Olympic Games, London 2012 - PREVIEW

From July 28th to August 3rd, 2012, the Olympic Games will be held in the British capital, London. During seven days, the best judo players in the world, coming from 133 countries, will try to get the most prestigious title of their sports career. Find hereafter the preview of the Games, category by category.

Women’s -48kg

There was not one, nor two, but three Japanese athletes who entered the World Ranking list in the top twelve and therefore were qualified for the London Games. But the rule is clear, only one athlete per country and per weight category can attend the Olympics and it was a difficult choice for Japan to differentiate Misato Nakamura and Yuka Nishida. The second one, who is currently the world number 1, was bronze medallist at the world championship 2007, not bad for a first attempt at the international level. One year later, Nakamura also obtained the bronze medal, this time it was in Beijing, when she was only 19 years old, on the occasion of the Olympic Games and that experience might have made the difference. Or may it is the fact that she managed a few losses against European fighters, the only one having defeated her being the French Gneto, during the Judo Grand Slam, Paris 2011. After Beijing, the two champions won all the world titles, for Nakamura and one for Nishida, who will probably retire after the games and become a coach. So, Nakamura will be the ultimate favorite in London, and Nishida seems to really be in position to challenge her. But the Olympic Games are different from any other competitions and Nakamura/Bayarzundaa (MGL), World number 2, Erika MIYAZAWA (JPN) or Sonoko HADDOA (ALG), bronze medallist in Beijing 2008 and winner of the African Championship this year, as well as KEL-MENDI Majindia (LFI), Natalia KUZUINA (RUS) or Priscilla GNETO (FRA), could be considered having a good potential for a medal.

Women’s -52kg

The favorite of the women’s -52kg weight category again will be a Japanese athlete, Kaori Matsumoto, who will probably end up to bring her brilliant career in London. As she promised to the magazine ‘l’Esprit du Judo’, after the Games, she wants to become a judo coach, a pastry cook or an astronaut. But before that, she would like to add the second Olympic gold to her already incredible prize list. The judo world discovered her in 2008, when she won the Kosen Cup. In 2009, when she was still beatable, the French Morgan Ribout, sent her back home, with her outstanding uchi-mata, during the World Championship in Rotterdam. Then, she had a perfect season in 2010, concluded with the world title. 2011 was a little bit more complicated and nobody seems to be really in position to match her. As she is the fact that she obtained a promising silver medal on the occasion of the Judo Grand Slam, Paris 2012, defea-ting the Belgian Charlotte Van Snick and the Romanian and Olympic Champion, Alina Dumitru. Earlier this year, she also obtained a promising silver medal on the international level. The women’s -48kg will definitely be one of the most attractive categories of the Olympic tournament.

Women’s -63kg

The women’s -63kg has two leaders: the Japanese Yoshie UENO, who would love to add an Olympic Medal to her prize list (her sister, Masae, having won 2 Olympic titles), and the French Gabrielle EMANUEL, already world champion in two different weight categories (-70 and -43), who would like to definitely prove that she is the best. The opposition between the two champions should be the fight of the Games in this category. One year ago, Ueno was ‘easily’ leading the world ranking list, and was actually the competitor with the most points at the World Ranking List (men and women). As a consequence of her regular good results, she was designated as the best current female judoka on the occasion of the 60th birthday of the IJF, celebrated just before the world championships in Paris. But Germaine EMANUEL won the World title, a few days later and took the lead of the World Ranking. Last January, Ueno won the World Master in Almaty, retaining the first position, but Emane was not present. If Ueno might end her career after London 2012 and become an international coach, Emane has already announced that she wants to prepare the 2013 World Championships in Rio. Just behind the two champions, several athletes have the potential to reach a medal, if not THE medal. China will be present as well as the Netherlands, with strong outsiders, who will send a very good outsider in the name of Alice SCHWERTNER, from Germany (GER), believed until the last moment, that she will be the representative of her country in London, Munkhbaatar TSEDEVSUREN, from Mongolia, 7th at the Tokyo World Championship, two years ago, and the Frenchwomen, with no doubt, will be the French, Lucie TACHIMOTO or Priscilla GNETO, from France, to win the world title in Paris. But in Tokyo, Akari Ogata defeated the American, before being defeated by her in Paris, on the occasion of the Judo Slam. Since Paris, Harrison has been the leader of her judo and she won all the tournaments she was engaged in. Last February, in Paris, Mayra Aguiar also showed that she was in the position to win the Olympics. She beat sach Tscheumio, who was actually co- chairman of the organizing committee of the tournament, but she was defeated in the final, against the runner-up, the Italian Dalila ZABLOTTA, from Hungary, Anamari VELIKONICA (SLO) will be one of the favorites of the tournament. With so many favorites and outsiders, the prediction is very hard. But for sure, the category -63kg will definitely be one of the most attractive categories of the Olympic tournament.

Women’s -70kg

In 2011, the favorite of the competition, with no doubt, will be the French, Lucie Decosse. Back in 2008, she was already one of the favorites of the Olympic tournament, but she was defeated in the final by the Japanese, Ayumi Imanishi. For four years, the French has been the best competitor of her weight category and nobody seemed to be able to challenge her... but last February, Haruka Tachimoto showed her that everything was possible. For the first time in her career, she obtained a difficult choice for Japan to differentiate. The women’s -70kg will be one of the most difficult categories of the London Games. Three athletes can attend the Olympics and it was not easy for Japan. The new choice was the one she had to loose in the last minute, to remotivate herself in the perspective of the Games. But the rule is clear, only one athlete per country and per weight category can attend the Olympics and it was a difficult choice for Japan to differentiate. Misato Nakamura and Yuka Nishida, the second one, who is currently the world number 1, was bronze medallist at the world championship 2007, not bad for a first attempt at the international level. One year later, Nakamura also obtained the bronze medal, this time it was in Beijing, when she was only 19 years old, on the occasion of the Olympic Games and that experience might have made the difference. Or may it is the fact that she managed a few losses against European fighters, the only one having defeated her being the French Gneto, during the Judo Grand Slam, Paris 2011. After Beijing, the two champions won all the world titles, for Nakamura and one for Nishida, who will probably retire after the games and become a coach. So, Nakamura will be the ultimate favorite in London, and Nishida seems to really be in position to challenge her. But the Olympic Games are different from any other competitions and Nakamura/Bayarzundaa (MGL), World number 2, Erika MIYAZAWA (JPN) or Sonoko HADDOA (ALG), bronze medallist in Beijing 2008 and winner of the African Championship this year, as well as KEL-MENDI Majindia (LFI), Natalia KUZUINA (RUS) or Priscilla GNETO (FRA), could be considered having a good potential for a medal.

