

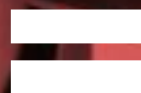


Special Olympics

JUDO

Coaching Guide

2021





Welcome

Welcome to the Special Olympics Judo Coaching Guide 2021

This guide will aim to provide coaches with valuable information to improve their knowledge and skills, or to get them started as coaches within Special Olympics (SO) Judo. Throughout this guide you will find a variety of other information relating to coaching the sport, such as safety, preparation and sportsmanship.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the [Special Olympics Judo Sport Rules](#) document and the [Special Olympics Sports Rules Article 1](#).

Keep in mind, that this guide is just one resource which may be useful to you as you progress through your career as a coach. As you develop your own style of coaching, you will find other books, websites, magazines and coaches, which will help to shape your approach to coaching. Always be curious! Always be open to new ideas! Always keep your athletes at the heart of your coaching!

Acknowledgements

Special Olympics would like to thank the following professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of this Judo Coaching Guide.

Each participant has helped to fulfil the mission of Special Olympics: to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years and older with intellectual disabilities, providing them with continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrating courage, experiencing joy and participating in sharing of gifts, and developing skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics is proud to acknowledge the support of [Gallagher](#), official sponsor of Special Olympics International Sport and Coaching programming, and [Toyota](#), official sponsor of Special Olympics Unified Sports.



TOYOTA

Special Olympics athletes welcome your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologise if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

Thanks to our Judo Sport Advisors: Cecilia Evenblij, Ego Sijmens, James Mulroy, Kjell Ingemansson, & Sherif Hanohom.

Judo coaching guide authors and review group

Special thanks to James Mulroy for the contribution of content and resources for this guide.

Thanks also to Cecilia Evenblij, Kjell Ingemansson and Tomas Rundqvist for their efforts in providing materials and reviewing the guide.

Special thanks

Special thanks to the students & coaches of Special Olympics Switzerland for modeling for us for the amazing photos used throughout this coaching guide. Thanks to Special Olympic athletes and coaches: Jonathan, Arlette, Jesaja, Nina, Sandra, Anthony, Karin, Marcel, Karolane, Mario, Annekathi, David, Jonas, Mike, Evan, Fabienne, Jessica so as further participant of the Swiss Special Olympics Judo Trainings and Competitions.

Special Olympics International Staff

Fiona Murray, Jeff Lahart, Monica Forquer, Gwendolyn Apgar

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Special Olympics

Benefits of Judo



Judo is a sport where interaction with others is essential. Judo, like most martial art type sports, has a “code of conduct”. This will help people with or without additional needs, learn how to respect rules, how to respect others and themselves. Judo has a fun approach to exercise.

The whole focus is to have fun whilst learning.

We include Judo related games as part of the warm-up, cool-down and as a tool to teaching new techniques. Examples of such Judo games are included later in this guide.

The main benefits of Judo include:

- Having Fun while learning
- The natural satisfaction to playful grappling
- Improving muscle tone
- Orientation in space
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Coordination
- Social interaction; integration and inclusion as the basis of well-being and equality
- Self esteem
- Communication
- Developing judo skill and technique

But most of all it's fun and it incorporates a safe approach to sport! Some children/adults might have a physical disability, an intellectual or social disability; they might have a problem with balance or coordination or might find it hard to remember or learn new things ... this doesn't mean that they can't practice Judo or any other sport. It just means that they need extra support to achieve their goals. Most of the above benefits can be gained with the correct guidance and commitment and effort.



Events Offered

In judo, two main events are offered,

1. Individual competition – Shiai
2. Unified Kata

Other events can also be offered in the form of team type events.

Individual Event: Athletes in individual competition are grouped into pools of similar ability and each athlete will compete against each of the others in that pool. Pools are created through divisioning and are characterised by gender, ability level, weight and age (in that order).

Unified Kata Event: Unified Kata is the newest development in Special Olympic Judo and offers more opportunities for our athletes to perform their skills.

In Unified kata tori is the Special Olympics athlete and uke is the Unified Partner. It is possible to include all ability levels and a wide range of kata forms. See below a sample list of categories.

- Category A1 - Nage No Kata - 3 groups for level 1, 2 and 3 - Beginner
- Category A2 - Nage No Kata - 3 groups for level 1, 2 and 3 - Advanced
- Category B1 - Nage No Kata - 2 groups for level 2, 3 and 4 - Beginner
- Category B2 - Nage No Kata - 2 groups for level 2, 3 and 4 - Advanced
- Category C1 - Nage No Kata - 1 group for level 3, 4, 5 - Beginner
- Category C2 - Nage No Kata – 1 group for level 3, 4, 5 – Advanced



CLASSIFICATION

Special Olympics Judo offers five levels of competition participation. Below is an over view of these levels.

Skill level 1

A judoka of level 1 can "compete" in shiai form almost as an equal to a "recreational" judoka, has a perfect judo feeling, he/she is fast and powerful in his/her movements, quickly reacting and able to develop a strategy during the game. He/she fulfils the above criteria to the maximum extent. An athlete of level 1 would need only a slight assistance and guidance by his/her coach or the referee in order to "compete".

Skill Level 2

A judoka of level 2 can "compete" in randori form almost as an equal to a "recreational" judoka, has a good judo feeling, is somehow slow and not so powerful in his/her movements, reacting fairly quickly and fairly understands the concept of strategy. He/she fulfils the above criteria to a fair extent. An athlete of level 2 would need a moderate assistance and guidance by his/her coach or the referee to carry out the game.

Skill Level 3

A judoka of level 3 can only share a playful randori with a "recreational" judoka", has a fairly good feeling of judo, he/she is somehow fast and powerful in his/her movements, reacting reasonably quickly, but with no sense of strategy. He/she fulfils the above criteria all to a moderate extent. An athlete of level 3 would need a serious assistance and guidance from his/her coach or from the referee to carry out the game.

Skill Level 4

A judoka of level 4 can only share a playful randori with a "recreational" judoka but needs to somehow be helped from the latter. He/she has a little feeling of judo and he/she is not fast in his/her movements and reactions. No sense of strategy. He/she fulfils the above criteria to a low extent. An athlete of level 4 would need a high level of assistance and guidance from his/her coach or from the referee to carry out the game.

Skill Level 5

A judoka of level 5 can only share a playful randori with a "recreational" judoka but he/she needs to be seriously helped from him/her. He/she has no judo feeling, he/she is very passive and he/she would need the assistance of his/her coach and the referee to a maximum extent to carry out the game.



To view full details on the weigh categories, unified kata and classification levels, download the Judo Rules 2020 handbook documents which contains all the relevant information to assist coaches. [Click here to download](#)

Judo the Sport and the History of SO Judo



JUDO THE SPORT

Judo is one of the most participated sports in the world and is practiced by millions of people spanning over 200 countries and territories worldwide. Created by **Professor Jigoro Kana** (pictured) of Japan in 1882, judo has developed in to an educational, social, mental and physically enhancing, global sport.

Judo has its own culture, systems, heritage, customs, and traditions. Moreover, the principles of gentleness are carried from the practice mats and into most students' lives, in their interactions with their friends, family, work colleagues, and even strangers.

The word JUDO when translated means "**The Gentle Way**"

Judo is an Olympic sport, Paralympic sport and a Special Olympic sport, making it an incredibly diverse and inclusive activity, suitable for all ages, genders, abilities and disabilities.

Judo first appeared in the Olympic Games in Japan in 1964 for men and as a demonstration sport for women in 1988. Judo participates in the Paralympic Games for judoka (judo athlete) with a visual impairment.



Special Olympic Judo

Judo made its debut as a demonstration event at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Ireland in 2003. At this inaugural event over 80 athletes from 9 countries competed for the prestigious title of Special Olympic World Champion.

Although this was the first major judo competition, SO judo had already began in Andorra, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel and the Netherlands.

The development of special needs judo had already began across Europe thanks to the efforts and cooperation of Tomas Rundqvist (Sweden), Ben van der Eng (Netherlands), Roy Court (Wales) and Marita Kokkonen (Finland).



It was the vision and dedication of this group with the help of SO European Sports director Marius Damentko that resulted in the successful inclusion of Judo in the Special Olympic Sports Programme.

World Games are the pinnacle for competing Special Olympic athletes around the world and Judo has been represented at 5 Special Olympic World Games so far. Below are some participation statistics,

2003	Dublin, Ireland	9 Nations	80 athletes
2007	Shanghai, China	19 Nations	130 athletes
2011	Athens, Greece	25 Nations	126 athletes
2015	Los Angeles, USA	22 Nations	101 athletes
2019	Abu Dhabi, UAE	25 Nations	132 athletes





Basics of Judo



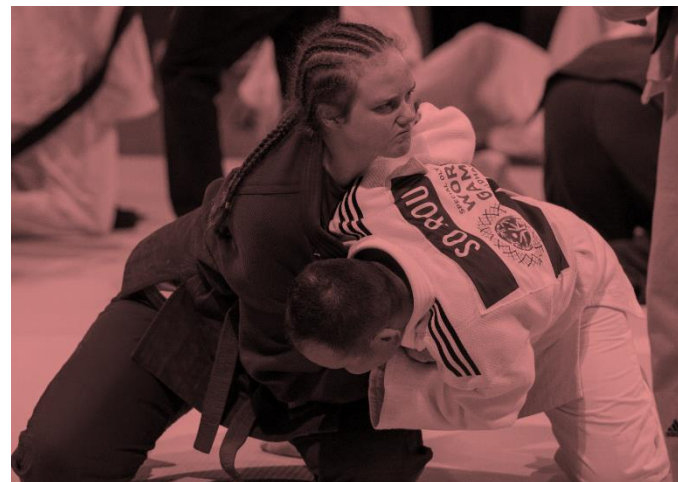
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The objective of the sport is a simple one, to subdue your opponent on to their back.



From a **standing position**, this is achieved by breaking the balance of your opponent and applying a throwing technique.

From a **ground position**, grappling skills are used to pin down your opponent for a set period of time or force a submission.



Judo is practiced on a tatami (floor mats). The mat consists of 2 colors that make the fighting area visible and is at least 4 cm thick. For the competition, markings can be made to give the athletes an orientation of where they should stand.

Judo uniforms or Judogi are worn for judo practice and competition. Only white judogi are worn during competitions. These judogi should be worn clean and in the right size. In training, on the other hand, the trainer can consciously use blue judogi, for example, to support the perception through the contrasting color. Female players must wear a white short sleeved tee shirt under their judogi.



Special Olympics

Judo Fitness Section



Fit 5 + Other Special Olympics Resources

Special Olympics provides a range of fantastic fitness resources that coaches and athletes can use to educate themselves on best practice around physical activity, nutrition and hydration.

There are many health-related and performance-related benefits of fitness for Special Olympics athletes.

Benefits of Fitness for Athletes

- Enhanced sport performance through improved,
 - Endurance/stamina.
 - Speed and agility.
 - Strength and power.
 - Flexibility.
 - Healthy weight.
- Increased energy level, improved focus, and better recovery after practices & games.
- Reduced risk for sport-related injuries.
- Decreased risk for illnesses and chronic diseases.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS

It is vital that Special Olympics sports programs are not the only source of physical activity and exercise for athletes. As a coach, you should be encouraging your athletes to exercise every day and educate them on ways to stay active outside of organized sport practice.

