



UNITED STATES JUDO ASSOCIATION

USJA National Judo Rank System

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The United States Judo Association (USJA) is an independent, national amateur sports organization, originally founded in 1954 and now established in accordance with Section 206 of Title II of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. The USJA is also a Charter Group "A" member of the United States Judo, Inc. (USJI) which is the National Governing Body (NGB) for Judo in the United States organized for this purpose also in accordance with the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. By virtue of these facts, the USJA reserves the right to administer a national promotion program and to award national judo ranks to its qualified members who are recognized by the NGB and by all other national and state organizations affiliated with the NGB. The USJA has established a national junior and senior rank system for the purpose of promoting its deserving members.

USJA Junior Judo Rank System The USJA Junior Rank System, for members 16 years of age and younger, provides for twelve junior degrees or ranks. These twelve degrees give a junior player ample opportunity to progress steadily through the system without any excessive waiting between ranks—thus keeping their incentive high. The twelve junior ranks are listed in Table 1 (reverse side) with their corresponding rank identification and minimum age, time-in-grade and promotion point requirements. Junior students earn their promotion points through class attendance, competition experience and assistance to their club. They must also pass a knowledge and practical exam for their promotion. Specific junior point awards and exam requirements are contained in the USJA Junior Rank Handbook. You must have this handbook to properly process USJA junior promotions.

USJA Senior Judo Rank System The USJA Senior Rank System follows the traditional judo grades established in Japan. The system has six student grades and ten advanced or instructor grades. The USJA retains the authority to promote deserving members up through the judo rank of Judan (10th degree black belt). The senior ranks, for players 17 and older, with their proper identification, minimum and normal time-in-grade, and promotion point requirements, are listed in Table 2 (reverse side) in the order in which they are awarded. Senior promotion points may be earned through competition, service to judo, or a combination of both. Specific senior point awards and exam requirements are contained in the USJA Senior Rank Handbook. You must have this handbook to properly process USJA senior promotions.

Normal Transition from Junior to Senior Ranks When junior players reach 17 years old, they are no longer eligible to hold a USJA junior degree. Upon reaching 17, the player will automatically convert to a senior rank in accordance with the USJA rank system. Specific conversion tables are contained in the USJA Junior and Senior Rank Handbooks.

Early Promotion from Junior to Senior Ranks USJA coaches who have outstanding junior students may promote them to senior ranks before they reach age 17. Outstanding juniors, 13 and up, may be promoted to Sankyu (1st degree brown belt) and outstanding 16 year olds may be promoted to 1st degree black belt. The USJA Junior and Senior Handbooks contain all requirements for these early promotions.

National Rank Standardization Both the USJA Junior and Senior Rank Systems are national promotion systems. That is, national requirements have been established for all judo rank promotions, and the same exams are used throughout the country. Judokas promoted to a certain rank in one part of the country can be expected to be equal in skill and knowledge to persons holding the same rank in other parts of the country. The USJA rank system achieves national standardization at six levels of progression:

1. All students must meet certain minimum requirements to become eligible for promotion. These individual requirements are outlined in the USJA Junior and Senior Rank System Handbooks. They must pass an exam and be recommended for promotion by their coach. In general, any USJA coach who is a member in good standing may recommend a student for promotion to any grade up to the grade below his or her own. That is, a 1st degree may recommend to 1st class rank and a 2nd degree may recommend to 1st degree.
2. All promotion recommendations must be submitted to the USJA National Headquarters on the proper recommendation for promotion form with the appropriate fee. All junior and senior promotions through the rank of (up to and including) Sandan are reviewed by the USJA National Headquarters to ensure that all minimum promotion requirements have been met.
3. Promotion recommendations for 4th degree black belt and up are further reviewed by the USJA Promotion Board. This committee also ensures that all minimum requirements have been met, and further identifies those exceptional individuals eligible for minimum time promotions.
4. Candidates for the rank of 2nd degree must also be examined and passed by a Certified Examiner who is a member of the USJA national Board of Examiners and candidates for the rank of 3rd degree must be examined and passed by two such Certified Examiners. This additional requirement ensures that the candidates have a thorough knowledge of all USJA Rank System technical requirements.

