

All Japan Judo Federation

Coach Development Guidelines

The All Japan Judo Federation (AJJF) established the “Long-Term Development Guidelines” in 2023 to address pressing issues pertaining to judo, such as declining participation. Additionally, the guidelines promote the healthy lifelong development of individuals through judo, identify the erosion of judo’s core values, outline the related challenges, and propose a strategic path for addressing contemporary Japanese societal issues through judo.

To support this vision, the AJJF introduced a “Certified Judo Coach Qualification System” in 2013 to ensure the quality and quantity of judo coaches. However, further elevation of the role of judo coaches is necessary. Judo coaches play a crucial role in addressing the many challenges outlined in the “Long-Term Development Guidelines.” These guidelines redefine the role of judo coaches and establish clear coaching standards that the AJJF aims to cultivate.



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1

The Essential Value of Judo (Judo's True Meaning) and the Judo Coach

Professor Jigoro Kano stated in his teachings, “Judo is the way of most effectively utilizing the power of the mind and body. Through the practice of attacking and defending, one trains and cultivates both the body and mind to comprehend the true essence of this way. The ultimate purpose of judo practice is to perfect oneself through this training and contribute to society.”

Professor Kano's emphasis on both the “purpose” and “goal” of judo practice is particularly important. Professor Kano argued that practicing offense and defense are merely means to an end, and improving one's judo performance or winning competitions are limited goals confined to a specific time and space, rather than the ultimate purpose. Even enjoying leisure time through judo or maintaining a healthy physique are short-term goals and means to an end, not the ultimate goal. This teaching implies that the ultimate goals of judo practice are to cultivate both the mind and body through the optimal use of one's energy, understand the true essence of judo, and use one's abilities to contribute positively to society.

Under the constraints of the Occupation, postwar judo inevitably emphasized its competitive aspects, leading to a stronger focus on winning and achieving specific goals. Consequently, the ultimate purpose of judo has often been overlooked, leading to an excessive focus on immediate objectives that has inevitably influenced the current state of judo. However, we must not forget the ideal of judo envisioned by Professor Kano: a lifelong practice that cultivates both the mind and body, enabling individuals to contribute positively to society. To ensure a promising future for judo, the AJJF must recognize the loss of judo's core values and take on the challenge of realizing Professor Kano's vision, which has remained unfulfilled throughout the prewar and postwar periods. The social standing of judo is heavily influenced by the behavior of its practitioners, particularly coaches. To ensure the future of judo, redefining the role of coaches and developing specific training guidelines for them, as outlined in the “Coach Development Guidelines” are urgently needed.



2

Reevaluating the Role of the Judo Coach

The roles and responsibilities of a judo coach extend far beyond simply teaching offensive and defensive techniques. Professor Kano stated that an ideal judo coach should be proficient in offensive and defensive techniques, understand the theory of competition, and possess the necessary knowledge and skills in physical education. Additionally, judo coaches should have a deep understanding of moral education, be skilled in teaching methods, and possess profound knowledge of applying judo principles to everyday life. In other words, a judo coach must possess technical skills and the ability to convey the deeper meaning and values of judo. This requires a thorough understanding of physical education, moral philosophy, and the practical application of the principle of Seiryoku-Zenyo (maximum efficient use of energy).

As judo coaches interact with others by virtue of their position, they must influence not only those directly involved in judo (e.g., parents and volunteer coaches), but also the wider public. They should strive to cultivate the character of these individuals and promote healthy development throughout their lives, ultimately contributing to a harmonious society.

Professor Kano also encouraged his students to question everything and adopt a scientific approach to judo training. He stated, “If there is any discrepancy in the principles I teach, I would rather prioritize research into those principles. That is how I approach teaching. Even after I am gone, Kodokan Judo will endure because as long as people continue to study its fundamental principles, the true nature of its techniques will become clear.” His words imply the significance of a proactive and inquisitive approach characterized by a constant pursuit of truth and the willingness to embrace change. His statement highlights the importance of ongoing self-improvement for judo coaches, emphasizing their role as lifelong learners who must adapt to the evolving needs of society and set an example for others.

