

DEVELOPMENT OF JUDO COMPETITION RULES

(A lecture given to the EJU Foundation Degree Course at Bath University by Syd Hoare 8th Dan Aug 2005)

Part One

For the first eighteen years of the existence of the Kodokan (roughly 1882-1899) there were no written rules for judo competition or randori. At least none have been discovered. Randori was one of the two training methods of the Kodokan – kata being the other one - and there must have been some agreed set of guidelines for randori during this period otherwise serious injury could have resulted. However the early Kodokan dojos were quite small and therefore capable of being supervised by Kano alone. It was not until the Kodokan dojo got much bigger that randori numbers grew making randori rules more and more necessary.

Kano mentions in his talk to the Japanese Education Society in 1888 that there were four types of randori among the jujitsu school. The first concentrated on throwing and followed the laws (hosoku) of jujitsu. The second concentrated on throws but used strength. The third concentrated on strangles and wrenching the arms (?) and the fourth concentrated on restraining the opponent and depriving him of his freedom to move. However he did not elaborate on these types of randori in this talk.

There is one early mention of a set of contest rules that were used by the Shinki-ryu Rentai Jujitsu of about 1887-97. In this system throws were given points in a hierarchy of effectiveness according to what type of throw they were. The first one to get 15 points won. The points were scored as follows:

Sutemi-waza scored 10 or 9 points.

Big throws (known as Kuji) such as uchimata, seoinage, ogoshi scored 8 or 7 points

Sukui-ashi (foot techniques) scored 6 or 5 points

Zatsugi (misc. other techniques) scored 4 or 3 points

Kumi-uchi (grappling, restraints) scored 2 or 1 point.

The one point difference between these various types of throw probably reflects the present day ippon and waza-ari difference. The ippon being the clean throw - the waza-ari lacking one key element of it.

Kano in one account said that he mixed randori and kata training when his dojo numbers were small but was forced to give this up when the numbers grew. During the early founding period the Kodokan was challenged by the Totsuka Yoshin ryu jujitsu school and by other individual jujitsu masters and these challenges would have demanded rules of some sort. Kano himself said that ‘the rules were decided by the circumstances at the time. If it was a real fight (*shinken shobu*) the outcome might be death’. Obviously one cannot go into a challenge without knowing whether rules apply or not. No doubt Kano imposed his early randori rules on any jujitsu challengers that came his way by force of his character and personal prestige. Possibly the fact that outsiders were challenging the Kodokan gave the Kodokan the right to decide the ‘rules’ in much the same way that someone challenged to a duel in medieval Europe had the right to chose his weapons.

In 1899 rules for jujitsu competition were formulated by the Dai Nippon Butokukai (The Japanese Martial Virtues Society) which was a semi-governmental body set up to control the martial arts. The Butokukai was legally a private foundation but the presence of top naval and army people, politicians, leading martial artists and the members of the Imperial family (as president) in the ruling committee made it a de facto governmental body. Kano himself was one of the early movers of the concept and later became a Butokukai councillor in 1900.

This was a very jingoistic time when Japan was successful in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 and the war against Russia in 1905/6. It was decided that fighting spirit (*shiki*) had to be fostered and Butokukai branches were set up round the country and also a Specialist Martial Arts College (Budo Senmon Gakko) was founded in Kyoto in the Butokuden. Every year in May the Butokukai was required to hold a Martial Arts Festival (Butoku Matsuri) and after that a competition (Dai Enbu Kai) which made some form of rules a necessity. At that time Kodokan judo would probably have been regarded by the Butokukai as a jujitsu school albeit a large one. This was despite the fact that Kano right from the beginning stressed his judo was different from Jujitsu.

In 1899 Kano was asked by the Butokukai chairman to produce a draft of the jujitsu competition rules and was appointed chairman of the committee to deliberate on them. It is worth noting that Japanese committees do not quite work like Western ones. Issues are not thrashed out in committee but are usually decided beforehand by informal talks between all concerned. After compromise is reached the committee meeting is where the decisions are rubber stamped. (When I was on the board of the International Sumo Federation this was very obvious. The Japanese members did not like the few foreigners on the board coming up with new ideas or objections at the meetings).

Kano not only ran a successful dojo but he would probably have been the most highly educated and best connected person among the surviving jujitsu masters for this codification of the rules. Kano quickly came up with his draft jujitsu competition rules and within a short space of time got his committee and then the Butokukai itself to accept them. Not long after this in 1900 the Kodokan accepted these rules but with three small amendments as its own competition and randori rules..

