



GEC POLICY FOR EQUAL COMPETITION CONDITIONS

The International Judo Federation (IJF) has always been committed to advancing gender equality within the sport. As athletes are in the center of all IJF endeavors, and all rules, regulations and policies are created around them, it was evident that in order for any gender equality measure to work, it must start with athletes. Recognizing the pivotal role that competition plays in driving visibility and engagement, already in 2015, the IJF's Executive Committee introduced a set of landmark measures to foster equal opportunities and visibility for male and female athletes in judo.

Core Measures

1. Unified Competition Calendar

To ensure equal representation, the IJF mandates that only events featuring both men's and women's divisions are sanctioned and included in the IJF Calendar and the prestigious World Judo Tour. This policy guarantees that every major competition showcases both genders, enabling fans and new audiences alike to engage with a balanced and inclusive presentation of judo.

2. Equal Competition Conditions

The IJF upholds that men and women compete under the same rules and with identical equipment standards. By providing a uniform framework, the Federation ensures that gender does not influence the conditions or expectations of performance, promoting a fair and inclusive sporting environment.

3. Equal Rewards and Exposure

In addition to parity in competition structure, the IJF has committed to offering equal prize money and media exposure to male and female competitors. This approach not only recognizes the achievements of all athletes equally but also seeks to inspire young judo practitioners, regardless of gender, by celebrating role models across the sport.

These initiatives reflect the IJF's commitment to making judo a sport where gender equality is integrated at every level, setting an example for its member National Federations and Continental Unions. By mandating balanced competition opportunities, establishing equal rewards, and ensuring consistent media visibility, the IJF fosters a more inclusive environment for current and future generations of judoka.



Achievements and Outcomes

1. Increased Participation and Talent Development

By fostering an inclusive environment with equal opportunities, the IJF could see higher female participation rates in judo. Equal visibility and rewards can inspire more women and girls to take up the sport, creating a richer talent pool and broadening the future of judo worldwide.

2. Enhanced Public Perception and Popularity

Gender-equal policies can improve the IJF's public image, appealing to a broader, more progressive audience. This commitment to gender equality can position judo as a leader among international sports in promoting diversity and inclusion, potentially boosting global popularity and attracting new fans.



3. Role Modeling for Member National Federations

By setting an appropriate standard for gender equality, the IJF influences National Judo Federations to adopt similar policies. This influence could lead to a wider cultural shift in how gender is perceived and treated in sports, amplifying the impact beyond judo alone.

4. Improved Sponsorship and Funding Opportunities

Corporations increasingly seek partnerships with organizations that prioritize social responsibility and gender equality. By emphasizing equal treatment and visibility, the IJF may attract sponsors interested in supporting progressive values, which could lead to greater funding and resources for judo.



Challenges and Limitations

1. Funding and Sponsorship Constraints

Equal prize money requires a substantial financial commitment, and securing this funding consistently may be challenging,

especially during economic downturns or if sponsorship remains limited. Smaller events, especially in countries where judo for women still largely depends on the equipment used, face more difficulty in adhering to these standards without sufficient backing.

2. Regional and Cultural Resistance

While gender equality is a shared objective, there may be varying levels of acceptance across regions where traditional views on gender roles prevail. Encouraging local judo federations to fully adopt and promote these principles may be a gradual process in some areas, requiring ongoing education and support from the IJF.

3. Media Coverage Imbalance

While the IJF may promote equal exposure for men's and women's competitions, external media coverage may not fully align. Media organizations may still display biases, focusing more on men's events, which can limit the visibility and popularity of women's judo. The IJF would need to collaborate closely with media partners to mitigate this challenge.



4. Ensuring Consistent Standards Worldwide

Implementing and monitoring gender-equal policies across all IJF-sanctioned events globally requires significant oversight and resources. Variability in regional resources and infrastructure could create inconsistencies in how these policies are upheld, potentially affecting their effectiveness and credibility.

Through these initiatives, the IJF sets a strong example for gender equality in sports, although achieving lasting change requires navigating financial, cultural, and operational challenges. By addressing these issues proactively, the IJF continues to make meaningful strides in promoting inclusivity and equality across the global judo community.