

JUNE 2023



TEACHING AND COACHING PARALYMPIC JUDOKA

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Classification

Long Term Development Model of JUDOKA

Road to Compassion – Being a Paralympic Judoka

Teaching Paralympic Judoka

Coaching Paralympic Judoka

History of VI Judo in Canada

- 1988 introduction of male judo in the Paralympic program.
- 2004 introduction of female judo in the Paralympic program.
- 2007 introduction of judo in the ParaPan-Am games.
- To date, 12 Canadian Paralympic judoka represented Canada at the international stage
- 9 males and 3 females
- To date Canadian Paralympic Judoka won 5 Paralympic Medals and 4 World Championships medals
- All except four of these 12 athletes were at one point of time residents at the Ross MacDonald residential school for Blind and Visually Impaired in Brantford Ontario

History of VI Judo in Canada

- **Coaches of the National Paralympic Program were selected based on their personal experience working with the Blind and Visually impaired athletes at the club or Provincial level.**
- **Several club coaches are known to work frequently in this environment. Mohamed Soualmia from Jikan Judo Club in Montreal, Shirin Elmayergi from Prince Albert; Johannes Schenk and Chin-I Hsiang work with blind judoka on regular basis.**
- **Judo Canada hope is to expand this network of coaches prepared to work with athletes of this special need.**

INTRODUCTION

Resources



Information about a variety of sports for VI:

[Home of blind sports - IBSA International Blind Sports Federation \(ibsasport.org\)](http://ibsasport.org)

Best resources available today on the Paralympic judo are offered at: [Judoka with a Disability – Judo Canada](#)

→ Judo is one of 3 IBSA sports offered at the Paralympic Games, beside Goalball and Football. IBSA Judo has now 50 member countries.

Paralympic Judo classification today



J1 blind judoka	Acuity of vision	Less than or equal to LogMAR 2.6 in binocular vision (20/7962 in Snellen system).
J2 visually impaired judoka	Acuity of vision OR	between LogMAR 1.3 (20/400 in Snellen system) and 2.5 (20/6325 in Snellen system) with binocular vision
	Visual field	binocular visual field of 60 degrees or less in diameter

