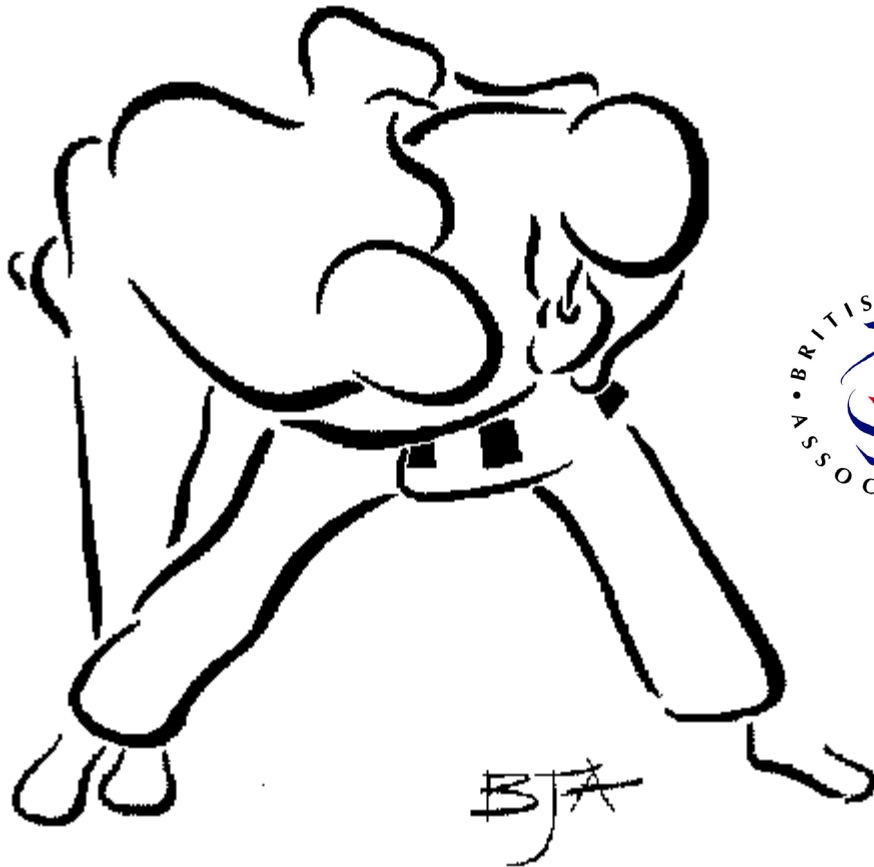


JUDO - Your Questions Answered



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WHAT IS JUDO?

Judo has its roots in ju-jitsu, which goes back many centuries in Japanese history when it was a brutal and often lethal method of self-defence and unarmed combat. Judo was established as a modern physical activity when in 1882; Professor Jigoro Kano founded his Kodokan Judo.

Responsible for education he was aware that physical education in his country at that time was sadly lacking. Jealous ju-jitsu masters began to question this system and the matter could only be settled by arranging a tournament between the various schools.

This was done in 1886 and the outcome was a totally victorious Kodokan. Japanese police officials had been watching the proceedings closely; they were looking for an acceptable method of apprehending and controlling aggressive law-breakers without resorting to weapons. To them Judo was the answer and it is used in Japanese police training to this day.

From that time, Judo schools were established in many countries and the first Judo club to open in Europe, the Budokwai which still operates today, was founded in 1918 by Gunji Koizumi who became known later as "The Father of British Judo". There are now nearly 1,000 Judo clubs registered with the British Judo Association in the United Kingdom.

Since the inclusion of Judo in the 1964 Olympic Games it has been regarded as a modern Olympic combat sport although some followers still consider it very much an "art form". Kano said that Judo is a teaching for life itself and with it we learn to overcome the pitfalls and obstacles of everyday living.

HOW CAN SOMEONE JOIN A JUDO CLUB?

It is most important to start correctly with a qualified Judo Coach. The British Judo Association is the official Governing Body for Judo in the United Kingdom. Clubs registered with the British Judo Association provide qualified coaches and you can obtain an up-to-date list of such clubs in your area from the Association Head Office.

HOW CAN PARTICIPANTS BE SURE THEY ARE GETTING QUALITY COACHING?

