

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT

BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION (BJA)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HELD ON MONDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2025 – VIRTUAL

PRESENT:	Gerry Gualtieri, Chair	(GG)
	Rowena Birch, President	(RB)
	Neil Fletcher	(NF)
	Garth Illingworth	(GI)
	Delia Wright	(DW)
	Russell Brown	(RB)
	Shaun Davies	(SD)
	Ben Quilter	(BQ)
	Alex Slade	(ASL)
	Marc Preston	(MP)
	Nicki Tang	(NT)
	Wai Cheung	(WC)

APOLOGIES:

IN ATTENDANCE:	Andrew Scoular, Chief Executive	(AS)
	Lucy Cleary, Executive Officer	(LC)
	Kate Howey (Performance)	(KH)

No	ITEM	ACTION
78.24	WELCOME & APOLOGIES	
	Meeting commenced – 10:00am GC welcomed all attendees to the meeting and extended a special welcome to the two new Board members, Nicki Tang and Wai Cheung, as this was their first Board meeting There were no apologies, all members were in attendance	
78.25	DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS/CONFLICTS	
	No matters raised	
78.26	ANY MATTERS FOR ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	SD – advised that he would need to leave the meeting before 12:00pm. RB – Noted that she had two points to raise: 1. The Presidency role 2. The increasing number of accusations against coaches and the level of support provided to those coaches. AS • Would like to discuss BJC Scotland matters with MP and GC during the meeting • Dan Powell life membership and grade.	

78.27	MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2025	
	The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21st October 2025 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting with no changes to be made. Proposer: GI Seconder: RB	
78.28	ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA)	
	AS reviewed the Board Actions and Decisions, with the following key highlights noted: • GDPR / cyber security – Discussions have taken place with Matt O’Keefe. This remains an ongoing matter. AS to discuss further with NT • Advisory panel – ongoing, as discussed at previous Board meeting, positive progress noted. • Trust – Work ongoing with Saj Hussain. The website and documentation have been updated, reports have been issued. • BJA have now signed up to Sports Secure. Training on this is underway with the athletes, with plans to expand training to staff. There is an option for HN to access this, however at a cost. • Strategy review – AS met with Ben Jeffreys and Judith McCleary regarding the draft review of the strategy. • Ben Pollard is picking up on the end of year review which will be presented at the next board meeting to allow for a full year’s cycle on the measures so far. • AS apologised to NT following the incorrect recording of her surname on the Board decision as ‘Wang’ instead of Tang • All remaining actions have been completed and closed. Actions: • AS to discuss with NT the GDPR / cyber security. • LC to amend NT surname on the Board decisions.	AS LC
78.29	RISK REGISTER	
C2	All updates are highlighted in red, showing the current position – AS explained in more detail highlighting the following: The disciplinary matter is now with UKS Resolutions and will follow a five-day process. Ed Carrey has been appointed to manage the case. Subject to the outcome, there may be an opportunity to reclaim expenses if the case is successful.	

04	Negotiations were made with Tim Ellis who will be staying on a four-day basis, which is really positive. Some of Tim's responsibilities will be shared with Ben Pollard as part of a restructure, helping maintain continuity.	
D4	Membership income has really picked up and is almost back on track. November has been the best month so far. A dip is expected in December, but not as large as anticipated.	
G1	A good meeting was had with Head of Facilities and Dean of Health and fitness. The system master plan has not yet been finalised and is expected to take approximately 4-5 years before any changes could affect the Head Office. There is no immediate risk but remains something to monitor over time.	
F1	Funding has been submitted for the VI programme for an extra £200k expected in the next period. Feedback on this has been very positive, although it comes with higher targets, potentially moving from 1-2 to 2-3 medals. BJA have a strong VI programme so achieving 2-3 medals is realistic. The split of classifications has opened up other opportunities.	
78.30	Strategy	
	- NT noted that the strategy looks good overall, with measurable elements. However highlighted that it is quite difficult to measure the value of these things and could be supported by numbers and each specific tactic to be tightened up to specific targets. For example, tracking spending on tech – have we got the engagement we were expecting, and setting specific targets for the increasing female coaches rather than only the performance-based ones. - AS advises he has a meeting with the CEO'S on the 4th February and this matter is on the agenda. - GC noted that the feedback he has had since the last board meeting is with the KPI's, for example membership's need to have some clearer metrics around them and would like to have these at the next board. - AS confirmed that membership is a specific target, however, each home country will have its own target, which will contribute to the overall target, - Marc advised that he received the strategy document last week and has shared it with the Judo Scotland board to review their KPIs and tactics, currently awaiting to receive it back, and Judith will forward over to Andrew. Action – AS to update the strategy with tighter and clearer targets for the next board meeting.	AS

