In this issue....

Have you ever wondered what your liability would be in a self defense situation? Alan Duppler, a practicing attorney and a former States Attorney in North Dakota explains the “use of force and the law.” The first in a series of articles on the Martial artist and the Law.

Jeff Ficek contributes an article about how they built a low cost mat for the Bismarck Judo Club.

Mark Gorsuch reviews a biography on Mitsuyo Maeda, better known as Conde Koma. The book is entitled "A Lion’s Dream, the Story of Mitsuyo Maeda". The author is Norio Kohyama. This book won an award as the 21st century International Best Work of Non-fiction, from a Japanese weekly publication called SAPIO.

I have always been fascinated by Geof Gleeson and my judo has been strongly influenced by him (a man that I have never met.) About 10 years ago I followed the advice in one of his books and developed a kata that I used for many years in my club. The story of its development is inside.

Mike Penny contributes our first Dojo Spotlight.

I hope you enjoy this 2nd issue of the Judo Forum.
Editor’s Page

Increase the Popularity of Spectator Judo

The NDSU Judo Club recently set up a booth in the Student Union to recruit new members. They asked me if I had some videotape that they could use and I told them that I would put something together for them over the weekend.

Over the weekend I went through my collection of video tapes (well over a hundred) and picked out 20 or so. There were local, regional, national, and international shiai, demonstrations that we had done, kata, clinics with Mark Berger, Mike Swain, Darrell Craig, Steve Cunningham, and some old video of Kyuzo Mifune, etc.

During this spin through my video collection I viewed a copy of the 1996 Olympic Trials recorded at the Olympic Training Center and broadcast on ESPN. The quality was very good, good interviews with athletes... It had some good ippons for the video I was making.

And a little later I watched a broadcast of the 1988 Olympics that was recorded in Japan off NHK.

Aside from the most obvious difference, one of the videos is in English and the other in Japanese, the Japanese tape is much more compelling emotionally than the ESPN tape. I looked at them again.

The two ESPN announcers were quite competent, they knew their stuff but the emotional content was almost dead pan, I doubt that their pulse ever got over 50 - - if you only listened with one ear they wouldn’t attracted your attention. On the other hand, the two Japanese sportscasters were excited and when something happened you knew it! What a contrast! The Japanese commentators were excited and knew how to titillate the viewing audience. I closed my eyes at one point, and without understanding Japanese you could still tell what was going on. It was exciting. The camera panned around the audience, got the concerned look of the losing coach, and the reactions of the spectators. It was terrific. It was sensitive and emotional.

I remember as a kid following sports on the radio. I can still remember the excitement of the play by play commentary with Red Barber, Howard Cossell and others. Recently I heard a basketball game broadcast on the radio by a local radio personality that had me rooting for a team that I didn’t know and I don’t even like basketball.

Most of you know that Judo is one of the most exciting sports there is! But to listen to the commentary that we are accustomed to on television we are bored to tears.

The point is that if we can’t find some good commentators to do the play by play of the what little judo is broadcast I doubt that judo will ever become popular. Where are the Howard Cossells and Red Barbers of Judo?

There was a comment on the Judo-L recently about how the popularity of sports in the United States is determining what we will see in the Olympics in the future. It seems to me that if the interest of the USA public is going to determine whether judo will be included in the Olympics as an event, we need to make sure that we find and train exciting sports commentators. Reflecting on it, I don’t think judo needs to be changed but I do think that we need to train commentators so they can bring this great sport to the screen in an exciting way.

Any comments would be appreciated.

Vern Borgen
Letters

IMHO, the magazine is awe-some! Steve Cunningham's interview provided me with a lot of food for thought. I hope others will read the current issue and comment.

Later,
Victor Anderson
Sacramento Judo Club

P.S: I loved the "air judo" shot!!!!
Linda Yiannakis

Vern has published what I feel could/should become a standard as far as Judo magazines is concerned. The formatting is wonderful, quality good and it's in the electronic format which I think is the way to go. We all need to rally around some point if we truly want a good product. I would suggest we bury Vern with articles and make Judo Forum even better. It really does take a whole village to put out a great magazine.

Gerald Lafon
Judo America San Diego

Reading this list [JUDO-L], I noticed a few references to 'Judo Forum' magazine... curious. I downloaded it this morning (it's an online 'magazine') and was really surprised to find a high-quality, professional publication, with interesting topics and interviews... I had been to the site but didn't bother to actually download the magazine itself... it was about 400k, about 3 minutes download, free to the reader. It does require that you download Adobe Acrobat Reader (also free), but you only have to do this once. This took about 10 minutes to download and install (easy). I had already done that so I could get tax forms off the IRS site...

