OVERVIEW

The development of the British Judo Association’s Competition Pathway is the result of much work, lengthy consultation (6 years I believe) and considerable debate involving the Association’s most experienced technical officials, referees and technical staff.

This paper consists of the main document and two appendices. The main document covers the Pathway and the modification of the Contest Rules that support the Pathway. Appendix 1 provides the detailed requirements for each level of the Pathway and appendix 2 consists of copies articles which the BJA published at the time of the introduction of the ‘Under 12 Rules’ - these articles give an overview of the rationale and thinking at the time and are for background information.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Pathway should have been at the same time as we removed the contest requirements from the Mon and Kyu grading schemes but, for various reasons, this never happened and for this we have been rightly criticised by the membership. Not everyone involved in the preparation of the Pathway agrees with the final proposals but there will never be complete agreement and some compromise has been necessary to get to this stage. That said, I believe we have enough of a consensus that will allow us to get a formalised structure in place without further delay.

The proposed Pathway is designed to provide an incremental pathway of appropriate competitions for all levels of competitors. The Pathway consists of different levels of competition which are grouped under the categories of ‘Development’ and ‘Performance’. Each level of competition is designed to cater for players with a specific level of experience. Those with higher aspirations will choose to move through the system while others may reach a level and remain there indefinitely.

Each competition needs to focus on attracting, and providing a positive experience, for a defined group of players. The level of the event best describes the skill and competitive level of the players that the event is intending to cater for. A competition may have different sections catering for different levels of player, if sections are different, the levels must be clearly displayed on the competition information/entry form.
If a competition organiser wants to have more mat areas for an event catering for lower level players, they will need to satisfy the requirements for the higher level event. For example, if you want to run a Level One event on two mats, you must satisfy the requirements for a Level Two competition.

**PATHWAY LEVELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development/Recreational</th>
<th>Performance/Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level One: Beginner</td>
<td>Level Four: Aspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Two: Intermediate</td>
<td>Level Five: Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level Three: Experienced</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEVEL ONE - BEGINNER**

These events are for players at, or near beginner standard where the emphasis is very much about fun and having a go and not on winning and losing.

Whilst the competitive experience is far more relevant than the player’s grade, these events would be for Mon grades up to yellow belt and Kyu grades up to orange belt.

Examples of Level One events are “Red Belt Rumbles”, “Inter-Club” and “Mini-Me” events.

**LEVEL TWO - INTERMEDIATE**

Events for players who are at an intermediate level where, in the long term the outcome of these events is not important, however results are recognised and only the top four competitors in each category are awarded medals.

These events would be for players who have already competed at Level One who are Mon grades up to green belt or Kyu grades up to blue belt.

Examples of Level Two events are “Mini-Mon” and restricted “Kyu Grade” events.

**LEVEL THREE - EXPERIENCED**

These events are for more experienced players. These events would be for club level higher grades. Some of these events would be age banded.

They provide contest opportunities for recreational players but also allow for development of aspiring elite players. They are generally open events, although event organisers may choose to exclude high level (squad) players.

Examples would be most club and county open events and the National Schools’ Championships.

**LEVEL FOUR - ASPIRING**

These events are for players aspiring to reach performance level. Club level players can enter these events but should be aware that they will be strong events. Most of these events would be age banded. There would be a minimum entry grade, which may vary according to age.

Examples would be most British National events, and national ranking events. Other open events would only be Level Four if they have attracted a high level of high performance competitors for many years.
LEVEL FIVE - PERFORMANCE

These events are performance events and would be organised under the auspices of the EJU or IJF. Entry to most of these events would be through selection by National Federations.

Examples would be the British Senior Open, the European Cadet Championships.

CONTEST RULES/REFEREES

The IJF Contest Rules are designed for use in international competition at Olympic and World levels with highly skilled professional players and to facilitate promotion of judo to the public – particularly television audiences. The IJF Contest Rules have been adopted by the BJA with the recognition that they are not appropriate for all levels of competition and have always modified them as deemed appropriate.

The Pathway has been split into Development/Recreational and Performance/Elite to reflect not only the fact that players need to hone their skills at a low level before progressing but also the fact that we have a split in the competitive judo population between those who compete recreationally and those who want to do well at the higher levels of competition.

While it is important that our Pathway provides opportunity for our performance players to develop the judo skills needed at a high level, it also needs to reflect the needs of the majority of our current membership, who are mostly in the developmental stage or a mainly recreational players.

The focus of the development category needs to be on safety, education and enjoyment, fostering a positive competition environment that people want to return to time and again. The modifications to the rules recommended for each level of competition along with the rationale for the modifications are discussed below.

