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#### KINESIOLOGY & COACHING

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# Seven infringements most frequently committed by competitors during a judo fight

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Key words: judo, sports rules, penalties, prohibited action

#### Abstract

Problem and aim. Changes and adjustments to sports rules of judo fighting introduced in 2014 were in force during the World Championships in 2014 and 2015 as well as during the judo tournament at the Olympic Games in 2016. The most significant changes introduced in 2014 included reducing the importance of warnings that could not balance effective technical attacks such as *yuko* and *waza ari*. An athlete could receive a warning three times during one fight, which would determine winning the fight by ten points (*ippon*). However, a warning received for the fourth time would lead to the athlete's disqualification. Taking into account the fact that penalties are an important part of technical and tactical preparation in judo, the purpose of the research was to define the most common infringements in this sport.

Method. The research material was made of an analysis of 846 fights conducted by men during the World Championships in 2014 and 2015, in which all warnings were registered. Results. The collected material allowed concluding that non-combativity during a fight was the most frequently committed rule infringement. Seven most frequent infringements accounted for over ninety percent of all registered penalties in these contests, while the sports rules specify more than forty of them.

#### Introduction

Dynamic development of sports competition in judo began after World War II. Successive continental championships, then the world championships and including judo in the Olympics program brought about a dynamic development of this sport. With some delay women made the same way competing at all levels of sports competition [Yeoh 1993]. In the following years, the increasing level of sportspersonship made it necessary to improve the sports rules and judicial provisions that would specify rules of the competition ensuring safety of

its participants and raising showmanship of the contests [Brousse, Matsumoto 1999]. Specialized committees for judicial and sports affairs operating at national and continental levels were established and coordinated by the International Judo Federation (IJF). Further changes and updates of the rules of judo fight are regularly imposed by the International Judo Federation and dispatched to sports organizations subordinate to it.

The World Championships in 2014 and 2015 were among the main qualifications in judo for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Changes to the judicial and sports rules in judo introduced during them were also in

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Weight category	60kg	66kg	73kg	81kg	90kg	100kg	+100kg	Total
Number of contestants	121	124	142	139	109	98	79	812
Number of fights	124	130	148	144	113	103	84	846
Number of warnings/penalties	278	306	313	306	279	203	213	1898
Number of efficient attacks	164	172	184	191	151	131	103	1096

**Table 1.** The number of warnings/penalties and efficient attacks during the World Championships in 2014 and 2015 in particular weight categories.

force during the Olympic Games in 2016. A vital change was to reduce the importance of warnings received for various infringements. This means that successive warnings which an athlete receives (up to three warnings – *shido*) do not balance, as it was before, successfully carried out attacks (evaluated by a referee as: *yuko* – 5 points or *waza ari* – 7 points). Currently, they are just an additional factor which may decide in naming the winner in case of the absence of scored points. However, the fourth *shido* warning, obtained in one fight results in disqualifying (*hansoku make*) the athlete in this bout and awarding victory to his opponent (www.ijf.org 2017).

Generally speaking, a judo bout can be won by an efficient execution of throws or pinning techniques for which judges may grant points (yuko - 5 points or waza ari - 7 points<sup>1</sup>). A bout can also be resolved before the end of regular time (ippon - 10 points). In addition, the victory may be decided by judges' warnings (shido) or disqualification ( $hansoku \ make$ ).

Past research on technical-tactical preparation in judo mainly concerned the efficiency of performing techniques [Franchini et al. 2008; Ito et al. 2014; Pujszo et al. 2014; Adam et al. 2015], directions of performing attacks [Sterkowicz et al. 2010; Adam et al. 2012a] and individual profiles of technical-tactical preparation [Adam 2007; Adam et al. 2012b; Adam et al. 2014]. The issue of penalties mainly focused on the number of lost points or penalties given to the opponent [Franchini et al. 2008; Sterkowicz et al. 2013]. In addition, it was observed that after the change of rules in 2012/2013 the number of shido penalties has increased in both women and men, and the number of disqualifications (hansoku make) has increased only in men [Franchini et al. 2013]. Escobar-Molina et al. [2014], in turn, stated that contestants who lose a fight are punished three times more often than winners, and also that the shido warning is more often administered with the passage of the fighting time, especially in the heavier weight categories.

