

Professional Coaches — and Not Only

Today I would like to explore the topic of **sports training** from a perspective that is **not strictly biochemical**, but rather **socio-philosophical**, if we may call it that. A recent conversation with someone prompted me to reflect more deeply on this subject.

About **twenty years ago**, while I was training with an **amateur judo group**, I met a man who was part of the group together with **his son**, who trained at the same time and in the same gym, but with the **competitive athletes**.

This man, named **Fabio**, was in his forties, of **average height**, good-looking, energetic, and wore a **brown belt**. At the time, he worked as a **factory worker in a furniture company**, and in the evenings he brought his son—still a **promising young boy**—to training. To avoid wasting time while waiting, he trained with the **amateur group** himself.

When we first met, I held a **white belt** and looked at Fabio with a certain **respect**. Sometimes, together with another brown-belt judoka, and under the guidance of our **coach**, he would stay after practice to refine **judo kata**.

Kata, however, did not interest me at all—I wanted to learn only the **practical side of judo**, that is, **combat**.

I progressed **very quickly**. Belts were awarded to me at short intervals: **yellow – orange – green – blue**. During **randori** with Fabio, I defeated him without difficulty. While he focused on executing techniques in the most **aesthetically correct** way, I was already throwing him in a more “**dirty**,” but effective manner.

Later, I began training with **competitive athletes** and understood the **huge difference** between **judo kata** and **Olympic competition**.

Over time, I lost touch with Fabio. I was training in another gym, practicing **MMA** and **grappling**. Years passed, and I heard that Fabio had earned his **black belt in judo kata**.

About a year ago, I reconnected with several old contacts and found Fabio again, whom I had not heard from in over **ten years**. We exchanged messages and had a conversation. I learned that for several years he had been working as a **coach** at our old gym. The rule is simple: if you hold a **black belt**, you are allowed to work as a **professional coach**.

In my essay “**Athletic Preparation in Martial Arts...**”, available on my website in **PDF format**, I examine the issue of **stagnation in athletic performance** over the last **forty years**. I believe I have identified one of the main causes in the **capitalist system**, which is not interested in **expensive fundamental research**, but instead

prefers investing in **dietary supplements, training machines, pharmaceuticals**, and similar products that, in reality, **do not improve performance in high-level sports**.

The example of **Fabio as a coach** makes me reflect once again on this **lack of progress**. Fabio is a **factory worker**; he did not even attend **high school**, let alone a **University of Sport Sciences**. What can he really know?

He can only know what he sees around him and what is passed down by the **senior coach** at the sports club. But even this senior coach is not a **professional trainer**—he is a **journalist** with a respectable past as an **athlete**, often reaching the finals of **national championships**.

Yes, he understands **judo technique, strategy, and philosophy**, but he is completely **ignorant of sports biochemistry and physiology**.

This coach had in his hands a true **diamond**: a young athlete, a friend of mine, a **national champion**, ranked among the **top ten in the world**, preparing for the **London Olympics**. And what happened?

He was subjected to **brutal training loads**, so much so that a few years later **sports doctors** refused to issue him a **B1 medical clearance** for competitive activity. The result: **no Olympics, end of his sports career**. His **heart** had been **severely damaged**.

In **Italy**, due to work reasons, I changed residence several times, and I consistently observed that gym **coaches** often came from **professions far removed from sport: plumbers, firefighters, warehouse workers**, or “**rich kids**” who had completed a **60-hour course** and presumed to teach me how to **increase endurance in combat**.

I do not want to **criticize** anyone. This is how the world works, and the **system** will not change despite criticism. In the past, **Olympic sport** progressed thanks to the **fierce rivalry** between the **capitalist world** and the **communist world**. Olympic stadiums were true **ideological battlefields**.

After the **collapse of the Soviet Union**, the **motivation** that pushed governments to invest massive **state resources** into winning disappeared. As a result, we now live in a kind of **golden stagnation**.

Perhaps the last **truly significant research** was conducted in the **1990s**, at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** and at the **Moscow University of Physical Education and Sport**. Some results of this research are presented in my essay “**A Modern Scientific Approach to Rejuvenation**,” also available in **PDF format on my website**.

In conclusion, I sincerely wish all of you to find a **professional coach**. But the most important thing is to **study independently**, to keep a **well-maintained training journal**, recording not only workouts but also **heart rate, blood pressure, nutrition, overall well-being**, and other essential parameters.

Good luck.