LEVELS ONE TO THREE - DEVELOPMENT

Technical Restrictions (see Technical Restrictions on page 4):

- All Level One competitions must use the BJA Technical Restrictions.

- All competitions with sections / weight categories that cater specifically for younger pre-cadet players (under 12years of age) must use the BJA Technical Restrictions for that element of the competition.

Rationale:

The use of technical restrictions at all Level One events allows time for the acquisition of sound fundamental judo technique.

A young player may develop a range of techniques as they grow and mature, given a choice an adult will learn and hone only one technique, especially if that technique provides them with instant success. Players who enter the sport at pre-cadet age are more likely to be the performance players of the future. Continuing to enforce the use of technical restrictions will help create rounded judo players with a range of skills and techniques.

In addition, safety is essential at Development events where beginners are likely to have less control over their techniques, lower skill levels and poorer Ukemi skills. The potential for injury from poorly executed techniques is just as high for adults as it is for children.
Shime-waza (strangles) or Kansetsu-waza (arm locks):

- Weight categories which could include players in any pre-cadet age group (or under 14 years on the day of the event), cannot allow either Shime-waza (strangles) or Kansetsu-waza (arm locks).

- Categories solely for cadets, juniors or seniors should allow Shime-waza (strangles) or Kansetsu-waza (arm locks).

Rationale:

Shime-waza and Kansetsu-waza are only allowed at cadet aged and above events, and only for cadet events with a minimum grade of green belt, because this is the grade at which shime-waza and kansetsu-waza are introduced in the syllabus.

It is possible that our younger players may never have been taught these techniques and thus have no idea how to respond to them. Injuries could result from inexperienced young players not knowing they are supposed to submit. Low level development events have lower medical personnel requirements and it is unfair on both the players and the first aid staff to put them in a situation where an injured joint or unconsciousness may occur.

Penalties:

- Modified IJF rules to be used, including Shido for offences below the belt.

Rationale:

Many players at Level One events only have a basic understanding of judo and little understanding of the rules. The priority at this level is on safety, education and enjoyment. Therefore rule infringements that are not against the spirit of judo or the safety of the opponent should initially incur a warning, this allows players to learn from their mistakes rather than be disqualified for their errors.

The Shido penalty for grabbing below the belt is in place as for long time members e.g. masters players, it may be an automatic reaction or reflex and it will take time to re-programme instinctive movements; to disqualify someone for something they have been doing for years may cause upset, confusion and reticence to take part in future competitions.

Competition is a big part of what we offer as a membership benefit, it is a key reason to purchase full membership, at this level they must be enjoyable and allow for learning development. Development events are not about creating great judoka but a great judo experience.

CARE System and Judges:

- Use of the CARE system is desirable but not essential.

- When the CARE system is used Judges must be positioned at the edge of the competition area.

Rationale:

Due to the low level infrastructure and the facilities available to organisers of development events the use of the CARE system is desirable but not essential.
The specified minimum number of Referees per mat at development competitions is one. Where judges are used they must be positioned on the side of the mat where they can observe the contest action and draw the attention of the Referee if required.

The use of judges is optional as smaller events may not be able to cover the expense associated with inviting multiple Referees.

Positioning judges at the edge of the mat, helps familiarise players, coaches and Referees with the contest area as it should be, clears the field of play of unnecessary obstructions and gives players and Referees room to manoeuvre. Referees will be able to develop effective movement patterns and independent decision making skills more quickly and judges will become familiar with the actions required to query a refereeing decision when working on a CARE system.

**Matside Coaching:**

- *Matside coaching is allowed throughout the duration of the contest.*

**Rationale:**

Due to the low level infrastructure and the facilities available to organisers of development events, the spectators may be positioned closer to the mat than the coaches. Therefore it would be ineffective to only allow coaches to communicate between Matte and Hajime, when at the majority of sports centres, they could move a few metres and coach for the duration of the contest. It may also help to make for a more positive experience for development players. Matside coaching should be positive and should not include criticism of officials or pre-emptive scoring.

**LEVELS FOUR AND FIVE — PERFORMANCE/ELITE**

For the purpose of preparing players for International events, full IJF or EJU rules will apply. Some events of this level will be bound by contract with the IJF or EJU.

**TECHNICAL RESTRICTIONS**

It has been necessary to adjust the definitions of ‘Technical Restrictions’ rules applied to players under 10 and under 12 years of age as some have been superseded by the IJF guidelines and the need for greater clarity to facilitate a more consistent understanding by all.

