

BJJA LEVEL 2 COACHES AWARD COURSE

THE VIEW FROM WITHIN

THIS IS THE SECOND in an occasional series of articles giving a personal perspective on life, courses and happenings within the BJJ, these are based on my own experiences as a student and coach. Some of you may recall the first article giving my views on the Level 1 Coaches Course, this article outlines, in a similar way, my observations on the Level 2 Course.

By EARL C. WALKER

The Level 2 Coaches Course I attended was held over two days, a Saturday and Sunday, from 10 am to 4 pm each day with an hour break for lunch, at Potters Bar in Hertfordshire on the 19th and 20th of November 1994. The course was conducted by the BJJ Director of Coaching Steve Allison. The participants ranged from a 6th Dan who runs his own group within the BJJ to the lowly 1st Dan coaches who run clubs on behalf of their senior Sensei. I fall firmly into the latter category. Present were coaches from all over the South East of England, from as far apart as Kent and Norfolk.

The course began with a recap of what we had learned on the Level 1 Course, including the rules affecting all members of the Association with regard to drugs. This is a very important area as Ju Jitsu has so far been absolutely clean as far as the drugs in sport issue is concerned. Like

all Governing Bodies, the BJJ is determined to ensure that our athletes remain drug free. The rules of drugs testing were made clear and the procedures for taking and testing samples were given in some detail. The fact that any competitor at any competition can be tested was brought strongly to our attention.

We moved on to discuss different types of exercise, exercises which are no longer recommended and the reasons for their exclusion (generally the more extreme forms), exercises which are now thought to be dangerous and the dangers, and which exercises are acceptable for children's classes. The Warm Up was covered in some depth, along with the Warm Down. The conditions under which Ballistic Stretching may be performed and the consequences of executing this type of stretch in the wrong circumstances. The responsibility of the coach was also covered, with safety considerations, first aid, insurance, mat area and general dojo safety adequately detailed. Of course it was pointed out that any coaching qualification issued by the BJJ is only valid when accompanied with Professional Indemnity Insurance, a current First Aid Certificate and Full Valid Membership Documentation.

Steve went on to talk about the way that 'Sport Science' is now a necessary part of coaching, the terminology used

and how to interpret it. Terms like Isometric, Isokinetic, Concentric and Eccentric joint movement, Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation and many other technical sporting/quasi-medical terms were explained. The basic message was: do not allow yourself to be blinded by science.

Motivation

Steve next detailed the motivational requirements needed to be a good coach, including the motivation of individual students, assistant coaches, groups, setting goals and the special motivational requirements of children, including the learning skills and utilising games to enhance skills.

The class went on to discuss the demonstration of a technique and its components; Explanation, Demonstration, Attempt, Breakdown, Correction. The KISS (Keep It Short and Simple) principle was emphasised. We all, it would seem, like to talk too much, and general agreement was reached on the essentials of demonstrating a technique. This may seem a little dry up to this point but I can assure you all that many jokes, common and amusing experiences were shared, and a good deal of laughter was heard.

We continued on into stretching, types of stretch, range of movement, and

improving suppleness and mobility. The importance of stretching, which is included in the warm up, how this prevents injury and enables students to perform certain techniques. Lesson Planning was looked at in some depth and the dangers of student boredom was highlighted.

The next session was undoubtedly the most fun of the whole course. We moved to the Dojo for a long period of role play. We began with each coach taking the rest of the class through a small part of a typical warm up session, we then sat down to discuss the value of various exercises and stretches, better and safer ways of achieving results were put forward. Each of us now moved on to run a class. For each coach (the other coaches playing the part of the students) a class profile was given, this ranged from running a novice children's class to a Black Belt senior class. In all cases, some of the 'students' were given a special role

to play - this might be anything from the class cry-baby to the Black Belt who only comes to class to socialise and who does no work at all. Needless to say the 'students' played their parts to the full and really gave the coaches a hard time. The coaches were unaware of the instructions that the 'students' were given on how to disrupt the class. There were at least two 'students' nominated for Oscars! Following each role play a post-mortem was held and all agreed that valuable lessons had been learned, despite the artificiality of the situation.

Back in the classroom we took on board further topics including stress - both the positive and negative sides, the learning processes, how to deal with individuals within a group, how the coach is perceived by the student, the basic elements of teaching and forming relationships with both the group and the individual. We also discussed how the coach should know the students, being

aware of their problems and injuries. How to successfully teach the various components of a group with differing ability and skill level, the importance of satisfying the needs of the student, elite performer and those who are about to grade, within the class structure was discussed.

The second day ended with a short talk on what the Level 3 Coaches Course would consist of, and the coaches who should consider taking this advanced course. A general discussion was held for the coaches to give their opinions of the course, one of the main points to emerge was that once a course was completed there seemed to be no way of keeping coaches informed on the latest thinking from the BJJ on exercises and related coaching matters. It was suggested that a 'Coaches Corner' could be started in this, our Official Magazine, giving all coaches such information. It was agreed that this would be an ideal way for the BJJ to communicate with its coaches.

In conclusion, this was quite a long and intensive course, however it would be impossible to impart the amount of knowledge and experience given in a shorter time.