

REVIEW

Judo for Elite Brazilian Women: A Successful Trajectory into the 21st Century: A Narrative Review

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Abstract:

Background: The objective of this study was to verify, in a perspective way, the history and evolution of the development of the Brazilian Elite Female Judo. Brazilian women's Judo is one of the best Judo teams in the world. Performance and achievement in Olympic and world championships has reached a significant and expressive increase. That is, of course, medal winnings at different competitive levels. Making it one of the most prestigious sport in Brazil. Methods: This is a Narrative Review study, where the Scielo, Google Scholar and PubMed databases were used, with no initial period restriction until the year 2022. Results: Women's Brazilian Judo evolved both individually and as a team. Achieving expressive results in national and international competitions, in the Olympic Games and World Championships. In addition, these results have raised the competitive level of the Brazilian judo team worldwide. It has solidified women within sport and combat sports. However, some barriers (social resistance, lack of investment, little credibility and social representation) persist, albeit with less intensity. Conclusion: We conclude that Brazilian Women's Judo is a strong representative in the competitive, social and world scenario. In addition, that the participation of women raised the sport to a high level of social representation.

Keywords: Judo, Gender, Sports, Athletes of Elite, Social

Introduction

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Judo is a Martial Art created by Sensei Jigoro Kano in 1882 in Japan (1). Jigoro Kano, who has always been concerned and emphasized the search for safety, etiquette and morals, addressing in his teachings the practice applied regardless of the size, age or sex of its practitioner, but always with the aim of developing the pillars of human and physical development, the spirit and the mind (2). Jigoro Kano Sensei's Thought on Judo as a modality was an integral formation of the individual, establishing two maxims: the first is Seiryoku Zenyo, which means "better use of energy in search of maximum efficiency Better use of energy in search of maximum efficiency" but the main purpose of practicing judo. The second principle refers to social life: Jika Kyoey, which means "mutual prosperity through mutual assistance and concession" (2).

The history of women's judo in Japan has not been addressed in depth, since there is a social environment and a recognizably masculine martial art. Not having relevance in some aspects or contents such as: judo studies, sport studies in general, feminist and gender studies and the history of modern Japan. Historians of Japan, feminists involved in judo, sports historians and sociologists tend to ignore the subject. Questions have been raised about the participation of women in martial arts, especially in Judo, such as: if the female practice "Female Judo" is special or if there is only judo, in which women also practice? Whether women's participation becomes specific in judo? In addition, if there is a need to adapt judo to the demands and expectations of women in relation to men? (2).

In fact, the history of women in sport has faced barriers and prohibitions in order to participate and/or become a competitor, especially in martial arts and combat sports. In a sport that was created by men and thought for them, even though it is a social activity of great interest and relevance throughout the world. However, women have been successful in different sports, breaking obstacles by competing on equal terms with men (3, 4). Sensei Jigoro Kano already observed the characteristics of women during the practice of Judo, when he says, "To understand Judo, see women's training". If such a statement is true, there is no way to imagine that the creator of judo was against the participation of women in the modality. This comment reveals that their training was indeed different from that practiced by men (5).

Kano sought to find out with doctors and specialists if there would be any restrictions on the practice of women in Judo, during the discussions, it was decided that women could participate in the katas, but they could not participate in direct combat in the fight called randori. Thus, in 1926, Jigoro Kano created a female Judo team at the Koubun Gakuin school in Tokyo - the Joshibut - having the first female black belt Kozaki Kanoko in 1933, the black belt had a white stripe in the center to differentiate from the male (6).

Specifically in judo, the integration of women had two moments. (a) The first moment, in the beginning of the 20th century until the 1960s, women who practiced judo were a minority and depended on their social status; (b) in the second moment, from the 1960s to the present day, when women's sport experienced important changes related to the strength of women in society. Judo was already experiencing a process of westernization and sportivization, which it had in France, with the judo master Mikonosuke Kawaisi, based on his pedagogical method of teaching judo, one of its highlights (7).

In the Brazilian scenario at that time, women only practiced physical activities with little impact; even in the early 1940s, by virtue of the law (Decree 3199, of 1941), with the justification that women could compromise their reproductive capacity, they were prohibited from participating in other modalities (8). The

history of women's judo in Brazil was analyzed from a narrative of ten pioneer judokas in this sport; nine of the ten athletes interviewed, joined judo in the period of restriction of the practice of fights by women. Two of them, daughters of judo teachers, who have been practicing the sport since they were children, competed in an international women's judo championship in 1979 (8).

