



Research on judo contest bowing in World Judo Championships 2010 and Japanese national championships

Isamu NAKAMURA

National Institute of Fitness & Sports in
KANOYA



I. Introduction

Bow is the essence of judo. The judo bows are the form of behavior expressing appreciation and respect for others in traditional Japanese way and set judo uniquely apart from other international sports. Every judoka is required to bow before and after each contest in an appropriate manner in order to show appreciation, respect and self-control. The existence of strict manner differentiates judo bows from other forms of greetings.

There are 4 mandatory bows and 2 voluntary bows defined by IJF. In addition, contestants must follow the certain preset manners such as taking a step forward with left foot first, taking a step backward with right foot first, keeping natural posture (*shizen-hontai*) while waiting for a referee's call.

However, it is often said that these bows and manners are not properly performed in many of the international competitions.

In this study, contest bowing at the World Judo Championships 2010 (WC) and Japanese National Championships (NC) is analyzed in order to understand the current trend of bowing among world judo athletes.

II. Method

The study filmed and evaluated the contest bows and manners of male competitors in three weight categories (60kg, 73kg, +100kg) in the final rounds of two Championships.

◆ Events & contests

World Judo Championships 2010 Tokyo (WC)

National Judo Championships by Weight Category (NC)

*Final rounds of 60kg, 73kg, +100kg

◆ Bows and manners to be checked

See Fig. 1.

◆ Judgment & scores

Three judo experts (college students , 3-dan, 21 y.o., knowledgeable in bows and manners) watched the video and gave scores.

Scores for the bows were awarded depending on accuracy and politeness.

