

**BRITISH  
JUDO**



# **ADAPTIVE JUDO**

# **CONTEST RULES**

BJA Version: 21/02/2026



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## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. The British Judo Rules for Adaptive Judo serve as a comprehensive framework to facilitate the inclusion of judoka with disabilities. These rules and guidelines underpin British Judo's commitment to create opportunities in a safe, enjoyable and equitable environment for all judoka, regardless of their ability.
2. These rules should read alongside the current BJA Contest Rules, inclusive of amendments, along with minimal changes for the wellbeing for Adaptive Judoka identified in this document.
3. Where this document lacks definitive solutions, BJA rules prevail.
4. British Adaptive Judo Rules aim to enable judoka with impairments to compete to their ability in a safe, fun and inclusive way.

## SECTION 2 – GENERAL

1. Adaptive Judo contests are to be directed by a qualified referee who has experience in judo for people with an impairment. All referees must be qualified through British Judo's Refereeing Pathway.
2. Divisioning of athletes into categories based on their level of ability is compiled via the competition application form, previous knowledge of their ability from events and training sessions, assessments conducted by the Adaptive Working Group and coaches using the guidelines on the BJA Adaptive web page.
3. In all cases not covered by the rules, the referee in charge and/or tournament director, as appropriate, will decide the action required in the spirit of inclusion, opportunity for participation and upholding fair play. All such decisions are final.
4. A distinction is made between Tachi-shisei and Ne-shisei contests and is identified on the entry form.
5. Divisioning may take place prior to the event starting to ensure judoka are matched fairly.
6. Contests will be conducted with three referees: one centre referee on the mat supported by two table judges, seated at the judges' table mat-side. Wherever possible, the CARE system should be used, and the judges should be connected to the referee by radio.
7. Where more than one division is combined together, the rules for the lower division will be used. For example, for Level 2 and Level 3 athletes matched together, tani-otoshi is not a valid action. This information is to be shared at the referee briefing and prior to the match commencing.
8. The durations of contests may be adjusted by the tournament director based on the flow of the event.

**Judo Ability L3, L4, L5 & Under 15s:** 2 or 3 minute contests, no Golden Score, penalties do not contribute to the outcome. Positive judo decides the winner.

**Judo Ability L1 & L2:** 3 or 4 minute contests, Golden Score rules are applied.

## SECTION 3 – TIMING AND DURATIONS

1. Contest times differ for levels and abilities:
  - a. **Over 15yrs, Judo Ability L1 & L2:** 3 or 4 mins & Golden Score applied.
  - b. **Judo Ability L3, L4, L5 and Under 15yrs:** 2 or 3 mins, no Golden Score, penalties do not contribute to winner, positive judo is promoted.
  - c. **Judo Ability L5 & L4** where required will be encouraged to have a 2 minute kinsa randori. The more productive wins the contest.
2. A reluctant athlete may need extra time to compose themselves. In such cases, the referee may consult with the tournament director and contest recorders to have the contest rescheduled. The maximum extra time allowable is two contest durations.

### No Golden Score (L3, L4, L5 & U15)

3. If technical scores and penalties are tied, there is no Golden Score period. Instead the winner shall be decided by a 'majority of three' decision, based upon the referees' judgement as to which athlete was more positive and the closest to achieving a score. To make their decision:
  - a. If radio equipment is in use: the two judges shall determine if they agree. If the judges agree, they shall inform the referee of the winner. If the judges are split, they shall inform the referee to give his decision.
  - b. If no radio equipment is in use: The judges shall make their decision and identify 'blue or white'. Where the judges are split, they shall indicate to the referee to make their decision.
  - c. In both cases above, the referee and judges shall confer only by stating 'blue' or 'white', there must be no further discussion.