Changes to the rules, beside improving athletes' safety, also aim at improving showmanship of "positive judo". However, increasing the number of awarded penalties and reducing the number of scores assessments (yuko and waza ari) meant that this objective has not been achieved [Franchini et al. 2013]. This results in a need for further exploration of ways to increase the

viewing attractiveness of the judo fight. Considering that penalties are an important element of technical-tactical preparation in judo and the fact that little is known about the reasons for given warnings and their participation in settling a bout, the purpose of this research was to determine the most frequently committed infringements in judo and to attempt to indicate the direction of changes in awarding penalties.

#### Methods

The research material comprised penalties administered by judges during 846 judo bouts fought by men at the World Championships in 2014 (403 bouts by 386 competitors) and in 2015 (443 fights by 426 competitors). On the basis of fights registered by means of standard audio-visual methods, judges' penalties for all infringements incompatible with the sports rules of judo fight were marked (www.ijf.org). In addition, the number of effective attacks that were evaluated by the judges (*yuko, waza ari, ippon*) was registered. Recording of the number of penalties and attacks was made with a breakdown by various weight categories. Detailed characterization of data is presented in Table 1.

In the paper we adopted naming *shido 1*, *shido 2* and *shido 3* as warnings, because they do not result in failure in case of gaining points. In contrast, we labeled *shido 4* and others causing disqualifications (*hansoku make*) as "penalty" because receiving them ends the fight regardless of the score.

General division of penalties during a judo fight:

The first warning – *shido 1*, the second warning – *shido 2*, the third warning – *shido 3*, the fourth *shido* warning during the same bout results in disqualification (*hansoku make*) of a competitor in this fight.

Also "immediate" disqualification is applied for infringements which are defined as a serious threat to health or life of an athlete or his opponent. Immediate disqualification is also applied in case of prohibited techniques in judo combat, such as holding the opponent's legs directly by hands, putting a joint lock on the legs, hitting, etc. – despite the fact that many of them are used in the classical judo teaching [Kano 1986; Daigo 2005].

Sports and Organization Rules (SOR) of the International Judo Federation (Sport and Organization Rules IJF version 19-03-2017) has assigned successive numbers,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Applies to judo rules before 2017 revision

from number 1 to number 40, to individual infringements, and infringements undefined and unspecified by the rules have been assigned number 99 (Table 2).

Table 2. Type of prohibited acts.

FORBIDDEN ITEMS	IJF Code
Apply-Technique-Outside	P01
Avoid-Grip	P02
Bend-Opponents-Finger	P03
Ashi-garami-Leg entanglement	P04
Defensive-Posture	P05
Disarrange-Judogi	P06
Disregard-Instructions	P07
Dojime-Body scissors; trunk strangle	P08
Drive-Into-Mat	P09
Encircling	P10
Fall-Backwards	P11
False Attack	P12
Fingers In-Sleeve	P13
Fingers-interlocked	P14
Foot-in-Belt	P15
Outside-Contest-Area	P16
Head-Dive	P17
Hold-Same-Side	P18
Hold-Sleeve-Ends	P19
Hand-On-Face	P20
Hold-Trouser-Leg	P21
Illegal-Joint-Lock	P22
Illegal-Newaza-Entry	P23
Judogi-In-Mouth	P24
Kani-Basame-Scissors throw	P25
Kawazu-Gake-Single-leg entanglement	P26
Knock-To-Break-Grip	P27
Metallic Object	P28
Non-Combativity	P29
Reap Supporting Leg	P30
Shime With Jacked/belt	P31
Spine Extension	P32
Unnecessary Remarks	P33
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	P34
Waki-Gatame-Armpit lock	P35
Pull down	P36
Pistol Grip	P37
Holding Belt	P38
Kicking	P39
Push out	P40
Undetermined	P99*

<sup>\*</sup> Not included in this table are following acts: **P99** - *One-Hand-Fight*, **P98** - *Immediate attack with hands at legs during a throw*, **P97** - *Throw with a joint-lock*, **P96** - *Sweeping hip throw*, **P95** - *Inner thigh throw*.

