

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION (BJA)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2026 – BOA OFFICES, LONDON

PRESENT:	Gerry Gualtieri, Chair	(GG)
	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	(AS)
	Lucy Cleary, Executive Officer	(LC)
	Kevin Ferguson – UKS	(KF)

No	ITEM	ACTION
78.36	WELCOME & APOLOGIES	
	Meeting commenced – 10:00am	
	GG welcomed all attendees to the meeting and extended welcome to the Nicki Tang and Wai Cheung, as this was their first Board meeting in person	
	There were no apologies, all members were in attendance	
	AS introduced KF as BJA'S UKS advisor	
	GG noted AS needs to leave early	
78.37	DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS/CONFLICTS	
	No matters raised	
78.38	ANY MATTERS FOR ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	No matters raised	
78.39	MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 2025	

	The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th December 2025 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting with no changes to be made. Proposer: GI Seconder: DW	
78.40	ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA)	
	AS reviewed the Board Actions and Decisions, with the following key highlights noted: - A meeting still needs to be arranged with NT regarding cyber security ACTION – AS to arrange a meeting with NT on cyber security – <u>Dan Powells – Dan Grades</u>: A question was raised regarding whether, in the past, when someone wins the World Championship, they are awarded a 1st or 2nd Dan grade. GG recommended promotion to 5th Dan. The board agreed with these recommendations; however AS will need to check the new IJF regulations to confirm whether this is permitted. ACTION: AS to check the new IJF regulations to ensure BJA can give Dan Powell 5th Dan due to his achievements - BP noted that awarding two Dan grades would not be consistent, as he has not progressed by two grades since achieving his titles. ACTION: AS to check BQ Dan Grades <u>IJF Regulations Update</u>: GG advised that he has spoken to Lisa from IJF regarding the new regulations. Lisa confirmed that a meeting is being held and that a notification will be circulated afterwards to provide further clarification AS provided a brief explanation to Board members outlining that the IJF has introduced new regulations requiring individuals to be IJF-qualified in order to obtain their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Dan grades, and that this qualification process will involve a cost. The key question raised was whether everyone must comply with the IJF regulations immediately, or whether the existing national grading standard will remain acceptable until individuals wish to progress to the next Dan level. It was noted that consideration needs to be given to whether all fighters and coaches will be required to hold an IJF Dan grade.	AS AS AS

	AS confirmed that a letter has been sent to the IJF seeking clarification on whether current national grading standards will be accepted, or whether additional requirements will need to be implemented. • <u>President role</u>: The role of President is currently being reviewed in the M&R in relation to the responsibilities of the role and the associated election process. ACTION - GG to revert back to the board with a recommendation on the President role	GG
78.41	RISK REGISTER	
	AS noted, that all updates within the report are highlighted in red to reflect the current position. AS explained in more detail highlighting the following: • Meeting with the BJC - A meeting has taken place with BJC. • ASL queried the position regarding the cyber-attached and security measures. AS confirmed that this is under review with NT, once a meeting has been scheduled.	
78.42	Safeguarding	

Safeguarding Update – Andy Bowly (via Teams):

Andy Bowly joined the meeting via Teams and reported on recent activities, including the weekend sessions with BQ on Saturday and adaptive coaching on Sunday. He then shared a presentation providing an update from 2025. Key highlights included:

- Team Overview:
The team is extremely busy, highly flexible, and possesses a strong skill set.
- Successes This Year:
 - Produced a comprehensive document on Safe Landings.
 - The “My Voice” initiative is growing, supporting the community effectively.
 - 475 concerns were reported for advice and support, demonstrating strong community engagement.
 - New resources have been added to support safeguarding initiatives.
- Young Persons Advisory:
The group visited Parliament, toured the building, and raised questions to Mr Newbury. This is part of an action plan to integrate aspects of safeguarding into the GCSE curriculum.
- BJA Safeguarding Course:
Enhanced at a higher level and received positive feedback; the course will be widely advertised.
- Website Feedback:
Stakeholders commended the website’s content and quality, particularly regarding respect and safeguarding resources.
- Safeguarding Meetings:
Regular safeguarding meetings have been established.
- CPS Annual Review:
Overseen by Sport England, the review achieved green in all target areas.
- UKS Council Oversight:
Five UKS council members are closely monitoring activity. The Board is aware of the need to align with this oversight for future initiatives.
- Transgender Update:
A recent ruling on the definition of “women” is being considered. Interim guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission is awaited. A meeting with a university was held, emphasizing collaborative and safe practices.
- Safe Sport Initiative:
The organisation has signed up for the initiative. A Safeguarding Day will be represented by the initiative. An annual review was produced, showing that programmes are moving in the right direction for cultural development.

