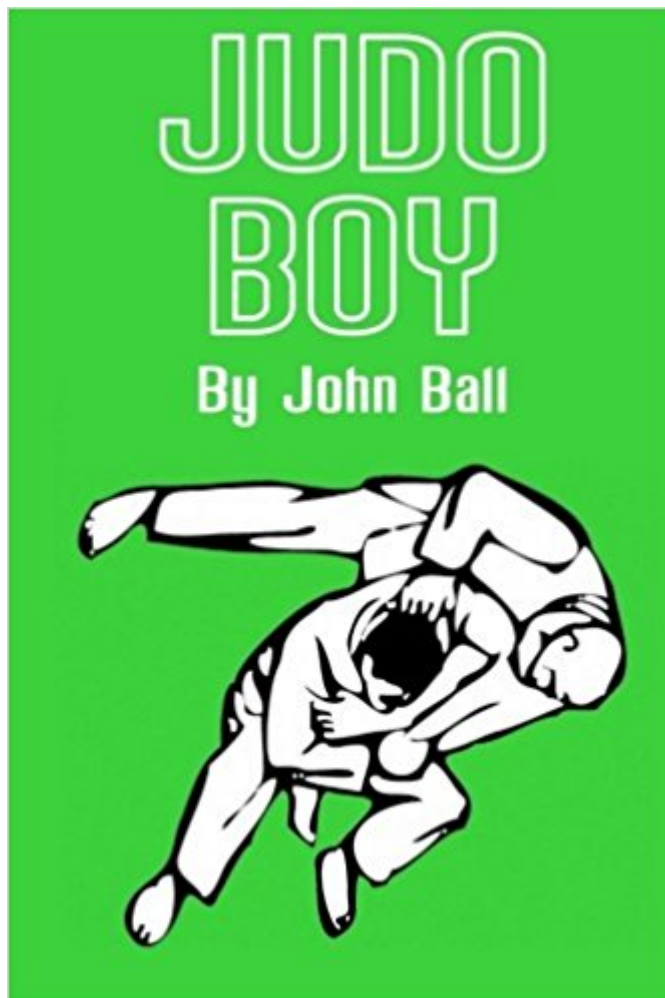




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# Judo Boy



## Synopsis

JUDO BOY is an adventure story for boys built around the ancient traditions of Judo. Rod Mitchell wants to fight his own battles. After being beaten and humiliated by the school bully and his gang, Rod is determined to fight back. Hearing about Judo from his friend, Mark Takahashi, a Nisei (Japanese-American), Rod joins the Judo school and is soon deep in a strange and fascinating new world. To his surprise Rod learns that Judo is, first of all, a sport with a strong and inspiring code of sportsmanship. Next he finds that Judo teaches courtesy, respect, and discipline as well as technique. Then, and most difficult of all for the fiery-tempered Rod, he discovers that the best thing a Judoist can do when a fight is starting is to walk away. Plenty of action, both on and off the Judo mat, keep this story of Rod Mitchell's self-development in Judo exciting. Based on accurate Judo data, it provides an original and valuable view of a new world of sport for boys.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

(From the dust jacket) "JOHN BALL, JR., is the author of two other books for boys, OPERATION SPRINGBOARD and SPACEMASTER 1, and of EDWARDS: FLIGHT TEST CENTER OF THE U.S.A.F. Pilot, journalist, and specialist in the field of Japanese culture in the United States, Mr. Ball has written books and articles on aviation, music, sociology, and adventure, and mysteries. A member of the Judo Black Belt Federation of the U.S.A., he has cultivated his musical hobby of playing the Japanese samisen." Now Ball is best known for mystery novels involving the African-American police detective Virgil Tibbs. Tibbs was introduced in the 1965 novel IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT, which won the Edgar Award for Best First Novel from the Mystery Writers of America and was made into an Oscar-winning film of the same name. Ball's departure from the

mystery genre was a bestselling what-if political thriller THE FIRST TEAM.