However, from the 1980s to the early 2000s, women's judo advanced timidly, in the shadow of men. In 2006, after 26 years of exclusivity in men's judo, women achieved important results in high-performance competitions, becoming more visible, in addition, with the expansion of support from the Brazilian Judo Confederation (CBJ) and from policies to develop the sport national (8).

Especially, we emphasize that one of the important and prestigious athletes for the success of the current women's Judo was Rosiclea Campos, reaching the position of technicians of the Brazilian Women's Judo Team, consolidating women's judo in the Brazilian and World senary. Once it was considered the second-best Judo team in the World, behind only the Japanese team.

In this sense, the objective of the study is to understand in a narrative way how female Judo has progressed in the sports and competitive scenario.

Methods

We carried out an in-depth review of the literature on the history of women's judo, at a national level. The foray into women's judo and the evolution of women's judo were examined. The main results of since the beginning of the women's competitions were highlighted, showing the medals obtained since the beginning of the international and national competitions. A descriptive and exploratory study was developed to analyze the social, competitive and evolutionary challenges related to sport in Brazil. The SCIELO, GOOGLE ACADEMICO and PUBMED databases were used, the period of search for articles was until December 2022. We investigated the presence of a possible unequal treatment between men and women, for example, analyzing sexist phrases or images.

Classification of Brazilian women's judo categories

Judo is a combat sport, classified by weight categories, where the athlete tries to throw the opponent on his back on the mat (the Ippon) or control him during the basic combat (9, 10). The proposal of the weight division is to guarantee equity and promote fair combat in terms of strength, body size and agility. However, judo athletes generally try to increase muscle mass and decrease adiposity in each weight category to gain a momentary advantage over weaker opponents or with less availability of these physical and physiological attributes (11, 12). In the case of women's judo, there are only fragmented data on their morphological characteristics, specific actions and needs and differences in weight categories and classes (13, 14). The categories are distributed based on age, classe and weight as shown below in tables 1 and 2.



Table 1: Classification of Women's Judo according to Class, Age and Weight.

Female athletes						
Class/	Under-13	Under-15	Under-18	Under-21 Under-23 and Senior		
Weight						
category						
Superlight	-28Kg (up to 28Kg)	-36Kg (up to 36Kg)	-40Kg (up to 40Kg)			
Light	-31Kg (over 28Kg and up to 31Kg)	-40Kg (over 36Kg and up to 40Kg)	-44Kg (over 40Kg and up to 44Kg)	-48Kg (over 44Kg and up to 48Kg)		
Medium-Light	-34Kg (over 31Kg and up to 34Kg)	-44Kg (over 40Kg and up to 44Kg)	-48Kg (over 44Kg and up to 48Kg)	-52Kg (over 48Kg and up to 52Kg)		
Light	-38Kg (over 34Kg and up to 38Kg)	-48Kg (over 44Kg and up to 48Kg)	-52Kg (over 48Kg and up to 52Kg)	-57Kg (over 52Kg and up to 57Kg)		
Middleweight	-42Kg (over 38Kg and up to 42Kg)	-52Kg (over 48Kg and up to 52Kg)	-57Kg (over 52Kg and up to 57Kg)	-63Kg (over 57Kg and up to 63Kg)		
Medium	-47Kg (over 42Kg and up to 47Kg)	-57Kg (over 52Kg and up to 57Kg)	-63Kg (over 57Kg and up to 63Kg)	-70Kg (over 63Kg and up to 70Kg)		
Light Heavy	-52Kg (over 47Kg and up to 52Kg)	-63Kg (over 57Kg and up to 63Kg)	-70Kg (over 63Kg and up to 70Kg)	-78Kg (over 70Kg and up to 78Kg)		
Heavy	-60Kg (over 52Kg and up to 60Kg)	-70Kg (over 63Kg and up to 70Kg)	+70Kg (over 70Kg)	+78Kg (over 78Kg)		
Super heavy	+60Kg (over 60Kg)	+70Kg (over 70Kg)				

Note: (Silva, 2022). (Adapted to Brazilian Judo Confederation-BJC, 2022).

 $Accessed \ in: \ https://cbj.com.br/painel/arquivos/normas_e_regulamentos/arquivo_cbj_174447200422.pdf$

Table 2: Women's Judo Classification by Team according to Class, Age and Weight

Class/Weight category	Under-21 and Senior	Under-18
Light female		-44kg
Light Female	-57kg	-52kg
Midfielder Women	-70kg	-63kg
Heavyweight women	+70kg	+63kg

Note: (Silva, 2022). (Adapted to Brazilian Judo Confederation-BJC, 2022).

