

JFA Seminar October 2009

As was the case in 2008, the JFA held a well coordinated program at the Australian Institute of Sport in order to formulate common ideas with state representatives.

The theme on this year's Seminar was 'Grass Roots Issues'. I found it refreshing and stimulating to listen to ideas from the judo community around the country who congregated at the AIS as JFA invitees.

This was the second, and likely to be the final gathering for a couple of years (due to funding) organized by the JFA. The JVI members who attended were Neville Sharpe, Paul Rooke, Frankie Serrano, Mick McMahon and myself. John Jory also attended as Chairman of the NCAS program.

The highlights for me on the weekend was listening to a marketing orientated Martial Arts exponent, Fari Salievsk, (Ju-Jitsu, Hapkido) talking about the road to making a living from Martial Arts. He is a fulltime instructor in Sydney making a very good living from his business. Also being on the mat with the NTID group and watching a skillful Japanese team interact with our athletes was, as last year, a thrill. It appears also that there is a strong feeling around the country that the current Kyu Grade System needs a total overhaul. More to come on that in the near future.

Listed below are comments from some of our representatives who participated during a full weekend of activities.

Neville Sharpe JVI Vic-President:

Notes on Grass roots Judo seminar at the AIS.

Gradings: I attended two very interesting seminars on the grading syllabus. The focus of the discussion was the need to review the Kyu grading system. There was a strong feeling that the age based transitions where junior members "go backwards" in their grades may a reason that we lose teenage members. The discussion from the floor was suggesting that we investigate international systems and belt systems to explore options of changing the Kyu grade system. A working party was set up to draw up a discussion paper.

Special needs Judo: the JFA has approved a system including contest rules for special needs judo without any apparent consultation. From the discussion it appears that they have adopted a five level classification system with very vague and undeveloped ideas that the referees will somehow classify the contestants based on their judo knowledge. The JFA has opted not to use medical advice as the basis for classification. The rules adopted are very complex and the referees present believe that there will need to be a training and accreditation process for coaches and referees before it can be implemented. There was a lot of discussion from the floor on the difficulties inherent in this system. Clearly a lot of work needs to be done before this system can be effectively implemented.

NTID: Daniel Kelly and Gavin Kelly presented their model for the communication of training programs from the NTID coaches and the club coaches. The fact that they are focusing on communication is a very

positive development. Specialised training to support club coaches should be built into the NCAS program when it is re-accredited.

State round up: On the Sunday the JFA attempted a report from each of the states. What was apparent was just how common the issues are facing each state. It looked for a while that we were going to suffer "death by PowerPoint", but fortunately a couple of states chose not to use the technology. The thing that came through most strongly as the attitude of the JFA staff that building the grassroots was all the work of the state bodies and that it is not their brief! Over time I would encourage all of the JVI committee members to attend one of these workshops.

Frankie Serrano JVI Committee Member:

The weekend seminar at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra was a great success.

It was a wonderful opportunity for members of the judo world from all over Australia to come together and talk about where we are at and where we hope to head as a sport overall. The sessions were well presented and very informative with topics including: coaching, judo as an employment opportunity, women in sport, NTID and High Performance program updates, JFA's relationship with the Australian Sports Commission and much more. It was very interesting to hear about the issues (good and bad) that each state has to tackle. Through mediums like this we can all help each other move forward.

The continued success of the weekend will hinge on what we all do to put into practice all the things that were discussed during the seminar. From the weekend I have come home with quite a few ideas on how I can better serve judo in Victoria. I certainly will endeavour to do my part in the growth of Judo in our state.

I would like to thank Judo Victoria Inc. for allowing me the opportunity to attend the seminar.

Mick McMahon JVI Registrar:

The seminar was a good chance to meet up with interstate compatriots and compare notes on Judo in Australia. There were many interesting informal discussions around Judo's overall participation rate and how to extend it.

I attended most sessions where possible and was impressed by the following sessions:

- Competition draw software
- Registrar software
- Online registering and paying

The session that gave the most food for thought was the Marketing talk – making a good living from teaching martial arts. It would be good to have the session presenter gave a similar presentation in Victoria to our late teen and early 20's elites (and their parents) as they would see the potential for a financially rewarding career in Judo within Australia.

The session that was the most sobering was Shane Alvisio's where the national Judo survey figures were presented. Sadly it painted a picture of small clubs (average of 28 members) with a single 50+ instructor. The figures highlighted:

- How fragmented we are as a sport
- Lack of succession planning for instructors as their circumstances change
- Comparative pricing of Judo
- Low numbers for female's (teenagers in particular)
- Centralization of Judo players in capital cities with a low number of non metropolitan clubs

All these figures should focus state bodies on implementing stronger recruitment strategies and consider some means of supporting/starting new clubs and instructors.

Overall a thought provoking weekend that requires ongoing action with measurable results to justify the JFA holding the next one.

John Jory NCAS Chairman:

My impressions of the weekend:

- Well worthwhile for both get-together and ideas
- We should enquire about getting the Queensland Registration System
- We should enquire about getting the SA tournament software
- The food at the AIS has improved since last year
- JFA is held in high regards by the ASC
- Even our professional coaches are amateurs compared with Fari Salievsk (Martial Arts Buisnessman); we need to develop a business model which can lead prospective young coaches into an affluent lifestyle (in the USA an annual income of \$200,000 is considered modest for full-time coaches
- The capitation fee is woefully inadequate and the JFA needs to raise it and develop other income streams if it wishes to present an air of confident self-esteem to its members, let alone the outside world
- The NCAS has been in turmoil, but the end is in sight

Congratulations to the JFA for the initiative taken.

Michael Picken

