



Developing On-Line Umpire Training

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for 7th degree black belt - G Eccles (NZ)

Prepared for
International Taekwon-Do Federation

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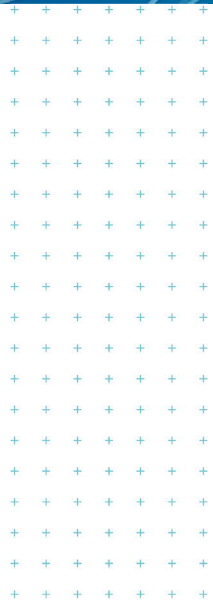


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1 Introduction

This thesis addresses the development and implementation of the first on-line ITFNZ umpire training course. It explains the origins of the course, its structure and content, and the future role of the course in umpire training and certification in New Zealand.

2 Qualifications and Experience

I am a 6th degree black belt and an ITF A grade International Umpire. I have umpired at 7 consecutive ITF world championships, with my first attendance being in Quebec City in 2007 and most recently in Inzell, Germany in 2019. I have undertaken nearly all umpiring roles, however since 2015 have been assigned roles mainly as a sparring centre referee, and as a pre-arranged sparring judge.

In New Zealand, I have been a member of the ITFNZ Tournament Committee since 1999, and have been teaching ITFNZ umpire courses several times per year since that time. I am the current ITFNZ Tournaments Director, with responsibility for ensuring that umpire training in New Zealand is undertaken in a professional and efficient manner and that domestic tournaments are run to a high standard that is enjoyable and safe for both competitors and umpires.

3 Umpire training in New Zealand

Historically, umpire training in New Zealand has been delivered by way of in-person training courses held in various venues throughout New Zealand each year. Shown below are attendees at a traditional in-person course held in New Zealand in 2018.



This requires instructors and attendees to travel to and from the course venue, which for some can require a great deal of time and expense. For others, it is difficult to attend training courses (which are typically a 6-8 hour time commitment on a weekend) due to work or family commitments.

Further, since the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, the in-person training delivery model has become even more difficult to implement due to lockdowns, venue and gathering restrictions, and the inability of people to travel within New Zealand.

In NZ, domestic umpire qualifications are valid for 3 years from the date of issue. ITFNZ requires students wishing to grade for 2nd degree or higher to also hold a current ITFNZ umpiring qualification.

Because of the difficulties set out above in terms of being able to access an in-person course in recent years it has meant that some dan grading candidates have been unable to grade because their umpire qualification had expired. Others have had to go to extreme lengths and cost simply to be able to attend a course in order to remain eligible to grade.

4 Developing on-line umpire training

For all of the reasons set out above, and in order to ensure umpire training in New Zealand is accessible to all regardless of location or public health settings that might apply in the future, I have developed an online umpire training refresher course. This course is the latest in a wider ITFNZ initiative to deliver on-line courses for instructor and student development purposes.

4.1 The Purpose of the Course

The purpose of the on-line course is to allow ITFNZ members with a current domestic umpiring qualification to undertake the course in their own time and, provided they pass, renew their domestic qualification for another 3 years.

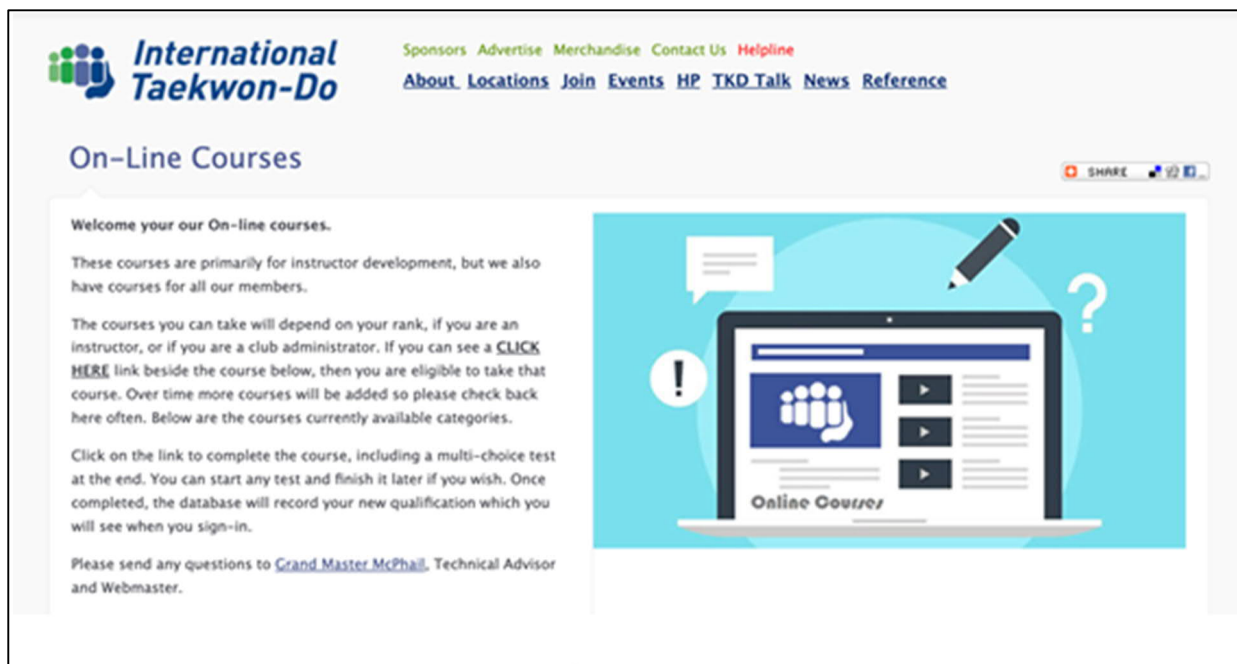
The on-line course is not a substitute for attendance at an in-person course for those who have no prior umpire training. That is, in order to obtain an umpiring qualification in the first place, a member will still need to attend an in-person course run by the ITFNZ Tournament Advisory Group.