## SECTION 4 – STARTING POSITIONS

### Determining Starting Positions

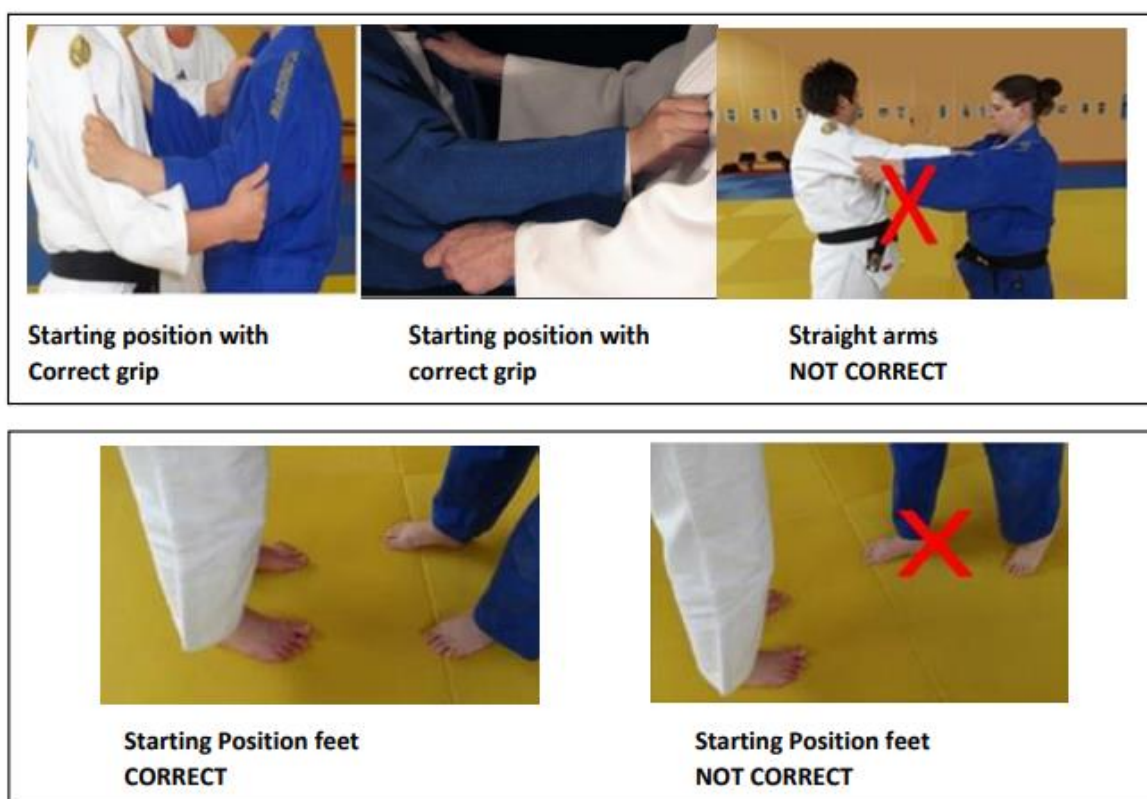
1. The correct starting position for each contest will be determined by the tournament director through divisioning, which may be re-evaluated by the referee mat lead upon viewing an athlete's stability. Where an athlete cannot perform safely in tachi-shisei, contests are conducted exclusively in ne-shisei.
2. A referee is authorised to change a tachi-shisei contest into a ne-shisei contest, where it becomes apparent that an athlete cannot perform safely in tachi-shisei.
3. In ne-shisei only contests, tilting techniques leading to uke landing on their side or back will gain a score. Uke, in prone position, does not have to leave the mat surface for this. Referees are directed to use their best judgement to score the landing per the BJA rules, but allowing for the fact such techniques will not achieve the full speed, force and impact of a tachi-shisei technique and the judoka's impairment.

### Tachi-shisei

In Tachi-shisei, there are two possible starting positions:

1. Where no adjustment is required, the athletes begin in the usual way, per the BJA rules.
2. In the case where one or both athletes have a visual impairment that impairs the execution of correct kumi-kata, they may be guided to and from starting positions and to take kumi-kata following the visually impaired (IBSA) bowing and gripping procedures. Where necessary to support the athlete, a carer or coach may assist in guiding the athlete through these procedures. The athlete may choose the extent of the support required. A sighted judoka is not allowed to release both hands from the kumi-kata grip.
3. In judo ability level 3, 4 & 5, the referee is allowed to continue the contest in Kumi-kata when:
  - One or both judoka appear to avoid Kumi-kata, or
  - One or both judoka cannot set up an appropriate Kumi-kata.

Note: A reluctant athlete may need intervention when it comes to gripping their opponent. Starting an athlete in kumi-kata may, through familiarity with the technique, calm the athlete. If extra time is necessary, consultation with the Tournament Director is required. This is a maximum of 2 contest durations.



## Ne-shisei

In Ne-shisei, the starting position can differ from judoka. Kneeling, sitting, lying on stomach, which will require a basic kumi-kata grip. The referee may be informed prior to the commencement of the contest.

1. Higher level ability athlete: za-rei at approx. 1 metre apart. Hajime to start. Kumi-kata can also be applied prior to hajime depending on disability.
2. Lower-level ability athlete: Za-rei or tachi-rei (support if needed) at designated places, place in required starting position, grip up in kumi-kata. Hajime to start.
  - a. From kneeling - athletes are not allowed to push/drive their opponent directly backwards, nor can they gain an unfair advantage by rising up from the knees and/or utilising a strong leg if the other judoka is more impaired.
3. Competitors sitting next to each other with legs stretched forward: Kumi-kata can comprise of sleeve/lapel, sleeve/belt grips. Both competitors use the same grip. Hajime to start.
4. Competitors laying on their front: Grip up, sleeve/sleeve, sleeve/lapel. Hajime to start.