IMHO, everyone who reads this list should take a look at this magazine today. Those who are complaining about Judo's lack of outreach to the general public will find a well-written, interesting publication that (if I read correctly) is designed to be printed out and distributed freely. And (also IMHO) I think it's a good idea to have a magazine out that's *not* connected to one of the governing bodies... plus, it's fun to read, not just a list of results and stats.

I imagine Vern's too humble to really tout his work on this list, so I'll do it for him... this is a great Judo resource to have. And, since I doubt any of the people putting it together will continue to do so without at least some response from the public, I'd like to tell them at least I'll be reading it. I'm sure they'd appreciate articles and input from experienced judoka as well.

Duncan Watt

p.s. check out the 'Air Judo' pic...

Suppose a boat is crossing a river and another boat, an empty one, is about to collide with it. Even an irritable man would not lose his temper. But suppose there was someone in the second boat. Then the occupant of the first would shout to him to keep clear. And if he did not hear the first time, nor even when called to three times, bad language would inevitably follow. In the first case there was no anger, in the second there was — because in the first case the boat was empty, in the second it was occupied. And so it is with man. If he could only pass empty through life, who would be able to injure him?

Chuang Tzu
Dojo Spotlight
Omaha Family Judo Omaha, Nebraska

Mike Penny writes:

In November of 1994, one of my fellow students in the Omaha Public Schools Judo Club, who was a fourth degree black belt in TaeKwonDo and the proprietor of his own dojang (Korean for dojo), asked my Sensei if he would be interested in starting a judo class at his TaeKwonDo school. My Sensei, already having a full schedule, asked if I would be interested in teaching the class. After a short discussion I agreed.

We started classes in January of 1995 in the basement of West Lanes Bowling, in central Omaha, using mats made from rolls of an industrial foam insulation called Armorflex. The first couple of sessions we concentrated on teaching judo and grappling to the TaeKwonDo students.

During the summer we moved to our present facility at 119th and Pacific. We put down tatami in our judo room and started recruiting new students. Currently we have a dozen active students, one full time instructor (nidan) and an assistant instructor (nidan.) Our instruction covers a wider range of technique than found in sport judo, encompassing leg locks, pressure points, striking techniques and takedowns. A typical class spends about 60% of its time on standing techniques and 40% on ground or grappling techniques.

Omaha Family judo is affiliated with the USJA. Our doors are open to all visitors regardless of affiliation.

Classes are Tuesdays 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays 11:00 a.m. to noon.

Put your dojo in the spotlight for the fall issue. Send us and description of your club and a picture.

A Lion’s Dream
Book Review by Mark Gorsuch

I recently finished reading a biography on Mitsuyo Maeda (better known as Conde Koma) and thought I would write a summary for the Judo Forum. Before you go look for it on the shelves of your local bookstore, let me explain that it was written in Japanese and as far as I know there is no English translation in the works. For those of you who are bilingual, I will include more information at the end of the post about the book.

The book is entitled "A Lion's Dream, the Story of Mitsuyo Maeda" (my translation). The author is Norio Kohyama. This book won an award as the 21st Century International Best Work of Non-fiction, from a Japanese weekly publication called SAPIO. I have no idea if this award is as prestigious as it sounds as I am not familiar with the magazine.

The author did a great deal of research in writing this book. He traveled to Cuba, the U.S., Europe, and South America and dug up old newspaper and magazine articles in library archives in these places. He talked to Japanese immigrants in Cuba and Brazil in order to learn more about the experiences of Japanese settlers and understand what Maeda's life might have been like. The author even went so far as to find Maeda's grades from a school he attended in his home prefecture (Maeda was a poor student and failed English).

The book itself is about 250 pages long. There are two pictures of Maeda on the cover flexing his muscles. Three more are inside. In one picture he is dressed in a suit, in another he is grappling with someone else, and in another, he is wearing a judogi and has his hands on his hips.

Maeda was born in Aomori Prefecture in 1878. Aomori is the northernmost prefecture on Japan’s main island. He moved to Tokyo when he was about 18 and began judo. The first record of him entering the Kodokan is in 1897. He had a natural talent for judo and moved through the ranks very quickly, establishing
himself as the most promising young judoka in the Kodokan.

In 1904 he was given a chance to go to the U.S. with one of his instructors, Tsunejiro Tomita. The first and only place they demonstrated judo together was at the U.S. Military Academy (Army) at West Point. Contrary to what has been published, they never went to the White House nor did they ever meet the American president at the time, Teddy Roosevelt. It was the Kodokan great Yoshitsugu Yamashita who taught Roosevelt judo at the White House and later engaged in a match with a wrestler nearly twice his size at Roosevelt's request, but this match took place at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. Yamashita won with an arm bar and was given a teaching position at the academy for what was then considered a great deal of money.