Any ITFNZ member wanting to gain or maintain an international umpire qualification can only do so by attending a qualifying International Umpire Course (IUC) run by the ITF Umpire Committee.

4.2 Accessing the Course

The on-line course is accessed through the ITFNZ website. Each ITFNZ member has their own login to the Members only section of the website. From there the member can access the On-Line Courses section of the website (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1 – Screenshot of the On-Line Courses section of the ITFNZ website



Once at the On-Line courses section, the member then selects the Umpire Refresher Course as set out in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2 – Screenshot of the Umpires Refresher Course Link



4.3 Course Structure

The course is modular, with six modules as follows:

- i. General Introduction and Umpiring Principles
- ii. Patterns Judging
- iii. Sparring Corner Judging
- iv. Sparring Centre Referee
- v. Specialty Technique
- vi. Power

Each module has an associated video clip that must be viewed in its entirety (it is not necessary to view all videos in one session). The video modules focus on demonstrations of practical umpiring skills (hand signals, correct interpretation of infringements etc) that are essential in order for the umpire to be effective in practice (see example image below)

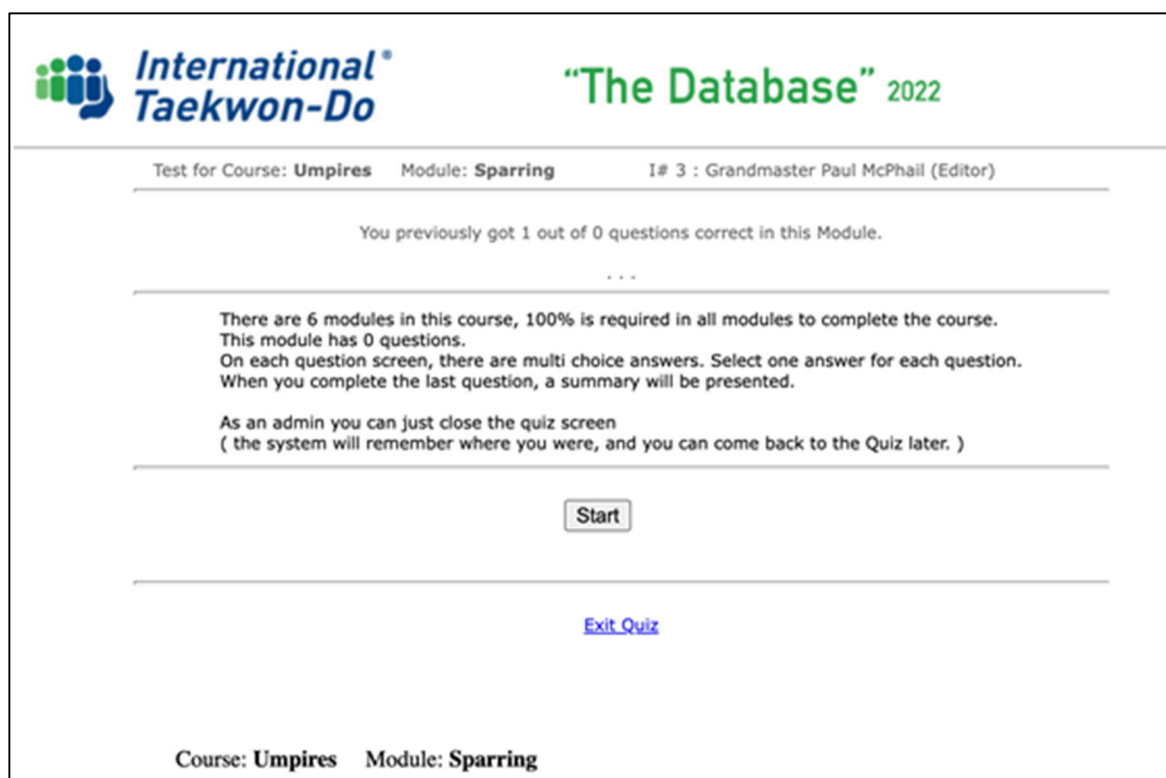
Figure 3 – Example of action from Centre Refereeing Module



4.4 Testing

Each of the modules (with the exception of the General Introduction) has an associated on-line theory test that the member must pass in order to complete the course. At the end of each test the score on the test is displayed. The image below sets out the screen that provides instruction to the member on the testing components.

