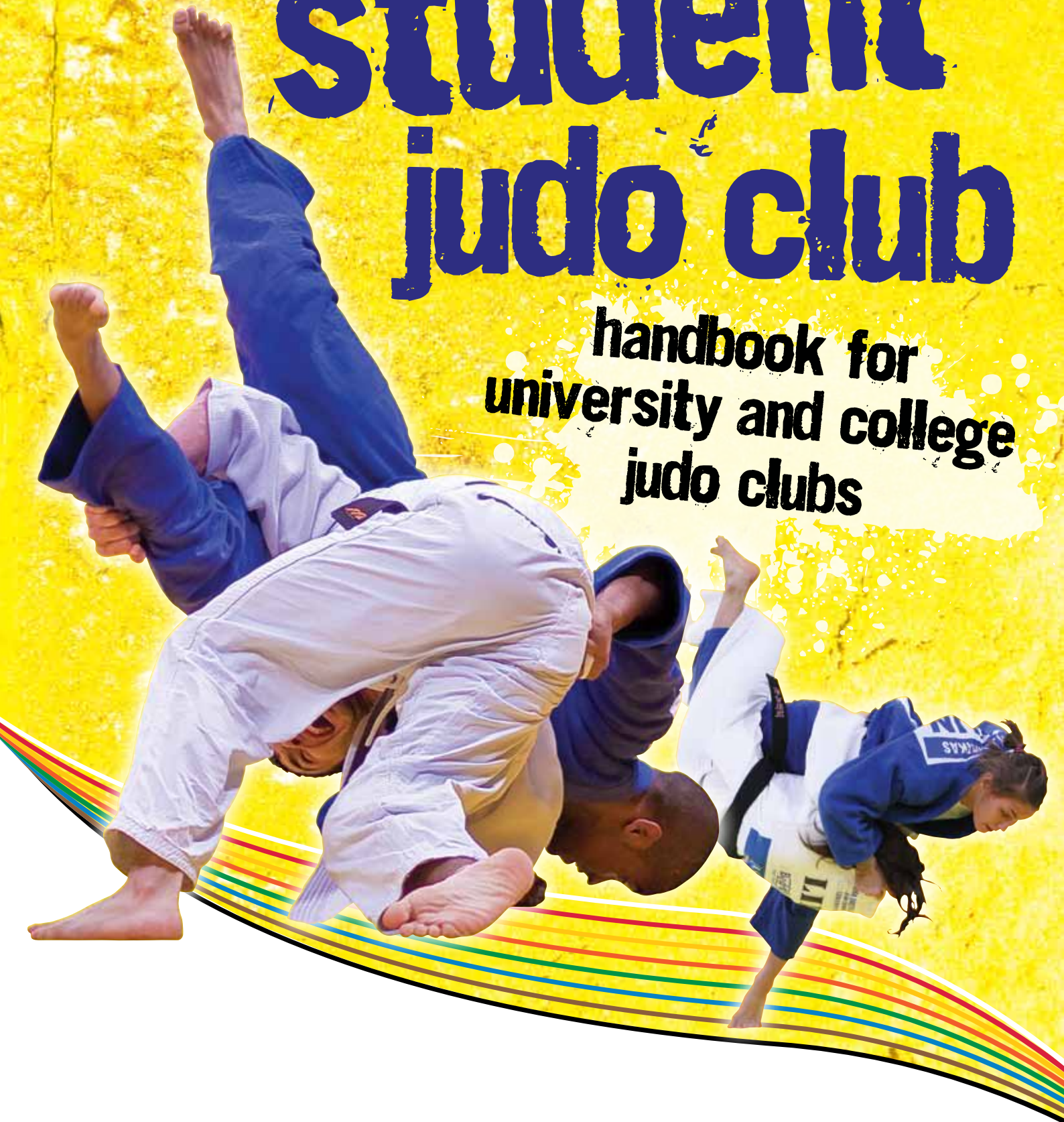


how to run a student judo club

handbook for
university and college
judo clubs



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how to run a student judo club



contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose	01
The Author	01
Structure of the Handbook	01
Why Judo?	02

CHAPTER 2: GETTING STARTED

Five Key Requirements	03
Premises	03
Mats	03
Coaching	04
Money	05
Members and Membership Fees	05
Institutional Approval and Support	06
Collecting Membership Fees	07
Who Should Belong to a Student Judo Club?	07
Recruiting Members	08
Methods of Recruiting Members	08
Website	09
Maintaining Contact	10
Organising Training Sessions	10
“No Licence, No Judo”	10
Children’s Judo	11

CHAPTER 3: THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CLUB

Structuring A Sports Club	12
Managing Finances	12
Creating a Current Account	13
Continuity	13
Health and Safety	14
Protecting the Club Against Legal Claims	14
More about Coaching	14
Who is allowed to coach?	15
Insurance Cover	15
BJA Insurance	16

CHAPTER 4: GRADINGS AND COMPETITION

Grading	17
Competition Judo	17
National and International Competitions	18
International Exchange Visits	18

CHAPTER 5: SOURCES OF HELP AND ADVICE

The British Judo Association (BJA)	19
Who Else May Be Able To Help?	20
• University Authorities	20
• Local Judo Clubs	20
• Local Authorities	20

CHAPTER 6: MORE ABOUT CLUBS

What Constitutes a Club?	21
What Sort of Club - Legal Aspects	21
What is an Unincorporated Association?	21
Legal Structure and Aims	22
Special Constitutional Requirements and Ex Officio Representation	22

how to run a student judo club



1: introduction

Purpose

This handbook has been produced to assist students who are in the position of running a judo club in a University or FE College¹ or who would like to form one in their particular institution. It uses the term “student judo club” or “SJC” as a general term to cover both Higher and Further Educational contexts.

The Author

The author has over a 50 years of involvement with University Judo having originally joined the Oxford University Club as a beginner in 1958, becoming Secretary the following year and President in 1962. In 1988 he became the Senior Member and is now Chairman of Oxford Judo which is a close federation of the Oxford City and University Clubs with a joint current membership of about 100, including over 20 Dan grades of both sexes. He has been involved in arranging exchange visits (both ways) between UK and Japanese student judo players.

He has drawn not only on his own experience but on that of a number of long established university clubs that have learned to deal with a wide range of issues and to overcome potential problems that might otherwise arise from them. The intention is to pass that experience on to others. In this way we hope that it will encourage and assist students who wish to run a successful university or college judo club to do so.

The aim is to provide a comprehensive do-it-yourself approach to running a stand-alone student judo club that (in the worst case) is in receipt of little or no administrative support from the HEI with which it is associated. It assumes very little knowledge of the principles of setting up and running such a club. Consequently, the advice it contains may not apply to all situations and contexts. For example, in your institution, there may be an athletic union to which all students automatically belong and which undertakes to provide facilities for any sport for which there is sufficient demand, possibly without additional cost to the student. In these cases, some of the financial expense and hard administrative work that is described may be separately covered, leaving students to concentrate on the immediate practical issues of recruiting members, providing coaching, running training sessions, setting performance standards and ensuring the observation of safe practice. Elsewhere this may not be the case.

Structure of the Handbook

In addition to this introduction, the handbook consists of 5 further chapters. Each is divided into a number of sections. It assumes that you, the reader, are already an experienced judo player (judoka) and are therefore familiar with the basics of the sport, its history, rules, grading structure, etiquette and so on. Even if you are not completely up to speed in these areas, it will help you to make good any deficiencies.

The second chapter is very much a practical introduction. It provides you with a plan for getting started but it also identifies a number of issues that you will have to deal with in some greater detail. But, rather than getting you too bogged down at the start, it also refers you to places where you can find out more (both in the book and elsewhere). It assumes that you have never been involved in running a judo club before, let alone setting one up. If you have, some of what it contains, but possibly not all, will already be familiar to you.

Chapter 3 assumes that the club is now in existence and that you, together with a few colleagues, are responsible for running it. You have either started from scratch, as described in chapter 2, or have inherited responsibility from a previous organising committee, who have all graduated and taken off into the wider world. For a well-established club, this will be an extreme case as there will probably be one or two more experienced people left over from the previous years from whom you can learn the ropes. But who knows, perhaps even they have something still to learn from what is written here.

Chapter 4 deals with the competitive side of judo in more detail, including grading and individual and team competitions and contests that take place at regional and national level. Within the world of university judo the most obvious example is the annual national Judo Championships organised by the British Universities and Colleges Sports organisation (BUCS). But there could also be opportunities to travel abroad, such as to the Paris International Team Championship or even to Japan.