It is recommended that the ‘Technical Restrictions’ are maintained but modified and updated as suggested in the rule modifications below and to be applied as follows:

- in all Levels 1-3 competitions which involve players the under 12 years of age
- in all Levels 1 competitions for players of any age

**RULE MODIFICATIONS**

The following modifications provided by the Chair of Referees Commission:

1. *No throwing techniques are allowed with the arm around uke’s neck similar to Kubi-nage.*

   It is not permissible to apply any form of hip throw with the arm of tori around the neck of uke and falling directly to the ground without the separation of tori and uke. The arm around the neck must
have the joint of the arm at the back of neck of uke and tori must throw uke on to the tatami without separation of the arm to invalidate the technique.

2. **No drop-knee techniques.**

   It is not permissible to apply any forward throwing technique by tori dropping with both knees simultaneously to the ground before uke has landed on the tatami.

3. **No sutemi-waza techniques.**

   It is not permissible to apply sutemi-waza techniques; this means techniques where the body of tori impacts with the tatami before that of uke and uke is being thrown with techniques similar to tomoe-nage or sumi-gaeshi.

**Note:** Contestants who do not adhere to these rules will be penalised with shido. Given that shido now has no cross over into scores unless the same contestant incurs four, this will not negatively impact the contest results.

**CONCLUSION**

British Judos aims to deliver medals and provide 5% growth across the board. This Pathway provides the stepping stones required for potential performance players to develop their skills while offering our recreational players opportunities to compete at a suitable level.

The different levels reflect and should cater for the differing needs of players, starting with introductory events designed to be enjoyable and a positive learning experience and moving gradually towards the higher levels where full IJF rules are used to prepare our aspiring performance players for international competition.

The tournament structure, the contest rules and the approach towards the players will vary between the Levels in order to suit the needs of the players so that everybody, whether recreational competitor or aspiring elite performer, is well catered for so that we can both increase the numbers taking part and also ensure that everybody has the opportunity for both enjoyment and improvement.

*Colin McIver*

*Technical Director*

*June 2013*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Event</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT/RECREATIONAL</th>
<th>NATIONAL EVENTS</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE/ELITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Level</td>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>Aspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Type</td>
<td>Red Belt Rumble Intra/Inter Club Mini-Me’s Mini-Mon</td>
<td>Junior Open Senior Open (non-ranking) Masters (non-ranking)</td>
<td>BC for 10/11 yrs School Games British Schools’ Ranking Events Area Opens</td>
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<td>Competition Format (Recommended)</td>
<td>Pools Only (everyone receives a medal) Pools into Knockout (generally crossover)</td>
<td>• Compound Knockout • Pools into Knockout and Simple Repechage • Pools Throughout</td>
<td>• Compound Knockout • Pools into Knockout and Simple Repechage • Pools Throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum Contest Areas</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Any Number Decided by BJA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Entries (Per Contest Area)</td>
<td>75 Under 16 yrs 50 Seniors</td>
<td>75 Under 16 yrs 50 Seniors</td>
<td>75 Under 16 yrs 50 Seniors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tournament Director (Minimum Qualification)</td>
<td>Level Two Coach or Contest Recorder (CR)</td>
<td>Contest Recorder (CR)</td>
<td>Senior Recorder (SR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referee in Charge (Minimum Qualification)</td>
<td>Level 2 Coach or BJA ‘C’</td>
<td>BJA ‘C’</td>
<td>BJA ‘B’ National</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referees and Judges (Minimum Per Contest Area)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competition Officials (Minimum Per Contest Area)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 - one must be a CR or above 2 – one CR or above plus 1 Timekeeper or above</td>
<td>2 - two CRs or above 2 - one CR or above plus 1 Timekeeper or above</td>
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<td>Medical Requirements (Minimum Per Contest Area)</td>
<td>1 First Aider</td>
<td>1 First Aider</td>
<td>1 First Aid/Physiotherapist 1 Doctor 1 Medical Station</td>
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<td>Competition Area (Minimum Sizes)</td>
<td>Club Mat Area - (Contact BJA if smaller than 5x5m contest area and 3m safety area.)</td>
<td>5m x 5m contest area 3m safety area</td>
<td>6m x 6m contest area 3m safety area</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7m x 7m contest area 3m outside safety area 4m adjoining safety area</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7m x 7m contest area 3m outside safety area 4m adjoining safety area</td>
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</table>
## British Judo Association

