

Metadata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCXxTIGuzto>

Okay guys, I'm here today with the great John Danaher. Here, John, for me, Placido, Jay. And guys, John is filming today the volume three of the Stand to Ground, all about upper body takedowns. So, John, can you explain a little more? Yeah, yeah. This is a fundamental dichotomy in takedowns in general. There are takedowns below the waist where we focus mostly on tackles, like tackles, single leg, high crotch, double leg. We're attacking your opponent's legs and putting them down.

Statistically, these are the most important takedowns in almost every form of grappling that doesn't actively outlaw them. Jiu-jitsu is no exception. If you look statistically, most of the takedowns in contemporary jiu-jitsu are leg tackles. But leg tackles do suffer from some potential problems. Some of the most pressing problems start to emerge in ADCC competition. Most of these problems are centered around the idea of placido, the right body chain, with the idea that if I initiate on the legs and successfully put a training partner down to the mat, the focus of my control is on his legs, particular chest to thigh contact. Now, this gives placido a huge number of options and abilities to scramble and scrimmage away from here and get to situations where I no longer score. Remember, under jiu-jitsu scoring criteria, I'm only gonna score if I put the majority of his back on the ground for three seconds, or I keep him on his hips, like so, okay? Now, I know three seconds doesn't sound like a lot of time, but when you're holding a trained athlete who is actively resisting you with everything he has, three seconds is an eternity, okay? And to, realistically, to control someone at the thigh and then work your way up from the thighs to the chest and actually pin and control them, it's extremely difficult. That's why you see a very large number of takedowns in jiu-jitsu, but very few scores, okay? Taking them down is one thing. Scoring on them is a completely different thing. And that's because of this fundamental problem associated with leg tackles, that I have to transition from the thighs all the way up to the chest under pressure, okay? And there are a thousand things your opponent can do to stop you from making that transition successfully. Yeah, also, especially when they're a sweat. Like, they cannot even kick you. Control becomes even more difficult, yeah. And, you know, some guys don't even compete with a rationale. It becomes even more difficult because there's so many things that can happen. And so this shift from the thighs to the hips, ultimately up to a pin on chest-to-chest or chest-to-back contact, it's enormously difficult. And as I said before, there's a large number of takedowns, but a relatively small number of actual scores in competition. Upper body takedowns operate completely differently because there, you get chest-to-chest or chest-to-back connection first and takedown second. It reverses the order of things. In a leg tackle, you start with the legs, put them down, and then work from the legs, shifting up to the chest. Upper body takedowns, you start with the chest contact or chest-to-back contact first and then takedown second. So that as you land, you already have the essential ingredient of scoring on the mat, which is upper body connection. So it has this intrinsic advantage to it. Let's contrast double leg situation. Say, for example, a classic double leg situation. We're in on a training partner's two legs and we put this guy down to a hip. Putting him down to a hip is no guarantee of score. He's faster, I can easily shift to a terminal site position from here. Now there's no score. Okay, I have no contact with his upper body. And even as I'm trying to make that contact, this guy's standing up and away from us and it's awfully hard to score under competition pressure. Now let's contrast that with an upper body throw. Okay, I'll demonstrate. For example, uke goshi, take an athletic stance. From here, I secure my training partner's waist and from this situation, we step in on a training partner and just whip him straight down to the mat. You end up with chest-to-chest contact. So when he tries to escape from here and screw my job, it's very, very difficult because you start in a pin. If he wants to turn up to total position, it's gonna be a fight, it's gonna be tough. If he does successfully turn up, it's gonna be with complete back exposure. And the chances of me getting hooks in and scoring on this guy on the back are very, very high. So the fundamental difference between upper body takedowns and lower body takedowns is that in lower body takedowns, there is a transition from legs to chest,

