



CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN JU-JITSU ASSOCIATION (AJA)

Approved by AJA Board of Directors on November 16, 2024

Highlights and clarifications relevant to AJA dojos:

- AJA guidelines in Article 4 regarding promotional criteria, time in rank, titles, belt colors, etc. are not intended to be narrowly prescriptive, but rather to offer broad organizational principles and general advice.
- Head Sensei of AJA dojos must now hold a minimum AJA rank of Nidan.
- AJA-Certified Instructors must now hold a minimum rank of Shodan, and the title of Assistant Instructor will no longer be granted. (Current Assistant Instructors may continue using the title and are subject to the same rules as Instructors, with one exception: When teaching, Assistant Instructors require supervision by the Head Sensei and/or an Instructor.)

Notes:

No revisions apply retroactively if they conflict with assumptions possible under earlier constitutions. For example, raising the minimum rank for Head Sensei from Shodan to Nidan has no effect on any current Head Sensei who are Shodans, because that rank was sufficient to be a Head Sensei under the 2023 constitution, which this constitution

supersedes. Similarly, all Board members until now qualified for lifetime individual memberships upon election, regardless of whether they completed full four-year terms, because that could be assumed under previous constitutions. Now they must complete full, four-year terms to qualify, this constitution makes clear.

As a contrasting example, the title of “emeritus”—addressed for the first time in this constitution—may now only be used by past Board members who completed full, four-year terms because earlier constitutions said nothing about use of that title. Thus, only former Board members who served (or will serve) four-year terms may use “emeritus” upon leaving the Board because they joined the Board with no expectations about that title (unlike, as noted above, their expectations about receiving immediate lifetime memberships). *Such reasoning applies to all the revisions made.*

If you have questions, please contact AJA President Thomas Dineen at president@aja-email.org or 410-949-6876 (text or call).

PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN JU-JITSU ASSOCIATION (AJA)

To further the study and practice of Japanese ju-jitsu, the American Ju-jitsu Association (AJA) has the following primary purposes:

- A. Serve as an association by which affiliated schools or clubs may cooperate and interact to promote the generous exchange of resources, ideas, information, and the technical skills of ju-jitsu;
- B. Promote the martial art of ju-jitsu to the general public and the global martial arts community by increasing awareness of the many benefits of learning ju-jitsu;
- C. Support, develop, and foster amateur sport competition within the guidelines exclusively set forth in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States of America; and
- D. Maintain high standards of the martial art of ju-jitsu and provide for the orderly promotion of qualified persons within the American Ju-jitsu Association.

Glossary:

In the text that follows, the term “Head Sensei” refers to the head of a dojo. In addition to a Head Sensei, a dojo may have one or more “Instructors.” The Head Sensei and Instructors may teach without supervision. “Students” are other members of the dojo who receive instruction. Collectively, a dojo’s Head Sensei, Instructors, and Students are “members” of the dojo.

An AJA member “in good standing” is one whose current AJA dues are paid.

An “official” or “officer” of the AJA is a member who holds an elected or appointed position in the organization.

An “official representative” of the AJA is any member authorized by the President, Vice President, or Board of Directors to conduct events and activities under AJA auspices.

AJA “policies” are general guidelines designed to fulfill the purpose and functions of the AJA.

“Programs” are organized activities designed to further policy ends.

“Procedures” are a defined set of actions designed to achieve a specific goal.

“Rules” are instructions for a proper course of conduct.

“Regulations” prescribe and/or constrain that conduct exactly.

“Criteria” are the properties or components of an action or endeavor. For example, in judo, the criteria of a throw are gripping (kumi kata), off-balancing (kuzushi), positioning (tsukuri), and throwing (kake).

“Standards” are measures by which the quality of execution of criteria are assessed.

ARTICLE 1: Government of the AJA

Section 1: Board of Directors

All legislative powers in this constitution are vested in a Board of Directors (hereafter “Board”). The Board establishes policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the AJA, including but not limited to: criteria and procedures for membership and promotion; certification of ranks; imposition and collection of dues and fees; member benefits and events; rules of amateur competition; and other matters pertaining to the welfare and purpose of the AJA. The Board may delegate any of these powers to others in the AJA.