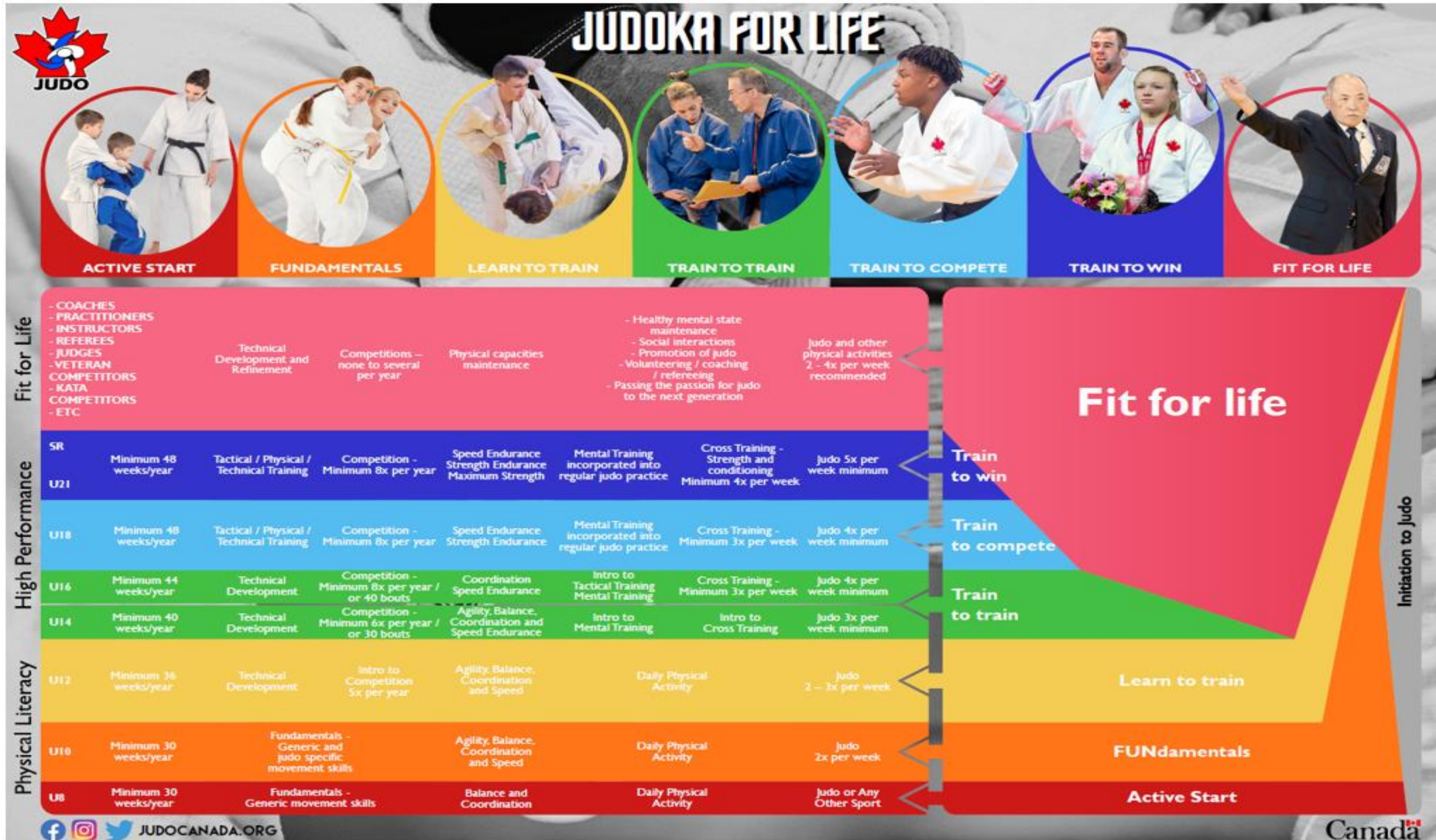
INTRODUCTION

Long Term Judoka Development Model



INTRODUCTION

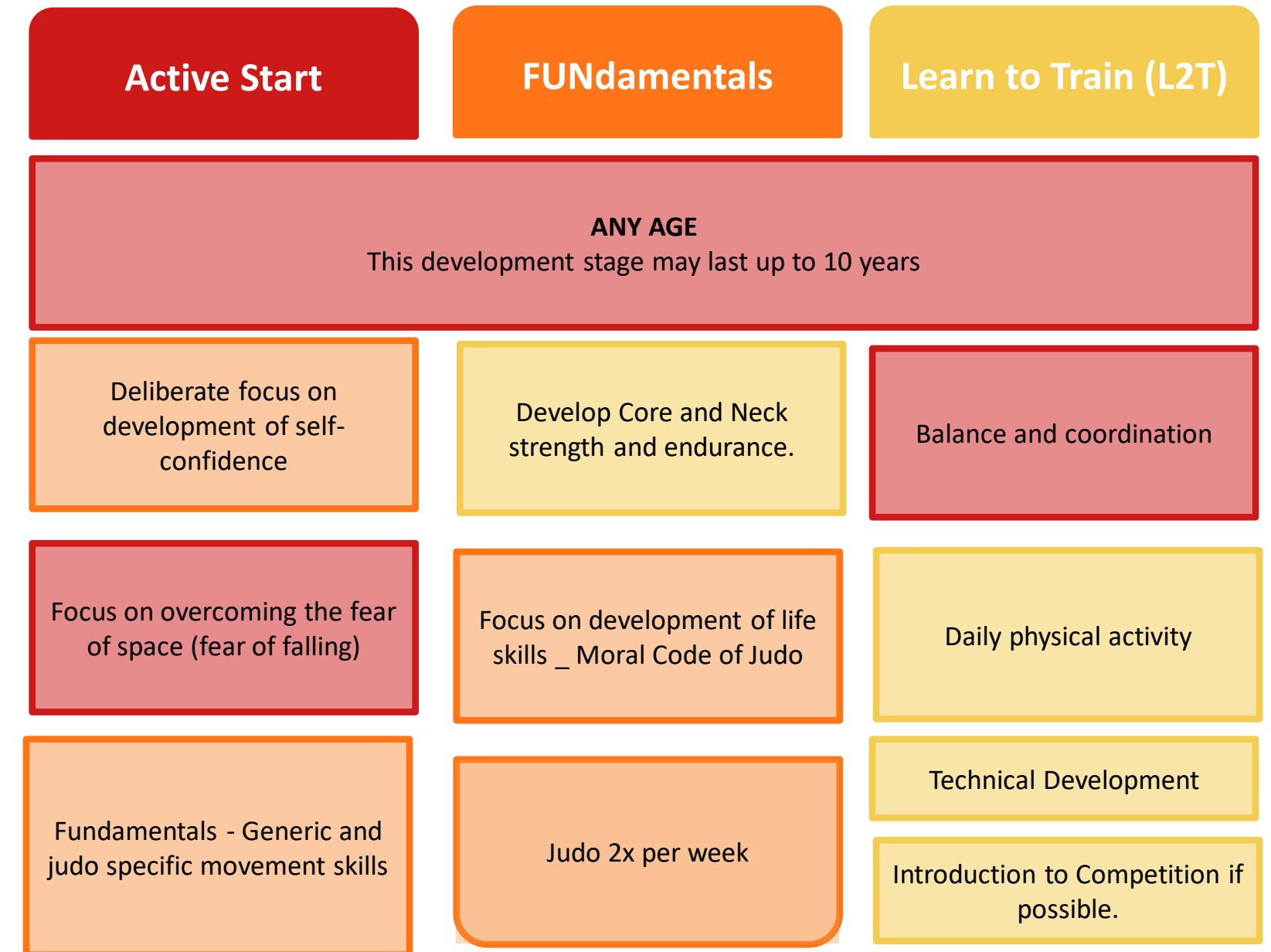
Long Term Judoka Development Model





1. START - Familiarization with judo

- For VI person can happen at any time
- For able body judoka usually 4 to 5 years. For VI may take up to twice this long.
- Main objective: enjoyable, safe, stimulating environment
- Deliberate attention to development of life skills: self-control, goal setting, friendliness, humbleness,