### Competition Pathway – Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Level</th>
<th>Level One</th>
<th>Level Two</th>
<th>Level Three</th>
<th>Level Four National Events</th>
<th>Level Four National Events</th>
<th>Level Four National Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of Event</td>
<td>Development/Recreational</td>
<td>Development/Recreational</td>
<td>Development/Recreational</td>
<td>Aspiring</td>
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<td>Performance/Elite</td>
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<td>Participant Level</td>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
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<td>- Shido for offences below the belt</td>
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<td>- Use of Technical Restrictions for players Under 12 years</td>
<td>- Use of Technical Restrictions for players Under 12 years</td>
<td>IJF Contest Rules Apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contest Rules</td>
<td>Modified IJF Contest Rules</td>
<td>Modified IJF Contest Rules</td>
<td>Modified IJF Contest Rules</td>
<td>IJF Contest Rules Apply</td>
<td>IJF Contest Rules Apply</td>
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<td>- Shido for offences below the belt</td>
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<td>IJF Contest Rules Apply</td>
<td>IJF Contest Rules Apply</td>
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<td>- Use of Technical Restrictions for players Under 12 years</td>
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<td>2 per competition area positioned at edge of competition area with CARE System</td>
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<td>Medical</td>
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<td>Medical attention will not automatically result in Kiken-gachi</td>
<td>Medical attention will not automatically result in Kiken-gachi</td>
<td>IJF Contest Rules Apply</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matside Coaching</td>
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<td>No if TD is SR Yes if TD is PCC or above</td>
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<td>£20</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2

Time for Aggressive Changes

Andrew Moshanov reports back on the Technical Congress and says there is a need for direct and aggressive changes.

The BJA Technical Congress was structured as a series of presentations, all of which revolved around the principal topic of the weekend – implementation of British Judo’s Long Term Player Development model. The key to the whole concept can be easily summed up in the sentence “deliver the right training at the right time in the right measure”, which sounds like common sense and rings true for every educator and coach, but in reality appears to be a concept that is extremely difficult to implement. Moreover, to answer the principal question of coaching “what is right and what is wrong” for a given age, requires certain knowledge, experience, intelligence and sometimes intuition. Very often coaches do not have the ability to know the answers.

A series of presentations, which included our own and guest speakers from France and Germany, as well as a playback of video materials featuring highlights from domestic children’s events, reinforced everyone’s impression that children’s judo is an area of weakness in terms of providing “right training” appropriate for this age.

Everyone during the congress shared the same feeling that we have too often failed to distinguish between children’s and senior judo practically in all aspects of teaching, so that today children’s judo is an exact replica of the senior version of the sport, and moreover no less strenuous.

It is widely felt that Judo has become largely a children’s activity for leisure, fun and sport. It is also worth noting that a significant number of our young judo population would not wish to compete at all and would like to see it more as fun and leisure.

“”To respect this trend, the BJA feels it absolutely vital to produce a series of new initiatives targeting the younger age group 6-14 yrs olds, which currently accounts for 75% of all BJA members” said BJA Chairman, Design White.

The over emphasis on competitive judo, over the last few decades, has resulted in a detrimental impact on the junior judo and downgrading of overall technical quality. Objectives and methods of competitive adult judo has been introduced to younger and younger age groups, which in combination with an uncontrolled and unrestricted usage of senior judo techniques, lead to a situation where educational values of judo were neglected and overwhelmed with the cult of performance achievement. It was a remarkable moment at the congress when everybody almost unanimously voted in favour of the statement made by Colin Mciver, that “children do overcompete”. At the same time as it was shown by Jane Bridge (in her presentation “Children’s competition under modified rules in France”), that it is possible to give a totally different, educational profile, to the children’s competitions and tackle the issue of “burning out” and over competing here in UK, if we would follow the similar way.

However, it is remarkable to recognise that the leading and consistently successful British Coaches have been following the LTPD concept in their clubs for years to a lesser extent, and thus providing right training at the right time. It was really enlightening for me to get to know that Don Werner from Pinewood JC is in favour of “age bandaging”, he is a proponent of the concept of “technical restrictions” in teaching children and has firmed on the strict timelines in his teaching. He would never present to children younger than 10-12 a high collar grip, as he says “it simplifies the job to unbalance the opponent (Kuzushi) and diminishes the proper hand work for this purpose”; he would not teach them belt grip or “diagonal / over-the-head belt grip” until they enter cadet performance stage and would face the necessity to struggle against it; he sets for the kids clear personal targets to meet prior entering their ever first content.