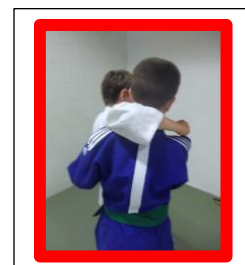
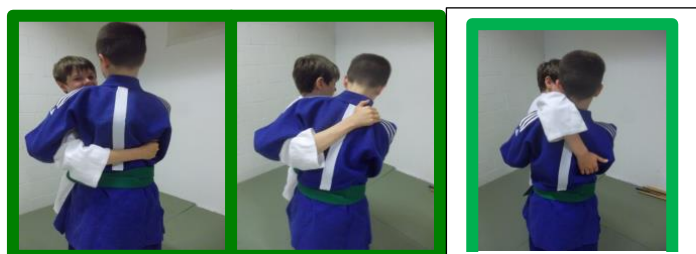
## SECTION 5 – PROHIBITED ACTIONS

In addition to the prohibited actions as described in British Judo rules as amended, the following techniques are also prohibited:

1. Any and all forms of:
  - a. Sutemi-waza, with the exception of tani-otoshi (or similar actions), where:
    - i. Level 1 & 2: tani-otoshi permitted
    - ii. Levels 3, 4 & 5: not permitted due to the varying disabilities.
  - b. Kansetsu-waza (armlocks)
  - c. Shime-waza (strangles)
  - d. Sangaku-waza (triangle techniques)
    - i. Level 1 & 2 and U15 & O15 entering into sangaku for the purpose of turning over their opponent, is allowed without the crossing of the legs.
  - e. Kawazu-gake (leg entwined)
  - f. Embrace techniques (direct bear hugging action)
  - g. IJF interpretation of using Tori or Uke head for the application or defence of a technique
2. To apply any throwing technique in any direction by tori dropping directly, with one or both knees, to the ground during the initial stage of the action. Guidance: if tori takes the weight of uke on their back in a standing position and then performs any recognisable throwing action, although they fall to the ground, this will be a valid action.
3. To put additional pressure on head, neck or throat of their opponent, even if the grip was at first correct.

### In Tachi-shisei:

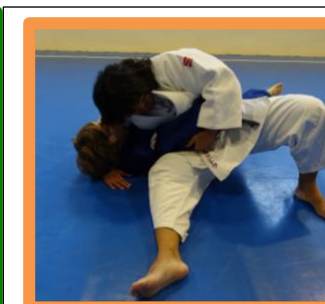
4. To make kumi-kata around the head or neck of the opponent. While taking hold over the shoulder or collarbone, the hand may not rise above their opponent's opposite shoulder blade/armpit.



### In Ne-shisei:

5. In ne-shisei, it is not allowed to put pressure on either head or neck. In osae-komi-waza situations where tori is in, for example, the kesa position, the palm of the hand positioned under the head or neck is to be placed flat on the tatami. Gripping the judogi is not allowed around the neck.

4. Applying extra downward pressure whilst in osae-komi-waza on the head and neck. In this case, the referee will tap tori's shoulder advising them to move, if repeated, mate will be called.
5. Pushing the opponent directly backwards while in kneeling position.
6. To immediately release kumi-kata after hajime during matches with a modified starting position.



## SECTION 6 – PENALTIES

1. For all prohibited actions, the action taken will vary by level:
  - L1 & L2 athletes will be advised of their actions and penalised accordingly.
  - L3, L4 & L5 athletes will be advised of their actions with a verbal warning, if the action is repeated, verbal explanation is repeated and the respective penalty will be awarded.
2. Prohibited actions will be penalised with shido, no hansoku-make will be given except for actions against the spirit of judo.
3. All actions that go against the spirit of judo will be penalised with hansoku-make, to protect the athlete.
4. At a maximum of three shido, hansoku-make can be given. However, L3, L4 & L5 this should be avoided in the interest of the athlete.
5. The referee is allowed to consider the level, the disability, type and intention of the offence in his decision, as well as repetition, overall contest image and safety when deciding on a penalty.
6. Shido given in L3, L4 & L5 contests are not counted toward the result: therefore, if there are not technical scores or the scores are equal at the end of original contest time, the referee will declare the winner for the competitor with more positivity.

## SECTION 7 – INJURIES AND SAFETY

1. In all cases during the match where the referee, coach or technical officials are of the opinion that the safety of either athlete is threatened, the match will be interrupted and the tournament director called. The athletes will not continue until any corrective measures deemed necessary are put in place.
2. There is no limit to the number of times the same injury may be treated.
3. If the referee deems it necessary for coach or carer to be present before or during the treatment of an injury, these persons may enter the contest area.

