

Here are 3 articles written for my Black Blog by friend Cheryl Harai, 6th Dan



Cheryl Hari & Gary Goltz

Panel Belt Secrets

By Cheryl Harai

3/29/22

Cheryl Hari recently wrote me regarding the judo belt ranking system.

When you begin judo your gi comes with a white belt. After several months of learning to take proper ukemi (falls), a few throws and holds, doing randori free practice and perhaps attending a shiai tournament the student progresses through the 3 ranks of ro-kyu, go-kyu, and yon-kyu, (yellow, orange, and green belt 6th to 4th class) followed by 3 ranks of brown belt san-kyu, ni-kyu, and ik-kyu (3rd to 1st class).

Hereafter, the levels are called dan. We thus find from 1st dan to 5th dan a black belt: Sho-dan (1st), Ni-dan (2nd), San-dan (3rd), Yo-dan (4th), Go-dan (5th).



Then the 6th (Roku-dan), 7th (Shichi-Dan) and 8th (Hachi-dan) dan are represented by a belt with wide, alternating red and white bands, the difference between grade being sometimes marked, in principle- slowly turning red, by the difference in width of the colored bands (6th dan white-red 20 cm, 7th dan white-red 15 cm, 8th dan white-red 10 cm. The 9th (Ku-dan) and 10th (Ju-dan) are symbolized by a red belt.

Some people believe that: "Being himself 11th dan, Jigoro Kano did not deliver grades beyond 10th. Today, this still represents a limit which cannot be exceeded." Symbolically, after his death he was awarded, by Jiro Nango, his nephew and successor at the head of the Kodokan, the 12th dan, represented by a wide, white belt. Philosophically, this meant that after having learned everything, even invented everything, it was necessary to relearn everything.

The awarding of this 12th dan took place in 1940, the year the first Tokyo Olympic Games should have taken place, for which Professor Kano had been the spokesperson for Japan's candidacy. At that time, already the highest ranking judoka, with his 10th dan, this 12th dan created an insurmountable gap that no-one will ever be able to bridge.

But this is actually a legend. "Kano Shihan has no dan grade, because he was the master who allowed his students to hold Dan grades. Nobody could give him Dan grade, because he was the founder of Kodokan Judo." (source: Kodokan).

Kano Shihan mentioned there is no upper limit of Dan grade. However, 10th Dan is the highest grade ever given in history. We know that the differentiated belts are an invention of Jigoro Kano. illustrations corroborate the existence of a belt system, although the first written mention dates from 1913.

Professor Kano was inspired by the 'Menkyo' reward method, dating from the 16th century and corresponding to certificates presented in rolls. On each was written various information, such as the recipient's name, their level, the techniques learned and the duration of the training.

According to Kano "I founded the Kodokan in the year 15 of Meiji [1882] and established the ranks of the practitioners without delay. In the past, depending on habits, the number of ranks differed and each one was given scrolls with various names, but generally there were three main divisions which were mokuroku, menkyo and kaiden.

I felt there was too much time between each one for this to be of any help in terms of motivating practitioners. So, I baptized the beginners mudan-sha [people without dan] which I separated into three divisions, ko, otsu, hei and I set up a system in which we became 1st dan after a certain progression in practice then 2nd, 3rd, 4th dan and so on upwards, causing the 10th dan to be awarded to people who in the old system would have reached the kaiden level.

Subsequently, I still felt that with my system of three stages ko, otsu and hei for people without dan, the time was always too important between two to motivate them and I reformed the system by establishing a 1st, a 2nd, a 3rd, a 4th, a 5th kyu as well as a non-grade, which corresponded to six kyu. Thinking about it with the experience gained since then, I think it fits the needs quite well."

The dan was divided into two colors: the black belt for 1st to 9th dan and the red belt for 10th. It was not until 1931 that the red and white belt appeared for the grades of 6th to 9th dan inclusive and finally in 1943, the 9th dan judoka were authorized to wear the red belt.