It was my pleasure to meet a number of coaches during the Congress who managed to turn the situation to their advantage, described as “one skills development training during a week and competitions through the weekends”, by setting for their players at certain events technical goals (such as to try new combination, check how this or that counter work against a particular attack, experiment with one or the other grip, etc.) and turning medal tally into a secondary issue. I personally witness how rapidly those children (some
Time for Aggressive Changes

Cont. from page 1

from WCSP squad started to progress once they learned to distinguish between performance and educational contests.

During the Technical Conference it was made clear by everyone that it is absolutely vital for British Judo to buy in the concept of LTPD and as a part of it adopt new thinking. Judo as the sport for children, and re-emphasise its educational element at the first stages. We need to re-focus Judo for children on enjoyment and re-think methods of recognition of a child’s progress in Judo. The latter can be best achieved with the implementation of Junior Technical Grading Scheme.

BJA Chief Executive Scott McCarthy referred to the menu of proposed changes on the horizon as a "Technical Renaissance", which we need to implement sooner rather than later. As time works against us we need to work aggressively and ensure its prompt delivery.

Immediate Actions:

New Junior Technical Grading scheme.

The Southern Area has volunteered to be first to test a pilot of the new Junior Technical Grading Scheme from October 2006 - January 2007. The technical content of the pilot is still undergoing a series of consultations, however, it is already possible to state that it will turn the conventional grading into an examination of skills and its application through assessed in a non-competitive environment. Followed with its explanation to the club coaches and the Examiners, re-training the pilot will be tested in all four Southern Counties. The full draft of the pilot will be displayed at the BJA web-page http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/technical in the area restricted to BJA registered coaches.

Please, follow the news and updates and submit your opinions, views and concerns.

"Technical quality" of children’s judo.

Implementation of restrictions for inappropriate techniques U12 (as leg grabs, knee-drop techniques, etc) made effective since January, 1, 2007.

Follow the updates from National Referee Commission at the BJA web-page http://www.britishjudo.org.uk/technical/referee
Appendix 2

Trials of New Policy: Definition of Purpose

Since 1st January the British Judo Association has applied (on a trial basis) new technical policy for juniors. This is part of a large number of amendments and proposed changes described as the Technical Renaissance. The trials started earlier this year with the implementation of restrictions on certain techniques recognised as inappropriate under the ages of 10 and 12 years.

Techniques restricted for U12 (A Band, 1995-1996) are those including a knee-dropping element and leg and neck grappling. Juniors U10 (A Band, 1997-1998) have been restricted even further with no Sutemi waza (sacrifice body dropping techniques) scored. This is not a banning of techniques, but a deliberate delay in their presentation to children at these respective ages. It is believed to be a way forward for juniors in order to obtain sound throwing skills, as they will have an extended time to spend on trying, building and mastering the fundamental techniques and skills. Also, this policy will restrict children from picking “easy technical solutions, such as grappling” and will not challenge their willingness and consistency in trying to get the “difficult skills” first.

The majority of coaches and parents support and understand the approach chosen to elevate the standard of junior judo in Great Britain. A full display of thinking behind this policy was made in March at the Midland Area Coach-to-Coach course for 160 qualified coaches. Analysis of feedback shows that 90% of them support and welcome the proposed changes regardless of the few grey areas existing on the way to implementation. I sincerely believe that we are on the road to recovery. However, how soon it will happen depends on us all.

Application of a new policy for particular age groups is inter-related with the complex and complicated issue of the junior competition structure. In fact, we have advised tournament organisers on implementation of compulsory age banding of all children’s events to start with under 12s. There is a strong opinion that those still requesting “no age banding” (often stretching them from 8 to 15) are serving their own interests to keep tournament management as simple as possible. At the same time we need to recognise the complexity of the issue: lack of depth in some areas, age groups, weight categories, etc.

The starting point could be definition of a purpose. With this respect, I will be looking to profile all children’s events into a few distinct categories with clear aims and objectives. If we take a look at our rivals (other European judo nations) we can see all of them recognise three essential stages in the personal progress in judo: introduction to judo, general improvement, and personal improvement. Their competition structures offer three principal types of events/learning (under 10s), development (under 12s) and performance (over 12s) objectives.

Once such a definition is assimilated it is easy to apply necessary changes in the current competition structure and realise that there is no universal format of a judo event, which is able to suit every member in the club from 8 to 15. There should be few categories of events matching particular learning objectives and abilities of children. In this case, technical restrictions can be viewed as an educational tool and a means to establish an appropriate learning environment with a progressive increase in demands.