Women’s -78kg

The category -78kg will definitely be one of the most attractive categories of the Olympic tournament. One year ago, Ueno was ‘easily’ leading the world ranking list, and was actually the competitor with the most points at the World Ranking List (men and women). As a consequence of her regular good results, she was designated as the best current female judoka on the occasion of the 60th birthday of the IJF, celebrated just before the world championships in Paris. But Germaine EMANUEL won the World title, a few days later and took the lead of the World Ranking. Last January, Ueno won the World Master in Almaty, retaining the first position, but Emane was not present. If Ueno might end her career after London 2012 and become an international coach, Emane has already announced that she wants to prepare the 2013 World Championships in Rio. Just behind the two champions, several athletes have the potential to reach a medal, if not THE medal. China will be present as well as the Netherlands, with strong outsiders, who will send a very good outsider in the name of Alice SCHWERTNER, from Germany (GER), believed until the last moment, that she will be the representative of her country in London, Munkhbaatar TSEDEVSUREN, from Mongolia, 7th at the Tokyo World Championship, two years ago, and the Frenchwomen, with no doubt, will be the French, Lucie TACHIMOTO or Priscilla GNETO, from France, to win the world title in Paris. But in Tokyo, Akari Ogata defeated the American, before being defeated by her in Paris, on the occasion of the Judo Slam. Since Paris, Harrison has been the leader of her judo and she won all the tournaments she was engaged in. Last February, in Paris, Mayra Aguiar also showed that she was in the position to win the Olympics. She beat sach Tscheumio, who was actually co- chairman of the organizing committee of the tournament, but she was defeated in the final, against the runner-up, the Italian Dalila ZABLOTTA, from Hungary, Anamari VELIKONICA (SLO) will be one of the favorites of the tournament. With so many favorites and outsiders, the prediction is very hard. But for sure, the category -63kg will definitely be one of the most attractive categories of the Olympic tournament.

Women’s +78kg

The category +78kg, which will be the strongest category of the tournament as the four leaders of the world ranking list will try to win the gold medal, and each of them has the potential to do so. Over the past two years, the weight category has changed many times. The whole story began when the four competitors were still juniors. Two years ago, when Kayla Harrison became world champion in Tokyo, the match was transformed into a titanic battle. One year later it was the turn of Audrey Tcheumio, from France, to win the world title in Paris. But in Tokyo, Akari Ogata defeated the American, before being defeated by her in Paris, on the occasion of the Judo Slam. Since Paris, Harrison has been the leader of her judo and she won all the tournaments she was engaged in. Last February, in Paris, Mayra Aguiar also showed that she was in the position to win the Olympics. She beat sach Tscheumio, who was actually co- chairman of the organizing committee of the tournament, but she was defeated in the final, against the runner-up, the Italian Dalila ZABLOTTA, from Hungary, Anamari VELIKONICA (SLO) will be one of the favorites of the tournament. With so many favorites and outsiders, the prediction is very hard. But for sure, the category -63kg will definitely be one of the most attractive categories of the Olympic tournament.
tains a constant level, but with her two world titles, she will be also one of the favorites of the tournament. Bronze medalists of the last 2008, and silver list at the Open World Championships in Rio 2007, Lucija Poljanci (SLO), will try, with SAAIRI, to demonstrate her strength. Just behind, the Russians or Idalis ORTIZ (CUB), already Olympic medallist, or Leon ALTHEMANN (BRA), Gisela KOCATAUK (TUR) will be the outsiders, when Anne-Catherine MONDIERE, from France dreams of a career in a high end.

Men’s 60kg
Judo has had two athletes qualified for the Games, and finally it was HIRAOKA Hidetoshi, who was designated by the All Japan Judo Federation instead of YAMAMOTO Hirofumi, even if YAMAMOTO had a better ranking in the World Ranking List. But HIRAOKA has been present on almost all the podiums in the international competitions over the last two years. Nevertheless, in London, he is expected to be a candidate for the bronze medal. Since then, WANG has won many gold medals: in the Judo Grand Prix, Abu Dhabi of 2010, he made a mistake at the end of the competition. But with such a level, nobody is assured to step on the podium, and surprises can occur.

Men’s 81kg
The men’s -81kg is a very interesting weight category. Light middleweights, because they have the potential to catch the gold medal. Of course, one will have to keep an eye on the Japanese fighter, TAKAEKI Nakai, even if he was never able to win a medal on the occasion of an international championship. The major favorite will be world number one, KIM Ki-Jung, already Olympic silver medalist and two times World Champion. But to become the world number one, from Brazil, Leandro Guilheiro, will definitely have something to say in this category. He is better than his two Olympic bronze medals, which represents a high longevity in the sport.

Men’s 90kg
Already Olympic Champion, and two times World silver medallist, KHAIBULAEV, instead of its World number one, from Russia. Alain SCHMITT (FRA), who won the title in the men’s -73kg weight class, is again in London 2012. All eyes will be concentrated on Rishod SOBIROV, from Uzbekistan. The unquestionable number one, with almost twice the points as the number two, and designated best current judo player in the world, he is also world number one. His birthday at the July, last Summer, SOBIROV, will be the grand favorite of the Olympic tournament. Nevertheless, the thing is written in advance and the thing is shown. But to become World Champion, we will have to see this in the Olympic tournament. And to become World Champion, replacing Mori Nishiyama (Daiki) of the category, who has already Olympic medallist against the other contestants.

Men’s 100kg
Takahama ANAI (JPN) long time World Champion, may be still able to get his second gold medal at London 2012. Of course one will have to keep an eye on the Japanese fighter, TAKAEKI Nakai, even if he was never able to win a medal on the occasion of an international championship. But with only a fifth place on the occasion of the last European Cup in Prague in June, it looks like nothing is written in advance. The Olympic bronze medalist and two times World silver medallist, Henk GROL (NED), wants to prove to the world that he is still a strong outsider for this title. This is possible after Zeevi’s demonstration during the last European Championship in Russia. Certainties and uncertainties are the key words of the men’s -100kg category and it makes the forecast almost impossible.
The list of the countries eligible for an invitation to participate in the London 2012 Olympic Games has officially been released. Please find hereafter the list of the countries and names of the athletes who will be receiving an invitation. 116 countries have already qualified for the London 2012 Olympic Games, after the Olympic qualification process (direct qualification and/or continental qualification), which ended after the last continental championships a few weeks ago. 20 more invitations still had to be attributed. After the meeting of the Tripartite Commission, the list was officially released on June 12th. Due to the important number of countries already qualified and due to the strict rules of the IOC concerning the invitations, 17 countries received an invitation to participate in the Games. The remaining invitations will go back to the International Judo Federation, which will designate the invited athletes based on the World Ranking List.

