

BJJ Position Transition Roadmap

Volume 1 • Core Positions

A quick visual guide to what commonly happens when a position ends.

How to read it. Each position starts with one simple 100% split: outcomes that favor the top player, outcomes that favor the bottom player, and neutral outcomes when they exist. Below that, each category is shown separately so the paths do not overlap.

Gi and No-Gi. The main percentage is the baseline. Smaller Gi and No-Gi numbers show how the same outcome shifts by ruleset.

Important limit. Public BJJ data does not measure every position-to-position transition directly. Some values are therefore evidence-constrained coaching estimates. Use the percentages as tactical gravity, not as a prediction of any single roll.

TOP-FAVORED

BOTTOM-FAVORED

NEUTRAL

Positions included

Closed Guard • Half Guard • Side Control • Knee on Belly • Mount • Turtle • Back Control

BJJ Position Transition Roadmap

Volume 1 - Roadmap Connection Sync

REVISION 2026-09-28

What changed

This update adds an explicit connection mapping for the /roadmap diagram. It does not change outcome percentages, Gi/No-Gi values, source anchors, or evidence classifications.

Connection rule

Draw an arrow only when an outcome names a specific roadmap position. Compound outcomes may map to multiple positions. Generic terms such as guard, pass, scramble, reset, pin, or back exposure are not converted into a destination unless the position is explicit.

POSITION	DIRECT ROADMAP DESTINATIONS
Closed Guard	Turtle; Back Control
Half Guard	Turtle; Mount; Leg Entanglement / Ashi Garami; Back Control
Side Control	Mount; Knee on Belly; Turtle
Knee on Belly	Mount; Side Control; Turtle
Mount	Back Control; Turtle; Half Guard; Side Control; Knee on Belly
Turtle	Back Control; Side Control; Mount
Back Control	Mount; Turtle; Side Control

Data provenance correction

The Volume 1 Side Control chart says "Bottom recovers guard" at 25%. The live page currently says "Bottom recovers guard / half guard." This synced edition keeps the source wording and therefore does not create Side Control -> Half Guard. Remove "/ half guard" from the live page unless that outcome is separately re-sourced and revalidated.

Validation notes

- "Exposes back" is not treated as established Back Control. Back Control requires an outcome that actually takes or establishes the back.
- Generic "guard" is not mapped to Closed Guard, Open Guard, or Half Guard unless that specific guard is named.
- "Side" in the Mount, Turtle, and Back Control outcome language is an intentionally reviewed alias for Side Control in this roadmap context.
- Reciprocal relationships should render as one bidirectional connection when both directions exist.

1. Closed Guard

Position: Bottom player has both legs locked around the top player's torso, limiting posture and mobility.