There are numerous ways that athletes can exercise to stay healthy when they are at home. Walking, running, skipping are simple ways an athlete can exercise on their own and work on their cardiovascular fitness. Fitness classes like yoga, core strength, HIIT and many others are great ways for athlete to work on their fitness and physical health outside of organized sports practice.

Special Olympics offers the Fit 5 Guide for athletes and coaches to use. As a coach it is a great resource to use when educating your athletes on the benefits of physical activity to their overall health and to their sports performance.



FIT 5

The [Fit 5 Guide](#) is a plan for physical activity, nutrition and hydration that can help to improve athletes' health and fitness and make them the best athlete they can be. The Fit 5 Guide and accompanying [Fitness Cards](#) provide a fantastic collection of exercises that athletes should do to assist them to improve the skills needed for their sport. The exercises included focus on Endurance, Strength, Flexibility and Balance.



Figure 1: Fit 5 Fitness Cards

In addition to these resources, there are a number of videos available [here](#) for athletes and coaches to view and use when performing these exercises as part of their training plans.

NUTRITION

Eating right is important to your health and your sports performance. Nutrition and Hydration are key points of athlete preparation and recovery for all forms of exercise. However, most athletes don't understand the connection between nutrition/hydration and sports performance. As a coach, it is important that you emphasize this connection and educate your athletes on correct habits. This is especially important for Special Olympics athletes, as they are at a higher risk for obesity.

It is vital to educate judo athletes about the importance of timing their meals or snacks prior to training or competition. Inform your athletes of the risk of eating too close to the time they are to train or compete and educate them on the best times to eat and foods to eat to ensure they are efficiently fuelled to perform.

Specifically, judo athletes are recommended to eat high amounts of carbohydrates and protein. Some good sources of carbohydrate include fruit, vegetables, cereals, bread and pasta. Protein is also an important nutrient in the regeneration of muscle



Coaches should encourage athletes to take responsibility for their own hydration before, during and after training. Follow this simple guide below on how you and your athletes can keep hydrated before, during and after training sessions.

Encourage athletes to drink one bottle of water (16-20oz/500-600ml) an hour or two before practice so they show up fully hydrated. Remember to pause for drinks breaks during a training session. It's recommended that coaches **pause every 15-20 minutes** to give your athletes the chance to rehydrate as they are losing water while exercising. Encourage your **athletes to drink one bottle of water** (16-20oz/500-600ml) during a training session to make sure they do not get dehydrated. When drinking, athletes should take many small sips of water instead of gulping it down as this can sit in their stomachs and cause discomfort when exercising! Encourage athletes to drink water after practice to help them recover from their workout.



Judo Warm-Ups/Cool-Downs (Injury Prevention)

WARM-UP

Before beginning any form of physical activity you should always carry out a warm-up. A warm-up should be designed to prepare the body and mind for physical activity and reduces the risk of injuries occurring.

Purpose of a warm-up

- Gradual increase in body temperature.
- Gradual increase in heart rate.
- Gradual increase in breathing rate.
- Increase in blood flow to working muscles.
- Increase in range of motion of primary muscle groups for their sport.
- Mental preparation.

As you can see, warm-ups are extremely important for athletes' preparation for physical activity. Increasing body temperature and blood flow to working muscles is key for athletes to prevent them from sustaining injuries while exercising. A gradual increase in body temperature reduces the chance of an athlete sustaining muscle and tendon injuries while an increase in blood flow to working muscles ensures a delivery of import fuels that are required for energy production. In addition to this, warming up helps athletes increase the range of motion they have in their muscles. This adequately prepares athletes' working muscles for the movements they will be performing (stretching, generating power, stabilizing the body, etc.). Finally, an adequate warm-up will mentally prepare the athlete for exercise, this includes increased focus at practice or in competition, positive self-talk, or improved motivation knowing they are physically prepared to exercise.

It is recommended to carry out a **comprehensive, sport specific** warm-up for **at-least 15 minutes** prior to starting training activities or competition.

Comprehensive: Warming up all parts of the body. Focus especially on the main muscle groups involved in judo, including the abdominals, legs and shoulders.

Sport Specific: Performing movements your athlete will carry out during practice. This includes fundamental judo movement, such as shuffling and sweeping motions, changing directions, squatting and shadow uchikomi.

There are a number of warm up ideas available in the [Games Manual](#).



Warm-ups should include three specific components:

1. Aerobic activity to raise heart rate

- This can be walking, jogging, jumping or skipping.

2. Dynamic Stretching

- Dynamic stretching involves active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion.

3. Sport Specific Movements

- Skills or movements which are core to your sport.
- Movements that the athlete will complete in training or competition.

See our [Warm-Up and Cool-Down Supplement](#) to learn more information on the components of a warm-up. The [Dynamic Stretches Guide](#) also provides a collection of exercises can be included in your warm-up.

Training Warm-Ups:

Sample Warm-Up 1: Ground Judo Session.

Aerobic Activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High Knees ○ Butt Kicks ○ Side to Side Bouncing ○ Bear Crawls
Dynamic Stretching:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Squats/Jump Squats ○ Lateral Lunges ○ Arm Swings ○ Arm Circles ○ Hip Circles ○ Windmill Toe Touches
Sport Specific Movements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ground based tag games ○ Roll and Catch (light contact games) ○ Bull-Dozer (push and pull game)



Sample Warm-Up 2: Standing Judo Session

Aerobic Activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Light multidirectional jog – 2mins ○ High Knees ○ Side Shuffles ○ Jumping Jacks ○ Forward Jacks
Dynamic Stretching:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heel and Toe Walks ○ Lateral and Forward Lunges ○ Lateral Leg Swings ○ Torso Twists ○ Arm Circles
Sport Specific Movements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standing based Tag Games ○ Crouching Tiger (break fall games) ○ Hot Sport (pull and pushing exercise).

Competition Warm-Ups:

Before any athletic competition, an effective warm-up needs to be completed. Warm-ups are essential to preparing the athletes' bodies and minds for physical activity, which will improve their performance and reduce the risk of injury. Here are some tips for competition warm-ups:

- Have athletes do the same warm-up routine that they do during training sessions.
 - Athletes with intellectual disabilities do best when they follow consistent routines. Routines help athletes to build their confidence, skills and time on-task.
- If space is limited, encourage athletes to do aerobic activities in place, or go back and forth between the allotted space.
- Keep athletes active and moving during staging. If they are sedentary during this time, they will lose the benefits of their warm-ups, such as an increased body temperature and blood flow to working muscles.



COOL-DOWN

When your training, practice or sport session is complete, you should always cool-down. It is just as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.

Purpose of a cool-down:

- Decrease heart rate.
- Decrease breathing rate.
- Decrease body and muscle temperature.
- Returns rate of blood flow from the active muscles to resting level.
- Decrease muscle soreness.
- Improve flexibility.

A typical cool-down includes light aerobic activity followed by stretching. The aerobic activity should gradually decrease in intensity/difficulty. It could be a short jog/walk at 50% intensity with some stretches, led by the athletes, at the end.

Cool-downs are perfect opportunities for coaches to carry-out a debrief session with their athletes and review the session they have just had. Ask your athletes some **open, informative** questions that will make them think about the session and what they would have learned. In addition to the athletes reinforcing the coaching points you have given them, it also gives you, as a coach, the opportunity to see what works for each athlete as an individual.

Coaches should also use this time at the end of practice to encourage healthy habits. Educate athletes on the importance of staying active and eating healthy outside of practice.

Open Questions – Questions that cannot be answered with 'Yes' or 'No', for example:

"What part of the training session did you find challenging today?"

Informative Questions – Questions that provide useful information for you, as a coach, and for the athlete.

"What part (if any) of the training session did you enjoy most today?"



Sample Cool-Down 1:

Low Intensity: 2-3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from the end line, jog around the mat at a low intensity <50%.
Stretching: (30 seconds each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Side Stretch (Flexibility Level 4 – Fitness Cards) Knee to Chest (Flexibility Level 1 – Fitness Cards) Kneeling Hip Stretch (Flexibility Level 3 – Fitness Cards) Triceps Stretch (Flexibility Level 3 – Fitness Cards) Wrist Flexion and Extension Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards)

Sample Cool-Down 2:

Low Intensity: 2-3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players split into two groups and walk the perimeter of the mat in opposite directions.
Stretching: (30 seconds each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child's Pose (Flexibility Level 1 – Fitness Cards) Quadriceps Stretch (Flexibility Level 2 – Fitness Cards) Butterfly Stretch (Flexibility Level 3 – Fitness Cards) Seated Rotation Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards) Shoulder Rotation Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards)
Coaches' Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about the stretches that might be easier to do in your particular setting. There are modifications to most stretches in order to do them standing, seated or laying down. Develop a standard routine for your cool-down. Not only will it provide an opportunity for you to review the session or provide suggestions leading into the next practice, it will also create a routine you can suggest your athletes to do at home. Observe how your athletes are stretching. Ballistic or 'bouncing' movements while stretching can cause injury. Stretching may feel a bit uncomfortable but should not be painful. Use the time at the end of practice to encourage healthy habits at home. 	



POSSIBLE INJURIES IN JUDO

Injuries are problems for athletes in all sports, at all levels. It is beneficial for coaches to be aware of possible injuries that athletes could experience in their sport.