The BJA Coach award structure is designed to ensure that qualified Coaches deliver safe, quality Judo instruction. The Coach award system is widely regarded as being one of the best in the world. All BJA member Clubs are required to have at least one qualified BJA Coach, who you can be assured has had to meet the strict standards laid down. In the past potential Coaches were

required to pass a First Aid exam, however since First Aid practice evolves continually, Coaches must now obtain an external First Aid Certificate. The Association has a strict child protection policy and ensures all Coaches complete personal disclosure documents prior to granting a Club licence.

WHERE CAN SOMEONE OBTAIN A JUDO SUIT, ETC?

Most sports shops and many of our Members Clubs supply Judogi (Judo suits) at reasonable rates and second-hand kit is often available from clubs. The Judogi is reinforced in all the right places and consists of a jacket, trousers and belt. The only other personal equipment required would be a pair of zori, which are Japanese style slippers and are needed for walking to and from the training or contest mat (a lot of people use flip-flops for this purpose).

WHAT ARE MON, KYU AND DAN GRADES?

For players aged from 8 to 15 years, there are 18 levels of skill grades known as Mon (Junior) grades, which are denoted by coloured and banded belts. The first six of these grades can now be obtained locally within a players own Club - all BJA qualified Coaches are allowed to examine up to this level. From 6th Mon onward players must be examined by BJA qualified examiners, more than likely at Area gradings.

From 16 years, Kyu (senior) skill grades apply and are again denoted by belts of different colours. Everyone has to work through the grading system to reach the 1st Dan Grade when the player is entitled to wear the famous black belt. Even then there are higher levels for the very dedicated.

HOW OLD DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO DO JUDO?

Judo training can start at any age. BJA members ranged from five to 85. As for starting Judo later in life, whilst one might not expect to reach Olympic standard there are still goals to be achieved. The BJA Dan Grade Register has on record a man who started Judo aged 54 and in eight years achieved his 1st Dan black belt.

WHAT ABOUT UNDER EIGHT YEAR OLDS?

On advice from our Medical Commission the BJA does not allow contest for under eight year-olds. We do however have a system for them known as the Kano Club in which they can study simple actions and refereeing terms and then demonstrate them. Special certificates and badges are awarded for successes in the Kano examination system. The Kano examination system also allows fast track conversion into the Mon grade system when players reach eight years of age.

WHY DO PARTICIPANTS NEED A LICENCE?

Although the accident rate is far lower than in some other sports it has to be said that Judo is a tough combat sport. It is therefore wise to have a licence, which gives insurance cover. Gradings and competitions take place all over the country and throughout the year under BJA rules and at which anyone taking part must have a licence. A Calendar of Events containing details of competitions and gradings can be obtained from BJA head office.

DOES JUDO GET YOU FIT?

Judo is an ideal form of physical education. The beginner concentrates on getting the technique right, and during this process inevitably improves general fitness. The bonus is stamina improvement, which equips one better for the rigors of day-to-day life. When asked about the extraordinary fitness he displayed on winning the British and European "Superstars" titles Brian Jacks attributed it all to his former Judo training.

IS JUDO THE COMPLETE SELF-DEFENCE?

There is no complete self-defence and it is foolish to make such claims. However, because of its close contact Judo helps to develop a keen awareness of danger. It offers the best self-defence training at close quarters than any other sport. The British Judo Association has specially trained self-defence instructors, (known as BJA Personal Safety Advisors), who run registered courses. For more details of self-defence in your area contact the BJA head office.

DO WOMEN DO JUDO?

They most certainly do. At the present time we have Kate Howey the Sydney Olympic Silver medallist, (Kate also won an Olympic Bronze in Barcelona) and Karina Bryant Senior European Champion, Double Junior World & Junior European Champion, Georgina Singleton Senior European & Commonwealth Champion, to name just a few.

The recently retired former world champion Nicola Fairbrother MBE who also won an Olympic Silver medal in the Barcelona games and other former female stars include Sharon Rendle MBE 92 Olympic Bronze medallist and former World Champion who is currently coach to the Australian Women's Team. Diane Bell former World and European Champion who is currently British Senior Women's Coach and Karen Briggs MBE four times World and seven times European Champion Karen is now running her own club in her home town of Hull.

DO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DO JUDO?

The British Judo Association Inclusion Commission has adopted the motto Judo for All and they work tirelessly to ensure that the Sport is open and accessible to players with a wide variety of disabilities. Because of the close contact involved in Judo it is the ideal Sport for blind or visually impaired players. Simon Jackson MBE is the Association's most decorated Athlete with Three Paralympic Gold medals, Three World titles and Seven European Championship wins under his belt.