4 points for the best, 1 point for the lowest

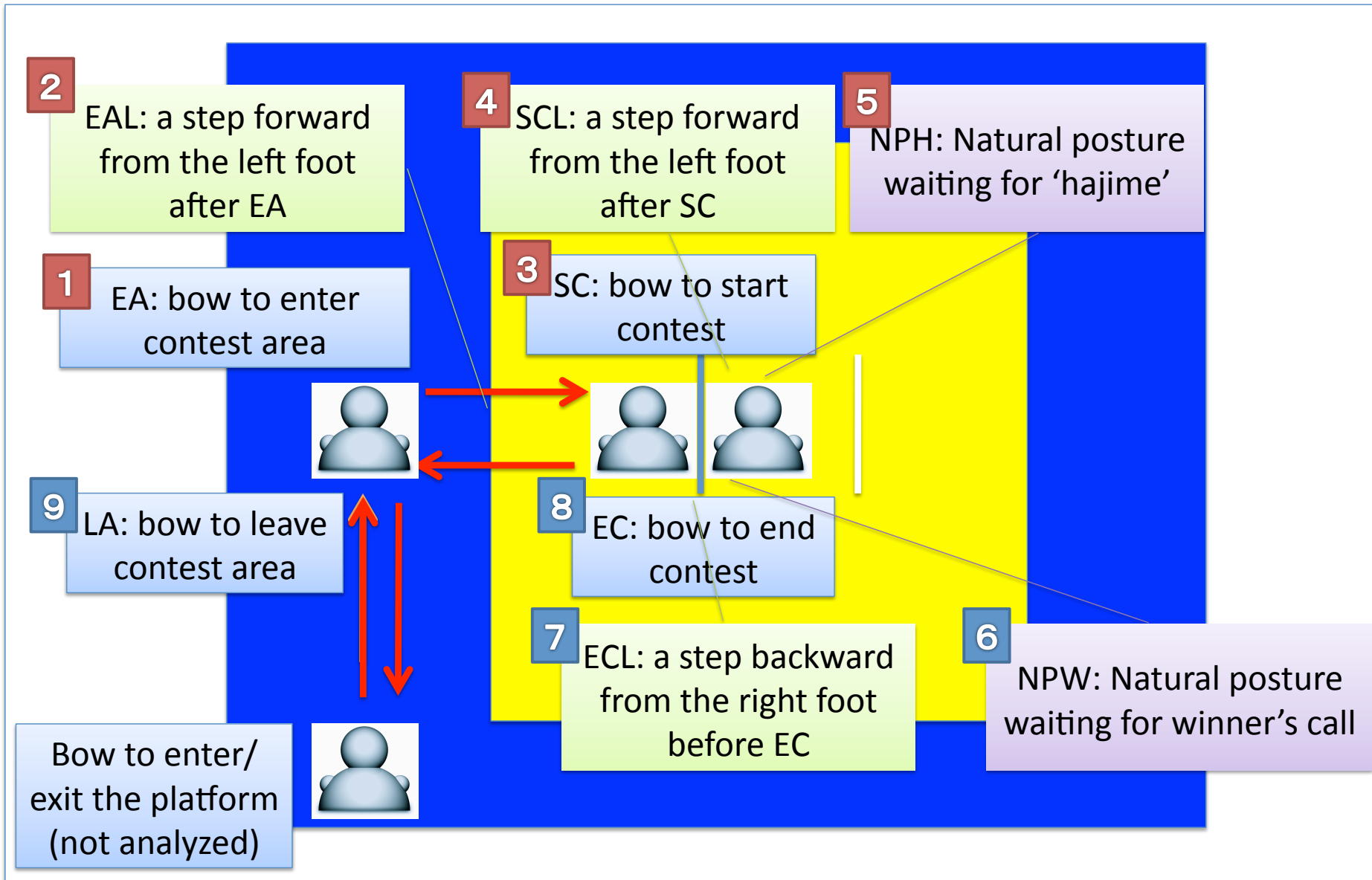


Fig.1 Contest bows and manners

III. Results

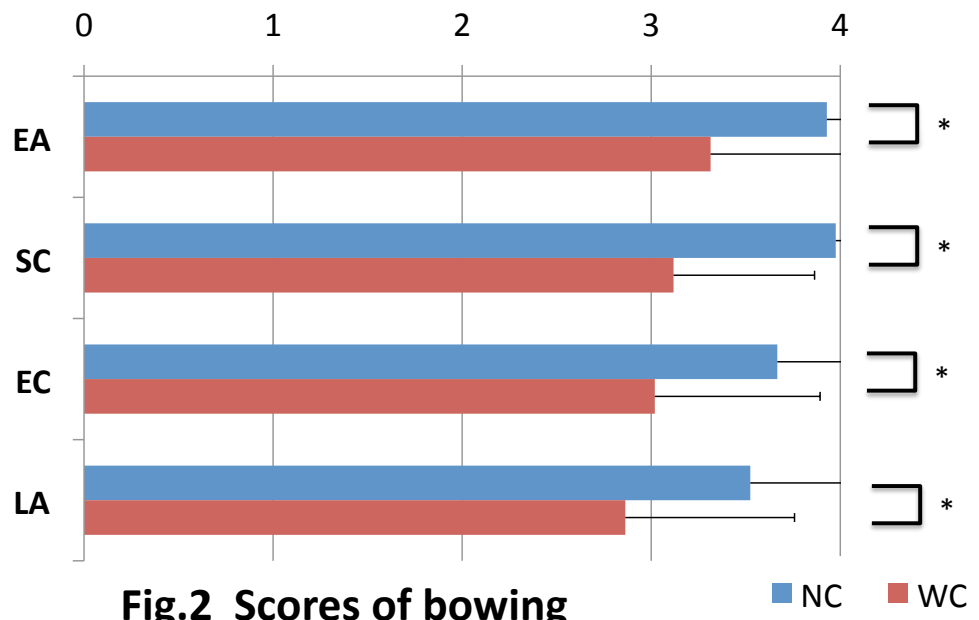


Fig.2 Scores of bowing

* : p<.001 between WC & NC

Scores in WC were significantly lower than those in NC. Post-contest bows (LA, EC) tended to score lower.

Losers received significantly lower scores in EC in both events.

Table 1 Bowing performance between winner and loser

	WC				NC			
	Winner		Loser		Winner		Loser	
	Ave.	SD	Ave.	SD	Ave.	SD	Ave.	SD
SC	3.16	.850	3.08	.891	3.24	.722	3.24	.436
EC*	3.42	.643	2.62	.898	3.33	.483	2.91	.700