	<u>Board Recognition:</u> Andy requested that the Board send a recognition email to the safeguarding team for their contributions. ACTION Board to send recognition email to the Safeguarding Team Andy's full presentation will be uploaded to Admin Control for Board review.	
78.43	UKS – Kevin Ferguson	
	UK Sport Update – KF Presentation: KF presented updates on current work and strategic developments within UK Sport (UKS). Key highlights included: <u>Support System and System Masterplan:</u> - UKS is progressing with system master planning and business reform. - Membership now includes 15 NGBs, some in implementation phases, others focusing on governance and strategy. - BJA's contributions were highlighted as particularly innovative, allowing UKS to view individual data centrally rather than through multiple databases. - The system aims to better engage sports, coaches, and athletes, providing NGBs with actionable insights. <u>Strategy and Digital Transformation:</u> - A new strategy will be presented to the Board at the end of the month. - Investment in the performance system is significant (potentially seven figures), supporting a transition to a digital platform. <u>Engagement Initiatives:</u> - Central engagement plan unit proposed, connected to BOA/BPA, to increase capability and capacity during Olympic Games. - UKS has developed three dashboards to consistently track engagement and fans across NGBs. Six-month insight reports and KPI tracking are now available.	

	- Work with athlete clubs includes creating content and engagement opportunities. Sports involved include weightlifting and ice hockey. • <u>Communication and Media:</u> - The Grit Newsletter covers current news topics; four editions released with eight more planned. Current reach is approximately 9,000 recipients and 5,000 social media followers. • <u>Major Events:</u> - UKEL set up with UKS Major Events Manager to coordinate initiatives. - UKL is supporting NGBs financially in ways UKS previously could not. - A pilot for shared public services has been initiated, starting with BJA, to test proof of concept for NGB sports. • <u>Structural Alignment:</u> - Ongoing work to align structures across UK, GB, and home nations for different sports. - Judo is noted as highly committed to collaborating with UKS. • <u>Performance Services and Innovation:</u> - Focus on building on past 15 years of success while future-proofing performance services for athletes under 10. - Emphasis on synchronized team operations, digital integration, and data-driven personalized athlete development. - Key focus areas: performance innovation and technical development. - UKSI continues to provide support, with lessons and development shared across UKS. - Investment in world-class practitioners and performance systems ongoing. - Staffing and sector models are being adapted to improve flexibility and resilience across sports. • <u>Challenges and Safeguarding the Future:</u> - Disruption due to staffing issues across sports was acknowledged. - KF emphasized the importance of current measures in safeguarding the future of performance services.	
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	KF's full presentation will be uploaded to Admin Control for Board review.	
78.44	Strategy 2026 – 32 update	
	Marc joined the meeting 10:33am AS stated, that the strategy 2022-25 has now been signed off. AS discussed, the below: KPIs are being populated and vary slightly across the different areas. The document has been shared with the Boards, and a CEO meeting took place last week. Ben Jeffrey's suggested reducing the document to a single page with flag indicators to provide a more integrated overview rather than multiple separate pages. Once all information is received, it will be consolidated into formal documentation. This will allow numbers to be aligned across the country. There was discussion around the tactical approach within each home country's strategy. Home countries are currently working on their KPIs and associated tactics, with initial work having started from a GB perspective. The style and presentation of the final document will be important. Joint targets can be collated, which is expected to take approximately one day. The next stage will be to convert the content into an infographic-style format. AS continued advising the importance to secure sign-off in April and all Board Members were in agreement on the vision, mission and objectives. Targets will be specific to each country. Once accumulated, overall numbers can be finalised. England is currently showing an increase of 6%. AS advised that once everything is brought together after the CEO's meeting, he would like to return it to the Board and work with two Board members to further refine and shape the document, ensuring engagement from the Home Nations. GG suggested setting a clear future date. It was noted that this work is important for staff action plans and appraisals and therefore needs to be concluded in April. A meeting will need to be arranged within the next few weeks, with a proposed date around 20th March. ACTION • AS to schedule a CEO'S HN's meeting • AS to schedule a Board member meeting after HN's	AS AS

