

AJFF swept by subsidy scandal

Judo body members may have used council funds for social events

The Yomiuri Shimbun

The All Japan Judo Federation has launched an investigation into alleged misuse of state-backed subsidies by its members, including coaches who train the nation's top athletes, according to informed sources.

It has been learned that the federation's committee to support potential Olympic medalists and other promising judoka received from its coaches a portion of the subsidies provided by the Japan Sport Council, an independent administrative agency under the wing of the sports ministry.

The subsidies are meant for expenses related to the sport, but they were allegedly used for such purposes as winning and dining committee members and others.

The federation, which is already beset by a scandal involving alleged abuse of female judoka by a former national team coach, was to discuss the subsidy scandal at its board meeting Monday and intends to take measures to prevent similar incidents, the sources said.

The subsidies are provided by the JSC to athletes who did well at competitions designated by the Japan Olympic Committee, and to their coaches. The purpose of the funds, a combination of government contributions, private donations and sports promotion lotteries, is to support the daily activities of coaches and athletes.

The upper limit is ¥200,000 per month for "Elite A" athletes and ¥100,000 for "Elite B." Coaches can receive up to ¥100,000 per month.

In fiscal 2011, about ¥757 million in subsidies were paid to 686 individuals in various sports. The subsidies are meant to be used for such expenses as travel, facility charges and sporting goods and equipment.

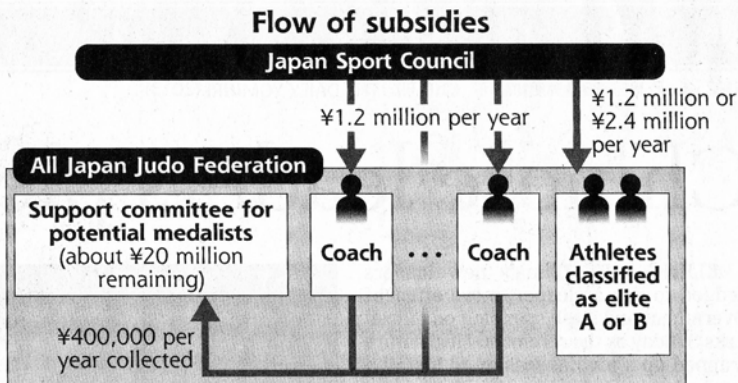
About a dozen members of the All Japan Judo Federation committee, who also serve as coaches, are believed to have each received up to ¥1.2 million per year.

However, according to sources close to the federation, the then head of the committee collected ¥400,000 annually from each of them and kept the money in the private bank account of a person at the federation for about four years until autumn last year.

The funds allegedly were used for such purposes as social events for committee members and entertainment for other people related to the federation.

In 2010, the number of athletes allowed to compete in the world championships rose from one to two for each weight class. Accordingly, the number of committee members eligible to receive subsidies also increased.

Committee members who make use of the funds are obliged to submit related income and expense reports to the JSC each fiscal year and keep receipts for five years. One coach concerned ad-



mitted to The Yomiuri Shimbun that false entries were made in the reports through such schemes as reporting fictitious expenses.

The JSC plans to closely examine the content of the reports concerned, the sources said.

Subsidies could be returned

In March last year, it was revealed that coaches in 10 sports organizations, including the judo federation, gave part of funds they received from the JOC to their respective organizations as donations.

Two-thirds of the rewards were financed by subsidies from the education ministry. After the Board of Audit investigated the case, the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Ministry asked the entities to return amounts equal to the subsidies, as they were deemed to have been used outside the scope of their original purpose.

As subsidies from the JSC also are considered "public money" because they derive from such sources as profits from government funds, it could face an audit. If it is confirmed that the subsidies were misused, the JSC is expected to ask the judo federation to return them, according to sources.

JSC subsidies are tax-exempt because they are considered reimbursement of expenses for daily sports activities. However, a tax expert said, "If some committee members used the pooled subsidies for personal expenses, the funds could be taxed, as they would be considered private income."