



Judo Sport Rules



Judo Sport Rules, version of March 2018

Special Olympics
Switzerland





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1 General Provisions

Special Olympics is the world's largest movement for people with intellectual and multiple disabilities¹. The vision of Special Olympics Switzerland (SOSWI) is to create a world in which people with intellectual disabilities enjoy appreciation, equality and acceptance.

Special Olympics strives to cater to all levels of sporting ability by providing a wide range of suitable disciplines, each structured to offer varying degrees of difficulty.

Sport at Special Olympics is based on two central principles that differ fundamentally from those of other sports organizations:

- Advancement – The process by which athletes progress from one level to the next through individualized competitions and training.²
- Divisioning – The process used to ensure that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability.³

The general rules governing Special Olympics are contained in Article I of Special Olympics International (SOI). You can find this document at: www.specialolympics.org/Sections/Sports-and-Games/Sports_and_Games.aspx, where you can also find other associated documents such as the "Sport Rules" and "Coaching Guides".

The Judo Sport Rules are based on the official rules of the International Judo Federation (IJF). You can access these at <http://www.intjudo.eu/>.

The SOSWI Judo Sport Rules are based on the SOI Special Olympics Sports Rules for Judo:

http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Sports_Essentials/Sports_Info/Judo.aspx?qa=2.104247232.1580288324.1512061018-1349339512.1487083001

If any of the provisions of the Rules diverge from or conflict with the rules of the IJF, then the SOSWI and SOI Rules prevail.

These Judo Sport Rules are applicable to all judo competitions held by SOSWI. At international meetings and events, the rules of the respective country and/or those of SOI apply.

Cases not covered by the aforementioned rules will be decided on by the competent SOSWI commission. If the Judo Sport Rules are published in various languages and if discrepancies exist between the different versions, the German version shall be binding.

¹ All the activities of Special Olympics Switzerland are geared toward the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, learning difficulties, developmental or behavioral disorders.

² See Chapter 6

³ See Chapter 7



1.1 Eligibility

Participation criteria for Special Olympics events

- All the offers of Special Olympics Switzerland are geared toward the needs of people with intellectual impairments, learning difficulties, mental retardation or behavioral disorders.
- The minimum age is 8 years.
- The SOSWI competitions are open to all athletes. Participants don't have to be members of a club, an institution, a special school or any other type of organization in order to be eligible.
- In principle, no one is excluded from participation and thus from the possibility of success.

Additional provisions apply to athletes with sensory impairment – see Chapter 1.2.

1.2 Athletes with sensory impairment

Athletes with sensory impairment may participate in Special Olympics events. If these persons need support in the form of an accompanying person or material during the competition, they must obtain authorization for this from SOSWI in advance. Authorization is issued by the Sports Coordinator of the sport concerned and is valid for all events. The Sports Coordinator will inform the Sports Officials of the decision that has been taken, and they in turn will ensure it is upheld at the events and inform other participants or coaches about the situation.

The authorization may be terminated at any time by either party, namely the Sports Coordinator or the athlete. In this case, the situation must be reassessed.

1.3 Restrictions

A small proportion of people with trisomy 21 (around 10% to 15%) suffer from instability between the C1 cervical vertebra and C2 cervical vertebra. If the cervical vertebra are subjected to extension or flexion, this instability, also known as atlanto-axial instability, can lead to accidents.

Athletes who have trisomy 21 and AAI or who have a spinal cord compression must therefore undergo a corresponding medical examination to establish whether their cervical vertebra are at risk of compression.

In 2015, SOI issued new rules governing participation in Special Olympics events. According to these, athletes with trisomy 21 and AAI are generally not permitted to participate in Special Olympics competitions. They can only take part if, after the first doctor's diagnosis, they undergo a further examination by a neurologist, who explains the possible consequences of participation to them and to their parents or guardians.

Athletes who have already undergone an X-ray examination and been diagnosed as not having AAI do not require further examination. Athletes with trisomy 21 who first participated in a SOSWI competition after January 1, 2016, must undergo examination as described above.

More detailed information on this topic can be found in Article 1 (Addendum E - PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MIGHT HAVE SPINAL CORD COMPRESSION OR ATLANTO-AXIAL INSTABILITY).



Special Olympics prohibits athletes with AAI or spinal cord compression from participating in judo competitions.