So similar were these two sets of rules that one can only conclude that Kano imposed his Kodokan judo rules on jujitsu and then went on to 'accept' these rules as his own for judo. Kano with his education, work and his high placed connections would clearly have been a very difficult man to argue against.

In fact Kano the bureaucrat may have decided that with the Butokukai planning to create some nationwide jujitsu rules it was not the tactical moment to produce his own set of rules first and that it would make more sense to push for the jujitsu rules first and try to shape them the way he wanted.

In these early sets of judo rules one can quite clearly see the rules structure under which judo competition and randori are regulated to this day. Kano got the rules right

- right from the start. This may sound a minor matter but anyone who has tried writing or amending sports rules will know how difficult this can be.

The first thing to note about these early rules is the fact that it was jujitsu *competition* rules that were first formulated. No doubt competition and randori were regarded as much the same but jujitsu consisted of many styles and techniques some of which were quite dangerous and only done in kata form. However, the objective of the Butokukai was to *standardize* the rules. In other words it wanted to create rules that would govern all jujitsu styles despite the fact that jujitsu was mostly not governed by rules in combat. To take one example how was atemi to be treated? Should it be included in the first place and if so should it be full contact or pulled punches etc? In fact atemi was not allowed in the rules thus depriving the jujitsu people of one of their major forms of offence. This process of standardization can also be seen in the way that the Butokukai dealt with kenjitsu which consisted of far more styles than jujitsu. In 1912 it recognized just one Kenjitsu kata. Japan is a very bureaucratic country and standardization is a constant powerful force.

The judo rules which the Kodokan accepted in 1900 were for randori *and* competition. For most of judo's existence the two have been quite close so this has not particularly mattered but as modern competition rules have changed, competition judo has moved away somewhat from training randori. The IJF rules for competition are now specifically described as competition rules. Rules for randori do not actually exist! For example in a contest a three man refereeing team is there to regulate the match and protect the competitors but an instructor running a randori class with twenty students on the mat is hardly likely to be able to protect all his students. An injury lawyer would probably advise judo associations to publish the differences between the two.

From 1900 to 1938 when Kano died the rules were regularly clarified and changed according to the contest problems of the time. In particular the prohibited acts repeatedly received quite a lot of attention over this period and it took many years before they were completely observed. During this period there were repeated bans on specific joint locks which leads one to think that it was difficult to eliminate them. The rule clearly prohibiting all locks other than the elbow lock for example was written into the rules in 1925 which was forty three years after the foundation of the Kodokan! Judo it seems was quite a rough activity for the first fifty years of its existence. Apart from the technical prohibitions rules were gradually introduced which regulated the conduct of judo competitions generally.

During the early period judo slowly gained its ascendancy over the surviving ju-jitsu schools but did not have its own way by any means. Jujitsu schools such as the Fusen-ryu, Takeuchi-ryu and the Yoshin-ryu and others gave the Kodokan masters some very hard times especially with their groundwork and leg locks. There was a much touted match between the Yoshin-ryu and the Kodokan about 1885 which the Kodokan *apparently* won mainly with 'small techniques' but there is no record of the rules of engagement. Author EJ Harrison who went to Japan in 1897 and began studying the jujitsu of the Tenjinshinyo school and later Kodokan judo wrote in his *Fighting Spirit of Japan* that while his teacher would not be a match for the Kodokan masters and their throwing techniques on the ground he was phenomenal.

Groundwork continued to be a problem for the Kodokan up to the mid 1920s when its new rules greatly restricted entry to groundwork.

Let us now look at the new 13 Article Butokukai Jujitsu Competition Rules which were completed in 1899:

1. Jujitsu shiai will be decided on the basis of Nagewaza and Katamewaza.
2. Nagewaza includes standing and falling throws (sutemi); Katamewaza includes shimewaza, osaewaza and kansetsuwaza.
3. The contest will be decided by the first to get two ippons. If both score one ippon the fight will be extended to enable either party to gain the third ippon and the victory.
4. Hikiwake (draw) will be allowed by the referee after a suitable time and in the case of ippon each way.
5. After the first ippon the referee will call Ippon and after the second he will call Nihon.
6. When it is difficult to decide if a throw is a full technique or if the man in groundwork just manages to escape (hold-down not specified) the referee may at his discretion call Waza-ari. When there is another Waza-ari the referee can call Awashite Ippon (same as the modern Awasete Ippon). (The referee could also call a Waza-ari after a number of near-waza-ari).
7. An Ippon for a throw must fulfil the following criteria:-
 - (a) Excluding where one party deliberately drops to the mat or falls in error a [scored] throw must be as a result of a deliberate attempt to throw or from the avoidance of that attempt.
 - (b) The thrown party (Uke) must fall face up even when it is difficult to decide whether the throw is correct or not.
 - (c) The throw must have considerable impetus (hazumi) and force (ikioi)
8. The throw will not be recognized if Uke twists in the air and avoid landing face up.
9. No matter how quickly and skilfully Uke rises to his feet from a throw such as sutemi-waza it will be recognized as valid.
10. If Uke clings, dangles or entwines himself round the thrower the referee can decide to award an ippon if it is done spectacularly.
11. In Katamewaza a competitor signals defeat by tapping twice or more on the opponents body or mat, with hand or feet or says Mairi. In Osaewaza the referee does not need to wait for the signal and can award Ippon after a suitable length of time. In the case of joint-locks and strangles he can award Ippon if the effect is apparent.
12. Since the purpose of the match it to test both the standing and groundwork abilities of the contestants the referee should caution anyone who seeks to concentrate on only one of them including those who start a match by kneeling or lying on the ground without coming to grips.
13. In Kansetsuwaza toe and finger locks and ankle locks are not included.

Let us look at each of these articles in turn to see what was included or excluded.

1. Nagewaza (standing-work) and katamewaza (groundwork) were allowed but not Atemi-waza (striking techniques) which would have been one of the chief techniques of many of the Ju-jitsu schools. Atemi had not only a knockout

function but was used to distract or unbalance the opponent or simply cause pain. One modern jujitsu expert (Sugano Hisashi) described this omission as 'like asking a bird to fly without wings'. At this early stage standing work was not given preference over groundwork although rule 12 begins to head that way.

2. The *nage-waza* included sutemiwaza (sacrifice throws) as happens today and the *katamewaza* included strangles, joint-locks and hold-downs. However the allowed locks must have included all sorts of locks such as leg-locks and wrist locks and shoulder locks. Note that *osae-waza* (restraints/hold-downs) were not defined.
3. The contest was won by the first man to get two ippons.
4. Draws (*hikiwake*) were allowed after a suitable time. The use of the word "suitable time" indicates that there was no set time limit for the match and that it was at the discretion of the referee. Contests would have been quite long (42 minutes in one case).
5. The winning ippon score (ie. the second one) was called *Nihon* by the referee.
6. In the case of a near full throw or an escape from a groundwork technique after some time, the referee could at his discretion call *Waza-ari* (literally - there is a technique). He could call it for the first good *waza-ari* or he could call it after a number of lesser *waza-aris*. And then if another *Waza-ari* was called he could announce *Waza-ari awashite Ippon* (two *waza-ari* combine to make ippon). The call *Waza-ari awasete Ippon* is the modern language version of *Waza-ari awashite Ippon*.
7. This is the definition of the throw and it is remarkable in its directness and simplicity. We can see the mention of intention (*koi*), falling in error, falling face up (*aomuke*), impetus/momentum (*hazumi*) and force (*ikioi*). Noticeable is the absence of impetus/momentum and the intention to throw from today's rules
8. Twisting out of a throw invalidates it as happens today.
9. Self-explanatory. A throw is a throw whatever *Uke* does after it. No follow-on scores as in wrestling are allowed.
10. Even if *Uke* clings to the thrower it can be counted as an ippon. This was probably inserted to prevent the groundwork specialists clinging and dragging down to the ground.
11. These are the defeat signals which are pretty much the same as today. *Mairi* & *Maitta* mean the same.
12. This is interesting because it is an attempt to shape the contest technically and not a rule to find a winner. It was inserted to limit the groundwork which if not included would have meant 100% groundwork contests since it is virtually impossible to force a contestant to stand up if he does not want to. However the 'caution' had no particular power in the modern sense. The ref could disqualify a competitor if he thought he deserved it.
13. Finger, toe and ankle locks were not allowed probably because they were seen as prone to injury but knee, shoulder, wrist, neck and spine locks were not specifically banned. Knee locks occurred in competition in the very early *Kodokan* days so perhaps these other locks were allowed as well.

Note that there were no weight categories or any system of penalizing a competitor for infringing the rules (other than excluding him from the match). The rules were very loose but as happens in Japan there were almost certainly unwritten rules which

all abided by. I have seen a similar situation in the sumo rules where the attitude was we all know what should be done so why bother writing them in the rule book. This was when I was given the task by the International Sumo Federation of translating the rules into English.

