



USJA / USJF 2012 WINTER NATIONALS

By Mark Lonsdale 12/12/12

The first weekend in December 2012 saw the town of La Verne, a suburb of Los Angeles come alive with another highly successful USJA / USJF Winter Nationals. The 7-year success of this event can be attributed to the hard work of the Goltz Judo crew, the Nanka referees along with some of the best referees in the country.



The tournament director was USJA President Gary Goltz; assistant tournament director, O.J. Soler; head referee, Dan Takata, and kata coordinator, Kenji Osugi. Registration and organizing the pools fell to Tony Farah with the help of Dave Guerrero and all of Goltz Judo, Discover Judo and CEM Judo. Special thanks to the ladies of Industry Sheriff's PAL Judo for the great catering and food stalls.

The Winter Nationals drew 497 *shiai* competitors and 14 *kata* competitors from 86 clubs, traveling from as far away as New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Mexico. Even the threatening rain could not take the shine off this annual event.



On Friday, prior to the tournament, all the action was at Goltz Judo in the form of a Kata clinic, taught by the renown Sensei Eiko Shepherd and Coach Certification clinic, presented by Mark Lonsdale a professional in training and development. (See separate article in this issue on the Coach Clinic)

Saturday, kicked off with a suburb rendition of the National Anthem by referee and masters competitor Gary Pederson, followed by the requisite welcoming speeches and a bow in for the seniors, masters, referees and tournament officials. Spectator and family attendance was good and the lineup of referees was quite impressive.



Video of [Goltz Judo's Sensei Brad Karmann scoring an ippon!](#)

After the first day of competition, Tokuzo Takahashi of LA Tenri Dojo and Paulo Augusto of San Marcos put on an excellent training clinic covering both ground fighting and throwing. There were over 50 senior judoka along with some dedicated juniors on the mat and the training focused on Paulo's grappling techniques and Tokuzo's devastating *uchi-mata*.



Early morning on Sunday the competition area was occupied by over 350 juniors warming up with their coaches for the day's events. At the end of the day the top three teams were Goltz Judo (89 points), Hayastan (84 points) and Kenam (63 points), closely followed by Mojica (58 points) and Kodokan Judo of Cape Coral (50 points) that brought sizable team from Florida!



It is safe to say that a good time was had by all and next year's Winter Nationals may be even bigger and better. Click here for [Winter Nationals 2012 Results](#) and for more information go to [JudoWinterNationals.com](#).

COACH CERTIFICATION CLINIC

The annual USJA Coach Certification clinic, run in conjunction with the USJA/USJF Winter Nationals, was hosted at Goltz Judo and presented by Mark Lonsdale. As with all too many judo clinics, poor pre-registration was not a good indicator of the actual numbers that would attend this year's clinic. The final count was thirty in the class with 24 participants and 6 auditing the program, to include: 1 x Rokudan; 2 x Godan; 5 x Yodan; 4 x Sandan; 2 x Nidan; 9 x Shodan; 2 x Ikkyu; and 1 x Sankyū.

This was also the roll-out for the newly formatted Level 1 & 2 (E & D) courseware for Assistant Coach and Coach Certification. On hand to introduce the program and contribute to the discussions were Bill Montgomery, Chair of the Coaching Committee, and Joan Love, USJA VP & editor of Growing Judo.

The class kicked off at 9:00 AM with individual introductions and a PowerPoint presentation covering the qualities of a coach, an introduction to long term athlete development (LTAD), coaching style, and talent development in young people. This was followed by a PPT lecture on the principles of learning, modern teaching methods, the importance of age-appropriate training, and the value of setting attainable goals for both recreational judoka and competitive athletes.



The third presentation for the morning covered traditional methods of teaching Kodokan Judo, but then delved into how to best integrate more modern methods of coaching and student development. Again, age-appropriate training methods were emphasized, along with the importance of fun and judo-related games for the younger students.

After lunch there was a brief review of risk management and risk mitigation before moving onto the mat area. The mat session walked the participants through a few judo-specific warm-up exercises, *Ukemi*, and then moved directly into an analysis of “demonstration quality skills.” One of the key requirements for a dojo instructor or *Sensei* is the ability to demonstrate fundamental judo techniques correctly but, as several discovered, this is not as easy as it sounds. It is one thing to teach in the comfort of your own dojo, but quite another to demonstrate in front of a peer group and several high-grade examiners. This exercise also highlighted the importance of practicing *tachi-waza* regularly and having a good *Uke* who can float for your demonstrations.

