

Hiza Guruma



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Even though hiza guruma (knee wheel) is one of the first throws a student should learn in Judo, it is still a valuable throw used by top contest men all over the world. As a part of the first kyo of the Go Kyo No Waza, it is part of the requirements for sankyu (3rd class brown belt) and all higher ranks. Hiza guruma is often used as a preparation to break up the opponent's defense. It is so used by Paul Maruyama, National AAU Light Middleweight Champion of 1966, and many others, particularly in combination with such throws as osoto gari and de ashi harai on the opposite side. Every Judoist should be able to perform it skillfully, both alone and in combinations.

THE PLAYERS

Hiza Guruma in this photo sequence series is applied by 1996 AAU Heavyweight Champion Allen Coage of New York City against Ron Hoffman of Southern Illinois University. Allen is one of the nation's outstanding young contest men, and Ron is a national collegiate champion in addition to being the 1966 Pan American Maccabiah Games Heavyweight Gold Medalist.

THE OFF-BALANCE (KUZUSHI)

Allen Coage (back to camera) is shown setting

Ron Hoffman up for hiza guruma by making Ron step back with his right foot. He does this by stepping forward strongly with his left foot and pushing Ron slightly with his left hand which holds the inner upper sleeve. The left hand can also hold the lower outer sleeve, depending upon the favorite grip of the thrower. When Ron steps back with his right foot, Allen has him in position to apply a rapid pull to Ron's right front corner. The same off balance position could have been achieved by making Ron step forward with his left foot. This is the method used by Paul Maruyama for his hiza guruma, which is his very effective break-up throw to get his opponents moving. He pulls strongly forward and around with his right hand, swinging his right foot back and forcing his opponent to step forward with his left foot. Then he reverses direction with a whipping action, plants his right foot and shoots the left foot up to catch the opponent's right knee, which is now to the rear.

No matter what action you take to get the opponent's right foot back or his left foot forward, the result is the same. That is, you can now break his balance by pulling sharply to his right front side.

THE ENTRY (TSUKURI)

In both of the photos shown above you see Ron being set up for hiza guruma as Allen maneuvers him to get

Hiza Guruma



his right foot back. In the two photos above Allen is finishing the off-balance and leaping in for the entry. This is a very important stage of the throw. Notice the difference between the right photo on the last page and the left one above. Allen is jumping over the right with his right foot, and as he does so his body is crouching and doubling up. At the same time the pull of Allen's left arm is swinging outward, elbow high, pulling Ron out to Ron's right front corner.

TAI SABAKI (BODY TWIST)

Here the tai sabaki action of the thrower is clearly apparent. In the left photo above his back is still toward us, but by the split second later when his right foot is planted, he was turned 90 degrees. It is this swinging movement of Allen's body that makes his left arm pull powerful. Ron would involuntarily step forward with his right foot at this point, but Allen finishes the entry by swinging his left leg up and holding Ron's right leg still.

RIGHT FOOT POSITION

There are a few more points to pay attention to in considering how Allen is moving into position to throw. One of these is the way he has placed his right foot on the mat in the right photo above and the two photos on the

next page. Notice that the toes are not pointing straight back as they would in a normal step forward, but instead Allen's toes are pointed in toward Ron. This foot placement action is exceedingly important in hiza guruma. The result is that it is easy for Allen to continue his body twisting much farther, keeping Ron off balance and falling.

Taking a complete look at the entry in the two photos above and the left photo on the next page, we can see that it is a spring to the right with all possible speed, pulling up and out with the left hand, and placing the right foot with the toes pointing at the opponent.

Allen's right hand is not visible in the two photos above, but its action is apparent. From the way Ron's left lapel is stretched in both photos above, it is obvious that Allen's right hand is driving up and across with the left hand pull. From the closeness of Allen's body to Ron's, we also know that Allen's right arm is bent, with the elbow down to give him more power in lifting and turning. This lifting or pressing action is really apparent in the right photo on the next page, as Allen's right arm is visible behind Ron's head.

