

# BLACK BELT®

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## *The Ultimate Throw*



[Photo by Gary Wagstaff](#)

## Technique Fightbook

by Edward Pollard, Black Belt's Managing Editor

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When Gokor Chivichyan walked into the Winter Nationals a [United States Judo Association](#) and [United States Judo Federation](#) event held in December 2008, he was dutifully playing the part of the sensei. He'd brought a number of his best grapplers--including Roman Mitichyan, the judoka who insisted he was able to continue competing on Spike TV's *The Ultimate Fighter* despite having suffered a broken arm.

Not long after arriving, Chivichyan was confronted by Gary Goltz, the event's creator and host who also serves as COO of the USJA and Head Sensei of [Goltz Judo Club](#) in Claremont. Goltz's mission was to convince the Armenian expat to enter the master's blackbelt division.

**“I'm not here for the tournament,” Chivichyan told Goltz. “I'm here because my students are competing.” Goltz countered that if Chivichyan entered, he'd make a lot of spectators happy. “Listen,” Chivichyan said, “I'm 45 years old and retired. You want me to go up against world-class guys? They will kick my butt!”**

**Perhaps betraying the fact that he was beginning to entertain the prospect, the former judo and sambo champ then said he didn't have his gi with him. Goltz offered to provide him with whatever he needed. “I said I'd remove any barriers such as pre-registration, weigh-in, fees, and so on,” Goltz said.**

**Before the Black Belt Hall of Fame member knew it, the loudspeaker announced that he'd be fighting. “I'd called the pooling room and told my guy to add him,” Goltz said. “As a judo advocate, I knew what it would mean to get Gokor out there.” As he'd predicted, a wave of supporters came to encourage Chivichyan and express their excitement.**

**“I was too embarrassed to back out after that,” Chivichyan said. “They gave me a gi and got me ready to go. The problem was that I didn't have enough time to warm up.”**

**His fears proved to be unfounded as he faced his first opponents. “In judo, when you pick them up and throw them to the floor perfectly, the fight is considered over,” Chivichyan said. “I didn't play too much on the ground. I started to, but those guys knew my style. I had to come up with something else. Judo rules don't give you much time on the ground, so I decided to save my energy and follow another strategy. All the guys were very good, but I was determined to finish everybody before I got tired because I wasn't in shape. I thought I'd be lucky to get to the final.”**

**As the tournament progressed, he almost didn't make it. Chivichyan defeated a man named Gary Butts in an early match. He found himself facing the same opponent again at the next stage of the competition, but Chivichyan pulled a groin muscle and was forced to forfeit because he asked for medical attention. “I couldn't even move,” he said. “The doctors told me that ignoring it would only make the damage worse. I said; it's already damaged. What does it matter if there's more I'm going to continue.”**

**In the final, Chivichyan was once again pitted against Butts, an officer for the Los Angeles Police and West Coast National Training Center Judo Coach because of the tournaments double-elimination format. The man immediately sensed Chivichyan's weakness. “He started trying to sweep the leg that was hurting,” Chivichyan said. “I thought I should be smarter, so I threw him.”**

**The throw, an uchimata (inner thigh sweep), was later called the best judo technique of 2008, Chivichyan said. It won him the match, but he was sidelined for several weeks because of the pulled muscle. “It was swollen so much that I couldn't move,” he said. “My whole leg was purple from top to bottom. I didn't know whether to be happy that I competed and won or unhappy because I was hurting.”**

**Despite the injury, Chivichyan set a fine example for everyone--both as a competitor and as a coach. With over 92 schools registered, his Hayastan MMA Academy won the overall tournament award for having bagged more points and more gold medals than any other, beating out the second place dojo by 26 points.**

- **Click here for a You Tube video of [Gokor in his final match doing uchimata](#)**
- **Click here for a Black Belt video of [Gokor showing uchimata combinations](#)**

**About the Tournament:**

The [Winter Nationals](#) will be held for the 4<sup>th</sup> time this coming December 5 and 6<sup>th</sup> 2009 in La Verne, California. It is expected to draw 600 players of all ages from United States, Mexico, and all parts of world. It represents the first time in over 40 years that the USJA and USJF came together to host a joint tournament. These two organizations represent more than 25,000 judo players in US and have a renewed commitment to growing judo in the United States at the grassroots level.

World Champion and 2X Olympic Bronze Medalist, Jimmy Pedro from Boston will once again be holding a competitors clinic at the tournament. The clinic is free to all players, coaches, and officials participating in the tournament.



Neil Simon, USJF President, Olympians, Jimmy Pedro, Ronda Rousey, Jim Bregman, with Dr. AnnMaria Rousey DeMars, USJA President, Gary Goltz, USJA COO, and Robert Fukuda, USJF, Executive Director

It should be noted that judo is going through extensive changes on an international level. Hayward Nishioka who is an A Level Referee and oversees the officials noted “the new rules eliminated the koka score for lesser throws and increased penalties for defensive posturing. The goal is to speed up and create much more dynamic action in order to attract more television coverage.” Hayward will be the featured clinician at the [Coaching Clinic](#) held in conjunction with the tournament.

For more information e-mail [Gary Goltz](#) or call 909-985-0486, office / 909-702-3250, cell.