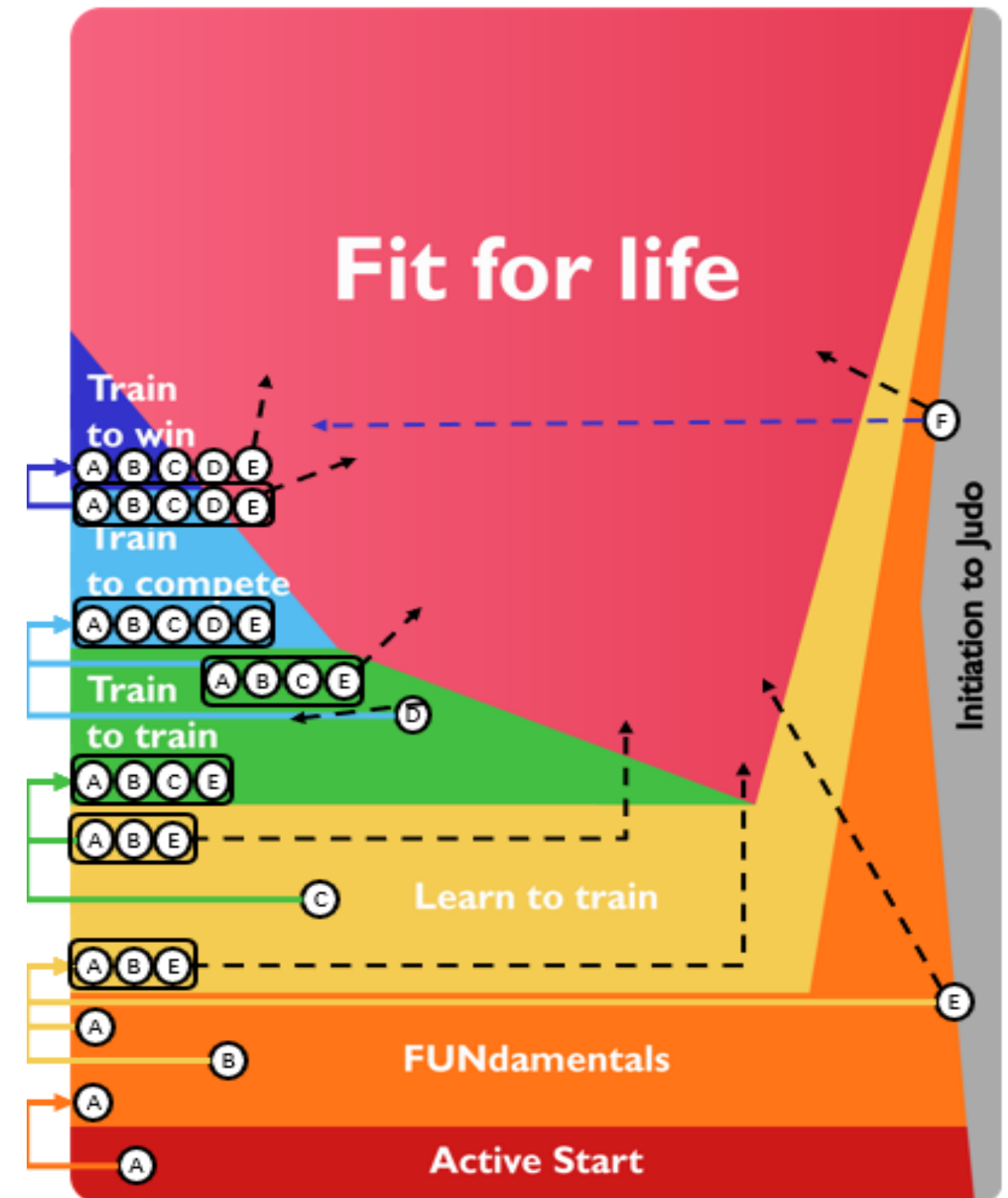


Paralympic Judoka development pattern.



2. STAY AND SUCCEED

- Regardless of whether the VI judoka stays in judo to pursue the Paralympic pathway or they continue in judo for other reasons, judo enriches their lives
- VI judoka may join the Paralympic stream at time and age that would make such a choice impossible for judoka in able body sport.
- once VI judoka enters the Paralympic stream, their training is not dramatically different from the able body judoka, however their support needs must be addressed.



BEING VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Overview – What and Why
Visually impaired living in the world designed for and by
sighted people

A glimpse into the world of the VI person

Humans are visual species and the modern world was designed and built to accommodate needs and desires of the sighted population. Most of sighted people can see and differentiate between:

- the dangerous and the safe; the beautiful and the ugly;
- the way people dress will tell us to what social/religious group they belong;
- the approaching car,
- the distracted pedestrian walking towards you,
- the tree branch hanging too low,
- the hole in the pavement we are walking towards... ;
- the clean and the dirty; the rich and the poor; the angry and the friendly face
- etc. etc....
- **NONE OF THIS IS AVAILABLE TO THE BLIND PERSON**

The What and the Why



- “Reduced vision or blindness caused by damage to the eye structure, optical nerves, visual pathways or visual cortex of the brain”
- VI can be either congenital or acquired. It is important to learn this fact when dealing with VI person because it has a very significant impact on their abilities.
- There are several medical conditions of which one must be aware of when working with VI athletes and which are often causing or are associated with a VI. **Some of these conditions may prevent an athlete from engaging in a high intensity activity.**

Major Medical issues associated with VI



- **Glaucoma** - is a condition that damages the eye's optic nerve over time and can lead to blindness. ! This condition may prevent a person in engaging in intense physical exercise which increases the risk of worsening glaucoma, since that activity is associated with a temporary increase in intraocular pressure.
- **Genetic retinal disease**- not preventable and detectable only via genetic testing or... when the loss of vision occurs which may happen at any time in life of a person with this genetic condition.
- **Diabetic retinopathy** - occurs when the blood vessels in the retina burst or are damaged and the blood leakage causes swelling or oedema in the retina. Usually, the result of poorly controlled type 1 or 2 diabetes. ! Intense physical exercise will increase the risk of damage to the eye.

