identify those areas in which the three organizations may work with each other for the betterment of judo in America.

A brief overview of each organizations current strategy

Jim Webb indicated that the USJA will continue to build upon their business model of communicating directly with club coaches. With the organization now free of debt, they will focus on greater communications to the membership, the introduction of an aggressive program of development camps and clinics, greater automation in the central office with an eye toward providing the club coaches with better club management tools, and identifying ways to get those judo practitioners that have not previously joined a judo organization (predominately recreational players) to affiliate with the USJA.

Neil Simon indicated that the USJF will continue to leverage their yudanshakai system. Their vision is to see judo in every community and every school. They are achieving this through a shift from a sensei-centric model to a customer-centric business model. Their strategy is to create a customer service organization, to cultivate leadership at all levels of the organization, and to foster a positive image of judo. The positive image is a shift to portray the judo athlete in a more professional image.

USA Judo is in the greatest state of flux due to recent mandates from the US Olympic Committee. The organization is driven by evidenced based outcomes – specifically medal counts and expansion of programs. They are migrating to a professionally driven organization, meaning the chief executive receives direction from the board and is expected to achieve results. Further, they are moving away from reliance on volunteers and are compensating people for their services.

Current USA Judo initiatives include the establishment of five national training sites. Two are currently established in Miami and Harlingen, Texas. The OTC will remain the central training facility. It was also stated that USA Judo has erased all overt references to “USJI” as a moniker – the brand is “USA Judo.” USA Judo envisions itself managing the complete judo spectrum from juniors through masters – but readily admits that it cannot do this by itself. Leveraging the Group A organizations only makes sense and is what the US Olympic Committee would like to see. Track and field was acknowledged as a good model to follow.

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USA Judo readily acknowledges that the recent by-law changes were not received well by the entire judo community and that there are those that want to see the new leadership team fail. They also acknowledge that the recent termination of the secondary membership program with the USJF will be met with a skeptical eye by members of the USJF.

Moving forward

A brainstorming session throwing out potential programs for moving forward included:

- Posturing judo as a secondary sport that develops skills
 - Skills needed in such sports as soccer, football and wrestling
 - Basic life skills such as hand-eye coordination, balance, and confidence
- Creating a judo season for more focused public relations efforts and to allow athletes a break
- Affiliation with another martial arts such as karate as an additional offering for their clubs
- Setting up a common brand “American Judo” that was jointly shared by the three organizations
- Creating a path for academic credentials for judo coaches such as an Associates Degree in Judo through such a program as the American Sports University.
- Identifying ways to make judo more professional

There are four things that the three organizations need to work through initially. They are:

- Membership
- Ranks
- Sanctions
- Coaching education and certification

The most pressing is membership as this pays the bills for every organization. A joint committee was appointed consisting of: Jose Rodriguez, Robert Fukuda and Gary Goltz. Their job is to craft a plan for membership in the future after accounting for both the independence of each organization and the areas of potential sharing (such as insurance and benefits).

Ranks and sanctions will be deferred at this time. It was noted that there was a joint committee established previously to study ranks.

The coaching education and certification committee will consist of Chris Dewey, Pat Burris and Dean Marcovics. It was noted that Chris Dewey’s coaching education course is highly regarded.

The first meeting of the leadership of USA Judo, the USJA and the USJF was held at the US Open in Miami earlier this year. It was noted that this was a historic occasion as it was the first time that the three organizations have expressed this strong of an interest in

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working toward the common goal of improving judo in America. This second meeting resulted in substantial steps toward this goal. All three Presidents expressed enthusiasm about the future of our sport.

The next meeting is scheduled in early March to review the drafts of the work products of the two joint committees. The plan is to have these documents ready for review by the April 07 meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Webb
President, USJA

Ron Tripp
President, USA Judo

Neil Simon
President, USJF