The Board is composed of ten (10) members, unless an increase or decrease is declared by a Board vote. A quorum of the Board (50% + 1 member) must be present to conduct any business, vote, or action. A majority vote of the quorum is required to approve all actions of the Board except for:

- (1) the removal of a Board member from the Board;
- (2) the removal of an AJA dojo or member from the AJA; or
- (3) changes to the AJA constitution.

Items (1) through (3) require a 2/3 vote of a quorum. Unless otherwise stated, a Board decision or approval is based on the vote of a majority of a quorum of the Board.

The Board operates under the California Corporations Code of 1980 as a non-profit public benefit corporation.

Whenever a Board position opens, the Board elects an AJA member to fill that position from among candidates by majority vote. The term of office for Board members is four (4) years, beginning with their most recent (previous) election, and there are no term limits. A Board position becomes open at the end of a term; upon retirement, resignation, or other departure of a Board member; and/or upon the creation of a new Board position.

With the exception noted in (d) below, Board candidates must: (a) hold a minimum AJA-certified rank of Shodan; (b) have a demonstrated history of active involvement in AJA activities, including having duties and responsibilities, preferably at the national level; and (c) be nominated by an existing Board member. (d) Up to one AJA member may be elected by the Board to serve as a Board member solely by meeting requirements (b) and (c) in this paragraph.

A duly elected member of the Board may retain Board membership after retirement from actively teaching ju-jitsu, assuming they are members in good standing. A Board member may resign his or her seat on the Board by written notice to the remaining members of Board.

If a duly-elected Board member serves at least one complete, four-year term, that person:

1. will be awarded a Lifetime Individual Membership in the AJA; and
2. may use the honorary title of “[Former AJA title] Emeritus/Emerita” (e.g., “AJA Treasurer Emeritus”) after leaving the Board.

The Board may remove a member from the Board by a 2/3 vote of a quorum for any offense listed in Section 7, or based on other criteria established by the Board.

One member of the Board is elected Chair, responsible for the conduct of meetings, discussions, and votes of the Board. A Chair serves a four-year term, beginning with his or her accession to that role. At the end of that term, the Board selects a Chair for the next term from all Board members, including the incumbent, by majority vote. A Chair may resign at any time by writing to other members of the Board. Upon a Chair's resignation, the Board selects a new Chair from among its members by majority vote. A former Chair retains his or her seat on the Board.

The Board convenes at least once per calendar year to discuss and vote on issues of AJA policy and finances. The Chair, or a majority of Board members, calls for a Board meeting to be held. The Chair is responsible for convening such meetings and determining their times and venues. The Chair prepares an agenda and sends it to all Board members at least one week in advance.

Board meetings or other Board business may be conducted via U.S. mail, e-mail, online call, or other communication method when a physical meeting is not feasible.

Section 2: Elected Executive Officers

The following Executive Officers are Board members elected by majority vote of the Board:

- . President
- B. Vice President
- C. Secretary

- D. Three (3) Regional Directors
- E. Treasurer
- F. One or more Directors at Large

Executive Officers execute the policies and programs, rules, and regulations established by the Board.

The President serves a four-year term, beginning with his or her accession to that office. At the end of that term, the Board selects a President for the next term from all Board members, including the incumbent, by majority vote. Other Executive Officers serve in their respective roles until they choose to vacate the office or are required to by majority vote of the Board. Vacating the office does not require an executive or administrative officer to leave the Board.

A. The President is AJA's Chief Executive Officer, responsible for working with the Board to formulate and implement AJA policies, programs, rules, and regulations.

B. The Vice President, also an Executive Officer, fills the role of President when the President is unable to do so and also chairs the National Standards and Certification Board (NSCB). The Board determines the length of the Vice President's service in the role of President when the President is unable to perform his or her duties.

The following elected officers fill administrative roles:

C. The Secretary records all meetings and votes of the Board; serves as custodian of the constitution; serves as Acting President or Vice President if these officers are unable to perform their duties; and performs other duties specified in the constitution.