Gunji Koizumi, founder of the British Judo Association and considered the father of British judo, revolutionized the rank system. In 1927, new colored belts appeared in the Budokwai reports. In Gunji Koizumi's program there are five colors (white, yellow, green, blue and brown), orange was added, to correspond to the six kyu of the Kodokan. It is believed that the colors were based on the color of the billiard balls.

The grade system invented by Jigoro Kano and developed by other experts was so successful that it was taken up by other martial arts and even other sports which adapted a ranking system as well based on the same concept. This kyu/dan system is still the most widely used.

The story that originally the belts were white, for a beginner, but lost their whiteness, becoming black while the judoka practiced from white to brown and then black is a myth that is commonly told to beginners as a motivation to keep coming to judo class.

Lucid Dreaming

By Cheryl Harai

2/13/22

As every coach and athlete knows, the quest for "that extra edge" over the competition is a continual part of competitive sports. We are discovering that although we have barely touched the practice, the benefits of mental training can be invaluable to the athletes' performance at all levels.

For most athletes, their quest to improve their performance is limited to the time they can dedicate to physical practice. Some dedicated athletes limit sleep to fit more workouts into their wakeful hours. Yet, the hours an athlete spends asleep can be just as effective to improving performance, and not just because they are giving their body a rest.



Cheryl Hari throughout the years (picture in the middle with her dad)

Active or Lucid Dreaming

If you have ever gone to bed and can't stop thinking, even in your sleep. You may know you are dreaming, you can manipulate the dream, and sometimes you even wake up with a solution. You have experienced spontaneous Lucid Dreaming or Active Dreaming. Did you know that you can train to use this seldom used method to produce an amazing performance improvement for yourself and your athletes?

Research is showing us that the practice of Active or Lucid dreaming can be far superior to wakeful visualization techniques and at times superior to actual physical practice. Those who practice lucid dreaming are showing significant performance improvements.

While initial studies of the Lucid dream state focused on the ability to face our fears, overcome nightmares, wish fulfillment and healing. Athletes benefit, not only from the training to overcome performance anxiety and fears. Lucid dream training has a much broader application.

In a lucid dream state, we practice our responses without facing the "danger" directly. You can practice your strategies and get a feel for what would work and what won't. You are aware that the events rushing through your brain aren't really happening, and you can rehearse how it may unfold, somewhat as if you were directing a movie in your sleep. You can replay the scenario over and over, until you discover the desired results.

Research shows that the sense of control and the repetitive practice you feel during a lucid dream stays with you when you are awake and encounter similar events and helps you respond as you practiced in your dreams.

Because lucid dreaming is an "altered state of consciousness" that differs from ordinary dreaming where the dreamer is capable of judgment and reflection, and repetition. They are able to utilize more awareness than during ordinary dreaming. Lucid dreaming occurs during REM sleep...

During REM sleep, the brain remains highly active even though certain motor neurons in the brain stem are suppressed to paralyze the sleeper's body .

The combination of an active brain and inactive body distinguishes lucid dreaming from wakeful imagery or visualization. Although the body's muscles are actively inhibited in REM sleep, the neural messages sent to them in dreams are just as strong as when the body is awake. This means that activity in lucid dreams can be as effective at perfecting physical skills as activity in waking life can be. In addition, while normal dreams are often forgotten, the memory of lucid dreams appears to be equal to memories retained while we are awake. This allows the athlete to apply their dream experiences to the waking world easily.

How To do it

With practice, triggering lucid dream training can be fairly easy.

You can train yourself to shift into a lucid dream state with pre-sleep autosuggestion Go to bed each night with the intention to become lucid during your dreams. Before you fall asleep, run the scenario you want to work on through your mind using a wakeful visualization technique. Once you reach the REM sleep state, your mind takes over.

It helps to work on your dream recall. Having a strong dream recall increases your chances of becoming cognizant and remembering your practice. Don't worry about always remembering though, the neural pathways for your response and techniques are still being built.