Monaco
- SICCARDI Yann

Lebanon
- CHAMMAS Caen

Belize
- SANCHEZ Eddaryms

Honduras
- GODOY GODDY Kenny Alexander

Rhonda
- SEKAMANA URAHE Fred Yanick

Dhruvri
- RAGUIB Sally Faissal Abdourahman

Cambridge
- KHOM Ratansakiny

Guyana
- LALL Raul

American Samoa
- LIU Anthony

Togo
- DENDAHOY Koami Sacha

Afghanistan
- FAIZZADA Ajmal

Aruba
- MATIA Jayne Lee

Benin
- GHANOU Jocelyn

Paraguay
- ACLEDOZ Ahmed

Myanmar
- AUNG Aye Aye

Liberia
- SARPEE Lila

Burundi
- NYAHOUVUKIYE Odette

The IJF attributes the 3 remaining position for the Olympic Games

The IJF has attributed the 3 remaining places, which were left after the tripartite commission had attributed 17 invitations for the Olympic Games. The 3 remaining places after the distribution of the Tripartite places returned to the qualification system, as per the Qualification Rules. They were granted to the three best ranked athletes in the WRL, regardless of category or gender. The three athletes qualified according to the above are:

-70 kg BARRIERI, Ericha (ITA)
-57 kg MELANCON, Joliane (CAN)
-52 kg SUNDBERG, Jaana (FIN)

The first Palestinian
To be qualified for the Games will be a Judoka

ABU RMLAH Maher was born in East Jerusalem and he will be the first ever Palestinian athlete to be ‘qualified’ for the Olympic Games that will be held next summer.

During the qualification process, the 29-year-old athlete obtained 20 precious points, which are synonymous of qualification and therefore he did not need an invitation. «It is the very first time in the history of our country, that an athlete will go to the Games, thanks to his sports capacities only. He did qualify himself and thus did not need to be invited, as it is the case for all the other Palestinian participants, who will go to London», declared with delight Haní al-Halabi, the Palestinian head of delegation for London 2012.

With his points, ABU RMLAH Maher will be present in the British capital and will be competing in the men’s -73kg. If he will be the only athlete from his country to go to London with a direct qualification, furthermore it is the first time in the sports history that a Palestinian will not need an invitation from the International Olympic Committee to participate in an Olympic event.

«I feel good and I am really proud to be qualified for the Olympics», explained the young champion, before adding: «I am so thrilled to go to London. I did something great with my qualification. I know that.»

«It is a big step forward for Palestine», explained the IJF President, Mr. Marius Vizer. «Thanks to the World Ranking list and the qualification process that we have implemented since 2007, we have opened the doors to many countries, which couldn’t imagine to participate without an invitation. Judoka is definitely a universal sport», added the IJF President.

In fact, in 2012, 116 countries have qualified for the Games. This is definitely a record. And 20 more judoka, from around the world will also be invited. Africa has 24 countries already qualified, Europe 40, Asia 21, Oceania 10 and Pan America 21. Only 4 countries have qualified their 14 athletes (one per category). Japan, Korea, France and Brazil. Great Britain, as the hosting country, will also have 14 judo players present during the games.«

A High Performance Perfume
African IJF Olympic Training Center

Nestled in the heart of the forest of the small city of Sidi Fredj, a few hundred meters from the Mediterranean seashore, the small holiday resort, which was chosen to host the IJF Olympic training center, over the past weeks, has taken on a high performance perfume. Here one can train hard and with fervor. Bodies and minds are strained. But the atmosphere is relaxed. It can be easily noticed that the Olympic qualifications are over and that there is no more pressure to get results and points… at least until July and August.

All the athletes that are still present in May 2012 are now getting ready for the Olympics and are taking real pleasure in being together, sweating together, living together, with one single goal: to get to the British capital as fit as possible. The general opinion is that everything has not been easy and that the challenge was very tough, as is was highly competitive. «It was difficult and complicated at the very beginning, because we did not know really where we were putting our feet, but the unwavering support of the IJF has been a great help. The financial and logistical support provided by the Algerian Government and by the Algerian Judo Federation, headed by Dr. Ali Bendjema, also allowed us to offer the best service possible to all countries.»

Unwavering Commitment of Algeria
Gradually, the center which is funded by the IJF and the Algerian government (full board accommodation of the athletes, medical expenses, visa fees, airfare for the participation in international competitions, some travels from the country of origin of the athletes, bonuses …), with the strong support from the Algerian Judo Federation and various national federations whose athletes were present in Algiers, reached its cruising speed, and for the members, Sidi Fredj has become a second home.

A Real Challenge
This taste of challenge and the need to ‘roll up your sleeves’ is widely shared. Gabriel Sampa does not say the contra-
ry. At the request of the IJF President, Marius Vizer, the sporting director has presented on the shores of the Medi-
terranean Sea, just 40 km from Algiers, since the beginning of the adventure, and he can be considered as the pillar of the center and its orchestra conductor. Initially assisted by Dani Ghourghi, who accompanied him throughout the beginning of the whole story (Dani is now in South Africa), Gabriel Sampa could talk for hours about the life of the center. For two years he has put his life on hold for the center and its orchestra conductor. Gradually, the center which is funded by the IJF and the Algerian govern-
ment (full board accommodation of the athletes, medical expenses, visa fees, airfare for the participation in international competitions, some travels from the country of origin of the athletes, bonuses …), with the strong support from the Algerian Judo Federation and various national federations whose athletes were present in Algiers, reached its cruising speed, and for the members, Sidi Fredj has become a second home.

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The Doors of the Highest Judoka Level
If you ask the ‘coach’, as everyone calls Gabriel here, how many medals his ath-
letes could get in London, the answer is straightforward: ‘It will be hard, even though I know that some athletes from the center have great potential and are now able to give stiff competition to the world’s best, as it was the case for ‘Dédel’ (Dieudonné DOLASSEM, -90 kg, Cameroon) at the World Championships in Paris last year, where he won several rounds before being defeated due to a small error. But there is still work to do, technical work of course but also phys-
ical work and mental preparation. We still have a few weeks in front of us.»