The demonstration at West Point did not go over well. Tomita and Maeda started off with kata, but the Americans did not understand what they were seeing. Maeda was challenged by a student wrestling champion and a match ensued. A misunderstanding occurred when the student pinned Maeda (wrestling style pin) and thought he had won. Maeda, not familiar with wrestling, continued to fight until he got his opponent in a joint lock and made him tap out. The students then wanted to see Tomita fight. Since he was the instructor, they figured he must be the better of the two. The truth, however, was that Tomita was in his 40's and past his prime. He had brought Maeda along to help with demonstrations, but had not intended to engage in challenge matches. He had no choice, and hesitated when his much larger American opponent rushed and tackled him.

Tomita was caught under the weight of the bigger man and forced to give up. Tomita and Maeda parted ways with Tomita heading to the West Coast and Maeda staying in New York for the time being. Maeda began teaching at Princeton University part-time when he won some challenge matches there.

He also taught in New York City, but the Americans did not take to the Japanese style of teaching and he often found his students did not stay long. Maeda was approached to engage in a match for money. Since his income was limited at the time, he accepted. This, however, was a violation of Kodokan rules that prohibited members from engaging in matches against other styles. Maeda did not appear to be worried about this and thus his career as a fighter began.

It is widely believed that Maeda was expelled from the Kodokan for participating in matches against fighters from other styles, and later in life, Maeda himself lamented to other Japanese he met during his travels that he feared this was true. The author states that there is no record of Maeda being expelled and this is nothing but a groundless rumor, which still exists today.

Maeda is said to have fought over 2,000 matches in his career, many unrecorded. He traveled throughout the Americas and Europe, taking on all comers. He was only about 165 cm (5'5-1/2) tall so his opponents were usually far larger than he was. Nonetheless, he became a legend in the fighting world and his name is still well known amongst Japanese settlements in the Americas. Maeda was not undefeated. He lost two matches in the catch-as-catch-can world championships held in London. In this tournament, Maeda entered both the middleweight and heavyweight divisions, advancing to the semi-finals and finals respectively. In matches where judo gis were worn, however, Maeda was undefeated.

Maeda thought of judo as the ultimate form of self-defense. To him, western arts such as boxing and wrestling were only games with a set of rules. Maeda's strategy in anything goes fight was to set his opponent up with an elbow or low kick. He would then go for a throw and then finish his opponent off on the ground with a choke or joint lock. Maeda was never afraid to prove the superiority of judo. Once while in London, he saw an article in the paper where a Russian wrestling champion was quoted as saying that wrestling was better than judo. He tracked the wrestler down and issued a challenge on the spot. The wrestler (who was much larger than Maeda) refused on the grounds that he was misquoted and could not risk losing to a non-wrestler. Maeda also wanted to challenge Jack Johnson, the world heavyweight champion at the time, but figured he would never accept
Brazil was very open to Japanese immigrants and the Amazon presented an unexplored world of unlimited opportunities. He fully cooperated with Japanese government officials who visited Brazil to explore the feasibility of Japanese immigration. In 1928, a Japanese company was formed to help Japanese settle into a town in the Amazon jungle called Tomeacu. This town was part of a large tract of area the Brazilian government had set aside for Japanese immigrants. For the rest of his life, Maeda worked tirelessly to help the settlers begin a new life. Unfortunately, the settlement turned out to be a failure. Malaria and other diseases were rampant. The settlers, not understanding the Brazilian diet, went into debt to grow rice, eggplants, tomatoes, and other vegetables which had little market demand. The immigrants began abandoning the settlement in large numbers for port cities. Maeda always tried to help out where he could. The company, which funded the settlement, eventually gave up on it and turned to overseas trade. Maeda was deeply saddened by the turn of events, but never stopped helping Japanese immigrants.

Maeda became a very prominent member of his community. He was given executive positions in many companies and even received a large tract of land from the government. In 1931 on the advice of a friend, Maeda became a Brazilian citizen. He is said to have married the daughter of the French consulate, but here is no record of this in a Japanese register, so the author says they probably only lived together. They had a daughter, but both mother and daughter died when the daughter was 2. He remarried at the age of 44 to a Scottish born woman and they had a daughter.

