

Recent Accidents Related to Judo in Japan
- Reports by Parents of Victims -

Category 1: Cases happened during Judo club activity inside of school facilities. Coaches of the activities are usually school teachers.

Case 1

Name: Izumi Sainohira, a girl in 10th grade from Saitama Prefecture

Type of Disability: persistent disturbance of consciousness

The girl attended summer training camp July 27-31 in 2002. She complained of headache on the third day, and missed some practices. Coaches of the camp, however, did not take her to hospital. On the fifth day, a female coach threw her by body drop (Tai-otoshi: one of counter techniques), which made her unconscious. At hospital, she was diagnosed with acute subdural hematoma, and given surgery. She did not regain consciousness, and has suffered from persistent disturbance of consciousness. The court of second instance ruled in favor of the claim by her family that she had complained of headache.

Case 2

Name: Ryo Tozawa, a boy in 10th grade from Akita Prefecture

Cause of Death: asphyxiation

On 22 July 2003, a male coach (teacher) insistently repeated groundwork (Ne Waza) on the boy, ignoring a number of signs of Maitta from the boy. The coach's subsequent chokes (Shimewaza) compressed the boy's neck and chest, resulting in asphyxiation. In practice, the coach never stops Shimewaza at mount position as if bullying until students (including girls) escaped, and sometimes throws students on concrete floor. Prosecutors, however, dropped this case twice because of insufficient evidence. Through civil action, the Akita Prefecture offered verbal apology to settle the lawsuit. The

parents are still fighting for an apology from the coach himself.

Case 3

Name: Taichi Kobayashi, a boy in 9th grade from Kanagawa Prefecture

Type of Disability: higher brain dysfunction

On 24 December 2004, a male coach who had once won the Kodokan Cup threw the boy in free style, and the boy developed acute subdural hematoma. The boy's pupils were dilated right after the throw because the vein of Labbe was injured. Since then, he has suffered from diffuse axonal injury and severe higher brain dysfunction. In fact, the boy, who had Judo experience of less than 1 year, was thrown in a way that damaged a large blood vessel in his brain and tore the cranial nerves. He received two chokes (Shimewaza) in 7 minutes: one of them made him unconscious due to asphyxiation. Prosecutors dropped this case twice, saying it is impossible to draw a line between crime and Judo while people were playing the sports using Judo techniques in Judo uniform. Is that so?

Case 4

Name: Kohei Tanaka, a boy in 10th grade from Osaka Prefecture

Cause of Death: acute subdural hematoma

On 16 July 2005, the boy did not come home, and found to be dead on next morning in the locker room of gym at school. He died of brain swelling due to acute subdural hematoma, but the autopsy on him revealed that the amount of bleeding inside of his brain was only 50 cc, meaning earlier discovery could have saved his life. In addition, strangely, his stomach were separated from esophagus. The boy seemed to have at least head injury during practice, but no one paid attention on him because the club members were not aware of symptoms of head injury, and worst of all, the coaches were not there for supervision.

Case 5

Name: Keita Takase, a boy in 10th grade from Osaka Prefecture

Type of Disability: persistent disturbance of consciousness

On 28 July 2007, the boy participated in a training seminar sponsored by AJJA as a club activity after school. After practice of techniques, he complained of sickness, but was left unattended. His mother who came to pick him up called ambulance. He was diagnosed with persistent disturbance of consciousness, and given brain surgery. After critical condition for one month, his life was saved, but he has not regained consciousness. Actually, three days before the accident, his coach had slapped him several times, causing concussion and headache. This indicates a second impact syndrome.

Case 6

Name: Koji Murakawa, a boy in 7th grade from Shiga Prefecture

Cause of Death: acute subdural hematoma

On 29 July 2009, during club activity at junior high school, the boy was thrown by a coach of the club. He immediately lost consciousness, and was diagnosed with acute subdural hematoma. After emergency surgery, he died without regaining consciousness on 24 August 2009. Before the accident, his parents had asked the coach to take care of the boy who was a Judo beginner with asthma. After the accident, it was found that the boy was urged to do reckless and nasty practices such as running with a dust mask. On the day of accident also, his practice menu was different from others, ended with the throw. His body was covered in bruises at that time. A verification report by a third party panel concluded that the teaching and play by the coach was inappropriate.