2 Disciplines

The following is a list of the various disciplines that can be announced and offered at official SOSWI competitions. The overview is neither exhaustive nor binding. Organizers are free to offer further disciplines listed as official by SOI.

1. Single competition – Shiai
2. Mixed mixed team competition – The mix of judo clubs, gender and level creates teams who compete against each other. Teams will be assigned by the competition management. Participants will not be allowed to object to the pool to which they have been assigned.
3. Kata and Kata unified – Tori with disability, Uke without disability

Special Olympics distinguishes between 5 judo levels. These relate to the athletes' degree of disability and do not indicate his level of competition or experience (as is the case with the different belt colors).

3 Levels

Special Olympics has 5 levels in judo. These relate to the level of disability of the athletes and not to the level of combat or experience as is the case with the belt color.

3.1 Level 1

The athlete has a mild intellectual disability, e.g., learning difficulties or a sensory processing disorder, and is able to hold his own in regular judo training sessions. Level 1 contests start in "tachi-waza" (standing). This judoka is able to understand and effectively participate in 80 to 100% of a regular, unadapted judo training session, and has a good feel for judo. He can be integrated into a regular judo training session with little to no need for any adaptations. While performing judo, the judoka is capable of differentiating between actions, reacting to them and combining them. He only requires minimal support from his coach or from the referee to compete against regular recreational judokas with no disabilities.

3.2 Level 2

As in level 1, the athlete has a mild intellectual disability, e.g., learning difficulties or a sensory processing disorder, and is able to hold his own in regular judo training sessions. However, he requires more time to process information. His disability may for example render him instable or unable to fully control his motor skills when under pressure. Level 2 competitions start in "tachi-waza" (standing). Having a feel for judo is about being able to coordinate your actions and reactions. Combinations performed while moving forward and backward are possible. This judoka is able to understand and execute 70 to 80% of a regular, unadapted judo training session, and has a good feel for judo. He can be integrated into a regular judo training session with little to no need for any adaptations. While



performing judo, the judoka is capable of differentiating between actions, reacting to them and combining them.

3.3 Level 3

The athlete has an intellectual disability that renders him able to understand and execute only 60 to 70% of a regular, unadapted judo training session. Due to his inability to fully understand how he perceives himself and how others perceive him, it is not always possible to integrate him into a training session. To integrate him, the training session would need to be adapted in numerous ways. Level 3 competitions start in “tachi-waza” (standing) or in “ne-waza” (on the floor). His ability to differentiate and to adequately combine his actions is only limited. He is unable to fully comprehend cause and effect cycles, be it in his mental processes or in judo. A level 3 judoka can engage in a relaxed randori with a regular recreational judoka. He has sufficient strength but little feel for judo; he moreover has no real plan or strategy.

3.4 Level 4

The athlete’s level of disability is such that integrating him into a regular judo training session would not be possible due to the many adjustments this would require. Level 4 competitions start in “tachi-waza” (standing) or in “ne-waza” (on the floor). A level 4 judoka can engage in a relaxed randori with a regular recreational judoka, but has very little feel for judo and requires active coaching in order to execute techniques. His judo movements are slow and lacking in strength. He tends to understand the goal of judo.

3.5 Level 5

The athlete’s level of disability is such that integrating him into a regular judo training session would not be possible due to the many adjustments this would require. Level 5 competitions start in “tachi-waza” (standing) or in “ne-waza” (on the floor). A level 5 judoka can engage in a relaxed randori with a regular recreational judoka, but requires his opponent’s assistance to do so. He tends not to have any feel for judo at all and requires active coaching in order to execute individual techniques. He is passive and his judo movements are slow and lacking in strength. During a contest, a level 5 judoka will need to be continually reminded of what the goals of judo are.

4 Shiai Contest Rules

The Shiai competition rules apply to both the Shiai Single competition and the Mixed Mixed team competition.

Special Olympics Switzerland divides participants into pools. Within the pools, all athletes compete against each other.

Athletes are allocated to the pools based on their weight, age, gender and level.

In addition to providing personal data such as gender, age and weight, coaches are required to provide an assessment of their athletes’ individual levels.



The Sport Official concerned is entitled to merge different categories together or to reassign athletes to other categories. He does this in coordination with the coach in order to ensure that the competition remains fair. The decision on which category to finally assign an athlete to is the preserve of the responsible Sport Official from Special Olympics Switzerland.

