

What to Expect at First

- Classes begin with a warm-up period of exercises. Some of the exercises will introduce judo specific skills as well as preparing the body for practice and some fitness conditioning.
- The first few weeks will focus on learning to fall properly so that judo techniques can be taught and practiced safely. These break falls (ukemi) start from a lying position and progress through sitting and standing positions to a forward roll.
- The first few weeks are also when students will learn safety and courtesy.
- Respect is particularly emphasized. Judo as a sport requires a partner to practice and compete with safety, courtesy, and respect will foster a positive re-enforced. You are thanking your partner for their help and co-operation as you learn together safely. Instructors will model this behaviour by being safe, courteous and respectful to the students and each other.
- Classes may end with a period of game –time. This is an opportunity for fun and exercise as well as learning judo specific physical skills. As the season progresses and judo skills improve, the amount of time spent on this activity will diminish.
- Once break falls have been learned to ensure safety, students will learn basic throwing and holding techniques. In judo contest, scoring is achieved by skilfully throwing your opponent to the mat or immobilizing them in a ground hold for a period of time.
- During the season, students will learn approximately 6-7 throwing and 2 to 3 holding techniques. Adult beginners usually reach this stage earlier than children. By December, some adult students may receive their first promotion to yellow belt. Younger students may have their progress recognized by receiving up to the 3 red stripes to be added to the end of their belts.
- As skills improve, students will progress from stationary practice to moving practice to free practice (randori). Randori is the basis of much judo practice. It introduces the element of some resistance given is enough to ensure that a good technique is rewarded by allowing the action to succeed while poor technique is ineffective. This allows partners of different skill levels and size to practice together.
- In class judo contests will be used to introduce contest rules and skills.