As you read through from the initial “how to get started” to the later more detailed chapters you may find some information repeated (e.g. “More About Coaching”). This is to enable readers to use the contents page to skip straight to the part where they require specific information rather than having to read right through. This ensures that some key points made earlier in the handbook, are not overlooked. It also enables you to choose those parts that are helpful and ignore or amend others.

There are also references to numerous websites where you can find additional relevant information.

¹ These are also referred to as Institutes of Higher and Further Education (“HEI”s and “FEI”s).

how to run a student judo club



1: introduction continued

Why Judo?

Before going any further let's just think about our sport of judo and what it is that makes setting up and running a judo club, as well as taking part in the sport, so worthwhile. From a global perspective, judo is one of the most popular sports in the world. It has been suggested that, worldwide, more people are active in judo than in any other sport except Association Football. As an Olympic sport it has one of the highest levels of country participation of any. In the 2008 Olympics in Beijing it was the 4th highest, exceeded only by athletics, swimming and shooting.

Judo can be practised competitively or simply for recreation. It promotes a high level of athleticism and physical fitness coupled with emotional maturity and self-confidence. It provides opportunities for almost infinite levels of skill development which can be practised into advanced middle age. Its founder, Professor Jigoro Kano, was a remarkable man who played an important part in the development of a liberal Japanese education system in the early years of the last century. He had spent many years studying various forms of battlefield unarmed combat techniques, learned and practised by the Japanese Samurai warriors and recognised the possibility of welding some of these into a safe sport. But he also saw it as more than a sport. In Japanese the word 'do' means "path" or "way" (i.e. a way of life) imbued with values of mutual cooperation and respect for others. He intended it as an activity with benefits both for personal development of the individual practitioner and to society as a whole.

Despite its global spread, Japan remains the spiritual home of judo. Some of its practitioners become immersed in its history and spiritual associations, not just of judo itself, but also of wider Japanese culture. Some learn to speak Japanese and even to go to live there to live, study or work.

Add these characteristics to its other merits and it is easy to see that there are excellent reasons why judo should have a wide appeal to British university and college students. Judo has had a long history in the older British Universities but unlike say France (not to mention Japan) it has never been seen as anything more than a minor, sporting, past-time. Where clubs have existed at all, membership has often been low. But now that judo is becoming much more widely available in schools and, with an increasing network of clubs around the country, the opportunity exists for university and college judo also to thrive.



2: getting started

As you read through this section, you will see that there are a number of crucial decisions to be made, many involving money. From the outset you should seek the advice of the BJA's Technical and Development Teams, one of whose current priorities is to support and promote judo clubs in UK universities and colleges. More details are to be found in Chapter 5.

Five Key Requirements

There are five main requirements for starting a judo club:-

- Suitable premises
- An adequate area of judo mats
- At least one qualified coach
- A financial income that is adequate to cover costs
- A critical mass of enthusiastic members

Premises

As you know, judo is an extremely physical and energetic sport and it is practised in special clothing (judogi) so, as well as a building which provides an adequate area in which to place your mats, you will also need adequate changing, showering and toilet facilities. Equally important, since it is unlikely that you will be able to leave your mats permanently in place, you will need an out of the way space where you can leave them stacked up when you are not using them².

Many judo clubs have started life in a local community centre or church hall but these are seldom ideal and will require a rental to be paid. This is a possible last resort solution but most institutions of higher education (HEIs) have extensive sports facilities of their own. How much better to be allotted the use of a defined space at a defined time in your university gymnasium or sports hall.

Remember that you will need some free space around your mat area for the players to leave their footwear, towels, water bottles etc and perhaps for spectators to stand.

Nevertheless, you will almost certainly be in competition with other sports for space/time allocation and you will have the added problem that, unlike say basket ball or even badminton, for which set-up times are relatively quick and straightforward, you will need to schedule adequate time

- to bring your mats from wherever they are stored,
- to set them in place and then
- to lift them and re-store them again afterwards.

So you may need to develop some negotiating skills both with the Director of Sport (if that is the person in charge) and with other clubs to get what you need. You will also have to organise your members to be in the right place at the right time to get the job done in the allotted schedule.

Mats

It is important to have the right sort of mats and it is definitely not worth compromising. Indeed it could be dangerous and costly to do so (see the section on Health and Safety). Don't be tempted to use gym or wrestling mats or anything else which does not have:

- The necessary resilience to allow a 100+ Kg man to be thrown onto it without hurting himself and
- A firm surface which allows feet to slide easily across it but is not so slippery that it is hard to stand up on.
- A way of holding them firmly together so there is not the slightest gap between each mat.

In fact there are European and international standards for the specification of judo mats but they have a complex history³ that is not easily grasped. What is worth noting is that, increasingly, clubs are buying mats that have an interlocking mechanism to hold them together like a jigsaw. Various manufacturers do advertise on the internet and you may find it helpful to get a number of quotes but your simplest solution is probably to buy a set of the mats now offered by the British Judo Association. They can be contacted on 01509 631695.

² Some modern University sports halls do have a purpose built dojo where mats can be laid permanently as part of their original design but these are still relatively rare. If not it is possible to buy trolleys on which you can stack your mats so that they can be wheeled between the sports area and the place where they are kept when not in use.

³ See <http://www.judomats.co.uk/>



2: getting started continued

Judo mats are not cheap so, unless they are already available, you will be faced with an initial cost to acquire them, easily running into four figures. That is a lot of money so you may need to turn to your Athletic Union or Sports Director for help. Hopefully you can persuade them to buy the mats for you although you may have to share them with other sports such as karate or kickboxing⁴. Alternatively there are various other grants available for this purpose on which the BJA Development team will be very happy to advise you.

You are more likely to qualify for assistance if you have a clear plan and budget to justify what you need. A calculation based on the number of members you can realistically expect in your club is essential. It is dangerous to have too small a mat area for the number who wish to practise. For 10 pairs doing randori simultaneously you would need a minimum of 10m x 10m mat area. Don't be too short term in your planning. If your club takes off successfully, numbers will soon increase and your successors will bless you for having had the foresight to buy for increasing capacity. For further guidance call the British Judo Association.

To quote a recent example (to be used only as a rough guide), a newly formed local club in the Oxford area has 24 members; this is expected to rise to a maximum of 32. The club purchased from the BJA⁵ 50 mats, each 2x1 metre in dimension (i.e. 100 sq. metres in total) at a cost slightly in excess of £4000. This area is large enough to allow 7 pairs doing randori simultaneously or to provide one small contest area of 6 x 6 metres (bordered by an all-round safety margin of 2 meters). This is actually too small for a regional or national contest of any importance⁶ but, since you are not likely to be hosting one of those, it should be adequate for club purposes⁷. Although a contest area layout may not be an immediate priority for a new club of, mainly, beginners, it will be necessary as soon as contest judo is introduced into the curriculum; so it is sensible to plan for it from the outset. The cost was slightly in excess of £4000.

Coaching

Every club needs at least one experienced qualified coach. There are two primary reasons why a qualified coach is essential. The first is the obvious one - to run training sessions and to instruct members for skill development and (if they are so inclined) for competitive success. The second is to qualify your club for affiliation to the BJA.

This means that you need someone who has achieved at least 1st Kyu (brown belt) grade. Most importantly of all, your coach must have at least a Level One coaching qualification⁸ awarded by the British Judo Association or an equivalent body recognised by the BJA. Without such a qualified coach, your club will not be accepted as an affiliated club by the BJA and would deny it:

- Access to BJA insurance cover against any one of a number of untoward events (with potentially disastrous consequences). A whole later section of this handbook is devoted to various aspects of insurance cover.
- The right to participate in BJA organised team competitions (e.g. BUCS team championships)
- Access to the to various services provided by the BJA and to the large and varied community of BJA clubs which exist in the UK.

Finding the right coach is worth a lot of effort. Once again, your first port of call for advice should be the BJA. They may be able to provide you with someone, possibly one of the Regional Development Team.

Of course you, or a fellow student, may fulfil the requirements yourself or you may know someone prepared to work with your new club. If not, a promising source could be a local BJA club which, by definition, must already have at least one qualified coach.

⁴ If you do have to share with other sports you that they observe the basic discipline (which should be second nature to your own members), that footwear should be removed before stepping onto the mat. Equally important is that some form of footwear (ideally "flip-flops" - Zori in Japanese) must be worn between the changing rooms and the dojo/ sports hall where the mats are laid out. This is a matter of basic hygiene. Judo players spend quite a lot of time in newaza (groundwork practice) face down on the tatami and prefer not to contemplate the bacteria that may have been transferred to it on the soles of the feet of others less disciplined themselves in matters of hygiene. My experience is that karate players, who should know better, are often less than punctilious, while kickboxers and the like require continuous and quite forceful education in this matter.