D. The Regional Directors (Northern, Southern, and Western) serve on the NSCB and organize AJA events in their regions, including seminars and tournaments.

E. The Treasurer's role is described in detail in Section 5 below.

F. The Directors at Large perform duties negotiated with, and approved by, the Board of Directors.

Section 3. Appointed Administrative Officers

The President appoints the following Administrative Officers from among AJA members to carry out the mission and policies of the Board:

- A. Director of Certification
- B. Marketing Director
- C. Historian
- D. Materials Director
- E. Membership Director
- F. Awards Director
- G. Webmaster
- H. Others based on need

The President may change the appointed administrative roles and/or remove an Administrative Officer for unsatisfactory performance of his or her role.

The President may make changes to basic procedures of administration, so long as those changes align with this constitution.

The President signs all legal documents for the AJA and may delegate this responsibility to other Board members if appropriate.

Section 4: National Standards and Certification Board (NSCB)

AJA's National Standards and Certification Board (NSCB) has the following responsibilities:

- (A) Establish criteria and procedures, subject to Board approval, for accepting dojos that apply for AJA membership;
- (B) Establish criteria and procedures, subject to Board approval, for AJA promotions;
- (C) Evaluate dojo applications for membership in the AJA by:
 - (1) Helping applicant dojos meet AJA criteria for acceptance; and
 - (2) Approving or disapproving dojo applications and issuing AJA Dojo Charters to approved dojos;
- (D) Meet at least twice a year to consider for promotion any active Yudansha who do not have a Head Sensei to promote them;
- (E) Make promotion decisions regarding Yudansha in group (D) above (the NSCB may take applications or initiate consideration);
- (F) Regularly notify Yudansha whose time in grade conforms to AJA's time guidelines for promotion (e.g., two years for promotion from Shodan to Nidan, three years for promotion from Nidan to Sandan, etc.); and
- (G) Ensure that promotion criteria and procedures approved by the Board are fairly and equitably enforced.

Certificates of promotion bear the signature of the President, the appropriate Regional Director, and the Head Sensei.

The NSCB is composed of AJA's Vice President and all AJA Regional Directors. The NSCB is chaired by the Vice President.

The NSCB Chair may make any necessary administrative changes to basic procedures of the NSCB, so long as those changes align with the constitution.

AJA's criteria and procedures for dojo membership and promotions are open to different ryu (styles) of the art. Moreover, they do not preclude a dojo from having more rigorous criteria or from promoting its own Students with reference to those criteria.

The NSCB may review any promotion submitted for AJA certification that falls outside the scope of stated NSCB/AJA criteria and procedures.

Section 5: Budget and Finances

The President, in consultation with the Treasurer and Vice President, is responsible for preparing the Annual Operating Budget (AOB) and submitting it to the Board for review, modification (if necessary), and approval.

The AOB must be submitted to the Board before the year to which it applies. The AOB may be amended by a majority vote of the Board.

The Board establishes procedures for the AJA's use of the AOB and frequency of reporting budget to actual status by the Treasurer. These procedures, once established, may be amended by the Board if and when the Board believes it appropriate.

The Treasurer is responsible for receiving and disbursing funds according to procedures approved by the Board. Furthermore, the

Treasurer provides a financial report to the Board at its request, at least once a year. The Treasurer also provides financial reports or other financial information possessed by the Treasurer to the President and Vice President, as requested.

The President and Vice President are responsible for the ongoing monitoring and yearly review of AJA finances and financial operations, including but not limited to: investing, accounting, receiving, and disbursing funds; ensuring that the AOB remains aligned with AJA policy. With approval of the Board, the President and/or Vice President may secure assistance with the ongoing monitoring and yearly review, if needed.

Regarding AJA finances, prior Board approval is required to open or close any new bank or investment accounts and to make any payments or incur any debts, subject to the following:

- A. Minor payments or debts: Payments of up to \$250.00 may be made by Board members (or those designated by them) in the ordinary course of business to pay vendors providing goods or services to the AJA; however, these payments must be reported to the Board.
- B. Related parties: Payment of any amount to “related parties” (e.g., family members or close business associates of Board members) requires prior Board approval.
- C. Emergencies: A payment may be made if an emergency is declared by any Board member and supported by at least two other Board members. The entire Board must be informed of the amount and reason for the emergency payment within 48 hours of the transaction.

