

RANDORI AT THE QPJC

Below is an excerpt from “Randori Rules” (<http://judoinfo.com/randori.htm>) by Neil Ohlenkamp

“The mat is a place to create opportunities and see possibilities, facing and overcoming one's limitations. Randori (free practice) is the primary method of learning the many lessons of Judo.”

At the QPJC we pride ourselves in the way we maintain the traditions of respect, efficiency in action and mutual benefit. As in life, randori is a learning process and we are all in this to help others grow, on and off the mats. Below are the standards we try uphold when we practice randori.

SELF-FOCUS

1. Keep your head up and over your hips
2. Keep your arms and knees slightly bent
3. Keep your core in perpetual readiness for attack and defence, sort of a “pilot light”
4. Keep most of your weight on the front part of your feet
5. Never cross your feet
6. Keep your mouth closed and tongue well behind your teeth
7. Do not grab around the neck or the back. Take a normal collar and sleeve grip
8. Do your best and never complain or make excuses

PARTNER-FOCUS

9. Attack without fear of being thrown
10. Learning from mistakes AFTER the bout is better than trying to think on the spur of the moment
11. Accept falling and do UKEMI
12. Do not waste time grip fighting
13. See your partner as a way of getting better rather than an impediment to progress
14. Try new techniques
15. Complement a good throw and only offer constructive criticism if you must
16. Protect and do not hurt your partner (either as uke or tori)

OFF THE MATS

17. When resting, sit on the floor (seiza or anza), on the benches, stand or stretch
18. Learn something beneficial by watching others practice
19. Do not “coach” from the sidelines; offer only words of encouragement
20. Remind yourself and others that there is no winner or loser in randori, it is not competition
21. Always protect others on the mats if you see the slightest hint of danger
22. Prepare for the next bout by learning from the previous

There are further contributions from those that know far more and that can explain randori far better than I can.

Three methods of practicing with other judoka (from Contest Judo by Saburo Matsushita, 9th Dan, and Warwick Stepto, 1961).

1. Practice with inferiors: "You should be trying to throw new throws and develop your secondary techniques when you practice with lower grades." "You can try new combination techniques or opposite-side throws..." Never practice your tokui-waza with a beginner, for you will "blunt it and spoil it".
2. Practice with equals: "The first tendency is for the practice to develop into contest. You should try to prevent this in your Randori practice. You must not adopt a defensive posture which might be justified in contest; instead attack with your best throws, as strongly and as quickly as possible." The main point here is to "play constructive judo, and not risk injury to save a point at all costs. Really, you have nothing to lose and should try to move more lightly and faster than you would in contest, in order to increase the speed and strength of your attack."
3. Practice with superiors: "In general, you should attack all the time. It is wasting everybody's time to take up a contest attitude against a much higher grade. Attack with all your heart and soul many, many times, and do not wait for a higher grade to attack. A much more skilled man, is not interested in throwing you many times, he wants you to attack, and afterwards he can give you advice on how to improve your methods... Normally, you wait for the higher grade to decide when to end the practice."

E.J. Harrison, *Manual of Judo*

"I should explain here that the underlying purpose of Judo is to enable a physically weaker person to defend himself against a physically stronger opponent, alike in mimic combat on the mats of the Dojo or exercise hall and in a genuine struggle for survival outside it. Other things equal it is simply axiomatic to say that the stronger man must eventually win, but seeing that not infrequently the relatively poorer physique of one man is largely offset by his superior intelligence, skill, and agility, he may conceivably prove the victor in contest with his physically more powerful antagonist. And admitting that there are always numerous gradations of sheer bodily strength among the pupils of any Dojo, the cumulative effect of assiduous study and practice of Judo is bound in the end to convert even a veritable tyro weakling into a physically vigorous and technically skilled Judoka."

My wish is for all of you to enjoy randori. It may seem hard at first but if you keep these rules with you, then everything will fall into place.

MARK LITTREAN, 29/12/15