#### Procedure:

To elaborate on the data, judicial materials of the authors' national judo organization were used. Fights were recorded in full so that a judge and the scoring board are visible. Two experts, one being a specialist in registration of judo fighting and the other being an international referee, while watching the bout simultaneously, identified the of prohibited act done (based on the judge's gesture and the scoring board) and registered every attack assessed by the judge that was given a score on the board.

Before proceeding with the registration, a test of reliability of the adopted procedure was conducted. Experts recorded five randomly selected fights, and then after a week they recorded the same fights once again. The reliability between the two testers and between the first and the second recording was 100%.

#### Data processing:

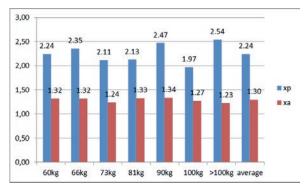
The results are presented in the form of the mean number of warnings/penalties (xp) awarded during one bout and the mean number of efficient attacks (xa) performed during one fight, and in the percentage of various types of prohibited acts.

$$xp = \frac{number\ of\ warnings/penalties}{number\ of\ fights}$$

$$xa = \frac{number\ of\ efficient\ attacks}{number\ of\ fights}$$

#### Results

Judo contestants participating in the World Championships in 2014 and 2015 received, on average, over two warnings/penalties during one fight, while performing one efficient attack. This was the case during fights in all weight categories (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Average number of warnings/penalties (xp) and efficient attacks (xa) in particular weight categories.

The most frequently committed prohibited act was "non-combativity". This infringement resulted in giving the athletes over half of all the warnings from judges (Figure 2).

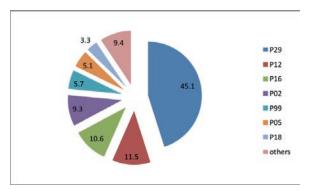


Figure 2. Proportions [%] of prohibited acts.

Also, athletes' disqualification was the most often decided by "non-combativity" (the fourth *shido*), while judges most often applied immediate disqualification for "grappling" or touching the opponent's legs during throws (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Immediate disqualifications\* or disqualification for warnings (fourth *shido*).

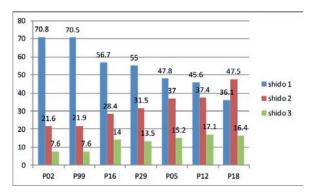
No	Type of prohibited acts resulting in disqualification	Number of disqualifications
1	Non-Combativity	33
2	Outside-Contest-Area	9
3	Immediate attack with hands at legs during a throw $^{\star}$	8
4	False attack	4
5	Hold-Same-Side	3
5	Defensive-Posture	3
7	One-Hand-Fight	2
8	Throw with a joint-lock *	1
9	Sweeping hip throw (harai goshi) - landing on attacker's head *	1
10	Inner thigh throw (uchi mata) landing on attacker's head *	1
11	Avoid-Grip	1
12	Non-defined (fight no 52 FIN-TUR cat. 73 kg) $^{\star}$	1
	Total	67

<sup>\*</sup> immediate disqualification (hansoku make)

From among the seven most commonly repeated prohibited acts, contestants received the first warning (*shido 1*) for "avoid-grip" (70.8%) and for "fighting one-handed" (70.5%). Warning *shido 1* was awarded the least for such infringements as "hold-same-side" grip (36.1%) and "false attack" (45.6%) (Figure 3).

Warning *shido 2* was awarded by judges the most often for "hold-same-side" grip (47.5%), "false attack" (37.4%) and for the "defensive posture" (37%). This warning was given the least often for "avoid-grip" (21.6%) and "fighting one-handed" (21.9%) (Figure 3).

Warning *shido 3* was the most often awarded for "false attack" (17.1%), and then for "hold-same-side" (16.4%) and for "defensive posture" (15.2%). While the least often for "avoid grip" (7.6%) and "one-hand-fight" (7.6%).



**Figure 3**. Percentage of particular warnings (*shido 1*, *shido 2*, *shido 3*).

#### Discussion

Analyzing 846 fights during the World Championships in 2014 and 2015, 1898 warnings and penalties received by contestants for infractions of the sports rules were recorded. During the same competitions athletes were able to execute 1096 efficient judo attacks. Thus, one can assume that, on average, during one fight two judicial interventions accounted for slightly more than one efficient attack (assessed as *yuko*, *waza ari* or *ippon*). This confirms the earlier concerns by Franchini *et al*. [2013] that the objective of changes to the rules aiming to increase the viewing attractiveness of a judo fight has not been achieved. Some athletes may have learned how to win only by making the opponent being penalized [Calmet *et al*. 2017].