78.31	PERFORMANCE	
	Kate Howey joined the Teams call at 10:25am and provided an overview of developments over the past six months since she has been in place. Performance update – Dec 25 Kate outlined that her initial focus over the past 6 months was building the team, during which 40 interview were conducted. <u>Staffing</u> Key appointments included - Jean-Paul Bell – Olympic Coach - Winston Gordon – National Training Centre Coach - Two new physiotherapists - Michael – S&C Coach. This role is slightly different, as Michael is employed by the organisation while completing a PhD through the University of Wolverhampton which is relevant to the world class programme. - Grace – Lifestyle Advisor. Although Grey Matters support the psychologists that will be alternating one day per week. This allows support for the athlete rather than it being solely performance based. - Jenny Close continues as Performance Manager. - Chloe Cowan has transition into the GB Home Nations Coach from Home Nations Coach. This coaching structure has moved from having two full Home Nations coaches to six coaches contracted for 50 days. This structure was revised purely due to the demands of the job and to reduce time away from home. Making it more sustainable to have contractors and are not consumed with 180 days out the country within just 1 role. - Max Stewart and Lucy Renshall have mixed it up a bit, wanted to target younger and female coaches going forward to hopefully develop more female Performance coaches. Overall, these developments were a significant area during the past 6 months. Kate noted that while embedding new staff, but most importantly maintaining the programme, the staff and coaches have still continued with the World and European Championships, Grand Prix and Grand Slam Medals. Although Irakli Goginashvili, Junior European Champion and World medallist is not part of the central programme, he continues to travel to the major championships and is still under the guidance of the GB coaches and will be part of the new semi centralised programme. • A new APM policy has been written and signed off by UK Sport. The key change allows athletes receiving C-level funding to choose to be either centralised or non-centralised, enabling them to remain at their home clubs or training centres whilst still receiving World Class Programme support, rather than being required to relocate.	

	• All junior and senior policies have been written and signed off which was a big undertake. • 6 monthly athlete reviews have been complete, with the annual reviews completed in November. - This was done on a slightly different approach, with meetings held with just Kate and Chris Price, rather than a larger panel. This was to encourage a more confident and honest opinions from the athlete, which was received positively by the athlete. • The World Class Programme selection has been completed fairly and transparent by the BAC and UKS. • 22 athletes were taken onto the programme, along with 6 Power Athletes, with 3 athletes exiting the programme – Wesley Jamel and Reece. • Three athletes remain on the programme but do not receive APA funding from UK Sport. • Two athletes are semi centralised, staying in their club environment with personal coaches whilst working alongside Jean-Paul Bell. • Semi-centralised athletes receive the same programme benefits including medical cover and doctor support. • Para athletes receive slightly different support, but if injured, all services are provided for at the centre, where rehab would be commenced. <u>Culture</u> • A lot more collaboration has been done with Home Nations, led by Chloe, having weekly meetings to bring feedback up and down the pathway. Progress has been also made on the weight making policy. • Every club coach in the country is invited to the weekly call, allowing questions and providing transparency in the programme. • Co-option criteria is shared openly, with coaches encouraged to provide feedback. • Club and personal coaches are now sent athlete plans for feedback, helping to build stronger relationships. • Coaches attending the Paris Grand Slam will receive accreditation. • Culture Lite surveys will take place regularly with everyone involved. <u>Future gazing 2026 – what we are planning</u> • GB squad for the 2025 Championships has been formed to provide purpose and belonging. • Co-options will open twice a year (January and May) as this has increased it goes through the Home Nations collaborating with GB. • Gret Britian Squad Training (GBST) has been extended from 1 day to 2 days, following feedback that 1 day isn't enough. • A new PP programme starts 01st January in collaboration with coaches, using a point scoring systems rather than rankings. • Specialists coaching support with thanks to GC - Neil Adams will focus on technical work starting the New Year.	
--	---	--