Recent scientific research has provided substantial support for the principles of the judo coach as envisioned by Professor Kano. Today, sports coaches are expected to possess a comprehensive skill set, including specialized knowledge of their sport (knowledge of skills and tactics related to a specific sport), interpersonal skills (knowledge for maintaining good relationships with others), and self-awareness (including reflection and self-regulation). Modern coaching philosophy emphasizes that athletes should undergo holistic development encompassing both athletic skills and personal growth. Thus, coaches are expected to contribute to the overall development of their athletes, fostering their growth as individuals who can make positive contributions to society.

In addition to technical and tactical expertise, sports coaches must possess a profound understanding of the “Four Cs”: competence, confidence, connection, and character. These are essential for fostering holistic athletic development. Competence refers to the acquisition of technical and tactical proficiency, confidence is related to self-efficacy and self-esteem, connection emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships, and character focuses on the cultivation of moral and ethical values.

3 A Judo Coach Trained by the AJJF

In 2022, the AJJF described the “Profile of an Ideal Judo Coach,” specifying six key qualities and competencies that all coaches should strive to develop. The “Long-Term Development Guidelines” established by the AJJF in 2023 addressed the challenges pertaining to Japanese judo and outlined the role judo should play in society. Many of the challenges outlined in these guidelines require judo coaches to take the lead in finding solutions.

Building upon the “Profile of an Ideal Judo Coach” and “Long-Term Development Guidelines,” the “Coach Development Guidelines” establish a clear vision for the type of coach the AJJF seeks to develop. These guidelines shape the future of the AJJF Certified Judo Coach curriculum.

In addition to the “Coach Development Guidelines,” the AJJF is committed to establishing a “Coach Lifelong Learning System” to foster a culture of continuous learning among judo coaches and ensure that they are equipped to provide high-quality coaching.



The Ideal Judo Coach Envisioned by the AJJF

1 A Coach Who Can Accurately Convey the Essence of Kodokan Judo

■ Deeply understand and strive to embody the characteristics of the “ideal judo coach” envisioned by Professor Kano.

Judo coaches should ideally be skilled in both offensive and defensive techniques, possess a thorough understanding of competitive principles, have the necessary knowledge and skills of a physical educator, and be well-versed in the theory of moral education. Furthermore, they should be proficient in teaching methodologies and possess deep knowledge and understanding of how to apply the principles of judo to everyday life.

- Thoroughly learn and become proficient in the “principles of judo (true meaning)” pursued by Professor Kano through various resources, including books, and be able to effectively communicate its appeal to the broader community.
- Understand judo training methodologies, including kata (forms), randori (free practice), lectures, and question-and-answer sessions. Be able to impart moral principles to society and strive to apply and contribute to the qualities and abilities developed through judo practices.



2 A Coach Who Develops Individuals for the Benefit of Society

■ Foster lifelong personal growth, taking a long-term view and not prioritizing short-term wins and losses.

■ Develop individuals who will contribute positively to society, thus enriching cultural life and enhancing the social standing of judo.

- Fully understand the ultimate aim of judo and provide appropriate support to help individuals achieve their goals. This includes embracing the diverse values inherent in judo and communicating them effectively to both judo practitioners and the wider community while avoiding an unhealthy obsession with winning at all costs. (Victory should be pursued, and the “principles of winning and losing” explored, as a means toward achieving this ultimate aim.)
- Judo promotes healthy lifelong development of the mind and body, supports fulfilling lives, and contributes to a more harmonious society.
- Recognize the significant individual variations in physical development (including an understanding of the relative age effect), cultivate lifelong personal growth in both oneself and others, and maintain a long-term perspective.
- Be able to articulate the characteristics of judo and its various societal benefits to both practitioners and the public. This includes highlighting their roles in promoting physical literacy, extending healthy lifespans, fostering overall wellness, and providing ongoing support in these areas.
- Maintain a strong sense of responsibility to share judo’s appeal with those who have never experienced it.

