

THE NORTHERN IRELAND JUDO FEDERATION

# PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

2023 - 2025

**#ONEBIGCLUB**  
**#IFITSNIJFITSNORTHERNIRELANDJUDO**



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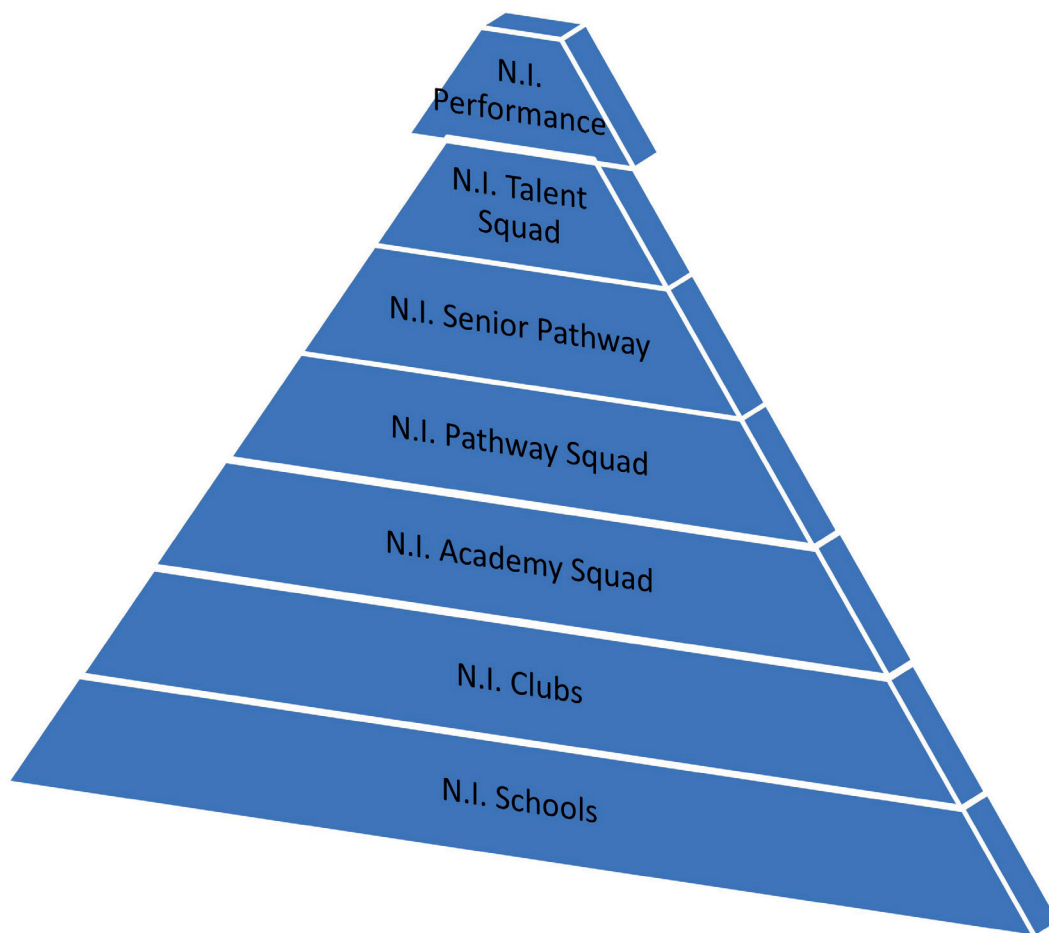
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## 1.0 The Aim of the Northern Ireland Pathway Development Program

***"To increase the skillset and capabilities of Minor, Pre-Cadet, and Cadet (10-17 years) and up to 23 years of age males and females, providing them with opportunities to remain and develop in Judo, and offer the potential to make a successful transition from local club to NI Academy and Pathway Squad to the NI Talent Development Program."***

## 2.0 Introduction

This document intends to provide an overview of the pathway available to NIJF members and member clubs. It will provide a connection and direct link to the NI Talent Development Programme, and serve to inform club coaches, parents, and players of the Technical and Physical competencies required for entry to NITDP.





The dual aim of the Pathway Development Programme is to develop and galvanise the participation in Judo, by building connections with the clubs, and in turn retaining the membership.

It will also provide the connection between clubs and future participation at all levels, with the goal of increasing the numbers on the NITDP and at grassroots level. The program is designed to inform and develop the fundamental skills and deliver the technical requirements necessary to make a successful transition to NITDP.