Dieudonné does not say the contrary. He also points out that here, he has been learning to fight in the positive sense. He has been learning to build his judo, to attack, to take risks and to impose his rhythm. He gained confidence in him-
self, and is no longer afraid of his oppo-
nents, regardless of their origin. Now he believes that he is ready for great per-
formance. To demonstrate that? His re-
cent silver medal on the occasion of the Senior African Championships in Agadir.
It is obvious that the group of judoka, which has gathered at the center, has changed its state of mind. The doors of the highest Judo level are finally opened to the entire continent. For several generations, the best results were mainly obtained by judoka from northern African countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria …) that have a long tradition of judo competition. But now everyone agrees in saying that the installation of the center here greatly contributed to improve the level in Africa while creating a very good emulation for Algerian judo.

Exchanges with the Algerian national team take place regularly and many future national champions are part of the group managed by Gabriel Sapta. The young Nachada Zelloul is a perfect example. At 20 years old, she has her whole future ahead of her. 7th place at the World Junior Championships in 2009 in Paris, she went on to win the continental junior title in 2010 and also won the senior Arab championship in 2011. Perfectly integrated within the group, she continues to hone her arms and dreams of a continental title before setting her hopes even higher. Ziad Maath, her club coach who also assists Gabriel Sapta on a daily basis in all administrative matters, is adamant: “This young lady has true potential and what she has been learning here while in contact with the other African nations, will help her in her sporting career but also in her professional life. She is currently studying to become a coach, she is as motivated as ever and in addition, the good results that she has gained, thanks to the center, have already helped her to progress socially. Through her efforts, she is now able to help her family. This is really great to observe.”

It is also one of the keys to success of the Algiers' center: giving a new horizon to athletes whose lives in their home country or in their social environment are not always idyllic.

A Second Father

Cerine, from Chad, who has qualified for the Olympics, understands that: “The coach has become our second daddy, he makes us suffer, that's for sure, yet it is useful, even necessary, because we can get nothing without working hard. But beyond suffering, beyond the difficulties, he is always present for us. He listens, is caring, considerate, so human!”

The true friendship relationships between the members of the group, over the months, have clearly become strong. Here, one does not show or proclaim his/her nationality, but everybody shares the moments of pain and suffering as well as the moments of joy and happiness. Basile, from Chad, is not qualified for the Games - in addition, he is suffering from a knee problem. It is tough for him, day already know that you will suffer on the mat or on the beach during a physical preparation session,” adds the group of girls. Then in the evening, after a long day of sweat and body aches, big chocolate cakes appear on the table and everybody celebrates with Basile, everybody laughs until they have stomach aches. Cerine, Antonia and Audrey spent part of their afternoon free time making a typical African meal. They took the opportunity to remember these months that just passed. Forward-looking, all three girls being qualified for the Games, they still have their minds full of images. Everything has not always been rosy: “When we arrived, everything was different: places, time, people, attitudes, training. But today we are really happy to have lived this extraordinary adventure.”

The day ends in the coach’s pavilion for a good party and great atmosphere. Fatiigue seems forgotten, homesickness had disappeared, the volume of the music gets cranked up a notch and everyone enjoys the African rhythms. 11 p.m., everyone in bed: “We are not here to have fun,” says Gabriel Sapta while laughing, before adding more seriously: “I treat them as true professionals and they must understand that there is a time for everything: for work, for training, for fun.” Joyfully, all those who came to Siddi Fredj christened the place ‘Guantanamo Fredj’. To illustrate that, Didié specifies: “It is in pain that we can progress, at the end it makes us feel good and we need decompression times, it’s important.”

The Opening to the Rest of the World

The next morning, the little party of the past day is long gone, and everybody is again looking forward to London. Like every day for the last two years, muscle toning starts at 8:00 a.m. sharp. Every day, another judoka is appointed to wake-up all his/her teammates. Abs, buttocks, triceps, pushups… as an appetizer for breakfast. Then, based on the training program, the training will continue on the floor, in the dojo or on the beach.

Before arriving at the center, many judoka did not even know what a beach was, such as the Zambian athletes for example. They are still not sure that they like it today: “It's hard to work on the sand, it hurts all over, but it's still nice to train in this environment,” say most of the young champions. When it came to the site selection for establishing the center, the location nearby the coast definitely played in favor of Siddi Fredj. This is a real treasure. “Other places might have offered more infrastructures, but to go running in the forest, or making physical training sessions along the seashore has no price,” says Gabriel Sapta.

Located a bit outside of Algiers, the center is ideally placed to effectively organize the preparation of the athletes. That’s why, a few weeks ago, the Georgian team, led by Peter Senenbacher, came here to face the African elite who are no longer ashamed of their level.

“In the future, we should open the access to the center even more to other London, the coach has confirmed that he will be present on the banks of the Thames in July and August. When the athletes learned it, they exploited with joy.

From the Idea to the Reality

Two years of adventure are now being completed. What was just an idea and a desire, expressed by the International Judo Federation (i.e. to develop a preparation center for African Olympic athletes on the African continent), through hard work and investment, has become a reality. Work is still necessary, adjustments must be made, but “We had to create a group, a group of athletes, which had to qualify for the Games. This is now done,” said the President, Marius Vizer, before adding: “But what we also wanted to offer was technical and teaching knowledge to as many countries as possible, because tomorrow these African athletes, who will participate in London or who have passed through the center, will return to their home country and in turn will be able to transmit what they have learned. Gabriel Sapta, with his knowledge of Africa and of High Performance Training, has done an exemplary job. It is also important to mention the support of the Algerian Judo Federation and the Algerian government, without which nothing would have been possible. Thank you to all of them.”

In Siddi Fredj, athletes are not really worried about their distant future. They are currently focused on the Olympics. Yet many of them face the question of what will happen after. “What will I do? How to use everything I have learned here? Can I transmit it and how?…” These are some of the issues. Some have also professional plans and they would like to build their future based on the contacts that they have made during their stay in Algeria, to try to bring a dream to life, to transform an idea or a passion into an activity that would allow them to live and to help their families to live. The challenges are still numerous, but when you see those that have been fulfilled over the last two years, on the south coast of the Mediterranean Sea, everything is possible. Without a doubt, among the sixty judoka from 26 countries who have come to the center, many of them will have a role to play in the future.”
A few days prior to the Judo Grand Prix, Baku 2013, the UF media team had the chance and great honor to meet and follow the Olympic Champion from Beijing 2008, Elnur MAMMADLI. Gold medal in the -73 kg weight category, Elnur will compete in under 81 kg in London. In a few weeks time, the Azerbaijan hero will try to collect a second gold medal at the Olympics, which would represent a premiere for his country. In the meantime, he is getting ready for the big rendezvous and is training with his personal coach, in Ismayilli, at one of the Olympic training centers of the country.