Section 6: Indemnification

The AJA indemnifies any elected or appointed officer or any official representative of the AJA made party to a legal proceeding resulting from any incident occurring at an AJA-sponsored event against liability referred to in the proceeding. AJA's insurance policy explains the terms and details of such indemnification.

Section 7: Disciplinary Actions

The Board may impose sanctions on any dojo or member who violates the AJA constitution or policies authorized by the Board.

Sanctions may be imposed against any AJA dojo or member for any of the following reasons:

- A. Discriminating in any AJA activity on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, place of national origin, or other category established by law;
- B. Making false or misleading statements about one's own rank, dojo, or martial arts background, or about the rank, dojo, or martial arts background of others;
- C. Unauthorized or inappropriate issuance of ranks (e.g. a Shodan issuing Shodan rank);
- D. Issuance of ranks for personal or political gain;
- E. Gross disrespect, e.g., demanding a promotion, threats toward other AJA members, etc.;
- F. Rude, profane, or abusive behavior;
- G. Sexual harassment or abuse;
- H. Abuse of dojo members through extreme physical, verbal, emotional, or other mistreatment;

- I. Reckless behavior that poses a serious physical risk to any participant in an AJA dojo or event;
- J. Any felony conviction;
- K. Willful and/or continual violation of the AJA constitution;
- L. Any other conduct that, in the judgment of the Board, is unbecoming of a martial artist.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) removal of a dojo, Head Sensei, Instructor, or Student from the AJA;
- (b) suspension and/or revocation of AJA certifications and/or benefits;
- (c) suspension of an AJA Dojo Charter.

Head Sensei are responsible for taking appropriate action if they are aware of such violations by members of their dojos.

If prohibited activities are reported, the Board sends a notice of the accusations and proposed sanctions to the accused party. The accused party has thirty (30) days to reply in writing to the Board, stating his or her position on the matter and providing supporting evidence. The Board evaluates the alleged violation and response, then issues a decision to the accused within thirty (30) days of receiving the response.

Section 8: Amending the AJA constitution

Any AJA member in good standing may propose changes to the AJA constitution. The proposal is addressed to the President. It must be in writing, state the proposed changes clearly and completely, state the reason(s) for the proposal, and include the name and email address of the proposer. Approval of the constitutional change requires a 2/3 majority of a quorum of the Board.

Section 9. Dissolution of the AJA

The AJA, its Board, and this constitution may be dissolved by a majority vote of the Board. Upon the dissolution of the AJA, the Board shall first pay, or make provision for the payment of, all liabilities of the AJA, then allocate any remaining assets to organizations that qualify as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as determined by the Board.

ARTICLE 2: Membership

Section 1: Dojo Charter

The Head Sensei of a dojo that teaches Japanese ju-jitsu--by itself or with other martial arts--may apply for AJA membership for the dojo and the Head Sensei who leads it. The National Standards and Certification Board (NSCB) will review the application.

To be approved, the dojo must, at minimum, have a standardized program of training and promotions in Japanese ju-jitsu, consistent with AJA standards, that enables Students to obtain the rank of Shodan or higher and meets the criteria for membership established by the NSCB. The Head Sensei must be of good character in the opinion of the NSCB.

A dojo must have at least five (5) individual AJA members (Head Sensei and four Students), or paid "placeholders," to obtain, maintain, and/or renew an AJA Charter.

If the application is approved, AJA keeps the dojo's program of promotions on file as an official record. Head Sensei are required to

report major changes to their programs, such as a change of ryu, to the NSCB for review and approval.

After approval of a dojo application, Head Sensei receive a Dojo Charter authorizing them to use the AJA logo; grant promotions; collect annual AJA membership dues; issue individual AJA memberships; and conduct AJA-sponsored events including, but not limited to, seminars, tournaments (shiai), and demonstrations.