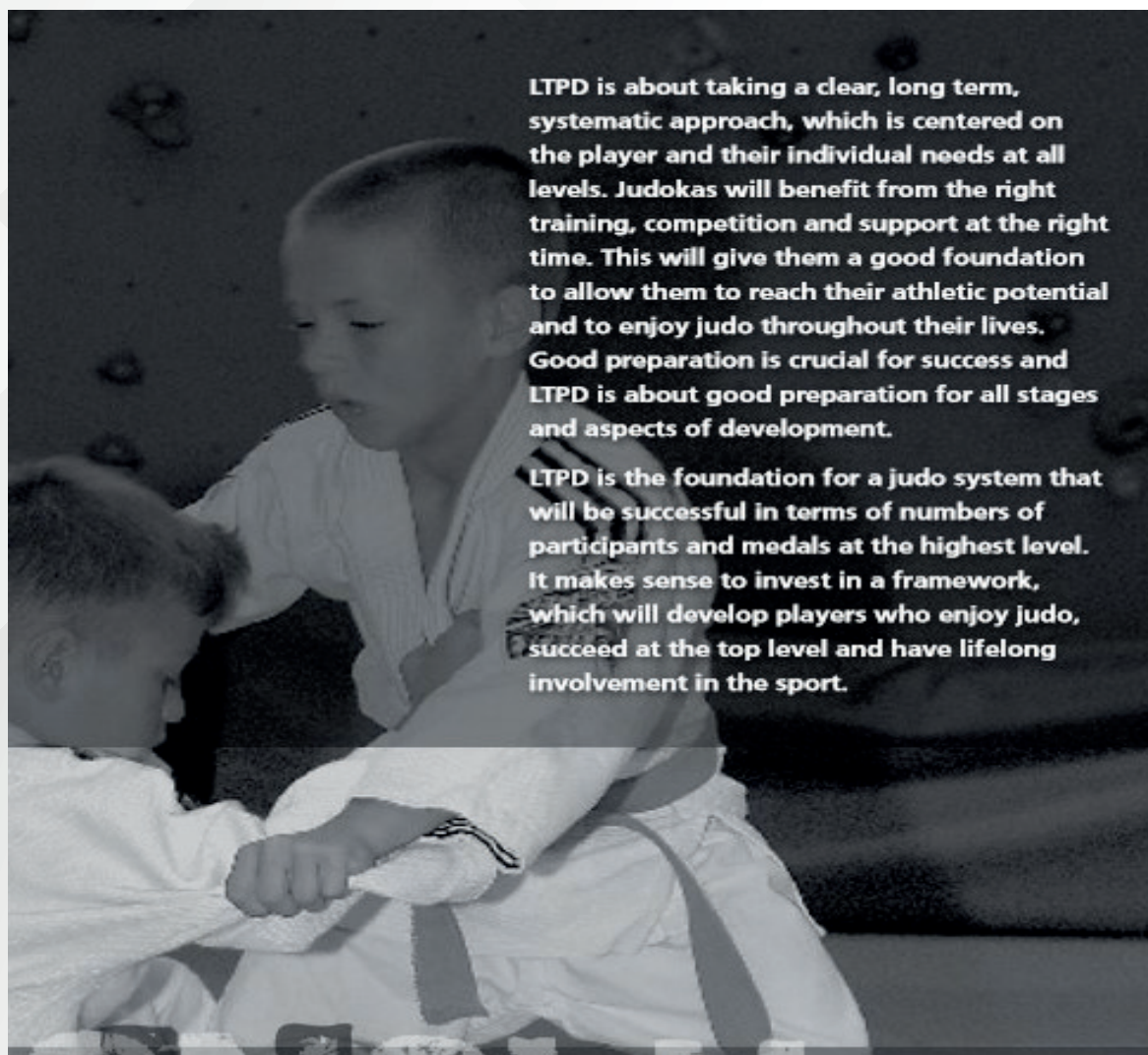
The program will use the fundamental skills that underpin the current NITDP and develop the technical competencies through the BJA trademarks model, Technical Grading Syllabus, and Technical Frameworks coaching system.

The focus will be on the major scoring techniques in Tachiwaza (standing techniques) and Newaza (ground techniques) and building competence in transition between the two.

The program will also focus on physical literacy, testing, and deliver a series of educational seminars to include Lifestyle and Behaviors, Goal setting, Nutrition, and Anti-Doping.



The British Judo Association Long Term Player Development policy was published in consultation with the industry leading practitioners in LTDP and the extract below encapsulates the aim of the NI Academy and Pathway Programs.



### 3.0 NI Academy Squad

The NI Academy Squad is for 10- and 11-year-old boys and girls to develop their fundamental skillset and improve their technical and physical competences at a level above club or school programmes.

The aim is to present an opportunity to practice with children from other regional clubs, meet squad coaches, and travel to Regional Centre's for advanced skill development.

There is significant governing body investment in this programme. The minimum expectation from participants and families is that they commit to attending the Academy squad sessions and continue to attend their resident club on a regular basis.

Currently, these squad sessions take place once per month.

#### 3.1 Entry Level Criteria for Minors (Under 12 years)

- Valid NI Judo license
- 10 or 11 years old
- 4th mon yellow belt, or above
- Recommended participation of two times per week at a resident club
- Coach recommendation
- Parental Consent
- Personal commitment to attendance at squad sessions

#### 3.2 Fundamental Skill Development

The aim of this part of the program is to ensure the participants understand how important fundamental practice is and what it can add to the development of techniques both in Tachiwaza (standing techniques), and Newaza (ground techniques).

The objectives of the program for minors are.

- To develop a wider variety and practice of Ukemi (breakfalls) in all directions.
- To increase mobility and range of movement in the application of technique.
- To understand tsugi ashi (following foot), ayumi ashi (walking foot), posture, balance, and purposeful practice thereof.
- To promote the use of individual training, 'Tendoku Renshu' (shadow drills), and visualisation.

The strategy to achieve a better understanding is coach led mat-based practice using pre-determined sport specific 'drills and skills' developed by the coaching staff. Complimentary visual aids will be available through a bespoke NI Judo Youtube channel that will provide a guide for both participants and the general coaching population.

<https://www.youtube.com/@nijudovideos2598/featured>



They include.

- The use of progressive and alternative gymnastic exercises in the warmup to encourage greater confidence and control both in and out of contact.
- Partner assisted breakfalls with focus on control during execution of the technique to reduce risk of injury and create a better feeling in the throw.
- A series of full body mobility exercises to each session that will improve flexibility around the ankles, knees, hips, spine, and shoulders to reduce risk of injury and Increase range of movement for 'Sabaki' (positioning).
- The use of individual and partner exercises to improve foot movement, balance, stance, and posture, both in and out of contact.
- Record each exercise, label, and post on the NI judo Youtube channel for everyone to use.