78.45	BUDGET / AUDIT & RISK MEETING	
	Report taken as read, with key highlights below: • We are currently reporting a £14k surplus, compared to a projected £20k deficit, which is a positive position. • Total income is £400k lower than expected due to the European Championships. Previously, all hotel income would be received and paid out through BJA. However, we now use a company called CSE to manage transportation and accommodation, meaning these funds no longer pass through BJA. This explains the difference on the expenditure. • Strong cash position of £1.4m, which is very secure. • Deferred income stands at £332k, which is very positive and puts in a strong position for this time of year. <i>Note – Deferred income represents mainly membership fees which are released monthly. Combined with the cash in the bank, this makes BJA much stronger.</i> • Membership: currently £13k below budget, but we have picked up and anticipate being on target by year end. The slower start in the first three months was due to members signing up for two-year memberships, but since then, numbers have been above expectations. • Technical education: Figures are expected to slightly exceed target. • SE and UKS: On track with funding, all documents on profile, and the annual return has been submitted. • Storage: Our current storage unit is in contract until the end of the year. However we are looking into using university storage for equipment, which will save £25k annually and offer excellent access. • Mat hire: We are hiring our matts out to Commonwealth Games, which will generate some additional funding. <u>Draft Budget</u> • The first draft was presented at the Audit & Risk meeting, who were comfortable with this. • Each department's budget has been carefully reviewed as part of the process. • There is a meeting scheduled on Wednesday with the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. You will notice a 3% salary increase, which will be reviewed by the Remuneration Committee. • UKS contacts are confirmed for the next 4 years, and SE for one more year. We are just waiting on the grant, which is expected during the summer. • Income is showing reduced by £212k due to the absence of the European Juniors this year – which will affect the events. • The net budget has been maintained, and we are exploring new team event opportunities.	

	We have increased our membership conservatively by 3%, but we may consider pushing it to 4-5% in order to meet our target. AS advised that an extra £40k has been allocated in the budget for an additional person in content creating, we are working with a local college to support this role in creating more commercial income. An agency will be brought in to provide further support. A discussion was held around how to ensure this investment delivers a tangible return, given past challenges. AS will look into the content and commercial creator role, considering whether it should be a staff position or an apprentice-type arrangement. The idea of reassembling a commercial group with specialists was raised to ensure the right expertise is in place. ACTION: AS to investigate the content and commercial creator role DW highlighted the need to use existing channels to reach non-judo audiences and attract interest from outside the traditional fan base. GG emphasized the importance of sharing key news on social platforms and investing wisely in communication. NF noted that while there is strong interest, other coaches and clubs may need guidance on engaging new, non-judo audiences effectively. A pilot with Ray Stevens is currently underway to explore strategies that balance traditional audiences with opportunities to bring in new participants. Figures are still being reviewed including updates such as new phone contracts and anticipated positive news from UKS regarding the VI, as well as any additional commercial income. Finalisation meeting of the budget is scheduled for 2nd April, with the final sign-off by Audit & Risk on the 8th April. Break: 11:45am Meeting recommenced: 11:55am	AS
78.46	CHAIRS REPORT	
	GG gave an update on the Grand Slam event in Paris, stating it was great weekend with a very positive meeting with the French Federation. Overall, the team performed really well, securing strong wins against tough opposition, and the environment among the teams was very supportive and tightly-knit. Many federations have shown interest in our programme and athletes, reflecting well on our work. The French Federation expressed a desire to collaborate more closely with us moving forward. The team secured two	