 $Accessed \ in: \ https://cbj.com.br/painel/arquivos/normas_e_regulamentos/arquivo_cbj_174447200422.pdf$



Assessing the morphological aspects of Women's Judokas helps to improve their skills and is useful in determining which traits play a role in their success. The morphological differences between female judokas of different degrees would allow estimating the influence of competitive and training activities on athletes' performance, leading to a more refined selection process in judo (15, 16). The Literature shows that judo athletes need high levels of power and anaerobic capacity of the upper and lower body, strength and muscular power to perform the best combat in competitions (10, 15, 17, 18).

Women's Judo participation in competitions

Historically, the Brazilian Women's Judo Team participated in its first Olympic Games in 1992, in the city of Barcelona and in the following edition, in Atlanta 1996. (19). In 2008, at the Beijing Olympic Games, Ketleyn Quadros, Judoka of the Brazilian Women's Judo Team, won the first Olympic medal in individual sports at the Olympic Games, Earning the Bronze Medal. Therefore, making her the first woman to win an Olympic medal in Brazil. In addition, the athlete even won the gold medal at the 2010 South American Games in Medellin, a competition in which she was also the Brazilian flag bearer (20).

This medal and this result reflect a very important recent growth for women's judo in Brazil, starting in the 21st century and culminating with extraordinary results in the last world championship, held in Paris-2011. On this occasion, Mayra Aguiar (Bronze), from Rio Grande do Sul, Sarah Menezes (Bronze), from Piauí, and Rafaela Silva (Silver), from Rio de Janeiro, won medals in women's Judo (20). In 2012, seven men's and seven women's Judokas managed to score to participate in the London Olympic Games, and Brazil had the best campaign of all time, achieving four Olympic medals, two bronze in men's, with Rafael Silva (category heavyweight) and Felipe Kitadai (lightweight category), and two in the women's category, one bronze for Mayra Aguiar (medium heavyweight category) and one gold for Sarah Menezes (lightweight category)(20).

In World Cups, female judokas are very strong; they brought titles with Rafaela Silva, in 2013, and Mayra Aguiar, in 2014. More recently, we obtained titles with Rafaela Silva (Gold), Mayra Aguiar (Gold) and Beatriz Souza (Silver) at the World Cup in Tashkent, Uzbekistan 2022. Important performances that place Brazilian women's judo at the highest competitive level. A list of the main medalists of Brazilian women's Judo can be seen in table 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: Brazilian Female Judo Athletes who won medals in Olympics Games.

Female Athletes Category		Competition	Medal
Ketleyn Quadros	-57 kg	Olympic Games -Beijing- 2008	Bronze
Sarah Menezes	-48kg	Olympic Games - London - 2012	Gold
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Olympic Games - London - 2012	Bronze
Rafaela Silva	-57kg	Olympic Games - Rio de Janeiro-2016	Gold
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Olympic Games - Rio de Janeiro-2016	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Olympic Games - Tokyo- 2020	Bronze

Note: (SILVA, 2022). Accessed in: https://cbj.com.br/galeria_de_campeoes/

Table 4: Brazilian Female Judo Athletes who won medals in Senior World Championships.

Female Athletes Categor		Competition	Medal
Edinanci Silva	-72kg	Paris World Cup (FRA)-1997	Bronze
Edinanci Silva	-78kg	Osaka World Cup (JPN) - 2003	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Tokyo World Cup (JPN) - 2010	Silver
Rafaela Silva	57kg	Paris World Cup (FRA) -2011	Silver
Sarah Menezes	-48kg	Paris World Cup (FRA) -2011	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Paris World Cup (FRA) -2011	Bronze
Rafaela Silva	-57kg	Rio de Janeiro World Cup (BRA)- 2013	Gold
Érika Miranda	-52kg	Rio de Janeiro World Cup (BRA)- 2013	Silver
Maria Suelen Altheman	+78kg	Rio de Janeiro World Cup (BRA) - 2013	Silver
Sarah Menezes	-48kg	Rio de Janeiro World Cup (BRA) - 2013	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Rio de Janeiro World Cup (BRA) - 2013	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Chelyabinsk World Cup (RUS) - 2014	Gold
Maria Suelen Altheman	+78kg	Chelyabinsk World Cup (RUS) - 2014	Silver
Érika Miranda	-52kg	Chelyabinsk World Cup (RUS) - 2014	Bronze
Érika Miranda	-52kg	Astana World Cup (CAZ) - 2015	Bronze
Érika Miranda	-52kg	Budapest World Cup (HUN) - 2017	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Budapest World Cup (HUN) - 2017	Gold
Érika Miranda	-52kg	Baku World Cup (AZE) - 2018	Bronze
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Tokyo World Cup (JPN) - 2019	Bronze
Maria Suelen Altheman	-78kg	Budapest World Cup (HUN) - 2021	Bronze
Beatriz Souza	-78kg	Budapest World Cup (HUN) - 2021	Bronze