UF: Within the Judo family, we all know Elnur Mammadli. The judo world knows you, but they don’t know you personally, and most people outside the judo world don’t know you. What we want is to present our heroes, and you are one of them. We are not here to tell ‘secrets’ but to paint a portrait of you, and your preparation for the Olympic Games. We simply want to present “Who is Elnur?”

Yashar ALLAHVERDIYEV (coach): Before Elnur Mammadli, in Azerbaijan, in sports complexes, there wasn’t any interest in judo. All the stadiums and clubs were closed to judo because no one came. But after the Olympic championship, it was a huge waterfall-like effect at the places of judo.

Elnur MAMMADLI: It’s not the main thing to become the Olympic champion… What is different from the Olympic champion is in all Azerbaijan, people saw me as an ordinary guy who didn’t do anything and suddenly I became a very famous person, a hero in the entire nation, not just in judo and judo life, but also in all of Azerbaijan. Maybe you remember, when there was the closing ceremony in Beijing, there were 3 pictures representing the competition: one of them was a photo of Michael Phelps, the American swimmer, the second was Usain Bolt, from Jamaica, and the third was me. These 3 photos showed that in the Beijing Games, we were the most famous athletes.

UF: How do you feel today? Just a simple question.

EM: It’s not an ordinary day, it is interesting because you are here! If you weren’t, it would be an ordinary work-out day, and after I would go to sleep! Thanks to you, I’m sitting here — it is very interesting and very fun.

UF: Can you explain to us how you discovered judo, who showed you judo etc. The very beginnings of Elnur Mammadli in judo…

Coach: His elder brother was doing judo. He came home from a competition with a third place. And when he got home, everybody looked at him like a hero. At that time, I thought “Why not me?” After that, his brother helped him to come to this way. Elnur saw how his brother became a champion with his 3rd place, how he became a hero in the family, and so then he would follow the family.

UF: At what age did you begin?

EM: Nine years old.

Coach: When he came to judo, all the trainers and coaches immediately saw that he had talent.

UF: At the very beginning, when you were nine years old, your dream was already to become a champion?

EM: Of course, at nine years old, the peak of my desire was to become the Olympic champion.

Coach: I’d like to tell you a little story. In fact, you stole my idea! I wanted to come to that step, to talk to you about this subject. While explaining Elnur’s start in judo, his coach, who had just finished his dinner put his hand around Elnur’s shoulder with a big laugh and very relaxed, the champion told him:

EM: Don’t put your chicken hands on my shoulder — it makes me nervous!

Coach: In each Olympics, there is a young boy and a girl from each country who are not sportsmen, who have special places. In the Athens Games, Elnur was one of them. He just went to the Olympic Games to represent Azerbaijan. He was 16 years old. The Olympic committee gave cards to these young people to attend the Opening Ceremony, but they only gave just one card to each country. They made a draw and gave the card to Elnur Mammadli, but Elnur gave the card to the girl and said: “The next Olympic Games, I will win this card. I am not going to the Olympic Games with this card. I have to earn this card. I will do it without the next Olympics, and I will cry myself when I become champion…” This shows his desire!

EM: And that I am a gentleman!

UF: And the girl, what is she doing now?

EM: She also fought in the European Championships, but she is not a competitor anymore.

UF: So we already talked about how the Olympic title completely changed your life, for sure. Can you explain to us, a little more be, what exactly changed in your life?

EM: I got married after, and now I have a son. This changed me more responsibility, because I have to pay attention to what all of Azerbaijan thinks of me. Before I was just an ordinary guy. Since the independence of Azerbaijan, I am the first to win a gold medal in judo. It was a very unbelievable thing for me for our national President to come to the stadium when I won and give me my medal. That made it two times better for me.

UF: What are your challenges for the upcoming Olympic Games?

EM: As you know, judo is such a game that you never know what will happen. But of course I will go for gold. A lot of times, a European Champion, a World Champion, even an Olympic Champion comes to the Olympic Games and loses to a much weaker representative. It’s normal. My challenge is to fight for victory again.

UF: Can you tell us a bit about the change in your weight category? That’s one first challenge, isn’t it? The second challenge is also the change in the judo techniques — direct leg drops are now forbidden. Can you comment about those changes for you?

EM: For me, the change in weight is not a problem because all athletes can differently change their weight. It’s normal. Often when they change their weight, they immediately lost. But thank god this situation is not for me, I am again in this arena, this tatasim. In the World Ranking List, I am third — even if I changed my weight. I became the European Champion two times, I won the Masters, in my new weight category! So no matter which competition I went to, minimum I got third place. The change in weight was a challenge, but for me it’s not so much a problem.

UF: And concerning the technical changes, what’s your opinion about that?

EM: Of course leg grab techniques were my royal techniques, my favorite techniques, but I have other movements! It was very difficult, but as you know, even after these changes, I win the Masters.

UF: Without going too deep into the technical aspects because I don’t want to give away your secrets whatever, but can you explain to us, a little bit, how you made that change when you learned about it?

Coach: After the Olympic Games, Elnur had a leg injury and had an operation in Germany. His next competition was in Tunis. At that time, it was very difficult for him to come back from an injury and then the IJF changed the technical rules, but he adapted. Immediately after, he became very comfortable with the new techniques. As you saw in Beijing, his technical aspects are very high level. He is a bit shy about himself, but he is very smart and… he has a lot of technical variance.

UF: Can you explain to us, what your program will be for the next 3 months, until the Olympics?

EM: For 10 days I am training here in Ismayilli, after I will go to a training camp in Astana, Turkey and then to Barcelona for an international training camp too. Then I will come back to Baku and then go to Japan for the Grand Prix. And of course I will be in Baku for the song contest, Eurovision!

UF: It’s important!

EM: Behind the curtain, I will show our flag.

UF: Are you looking at the results of other champions in your weight category? Their matches, what they are doing? Watching videos…? Of course, you know you are third in the WRL, there is no number one and number two in your weight category, but there are 15-20 people who will meet at the Olympics.

EM: The first, Leandro GUILHERME, the Brazilian, I fought with him, I never fought with the Korean, KIM, the second. Of course I watch them, and I know that they also watch me. Of course it’s normal that I watch them and pay attention to their results.

UF: Other athletes are focusing on video, analyzing all the fights, the details, and so on… Is that a kind of training that you are doing also? Or are you watching just to know?

EM: For me, it’s not the main thing. All the main things happen on the tatami.

Coach: Let them be afraid of him! He just watches and that’s all. He doesn’t make analysis, or focus on them. Of course it’s normal that other athletes are focusing on the other fights, but for example, maybe suddenly on the tatami Elnur will change his tactic. We are just focusing on ourselves. You can’t learn everything from videos. Elnur is not a robot.