Another way to initiate lucid dreams is to use a portable device that induces the lucid dream state. They are in the form of a sleep mask or headband that produce noises, flashing lights, vibrations and other cues that act as auditory, visual, or tactile stimulation

It takes practice to master your dreams, but with repetition the skill becomes easier, and with strategies and effort anyone can do it.

Conclusion

Research is determining that lucid dream training has a lot to offer judo athletes. Coaches and athletes know that mental practice can be half the game. Being able to rehearse performance, leads to a better response to the situation.

As the connection between how the mind and body interact to affect athletic performance, there is strong evidence that dreaming about performing a complex action is as effective as actually practicing it. In multiple studies, there were no significant advantage for those who physically practiced the technique compared to those who practiced in lucid dreaming state. The practice improves motor skills by strengthening the neural pathways used to elicit the patterns of movement that are required.

Improvements in new skills are evident even before they are attempted while awake, positive changes appear within one dream to the next. The implications of this are amazing. Lucid dreaming can help an athlete practice movement before their bodies are physically ready to perform. They can start developing the neural pathways, so they are ready to perform when their muscles are ready. Injured athletes can also benefit from lucid dream practice. Helping them maintain their techniques while healing.

Lucid dream practice can provide an athlete with that "extra edge," both physically and mentally. The sensory-motor work and mental strengthening that occurs during sleep is incredibly beneficial. The 'edge' of being able to train in your sleep and waking life gives the athlete time to devote a significantly greater number of hours his sport than any of his competition who do not harness the skill of lucid dreaming.

Early Women's Judo and Traditional Japanese Dance

By Cheryl Harai

7-21-2021

Last month following a judo event a bunch high ranking older sensei were sitting at a table enjoying lunch and our conversation touched on how successful women have been in in the grappling arena in recent years. Cheryl Hari whose family has been connected to judo for several generations mentioned having to learn the [judo dance](#) as a young female judoka. Blank looks were on everyone's faces which led Cheryl to share her amazing insights on her early day involvement in Women's Judo.



Cheryl with her Dad at an early age

According to Cheryl the *judo dance* or *judo buyo* played an interesting role in the history of women's judo. *Nihon Buyo* – a Japanese dance performance, was popular entertainment for the samurai in premodern times, flourishing from 1660's to the 1900's. Often called *Kabuki* or *Noh* theater today, *Nihon Buyo* is its own independent, highly imitative performance. The dance combines three traditional categories of body movement, Mai-lateral movement, odori- vertical, jumping movement and furi-mimetic or imitational movement. These classifications of movement come from the Japanese martial arts, including jujitsu and later judo.

After the time of the samurai and for a while after WW II, Martial Arts were banned. So, to maintain the knowledge, Martial Artist disguised their arts into *Odori* as folk dances.

This allowed them to continue their training without interference from opposing forces. As Kano developed and continued to promote judo to the world, he presented the sport as a form of culture that had both a certain nationality- Japanese- while also being impressive and useful enough to be accepted as a sport, especially in the west. Kano's goal was to cultivate patriots who would dedicate themselves to national development. During a lecture in 1889 he insisted that judo was a means to strengthen patriotism, and that Judo would help earn Japan the admiration of the rest of the world.

The *Nihon Buyo* also played its part in the effort to rest a European and Western cultural hegemony. The dance functioned as a distillation of Japanese aesthetic practice, conservatism, and masculinist privilege. As women began to practice judo, many had already learned some of the body movements through dance as parents often used the dance forms to train normative femininity, instilling discipline, and beauty along with balance and smooth body movement. The concept elegance, grace, and refinement were of great importance in playing upper-class women's roles. In judo practice, Kano emphasizes that "a right posture should be always maintained so as not to be unbalanced in the time of motion." The women of judo incorporated the techniques and movements they were learning in judo kata and self-defense into a *Nihon Buyo Judo* dance.