	• VI Pathway is expanding with thanks to Mr Ginsberg for supporting the funding, which is being fully utilised. • Funding for competitions is tight; a tiered system will be used to allocate resources. • Qualifications start in June with good athletes. Confident men will be qualifying. The structure of HN is that they done fund athletes that are 20 years above Junior level, therefore looking at a transition programme to fit in the pathway, to enable these athletes to get TASS support to cover them. GC commented that seeing the progress laid out highlights the incredible amount of execution achieved in just 6 months, congratulating the team. He stated that this was the first National Championship since GC became Chair, that there were no complaints with the programme. GC added that for those who hadn't attended the event, Kate's team was present across both days, engaging and receiving positive feedback. MP queried KH if there are any full-time athletes in the non-centralised system and who will be in the Chair. KH responded that it will be a GB coach and the athletes personal coach will also attend the chair sessions to gain accreditation and build relationships. This is significant as there has been limited communication between coaches over the past six year, and collaboration is seen as the way forward. GC added that that the 2-day Championship format works well, avoiding having it over two separate weekends. Some minor feedback was given regarding medal presentations, but overall consensus is to retain the 2 day format. The venue was very successful and will be used again, though next year it could be held in Scotland. MP feedback – The venue was praised for excellent facilities and parking.	
78.32	CHAIRS UPDATE	
	GC opened by noting how busy he currently is with his day job and thanked Andrew and the team for their support while he works through matters. Key point is Neil Adams being involved which GC is excited about. Following Paul Ajala stepping down, the advertisement is included in the appendix for review. Members were asked to provide any feedback ready to proceed with it being published.	

	It was emphasised that this is a recruited, rather than elected role. It is heavily Judo focused, so will need to be filled by someone within the Judo community. AS highlighted that the role is for British Judo Club Members, rather than British Judo Members, as Home Nations have their own members. Decision – All members approved the INED advert Home Nations Updates – Reports taken as read, with key points noted: Welsh Judo Association: • The British Championships event was excellent and ran very smoothly. Thanks were given to the operations team, especially Jess. • Ben Jeffreys (BJ) has gained access to admin control and will update directly through that going forward. He has now been enrolled for three months, is settling in well, and is building strong relationships with stakeholders, including Sport Wales, Andrew and Home Nation partners. His progress has been very positive, especially coming in at a key time around the Commonwealth events. • BJ has been working with Natalie Powell and Michael Horley, who have closely supported the teams. The results have been strong, including 7 out of 8 golds, and three senior athletes achieving silver and bronze. • BJ priority now is building their strategy and looking at their priorities of 2026 this involves aligning resources across the team. • BJ is developing a plan for next year, not only focusing on performance but also where he sees their priorities need to be resourced. He has mapped out the year for the board and assigned specific items to each area based around the strategy, providing working targets. • Wales AGM is being held on the 16th December, with hopes it all runs smoothly. SD is up for re-election. hopefully that all goes okay. GC asked SD to inform him of the outcome, thanking him for his contribution and wishing him luck. AS advised, he has invited BJ to the induction day to meet the team and to attend the next board meeting being held in February. Judo England: • Recruitment for the 2026 Commonwealth Games Coaching Team is complete. Luke Preston has been reappointed as Lead Coach, with Peter Douglas and Jason Parsons as Support Coaches. Jenny Close and the team are progressing plans, with a positive outlook for England. • Meeting with are chairs to discuss the model were positive, with no opposition. Background work is being finalised to allow the	
--	---	--

	launch, particularly around the financial process. AS has taken advice on updating how finances are returned. AS needs to confirm the exact wording and ensure that instead of funds going back to clubs, they are returned to England to be shared with the areas. Action – KR and AS to finalise the wording for Judo England constitutions winding up fund allocation and send to all areas. - The England performance review is progressing well with the new coaching team in place. Jason Parsons has been leading inductions, with the main focus on engaging the English areas and planning next steps. Meetings with the areas will take place again in the New Year. The pack will be sent out in the next few days and will go live shortly after. GC noted that finance is a delicate area but necessary and does not undermine the work of the areas. He offered support and expressed interest in seeing how the coaching structure develops over the next 12 months. GC highlighted that this also supports Kate's work, praised the progress made, and acknowledged the large scale of work it involved. Northern Ireland Judo Federation: RB advised there was little change since the previous meeting. - A letter of offer was received from Sport NI, following minor tweaks required for the Performance Pathway Programme. The Performance Advisory Group, comprising of Tim Ellis, Sarah B, RB, and Mr Conor (Independent Chair for NI), have met virtually to review. All paperwork is complete and sent back to Sport NI, who are satisfied and expected to release funding. RB noted significant time spent reviewing policies, procedures, governance, strategies and updates, with Sport NI happy with the outcome. - A board member has stepped down due to ill health, and a recruitment process will be needed to appoint a replacement. - RB requested an official amendment on the previous minutes, clarifying that a post Steen Erickson referenced as being on his website was actually on his Facebook page. Action – BP to amend the statement on the minutes. Judo Scotland: - Scottish Judo has had its most successful year ever, three years ago, Judo Scotland had its funding from Sport Scotland suspended and was rated non-satisfactory by an independent body. This year, they were awarded National Governing Body of the Year for the first time. - Memberships have reached 9,215, a 7.6% increase and the highest ever recorded.	AS KR BP
--	---	---

