

# **Judo Referee Development/Progression System**

## **Philosophy**

Referees provide an essential service to the Judo community by developing, interpreting and administering the Rules of Competition for Sport Judo. The goal of the development/progression system is to provide the opportunity for all referees to advance to the highest referee level they are capable and willing to achieve.

## **Getting Started**

The first step is to learn the written rules and their correct current interpretations. This is best done by reading the rules often, attending rules clinics and referee clinics, and discussing the rules with officials who you have confidence in and who are certified at a higher level than you are. Refereeing within your club during randori sessions is a nice informal way of getting used to moving efficiently on the mat, making calls for each throw to develop your appreciation, becoming aware of when the rules are being violated and developing the basic set of skills needed by all referees. It is important to have someone more knowledgeable watch you while you referee and give constructive feedback. Keep a log of things you learn and questions that arise from these experiences. Discuss them with a certified official at a later time.

## **Local/Regional Certification**

Any National or higher Referee may certify candidates to the Local and/or Regional Levels. Most certification programs offer one (1) local level and up to three (3) regional levels. You may contact the your Referee Commission Chair for information about referee certification programs in your area.

## **Where Can I Referee With Local/Regional Certification**

Referees certified at the Local Level may referee at any club, local, or regional event that does not have further restrictions. It is advised that Local Referees gain significant experience at local and small regional tournaments, and then test for Regional, prior to trying to referee at large regional tournaments.

Referees at the various levels of Regional Certification (depending on what system they are certified through) should support the level of event that matches their certification level, in addition to all events they can attend below that level.

All levels of referee certification (including Local and Regional levels) are valid throughout the United States so you can officiate at the appropriate levels across state lines without any issues.

## **Training For National Level Certification**

Attend as many clinics as possible. Referee at as many events where the competition is high level and you can receive good critiques from upper level referees you use as role models. It is suggested to “get out of your own back yard” and travel to events in other parts of the country to gain experience refereeing different style players and working with a variety of officials. Study the rules prior to each event, in addition to your normal routine reviews.

### **National Level Certification**

Sites for the National Referee Certification Test are determined each year by the USA Judo Referee Commission. Events that have been testing sites in the recent past include:

Wisconsin Open (Wahadachi) Championships (WI – Jan)  
Sensei Memorial (CA – Jan/Feb)  
Sargent Major Mayfield Test Event (NC – Feb)  
Liberty Bell (PA – Apr)  
Pedro Challenge (MA - Feb)  
AM/CAN (NY – May)  
Summer Grassroots Nationals (various locations – Jun)  
Tohkon (IL – Jun)  
Golden State Open (Aug – CA)  
Cohen Memorial Championships (IL – Oct)  
Morris Cup (NY – Oct)  
Palo Alto Invitational (CA – Nov)  
Continental Crown (WA – Nov)  
Dallas Invitational (TX – Nov)  
Hawaii Championships (HI – Dec)  
Winter Nationals (CA – Dec)

In addition the following events have been designated re-evaluation sites and although referees are not tested for their initial National Level Referee Certification at these events, national and Continental referees are re-evaluated:

National Youth Championships (N2 or higher)  
National Junior Olympics (N2 or higher)  
National Presidents Cup (N2 or higher)  
Senior Nationals (N3 or higher)  
US Open (N3 or higher)

Other sites may be included on an annual basis. Please look on the USA Judo Web Site (Referee Page) for the most updated list of test sites.

As a general rule, please follow the guidelines of the National Referee Handbook. This handbook could be just as important in your development as the rule book is in your understanding of the rules.

1. Be prepared to referee only. DO NOT referee and compete (or coach) at the event you are taking the test at or are practicing to achieve a higher level of certification.
2. Always have the highest integrity in refereeing. DO NOT talk to coaches, players, spectators or parents while you are functioning as a referee, particularly when you are mat side.

3. Be prepared to referee players from your own club at local tournaments. Avoid refereeing your own children.
4. Be prepared to take criticism with grace and dignity knowing that those supplying your critiques are there to help you become a better referee. Remember, it is about the players, not you.

