



Introductory Letter to New Seniors

Dear New Member,

On behalf of Akitas Judo Clubs I would like to welcome you to the Club and provide you with some information about our activities. The Club provides its membership with opportunities to receive coaching and competition in Judo. All coaching is by qualified British Judo Association coaches who are well trained and very experienced.

Training sessions take place on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Please see Session Times in the cover of the welcome pack for details of when and where Akitas Judo Clubs run.

We appreciate it if members can arrive in time for the start of the session, and if possible that they do not leave before the end of the session. We do though realise people have differing work commitments etc. and should you find yourself in such a position, please inform the Coach on duty so that they are aware.

The Club can purchase training kit (Judogi) at greatly discounted prices. Costs for specific sizes can be obtained from Bexs.

We would be grateful if you could complete the Club membership registration form. For safety reasons, it is important that the Club is informed of any medical condition or allergies that may be relevant should you fall ill or be involved in an accident while at the Club.

Also enclosed within this induction pack you will find a document produced by the British Judo Association, which highlight the benefits of participating in Judo. If you would like to talk to someone at the Club about this information or your involvement with the Club, please contact the Membership Secretary, Bexs on 07767224405 or bexs@akitasjudo.com. Alternatively you can contact Adam on 07753820439 or sensei@akitasjudo.com.

Once again welcome to the Club - please enjoy your Judo and do not hesitate to offer us feedback on the services we provide for our membership.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Hutchins
Head Coach
3rd Dan



Akitas Judo Clubs

Akitas Southend Judo Club (3038), Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre, Green Park, Eastern Avenue SS2 4FA
 Akitas Harling Magna Judo Club (3065), Harling Magna Parish Hall, 432 Little Waresing Road, Harling Magna SS3 0LN
 Akitas Raleigh Judo Club (3068), Raleigh Leisure Centre, Priory Chase, off Rowlett Lane, Raleigh SS6 9NF

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The value of Judo - on a personal level

Many people have a pre-conceived notion of what they believe Judo to be which is well wide of the mark. Judo bears no resemblance whatsoever to many of the martial arts it is so often associated with. Here we examine what Judo was, is and the benefits it can offer its participants in sport and day-to-day life: -

Judo was developed in Japan by Dr Jigoro Kano towards the end of the 19th century and has evolved from being a martial art into one of the world's most popular sports. Since its inclusion in the 1964 Olympic Games Judo has progressed rapidly and is without doubt the worlds most popular combat sport. Judo is however much more than a sport, it is also seen to be effective as an educational system in both physical and moral spheres.

Judo training is an ideal form of physical exercise and it serves as a great cardiovascular workout, which improves stamina, general health and overall fitness. Physical strength is also improved as a direct result of trying to control and dictate the movement of the opponent and as well as enhanced power; a Judo player will also improve their flexibility. For the same reasons the balance and posture of a player will also be enhanced. Physical co-ordination can be seen to develop dramatically from participation in Judo and reflexes are also improved together with mental reaction time.

The moral benefits of Judo are a direct result of the transition from martial art to what Kano termed "Do" or "way of life". Kano added a strict code of ethics and a humanitarian philosophy to his system. His Judo instructors and students were expected to be outstanding examples of good character and honest conduct. Combat outside of the training hall or behaviour that brought shame to the school would lead to suspension or even expulsion. Kano's ultimate concern for the well being of both the individual and the community is reflected in his teaching methods and one of Judo's guiding principles is "mutual benefit and prosperity". Kano believed that the diligent practice of Judo should lead to the realization that one could not progress at the expense of others; only mutual prosperity offered the key to any real progress in human life. These principles still underpin the sport today and this can be seen from the respect shown between rival exponents.

Judo is an ideal sport for all ages, males or females and attracts very many disability groups. Confidence and self-esteem are enhanced as a player progresses through the ranks and the very nature of the grading system ensures that the next goal is always realistic and achievable with effort. The grading system also ensures that regardless of their skill level all Judo players can actively compete with players of similar ability and hence they have a reasonable chance of emerging victorious.

Because of the potentially dangerous nature of the sport, strict discipline is essential and great importance is placed on safety, hygiene and etiquette. Safety is controlled by the contest rules, which are constantly updated to exclude harmful actions - this allows Judo to be practiced in a spirited manner without undue risk of harm or injury. Hygiene is essential due to the close physical contact between players and Judo etiquette instils respect, modesty, politeness and general social skills on all participants.

Contest Judo is derived from techniques that were traditionally used in Japan to kill or severely injure opponents on the battlefield - these techniques have been refined and modified and contest rules have been applied to make them safe. Punching, kicking and gouging for example is not allowed, the object of the contest being to throw the opponent largely onto their back with considerable force and speed - this scores "Ippon" and ends the contest.

Naturally players are taught to fall in such a manner that they land safely, great emphasis is placed on mastering the several methods of breakfalling since this gives players the confidence to participate fully. It is also possible to score Ippon by pinning the opponent to the mat for a period of twenty-five seconds. Chokes, strangles and arm locks against the elbow joint can also be used to make an opponent submit though this is not allowed in children's Judo for safety reasons since their bodies are still developing. In addition to the sought after Ippon, smaller scores are given for less successful throws and hold-downs broken before the twenty-five second limit.

There are even benefits in defeat as the sport lays great emphasis on discipline and self-control - it is rare indeed to see a player ungracious in defeat at any level from Club training to International competition. A handshake almost always follows the traditional courteous rei (bow) at the end of a contest and the defeated player, though perhaps disappointed with the result, remains respectful of the winner.

Judo has also been seen to actively reduce bullying, bully's can only get away with their reigns of terror in relatively uncontrolled environments and the disciplined Dojo (training hall), removes them from their position of power. At the same time they themselves learn discipline and self control, quite often whilst losing to players who were previously a victim of their bullying, this gives them a new perspective and a newfound respect for such players.

A useful spin off from Judo training is that by its nature Judo is an ideal form of self-defence however it must be remembered that no system can ever be regarded the complete self-defence. Judo players often find that physical intervention is never needed since they are not easily intimidated and assailants frequently back down when they observe the confident, calm nature of their target. Because of its close contact Judo helps to develop a keen awareness of danger, however should the worst come to the worst and a Judoka be forced to physically defend their self it offers better self-defence training at close quarters than any other sport.

Judo also offers a great social scene, many Clubs meet up regularly away from the Dojo at functions, dinners, parties etc. Judo draws people from all walks of life and social backgrounds. More than one hundred years after Dr Jigoro Kano the founder of Judo said, "Judo is a teaching for life itself and with it we learn to overcome the pitfalls and obstacles of everyday living" his words still ring true. A man of great vision Kano summed up Judo by saying "it is the way to most efficiently use one's mental and physical strength. By training, one should discipline and cultivate the body and spirit through the practice of techniques of offence and defence, thereby to master the essence of Judo. And, by these means, it is the ultimate goal of Judo to build oneself up to perfection and thereby benefit the world."