

## **Ontario Jiu-Jitsu Association 12-02-2023 Annual AGM Meeting Minutes**

In attendance:

### **Board of Directors:**

Doug Knispel – President / Chairman – Japanese Jiu-Jitsu

Gary Pilon – Vice-President / Treasurer - Japanese Jiu-Jitsu

Shawn Rodie – Secretary / Japanese Jiu-Jitsu

David Doucette – Director - Education / Marketing / Grant Committee

Mike Pisano – Director - Technical Support / Club Membership / Coaching Card – Japanese Jiu-Jitsu

Tony Isaacs – Director - Tournaments – Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

John Cole – Director- No-Gi Shows - Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Fernando Zulick – Director - Officials, Tournaments - Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

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This year the Annual AGM was held at the Markham Pan Am Centre, located at 16 Main St. Unionville, Ontario, L3R 2E4 and was well attended with 33 people (Including OJA Board Members) in attendance both in person and via Zoom Link. The OJA takes its responsibility of serving its member base seriously, and the ever increasing attendance by the member base is a direct reflection of this mandate.

**Meeting called to order** - by our Chairman Doug Knispel at 7:05 PM

### **Presidents Report** – (Report attached) - Doug Knispel

Doug Knispel started the meeting by highlighting the AGENDA for the meeting and presented the Presidents report via projector for everyone in person and also on-line to see.

2023 was a very busy year for the OJA. Some of the highlights were:

2023 marked a return to a full year of events with no COVID related shutdowns or restrictions this year.

The OJA is an open and inclusive organization dedicated to serving its members and expanding the art of Jiu-Jitsu. We openly invite all qualifying Clubs to join.

OJA fielded successful Junior, Senior and Masters Teams sent to JJIF World Championships in Mongolia and Kazakhstan. We also had athletes compete at the World Combat Games in Riyadh. Canada continues to improve its standing with the JJIF at the International Level and a goal of the OJA is to one day take part in the Olympic Games.

The OJA continues to promote and ensure, an awareness in sport for ROWANS LAW and the OJA is in compliance.

The OJA strongly enforces our code of conduct for all Athletes Coaches, Officials and Parents. Although rare, anyone aware of any issues should promptly report them to the OJA where they will be investigated. A mandate of the OJA is to ensure safe, fun and respectful events for all.

The OJA holds two Black Belt Grading's per year, spring and fall and 2023 was no exception. Congratulations to everyone who were promoted to their next belt level. The Black Belt Grading Board / Technical Committee will also continue to look for training / learning opportunities for its Japanese Jiu-Jitsu leaning members.

The OJA works very closely with the Ontario Government to ensure compliance and standards in reporting to ensure compliance with Government policies.

Doug Knispel concluded the report by advising that the AGM Minutes would be posted for everyone to see on the OJA website and also asked if anyone would like to join the OJA Board or form a committee.

#### **Finance Report** – (Report attached) - Gary Pilon

Gary Pilon shared the OJA Financial Report on an overhead projector and on-line for all the attending members to see and walked everyone through the report, advising that things are starting to return back to normal now.

Some of the highlights from the report were:

During 2023 the OJA continued to work closely with our Insurance Company re insurance cost. The cost to the OJA for insurance coverage is based on the overall number of our members.

The OJA continued to find value in software utilization for both Smooth Comp and Wild Apricot.

The OJA worked diligently to disburse Government support to qualified Clubs during the COVID pandemic.

The OJA has increased its matt storage space to accommodate both the matt's and the newly acquired blue barriers that are used at tournaments.

The OJA continues to send annual funding to the CJA in order to provide them with operational support.

Finally, Gary Pilon concluded the report by advising that despite some setbacks and large expenses during 2023, and that due to prudent financial decisions, the OJA Cash reserves are up \$75,000.00 compared to last year and that the OJA is in a good financial position going into 2024.

A motion to accept the report was made: Seconded by 1. Steve Huff, and 2. Gabriel Araujo.

#### **Safety and Insurance Report** – (Report attached) – Gary Pilon

Concerning Safety and Insurance, Gary Pilon was pleased to advise that during 2023 the OJA experienced no injury claims. This is a testament to how well the Tournaments and various events are run.

Although our insurance costs are going up, the OJA will maintain the nominal cost for Clubs to join the OJA for 2023 and 2024, how-ever this fee may need to be updated in 2025 as it has not been in some time.

### **Education / OJA News Report** – (Verbal Report) - David Doucette

David Doucette spoke to the group about the recent event coverages that he has been involved in and the amount of work it takes to produce the quality video coverages for the OJA News. The OJA News is at all OJA sponsored events and provides informational and educational, video and written reports on the goings – on at the events.

