

**Editor's Note:** The information on the following pages is being published in USJA's *Growing Judo* at the request of Dr. Martin Bregman, IJF International Referee and Chair, USJA Referee Committee, with credit given to the IJF Referee Commission, Juan Carlos Barcos, Chairman. The US Referee Commission will meet in January, 2013 to give their definitions and determine which, if any, of the recommendations will not be observed in the U.S. (For example, the U.S. allows the use of mouth pieces, which were banned last year by the IJF.)

## Refereeing & Organization Rules Changes - Explanations

11th December 2012.

### **The International Judo Federation has made public the amendments to the competition regulation as well as to the refereeing rules for the upcoming Olympic period 2013-2016.**

*All proposals, made and approved by the IJF Executive Committee, based on the opinion of many international experts, will enter into an experimental phase, from the Judo Grand Slam Paris 2013 (February 9 and 10, 2013) on, to the World Championships in Rio (included – August 26 to September 1st).*

On the occasion of the recent Judo Grand Slam in Tokyo, the IJF President, Mr. Marius L. Vizer, had the opportunity to re-explain the long process that led to these changes: "Since the London Olympics, we conducted a great brainstorming that involved more than the Executive Committee members. We first analyzed the impact of the changes that were initiated after 2007. We also analyzed, with a critical state of mind, the London Games. Then we gathered together a group of experts, including referees, but also, and this was a first time ever, coaches and former recognized champions. All these personalities have worked under the leadership of the IJF sports and refereeing directors and I must say that the commitment of everybody was total."

Since last summer and the end of the London Games, numerous meetings took place to determine the future of the judo. In recent years, Judo has been profoundly changing. A World Judo Tour was set up, the World Championship is now an annual event, the World Ranking List, that determines Olympic qualification, was invented ...

On the technical side also, several changes have been made. These changes have allowed us to propose a much more dramatic and attractive judo. "The results should not prevent us from analyzing what has worked or not," said Mr. Vizer, before adding: "London has been a real success in terms of organization and judo showed all its universality with 137 participating countries. We had beautiful and great champions, who are the judo ambassadors throughout the world. We also had great guest, who enjoyed our sport and our organization. But the stress of this outsized competition tended to block the judoka who, for some of them, failed to show themselves in the best light, while we had very positive signals after the Tokyo World Championships and the Paris edition, last year. '

The President Vizer also explained several important points that were recalled during the debates: "It is important to remember that all the decisions were unanimously taken by the executive committee members and that, from now on, they will all be tested. Thus, if we discover that a particular decision does not go in the right direction, we will review our position. There is nothing definitive, as we are not in an Olympic qualification period. It is now or never to make the changes that we consider necessary. Our aim is to preserve the spirit of judo, the neutrality of the refereeing, the transparency of the decisions and to do everything possible to promote beautiful and spectacular judo, where ippon becomes the ultimate goal again. Judo is by definition the way of adaptation. We could do nothing, but that is not our philosophy. Judo must continue to adapt while maintaining its roots and values alive. '

In January 2013, before the first implementation of this new regulation, the IJF will organize refereeing and coaching seminars, on every continent, in order to explain and clarify the new rules. You will find in the following pages, the changes of the competition regulation and of the refereeing rules. You will also find food for thought that inspired these changes.

## **The Competitions Rules Explained**

### **Proposals 2013 – 2016**

#### **Weigh in**

The athlete's weigh in will be scheduled the day before the competition at 19:00h.

A weigh in will be operated the morning of the competition, during the Judogi control, prior to the first fight in order to assess the impact of this new decision on the weight of the athletes during the competition. If the collected data require further experimentation, then it will be maintained. A procedure will be implemented when a fighter has a weight over a certain weight tolerance percentage. Within his category (weight to be determined with sport doctors) a medical check may be done.

*Why?*

*For many years, it has been an important topic related to the athletes' health. As they are organized today, weigh-ins force competitors to get up early, or very early, and sometimes to follow drastic diets until the last minute. The organization of the weigh-in the day before the competition will be set on an experimental basis. It will determine if it is beneficial and if it helps to protect athletes from injuries related to too restrictive weight loss. The test will be closely followed by the IJF medical staff. At any time it will be stopped if the observations are not positive. From the beginning of the experiment, "weigh-in tests" will be conducted, during the judogi control, to determine if the weight gain during the night is consistent with the weight categories. Athletes and coaches will also be asked to explain the changes it brings to their preparation for the competition. This new procedure should help to reduce to competition day for athletes, coaches, but for the organizers as well. It must also protect the health of the athletes.*

#### **Composition of the delegations for individual World Championships and Continental Championships**

- 9 entries in total for men and 9 entries for women.
- The maximum of 2 athletes per category for men and the same for women.
- Maximum of total delegation men and women, 18 athletes.
- For cadets and juniors: same principle for the delegation composition

*Why?*

*National Federations have the opportunity to enter two athletes per weight category for the World Championships, as well as for the continental championships. This procedure has been positive both in number of participants and quality of judo. It has enabled federations, who could not register athletes in all categories, still to engage their best athletes. In order to give the opportunity to all national federations to register their best players in the respect of the fairness of these major events, it will now be possible to register a maximum of two athletes per category, but delegations may not exceed a total of nine competitors (9 men / 9 women). Slightly reducing the number of participants, this measure will tighten up the level of the World Championships and Continental Championships.*

## **Denomination World Cups**

Name: "Continental" Open of "City". E.g.: European Open of Roma, Asian Open Ulaanbaatar....

