

International Judo Federation

Disciplinary Commission

David PAPAUX (presiding)

Shu-Tai CHENG (member)

Helder LOURENCO (member)

Case Number DIS2024-05 (SRB)

Decision

Background – The Charge and the Legal Basis

The Disciplinary Commission (“Commission”) was convened to conduct the disciplinary proceedings relating to the charge issued by the Secretary General of the International Judo Federation (“IJF”) with respect to Mr. Nemanja MAJDOV (“Defendant”) issued on the 1st August 2024 regarding an incident occurring on the 31st July 2024, during the Olympic Games, Paris 2024.

The Commission notes that the Defendant has been charged as follows:

*Having showed a clear religious sign when entering the field of play and having refused to bow your opponent at the end of the contest, you had committed a potential violation of the **IJF Code of Ethics, version 27 February 2023, article 3:***

RESPECT FOR THE FIGHT CEREMONY

The ceremony of the bow was formalized by the IJF Education Commission. It must be scrupulously observed.

The bows and particularly the bow to the opponent at the beginning of the fight must be respected rigorously and it is prohibited to use bows or ceremonies from other combat sports or disciplines.

RESPECT FOR PEOPLE AND THE FACILITIES

- At all times opponents, coaches, referees, organizers, guests, the media, and the public must be spoken to calmly and with respect, without making aggressive or obscene gestures.
- The anti-doping code and sport betting regulations must be adhered to.
- Both victory and defeat must be accepted by exercising self-control and without showing any ostentatious behavior.
- Exercise self-control and remain disciplined in all circumstances.
- Do not abuse any equipment and ensure all facilities, hotels and other places put at your disposition are respected.
- Judokas represent the sport of Judo and the national teams of their countries.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- Do not show any object, sign or religious gesture or movement of any ostentatious form before, during or after the fight or during the formal ceremonies.

*Having removed your judogi in the field of play, you had committed a potential violation of the **IJF SOR, article 8.6:***

Athletes must enter and leave the field of play wearing their judogi in the proper way. It is not allowed to remove any part of the judogi or the belt or to add items of clothing or accessories (caps, sunglasses etc.) until the athlete has left both the field of play and the mixed zone.

The Commission notes the report of the IJF Ad Hoc Commission stating that:

Report of the IJF Ad Hoc Commission regarding Mr Nemanja MAJDOV (Serbia)

During day five of the Olympic Games Paris 2024, on 31 July 2024 the athlete showed a clear religious sign when entering the field of play before the contest in round of 16, in - 90 kg category, against Mr Theodoros TSELIDIS (GRE).

The athlete has already received a warning letter on 10 April 2018 and the ultimate warning on 24 February 2022 for the same violation of the IJF Code of Ethics.

In addition, at the end of the contest the athlete refused to bow the opponent and could not control his emotions. He started to remove his judogi while leaving the tatami.

The Defendant has antecedent incidents involving conduct which breached the IJF Code of Ethics. The Defendant was warned, by letter, in April 2018, and again in February 2022, about behaviour that was contrary to the IJF Code of Ethics. In the February 2022 warning letter, the Defendant was advised that "In case of any future breach and clear violation of the IJF Code of Ethics, the IJF will call for a disciplinary session." The Defendant did not contest either of the two warnings.

The Commission notes that the Defendant acknowledged receipt of the current charge and associated documents, and the Commission allowed him a period up to the 20th August 2024, to either admit the charge or enter a statement of defense.

Within that time limit, the Defendant responded as follows:

Dear [...],

I don't need hearing, don't need to take your time, just I will tell some things from my heart as defence but more to try to help Judo grow, because Judo represent us, and we represent Judo. And as people have better opinion about my sport they respect me more, but also the same in different direction, if people starts to see judo going down in some ways, than it happened same to me in people eyes, because...judo represent that who I am.

Now, about showing cross, I want to say one thing from my close friend Novak Djokovic who is coming from same culture as I do: "Before I am an athlete, I am an Ortodox Christian."

I came from country that is Christian culture very big and very strong and we grew up like that.

For me there is something more bigger then any sport and any job. God gave me everything in my life, I won lot of big titles, and I am thankfull to Him. Before every fight as all athletes I am stressed and type of afraid, and I pray a lot a that gave me confident and power to overcome all things. I did cross lot of times, thats true, but I dont see anything bad in that. I never wanted to provoke someone else or something, I even

respect a lot when someone do things from another religions, because some people just feel the need to do it to overcome all miracles.

Great role models, in even more 100x popular sports, doing cross and another things. If one Rolando, one Messi, one Djokovic, Lebron James, Tom Brady, Khabib, Usyk...etc doing it every sigle time thay step in the game, why we can't. This is human right and as we know, God is the greatest.

That Olympics ceremonies were really annoying for all Christians, a very satanic and out of control.

Second thing what I want to say. Judo rules need to change a lot. And Im here as world and european champion to help to we overcome it. Right now I didnt met high level judokas who is happy with this now, everybody is embarassed, same as me. I won 3 World and 8 European medals, I think from the guy who came from region that never had this results before, that I am master of my sport. But...how is possible that I cannot understand rules bc in last 2 years, I got around 15 hansoku makes and thats ridicoulos.