Case 7

Name: Ayumi Ikeda, a girl in 12th grade from Saitama Prefecture

Type of Disability: cervical cord damage

On 1 May 2010, in a regional preliminary game of Prefectural tournament, the girl was thrown (by Nage waza) and collapsed downward. The opponent tried to transit to Newaza by lifting her leg, pressing her down with her head touching the floor,

and flipping her over. At the point of time, the opponent's weight was applied to her neck, causing fracture and cervical cord damage (cervical dislocation at 56). She has paralysis of arms and legs and impaired excretory function, and cannot maintain a sitting posture. Her parents have been awaiting further clarification.

Case 8

Name: Reo Ogawa, a boy in 7th grade from Shizuoka Prefecture
Cause of Death: acute subdural hematoma, cerebral contusion

On 27 June 2010, during club activity at junior high school, the boy complained of severe headache, and fell down forward. Immediately she was sent to Tendo Shizuoka Hospital, where doctors declared she had acute subdural hematoma and cerebral hernia with survival rate of 10-20%. She underwent three craniotomy procedures to decrease intracranial pressure and remove cerebral edema during the 10 days until she died on 6 July 2009. Autopsy by police and anatomy by hospital confirmed that she died of cerebral contusion without external injury. Police is currently investigating this case.

Category 2: Cases happened in PE classes

Case 9

Name: Yoshiaki Tanaka, a boy in 10th grade from Chiba Prefecture

Cause of Death: commotio cordis

On 7 October 2005, the boy developed commotio cordis at 10:10, and was declared dead at 11:15 at hospital. The accident happened in PE class at high school. He, a Judo beginner, played a game with an experienced club member, and was dropped by Kosoto Gari. The member pushed him down again at his chest by Kesa Gatame with full weight using elbow or side body, which caused commotio cordis. In the PE class, only one teacher controls matches at four courts. The referees were students. Fire Department was located in front of the school, but teachers tried to handle the trouble by themselves and did not call ambulance soon, missing the last chance to save his life. They were not aware of the danger of Judo as combative sports, and their response to the accident was incredibly inadequate.

Case 10

Name: Yuki Ohashi, a boy in 10th grade from Shizuoka Prefecture

Type of Disability: cervical cord damage

On 7 December 2009, in a PE class at high school, the boy in 160 cm height and 65 kg weight was thrown by a student in 175 cm height and 80 kg weight. The PE teacher called his mother 2 hours after the accident, and asked her if she wanted to call ambulance. The school side told her that any PE teacher would behave the same way in the situation. After hospitalization of two weeks, the boy was treated at home. He still has numbness on his right arm and headache, and is prohibited from full exercise, especially stress on his neck. The PE teacher left the school without explanation about the accident to his family. The boy wished to major in physical education, which vanished like smoke.

Category 3: Cases happened at private spaces

Case 11

Name: Tenma Sasaki, a boy in 7th grade from Hiroshima Prefecture

Cause of Death: acute subdural hematoma

On 22 June 2007, in Kawaguchi Dojo (Judo school run by Mr. Takao Kawaguchi, a Gold Medalist in the Munich Olympic Game, a board member of All Japan Judo Association (AJJA)), the boy was thrown by a 9th grade student by irregular and dangerous Osotogari that is a technique an instructor of the school taught the student. The boy hitting his head could not move, but a female coach told him to back to play, and the boy was thrown again and developed acute subdural hematoma (second impact syndrome). Without regaining consciousness, he died at 6:25 am on 6 July. Seeing the boy with dilated pupils vomiting, the coach credulously believed he suffered from heat disorder, and let him lie on the floor. The Court found that the school had failed in their duty of safety owed to the boy due to the dangerous technique. Still, the school continues their business, without pursuing exact cause of the accident or offering apology to the family.

Case 12

Name: Musashi Sawada, a boy in 6th grade from Nagano Prefecture

Type of Disability: persistent disturbance of consciousness

On 27 May 2008, the boy attended a Judo lecture sponsored by a social educational group. During practice with a coach, the boy was strongly thrown by double-handed single sleeve body drop, causing acute subdural hematoma. After one-week coma, he was diagnosed with persistent disturbance of consciousness. The coach, who is a judoist of 4th rank and a judo therapist in 180 cm height and 80 kg weight, should have known the result of throwing a smaller boy in 146 cm height and 43 kg weight. The victim's parents are skeptical about Judo spirit of the coach.