⁵ See section on the BJA

⁶ See section on contest rules

⁷ The 6x6 contest area should include at least 1 meter wide outer square of mats of a different colour indicating the "danger zone". Originally the main mat area used to be green with the danger zone border coloured red but new regulations for national and international competitions now prescribe blue (for main and safety areas) and yellow for "danger area". So starting from scratch it is sensible to adopt these colours.

⁸ This really is the minimum grade and experience that would allow you to run your club. For competitive coaching a more experienced higher level, Dan grade, coach is desirable.



2: getting started continued

Wherever possible you should look for someone who is prepared to help you on a voluntary basis for which they might reasonably expect to be reimbursed for travelling expenses. You might also consider offering a small annual honorarium⁹.

There are people who make a living as professional judo but they do come expensive. Any coach who makes his living out of teaching judo is likely to charge a “rate for the job” which will prove quite expensive over the course of a year. Consider inviting such a person to give an occasional “master class” but you are unlikely to be able to afford them on an on-going basis. You should also ensure that their experience is not limited to teaching children which is not what you require in University.

Money

Whatever happens, it looks as though you are going to need money to set up and run your club. Hopefully your mats will be provided for you or you will qualify for a grant from the BJA or elsewhere to buy them. If not, perhaps you could borrow or purchase an old set of mats from an established club (but if you do make sure they are fit for purpose; never compromise on safety).

But you will also need a small but regular source of finance for additional expenses (probably including coaching expenses) and you will also need a system for managing these finances. That means setting up a bank account (easier said than done!) and appointing someone to look after the money (i.e. a club treasurer).

There is quite a major section on finance and related issues in the next chapter which you will certainly need to look at in some detail. First, we will just look at what needs to be done to raise enough funds to get started.

Members and Membership Fees

The obvious source is members’ subscriptions. No judo club can thrive without the support of a critical mass of members prepared to turn out on a regular basis for training sessions, gradings, competitions and other events that the Committee may wish to organise, including social events. This critical mass is also essential to generate an adequate level of subscription income. How you might go about achieving this is the subject of further discussion in chapter 3.

So you have a classic chicken and egg situation. You need members to raise some funds and you need the funds to get things going to attract more members. Fortunately, once you have your premises and some mats (maybe not the full 100 sq metres described above) you can start putting out publicity, run some taster sessions and hopefully borrow a coach to run proper training sessions.

In setting the charge levied on members, the first consideration is the level of finance required to make the club viable on a long term basis, of which the largest single item, next to acquiring the necessary mat area, will probably be payments to external coaches. There is also the annual subscription for affiliation to the BJA (currently £55.00). You may also wish to build up at least a small reserve fund for future needs such as additional equipment (e.g. crash mats), entry fees for competitions such as the BUCS annual championships. Then there are the associated accommodation and travel expenses around the UK and even overseas and, perhaps eventually, assistance to your more talented members to compete internationally or to visit Japan.

That raises the question of how much you should charge your members. By now you will probably have set up a small committee of like enthusiasts. The level of subscriptions and the means of collecting them will be one of the first key decisions for the Committee.

Obviously it is also important to consider what is affordable by students, especially beginners and those less committed students for whom judo is just one option among several possible commitments. This means thinking also about what the “competition” such as other sports clubs, especially other martial arts clubs, charge within the institution. You don’t want to drive recruits new to judo into the arms of karate or kick-boxing by charging too much.

⁹ An honorarium is defined as “a voluntary payment for professional services rendered without the usual fee” (Concise Oxford Dictionary). It could be paid in one block amount or perhaps half-yearly or quarterly and the amount should be at the club’s discretion and within the bounds of what you can afford. However it is paid, there should be a clear understanding, agreed in writing, that the recipient takes full responsibility for declaring it to the tax authorities. Otherwise, should the recipient (perish the thought) fail to do so, the club might be held liable for supporting the black economy.



2: getting started continued

A good starting point is the amount other existing judo clubs charge. A recent survey of existing student judo clubs suggests an annual level of charge (however collected) that varies between £15¹⁰ and £75.00 per annum in total with the average at about £65.00. Even at the higher end this represents extremely good value compared with most private or community judo clubs especially when several sessions per week are on offer. The top end is for a few clubs that only receive modest subsidy from their institution, and that offer several sessions a week, perhaps even extending into vacations (for post-graduates and university staff).

Another consideration is the amount of judo that members get for their money. The average number of sessions per week in term time seems to be about 2.5, ranging from one to six. At the top end, sessions tend to be “streamed”, with a session for beginners and low grades on one evening, a more advanced technical instruction on another and a third for full-blooded club randori session. For the highest graded club members, you may want to organise a regular visit to a regional centre of excellence on yet another evening. This will probably require the payment of additional mat fees but perhaps you may be able to negotiate a discount for your members¹¹.

Other than student judo clubs, the typical charging structure for a community judo club is based on attendance. This is known as a mat fee, typically £4-5 per session for seniors, which is usually charged on top of an annual membership fee. So for someone training hard (say three sessions a week) the cost could be as much as £200 per annum or even more. Compared with this membership of a student club is a pretty good deal.

Institutional Approval and Support

In addition to the five key requirements already described, for a student judo club, there is one further requirement. This is the approval and support of whatever authority exists within your Institute of Higher Education to oversee and organise sporting activities. Without this you are unlikely to find the premises you need or acquire a capital grant or loan to acquire the mats. Equally important, without approval, you may not even be able to claim to represent the Institution and to compete against other student judo clubs in competitions such as the BUCS National Championships. There will also be rules to comply with, notably on health and safety issues.

But that is not all, for even once the club is established there will be other issues for which you will need the constant help and support of the Director of Sport and his staff. Sometimes you may need to arrange a special session outside the normally agreed schedule (perhaps a visit from another university club or high graded visitor to run a special master class). Sometimes, with the best will in the world, “border disputes” arise with other clubs whose usage of space may conflict with your own. There are those who cannot understand why they cannot run onto your mats wearing trainers to retrieve their volley ball or borrow them without permission for a taekwon do championship. And they in turn may be, not unreasonably, aggrieved when you are a few minutes late in removing your mats after a session so they can put up their badminton nets. These are all real situations which the author has experienced.

Tactful ways of resolving these situations are part of the role of the sports authorities and it is helpful that they understand and are sympathetic to your club’s needs without losing objectivity.

So once you have conceived the idea of starting a judo club, the first thing is to persuade the top person in your sports authority organisation of what a unique and valuable sport judo is. In addition why its need for a modest initial financial investment is offset by the moral and educational, as well as sporting, benefits of its unique code of practice based on traditional Japanese values.

Whatever the title, (Director of Sport, Head of Physical Education, Athletics Union President etc.) these are the people you need to persuade that your plan is both sound and worthwhile. They will wish to ensure that the club is properly set up with a constitution and elected officers (chapter 5) and insist that you understand the critical importance of observing health and safety requirements and securing adequate insurance cover for the club, its members and whoever is responsible for coaching.

¹⁰ The lowest fee quoted here is for a university where most of the costs are subsidised by the Students Union, which means that the real cost to each member is partly hidden in the union sub.

¹¹ For a new startup club this sort of schedule would be ambitious and perhaps two sessions per week would be the number to aim for.



2: getting started continued

Collecting Membership Fees

The means of collecting these membership fees varies from club to club. Some clubs have a relatively small annual membership fee (say £15.00) supplemented by a termly fee of say £20.00. Others charge a termly fee payable at the beginning of each term. Following the practice of many private membership or community clubs, some student clubs charge a mat fee for each occasion a member turns up for a practice. All of these approaches suffer from a practical defect - namely that they require someone, presumably the treasurer, to collect cheques or cash from members and, especially in clubs with a large membership, it is easy for people to get overlooked.

It can get even more complicated if there is a differential charging structure (i.e. for associate members). Charging session mat fees is the most cumbersome system. It means that students have to bring cash or a cheque book with them and some have a convenient habit of consistently forgetting! Also the treasurer may not be present at every session, and coaches are typically reluctant to get involved with such matters. The more often this happens the more likely it is that the club will be denied income that justly belongs to it.

One way of dealing with this is by requiring new members to sign a form authorising their bank to make a monthly standing order payment into the club's account. The monthly payment is calculated to equate, over twelve months, to the same as would be charged for three terms but it also allows them to practice in the vacation (assuming classes are available). Cancelling this arrangement requires an action on the part of individual members to notify their bank, at the same time informing the club.

A particular advantage of this system is that it allows the treasurer immediately to see from the monthly bank statement who is a paid-up member and who isn't paying by checking the names against the class attendance register¹². A vigilant treasurer or membership secretary should notice pretty quickly, from the monthly itemised bank statement, if the member is no longer paying a monthly contribution thereby cancelling the rights of membership.

Who Should Belong to a Student Judo Club?