	• The target is to exceed 10,000, which is expected to be achieved through the 3-Step Safe programme. • Gradings have reached 14,584 up to November, a 6.8% increase. • The 3-Step Safe programme, the strongest document in recent years, will begin in January. It provides tools to address behaviour that does not align with Judo values. The process has already started over the past nine months with Right Wye and club. From March, clubs that do not work in line with the expected standards will be prevented from affiliating. • The Scottish National Close Championship was a success, with 25 judoka from 46 clubs participating. Thanks were given to the BJA for stepping in to cover the Wellbeing Protection Officer role. • At the Sport Awards, two females won the year's biggest awards: Lois Goldie won the Youngest Sportswoman of the Year and Lorretta Doyle Inspiration Sports winner. • High Performance is back in Judo Scotland for the first time in years. Alberto Borin, Takafumi Kitahara and Gary Edwards have been employed to support the programme. The programme is running exceptionally well with some changes making it centralised, while it being specific of 60%. • 14 places have qualified for the Commonwealth Games. 12 places are available however will discuss with the authorities to hopefully secure a place for the extra 2. • Thanks were given to Winston Gordon and expressed Judo Scotland's thanks for the continued collaboration with the BJA. • A £34k deficit was forecasted due to various factors but is now expected to break even. • Scottish open is on the 17th – 18th January. Members attending to contact Judith, who will assist with accommodation where possible. Break 11:32 Meeting commenced 11:40	
78.33	INTERNATIONAL REPORTS	
	GC noted that Russian and Belarusian flags were permitted at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and that there is currently no intention to boycott events. However, if an event were to be hosted in the UK, there may be some complexity arise on this point. AS added that this was discussed at the EJU, where Ukrainian athletes have accepted and are now participating, with no boycott in place. AS also noted, that discussions with UK Sport confirmed the IPC has already addressed this. The only potential issue would be on the UK Government visa restrictions for Russian athletes.	

78.34	CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE	
	Report taken as read with the key highlights: <u>Staffing</u> One outstanding matter remains relating to a coach, which is currently in the process of negotiation. <u>UKS</u> The PAG meeting has taken place, with Andy Allford appointed as Independent Chair. A small number of recommended changes were identified to the terms of reference, including the inclusion of athlete voice and independent representation. The revised terms of reference will be updated and brought back to the Board for approval. <u>Patrons Club – Appendix 1</u> The booklet was presented in Appendix 1 for approval to begin promotion. Ben Pollard is working on a log strategy for that if everyone is happy Decision – The Board approved sign-off of the Patrons Club booklet. <u>Grand Prix</u> UKS are keen for this to be progressed. A meeting to discuss this further is scheduled in for Wednesday 13th Dec, following positive discussions with Glasgow who are also very keen. The event would be slightly different combining of Olympic, Paralympic, Adaptive and Deaf Judo across four competitions. Glasgow City Council are interested in hosting this event and are already making connections in regard to this. Budget is now underway, with a go/no-go decision to be brought to the board in February before submission to Sports Events for final approval. <u>Uniformed Services</u> This is planned to take place next year, with Stephen Watson leading along with support from Ronnie. The event is expected to break even if not earn a surplus. <u>Strategy document feedback</u> NT noted a duplication, which AS investigated. It reflects repetition across two different projects, which AS will tidy up a little. The strategy is more detailed than the previous version showing more ambers and reds. If members are happy with this format AS will get it refined into more of a production base, reader-friendly format, providing a summary of the strategy discussed last week. ASI noted that adding numbers on the colours will give a key of understanding. Action – AS to refine the strategy and add numbers. <u>VAT</u> It was noted that if further action is required following identification, the matter will need to go to the Audit and Risk Committee for approval.	

<u>Membership</u> Appendix 3 (Table 1) – General membership fees to increase by 3% effective from 1st April 2026,	AS
Appendix 4 (Table 2) – Approved supplier memberships to increase from the 01st January 2026, as no increase was applied previously.	
Decision – The Board approved both increases. Notifications will now be issued.	
<u>Timeline – Appendix 4</u> An example of the digital features for the membership card was shared, with updates continuing to be implemented.	
<u>Environmental action plan – Appendix 6</u> Action plan taken as read	
Decision – Board approved sign off	
<u>Lifetime membership – Appendix 7</u>	
Additional information was provided regarding the approval of lifetime membership for Ricky Haynes and David Quinn.	
Decision: Approved by the Board.	
AS gave recommendation for Dan Powell, also receiving a lifetime membership. Dan Powell is VI athlete, Olympic silver medallist, World Champion, and European Champion. Historically, lifetime membership has been granted to World Champions, and it is recommended the same be considered for Dan. Ian Jones has been asked to review this against the grading criteria. Once the information is received, the matter will be brought back to the Board for consideration.	
Decision: Approved by the board	
Action: AS & KR to discuss Dan Powell's Dan grades	
<u>Sport Resolutions</u> ASI raised concerns about the slow progress of Sports Resolutions and asked whether there has been any outcome, including the possibility of putting the service out to tender for an alternative provider.	
AS noted, that following an official complaint regarding their operations, the UKS element of the service is not paid for by us but by UK Sport. A full review of the process is currently underway.	AS KR
11:58am - SD left the meeting	
<u>Financial update</u>	

