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Physical fitness and anthropometrical differences between elite and non-elite judo players

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The objective of this study was to verify the differences between Elite (Brazilian National and International medalists) and Non-elite (nonmedallists in Brazilian National Tournaments) junior and senior judo players. For this purpose, the following tests and measurements were conducted: (a) skinfold thickness; (b) circumferences; (c) breadths; (d) upper body Wingate test; (e) Special Judo Fitness Test; (f) aerobic power and capacity; (h) Lactate after combat during active recovery (70% of velocity of anaerobic threshold) and passive recovery (rest); (i) Isometric hand grip strength. The groups were compared by means of an ANCOVA (covariates – age and weight) followed by a post-hoc Scheffé test (significance level=5%). Elite group presented better results than Non-elite group in the following variables ( $p < 0.05$ ): circumferences (cm) - flexed arm, forearm, wrist and calf; breadths (cm) – femur and humerus; Wingate Test – Mean and Peak power; Special Judo Fitness Test – number of throws and index. The other variables were not different between groups. It can be concluded that Elite judo players presented higher upper body and specific anaerobic power and capacity, higher circumferences (specially from upper body, indicating superior muscle mass in this area) and that skinfold, hand grip strength and aerobic power and capacity were similar in Elite and Non-elite judo players. Thus, these results suggest that training and talent identification of judo athletes should focus on the variables that were different between Elite and Non-elite athletes.

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