For a dojo charter to be valid, the dojo and all its members must be registered with the AJA each calendar year. Renewals for a given calendar year may be made, and become active, in that year or as early as October 1 of the previous year and as late as February 15 of the year to which the renewal applies. Otherwise, the dojo will be dropped from the AJA Directory until all dues for the year are paid.

If a Head Sensei leaves his or her dojo, the AJA Dojo Charter may be transferred to another certified AJA Head Sensei or Instructor, subject to approval by the NSCB. The party to whom the Charter is transferred becomes the dojo's new Head Sensei.

The new Head Sensei must certify in writing that he or she will continue to operate the dojo in accordance with AJA rules and regulations and follow the promotional criteria, standards, and procedures used by the previous Head Sensei and approved by the NSCB. Assuming NSCB approval, the name designating the Head Sensei of the dojo will be changed upon issuance of the next annual dojo charter renewal.

Section 2: Individual Membership

Individual membership in the AJA is available only through membership in an AJA dojo, except in the cases of honorary memberships and Board members awarded lifetime memberships. All members of a dojo--the Head Sensei, Instructors, and Students--must be registered with the

AJA through the dojo for the dojo's AJA Certificate to be valid. There is a fee for individual registration, as well as for dojo registration, which the Head Sensei pays to the AJA. Head Sensei may pass the membership fee to their Students, at their discretion.

Section 3: External Dojos

The AJA accepts dojos from other countries and territories (external dojos) for AJA Certification based on the same criteria, standards, and procedures that apply to dojos inside the U.S. (domestic dojos).

External dojos and their members are subject to the same rules and regulations as domestic dojos. Members of external dojos may receive AJA-certified promotions. At the discretion of the Board, external dojos may pay reduced or no AJA fees.

NOTE: External dojos are not covered by any AJA insurance policies, aside from when its members are participating in AJA-sanctioned activities within the U.S.

Section 4: Honorary Awards

An AJA member with the rank of Shodan or higher may give any worthy individual not already a member of the AJA an "Honorary AJA Membership" award.

The Board may vote to give any worthy dojo not already a member of the AJA an "Honorary AJA Dojo Membership" award.

Honorary dojo memberships persist as long as the dojo in question is active. They are listed in the Directory on the AJA webpage.

ARTICLE 3: Certification

Section 1: Rank Certification

With one exception, a dojo's Head Sensei is responsible for any and all promotions of other members in his or her dojo. The Head Sensei provides dojo certificates for these promotions. All dojo promotions to Sankyu and above must also be certified by AJA's Director of Certification.

If a Head Sensei does not have another AJA member qualified to promote him or her – because of retirement, great distance, or other factors – the NSCB may promote the Head Sensei.

A Head Sensei may be promoted by another AJA member of a different dojo when the former is legitimately a Student of the latter. Cases in which a Head Sensei determines that a Student in his or her dojo should be promoted to the Head Sensei's own rank are referred to the NSCB to be considered for promotion and certification.

To obtain AJA certification of a dojo promotion, the Head Sensei submits the member's promotion to AJA's Director of Certification, along with the required fee. No other documentation is required.

Section 2: Teaching Certification

All AJA Head Sensei and Instructors must have AJA certificates attesting to their teaching status. Teaching certification for the Head Sensei is provided when their dojo is certified. Certification of Instructors is provided by the Director of Certification upon application by the Head Sensei.

Head Sensei and Instructors must be legal adults as determined by the U.S. state, country, or territory in which they reside—eighteen (18) years of age at a minimum—and must have completed a concussion awareness training course offered by a recognized organization approved by the AJA Board. Please consult the AJA website for specific

course recommendations and other important training and safety resources pertaining to concussions, CPR, first-aid, etc.

An AJA Head Sensei must, at a minimum, have the rank of Nidan. The minimum rank for AJA-Certified Instructor status is Shodan.

ARTICLE 4: Standardization

Section 1: Criteria for Dojo Membership

One of the main purposes of the AJA is to "maintain high standards of the martial art of ju-jitsu." The AJA recognizes variations in the philosophies, principles, methods, and sequences of instruction across AJA dojos. However, some standardization is necessary, so the AJA has adopted minimum requirements for membership and promotion.

