

A RUN THROUGH OF A JUDO COMPETITION MATCH

Just to get an understanding what we're ultimately aiming at when training. This goes for the international level, all the way down to our students. For parents of our students, or others who are interested but have no idea of what's happening!

Before it happens.

There are rules as to the size of the judo kit, sometimes call a *judogi*. Length of sleeve, to wrist, the gap between arm and sleeve, cross over of jacket at chest, length of 'skirt' the bit under the belt, similar with trousers. At international level, this is checked before each tournament and frequently changes from year to year. Bear in mind top quality judo kit is now about two hundred odd pounds, and top level performers need at least two, white and blue for competition. Size of badges, patches on back showing name, country and sponsor is also defined in the rules.

At international level 3 referees, connected by intercom judge each match. One out on the contest area you can see, two sitting watching the video play back, which of course is state of the art, multiple cameras and angles etc. There are also other officials, keeping time, score, etc. all sitting at a table on the edge of the mat area out of sight, when watching YouTube etc. Area is about 8-10 metres square and is of one colour, the surrounding mats are of a different colour. Players must stay within the contest area unless avoiding an attack.

Contests are 4 minutes long for both men & women, if there is no winning score or it stands as a draw at the end of that time, "Golden Score" is started and goes on until a score is achieved or one player is disqualified, usually by tocking up 3 penalties.

There are 2 scores, that can be made either in standing work (*tachi waza*) or on the ground (*ne waza*). "Ippon" a full or terminal score, or *waza ari*, which can be looked at as half a point. Two *waza ari*-s are added to make a full Ippon thus finishing the contest.

How to score: in standing work the points are given for throwing the opponent. Ippon, fully on the back with force, control & speed. Often said in the commentary, the back patch fully on the mat. *Waza ari*, not as much or on the side. Whether the arm/elbow is in or out, changes. I think at present it's either is ok...

On the ground, it is a 10 or 20 second hold of the opponent on their back (*osae komi waza*), you in control (the loosing player can frustrate this by entwining their legs around the winning player, holding and basically stopping all movement-resulting in "ma-te" a stop, from the ref.).

Also for the adult level (16 yrs. Old and above), joint locks on the elbow or strangles for submission are available to win outright, as an Ippon.

Penalties are many; putting fingers or thumbs inside sleeves or trouser legs. Holding in a non-standard fashion for too long – that can be 2 hands on one-side of the jacket, holding the belt (down to ref's discretion as to how long *too* long is), below the belt, touching legs or trousers while standing, gripping the end of the sleeve 'wrongly'. Going out of the fighting area, pushing (almost never given) or walking. Overly passive, being negative – arms out straight making throwing difficult, running away, not really intending to throw or false attack, all get a penalty. Three of these and you're out. With gamesmanship, contests can be won or last without actually scoring any points. Some penalties result in instant disqualification; throwing on a locked arm joint, taking the supporting leg out from underneath the attacker from behind, endangering head/neck of attacker are the main ones. Punching, pulling hair (more girls), unsportsmanlike behaviour and that kind of thing will also get a penalty or disqualification depending on...

There is a set method of starting a contest. Both come out to the mid point on their side of the contest area a bow is done on entering at the beginning and leaving after the end. Then both competitors close towards the middle. The three stand roughly equidistant; the referee, and the two players. This is the positions all come back to when a break in proceedings is called by the ref.(ma-te). Breaks in play usually happen after a score,

penalty, unsuccessful ground work exchange etc. Blood injures are allowed twice, third one means a forfeit of the contest.

That's all the details. Then the two out in the middle have to navigate their way through all that, and try and win. Its a long hard fight. Judo players are considered to be among the fittest and strongest athletes out there. One thing that really separates them from others in the necessity to deal with vast amounts of lactic acid as work rates seesaw throughout the minutes spent fighting.

There are many judo channels on YouTube, the International Judo Federation now sell access to the 'Grand Tour' tournaments, Grand Prix & Grand Slams, European, world Champs. and Master's. They are held around the world. Obviously some are more fiercely contested than others; Paris, Tokyo are definitely the big ones. African and Arabian not so much.

The central Asian countries are all very strong, the Caucuses; Georgia and Azabajan are to be watched! France, is now chasing down Japan (the strongest country by a margin and has been since the beginning of time) as the second strongest country. Russia has always been a force to be reckoned with as is the Ukraine! GB have strong women, one is world number one (at time of writing this) but the men aren't so strong. The UK is in my opinion probably quite a way down the list of judo countries. Not much so, when my father was running the national training programme. But that's another story.

Well, I hope that helps you understand what is going on a little better? Email me any questions you have on this, if I've missed something or not quite explained it well enough -

Thanks,

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