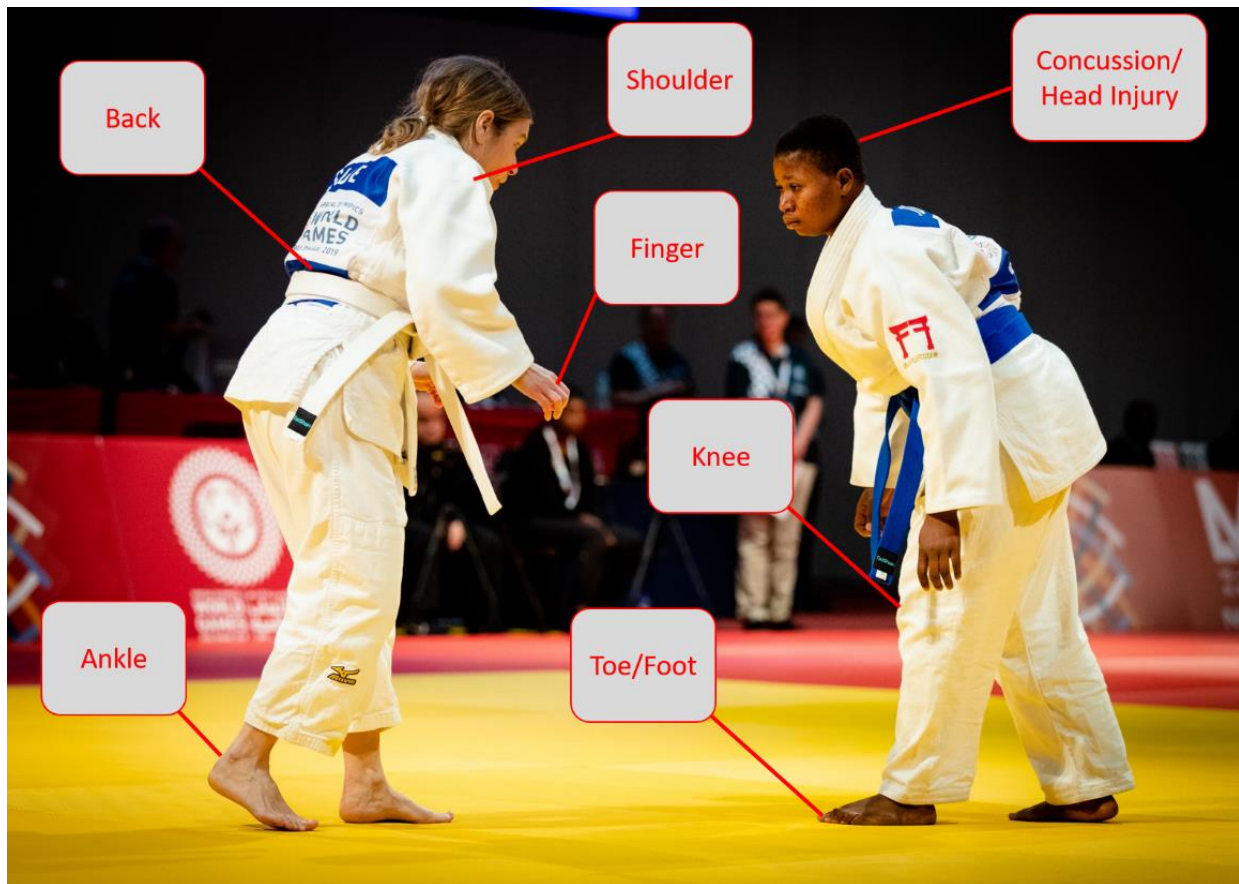


Figure 4: Common Judo Injuries

The graphic above highlights seven of the most common injury sites for judo players. Of these injury sites, the knee is likely to be the most common site. **Any injuries that athletes happen to obtain during SO training should be immediately tended to by a healthcare professional** (doctor, nurse, and physiotherapist). If an athlete reports to you with signs or symptoms of any form of injury it is recommended to send them to a healthcare professional.

Appropriate warm-ups and cool-downs can help to reduce the risk of both acute and overuse injuries specific to judo. Additionally, strength and flexibility training either in practice or at home can further prevent injuries and improve performance. Specifically, shoulder, quadriceps, glutes and hamstring strength and flexibility should be a main focus when trying to prevent injuries. There should also be a focus on learning break falls and accepting throws.

JUDO SPECIFIC PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

Physical conditioning is the improvement of physical health through programmed exercises. Judo specific conditioning is the use of exercises specifically related to the movements used by players to develop judo specific fitness. The main components of physical conditioning are cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, balance, flexibility, and skill development. A successful conditioning program can be accomplished with very little equipment through bodyweight exercises, jumping drills, etc. Some teams may also like to incorporate equipment like resistance bands, weights, stretching straps

In judo, these components can be developed through various exercises, activities and drills. Judo conditioning involves building up strength, endurance, balance and flexibility in the muscles that will be used the most while doing judo. This can be done through a variety of methods using bodyweight exercises, those with added resistance, or agility movements. Examples of conditioning are:

- Core strength exercise
 - Plank hold/side plank
 - Leg raises
 - Curl ups
- Bodyweight strength exercises
 - Push ups
 - Squats
 - Wall Sits
 - Lunges – Forward and Lateral
 - Calf Raises
 - Burpees
- Sport-specific actions
 - Break-Falls, repetitive
 - Short, reactive, agility movements (side to side, forward and back)



FITNESS RESOURCES

Coaches are eager to help their athletes live a healthy lifestyle to improve both the health and sports performance of our athletes. The [Fitness for Sport Coaches resources](#) were designed to support training and the integration of fitness into sports coaching.

In addition to the [Fit 5 Guide](#) and other resources available [online](#), Special Olympics also offers online Fitness specific courses where coaches can learn more about Fitness, SO athletes, and how the two work together!

The courses include:

- Fitness for the Sport Coach
 - This module is designed to provide Sport Coaches with information that will help them to introduce fitness into their ongoing sport program.
- Fitness Coach Online Training
 - This module is designed to provide volunteer Fitness Coaches with information that will help them to be effective at engaging our athletes in fitness.
- Inclusive Fitness Online Training
 - This learning module is designed to provide Fitness Professionals with information and guidance that will help them to successfully include individuals with intellectual disabilities in fitness opportunities.

Head coaches may feel confident integrating all the components of fitness within their training. Additionally, they could consider bringing in a coach to work specifically on fitness relevant to their sport (fitness coach) or have an assistant coach trained on the online courses to gain a greater knowledge of fitness and take the lead on fitness training for their athletes. Either way, we would encourage head coaches to use the online learning modules as a way of improving their knowledge and understanding of fitness.

Check out learn.specialolympics.org to find these courses, along with many other available courses, and get learning today!





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Role of the

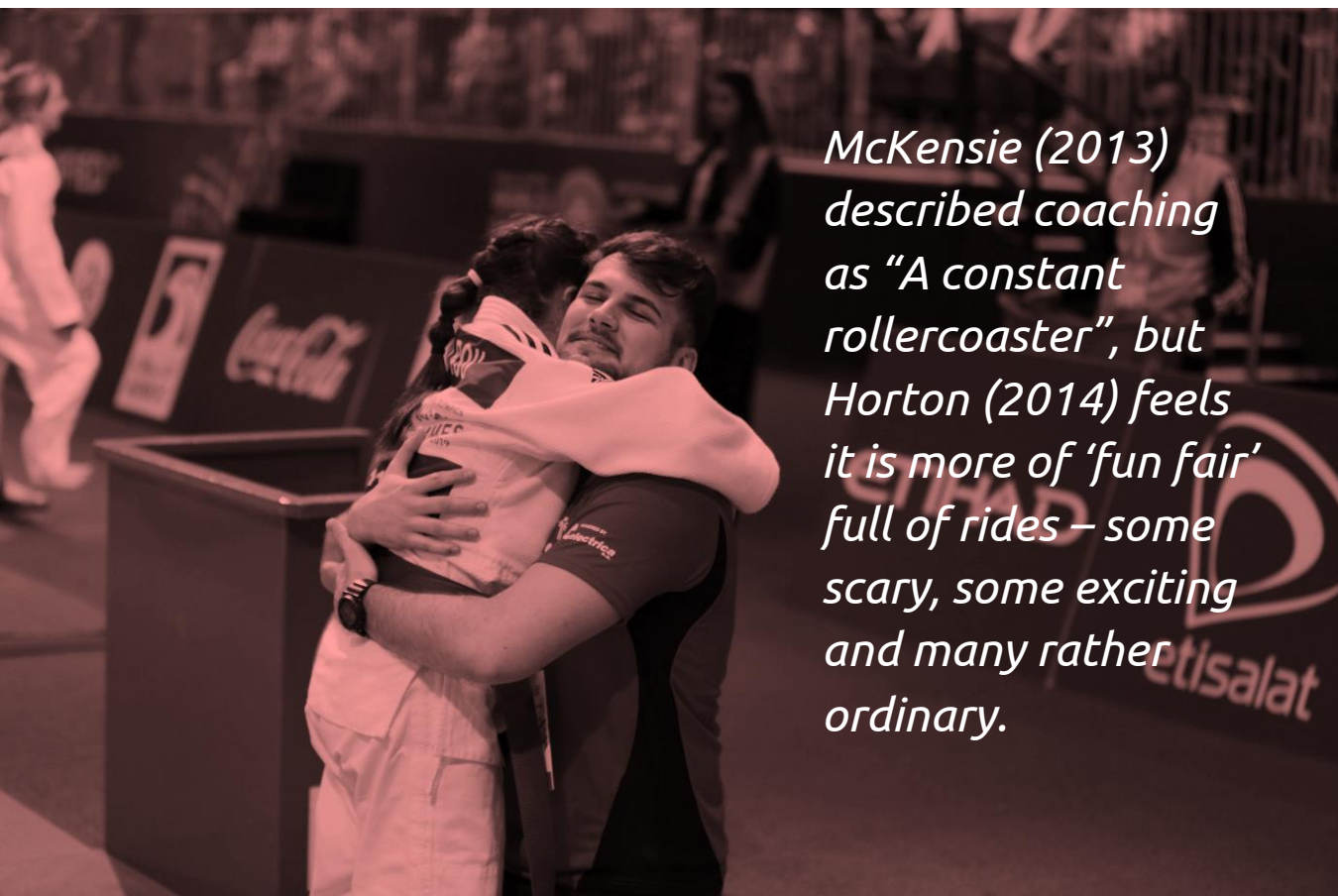
Coach



The role of the coach is multidimensional, complex and challenging. It is also one of the most rewarding aspects of being involved in sport. The coach facilitates the athletes to engage in sport, with peers, opponents, supporters, and to encourage themselves to improve. Coaches must take on numerous roles as they engage with athletes, family members, officials and other stakeholders. Roles can range from teacher to advisor, mentor to motivator - all of which are important roles supporting athlete development.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Teacher | 5 | Mentor |
| 2 | Demonstrator | 6 | Psychologist |
| 3 | Assessor | 7 | Planner |
| 4 | Advisor | | |

Some roles of a coach



McKensie (2013) described coaching as "A constant rollercoaster", but Horton (2014) feels it is more of 'fun fair' full of rides – some scary, some exciting and many rather ordinary.

All Special Olympics coaches should familiarize themselves with [Article 1 – Sports Rules](#). This documents notes the roles and responsibilities of coaches, players, officials and other stakeholders, as well as noting codes of conduct for each respective role.

Coaches have a responsibility to continually improve their knowledge, maintain best practice and keep up with developments and innovations in their sport to fully meet the needs of their athletes.

Coaches Continuum Framework:

The Coaches Continuum Framework (CCF) shows the constructive coaching process that SO encourages coaches to use. The CCF focuses on 4 key components of coaching that will assist coaches in carrying-out best practice while ensuring the athletes are at the center of their coaching.



Figure 5: Coaching Continuum Curriculum

PREPARE

All training sessions should be planned prior to arrival. This reduces on the spot pressure on the coach, results in a better training session for the athletes, and allows for better progressions of trainings as sessions go on.

How?

- Set out a strategy (for your next session and upcoming block/season - Periodization);
- The topic of the session;
- Determine what you will deliver to your athletes;
- The key deliverables (points);
- Potential progressions and regressions (if necessary for groups of individuals).



FACILITATE ATHLETES

All sessions should be *athlete-centred* and should consider the individual needs of each athlete when it comes to progressions.

How?

- Identify and cater for the individual needs and differences of your athletes;
- Build relationships with your athletes;
- Go at each athlete's own pace;
 - This includes continuously challenging each athlete to improve.
- Match/Pair them up with athletes of a similar ability level;
- Praise efforts;

ADAPT

Session structure should **not** be rigidly followed. Coaching is dynamic, meaning that it must be adjustable in the case of something unplanned happening. This means that your plans should always include several options. You should be prepared with a back-up activity, a progression or a simplified activity if you find it is simply not working as planned. That is ok! It happens to all coaches, the difference is that, effective coaches, are prepared for it!