There is an area associated with “late beginners”, which may seem as grey in regards to age banding of children events. For example, someone who started judo at 12 or even 16 and falls out of the proposed age bands framework. What sort of events can we provide for him? Unfortunately, we are used to place such category of members into extreme situations. One is mixing them with much younger but skilled players, where “late beginners” start utilising their advantage in age or strength and lose a focus on development. In another scenario they are mixed up with the player of their age but dramatically exceeding them in skills (“early beginners”).

Here they are trying to survive rather than develop their judo. This is how some under-developed players (below an acceptable standard) can be seen at the National Age Band Championships. Both options are detrimental, and difference in skills cause serious traumas and injuries. The purpose of an event is key. It is not beneficial for a beginner to skip over the major phase of learning regardless of the late start. They need to have sufficient number of learning events. Grading for under 10 Mon can best serve the purpose, when technical restrictions are fully applied. This type of event for lower grades needs to become the principal area to learn, develop, test and prove technical skills for this category of members. Then they will be able to catch up with the others.
Appendix 2

Technical Renaissance Q&A

Dave Duffy, BJA Coaching Officer put several searching questions to our Technical Director Andrew Moshav who explains how the term Technical Renaissance represents a "Judo for all" and a "Judo for Life" movement.

What is Technical Renaissance?
The word "renaissance" relates to times in history when society re-thought and brought back certain values of the past. Jigoro Kano devised judo as a means of physical education and he brought in the two very powerful philosophical concepts – ‘mutual benefit’ and ‘maximum efficiency’. In recent times this attitude (regarded as true spirit of judo), has become overshadowed as the Olympic sport became dominant. The BJA intend to refocus on the traditional values and have dubbed this movement "Technical Renaissance".

Why are we piloting a 'Technical' (Non-competitive) grading scheme?
Fighting ability does not necessarily reflect the degree of judo knowledge, and cannot therefore properly evidence someone’s personal development. Significant advantages can be gained by using this alternative technical model of progression in judo. The scheme has been designed as a knowledge-based system and will evidence the personal development of judoists. It provides opportunities to stay in and enjoy judo for a variety of people most of whom are not "tough guys" or "born fighters", but nevertheless could be supporters and promoters of judo later on in life. In fact, this approach was in place at the very early days, but unfortunately faded away as judo fell under the spell of the competitive stereotype for so long! Hopefully via this pilot we will begin to bring it back.

How will a Technical promotions work in such a competitive sport as judo?
The Technical grading syllabus presents judo as a set of formal tasks embracing all aspects of performance skills as required in competitive judo. Candidates are required to demonstrate the application of techniques in a range of realistic situations and display an in-depth understanding of judo. They will no longer need to prove their skills with a given number of wins over other candidates. It is worth noting that such schemes are already in operation in many countries that are all very successful in both retaining their membership figures and excelling in High Performance areas.

What is the “new technical policy” for children under 12’s in judo?
The policy for children Under 12 and 10 is a part of the ‘big picture’ in our Technical Renaissance framework. It is a set of restrictions relating to the application of certain throws, which have been recognised as inappropriate to be presented earlier than these ages. They are all forms of leg grappling, throws incorporating knee dropping and neck grappling for under 12’s, and even stricter restrictions are employed for under 10’s i.e. no sacrifice or deliberate body dropping throws. The techniques themselves are not banned, but it is the timing of their presentation to children which we have deliberately postponed.

Why deliberately postpone the introduction of these actions?
Judo is an extremely complex, technical and physical sport with a range of variables affecting competitive performance, which makes it difficult to prioritise the components to be learnt first. Most complex skills need to be studied for longer and should be broken down into less complex actions where possible and presented in a logical progression with increasing demands. Let us take as an example Kuzushi (the art of breaking an opponent’s balance), it lies at the core of judo and should be regarded as one of most complex skills. It includes definite hand, body and footwork, which are essential elements of an effective judo throw. In contrast, such techniques as leg grabs can be executed successfully when a player is able to grapple an ankle or knee. By delaying the practice of such techniques we can prevent children from picking up these "easily worked grappling solutions" and allocate significantly more time for the purpose of building fundamental skills. It will help fill the gaps, which have been largely missed in our system. It will also help players to build an in-depth knowledge of judo and look at being successful in international performance later.