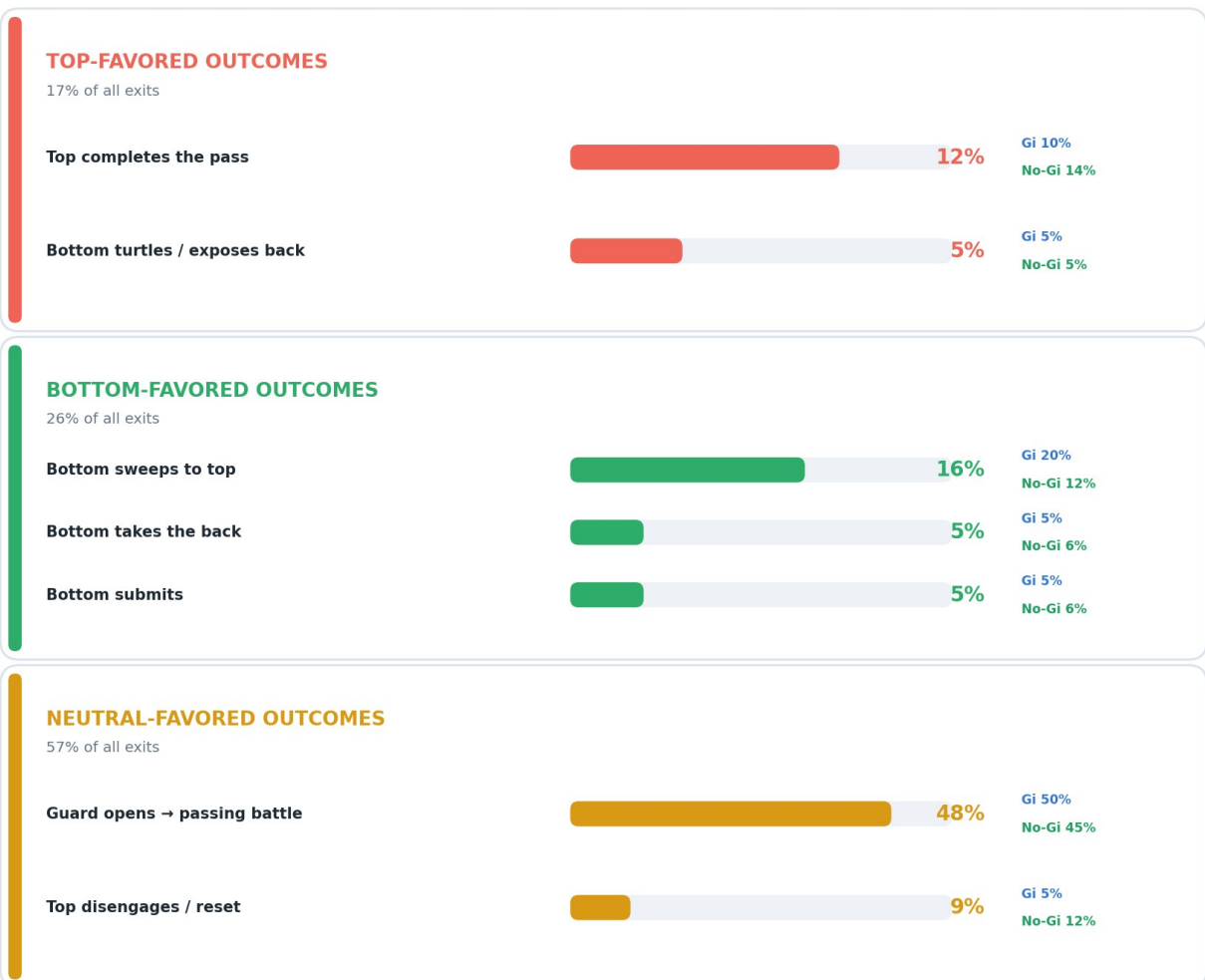
Top goal: Open the guard safely and begin passing.

Bottom goal: Break posture, sweep, take the back, or submit.

CLOSED GUARD

WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?

OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT



Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [5][7]

2. Half Guard

Position: Bottom player traps one of the top player's legs. It sits between guard and a completed pass.

Top goal: Free the trapped leg, flatten the bottom player, and complete the pass.

Bottom goal: Recover guard, sweep or wrestle up, enter the legs, or take the back.

HALF GUARD

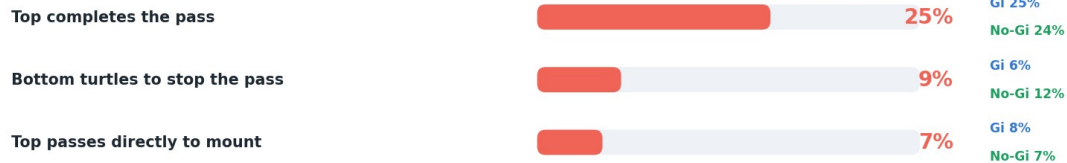
WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?

OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT



TOP-FAVORED OUTCOMES

41% of all exits



BOTTOM-FAVORED OUTCOMES

54% of all exits



NEUTRAL-FAVORED OUTCOMES

5% of all exits



Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [4][5][6]

3. Side Control

Position: Top player pins across the chest from the side with the legs cleared.

