

INTERNATIONAL JUDO FEDERATION



PROJECT
JUDO
FOR REFUGEES



JUDO FOR REFUGEES

PREAMBLE

The current global geo-political situation sees a series of changes occurring within the structure of society all over the world, in all the countries. Society undergoes massive changes due to the immigration phenomenon and this impacts a wide array of areas, from economy to education and sport.

Social integration of immigrants, regardless of their background and origin is crucial in order to maintain a balanced and harmonious society.

Sports are an integrating part of social life, ensuring the well-being of society and promoting healthy lifestyles. Furthermore, sports take their part in educating younger generations, building bridges between different members of the society and promoting the Olympic values of friendship, respect and fair-play.

There are two main types of immigrants to be considered when it comes to social integration and the use of sports as a tool for education and social integration:

1. Refugees
2. Economic immigrants





SPORTS FOR REFUGEES

Under the guidelines of the International Olympic Committee and based on the excellent example of the first ever Refugee Team who participated in the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, the International Judo Federation decided to reach out to the international judo community and make sure that all the athletes who have a refugee status and thus have no possibility to represent their country of origin, as well as their country of residence, are integrated in the judo circuit of their country of residence, as well as the international circuit.

The International Judo Federation has put in place a rule that clarifies the conditions in which these athletes can participate in national and international competitions, which would also give them the chance to even qualify for the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 or at least to be integrated in the wider Refugee Team of the IOC. Our goal is to give all athletes the chance to practice judo, participate in competitions and possibly, to integrate in a judo team which could compete in the Mixed Team event in Tokyo 2020.

The following rules have been published and sent out to all IJF member National Federations:

"For events organised by the IJF or under its auspices, the IJF Executive Committee, in order to protect the interest of the athlete, can authorise that the athlete can compete under the IJF flag for any reason (for example: non-official refugee status of the athlete, non-recognition of the NOC by the IOC, suspension of the National Federation etc.).

Judoka with an official refugee status, hosted by a country, can qualify themselves for IJF or continental union competitions through their host country national championships and thus will compete under their host country flag. The judoka and the national federation requests must be sent, with the official refugee status document, to the IJF General Secretariat (gs@ijf.org). If the documents sent are compliant, the agreement will be automatically given by the IJF General Secretary following confirmation by the IJF President."



SPORTS FOR ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS

In the current configuration of world economy, there are many people who choose to work and live in a different country in order to make a better living. These people move to their host country accompanied by their families and thus, often with their children. While there is nothing to stop these children and youngsters from practicing any sport, there are many impediments and an unclear sports legislation/regulation with regards to possibilities of competing and practicing the sport at higher level.

Participants as well as clubs, National Federations and International Federations are at a loss when the persons affected reach out to them for help but there is no clear method or solution that can be applied. On the other hand, participants are bound by geographical boundaries and have no chance to attend national competitions in their country of origin.

In order to solve this impasse and give a chance to those affected in this process, the International Judo Federation proposes a series of measures to its National Federations:

- Once the petitioner has proved their legal status of immigrant and has rightful residence in a country, as well as the child/children concerned are rightfully registered in the schooling system of a given country, the concerned child/children become eligible for participation in the age appropriate National Championships or other selection competitions.
- Should the respective child/children show talent and potential in the sport, the National Federation can choose to register him or her in international competitions, under their flag, even if their citizenship is different.



CONCLUSION

The project aims to assist individuals to participate in sports and pursue a sporting career, as well as sports bodies at different level to enroll participants with an immigration background, thus developing their sport level and pool of potential elite athletes.

By giving these immigrants a chance to practice sports and turn towards a sporting career, we are assisting their social integration and their education, thus contributing to the betterment of society and to creating a more stable and harmonious social environment.

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