How?

- Observe how athletes are performing the designated task;
- Demonstrate best practice/technique;
- If required, adapt/change components of the session to suit the athletes;
- Assist athletes with difficult components when needed;
- Offer feedback to assist athletes;

Note: If an activity is not working, even after you have tried to modify it, then stop! Move on to something else that has previously worked and afterwards have a debrief session with your athletes to try and solve why it did not work. If you can identify that it is not working so can the athletes!



REFLECT

Reflection is a key component of the coaching process. It presents coaches with the opportunity to self-analyse and self-improve after a training session.

How?

- Evaluate how the session went;
 - Time management; Content; How you spoke to athletes; The delivery of key points;
 - Were you *Clear, Concise* and *Consistent*? (3 C's)
 - What went well?; What could improve?
- Reflect at multiple points during your training block/season
 - Are you meeting your set strategy?
 - What has been going well?; What could improve going forward?
- Adjust
 - Post-reflection, identify what you would change to improve your next session.
- Be critical, constructive and honest with yourself.
- Use a 'critical friend'
 - Ask another coach, sport assistant or a friend to observe your session and to give honest feedback.
 - Have an open-mindset; be open to other people's ideas.



When reflecting on a session it is so important to look at yourself, your actions, the language you used, the directions you gave and the environment you created.

If the athletes execute an activity well, what was it you did as a coach to support that happening, or not happening if they did not execute the activity well?

How are your actions and behaviours impacting the athlete's actions and behaviours?

We have a tendency to focus on how athletes perform the skills or activities, but not how we made it possible or created the correct environment for them to perform.

Consider if you:

- i. Gave clear instructions about the activity
- ii. Demonstrated the activity to a high standard
- iii. Gave the athletes an opportunity to practice and settle into the activity
- iv. Provided feedback to those who required it
- v. Gave further opportunity to practice and implement the feedback



Responsibilities of a Coach:

- ✓ You are responsible for facilitating athletes playing sport, learning and having fun.
 - Very important to remember that it is about the athletes!
- ✓ Responsibility to safeguard and protect athletes.
 - Carry out Safeguarding courses as required by local law.
- ✓ Create an environment where athletes can become the best they can be.
 - Always look for improvement (this can be sport-related ability or knowledge/understanding).
- ✓ Challenge your athletes!
- ✓ A strong understanding of the sport you are coaching.
- ✓ A strong interest and commitment to creating positive sport environments and to the development of people, through sport.
- ✓ Continually improve your knowledge and understanding of best practice.



Qualities and Skills of an inclusive coach¹

PATIENCE: Recognising some participants will take longer to develop skills or make progress than others

RESPECT: Acknowledging difference and treating all participants as individuals

ADAPTABILITY: Having a flexible approach to coaching and communication that recognises individual differences

ORGANISATION: Recognising the importance of preparation and planning

SAFE PRACTICES: Ensuring every session, whether with groups or individuals, is carried out with the participants' safety in mind

KNOWLEDGE: Utilising knowledge of training activities and how to modify them in order to maximise the potential of every participant

- Use a range of coaching styles, including lots of visual demonstrations and visual cues.
- Praise when success is achieved, encourage when not.
- As you get to know your athletes, learn what coaching styles and approaches help them to learn best. Each person is unique!
- Build routine and familiarity into your sessions.
- This can be especially helpful for athletes with autism spectrum disorder and they can feel prepared for what is to come. Changes to schedules, plans and expectations can be especially challenging.
- Plan and allow for additional time to offer support or to adjust the plans as needed.
- Give clear concise instructions and repeat them frequently. Use trigger words to condense instruction and be consistent with terminology.
- Demonstrate specific coaching activities one element at a time, and progress at a pace that your athletes can manage.
- Where applicable pair up your participant with a supportive fellow participant who has the ability to explain concepts clearly, concisely, and patiently.

¹ SportAUS, Becoming an Inclusive Coach,
https://www.sportaus.gov.au/coaches_and_officials/coaches/coaching_specific_groups#inclusive_coaching.



COACHING MODELS



STEP
model

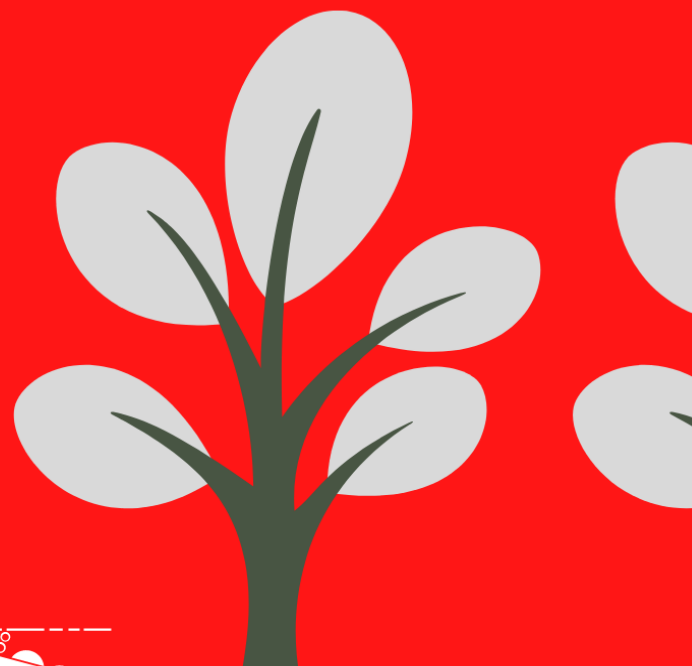


C	COACHING Modify your teaching style to suit the needs of each athlete – instructions, demonstrations, feedback.
H	HOW TO SCORE Vary the method of scoring so that everyone can be included or to make an activity easier or harder.
A	AREA Change the area size to vary the intensity of play, difficulty of the activity and in some cases the safety of the activity.
N	NUMBER OF PLAYERS The number of players on a team can be changed to vary the game experience, create or lower game intensity or emphasise specific tactics.
G	GAME RULES Game rules can be changed to make it easier or harder, highlight a skill or tactical aspect, vary the game experience or make it more inclusive.
E	EQUIPMENT Different equipment can be used to make the activity easier/harder, suit the physical characteristics of the players or as a novelty to increase engagement in the game.
I	INCLUSION Adapt or modify different aspects of the activity so that everyone is included.
T	TIME Vary the duration of the activity to vary the volume and intensity of the activity.

CHANGE IT
model



TREE
model



THE TREE MODEL

A TOOL TO ADAPAT AND MODIFY YOUR ACTIVITIES TO
MAKE THEM MORE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE FOR
ALL ABILITY LEVELS



T

Teaching/Coaching Style:
you can adapt the way you communicate
with the participants



R

Rules/Regulations:
you can simplify or change the rules and
regulations to make your activities more
inclusive



E

Equipment:
you can modify the equipment you use so
that participants can access your activities

E

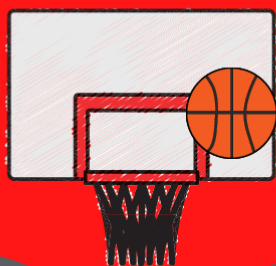
Environment:
you can adjust where the activities happen
and how they are structured to
accommodate all ability levels



CHANGE IT

model

 C	COACHING Modify your teaching style to suit the needs of each athlete – instructions, demonstrations, feedback. 
H	HOW TO SCORE Vary the method of scoring so that everyone can be included or to make an activity easier or harder.
A	AREA Change the area size to vary the intensity of play, difficulty of the activity and in some cases the safety of the activity.
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 I	INCLUSION Adapt or modify different aspects of the activity so that everyone is included.
T	TIME Vary the duration of the activity to vary the volume and intensity of the activity.



SPACE

Increasing or decreasing the size of the playing area or increasing or decreasing the distance between targets.



TASK

Varying methods of completing a task, e.g. one golfer may start closer to the pin than their partner.



STEP Model

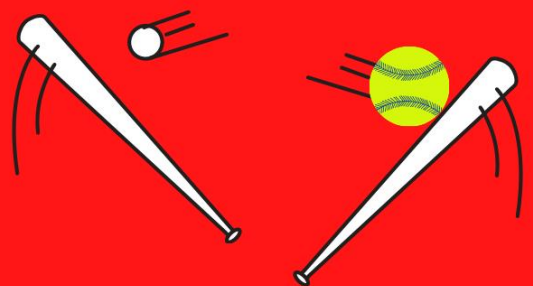
PEOPLE

Match athletes of similar abilities together for a task.



EQUIPMENT

Modifying the equipment used, e.g. using different sized balls, but allowing the athlete to use the ball that best suits them.



Coaches Education Process / Minimum Requirements

Per the rules, for competition activities, the coach to athlete ratio is required to be 1:4. In applying this rule there must be at least one certified sport-specific coach for each sport, and the remaining quota may be determined between coach roles. Additionally, this ratio should be applied so that each female athlete accommodation has a female coach available on premise and each male athlete accommodation has a male coach on premise. In the event of a delegation having a single team participating, there must be at least one staff member per gender represented on the team

Head coaches are required to complete concussion awareness training, available at [CDC Concussion Training](#) and submit the certificate of completion to their state Program.

All coaches – head coaches and team managers are required to hold valid certifications from following courses, most of which are available on the [Special Olympics Online Learning Portal](#)

Course	Head Coach	Team Manager
Level 1 Sport Assistant	✓	✓
Level 2 Coaching Assistant	✓	✓
Unified Sports Coaching	✓	✓
Heads Up Concussion in Youth Sports	✓	✓
Level 3 Coach (Online Module)	✓	
National Sport Federation Coach Certification**	✓	

** Not available on Special Olympics Online Learning Portal

[Special Olympics Learning Portal](#) provides a single place to access variety of coach education courses in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Japanese or Greek.



To gain access to a range of courses, please create a free account at <https://learn.specialolympics.org>

For further information on how to create an account and learn more about the range of courses available, please click here or visit <https://resources.specialolympics.org/online-learning-portal>

Special Olympics provides a range of coaching education courses available to all coaches with the goal to provide safe and high quality coaching to athletes with and without intellectual disabilities. SOI aims to provide coaches of all levels, across all sports, with the skills, knowledge and confidence to provide their athletes with the best possible opportunities to experience the joy, challenge and growth opportunities that sport can provide.

The implementation of a Global Coach Education System began in 2018. The Special Olympics online learning portal provides coaches around the world with a single place to go to access their Special Olympics Coach Education. Special Olympics has therefore established a set of minimum education requirements that a coach must have achieved, prior to entering Special Olympics competitions. They must possess required skills, knowledge and confidence to provide their athletes with the best possible opportunities to experience the joy, challenge and growth opportunities in a safe environment.

Within each team, there must be one head coach, a certified sport-specific coach by respective National Governing Body per sport per team. The remaining coaches' quota may be assigned to other roles, e.g. assistant coach or team managers (help players in non-sport daily routines).