* : p<.001 between Winner and Loser

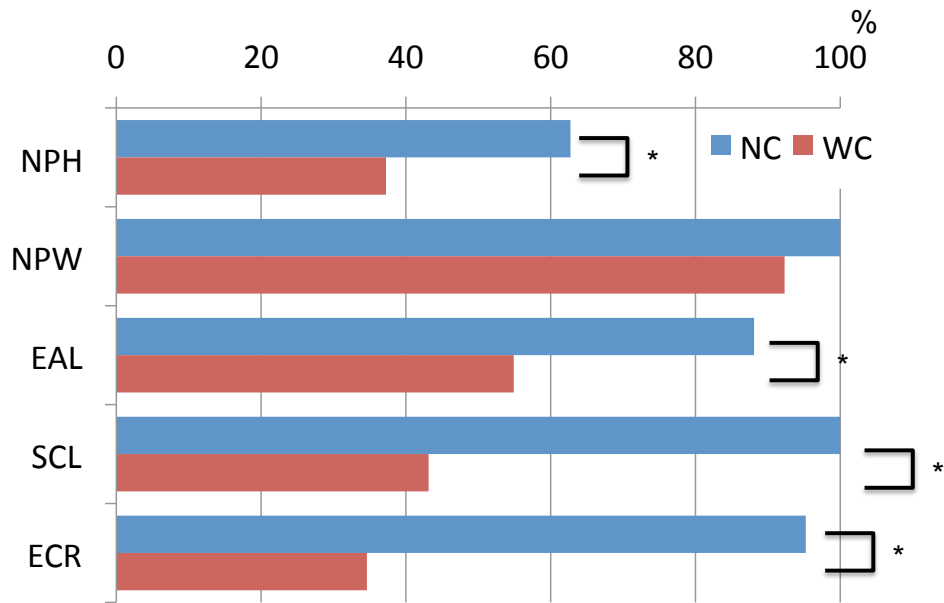


Fig.3 Rate of manners (step & posture) achieved

* : p<.001 between WC & NC

NPH was seen fewer in WC because 'hajime' was often called immediately after NPH.
It may be due to current trend of prompt running of tournament.
Contestants in WC do not seem to know 'sashin-utai' (the rule of step).

Half of EC and 70% of LA in WC are not performed at the same time.

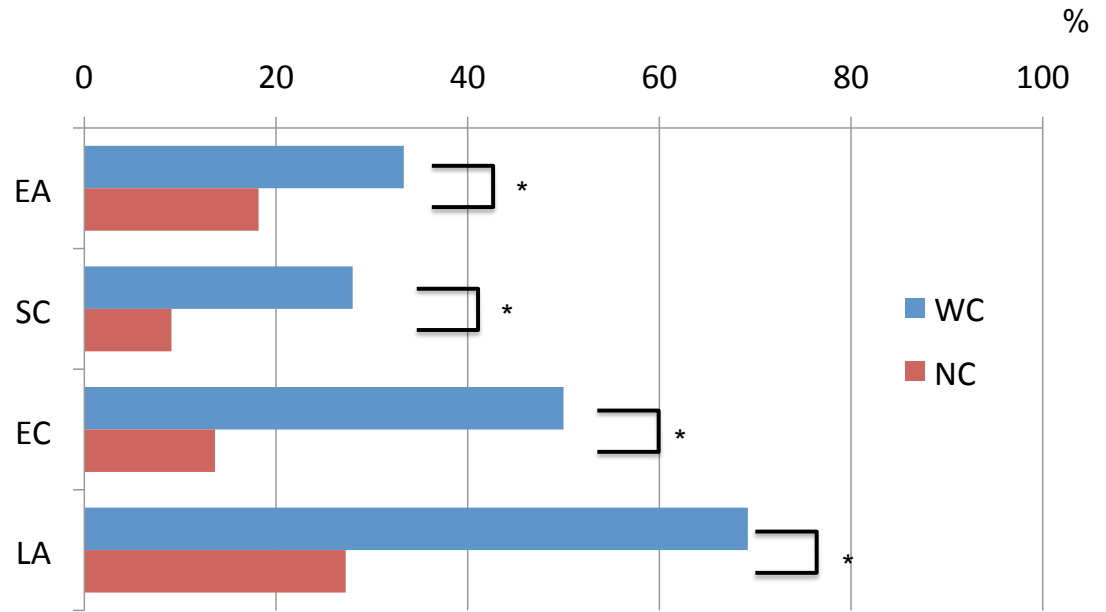


Fig. 4 Rate of unsynchronized bows

* : p<.001 between WC & NC

7 IV. Discussion

○Bowling

According to Referee Rules of International Judo Federation (IJF), contestants must bow when stepping on/off the platform, and at the starting positions (SC, EC), but EA and LA are not compulsory. The Rules described that the bows must be at an angle of 30 degrees measured at the waist. (Article 15) After SC, they must take a step forward and stand in natural posture to wait for 'hajime' call, and at the end, they are to take a step back and bow to each other (EC) (Bowling Guide Article 9)

In this study, the post-contest bows tend to score lower, and the losers to demonstrate relatively bad bowing manner in both WC and NC. The purpose of judo bow are not only to show appreciation and respect to others, but also to show one's ability of keeping one's own mind and body under control. The result may indicates that even the top athletes in the world have not yet achieved self-control .

○Manners

'Sashin-utai (左進右退)' or 'a step forward from the left and backward from the right' is the traditional manner in judo (as in *Kata*), but may not be well known among athletes.

NPH and NPW are written in the Rules and necessary for contestants to take a moment to prepare for fight and to keep a contest in order.

○ Synchronizing bows

The SC & EC bows are especially to express mutual appreciation/respect, and, therefore, two contestants are required to perform them at the same time.

However, 28.0% of SC and 50.0% of EC in WC were not synchronized each other at all.

Even though the importance of bowing is common perceptions among world judo family, contest bows are sometimes less concerned in training program.

WC is the best chance for our athletes to show not only their great athletic performance but also their achievement level of judo spirit.

References

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- Matsumoto, D. (1999) Judo A sport and a way of life. International Judo Federation.
- Nakamura, I., Hamada, H.(2007) Discussion of bowing in judo and the internationalization of budo. Annals of fitness and sports science, 36. 7-16.