The late [Keiko Fukuda](#) Sensei, often said, "*There are two types of judo that can be learned. The first is narrow and emphasizes judo techniques. With competition, this is how men do judo. The second approach is much broader and deals with the development of a human being.*" This is the approach Miss Fukuda believed to be the true goal of judo. With this goal in mind and the desire to show the women of the world how judo would benefit them, the judo buyo found a place in the dojo women's classes and as part of the opening ceremonies at the men's tournaments alongside Kata.

Once women started competing and women's judo began to focus on technique and wins, the judo buyo faded into history. Several attempts have been made to revive this hidden legacy of women's judo. Keiko Nagasaki from the Kodokan taught a several women for a while.

In 2017 [Sawtelle Judo gave a performance of their version of judo buyo](#) incorporating the GoshinJutsu no kata during a tournament celebrating their 90th anniversary.

Figure 1 - The Weaker (?) Sex is Organizing Anthony De Leonardis, Black Belt Magazine

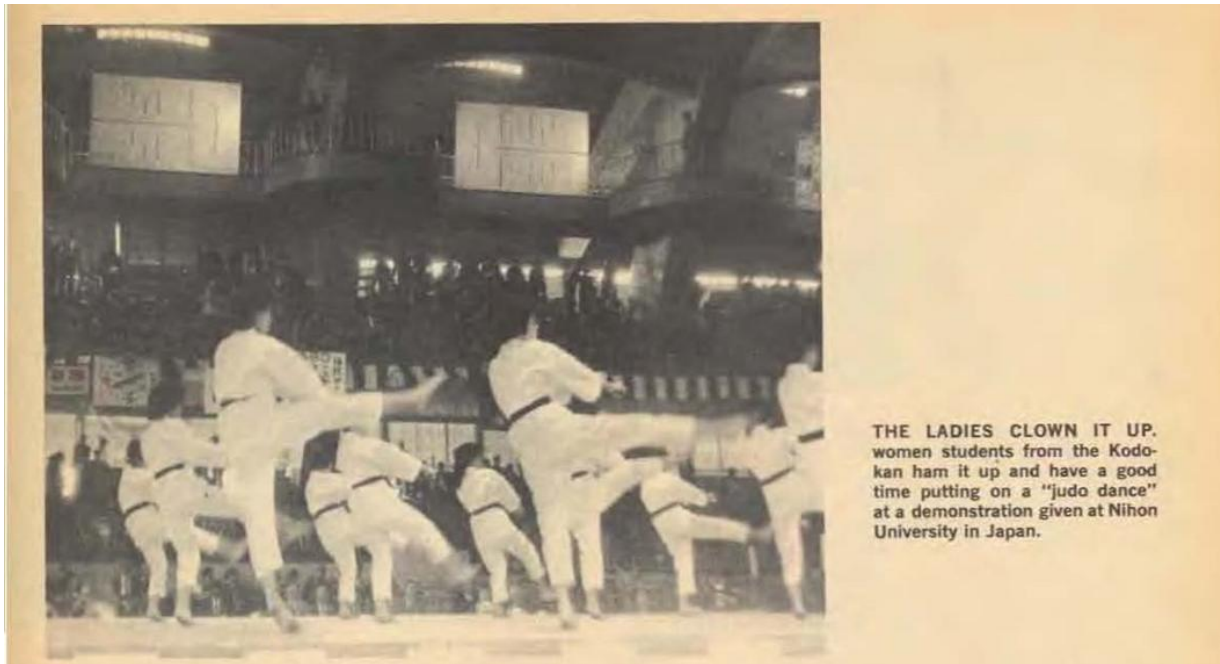


Figure 2 - The Weaker (?) Sex is Organizing Anthony De Leonardis, Black Belt Magazine