In 1940, the Japanese government offered to pay Maeda's way for a trip back to Japan in appreciation of all he had done for Japanese immigrants. He refused at the time, reportedly telling a friend that he wanted to finish building a house for his family. His wife apparently feared that if he went back to Japan he would never return to Brazil. Although, he showed no strong urge to go back to Japan, his final words when he died a year later of kidney disease were said to have been "I want to drink Japanese water, I want to go back to Japan."

"In 1925, the focus of Maeda's life changed from judo to helping Japanese immigrants in Brazil."
In the 80’s I developed a series of kata that we used as our primary syllabus until 1994.

My idea was to develop a training program that incorporated transitional movement. Transitional movement is what happens between throws, holds, chokes, etc. Geof Gleeson stated in one of his books that throws, holddowns, chokes, etc. make up only about 5% of judo, the rest of judo is transitional movement. He further suggested that since transitional movement makes up such a large portion of sport judo then some portion of training should be devoted to it.

Much of the inspiration to create the kata was obtained from reading Gleeson’s books. Gleeson designed several kata that he used for training and commented that the exercise of creation was very enlightening. That was enough for me… I needed enlightenment!

Considerations
The kata was developed for use in a college class. The class had people with a wide range of physical abilities. Dr. Kano said that “judo is for everyone” and so I try to design my entire syllabus with that in mind.

One important consideration is that the general public is not ready for hard ukemi. It must be presented in an easy, non-intimidating manner to be palatable. At Camp Bushido Wally Marr demonstrated a method of ukemi that was suitable for beginners. He called it, “Step over, turn around, sit down and roll” and it is done just like that. See figures 1, 2, 3, and 4. It is an easy system whereby the person doing ukemi has complete control of the movement. The thrower must be reminded (usually over and over again) that his partner needs time to learn how to fall properly. Within a half dozen practices most everyone has learned the proper responses so the incidence of injury remains low.

I also wanted to weave into the kata enough strategy and tactics so that students would have a good experience at shiai. This included much of Gleeson’s “Sensjitsu no kata.” By the time I finished the project I had enough material for yellow, orange and greenbelt grading. Presented below is the yellow belt kata.

The main ingredients in my kata were:
1 One big part Gleeson, especially the “go no kata and sensjitsu no kata”;
2 “Beginners ukemi system” that I learned at Camp Bushido from Wally Marr;
3 Terry Kelly’s “Ladder Gripping”;
4 George Weers’ “Beginning Competitors Training System”;
5 Charlie Robinson’s “Break Stepping Drills”;
6 And dashes of this and that – books, videos, camps, clinics, etc.

Convention
THE GUY (TALLER, SHORT HAIR) IS CALLED TORI AND ACTIONS OF TORI ARE REPRESENTED BY UPPERCASE LETTERS. The gal (shorter, long hair) is called uke and lower
case letters represent actions of uke. The sequence always starts with right hand play. Please note that TORI is not always victorious, but is just a player in these scenarios.

Beginners Kata – Rokkyu – Set No. 1

1. TORI REACHES FOR UKE’S LEFT LAPEL WITH RIGHT HAND. Uke blocks tori’s right hand to the outside (fig 6). (Same movement as a punch and block.)
TORI REACHES THROUGH OPEN SPACE CREATED BY UKE’S BLOCK AND GRASPS LAPEL WITH LEFT HAND, PULLS HARD AND FEEDS LAPEL TO THE RIGHT HAND (fig 7), THEN GRABS UKE’S RIGHT SLEEVE AT THE ELBOW. (fig 8)

2. Uke gets what grip he can and resists by stepping back. (Fig. 9)
3. TORI STEPS FORWARD AND ACROSS WITH RIGHT FOOT PUSHING UKE TO UKE’S BACK RIGHT CORNER AND THEN TWISTS (THIS IS TAI OTOSHI) see figs 10 & 11

4. Uke “falls” by stepping over the leg, “turn around, sit down and roll” (fig 1-4)
5. TORI FOLLOWS UKE TO THE MAT AND APPLIES KESAGA-TAME (fig 12)
6. Uke places stomach against tori’s back, squeezes tight, bridges to shoulder and rolls tori over her left shoulder. (fig 15 & 16)

2. Beginners Kata – Rokkyu – Set No. 2

1. Begins the same as the 1st set. LADDER GRIP (FIGS 6-8) FOLLOWED BY TAIOTOSHI - (FIGS 9 & 10) except uke steps over tori’s leg (fig 1) and moves all the way around to tori’s left side and executes left side osotogake (figs 17 & 18).
2. UKEMI (SIT DOWN AND ROLL)

4. Tori reaches with right hand. Uke blocks with her Left.
5. Tori grabs uke’s collar with his left hand & “climbs the collar”
6. Uke executes bridge & roll escape
Notes: What is learned from this sequence?
- ukemi
- grip fighting
- kuzushi
- transition from standing to ground work
- escape movement
- twisting movement
- evading throws (stepping over the leg) also see notes on set No. 2

Notes:
1. This sequence of movement is from Gleeson’s Go no kata – 3rd set (Dynamic interaction) 11th illustration – Osotogake

2. Instead of ending the series with ukemi a series of mat work might be taught after the ukemi.

3. Note that the ukemi practiced starts out with an evasive movement; i.e. “step over leg.” This is easily adapted to a strictly evasive movement like that required in this kata – we speak of this as giving ukemi to our partner… or not!

