

## WHAT IS A JUDO TECHNICIAN?

by Mark Lonsdale

No, it is not someone who fixes broken judoka, that's the job of the professionals at Falcon Physical Therapy. A judo technician is a judoka who explores judo techniques in depth and beyond the superficial pictures seen in most books. Apart from being recognized as a competent instructor, every judoka above the rank of brown belt should aspire to be a good technician.

A judo technician should:

- Know all the techniques required for his or her rank
- Be able to demonstrate those techniques in a smooth, balanced, and proficient manner
- Understand and be able to explain the bio-mechanics of each technique
- Be able to build a family of techniques around any given technique (standing or on the ground)
- Be able to demonstrate the logical transitions from standing techniques (*tachi-waza*) into ground techniques (*newaza, osaekomi-waza, shime-waza, or kansetsu-waza*)

For those readers unfamiliar with the term "family of techniques," it is the process of developing a number of techniques to set up a particular throw, and the combinations (*renraku-waza*) that can flow on from the primary attack if or when it fails.

A setup is essentially a feint, or false attack, used to move an opponent in a particular direction, or elicit a specific response, so as to off balance Uke sufficiently for the intended attack to work. An example would be a minimally applied *ashi-waza* (leg or ankle attack) such as *sasae-tsurikomi-ashi*, used to transition immediately into a major throw such as *tai-otoshi* (body drop). Similarly, any perceived attack to the rear will invariably setup an opponent for a throw to the front, and vice-a-versa.

A combination, on the other hand, is a series of attacks where each individual technique is applied with full force and the intention of throwing Uke; when one fails, Tori flows immediately into the next committed attack. Common examples would be *ouchi-gari to uchi-mata; osoto-gari to harai-goshi;* and *ippon-seoi-nage to kouchi-maki-komi*. The key difference between a setup and a combination is that each attack in a combination is a committed attack.

A good judo technician will have a dozen setups and combinations built around any single primary technique, plus several counters (*kaeshi-waza*) using that technique or against that technique. To complete the family, a technician will also know all the transitions from a standing technique or counter into *newaza* or ground attacks. For example, hip throws transition nicely into *kuzure-kesa-gatame* or *yoko-shiho-gatame*; a full shoulder throw will land Uke in a position that invites *kami-shiho-gatame*; and *tomoe-nage* transitions easily into *tate-shiho-gatame* (with Tori doing a backward roll).

To conclude, a judo technician should be a serious student of all aspects of traditional judo and one who thrives on teaching what he or she has learned. Judo technicians are the gate-keepers of good judo, responsible for maintaining the traditions and standards of JUDO – recreation, sport, self defense, philosophy, and lifestyle.

For additional reading on this subject, see JUDO UNLEASHED by Neil Ohlenkamp; and TRAINING FOR COMPETITION JUDO by Hayward Nishioka. Both detail numerous combinations built around the most common techniques.

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