

Kelly's Capers (A Summary) *by Sid Kelly, 8th Dan Judo*

GOALS

The primary goal of Kelly's Capers is class retention; maximizing the number of students who remain in judo after trying out judo classes. Kelly's Capers is not about producing champions. It's about increasing the judo population by a method that is fun, satisfying, recreational and empathetic towards the beginner. With a large judo base there will be far more talent to draw upon to produce judo champions. The secondary goal of Kelly's Capers is to maximize the beginner's development of judo skills; so in later years the beginner is able to achieve his or her greatest judo potential. This is done by immediately introducing the beginner to that important fundamental judo principle – the principal of giving way.

DEFINING KELLY'S CAPERS

Kelly's Capers is an engineered, empirically tested, and carefully thought out system that prepares beginners for the exercise of standing randori. Upon completion of attack and avoidance exercises, beginners are more able to participate in and enjoy standing randori with experienced members of their club. The system also prepares experienced players to cooperate with beginners. This is done in such a way that challenges the experienced player and maximizes the benefit the beginner receives from the standing practice. Kelly's Capers is not concerned with groundwork grappling, as groundwork grappling is not the reason why beginners leave judo; present day Ju-jitsu is proof of this. The problem is keeping beginners in judo long enough so that they can master enough throwing skills to be able to fully enjoy the exercise of standing randori.

THE PLAYING OF OTHER SPORTS

To achieve these goals the judo community must first turn to other sports and analyze, understand, and appreciate why it is that so many other sports have such a large following. Many other sports have large amounts of money to advertise, and success in a particular sport often brings recognition to an individual. But these sports, by and large, do bring pleasure and satisfaction; otherwise they would not be popular. The reason for this can be found in the fact that so many sports are easy to immediately participate in, whereas judo is not. In baseball it's easy to swing a baseball bat and run from base to base, but the challenge of hitting a home run is difficult. In boxing it's easy to throw a punch, but the challenge of knocking someone out is difficult. On closer inspection it can be seen that all sports can be categorized into two groups regarding their initial participation. The first group, which includes the majority of popular sports, such as soccer, boxing, tennis, golf,



karate, and many others, can, after their rules have been explained, be immediately played. This is because only naturally developed motor skills are needed; such as running, pushing, pulling, jumping, turning, gripping, punching and kicking etc. Then there is the second, smaller group of sports, that includes ice hockey, cycling, judo, and others. In this group a special skill has to first be mastered before it is possible to play in one of these sports; skating (ice hockey), bicycling (cycle racing), throwing (judo), and so on. However, judo is unique in that it possesses a third restriction. Because of the starting position of the two participants, whose arms are interlocked, intertwined, and often stiff and rigid, the beginner, with his limited skills, is so severely restricted, that he is often unable to try anything he was taught. From the beginner's viewpoint, limitations of one's motor skills, being somewhat clumsy with the actions of newly learned techniques, and lacking the skills to apply newly learned techniques, is acceptable and understandable as being part of the challenge and fun of judo. But it is in trying to overcome the imposed next to impossible conditions of stiff, rigid, interlocked intertwined arms, that takes the fun out of the introductory practices of standing randori. With immediate gratification being constantly satisfied in this age of electronics, most young people are not going to be attracted to the promise of having fun in a year or even in a few months time. In summation: a beginner trying out other sports is immediately able to have fun by attempting the actions required to make a score. Whereas in the sport of judo, restrictions placed on a beginner are such that he or she is unable to apply learned scoring actions and therefore not have the comparable fun that beginners do in other sports.

METHODOLOGY

If we in judo are to learn any one thing from a beginner playing other sports, it is that there is more fun, satisfaction and skill development when a beginner is able to apply whatever is needed to make a score. Just as a golfer is able to find some satisfaction, however frustrating, by completing his swing, even if the ball is not hit, or a boxer can swing a punch which misses. To find a solution for making the initial introduction of judo similar to, and as entertaining as that of playing other sports, we have to examine the source of the problem. And this is to be found in the judo exercise of standing randori. As generally understood, standing randori is a method of training where two judo exponents are paired off to practice their throwing skills on each other within an agreed upon competitive environment. It is mutually agreed that each person is trying



to throw the other while at the same time not allowing themselves to be thrown. This type of generally agreed upon randori is one sided, in that each exponent is mainly concerned with his own outcome, even though there is no winner or loser; as there is in a contest. The methodology of randori used in Kelly's Capers is the same in that there still is a competitive environment, but the twist or difference is the defender is cooperating with the attacker in the way he defends against attacks. Briefly, through a series of pre-randori exercises, the

defender allows the attacker to attack, but prevents the throw from being successful by avoiding the attack through body evasion. In these exercises the defender is forbidden to block with the arms or body. The only defending action allowed is body avoidance movements. Paradoxically, the onus is as much upon the defender as the attacker for the development of the attacker's throwing skills. Practicing by this method accelerates the learning process because the beginner

is able to experience both, being able to use the techniques he was taught and, apply them in a realistic competitive environment that is fun and challenging. At the completion of a carefully thought out sequence of lessons the beginner is able to apply avoidance moves against five basic throws, apply a follow up throw, and a counter throw to the five basic throws, be familiar with some grip changing, and be able to transition from standing to groundwork techniques. At this stage a beginner is now able to engage in standing randori with the more seasoned players of his club. However, when beginners first practice with seasoned players they often find themselves in an environment that is baffling and alien, and completely contrary to that which they were taught in Kelly's Capers. There will be some people who will hardly ever attack, there will be those who do everything they can to prevent being thrown, and some will consistently grip with arms that are so stiff and rigid it appears that their life depended upon it. Because at this stage most beginners are unable to cope with these sometimes rigorous factors, there are a series of guidelines for the seasoned player to follow that will have a more equalizing effect on the practice. This will make judo more fun and educational for the beginner, and will hopefully increasing the chances that the goals of IMPROVING CLASS RETENTION and EARLY SKILL DEVELOPMENT will succeed.