In our study, on average, during one bout more than two warnings were awarded, while Escobar-Molina *et al.* [2014] obtained slightly more than one *shido* per fight. This difference may be due to the fact that we also analyzed qualifying rounds, whereas they examined only fights from semi-finals and finals. This may mean that during the elimination phase more penalties are given than during fighting for medals, when the sport level is more balanced, but this suggestion requires additional analysis.

The first seven repeated prohibited acts by IJF, for which athletes received warnings in the World Championships in 2014 and 2015 accounted for over 90% of all warnings applied during these competitions. The warning which most frequently resulted in disqualification was the fourth *shido* awarded for "non-combativity".

The most frequent judicial interventions were warnings and penalties for contestants' "non-combativity". The intent of such action is to encourage competitors to increase the frequency of conducted attacks, thereby raising the attractiveness of watching the fight. It should be remembered, however, that increasing the number of performed attacks does not always coincide with the quality and precision of their execution. In case of attacks which do not result in

the efficient implementation of a technique, a judge can award a warning for "false attack". Both of these prohibited acts put competitors in a difficult situation, tactically, and also psychologically. Not only lack of attack attempts, but also an attack considered as inferior may result in a penalty. These two prohibited acts accounted for more than half of all warnings and disqualifications during the analyzed competitions. It seems that different approach to these acts would give competitors a greater liberty during the course of bouts, reducing the number of warnings and penalties, thus enhancing the spectacle. Moreover, a significant advantage of this kind of warnings could also be seen prior to the introduction of a number of amendments to the sports rules during the World Championships in 2001 [Kownacki et al. 2007].

Another prohibited act, "outside-contest-area", can prove not only poor concentration of a contestant who left the contest area by mistake but also his deliberate avoidance of threat from the opponent. This avoidance attitude was also a common cause of warnings for athletes who limited themselves only to actions defined as "defensive posture".

To properly perform throwing techniques, it is necessary to get a good grip during the fight [Adams 1992]. However, athletes fighting for favorable grips cannot be limited only to carrying out destruction in efforts to grapple their opponents, hence also such situations require judges' intervention. Detailed rules for correct grips in sporting competitions are also defined by the sports rules of the International Judo Federation (www.ijf.org).

Contestants received immediate disqualification (hansoku make) mostly for "hold-trouser-leg" of the opponent while performing throws. This accounted for as many as 8 out of 12 immediate disqualifications. It seems that this punishment is too harsh, because such an attack is not as dangerous as, for example, performing a throw with falling on the head or a throw with "illegal joint lock", and it is also often awarded for incidental touching of the opponent's legs. It is worth noting that until 2009 these techniques were often used and allowed in judo sports fight and belonged to the basic repertoire of training of many successful male and female contestants [Van de Walle 1993; Iatskevich 1999].

Prohibition of directly "gripping the legs" of opponents was introduced in 2010 and was aimed at forcing contestants to hold an upright posture during a fight. A stooped or even very low position observed in fights during the World Championships in 2007 and 2009 limited and impeded the execution of many foot techniques. Therefore, according to many specialists, a ban on gripping legs during a fight was a step towards "returning to classical judo" [Adams, Yeoh 2011]. The Olympic Games in London (2012) were an important test of the new provision. During this tournament in the male group, Russians won in three

weight categories, Koreans in two and representatives of Georgia and France in one category. This was surprising to many specialists because it seemed that the introduced restrictions would favor the conduct of the fight by the Japanese. However, already during the next World Championships held after the Olympics in London athletes from Japan again showed the highest efficiency by winning three gold medals in 2013, two in 2014 and three by 2015, while Russian contestants did not win a single gold medal. Based on these results, it is impossible to decide whether this revision definitely caused a preferation for classical judo.

