

# The Impact of New Rule Changes In Judo: A Comparison of Points and Penalties during Grand Slam Paris between 2016 And 2017

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**ABSTRACT:** In 2016 the International Judo Federation (IJF) started to test new rules to promote the rules of judo and make them easier to understand as well as to simplify them. IJF stated that the purpose of these rules was to give priority to the attack and to the realization of *ippons*. Duration of the competition for both women and men was changed as 4 min. Points and penalties were rearranged; thus important changes were made (IJF Refereeing Rules 2017). The aim of this study was to compare the points and penalties before and after the rule changes in judo. The data were obtained from the judo world tour and ranking list website (<http://www.judobase.org>). Archive data from this official site are open-access and there are no ethical issues involved in the analysis. The data were collected from the scoreboards directly, so includes any errors made by volunteer operators. The chi square test for linear trends in proportions was used to evaluate differences in the scores and penalties in Judo Grand Slam Paris between the 2016 and 2017. The odds ratio was used to estimate effect size. Statistical significance was set at a level of  $p < 0.05$ . The frequency of *ippon* and *hansoku-make* did not significantly change after the new rules in men and women ( $p > 0.05$ ). The new rules caused to increase in *wazari* score for both group, while decreasing total number of *shido* only for men ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Keywords:** Judo, Rule change, Match.

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## INTRODUCTION

Judo has been exposed to rule changes for many reasons since its appearance as an Olympic sport in 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics (European Judo Union-EJU, 2017). These changes include weight categories, match duration, *judogi* colours (blue-white) and usage of the *tatami* (Brousse & Matsumoto, 1999). In order for judo to be more attractive and watchable, World Judo Tour which is a series of competitions with the prize money and creation of World Ranking List was added to International Judo Federation program (Franchini et al., 2013). Besides all these changes, in 2010 some rules were modified to make the sport more appealing for people and to promote it "positive" which means a non-stop struggle of the athletes to make *ippon* (maximal score) during the whole match (Boguszewski, 2011; Ito et al., 2013). New rules were proposed to be tested from Paris Grand Slam to World

Championship in 2013. These rules were used till the end of 2016 Olympic Games in London. In 2017, new changes were suggested to make judo more watchable and understandable by the public (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2017).

Considering time limits in senior category, eliminations and semi-finals were 10 min and finals were 20 min at 1956 World Championship in Tokyo. In 1987, eliminations lasted for 5 min and semi-finals and finals lasted for 7 min at World Championship in Essen. With a new modification in 1988 match duration were 5 min for men and 4 min for women at Olympic Games. In 2003, match durations were changed again as 5 min for both men and women (Suganami et al., 2005). In 2013 with another change, match duration was 5 min for men and 4 min for women (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2013) and last change was made in 2017 which made the match duration 4 min for both men and women (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2008).

From 1956 World Championship in Tokyo to 2001 World Championship in Munich *hantei* system (one of the competitors was chosen as winner by three referees with white or blue flags) was used to end the contest. Then, golden score was applied to be neutral (Suganami et al., 2005), golden score was limited to 3 min in 2008 (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2008). In 2013, in case of a tie in the match time limit was abolished (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2008). That means that the match goes on after official match duration until one of the competitors gets a point or is penalized. This rule was not changed with the new modification in 2017 (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2017).

With the rule changes made in 2013, when a competitor gets a penalty (*shido*) the other gets no score any more which means only points can surpasses penalties except *hansoku-make* (disqualification). In standing up position, if a competitor holds below the belt they are disqualified and some grips and grip breaks are penalized (breaking a grip with two hands, by using legs and by hitting the opponent). Moreover, one referee controls the match supervised a group of referees with access to video replay during the match. Another important change was weigh-in; weigh-in is conducted one day before the competition (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2013).

When rules were modified again in 2017, new rules include time limit, points, immobilization (*Osei-komi*), importance of points and penalties, number of the penalties, behaviors improper to judo spirit (Running out of the mat or any attempt to escape from the fight), throw and counter-attack. Time limit was 4 min for both men and women. *Yuko* score which was seen on the scoreboard before is not used anymore to make judo more understandable by the public. *Ippon* and *wazari* scores are used but two *wazari* were equal to an *ippon* and thus end the match before the rule change but now it is just seen on the board and two *wazari* make no *ippon* anymore. Immobilization time was decreased to 20 seconds; between 10-19 seconds the athlete can get *wazari* and 20<sup>th</sup> second ends the competition with *ippon*. In a case of equality of scores the contest will continue in Golden Score. Any scores and / or penalties from regular time will remain on the score board. The decision in Golden Score is made by the difference of scores or *shido*. Any action against the spirit of Judo will be penalized by *hansoku-make*. If an opponent attempt to avoid landing on his back by any movement which is dangerous for the head, neck or spine, s/he is penalized with *hansoku-make* and landing on both elbows is considered valid and is evaluated with *Waza-ari* (IJF Refereeing Rules, 2017).