For more information on the role of a coach, coaching styles and practices, as well as coaching models and information about coaching philosophies, download our [Role of The Coach](#) document.





Special Olympics

Judo Coaching Concepts



Coaching leisure and pleasure athletes

In SO judo a large number of athletes participate in the sport just for leisure and pleasure purposes and not for competition. Special Olympics creates opportunities for competition but it is not a requirement of participation.

Our approach to learning through play has led us to the development of a series of judo related games as a fun way for the athletes to learn and retain information. We would like to share these game ideas to help coaches develop different styles of coaching and in doing so, improve the training and learning experience for our athletes.

Below is a small selection of short videos containing game ideas for coaches to try. We also have a static judo games manual for you to download which contains a large selection of judo games ideas. [Click here to download](#)



SAMPLE WARM-UP GAME IDEAS

VIDEO 1



Worm Tag: Crawling on the ground each player has to either avoid or catch the other players. When caught, the player makes a bridge and to get free, one of the other players must crawl under your bridge.

VIDEO 2



Line Tag / PACMAN: Using the joins of the tatamis, players have to skip sideways up, down and across the lines in all directions to tag each other. This is a good game for the fundamentals of movement.

VIDEO 3



Roll and Catch: One person rolls down the mat while their partner (on hand & knees) tries to catch them before they reach the end. The catcher should be encouraged to catch using their body rather than just the hands. This encourages body contact and hold advantage.

VIDEO 4



Star Fish: In groups, each player grips both ends of a belt which is looped through a central ring/belt. The object of the game is to pull their fellow players off their spot/marker. You can play this game with or without floor markers/hoops. It can also be expanded to include uchikomi exercises.



SAMPLE BREAK-FALL GAME IDEAS

VIDEO 5



Ball & Fall: Sitting in a circle each player throws a ball to one of the other player and immediately after, rolls back for a backward break-fall. This is great fun and good hand eye coordination exercise.

VIDEO 6



Pull & Fall: Sitting in a circle each player takes turns in helping others fall over. Falling players deliver a backward break-fall. This game is great as a warm-up and break-fall exercise.

VIDEO 7



Ball drop: This exercise brings break-falls up level and helps to reduce the fear of falling. This game could be expanded by using space hoppers and introducing a tag element, when caught you have to roll off the hopper into a break-fall.

SAMPLE GROUND PLAY GAMES

VIDEO 8



Kesa Challenge: Starting lying head to toe, on the start command each player has to sit up as quickly as possible and try and catch their opponent in kuzure-kesa gatame.

VIDEO 9



Octopus: A great newaza game that get both players working hard. One player lying on their back waves their arms and legs around like an Octopus, the second player tries to avoid the moving arms and legs and secure a hold.

VIDEO 10



Wrestle Ball: In groups of two or three in a ground position, one of the players holds onto a small ball. The other player(s) have to turn them over and wrestle the ball from them. This game encourages rough and tumble interaction and helps with turnovers.



SAMPLE THROWING TYPE GAMES

VIDEO 11



Heel Ball: This game is designed to introduce O Soto Gari in a movement target scenario. A number of players stand with legs apart and place a ball on a cone in between their legs. The player has to approach by hopping on one leg out to the side and heel (backward kick) the ball off the cone. This develops a perfect O Soto Gari

leg movement and backward drive.

VIDEO 12



Hop and Throw: Using floor discs as targets to improve footwork and coordination the player approaches on the disks and executes a judo throw.

VIDEO 13



Hiza Challenge: Simple exercise to help with ashi and hiza type throws.

VIDEO 14



Sweeping Circle: Group exercise, gather in a circle holding onto each other's sleeves. On the start command each player has to try and sweep their adjoining partner to the ground.

We would like to sincerely thank the students and coaches of JC Uster and JC Rheintal, Switzerland for their time and effort making the videos for you to enjoy.

Coaching Athletes for Competition

It is quite common that within Special Olympics judo, the judo coach, the judo teacher and the judo trainer are one and the same person. This combination of features makes it possible to prepare the athletes well and fully for competition.

Part of the preparation for a Special Olympics Judo competition starts well in advance. The coach and the athlete need to get to know each other and build a relationship.

The coach will prepare their athlete in this first phase on several levels:

Technical level:

The training of judo techniques and judo processes

Social level:

Dealing with others in the judo team, behavior on and off the mat.

Emotional level:

How to deal with nervousness, success and backlash.

Depending on the level of development and the required amount of supervision of an athlete, this preparation phase can vary from a few months to a few years.

The coach is the contact person for the athlete during a competition. Certain independence must therefore be trained. For this type of self-reliance training, it makes sense to include the parents or caregivers of the athletes.

It is recommended that Special Olympics judoka start by participating in smaller regional or national tournaments to gain security and experience. In a familiar environment (home), participating in international tournaments depending on the level of disability is a nice boost before competing at other international tournaments.



Coach-Athlete Relationship

For Judo Competitions

- Performance Feedback
- Comfort and Praise
- Re-training for next competition

After Competition
30%

- Positive Coaching
(Where possible)

During Competition
10%

% of time a
coach
spends with
their athlete

Before Competition
60%

- Training
- Competition Preparation
- Relationship Building

During Special Olympics competition **Level 1 and 2**, coaching is allowed according to [IJF rules](#) only during Mate.

In **Level 3**, encouraging positive comments from the coach are allowed throughout the competition with judo technical coaching during Mate.

In **Level 4 and 5**, encouraging positive coaching is possible, as well as technical coaching throughout the competition.

The coach's job does not end after the contest. The athlete has a right to a positive follow-up, as well as comforting or praising feedback.

The relationship between coach and athlete is long-term and is founded on respect and appreciation.



PROGRESSION PATHWAY FROM PLAY TO CONTEST

When athletes start judo, they will first learn some basic judo techniques. From these basic techniques the athlete can follow very quickly to the first grappling practice.

If Special Olympics Athletes get used to grappling games during training, participation in judo contest/competition is the next logical step.

Each athlete is different. The time taken to progress to combat games/contest/competition will be different for each individual. This will depend on:

- Level of abilities
- Comfort of the athlete
 - With the actions of Judo
 - The experience of a competition setting
 - New structure
 - New people
- Time spent training





Special Olympics

Sports Psychology



What is Sports Psychology?

Sports Psychology is a name given to a topic that includes many different areas related to sports performance. These include (Association, American Psychological, 2021):

- Goal setting;
- Imagery and performance planning;
- Athlete motivation
- Handling disappointment and poor performance.

Ultimately, Sports Psychology relates to how an athlete's mindset assists or hinders their athletic performance, be that training, competition, or recreationally.

As a coach, your role is to assist an athlete to perform at their best – this includes psychologically as well as physically. This section will briefly discuss a number of Sports Psychology concepts that will assist you in your coaching of Special Olympics Athletes.

For further information on the topic, it is recommended that you explore expert research on the topic such as academic articles, online learning courses, podcasts, and books.

Key Areas of Sports Psychology:

Motivation:

What is motivation?

Often we consider motivation to be making that last lift in the gym, doing that last run up the hill, and going out to win in the final of a competition. However, these are only a select few examples. Most of the time motivation can be; going to training, sticking to your exercise routine, or drinking all of your water for the day.

Motivation is goal-dependent. This means that each person will have different motivation because each person will have different goals.

According to Burton and Raedeke in *Sport Psychology for Coaches* (2008), great coaches know that they don't give athletes motivation. Rather, they create the conditions or team climate in which athletes motivate themselves. Coaches do this by recognizing the importance of **intrinsic and extrinsic motivation**.

Intrinsically Motivated Athletes participate for the love of the sport. They enjoy the process of learning and mastering difficult sport skills and play for the pride they feel when working hard toward accomplishing a challenging goal.



Extrinsically Motivated Athletes participate in sport in order to receive praise, to win, or to avoid punishment. The process is often not as enjoyable, they don't enjoy completing difficult tasks and often results in sport drop-out down the line.

Extrinsic motivation can also be useful in assisting athletes to learn a skill or try a new task. Using praise as a motivator can help to encourage athletes to explore or complete a task they normally would not attempt. However, extrinsic motivation should not be used long-term, and should be phased out over time if it is being used to help motivate athletes to complete tasks.

For example, a golfer does not like hitting the ball out of long grass and is willing to take a shot penalty to move the ball. Encourage the athlete attempt the shot out of the long grass and praise them for their effort. Over time, as the athlete becomes more comfortable performing the shot and continues to hit the ball out of the long grass, praise should be reduced.

Special Olympics carried out an Athlete Satisfaction Survey. This survey aimed to find out why athletes participated in Special Olympics sports and their motivation to do so. The results can be seen in the pie chart below.

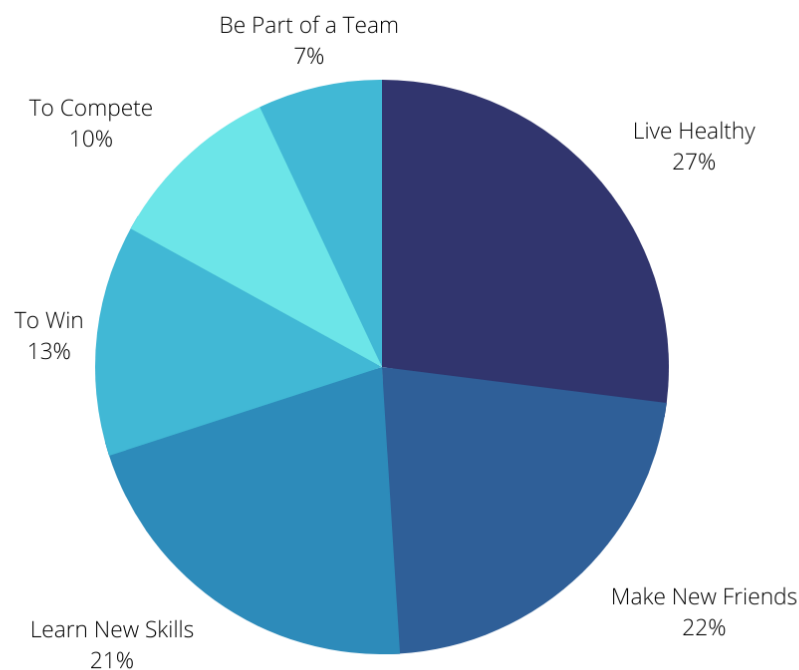


Figure vii: Athlete Satisfaction Survey Results - Why athletes participate in Special Olympics Sport. These can be considered to be sources of motivation for athletes and should be considered in your decision making as a coach



MOTIVATION MYTHS:

Motivation Myth 1: Athletes are either motivated or not motivated

Some coaches believe that motivation is simply a personality trait, a static internal characteristic. They believe that an athlete either has motivation or doesn't. They don't believe motivation is something coaches can develop. For these coaches, the key to having a motivated team is to find and recruit athletes who have the right personality. However, while some athletes are, in fact, more motivated than others, this view does not provide any direction or guidance on how coaches can help develop and sustain athletes' motivation. The fact is, coaches can help athletes develop motivation.

