JUJITSU CLUB 2016/2017

This year has been one of growth for the jujitsu club. With more members, increased fundraising efforts and our surge in hosting events and developing new activities, we have been very busy.

The year we started with a bang, as we organised travel and logistics to take part in the International Seminar celebrating Sensei Archie’s 30th year anniversary of obtaining his black belt. New and returning members had the opportunity to engage with eminent martial artists such as Sensei Marc DuJardin from Belgium, Sensei Adriano Busà from Italy, Senseis Dave Martin and Kirby Watson from England, as well as to meet with alumni who had travelled to Kinghorn for the event. And with the amendment and expansion of the constitution early in the year, the committee welcomed a Fundraising Officer who helped coordinate the initiatives that eager club member were already taking to raise money dedicated towards Sensei funds.

As planned, this year was the official launch of the Kuro Iwa Ryu jujitsu coaching course in which senior students had the opportunity to coach, co-lead sessions, learn how to grade, and get involved with the more technical aspects of being martial arts instructors. The coaching course is expected to continue next year as a staple for higher belts who want to learn these skills.
In 2017, we have seen the labours of two of our year-long projects come to fruition, with positive developments in the Budokai and the Self-defence course.

Since September, the Captains of the various martial arts clubs have been meeting with the intent to improve inter-club relations and organise joint events. The Jujitsu club has long talked about forming a ‘budokai’ with the other clubs in St Andrews. While it took longer than expected to set up, the Budokai is now officially recognised by the AU and we have our own email address - budokai@saints-sport.com - and we will have our own landing page on the AU site. I would recommend that the new Captain of the club immediately establish contact with the other club captains in order to sustain the inter-club relations. One project the Captains could begin thinking about would be whether to plan an inter-club ball such as the Budo Ball/Dragon Ball that took place several years ago. While this year we were limited on time, and thus restricted ourselves to simply laying the foundations by having inter-club mixers such as Sinners or a board game night, with enough preparation a ball could be organised for the year to come.

Based on the success of our 2 hour self-defence course in collaboration with Plan St Andrews last year, we have worked to launch a full self-defence course this year. While the course was originally meant to be launched in September, at the beginning of the year, as a 6 week self-defence course taking place at the Union on Saturday afternoons. However, due to a lack of suitable venues and timing clashes, this was not possible. Nevertheless, after receiving endorsement from student services and increased support from the Union, we were able to start productively coordinating the event. This year the self-defence course will take place as an intensive 1 week course in April, in which all 6 hours of material will be covered in two-hour chunks during our normal training hours. For next year, I would recommend approaching the Union already now for next year and continuing the promotional efforts and connections with local newspapers such as the Saint, and University units, such as student services in order to highlight the official nature and support we have received for this project.

A new element that came to the fore in just the past month is the monetary grant we received from our application to the TeachFirst Club Development Fund. While at originally we were awarded a partial-grant of £225, we have now been allotted the whole £420 we had applied for. We have already invested the original grant money into the necessary padwork equipment we
needed for our upcoming gradings. With the full fund, I highly recommend investing the rest into weapons such as bos and bokken, so that they can be stored in the AU and facilitate the delivery of weapons’ training sessions with more and frequent accessibility for next year. With these new assets, the club should be ready for increased cardio and weapons’ sessions with which to welcome Freshers. As a result it will be imperative to continue to meet the conditions of the TeachFirst Club Development Fund and maintain good relations with them.

One smaller development, but which has been requested from members this year, was the addition of Strength and Conditioning sessions. Thanks to our Fundraising Officer, McKenna’s, contact with Tom Gardiner, who is now our S&C coach, we have had the privilege of having free S&C sessions on a weekly basis for this last term. Tom is a level 2 fitness instructor qualified by Active IQ and for next year I would recommend keeping contact with Tom and organising weekly S&C sessions.

I would also recommend that the new committee keep contact with our current member, Jeff Hannan, who became our official AU approved driver for the year. Since then, we have been booking 8-seater vans from the AU and Jeff has been able to drive members on Friday nights to Burntisland for extra training. Keeping this possibility of extra training open would be important for increasing members’ training options and provide an added sense of camaraderie during travel time. In order to do this, the new committee would have to register Jeff to take the AU driving test again in September and then apply for AU vehicles as travel dates arise.

Finally, we have been invited to Italy for a training course by Adriano Busà in Pista, near Florence, for the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of June. As the materials covered in the course will be of an advanced level, for safety reasons the minimum belt needed to attend will be a green belt. In the past, the Jujitsu club has been invited to courses hosted by other clubs in the UK and has organised travel to cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. This would be the first time the club could travel together as a group on a higher international scale. This year we have had an active social complement to our training. And in order to continue with the bonding and camaraderie that we have developed, and culminate with a beautiful finish to a very industrious year, I would recommend that the future committee organise a club trip to Italy to take part in the Adriano Busà training course.