UF: I know it is kind of a stupid question, because now, your next step, your next goal is the Olympic Games but do you already have a slight idea of what you will do after the Olympics?

EM: Of course, first of all, I will have a rest in Astana, Paris, Germany… If you invite me, I will come to visit you. I have been in so many places for competitions that I forget where I have been.

UF: Now it’s kind of open. If you want to say nothing, just feel free to do so…

EM: At the World Championships in Paris, all of the population comes to the tournament. My idea is that in France, all French people would come to see me. In the view of Azerbaijan national sports, judo has become very popular, thanks to judo men like me and others, Olympic and European champions. My desire is for people to come to the competitions in Azerbaijan like in Paris. In Azerbaijan, the President is the head of the Olympic Committee. He shows personal interest, and so sport is increasing in Azerbaijan, day by day. Maybe in other countries, there is not the direct and special interest of the Head of State. If I become an Olympic champion again, I will be part of a long history because there is no sportman in Azerbaijan who has two Olympic gold medals. After changing the rules in judo, it became much more active, much more intense, much more difficult, but the beauty is in the difficulty.

Coach: At the Olympic Games it’s impossible to say who will certainly win. It’s a beautiful event, but you have to be a bit lucky.

It is with these words that the discussion with Elnur Mammadli and his coach came to an end. For several hours, the champion returned to his training and concentration. During the next three months, his life will be fully dedicated to the ultimate goal of winning a second Olympic title, which in itself represents an outstanding achievement. When you know that he has changed his weight class and that during the Olympiad, new rules have been implemented at the international level, new rules that could have severely disturbed his judo, the challenge becomes even greater. However, a big smile across his face and good humor seem to inhabit the champion. Permanently attentive and thoughtful… he offered us his precious time and shared a little of his life. Motivated more than ever, ready for the challenge and never blurring, actually quite the contrary, today he considers that International Judo is going in the right direction and although it is harder than yesterday, it makes it even more beautiful. Thank you to Elnur Mammadli. He is not only a champion, he is an incredible human being •
My Olympic Dream
Emmanuel Nartey

African judoka Emmanuel Nartey will fulfil a lifelong dream this summer when he competes at his first Olympic Games in London and becomes the first Ghanaian to represent his country in judo at the greatest show on earth.

Nartey, 29, who has lived in England since 2002, secured direct qualification to the Games after finishing in fifth-place at the African Championships in April. The 73kg standout trains out of the highly-successful Team Bath High Performance Centre alongside British internationals such as British Open silver medallist Tom Reed and Junior World bronze medallist Ben Fletcher having been granted leave from British Army where he’s served since 2003. But the world number 32, who has won medals on four continents, has had a tumultuous road to London, beset with hardship, tragedy and great sacrifice which has made him one of the strongest and most grounded judoka in the sport. As one of eight children in his hometown of Accra, the Ghanaian capital, Emmanuel would endure a daily ritual which would equip him with a single-mindedness and resolve which would serve him well in one of the world’s toughest sports.

“I remember my journey like it was yesterday,” said the 2nd Dan, who became the country’s first ever World Championship representative in 2005 where he defeated South Korea’s Joo Bum Kim, a future two-time world champion and Beijing Olympic silver medallist.

I’d get up at 5:30am in the morning at the age of 9. My mother would be in the kitchen cooking breakfast for us and then I’d walk three miles to school and three miles back in 40 degrees heat.”

“I’d stay on school campus and play football with my friends for an hour before I returned home. I have always had the heart and desire to play football and was the class captain and was selected for my school football team for the inter-school championship. I started judo as a habit and therefore developed a love for the sport. After returning home from school and doing my homework I’d have lunch and then walk another seven miles to training and back.

“At that age I was very determined to be successful in every activity.” While his mother brought up eight children and his father worked at the Bank of Ghana, Emmanuel started his road to London at Prison Judo Club in Accra and quickly developed a routine.

“I would train three times a week in the old hall which belonged to the prison training school. We had one mat area which was supplied by the Japanese government. I remember there was a big leakage in the room of the building so when it rained, sometimes we couldn’t train and we’d have to put the mats away because the rain would have destroyed them.

“We loved it there though, the training was very hard and being a child training with adults was tough but we loved it. As I progressed I started to go to the National Stadium to practice with more advanced judoka.”

“I knew by then that there was a big difference between us and the rich countries in the world. For us life is about survival, we haven’t got what they have but we have the desire and the heart to fight, we were taught to give our best in every training until the end, we were taught to believe, we will make it even if in reality there seems to be no hope.”

In 2002, at the tender age of 18, Emmanuel decided to make a life-changing decision and moved to England to pursue his Olympic dream and to join the British Army.

Life is all about working hard and the determination to be successful.

“I lived in Manchester for one year, where I worked as a cleaner in both a pub and BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) offices in Manchester. I remember those times; I always took my judogi to work, left early for training and then come back later in the night to finish my work. You know what makes Olympians different from other athletes is we have the confidence and believe in our dreams and we never shut the door on our dreams. For me, life is always one way traffic not going back, it’s all about fighting and moving forward.”

In February 2003, Emmanuel elected to join the British Army and began training the following month. However, having emerged from rigorous testing to proudly become a British soldier his life was turned upside down. Four days after celebrating his 19th birthday Emmanuel’s father passed away in his homeland.

“It was one of the toughest days in my life but at that moment training become my mission, my journey to success and I passed out into the field army.”

With his emotions still raw but the fire inside him still burning, Emmanuel’s judo talents were spotted by his Commanding Officer who took him to Team Bath’s High Performance Centre.

“My Commanding Officer, Alex Leslie, read my record and found out that I competed in Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, so he did research about judo clubs in South West area. One day I went to work and he told me to change to civil uniform and took me along to Bath.

“When I saw Tom Reed and British internationals then I firmly believed more than ever that my Olympic dream could become reality.”

Emmanuel embarked on the IJF World Circuit and with every tournament he closed the gap between himself and the world’s elite. As his talent soared, the Ghanaian started to achieve success domestically and internationally with medals at the British Open and GB World Cup before going on to win his first IJF World Cup gold medal in Apia, Samoa in 2009. The highly-regarded judoka has now graced medal rostrum’s the world around including in Morocco, Algeria, Hungary, Wales, England, Senegal, Germany, Australia, Venezuela and Mauritius. His Olympic quest come down to the African Championships, the continent’s showpiece event, where he was required to finish in fifth-place or above to seal direct qualification. In a sport where victory and defeat can be decided in a fraction of a second and upsets are a very familiar occurrence, Emmanuel, who was one of the most talked about talents on display, lost out in the preliminary rounds.