Why 12?
The first age band of the National Age Bands Championships, is Band 8, for players between the ages of 12 and 13. Given that judo is a late-specialisation sport this is considered to be the right time for players to enter an elite program of nurturing and development. At the same time, one needs to take a note of the fact that there is no formal system of talent identification in judo (due to complexity of demands and variety of pathways to win). By far the strongest characteristic demanded by the current system of talent identification is the ability to perform successfully in a competitive environment. Ironically, this seems to be the only way favoured by the majority of performance coaches. They start to throw much younger kids into this “melting pot” of competition circuits in order to prepare them to meet such a “talent identification criteria” by the age of 12. However, psychologically and psychologically it is not desirable to impose such pressure (mistakenly associated with “talent development”) on players beneath the age of 12. Moreover, the results of biomechanical analysis conducted on behalf of the BJA by Loughborough University compliment the above statement and suggest that players younger than 12 are not physically capable of conducting a full range of judo skills and techniques without running the risk of incurring physiological damage. These conclusions would therefore support the suggestion that talent identification should not take place within an age group younger than 12.

Application of technical restrictions for under 12’s is aimed at the creation of an appropriate learning environment for them at the “Learning to Train” stage in the language of Long Term Athlete Development concept.

What if I accidentally apply a “restricted throw” in a contest?
Ten to 15 years ago there was a campaign aimed particularly against “hopping and dropping” in junior judo, however, it was associated with penalties to be given to a player who repeatedly applied knee drops. With the current approach, you will not be penalised, but the referee will remind you about the new rules and will ask you to focus on the other techniques.

For players aged under 12 is vital to learn and there is no need to try to showcase ultimate skills. Is it possible to imagine such a school where they would punish a child for his poor performance in running before the stage where he can walk properly? Or should a child be penalised for poor results in home-
work? Common sense invites us to think that a teacher will need to give such a pupil extra time to cope with any difficult task.

**How the child’s age will be considered?**
The year of birth is the primary consideration for the age banding of all the events. Thus, age band 'A' with the years of birth 1995-1996 falls under the category of "under 12's" in 2007 and is therefore subject to the "new technical policy". Similarly, children born in 1997-1998 will form a group of "under 10's" (Band 'AA') in 2007.

**Can I compete in the next age group if I am in the under 12's?**
The general recommendation is that players of each age band can compete with the next age band in these mixed age events, but not with any band more than one stage higher. So if you are under 10 it is not advised for you to be mixed with over 12s (in this case the age difference could be more than 4-5 years). If you are under 12 (but in the "A" Band), then you can join the event for over 12s with the agreement of parents and coach who will be asked to sign a waiver but you may not compete with players from Category C and above.

**Will implementation of compulsory age banding reduce the number of events for children?**
As you can see from the table below a flexible system is being permitted to start with. We do recognise the lack of depth in some age groups and weight categories, existing within areas or clubs, so we will keep investigating the feasibility for approving applications for exemptions.

For a long time it has been a common practice in British judo to stage a mixed age events commonly stretching from age of 8 to 15. Safety policy and educational considerations adopted in international youth sport recommend a minimum 2-year age banding, especially in those involving full physical contact. We are far from implementing the same approach; however, by introducing this new policy we have drawn the first line at the age of 12, which is a starting point for reform. Obviously, we are at the very beginning of restructuring of our own system of domestic competitions in order to give the events more definite objectives – educational, developmental or performance. The number of events should not go down, we are looking to raise their quality and give a certain profile.

**Will the technical restrictions be applied to junior grading events?**
It is not beneficial for any beginner (regardless of age) to skip over the learning and developmental stage to work on the full list of performance throws straight away. Sadly, the current competitive grading system for juniors allows them to progress rapidly without proving any sound technical knowledge and gives them opportunities to use almost every form of ‘ultimate performance throw’ (drops, leg grabs, etc) in order to be promoted to 7th, 8th and 9th! Grading organisations should now be applying the Under 10’s technical restrictions to all regular grading events for juniors of grades below 10th. More regardless of the players’ age to help address this. In my personal opinion, the overall quality of judo would benefit from extending this an approach into senior gradings too, say from 9 to 7kyu.

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Note: A signed waiver from a players’ coaches or Parent will permit categories A and B, but only in the interim period until 1st January 2003 – from then on this concession will be discontinued.
Appendix 2

MODIFIED RULES

by Marion Woodard

International referee and senior examiner, Marion Woodard analyses the benefits of using modified rules at junior events, which she claims include a higher level of enjoyment, greater use of tachi-waza techniques and a greater range of tachi-waza techniques. Now she hopes that the Association will start to introduce modified Contest Rules at further events.

Imagine yourself as a mini-mon player in your first-ever contest. You’ve coped with being sick because of nervousness, dealt with the confusing mass of mats and people in a huge sports hall, found your way to Mat 3 (whatever that is), remembered your name for the lady who keeps yelling things while sitting at a table, remembered that you had to bow somewhere, and have taken hold of that REALLY fierce-looking giant opposite you. Then someone in a blue jacket is waving his hands at you, and saying funny words that sound familiar because you heard them from your coach. You finish the fight and someone tells you that you lost, … but you really tried your best to attack, and you didn’t notice where you were, and your face hurt because your opponent kept throwing you on the ground. Then your coach says there’s another competition next week — “would you like to go?”

