USA Judo Coach Certification Program

Introduction

USA Judo developed the below national coaching pathway promoting technical excellence, athlete development, leadership, and professionalism. This progressive step program leverages online resources and strategic in-person engagements to cultivate a future defined by technical mastery, sustainable growth, and unified coaching philosophy. This standardized programing outlines a pathway to empower coaches ensuring that skills development, assessment, and coaching capacity flourish across all geographical areas.

Prerequisite Requirements for all Designation & Certification Levels:

- Current USA Judo membership, with applicable fees paid
- Completion of USA Judo Coach Education application
- Current SafeSport, concussion protocol training
- Current background screen
- USA Judo rank verification
- State and Regional Coach, grandfathered protected into their level, must complete online assessments and an in-person course by December 31, 2027, to maintain certification
- Certified instructors/coaches must complete online quizzes and attend at least one USA Judo sanctioned education event every 2-years
- Coaches must be certified at previous level before applying for upgrade to the next level
- Satisfactory completion of course material

Clinics/Courses:

USA Judo will host coach education events in different regions. Courses will be specific to each level of certification. Sessions will be led by certified USA Judo coach clinicians. Details of courses will be posted on the USA Judo website. Courses must first be approved by the Coach Education Committee and a USA Judo sanction issued.

Becoming a Clinician

Coaches are encouraged to **apply** to join the certified clinician group. This group will undergo advanced training in both content delivery and best practices. Application is available on the USA Judo member Sport80 website. Approved clinicians will implement the coach education program regionally, adapting modules and assessments to meet the needs of their geographical areas while upholding national standards.

- Applicants must be a minimum of Shodan

- Must be a minimum of certified national coach
- Must be 1-level higher than course being conducted
- Must be approved by the Coach Education Committee

USA Judo will offer the following coach certification levels:

LEVEL	MINIMUM AGE	MINIMUM USA JUDO RANK	TIG*
Club Assistant	**16**	**Ikkyu**	**1-year**
Club Coach	**18**	**Shodan**	**1-year**
State Coach	**18**	**Shodan**	**1-year**
Regional Coach	**19**	**Shodan**	**1-year**
National Coach	**21**	**Shodan**	**n/a**
Continental Coach **International Coach**	**No longer offered**	**No longer offered**	**N/A**

***Minimum time at the current level.**

All current USA Judo coaches will be grandfathered into their appropriate level above for 2027 but must meet the requirements outlined below as determined by each level.

Club Assistant (1-year apprenticeship under supervision of a USA Judo Club Coach)

Goals:

- Moral Code is presented and executed;
- Promote safe and healthy training environment;
- Assist with beginning classes;
- Learn leadership;
- Implementation of foundational skills curriculum using online resources.

Modules/Content/Skills Acquired:

- Supervised on mat at all times by a USA Judo Club Coach or higher level;
- Ability to teach a technique to a student who then can replicate it successfully;
- Online learning: “Essential Judo, and Judo Excellence”.

Assessment Parameters:

- Online quiz: “Maintaining Safe Environment”
- Sign off by mentoring certified USA Judo Club Instructor, or higher level

Club Instructor

Goals:

- Act as mentor to Club Assistants;
- implementing solid technical base;
- Ensure rules, etiquette and Moral Code.

Modules/Content/Skills Acquired:

- Ability to teach a technique to a student who then can replicate it successfully using a provided model lesson plan
- Online learning: “Essential Judo, and Judo Excellence”
- Basic IJF rules

Assessment Parameters:

- Online quiz: “Basic IJF rules”
- Online quiz: “Understanding the Importance of Lesson Plans for Children, Beginners, Recreation, and Senior Participants #2”

State Coach

Every registered USA Judo club must have at least one USA Judo certified State Coach, or higher level serving as Head Coach (coach of record):
Goals:

- Create solid foundations in teaching/coaching
- Competency in teaching large group sessions
- Utilization of lesson planning
- Knowledge of IJF rules and positive tactics
- Progressive technical ability

Modules/Content/Skills Acquired:

- Ability to instruct, motivate, direct, and contain a large group session
- Demonstrate a level of information retention and ability to replicate to a technique
- Online learning: “Coaching Pathway Level 2”
- Knowledge of Intermediate IJF sport rules

Assessment Parameters:

- Online quiz: “Intermediate IJF rules quiz #2”
- Online quiz: “Understanding the Importance of Lesson Plans #2”
- Online quiz: “Coaching Pathway, Essential Judo, and Judo Excellence”

- Coaches who are grandfathered into their level must complete online materials and take an in-person course by December 31, 2027 then annually.