Major challenges resulting from medical VI issues



- **Disruption in circadian rhythm** - For athletes with total vision loss, the circadian rhythm is disrupted which causes sleep disturbances and affect strength and reaction times.
- **Risk of dehydration** – some athletes with a VI may be unable to self-monitor hydration by checking urine colour and volume, and this can lead to a risk of dehydration – however they may be able to detect it by smell.
- **Risk for retinal detachment** - ! Athletes who are at risk for retinal detachment should avoid contact sports like goalball and judo.

Physiological issues related to VI



- **Energy expenditure** - For athletes with a VI, the metabolic cost of physical activity is often much higher than for sighted athletes. This may be due to increased residual muscle tension from performing complex functional tasks in the sporting environment without visual feedback
- **Fatigue** - Increased energy expenditure has the potential to cause early fatigue. This may predispose athletes with a VI to a higher risk of tension-related muscle injury
- **Walk asymmetry** - Athletes with a VI may present with asymmetric or altered walk and biomechanics due to potential decrease in postural stability and proprioception.

- **VI person adapts** – deprivation of some sensory sensations may develop heightened mental capacity (i.e. memory) or somatosensory awareness (hearing, touch, temperature awareness, body position).
- **(Most?) VI persons want to live an independent life** as much as possible. Do not assume that VI athlete cannot do something. Always ask whether your assistance is needed.
- **In sport environment** ensure that VI athlete is not left alone to fend for themselves in areas or situations that they are not familiar with.

COACHING- SAFE SPORT ENVIRONMENT

WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR?
SAFE SPORT
SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN JUDO

NCCP Coaching Competencies & Paralympic Sport



- **Problem-solving:**
 - Look critically at everything we do and try to adjust our actions in the best interest of Visually Impaired athletes for whom we are responsible.
- **Valuing:**
 - Ensure that whatever action we take it is respecting the values inherent to coaching profession and to the sport of judo.
- **Critical Thinking:**
 - Compare current knowledge, skills, and attitudes with the information available on this topic
- **Leadership:**
 - Demonstrate empathetic and compassionate attitude that offers an example to all participants in the program which is particularly important in shaping tolerance and understanding of the diversity of human experiences in an integrated environment.
 - Seek Excellence and be transparent.
- **Interaction:**
 - Work with other coaches and organizations to develop consistent approach to the concept of inclusion and integration.
 - Demonstrate positive leadership and respect for others

– INTEGRATION:

OTP's vision of integrated environment for Visually Impaired/Blind Judoka:

“When working in a fully integrated sport environment – (which is the case of judoka in a contextual reality of Paralympic judo in Canada – AS clarification), the Blind judoka works with a designated able body training/sparring partner in a designated training area where no other able body athlete's are welcomed to train”

KNOW YOUR ATHLETE



General principles of safe environment



- Genuinely Welcoming
- **Support Needs are well understood by all participants in the program – very important in integrated environment.**
- Spacious enough to practice skills
- Free of hazards
- Free of harassment
- Developmentally appropriate sport programming and activities
- Equipment in good condition
- Comfortable temperature
- Water (and food.. ??) available
- Team rules and expectations
- Core values
- Inclusive

Support Needs judoka and safe environment



- Familiarization with the dojo
- Designate sighted person who will assist the VI in case of emergency.
- If possible, adjust the level of light to address the comfort of the VI
- Avoid destructive sounds (music?)
- Place a sound device in one place in the dojo (metronome?).
- Remove obstacles
- Always keep equipment in a well defined area
- Designate one area of the dojo where the VI judoka has a safe “hub” – water bottle, etc.
- **Designate a willing training and sparring** partners for the VI.
- Team rules and expectations
- Don't take things for granted. Ask the VI judoka whether they are comfortable with all that is happening.

Safety considerations for coaches



- **Keeping participants safe is your primary job.**
- **Don't take things for granted – lack of attention to details may constitute negligence.**
- **Consider potential environmental, mechanical and human risk factors, and design activities to minimize those risks.**
- **Create an environment that is psychologically safe, where participants and coaches are able to be their authentic selves.**
- **Consider the nature of judo and its inherent risks.**
- **Have an emergency action plan (EAP) available.**

TEACHING

Basic Principles
Skill Teaching
Tactics Teaching tools

TEACHING; LEARNING AND TRAINING

Again - Know Your VI Athlete



- **KNOW YOUR ATHLETE.** Are they congenitally blind or was it acquired condition. This will determine a lot of potential options.
- **KNOW YOUR ATHLETE's Medical Conditions.** Do they have any other physical or psychological condition. Visual Impairment often comes with a number of other challenges. If such is the case, ensure that the athlete has a medical clearance to practice judo.
- **KNOW YOUR ATHLETES' GOALS** – ask what are they looking for in judo? Be aware that what they think today may change tomorrow.
- **KNOW YOUR ATHLETE'S PHYSICAL CAPACITY:** Use common fitness test to determine where they are in comparison to participants of similar chronological age.