3 A Coach Who Respects Human Rights and Embraces Diversity

■ Do not tolerate discrimination, violence, abusive language, or harassment; respect the rights, dignity, and personalities of all people, and aim to treat them fairly.

- Absolutely reject all forms of discrimination, violence, abusive language, and harassment. Treat everyone with respect. Honor their rights, dignity, and individuality; ensure fair treatment for all.
- Respect human rights, celebrate diversity, treat all individuals equitably, and foster a spirit of fair play that actively combats injustice.
- Reject all forms of discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other factor, and actively work to eliminate such biases.
- Have zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior, including violence and harassment, and take proactive steps to prevent and eradicate such actions.
- Understand the potential harm of controlling, intimidating, high-pressure, and authoritarian coaching styles. Instead, foster an environment that supports autonomy and empowers individuals to make their own decisions.



4 A Coach Who Prioritizes Safety and Ensures Full Compliance

■ Maintain an unwavering commitment to preventing accidents, possess the necessary knowledge, and take proactive steps to ensure a safe training environment.
■ Adhere to all applicable laws and social norms, acting as a positive role model within the community.

- Thoroughly analyze past serious judo-related accidents, identifying their root causes and applying scientific knowledge and advanced practical skills to create a safe and secure learning environment in order to prevent future incidents.
- Be well-prepared to respond to emergencies and possess both the knowledge and skills to administer appropriate first aid.
- Demonstrate high ethical standards, cultivate virtue through judo, and consistently act as a positive role model.



5 A Coach Who Embodies the Judo MIND*

- Demonstrate respect and proper etiquette, make principled decisions, conduct oneself with dignity, and earn the respect of others.
- Foster an environment of mutual appreciation, trust, cooperation, harmony, and support (sojo-sojo; helping each other, yielding to each other).

- Strive to become a virtuous person throughout life (accumulating virtuous acts).
- Accurately understand the true meaning of seiryoku-zenyo (maximum efficiency) and jita kyoei (mutual prosperity for self and others) advocated by Professor Kano, inspiring others and contributing to a harmonious society based on the concept of sojo-sojo (helping each other, yielding to each other).

※Judo MIND: Activities promoted by the AJJF since 2014, aiming to return to the spirit of Professor Jigoro Kano's teachings and the heart of judo (MIND = spirit, heart). The four letters have the following meanings: Manners, Independence, Nobility, and Dignity. Those who satisfy these are worthy of being called a true "judoka."



6 A Coach Who Continuously Grows Through Self-Improvement

- Fully understand the ultimate purpose of judo training and, while sincerely working toward achieving this goal, grow alongside other judo practitioners.
- Maintain a strong desire for self-improvement, continuously learning and staying up-to-date regarding the latest rules, coaching methods, and other relevant information, and effectively communicate these to other judo practitioners.

- Articulate the ultimate goal of judo practice (self-perfection and contributions to society) to fellow judoka and the public and strive toward this ideal together.
- Continuously learn and grow, adopting an inquisitive approach that goes beyond mere experience. This includes acknowledging personal shortcomings through self-reflection, revisiting core principles for correction, and embracing change for continuous improvement.
- Acquire scientific knowledge related to judo, such as physiology, nutrition, psychology, mechanics, and scientific training. Become proficient in safe and effective judo coaching methods and be able to logically explain the rationale behind them.
- Utilize the six stages outlined in the "Long-Term Development Guidelines" in order to provide effective and diverse coaching programs tailored to the specific characteristics of each individual.
- Design training plans that are appropriate for each stage to support judo practitioners in their long-term development.
- Recognize the importance of a continuous system for promotion and development—ensuring continuity across time and space—and leverage a consistent and progressive coaching methodology.



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