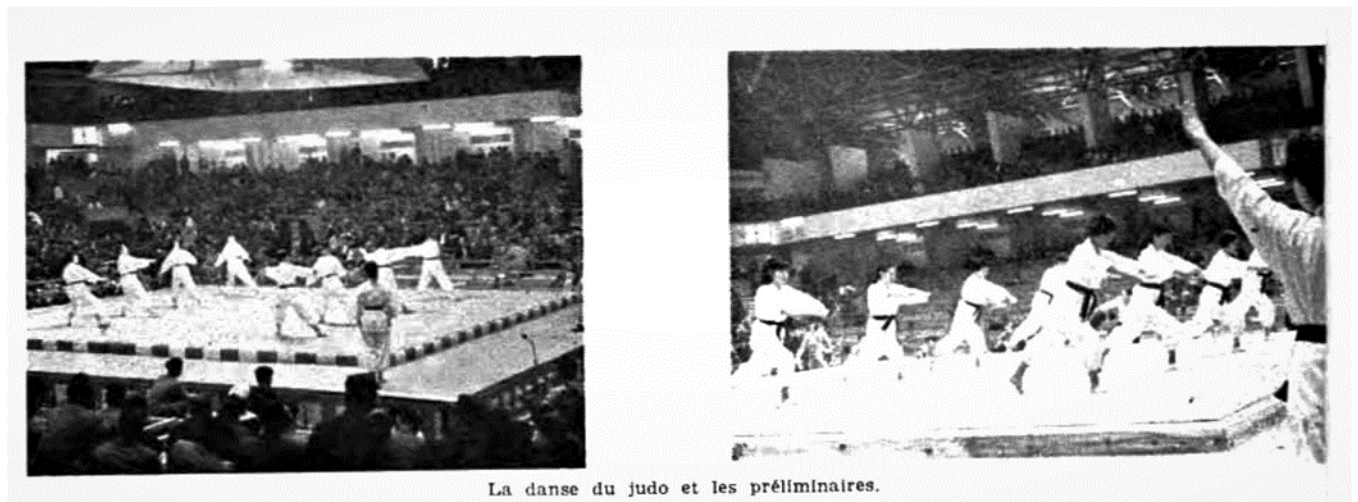


Figure 3 - The Weaker (?) Sex is Organizing, Anthony De Leonardis, Black Belt Magazine