	The budget had anticipated a £15k loss, but a small surplus is expected this year. Some work has also been outsourced. Membership levels are slightly below target but have picked up significantly and are close to projections. December is expected to see a slight dip, though figures for November have increased to approximately £74k Cash is in a good position with four months remaining in the financial year. Due to staffing changes and potential UK sport funding the draft budget is slightly delayed, but Saj is meeting tomorrow to finalise before submission to Audit and Risk and then the board. GG noted that overall finances are in a really good position, and highlighted discussions with Saj regarding investment of the profit. AS mentioned, that there is a flat available for consideration, but a proper analysis is needed before any proposal is put forward.	
78.35	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	AOB regarding Dan Powell and BJC Scotland had already been covered. <u>Rowena birch</u> The first item was to raise awareness regarding her position as President. The current term, as stated in the association rules, is five years (or such other period in any association). Her term is due to end next year, and the Board will review her position accordingly. Rowena highlighted the responsibilities of the President, which include chairing the council, reviewing and challenging the Board, and engaging with coaches and communities. She emphasized her advisory role, including sitting on panels with fighters, listening without making decisions, and contributing her experience wherever possible. Rowena shared her observations on the role of managing risk regarding safeguarding issues. She noted the difficulties in the position, as confidentiality restrictions make it challenging to know if risks are being properly managed and everyone is being held to account. There are also associated costs. She highlights that coaches and staff do not always receive the same level of support as those accused, and there is an increasing safeguarding focus in performance areas. Rowena stressed the need for a transparent and timely system, noting that current support from UKS is not always sufficient. Lawyers can provide some support for coaches, but overall, the risk affects the associations reputation, finances, and the lives of those involved. Rowena recommended applying more pressure on UKS to provide stronger support to National Governing Bodies, allowing a tight and safer	

	system. She acknowledged the complexity of the situation and the need for careful review and additional support. GC noted additional challenges when both an individual and their club are involved, making cases increasingly complex. He highlighted that while it is positive more issues are being reported, the main concern is the lengthy time frames, given the sensitivity for both defendants and claimants. GC suggested that if a centralised body cannot manage these cases efficiently, there should be resources who understand these matters and can deal with them in appropriate timeframes. AS agreed with Rowena's points and noted that not only is the time frame an issue but the support to the respondents, and the way the staff involved are interviewed. DW raised a question regarding the Board's ability to influence and control safeguarding processes, asking whether they have the ability to change the outcome of this. AS advised that if the matter goes to Sports Resolution, it is handled independently and is no longer within BJA's control. While support can be sought from UK Sport and Sport England, managing the issue alone places strain on the BJA. GG stated that the only way to reduce this is by working with sports and collectively approaching UK Sport. AS noted, that UK Sport have identified the issue, the challenge is obtaining the information from all the other NGBs WC agreed with working alongside other sports and asked whether there are any standard processes in place. AS responded that a point of contact is provided, however the challenge is when a new witness is identified the 30-day timeframe is reset, which is frustrating. This is, however, part of the agreed process between Sports Resolutions and UK Sport as they have their own KPI's. Action - AS and GC to push UK Sport and get other sports on board GG noted that he would follow up with Rowena in the new year to discuss the presidency role, noting that her description did not describe all that she does. He outlined the President's role historically and highlighted that Rowena has taken it to a new level and is highly respected within the sport for her achievements. Action – GG to follow up with RB on the President Role ASI raised a query regarding the risk register scoring, AS advised that a heat map has been used previously for a highest-to-lowest scoring format.	AS GG GG
--	---	----------------------------

	GG advised that he and Andrew may have older KPI templates that could be used. Action – GG and AS to look out KPI template for use in the new strategy document. GG closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions and expressed looking forward to working together in 2026. While the year ahead will be challenging, the organisation is entering it from a strong position. Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2026 Meeting closed 12:19pm	AS GG