David Doucette asked the group if there was anyone interested in being involved with the OJA News as an investigative reporter to speak with him directly. As our events continue to increase in frequency and size there will be an immediate need to more investigative reporters.

### **Tournament Report**– (Report attached) - Tony Isaacs

Tony Isaacs started off by advising the group that 2023 was a good year for the OJA and also stated the 2024 year is going to be an even busier year for us.

Some of the highlights from the report were:

2023 we had (24) events, 3 of them were international events and comprised over 600 athletes.

During December 2023, the OJA will be teaming up with Wrestling Ontario for “Takedown” events.

It is important to the OJA that we maintain both strong and experienced referees at Tournaments and to this point Tony Isaacs spoke at length about the value of bringing in Instructors from out of town to assist with training and the role of the OJA in assisting sponsoring such training.

Tony Isaacs concluded his report with an overview of the current 2024 events, in which we currently show 28 events listed. These include the Windsor Open, the Durham Open, and the ADCC, AJP, IBJJF Nationals.

John Cole – put out an open offer to the group for anyone interested in volunteering to help with running the Gi or No-Gi events to speak with him directly.

### **OJA Membership / Sport Jiu-Jitsu Report** – (Report attached) – Mike Pisano

Mike Pisano presented some interested data surrounding the 2023 membership base.

Some of the highlights from the report were:

During 2022 the OJA had approximately 4061 members and during 2023 that membership base grew to 8395 members – an increase of 207%.

The gender breakdown for 2023 was 80% male and 20 % female members. Female membership seems to be growing.

2023 saw Sport Jiu-Jitsu grow to 4 events attended by 36 Clubs and approximately 77 athletes.

Mike Pisano ended his report by speaking about an up and coming event for Sport Jiu-Jitsu where we will be parring with Karate Ontario to share space in which both styles can be highlighted and enjoyed. This event will give good visibility to the art of Jiu-Jitsu in Ontario.

### **Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Association Report** – Tony Issacs (CJA President)

Tony Isaacs began his report by advising that the Canadian Team did very well at the JJIF event in Mongolia and talked at length about building and training a National Team.

The CJA needs to do more to support its athletes and growing PSO's in Saskatoon, Vancouver and Alberta would help us to raise more funds to support our athletes. In order to be a Government recognised NSO we need to have 5 Provinces signed up.

Currently the OJA assists the CJA in supporting the Canadian Team and Tony asked the OJA what more it may be able to do as the Team continues to grow and is more engaged then ever in International events.

During Tony Isaacs report, a member of the attendees asked about funding to support athletes under the age of 18 that compete internationally and presented some compelling reasons as to why this funding would be appreciated in order to benefit the growth of under 18 athletes on the international stage.

Doug Knispel responded by stating that the OJA needs to find a balance in its support to all groups and that under 18 years athletes is a consideration and something the OJA is looking at.

Steve Huff – (CJA Finance) – spoke about the annual funding the CJA continues to enjoy from the OJA and further advised that currently that is the main source of funding they have. Although other avenues of funding are being investigated, the OJA funding is critical to providing the CJA with operational expenses.

The OJA understands the CJA's position and is reviewing the matter to see if it would be possible to increase funding to the CJA in upcoming years.

### **New Business (OPEN)** – Doug Knispel

Doug Knispel opened the floor for discussion surrounding new business.

**Referee Requirements** - Fernando Zulick asked the OJA to provide a written document outlining the requirements for achieving various levels of Coaching and Refereeing. This would include any courses, age requirements and experience required in order to be certified at various levels. There was much discussion from the attendee's on this topic and many had interesting input towards this question.

Fernando Zulick to review everyone's input and draft up a plan that the Board can review at a future meeting.

**Moving younger athletes forward** – Tony Isaacs spoke about cases where we have a highly skilled younger athlete that should be moved forward but due to the current age and rank brackets are unable to do so. In order to get around this, should we consider parents and coaches to co-operatively agree, and sign, to allow, say, a 14 year old athlete to compete against a, say, 16 year old athlete?

There seemed to be a division amongst the attendees concerning this issue and the pro's and con's of moving forward with this form of proposal were discussed at length. A primary consideration would be the safety of the athletes. It was clear the topic needed further review before it could be voted on and this topic will be brought up again at a future meeting for further discussion.

**CJA Chief Official Position** – Tony Isaacs made a motion to induct Roger Tang to the CJA Board in the capacity of Chief Official – Tournaments. In this role Roger Tang would have overall responsibility for looking after the officials at the Tournaments. Roger Tang has been assisting Tony Isaacs for some time now and has proven himself to be valuable in helping to run a smooth event.

A motion to accept Roger Tang into this newly created position was made: Seconded by 1. Patricia Vandermeer, and 2. Gabriel Araujo.

**Adjournment** – by our Chairman Doug Knispel at 9:12 PM.