Regional Coach (Required completion of State Coach level):

**Regional coaches under the old program receive the title of Regional Coach under the new program and have the designated period to complete requirements for Regional Coach under the new program rules.*

Goals:

- Focus on competition coaching
- Regional athlete development
- Create a solid foundation in competition teaching/coaching
- Keen knowledge of IJF rules and positive game play
- Continued professional development of personal coaches

Modules/Content/Skills Acquired:

- Ability to instruct, motivate, and direct a large group session
- Demonstrate a level of information retention and ability to replicate a technique
- "Coaching Pathway Level 2", video
- Competitive IJF rules

Assessment Parameters

- Online quiz: "IJF rules #3"
- Online quiz: "Understanding the Importance of Lesson Planning #3"
- Coaches who are grandfathered protected into their level must complete online materials and take an in-person course by December 31, 2027, then annually thereafter

National Coach (Required completion of Regional Coach level)

Individuals at this level are encouraged to apply to the IJF Academy for international certification

NOTE: Only National Coach or higher levels will be allowed to coach at domestic national competitions. Individuals with state and/or regional levels shall be charged a one-time, per event, nominal fee to coach at domestic national competitions. The nominal fee to be determined by the event organizers. Any coach who does not satisfactorily complete a coach certification course within the outlined timeline will have their coach certification suspended and is not eligible to request event coaching credentials

Goals:

- Prepare coaches for IJF certification
- Create a knowledgeable cadre of coaches for attending national competitions
- Focus on high-performance coaching and national athlete development

- Purposeful level of technique and tactics
- Show ability to adapt/readjust to quick changing situations
- Strategic focus on skills mastery, tactical awareness, and psychological resilience to produce potential International-caliber judoka
- Encourage coaches to participate to ensure consistent messaging and team building

Modules/Content/Skills Acquired:

- Demonstrate a level of information retention and ability to replicate to a high level
- Online learning: “Coaching Pathway Level 3” to include aspects of IJF Academy curriculum.

Assessment Parameters:

- Online quiz: “The Phase Training Method”
- Online quiz: “Advanced IJF rules quiz #4”

Current Continental or International level coaches who are grandfathered into the new program, must also complete the online and in person courses no later than December 31, 2027. If the coach is unable to complete the IJF Academy requirements within 2-years they will be re-designated as USA Judo Coach Emeritus with the authority to continue coaching at all domestic competitions and non-IJF/PJC events. USA Judo Coach Emeritus must complete renew their designation annually. Coaches successfully completing the IJF Academy course are exempt from taking USA Judo certification courses for two (2) years after completion of the IJF Academy. However, if the IJF issues significant rule changes, the coaches must complete an in-person course within 1 year to remain updated.

Goals:

- Preparation to take IJF Academy courses
- Strategic focus on skills mastery, tactical awareness, and psychological resilience to produce international-caliber judoka

Modules/Content/Skills Acquired:

- Online video content from IJF Academy

Assessment Parameters

- Successful completion of IJF Academy online course and in-person practical examination

Fee Structure:

LEVEL	FEE
Club Assistant	$200.00
Club Coach	$250.00
Regional	$300.00

National	$350.00
International/Emeritus	$350.00

Notes:

- All coaches must renew their certification annually unless written exception is approved by the USA Judo Coach Education Committee
- All certifications are valid from January 1 to December 31 regardless of when coaches renew
- Certified approved Coach Clinicians must submit their application annually