

A Multi-dimensional Research Approach to Support Youth Taekwondo Athletes

Laura Capranica¹, Salvatore Chiodo², Francesco Tornello², Cristina Cortis³, Giancarlo Condello¹, Corrado Lupo⁴, Tessitore Antonio¹

¹ Dept. of Human Movement, Human and Health, University of Rome Foro Italico

² Italian Taekwondo Federation (FITA), Rome, Italy

³ Dept. of Human Sciences, Society and Health, University of Cassino e Lazio Meridionale, Cassino, Italy

⁴ Dept. of Medical Sciences, School of exercise and Sport Sciences (SuiSM), University of Turin, Turin, Italy

Youth sports encompasses a long-term developmental process, which varies in relation to the age and technical level of the athletes. At present, no single variable could be considered effective in providing information on relevant aspects related to the holistic development of talented athletes. This study aims to present a multi-dimensional research approach to taekwondo competitions, training, selection process and best practices in the combination of sport and academic commitments (e.g., dual career).

Findings from psycho-physiological and technical-tactical methods to investigate youth taekwondo athletes (age: 10-17 years) during competitions, training and a selection period will be presented, as well as European best practices of dual career policies for athletes.

In general, high psycho-physiological demands of official youth taekwondo competitions emerged. Conversely, children tended to perceive competition and training efforts as moderately high. In particular, qualitative psycho-physiological variables seem to be effective in discriminating talented athletes during intensive training periods. Thus, the assessment of the athlete's perceived efforts during training and competition could help coaches monitoring their training plans and effective recovery strategies. Although the European Parliament and Commission prioritize the holistic development of elite athletes, Member States present relevant differences to dual career policies, with Italy being characterized by *laissez-faire*/no formal structures. Therefore, a cooperation between Italian sport and educational institutions is deemed necessary to support the youth talented athletes in combining sport and education commitments.

Keywords

Rating of perceived efforts, match analysis, psycho-physiological responses, dual career