Because previous rule changes were not successful in making judo more active and watchable, new rule changes put into practice in 2017 aimed at increasing number of scores, especially *ippon* and decreasing penalties. In this sense, the aim of this study was to investigate the effects of new rules in 2017 on scores and penalties.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *Data Sample and Statistics*

The data in this study were provided from official results web-site of International Judo Federation (<http://www.ippon.org>). Because the data were provided from open access website and athletes' personal information was not used, there are no ethical issues in analyzing or interpreting these data (Morley & Thomas, 2005). All the data were recorded directly from the scoreboard so there was no mistake in terms of recording the scores and penalties.

Chi-square test for trend was used to analyze percentage changes in obtained scores in Paris Grand Slams in different years. The magnitude of association was determined with odds-ratio. Significance level was set at 0.05. Odds-ratio (OR) values and confidence limit were calculated.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 presents the total number of scores and penalties for males competing in 2016 and 2017 Paris Grand Slam and table 2 presents for women.

**Table 1.** Scores and penalties during Men’s 2016 and 2017 Grand Slam Paris.

	PARIS 2016	PARIS 2017
Total fights	374	280
Ippon	200	168
Waza-ari	85	215
Yuko	152	-
Shido 1	212	168
Shido 2	340	196
Shido 3	234	132
Shido 4	104	-
Hansokumake	9	11

There was not a significant increase in frequency of *ippon* ( $\chi^2=2.77$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=0.77; %95 CI= 0.56-1.05). However, there was a significant frequency of *wazari* ( $\chi^2=188.46$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; OR=0.09; %95 CI= 0.06-0.13). Total number of scores in men did not change significantly ( $\chi^2=2.23$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=1.17; %95 CI= 0.95-1.44). Total number of penalties significantly decreased in men judo athletes ( $\chi^2=9.31$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). There was no significant change in frequency of *hansoku-make* in men ( $\chi^2=1.25$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=0.60; %95 CI= 0.25-1.48).

**Table 2.** Scores and penalties during Women’s 2016 and 2017 Grand Slam Paris.

	PARIS 2016	PARIS 2017
Total fights	225	171
Ippon	109	92
Waza-ari	45	137
Yuko	81	-
Shido 1	124	93
Shido 2	164	124
Shido 3	78	75
Shido 4	8	-
Hansokumake	2	0

Frequency of *ippon* in women judo athletes did not change significantly ( $\chi^2=1.12$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=0.81; %95 CI= 0.54-1.20). There was a significant increase in frequency of *wazari* ( $\chi^2=141.38$ ,  $p<0.05$ ; OR=0.06; %95 CI= 0.04-0.10). There was not a significant change in total number of points ( $\chi^2=3.27$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=1.28; %95 CI= 0.98-1.68). There was not a significant change in total number of *Shido* ( $\chi^2=0.44$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=1.03; %95 CI= 0.80-1.32). No significant change was investigated in the frequency of *hansoku-make* ( $\chi^2=1.53$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; OR=0.99; %95 CI= 0.98-1.00).

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The main result of this study was that new rule changes implemented in 2017 did not affect the number of *ippon* and total number of scores though these changes were effective in terms of decreasing the total number of

penalties when these rules were evaluated just in terms of points and penalties by ignoring activities during the match.

It seems that the new rules did not provide the desired effects on judo competitions in terms of increasing *ippon* frequencies, which was explained by Franchini et al (2013) indicating that the athletes may have stopped to search for scores upon being in the advantageous position till the end of the match by decreasing his/her attempts to get a score, refraining from being counterattacked in addition to blocking opponents' attack with a defensive posture. In this study, *ippon* and *shido* frequencies did not change between the years but frequency of *wazari* changed in women athletes due to absence of *yuko* score after the implementation of new rules. As for men athletes, *ippon* and total score frequencies did not change but frequency of *shido* decreased which was expected in accordance with the new rules while frequency of *wazari* increased because of the same reason mentioned above. Conversely, after the rule change in 2013 Franchini et al (2013) stated that the rule changes in 2013 increased the frequency of *ippon* for men but not for women athletes and increased significantly total number of *shido* for both men and women athletes, while decreasing the frequency of *wazari*. According to Balafoutas et al (2013), the audience preferred seeing positive technical scores to watching a combat dominated with *shidos*. This was what the new rule changes would have brought but in our study we didn't examine any increase in number of *ippon* while seeing that total number of *shidos* decreased. Moreover, the increasing frequency of *wazari* resulted from the absence of *yuko*.

This study had some constraints; first, the data is limited to the scores and penalties provided from the scoreboards. Thus, the activities and attacks of the athletes during the competition were not evaluated. It is well known that the duration of a match can affect the number of scores and penalties but there is no information concerning the duration of the matches. In the future studies, if the rule change is supported with activity numbers, numbers and durations of the combat in standing position and groundwork and total match duration, the effects of the rule change can be demonstrated more powerfully. Moreover, carrying out a study about rule change with the data provided from European or World Championships and Olympic Games will give more detailed information about the effects of the rule changes.

The rule changes resulted in increase of *wazari* score and decrease in penalties in men athletes while resulting in no change in the frequency of *ippon* for both sexes, total number *shidos* in women athletes and frequency of *hansoku-make* in both sexes. It is advised for a similar research to investigate whether advantageous athletes decrease frequency of attacks in a defensive position in order to keep their situations. Also, a survey may be implemented to both specialized and non-specialized judo audiences to get feedbacks about the new rule changes.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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