Taking into account the order of awarding the shido warnings, athletes usually received shido 1 for "avoidgrips" and "fighting one-handed", probably because when initiating a bout they tried to impose their grip not always in a manner consistent with sports rules. Athletes were penalized the least shido 1 for "hold-one-side" and for "false attack". The situation changed with next infringements, when it was "hold-one-side" and "false attack" that were the most common causes of warnings (shido 2 and shido 3), while infringements such as "fighting onehanded" and "avoid-grip" were least frequent. It can be assumed that, with the passage of time and increasing fatigue, contestants focused their attention on looking for final settlements, and less on fighting for a convenient grip. Similarly, Escobar-Molina et al. [2014] observed in their study an increase in the frequency of shido warnings with the duration of the fight time.

In summary, it should be noted that ensuring contestants' safety is the supreme aim of the created and modified rules of sports fight, but also attention to raising the viewing attractiveness of events with the participation of judo competitors is one of the conditions for the proper development of this sport.

The number of awarded warnings and penalties during the analyzed fights may not increase the attractiveness of judo among viewers. This is contrary to the purpose of the application of some of rules and it would be advisable to reduce their number and perhaps to examine closer the impact of penalty types on the dynamics of a judo bout. As demonstrated in our study, most of the received warnings related only to a small number of recurring infringements and were not related to contestants' safety. It is worth noting that the new rules, introduced in 2017 (and not included in this research) do not provide a new interpretation of prohibited acts, and thus are not likely to improve judo as a show.

#### 5. Conclusions

1. The number of warnings and penalties awarded in the analyzed competitions testifies to the fact that they constitute an important element in judo fighting. Thus, understanding how warning and penalties

- impact decision-making during judo combat has to be included as part of athletes' technical and tactical preparation.
- A possibility of modifying the rules should be considered so that the optimal ratio between the number of effective attacks and the number of penalties is maintained. This will serve to protect the integrity the course (flow) of the judo bout as well as the viewing attractiveness.
- 3. It would be worth analyzing the warnings and penalties awarded for widely understood passivity, of which penalizing aimed at increasing both the showmanship of the fight and the frequency of attacks. However, the large number of penalties (and breaks in the bout associated with it) can interfere with the course of the fight, and, in addition, it was a reason for half of the disqualifications.
- 4. It seems advisable to remove from among the infringements posing a threat to contestants' health and life (they are penalized with disqualification) "hold-trouser-leg," because it is not such a threat as other infringements.
- 5. Safety during a judo fight is paramount, and on the basis of the conducted analysis, it can be concluded that there are just few infringements posing a threat to contestants' health and life.

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### Siedem najczęściej popełnianych przewinień przez zawodników podczas walki w judo

**Słowa kluczowe**: judo, przepisy sportowe, kary, działania zabronione

#### **Abstrakt**

Problem i cel. Zmiany przepisów sportowych walki w judo wprowadzone w 2014 roku obowiązywały podczas rozgrywania Mistrzostw Świata w roku 2014 i 2015 oraz podczas Igrzysk Olimpijskich w 2016 roku. Do najbardziej istotnych korekt wprowadzonych w 2014 roku należało ograniczenie znaczenia upomnień, które nie mogły równoważyć skutecznych ataków technicznych takich jak *yuko* (5 punktów) i *waza ari* (7 punktów). Korekty w przepisach, poza troską o bezpieczeństwo sportowców, mają również na celu zwiększe-

nie widowiskowości walki "positive judo". Biorąc pod uwagę fakt, że dotychczasowe analizy walki w judo koncentrowały się głównie na skuteczności wykonania technik, a problematyka kar była rzadziej podejmowana, celem badań było określenie najczęściej popełnianych przewinień w tej dyscyplinie sportu. Materiał i metoda. Materiał badawczy stanowiła analiza 846 walk stoczonych przez mężczyzn podczas Mistrzostw Świata w 2014 i 2015 roku, w których zarejestrowano wszystkie upomnienia sędziowskie, które otrzymali zawodnicy.

Wyniki. Zebrany materiał pozwolił stwierdzić, że do najczęściej popełnianych przewinień należał braku aktywności podczas walki. Kolejnych siedem powtarzających się wykroczeń, które popełniali zawodnicy, stanowiło ponad dziewięćdziesiąt procent wszystkich zarejestrowanych w tych zawodach kar, podczas gdy regulamin sportowy Międzynarodowej Federacji Judo określa ich ponad czterdzieści.