

Ouchi Gaeshi



GENERAL INFORMATION

This counter for ouchi gari is part of the requirements for Junior 7th Degree and senior sankyu (3rd Kyu). It is a basic movement necessary for every serious student of Judo. Consult page 22 of your Instructor's Handbook for the Junior System to see where this fits into the general patten of Judo skills.

After getting the feel of the movement, work on it both in randori and by using the drills outlined at the end of this Technical Series.

THE PLAYERS

The counter demonstrated here by Robey Reed, 5th Dan, member of the AFJA Board and National Coaching staff, as tori (the thrower). Uke (the receiver) is Len Carter of Charleston, South Carolina, one of the top contestants and teachers in the south for many years.

THE ATTACKER STARTS OUCHI

In the two photos above, Len Carter, on the left, is launching an excellent ouchigari attack. Note that his chin is down, back straight, and that he is leaning forward well into the throw with a good body arch. At the same Robey is transferring his weight to the right leg, getting it off the leg that Len is going to attack.

AVOIDING THE STRAIGHT LINE ATTACK

Remember that the throws to the rear, and there are only four in common use: Osoto, Kosoto, Kouchi and Ouchi gari are all straight line attacks. That is: The

thrower starts in one place, drives against his opponent, and keeps on going to throw to the rear in just about a straight line. This is not true with the forward throws. They require the thrower to start in one place, go to the opponent, and then throw him back toward where the thrower started from. The counter to the rear or straight-line throws, then, is to get out of the way of the opponent's drive and throw him where he intended to throw you.

DO NOT TELEGRAPH

Notice that Robey has not started, in the two photos above, to make any move which would scare the attacker off. His action during the moments when the attack is coming is to shift his weight to the right foot to free himself for the rapid action which will come later.

NO OFF BALANCE

Further, you will notice that Robey's balance is not broken to the rear. He cannot permit this because he would then be unable to execute the most efficient counter, which must be made before his own balance is broken. True, there are other counters which can be done even if the opponent breaks your balance, but this counter is not one of them. The counters which are made before the opponent breaks your balance are called by many coaches: "Phase One Counters." If you have to dig in a little to resist the first part of your opponent's off balance attempt be careful that you don't get faked out and thrown to the front. In this counter, you can prevent getting faked out by keeping your head up and shifting your weight to the right foot, plus being ready for anything.

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STARTING THE BODY TURN

In the two photos above you will see Robey starting the body turn which will get him out of the way of Len's attack. Robey's weight may seem to be leaning forward, but in reality he is opening his body to his own right front corner. Len's attack is a good one. He is reaching deeply with his right leg, and has his head well down.

THE ATTACK IS BROKEN

In the right photo above, the attack is broken. Len's lower body is still driving straight through, but his shoulders have been twisted by Robey's body turn. From here on Robey is in control of the situation. If you will look closely at the left photo above, you'll see that Len's feet are both off the ground. He is driving in very hard for the reaping movement of ouchigari. At this point he can't stop without a real effort of skill, and even if he stops, he is still in a very weak position with one foot off the ground and nowhere to go.

SHIFTING THE WEIGHT

By looking carefully at the right photo above you'll see that Robey's right knee is now bent slightly with the force of his turning movement. You can also see that the gi across Len's back is starting to show wrinkles where Robey is pulling. This pull is up and almost straight back the way Len wanted to throw Robey with the ouchigari in the first place.

FORCING A TRANSFER OF WEIGHT



By turning his body to the side to avoid the attack and lifting and pulling, Robey has not only broken the attack, he is forcing Len to stop the attack and put his right foot back down on the round. When this occurs, we have a perfect chance for okuri ashi harai. The okuri ashi harai movement works best when you catch the opponent just as he is changing his weight from one foot to the other. Then, neither foot is planted firmly, and both can be swept from under him. If both players stopped right here, Len's foot would come down on the mat and he could step back out again.

BALANCE BREAKING DRILL

At this point the instructor and students can learn an important drill which should be used to learn the counter up to this point. We have used this drill many times in camp and in the dojo with both skill and beginner Judoists. Have the players line up along the edge of the mat in pairs. One man in each pair has his back toward the center of the mat. The other man in each pair faces the center of the mat and is the attacker with ouchigari (who gets countered). Start the pairs moving in a line across the mat, with the man who is going forward making repeated ouchigari attacks. The player who is moving backwards shifts his weight to his right foot each time he is attacked, thus avoiding the throw. When this point is reached in each attack both stop, withdraw, and move again. When the pairs get across the mat they come back with the other man, now going forward, doing the attacking.