I first read this book as a boy, checking it out of the local library. I've looked for it often since, but the library either lost or discarded their copy. When I saw this reprint, I snatched it up eagerly, hoping that it was as good as I remembered. I was not disappointed. This is a classic story of a bullied young man who, through luck or destiny, takes up the martial arts in order to be able to defend himself. In the process, he learns more about life and about himself than he does about fighting. I know that this is a worn plot by now, but in the '60s, this was fresh and fun. Yes, this is a book aimed at younger readers, but an adult (at least this adult) may enjoy it as well. Some of the references are a little dated, but they do not, in my humble opinion, detract from the book to any great degree.

I read this book as a boy when it first came out. Subsequently, I started studying Judo at the Seattle Dojo under Chris Kato and others. This book had a huge positive impact on me to the point that, when you add up my black belt rankings in various martial arts systems and styles to date, they total 15. I am also an inductee into 2 martial arts halls of fame plus a Platinum Achievement Award from each. Given the impact this book has had on my life, I recently decided to read it again. I thought it might be dated at this point, but it is not. It is an extremely well written book and quite authentic in its descriptions of various Judo concepts and techniques. It brought back a lot of great memories of my path in Judo, Chris Kato, and the Seattle Dojo. Bravo and sincere gratitude to the author and his family!

I read this book several times as a kid. I was born in the year it was published, 1964, so I probably read it when I was 10, 11, or 12 or so. Loved it then. Occasionally I've popped around to see if it was available, and when I saw the Kindle version, I picked it up. It holds up reasonably well. It's a very tightly written book. The only really dated qualities to it for me is the use of "Oriental" as opposed to today's appropriate word, "Asian," and some of the kids' slang is quite dated, but overall, a very good book. And I went on as an adult to get that black belt in Sanchin-Ryu karate, and the book's stuck with me for 40 years or so.

Re-read this favorite of my teen years. Still a long time favorite at the young age of 57! A must for any young martial artist.

Awesome!

Back in the early 1980s I endured a lot of bullying as a small high-schooler with a big mouth. I began taking karate lessons in order to protect myself and eagerly looked for any martial arts books I could find. Ironically I discovered "Judo Boy," the tale of a lad who takes up Judo to combat bullies, in the sanctuary of my school library. I ended up reading "Judo Boy" a couple of times because of the encouragement it offered during a difficult life stage. The story concerns Rod Mitchell, a young man who gets soundly thumped by the student body's resident tormentor. Seeking help, Rod is introduced to Judo by an Asian-American friend, and he fervently works to gain anti-bully skills. We follow Rod's training and see him grow not only in ability but in maturity as well. Of course, Rod eventually comes face-to-face with his nemesis, and their confrontation is as satisfying as one might expect. Although it was written in the 1960s, "Judo Boy" is quite similar in theme to the "Karate Kid" movie that also captivated me in my youth. Bear in mind that it has been almost twenty-seven years since I read "Judo Boy" so I'm a bit fuzzy on the details. Indeed, I had to refer to this page's Customer Image for a reminder of our hero's name and the existence of his crucial friend. Over the years I've thought about this book from time to time, and recently reading an interesting non-fiction account of Judo titled "Falling Hard" by Mark Law made me wonder if "Judo Boy" is still available. I fondly remember carrying it around school with me like a talisman (and how mortified I was when, after forgetting it on the school bus, the driver held it up in front of everyone to find the owner), and I'd like to have a copy in my library. Although I never had the satisfaction of a decisive victory over my high-school tormentors, "Judo Boy" and karate helped me to grow up, endure a rough situation, and arrive at graduation intact so I could escape into the Marine Corps. That was probably a more optimal outcome than a fight would've been anyway. Now, after studying various self-defense methods over the years and earning a 2nd-degree black belt in Kenpo karate, I look fondly upon Mr. Ball's book as the genesis of a lifelong affection for the martial arts. Someday I hope to read "Judo Boy" again, and perhaps pass it on to someone else for their own personal edification.

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