Almost every 2nd competition they gave me 3 shidos and HM for something that another guys don't. I can find for any case of my shido or HM like 100 situations that another didnt get shido.(I can but its better to dont go in that way)

Sometimes yes, sometimes no, but if its Nemanja Majdov, then its always yes.

In lot of cases referees did mistake. And send you home, you prepare hard, came again HM go home. Just in case of begining of 2023 I had 6 HM in a row?! Every body who followed my carrer know that my style is open spartan style of fighting, not some scary type. I stayed calmed to say nothing to that, bc Olympics is coming, and came, and same happened. 3 shidos, agaist guy that I had 5:0. Referee killed me with their mistakes, with stupid rules that referees only uses when they dont like somebody, but what is bigger problem is that in thst rule, my opponet should get shido not me, but they gave me and kill my dream in 3 minuts of not judo fight.

Judo become shido fight. When we fighting we are more focused to dont get penelaised not to throw. Thats happening. Now in judo Referee has 100% of influence on the outcome of the match.

Thats not good for us. Not good for sport.

Not a better man win. Leave us fight, we need throw, not policemen in suits to send us home without losing real fights.

We are working hard 20+ years, our families live by judo, we put all life effort in this. And referee comision need to take care more about that and have more space in making stupid decisions to sent you home without letting you even to sweet.

I every sport where is referee no1 important man on court, that sport has no future and ofcourse its not in high leverage popular sports.

Two referees, [...] (now at olympics) and [...].

I think in last 20 fights when they jugde me I lost 18. With [...] I had 0:10 win lose score. And look, always HM, 3 shidos. I cannot win when they are here. Its devastating mentaly. I pray just when I walk it to dont see thay coming, because then 99% I win the fight.

When it happend to olympics, emotions overcome all, its hard when somebody send you home without giving you a change to show. There us type of fighters that first 2 minuts are strong, later they give up....lot of them is like that with not champion mentality. But let us to show champ mentality. If that decision happend in 3/4 minuts if GS I will understand but to send me home like that was not ok. After 15HM I coundnt control my emotions, because I was right, referee did mistake in last shido, he broke up, not me. And I stand with that that I was right about that decision.

I don't how what to say just please change that rules about gripping, because its stupid, I can do when you break a grio to I pull to look as you broke it all, but you didnt, but its looked as you did, and you get shido and go home because I used rules and work on it on training to cheat referees. I not that type, I am real fighter.

Christian Knight :)

Sorry for long text, I speak open from my heart.

I wanted to help my sport if you can understand

what I wanted to say. I dont speak it because myself and my future, I did a lot there, even more that I can imagine, I am happy blessed family man, an millionaire , respected in my country as first ever world champion. Have all things, doing it because my love and passion and bc I am still a lion. Started from zero with my crazy parents who put all on risk for judo and succed. But I speak it for another high level judokas from all over the world who put also all and didnt gave back, who dont live so good by judo, I speak with them and I know what Im speak about.

Lot of things to care about...

Thank you for reading

Dont give me too much to rest

Kings never die;)

Nemanja Majdov,

European and World champion

Findings

The Defendant has acknowledged his conduct. In view of the Defendant's admission the Commission considered the specific circumstances of the case to apply a sanction proportionate to the gravity of the offence.

The Commission notes the evidence provided, namely the video evidence of the Defendant's conduct showing that the defendant made the sign of the cross, did not control his emotions, refused to bow to his opponent and removed his belt while he was still on the mat.

The video evidence shows that the defendant objected visibly upon the award of shido, and once again upon the declaration of the winning judoka by the referee.

The defendant did leave the tatami while showing gestures of displeasure.

The defendant also explained that the sign of the cross was not intended to offend or provoke, but for his own sake, as it gave him strength and confidence. The Commission considered that the sign of the cross was relatively discreet, was not intended to offend, and was made in the mixed zone, close to the entry into the field of play.

The Commission believes that among the main characteristics that distinguish Judo from other sports is its insistence on respect, and on proper and self-controlled behaviour on the tatami. This concept is a fundamental element of what is known as "the spirit of Judo".

Another important factor in the Commission's decision is the Defendant's prior conduct for which he was reprimanded in 2018 and 2022 and issued written warnings.

Sanction

The Commission finds that the Defendant's conduct was not accompanied by aggression, or other unruly behaviour, but it did occur before a large audience at an Olympic Judo event, thereby tarnishing the image of Judo.

The Commission decides to apply against the Defendant the sanction of a one hundred and forty (140) day suspension from all Judo activities both at the continental level and at the international level. Such suspension applies also to his membership rights, including the exercise of the rights and the holding of office related to sporting or sporting administration activities.

The period of suspension is considered to commence on the 31st August 2024 which is the date of the issue of the disciplinary charge.

The Defendant is informed that this decision is subject to appeal to the IJF Disciplinary Appeal Commission.

The time limit for appeal shall be fifteen days from the receipt of the decision appealed against.



David PAPAUX

On behalf of the Disciplinary Commission

Today the 31st of August 2024