In Switzerland, the rules of the Swiss Judo Federation as adapted by Special Olympics Switzerland are applicable.

In situations not specifically provided for by the applicable rules, but which the referee sees as presenting a risk to one or both of the athletes, the referee will stop the fight immediately and implement the measures he deems necessary in the circumstances.

The contest duration is as follows:

- a) For the age group 8 to 11 years, a contest lasts 2 minutes.
- b) For the age group 12 years and over, a contest lasts 2 or 3 minutes, depending on the level.
 - The contest duration in levels 1 and 2 is 3 minutes.
 - The contest duration in levels 3, 4 and 5 is 2 minutes.
- c) If the athletes are tied, the 1-minute golden score procedure is implemented. After this, the referees will vote on the outcome of the contest ("hantei")
- d) If pools of different levels or different age groups have been merged, then the precise contest duration is defined by the Sport Official.

If an athlete requires assistance to get onto the mat, then he may be helped by the coach together with a referee or an assistant.

Only white and blue score tables are used. The competitors must therefore wear an additional white or blue belt.

The contest areas are designated Mat 1, Mat 2, Mat 3, and are additionally marked with a colored table cloth. This results in designations such as, "Mat 1 red," "Mat 2 blue," "Mat 3 green."

Helpers dressed either in white or blue are on hand to assist the athletes with tying the additional belt and to then accompany them to the edge of the mat. The helpers are not permitted to step onto the competition area.

Upon registering for a competition, the coaches must specify their athletes' respective starting positions, i.e., "tachi-waza" (starting from a standing position) or "ne-waza" (starting from the floor).

In "ne-waza" there are three positions from which an athlete can start the contest:

- a) From a kneeling position.
- b) Sitting next to each other with both hands in the engagement position known as "kumi-kata," and with both legs stretched forward.
- c) Lying on your stomach, both hands on the "kumi-kata" engagement position.



If, due to his disability, an athlete needs to start from the floor, then the other athlete must adapt his approach accordingly and also start from the floor.

If an athlete is unable to put weight on his feet, then the other athlete, when in the “ne waza” position, also cannot use his feet to support himself or push himself off. If both athletes can put weight on their feet, then both are allowed to use their feet to support themselves or push themselves off. Principle: All athletes who are able to walk onto the mat without any help and in an upright position can put weight on their feet. In the event of an exception, the coach must report this to the referee at the start of the contest.

If the referee believes that, for safety reasons, the contest should not begin from a standing position, then he may at any time demand that the contest be conducted “ne-waza.” The athletes and the coaches must accept the decision of the referee.

A contest that begins in the “ne-waza” position must be continued in “ne-waza”.

It is always possible to gain points by using “ne-waza” throwing techniques, provided that the contest began in “ne-waza” or was switched to “ne-waza”.

In “ne-waza” it is not possible to push your opponent straight back when in a kneeling position.

In both “tachi-waza” and “ne-waza,” the referee must ensure that the athletes’ throats and necks are never locked to the point that it could risk injury. Neither “tachi-waza” nor “ne-waza” allow the neck to be enclosed; holds may not go any further than the spine. In “tachi-waza,” holds that go further than the spine lead to “mate.” In “ne-waza,” they lead to “sono-mama.” The referee then corrects the position. If the incorrect hold is repeated, this leads to “mate.”

Classic techniques such as “hon-kesa-gatame,” “koshi-guruma,” and “kubi-nage” are therefore forbidden if they involve holds that go beyond the spine.

4.1 Prohibited Techniques

- a) All sacrifice techniques (“sutemi-waza”), including “tani-otoshi” and “makikomi” techniques.
- b) Arm-lock techniques (“ude-kansetsu-waza”)
- c) Choking techniques (“shime-waza”)
- d) All choking, holding and locking techniques that involve holding the legs in a triangular position (“sankaku-waza”)
- e) Forward and backward throws performed while kneeling on one or both knees
- f) Techniques that involve grabbing below the belt, whether with one or with both hands (“morote-gari,” etc.)
- g) Allowing yourself to fall on your opponent after performing a technique well

Prohibited techniques will not be graded.