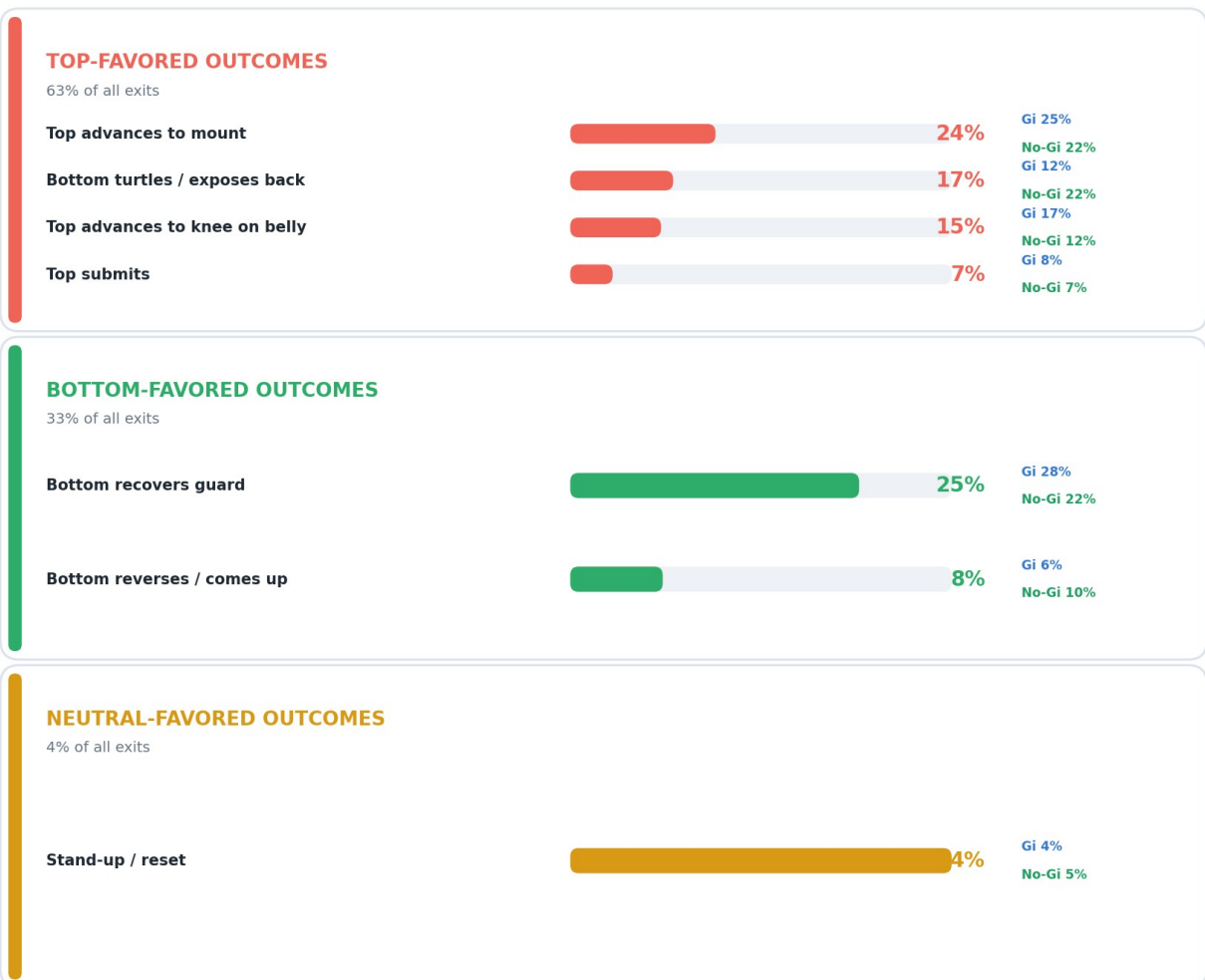
Top goal: Maintain control and advance to mount, knee on belly, the back, or a submission.

Bottom goal: Create space, recover guard, reverse, or safely move through turtle.

SIDE CONTROL

WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?

OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT



Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [1][6]

4. Knee on Belly

Position: Top player controls from the side with a knee or shin across the torso while staying mobile.

Top goal: Use pressure and mobility to mount, return to side control, or finish.

Bottom goal: Remove the knee, recover guard, or come up.