### **3.3 Technical Skill Development**

Technical skill development is the most critical area of this program. The aim for Academy players is to identify one Tachiwaza (standing technique) and one Newaza (ground technique) that they can score and /or transition successfully.

The objectives for minors are.

- To know their main nage waza in all directions to achieve ippon (full point).
- To know their main osaekomi waza (pinning/holding technique) from four positions to achieve ippon.
- To use the technical frameworks model to begin building transition between Tachiwaza (standing techniques) and Newaza (ground techniques).
- To add the use of alternative kumikata (gripping) to affect their tokui waza (favourite technique).

The strategy to achieve improvement in nage waza (throwing techniques) will be through delivery of 'master class' coaching sessions in the four main throwing techniques that research has proven successful in international competition. Tai otoshi (body drop throw), Uchi Mata (inner thigh throw), Seoi Nage (shoulder throw), and O Soto Gari (major outer reap).

To achieve improvement in osaekomi waza (pinning/holding techniques), the program will focus on mobility in newaza (ground techniques), positional awareness, lever turnovers, lapel rolls, getting past guard and turnovers from guard position.

Purposeful practice using common transitional scenarios with a cooperative partner will explore the link between tachiwaza (standing techniques) and newaza (ground techniques) for this formative age group.

Alternative gripping options can be explored on an individual basis with a view to delivering scoring opportunities in a competitive environment.



The delivery will include.

- 'Master class' coaching in four main scoring techniques.
- Tailored technical coaching for each players Tokui waza (favourite technique).
- Delivery of a series of common drills and skills to improve speed, body positioning, and grow 'muscle memory' for each technique.
- Uchikomi (repetitive training) development in four directions/ positions, both in tachiwaza (standing) and newaza (ground).
- Nagekomi (repetitive throwing) development in four directions, and with alternative grips.
- Cooperative 'randori' (free practice) with focus on transition development.

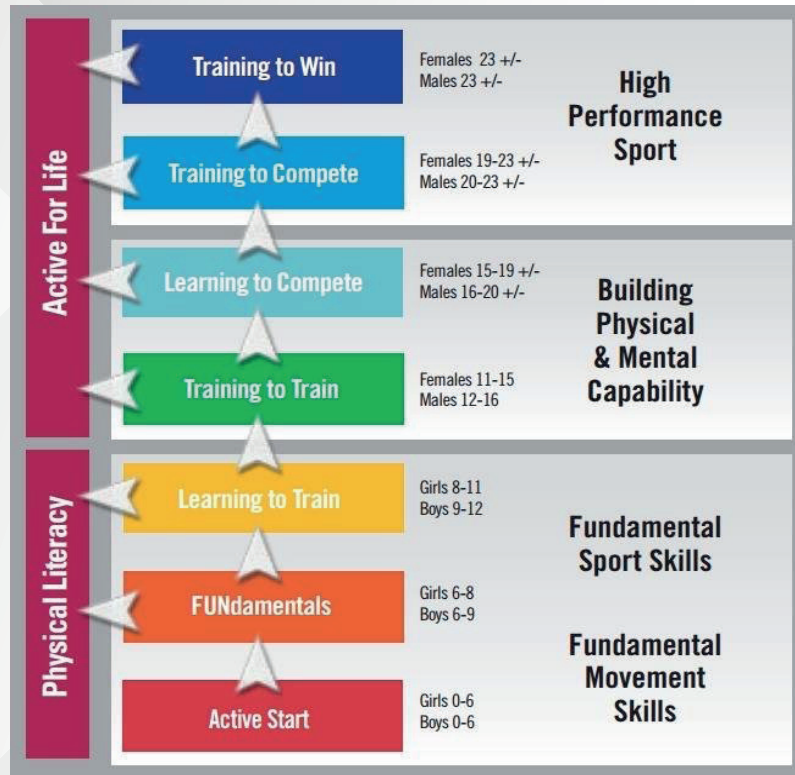
### **3.4 Physical Skill Development**

Physical skill development at the Academy squad sessions will be primarily focused on building strong motor skills, mobility, flexibility, speed, and core strength.

The objectives of the physical programme for minors are.

- To develop upper and lower body coordination to affect the 'sabaki' (positioning).
- To achieve and maintain correct posture both in and out of hold.
- To improve balance and stability while making a 'kinza' (attack).
- To improve mobility around knees, hips, shoulders, and rotation around the spine.
- To increase the speed of entry into the 'kinza' (attack).

The Long-Term Player Development Model (LTPD) below will be used as a guide to design the suitable physical literacy programme for squad athletes.



The strategy to achieve physical skill improvements will be to use progressive, modern, and sport specific drills that imitate the movements required to make a proper judo technique.

Purposeful practice of ayumi ashi (walking foot), tsugi ashi (following foot), and tai sabaki (body positioning) will build a strong fundamental base.

The use of animal movement patterns, mobility exercises, gymnastics, and judo specific rolls and tumbles will be used as standard practice at the squad sessions.

Body weight and plyometric style strength training will allow muscle, joint, and bone development at this age group.

These will be included in the lesson plans and published on the NIJudo Youtube channel and social media outlets.

Delivery will include.

- Ayumi Ashi (walking foot), Tsugi Ashi (following foot), and Tai Sabaki (body positioning) movement drills both individually and with a cooperative partner.
- Bear crawls, Frog jumps, Monkey walks, Seals, Sea Lions, and Penguins.
- Forward, Backward, and Sideward breakfalls.
- Cartwheels, Round off, Handspring, Handstand.
- Press Ups, Leg raises, Dips, Belt Pull, Plank, Burpee, Turkish get up, and Box jump.

