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To: All Club, Area, Squads Coaches and Regional Technical Officers

Dear all,

Please find the first round of thoughts in conjunction with the trials of new IJF rules. By sharing them with you I expect to create a wave of debates and discussions among the coaches, finally leading you to technical solutions. All the recommendations below are based on my personal expertise and may differ from opinion of the other experts. But I will be most happy if some of these recommendations could help Club, Area and Squads coaches to react in advance to the new IJF technical policy, foresee and predict the outcomes and modify their coaching process for the sake and success of their performance players.

REPORT

NEW TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR COACHING IN PERFORMANCE JUDO **IN THE LIGHT OF NEW RULES (2010 and beyond)**

Background. Following lengthly debates on the subject of how to improve the modern judo, IJF Executive Committee agreed on experimenting with another round of amendments to the contest rules. It is one of the many attempts to «protect» the original Kodokan Judo from the damage caused by the influence of various wrestling styles, despite the recognised fact that Judo continues to evolve and absorb technical innovations which do not contradict its true spirit. Once approved these amendments will need to be followed with changes in coaching at every level, and also with changes in the technical approach applied for preparation of performance squads. It will be also critical to predict some of the outcomes and jump ahead of the opposition.

Rules amendments (trials yet).

1. Direct attacks with one or two hands/arms below the belt are not allowed
2. Grips below the belt (trousers) are authorised only after the sequence of techniques (if it's real and sincere)
3. Grips below the belt are authorised in counter-attack
4. These counter-attacks are allowed only within a sequence of techniques started by the opponent.

Where we are: long-term. We have to admit that BJA appeared to be one-step ahead of this changes by implementation in 2007 of a new technical policy for U12 which has been successfully applied across the country and is producing the long-term results for already two years, and is gradually changing the coaching culture and knowledge.

Where we are: short-term (2012). However, it is the performance judo which is going to face the most difficult task to bring in and re-align the new tactical and technical approach to the players with already well-established sets of individual techniques many of which include leg grabs.

Speculations and thoughts on new perspectives in coaching (short-term 2012)

New technical policy hopefully may bring the results in the long-term. However, in the short-term, we may receive the instant outcome, which could be also unwelcomed and even more harmful. «Once something is taken out – it will be replaced with something else». Also, unorthodox judo will remain as an unorthodox one, and hence it will adjust itself to the new circumstances.

I will dare to speculate and predict that :

1. The amount of time in **Kumi-kata** which both players will spend in the contest will increase significantly (up to 25%), and will occupy up to 3-3,5 minutes of pure «hand-wrestling» from 5 min match (men).

Oftenly, leg-grabs used to be applied in the situations when the player was no longer comfortable with his opponent's upright stance and/or strong grips, so Leg-grab used to serve as a «tactical escape» to certain extent. With new rules in place performance players will need to build even much **stronger and more intensive Kumi-kata** (than before) in order to control the attack-defence situations.

2. New impetus will receive close-quarter Kumi-kata solutions such as «Georgian» and «Russian» grip.

Those «technically limited» players may go the route of ultimate gripping, known as «Georgian» and «Russian» grips. We may evidence more often the «1996 Boras (FRA) – Koga (JPN) Olympic final scenario» in the international events.

3. The amount of successful (scored) all-out drops techniques will increase in international performance judo. **Drop-seoi-nage variations comeback.**

It may well appear that degree (power, frequency, etc) of scored knee-drop techniques will increase. When re-drawing the «tactical map» for a player in order to equip him with a «tactical escape» from disadvantage of a strong Kumi-kata and/or oncoming attack – some coaches will turn their mind back onto Drop-seoi-nage (what else is left ?). It is also very likely that some drop-seoi-

nage's will receive further modifications regarding entry pattern or a starting grip. (few new examples could be seen in WC2007)

4. The amount of successful (scored) all-out sacrifice techniques will increase in international performance judo. **Sumi-gaeshi variations comeback**

I predict the increase in successful applications of Sutemi-waza, particularly such as Sumi-gaeshi, and its numerous modifications known in Eastern European Judo schooling. These attacks could become more favoured, particularly as unorthodox players with strong Kumi-kata skills will be able to dominate with triceps and mid-back grip

5. New impetus will receive existing wrestling and sambo moves («grab-and-throw», unorthodox ashi-waza (to include Kawazu-gake), take-downs and transitions). **Close-quarter / Upper-body wrestling comeback**

It may well appear (as a result of new rules) that 2012 will be a true display of a «pure conventional judo technique», but it is also possible that we will see a surprising range of unorthodox moves and techniques as well – perhaps, will see a comeback of «flying juji-gatame», «one-knee drop Tai-otoshi», throws with the belt grip, etc.

6. All familiar leg-grabs will receive «technical modifications» to meet the requirements of the «new rules interpretation». Most of conventional leg-grabs will receive a sincere-looking set-up in a form of a feint, or a first false attack (there is a lot of opportunities for creative leg-grapplers !). **Twitch-into-Leg-grab combinations**

Being high performance coach myself when having such a short time-frame for a change (1,000 days before 2012), I would start thinking in the first place of a «bypassing» the rules for my top players (particularly those having efficient leg-grabs in Tokui-waza). So I advocate, that those international players who could previously score with leg-grabs will continue applying this techniques but in a new fashion in 2012 (though they may well die out after 2012). Truth is that there are numerous modifications of leg-grabs (particularly in Eastern European Judo Schooling) which they would prefer to investigate further rather than will be frantically trying to fill the gaps in their fundamental judo skills.

7. I predict that in overall terms Judo will become even more physical than before. **Counter-attacking strategies and tactics of physical domination.**

Players with poor technical base and without any chance to build proper technique («leg-grapplers») will choose the route of «physical tactical set-up». First they would apply physical domination with strong Kumi-kata, pressure, taking over the central mat area, close-quarter, sacrifice throws, take-downs, etc. As their opposition will need to break their physical domination and will be applying «technical attacks» they will be free to pick-up counter-leg grabs.

Short-term technical recommendation for BJA performance players 2010-2012:

1. To increase a.s.a.p Kumi-kata practice and to include in each training session 15-20 minutes of «grip work» - to get yourself ready
2. To pay serious attention to proper conditioning of performance players
3. To investigate the inner workings of «Georgian and Russian grips», prepare counter-action plan and technical solutions.
4. To pay more attention to both attack and defence from Drop-seoi-nage, and build strong transition skills vs Drop-seoi-nage (shime-waza, kansetsu-waza entries, etc)
5. To pay more attention to both attack and defence from Sumi-gaeshi;
6. To design and practice special combinations («sequences» as interpreted by new rules) of 2-3 continuous attacks to incorporate leg-grab as the last action in combination (this meets the requirement of a «non-direct» attack, so far);
7. To increase the amount of work on Kaeshi-waza. This could be achieved by offering Randori with a special scenario (Player A – attacks ; player B – counter-attacks with inclusion of leg-grabs);

Conclusion / Personal remarks

When I worked as Head Coach in Chinese Taipei 1996-2000, I explored efficiency of their system. Every top manager has two assistants known as Black and White Adviser, in otherwords one is an optimist, another is a pessimist. At least, man-in-charge receives a full picture of concerns of every kind and takes thorough decision.

It seems to me that in this research I sound more as a pessimist. Anyway, I will be happy if any of my positive predictions will come true, and all negative speculations will never happen.

Let's discuss the subject !

