

Presidents Report February 2010

2010 is shaping up to be a year full of surprises. Thus far judo members in Victoria have sadly seen the passing of a long standing member of our Judo community.

On January 29th former JFA President Arthur Moorshead passed away peacefully after suffering ill health for some time. He will be remembered for running a very successful Club, (Caulfield Judo Club) as a long standing committee member of the then JFA Vic and the mentor to many of Victoria's most successful competitors. I will remember Arthur as saying to me one day he loved every minute he spent doing Judo, which I think sums up his passion for the sport. I personally wish Susie and Arthur's family commiserations and all the best for the future.

On more pleasant matters, new IJF competition rules now in place around the world mean all judo competitors will have to make major adjustments to their strategies and techniques. These changes, in my opinion, will bring back the style of Judo I'm accustomed to, and dare I say more dramatic at that.

The IJF Rules Committee has recently made dramatic changes to the way judo is going to look on the competition mats around the World. These changes will mark the end of leg grabbing techniques as an initial attack. In other words putting an emphasis back on doing more upright throws. This is in a bid to make a clear distinction between the other Olympic grappling sports in Freestyle and Greco Roman Wrestling. Being the traditionalist that I am, it is a pleasing decision and one that I'm sure the Japanese, and Korean judo teams will enjoy in the short-term.

The other substantial change coming in this year is the introduction of new age categories for our young people.

The national body (JFA) has decided to align the National system with International parameters in the age brackets between 14yrs and 20yrs. This translates into junior competitions changing to 14 years and under. A new category in Cadets, which ranges between 15yrs and 17yrs and Young People's divisions now 18yrs to 20yrs, is the big move. Also January 1st of each year will be the date that sets individuals age and not their actual date of birth as has been the case since I can remember. The big one to note in all of this is that Cadets will be able to legally apply strangles but not arm-locks. Arm-locks will then be allowed in the Young People's categories as is the case now. I believe this easing in process, as is the intention; will allow our young people to adjust more comfortably whilst heading for the senior ranks.

Of course with these changes comes a total revamp of the grading guidelines, with the Canadian model now highly likely to be the approximate version of what is to come to our national system. This year (2010) should see the new guidelines finalized.

So as you can see many new innovations for all of us to adjust to and all of them a positive in my opinion.

Back to matters on the Victorian scene:

December heralded the State Championships where once again terrific numbers were the order of a very full day. It also allowed us to showcase JVI's new competition mat which is of an international standard and given the thumbs up by all.

At an administration level the JVI Committee has already met on two occasions since the AGM in November 09, with considerable reshuffling necessary due to a sudden resignation.

Longstanding Victorian Treasurer Paul Rooke decided to take up the vacant JFA Treasurers role which meant he was ineligible to hold a state position. Fortunately Neville Sharpe volunteered to fill the Treasures role thus leaving his Vic-Presidents position vacant. This vacancy was then filled when Bob Todd was asked to come back on to Committee to fill the void until formal elections at the next AGM can officially fill the position. We thank Bob for finding the time once again to assist with this interim position.

On the subject of Paul's resignation, may I thank him for the 11 years of service he has given to the judo fraternity in this State. Paul has vigorously protected JVI's finances over his period as the bean counter, and he leaves the organization in good shape for the future. I wish him well in his national role.

Events to keep in mind in the near future are the March Camp at Shoreham which Sandy Hollingsworth coordinates and the Geelong Tournament being held on March 21st this year.

Finally, my thanks to all the State Team Coordinators, who have again nominated to give their time and energy to our top competitors this year. State training is already in full swing at Richmond MMA Sunday mornings, with positive reports already prevailing regarding numbers on the mat and enthusiasm of the participants.

Yours in Judo,

Michael Picken