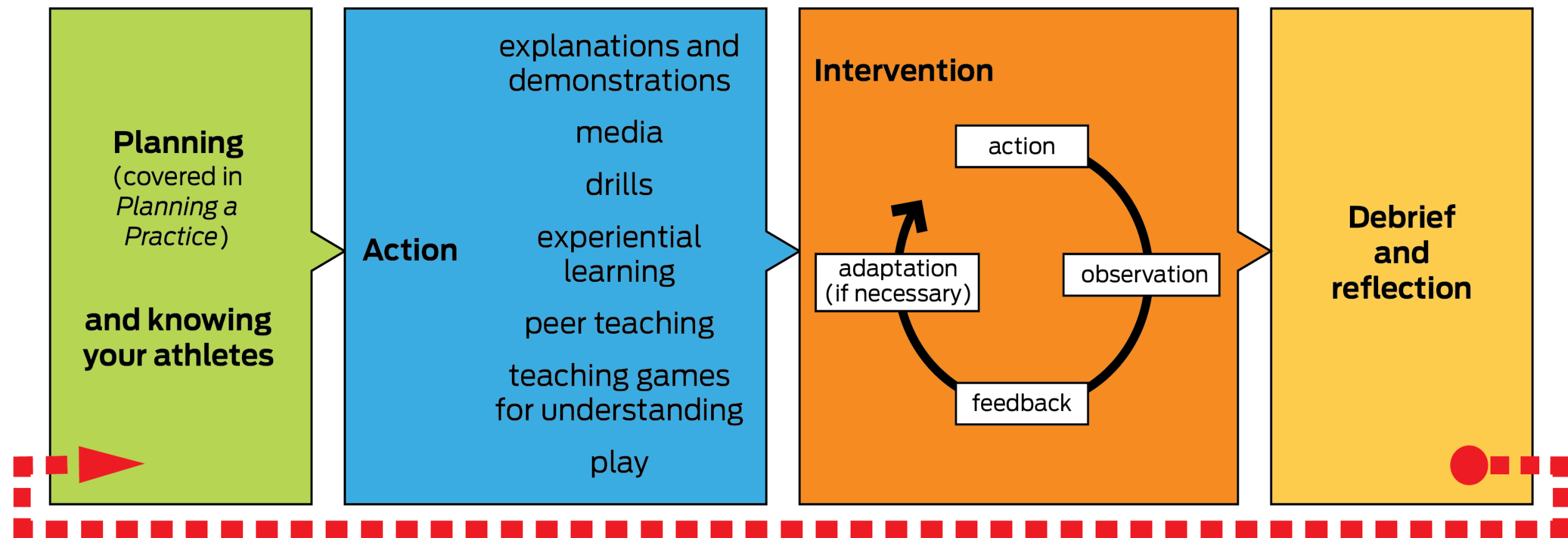
TEACHING & LEARNING

Principles: Foundations



LEARNING

competence · confidence · connection · character



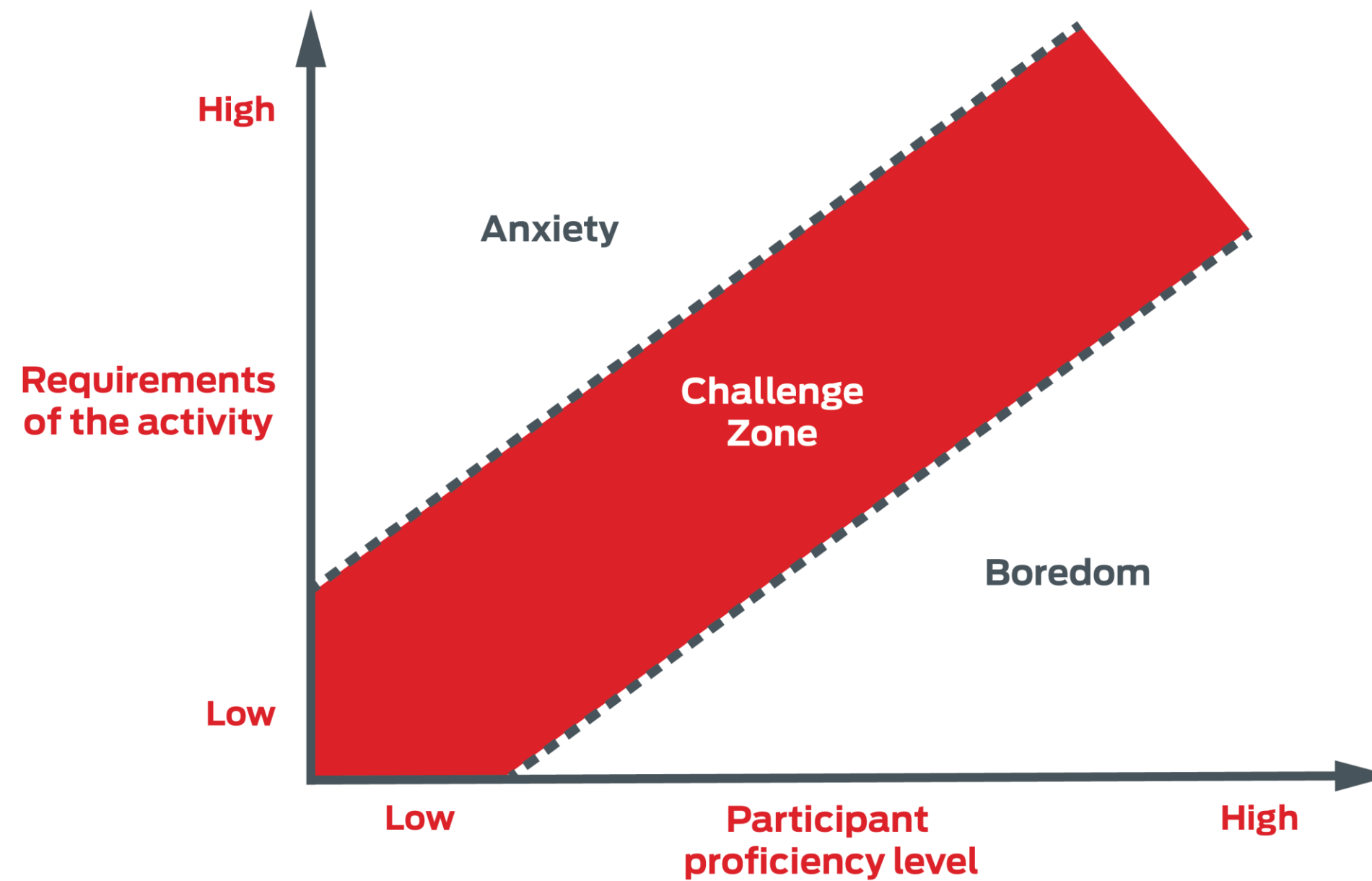
positive learning environment

TEACHING

Teaching tips: Know your athletes



- **Kinesthetic:** Paralympic judoka are predominantly learn by feeling. Requires a good partner to learn a proper form; requires a large number of repetitions to consolidate skills. Often learn slower than the other learners; Explain **Kinetics** – what is happening and **Kinematics** – why your motion results in a given outcome.
- **Auditory:** some Paralympic judoka who learned judo prior to experiencing visual impairment react well to auditory feedback when they receive very precise descriptive or prescriptive explanations; usually very good with rhythm.
- **Visual:** Very few Paralympic judoka benefit from visual tips .



Post warm up.

- **Choice of activities**
- **Sequence of activities**
- **Transition between activities**

- Activities to acquire new techniques, skills or motor patterns
- Activities that develop or require coordination or balance
- Activities that develop or require speed
- Activities that develop or require strength

Then

- Activities to develop or require speed endurance
- Activities that develop or require strength endurance
- Activities to consolidate skills already acquired

Later

- Activities that develop or require aerobic capacity
- Activities to develop flexibility

Teaching/Coaching Key duties - specific



EXPLAIN & DEMONSTRATE:

- Clear explain objective – preferably 1 key point – maximum 2.
- Demonstration of task must be of high quality. **If not able to demonstrate, choose an assistant who can do it well. Demonstration on a blind athlete must include description of what (kinetics) is happening and why (kinematics) in a given action.**
- Start with the general principles and leave the details for later – once the participant gains control of the general principles.
- Define milestones detectable to you as well as to the participant.

General tips for instructors:



- **Patience** is a key! Visually impaired athletes will not progress at the same pace as the able body judoka. Keep your **mind and heart** open. Educate yourself
- Experience being Visually Impaired. Listen to instructions and try to replicate it with your eyes closed. Practice randori blindfolded.
- Ensure that Visually Impaired judoka has a **willing partner** who understands their support needs. You need to find partners who demonstrate a high level of empathy.
- Use as few verbal or visual prompts as possible. These become distractions rather than teaching tools.