4. This sequence is expanded in the orange belt kata. Instead of A BACK FALL, TORI DOES A DIVEOUT/FRONT FALL (figs 19 & 20). Uke rounds off over tori’s back (placing her hands on tori’s back – practice this first on the mat) (fig 20 &21), followed by a quarter nelson turnover (fig 22) into yoko-shiho-gatame AND TORI ESCAPES WITH UPHILL TURN ESCAPE (fig23).

Beginners Kata – Rokkyu – Set No. 3
1. Begins the same as the 1st set. LADDER GRIP FOLLOWED BY TAIOTOSHI, uke steps over tori’s leg (fig 6-11).
2. TORI CONTINUES WITH A LEFT SIDE SASAE-TSURIKOMI-ASHI (fig 24)
3. Uke does ukemi (step over, turn around, sit down and roll) (or fig 25.)

Notes:
1. More than anything this set has to do with the idea of changing direction... I compare this motion to the agitator in a washing machine.
2. It illustrates a left throw from a right-handed grip.
3. The movement of sasae-tsurikomi-ashi is very similar to that described in the Illustrated Kodokan Judo.
4. After this is learned a series of mat work drills would follow the last step.

Beginners Kata – Rokkyu – Set No. 4
1. Begins the same as the 1st set. LADDER GRIP FOLLOWED BY TAIOTOSHI, Uke steps over tori’s leg (fig 6-11).
2. TORI FOLLOWS WITH A RIGHT SIDE OUUCHIGARI (fig 26) Uke steps back, over the leg (fig 27).
3. TORI STEPS ACROSS WITH LEFT LEG FOR LEFT IPPON SEIOINAGE (KEEP THE SAME GRIP) (fig 28) – Uke does ukemi (fig 29).
4. PULL AROUND ENTRY (fig 30) INTO KAMI-SHIHO-GATAME (fig 31).
5. double bridge and roll escape (fig 32).

Notes:
1. This deals with a much longer sequence, more along the lines of randori.
2. There is a crossover from right ouchigari to left ippon-seoinage. Beginners like to change grips here and grasp the sleeve so it takes some encouragement to get them to throw ippon from the collar (fig 33).

Summary

We used the kata for 6 years as our primary syllabus. Student surveys indicated that the students enjoyed the practice and felt like they learned something from it. We lowered our drop out rate – probably due to changing how we introduced uke-
mi. As the kata taught transitional movement the beginning student’s randori improved. In six years and over 500 students we have had only one serious injury.

This kata formed the basis for the yellow belt grading. At the end of the semester we had a night of shiai and each student had to perform one of the sets of the kata for competition.

We aren’t situated to participate in a lot of shiai. For many years the closest judo club was 250 miles away. But we have had a fair number of people who did compete a couple of times a year. Those who were trained under this system made fewer mistakes and were more successful than those who learned under previous syllabus.

Bibliography

1. Geof Gleeson
   Judo for the West, 1967, Kaye & Ward Ltd.
   Anatomy of Judo, 1969, Kaye & Ward Ltd.
   All About Judo, 1975, EP Publishing Ltd.
   Judo, 1988, A&C Black
   Judo Games, 1989, A&C Black
2. Wally Marr, “Step over, turn around, sit down and roll”
3. Terry Kelly, “Ladder gripping”
5. Charles Robinson, “Break stepping” video

(A Lion’s Dream Continued from page 6)
Rorion about the origins of Gracie Ju-Jitsu, and a mention in passing that while Maeda was teaching in Brazil, Carlos Gracie, the founder of Gracie Ju-Jitsu, was a student.

For those interested in obtaining a copy of this book, the ISBN is 4-09-379213-5 and the publisher is Shogakukan.

Finally, for those living in Japan or who plan to visit, there is an epitaph to Maeda in his hometown of Hirosaki, Aomori. It is located at the entrance of Hirosaki Castle Park on the left side. Unfortunately, it is now sandwiched between a tennis court and a restroom.