*Why?*

*The World Judo Tour consists of Judo World Championships, individual seniors, World Masters, Grand Slams, Grand Prix and World Cups. All these events are eligible for points for the world ranking list and for the Olympic qualifications. The World Cups are events organized by the Continental Unions. Thus, in order to make the system coherent and comprehensible and to highlight the work of the Continental Unions, the names of the World Cups (to become Continental Open) will change in 2013.*

## **Cadets – U 18**

- 3 years for Cadets (this proposal could be reviewed).
- Kansetsu-Waza authorized for Cadets.

*Why?*

*To harmonize the age categories, with, amongst other, events such as the Youth Olympic Games, three years have been planned for the cadets. Based on the analyses that will be made (especially on the medical impact), the proposal may be modified.*

*Cadets are, for many of them, on the eve of an international career. Therefore, it seems obvious that they can practice the arm-locks, in order to prepare for the juniors. In fact, as soon as they enter in the juniors, athletes can participate in senior competitions. They need to be ready.*

## **Tatami**

10x10 m and 4 meters minimum for safety area for Olympics, Worlds and Masters. Recommended for Continental Championships.

*Why?*

*To ensure the maximum performance and security for the major world competitions which are organized in venues that allow it. For all other competitions, a combat area of 8x8m will both ensure the performance and the safety, while allowing organizers to host major international competitions of the world circuit.*

*A 4 meters security area is necessary in regards to the rule that an action initiated inside the fighting area can be concluded outside.*

## **Juniors - U 21**

3 years for juniors (upgrade 1 more year)

*Why?*

*To harmonize the age categories.*

## **Ranking List Events**

Only one annual event with IJF ranking list points can be organized in the same country except of World Championships, Masters or Continental Championships. The World Ranking List has been modified, see annex.

*Why?*

*For instance, if you are organizing a Grand Prix, you cannot have a Grand Slam, in the same country, during the same year. This does not concern the World Championships, the World Masters and the Continental Championships.*

*The scale of points distributed at the world circuit events has been modified (see Appendix) to mark a clear difference between the events.*

### **Delegation Participating Fees**

Organizing countries should not request fee penalties for countries which cannot make bank transfers but can pay in cash money upon arrival. On the other hand, they should inform well in advance the organizing country and specify the number of participants before the deadline.

*Why?*

*Not to penalize countries that have no bank transfer facilities.*

### **Uniform IJF Competition System**

Quarter Final / last 8 / repechage for all IJF events (including Master, GS and GP)

*Why?*

*All IJF events will adopt the quarter-final repechage system. As a consequence, three winners of their last fight will be present on the podium (instead of one, in the knockout system. The only 'loser' will be the silver medalist). It will also raise the interest to the final blocks of the competitions, whose results will take more value. Finally, it will give a second chance for the quarter-final losers, while maintaining a compact system of competition.*

## **The Refereeing Rules Explained Proposals 2013 – 2016**

### **Referee and judges**

Only one referee on the mat and one referee at a video check table with a radio communication assisted by a referee commission member or another referee will judge the fights. A rotation system will be implemented for the Referees. The IJF Jury will interfere only when they consider it to be necessary.

*Why?*

*To the question: will there be only one referee to judge the fight? The answer is clearly no. There will always be three people. Only the distribution of the roles will change. Instead of having three referees on the mat, there will be one referee on the mat and one referee sitting at the table with the video. He will be assisted by a member of the refereeing commission or another referee, whose expertise in the use of video is recognized. So, there will always be three people to judge a fight. The IJF jury will intervene only in exceptional situations. The sole purpose of this approach is to ensure that the fighter who really won the fight, would leave the tatami as the winner. For this purpose, a direct and clear refereeing procedure on the mat, with a single referee, assisted by another referee and a member of the refereeing commission, must make things more fluid. A Rotation will be organized among the referees to maintain the fairness between the fighters and to ensure an optimal recovery of the referees. The referees will be directly involved in the video assistance.*

### **Technical assessment**

IPPON: to give more value «to take into account only the techniques with real impact on the ground on the back.

*Why?*

*By definition, a clear ippon is a movement executed with strength, speed, and control, on the back. A return to this definition will be observed, in order to give real value to the objective of any competitor: to score ippon. Judo is a spectator sport as long as the goal is clearly defined.*

### **Landing on the bridge position**

All situations of landing on the bridge position will be considered Ippon.

Why?