Figure 4 – Modular Test Instruction Screen



In order for the course to be as user friendly and flexible as possible, there is no requirement for the member to undertake all the tests one after each other in the same session. The tests can be completed at times convenient to the member. However, the overall course cannot be passed until all of the module tests have been passed.

The questions are multiple choice and are structured to ensure that the umpire must have viewed each module in its entirety in order to be able to pass the test. An example of a test question is shown below.

Figure 5 – Example of Test Question

Course: **Umpires** Module: **Sparring**

Question 1/10: If a corner judge notices that their scoring equipment has malfunctioned, they should:

a: immediately stand up and remain standing until the match is stopped

b: wave to the jury president to get their attention

c: continue scoring mentally and try to remember the scores for each competitor at the end of the round

d: do nothing until the end of the round and then get the attention of the IT assistant

Tick an answer, then click Next.

Go to Q# -- 1 --

If the test has not been passed, the member can try again. There is no limit to the number of attempts a member can undertake in order to pass the test. Shown below is an example of the system feedback to the member on their test result, and instructions for how to take the test again if necessary.

Figure 6 – Test Result Screen

Course: **Umpires** Module: **Sparring**

Summary:: 40% 4 Correct out of 10

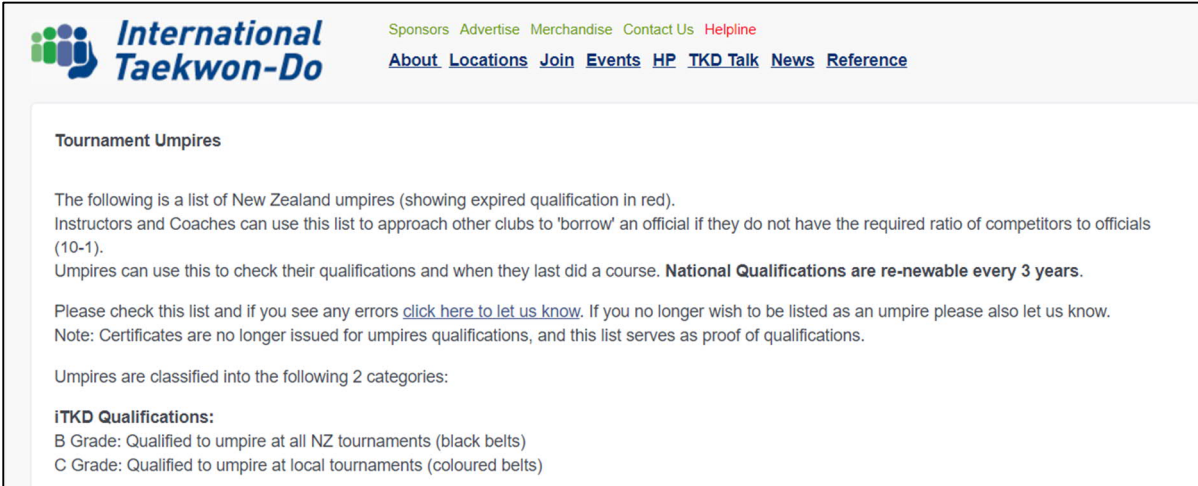
...

You can take the quiz again, 90% is required to pass.

**if you wish to review your answers for this module, click [Review]
or you can change answers by clicking [Restart Test]**

Once a member has successfully passed all the required module tests, the overall course is passed and the umpire qualification renewed. The result is recorded automatically in the ITFNZ database and the ITFNZ Umpire list is also automatically updated – see below.

Figure 7 – ITFNZ Umpire Database



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Tournament Umpires

The following is a list of New Zealand umpires (showing expired qualification in red).
 Instructors and Coaches can use this list to approach other clubs to 'borrow' an official if they do not have the required ratio of competitors to officials (10-1).
 Umpires can use this to check their qualifications and when they last did a course. **National Qualifications are re-newable every 3 years.**

Please check this list and if you see any errors [click here to let us know](#). If you no longer wish to be listed as an umpire please also let us know.
 Note: Certificates are no longer issued for umpires qualifications, and this list serves as proof of qualifications.

Umpires are classified into the following 2 categories:

iTKD Qualifications:
 B Grade: Qualified to umpire at all NZ tournaments (black belts)
 C Grade: Qualified to umpire at local tournaments (coloured belts)

5 Future Use of the On-Line Umpire Training Course

Given that the on-line umpire course is a new initiative, the uptake and efficiency of the course will be monitored over the next 12 months and then formally evaluated in March 2023. It is my intention that the provision of basic umpire training in New Zealand could be devolved to club instructors, using the on-line umpires refresher course I have developed as a tool to assist their teaching. This would provide the maximum flexibility of delivery of basic domestic umpire training which will hopefully result in an increase in the number of ITFNZ members that are qualified as umpires.