Rafaela Silva	-57 kg	Toshkent World Cup (UZB) - 2022	Gold
Mayra Aguiar	-78kg	Toshkent World Cup (UZB) - 2022	Gold
Beatriz Souza	+78kg	Toshkent World Cup (UZB) - 2022	Silver

Note: (SILVA, 2022). Accessed in: https://cbj.com.br/galeria de campeoes/

Table 5: Brazilian Female Judo Athletes who won medals in World Team Championships.

Female Athletes	Category		Competition	Medal
Sarah Menezes	Until 52kg,	Until 57kg,	Salvador World Cup (BRA) - 2012	Bronze
Érika Miranda	Until 63kg,	Until 70kg,		
Ketleyn Quadros	+70 kg			
Flávia Gomes				
Rafaela Silva				
Katherine Campos				
Maria Portela				
Nadia Merli				
Suelen Altheman				
Rochele Nunes				
Erika Miranda	-52kg, -57kg,	, -63kg, 70kg	Rio de Janeiro World Cup (BRA) -	Silver
Rafaela Silva	e +78		2013	
Katherine Campos				
Maria Portela				
Maria Suelen				

Note: (SILVA, 2022). Accessed in: https://cbj.com.br/galeria de campeoes/

Importance of Brazilian women's judo for sport

From the Olympic Games (OG) in the Modern Era in 1896, there was a growing opportunity to promote meetings between countries, encouraged by the sporting dispute. On this occasion, the participation of Brazilian women was recognized, although, within the scope of the OG, they began to participate in 1932, which was already the tenth edition. Furthermore, about the Olympic medals won by Brazilian judokas, the first came only in 1996, which made women more visible as athletes in Brazil (21).

However, the absence or precariousness of support, structure, resources and narratives of little interest and little credibility regarding women's sport, have been the many obstacles that permeate the history of Brazilian women's participation in many Olympic, world competitions and continental in which they managed to compete. It is also important to point out that the history that precedes – and continues to color – the first female participations, including the barriers faced by them, do not appear for the male competitors. Being that through their own

trajectories, by overcoming personal and social barriers and achievements in a country, which historically, sport is treated under the stereotype of elite or masculinized activity (21).

In fact, women's judo has been responsible for leading a major revolution in the way society views women and their participation in combat sports. Once Judo evolved in a society where women traditionally played an extremely submissive role - at least in public opinion (22). In this sense, being an athlete in Brazil, as a woman, opens discussions about the history of Brazilian women in sport, specifically, their participation in Olympic Combat Sports (OCS) (23).

Judo has evolved in recent decades, becoming one of the most relevant sports on the Olympic program, which ensured high television audience ratings during the recent Olympic Games. We can mention as an example, the live coverage of the men's +100kg final was the most watched event in France, with more than five million spectators. In Brazil, the host country in 2012, Judo was ranked among the top five sports with the highest television audience, reaching 41.7 million individuals (24, 25).

Today, judo is a highly competitive Olympic sport for both men and women. Judo competitions are segregated by sex in the sense that male and female judoka compete in different categories, training sessions are generally mixed; men and women practice together and often fight each other. Currently, women have gained their spaces in Brazilian Judo and in World sport (GUÉRANDEL, 2007).

Conclusion

Brazilian women's Judo has progressed over the last few years. We observed that the significant achievements in national and international competitions promoted a social achievement and representation in the sports world. The practice of Judo among women has expanded more and more. The Brazilian Women's Judo team has participated significantly in important championships and brought expressive results, placing Judo on the world stage and women's participation much more solid. However, women still struggle and find barriers (social and cultural resistance, few investments, little appreciation and little credibility) for their consolidation in sport, autonomy and sports development. We can verify limitations for the construction of the study such as little contextualization of female progress in sport, few interventions and studies on women in combat sport.

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