which takes time and is extraordinarily difficult against a resisting opponent. In other words, the takedown comes first, the upper body control comes second. Upper body takedowns are fundamentally different. You get the upper body connection first, takedown second. So in the critical three-second aftermath of the throw, you have a much higher likelihood of pinning and establishing chest-to-chest or chest-to-back contact that results in a score under Jiu-Jitsu scoring criteria. That's why we put a heavy emphasis on them. Now, the problem is most people believe that upper body throws require a higher level of athleticism, a higher level of skill, and because they take a higher level of skill, have a longer learning curve. Okay, so that's always been the criticism. It takes a long time to get rid of them. They're subject to very strong counters. And so most people say, hey, it takes less time to learn a single leg, less time to learn a double leg. Just stick with those. Now, it's not wrong to think that way. Single legs and double legs are extraordinarily effective and they've worked just fine for many years. But what I wanted to focus on in this video is something that emerged in the recent ADCC World Championships. I had students who had trained with me for a relatively short period of time, especially in takedowns. Like, for example, Gordon Ryan trained with me for a long time, but has been doing serious takedowns in a relatively short percentage of that, a small percentage of that. Others like Nicholas Miragalli or Giancarlo Badoni. Nicholas had the best takedown of the tournament. He won the best takedown. And it was an upper body takedown. And Giancarlo had two spectacular upper body takedowns in his most important matches. Gordon Ryan had a chest-to-back upper body takedown against Andre Gavon. They were all upper body takedowns. And so I've also come to believe over the years that I no longer believe that it's intrinsically true that upper body takedowns require greater athleticism than lower body takedowns. In fact, I think it just comes down to different people's bodies. For example, Nicholas Miragalli is tall and lanky, and he finds it very difficult to level change down and go into doubles and single legs on his knees. For him, upper body is much easier. It just comes to him more naturally. There's no one body type which is inherently better for all throws, all takedowns. What I find is that different people have different kinds of athleticism. And you may be someone who really struggles with level changes, but who finds upper body takedowns relatively easy. Other people find upper body takedowns a little difficult, and they're better with leg tackles. So I wanted to offer, in this video, a different route. Volume one was mostly about leg tackles, double leg, single leg, going in on the legs. Whereas this one is more about tying up the upper body and throwing so that you end up with good scores. And there was a heavy demand for this after ADCC because people could see, hey, these guys are training less than a year, and they were taking on champions with these methods. So it doesn't take as long to get good as many people believe. I do believe that part of the reason why many think that it takes a long time to get good is because they look at judo. Now in judo, the distances between you are much greater because you're gripping the jacket. And it takes real skill to be able to go through your opponent's grips, draw them in, and change distance between you and your opponent in a millisecond against resistance and throw people. That takes real skill. But in the nogi situation, you're typically starting shoulder to shoulder, chest to chest. The grips are already there. So it takes a lot less skill to throw from an overhold than it does from a power grip, for example. And so the learning curve nogi with upper body is significantly shorter. In addition, most of the throws that we show here are fairly standard throws in jiu-jitsu. I'm not showing advanced ura-nage or suplex throws to the back, which do require some athletics, and you have to have a good flexible spine for these. But none of the throws that I show require any kind of extraordinary athleticism. I mean, look at me, I'm an old cripple with a hip replacement. And if I can do it, everyone else can do it as well. The main emphasis will be on giving people the ability to throw in different directions so that as they encounter resistance in one direction, they'll be able to throw successfully in another. Okay, so for example, Jeff. Oh, Joe, and just yesterday we were discussing at the dinner how nowadays it's not enough anymore to just like grab a wrestling instructor and think that you're

gonna get good at wrestling. For ADCC, it's almost like you gotta have like a jiu-jitsu wrestling type of game, which you were the master of. You have to interpret all of the wrestling and judo skill in the light of jiu-jitsu scoring criteria. And a wrestling coach or a judo coach could actually do that, but you would have to tell them, okay, what are these scoring criteria? And they would have to adapt the techniques. So that's what it comes down to. Can you adapt the techniques that they use for the scoring criteria of jiu-jitsu? That's the real question. And guys, I have seen with my own eyes, Gordon training with a wrestling world champion. And on wrestling rules, he would have lost, of course, but on ADCC rules, the person was not able to score on him. And just that day I was in Austin, I saw Big Dan training against a D1 wrestling. And on ADCC rules, he didn't get scored. So it's really- He actually scored twice. And he actually scored twice, yeah. So it's- It is a fascinating part of the game. And people don't realize, once you start fiddling with the scoring criteria, the whole skillset has to be adjusted. It really is a different kind of game. Direction is a very important theme. The basic split here is between throws that take people forwards versus throws that take people backwards. So for example, uchi-mata would be a good example. If we start separating someone's legs from in here, if we step in with uchi-mata, that will be a throw in a forwards direction. Okay, and if we can start taking people down, you end up in positions from here where it's very hard for an opponent to get away from a score. You're literally chest over chest, head over head. When they try to get back up to their knees, it's an easy step over into really, really strong attacking positions. Okay. Pretty soon, once you get good in one direction, your opponent's going to try and stop you. So we have to have complementary throws. A good complementary throw to uchi-mata would be kosori-gaki. Takes them in a backwards direction. So the first threat was forwards. When he starts tipping in on us, hard to throw forwards in this direction now. And that's when kosori-gaki starts becoming a good option. And taking it in a backwards direction. And so we investigate this idea of the directionality of throws. You've got to have a good set of throws going forwards, good set of throws going backwards. And even the angle of entry has to be modified, adaptable on the strikes. So for example, if your entry for uchi-mata is getting complicated, uchi-mata requires me to open my chest to my opponent. If I can't do that, a good option will be to switch off into uke-waza. or the lateral drop, as it's often called. From a situation where I step in on my training partner, from here, we come out. It's still a forward throw, but it's got a completely different dynamic based on chest position. You're closing your chest to your opponent rather than opening your chest. And so the direction of attack is a big thing that we push. Another big thing that Basia and I, we were talking a lot about on the way here, is this idea that there are certain specialty moves that I wanted to teach in this video, which I think are underutilized in the sport of jiu-jitsu. In particular, a simple move, we always used to call it a cement mixer. I lived in New York, but many Americans call it a cow catcher. And it's a fairly standard move in wrestling, which has tremendous ability to be adapted to the sport of jiu-jitsu by a champion. The idea is it gives simultaneous control of the head and an arm, so that at the outcome of the move, once we get into a position like so, you end up in almost perfect pin, like a full half-nelson, where when Basia tries to work out of here, this half-nelson control makes it incredibly difficult. It sets up strangulation, it sets up arm lock entries. It's like the perfect way to both pin and submit opponents at the outcome of the throw. So we use specialty methods like this to solidify your scoring ability under jiu-jitsu rule sets. But it's not just about the throw itself. You have to be able to score. You have to be able to get these critical chest-to-chest and chest-to-back positions. In volume two, we looked a lot at chest-to-back takedowns, so I didn't want to repeat myself. So now we're looking mostly at throwing from conventional over hooks, under hooks, over-under position, pinch headlocks, reverse over back grips, all kinds of effective ways to grip people and effectively throw it. I was delighted at the world championships that people got to see that it doesn't take 10 years to get good at this. People became highly effective and ended up winning awards for their takedowns with less than six months of standing training. But you can make