In Tachi-waza, there are two possible starting positions:

1. In the usual way, according to the IJF Tournament Regulations.
2. In the case where one or both judoka has a visual impairment or is blind, or has a disability that impairs the execution of a correct kumi-kata, the judoka will bow at about 4 meters of distance. The attendant, coach or referee is allowed to support the judoka. At the command of the referee, the judoka approach mat center and perform basic kumi-kata (sleeve, lapel). They will not change position from that moment until the referee announces Hajime.

To be able to offer their training services to people with disabilities and to register students for competitions, coaches must hold valid licenses to train judo to people with disabilities.

4.2 Penalties

If a prohibited technique is performed, the referee will issue a warning to the athlete concerned and explain what was done incorrectly.

To be able to give his explanation, he must first announce “mate” and have the athletes return to their starting positions, or, if in “ne waza,” he must announce “nono-mama.”

In levels 1, 2 and 3, the referee will penalize the repeated use of prohibited techniques by issuing “shidos.”

In levels 3, 4 and 5, the referee shall request that the coach be present for the explanation, in order that the errors be explained to the athlete in their native language. At these levels, “shido” is only announced after providing repeated explanations. In levels 1 and 2, it is recommended that the coach be involved in the explanations.

All prohibited actions will be penalized with Shido.

Actions that go against the spirit of Judo or the safety of either judoka will be penalized with Hansoku-make, to protect the judoka affected by this. The referee is allowed to consider the level, the disability, type and intention of the offense in his decision, as well as the intention, repetition, overall match image and safety while deciding on a penalty.

If an athlete injures himself as a result of a prohibited action, and can then no longer compete, the injured athlete is declared the winner. All injuries may be treated on the mat by a medic, if necessary with the respective coach present.

No one is permitted to access the mat area without the referee’s permission.

4.3 Coaching

At levels 1 and 2, positive coaching is only permitted during “mate.” At levels 3, 4 and 5, positive coaching is permitted throughout the entire contest.



5 Kata Contest Rules

Kata Unified	Category A, 15–18 techniques in 3 groups	Level 1, level 2, level 3
Kata Unified	Category B, 10–12 techniques in 2 groups	Level 2, level 3, level 4
Kata Unified	Category B, 5–6 techniques in 1 group	Level 3, level 4, level 5
Kata (both Uke and Tori, Level 1–2)	Category D–a, 15–18 techniques in 3 groups	Level 1, level 2
Kata (both Uke and Tori, levels 3 and 4)	Category D–b, 10–12 techniques in 2 groups	Level 3, level 4
Kata (both Uke and Tori, levels 3 and 4)	Category D–c, 5-6 techniques in 1 group	Level 3, level 4

Starting situation Kata Unified: Tori = Athlete with intellectual disability, Uke = Athlete without intellectual disability.

Starting situation Kata: Tori and Uke = Athletes with intellectual disability

In kata contests (Unified), the Joseiki will take the following into account when assessing the competitors' performance:

The kata both begins and ends with a greeting.

1. It should be as normal as possible, adapted as necessary.
2. The kata should be based on an existing kata form (e.g., "nage-no-kata," "katame-no-kata," "gonosen-no-kata," etc.)
3. Attention to connections, for example between throw families and technique families
4. Execution quality
5. Control of Tori
6. The development of the techniques
7. Prohibited techniques (e.g., "sutemi-waza," "kansetsu-waza," "shime-waza") are not permitted

The Joseiki basically judges positively and awards points for correctly executed actions and movements. So they start counting from 5 high, instead of, like in the regular kata, from 10 down.

The actions and movements of Uke may only be judged under point 4 "execution quality".

6 Advancement

The coaches are responsible for offering training sessions tailored to the abilities of the athletes, and for selecting the disciplines they train accordingly. In this respect, the coaches continually assess and



encourage their athletes' individual development. They should also seek to promote as high a degree of independence in their athletes' as possible.

As a rule, the athletes must first participate in local and regional competitions before participating in national, and, ultimately, in international competitions. Training is considered fundamental to athletes' success. After all, training allows them to show whether they have the abilities required to participate in the different levels of competition.

Participation in international events is generally subject to a selection process conducted by the SOSWI Sports Commission. The Sports Commission defines the rules of participation and the criteria for selection, and publishes these on the SOSWI website at www.specialolympics.ch.

As a rule, all athletes are permitted to participate in international events. Their performance is not considered a limiting factor in this respect. Indeed, Special Olympics explicitly encourages variation and rotation among the athletes and coaches. However, it is still possible to participate in an international event more than once.