The immediate answer to this question is pretty obvious – members of the Institution, both students and staff. Needless to say this includes both men and women. But there may be additional candidates.

If there is no other judo club in the locality and provided the regulations of the HEI allow, it is often possible to accept a proportion of members who are not associated with the institution. This can be beneficial in a number of ways; notably by increasing the mix of more experienced judo players for club members to train with as well as increasing membership subscription income. It may also provide a source of qualified volunteer coaches.

However, it is important that the non-university members do not predominate and effectively take over. A student judo club should be for, and run by, students. If the club is enjoying the use of the university's facilities (e.g. space within a sports hall) or receiving an annual grant from the sports budget, the authorities might reasonably object to its financial support being used to subsidise the membership subscriptions of the wider community. It is probably best to place an upper limit on the number of "associate members" and probably to charge them a higher subscription.

On the other hand, where the capacity exists, many Directors of Sport are keen to open their facilities to the wider community as a way of responding to the increasing pressure from the Government for higher educational institutions to engage more with their local communities. One university judo club has responded to this by assisting its former "associate members" to form a, separate but federated, community club which now shares the use of the university club's premises, facilities and coaching resources. For this the community club pays the university club a block fee which in turn reduces its financial dependence on the university administration. Everyone benefits. Both clubs have grown both in membership and in the quality of their judo as a result.

¹² It is important to keep a register of attendees at each training session, not only for the reason given above but also in case of subsequent disputes about injuries for insurance purposes. Sometimes claims can be lodged long after the event and the register will establish who was present at the session and which coach was in charge.



2: getting started continued

Recruiting Members

Judo is definitely not an activity to be pursued on a “once in a while when I feel like it basis”. To get real satisfaction from the sport requires regular practice in order to make progress and also to maintain a reasonable level of fitness. As every student knows there are many demands on their time and many potential distractions from the regular hard physical training which judo entails. So members need to make a conscious decision to devote some of their precious time to judo and as a consequence to give up something else.

This means that real and continuous effort has to be put into recruiting student members at least until the club is really well known. In general, a student community is likely to provide four categories of new member:

- Freshers who are “up and coming stars” such as junior internationals; members of one of the national training squads and others, already highly graded, with real competition experience at school or local club level; every club prays that a few of these will arrive each year.
- Newly-arrived post-graduates, not quite in the first category, but who have been prominent members of the judo club at their previous institution; perhaps black belts with a BJA Instructors Award (see below). They are as valuable as the up-and coming stars.
- Those who have done a bit of judo at school or local club but gave it up and now want to start again¹³.
- Finally there are those who have never done judo before but fancy they might give it a try. These are important. A healthy club pays as much attention to its junior and recreational members as to its stars. Judo offers something for everyone if they are prepared to accept the challenge. If they are good at other sports they may have real potential and 12 months from starting they often comprise the main core of the club, moving up through the grades and successfully competing in Kyu grade competitions. A year after that they may be building up points for their Dan grade or even better.

The first two categories may well take the initiative in contacting the club via its website (but don't take them for granted; they are likely to be under a lot of academic pressure especially when they first arrive) and may feel they want a change from judo. They will need to be persuaded that the judo club is every bit as well-managed and as competitively successful as their

“home” club and offers scope for their own personal development. The quality of the coaching arrangement will be an important consideration for them. Failure to present the right image could result in losing them.

Categories 3 and 4 are most likely to be contacted at the start of each academic year via the Freshers Fair and subsequently via the website or by word-of-mouth. In addition the BJA's Facebook project, briefly described in chapter 5, is designed to be of assistance to clubs with these two categories of potential recruit.

Methods of Recruiting Members

The Freshers Fair: This needs little explanation. Every institution seems to have one although the name (and spelling) can vary. They are clearly an extremely important way for the club to announce its existence to Freshers who are likely to vary in their knowledge and experience of judo. The judo club stand must have a professional presence at the event that distinguishes it from all the other clubs on show and attracts the attention of casual passers-by as well as those who are actively searching it out. It needs to be supported with good visual effects such as video, posters and literature (the BJA can provide some really valuable help here) and manned by club enthusiasts willing to talk to anyone who shows an interest.

The Freshers Fair stand should certainly aim to catch the “passing traffic” recognising that there will be many who declare an initial interest in many more activities than their available time will accommodate and who end up rejecting most. But if you can create sufficient interest for them to come along to a dedicated “taster session” leading into a series of beginners' classes you may get them hooked.

Taster Sessions: The way these sessions are organised will be crucial. A well-informed introduction with demos is likely to be an enormous help in creating interest. For those with a vague interest in the martial arts in general, judo should have a particular appeal to those who like to compete. Most of the others aren't competitive and none, with the exception of taekwondo, is an Olympic sport. Others may be more into the esoteric or self-defence aspects of the martial arts. Don't forget that judo can have something to offer here too. But don't play down the demanding nature of the training; new recruits should be under no illusions about that.

¹³ Many children take up judo enthusiastically but, in their mid-teens, tend to drop out as other interests, not to mention the pressure of exams, begin to occupy their attention. Many of them are fairly easily persuaded to take up the sport again when they enter higher education and can become some of your most valued members. There are also those who have done some form of jiu-jitsu or other related martial art and who are interested in switching to judo. Don't discourage them but beware. For example, those who have done some forms of jiu-jitsu in particular can be brilliant at ground work but the rules are different and they have a tendency to attempt things on the mat that are banned in judo and that should be stamped out immediately.



2: getting started continued

Beginners Courses: Beginners and rejoiners will quite rightly expect there to be a properly organised beginners/returners class starting as soon as possible and running at least for the whole of the first academic term, if not longer.

Assuming you have a number of complete beginners and “rejoiners” in your new intake (i.e. at the beginning of the autumn term/semester) you should allocate at least one and a half hours per week to running a course for this group.

At least 15 minutes of this time will be taken up in a thorough warm-up session before instruction and at least 5 minutes in cooling-down at the end of training. This leaves little more than an hour for formal technical instruction for this group.

The first point is to ensure is that they have mastered the art of break falling and also observe the etiquette of bowing in various situations - from the point of entering the dojo (if there is one) or stepping onto the tatami (if there isn't), a kneeling bow (zareai) with the coach at the start of the session and another standing bow to the mat at the end of the session.

The target should be for them to achieve orange belt (4th Kyu) in nine or ten weekly sessions leading up to Xmas. This means that course members have to satisfy the grading examiner that they can adequately demonstrate the prescribed techniques in the syllabus up to that level; they must also be familiar with the Japanese names of these techniques and with the basic terminology used in competition (although there is no longer a competitive element to grading at this level). Your coach will have clear ideas about how this should be achieved and they may add their own techniques outside the syllabus as well as in the way they teach these skills but there is an underlying common core of coaching methodology that they should have been trained to follow.

If you do not have enough novices to justify a dedicated beginner's course of this sort then you will need to improvise. Probably the coach will have to organise one-to-one instruction for anyone who does come along. This will, in any case, be necessary for the late joiners, a few of whom invariably turn up throughout the year. It is essential to ensure that this sort of instruction is done as thoroughly as if in a formal class. Again, proper attention must be paid to break-falling and other safety considerations as well as to good throwing and groundwork technique. However a properly qualified coach will do this automatically.

A few more experienced club members should always be invited to help out with instructing beginners, for example in breakfalling and then in some basic techniques once they have been demonstrated by the coach (and always under his or her watchful eye). As they gain experience (and once their own grades are high enough – say brown belt) these teaching assistants should be encouraged to acquire an Instructors Certificate which would allow them to run the session themselves.

Website

As well as Freshers Fairs and beginners courses, the club will obviously need to have a properly designed website and someone to manage it and keep it up to date. This should not be too much of a problem as many students these days are knowledgeable in all aspects of IT and amazingly skilled in website design.

It goes without saying that this should have lots of visuals, perhaps video material; in addition to what the BJA can provide, there is plenty of this available on YouTube and you may wish to create some of your own.

However the most important thing is that it should answer these key questions:-

- What is judo? What are its unique features? (perhaps the section “Why judo?” in the introduction to this booklet will be of some help here).
- Who do I contact to find out more? (provide an e-mail address)
- How do I join? (it may be helpful to have application forms downloadable from the website)
- How much will it cost me? (this should cover both club membership and also BJA membership)
- When, what time, how often and where are training sessions held?
- Does the club cater for different levels of experience?
- Who is/are responsible for coaching?



2: getting started continued

This is the absolute minimum level of information you should provide. Your own Institution may require you to provide some or all of the following:

- Club Constitution
- Health and safety code of practice
- Risk assessment¹⁴

You could also include a newsletter covering such things as recent achievements by members in gradings and competitions and social events.