tremendous inroads in a relatively short period of time. And you saw the fruits of that at ADCC 2022. Yeah, I think like Mary Galli is a great example because he was well-known as a guard player. You don't see guard players getting takedowns. You really don't. And then all of a sudden, in a few months training field, he did a super fight with Lovato where he got like two or three takedowns. Lovato is hard to takedown. And Lovato is not just a jiu-jitsu player, he's also an MMA champion. He took all of his opponents down in MMA. And then on the ADCC, he got the most beautiful takedown. Also, Giancarlo was hitting takedowns on everybody. Now, Giancarlo always had a good single leg, but no one associated with him with upper body takedowns. Suddenly he was hitting foot sweeps, and Kosoto Gake's, and people are like, where did this come from? How did this happen? And it all happened in a relatively short period of time. So this idea that it's gonna take you 10 years of brutal work to get good at these moves, experience just doesn't bear this out. I'm very confident that in a relatively short period of time you'll be able to get a good ability to hit these throws on your peers. And I can actually point to evidence of this now. It's not just words that I'm saying. I mean, look. John, in my opinion, you are a master of finding loopholes in jiu-jitsu. So you found the leg-lock-hoop loophole, and then you completely changed the game. And I remember you talking about the takedowns, even before the feet-to-floor, it was not even before the stand-to-ground. You were like, Bernard, there is a loophole in jiu-jitsu. It's the standing game. And I think now after ADCC, this is very clear to everybody. Like, how many people want ADCC pretty much only doing standing? And it's not wrestling. It's a jiu-jitsu type of wrestling. That's the problem. Like, people look at the game and say, oh, I need to get better in the standing position, so let me just learn some wrestling. That would be like saying, oh, I need to get better at chess, so let me learn checkers. And it's a different rule set. It's a different set of objectives. They're both wonderful sports, but they're very different in the direction that they go. And what's needed is the right ability to take what's appropriate from other grappling sports, judo, wrestling, and bring that in, and bring in what's appropriate, and make it or modify it in appropriate ways for the rule set of jiu-jitsu. And you're also gonna find that there's other complicating factors that make it even more difficult to make the adaptation. This, of course, is the presence of standing submission holds because now all the scrambles go in two directions. Okay, there's positional scrambles, and there's submission scrambles. And typically, you can counter the positional scrambles with submissions, and you can counter submissions with positional scrambles. And once you start getting those two working together, all the scrambles that determine scores completely change. While you were talking, it's coming to my mind, Gordon, the match that he finished in 12 seconds. So he pretended that he was going for some upper body technical game. It looked like he was reaching for a single leg. Yeah, I guess Roosevelt. And then all of a sudden, he pulled guard, and he was riding the heel hook. So it's a great combination. And it's so hard to read which one is which. He came up for an upper body grip, made a transition to what looked like a lower body leg tackle, and then suddenly he was an ashi garami. No, it's fascinating. Now it's submissions. And it's a very different game. And victory in the future will go to those who bring in a holistic package. I've always been critical of jujitsu instruction with the standing game because they tend to outsource. They tend to say, okay, just go over there and learn with those guys and come back three weeks later and hopefully your takedowns will be a little bit better. First off, if you're going to study something, you've got to study it year round. You can't just, before a competition, do three weeks of takedown training. You're not going to get better in three weeks. You're not going to get better in just some cursory study where you study another sport for a month before a competition and then think you're going to be able to pull out good moves in it under the stress of competition. Life doesn't work that way. It has to be year-round study, and it has to be appropriate for the activity in which you're engaging in. And only when jujitsu matures and understands it needs an autonomous game, yes, it will have huge amounts of input from wrestling. It will have huge amounts of input from judo, but it must all be

