



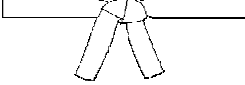
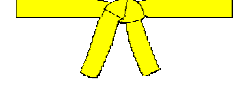




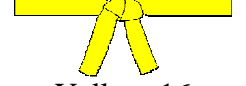


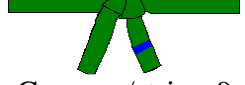
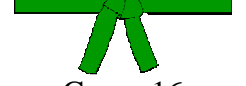







Southwestern Pennsylvania Judo, LLC.





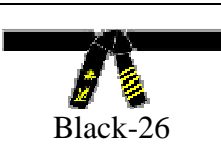
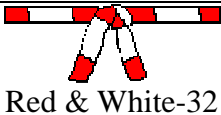
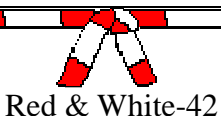


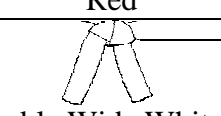
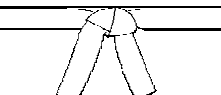

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JUDO RANK SYSTEM

At SWPA Judo juniors ages 5 – 15 are promoted with 10 student (kyu) ranks. Senior ranks begin at age 16 with 6 kyu ranks. Junior Ik-kyu advances to Senior San-kyu at age 14 and at least 1 year in rank.

Rank	Sr. Belt Color & Min. Age	Jr. Belt Color & Min. Age	Min. Time in Rank
		 White-5	0 Months
Ju-kyu 10 th Grade		 Yellow-5	3-6 Months
Ku-kyu 9 th Grade		 Yellow w/stripe-6	3-6 Months
Hachi-kyu 8 th Grade		 Orange-6	3-6 Months
Shishi-kyu 7 th Grade	 White-16	 Orange w/stripe-7	0 Months/ 6-9 Months
Ro-kyu 6 th Grade	 Yellow-16	 Green-8	3-6 Months/ 6-9 Months
Go-kyu 5 th Grade	 Orange-16	 Green w/stripe-9	3-6 Months/ 6-9 Months
Yon-kyu 4 th Grade	 Green-16	 Blue-10	6-9 Months
San-kyu 3 rd Grade	 Brown-14/16	 Blue w/stripe-11	9 Months - 1 Year
Ni-kyu 2 nd Grade	 Brown-15/16	 Purple-12	9 Months - 1 Year
Ik-kyu 1 st Grade	 Brown-16	 Purple w.stripe-13	1 Year
All Kyu (student) ranks are club level. All Dan (black belt) ranks are at the state or national level.			

Sho-dan 1 st Degree	 Black-15	All of Nage-no-kata or 10 of 15 sets of Ju-no- kata (women only)	6 Months- 3 Years
Ni-dan 2 nd Degree	 Black-16	Local referee cert. or Coaching Cert. All of Kateme-no-kata or all of Ju-no kata (women only)	6 Months- 4 Years
San-dan 3 rd Degree	 Black-18	Regional referee cert. or Coaching Cert. Ju-no kata	1-6 Years
Yo-dan 4 th Degree	 Black-21	National referee cert. Kime-no-kata or Kodokan Goshin-jitsu	1-8 Years
Go-dan 5 th Degree	 Black-26	National teacher/coaching cert. National refereeing & judging Kime-no-kata or Kodokan Goshin-jitsu	1.5-10 Years
<p>In <i>Joshi</i> or <i>Woman's Judo</i>, persons who hold a black belt rank are awarded a special black belt that has a white stripe down the center. This belt is only awarded to a woman. And represents the <i>Pure</i> form of Judo as they do not rely on strength like most men do. However most woman prefer a normal black belt like men.</p>			
Roku-dan 6 th Degree	 Red & White-32	Substantial contributions to Judo Superior proficiency in all of the above katas	5-15 Years
Shichi-dan 7 th Degree	 Red & White-42	Excellent proficiency in all of the above katas and either Itsutsu-nokata or Koshiki-no-kata	6-18 Years
Hachi-dan 8 th Degree	 Red & White-55	Mastery of principals & philosophy of Judo Excellent proficiency in all of the above katas.	9-21 Years
Ku-dan 9 th Degree *	 Red		
Ju-dan 10 th Degree **	 Double Wide White or Red		
<p>* Mrs. Keiko Fukuda 9th Dan, makes her the highest ranked and oldest woman in judo alive today. (Born, April 12, 1913) She teaches at the Soko Joshi Judo Club in San Francisco, CA. ** There have only been 15 10th Dan ranks awarded by the Kodokan to date. Profiles of Kodokan 10th Dan Holders.</p>			
Ju-ichi-dan 11 th Degree †			
Ju-ni-dan 12 th Degree †			

† Only Dr. Jigoro Kano himself was awarded the 11th and 12th Dan ranks. They were awarded after his death by order of the Kodokan and Japanese Government. He was also awarded the title of Shihan.

Most black belts will wear a normal (plain) black belt most of the time, some may have stripes (rank tabs) or not, it is a personal preference at this level. Master Kano was fond of a normal black belt for class; and in fact most black belts will wear the same belt throughout their career so much so that it becomes white with age, this is why the 10th dan is symbolically a white belt. It symbolizes "*Full Circle*" White to Black and then back to White.

How do I get promoted, when will I get my black belt?

Dr. Jigoro Kano divided ranks into two major categories: dan ranks for graded and kyu ranks for non-graded practitioners. He then subdivided black belt grades as described above. Kyu ranks are named in reverse order (lowest number being highest rank) to signify how many promotions there are to the first black belt. Interestingly, the first black belt grade is called shodan rather than ichidan. Many students view shodan as the end of a quest, culminating years of practice. They think shodan rank makes them experts. Although reaching shodan rank is significant, it is but the beginning of training. The kanji (Japanese character) for "sho" in shodan means to begin or start. It does not mean numeral one. Attainment of shodan might be compared to receiving a high school diploma with the expectation of attending college.

Sensei's Zen answer: "*The question is not when you will get your black belt, but when your black belt will find you*".

Students are ranked according to skill and knowledge of and their contribution to Judo, that grade being reflected in the color of the belt. We try not to focus on "Belt Color", the belt is only as good as the one who wears it. It is better to focus on learning Judo and the more practical use of the belt, to keep your gi (uniform) closed, and not on its color.

With that being said unlike other westernized martial arts like some karate styles where they say you may get your black belt in a year, this is simply not true in judo. In fact the youngest you are even eligible to have a black belt in judo is 15 years old and it is extremely rare to obtain a black belt before the age of 18. There are always rare exceptions to this rule. (National Judo Champion, fighting adults of dan grade and winning "*Batsugan*", or simultaneous promotion; extremely rare.)

The national organizations (USJI, USJA, USJF) set requirements that must be followed for promotion, they can be interpreted on a per-club basis up to Sho-dan. You will be notified if and when you are eligible for promotion, and what needs to be done to get promoted.

A black belt is not something you "Get", it's something you EARN.