5. Candidates for the rank of 4th degree and up must go through the USJA Certified Examiner program and must themselves be certified as USJA Examiners. All promotions for 4th degree and up must also be reviewed and approved by the USJA National Promotion Board. This board traditionally meets three times per year at the site of the Senior Nationals (April), USJA Junior Nationals (July), and the U.S. International Invitational (October).
6. All promotions to the rank of 7th degree black belt and higher, must be additionally approved by the USJA Board of Directors.

All persons recommended for promotion must be current members of the USJA and must belong to a USJA Chartered Club (five or more registered members with the USJA). The USJA Board of Directors also recommends that all black belts be USJA Life Members and all 4th degree black belts and above be Patron LMs.

National Rank Credentials All USJA judo rank promotions, junior and senior, are registered at the USJA National Headquarters. Each individual is issued a national rank certificate and membership card with his or her rank on it. If a member loses his rank card or certificate, it can easily be replaced by contacting the USJA National Headquarters.

Table 1 - USJA Junior Judo Ranks

Rank	Identification	Minimum Age	Time-In-Grade	Promotion Point
Junior 1st Degree	Yellow Belt plus 1st Degree Patch	4	2 Months	4
Junior 2nd Degree	Yellow Belt plus 2nd Degree Patch	5	2 Months	5
Junior 3rd Degree	Orange Belt plus 3rd Degree Patch	6	2 Months	6
Junior 4th Degree	Orange Belt plus 4th Degree Patch	7	2 Months	7
Junior 5th Degree	Green Belt plus 5th Degree Patch	8	3 Months	8
Junior 6th Degree	Green Belt plus 6th Degree Patch	9	3 Months	9
Junior 7th Degree	Blue Belt plus 7th Degree Patch	10	3 Months	10
Junior 8th Degree	Blue Belt plus 8th Degree Patch	11	3 Months	11
Junior 9th Degree	Purple Belt plus 9th Degree Patch	12	4 Months	12
Junior 10th Degree	Purple Belt plus 10th Degree Patch	13	4 Months	13
Junior 11th Degree	Brown Belt plus 11th Degree Patch	14	4 Months	14
Junior 12th Degree	Brown Belt plus 12th Degree Patch	15	4 Months	15

Table 2 - USJA Senior Judo Ranks

Rank	Identification	Minimum Time and Points	
6th Class Rank (Rokkyu)	Yellow Belt plus Rokkyu Patch	3 Months – 6 Points	Time-in-grade exceptions will be made for outstanding performers.
5th Class Rank (Gokyu)	Orange Belt plus Gokyu Patch	5 Months – 9 Points	
4th Class Rank (Yonkyu)	Green Belt plus Yonkyu Patch	6 Months – 12 Points	
3rd Class Rank (Sankyu)	Brown Belt plus Sankyu Patch	8 Months – 16 Points	
2nd Class Rank (Nikyu)	Brown Belt plus Nikyu Patch	10 Months – 20 Points	
1st Class Rank (Ikkyu)	Brown Belt plus Ikkyu Patch	10 Months – 23 Points	
1st Degree (Shodan)	Black Belt plus Shodan Patch	1 Year – 30 Points	
2nd Degree (Nidan)	Black Belt plus Nidan Patch	3 Years – 65 Points	Additional technical requirements are waived, and promotion is by advice of the USJA Promotion Board and ratified by the USJA Board of Directors
3rd Degree (Sandán)	Black Belt plus Sandán Patch	4 Years – 130 Points	
4th Degree (Yodan)	Black Belt plus Yodan Patch	5 Years – 210 Points	
5th Degree (Godan)	Black Belt plus Godan Patch	7 Years – 300 Points	
6th Degree (Rokudan)	Red and White Belt plus Rokudan Patch	8 Years – 410 Points	
7th Degree (Shichidan)	Red and White Belt plus Shichidan Patch	9 Years-550 Points	
8th Degree (Hachidan)	Red and White Belt plus Hachidan Patch	11 Years-700 Points	
9th Degree (Kudan)	Red Belt plus Kudan Patch		
10th Degree (Judan)	Red Belt plus Judan Patch		
USJA Form 48 March 2004-All previous forms are obsolete			