JU, yawara - YIELDING, FLEXIBLE; GENTLE the character is made in two parts, (top) halberd/lance and (lower) tree or wood. Yawara-kamono are silks. Ju-jitsu means gentle art.

DO, TO, michi – PRINCIPLE, WAY, ROAD, PATH: the character is made in two parts, (left) movement and (right) head. A tetsu-do is a railway. Shin-to or way of the spirits (kami) is the folk religion of the Japanese people.
Imagine watching a movie about a world where a merciless, evil tyrant ruled supreme. Capricious and random, he strikes out at the helpless and cowed population in his thrall. No indignity or minor annoyance is beneath him. No major tragedy occurs without his sinister involvement.

Until, at last, there rises a resistance to Evil. A shining force which refuses to bow down before the godlike oppression of the tyrant. These white knights spread across the land, teaching the people to remain poised and balanced before the crushing power of evil. In our imagination, the movie will end with Good defeating Evil.

Unfortunately, we do not live in the world of our imagination or the movies. And, while the world we live in is not necessarily governed by an evil tyrant, it is run by a merciless and pervasive one. Gravity is a force only a very few humans can claim to have pretended to escape. The rest of us live in its shadow and cope with falling down.

But falling down has other problems, even for those of us who seem to welcome a chance contact with the ground. A Karate Dojo can be started successfully with little more than shelter from the elements and level area. Judo, Aikido, and any other art which incorporates falling drills, require that most dreaded of all words: Mats. Despite stories of renowned Masters practicing their arts on grassy knolls or sandy beaches, the average beginner student in a modern dojo, when confronted with the choice of staying home with a beer and the TV, or getting pounded in the suddenly-not-so-soft turf repeatedly, is not going to have a hard choice ahead of them. If he is also foolish enough to give out his address and the quantity of beer on hand the rest of the more advanced members of the class, they too, will have an easy choice before them.

And so, the modern Dojo hinges upon mats. Ideally, someone is rich enough to buy and donate several thousand square feet of tatami to the fledgling Dojo. In larger cities, some Sensei’s are lucky enough to access local gyms or YMCA’s already possessed of mats for a fee or in return for offering classes through the established organization. There is also the possibility of utilizing the mats at the local high school or college.

When those options become exhausted, however, the enormity of starting a Dojo in the face of buying mats often creates a falling sensation of its own—in one’s gut. Money. The single most important factor in starting a Dojo, once the desire and ability is accounted for. And the hardest factor to account for as well. We have created two distinct designs for a mat of decent size and with a certain longevity. Both of these are reasonably affordable.

Again, keep in mind, that when you are building a mat, you are constantly going to be constrained by cost. And, in order to make the most of your dollar, you want something that will last, as well. So, any deviations from the outline below should consider the factor carefully.

The first design is for those who intend to have the space of the Dojo locked down in a two or three year lease. In other words, it is not a moveable mat. The advantages are that it is...
cheaper and more easily built. Start by determining the size of your mat based on how many people you have/realistically hope to expand to, size of the Dojo, and, of course, money. The largest expense will be the plywood, followed by the canvas. ¾” plywood in 4x8 sheets is fine. The tongue-and-groove chipboard (flooring type) plywood is preferred, but not necessary. Canvas can be had through sewing stores, some farm/implement stores, but most cheaply wholesale through theatrical supply firms. You need a seamstress and a good sewing machine if the size of your mat warrants it. A heavy weight canvas is preferred, but not necessary. Try to leave the plywood sheets full size (or in large pieces) and lay them out to fit your area as much as practically possible.

Obtain Marine foam (a dense, waterproof material, found in the cushions of boat seats and so on). Surplus centers, upholstery dealers and suppliers and the like will have this. Cut into six-inch squares and place 18 of them in alternating rows running down the length of the sheet of plywood. Use liquid nails or another adhesive to affix them. Next, cut the flatbar into one-foot lengths, drilling two spaced holes in either end of the piece (four holes total.) As you place the sheets of plywood edge to edge, some hapless volunteer crawls under the sheets to the nexus of the corners and drills upward through the holes in the bars. Someone standing on the top of the nexus point then places a carriage-headed SHORT bolt (carriage head up into the hole and seats it with a judicious hit from a hammer. It is advisable to use some jacks and blocks to hold the flooring up high enough for the volunteer to crawl under and perform this service, especially in light of the abundant activity carried out directly above him. The additional fortification of the situation by several beers (with several strategically placed in the volunteer) is recommended.