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By performing this drill many times, each player will develop the reflex of avoiding the throw rather than merely resisting. This is an important point made by Geoff Gleeson in his important book, "Judo for the West." The idea is that you move when attacked rather than stiff arming alone. There is nothing wrong with gripping for defense, but it is a dead end as far as counters and combinations go. It merely postpones the day when a stronger opponent smashes right through or under your stiff arms.

ACTION OF THE ARMS

In the two photos above you'll see the snapping action of Robey's arms and shoulders which makes the okuri ashi harai counter possible. There are several important points to look for here. First, the lift is not only to the rear the way Len is going, but also up. Look at the way the gi is stretched tight across Len's back under the shoulders and you'll see how strong this pull is.

Second, Robey has his elbows down. It's impossible to get a really strong lift with the arms extended. To make your pull and lift stronger, the elbows must go down and in, it's a mechanical fact which can't be denied.

Third, the hand action is the only result of a snapping twist of the head and shoulders. Notice the difference in Robey's head position from the second photo on the last page to the left photo above. This much change from one sequence photo to another means that the movement was very fast and powerful.



SWEEPING WITH THE WHOLE BODY

Our Executive Secretary, Mr. Rick Mertens, once recalled to me several sessions he had in Japan with Osawa Sensei, who is noted for okuri ashi harai. Rick recalls that Osawa emphasized that when he sweeps okuri ashi harai he sweeps with his whole body. In the right photo above you can see this happening with Robey's counter.

In the left photo above you can see that Robey's left thigh is actually under Len's leg and is lifting along the leg even before his foot comes into action. This is the kind of dynamic, whole-body movement which makes Judo work.

CONTINUING THE BODY TURN

The right photo above shows Robey continuing his body turn toward the rear. Notice that he is still sending Len's upper body straight to the rear in the exact direction he was trying to go with the original ouchi gari attack. The pull is still very strong, as you can see from the tightness of the gi across Len's back. The elbows are still down and locked in for greater power. It is the shoulders turning toward the throw which execute the movement.

DYNAMIC BODY ARCH

We commented above on the excellent technical points made by G. R. Gleeson in his fine book. His the National Coach of Great Britain. One of the most important concepts he has developed is that of the power of the curve of the human body. Gleeson points out that

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at the moment of maximum power the human body is always arched, driving off one or both feet, with the chest and head up and out. In this technical series the power curve (we call it the dynamic body arch) is well shown two times. In the first few photos Len's body is starting to arch into ouchigari (see the fourth photo in this sequence). The, as Robey breaks the attack and performs the counter, his body starts to arch into its most powerful position with the weight driving off his right foot and head and chest up (see the right photon on the preceding page). The important point for the instructor to remember is that he must get the student to execute his throwing movements by arching and driving at the moment when he desires to develop maximum power.

SOME EFFECTIVE DRILLS

The off balance for this counter, or the beginning, can be learned very well from the drill described above. There are also other good methods of practicing this counter.

One method is to get one student out in the center of the mat and have several others line up against him. Each one then comes forward to attempt ouchi gari, trying to throw if he can. The center man tries to counter each attack. In this drill be careful that beginners actually try ouchigari. Sometimes they are so interested in stopping the counter they know is coming that they don't even make ouchigari. Then of course the drill breaks down because no counter can be execute.

Another excellent drill is to have half the class form a circle around the edge of the mat, facing the

Center. They should be far enough in so that they won't go off when thrown backwards with ouchigari. Then take the other half of the class opposing the players in the circle and have them throw with ouchigari.

After each throw the whole inner circle of attackers moves one man to the right or left and attacks again with ouchigari, but this time the circle of players facing in counteres the attack with okuri ashi harai. The inner circle of attackers changes one man to the left or right after each movement, but the outside circle stands still. You can also work this drill with the left attack.

Hopping is another excellent drill for this skill. In the hopping drill the line of pairs moves back and forth across the mat. Those who are moving forward attack with ouchigari, hopping into the throw with the leg hooked behind the opponent's. Those being attack as they move backwards hop backwards a few times and then snap into the counter. This is an excellent drill for balance and recovery of lost balance.

SUMMARY

The counter for ouchigari is a basic skill for all Judomen. This counter is not the only one used, but it is so common as to be the basic skill upon which others are built. Practice it repeatedly until it becomes reflexive.