



BEST PRACTICES IN GENDER EQUALITY

Promoting the Participation of Women Coaches in Judo

Introduction

Across the sporting world, including in judo, there is a well-documented decline in women's participation following the end of their elite athlete careers. This attrition is influenced by various factors such as time constraints, increased family responsibilities, and a lack of attractive professional pathways or long-term perspectives in the sport. The International Judo Federation (IJF) acknowledges these challenges and is proactively working to reverse this trend by fostering environments where women can remain actively engaged in judo through coaching and leadership roles.

Judo is a profoundly educational sport, and the IJF is committed to supporting the organic growth of women's roles at every level of our organization. We believe education is the foundation for empowerment and advancement. It must be accessible to all members of the judo community – regardless of gender or specific role within the sport.

A cornerstone of our approach is the IJF Academy, the official educational arm of the IJF. The Academy delivers structured, high-quality judo coach education globally, ensuring consistent standards and a professional framework for coaching in Judo. Importantly, the IJF Academy Instructor qualification is mandatory for all coaches active on the IJF World Judo Tour, thereby raising the level of coaching and ensuring athlete safety and development.



Measures Implemented by the IJF

Measure 1: Continental IJF Academy Scholarships for Women Coaches

To address access barriers and promote educational advancement, the IJF offers five annual scholarships, one per Continental Union, specifically for women coaches. These scholarships cover the full tuition of the IJF Academy Instructor course as well as participation in the one-week practical session and final examination. This initiative not only supports women in acquiring professional qualifications but also helps create role models for future generations of female judoka.



Measure 2: Dedicated IJF Academy Practical Session for Women

Through data collected from the IJF Academy, it became clear that many women successfully completed the online modules and theoretical exams but did not proceed to the in-person practical session – often due to financial or logistical constraints. To remove this barrier, the IJF established a dedicated all-women IJF Academy practical session, co-financed by Olympic Solidarity. This specialized session will take place in Italy at the end of the year, offering a focused and supportive environment for women to complete their certification and step into active coaching roles.



Measure 3: Targeted Participation in the WISH Programme

The IJF values the importance of aligning global opportunities with merit-based selection. In the past, one female coach per continent was nominated to participate in the WISH (Women in Sport High-performance Pathway) program. For the current edition, the IJF has refined its approach by selecting the two most outstanding women coaches – one from Europe and one from Asia, the two strongest judo continents – based on their performance in the IJF Academy. This targeted selection ensures that coaches with the highest potential and strongest foundational knowledge are supported in reaching the next level of international coaching leadership.

