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CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPETITIVE ACTIVITY OF UKRAINIAN NATIONAL TEAMS IN SPORTS GAMES ON THE INTERNATIONAL AREA

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Abstract

Introduction. At the present development stage of the high achievement sport, global transformations are taking place all over the world, which have influenced the intensification of competitive practices and the introduction of innovative technologies in the process of training elite athletes. Unfortunately, both external factors and internal political and economic problems in Ukraine become a serious obstacle to the effective competitive activity of national teams at major international sports competitions, namely: the socio-economic situation in the country calls into question the ability to prepare quality reserve, children's and youth sports suffer as a result of the financial and economic crisis; Insufficient level of logistics and the possibility of migration of the best players and coaches abroad, negatively affects the level of performance of the national team in the international arena. The planning of preparation of highly qualified athletes for the main international competitions should take into account the peculiarities of tournament loads in team and individual sports. Why is it necessary to determine the main factors influencing the quality and effectiveness of the performances of the best athletes and teams in sports games.

Aim of our research is to analyze the effectiveness of competitive activities of highly qualified athletes in sports games.

Material and methods: analysis of planning and competition documents and generalization of special literature, method of expert assessments, pedagogical observation, pedagogical experiment, psychophysiological methods, methods of mathematical statistics.

Conclusions: the implementation of effective performance of athletes of Ukrainian national teams in sports on the international arena requires optimization of the process of sports training based on individualization with the parallel use of technical-tactical, psychophysiological models of training of leading players in the world combined with modern capabilities.

Keywords: elite players, training programs, competitive activities, sports games, efficiency criteria.



Introduction. High intensity and a vast amount of nowadays athletes' competitive activity in team and individual kinds of sports games are caused not only by the need in successful performance in various tournaments but also by using competitions as the most powerful means of stimulating adaptation reactions and integral training giving opportunity to combine the full complex of technical and tactical, physical and mental backgrounds, qualities and abilities in a single system aimed to reach the planned result in the main events of the cycle [3–6]. Therefore, one of the most important and complex components of long-term training of athletes is competitions.

These are the well-known specialists having at different times contributed greatly into local sports science and practice, namely into introducing practical and theoretical recommendations to increase the efficiency of the highly qualified athletes' competitive activity in sports games: N.F. Krotov, V.R. Shablynskyi, Y.I. Ivakhin, M.P. Yukhno, M.P. Pimenov, M.M. Balakin, V.M. Balva, O.D. Leonov, L.A. Latyshkevych, N.I. Khomutov, etc.

L.A. Latyshkevych, an Honored worker of physical education and sports in USSR, the candidate of pedagogical sciences, and a professor, was a prominent specialist not only having been running the sports games department in 1980–2000 but also having created a scientific school, headed a complex scientific group in handball, and prepared 40 candidates of sciences during the period of his work. The developments of the ways to

optimize the training process and improve the efficiency of competitive activity in sports games constituted theoretical, methodological and experimental basis of their studies.

In world practice during the last decades, the approaches in planning long-term training changed profoundly: the demands and intensity of competitive activity for the participants of sports games increased [3, 5, 7]. The elements of training process in high performance sport being traditional for the previous century today are not efficient enough and require new interpretation to increase the efficiency of international competitive practice among Ukrainian athletes. The troublemaker element in improvement of the Ukrainian athletes' competitive activity nowadays is separation between the scientists' theoretical acquirement and the specialists' practical activity. So the analysis of the trainers' athletes', and officials' expert evaluations is advisable with a view to determine the most significant contribution for achieving successful competitive activity of highly qualified athletes in team and individual kinds of sports games.

The **aim of the research** is the analysis of efficient competitive activity among highly qualified athletes in sports games.

The *object of the research*: indicators of efficiency of competitive activity among highly qualified athletes in sports games.

Material and methods of the research: the analysis of planning and competition documents and synthesis of specialized literature, expert evaluation method, pedagogical observation, methods of mathematical



statistics.

In the course of completing a scientific work, retrospective, statistical, qualimetric, and content analysis were used complying with the rules of system analysis and approach.

The methodology of conducting expert evaluation was divided into the following stages:

1. Identifying the need to conduct expert evaluation and make up a plan and program of the expertise:

- formulating the aim and objectives of expert evaluation;
- creating a questionnaire which 30 experts and trainers of Ukrainian national teams in different kinds of sports games took part in. The questionnaire included the questions requiring choosing one of a few exactly formulated statements. 160 responders completed the questionnaire;
- choosing the way to assess the experts' competence, namely, we used objective way of assessing the expert's competence (documentation method) including selection of experts based on their professional characteristics. The experts must have scientific degree, required working experience in specialty or trainer, judge or sports category;
- forming the rules of conducting the questionnaire among the experts. Using individual method consists in every expert to give their evaluation regardless of the others and afterwards these evaluations are combined into the general using statistical methods. The way of conducting individual expert evaluation was interviewing;
- forming the rules and methods of processing the experts' views.

2. Forming the group of experts and conducting expert evaluation itself.

3. Grouping and reduction of expertise materials, calculation of statistical indicators.

- determining relative values and dependability of difference between the obtained relative and average values;
- after the obtained results, the calculation of dependability of the gained expert view is an obligatory component. That is what the level of like-mindedness among the experts was determined.