The World Games and the European Games do not offer level 4 or level 5 competitions.

7 Divisioning

7.1 Philosophy

The divisioning approach applied by Special Olympics differs fundamentally from that of other sports organizations. Fundamental to the philosophy and concept of Special Olympics is that athletes of all levels of ability can take part in fair and exciting contests. There are no qualifying or elimination contests, only preliminary rounds and contests at the various levels. This means that athletes compete within groups whose members are all of similar ability. The process of putting together these groups, known as divisioning, is based on the abilities demonstrated on site during the course of the event. These abilities are assessed prior to the respective individual contests. If, due to time constraints, such prior assessment is done without (e.g., for one-day events), then divisioning is conducted based on the level specified upon registration.

For each level, a winner is chosen and a ranking established.

Divisioning – Allocating Athletes to Judo Pools: Divisioning (allocating athletes to pools based on their level) is conducted on the day of the event and begins with a joint warm-up session followed by an assessment of some technical aspects. Here, the level specified by the coaches is checked and, if necessary, adjusted appropriately.

7.2 Allocation Criteria

Within a discipline, the process of allocating athletes to the different pools is conducted based on the following criteria:



1. **Performance**

Based on the level specified on registration and on the results of divisioning.

2. **Gender**

Athletes are normally divided according to gender. However, if only a small number of athletes registers, division according to gender may be dispensed with

3. **Age**

If sufficient numbers of athletes and teams register, then the official age categories can be used. These are as follows: **8–11/12–15/16–21/22–29/30 and older**. However, if only a small number of athletes registers, division according to age categories may be dispensed with.

These pools should comprise a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 8 athletes.

The Sport Official⁴ is authorized to adapt the allocation criteria if doing so enables him to form groups of more equal ability. Depending on the number of participants and the organizational structure of the event, and with a view to creating groups that are as homogenous as possible, criteria 2 (gender) and 3 (age) can be dispensed with. Decisions in this respect are made at the discretion of the Sport Official.

7.3 The Maximum Effort Rule

Athletes are expected to advance within their discipline, i.e., to demonstrate improvements in performance between the preliminary rounds (or the level specified on registration) and the final.

But such improvements must be within the realms of the possible. Athletes are therefore under obligation to always give their best, even during preliminary round divisioning. Only in this way can they be correctly ranked and assigned to the right pools.

If an athlete performs significantly better in final competition relative to his preliminary rounds, this usually indicates that he was assigned to the wrong level and pool. Athletes who fail to observe the maximum effort rule can be subject to disqualification.

Responsibility in this respect lies with both the athlete and the coach. They must both ensure that the level specified on registration and determined during divisioning is representative.

Materials such as clothing or sports equipment as well as aids or any accompanying persons of athletes with sensory impairment must be used in the divisioning and in the final, so that participants compete under the same conditions (see Article 1, SOI).

7.4 The Coaches' Responsibility

If a coach feels that his athlete has been assigned to too low a level, then it is the coach's responsibility to notify the jury accordingly.

⁴ The Sport Official serves as the respective event's technical coordinator. See <http://specialolympics.ch/funktionen/> for more information.



If there is no corresponding form available, the coach must inform the Sport Official (the party responsible for the competition) of the incorrect assignment as soon as the groups are announced.

8 Unified Sport

Special Olympics offers “unified sport” across many of its sporting disciplines. The principle of unified sport is to have athletes with and without disabilities competing on the same team. Ideally, the athletes in a team will be of a similar ability level and similar age.

Unified Judo is only possible in kata⁵. The Tori is the athlete with the disability, the Uke is the athlete without the disability (see Chapter 4).

9 Implementing the Rules

Responsibility for the Judo Sport Rules is held by the Technical Coordinator Judo⁶, in coordination with the Sport Director of Special Olympics Switzerland.

The Sport Official, aka Technical Coordinator, is responsible for ensuring that the Rules are implemented during a competition.

If there is a difference in the rules within the different languages, then it’s the German version who will be effective.

SOSWI will adjust the Rules as necessary or should circumstances change, and will respond to any developments.

Proposals for changes to the Rules should be submitted by email to the following address:
sport@specialolympics.ch

⁵ See Chapter 5

⁶ The Technical Coordinator is also responsible for the types of sport offered <http://specialolympics.ch/funktionen/>.