

## How does Junior Judo differ to Senior Judo

Junior Judokas generally have the advantage of being more supple and don't have any concerns about how their bodies could suffer from their Judo training. Whereas the senior Judoka may have reservations about how this could effect their work/family situations, should an injury occur. Having said that, there are many senior Judokas who train regularly with or without injury, so it can't be all bad.

### Junior Judo

Children's bodies are very flexible and this can sometimes be a disadvantage as they can bend their limbs at all angles. At Blackwater Judo Club we are very aware that damage can be done from starting Judo at an early age. They are growing at a fast rate and excessive training could lead to a strain on their bodies. With this in mind, we started the FOUNDATION CLASS. This teaches many aspects of Judo, but at a slower pace. Here we follow a syllabus of various throws and hold downs, but also tries to make their learning fun by including various games which have Judo themes to them. This helps the very young or new beginner learn Judo much easier. As only a few techniques are taught, we are able to focus on getting their bodies into a correct/safe position to do a throw or hold down. Having learnt these techniques in the controlled environment this should aid them later on as they progress through the belts. Only once they have mastered a safe way of doing their Judo, and they are over the age of 8, they are then ready to progress to the main mat for the more complex techniques. To show that they have completed the Foundation level they wear a Red belt on the main mat.

Once a junior is aged 10 or above it is felt they are aware of how their bodies function and beginners at this age may start on the main mat, or after a few lessons through the Foundation level. Judo on the main mat is learnt following a syllabus which will take them through from a White belt all the way up to a Junior Black Belt. Junior Judokas do not go from one belt colour to another, but progress through them by gaining coloured tabs which are then sewn onto their belt. When a judoka has been awarded enough coloured tabs, they will be awarded to the belt colour they have achieved. The coloured belts go in the order of White, Red (Foundation graduates only) Yellow, Orange, Green, Blue, Brown, Brown/Black stripes and then full Black. They continue gaining coloured tabs all the way up to the Junior Black Belt.

As a club we like to encourage the higher belt colours to become Assistant Junior Instructors. With guidance from a designated Sensei they will complete a list of essays, questions and an assisted session teaching other Judokas in order to gain their Assistants Badge. Once they are a Junior Black Belt they can then go on to gain the Junior Instructor Badge.

On turning 16 they become classed as an Intermediate and wear the adult Green belt, but only if this level had already been achieved as a junior.

## SENIOR JUDO

Quite a few parents of Junior's decide to take up Judo. It can be quite a shock to the average adult Judokas body, as you will start to use parts of you body that you have not used for a very long time. But having said that, you will soon become addicted to learning how to do Judo (I speak from experience.) Once you have mastered the Breakfalls and the idea that you're willingly going to get thrown, you will be able to enjoy all the challenges ahead of you.

Senior Judokas follow a similar syllabus to the juniors with the addition of armlocks and strangles. Unlike the juniors, their progression is through coloured belts only, they do not receive tabs. A senior Judoka will be expected to show the techniques to the best of their ability which can be quite frustrating as they might feel that they could have done better. As with the juniors you are encouraged to go for the Assistant Senior Instructors Badge once you get higher up the belt colours. By helping to teach the junior Judokas different techniques, they will become fresh in your mind. Senior Judoka belts follow through in the sequence of White, Yellow, Orange, Green, Blue, Brown and then to Black Belt. Once you have achieved a Black belt (1<sup>st</sup> Dan) there is the opportunity to go further up the belts by gaining 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Dan. Once you have achieved these, further Dan grades are gained by nominations.

By Sam Harrington (2014)