Maintaining Contact

All universities and colleges these days have pretty sophisticated internal e-mail systems which makes maintaining contact with members (and potential members) simple compared with the days before such systems existed. Add to that mobile phones and there should be no reason why you should not be able to contact members virtually instantaneously. Assuming the club has signed up for BJA membership, it will be able to participate in a new project initiated by Sport England Facebook project in which the BJA is participating.

Organising Training Sessions

The actual content of the session should be controlled by the coach. Ideally training sessions should be organised at regular set times throughout the week and advertised as such on the website. The number, timing and duration will depend very much on local circumstances, not least the availability of the premises you have managed to arrange, but we suggest that you should aim to hold a minimum of two two-hour sessions per week. It is difficult to achieve real progress with anything less. At least one university club we know of runs five sessions a week during term and senior club members also visit a strong local club where they can be sure of very stiff practice on one further day (six practices a week in all).

As most clubs do not have their own dojos with permanently laid mats, it is essential to utilise the available time as efficiently as possible. This means getting the mats down quickly from wherever they are stacked when not in use ready to start at the earliest possible moment. It is essential therefore to have a rule that everyone arrives early enough to be changed and ready to

put the mats down as soon as the space becomes available. It is all too easy to allow people to turn up a few minutes late on the assumption that someone else will have done the job. Soon everyone will have learnt to play the same game. The coaches then find themselves left with a task which should not be their job (especially if there is only one of them). The result is some very irritated coaches and with anything up to 25% of the theoretically available training time lost, which is both frustrating and wasteful of a scarce resource.

Weekly mail-outs: It is useful to keep members informed about what is going on with “weekly mail-outs”. Apart from anything else, it helps to get them to turn up regularly and, if you are preparing for a match or competition, you may be organising special running or fitness sessions¹⁵ as well. You can also use the mail-outs to announce special sessions with visiting coaches, social events, club dinners and so on.

If you are lucky enough to have several qualified coaches to share the load, a useful idea is for the club captain or senior coach to circulate a weekly roster by e-mail perhaps including an indication of the technical training to be covered in each session. In this way you can ensure that there is no overlap or repetition. It also encourages the coaches to prepare properly in advance.

“No Licence, No Judo”

The topic of insurance is covered in some detail in the next chapter. However it is worth drawing your attention here to the BJA’s maxim “No licence, no judo”. Basically this means that it is not worth taking the risk of allowing people into your training sessions who do not have adequate insurance cover. It should be a fundamental club policy that all members should have such cover and the simplest way of achieving this is by being a BJA member. The risk sometimes arises from visitors (especially foreign visitors) who claim to have such insurance but which turns out not to be deemed valid. Always check. The BJA does allow a “period of grace” of four visits where it will extend cover to the club should one of these individuals either receive an injury or inflict injury on others. But the safest policy is to insist that they join the BJA after the first visit.

The period of grace also applies to novices. You should make it a condition of joining your beginners’ class that they join the BJA no later than the fifth session of their attendance.

¹⁴ Whether or not the code of practice and risk assessment are published on the website, it is essential to produce them and review them annually; so it is not a bad idea to publish them anyway.

¹⁵ If you organise fitness sessions make sure that someone qualified is in charge. When organised “off-site” (e.g. in the local gym, using weights etc.) a BJA coaching qualification may not provide sufficient insurance cover in the case of injury.



2: getting started continued

Children's Judo

Once the existence of the club becomes known, it is possible that enquiries will be made about whether children's classes are available, to which the answer will almost certainly be "no". There are several good reasons for this. Even if its constitution does not prevent it, this would divert the club from its primary purpose. There is also the ever-present concern for child protection and the responsibilities and requirements placed on the officers and coaches of a sports club for the welfare of its junior members.

Another question that sometimes arises is whether older children of academic or administrative staff members who have trained regularly as juniors and reached a high junior grade¹⁶ can attend regular senior sessions. This might not be out of the question; it is quite possible for such juniors to be more experienced and skilful than some of the students. However, they are still minors, so a special understanding must be reached that the parent would be both present and responsible for the child at all times before, during and after the training.

In general, no student judo club will be keen to accept junior members (other than under the special circumstances described above), as a major priority, it may be invited to participate in "schools outreach sessions" organised in conjunction with the Local Education Authority. This could be a source of extra finance as well as a way of promoting judo in the wider community, which all clubs are encouraged to do. However, the following issues need to be considered:-

- Does the club have the capacity (i.e. free time slots) without reducing opportunities for its senior members?
- Do the club's coaches have the necessary qualifications (in particular have they passed a recent Criminal Records Bureau check?); as well as the skills necessary for coaching children and maintaining discipline?

Other aspects of running a club with junior members are covered in the BJA's Safeguarding courses (see BJA website).

¹⁶ Juniors are defined by the BJA as less than 16 years old but there plenty of 15- 16 year olds big enough and skilful enough (some with black belts) to hold their own in a senior club.



3: the administration of the club

The previous chapter set out an initial set of requirements for founding a judo club. However, there is rather more than has been discussed so far to actually running a judo; or any other sort of sports club, that we need to consider.

Structuring A Sports Club

As defined in terms of their legal structure, there are potentially four possible types of sports club (see chapter 5) but really only one which is suitable for a student sports club. This is known as an unincorporated association for which we can again identify a set of basic requirements to do with how the club is managed. It needs to have:-

- a statement of aims and objectives
- a statement of the basic rules by which the club will be governed in order to achieve its aims.
- a committee consisting of various officers (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are the key ones) who will be responsible for operating the constitution.

Once again we have an apparent chicken and egg situation because in order to create a constitution we need a competent (i.e. formally appointed) committee to discuss and agree it whereas, in theory, we first need a constitution to define the rules for setting up a competent committee. What happens in practice, of course, is that a group of enthusiasts come together, appoint themselves as the committee, decide on who will do what and then agree a basic constitution which probably then evolves over time.

There are likely to be at least three roles for student officers, of whom one has to be the "first among equals" who chairs the committee meetings. In this booklet, this individual is referred to as the President¹⁷ and is assumed to have a separate role from that of Captain, although initially they may be the same person. However many established student clubs now have both a captain and a president with the former taking responsibility for organising training sessions and, in collaboration with the coach, selecting team members and acting as leader and motivator of the team. There may also be a women's team captain. The president takes responsibility for the overall management of the club including chairing meetings, appointing the coach(es), running all meetings including the AGM and

having a concern for its longer-term development. It is not unusual for the president to have been a former captain¹⁸.

The other two key roles are those of club secretary, who helps the president manage the committee, preparing and circulating agenda and taking minutes (plus other administrative tasks such as signing up and keeping a register of members), and the club treasurer.

The three key issues the treasurer will be concerned with will be:

- ensuring the club has adequate finances to support its day to day operations and longer term objective.
- making sure that that the money it does have is managed sensibly, and not squandered. This will mean keeping a record of income and outgoings, monitoring monthly bank account statements and ensuring that the club does not go into negative balance¹⁹.
- advising the club Chairman/President/Captain and committee on an annual budget. (This may have to be approved by the sports authority and also form part of any submission for any grant support, whether of an annual or one-off nature.

Managing Finances

A very important issue to address in the early stages is for the club to establish its own bank account into which all its income, and from which all its expenses, will be paid. Advice on the setting up of a club bank account can be found in the next chapter. The point to grasp is that banks are not normally willing to allow the new club an account without seeing a written constitution and minutes of a meeting, signed by the chairman agreeing that the bank in question be asked to set up an account.

Once established, with responsibility firmly assigned to a club treasurer, the club's revenues and expenses can be properly recorded and accounted for. Though there should be no need for an external audit of its accounts, the treasurer should be required to provide a financial report to the members at least once a year. In the case of an unincorporated association, any surplus of revenues over expenditures must be retained and ploughed back into the club's future activities. This should be clearly stated in the constitution.

¹⁷ The use of this terminology is slightly confused by the fact that the BJA also has a requirement for its member clubs to adopt a basic form of constitution which includes the need for a designated Chairman who would normally be expected to continue in that role over a number of years. These topics are discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

¹⁸ Moving from captain to president seems a natural progression unless both graduate together.

¹⁹ The club will in all probability have what most UK banks term a 'treasurer's account'. These are specifically designed for small clubs and similar institutions. The bank will provide the club treasurer with monthly reports and even pay a (very) small rate of interest on the positive balance. However there is no overdraft facility on offer and if the account were to go negative the treasurer would be held personally accountable and soon start receiving some increasingly hostile letters from the bank.