*Considered as a dangerous technique avoiding to be thrown, any attempt to land (for UKE - the one, who is thrown) on the bridge position will be considered as ippon for TORI (the one who has executed the throwing technique).*

### **Penalties**

- During the fight there will be three Shidos, and the fourth Hansoku-make (3 warnings and then disqualification). Shidos do not give points to the other fighter, only technical scores can give points on the scoreboard.
- At the end of the fight, if scoring is equal, the one with less Shido wins.
- If the fight continues to golden score (due to a draw), the first receiving a Shido loses, or the first scoring a technique will win.

Why?

*In order to avoid that an increasing number of competitors try to win by penalties instead of trying to win with a score, and in order to restore the balance in favor of the scores obtained by judo techniques, the penalty philosophy completely changes. Penalties still exist and after four of them, the athlete is disqualified, as it has been the case until now. However, there are no more parallel between the scores (yuko, waza-ari) and penalties. The advantage is given to the fighter who attacks and scores. But if nothing is scored (no technical advantage), the one with the least penalties wins. Once again, this gives the advantage to the competitor who attempts the most to execute techniques and who is practicing the least anti-judo.*

### **Penalized with Shido**

- Breaking the grip with 2 hands.
- Cross gripping should be followed by an immediate attack. Same rule as for the belt gripping and one side gripping.
- The referees should strictly penalize the contestants who do not engage in a quick Kumikata grip or who try not to be gripped by the opponent.
- To hug the opponent for a throw. (Bear hug).

Why?

*The take the grip (kumikata) is part of a judo contest. Searching the best kumikata to perform beautiful techniques is logical and necessary. But to prevent the opponent to grip, if there is no immediate attack, is not constructive. Recently, it was found that the process of blocking the opponent became predominant in many fights, leading to long and boring combats. Thus, the decisions that have been taken aim to correct this. The goal is not to prevent the kumikata work, but rather to make it active and constructive.*

### **Penalized with Hansoku-make:**

All attacks or blocking with one or two hands or with one or two arms below the belt in Tachi-waza.

Why?

*The aim of judo, as is has already been pointed out is simple: to score ippon. For this, there are many possibilities, which make judo a spectacular sport, but nevertheless a technical activity. A greater clarity is needed to make it more understandable by judoka themselves, to make it easier to judge, but also to make it more affordable to the public. The direct leg grabs were banned from judo competition in recent years. The effects are obvious: some techniques disappeared for the benefit of the reappearance of spectacular movements that couldn't be executed due to the position of the fighters. The exception made for direct leg grab in case of cross grip made the refereeing yet*

*sometimes complicated, despite the intervention of the video. As such, any attack of blocking below the belt, during standing work, will now be sanctioned by Hansoku-make, without exception.*

### **Osaekomi, Kansetsu-waza and Shime-waza**

- Will continue also outside of the contest area as long as Osaekomi was called inside.
- Osaekomi scores 10 seconds for Yuko, 15 seconds for Waza-ari, and 20 seconds for Ippon.
- The Kansetsu-waza and Shime-waza initiated inside the contest area and recognized as being effective to the opponent can be maintained even if the contestants are outside the contest area.

*Why?*

*A lack of consistency was observed due to the fact that an action, in standing work, could begin within the fighting area and end outside (giving a score), but it was not valid for the ground work. From Paris Grand Slam on, an immobilization, which starts inside, can be completed outside the fighting area. The only possibility to stop the immobilization will be to get out of it. Just going out of the fighting area is not sufficient anymore. It is the same for arm locks and chokes. As long as they are clearly engaged inside the fighting area (outstretched arm, engaged arm lock or choke engaged), the conclusion may be held outside. If the arm is not stretched or if there is not throttling, the combat will stop and start again from the standing position.*

*Downtime is reduced to make combat more dynamic. Indeed, it is the first 10 seconds of immobilization that are the most important. In most cases, after 10 or 15 seconds, there is little chances to escape and abandonment often occur.*

### **The bow**

When entering the tatami area, fighters should walk to the entrance of the contest area at the same time and bow to each other into the contest area. The contestants must not shake hands BEFORE the start of the contest.

*Why?*

*Judo is a sport whose values are worldwide known and recognized. In Judo, there is a 'ceremony', which is accepted by everybody and which is part of the DNA of our sport. It must be respected. It is the symbol of our moral code and it warns against any drift. That the fighters will be asked to really respect the bow procedure as it has been defined since the invention of judo. At the beginning of the bout, they will not be allowed to use other signs than the bow. At the end of the fight, after the bow, the fighters are allowed to shake hands and to congratulate themselves with respect.*

### **Duration of Contests**

No time limit for Golden Score (Hantei is cancelled).

*Why?*

*Recently, everybody agreed that too many fights ended in golden score with a referee flag decision. With the fight coming to an end (towards the referee decision), some fighters relied on that flag decision to decide between themselves, while the goal of judo is and will remain to score ippon, or at least to score an advantage. To avoid that, the removal of the flags decision (Hantei) was recorded. The golden score will now be 'open' until a fighter scores an advantage or is penalized, the decision will be made only on the technical merits of judoka.*