- Simplify judo techniques. Focus on the large outcome of action rather than on details of particular movement. Do not correct details unless what is happening may be unsafe to participants.
- Look for natural tendencies of the VI judoka. I.e. if relative ease in tai-sabaki - teach rotational techniques; if not turning around with ease – teach straight forward or backward techniques that do not involve rotation.

General tips for instructors - continued:

- Avoid techniques that require a high level of eye hand/ eye leg coordination – i.e. Deashi-barai, to fully blind judoka.
- During warm up use a precise language to describe next exercise or format of the exercise – i.e. “rolling forward ukemi left and right with two steps in between”
- Design and adopt a technical progression inspired by the Kyu Grading Syllabus taking into consideration the support needs.
- Ensure that VI judoka are facing the correct direction before taking part in an activity.
- Encourage “play and feel” discovery learning and intervene only when safety of participants is a concern.
- Remember that individual differences must be addressed. So if a judoka (child in particular) is able to safely take the next step, the coach has to be able to detect it and ensure that the child is working in the “challenge” zone and not in the “I am bored” zone.

OTHER ESSENTIAL TIPS

Communication with the VI person

Traveling with VI

Guiding the VI

Selection a Sparring/training partner of the VI judoka

KNOW YOUR ATHLETE

Competitions



- Be aware of the fact that “**life skills**” of a VI judoka has a much greater impact on the potential of success at the international level than it is for an able-bodied judoka. The support structure around the athlete, level of education, ability to function without assistance, capacity to reflect on life and self-evaluate, will play more important role than the technical, tactical, psychological, or physical key factors of success in sport.
- Offer a competitive pathway option to a VI judoka who are interested in it and for whom such options exist. Be aware that low numbers of participants with specific classifications of impairment makes it difficult to offer meaningful competition domestically in most countries. When possible, a mock-up event should be offered where able-bodied athletes will compete with the VI judoka according to the IBSA sport rules. **Ensure that this is legal in your jurisdiction.**
- Once a VI judoka enters the competitive or High-Performance stream, they should be treated as any other elite level athlete providing that their needs are addressed. This means addressing all aspects of the Daily Training Environment to ensure that their training is developmentally appropriate.