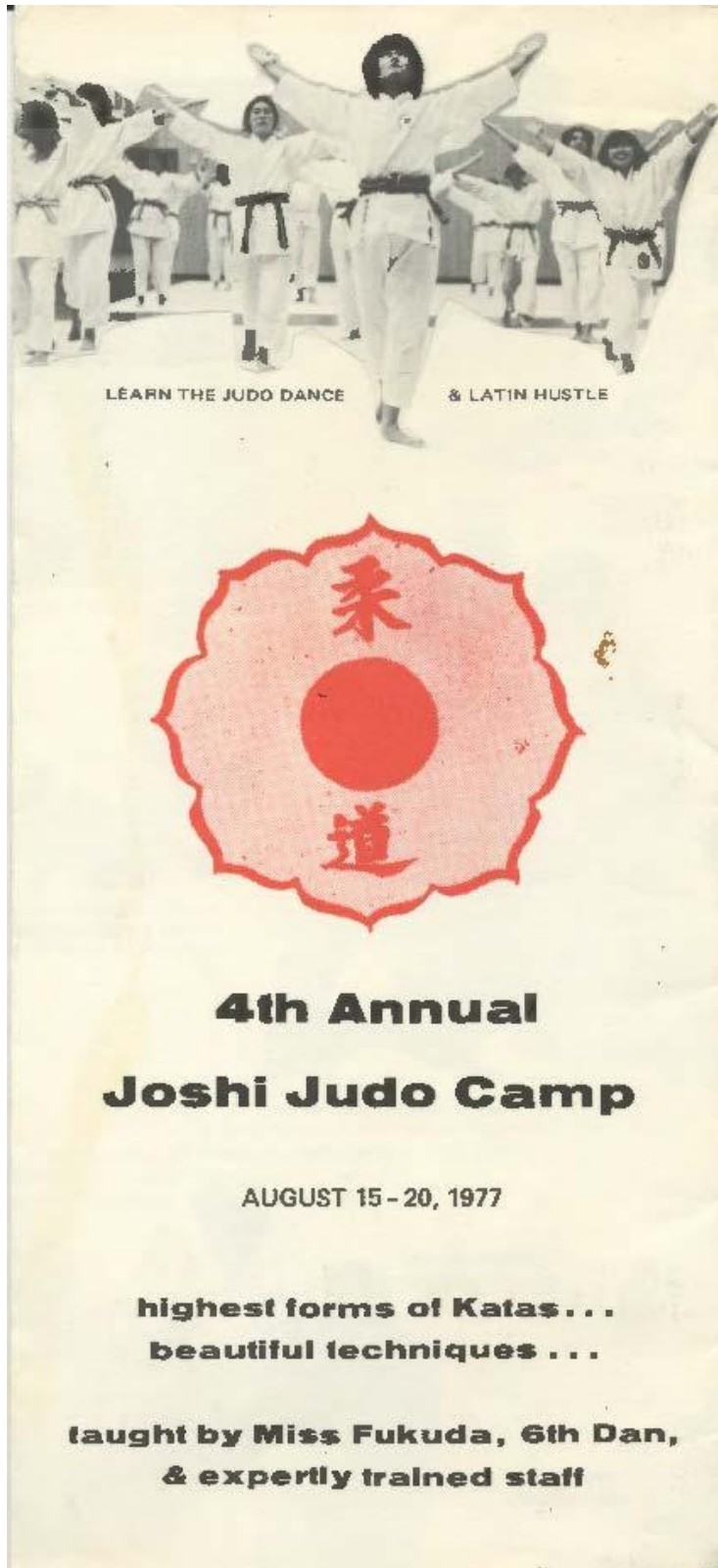


Figure 4 - Women's Randori Contest Rules from 1954

Women's Randori Contest

September 1954

Sacramento, California

INTRODUCTION

We would like to introduce you to our new WOMEN's Randori Contest. It is not a shiai, but a contest with the winners being decided on a total number of points per match. We hope that everyone will enjoy it and that it will become a successful part of Women's Judo.

We feel that women in judo need to have some type of competition besides kata or working just for judo rank. Women need some way to show their ability on the mat without degrading themselves or the real meaning of true Kodokan Judo. We feel that we must always preserve the true philosophy of Professor Kano's Judo. Therefore, we have tried to keep both the competition and the philosophies of judo in mind as we devised the Randori Contest.

THE CONTEST

The Women's Randori Contest will consist of throwing techniques only. There will be no mat or maki-komi techniques, choking or arm locks used or allowed at any time during the contest.

There will be 4 divisions with 4 winners in each division.

This will be a round robin tournament per division to find the overall winner of the tournament, the winners in each division will go into a single elimination tournament, thereby deciding the champion.

Each division shall have a Recorder, Referee, 2 to 4 judges and a time keeper.

Each contestant must be registered prior to the tournament.

The contest will be 2 or 3 minutes in length, depending on rank.

POINTS

Judges for Ukemi will judge from 0-5 points per ukemi, manners and attitude will be judged 0-10. Judges for throws will mark 5 points for waza-ari and 10 points for ippon. If the judge feels that the throw was an ippon and the referee called waza-ari they can mark 7 points on the throw. Body movement will be judged from 0-10 points.

If a girl has done exceptionally well in her division by winning 3 to 5 matches or more, she may be awarded 3-5 bonus points added to her final division points total.

Judges will score points in the following categories. Each being of equal importance.

UKEMI

Points will be given for taking a good fall as well as for throwing.

MANNERS & ATTITUDE

During the contest women should show minimal aggressiveness toward her opponent and will be judged on this. However, this should be done with good judo spirit, not with unnecessary roughness. If the contestant persists in a rough manner, she can be disqualified, thus awarding the match to her opponent.