## SECTION 8 – JUDOGI AND AIDS

### Judogi

1. The judogi must be adjusted to the physical limitations of the athlete however it must not disadvantage their opponent's ability to perform kumi-kata.
2. Only white judogi are allowed, marked with a white or a blue belt only.
3. Wearing a plain white round neck t-shirt or rashguard under the judogi is mandatory for female athletes. Males may choose to wear a plain white round neck t-shirt or rashguard

### Aids

4. Where aids are worn, they must comply with BJA/IJF regulations. Aids must be safe for both wearer and opponent and may not contain hard components. Clarification can be sought from the referee in charge prior to the contest commencing. The opponent may not be disadvantaged, nor may the wearer receive an unreasonable advantage from the aid.
5. Wearing a properly fitting mouth guard is allowed (white or transparent).
6. Sports glasses are allowed once authorised by the tournament director, provided they do not present a risk to either athlete.
7. Wearing white socks in ne-shisei is allowed for medical reasons. Socks with rubber dots are allowed.

## SECTION 9 – COACHING AND ENCOURAGEMENT

1. For Levels 1 & 2, accredited matside coaches and carers can only coach between the duration of mate and hajime but must refrain from directing comments to the referee.
2. For Levels 3, 4 & 5, coaches and carers can coach throughout each contest but must refrain from directing comments to the referee.
3. For athletes at Levels 3, 4 & 5, and to inexperienced athletes generally, coaches, carers and referees should offer encouragement.
4. In some cases where the judoka disability is greatly impaired, coaches or supporting judoka may enter the contest environment to encourage or physically support their judoka.

## SECTION 10 – WEIGHT CLASSES AND DIVISIONS

### Weight Classes

1. Where possible official weight classes are used for Levels 1 and 2. The allowed weight margin during the weigh-in procedure is determined by the tournament director.
2. At Levels 3, 4 and 5 weight, experience and abilities are considered at the time of divisioning and weighing in.

### Divisions

Divisioning will be performed by or under the supervision of the tournament director or the head divisioner at the event, and by having regard to the descriptors for each level, to place all athletes into one of five divisions. Communication between tournament director, coaches, support carers/coaches, referees and competition officials will create an appropriate contest experience for all athletes.

#### Level 1 (Most Able Athlete)

An athlete who can train and compete with mainstream athletes on club level. Has a good understanding of the meaning and goal of the competition. Capable of taking part in mainstream national and international championships.

#### Level 2 (More Able Athlete)

An athlete who can train and take part in light competition (randori) with mainstream athletes. Understands the meaning and goal of the competition. Capable of taking part in mainstream local championships and tournaments.

#### Level 3 (Medium Athlete)

An athlete who can take part in training with mainstream athletes but only competes in special competitions with athletes of the same level. Understands most of the rules, meaning and goal of the competition.

#### Level 4 (Medium / Less Able Athlete)

An athlete who is only capable of taking part in special training and competitions. This athlete needs guiding during the competition but understands most of the rules and goal of a competition.

#### Level 5 (Less Able Athlete)

An athlete who is only capable of taking part in special training and competitions with specialist care. This athlete needs a lot of guidance during the competition. The competition might need to be adjusted to the competitors. Due to safety considerations this athlete may be restricted to compete only on the ground (ne-waza).

## Contests between Athletes in Different Divisions

Athletes may compete in their own division or the division immediately above or below their own division.

- Level 1 athletes may compete against level 2 athletes.
- Level 2 athletes may compete against level 1 athletes and level 3 athletes.
- Level 3 athletes may compete against level 2 athletes and level 4 athletes.
- Level 4 athletes may compete against level 3 athletes and level 5 athletes.
- Level 5 athletes may compete against level 4 athletes.

Where more than one division are combined together, the rules for the lower division will be used. For example, for Level 2 and Level 3 athletes matched together, tani-otoshi is not valid

## Licences

Athlete's competition levels will be recorded in their British Judo licences - dated and signed. Continual assessment will be performed annually to adjust levels where necessary.

## APPENDIX – INTERNATIONAL VARIATIONS

Certain rules may differ at international or European events; they are listed here for reference only.

1. In kesa-gatame and mune-gatame no part of the arm or hand is allowed around or near the neck of the opponent.
2. Tani-otoshi – Due to the disabilities of some athletes, this technique is not valid in Europe. A warning is given in the first instance and then a penalty.
3. Maki-komi actions are not permitted.
4. In Tachi-shisei kumi-kata may not pass the centre line of their opponents' spine.
5. In Tachi-shisei, dropping to the knee in the application of a rear technique is not permitted.

Coaches are strongly advised to seek clarification on the rules specific to each event in advance.