Kodokan Competition and Randori Rules

Within one year of the formulation of the Butokukai competition rules the Kodokan produced its own rules (Kodokan Judo Randori Shobu Shimpan-ho) in 1900. Note that these were randori and competition rules. They were identical to the Butokukai ones but with three small changes which were (1st) those below shodan (1st Dan) were not allowed to do Kansetsu-waza (joint-locks). (2nd) The ratio of standing work to groundwork for those below Shodan should be 70-80% to 20-30% and for those Shodan and above 60-70% to 30-40% and the (3rd) difference was in article 13 which was changed to read, “Even 1st Dan and above are not allowed to use toe and finger locks or ankle and wrist locks.” Maybe the wrist-lock inclusion here was because of a typo/omission in the earlier Butokukai rules.

Whereas the Butokukai rules were for competitions between many different jujitsu styles the Kodokan rules were purely for their own people. So similar are these two sets of rules that one must say that the Butokukai rules were a triumph for the Kodokan over Jujitsu. The Kano view prevailed.

Kano later justified his emphasis on nage-waza by saying that throws were:-

1. Better for physical development.
2. Technically much more difficult to do.
3. Katamewaza can only be done on one opponent at a time (in a combat situation).
4. Shimewaza is good for rendering unconscious and then binding up but it takes time to kill or control a strong opponent who can punch or kick his way out of trouble.
5. Nimble footwork enables a thrower to take on more than one opponent (cf No.3 above).
6. Concentrating on nage-waza first easily allows newaza to fall in place afterwards but those who concentrate on groundwork first do not easily go on to develop good standing work.

In the above sets of rules we can easily see the later development of the rules and how they and we face the same sort of problems today, such as the mixture of groundwork and standing work. Without rules restricting groundwork, judo would be almost 100% groundwork.

According to the records between 1897 and 1924 most contests were called Sambon Shobu (literally 3-ippou matches) but in fact they were fought for the best of three-ippous). The first to get two Ippons won. This slowly changed under pressure of numbers and gradually contests were fought for just one Ippon. Red & white (Kohaku) contests and contests among juniors were the first to be fought for one ippou. If scores were level or if there were no scores the referee could let the contest continue for as long as necessary (42 mins in one case in 1900) ~ then award hiki-

wake draw. However this discretion of the referee worked both ways. If there were a lot of matches on the card he could terminate bouts quite quickly.

One point to note with this best-of-three points format was that there seemed to be less emphasis on the throwing ippon as a decisive combat technique (kime-waza). This was probably because Kano said that competition was for testing the abilities of the contestants not for finding a winner.

In general the technical differences between the old traditional (ko-ryu) jujitsu, later Meiji period jujitsu and Kodokan judo in their five main technical methods were:-

1. Judo/Butokukai throws drop the opponent on to his back. Traditional Jujitsu throws drop the opponent on to any part of his body often using a joint lock (gyaku-waza) to do so. Jujitsu throws were simple and few while judo throws were many and technically more complex. (Possibly the restriction to throwing on the back indicates some influence from the Greco-Roman wrestling rules used from the first modern Olympics in 1896). Note that sumo throws are on to any part of the body.
2. Many ko-ryu Jujitsu immobilizations were with the opponent face down. However neither the early Kodokan nor Butokukai rules defined what constitutes an osae-waza. The only reference to it technically was the note that the referee could call an osae-waza win if the opponent was unable to get to his feet after a suitable time. It seems likely that the restraints had to be on the back from the very beginning especially since throws were meant to pitch the opponent onto his back.¹ This indicates some Greco-roman influence again perhaps or perhaps the Japanese desire for neatness.
3. Strangles do not appear to feature that much in ko-ryu jujitsu. As Kano himself said, “Shime-waza is good...but it takes time to control a strong opponent who can punch or kick his way out of trouble.” Strangles are also not quite so effective when the opponent can attack the fingers. Most strangles require suitable collars and lapels to be effective.
4. In traditional jujitsu any joint can be attacked whereas in Judo and the Butokukai rules certain prohibitions were included right from the start and eventually only the elbow-lock was allowed. Although jujitsu locks could be used to restrain the opponent or make him submit they were also used to wrench or damage the joints.
5. *Atemi* striking techniques were much used by the jujitsu schools but were never made part of either the Kodokan randori or the Butokukai competition rules (except in 1944). This possibly reflects the difficulties of meshing grappling and striking moves.

