

I COULDN'T BE A COACH, COULD I ?

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What is Coaching?

Many judoka enjoy telling others how to do things differently but this does not make them an instructor. It is often inconvenient for the rest of the class and makes the coach's job more difficult. However anyone who has ever told another judoka how to do a technique should consider becoming a coach.

Coaches have an overall picture of what they want their class to learn. Instructors can help coaches with that task because they understand what the coach is working towards and can work with individuals or groups.

- ❖ *The traditional Judo Belt grading system reflects a judoka's technical and fighting ability.*
- ❖ *The BJC instructor/ coaching route is a complementary pathway for judoka who are interested in the way of judo and want to help other judoka enjoy judo; but it does require additional time and commitment*
- **An instructor** instructs 'how to do techniques' as requested by a coach.
- **A coach** considers 'how training can be structured' to help all judoka to enjoy and get maximum benefit from their judo.

Each instructor/coach level is divided into five core areas that reinforce the fact that coaching is not just about *doing* techniques, it is about safe practise, because this pathway is structured to ensure safe practise and competence all judoka must start at the beginning and progress through each level. The different levels mean that instructors should never feel out of their depth, they all always be teaching at a level they can do.

Promotion between the instructor / coaching levels can only be recommended by a Senior Club Coach (3rd Dan or above). Candidates will be continuously assessed over a period of 3 months (a minimum of 10 training sessions), by discussions between an assessor and the candidate, through submission of paperwork and observation. The period of assessment will start from submission of the first essay. No one can fail, but some judoka may take more than 3 months before they feel comfortable to progress further.

Each level is neither a beginning nor an ending. It simply *recognises* that the instructor has shown that s/he has understood and put into practice certain concepts and can build on that knowledge. In wearing an instructor/coaching rank a judoka is letting everyone know that they feel comfortable and are competent to coach at that level.

Who Can Become a Coach?

Judoka have two reasons for doing judo; one has a selfish element, a desire to get fit with the possibility of winning gold whilst the other combines the pleasure of partaking in a physically challenging, social activity with the opportunity to perform a useful function for society.

Most beginners start judo hoping to get fitter and seeking personal achievements, but as judoka progress many come to realise that passing on their knowledge gives them nearly as much pleasure as winning gold for themselves. Judoka who come to realise that Judo is less about building superior muscle power than about improving mental and/or physical agility are the potential teachers, instructors or coaches of the next generation.

However just as judoka have to learn strategies and techniques to win, so strategies and techniques have to be learnt to teach. This is why the coaching path is structured as it is. Passing on your knowledge and experiences can be fun but getting groups of people to do techniques safely and effectively is hard work and can be very daunting and, but if instructors and coaches work together as a team then it becomes enjoyable.

The Bigger Picture



Remember our motto: "use his weight against him".

Judoka come in all shapes and sizes and within a club there is inevitably at least one who is either too large or too petite to find training partners with whom they can work as equals - much less prove their fighting ability in shiai. Judoka who are prepared to attend competitions have the satisfaction of seeing how they compare against other judoka but those whose commitments mean that they cannot risk injury are unable to have this satisfaction

Judo is about the ability to throw and control, as a result being good at judo is too often equated with never being thrown. Historically, shiai was the crucial test for whether a male judoka was ready for his next belt whereas women were graded according to how well they worked together to present Kata. Women's judo and the lessons learnt from kata came to be seen as soft, ineffectual and inferior to men's judo; the ability to win in shiai was all that mattered.

Participation and success in well-run competitions is vital to the progress of international judo, but some judokas are better at understanding, explaining and motivating others rather than winning gold for themselves. The Blackwater Judo Club is successful because it appeals to all ages and temperaments, we have judoka who because of age, infirmity, injury or ill health are unable to fight to the standard they would like to. Too often judoka who can not fight to win feel they must give up judo. The reality is that they are the lifeblood of judo; they are the teachers of the future, the ones who will keep our club going.

THE SMALL PRINT

Each coaching level has been designed to ensure that those judoka who want to become coaches can acquire the knowledge, experience and confidence that s/he needs to take the next step. All judoka must progress through each level and complete each core task. Juniors must complete both steps of their ladder and seniors must work their way up theirs. Just because you are a brown belt it does not mean you are ready to be a Club Coach. You may have the technical knowledge but coaching is about more than being able to *'do'* it.

The core tasks are to establish a *minimum* level of competency. They are there to ensure that everyone who wants to teach is playing from the same song sheet – or something like that. It is hoped that coaches will not just restrict their coaching skills to the principles being assessed but that they will stretch themselves *and each other*.

For the judoka who is new to teaching, teaching breakfalls, ogoshi and osotogari is a novelty. And whilst each new beginner is a fresh challenge, after the 1000th instruction *to take hold* and *bend the knees* it is nice to progress and teach something else, safe in the knowledge that someone else can be trusted to teach the basics.

Seniority and Diplomacy

Visiting judokas are always encouraged to bring their knowledge and experience into our dojo. In terms of etiquette the highest grade by belt (whether visitor or club member) has seniority on the mat. But when it comes to safe practise it is the senior coach who has overall responsibility for the smooth running of the dojo - even though this might test their skills of diplomacy.