### **3.5 Competition Program**

Although this program has a primary goal of improving the technical and physical elements of the individual, a progressive structured competition and training event schedule can complement and add value to the athlete.

The aim of the competition program is to provide the athletes with the experience of the event environment, the feeling of 'shiai' (competition) as opposed to cooperative practice.

Performance and experience are more important than the actual result.

Analysis and review of these performances will inform the delivery of future NI Academy Squad Sessions.

Organised local and regional events are recommended for the NI Academy Squad to attend.

These include.

- NI Closed Championships (February)
- NI Open Championships (April)
- NI Schools Championships (June)
- NW Open Championships (November)
- All Ireland Championships (December)

As the program grows, travel to training events and age banded competition in Scotland, Wales, England, and Europe will be informed by performance and success at the above events.

## 4.0 NI Pathway Squad



The NI Pathway Squad is for 12-23 year-old males and females to help develop technical and physical skillsets with a view to making a successful transition to the NI Talent development programme.

The aim is to provide opportunities for advanced technical skill development, as well as developing physical competencies that will allow the individual to meet the rigors of a performance sport program.

A focus on educating the players on topical issues in performance sport such as mindset, lifestyle, nutrition, and strength and conditioning will be at the heart of this programme.

There is significant governing body investment in this programme. The minimum expectation from participants and families is that they commit to attending the Pathway squad sessions and continue to attend their resident club on a regular basis.

Currently, these squad sessions take place once per month.





#### 4.1 Entry Level Criteria for Pre Cadet and Cadet (Under 18 years)

- Valid NI Judo license / membership
- 12 to under 23 years old
- 8th mon orange belt, or above
- Recommended participation of two times per week at a resident club
- Coach recommendation
- Parental Consent (for under 18s)
- Personal commitment to attendance at squad sessions

#### 4.2 Fundamental Competency Development

The aim is to develop the fundamental skills required for purposeful practice and connect the competencies and their role in improving the tachiwaza (standing techniques), newaza (ground techniques), and transitional success.

Although fundamental drills will be similar in style to the minor age group, the practice, speed, and intensity will increase significantly in accordance with the demands of the competition level at this age group.

The objectives of the program for pre cadet and cadet are.

- To develop 'ukemi' (breakfalls) as a cooperative partner.
- To develop mobility, range of movement, and intensity in fundamental practice.
- To develop tsugi ashi (following foot), ayumi ashi (walking foot), and focus on posture, balance, and upper/lower coordination in fundamental practice.
- To develop 'Tendoku Renshu' (shadow drills), visualisation, and uchikomi (repetitive training) in all directions.

The strategy to develop fundamental competencies will again be coach led mat-based practice. The addition of working with a cooperative 'uke' (person being thrown) will ensure realistic sport specific practice in all areas.

The use of 'resistance band' training, 'shadow drills,' and promotion of the Youtube channel will encourage self-development away from the group.

Delivery includes.

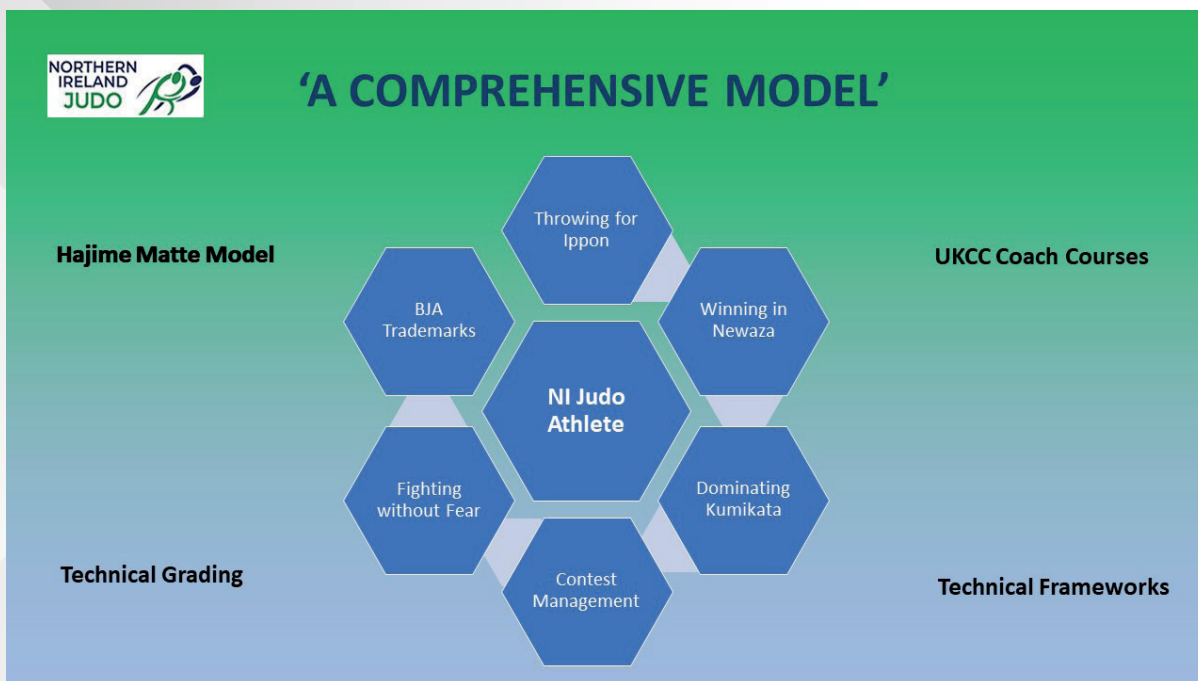
- The use of exercises and drills where there is a reliance on a cooperative partner.
- The use of partner-based skills where each participant has a role in the success of the technique. The objective to 'make each other look good.'
- The use of team building tasks, or games where each group must work together to achieve a goal.
- Incorporation of sport specific tachiwaza (standing) and newaza (ground) drills that imitate the common movements associated.