¹ In 1996 I was invited to Japan to give a lecture on judo. Before going I enquired about hold-downs and why they were only on face-up opponents and was eventually told that it was a principle of judo to always face the opponent. Later on this ‘rule’ about facing the opponent was brought in as a clarification of hold-downs when competitors started to hold their opponents down but without being able to ‘look’ at them. In these situations both players were facing upwards and the back of the holder above bore down on the stomach of the opponent below. In fact if you go back to judo’s jujitsu roots restraining an opponent face to face would have been a very risky move especially if he had a knife. The safest way to hold somebody down is with them face down to the floor. Maybe Kano experimented with this and abandoned the idea because it would have limited judo groundwork considerably?

Kano skilfully picked his way through these many differences and created a viable training and competitive method which spread around the world. His rules were a work of genius.

Apart from the Butokukai and Kodokan rules there were also other sets of rules in Japan such as:- Imperial Household Agency (Imperial Palace Police) Judo Rules. The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Judo Rules. The Imperial University Kosen Rules and Judo rules for Japanese troops in Korea and Manchuria and so on. The difference between these rules and those adopted by the Kodokan and the Butokukai were very small. The Kosen judo rules however continued to place much more emphasis on groundwork for several decades afterwards.

After the second world war the Butokukai was wound up by the Americans for being the focus of militarism and ultra right-wing nationalism (under the Potsdam Agreement) and both kendo and judo were banned in schools. But it was not long before judo and the Kodokan soon emerged again. Judo was allowed to continue if it was done privately as in the Kodokan (see Kotani – Judo Gokyo) Budo as a word or system was also banned. This attracted some criticism from other Japanese martial arts groups which remained banned.

Gradually the rules were added to and clarified responding to judo's rapid growth in Japan and internationally:-

One important event in 1906 which affected contests was the re-designing of the judogi that diverted judo away from small techniques and into the big scoring techniques such as Uchimata and Seoinage. The main change was to lengthen the trousers and sleeves but it was a big change.

In 1916 (Taisho 5) following a big increase in the number of competitions in Japan extra rules for dealing with injuries during a contest and for violations of the rules were added. The number of articles in the rules jumped from thirteen to sixteen and the rules were considerably fleshed out. In these rule revisions it was stated that Dojime (trunk squeeze), finger locks, neck locks and ashigarami were not allowed. Since finger locks were already banned one wonders if there were problems eradicating this technique. One can also assume that the ashi-garami leg-lock must have been used in competition up to this point.

In 1925 (Taisho 14). Much stricter rules regarding the transition from standing to groundwork were introduced. This was a reaction to the Kosen style of judo which had begun to host its own contests from 1914. Its full name was Teikoku Daigaku Kosen Senmon Gakko Judo (Imperial University attached Specialist High Schools Judo) which allowed almost unlimited groundwork. We can surmise that despite the restrictions on groundwork in the earlier rules they could not have been that successful. There were also new restrictions on anything that endangered the spine or neck. Furthermore it was stated that dojime and all joint-locks other than elbow locks were not allowed. One can assume that up to this point a variety of joint locks were done and that there were problems eradicating them. (43 years after the founding of judo!).

One new method of scoring introduced in 1925 was the rule that the referee could award an ippon to a competitor who 'skilfully' lifted his opponent up from the ground to shoulder level (Daki-age), however at the same time it was made a foul to drop the opponent from this height. This rule stayed in place till at least to 1967 when it was again included in the new IJF rules but it was very rarely if ever given a score. Thereafter it was quietly dropped. Two similar moves were later banned and they were falling backwards with the opponent in the hoisted kata-guruma position and secondly picking someone lying on his back up and driving him back down again. A third falling move was banned and that was falling backwards when the opponent was clinging to the back. The Japanese rule makers seemed to have a dislike of any of the lift up and drop techniques (*mochi-age-otoshi*) probably because they were not very technical and possibly because they were dangerous. A lot of these moves can be seen in pro-wrestling (body slams).

For a long time it was accepted that you could not score off the ground. In other words both competitors had to be standing to throw each other. This though was never written into the rules. This exposes a problem of naming. Tachi-waza is generally thought of as an alternative general term for throwing but in fact it refers to throws that are actually done standing such as Harai-goshi as distinct from *sutemi-waza* where the thrower falls to make the throw. The present rules especially the prohibitions relating to the lift-up and drop type techniques (see above), now prevent this possibility. However the throws Tawara-gaeshi and Daki-wakare are not specifically banned and both are done off the ground so more clarity is required here.

A further complication was the notion of the take-down which skilfully rolls the opponent down for groundwork (eg. hikkomikaeshi). Such moves can be quite slick and many a referee has given a throwing score for them despite the fact that they do not contain many of the ippon throwing criteria.. The rule makers need to grasp the nettle on this one and decide whether they are throws or not. If they are purely takedowns/roll-downs for groundwork purposes they should not be scored as throws I think.