With his Olympic bid under threat and the pressure growing, the defiant Team Bath fighter battled back in the repechage to reach the bronze medal contest where he narrowly lost out to finish in the all-important fifth-place and qualify for the Olympic Games.

“For my family, it was a sense of great joy and emotion, they couldn’t believe it, they couldn’t believe that I had secured my place as an Olympian. The most important thing to come out of my qualification for youngsters in Ghana is that I have given them hope and something to aspire to. Now they know and believe with hard work and dedication that the Olympic dream is possible and they are all proud of me at home. I thank everyone for their support and prayers; I know the pride I feel is mutual and they share my journey as a team.”

“Life is all about working hard and the determination to be successful. Over here in Britain life is different but where I am from life is always about fighting hard and working, the determination to achieve something in life.”

We can all learn something from Emmanuel Nartey – whatever your circumstances, a sheer desire to improve your life can overcome any circumstances and pave the way to realise your dreams.

By Mark Pickering
British Judo Media Officer
From June 15th to 18th, 2012, the third Judo for Peace Seminar was held in the city of Drammen, in the south of Norway. This location was not chosen at random, as the University of Drammen proposes a Masters Degree in Human Rights and Multiculturalism, a subject which completely fits with the Judo for Peace philosophy. But Drammen is also the hometown of the Judo for Peace Director, Jan Eirik SCHIOTZ, who organized everything to welcome the delegates from four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe and Pan America). During three days of hard work, the participants could learn more about human rights policy and how to adapt it to judo values, and they had the opportunity to exchange their ideas and field experiences for the benefit of everyone.

During the opening ceremony of the seminar, the representative of the city of Drammen underlined the multicultural dimension of the region, which counts 65,000 inhabitants among which 140 countries are represented. But the 200 year-old city also has a long history with judo. Many clubs are present in the area and in 2008, Drammen was the first city ever to organize a World Cup in Norwegian territory.

After the welcoming speech of Mr. SCHIOTZ, who briefly presented the hard program of the three-day seminar, the first keynote speaker to take the floor was the President of the Norwegian Judo Federation, Vibeke THIBLIN, who explained how she has been involved in the ‘Judo for Fred’ (Judo for Peace in Norwegian) activities in Afghanistan for the past 10 years. Through a vibrant presentation, she perfectly introduced the subject of the seminar: how can judo be helpful in societies that have gone through terrible dramas?

Reconstructing the Way of Thinking «Everything started when Stig TRAAVIK (Ambassador Stig Træaæ is a diplomat, and former National team member from Norway. He partici- pated in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. He is a six times National Champion in Norway, and is a medalist in the World and European Championships. Stig Træaæ has served as a diplomat in Abidjan, Geneva, and Kabul. He has recently been appointed as Norway’s Ambassador to Indonesia) went to Afghanis- tan as a diplomat,» explained Mrs. THIBLIN, before adding, «the Afghan people needed everything and espe- cially the women. When later on we went to Kabul, you can imagine that everything looked so different compared to Norway, but we had a common language with the local community and that language was judo.» When the Norwegian Judo Federation first started to go to Afgha- nistan, there was noth- ing but a few goat skins on the floor to practice judo and only adults were in- volved. Step by step, orphans and street children could come to the judo clinics. Their first reaction was to fight in a negative way, but through judo, they learned how to behave and slowly but surely, the connexion was made between the Norwegian delegates and the Afghan people. The women gained self confidence: we spent a lot of time discussing with our hosts and specially with the women, who are the bravest I know. Today there are more than 3,000 judoka in the country. Unfortunately, the security situation does not allow us to go back for the moment, but we hope that sooner or later, we’ll be able to send our teams to Kabul again,» concluded Vibeke THIBLIN.

«In Afghanistan, judo was the per- fect tool for reconstructing the way of thinking and that is exactly what we are trying to do with the Judo for Peace commission,» emphasized Jan Eirik Shiotz. The JFP Director then explained to all the participants why the UFJ, under the leadership of its President, Mr. Marius L. Vizer, has been conducting JFP activities: «Because it’s part of our philosophy and because judo is education. The ethical aspect of our sport is the most impor- tant legacy that Jigoro Kano brought to the world. In judo we are deve- loping self confidence, whereas often in our society development is necessary.» How to Promote Human Rights.

During the three days of the seminar, participants could discover how Judo for Peace really has become a pro- gram for peace, reconciliation, social engagement and the creation of a just society, and one key element to mea- sure the level of participation of the seminar, where through theoretical and practical approaches, they could discover the essence of the international commu- nity’s stability, but beyond that, they learned how to promote the human rights policy in their daily judo coach life.

During the second day of the semi- nar, the United Nation’s objectives were described in detail, giving some use- ful information that the participants will be able to use to develop their own projects. The free time between the different working sessions was utilized to reinforce the connexion between the representatives of the different continents and the Judo for Peace commission.

To reinforce the Cooperation Between UNOSDP and IJF.

On the third day, the Head of Of- fice of the United Nations Oli- ce on Sports Development and Peace, Mr. Paul Hansen, passed an impor- tant message to the par- ticipants. During more than one hour, he ex- plained the working of the UNOSDP and the pleasure that Mr. Lomke (the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General on Sports, Development and Peace) had to work with the IJF and with the Judo for Peace Commission: «Your orga- nization through the fan- tastic tool that represents judo, is very efficient in the field. That is really important. We have never been disappointed and we are looking forward to reinfor- cing our cooperation.» One example of that is the participation of the IJF to the second Youth Leadership Trai- ning camp, which was held in Ger- many, after the Doha workshop last January.

Mr. Paul Hansen explained how through conferences, reports, official resolutions, media outreach, public relations and networking, the UNOS- DP can assist the Special Adviser in raising awareness about the use of physical activity and judo as powerful tools in the advancement of development and peace objectives, in- cluding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The concluding words were presented by Jan Eirik SCHIOTZ, the JFP Direc- tor: «Within a few years, the Judo for Peace commission has become very important. We are on very good terms with many international organizations and our work is shown as an example. The judo world can really be proud of that. But to be proud is not enough, we must keep going, working like we are, and we must then show that is going on in the field. Results, that is the key word. What do we do? How? When? Why? Those are some of the questions that we must always have in mind. As we are judo people, we are happy because this seminar was a real success. Nevertheless, next year, because this year’s seminar did not cause life is a challenge, and through judo we have learned to overcome the challenges.»
entire life.» For many years, Kenny was also in charge of university judo in his country, he participated in many summer universiades and organized several student exchanges.