	bronze and one silver medal, marking a strong start to the year. Overall, it was a fantastic experience, and everyone is pleased with the performance of the teams and coaches. Home Nations Updates – all reports taken as read with the key highlights below Northern Ireland Judo Federation Update: RB noted that his report remains the same as the December version, as there have been no significant changes due to ongoing operational procedure updates. They have finally received their funds from Sport NI, although these came late in the season. Some tactical adjustments have been agreed to align with the funding. Membership numbers are on target but slightly reduced in January and February. The main challenge currently is keeping up with timekeeping, though Freda has been providing support. Progress is being made. Sport NI was expected to develop a 5-year cycle in December, but the necessary forms have not yet been provided; an extension will be requested from Sport NI to accommodate this. ASL left the meeting 12:05pm JudoScotland: MP noted that there have been no significant changes since the last report. One key development is that the Scottish Government announced a £40m uplift for Sport in Scotland, it has resulted in a uplift to £14m for NGBs in sport activities. The Scottish Open was successfully held, with 485 competitors from 143 clubs across 14 countries. The event ran very smoothly, with only minor feedback regarding the venue, though its proximity to accommodation was convenient for participants. Current facility includes an office and dojo but lacks accommodation, educational facilities, and kitchen amenities. Over the past 18 months, options have been explored, including university facilities offering educational access and the potential to run a 4-year optional course, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss next steps. Approval has been given to proceed with the facility development, including a regional element allowing children to attend during the morning.	
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	MP will provide updates Scottish athletes are now fully integrated into the programme across Home Nations and Scotland, allowing greater visibility of behind-the-scenes work and making the programme more accessible. Feedback on these developments has been excellent. The academy model has commenced, offering various sessions and movements.. High performance athletes of 15 has been set in preparation for the Commonwealth Games. The 3-step safeguarding process has been implemented to address individuals breaching safety protocols while still receiving membership benefits or income without being registered members. Legal action has been initiated. Scottish Gymnastics has become involved and is seeking legal advice. Sport Scotland is engaged, and BJA are monitoring the situation and developing a forward plan. The reaction of the parties involved was as expected of involving the council, BJA, and solicitors. Affiliation with a member club was stopped after an ongoing issue for 15 months. Discussions were held to explain how Judo Scotland intends to work with the club. Other clubs may observe the benefits and seek to adopt similar practices. AS emphasized that quality control and fairness to all clubs and members is a priority, and BJA is working with Judo Scotland to ensure this is maintained. Roundtable Meeting with BJC and Home Nations Update • The roundtable meeting was very clear and hugely positive, with all parties aligned and “on the same page.” • Agreements were reached on all discussed points. A follow-up meeting is planned for the beginning of March to move matters forward. • MP will confirm and circulate the scheduled date for this follow-up meeting. • AS noted the positivity of the meeting, highlighting that discussions focused on moving forward rather than looking back, with everyone “speaking the same language.” • MP noted that a key risk for Judo Scotland is a lack of understanding of the wider landscape. • Some members may threaten to leave and join BJC if they do not agree with processes or behaviour expectations. • It was clarified during meetings that both BJC and BJA support Judo Scotland, and all organisations are aligned in their objectives.	
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	ACTION: • MP to inform Board members of when Judo Scotland and BJC have a meeting scheduled Welsh Judo Association: Ben's time has been largely taken up with the governance review, and a significant amount of work has now been completed and submitted. This establishes the baseline against which future funding will be assessed. In terms of performance, the team recently competed at Casa Blanca and is participating in Tunisia this month, with plans to attend the Spanish European Open in Valencia. The team achieved good results, securing several medals at Casa Blanca. Attention will continue to focus on tracking qualification finishes and monitoring how many athletes progress through the competitions. Judo England: GI opened by noting that Judo England has been on a positive journey over the past year, highlighting that the Commonwealth celebration went particularly well. Garth reflected on the progress, noting that while the journey has been positive, it took time to address the necessary structural and operational changes, particularly around governance and decision-making. The governance model had previously affected decision-making, with certain roles being appointed rather than elected. Moving forward, there is a need to ensure appointments are based on relevant skills. Funding had also been a point of confusion, as some believed funds belonged solely to them, when in fact they were overseen by BE and BJA. Commissions in each area were operating but not effectively coordinated, highlighting the importance of a more joined-up approach. This period was described as a transition phase. A meeting is scheduled for the 23rd to discuss remaining points and answer outstanding questions. AS added that some areas may need to be dissolved, and stressed that, as funding came from England, so need an overall look into this. Garth and AS will arrange a catch-up to create a timeline for implementation. Marc raised a question regarding the impact of the budget on Judo Scotland. It was clarified that, for world-class performance, UKS funds are ring-fenced. However, for coach development, BJA designs coaching courses which are delivered locally, and consideration is being given to how these initiatives can be resourced effectively. England has funded all British Championships, reinforcing the need to finalise the strategy first, and then determine funding allocation. It was agreed that the strategy and structure must be finalised before addressing financial implications, as this will help reduce unnecessary	MP
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	expenditure and optimise staff deployment. There is no staffing risks identified, the focus is on re-deploying and maximising output rather than reducing staff numbers. Garth confirmed that all proposals had been approved by the Board. Action: • GI and AS to arrange a catch up to create a timeline and implementation on the England review. • Decision • All board members approved England's review implementation plan	GI AS
78.33	INTERNATIONAL REPORTS	
	GG reported that the French Federation runs a club competition, and was agreed that the winner of the Ares competition will match up with the winner of the French event. The French Federation is interested in coming over, signing an agreement to work more closely, and collaborating with French schools. It was noted that this will not replace a European Cup event. The budget has been allocated for this initiative. AS noted that a request had been received from Gibraltar, which has been responded to. One club requested associated membership with the IJF on British territory. UKS and BOA advice has been sought, and from an Olympic perspective, the club is considered British. In theory, they are British, but if they wish to hold an IJF membership, there is no objection. It was agreed to continue working with the EJU and to review European services over the summer. This should have no significant impact on BJA, and would be the first European Championship involving not just military, police, and fire services but all blue-light services will take place at Walsall.	
78.34	CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE	
	Report taken as read with the key highlights: NED position was for the Judo Community. Rather than holding an election, the process has moved to a vote. There were 16 applications received; however, a few applicants were not members, so their applications will be automatically removed. The Nominations Committee meeting is scheduled for 11th February, with the Remuneration Committee meeting to follow. Discussions will focus on	

