

STATEMENT CONCERNING UNCERTIFIED RANK:

There are Judo clubs that issue Judo promotions to their members outside of the internationally recognized systems of USA Judo or its member affiliates (USJA & USJF). Judo rank is a serious subject & is of great concern to all members of the state's promotion board. Oklahoma is different from most, if not all, other states in that our promotion board recognizes rank granted by USA Judo & all of its member state organizations & the USJA & the USJF (class A members of USA Judo) without any reservations. We cannot, & will not, recognize any rank granted by any other organization not recognized by USA Judo as a valid rank-granting association. Organizations such as the American Martial Arts Society, etc. have not been given the authority to grant JUDO rank by the International Judo Federation & as such, any Judo rank received from these suspect organizations cannot be recognized by organizations licensed (ultimately) through the IJF.

Karate, Taekwondo, Aikido, or Kung-Fu ranks which are granted by organizations (?) governing those forms are not JUDO rank. Though a person may even hold Black Belt rank in any of those forms, that person cannot be recognized as a Black Belt in Judo, & cannot issue JUDO rank to his/her students unless he/she also has valid Judo rank granted by one of the recognized Judo organizations.

What does this mean to the average player? If a competitor defeats an opponent in a contest, & that opponent has uncertified rank (& therefore no rank) regardless of the opponent's belt color the competitor can only record promotion points as though he/she had just defeated a white belt. If a player is a member of either USA Judo, USJA or USJF but receives rank through an unrecognized organization that player cannot even be validated to whatever rank he/she believes he/she has earned, as validations are only applicable where the player had no prior knowledge of, or due to location, was unable to join one of the three recognized organizations.

We can use, as a hypothetical example, a member of the Oklahoma Judo Association who, though an active member for years, gets all of his promotions through one of these unrecognized organizations. He is wearing a brown belt & is good enough (he believes) to place at the U. S. High School National Championships. Upon trying to enter that tournament he finds that he must hold at least Nikyu (brown belt-2nd class or its equivalent-Jr. 20th degree) rank to compete, & as his rank is invalid, he is not allowed to enter, thereby losing a possible chance to win, & become a member of the U.S. High School National Team, & a trip to Japan to compete in the World High School Championships.

In addition to being barred from competition as indicated above, a player holding invalid rank essentially is promoted through a system which is uncontrolled as far as quality is concerned. The three national organizations (after many years of turmoil) essentially have similar (if not exactly the same) kinds of promotion-testing procedures, however, organizations not recognized by the IJF have unknown testing procedures, which generally leads to the 'possible misconception' that these organizations have no testing procedures at all. After all it can be argued that "if that player really does deserve that rank, if he really knows what is required, why is he afraid to take the same test that the rest of us had to?"

Former President (of the OJA) Ron Benner was succinct at the 1986 OJA meeting saying that "(He) is not running a circus here in Oklahoma". Generally a current list of the ranks of all USA Judo members with verified and unverified rank is available to the OJA President at each event.

The Oklahoma Judo Association Promotion Board will hold promotional testing upon request of coaches which are members of the OJA. We suggest that any member of the OJA who has invalid rank who wishes to be validated by testing for that rank do so at the earliest convenient time. Each candidate will have to demonstrate the rank requirements as well as show proof that the candidate had never previously held valid rank. Members who held some lower valid rank (ie: Yonkyu) & now claim to be a Sandan, are in effect still Yonkyu.

Additionally no member of the OJA may be validated into the Black Belt Levels unless that individual had been a member of the OJA for at least one year.

It should also be noted that any judoka who joins the OJA in order to get promoted (ie: a Shodan who wishes to test for Nidan) & then does not rejoin until it is time for his/her next promotion will not be eligible for promotion as any & all points received during the time the judoka is not a member of the OJA, USJA or USJF are of course invalid. Additionally should a judoka who tests in the OJA for promotion, and then does not rejoin the OJA but does join either the USJA or USJF, & later returns to test in the OJA for his/her next promotion will be required to pay any and all membership fees not paid during the period between promotions.