### **Where Can I Referee With National Certification**

National Referees are subdivided into 5 categories: N0 are on probation; N1 is the basic starting level of all nationally certified referees; N2 designation is given to those whose performance exceeds that of the N1 referee and the evaluators feel the referee is good enough to referee at N2 level events; N3 designation is given to those whose performance exceed the N2 level and is good enough for N3 events; N4 designation is given to those whose performance exceeds the N3 level and who perform such that the evaluators think the performance is of such a high caliber that the referee should be considered for the Continental Level Test.

These categories divide referees according to their previous year's performance average and the referee may move up or down at the end of each year depending on their average performance and the level of competition at which they are evaluated during that year.

N0 referees must be reevaluated and receive a rating of at least N1 at their next event in order to maintain their national referee license. N1 referees can referee at any of the National Referee Test or Evaluation Sites (which for recent years are listed above). They must referee at least one of these events each year to maintain N1 status. N2 Referees can (in addition to the events listed for N1s) referee at the National Youth Championships, National Junior Olympics, and the President's Cup. In order to maintain their N2 rating, the referee must attend at least 1 evaluation event each year and referee at the National Youth Championships, National Junior Olympics, or President's Cup once every 2 years. N3 and N4 level referees may also attend the Senior Nationals and US Open, in addition to all events open to N2 referees. In order to maintain their N3 status (or N4), the referee must be evaluated at least once each year at an evaluation event and once every two years at the Senior Nationals or US Open.

### **Training For Continental Level (IJF-B) Certification**

Participation as a referee in clinics and competitions at the highest level the referee is qualified for is the best training for the B-Level Certification Test. It is best to officiate at events where critiques can be obtained by the PJC Referee Commission (or the USA Judo Referee Commission at high level U.S. events). Additional experience and critique can be obtained at lower level events, however it is suggested that the percentage of time on the mat at low-level events should be minimized just prior to taking the "B test".

### **Continental Level Certification**

B-Level tests are administered by the PJC Referee Commission at designated events within the union. Candidates are suggested by the USA Judo Referee Commission (in accordance with the USA Judo RC Selection Procedures for Continental Test candidates) and selected by the PJC Referee Commission.

### **Where Can I Referee With Continental Certification**

B-Level Certification is a prerequisite for several top level Continental events within the PJC and many championships in other countries around the world. Referees for some events are selected from the relevant roster. Referees at other events can be recommended by the USA Judo Referee Commission for consideration and selection by the PJC Referee Commission or the host nation. Sometimes referees will be invited directly by the host and in this case, the referee should follow USA Judo procedures.

### **Training For World Level (IJF-A) Certification**

Participation as a referee in clinics and competitions at the highest level the referee is qualified for is the best training for the A-Level Certification Test. It is best to officiate at events where critiques can be obtained by the PJC Referee Commission, other continental referee commission members, or members of the IJF Referee Commission. Additional experience and critique can be obtained at lower level events, however it is suggested that the percentage of time on the mat at low level events should be minimized just prior to taking the "A test".

### **World Level Certification**

A-Level tests are administered by the IJF Referee Commission at designated events around the world. Candidates are suggested by the USA Judo Referee Commission (in accordance with the USA Judo RC Selection Procedures for World Level Test candidates) and the PJC Referee Commission will determine if the candidate will be submitted to the IJF, usually depending on that referee's evaluations at various PJC events.

### **Where Can I Referee With World Certification**

A-Level Certification is a prerequisite for many top level competitions around the world. In addition, many events are by invitation only. Selections for all World Tour events, all World Championships and all Olympic Games are done by the IJF Referee Commission. Referees for some events are selected from the relevant referee roster. Referees at other events can be recommended by the USA Judo Referee Commission for consideration and selection by the PJC Referee Commission or the host nation. Sometimes referees will be invited directly by the host and in this case, the referee should follow USA Judo procedures.