Motivation Myth 2: Coaches give athletes motivation

Other coaches view motivation as something they can inject into their athletes on demand, like a flu shot, by means of inspirational pep talks or gimmicks. They may use slogans, posters, and bulletin board quotes from upcoming opponents. These strategies may be helpful, but they are only a small piece of the motivation puzzle. There is much more to the story—motivation is not something coaches can simply give their athletes.

Motivation Myth 3: Motivation means sticks and carrots

Some experts suggest that effective motivation means using carrots (rewards) and sticks (punishments) to drive athletes to do things they would not do on their own. This may seem innocuous, but think about it on a deeper level. It assumes that athletes don't want to do something, so the coach will provide motivation to make them do it through punishments or rewards. Coaches who emphasize the stick, in the form of chastising, criticizing, yelling, coercing, and creating guilt, often find themselves swimming upstream. No matter what they try, they meet resistance and negative attitudes. Not only is this approach ineffective, it saps the enjoyment out of sport. Coaches must understand athletes' needs in order to create a team culture that naturally motivates them.



Confidence (through Goal Setting)

Sports confidence is the belief in yourself to execute or complete a task or skill relevant to the sport or activity you are participating in. Sport confidence should be gained through consistent execution of the skill or task in a controlled environment (training session). This can then be applied in a more chaotic environment (competition). For example; Maureen is confident she can complete the 100m breast stroke in her local competition because she has completed this particular stroke many times in her training.

An athlete with lack of self-confidence doubts whether they are good enough, whether they have the qualities necessary for success (Plakona, Parčina, Ludvig, & Tuzović, 2014).

1. Developing sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation.
2. A considerable amount of anxiety is eliminated when athletes know what is expected of them and when they have to be prepared.
3. Mental preparation is just as important as skills training.
4. Progressing to more difficult skills increases the challenge.
5. Dropping back into easier skills increases one's confidence.

Developing Self-Confidence through Goal Setting

Realistic yet challenging goals for each athlete are important for the motivation of the athlete, during both training and competition. Accomplishing goals at practice through repetition in settings that replicate the competition environment instill confidence. Sport confidence in athletes helps make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Setting goals is a joint effort between athletes and coaches.

Goal setting must be a collaborative effort. At the end of the day, the goals are set for the athlete for what they want to accomplish, not what their coach, parents, friends, or family want them to accomplish. A coaches' role is to assist the athlete in creating the goals that align to their desires, and to keep the athlete on track to achieve those goals.



Goals should be:

1. Structured as short-term, intermediate and long-term.
2. Viewed as stepping stones to success.
3. Created and accepted by the athlete.
4. Used to establish the athlete's training and competition plan.
5. Flexible
6. Written down
7. Identified as either performance goals or practice goals
8. Achievable - Sometimes athletes will need to seek support to accomplish their goals

Following the SMART Goals model is a simple way to set goals for your athlete in a collaborative and logical way.



Handling Disappointment (performance/success oriented/injuries)

Disappointment can present itself in many different ways for an athlete. This can be:

- Poor/Below expected performance (in training or competition)
- Good performance without the desired outcome (winning/scoring/placing)
- Disappointment for others (teammates/friends)
- Acquiring an injury (meaning inability to compete/perform)
- Not receiving praise (from coach/friend/family)

And many more reasons!

As a coach, it is essential that you assist your athletes in handling disappointment. Not only is this beneficial to them in sport, it is a life skill that can be applied in almost any other context (such as job applications, studying for school/college, acquiring an illness, etc.).

How disappointment can be seen in athlete behaviour:

- Anger
- Frustration
- Going within themselves
- Feeling overwhelmed (tears)
- Loss of focus
- Loss of motivation to train/compete
- Loss of interest in the sport

Disappointment often presents itself as stress in athletes. Special Olympics offers the Strong Minds program to assist athletes in learning how to cope with stress. This can be stress from competition or the stress that comes from daily tasks.

Check out the [Strong Minds](#) page for all resources required.

A useful tool for coaches working with athletes showing signs of stress would be the [Strong Minds Coach's Playbook](#). These strategies can help athletes with the stresses of life and sport, and promote healthy thoughts and coping mechanisms.



Strong Minds Tips for Stress

Coach's Playbook

Special Olympics
Strong Minds



Strong Minds is an interactive learning activity focused on developing adaptive coping skills. Competition provides a natural opportunity to develop active strategies for maintaining emotional wellness under stress, such as: thinking positive thoughts, releasing stress and connecting with others. During Strong Minds, your athletes will learn the following strategies and will benefit greatly if you can incorporate these strategies into practice and games.

Station 1

1 Squeeze the ball for 3 seconds.



2 Release the ball and any tension.



Coach Recommendations

- On the way to a game or competition
- During a pre-game team talk
- After the game during a team talk
- For an athlete sitting on the bench or in between turns/games

Station 2

1 Think a good thought.



2



- During practice and games, state positive statements to athletes
- Start practices with a song with a positive message
- Ask an athlete to start each practice with a positive statement to the team
- After the game, ask the athletes what went well

Station 3

1 Smell the flower [pinwheel].



2 Blow the flower [pinwheel].



- Encourage deep breathing during stretching
- Teach the athletes to use deep breathing during a stressful situation in a game (ie. Before shooting a foul shot).
- Before a game, do a few rounds of deep breathing as a team

Strong Minds Tips for Stress

Coach's Playbook

Special Olympics
Strong Minds



Station 4

1 Try a few stretches



2 How do you feel?



- Make sure athletes hold static stretches for at least 30 seconds
- Incorporate deep breathing into stretching routines
- Lead stretches that also focus on relaxation
- Encourage athletes to do a few stretches before they go to bed each night

Station 5

1 Support others



2 Seek support from others



- Set up drills for partner work to allow athletes to build connections
- Encourage athletes to use positive messages to teammates during practices and games
- Remind athletes that their coach and teammates are there to support them
- Encourage family members to also incorporate these strategies with their athletes

Station 6

1 Pick the strategies you like



2 Use the strategies in everyday life



This Strong Minds Tips for Stress concept was created by Special Olympics Texas

- Encourage athletes to visit Strong Minds at Healthy Athletes or Game Ready Minds at Performance Stations
- Remind athletes who visited Strong Minds to utilize the skills they learned in practice and games
- Ask the athletes to practice these strategies at home

Communication strategies by the coach, fellow athletes, families and friends will help an athlete handle disappointment. Listen to what the athlete says and why they may be disappointed. Offer positive switches – positive comment – correction – positive comment to take the athlete's attention away from their disappointment. The athlete's effort, attitude and preparation should be emphasized, not the result of the competition.



Athletes in Training

Self-Talk & Imagery

Self-talk represents the things you say in your head about yourself.

Self-talk can sometimes be negative e.g., "that team is much better than ours".

Positive self-talk involves repeating a helpful and positive word or phrase such as "I am fit and ready to play".



Imagery or visualization is a mental process. It allows you to simulate (imagine) experiences in your mind. Often these experiences have the desired outcome e.g. scoring a penalty kick in football.



Imagery also involves using your senses (smell, sound, taste, touch, and feeling) to create an accurate experience in your mind.

Positive self-talk and imagery promotes confidence and success. Coaches should help educate their athletes on the value of positive self-talk and imagery.

One thing coaches can do is help athletes establish a pre-performance routine. At the start of a competition athletes can very briefly (10-15 seconds) do 4 helpful steps:

1. Close your eyes
2. Take a few deep calming breathes
3. Repeat a positive phrase "I am ready"
4. Picture yourself successfully making a perfect start, or finishing strongly.

This routine can be created and modified at training. Find what works best for the athletes. Take this pre-performance routine into a competition to help athletes best prepare mentally.



Athletes at competition

Psychological Preparation

Just as you train your athletes physically and tactically for competition, you equally need to prepare them psychologically.

Physical Readiness + Psychological Readiness = Competition Readiness



Readiness of the athlete means being focused and prepared for competition.

- **Psychological Readiness:** Being a participant in the sport, showing confidence and an understanding strategy.
- **Physical Readiness:** Being physically conditioned and trained in the skills required for competition.

How to Psychologically Prepare for Competition:

1. Create and Set Competition Goals
2. Prepare for competition setting
 - a. Tell your athletes what to expect
 - b. Use videos of previous competitions
 - c. Have experienced athletes speak with inexperienced athletes
 - d. Have all equipment ready and available before time
3. Train as you plan to compete
 - a. Make sure training is properly preparing your athletes for competition
 - b. This will give athletes confidence going into competition performance
4. Practice Strong Minds Stations

Anxiety or stress is normal before a competition. Athletes who do not suffer from some sort of anxiety or stress before performance would be in the minority.

Competition anxiety occurs when an athlete perceives a competitive situation as potentially threatening, resulting in an aversive emotional response (Schaefer, Vella, Allen, & Magee, 2016). Although some level of competition anxiety is



considered to be normal, when competition anxiety exceeds a threshold level it can become detrimental to performance, motivation, and enjoyment (Schaefer, Vella, Allen, & Magee, 2016).

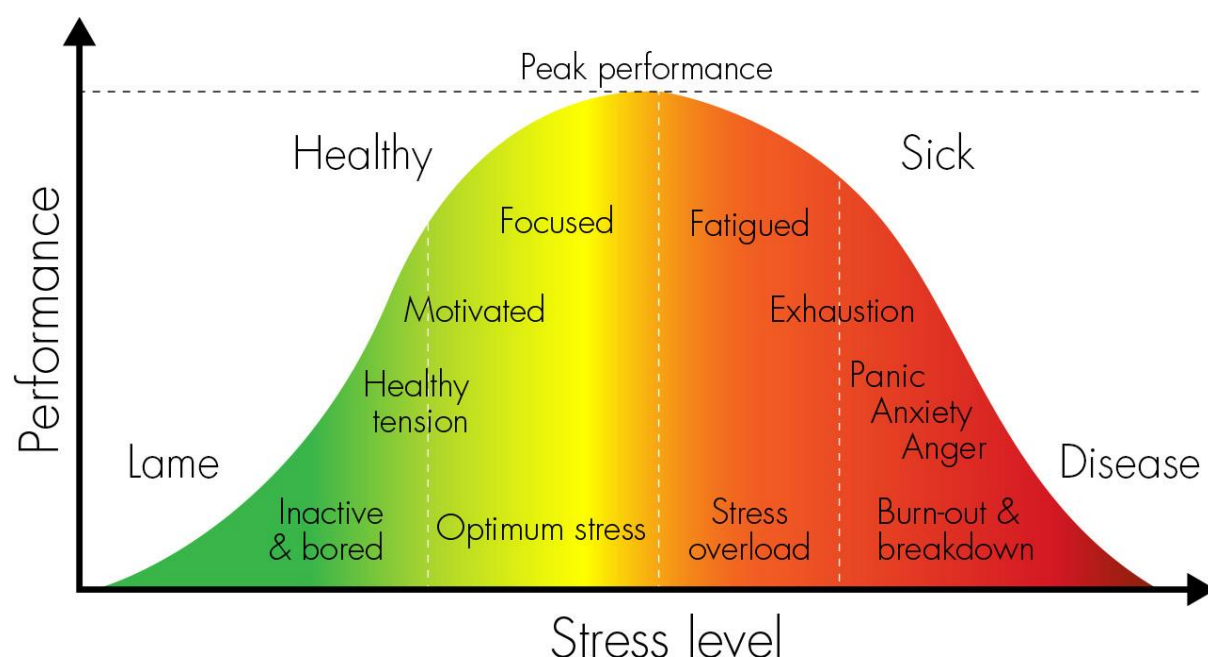


Figure vii: The relationship between stress level and performance. This graph shows where peak performance can be achieved with a moderate stress level. It also shows the dangers of high stress and anxiety. Credit cescasdestinationhealthy.wordpress.com for image.