After spitting out sawdust from the aforementioned hammer blow, the volunteer now places a lockwasher and nut on the end of the protruding bolt and tightens it with a wrench. The lockwasher may be omitted if you do not debur the holes drilled in the flatbar, but then caution should be taken not to cut oneself. Short bolts (15/16” to 1” maximum) are necessary so that they do not bottom out the suspension system when the floor is compressed during the throw.

The underside of the floor, then should have a one-foot square box of bolted flatbars at every four-corner nexus, and each open edged seam (the outside edge of the mat) should have flatbar connecting it six inches in from the edge. Continue until the entire floor is finished.

Next, lay out as many used carpet remnants as you could scrounge. Try to make sure of an even depth. If only two thicknesses of carpeting over the entirety of the mat (of a short, office type variety of carpet) could be found, it will be sufficient, if not as soft as one might want it. With additional fundage, or a lack of used carpet, cheap carpet pad (*, above) may be used in one or two layers. Be very careful about the placement of remnants if they are insufficient to cover the whole area without creating seams. These seams will spread apart under friction despite the canvas covering. A whole carpet cover is preferable. If that is not possible, perhaps a Tear-Grease connecting strip of stitching the two edges together at intervals might be attempted. It will depend upon the type of carpet you find.

Finally, after wrapping it in laths or carpet tack strips one or two revolutions, nail the canvas to the underside far edge of the mat (if the mat is going to be built large, and against a wall or corner, do this part before you lay out the
carpet.) DO NOT screw it to the plywood, as you may rip up threads from the canvas. Use nails. Unfold the whole canvas to cover the mat and wrap the far edge in lath. Using a spray bottle set to mist, lightly spray the whole canvas down with water. Then with volunteers at intervals, stretch the entire canvas as taut as possible. If there are volunteers to spare, while the first group holds the amount of wrapped slack they have taken up against the carpeting, the second set of volunteers may go to the far end of the mat (in bare, clean feet) and jump and push slack out of the canvas using momentum and their feet.

Nail canvas-lath to the end (underneath the plywood, same as the first side.) Repeat this with either of the sides taking care to eliminate all wrinkles. Allow dampness to dry out of the canvas (it will shrink and become even more taut.)

That takes care of the easy and cheaper version. The more expensive version involves the additional purchase of some 2” x 4” lumber to match the outside perimeter measurements of your mat and additional marine foam. However, you need not buy flat bars and bolts. Simply repeat the above, outlined process of alternating marine foam pads and tacking canvas around each individual 4’x 8’ sheet of plywood. Make sure that you leave enough canvas for each rectangle to wrap the lath and nail it about six inches past the edge of the plywood. Then, cut the additional marine foam into 10” to 12” wide strips, and simply lay it around the outer edge of each sheet, where it butts up against the next sheet. When the entire mat is laid, you will need to lay your perimeter frame around it (you may need to purchase 2”x 6” boards, instead of the 2”x 4”, depending on the thickness of your finished mats.)

This border will keep the mats from walking apart, can be readily and easily dismantled for moving purposes. If padding cannot be bought and glued over the upper edge of this perimeter, care should be taken not to throw anyone on the edge of the mat.

Even with donated and scrounged carpet remnants, this is still an expensive project for the fledging Dojo. It will run at least five hundred dollars for everything, not counting labor or beer. However, it gives the beginning Dojo the last vital ingredient it needs to defy gravity. A place to fall down.
This is the first in a series of articles for martial artists that explores how our legal system impacts our art. Whether we study judo (as I do), or a style of karate, jujitsu or what have you, we are engaged in learning a system of using physical force. Learning how to use force is the easy part. Things become complicated when we are either compelled or choose to use it against another. That’s when the law becomes involved and we learn that using force is not simply a matter between two individuals. Rather, it is a matter between the two individuals and the society they live in. This article will first discuss the philosophy behind the Anglo-American legal system and will then apply that system when discussing the times force against another may, legitimately, be used.

I am a lawyer. I work with the law every day, and I’m proud of that fact. This may sound strange in the lawyer bashing age we live in, but it is true. The law impacts everything we do. If you want to function in society, then you have to be concerned about the law. The law not only defines who we are; it also regulates how we interact with others. It is the very glue that holds us together as a society. Without the law we would be huddled masses of frightened humanity—unable to function, much less express opinions, object to the actions of our leaders or assert our individuality.

Clearly, something so important as the law cannot be irrational or capricious. It has to be grounded in common sense and it has to reflect the mores and values of every day people leading every day lives. Contrary to what some would have you believe, our legal system does just that. Our laws are based on how people live and what they hold most dear. The law is not a trap for the unwary. The law is a guidebook to what our society holds valuable.