### **4.3 Technical Competency Development**

Technical competency development references the use of the British Judo Association (BJA) 'Technical Framework' coaching model to build a structure around a 'tokui waza,' or preferred technique, to achieve a network of scoring patterns.

This is also characterised in the BJA and NI Talent Development program 'Technical and Tactical trademarks' of a judo athlete. (See diagram below)

The NI Pathway Program is underpinned by the Technical Grading System (TGS), BJA 'Technical Frameworks' model, 'Hajime Matte' model, and 'Technical Trademarks' model, to educate, train, understand, and develop a 'rounded' NI squad player.



The aim for Pathway players is to identify two tachiwaza (standing techniques) and two newaza (ground techniques) that they can score and /or transition successfully.

The objectives for pre cadet and cadet are.

- To develop their main nage waza (throwing technique) 'on the grip' and 'in contact' to achieve ippon (full point win).
- To develop two 'Renraku waza' (combination in opposite direction) and 'Renzoku waza' (combination in same direction).
- To develop a main osaekomi waza (pinning technique) from a 'failed attack by themselves' and 'a failed attack by opponent' to achieve ippon.
- To develop a 'kumikata' (gripping) strategy to achieve a preferred grip.

The strategy to develop competence in nage waza (throwing techniques) will employ the delivery of the elements of the 'Hajime Matte model' at the squad sessions.

This model of 'building a contest' from start, to pause, to start, is an easy-to-understand example for 12 to under 23 year-old judo athletes.

The model can be adapted for everyone using their favourite techniques to understand contest phases and how by developing each phase, the athlete can dominate the contest and achieve a winning position.

To develop competence in newaza (ground techniques), the programme will adapt current topical newaza techniques that are successful in international competition. 'Stomach Wrap,' Lapel Rolls, Turnover from guard, and San Gaku (triangle) style turnovers.

Developing the common transitional scenarios in a 'randori' (practice) and 'shiai' (competition) setting will challenge the pathway players to adapt to the differences in cooperative practice and competition.

The delivery will include.

- Introduction to Technical Frameworks model, Hajime Matte model, and Technical Trademarks model.
- Bespoke framework agreed for each players Tokui waza.
- Development of framework for 'Renraku waza' (combination techniques) and 'Kaeshi waza' (counter attacking techniques).
- Uchikomi (repetitive training) development as per individual framework.

## The Hajime Matte Model



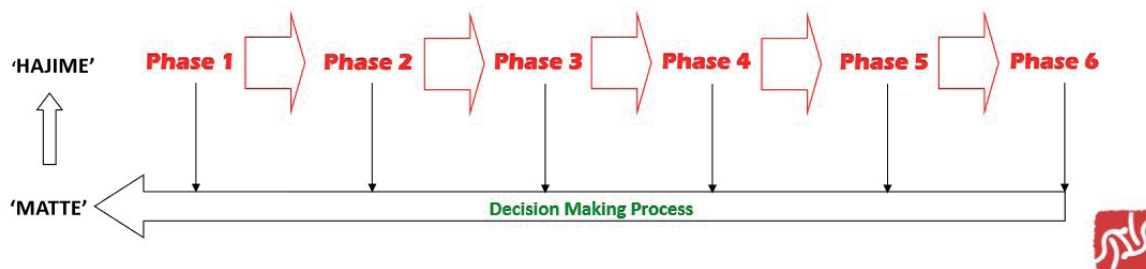
### Structure and Preparation of Contest Phases

#### 'Hajime - Matte' Model

Building the Fight

	Phase	Key Components
Phase 1	Mobility	Dynamic Posture and Stance, Distance, Tsugi-Ashi, Tai-Sabaki, Ashi-Sabakai, Tandoku-Renshu (Coordination)
Phase 2	Kumi-kata	Lead Grip / Main Grip, Structure, 'First On' Getting Your Grip, Hiki-Te, Tsuri-Te, Tsugi-Ashi, Ashi-Sabakai
Phase 3	Preparation	Action / Reaction, Direction, Timing / Distance, Ashi-Waza Combinations, Feint Attacks, Kuzushi, Hiki-Dachi
Phase 4	Nagewaza	Tai-Sabaki, Speed of Entry, Transfer of Power, Control, Belief, Execution, Commitment to Finish Attack
Phase 5	Transition	Mobility / Agility, 'Catch', Positioning, Continuous Control, Dominate, 'Open Up' Opponent
Phase 6	Newaza	Mobility, Control, Connection, Belief
Decision Making		Tactics, Strategy / Plan, TCUP, Body Language Adaptability : Reading the Scoreboard, Penalty For/Against, Score For/Against, Defending a Lead, Chasing a Lead, Time Wasting, Time Remaining in the Contest

#### Hajime - Matte Model





## 4.5 Competition Program

The competition program recommended for pre cadets and cadets is like that of the minor age group. There is a focus on the development of a competitive 'mindset' as the athletes move from the pre cadet, 12-14 years, and to the cadet, 15-17 years age group, and beyond.