3: the administration of the club continued

You should be aware that any surplus of income over expenditure (provided the income is derived from the monies provided solely by its members; i.e. from subscriptions) is non-taxable. But any activity which generates revenues from the general public (e.g. from a public demonstration for which an entry fee is charged) is, after deduction of corresponding costs, theoretically liable to taxation by HM Customs and Revenue, which is another reason why accurate records should be kept. It is unlikely that the HMCR would trouble themselves with such a small matter but it is the treasurer's responsibility to be aware of such eventualities and manage the finances accordingly.

This is clearly a key issue at all stages in the club's life. So the appointment of a competent club treasurer is crucial.

Creating a Current Account

There is a little bit more to this than setting up your own personal account. As already mentioned, for even the simplest form of association, in order to create a treasurer's account, the bank will probably ask to see

- a copy of the club's constitution and
- a copy of the minutes at which the setting up of the account was agreed, signed by the person who chaired the meeting.

Having gained the bank's agreement to provide this basic banking service, you will need to establish one or more authorised cheque signatories. This requires a decision about who these should be and how many signatures are required on each cheque. The most obvious candidates are the treasurer (the job would be pretty meaningless otherwise) and the club president or senior member (see section) or some other member. The bank will then set up a bank account mandate with the name, address, club position and a copy of each signature. This will have to be supported by proof of identity for each signatory and be signed by whoever chaired the meeting at which these decisions were made. This procedure will have to be repeated each time one or more of the signatories is replaced which, because of the regular turnover of student committee members will probably be annually²⁰.

Online internet banking facilities are now usually available with treasurer's accounts. Once set-up (easier said than done) these do make life simpler and minimise the use of the cheque book²¹.

As the club grows and you begin to build up a bit of a financial surplus you are strongly advised to set up a new savings account with the same bank. This will earn you a bit more money in interest and you should try not to touch the money except for major projects.

Continuity

Because student clubs are, by definition, largely run by students, appointments to key committee roles such as president, secretary and treasurer are typically made by election for a period of only one year. This can cause some difficulties. Unless steps are taken to avoid it, wisdom acquired by each successive set of officers, usually after a very steep learning curve, can be immediately lost again as new appointees to these key roles succeed them. In a small club, unless succession is well planned, the whole committee could be lost at the end of a single academic year.

The danger is that each successive generation reinvents wheels and makes the same mistakes year on year. Even worse, it is not unknown for things that worked reasonably well in the past to be discarded - only to be replaced by things that work less well. To establish a thriving club that will be viable in years to come, some longer term planning is essential. This booklet is itself designed to help clubs overcome this but the best long term solution is to create some simple, but well-documented, administrative systems and clearly-recorded minutes of committee decisions which can be passed from one generation to the next.

²⁰ It can become very tedious for the treasurer to have to obtain a second signature every time a small invoice has to be paid or members' travel expenses reimbursed. But the HEI's sports authority may wish some more rigorous controls to be exercised. Maybe just one signature might be sufficient up to a limit of say £100.00 and two above that. Obviously you must trust your treasurer (otherwise why appoint him or her) but the whole committee must take ultimate responsibility and occasional errors are bound to occur. So perhaps you should arrange for a second person to receive a copy of the monthly bank statement and for a quarterly or half-yearly meeting to take place to review the transactions and the state of the account.

²¹ You may find that the majority of payments can be made by on-line inter-account transfer. These are typically made by one person (i.e. the treasurer) who holds a security device and the associated codes provided by the bank. This is a further reason for more than one person to receive the monthly statements and for reviews to be conducted from time to time. This should not be seen as a slur on the treasurer' integrity; more an added protection.



3: the administration of the club continued

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is a key issue in all sports, not only to protect those practising the sport but also those indirectly involved such as spectators and visitors.

So the committee will need to inform themselves of the Health and Safety regulations that affect them. They must ensure that:

- the club is not in breach of the law or local regulations,
- that clear rules of conduct exist, are made public and properly enforced.
- that a risk assessment has been carried out and that plans exist for dealing with them.

The club will need either to have its own Health and Safety policy (available for all members to read). Alternatively it may make a declaration to the effect that it subscribes in all respects to the Health and Safety policy of the Institution to which it is affiliated (which must also be published).

For a robust contact sport like judo, it is best that the club should have its own well-publicised health and safety code governing behaviour both on and off the judo mat. It should include rules of behaviour to other club members, matters of hygiene, the circumstances governing who can practice with whom, procedures in the event of an accident and other emergencies such as fire in the premises, and so on.

The club should regularly carry out and publish a risk assessment identifying the possible consequences of various types of risk and stating the controls and contingency plans that have been put in place to minimise them. Both documents should be regularly reviewed and if necessary updated²².

One particularly important point to note is that, in order to conform with the requirements of the BJA Insurance policy, in the event of an injury occurring as a result of the club's activities (on or off the mat) the BJA should be informed immediately using the special form provided (see also the section on insurance).

Protecting the Club Against Legal Claims

All sports are experiencing an increasing tendency towards more and more legal actions against clubs as well as individuals (players, referees and other officials) for alleged negligence, resulting in injury. In serious cases, damages awarded by a court may run in to a six-figure sum or even more.

There are number of ways of protecting against this, should it arise. Some have already been mentioned. By having a carefully considered, well-published health and safety policy, supported by an up-to-date risk assessment and a code of conduct which lays out what constitutes acceptable versus unacceptable practice, the risk of a successful claim for negligence is greatly reduced. You must, of course, be able to show that, in the specific case, no aspect of the policy was broken.

A further essential protection is to have a properly qualified coach.

More about Coaching

As mentioned earlier, without at least one suitably qualified coach, no club will be accepted as a BJA member club. In any case, any judo club worthy of the name will wish to take the question of coaching very seriously indeed, and the head coach (assuming more than one) should be a highly respected ex-officio member of the committee. Together with acquiring suitable premises and equipment, it will be the most important issue for the club committee to organise, and the one most likely to determine its success or failure. Equally importantly, this could determine its ability to defend itself against possible civil action in the event of a member's (or visitor's) serious injury or death.

The quality of coaching will determine the success of your club in all sorts of ways:

- the skill progression of your members, and therefore
- the level of satisfaction of club members
- it's ability to recruit and retain members
- the competition record of your club both of individual members and in team competitions and therefore
- its continuing existence!

²² For examples of judo club codes of practice and risk assessments see <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/Judo%20Club%20Safety%20Policy.pdf>



3: the administration of the club continued

Who is allowed to coach?

The British Judo Association (BJA) Coach Education Programme was introduced in 1960 and was subsequently revised several times. There were three broad levels of performance defined within the Programme with awards at each level.

Recently, with the introduction of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC - which is now being adopted by an increasing number of sports), the Programme has been radically overhauled and updated to meet the coaching demands of modern judo. The UKCC, which replaces the existing award structure, was phased in during 2008 and the early part of 2009. There are currently 3 levels in the BJA UKCC coaching structure.

In 2009, the BJA also introduced an "Instructor Award". Among other considerations this is a particularly important development for student judo clubs since it allows high-graded students (1st Kyu and Dan grades), after a 2-day course and assessment, to run mat sessions in their club.

The Instructor Award is not a coaching qualification per se and holders of the Award will only be qualified as "mat supervisors" able to organise and supervise judo training sessions. As such they are covered by the BJA's public liability policy. They are not however qualified to run clubs, to coach at competitions or to conduct gradings. They are actively encouraged to enter the formal UKCC pathway as soon as possible after attaining the Award.

For further details of the BJA Instructor Award and details of Courses that are available, check the BJA Website (www.britishjudo.org.uk).

An Instructor's Award is not a sufficient qualification to run a BJA club. Instead the club must be able to identify at least one regular coach holding a BJA Coach Level 2.

Insurance Cover

Judo is a remarkably safe sport when conducted in the right way, with due considerations to adequate health and safety provisions and under qualified supervision. Nevertheless, injuries can occur even under the best supervision and are recognised as one of those things that happen in any sport. In 99 cases out of 100 they are relatively minor and at worst prevent the athlete from practising their sport for a period of a few weeks.

Nevertheless the potential for more serious injury does exist. In club judo, the most common cause is when individuals experiment with techniques which they have not been properly taught or which do not conform to the spirit or rules of judo. Occasionally individuals are thrown awkwardly or land on someone who has already been thrown on the mat. It is the coach's first duty to ensure that none of these things happen. If they do there is always the possibility of a legal action by the injured person for alleged negligence.

This is why it is essential to ensure that anybody who coaches or instructs is properly qualified and insured. This is to protect both the club and the individual coach.

This is a key issue to be aware of when starting a new club; existing clubs should also review it annually. It is essential to ensure, not only that adequate cover exists, but also that no practices are being adopted that might compromise that cover in certain circumstances, such as sessions being run without a qualified coach.