THROWING & BODY MOVEMENT

Body movement on the mat is very important to ladies judo-ka. It should be quick and smooth. There should be no stiffness when blocking throws, but instead should be body movement in the way of defence. Also, in offence women should use good body movement and technique when attempting to throw her opponent, not strength. Excessive use of strength will earn less points than proper technique.

RULE 1- CONDITIONS & ELIGIBILITY

Section 1- Conditions

- A) Women's Randori Contest will consist of throwing techniques only.
- B) There will be no Mat or maki komi techniques, choking or bone locks used or allowed at any time during the contest.

Section 2- Eligibility

- A) This Randori Contest is open to any Woman or girl after completing six months of training. It is not mandatory, nor does it have any effect in gaining judo rank.
- B) The contestant must be mature as defined by the rules of the AAU.

RULE 2- COSTUME

All contestants shall wear a judo-gi under the following regulations

Section 1- Jackets

- A) A white garment without snaps or buttons shall be worn under the jacket.
- B) the jacket should be long enough to cover the buttocks and shall be neatly in place.

Section 2- Belt

- A) The belt must be neatly tied in a square knot at the waist, and the ends should be tucked back through the belt at the waist.
- B) If the belt is colored shall have a white strip running through the middle from end to end on both sides.

Section 3- Pants

- A) The pant legs should reach more than half-way down the calf.
- B) There should be a narrowing of the pant leg or a tuck on both sides of the calf opening to prevent the pant leg from exposing more leg than necessary.

RULE 3- PERSONAL HYGINE

Section 1- The judo-gi must be clean and neatly in place.

Section 2- Contestants must keep their finger and toe nails cut, (within reason).

Section 3- Hair, if worn long must be controlled in some way so that it does not interfere with the match.

Section 4- There will be no articles worn on the contestants such as: rings, medals etc.

RULE 4- CONTEST AND CONTEST AREA

Refer to Rule 3 in the National Rules for contest area.

Section 1- a red ribbon will be worn at the waist by one contestant to distinguish between the two.

Section 2- Starting the contest

A) To begin, the contestants will take their place on the mat in a sitting position, bow to each other, then stand.

B) The contest will start when the referee says Hajime, (being or go)

Section 3- Ending the contest

A) At the end of the match the contestants must return to the same position on the mat (sitting) bow to each other, stand and wait for the decision.

Section 4- Divisions

A) There will be 4 divisions, 4 winners in each division (1-2-3-4).

Theses divisions will be decided by rank, height, age, and weight under the following categories:

1) Jr. white- weight from 50-75

2) Sr. white- weight from 76 to 95

3) Brown belts- 100-120, 121 to 140, 141 to 160

4) Black belts- 100 to 120, 121to 140-, 141 to 160

B) Each division will have a referee, two to four judges, a recorder, and a time keeper

Section 5- The length of the match will be as follows:

A) Two minutes nikyu and under.

B) Three minutes ikkyu and over.

RULE 5 – TOURNAMENT SET-UP

Section 1- Registration

A) All entry blanks must be sent out two or three weeks prior to the tournament.

B) Women entering the tournament must then return their entry within 5 days prior to the tournament.

- C) When all entries have been returned the person responsible for setting up the tournament will arrange the contestants in their divisions and put their names in a drawing box.
- D) When the contestant arrives at the tournament, she must check in at the registration desk and draw a name from the box.
- E) After she has drawn the name of her opponent, both names will be placed on the recording sheet

Section 2- The tournament

- A) There will be a round robin tournament in each division.
- B) If the coordinator for the tournament wants to have an over-all tournament champion, the winners in each division can go into a single elimination tournament, thereby deciding the champion.