The natural physical development and growth at this age will necessitate a more individual outlook for both training and competition.

The sport specific changes at each age group, with the use of armlocks, chokes, and strangles, will also dictate the level of competition for everyone.

Keeping in mind that the program will be developmental in nature, it is important that the performance and experience of the different competition levels are the focus, rather than the actual result.

As in the minor age category, organised, local, and regional events are recommended for the NI Pathway Squad.

These include.

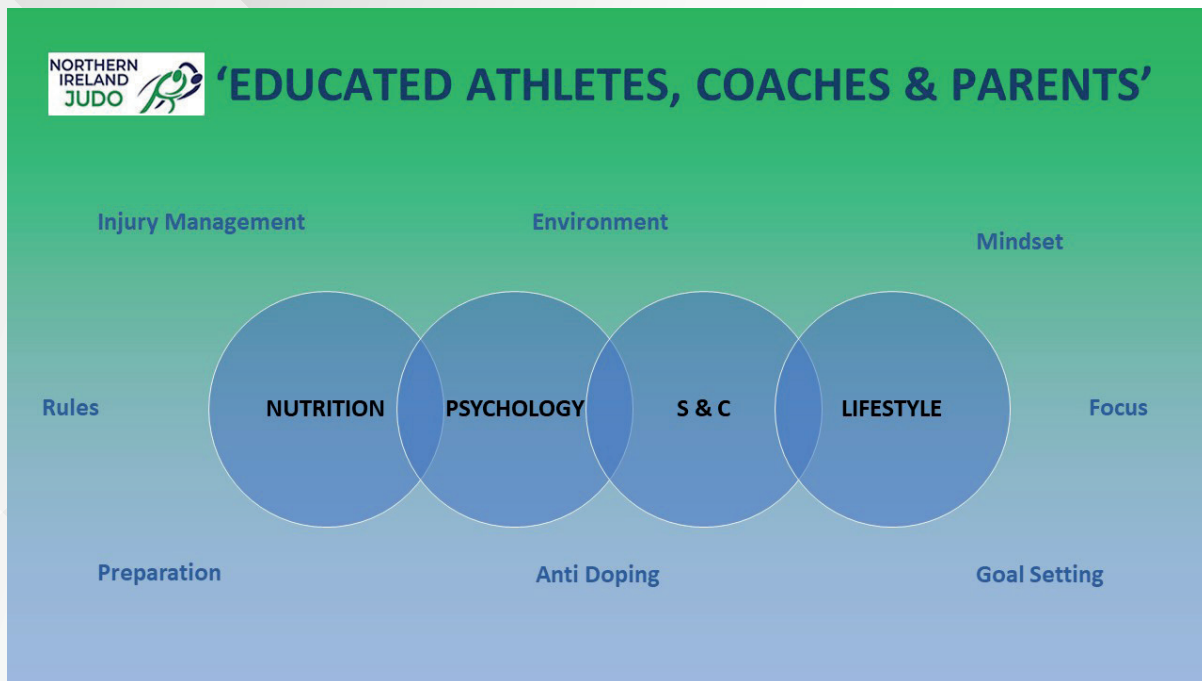
- NI Closed Championships (February)
- NI Open Championships (April)
- NI Schools Championships (June)
- NW Open Championships (November)
- All Ireland Championships (December)

Additional competition for pre cadets and cadets includes.

- Scottish Open (January)
- British Schools Championships (March)
- London Open (May)
- Kent International (June)
- Heart of England Championships (September)
- NHC Championships (September)
- C2 London International (October)
- Welsh Pre cadet and Cadet Open (October)
- British Championships (December)

As the program grows, travel to training events and age banded competition in Scotland, Wales, England, and Europe will be informed by performance and success at the above events.

## 5.0 Athlete Education Program



The aim of the NI Pathway Athlete Education Program is to provide the squad with an introduction to some of the areas that international athletes focus on, in addition to sport specific practice.

NI Judo have identified four key topics that can help prepare young judo athletes for entry to the NITDP (Northern Ireland Talent Development Program).

The education program will provide a sport specific workshop on each of the topics with a view to building each area into the program separately as the squad sessions progress.

The program will employ local experts to present workshops and NIJF international representatives to compliment the experts on their own experiences of preparation, training, national and international events.

## 5.1 'PCDE' and 'Mindset'

The most current topical area of interest in recent years, 'Mindset' trademarks, feature highly on talent development and high-performance programs in all sports.