This was followed by discussions and demonstrations of teaching methods such as whole-part-whole and guided discovery. For these drills the participants focused on *newaza*, *osaekomi-waza*, escapes, and basic arm-bars such as *juji-gatame*, from the throw and from the guard. Throughout the mat session the importance of dynamic judo was reinforced with moving *uchi-komi*, combinations (*renraku-waza*), linking techniques, and direct transitions into *newaza*.

As with the National Level programs run last summer, feedback from the participants on the new format and academically comprehensive course was very positive and encouraging. So moving forward, it is hoped that anyone with a vested interest in U.S. judo coaching will be able to attend the future coaching development and certification programs. Clubs in Seattle, Washington, and Yuma, Arizona, have already expressed an interest in hosting coach certification programs, as have clubs in the Los Angeles and San Diego areas.

Note: We have begun taking sign-ups for the next Coach and National Coach Certification courses in 2013. The exact dates have not yet been determined, but courses will be scheduled as soon as we have a minimum of eight individuals signed up, or any dojo offers to host one of these programs. Email [Mark Lonsdale](mailto:Mark.Lonsdale@usja.org) for more information or to get your name on the coaching development email list.

KELLY'S CAPERS CLINIC



Following the Winter Nationals, on December 8th at Goltz Judo, Sid Kelly ran a comprehensive 5-hour clinic on Kelly's Capers. There were a dozen participants in the class along with many high-grades on hand to audit the program; including USJA President, Gary Goltz, Hayward Nishioka, Low Dong, and OJ Soler. Hal Sharp was also on the mat videoing the entire program so hopefully we will see a DVD of the program available in the near future.

Also known as "the Road to Randori," Kelly's Capers is an innovative system of introducing beginners to judo. It is also designed to lay a foundation of more fluid and dynamic judo by emphasizing avoidance, movement and counter attack over the dead-end tactics of blocking or stiff-arming with no follow-up.

The analogy that Sid presented in the class was one of novice baseball players. When first introducing kids to baseball, it is not necessary to go into great detail concerning the finer points of gripping and swinging a bat, or the terminology and rules of the game. It is sufficient to simply have the kids take a bat and swing at the ball, and in most cases, they will probably pickup on the skills required to connect with the ball quite quickly. In other words, within the first few minutes they could be out in a field having fun and playing something resembling baseball.

This concept has been applied to initiating a novice into the mysterious world of martial arts – in this case judo. While all the movements taught in the class would be recognizable to an experienced judoka, there is not mention of judo terminology or the Japanese principles of *kuzushi*, *tsukuri* and *kake*. The training progression can be quite rapid, moving from simple methods of teaching *ukemi* to basic throwing grips, movements and avoidance. Instead of a traditional lapel and sleeve grip, students are taught to take a double lapel or double pocket grip. In this manner they can move seamlessly between right and left handed movements without having to transition grips. The goal is to get the players “feeling a sense of movement” and accomplishment rather than being put through a long, tedious process of detailed step-by-step instruction.

The three stages, introduced in the classroom and then taught on the mat, consisted of:

1. A basic introduction to throws by teaching without actually demonstrating
2. Developing judo skills (not techniques) through the use of sport-fighting exercises. These were both standing and on the ground.
3. Pre-randori exercises such as the Bull and the Matador

This latter term “Bull and the Matador” offers some insight into the philosophy of Kelly’s Capers. The matador challenges the bull to attack and then avoids the attack. As with a real bull, you would not try to block it or stiff-arm the animal. The logical tactic is to avoid the attack and then immediately capitalize on the attacker’s loss of balance. The concept of winning and losing is also replaced with a more mutually beneficial style of “form fighting.”

While Kelly’s Capers is not a substitute for traditional Kodokan judo training in the long term, it does offer several useful tools for the judo instructor, especially when introducing novices to the feel of judo, throwing, and dynamic randori. So if you see a clinic being offered in your area, be sure to register for the program.