funneled in a way which is appropriate for the rule set of jujitsu. Once people understand that and start making a serious study of it, you're going to see a second revolution in no-gi jujitsu just as you did with leg locks, which ultimately makes this a much, much better sport. No, and after the ADCC, I saw a lot of discussions about how the, and I'm Brazilian, I can say, how the Brazilians are getting behind because they're not good at leg locks and they're not good at the standing game. And when I stopped to think about it, it's kind of true because in Brazil, wrestling is not very well known. And leg lock in Brazil, many years ago, had kind of like a bad thing. And now we're almost running to grab that information. I do believe that Brazil will catch up very quickly just because they have such an incredible pedigree of jujitsu in general. And if people are well-taught, it doesn't take long to be good at the leg lock game. It doesn't take long. It's not the most difficult thing to learn. If you've got good positional control overall, it doesn't take you that long. And secondly, Brazil has excellent judo. They don't have good wrestling, but they have excellent judo. The best Brazilian judo players are absolutely among the best in the world. So what I do believe is that they will have a standing game that's a little different to the American. Culturally, Americans are dominated by the local styles of wrestling. So that will always be a powerful influence in America. Brazil doesn't have that, but they do have fantastic judo. So I believe that you will just see a slight difference in their approach to the standing game. But I believe that once Brazilians start synthesizing their home-grown judo, adapting it to no-gi, they will be a powerful threat in the standing position. Well, Joe, and why did you leave the upper body take now to the last part of the, because that's the volume three of the stand-to-ground, and the stand-to-ground is three volumes, right? Part of it was practical, because I was quietly confident that my students would be able to show their skills in ADCC, so I wanted to delay until after ADCC. Just to have the proof that this is it. I don't like to offer opinions without proof. I like to say, this is what I think. I like to have a saying, this is what I think, and here's the evidence for it. And so I waited for ADCC, and now I believe I have good evidence to present to people. Everyone likes to talk a big game, but talk is much better when there's evidence to back it up. Okay, all right. So that's the main reason I waited. Yeah, no, that's amazing. John just shot the third part of the stand-to-ground, which is all about the upper body takedowns, and especially if you watch the ADCC, this is all I saw over there. Everybody who was winning was playing upper body takedowns. Just like last week, I was hanging out in the camp with Baby Shark, Diogo Reyes, and he was telling me that he pretty much won the ADCC doing takedowns that was involving upper body. So I think that's the key to... I think it's one important element. I don't want to create the idea that one is better than the other, any more than I don't like the idea that leg locks are superior to upper body submissions. You guys know what my spiel is. Attack the whole body, okay? If you only attack legs, you become predictable. And I don't care how good you are at leg locking, people are gonna find ways to counter you. If you only attack the upper body with submissions, you become predictable, and people are gonna attack downstairs and finish you. Only when you attack the whole body with submissions, do you fully actualize the potential that they have. Same thing with takedowns. I'm not trying to sell you some kind of magic potion here that upper body takedowns are somehow physically superior to lower body. No one likes a good double leg or a single leg better than me, okay? They're still statistically the most important takedowns in competition. They're a fantastic means of attacking, but I do think you would be selling yourself short if you only did lower body or you only did upper body. Learning them both, just like it is with submissions, is the way to go to fully actualize your potential with takedowns. Yeah, so guys, make sure to check that out. It's coming out amazing. And as you guys saw in the ADCC, I think John is the best instructor for standing in Jiu-Jitsu because it's not enough to hire a wrestling instructor and learn takedowns. And John is the one who knows how to put together the Jiu-Jitsu with the proper wrestling. So it's gonna be at bjfanatics.com. And maybe by the time you're watching, it's already there. So make sure to check that out. And thanks so much, John. Good to see you. Thank you. Thanks, Jay. Thanks, Placido.

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