The UJF Contest Rules are designed for use in international competitions at Olympic and world levels with highly skilled professional senior judoka, and to facilitate promotion of judo to the public – particularly television audiences. So how appropriate and useful are these Rules for the competition scenario described above? It’s not surprising that we lose many junior players from the sport.

The BJA is implementing projects such as the Long Term Player Development programme and changes to the Coaching Scheme. In essence, the aims and anticipated outcomes of these projects are to improve the technical skills and knowledge of players and coaches, improve retention of players and create more enjoyment, opportunities and recognition for non-competitive players.

It is now being recognized that many players do not want to concentrate only on contests, and that competitive-type activities should be made more enjoyable. However, the contest rules under which players practice their contest skills do not support player enjoyment, or allow development of good and safe competition techniques, then significant changes are needed.

Over the last 8 years or so, various club and county competitions around the country have used modified Contest Rules for mini-mon and/or novice – 60+ mon players. Various versions have been used, but the rationale for all versions has been to improve contest experience for younger players. Many European federations have modified rules for junior events, thus providing extensive evidence of good practice.

WHAT ARE THE MODIFICATIONS?

The rules have been variations of: No penalties with the referee informing / educating players of prohibited actions (with exception of intentionally dangerous acts), Minimum score of 10/10 for tachi-waza, No drop techniques, No sotme-waza, No kote-waza, No leg graps (including hand assisted su-waza / ko-suchi gam), Only 2-handed gripping allowed (except for ippon seoi-nage), No entry into ne-waza unless a throws action is awarded a score, Coaches not allowed to shout specific advice or negative comments about opponent could give general encouragement.

The use of modified rules at Sussex County and Kim Ryu events was evaluated by questionnaires that were distributed to parents, coaches, tournament officials and referees. The feedback from all groups showed overwhelming support for the modified rules. The results (summarized below) of these evaluations are similar to the information received in discussions with other officials who ran competitions with modified rules.

So, what next? As Lisa McAfee quoted at the recent technical conference “I think this is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting things to change.”

The use of full UJF contest rules for junior players does facilitate good technical skills or create a positive learning experience for players. Changes in contest conditions are needed to complement the current targets for technical development. It is hoped that the Association will recommend and promote innovation in competitions through measures such as modified Contest Rules.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

More enjoyment for players – no penalties meant that although players may have been more cautious there were no negative elements to this.

Educative elements over several competitions meant that players learnt rules in a more realistic manner – and learnt not to do the same actions.

Players demonstrated that they could throw with skill using the techniques from the syllabus.

No ne-waza unless a score resulted in higher percentage of contests being won with tachi-waza AND a marked decrease of wins by opportunist only fighters who rely on waiting for their opponent to attack.

One concern of coaches in the use of this rule was sotme-waza was not allowed because a throwing action had not been awarded a score by the referee, but then both judges did award a score. In practice the impact of this rule for players affected in the few occasions where this arose was far outweighed by the greater improvement of most fighters.

At this rule results in supports greater usage of tachi-waza, this supports total player development as proficiency in tachi-waza takes much longer than ne-waza.

The range of tachi-waza used increased significantly as players did not rely on one throw.

Players’ actions focused on techniques and not grip fighting.

There was a significant decrease in injuries to uke caused by drop techniques and sotme-waza.

Different players won fights and medals from the usual suspects as players with only grip fighting / street fighting skills did not win players with kake judo did not win – or they improved the quality of their actions as lesser technique was ‘not rewarded’. (NB this rule alone resulted in significant increases in the quality of throwing actions) players who rely on ne-waza for the sake of not mistakes of their opponent to move into ne-waza did not win.

The fringe benefits were

There was less friction between coaches and referees as players were not penalized.

There were significant reductions in injuries and tearful episodes due to emotional stress.

All competition officials enjoyed the events more as the quality of judo improved, and the whole atmosphere was positive as players had greater enjoyment. Remember there’s a real national shortage of competition officials and referees, so anything that results in more volunteers being willing to spend hours at an event has to be a bonus!

Last but definitely not least

Parents enjoyed the event more as they saw that their child was given a chance to use judo skills not just strength/ grip / leg grab and there wasn’t the perceived emphasis on penalties / negative actions over technique.