

# O Soto Gari – Major Outside Reaping



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

O soto gari is generally considered to be one of the most effective throws in Judo. Along with uchi mata it is one of the two most popular contest techniques at present. In addition, it is one of the three most effective rear throws (o soto gari, ko uchi gari, and o uchi gari). Therefore all Judoka must study it carefully, Opportunities continually appear which must be passed by if the student can't throw immediately with osoto (as it's called by most Judoists). As osoto is part of the first kyo of the Go Kyo No Waza, it is of course one of the requirements for promotion to sankyu.

## THE PLAYERS

Osoto gari in this photo sequence is demonstrated by two fine young American Judoists. Tori (the thrower) is Odell Terry, National AAU Middleweight Runner-up for 1966 and one of the three or four top American middleweights. Terry stands an excellent chance of representing the United States in 1967 Pan American Games or the 1967 World Championships if he can place first or second in the Final Pan American Trials. Uke (he who is thrown) is Ron Holfman, National Collegiate Champion, and Pan American Macabiah Games Gold Medalist.

## THE OFF-BALANCE (KUZUSHI)

Odell Terry, facing the camera, is stepping in for the entry as he makes the off-balance in the

photo above. Notice that Odell is holding both lapels. This off balance is a very effective body twist first to the right rear with a slight pull or shift and then to the left front with a dynamic snap. You may think that this is an unorthodox entry and grip, but it is a very common one among skillful Judoists. Terry's osoto in these photos is slightly unorthodox, but it is extremely effective. In many ways it is similar to the entry used by Toshiro Daigo, twice All-Japan Champion. The key to this first slight pull is to give your opponent the impression that you may be coming in for a left hand throw. If you'll study the photo above, it is obvious that from Terry's stance and grip, he could attack with left hiza garuma at this point, and is even pulling his opponent slightly toward the opponent's left front, although he wants to throw toward the opponent's right rear corner.

## FINISHING THE KUZUSHI

In the two photos on the next page you'll see the fast action Odell uses to finish the kuzushi and put his body completely in position to throw. This kuzushi is made with a tremendous snap of the right hand upward and across toward Ron's head, forcing Ron's head and shoulders up as you can see in the right photo. Proof of the speed of this movement is the fact that Ron is still leaning slightly forward from Odell's slight pull in the left photo, even though Odell's left foot is in place and his right knee is high with the left half way into the entry. What is the result of this off-balance? It is essential to note that

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the result is that Odell is able to enter with his left foot, his right leg, and his body while still pulling Ron forward in the opposite direction from the final throw.

## HOLDING THE OPPONENT STILL

Most Judoka have extreme difficulty in getting their opponents to standstill while they off-balance and enter for osoto. Careful study of the left photo above will show that Odell has forced Ron to stand still or even lean forward while Odell himself has maneuvered into an extremely strong position for osoto. Thus the face to the front left has been successful, and it is too late for Ron to get away when Odell reverses his slight forward pull with a powerful snap to finish both the kuzushi and the entry at the same instant.

## THE ENTRY

Although the entry has been taking place at the same time as the off-balance, it is important to note some of the points in the entry to make sure they are understood. In the left photo above, Odell's left foot has advanced until it is in line with both of Ron's. Stepping at least this deep is important, because if the thrower is too shallow the throw will be ineffective even if the sweep is good. Sweeping from too far out just drives the opponent's front leg down into the mat rather than lifting it and the opponent's body up and over. Another key point in the entry is that Odell's chin is driven down hard as his leg enters in the right photo above be sure to



difficult the counter, a very important consideration.

## RIGHT HAND ACTION

The action of both hands is important in osoto, but the most common mistake in their use is to push incorrectly with the right hand. In the right photo above be sure to note how hard Odell's right hand is driving up and into Ron. The push with the right hand is so strong that Ron's lapel is driven up in front of his face, further tipping Ron's head back and destroying his balance.

## LEFT HAND ACTION

The left photo on the next page indicates the correct use of the left hand in osoto. The pull should be very strong right across your own body, locking the opponent's arm and shoulder to your chest. It is not easy to achieve the proper movement of the hands in osoto. Although it seems hard to believe, the beginner usually does exactly the wrong thing with both hands. Thinking that he must throw his opponent over backwards, the beginner pushes with both hands. This results in two unwanted things. First, the opponent steps back with his right foot and the thrower is never able to get into position. Second, the push by the beginner with his right hand is usually toward the opponent's left rear corner, so even if the opponent doesn't step back with his right foot, his weight is pushed on to his left foot and the thrower cannot trap and sweep that right leg as it is not glued to the ground. Hence the upward drive of the right hand

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and arm and the sharp across pull of the left are absolutely essential for the success of the throw.

