

USJA JUJITSU PROGRAM
by
Ronald Allan Charles, April 2013



Numerous USJA clubs offer jujitsu in addition to judo. Many members and instructors don't know about this or, if they do, how well the program works.

Judo founder Dr. Kano, long before he learned to spell JUDO, learned jujitsu. A diminutive individual, Kano experienced bullying to the point that he sought out jujitsu masters to learn to defend himself. Over time he became proficient in several ryu (styles).

There are many different ryu. In 1600, there were 2,000. When instructors passed away, their disciples would incorporate new tactics and techniques, resulting in the creation of distinctive ryu, thereby proliferating the art. There's no telling how many ryu exist today. Apparently jujitsuka do not get along as nicely as judoka in this organizational regard, because there's but one style of judo in the world, based on Kodokan Judo that Dr. Kano developed.

Our USJA jujitsu is not really a style. It's a composite of what's easy to teach, easy to learn, and most importantly, what's street-worthy and practical. And while other organizations may not recognize our ranks, we don't accept many others' either. It's that way in jujitsu, unlike judo. But our USJA jujitsu is second to none, with quality techniques and sound promotion requirements.

Judo developed from self-defense (jujitsu). Dr. Kano, a physical education teacher, realized the effectiveness of jujitsu but saw its limitations. Practicing jujitsu to full effect can result in serious injury or worse. As an educator, Kano tinkered with what he'd learned by eliminating dangerous techniques, modifying others, and implementing moves of his own design.

For example, in jujitsu, you throw over your shoulder, bending an attacker's arm so as to break it on the way down. Kano, in modifying this maneuver into a judo throw, reversed the arm so as not to task the elbow, resulting in seoi-nage. When throwing to the rear using jujitsu, you might push someone's chin or throat to the diagonal rear, put your leg behind, and bash an attacker's head onto the ground, resulting in concussion or death. The judo modification simply puts the power hand on the chest and teaches the attacker to tuck in the chin, resulting in osoto-gari. Then add tatami and breakfalling to complete the picture. Kano named his baby Judo. Jujitsu was the momma.

Hence judo became a safe and vigorous application of jujitsu. Because of their close relationship, it's logical to consider offering both arts if the judo instructor has the skills. And to enable a club instructor to promote worthy individuals in jujitsu, that instructor has to establish his or her own credential in jujitsu. Accomplish this by attending The Greatest Camp on Earth, where USJA jujitsu sensei can validate skills and position individuals at their best-qualified rank, thereby placing their feet on the rank ladder so that they properly can assist others in jujitsu. Those unable attend camp should seek out a jujitsu rank examiner qualified to evaluate technical skill. Please contact the USJA's Jujitsu Committee Chairman, Lowell Slaven at lslaven1512@comcast.net or phone him at 765-891-0130, and he will refer you to a rank examiner in your area. Or visit Goose Creek, near Charleston, SC, where the Samurai Judo Association jujitsu staff will do this free of charge.

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The USJA jujitsu program was developed more than two decades ago at the National Judo Institute in Colorado Springs, CO. There, talented sensei including 9th dan Professor of Jujitsu Ben Bergwerf formulated our *Jujitsu Manual* that established technical and other requirements, thus contributing a wonderful supplement to USJA programs.

Individuals come to a dojo for different reasons. The vast majority don't aspire to become judo champions. And recently all national judo organizations have come to realize that most judoka are not interested in competing. Rather they seek judo's recreational aspects. Judo's foundation is self-defense. Those who have been assaulted or are apprehensive about being victimized may seek the self-defense aspect that judo represents. As long as we keep the arts and classes separate, reminding students which techniques to use under what circumstances, we can offer both judo and jujitsu to entice students to our dojo and retain them.

Though some seek to learn jujitsu as a sport, our USJA jujitsu was not designed as a sport. In fact, traditional jujitsu practitioners shun that thought. For them, jujitsu is not a game. Judo is the game, the safe facet of a deadly art. To the traditionalist, when jujitsuka compete, there is but one winner -- the one still alive.

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, referred to as BJJ, advertises jujitsu as a sport and has become very popular and commercial. To traditionalists, BJJ is basically just judo groundwork except for headlocks that can damage the spine or neck, and leg or knee locks that can blow out knees or break ankles.

For traditional jujitsuka, the last place you want to be is on the ground. That's because once there, you are subject to Number Two. As long as you're rolling around while being beaten by an attacker, it's just one on one -- him on you. But if you take the upper hand and begin to dominate the encounter, that's when his buddy, whom you had not noticed sitting in his pickup truck, puts down his adult beverage, pats his hound dog on the head, picks up his baseball bat, and exits the vehicle to come to his friend's assistance. And while you are entangled on the ground, the standing buddy can kick and stick you.

If you want to live to become an old fly, you stay out of spider webs. There, you cannot kick, punch, throw, run, or fly. You are dead meat. So the traditional approach to jujitsu is to remain standing whenever possible. It's true that many fights wind up on the ground, but nearly all start while standing. Think about that. You probably won't be on hands and knees on the beach collecting seashells and have someone attack you. You will rise to the occasion, and vice versa.

Practical self-defense with or without weapons focuses on standing techniques, though we learn ground techniques too. Just knowing judo throws is not sufficient, especially if attackers have weapons. And even if empty-handed, they likely won't grab your shirt. Consequently, we need to know how to block or deflect an attack or strike, and then maybe apply a judo throw or joint locking maneuver, following up with a crippling technique to end the threat, all the while performing in a court-defensible manner that won't land us in prison for excessive use of force or an unreasonable response.

If you or someone in your club has jujitsu skills, consider setting up classes to enhance your school and entice students. Classes offering practical, street-survival techniques generally are less vigorous than judo classes and appeal to many.

USJA insurance covers jujitsu. Everyone promoted receives a Ju-Jitsu patch and new rank patch for the gi. You can order the *Jujitsu Manual* from the USJA website. Over 500 pages long, it well describes techniques, with key points and lots of drawings, and page holes to fit into a binder.

I encourage you to consider adding jujitsu to your club offerings.

Dr. Ronald Allan Charles heads the largest jujitsu and judo club in the USJA, called the Samurai Judo Association, in Goose Creek, SC. He holds 6th dan jujitsu and 8th dan judo ranks and is a Master Rank Examiner in each. Photo shows Ben Bergwerf treating Dr. Charles to the finer points of joint locks.