KNEE ON BELLY

WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?
OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT

TOP-FAVORED

71%

Gi 73%
No-Gi 68%

BOTTOM-FAVORED

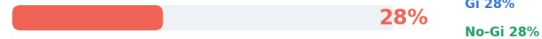
29%

Gi 27%
No-Gi 32%

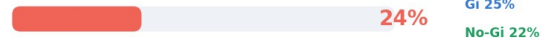
TOP-FAVORED OUTCOMES

71% of all exits

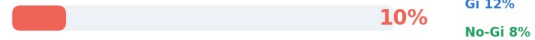
Top advances to mount



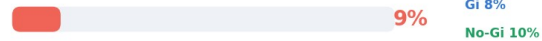
Top returns to side control



Top submits



Bottom turtles / exposes back



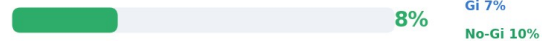
BOTTOM-FAVORED OUTCOMES

29% of all exits

Bottom recovers guard



Bottom reverses / comes up



Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [1][2]

5. Mount

Position: Top player sits astride the torso. Mount scores 4 points under IBJJF rules.

Top goal: Stay balanced, submit, or take the back when the bottom player turns.

Bottom goal: Protect the neck and elbows, recover guard, or reverse.

MOUNT

WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?

OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT

TOP-FAVORED

59%

Gi 55%
No-Gi 62%

BOTTOM-FAVORED

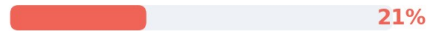
41%

Gi 45%
No-Gi 38%

TOP-FAVORED OUTCOMES

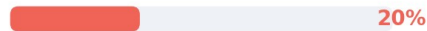
59% of all exits

Top takes the back



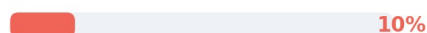
Gi 18%
No-Gi 24%

Top submits



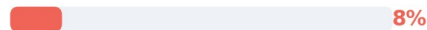
Gi 22%
No-Gi 18%

Top falls to side / knee on belly



Gi 10%
No-Gi 10%

Bottom turtles / top re-attacks



Gi 5%
No-Gi 10%

BOTTOM-FAVORED OUTCOMES

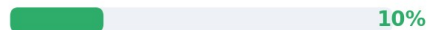
41% of all exits

Bottom recovers half guard



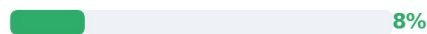
Gi 25%
No-Gi 22%

Bottom recovers full guard



Gi 12%
No-Gi 8%

Bottom bridges and reverses



Gi 8%
No-Gi 8%

Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [4]

6. Turtle

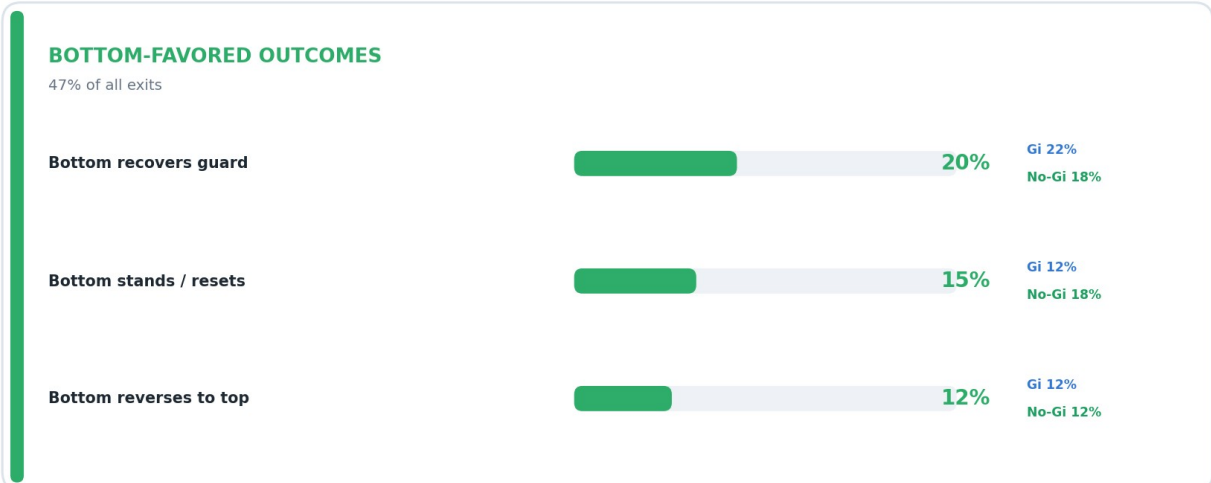
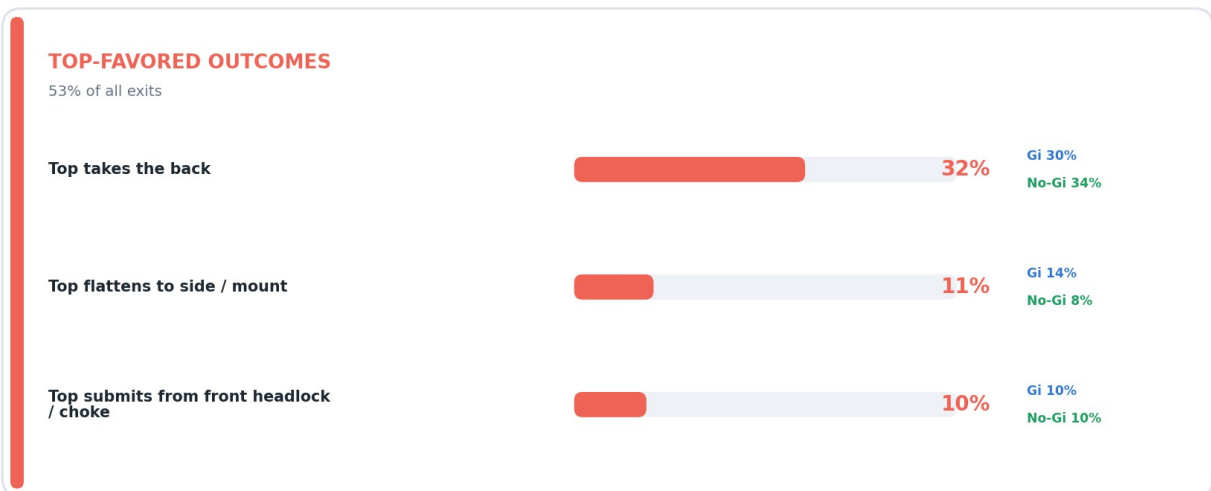
Position: Bottom player is on knees and elbows or hands with the back facing the top player.

