

BJJA LEVEL 1 COACHES COURSE

VIEW FROM WITHIN

By EARL C. WALKER

HAVING RECENTLY ATTENDED the British Ju Jitsu Association Level 1 Coaches Course, I felt other potential coaches might be interested in knowing what's involved. I decided to attend the course, which grants Assistant Coach status. As I help the Sensei at our Tuesday Club and assist in the training of Juniors on Fridays, I felt the course would help me to help others. I enjoy passing on the Ju Jitsu knowledge and skills I have gained.

The course was held at Ongar Sports Centre, Ongar, Essex, on Saturday, 13th March. The two lecturers were Michael Player, BJJ National Tutor Coach, and Terry Parker, BJJ South of England Co-ordinator, Senior Sensei and Head of the Jikishin Ju Jitsu Association, and BJJ National tutor coach.

It was made clear to all prospective coaches, prior to the course, that the minimum requirement for a BJJ Level 1 Coach would be a Brown Belt Kyu Grade and a First Aid qualification. Those candidates who did not possess a First Aid qualification would not gain a Coaches Certificate until this had been achieved. A number of the students (myself included) had not yet acquired First Aid and accordingly were not awarded a Certificate at the end of the day, however, attendance of the course was noted in our Budo Passes. A BJJ Level 1 Coaches Certificate will be granted when proof of a First Aid qualification can be produced.

The course itself, whilst being conducted in a relaxed and friendly style, was well structured and very informative. Attendees received, prior to the course, an agenda and the National Coaching Foundation booklet. "The Coach in Action". We were, of course, expected to have read the booklet.

I felt that, for a one day course, the amount of information which was imparted was impressive, although much should already be practised by those with common sense. It was good to confirm that some of the things we are doing are right!

The day's events began with an open discussion on what a Level 1 Coach is, and should strive to be. How the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) will come into effect and what changes this is likely to bring. The topics moved forward to cover Insurance, both Personal Accident — Student to Student (covered by the BJJ within your annual subscription) and Professional Indemnity (which no coach should be without). The limits of cover, what to do in the event of an accident and how to deal with a claim, should an unfortunate incident arise. It was pointed out that Dental Insurance is not covered under the Personal Accident policy, however this is offered by the BJJ at an additional premium. This may sound quite boring but a number of amusing anecdotes, related by Terry Parker, kept everyone alert and smiling, the general feel of the course was very much one of keeping things relaxed whilst stimulating and maintaining interest.

Warm up exercises

Next we looked at the Warm Up exercises we perform, analysed the reasons and benefits of various types of exercise, and possible improvements. The Warm Down and its physiological effects were put forward, making a very strong case for this to be included in our sessions. Lunch was followed by a practical demonstration of Warm Up techniques performed by the students with a critical eye cast by the tutors, a number of points were raised and discussed. This was followed by a practical demonstration of Warm Down Techniques given by Michael Player. The exercise gave us a pleasant break from all the thinking we had been required to do.

Safety and the Safe Dojo were next on the agenda and this gave considerable food for thought, in particular minimum mat area, Dojo temperature, personal hygiene and Dojo hygiene. Once again a few amusing stories kept the pace good and aptly

illustrated a number of the points made. We moved on into Group and Personal Characteristics, the reasons why people take up Ju Jitsu and some elementary psychology. Body types were covered and how these are effected by heredity, each of us looked around and found many Ectomorphs, Endomorphs and Metromorphs among our colleagues — you'll have to look these up if you do not already know what they are.

By now the Course was moving along at quite a good pace as we covered Time Planning, Lesson Structure, Grade Considerations and Grading Conditions. Students should only grade when ready and fully conversant with the required techniques. We learned that they should never be put in early at, perhaps, a poor standard, nor held back in order to attempt to perfect every part of every technique. A high standard of both knowledge and skill is the optimum requirement for a grading.

Finally, we moved onto the subject of Drugs and Doping. It was made clear that with the advent of Sport Jitsu and our involvement with the Sports Council — the BJJ is the only recognised Governing Body of Ju Jitsu in Great Britain — we are all responsible for ensuring that our students are drug free. It was pointed out that even some "over the counter" drugs contain banned substances, therefore care must be taken by everyone involved in order to ensure our sport does not gain a bad reputation for drugs use. Any Dojo may be visited and samples taken for analysis. Remember — drugs are very big news in sport these days.

So we finished and the Certificates were awarded to those students achieving the full requirements.

Overall impression? A very worthwhile course where everyone was encouraged to ask questions and give feedback, a substantial amount of knowledge gained and a fresh perspective on a number of areas. Good value for money — especially as the course will probably be accepted as part of the official National Vocational Qualification scheme.