Around 1929 with a big increase in drawn team matches the Yusei-gachi (superiority-win) rule was introduced. This stated that in the event of no scores the contest could be awarded to the one who showed better *attitude, technique* and *posture*. This was inevitably a subjective assessment but in due course it paved the way for the introduction of koka and yuko scores and a scoreboard for all to see the state of play.

Other restrictions either re-stated or newly introduced were Lifting opponent up from the ground and dropping him (such as when the opponent is on his back with you between his legs and he is trying for jujigatame or sankaku-jime) , scissoring the head or neck with the legs and putting fingers in the sleeve and trouser openings.

In 1941 following the death of Kano in 1938 further clarifications and rules relating to going off the mat were added. Yet again when you look at the restrictions introduced or restated one can guess at the type of judo that was prevalent. For instance the following were not allowed and if they happened the referee had to stop them (and then disqualify if repeated) :- Two legs wrapped around the neck, inserting the foot or leg in the belt or inside the lapel when escaping from newaza, putting hands or feet

directly on the face, using finger locks when escaping from strangles, using the belt or skirt of the jacket to bind the limbs or head.

Also not allowed were clinging to both legs in order to go into groundwork, kneeling or lying on the back in order to invite groundwork, hanging on to one side of the jacket with both hands for a long time in order to force a hikiwake (or other actions designed to lead to hikiwake) and pulling an opponent straight down into groundwork from Hajime.

Further revisions occurred in 1951 and 1955 paralleling the growing internationalisation of the sport. 1956 saw the first world judo championships and in 1964 the introduction of judo into the Olympic programme.

New regulations over this period dealt with:-

1. Weight categories
2. Smaller scores (koka etc).
3. The end of match decision (Hantei).
4. Three man refereeing teams
5. Contest times
6. Contest area regulations
7. Referees apparel
8. Penalties
9. Combined wins
10. Referees gestures.
11. Going out of the area.
12. Repechage systems.

In fact all the normal rules and regulations you would expect in any developing international sport.

The smaller scores began to be codified from 1967 and they followed on naturally from the so called Yuseigachi or superiority win and from the existing waza-ari call which as noted earlier was 60-70% of an Ippon. I personally can remember when wins were given to the higher grade of the two when there was no obvious winner. Deciding who was superior was very subjective and many a competitor put in a magnificent flurry of activity towards the end of the contest in order to convince the referee.

The IJF Congress at the world championships in Salt Lake City in 1967 introduced new IJF rules which included scores divided down from Ippon to Waza-ari to Waza-ari ni chikai waza (later Yuko) to Kinsa (later koka) and with similarly stepped penalties but they were not called or recorded on a score board. The referee and judges were expected to remember. But scoreboards followed not long after following research by the Europeans.

Charles Palmer (GB) who was the president of the IJF around this time pushed for the rationalization of the scoring system with recorded smaller scores. It was inevitable of course since judo began with lesser scores - for that was exactly what a Waza-ari represented. Around this time the European Judo Union began to experiment quite a lot with the rules and introduced several changes into European Judo competition. However it soon became obvious that players could not fight under different sets of rules and that rules changes had to come from the top down, in other words from the International Judo federation.

The Japanese answer for most of judo's early history was decided slightly differently which was to have almost open ended contests and fight till the ippon or one or more near-ippons were scored. Also such contests were not fought in weight categories and there were no medals (or repechage systems) for those who were not the outright

winner. However time constraints especially in big championships and the advent of televised sport meant that eventually contest time limits had to be imposed.

Apart from the smaller scores the two main subsequent rule modifications were penalties for stepping outside the contest area, recording of loss-time and penalties for passivity. The penalties for going off the mat were effective in stopping players frequently wandering off the mat which previously happened a lot and of course passivity penalties prevented players from wandering around waiting for a chance to make a counter throw, stall or go for a draw. Loss-time rules ensured that the full five minutes of a bout were fought and prevented players who were ahead on scores, wasting time.

Reviewing what I have said so far it seems judo was quite a different game up to the second world war. According to my sensei Trevor Leggett who trained there before the war, judo was a much rougher and more dangerous game and this is confirmed by the repeated attempts to state what was banned.

PART TWO

So how do the rules look now? In so far as they ultimately form our sport are they succeeding in producing a good product, are they neutral or are they hindering that?

It is my experience that most people who are unfamiliar with judo have difficulty understanding the rules. When I commentated on judo for Eurosport TV I was always aware of the need to explain the scoring and many a time after having explained how it worked I was forced to criticise a referee's decision which clearly did not match the criteria for a throw. But don't take my word for it – do some market research! Get some non-judo people to watch four or five matches and then check with them as they go along to see what they thought had happened. In this day and age sport has to look good and it does judo no good at all if the rules do not make sense and the players win for incomprehensible reasons.

