

Foreword

Strength and conditioning for combat sports athletes

Leandro Marques GUILHEIRO

Double Olympic judo medallist (bronze in Athens-2004 and Beijing-2008, -73kg)

Double Judo World Championship medallist (silver in Tokyo 2010 and bronze in Paris 2011, -81 kg)

“I was told by Inokuma-sensei to foster a scientific eye toward judo”. These words of Nobuyuki Sato in his book *Best Judo* describe the approach applied by him, together with Isao Inokuma, in the newly created Martial Arts Department, focusing on judo, in the victorious Tokai University, in the 1960 decade.

Beyond their brilliant careers as athletes (Inokuma was Olympic champion in 1964 and World champion in 1965, whereas Sato was twice World champion, in 1967 and 1973), both were the mentors of that who is considered the most successful judo athlete of all time, Yasuhiro Yamashita. Olympic champion in 1984, World champion in 1979, 1981 (in the heavyweight and open categories) and 1983, Yamashita inherited not only part of his teachers' technical prowess, but also the scientific view of sport, giving to physical preparation the due importance it deserves. It is not by chance that in his book *The Fighting Spirit of Judo* Yamashita exposes his physical training routine and emphasizes the need to study more current methods to improve performance in this aspect.

It is likely that the fact that the main Japanese judo teams belong to the universities makes this symbiosis between the academy and the dojo a natural process. This union seems obvious, given that all information available to improve performance, decrease injury rate and optimize the time of coaches and athletes must be absorbed by those working with high-level sports. It can be said that this approach is an application of the *Seiryoku-Zenyo*, a judo principle that preconizes the most efficient use of physical and mental energy.

My first contact with physical training involving strength training, in weight training room, was in 1999, when I was 16 years-old. At that time, I trained with a former judo athlete and physical education professional, Marcus Daud. In that period, I started to realize that my body was more prepared to the high-volume of training I was submitted daily. In 2006 I changed of judo team and started to train under Professor Emerson Franchini supervision, who had a different approach to organize my training. Under his direction, the number of my weekly physical training sessions doubled and the type of exercises and stimuli had a characteristic I have never experienced up to that moment. Although I was a complete white belt concerning the execution of Olympic weightlifting and other complex exercises, the effort to learn them proved valuable.

Besides I never suffered any kind of muscle injury again, I started to feel safer when having closer contact with my opponents, since my legs guaranteed me a better and stronger base; my arms and hands got stronger, increasing further the pressure I could exert on my opponents' *judogi*; my techniques became more powerful, making me win more matches by *ippon*, and as my body was even stronger I was able to save energy and maintain a high rate of attacks during the match for a longer time. Therefore, a well-planned physical training was determinant for the evolution of my judo, including in the technical and tactical aspects.

But my evolution was not just concerning my body. The proximity to Professor Franchini made me see judo from another point of view. I started to be more critical, I began to undress pre-conceived biases and tried to stick to observable facts. I can say that I was taken by the "scientific look in relation to judo" and the results of this approach will be recorded forever in my history as an athlete.

All combat sport athletes need to be strong, powerful, flexible and to have stamina. The next pages of this book will serve as a rigorous guide for those who wish to work and develop these physical capacities in an athlete. Take advantage of this privilege!