The difference between a good action and a bad one is that the power of the body is used in an effective throw. The beginner usually doesn't move his body at all,

Hiza Guruma



he just tries to muscle his opponent over by yanking with his arms. However, if you'll look closely at these photos, you'll see that Allen's arms don't move independently of his body at all. The four photos on these two pages show that he has moved his whole body to the side and whipped it around without changing the position of his hands and arms in relation to his body very much at all. Hence he is actually transmitting the power of his tai sabaki to his opponent through his arms, making for a very dynamic movement which the opponent cannot resist.

A MINOR TECHNIQUE

Very few Judomen know the difference between a major and minor technique. When asked, they say that the minor technique is faster, or a major technique is more powerful, but all of these answers miss the mark. The definition of a minor technique is one that uses a forward sweep of the leg. All others, including the sutemi waza, are considered to be major techniques, which involve either a body twisting action alone (tsuri komi goshi) or a body twist together with a rear sweep of the leg (uchimata, osoto gari, or ouchi gari). Hiza guruma is a minor technique because it includes a forward sweeping

action of the leg. This action holds rather than sweeps the opponent's leg but it is still a forward movement of the leg.

STRAIGHT BODY

In the paragraphs above we noted that Allen's body was completely turned in making the off-balance and entry for hiza guruma. In the two photos above the entry has been completed and the kake or throw itself is starting to take place. In observing this action there are some very important points to note. In the right photo on the preceding page notice that Allen's right leg is bent as he jumps around in the entry. Then look at both the photos above and see that this right knee remains bent throughout the rest of the entry and the execution. Bending this right knee enables Allen to keep his body straight from foot to shoulder throughout the throw. Although little understood, this is the most important part of the execution, keeping the body straight as it is twisted and the opponent is wheeled over the outstretched left leg. This perfect straightness of the body is clearly shown in the left photo above, and continues in the right photo. Notice also that Allen's left foot and lower leg are holding Ron's right leg above the knee, preventing Ron from stepping over and escaping the throw.

Hiza Guruma



THE EXECUTION

In the two photos above we see the final execution of hiza guruma started on the previous page. Allen's left leg, having blocked Ron's right knee for the instant it took to get him in the air, is now returning toward the mat to provide stability. You can see that in the right photo above Allen has his left leg under him and is standing on both feet in a solid position ready to take an arm lock or mat hold. This stability is extremely important. If the attack fails to score a full point, then the thrower can instantly take an arm lock or hold down. As an example, this year Gene Bailey worked a good deal on following his tai otoshi with juji gatame (cross arm lock). During one of the important contests of the AF World Wide Tournament, Gene threw a very strong opponent with tai otoshi for half point. Without hesitation he followed with juji gatame and won the match. The point is that every throw can and should be followed with katame waza, either a choke, arm lock, or hold down. There is absolutely no excuse for throwing a person down and then failing to score a complete victor because you have not developed the ability to keep your balance and follow smoothly into mat work.

Observe that in the left photo above the force of Allen's

right arm push is very strong as he continues to twist his body. In the beginning of hiza guruma, the left hand pull is most important as it drives the opponent over.

SUMMARY

Hiza guruma, a minor foot technique of the first Kyo of the Go Kyo No Waza, is best applied against the opponent's knee when it is to the rear. To get the leg you are going to attack to the rear position you can either swing him around to pull his other leg forward, or push him so he steps back on the leg you are going to attack. This sequence photo series shows the latter method.

The maneuvering to get his leg back can be done slowly, but when the instant for attack comes, the thrower must slide to the side very quickly and break the opponent's balance with a fast pull to his opponent's right front corner. At the same time, the sweeping leg must be brought up very quickly to block the opponent's right leg before he can step.

In the entry, the entire body is swung to the side like a door, and the hands merely transmit the power of this body turn to the opponent. With the body straight, the opponent is then wheeled over and the thrower follows through into mat work.