Although recent long overdue rule changes have lengthened the amount of time competitors can spend on the ground it is clear that in the last ten to fifteen years the restriction of groundwork has virtually eliminated it from competition. Groundwork scores in major events account for about 11% of the total scores.

This restriction was done because it was thought that groundwork was boring for the spectators. I wonder who in the IJF thought it was boring and what their arguments were. From a TV commentating point of view much depends on the commentary. If the commentator knows his groundwork he can make it interesting. Cage-fighting consists of a lot of groundwork and judging by the amount of TV time it gets the viewers think so too.

Referring back to the original Kodokan rules we can see the intention of Kano was to produce a judo that was about 33% groundwork and 66% standing work. It is debatable whether this is a right balance but I personally would like to see something close to that ratio. Most groundwork techniques can take a little while to set up and take effect but if no time is given for it Judo could well become a ne-waza-free zone.

If people really do judo for its self-defence potential then we would be cutting our throats if we eliminated armlocks, strangles and hold-downs.

Another major change emerged much about the same time as the restriction on groundwork and that was the dumbing down of the ippon throw. It was felt that not enough Ippon throws were being seen in competition so softer *ippon* scores were introduced. The refereeing authorities said in so many words that the spectators like to see *ippons* so let us not be too fussy about calling Ippon. So we then had more fights won by ippon which previously might have merited a waza-ari or less. It seems to me that the reasoning behind this was confused. Obviously big ippons are spectacular and please the spectators but what is exciting about down-graded ippons? Does calling a low, soft throw an ippon make it more exciting – I think not. Imagine boxing saying they were going to count soft punches! Many a time we see an ippon given for a pretty feeble throw but what makes it worse is when the same throw is shown in slow motion on TV or on a big screen in the venue and we can see exactly how badly it was done. Regardless of the intention the ippon dumb-down had no effect whatsoever. It simply left the judo looking messy.

The big mistake was to imagine that simply instructing the referees to be less strict would be sufficient. What that really required was a re-writing of the definitions but that was not done. In the previous rules we had four levels of scoring matched by four criteria which were all very neat and tidy but if you reduce the criteria required for the ippon it effects every score level below it. You end up having to lose one level of score. Well recent rule changes seem to confirm this because we have now (2009) lost the yuko score. How will this work out I wonder. Has it been thought through?

The key part of the rules are the definition/criteria for the Ippon throw. They were first drafted and accepted at the Rio de Janeiro (1965) and Salt Lake City (1967) IJF Congresses. Kawamura Teizo of the Japan Judo Federation was responsible for presenting the draft rules which were based on the Japanese rules for the previous world championships of 1956, 1958 and 1961. Under his rules an Ippon score for a throw had to satisfy the following criteria:- Considerable force – (soto na ikioi), impetus (hazumi), facing upwards (aomuke). As can be seen there were only three criteria and two of them were much the same thing ie force and impetus. So in fact the earliest international rules really only had two criteria for the Ippon namely landing on the back and with force. The waza-ari was called when ‘the throwing technique was not completely successful and did not quite merit the score of Ippon.’ No mention here of any missing criteria. Of these three early Ippon criteria only two have survived to the present day namely (1) landing facing upwards and (2) considerable force (force and impetus being much the same thing).

From then and up to the present day ‘control & considerable speed’ have been added to the list to make the present four criteria (On the back, with control, considerable force, considerable speed). The major flaw in these criteria is that *force* cannot be separated from *speed*. Force is calculated by body mass over two times acceleration so considerable force includes speed. A body being thrown slowly to the mat has little force.

Secondly control is rarely a criteria for a referee in his decision. How is control defined anyway? Does it mean holding the opponent with both hands or does

holding with one hand indicate control? Is it possible to throw without a hold at all and still score (ie. with foot sweep). Does a man landing badly indicate loss of control? Does a man landing squarely on his back indicate the presence of control. Does falling with the opponent when throwing him indicate control or loss of control? In fact this control criteria is totally unnecessary because Article 27 (d) xxix and its commentary states that Hansoku-make can be called for 'not intending to throw an opponent cleanly onto his back.'

