

Richard P. Mignogna, Ph.D., P.E.

Rokudan

Candidate for USA Judo Board of Directors

Dear Fellow Judoka,

It is my privilege to introduce myself to you and seek your support as a Director of USA Judo. For more than 50 years I have devoted myself to the sport and art of judo as a competitor and coach – the details of which may be found on my CV which can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3Xbvrdd> I am also happy to send it to you directly if you email me at rich.mignogna@gmail.com

Over the years, we may have met as a representative of the [Northglenn Judo Club](https://www.northglennjudo.org) (<https://www.northglennjudo.org>) or as coach of the Colorado School of Mines Judo Club. I have also been a proud member of USA Judo since its inception and have also held many positions in its state affiliate, the Colorado Judo League. As an Internationally (formerly A Level) certified coach I have helped train other coaches with clinics in sport psychology and biophysical conditioning. I have also served as Coach Liaison at Senior Nationals and other tournaments.

But we should keep in mind that the present election is not as head of the coach committee but rather as a Director on the USA Judo Board of Directors. It is in this capacity that I believe my extensive business, education, and professional background would be most valuable (again, please see CV which is available at <https://bit.ly/3Xbvrdd>). In addition to judo, I believe I can bring knowledge of sports management practices in other sports to the Board. For instance, I am also a Professional Ski Instructor at the Breckenridge Ski School in Colorado and am certified by the Professional Ski Instructors of America.

Like many of you, I came away from the recent Olympics concerned about our sport, its rules, and our lack of participation. To help remedy this affliction let me propose for your consideration improvements to three aspects of US judo... and they are not unrelated.

1. Coaching Education. In the early days of the coach certification program we had a more or less designated curriculum for the various coaching levels (then designated as A through E and now Local through International). Coaches advanced through the levels by completing certification courses at each level. At the present time, there is little differentiation between the levels and there is no clearly identified skill set to distinguish the various certification levels. Rather, advancing through the levels seems to be ad hoc at best. We need to re-create our own coach education curriculum, and we need to do it ourselves rather than farming it out to other organizations.

2. It should be obvious that the U.S simply does not have the depth of talent pool to compete successfully at the international level. Unfortunately, this isn't improving and the pandemic only exacerbated the problem. We need to rebuild some of our clubs and this can only be done by growing judo at the grass roots level. Yes, I recognize that USA Judo is responsible for managing and supporting our sport at the Olympic and world level, but unless we grow the talent pool there won't be much to manage. For years the conventional wisdom represented that if we could only win gold at the Olympics judo would become more popular. I think we've seen the fallacy of that belief. And give up the notion that we need to make judo more palatable to television. Grow the sport first, then perhaps TV may notice.
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3. We must recognize that judo, while far more popular internationally than in the US, is still not popular overall. Rule changes made over the last dozen or so years by the IJF have only exacerbated this problem. Granted, we have limited, if any, power to affect this but perhaps we can implement some changes at the local level that will MAKE JUDO MORE FUN. To start with, we have lost half of *Judo* due to the prohibition of touching below the belt. Even skillful throws where there is only incidental leg contact have been outlawed. Let's go back to teaching the full Gokyo No Waza. And, there is no reason why we could not promote what I call *Classic Judo* divisions in local tournaments. We've done this occasionally at local tournaments in Colorado in the past and they were widely regarded by spectators and competitors alike as being more interesting. We don't need to go so

far as to go back to legacy scoring (no koka, thanks) or a wrestling style point system as some have proposed, but if we continue on the current path there won't be much of a sport left to save. Some day the IJF may see the error of its ways but we can't afford to wait.

As your coach representative on the Board I would strive to implement the above platform and grow our sport. In closing, it would be my honor to represent our coach cadre on the USA Judo Board of Directors and I respectfully ask for your vote.

Yours in judo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rich Mignogna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "R" and "M".

Rich Mignogna, Ph.D.