The BJA insurance, which comes automatically from club membership of the Association, covers any Civil Liability claim but additional insurance cover may be required to cover the cost of physical damage to premises from fire etc. All that is required is the registration of the club on the 1st January each year and the payment of the annual fee which is best done by setting up a Direct Debit arrangement with the BJA.



3: the administration of the club continued

BJA Insurance

The BJA provides comprehensive insurance cover to all member clubs and their officials. For current detailed information on the cover see the membership page on the BJA website at <http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/membership/insurance.php> There are two main policies that protect member clubs, their officials and the licence holders who participate in club activities:

- **Civil Liability Insurance** – This policy includes protection from Public Liability claims and Professional Indemnity for any coaches or instructors in the club and the club itself. The club's officers (Committee) whether volunteers or not, are also protected from charges of abuse, exclusion, equality mismanagement, bullying and child protection issues that may be leveled against them. The policy limit is currently £10 million for any one incident and provides contingent cover against the possibility of an action being brought against the club and its officers, for example on the grounds of alleged negligence when an injury occurs. It should be understood that coaches and instructors are protected by this policy against a claim by a licence holder for negligence and for those who are not licence holder for only their first four "taster sessions. A licence is obligatory after the first four session if the cover is to be maintained for injuries on the mat but this does not invalidate claims by any member of the public against the club, its coaches or officials for whatever reason..

- **Personal Accident Insurance** - This policy has defined benefits related to an injury and these are updated from time to time and the current benefits can be identified on the BJA website as detailed above. For example, fractures to the main bones in the arm, leg and collar bone in judo can result in a modest payment as compensation. Larger sums are payable for permanent loss of sight or hearing. Note that only licence holders are covered under this policy so that players who may be participating in randori in the first four "taster" sessions cannot claim benefit should they be unfortunate enough to fracture a limb or other injury covered under the policy.

- There is a further policy to cover the loss of club assets – e.g. mats or trophies – through theft, fire or water damage under specific conditions. The BJA can advise on this but separate registration is required before this policy can be accessed.

It should be understood that coaches and instructors must have a valid coaching certificate to be covered under the above policies. A coach without such a certificate who is instructing a licence holder who is injured could be personally liable if it is determined that the coach was in some way negligent.



4: gradings, competitions and international exchange

Grading

Anybody who has been involved in judo is aware of the part that grades, and therefore gradings, play in the sport. There is a great satisfaction for practitioners of judo, especially in the early stages, to be gained from progression up the grades. Each “next grade up” provides a target to aim for and a way of measuring progress when achieved. For other judoka, coaches and competition organisers, it is a useful (though not infallible) measure of relative skill levels when faced with a new practice partner or when matching one player against another in contest. This has an important safety element.

In the section on beginners’ classes that your club may wish to organise, it is suggested that you should target a few of your most able beginners to achieve 4th Kyu (orange belt) at the end of the 10 week course. Although this breaks the BJA’s normal one grade at a time or one grade per month rule, the rules do make provision for exceptional circumstances. It is the author’s experience that fit, athletic, intelligent and well-motivated students are perfectly capable of making this level of progress and that the BJA will normally be prepared to accept this.

The way gradings are conducted and the associated grade syllabi have recently been subject to review by the BJA. Detailed information is given for both Kyu and Dan grades together with much additional information on the BJA website at http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/technical/gradings_home.php

Competition Judo

Judo is at heart a competitive sport. Its founder, Jigoro Kano, had some words of caution to give to those who regarded competition as its sole rationale and he totally rejected the win-at-all costs philosophy which has, alas, crept into certain quarters. He saw this as being detrimental, both to the individual and to the underlying values that he believed in. However he was also supportive of judo becoming an Olympic sport because he rightly believed that this would accelerate the sport’s global dissemination.

So it would be strange if your club members did not wish to test their skills against others in competition as soon as they are able, both individually and as team members against other clubs (whether or not student clubs). So you will wish to enter representative teams in some of the various inter-university and college competitions and championships which now take place across the UK and Europe.

You may even wish to organise your own competition. If so, you will need to ensure your mat space is adequate and that proper arrangements have been made for refereeing, line judges, table officials, insurance, first aid support and, if the number of competitors is greater than about 50, a special BJA competition licence.



4: gradings, competitions and international exchange continued

National and International Competitions

For student clubs, pride of place in the UK must rest with the annual British Universities and Colleges (BUCS) National Championships which take place over a weekend in March (currently held in Sheffield).

They consist of individual competitions by weight category for both men and women and also team championships, again for both men and women. The individual competitions are also divided into two categories – namely for Kyu grades (up to 2nd Kyu) and Dan grades (including 1st Kyu). For further details see <http://www.bucs.org.uk/page.asp?section=3391§ionTitle=Championships>.

A number of other UK universities also organise competitions of which the longest established is probably that run by Sheffield University Judo Club in mid-February (<http://judo.union.shef.ac.uk/#comp>). This is an international inter-university competition which usually has entries from Belgium, Holland and Germany as well as from all over the UK. Recently Warwick University has also organised a competition in February.

A new event now held under BJA auspices is the London Universities Invitational in the autumn.

There are also championships held in Europe. For example the Paris TournoidelX (www.tournoidelx.info) organised by the Ecole Polytechnique, again in February, allows more than one mixed teams from one club to be entered.

In addition to these events specifically for university and college clubs (and with an emphasis on teams rather than individuals), the BJA organises a whole range of regional contests and ranking events which form the framework for individuals with higher level national and even international aspirations to prove their worth.

Then there is the British Judo Council (BJC) National Championships, and events such as the Kent International Competition and a whole range of competitions for different levels and age groups. See the BJA website <http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/competitions/results.php> for a sample.

International Exchange Visits

Some university judo clubs are now participating in international exchange visits with European and even Japanese university clubs.

Cambridge now have an annual exchange visit with Judo Club St. Dennis (Belgium) and have also established links with the judo clubs of Marburg and Helsinki Universities.

In 1997 a group of about 15 judoka from Tokyo Imperial University (Todai) visited the UK for 10 days during which time Oxford and Cambridge Judo Clubs, supported by the Budokwai in London, acted as hosts. This was repeated in 1999 and 2001, while a combined group of Oxford and Cambridge club members spent a week in Tokyo in 2000 as the guests of Todai. In 2006 a group representing Oxford, Cambridge, Bath and Chichester were again made welcome in Japan spending several days at Tokai University (the alma mater of two of judo's greatest champions, Yasuhiro Yamashita and Kosei Inoue). The trip included visits to the judo clubs of four other Japanese Universities and a reception at the Kodokan. Something similar will be repeated in 2010, this time additionally involving Imperial University and the University of London.

These examples, which are certainly not the only ones, show the sort of opportunities open to university and college judo.



5: sources of help and advice

The British Judo Association (BJA)²³

The BJA is the National Governing Body for the Olympic Sport of judo in Great Britain.

The Association represents Great Britain internationally and is a member of The International Judo Federation, The European Judo Union, The British Olympic Association, The Central Council of Physical Recreation, Commonwealth Judo Association, and the Commonwealth Games Council.

The BJA is a membership organisation and has expanded its network of clubs, qualified coaches and individual members throughout Britain providing access to the sport in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

It is a public company whose principal activity is the promotion and supervision of judo activities. The member clubs directly elect the Chairman and seven Directors.

The BJA member clubs are required to pay an annual fee (currently £55.00) which, among other things provides civil liability insurance cover. Members also pay a membership fee, depending on their age and category of membership (with reductions for students see website).

It is the authority for conducting grading examinations and licensing various categories of officials such as competition controllers, referees and table officials. Each year a large number of area and national competitions are held, executed through its Area Committee structure but also conducts National Competitions for all age groups of membership.

The BJA is the first port of call when seeking advice on both the creation and running of your student judo club. Some members of the BJA's Technical and Development teams have been given specific responsibility for the development and support of judo clubs in higher and further education institutions. They will be only too happy to provide advice.

British Judo Association partnership with Facebook & BUCS: The BJA has created a working partnership with Facebook and the British Universities and Colleges Sports Association (BUCS) whose aims are:-

- to encourage more people (especially females) to try judo, using different attributes to promote it, a form of self defence, a great exercise (flexibility). universities are encouraged to introduce taster sessions of general judo warm up moves, so this deflects the issue of different levels.
- to encourage people to come back to judo. Many people have tried judo in their youth and gave it up for various reasons. We need to get them to come along to a club and have a try, encourage them by competition and the social aspect.
- to raise the profile of university club(s) and facilities but using Facebook and promoting competitions, club sessions/events and creating a form of interleague table on line. We will also profile the key judo players in the GB and so players are compare themselves to their levels on a form of table.
- to promote the assets of judo and taking part, pointing out all of the positive points.
- to encourage and increase inter-uni competitions/events.
- to encourage students to develop their judo education and levels (qualifications and links with out of college judo clubs)
- to promote judo throughout!