One of the unwritten rules of judo was that the thrower could cushion the fall of his opponent by putting his hand down to the mat to lessen the impact and not lose the full score for the throw. This probably harks back to the shinitai (dead-body) and ikitai (live- body) rules of sumo. In sumo you lose by touching down first in or outside the ring. But this is voided if you use your hand to soften the throw in order to protect the opponent who is unable to protect himself (dead-body). Whatever the origins of the control criteria it is extremely difficult to define and almost never features in a referees decision except where the throw is intentionally done dangerously. Sumo has the same problems.

From about the time of the 1965 and 1967 IJF Congresses (which decide on rule changes) the number of criteria for the Ippon throw jumped to four as mentioned above and the levels of score jumped to four to fit the criteria. Or was it the other way round?

In reality there are only two criteria for a throw namely largely on the back & with force. If this is correct all the neat scoring divisions into four do not follow.

The Ippon throw must be reinforced as the showcase of our sport. The throw must not look like a soft squash down or slow stumble to the ground. Poor definitions of what constitutes an Ippon confuse the players, confuse the referees and most of all confuse the spectators. It is the contest rules that shape our sport.

We know historically that Kano was keen to make judo more of a throwing 'sport' and that he restricted the opportunities groundwork. He gave his reasons for this stating that as a combat art especially against multiple assailants it was necessary to stay on ones feet and throw them. However he restricted the groundwork but he did not reinforce judo as a standing art. For example within the rules it does not matter if the thrower falls over when making a throw or whether he stays on his feet.

If we look to other similar sports we can see other solutions. In Olympic wrestling high throws (known as grand amplitude) are given extra points so as to deliberately encourage more spectacular action and we do see these actions. 'High' is defined as around or above the opponent's centre of gravity.

The big question is whether spectacular throwing can be encouraged by rule changes or not. It might be difficult because defensive judo is too tight. But I believe we should try very hard to encourage good throws and experiment with the rules under controlled conditions.

Finally in order to encourage thinking outside the box let me suggest some different ideas for competition and scoring:-

1. Allow lifting a face-down (prone) competitor up from the ground and throwing them as in Olympic wrestling lift-overs, waist-locks etc. And allow pinning somebody face down. These would be a natural ways to limit defensive groundwork. Groundwork could change in surprising ways if this was allowed.
2. Divide the fight time into two 3-minute rounds. This would allow more tactical play with the coach assisting in the one minute break. Wrestling, boxing and Taekwondo all have more time than judo and they fight mostly in rounds.
3. Refereeing teams (ref & two judges) should all make simultaneous instant electronic recording of scores (as in Taekwondo).
4. Employ video replay for refereeing team (now in more and more sports).
5. Decide how to score (or not score) the takedown in relation to a throw (a move that skilfully rolls the opponent to the ground for groundwork as in Article 16d).
6. Art 23 – Currently an interrupted (two stage) Tomoe-nage can be given Waza-ari. However the whole concept of interruption needs to be spelled out. What should be the score in a two-stage throw be when for example the buttocks first hit the mat and then the back follows. I think we should require ‘clean’ throws to the back for an Ippon score. Video slow-mo replay highlights this problem.
7. Drop the yuko score and state the specific criteria for each of the remaining 3 scoring levels – ippon, waza-ari, koka. (1-point, half-point, quarter point?) (As I write this for the website I am aware that this suggestion of mine has been taken up).
8. Make the single criteria of force mandatory at all levels of a throw and lessen the score only according to how much of the back hits the mat. (NB currently a Koka is given for speedy and forceful throw on to the shoulder (!!), thigh(s) or buttocks. Here all scoring criteria are clearly stated with no reference to any lacking criteria). **Define by what is present in a throw not by what is lacking.**
9. Remove ‘control’ totally from the throwing criteria but be more specific about what constitutes a dangerous throw in the Prohibited Acts section.
10. Extend the non-combativity rule to groundwork as well. In other words allow competitors at least 15 seconds of groundwork time before being stood up. (This suggestion seems to have been taken up recently).
11. Consider making height one of the criteria for a throw to encourage spectacular action. Define height with reference to Uke’s centre of gravity/height.
12. Strengthen the leg grabbing rule by stating that the opponent must tumble to the ground immediately from it. Judo is beginning to look more and more like wrestling and looks messy. Or disallow leg grabs?
13. Define what an ‘excessively defensive posture’ is (Art 27 a2.) and penalize accordingly. This too is another wrestling influence creeping into judo.
14. Redraft the rules in a logical way. There is a sense of drift about them.

So on this very controversial set of suggestions I wind up. The rules need to be very carefully drafted and translated and clarified. A good set of rules is absolutely vital for

all levels of judo. Coaches must involve themselves in the rules and their applications and not leave it to the referees. Our judo must look good on TV and to the public.

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