When I was in law school one of my professors put it this way. "Look at the laws of the State of North Dakota," he said (they took up about four feet of shelf space). Then he said, "Look at the U. S. Code," (which took up about sixty feet of shelf space). "The Bible," he continued, "does it all in Ten Commandments."

Now, I’m not a preacher. In fact, I’m not certain I’m even a Christian. But, there is a lot of truth in that statement. The first truth is historical. Our American legal system arose out of the English Common Law. (Thus the term "Anglo-American"). This, in turn, developed after the year 1066 A.D., when the invading Normans imposed their legal system on the natives of the British Isles. The Normans had adopted, or rather, had been forced to adopt the legal system of the Romans. And, that system, after about the second century, came straight out of the Old Testament. Second is the fact that all of our laws, all of our regulations, all of the paper work that keeps guys like me busy have, at their root, only a handful of central concepts. These concepts (so succinctly stated in the Ten Commandments) are what I will call "core values" and they form the heart of our law. Learn them and you will become a lawyer.

What are the core values that control the use of force in modern, urban, industrialized America? There are three of them: (1) you may defend yourself, (2) you may defend another, and (3) you may defend your property. All other uses of force, our society says, are forbidden.

Stated this way, the core values are deceptively simple. Of course you can use force to accomplish these three things. No one wants to see himself or his loved ones attacked, nor does he want to see his things taken. It is this very simplicity, however, that conceals profound truths about our society. A closer examination of these statements is in order.
The one word that is common to all three core values is "defend". That says a lot about us. While aggression may be acceptable in the boardroom, in the courtroom and sometimes even in the classroom; it is never acceptable when using physical force. Many hours of attorneys’ time and many gallons of ink have been spent arguing and deciding whether a particular use of force is defensive or offensive in nature. As one can well imagine, the distinction is not always clear or easily made.

Imagine yourself at an automobile dealership. The garage has just performed work on your car, which you feel was not only unnecessary, but a "rip off" to boot. You refuse to pay for the repairs. A heated argument ensues. At some point the shop foreman draws back his fist as if to strike you. In so doing he shifts his weight to his left, or back, foot. Seizing the opportunity you sweep the foreman’s right foot with deashi-harai, drop into juji-gatame and break his arm. Were you justified in using the force you did?

In all honesty, I can’t answer that question with just the facts I’ve just given you. You have the absolute right to defend yourself. If the shop foreman were actually intending to strike you when he drew back his fist then you could clearly protect yourself from his blow(s). But, without more information, I can’t say for sure that he was really going to strike. The question is whether a "reasonable person" would have felt threatened under the circumstances? For example, if the foreman says, "You dirty son-of-a-bitch" as he draws back his fist, the implication is he intends to strike. Defensive force is justified. If, on the other hand, he says, "These damn flies!" A real question exists as to his intent. Maybe he is really going to strike you but maybe the flies are the objects of his strike.

The lesson to be learned from this is not alien to martial artists. That lesson is control. When we seek to perfect our art we are seeking control: control of our bodies, control of our minds and (in some cases) control of our surroundings. An act of aggression is not an act of control. Rather it is an act, which evidences a loss of control. If, in my example above, the shop foreman were really in control of the situation he would have no need to strike you, the customer. If he drew back his fist it would be to swat those "damn flies." On the other hand, if he were not in control then striking you would be much more plausible.

Simlar examples can be developed for each of the remaining two legitimate uses of force stated above. In each instance the central question is one of defense (for the Anglo-American legal system) or of control (for the martial artist). These are not separate questions but, rather, different manifestations of the same question.

In the end common sense tells us when force can be justified. We are not a nation of bullies. We do not seek to impose our will on others by force. Rather, we all want to get along without conflict while living our lives to the fullest. Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo expressed it as "Minimum effort, maximum efficiency." In other words, by using the minimum amount of effort we all strive to attain the maximum benefits society has to offer. Using force to attain these benefits is a waste of effort. Force can only be justified if it is used to protect that which we hold most dear: ourselves, our friends and family, and our possessions. Any other use of force is unjustified and, therefore, inefficient.

NEXT TIME: If the use of force is justified, just how much can you use? Or, The House Painter’s Guide to the Use of Force

---

Bad Call

Back in the days when AAU rules prohibited coaching from the sidelines a coach was being more than a little bit obnoxious at doing just that. Finally the referee stops the match and awards a shido to that coach’s player.

"Another bad call", yells the coach. "Coaching from the side lines is supposed to be 'CHUI'."

The referee looks at him and replies, "your coaching is worth only a SHIDO."

Submitted by Chuck Malooley