A key activity of the project will be to create a series of key events where the BJA will be present and Facebook will act as an additional driving force.

²³ The BJA's website may be found at <http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/executive/aboutus.php>



5: sources of help and advice continued

Who Else May Be Able to Help?

University Authorities: Naturally when considering creating a judo club that will bear the name of your own institution (university or college), you will need the approval and support of that institution's authorities. Most have an individual designated as the Director of Sport or some equivalent title who, among other things, will be responsible for the running of the institution's sporting facilities (sports hall, swimming pool, gymnasium, rugby, soccer, hockey pitches etc). This person will be able to advise you both on what is required in order to gain that approval and also on the availability of space (for example within the sports hall) and perhaps providing a grant from his or her budget to purchase judo mats. It may be that some form of sharing may be possible with other clubs having similar requirements. However you should avoid compromises, such as being crammed into too small a space or the use of gym mats, which lead to the use of sub-standard and possibly even dangerous facilities

Local Judo Clubs: The BJA will be able to give you the address and contact names of any judo club in your locality. It may be willing to help you in all sorts of ways in the early stages of your club's facilities including offering qualified coaching resource and allowing members to train as a club using its facilities until you have your own. In any case, however well established your own club, regular exchange visits by your members to local clubs can only be beneficial and you should welcome them to your club in return. The one thing to watch out for is to ensure that visitors are properly insured (see the section 'No Licence No Judo').

Local Authorities: Local Government Authorities now have a remit to promote sport in their areas and often have budgets to support this. In theory this money is primarily intended for clubs which are open to the entire community. This may not be possible in the early stages but once established, it may be worth considering whether to establish your club in such a way as to make it open to membership by the wider public. In any case, it is still worth contacting them for advice on how they might be able to help.

how to run a student judo club



6: more about clubs – legal and administrative issues

The following comments provide more detail about the legal structure and administration of clubs and may be of interest to all those running judo clubs in any form.

What Constitutes a Club?

There is nothing to stop any group of enthusiasts, in any activity, whether it be playing a sport, collecting stamps, forming a reading group or practising flower arrangement, to come together informally, at their own risk, in a convenient venue, to engage in that activity. So it is for judo.

But if they want to continue on a regular basis, pretty soon this group of enthusiasts will wish to form a recognised club or association. They will then have to address some organisational issues of which the most obvious and immediate are

- deciding on a legal structure and a written constitution
- setting up a management committee and appointing or electing key officers
- organising finances and related matters such as insurance cover
- acquiring premises and equipment
- organising and scheduling activities
- recruiting sufficient members to make the club viable.

What Sort of Club – Legal Aspects

There are basically four sorts of sports clubs²⁴ as recognised by the British legal system and anyone wishing to start a club must take a decision as to which form to adopt. The options are:

- Unincorporated Association
- Incorporation as a Limited Company (two forms)
- Mutual Society with limited liability
- Registered Charity

The decision you take on this will be among the information requested when you register your club with the British Judo Association.

Issues to be taken into account are i) who is liable if anything goes wrong ii) does the club engage in any activities that might create a tax liability iii) does it own its own premises.

For student judo clubs (unless the university or college authorities take a different view) “Unincorporated Association” has to be the right decision.

What is an Unincorporated Association?

This is adopted by the vast majority of sports clubs, not least because it is the simplest and easiest to run and operate. As already described, the members come together and agree to establish the club with its own rules and operating procedures. These are then set down in the Constitution. It’s an “Association” because the club does not have a separate and distinct legal identity. For legal purposes, the club is regarded as a voluntary coming-together of its members. For any of the other options, the club will require legal advice.

One consequence that you should be aware of with this type of structure is that, if anything were to go wrong, ALL the members of the association would be liable. So, if the club were to go bankrupt or become subject to a court order arising from a claim of negligence, all the members could be liable for the debts, irrespective of their individual financial circumstances. However, as the financial circumstances of the members of a student club will be “meagre” to say the least, the creditor/ plaintiff would in all probability pursue the university or college for financial redress. This may get the members off-the-hook financially but will certainly not endear the club to its university or college authorities and might result in its winding up or undermine support it receives. It will certainly mean that the institution in question will impose even stricter requirements on the both way the club is managed and the sport is practised. (see Finance, Health and Safety, and Insurance sections)

²⁴ The BJA’s website may be found at <http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/executive/aboutus.php>



6: more about clubs continued – legal and administrative issues

Legal Structure and Aims

Irrespective of the chosen solution, there will also have to be some basic rules about what the group is for, what sort of activities it engages in (aims and objectives). These also, by implication, define what lies outside its range of activities. These will be enshrined in the club's constitution.

The constitution defines who is allowed to participate (rules of membership) being careful to avoid accusations of discrimination and how often the club meets. Unless they meet in private premises, (which is unlikely to be sustainable for long) these enthusiasts will have to borrow, share, rent (or perhaps eventually even buy) premises in which to operate. They will also need to borrow or buy equipment (i.e. judo mats) and probably pay for some form of external instruction or coaching. By this time, the original discussions on the club's aims, membership rules and the way it is governed should have been formalised in a written constitution. This is likely to include

the procedure for holding annual elections for

- the appointment of officers,
- the frequency of committee meetings,
- the way the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is announced and, though we hope that this will never be invoked,
- the procedure for a member to express a grievance and have it resolved.

Committee: It will be necessary to set up a Committee to decide on these issues and to set about planning an organising them. In order to function effectively, the club members will need to appoint someone to be chairman or president. A committee secretary will be required to take minutes and communicate with members; perhaps a social secretary to organise social events; someone to create and look after a club website and, of course, the treasurer to look after the finances.

Special Constitutional Requirements and Ex Officio Representation

What has been described so far could apply to any sports club whether or not associated with an educational institution. The constitutions of all types of clubs have much in common. The BJA offers a model for its clubs to adopt or modify as they please (see <http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/pdf/clubcon.pdf>).

Educational Institution's Requirements: However for a student club associated with a university or college, that institution is very likely to require the inclusion of certain additional clauses referring to its own specific policies and regulations. Every institution of higher education has a duty of care to each and all of its members (both students and staff) and it is unlikely that it will derogate this to a student management committee without adequate controls both via the constitution and in other ways. These will be designed to establish the institution's ultimate authority and to protect it against the consequences of poor management or untoward events²⁵. The result may be something rather more complex than that recommended by the BJA may be the result. As an example of a student club constitution that goes to the opposite extreme see that of the Oxford University Judo club: (<http://fighting.materials.ox.ac.uk/images/judo%20constitution%2009-10.pdf>).

Hopefully your club can find a happy medium between the two!

- Appointment of a "Senior Member": As you can see from the Oxford constitution, one way the university or college may ensure that its interests are secured is by requiring a 'Senior Member' (typically a faculty member or possibly the director of sport) to be a member of the committee. This person will be the one ultimately held accountable should anything untoward threaten the institution's integrity. The Senior Member is likely to be responsible for reviewing the club's annual financial accounts, investigating anomalies and resolving possible disputes both within the club and perhaps with the institution. If the committee does its job properly such problems should be resolved without involving the Senior Member. In any case, he or she should be seen as a useful ally in dealing with the institution, for fund raising and so on. Ideally, the SM should be a practising member of the club and of the BJA and, therefore, knowledgeable about judo and its unique characteristics, but such a person is not always available.

²⁵ An example might be a serious accident occurring to one of its teams in travelling to an away match or the club incurring a financial liability beyond its means.



6: more about clubs continued – legal and administrative issues

BJA Requirement: The BJA also has some requirements. Each year, on re-registration, it will want to know the name and address of an elected Chairman. The ideal person to fulfil this role might well be the Senior Member as described above, but the Association does normally expect this person to be a BJA member, who is well-versed in judo matters. More often than not this will mean that the senior member will not be eligible²⁶. The office of chairman could be held by a student but there are advantages in appointing someone older who is able to make a longer term commitment to the club and so provide some continuity. It could be a senior coach or committee member from a local judo club.

The chairman needs to be someone immersed in judo in order to provide an effective ongoing relationship with the BJA but, assuming they are not the same person, should also have a good relationship with the senior member. He (or she) may, over time, develop a good understanding of the inner workings of the university or college authorities (no mean task given the Byzantine workings of many university administrations!). Without taking over the running of the Club, this individual can then provide each new committee president with advice based on past experience.

²⁶ If the club has junior (i.e. under 18 year old) members, the Chairman should also have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau according to provisions of UK child protection legislation. This raises an interesting point when some first year students enter higher education before their 18th birthday. As far as the author is aware, it has not so far arisen as an issue - but it might.