As a coach, it is your role to assist your athlete in not exceeding this anxiety threshold.

Simple measures such as:

1. Pre-Performance Routine
2. Strong Minds Stations
3. Alternative tasks to take their mind off of the competition/performance

These measures can be beneficial in the psychological preparation for athletes before competition.

There can be times when anxiety becomes too much for an athlete. They may not want to train or compete. The idea of competition or performing will cause them serious stress. If this is noticeable for an athlete within sport and outside of sport (social life, education, family life, etc.), it is recommended that the athlete talk to a professional. This can be a family doctor, a counsellor, or a psychologist.



Post-performance psychology

• What is success – individual to the athlete

Many athletes will equate winning and losing with success and failure. This is often a self-defeating perspective as athletes only partly control the outcome of competition and often winning is unrealistic.

Coaches should focus on individual effort, self-improvement and learning as barometers of success.

Each athlete will have their own take on what success is to them.

If an athlete feels they are unsuccessful at a competition:

- ✓ Reassure them that winning isn't everything
- ✓ Refer back to the athlete's goals
- ✓ Identify where they have achieved or progressed towards their goals
- ✓ Praise their effort, not performance
- ✓ Remember the Special Olympics athlete oath;
"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

• How to win & lose – code of conduct

All athletes should follow the Sportsmanship section of the [Special Olympics Athlete's Code of Conduct](#).

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

As a coach, your role is to remind the athletes of their conduct and how to manage themselves win, lose, or draw. The important thing to do when educating athletes on their code of conduct is to explain 'why'.

Explain that athletes should act in the same manner they would want others to act if they were in the same position. If an athlete is successful, congratulate them. If an athlete is unsuccessful, encourage them for next time.

Your role as a coach is to be a role model to your athletes. You should always demonstrate good sportsmanship throughout competition, training, or events. Athletes often 'feed' off of their coach's energy and enthusiasm – make sure yours is always positive and following good etiquette.





Figure viii: Some roles a coach may take on in addition to being a role model.

- **Athletes in a heightened state of anxiety post-performance**

Can be after achieving success (over-excitement) or not achieving desired outcome (disappointment).

If an athlete is excited and celebrating, do not discourage this! This is the feeling we all long for as athletes, coaches, and fans! Help the athlete to celebrate in a positive and safe manner.

It is important to not discount feelings of disappointment. It is appropriate to be disappointed when we lose a game or match. The challenge for the coach is to redirect that disappointment into a renewed commitment to training for the next competition or season. Becoming obsessed with losing is not a healthy or natural reaction for anyone.

Here are some strategies for athletes experiencing heightened states of anxiety:

1. Use Strong Minds stations
 - a. Positive Messaging
 - b. Deep Breathing
 - c. Stretching
2. Offer support – through hi-fives, knuckle touches, other forms of comfort that the athlete is accepting of and comfortable with
3. Have a consistent post-performance routine (win, lose, or draw)
 - a. Stretching
 - b. Debrief
 - c. Praise for effort

All athletes are different and will have different ways of coping. Work with your athlete what their best post-performance routine should be and when to carry it out.



For some, shortly or immediately afterward is appropriate. If you leave it too long, it becomes forgotten.

For others, they may need more time to decompress – **there is no one size fits all.**

The athlete's effort, attitude and personal skills attainment should be rewarded and positively reinforced.

Educating Athletes

Each athlete is different. Simple guidelines and strategies on how to educate athletes will not be universally applicable to athletes. However, having a knowledge of the foundations as listed above will help you to best prepare your athletes for training and competitions.

Some simple tips for educating athletes about sports psychology are:

1. Introduce elements bit by bit
 - a. Start with goal setting
 - b. Strong Minds stations
 - c. Introduce pre-performance routines
2. Use sporting examples to explain elements of psychology
 - a. Confidence
 - b. Disappointment
3. Work in groups
 - a. Have open discussions about elements before, during, and after training and competition

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Safety Rules & Regulations



Special Olympics

The [Special Olympics Judo safety rules and regulations](#) were updated in 2020. These safety rules focus on the absolute safety of the athletes and we encourage all coaches to familiarize themselves with every aspect of the safety rules. Below we have outlined the main safety aspects of the rules and added visuals to assist the coaches in the full understanding of each of these actions.

What is allowed vs. What is not allowed:

Images with **Green** surrounds = what is legally allowed by the official Judo rules.

Images with **Red** surrounds = what is not allowed by official judo rules.



Starting positions

In **Tachi-waza**, there are two possible starting positions:

1. In the usual way, according to the [IJF Tournament Regulations](#)
2. In the case where one or both of the judoka has a visual impairment, is blind, or has a disability that impairs the execution of a correct **kumi-kata**, the attendant, coach or referee can support the judoka to the tatami edge. At the command of the referee, the judoka approach mat centre and perform basic kumi-kata (sleeve, lapel). Referee announces *Ha-jime*.

In **Ne-waza**, starting position can be different depending on the following procedure:

1. The judoka enters the contest area, where necessary supported by attendant, coach or referee. The judoka bows at about two metres of distance, after which the referee announces *Ha-jime*.
2. In the case where one or both of the judoka has a visual impairment, is blind, or has a disability that impairs the execution of a correct kumi-kata, the attendant,



coach or referee can support the judoka to the tatami edge. At the command of the referee, the judoka approach mat centre and perform basic kumi-kata (sleeve, lapel). Referee announces Ha-jime



In this starting position, both players' knees must be level, so no unfair advantage is given.



If either *judoka* cannot use one leg for support, this is also **not** allowed for the other opponent.



If either judoka cannot perform the match in kneeling position, the judoka will start the match in a sitting position. In this case, the opponents sit next to each other, facing opposite directions, and kumi-kata is basic sleeve-lapel.



If either judoka cannot perform in a sitting position, both judoka will start lying down, facing each other, in basic Kumi-kata (sleeve-lapel).

NE-WAZA CONTEST

Ne-waza matches are performed exclusively in Ne-waza because either judoka, because of a disability, cannot perform a match safely in Tachi-waza.

A referee is authorised to change a Tachi-waza match into a Ne-waza match. The judoka that triggered this decision will then perform in Ne-waza for the remainder of the tournament.

PROHIBITED ACTIONS

In addition to the prohibited actions as described in the IJF official Judo rules, the following techniques are also prohibited:

1. Any and all forms of:
 - a) Sacrifice techniques (sutemi-waza) including Tani Otoshi and Makikomi
 - b) Arm-lock techniques (kansetsu-waza)
 - c) Choking techniques (shime-waza)
 - d) Choking, locking and holding techniques that involve holding the legs in a triangle position (sankaku-waza)
 - e) All throws executed on one or two knees (to the front and rear).



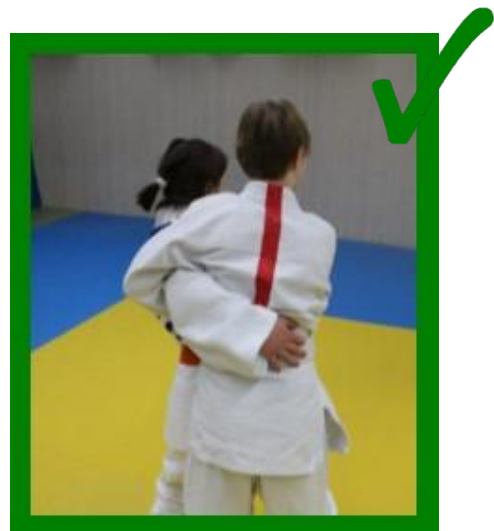
2. To fall on the opponent after a properly executed technique.
3. To put pressure on head, neck or throat of the opponent.

IN TACHI-WAZA

To perform Kumi-kata around the head or neck of the opponent. While taking hold over the shoulder or collarbone, the hand may not pass the centre line of the back.



Gripping around the back is allowed when the arm is around the shoulder or lower on the arm as demonstrated above.



Gripping around the back is also allowed when the arm goes under the opponents arm at shoulder or waist level as demonstrated above.

IN NE-WAZA

- a) In Ne-waza, it is not allowed to put pressure on either head or neck. In Osae-komi situations where Tori is in Kesa position, Tori is not allowed to put either hand or arm under head or neck of Uke.



- b) Pushing opponent backwards while in kneeling position is not allowed



- c) To immediately release kumi-kata after Ha-jime during matches with a modified starting position.
- d) In Ne-waza matches: Raising the knee to gain leverage when it is agreed beforehand that this is not allowed.

Prohibited techniques will not be scored, and where possible mat will be called before the technique is executed to ensure the safety of the players.

PENALTIES

- Any deliberate infringement of the rules in **Level 1 & 2** will be penalised with shido straight away.
- Leg grabbing will be penalised with Shido as per [IJF rules](#).
- All actions that go against the spirit of Judo will be penalised with Hansoku-make, to protect the judoka affected by this.
- The referee is allowed to consider the level, the disability, type and intention of the offense in his/her decision, as well as the intention, repetition, overall match image and safety while deciding on a penalty.

REFEREES

- There will be 3 referees per mat.
- This is for the safety of the players to ensure that all angles are covered and any potential injury situation is avoided before it happens.



- SO Referees are as much part of the contest as the players
- SO referees position themselves closer to the action than mainstream refereeing in order to intervene quickly in any potential injury situation.
- All of the safety measures put in place are for the absolute safety of the players. As a result of these measures adaptive judo play and contest is one of the safest contact sports in the world. Recording injury rates at a large number of events it was concluded that the injury rate is currently at 0.04% and improving all the time!

To download a full copy of the 2020 Rules & Regulations click [here](#).

Additional Information

Disability Information

It is important for coaches to be aware of, and have some knowledge of a range of disabilities. Although Special Olympics provide opportunities for people with intellectual differences, some of these athletes also may have additional challenges such as a physical restriction, a social disability or a sensory impairment.

We have provided some information below in relation to a number of different disabilities that regularly participate in judo.

Intellectual Disability (ID)

An Intellectual disability is defined as having an IQ of 70 – 75 or below. 3% of world's population have a learning Disability.

Like everyone else, people with an intellectual disability enjoy activities and meeting new people. Most people with an intellectual disability are very able and value any opportunity for new experiences.

Each person with an intellectual disability is an individual. Therefore it is important in getting to know each individual, to spend time with them and/or ensure that an overview of any specific needs that the person may have is received firstly from themselves and then the person's family/support worker. There are some particular points to be aware of.