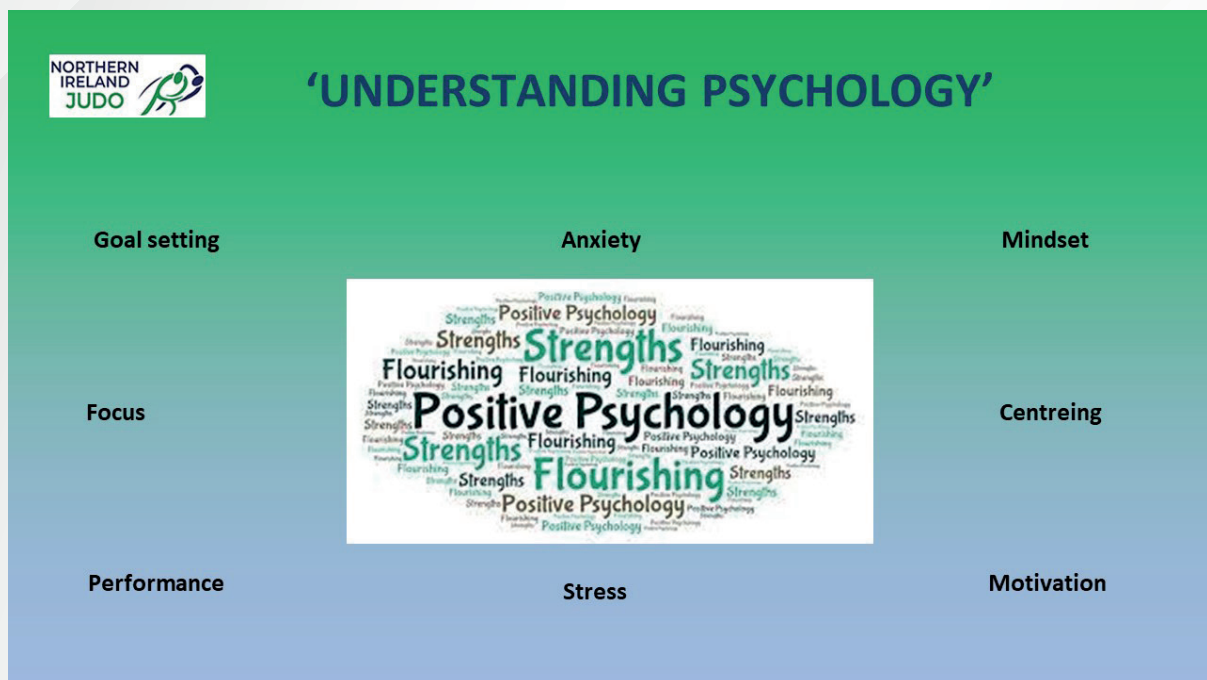
Individual sports and in particular combat sports have traditionally championed the use of techniques of the mind, and the need to explore ways to control emotions and focus attention.

One of the areas featuring on the current NITDP is that of Psychological Characteristics of Developing Excellence, or 'PCDE.'

These characteristics are identified as skills, and as all skills, they can be learned and developed.

They include Commitment, Focus and Distraction Control, Performance Evaluation, Self-Awareness and Regulation, Planning and Organisation, Goal Setting, and Imagery.

The main goal of NI Pathway Program will be education, but pre-cadet and cadet squad players can certainly use Goal Setting techniques, Imagery, Commitment, and Focus control as simple psychological awareness techniques.



## 5.2 Strength Training for Judo

'Judo players need to complete full body exercises (preferably in a standing position), they also need grip strength, power, and explosiveness. Along with this, they need strong core muscles focusing on rotation above all others.'

Reference; judoinfo.com

Strength and Conditioning at its simplest form is the practical application of sports science to enhance movement quality.

The article and slides below give a synopsis of what will be offered in the Academy and Pathway S&C education programme.

<https://sweetscienceoffighting.com/strength-training-for-judo>

Modern S&C	Traditional S&C
Mobility, Flexibility, Agility	Running, Sprinting, Skipping
Battle Ropes, Ball Slams	Olympic Lifts
Kettle Bells, Bulgarian Bag	Rope Climbing
Sled Pull/ Push	Bodyweight exercises
Plyometrics	Endurance training
Pilates, Yoga	Gi Pull ups, hold
Resistance Bands	Pull/Push Circuit Training

**'Athletes need to embrace both modern and traditional training methods to achieve maximum benefit and enjoyment from their programme.'**



### 'TEST AND REVIEW'

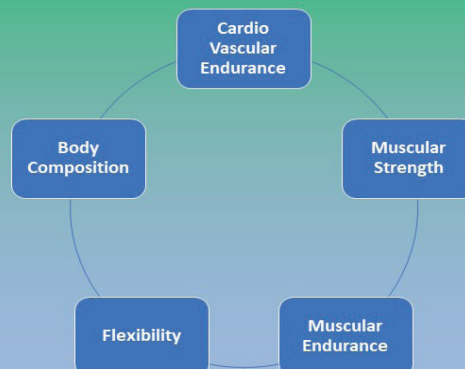
**'In order to monitor progress, initial levels need to be recorded, followed by frequent checks and balances, to maintain or alter the individual athletes programme.'**