Roberge, 5th dan. Patrick participated in the Olympics in Barcelona 1992. He is currently the coach of the regional development center in Beauport and of the high level center of the Quebec region. Patrick Roberge

she was assisted with Serge Sanfaçon, coach of the Dojo de Beauport. The third demonstration involved the cadets, juniors and senior competitors. This judo demonstration was led by Catherine's brother, Patrick

Mr MAZZULO reported that many athletes who attended the training session had no coaching experience before the course

- Running a Class
- Coaching styles      - Beginners syllabus

Andrei Chernyak. The model of the «Academy» with regard to the further development of the complex had been demonstrated to Mr. Vladimir Putin. Now the «Academy

15 men and 5 women were in attendance recently to a technical course for coaches in LAO. A level one coaching course which

- Coaching duties and responsibilities    - Good judo practice and IJF Coaches' Regulations

President, Mr. Marius L. Vizer, Mr. Lasana Palenfo, President of the African Judo Union, Mr. Raffaele Chiulli, President of the

28-31  World Champ. Varna BUL

The annual General Assembly and Convention of SportAccord which took place in Quebec City, last week, just before the Judo Grand Slam, Moscow 2012, was a good occasion for a popular judo promotion, in front of all the International Sports Federations.

The following athletes are the current World Number 1 judoka in their weight category (updated July 2012).

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<tr>
<th>Weight Class</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Athlete</th>
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<tr>
<td>-73 kg</td>
<td>JPN</td>
<td>Asami Haruna</td>
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<td>-32 kg</td>
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<td>Asami Haruna</td>
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Judo Demonstration at the SportAccord Convention

The General Assembly and Convention of SportAccord which took place in Quebec City, last week, just before the Judo Grand Slam, Moscow 2012, was a good occasion for a popular judo promotion, in front of all the International Sports Federations. Organized by the Judo Club 'Dojo de Beauport', which has been bringing up, for more than 25 years, many champions, the 65th CISM General Assembly and Congress was assigned to participate in the 67th CISM General Assembly and Congress, which took place in Quebec City, last week.

Vladimir Putin visits the «Academy of Judo»

The President of Russia, a Honorary President of the International Judo Federation and the European Judo Union, Mr. Vladimir Putin has visited the Russian Judo Complex «Academy of Judo», which opened in Zvenigorod, Moscow region. The meeting was attended by the International Judo Federation President Mr. Marius Vizer, the President of the European Judo Union Mr. Sergey Solovyev, the President of the Russian Judo Federation Mr. Boris Rotenberg and the Vice-President of the Russian Judo Federation Mr. Andrei Chernyak. Vladimir Putin was received at the «Academy of Judo» by Mr. Marius Vizer, the President of the International Judo Federation and Mr. Andrei Chernyak, the President of the Russian Judo Federation. The meeting was attended by the Russian Olympic Committee President Mr. Vitaly Mutko and the President of the International Judo Federation Mr. Marius Vizer.

The visit was also an opportunity for Mr. Vladimir Putin to meet with Russian judo athletes and coaches, as well as to attend a demonstration of judo competitions involving members of the Russian national teams. The «Academy of Judo» is one of the largest judo complexes in the world and has been developed with the aim of fostering excellence in judo and promoting the values of discipline, fair play and respect for others. The visit was an important moment for the development of judo in Russia and for the promotion of the Olympic values.

67th CISM General Assembly and Congress

Participation in the 67th CISM General Assembly and Congress Between 13-15 May 2012, Col. Stefan MARGINEAN, Director of the Military Police Commission, the CISM President, Mr. Leopold Stavitsky and the Mayor of Zvenigorod, Mr. Leonid Stavitsky, assigned to participate in the 67th CISM General Assembly and Congress held in Kigali/Uganda, agreeing an invitation from CISM President, Col. Hammad KALKABA, due to his large experience in CISM field.

For this event, Col. Stefan MARGINEAN represented the IJF President, Mr. Marius VIZER. During the congress, Col. Stefan MARGINEAN presented in front of the participating delegations from 97 countries the Memorandum of Understanding, that was signed between the president of the International Judo Federation and the president of the CISM to ensure that judo is inserted in the Olympic Program and to support the CISM International Executive Council on February 12, 2012 in Paris, highlighting the importance of this document for the two organizations and the benefits resulting from the collaboration between them on international level.

At the end of his intervention, Col. Stefan MARGINEAN offered to CISM President, Col. Hammad KALKABA, the «Honorary black belt» on behalf of IJF President, Mr. Marius VIZER.

Kenny Rinquuest and Daan Le Grange have passed away

It’s with a great sadness, that the IJF has learned that Kenny Rinquuest, Judo South Africa Development Director, and Daan Le Grange have recently passed away.

Kenny has been involved with Judo South Africa for many decades and since his retirement, last year, he has been leading the development projects that were initiated by Judo South Africa under the leadership of Temba Hlasho, and by the International Judo Federation, after Mr. Vizer’s visit to the Township of Macassar, during the World Junior Championships, November 2012.

After this unforgettable visit, Mr. Vizer decided to launch a pilot project all over South Africa and sent tattamis and judi. Kenny Rinquuest, who was following up the whole project was currently conducting a survey to identify the areas with the biggest needs. Mr. Rinquuest truly believed in the power and the values of judo, specially with the women, who are sexually abused. For the past few years, he was also actively following his son, D.J., who, the day before his father passed away, won the SA Championship. D.J. had made a promise to Daan, to be present at the Rio Olympic Games, in 2016. That is all that what the judo family can wish to him.

The IJF presents its sincere condolences to both families and to the entire judo family.

A Successful Olympic Solidarity Course held in Vientiane

15 men and 5 women were in attendance recently to a technical course for coaches in LAO. A level one coaching course which took place from 7th – 16th May 2012 was conducted by Simon MAZULLO, an IJF expert from GBR. The coaching activity covered two sessions per day. It combined both theoretical and practical aspects of coaching judo. Many important topics were covered by the expert:

- Coaching duties and responsibilities
- Teaching methods
- Anatomy and physiology
- Teaching points for producing the best judo skills
- Coaching styles
- Running a Class

Mr MAZZULO reported that many athletes who attended the training session had no coaching experience before the course and hence more time was spent on the basic skills required for coaching judo. An evaluation was carried out ongoing during the course. When any request was necessary to improve, the expert immediately relayed back to the participant to seek improvement. The facility for running the course and teaching judo was excellent. The expert was thankful to the National Olympic Committee and National Judo Federation of Laos for providing all the equipment that was necessary to run the course. The participants who showed considerable interest and dedication during the technical course enjoyed the company of the IJF expert who demonstrated great passing skills for messages passing. At the closing ceremony all the coaches received a participation certificate.