In assessing dojo applications for membership in the AJA, the NSCB reviews the Head Sensei's credentials and the dojo's guidelines and requirements for promotions--among other criteria--to assure that they are consistent with Article 4, Section 3 below, prior to approving the application.

Once a dojo is approved for AJA membership, its guidelines and requirements are regarded as comparable to those of other AJA dojos and acceptable to the AJA. If the applying dojo's guidelines and requirements are not satisfactory, one or more NSCB members may work with the applicant to improve them.

PLEASE NOTE: The guidelines in Sections 2, 3, and 6 below regarding promotional criteria, time in rank, titles, belt colors, etc. are not intended to be narrowly prescriptive, but rather to offer broad organizational principles and general advice.

Section 2: Ranking Systems

The number of rank levels and belt colors may vary across dojos. However, dojos must distinguish between Mudansha (those without black belt rank) and Yudansha (those with black belt rank). Dojo ranking procedures must permit more than one rank to exist in both the Mudansha and Yudansha categories.

Many AJA dojos adhere to a kyu/dan system having eight kyus (Mudansha ranks) and ten dans (Yudansha levels). The ranks below are presented for illustration. AJA dojos not adhering to this system must have viable rank equivalents or equivalence ranges.

Mudansha Ranks (low to high)

- 8th kyu -- Hachikyu -- white belt
- 7th kyu -- Shichikyu -- yellow belt
- 6th kyu -- Rokyu -- green belt
- 5th kyu -- Gokyu -- blue belt
- 4th kyu -- Yonkyu -- purple belt
- 3rd kyu -- Sankyu -- brown belt, one stripe
- 2nd kyu -- Nikyu -- brown belt, two stripes
- 1st kyu -- Ikkyu -- brown belt, three stripes

Yudansha Ranks (low to high)

- 1st dan -- Shodan -- black belt, one stripe
- 2nd dan -- Nidan -- black belt, two stripes
- 3rd dan -- Sandan -- black belt, three stripes
- 4th dan -- Yondan/Yodan -- black belt, four stripes
- 5th dan -- Godan -- black belt, five stripes
- 6th dan -- Rokudan -- red and white belt
- 7th dan -- Shichidan -- red and white belt

8th dan -- Hachidan -- red and white belt

9th dan -- Kudan -- red belt

10th dan -- Judan -- red belt

Section 3. Guidelines for Promotion

A dojo's requirements for promotion are established when the dojo is accepted for AJA membership, and AJA keeps a record of them.

All Yudansha promotions – as well as Mudansha promotions in the three highest kyu's immediately preceding first dan – must be certified by AJA's Director of Certification.

As a general guideline, at least four years of cumulative practice and study are required for a Student starting at the lowest level (e.g., Hachikyu) to be ready to test for 1st dan (Shodan).

In Yudansha promotions, the number of years between one dan level and the next should roughly equal the number of the dan level to which the candidate is being promoted, e.g., two years between 1st and 2nd dan; three years between 2nd and 3rd dan; four years between 3rd and 4th dan. This progression stops at 6th dan; any promotion beyond that requires at least six years. The NSCB may review any promotions that deviate from this advisory.

Technical proficiency assessments, through mat tests or other means, are required for promotions from beginner's level up to and including Godan. All promotions require an understanding of ju-jitsu appropriate to candidates' ranks. Promotion to ranks above Shodan require that the candidate be an AJA-Certified Instructor and that they demonstrate teaching skills appropriate to their rank.

Assessment of the knowledge and skills of candidates for promotion up to and including Godan may include observation of the candidate

teaching classes, leading and teaching seminars, competing in tournaments, and/or comparable activity that demonstrates technical proficiency and teaching ability. Contributions to the AJA and the art of ju-jitsu may be among the criteria for Yudansha promotions, increasingly so for higher Yudansha ranks.