Skin Folds Test

20m Shuttle Run Test

Push/Pull Timed Tests

Sit and Reach Test



Max Lift Test

Vertical Jump Test

400m Sprint Test

Hand Grip Test

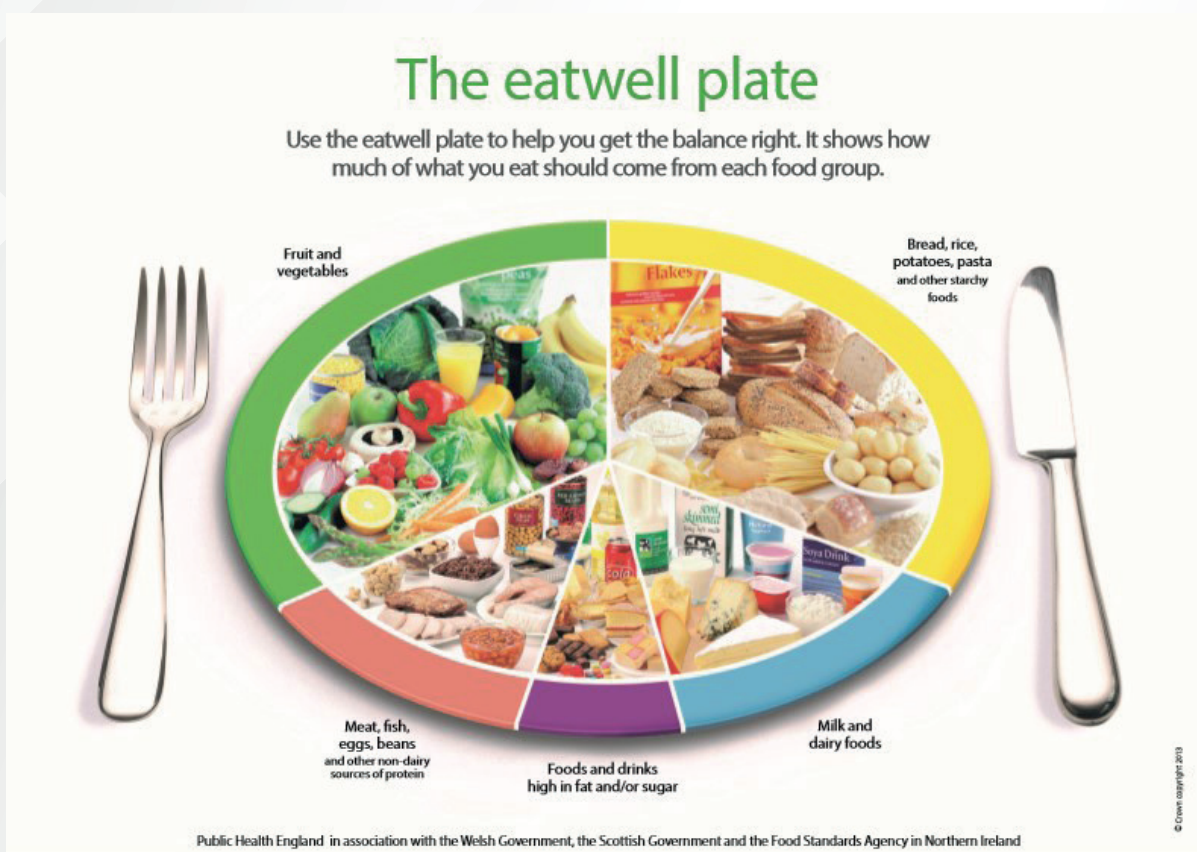


### 5.3 Nutrition for Judo

As a weight-controlled individual sport, nutrition plays a pivotal role in the development and indeed the performance of all judo players.

British Judo coaching courses focus on the 'eat well plate' as a general guide but in the blog link below, team nutritionist Louise Bloor explores the specific needs of judo players before training and competition.

<https://www.britishjudo.org.uk/fuelling-the-body-for-judo/>



The NI athlete education program will focus on providing the squad with the correct nutritional information to know how to eat healthily and maintain a balanced diet.

This will help them develop physically at the correct pace and sustain their level of performance through the age groups.

## 5.4 Anti-doping

The main aim for the pathway and academy squads is to be informed on the regulations surrounding the policy and how this affects their participation in competitive sport.

The Northern Ireland Judo Federation have a succinct Anti-Doping policy that can be fully viewed on the link below.

<https://www.nijudo.com/info-hub-resources/anti-doping-information/>



The anti-doping policy will provide the basis of workshops educating and updating the athletes, parents, and coaches on the most current regulatory requirements for NI judo squad members.

## 6.0 Safeguarding and Care Program

The Northern Ireland Judo Federation has the highest standards of safeguarding for its members.

Paul Stephenson from the NSPCC has recently quoted,

***“The NSPCC’s Child Protection in Sport Unit are pleased that the NIJF continue to place the welfare of children as their key priority when developing their youth programme. It is heartening to see the NIJF’s focus is on delivering a sport that is safe and fun. This approach helps children develop a lifelong interest in sport, and hopefully adopt a longer-term healthy lifestyle.”***



The aim of the safeguarding and care program is to create an environment where there is a clearly defined line of communication and support pathway for players, parents, and coaches.

The objectives are.

- To ensure every participant, parent and coach in the programme knows the safeguarding officer, policies and procedures as laid out in the NIJF website.
- To ensure every participant, parent and coach knows the NIJF Mental Health and Welfare Officer, and policies and procedures as laid out in the NIJF website.

The delivery of the safeguarding and care program will be prioritised through the athlete education program at 5.0, and will involve,

- Introduce the lead Designated Liaison Person for Safeguarding for the NIJF.
- Signpost players and parents to the resources available through affiliation to the NIJF.
- Delivery of a Safeguarding workshop to parents, players, and coaches.
- Introduce the lead Mental Health and Wellbeing Officer and their role in the federation.
- Delivery of a workshop dedicated to the promotion of good mental health and mental health awareness.

You can view the full NIJF safeguarding policy and other documents at the link below.

<https://www.nijudo.com/safeguarding>

## **7.0 Programme delivery**

The NI Pathway program is delivered by NI pathway coaches that have been appointed by the NIJF committee after a formal interview process. A program director and communications officer support the coaches through planning, administration, and remote delivery.

At all times the continued attendance of players and coaches remains at the discretion of these personnel.

### **7.1 NIPS resource development**

The NI Judo Youtube channel, website, and social media outlets will be managed through the commercial and communications officer. This is used to promote the NI pathway program and inform players, parents, and coaches of the detailed progress and outcomes of delivery.

### **7.2 Athlete education program delivery**

The athlete education program will be delivered in conjunction with Sport NI recommended experts in the field. There will be two sessions in Year 1 and two sessions in Year 2, after which the pathway program will be updated and reviewed to include the learned sport specific needs of the squad.

### **7.3 NIPS update and review**

The NI Pathway program will be reviewed in six-month intervals to coincide with the development and inclusion of the athlete education program.

An updated working document will be published on the NI judo website to highlight additions and progress of the program.





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