Top goal: Break the base, take the back, flatten the opponent, or attack the front headlock.

Bottom goal: Move immediately to guard, the feet, or a reversal before control is established.

TURTLE

WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?
OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT



Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [3][4][5][7]

7. Back Control

Position: Top player controls from behind with chest-to-back connection and hooks or equivalent control.

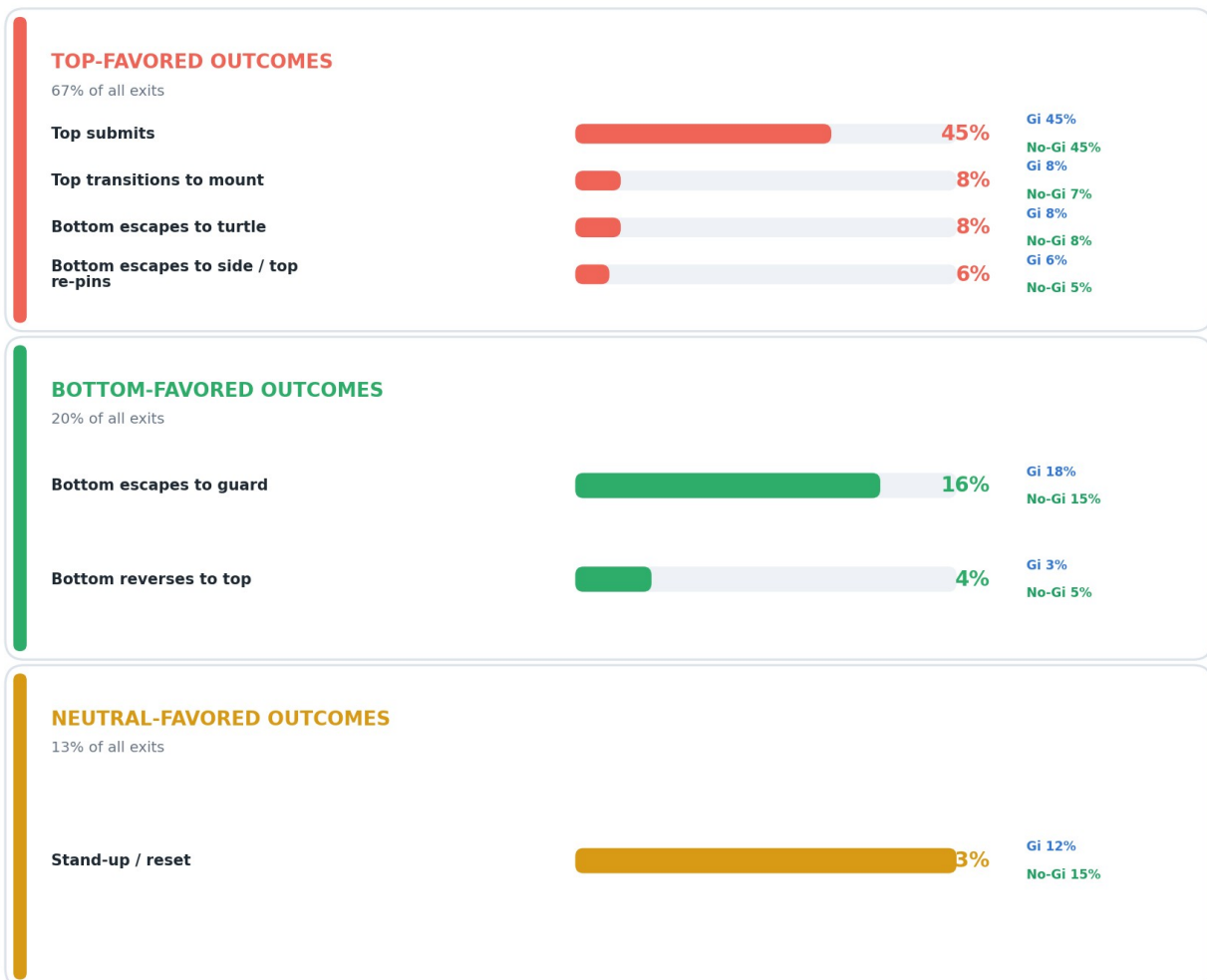
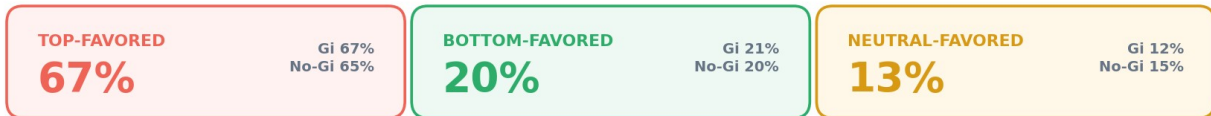
Top goal: Keep chest-to-back connection and finish.

Bottom goal: Protect the neck, clear control, and escape to guard, turtle, a reset, or top position.

BACK CONTROL

WHERE DOES THIS POSITION USUALLY GO NEXT?

OVERALL OUTCOME SPLIT



Percentages are shares of all exits from this position. Top + Bottom + Neutral = 100%.

Source anchors: [2][4]

Sources & Citations

The position diagrams use the sources below as evidence anchors. Where a source does not isolate a specific position, the roadmap uses a coaching estimate constrained by the available measured direction.

- [1]** Kesting, S. A Roadmap for Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Grapplearts. Position hierarchy and transition logic (qualitative).
- [2]** Lamas, L., Heiner, M., Ferreira, M., et al. (2024). No-gi Brazilian jiu-jitsu: A Markovian analysis of elite-level combat dynamics. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 19(4), 1767-1775. doi:10.1177/17479541231210979
- [3]** BJJ Heroes (2023). Analysis of Guard Passing in the ADCC.
- [4]** BJJ Heroes (2022). ADCC 2022 After-Math, Data Compilation and Analysis.
- [5]** BJJ Heroes (2024). ADCC 2024 After Math, Data Compilation and Analysis.
- [6]** BJJ Heroes (2026). ADCC 2026 After Math, Data Compilation and Analysis.
- [7]** BJJ Heroes (2020). Modern Day Guard Passing By The Numbers.
- [8]** IBJJF General System of Rules. Point values: mount/back 4, pass 3, sweep/takedown/knee on belly 2. The source edition summarized this through Gymdesk.
- [9]** Spanias, C., Kirk, C., & Ovretveit, K. (2022). Position before submission? Techniques and tactics in competitive no-gi Brazilian jiu-jitsu. *Revista de Artes Marciales Asiaticas*, 17(2), 130-139.