These include the following:

- Some people with intellectual disability may have a high pain tolerance. If they fall etc, it is important to ensure an injury has not been sustained.
- People with Down syndrome may have a circulatory disorder. They may also have poor coordination and difficulty with steps.
- People with intellectual disability who also have epilepsy may be prone to photosensitivity. Therefore flashing lights at a disco and some lighting from films may precipitate a seizure.
- Some people with learning difficulties may react negatively to change - mostly through fear of the unknown. It is best to introduce change very gradually.
- Do not sensationalise the accomplishments of people with learning disability. Respect their achievements as you would any athlete.

The above does not pertain to all individuals with intellectual disability. However it is important to be aware of these points and ensure time is spent getting to know each person's abilities as well as their needs.



COMMUNICATING AND MEETING PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

DO	Say what you want to say, clearly and simply
DO	Attract someone's attention by eye contact and calling their name.
DO	Provide tasks within their abilities.
DO	Break down tasks into uncomplicated steps
DO	Use plenty of repetition
DO	Show rather than tell people how to do a task.
DO	Give praise and positive reinforcement.
DO	Be patient if people don't understand something the first time you tell them.
DO	Treat everyone as an individual and afford them the respect and dignity you would like yourself.
DON'T	Use jargon
DON'T	Insist on helping if your assistance is turned down.
DON'T	Patronise adults with and intellectual disability by saying such things as "good boy/girl"
DON'T	Pretend to understand if you actually don't – ask them to repeat
DON'T	Expect all individuals to be able to follow written instructions.
DON'T	Take some behaviour that is difficult to manage personally.
DON'T	Be offended by lack of response or unconventional behaviour
DON'T	Ignore inappropriate behaviour.



DOWN SYNDROME (DS)

Down Syndrome is a genetic condition caused by the presence of an extra chromosome 21 in the body's cells, it is not a disease. In the majority of cases DS is not an inherited condition.

Some Facts:

- Down syndrome is not a disease.
- People with DS are not ill and do not "suffer" from the condition.
- Down Syndrome affects people of all races and economic levels

Main Characteristics:

- Intellectual Impairment (99%)
- Stunted growth (90%)
- Large tongue (75%)
- Smaller mouth cavity
- Separation of first and second toe (68%)
- Tendency for obesity after puberty (90%)
- Slanted eyes (60%)

People with Down syndrome are not all the same. They have more in common with their families than with each other. Just like the rest of the population, they will inherit family characteristics. The most important thing to remember is that everyone with Down syndrome is a unique individual.

Achieving Potential

Children raised at home, in all aspects of community life, can best reach their potential and function in society with a greater degree of independence.

Parental love, nurturing and support, as well as early intervention programmes, education opportunities and community involvement, have a direct influence on the degree to which a person with Down syndrome is able to achieve his / her potential.

Health issues

- Heart defects occur in around 47% of individuals with Down syndrome and 10 to 15% of babies with Down syndrome have a severe heart defect that requires surgical intervention during the first few months of life.
- Respiratory infections are more common among people with Down syndrome, especially during the first five years of life. Infections of the skin and the bladder also tend to be common.



- Children with Down syndrome have a 10 to 20 fold increased risk of developing leukaemia
- Up to 80% of children with Down syndrome experience hearing loss, sometimes severe. Even mild hearing loss will lead to difficulties in speech and language development.
- People with Down syndrome are more likely to experience vision disorders such as long & short sightedness.
- 95% of people with DS have an imbalance of body fluids resulting in a reduction in saliva production, dry skin and dehydration
- Neck defect, Atlanto axial instability, weakness disorder of the neck.

All Down syndrome athletes need a test and are not allowed to participate or train Judo if they have this instability according the SOI rules.

AUTISM (ASD)

Autism is a lifelong neuro-developmental disability that affects the development of the brain in areas of social interaction and communication. People with autism have difficulties in communicating and forming relationships with people and in developing language. It also impacts their ability to make sense of the world around them.

Autism is described as a 'spectrum' disorder. This means that the symptoms and characteristics of autism can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations and can range from mild to severe. Two people with the same diagnosis can act very differently from one another and have varying skills.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is also referred to as ASD.

Autism is often referred to as the 'hidden' disability because people who are on the autistic spectrum show no significant physical difference to their peers, rather it is their behaviours that mark them out as different. The 3 main areas of difficulty for people with autism are referred to as the 'triad of impairments'.

- Social communication
- Social interaction
- Social imagination

There is a fourth area which has been identified as presenting people with autism with significant difficulties and that is the area of sensory processing. Sensory processing difficulties are indicated by either an over or under sensitivity across any or all of the senses.



Some Simple Information

The following information refer to people with a mild or moderate diagnose of autism. These are guidelines only and should be treated as such. Remember each individual may have traits uncommon to others with the same condition.

Eye Contact: People with ASD often make poor eye contact and might look away, giving the impression that they are not listening or are uninterested in what the person may be saying.

Clear Language: People with ASD have a tendency to interpret things literally and may have a problem understanding the humour in jokes, puns etc. This can sometimes cause a problem for coaches and teammates alike. The rule is to keep it simple and to use direct commands.

There may be a difficulty for some people with ASD in turn taking and some take losing badly. This can cause difficulty for teachers or coaches who might not be aware of this. Understanding this problem is half the battle.

People with ASD generally dislike loud noises, crowds and strangers and they value their own personal space.

Some people with ASD react negatively to change. They often function best when working to a routine. It is important to remember that any little change can upset that routine.

Some people with ASD can lack social skills and tend not to mix very well, thus need encouragement to become part of a team. Some may prefer solitary sports.

People with ASD can have a very high pain threshold. This is vital to know in relations to sports injuries. They might try to continue a game or particular sport instead of seeking medical attention.

Some people with ASD are persistent talkers and may irritate teammates or coaches but this is something people eventually get used to.

Some have poor motor skills and may appear clumsy or awkward when participating in games or sports and may be easily discouraged if others make fun of them. Sports and games can help their hand eye coordination, motor skills and general fitness and boost their moral and self-esteem.



DYSPRAXIA

Dyspraxia is a difficulty with thinking, planning and carrying out sensory/motor tasks. The person with dyspraxia may have a combination of several problems in varying degrees.

These include:

- poor posture and poor balance
- poor motor co-ordination and sense of direction
- difficulty with throwing catching a ball
- poor awareness of body position in space
- difficulty hopping, skipping or riding a bike
- sensitive to touch
- confused about which hand to use
- find some clothes uncomfortable
- difficulty with reading, writing
- speech problems – late in learning to speak and speech may be incoherent
- phobias or obsessive behaviour and impatient

Children with dyspraxia can be of average or above average intelligence but are often behaviourally immature. They try hard to fit in to socially accepted behaviour when at school but often throw tantrums when at home. They may find it difficult to understand logic and reason.

CEREBRAL PALSY (CP)

Cerebral Palsy is the result of a brain injury or a brain malformation affecting a person's ability to move. It is a permanent life-long condition, but generally does not worsen over time. Individuals with Cerebral Palsy were most likely born with the condition, although some acquire it later.

Cerebral palsy affects people in different ways and can affect body movement, muscle control, muscle coordination, muscle tone, reflex, posture and balance.

Muscles can contract too much, too little, or all at the same time. Limbs can be stiff and forced into painful, awkward positions. Fluctuating muscle contractions can make limbs tremble or shake.

An individual with Cerebral Palsy will likely show signs of physical impairment. However, the type of movement dysfunction, the location and number of limbs involved, as well as the extent of impairment, will vary from one individual to



another. It can affect arms, legs, and even the face; it can affect one limb, several, or all.

Balance, posture, and coordination can also be affected by Cerebral Palsy. Tasks such as walking, sitting, or tying shoes may be difficult for some, while others might have difficulty grasping objects.

Other complications, such as intellectual impairment, seizures, and vision or hearing impairment also commonly accompany Cerebral Palsy.

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

When chatting...

- Make sure you are in front of or fairly close to (approx 1 – 2 metres) and on the same level as the person
- Check that background noise is kept to a minimum
- Do not shout
- Speak clearly, maintaining a normal rhythm of speech
- Remember that sentences and phrases are easier to understand than isolated words
- If a word/phrase is not understood, use different words with the same meaning – rephrase
- Allow more time for the person to absorb what you have said
- Keep head still and stop talking if you turn away
- Keep hands, pens, etc away from your face while speaking
- Avoid exaggerated facial movement.
- Make sure the person is looking at you – attract attention if necessary
- If the topic is changed make sure the person knows
- Check the person understands you
- Write thing down if necessary
- Remember lip reading can be very tiring

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Contrary to popular belief, most blind or partially sighted people can see something. Just how much someone can see will vary from person to person. A minority of blind people can distinguish light but nothing else. Some people have no central vision and others have no side vision. Some people see everything as a vague blur, and others see a patchwork of blanks and defined areas.



There are a number of different eye conditions that can cause sight problems. Some people are born with no vision or significantly reduced vision. Others lose vision due to accidents or the natural ageing process. The actual effects of the vision impairment vary widely, depending on the condition, its progress and the person's coping skills. Therefore it is important to speak to the person about the effect of their visual impairment and how they cope, so that their individual needs can be met.

- Greet a person by saying your name in case the person does not recognise your voice
- Talk directly to the person rather than through a third party
- There's no need to shout
- Don't be afraid to use terms like "see you later" or "do you see what i mean!" People with visual impairments use them too
- Always ask the person if they would like your assistance and if so, allow them to take your arm
- When assisting, it is helpful to give a commentary on what is around the person
- If you are giving directions, don't point. Give clear verbal directions. It is also helpful to inform the person of steps along the route and whether there is a step up or step down
- Similarly, don't assume that a person using a white cane or guide dog is totally blind. Many partially sighted people use these
- Always let a person know when you are entering or leaving a room, so that they are not left talking to themselves
- Don't leave a blind person standing in space – let them have contact with some object such as a chair, desk or wall bright colours help when marking out areas.



Glossary of Terms

Japanese Phrase	English Interpretation
Ashi / Ashi waza	Foot / Foot Technique
Hajime	Start / Begin
Hansoku-make	Disqualification
Hiza	Knee
IJF	International Judo Federation
Judogi	Judo Uniform
Judoka	Judo Person
Kansetsu-waza	Joint Locks
Kata	Form
Kesa / Kesa Gatame	Scarf / Scarf Hold
Kumi-kata	Grips / Engagement Position
Kuzure Kesa Gatame	Modified Scarf Hold
Makikomi	Wrap Around/ Winding Throw
Mate	Stop / Pause
Ne-waza	Ground Technique
Osaekomi-waza	Pinning Technique
O Soto Gari	Major Outer Reap (throw)
Randori	Free Style Practice
Sankaku (jime)-waza	Triangular (strangle) Technique
Shiai	Competition



Shido	Penalty
Shime-waza	Choking Technique
Sutemi -waza	Sacrifice Technique
Tachi-waza	Standing Technique
Tani Otoshi	Valley Drop (throw)
Tatami	Floor Mat
Tori	Attacking / Throwing Player
Uchikomi	Repeated Throw Practice
Uke	Defending / Thrown Player