## HEAD ACTION

The four photos on this and the preceding page show clearly the snap of the thrower's head over and down into the entry and the execution itself. As mentioned before, the chin must be kept tucked during the entire throw to strengthen the back, help the pull of the left arm, and make the right arm push strong. This tucking of the chin also keeps the balance driving forward into the throw to prevent any counter action by the opponent.

## THE EXECUTION

Osoto gari is executed by driving *up* against the rear part of the thigh of the opponent. The body is kept in a straight line and the whole body sweeps.

The toe is pointed and the point of contact between the thrower and the opponent is the back of the two legs. Now check carefully in the left photo on this page to note how Odell's toe is pointed at the moment of execution. Later, in the right photo on this page, his foot starts to bend as he brings his leg back down on the mat, but only then. Check also in the right photo above the powerfully, bent and efficient position of the right arm of the thrower. His entire forearm is slammed against the opponent's chest, and his right fist is pushing against the side of the opponent's head. At this point in the game, if this were a contest, the thrower would push a little



more to the side and keep driving his opponent right to the mat, ending on the mat in right kesa gatame.

## CONTROL OF THE OPPONENT

In the two photos on the next page Odell keeps both hands on Ron's lapels until Ron is almost on the mat. Odell is still bent double although his right or sweeping leg is returning to the mat. From this position he is in full control, and should a point not be called, or even without hesitating to see if a point has been called; Odell can take either a mat hold or he is in perfect position for juji gatame, an arm lock. This control is vitally important. Even though you are not completely successful in gaining a point, you must keep going to finish your opponent off on the mat.

## SUMMARY

Osoto gari is classified as a leg technique, as the main point of contact with the opponent is the back of the leg, in the classic case the back of the thigh, as is show in this sequence. The student must remember that he cannot push his opponent back with both hands, as this will merely make him walk backwards. The key to off balancing in osoto is to trap your opponent to the ground while you step in along side of him and get your leg behind him. Any method you can devise of trapping his right foot on the ground is good. This sequence shows a slight pull forward which sets up a

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Backward reaction which the thrower takes advantage of and adds to by snapping up and across with his right hand. The pull of the left hand is very strong across the thrower's body. When contact is made with a straight leg with the toe pointed, the upper body is thrown forward as the leg sweeps up, the most powerful sweep the human body can make.

## USEFUL DRILLS FOR OSOTO

Many of the mistakes made by beginners in attempting osoto can be corrected by practicing several drills for the use of both instructors and students.

## ROCKING HORSE DRILL

One of the good times to attack your opponent with osoto is when he steps back rather than forward with the leg you are intending to sweep. This may sound difficult at first, but you must remember that you always want to trap the opponent's weight on that leg to sweep it and get his whole body at the same time. Any time he steps with his weight transferring to that foot will be a good time to attack, even if he steps back. However, you must step in much more deeply yourself to drive his weight back as he steps back. To drill on this deep stepping, take a partner and attack him with osoto without throwing. Then step back deeply with your right boot as you come out of the attack, and have him advance deeply with his Left foot to attack you in turn. Don't waste any



steps in between, keep your balance, and return the attack against him as he steps out. This sets up an action like a rocking horse, forcing you to step deeply every time and keep your balance. It is a difficult but excellent drill.

## HIGH KICKING

To insure that you get your hips in deep enough to sweep properly, that is, upward against the back of the opponent's thigh; here is a drill in pairs for you to practice. Attack your opponent with osoto by stepping in deeply and then bringing your sweeping leg clear up behind him with the knee bent and actually kicking him in the back of his right shoulder with your knee. This has a tendency to throw your head back, so be sure to keep your chin tucked well down when you are doing this drill. Point your toe down when your knee is up all the way. After you do this many times you'll find that your hip is going in very deep, and that when you sweep your whole body sweeps as a unit.

## SIDE STEPPING

When your opponent's arms are so still that it seems impossible to attack with osoto, try stepping to the side so that his stiff arms swing sideways with you and you get the chance to get past him, and thus sweep properly. Set this up as a drill by instructing your partner to keep his arms stiff while you pull more to the side each time you attack. Concentrate on the pull of your left hand in this drill.