

Judo coaches face chop

Martial art community is divided over plans for national coaching certificate

By Victoria Vaughan

A MOVE to bring all Judo clubs under the control of one association has sparked a campaign headed up by independent instructors determined to thwart the measure.

The Government wants to impose a United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) to ensure a national standard across 31 sports.

The governing body for Judo in the UK, the British Judo Association (BJA), have been given full responsibility for setting standards and awarding the Judo UKCC meaning that to get the certificate all coaches and students will have to become members.

The annual fee for coaches would be £29 and £17 for students.

Save Independent Judo is a campaign that has been formed in response to the news as independent instructors are fighting for their right to choose which association they are affiliated to.

Jim Lawson is a campaign coordinator and runs clubs at St Piran's School and Eton College as well as at Woodlands Park Community Centre in Cox Green.

He said: "If it goes ahead it means all instructors will have to

join the BJA to get a coaching certificate even if they already have one from another association.

"Schools and leisure centres will be forced to only employ people who are BJA accredited and many instructors will just give up.

"The BJA has a reputation of being competitive and it doesn't suit many players of the sport. The campaign aims to challenge the measure before it takes hold."

Mr Lawson has been practising judo for 35 years and depends on the work for his income.

He is a member of the Bushido Zarzen International Society based in Dover.

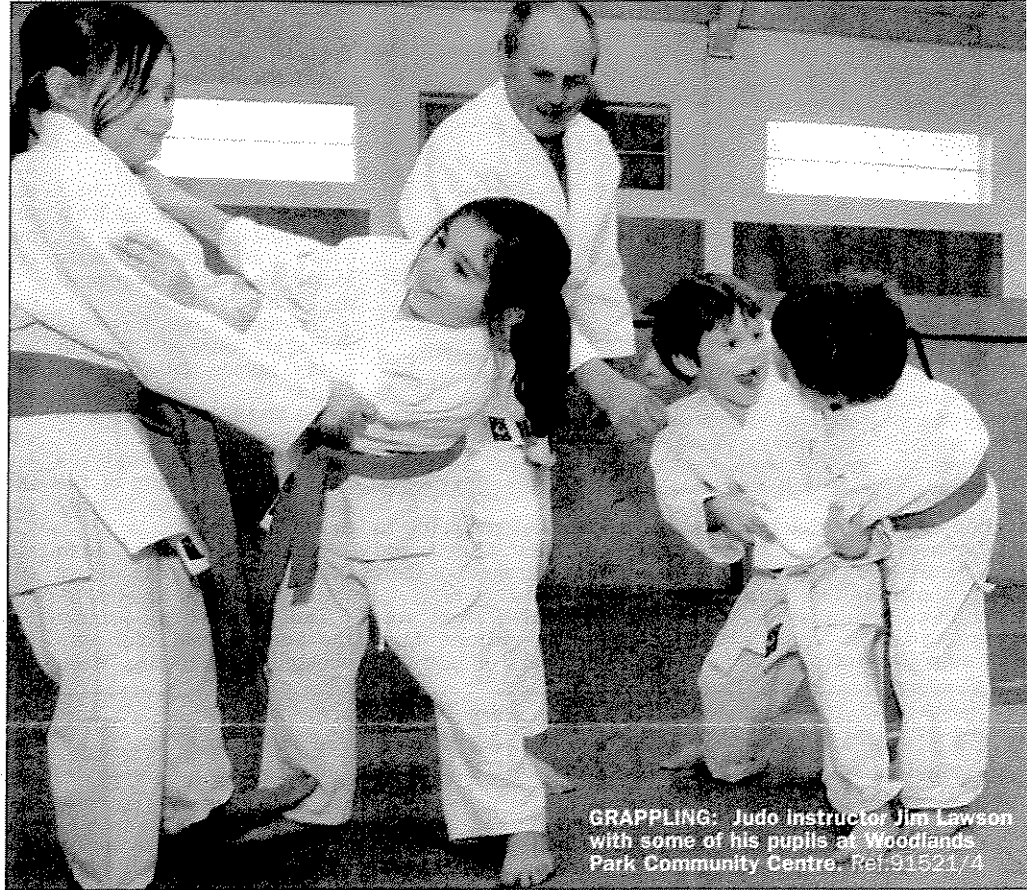
"We all teach virtually identical forms of the sport we just don't belong to the BJA," he added.

The campaign is being run by John Goldman, a tutor of the Japanese martial art, based in Devon.

He said that the BJA is a fund-hungry organisation.

"There are in excess of 150,000 instructors happily doing their job, performing a community service in keeping young people off the streets and instilling in them a sense of good manners.

"These instructors will be prevented from getting the award unless



GRAPPLING: Judo instructor Jim Lawson with some of his pupils at Woodlands Park Community Centre. Ref:91521/4

they are a member of the BJA and it is possible that some instructors will be debarred and all other judo organisations will be forced to disband," said Goldman.

Scott McCarthy, Chief Executive of the BJA, called independent judo instructors outlaws and pirates.

"We have 45,000 members and 35 full time employees, we have to have comprehensive insurance, risk management and a child protection program.

"We are not out to crush the independent judo campaign as far as we are concerned it doesn't exist.

"These instructors have basically issued their own qualifications and if these renegades fall off the tree and decide to stop practising judo rather than join the BJA to obtain the UKCC we won't notice it at all."

Sports Coach UK is the charitable organisa-

tion that has been charged with overseeing the UKCC for all the 31 sports by Sport England.

Once the BJA has set the standards for the UKCC and they have been approved by Sports Coach UK they will come into effect though a no date has been set.



Are you an outlaw, a pirate or a renegade? Read what BJA Chief Executive Scott McCarthy says above.

This article appeared in the Maidenhead Advertiser Jan 27 2006.

Join the campaign, a petition form is enclosed.