

## JOY Talk No. 9

### dr. Nuša Lampe, Judo Club Golovec, Slovenia

Dr. Nuša Lampe, 6th DAN, Slovenia's first female international judo referee, and former first female Vice-President of the National Judo Federation, as well as Director of [Judo Club Golovec](#), shares her insights on what truly shapes performance and learning in judo. Drawing from her doctoral research on international referees, she explains how personality, environment, and support systems influence not only refereeing, but also coaching and education.

In this JOY Talk, Dr. Lampe discusses intergenerational learning, inclusive coaching practices, and the educational value of kata, illustrating how judo can be a lifelong journey of growth and collaboration across generations. With the national kata championship taking place this weekend in Ljubljana, co-organised by Judo Club Golovec, her reflections are particularly timely and offer practical guidance for coaches, referees, and judoka at all levels.

#### Refereeing, Personality, and the Learning Environment

***In 2025, you completed your doctoral research on the work performance and personality traits of international judo referees on the World Judo Tour. What inspired you to choose this topic, and what is one insight that could change how we understand refereeing and judo education?***

The topic emerged from my many years of experience as an international *Judo* referee and from my work in the field of *Judo* education. In practice, I often noticed that referees are usually discussed mainly in terms of rules, technical knowledge, or decision-making on the *Tatami*. Much less attention is given to their personality traits and the work environment in which they operate. For this reason, I wanted to explore how personality traits influence the work performance of top-level referees.

One interesting finding from the research was that personality traits such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion significantly influence how referees perceive their work environment. In this context, so-called workplace resources play an important role. These resources include access to information, support from supervisors and colleagues, available organisational resources, and opportunities for learning and professional development.

The research showed that referees who perceive greater support, more opportunities for development, and better access to information tend to perform their duties with greater confidence and effectiveness. This means that a referee's performance is not determined only by knowledge of the rules but also by psychological and social factors and by the quality of the supportive environment. This finding suggests that referee and coach education should pay greater attention to the development of personal competencies, communication skills, and supportive learning environments.

## Judo as a Space for Intergenerational Learning

***Intergenerational learning is a core value of the JOY project. Why do you think learning across generations, from children to seniors, is so valuable in judo? Have you seen this in practice through your coaching or refereeing experience?***

*Judo* is, at its core, an educational system, not only a sport. One of its greatest strengths is the opportunity for different generations to train and learn together; children, young people, adults, and seniors. Such an environment creates unique opportunities for mutual learning.

Children learn respect, discipline, and patience when training with more experienced partners. Older practitioners, on the other hand, often rediscover the joy of movement, energy, and spontaneity that younger generations bring. In practice, I have often seen

strong bonds forming between generations; for example, when experienced judoka help beginners, or when children train alongside their parents or even grandparents.

## Rethinking Coaching in Modern Judo

***From your perspective, what are the biggest gaps or needs in judo coaching today, especially when working with children, beginners, or mixed-age groups? What would you like to see change in the coming years?***

One of the biggest gaps in modern *Judo* coaching is often an excessive focus on competitive results, especially in younger age categories. Competition is certainly an important part of *Judo*, but it should not be the only objective.

When working with children, beginners, or mixed-age groups, it is essential to create an environment where learning, motor development, social skills, and enjoyment of movement are at the forefront. Coaches should have stronger pedagogical knowledge about working with different age groups and about adapting training methods to different abilities.

In the coming years, I would like to see more emphasis on coach education, particularly in areas such as inclusion, intergenerational practice, and long-term personal development. *Judo* has enormous potential as a lifelong activity, not only as a competitive sport.

## From Inclusion to Practice: The JOY Project

***The JOY project is developing an online tool to support more inclusive and intergenerational coaching. What excites you most about this initiative, and how do you think it will help coaches and clubs in practice?***

What excites me most is the idea that coaches will have access to practical tools, methods, and ideas that can help them develop more inclusive programmes. Many coaches have good intentions, but they often lack support or concrete examples of how to organise training sessions for different age groups or for people with different abilities.

This online tool could become an important source of knowledge where coaches can find training ideas, teaching methods, and examples of good practices from different countries. I hope it will help clubs create a more open, inclusive, and intergenerational environment where everyone feels welcome.

## **Kata and Lifelong Learning in Judo**

***Judo education is not only about randori – kata also plays an important role. At Judo Club Golovec, you work with kata across all age groups. How young are your youngest participants, and how has this evolved in your work? What stands out from your experience of teaching kata to different generations?***

In Judo, we often emphasise that learning is based on four fundamental pillars: Randori, Kata, Kogi, and Mondo.

- *Randori* represents practical learning through free practice and experience.
- *Kata* allows for a deeper understanding of the technical principles of Judo.
- *Kogi* refers to lectures or explanations of concepts, rules, and the philosophy of Judo.
- *Mondo* is a discussion-based learning process, where students and the teacher reflect together on knowledge and experience.

At Judo Club Golovec, we try to incorporate all these elements into the learning process from an early age. Our youngest participants begin to encounter basic elements of Kata at around six or seven years old. Of course, the approach is always adapted to the age of the children; for the youngest, the focus is mainly on understanding basic movement principles, balance, cooperation, and respect for a partner.

*Kata* has great educational value because it develops precision, body awareness, and an understanding of the principles of Judo. It is particularly interesting to observe how Kata can connect different generations. We often see older Judoka patiently helping younger ones understand the rhythm and movement of techniques. This kind of cooperation creates a very positive learning environment.

***Finally, what advice would you give to young coaches who want to create meaningful, inclusive, and lifelong learning experiences through judo?***

My advice to young coaches would be to always see Judo as something broader than just sport techniques or competition. Judo is a rich educational system that can accompany a person throughout their entire life. It is important to create an environment where everyone feels accepted and respected, regardless of age, ability, or goals. Coaches carry a great responsibility, as they often influence the development of young people not only as athletes but also as individuals.

The most important advice would be: stay curious, continue learning, and listen to your students. Every training session is an opportunity for learning – both for the students and for the coach. The true goal of Judo is not only achieving results, but shaping people who will carry the values of Judo with them throughout their lives.

*Interview conducted by  
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