TIPS

Communicating with VI athlete



- Address the **athlete by name and if needed by light touch on the shoulder** if you want to indicate that your message is for that person in particular.
- When approaching a person or group, **always say who you are by name**. You may have to do this more than once to allow them to become familiar with the sound of your voice.
- Be aware that facial expression in many VI persons may not be consistent with **facial expression** of sighted person – they may not have learned it;
- Be aware that **voice intonation** offers additional cues to the VI person. **They know when you are friendly.**
- Be aware that many VI persons can hear conversations conducted quite a distance away and distinguish specific sounds from a multitude of sounds surrounding them.
- When instructing on skills or daily activities **use “clock face” instruction**: i.e. take two steps forward to your right at 1 o’clock – as oppose to “move two steps towards the window” or “two steps forward at 30 degrees”. When setting a plate. 6 o’clock potatoes, 12 o’clock turkey, your glass of water at 2 o’clock next to your plate.

TIPS

Travelling with VI athletes



- **Ensure (check!)** that all athletes have the proper travel documents with them
- Ensure **proper hydration** by a proper scheduling. – VI persons are not able to detect the colour of urine to detect dehydration however more experienced judoka may be able to detect dehydration with the smell of the urine – this however, can be impacted by intake of vitamins.
- Learn your **VI athletes eating habits** – what they like and what they don't tolerate;
- **In a self serving buffet setting** - ensure that athlete is capable of handling their own plate; if not – prepare the meals for them;
- **In hotels** – on arrival guide the athlete on arrival to ensure they are familiar with the lay out and “particularities”. On departure, check hotel rooms for items that might have been unnoticed when athletes were packing.

TIPS

Guiding VI athlete



- **Do not offer uninvited assistance.** Always ask first whether assistance is welcomed.
- Do not grab the VI when trying to guide them. **Offer an elbow or shoulder** to the VI judoka. Ask which side they prefer to be guided on. If you are dealing with a VI child, offer to them a hand – they may prefer it.
- When guiding, make sure you are always **one step in front** of the person that you are guiding. Ask if they are happy with the pace.
- When guiding, **communicate at all times**, describing what is around them and explain any changes in ground surface. Make sure the individual is aware of staircases as you approach them.
- When approaching a seating area, **place the hand of the VI on the back of the chair**. They will be able to sit down by themselves.
- As you walk through doorways or other narrow spaces, make sure the visually impaired person is behind you. Be careful and make sure they don't hit or get hit by the door when it swings back.
- **Explain any loud noises** if they occur.
- Keep your **guiding arm still and relaxed**; don't start waving it about.
- **Be aware of obstacles** - give the visually impaired person adequate room around it and if necessary add verbal information – i.e. low hanging tree branch on the left or ridge in a sidewalk ahead;

TIPS

Selecting a sparring partner



- The blind person is not a charity case.
- Tip 1 - Look for judoka who will try to assist the VI without being asked to do it – which demonstrates empathy
- Tip 2 – they see a problem and will address it without being prompted to do it – which demonstrates compassion
- Training partners must be aware of the support needs of the VI Judoka. They must be good guides first and only when they are able to guide in a non sport specific environment they should be considered for a Sparring partner role.
- Good training partner in judo may be the most important factor in a potential enjoyment of judo by the VI practitioner both in the recreational or competitive setting.
- Optimal training/ sparring partner will be a **good quality judoka** who can offer a technical advice to the VI judoka (example – Nathalie Gosselin for Priscilla Gagne).

TRAINING

**Basic Principles of training & what to pay attention
with Paralympic judoka**

Know your sport - implications



What to Train

- Paralympic judo – 4 minutes bout
- Work to Rest ratio varies from 1:1 to 1:4.
- Mental training.
- Know your opponents
- Technical vs. Randori vs. Drill training (Kakari-geiko; Yaku-soku-geiko; Sute-geiko).

Respect principles of How to train:

- Aerobic capacity
- Anaerobic lactic capacity and power
- Anaerobic alactic capacity and power
- Mental skills in daily training environment
- Simulation of competition

The Ultimate Goals of Mental Training

- High self-confidence**
- Commitment and ability to set goals**
- Composure, motivation, having rational perspective**
- Positive attitude and mindset**
- Mindfulness, focused on task**
- Emotional control**
- Ability to manage stress and anxiety**
- Control of activation and relaxation levels**
- Well-developed competitive plans**
- Ability to embrace and manage pressure**
- Adaptability and self-regulate**
- Passion and love for sport**
- Work-ethic**
- Responsibility**
- Ability to manage team environments and performance demands**

Focus: Developing and maintaining focus – Emotional

ANXIETY

- Can be a **positive emotion** when it reflects excitement or eagerness to perform well.
- Can be a **negative emotion** if it reflects feelings of apprehension

STRESS

- Substantial imbalance between demand and response capability, when failure has consequences.
- **Stress is natural**

Important !

- Paralympic judoka will not have the same chance to “learn” how to cope with emotions as does able body judoka. They don’t have the competition development pathway that will help them to acquire these skills.
- They must be made aware that Stress is a natural emotional state and accept it. Everybody goes through the same challenges.

Teaching/ Coaching Key duties



OFFER INTERACTIVE FEEDBACK:

- Step 1- Before providing feedback, deciding whether the participant is succeeding or failing the task. **Ask the participant first** how they feel about their performance?
- Step 2 - Choose the appropriate intervention. The intervention must be done at the right time and address precise and specific details. The quality of the feedback (not the quantity) determines if the intervention will help the participant.
- Step 3 - Use the right type of feedback for the situation and the intended goal.