RULE 6- CONTEST OFFICIALS

Section 1 Referee

- A) Referees should be of higher rank or equivalent to the contestants.
- B) He will govern the match and will make the final decision only in the case of a draw.
- C) It shall be the responsibility of the referee to call out ippon or waza-ari, all during the match.
- D) The referee will announce the winner.

Section 2- Judge's

- A) There will be 2 to 4 judges per match, depending on how many qualified people are available.
- B) One (two) judges for ukemi, manners and attitude and one (two) for throwing and body movement.
- C) It shall be the sole responsibility of the judges for the final decision of the match, except in the case of a draw.

Section 3- Recorder

- A) The recorder will total the number of points per match, record them on the recording sheet and will hold up a red or white card determining the winner.

Section 4- Time keeper

- A) The time keeper will time each match and will call time in and time out.

RULE 7-JUDGEMENT OF THE CONTEST

Section 1- Ukemi

- A) Contestants will be given points for taking a good fall as they are being thrown. A fall may be scored an ippon or waza-ari
- B) The contestant should try to avoid being thrown: but if thrown, she should try to fall clear and with good form.
- C) The contestant should not try to turn her body to keep from landing on her back or try to stop herself by reaching for the mat with her hands.

Section 2- Manners & Attitude

- A) A woman judo-ka must be neat in her appearance, polite in her ways to her opponent and to those connected with the contest.
- B) She must have a respectful attitude toward the senseis, her opponents and everyone connected with the contest.
- C) During the contest she should show minimal aggressiveness toward her opponent and will be judged on this. However, this should be done with good judo spirit, not with unnecessary roughness.
- D) If a contestant proceeds in a rough manner she can be disqualified, thus awarding the match to her opponent.

RULE 8- SCORING THE CONTEST

Section 1- Score sheets

- A) There will be two different score sheets, one for ukemi and one for throws.
- B) Each judge will have a score sheet which will have both contestants on it.

Section 2 – Points

UKEMI-----	0-5
MANNERS & ATTITUDE---	0-10
THROWS---	waza-ari 5 -- ippon 10
BODY MOVEMENT---	0-10
FALLS---	waza-ari 5 -- ippon 10

- A) Each time the referee calls ippon or waza-ari the judge marks the score sheet 5 or 10 points.
- B) If in the judgement of the judge a throw was an ippon and the referee calls waza-ari, the judge may award the contestant 7 points as a compromise between the two.
- C) When a contestant has been awarded two ippons or at the end of the time period, the referee will end the match.
- D) After the match is over the judges will total and average out the marks, the recorder will then total and average out both score sheets determining the winner.

Today Cheryl is rather busy between her position as Nanka's Secretary, taking over managing Jerry Hays' Judo Archives, rescuing wayward dogs, plus teaching judo at her dojo and at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Cheryl Hari's Judo Bio

- Kodokan Yodan - 11/8/13
- USJF Archivist/ Historian
- USA Judo Archivist
- NANKA Board of Directors Secretary
- NANKA Sr. Promotion Board Secretary
- Serve on Nanka Police Judo Committee
- National Referee
- Judo Research with articles published in several magazines

Personal Trainer with additional certifications in Martial Arts Strength training and conditioning, Rehabilitation for sports injuries, Feldenkrais somatic movement and many others.

Head instructor of Coastal Ronin Judo Club

Contracted by the Airforce to teach Judo, Combatives and children's conditioning classes at Vandenberg Space Force Base.

Negotiating to be included in the Military's World Class Athlete Program

Guest instructor at 3 clinics to speak about the history of women's judo.

Board member - Secretary Hal Sharp Foundation

PhD candidate - Sports History and Mythology Dissertation *Women's Role in the Martial Arts*

Author of Eva's Challenge - to be introduced at the next Nanka BOD meeting. A challenge/ project to increase the research of judo topics at all ages and ranks with a focus on High School and Collegiate academics.

[More Articles by Cheryl Harai](#)

I'm always looking for new subjects to write about regarding judo as well as contributions from my readers. Please send them to gary@garygoltz.com thanks.

Gary

