

Judo At Alberta - A Big Happy Family

By Alex Hardy

Back in 1953, a YMCA judo instructor named Ray Kelly was asked by a university student to form a judo club on the Alberta campus.

Kelly accepted the offer, and in the last 12 years has spent countless hours propagating judo at U of A.

His efforts, it is fitting to say, haven't been wasted. Judo today stands as a sport worthy of serious consideration by col-

Way Of Life

The first thing beginners are taught is how to fall sideways and backward. They're given the history of judo and its philosophy ("It's a way of life," Kelly tells them).

Ray teaches according to the "Five Principles or Stages of Instruction." The stages were developed in 1920 by the teachers at the Kodokan Institute in Japan, the mother-school of all judo.

about a year or so between promotions.

Student Promotion

Kelly is qualified to promote his students up to and including green belts. Promotion is based on attendance as well as practical and written tests.

Ray can also confer blue and brown belts after consulting high-ranking black belt officials.

Won On Spirit

The team won a Calgary tournament Nov. 21. Although it captured all but five of 26 matches, Kelly admits "we won on spirit as much as technique."

The club is all one big happy family.

"Everybody helps everybody else, regardless of rank," says Ray. "The club is also its own

join the club are, without exception, the finest group of young women I have come across."

No gangster types, whose sole ambition is to acquire a weapon for attack, are to be found within the club's walls either.

"Judo isn't something you can learn when you've got nothing else to do," Ray says. "A person has to stay with it."

The gangster-type wants to learn fast, and can't tolerate the long hours of practice required to gain proficiency of the art, he explains.

Kelly's participation in judo has left him with the conviction that judo can develop an individual's character as well or better than other sports.

"And unlike so many other sports, you don't have to give up judo when you reach middle age. You can start at seven or eight years old and continue until you die."

Biggest Failure

"This is the biggest failure with most sports. To me, physical activity is a lifetime thing. It's like education . . . you never stop learning."

And unlike so many other sports, you don't have to be a Mickey Mantle or Gordie Howe to participate skillfully.

Says Kelly: "I've even seen deaf mutes, cripples and blind people take part."

Ray also finds that several misconceptions exist regarding the sport.

"I had my own misconceptions when I started," he concedes. "I thought of judo as some sinister little individual reducing some huge monster to a pile of bones."

Kelly says most people take up judo in the interest of self-defense, without realizing it is a sport.

Ultimate Sport

"I consider judo the ultimate sport," he says. "There are never fights, you don't hear any malicious discourse, and combatants accept the official's word without argument."

Does he consider judo a thing of violence or danger?

"Definitely not, because of the methods by which it is taught and its underlying principles. In judo you are training the body to serve the mind."

Regarding the future of the sport, Ray says it is "unlimited."

"And the ideal area for judo to grow is in the university. University students have inquiring minds . . . this is fertile area."

Gateway Sports Feature

lege athletic heads as a recognized intercollegiate athletic event.

Saskatoon will be the site Jan. 30 of a trial meet which Kelly hopes will eventually lead to the Japanese-founded sport attaining regular intersvarsity sport status, along with football, hockey and the like.

Students Strongest

"It's only natural," he says. "The strongest judo competitors throughout the world are university students and graduates."

Meanwhile, Ray Kelly is content at doing his part to promote interest and attract students to the benefits judo has to offer.

Three times a week he meets with his 64-member U of A club in the physical education building's individual exercise room. Beginners are taught Tuesday nights, seniors Thursday nights. The two groups meet Saturday afternoon for general practice sessions.

Membership deadline has passed for this year, but Ray invites all full-time undergraduate or graduate students, whether beginners or black belt grade holders, to join next fall.

"There is really no prerequisite to judo," he says. "I've seen fellows who were tiddley-wink players become tremendous at judo, even though a strong body is a definite asset."

Each stage contains eight throws; in all, forty throws. Students are taught the first throw of the first stage, and, as they show proficiency, advance to the next and the next.

"Normally, a beginner is shown eight throws, three ground holds and two or three methods of choking by Christmas," Kelly says. "After Christmas he practices what he has learned."

Senior (those with a rank or previous students) are taught another stage or set of eight throws.

"The 40 throws are selected as embodying the basic judo techniques," Ray notes. "By the time a person has learned all 40, he normally will have a brown belt."

Two Categories

Judo players (called judoka) are ranked in two categories. White, yellow, orange, green, blue and brown belt classes are those below black belt rank.

Above this first category the ranks are called grades or degrees. They begin with the first black belt and rise to the tenth. Kelly, in his 15th year of practising judo, has a second degree black belt. It's the highest rank in Edmonton, although his own instructor, Y. Senda of Lethbridge, is a fourth degree black belt. Kelly was the first occidental in Alberta to be given a black belt.

But the saying is that the wise judoka never worries about his rank. In short, it is better to be a good yellow belt than a poor orange belt.

In general, a player spends



THE TEAM AND ITS TROPHIES—The University of Alberta's highly successful judo team poses with some of the trophies it has won in competition. The team was chosen from the university's judo club. Members are, kneeling, l. to r., Mike Demaine, Ron Powell and Luke Stebbins; and standing, l. to r., Dale Blue, Ken Shannon, Don Hames and coach Ray Kelly.

But the ultimate in promotion, the black belt, must come from the Kodokan in Japan, following examination by the Alberta Kodokan Black Belt Association and recommendation by the Canadian Kodokan Black Belt Association.

Kelly stages judo contests among his club members each Saturday. Earlier in the year he selected a team to represent the club in outside competition, then he told the rest of the club that "anyone who wants to get on has to beat a team member." To date no one has managed the feat.

Team members are Ron Powell, Mike Demaine, Dale Blue, Ken Shannon and Don Hames. Powell, who has been at the sport since he was 12, is the club's highest-ranking member with a brown belt. The other team members claim orange belts.

police force. Nobody horses around, for that's when injuries happen."

Kelly always keeps the risk of injury in mind when teaching or supervising.

"For the body contact sport that judo is, injuries are extremely scarce," he notes with pride.

The club membership includes women as well as men. Kelly says sex, like age, makes no difference.

"The Japanese Kodokan has special sections for young and old of both sexes."

Girls Not Tough

He adds the girls who belong to his club are not rough-and-tough, contrary to what some might think.

"I swear one girl, Susan Whiting, doesn't weigh 85 pounds. And the girls who