	improving recommendations regarding salaries and other structural matters. There has been strong interest from individuals within the community. It was agreed that a discussion with the Nominations Committee is required to consider whether the Rem & Com should be revised from having three elected GB positions to appointed positions within the judo community, with the requirement that appointees be members of a GB club. It was noted that changes to the membership and articles will be undertaken at the AGM. Representation from members via the council will be used to review and challenge this process. - It was noted that BQs initial term came to an end in November. BQ has kindly agreed to continue in the role; however, this continuation requires ratification by the Board. DECISION All Board members ratifies Ben Quilter's renewal on the board ASL and NF will be standing down after completing their two terms. Regarding NF, there is an option to keep someone in reserve, subject to changes to the membership and articles being passed. It is hoped these changes will be approved at the AGM, after which appointments can be made. ASL will finish his term in September, with his last Board meeting scheduled for August. Recruitment for his replacement will take place internally, as recommended by AS. DECISION All Board members agreed to proceed with internal recruitment immediately. Once all Board members are in place, a board valuation process will be undertaken to reflect the recent changes and ensure effective governance. <u>UKS, SE, BOA</u> It was noted that UKS has now offered funding, which is a positive step forward, and the annual review is awaited. BJA have challenged UKS and UKSI, with one appointed individual, James, reviewing overall VAT matters. UKS has spoken directly with the CEO, which was a positive engagement. A formal letter confirming outcomes is currently awaited. As the funds were UKS money paid out, it will be returned back in, so will not have an impact on BJA.	
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	SE – BJA have been challenging SE to gain access to the development funding pot, which BJA has not previously been able to access. A meeting was held with the SE liaison officer, which was considered a positive step forward • Applications for LA Olympic tickets are open for Judo events only. Anyone wishing to obtain tickets should coordinate with LC. Tickets are not guaranteed, and attendees are advised to consider alternative accommodation options, such as Airbnb, when planning their visit. BOA is working to secure a hotel to provide accommodation that can be accessed by all governing bodies. • AS advised that the plan for the Grand Prix has been submitted to the IJF. Glasgow has shown interest in hosting, however, once costs are fully balanced, it would be significant financial commitment. Another consideration is that the IJF typically requires a 2–3 year contract, whereas BJA can only afford a 1-year commitment. It is therefore uncertain whether the event could be financially viable • Investigating doing a veterans event. UKS funding would not be available for this event, as it does not qualify as a World Cup. Despite this, the event could potentially attract over 1,000 participants. • Plans are underway to discuss hosting the European Congress in November 2027. Ms Nicole Wood will be working with BJA to coordinate arrangements. • British Championships will be hosted at Nottingham again, which has been provisionally booked. • Judo manager – is now available for use. DECISION: • All Board members approve for the strategic review to go on the website and all platforms.	
78.35	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	There was no other business. GG closed the meeting by thanking attendees, noting it was great to see everyone, and confirmed that the next Board meeting will take place in Walsall.	

	The meeting closed at 13:10.	
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