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Thin mats blamed for martial arts injury

A martial arts enthusiast who dislocated his collar bone after he was thrown onto mats that he believes were meant for children, is suing the World Kobudo Federation who ran the Ju Jitsu classes at Wessex Hall in Ponders End, Enfield.

Taxi driver and personal trainer, Dino Guagenti, aged 39, of Kingsway in Ponders End, was hardly able to work for 18 months after the accident and is still unable to play sport or do martial arts.

A trained martial arts enthusiast, Mr Guagenti was attending Ju Jitsu classes at Wessex Hall in 2002 when his friend threw him as instructed. He landed on the mat and his collar bone was pushed out of place, leaving his neck completely numb. Two days later in agony, he was forced to use a broom handle to put the shoulder back into place, but six months later, after numerous visits to an osteopath, the shoulder was still causing extensive pain.

Mr Guagenti commented: "I know that the mats were too thin, they were meant for children not adults. I've suffered for years now because of this injury and I'm still not able to do the martial arts that I love."

Cheryl Abrahams, specialist personal injury solicitor at Bolt Burdon Kemp, took on Mr Guagenti's case and has now issued proceedings against the World Kobudo Federation, who ran the classes.

" These mats used by the club were inadequate as they just weren't thick enough," she said. " The Club claims that 30mm thickness is enough to take the weight of a grown man. When adults are throwing other adults around, they really should have enough protection to make sure they're not going to get hurt. We know our client wasn't the only person to be injured on these mats."

The Club maintains that the mats were adequate and in good condition, however, Bolt Burdon Kemp have not been given any documents to prove that the mats were inspected regularly or maintained in any way.

Mr Guagenti added: " I'm absolutely fed up with the Club. They must have known that these mats were only suitable for children up to the age of 12 doing light tumbles. I'm a 15 stone man and when thrown by another similarly sized man, it's obvious I am going to fall heavily."

Bolt Burdon Kemp are now intending to pursue the case.

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