TRAINING:

Closing statement - Prioritizing abilities and skills training in judo – Bompa's correction pyramid.



KNOW YOUR ATHLETE

Final Coaching tips



- **Coaching (and teaching) approach will vary** based on the skill level of the VI participant, their level of visual impairment, medical conditions, age, etc.
- Coaching Paralympic judoka will **often include management of other demands** for their career (school, work, sponsors, media, etc.) as well as exploring with the athlete aspects related to their post-sport career.
- **The basic training principles for VI persons are the same as for able body athletes.** The most important principle is individualization. Each athlete will have different needs, goals and capacity. These must be taken into consideration in the training process.
- **Competition intelligence is a key performance factor in the VI environment.** Drill training is very effective in preparation of VI competitors providing that they focus on specific solution to be employed versus specific opponents.
- When working in **fully integrated environments**, all other athletes and coaches must be aware that VI persons are part of the training environment.

IBSA Classification Rules

[Microsoft Word - IBSA Judo
Classification Rules
\(judoontario.ca\)](#)

Coaching tips – Warm up

[VI Paralympic Judo | Judo
Ontario](#)

Coaching tips – Ne-waza

[VI Paralympic Judo | Judo
Ontario](#)

Coaching tips – Tachi-waza

[VI Paralympic Judo | Judo
Ontario](#)

Coaching tips – Randori

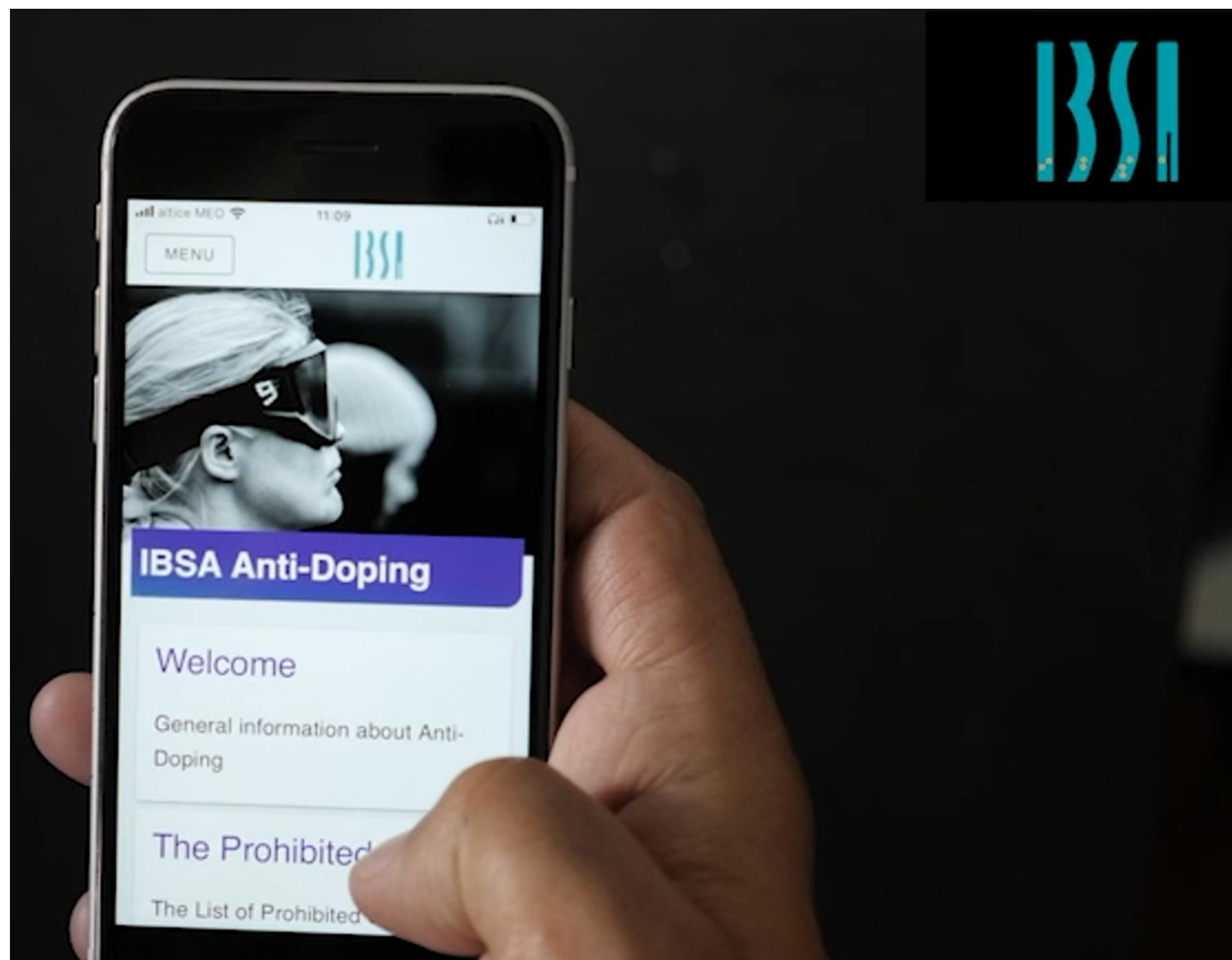
[VI Paralympic Judo | Judo
Ontario](#)

British Judo Guide to Paralympic judo

[BJA Guide to VI Judo -
British Judo](#)

DOPING EDUCATION:

IBSA App developed in cooperation with the IPC



Thank you