At the rank of Rokudan, a ju-jitsuka's technical skills are assumed to be well-formed and complete. Promotions to Rokudan and above are therefore based primarily on criteria such as:

- A. Contributions to the AJA and/or the art of ju-jitsu;
- B. Length of time and depth of experience teaching and/or practicing Japanese ju-jitsu;
- C. Leadership, teaching, and/or participation in AJA-sponsored events; and
- D. Broader knowledge of the martial arts world.

Section 4: Promotion of New Students in a Dojo

Head Sensei assess the skills and knowledge of new Students from outside the AJA and, with one exception, promote them in the same way they do their incumbent Students. After a period of observation and assessment, the Head Sensei may grant promotion to a rank appropriate for the Student's skills and knowledge, up to the rank of Ikkyu.

However, NSCB is responsible for promoting new Students from outside the AJA to the rank of Shodan and above, according to the NSCB's own criteria and procedures. The procedures may include the NSCB's review of a video demonstrating the candidate's skills.

Section 5: Challenges to Promotions

The promotion of an AJA member may be challenged by another AJA member as unwarranted. The challenge is directed to the NSCB Chair. The NSCB then assesses the merits of the challenge and decides whether the promotion will be recognized by AJA. The NSCB decision may be appealed to the Board.

Section 6: Special Indications of Rank for Higher-Grade Yudansha

The AJA allows for, but does not require, certain special indications of rank and title for Yudansha at 6th dan and above. For example, a red belt with white segmentations may be worn at the rank of Rokudan (6th dan) and above. The title of Professor, or Shihan, may also be awarded to those holding the rank of Rokudan and higher. A solid red belt may be worn at the ranks of Kudan and Judan. (As noted earlier about AJA guidelines, the preceding are suggestions, not requirements.)

Section 7: NSCB Right of Review

The NSCB has the right to review all promotions and may decide to approve or disapprove AJA certification of such promotions.

The following circumstances, among others, may trigger an NSCB review:

- . The promotion is made by an organization other than AJA;
- A. The promotion is made without the involvement of the candidate's Head Sensei;
- B. The promotion is excessive and/or made for the benefit of the Head Sensei;
- C. The Head Sensei/Student relationship is questionable;
- D. A promotion skips one or more ranks/grades (e.g. Ikkyu to Nidan, Shodan to Sandan);

E. The Regional Director requests that the promotion be reviewed by the NSCB.

If the NSCB denies recognition of a promotion for any reason, the NSCB Chair shall notify both the Head Sensei and the candidate of the NSCB's decision and the reason(s) for it. The Head Sensei may appeal the NSCB decision to the Board.

ARTICLE 5: Liability

Section 1: Insurance

All AJA dojos (and AJA-sponsored events) have liability insurance by virtue of the dojo's membership in the organization. For this insurance coverage to be valid for a dojo, it must meet certain conditions:

- A. All members of a dojo must be registered as AJA members;
- B. All dojo and individual memberships in the AJA must be fully paid and current;
- C. All members of a dojo and all active participants in an AJA-sponsored event must sign a standard AJA Participant Release/Waiver form;
- D. If the dojo member or event participant is under the age of eighteen (18)--or otherwise under the age of adulthood in the relevant jurisdiction--that person's parent or legal guardian must sign the waiver.

Section 2: Sponsored Events and Activities

Any event or activity other than regularly scheduled ju-jitsu classes where the name and/or logo of the AJA is used to suggest AJA sponsorship must receive prior approval from the AJA President. Every such event or activity must have a host dojo responsible for requesting the approval, locating the facility, arranging insurance, and taking other measures necessary for the organization and running of the event or activity.

Section 3: Safety

Head Sensei ensure that their classes and events are safe and properly supervised; that all Instructors are trained and capable of supervising their Students; and that Instructors know what to do and NOT to do in an emergency.

In addition to mandatory training in concussion awareness, CPR and first-aid courses are strongly recommended for the Head Sensei and Instructors.

Head Sensei and Instructors should regularly remind Students of the basics of safe practice and ensure that first-aid kits are accessible and well-stocked according to dojo needs.

Please consult the AJA website for specific course recommendations and other important training and safety resources pertaining to concussions, CPR, first-aid, etc.

-END OF CONSTITUTION-