Results and discussion. The results of the national teams' performance in the major international events are the main indicators of efficiency of a sport's development within the country. During the last decade, for the local athletes in team kinds of sports games in international events the tendency to reduction of the efficiency of competitive activity is observed. Principally, it is manifested in the reduced quantity of medal places among Ukrainians in major tournaments. Volleyball can serve a striking example of losing leader positions having been inherent for the USSR national team including highly qualified athletes from Ukraine. These negative consequences are related to social and political as well as economic changes in the world, and untimely correction of sports training. The performances of world national teams in the Games of Olympiads during 1992–2016 are characterized with using new tendencies of world volleyball. Thus, introducing the new position of «libero» in the late 1990s amended the structure of competitive activity; using the «challenge» system – video repeat of gaming situation – to eliminate impartial judgement as well as introducing the «green» card



promoted fair play of the athlete; game positions, athleticism and height qualities of the players were universalized; also the concept of strategy and game tactics development were changed, namely – using single-step combinations in competitive activity.

The comparative analysis of the national teams' performances results in the Games of Olympiads shows that nowadays tendencies of development of volleyball had had a significant impact on the number of leader-teams in the world rating substantiating the conventionality of this kind of sport in these countries. Now the most medals are owned by the national teams of Brazil and Italy – 23.8%, the national team of Russia – 19.0%, and the national team of the USA – 14.3%. To increase the results of the Ukrainian volleyball national team's performances in the official international events it will be logical to use the leader-countries' models of training [8, 10].

The analysis of the situation in the world championships during the period of Ukraine's independence made it possible to establish that the year 2002 for Ukrainian ice hockey became the peak of achievements – the 9th place in the world championship in Sweden and the 10th place in the Games of Olympiads in 2002 in Salt Lake City. During the period of 2007–2016, a sharp decline in sports results among Ukrainian hockey players in the world championships [11].

In spite of laid victorious traditions in Ukrainian volleyball, since 1991 up to now the national teams cannot create a worthy competition at the international level. It is also proved

by low statistical indicators of competitive activity in the European championships and absence of national basketball teams in the major tournaments (the Games of Olympiads and world championships). The reason for this negative tendency in basketball development in Ukraine consists in considerable collapse of long-term system of training the sports reserve; the lack of mass element; the need in parent funding of sports sections; the qualified trainer staff have left the country or changed the type of activity because of problematic financial and economic conditions. The financial component has become the basis of actual losing plenty of sporting venues as they require major maintenance and renovation since it is impossible to hold the competitions there [7].

The positive shift at the current stage of Ukrainian basketball development is quite high level of the national teams' athletes in the major international events in the new Olympic sport – basketball 3×3 having been included in the Games of Olympiads program in Tokyo (Japan) since 2017.

What about individual sports games, during the last decade considerable progress in the Ukrainian athletes' achievements on the international scene is observed.

A striking example of the growth of competitive activity efficiency in individual sports games can serve tennis. Elina Svitolina has become the second Ukrainian after Kateryna Bondarenko having won at the French Open «Roland-Garros» (Les Internationaux de France de Roland Garros). At the age of 19 Elina Svitolina gained her first title in the



adult WTA round having become the owner of the Baku Cup, and in a year she managed to defend it. During 2014–2017, the top seed of Ukraine won many times in the matches against the rivals from the first ten of the world rating. In 2017, Elina Svitolina achieved the third place in singles international rating of Women's Tennis Association (WTA).

If we analyze a popular non-Olympic individual sports game, today it is exactly billiards numbering multimillion audiences around the world with a great variety of kinds and events. World Confederation of Billiards Sports includes international federations of snooker, carom and pool (as of 2020). The kinds like blackball, artistic billiards, «Chinese» eight-ball, and pyramid popular in Ukraine are included in World Pool-Billiard Association. Ukrainian athletes traditionally have considerable achievements in the European and world championships in pyramid but it was hard to imagine competition of Ukrainian national teams on the international scene in the kinds of billiard sport from the World Games program (pool, snooker and carom) as far back as 20 years ago.

Holding the I European Games in non-Olympic sports in 2007, in Kyiv became a significant event for Ukraine where the national team's athletes had become the winners. During the last decade, the national team's athletes keep gaining the medal places in pool in the major international events every year. In 2016, Vitalii Patsura became the winner of the Men's European championship in pool (pool-8) for the first time in the history of Ukraine having set the record as the youngest

champion of Europe among men in 40 years of existence of such level competitions [1, 2, 9]. In 2020, a Ukrainian snooker player Yulian Boiko gained silver in the Men's World championship at the age of 14, and it was the first time when our homelander had gained the right to take part in the professional round.

In spite of success, during the last years, at the high international and European level events among sports games the Ukrainian national teams do not provide serious competition to leader-countries. Such decline of the results takes place due to the current issues caused by worldwide development:

- team sports games require engaging a good deal of money as there are a lot of athletes in the team compared to individual sports;
- the migration of talented athletes to the foreign clubs without further participation in the national team of Ukraine;
- weak logistics;
- decline of staff capacities.

We have conducted the analysis of the trainers', academic and teaching staff's, athletes' and officials' expert evaluations to determine the most prominent contribution in providing successful competitive activity among highly qualified athletes in team and individual sports games.

On the first stage, using the «brainstorming» technique the main factors influencing the efficiency of competitive activity among highly qualified athletes were formulated being determined by a homogeneous group of experts (30 trainers of national teams in sports games):

- Providing required conditions for



the national team's training and participation in qualifying and major events of the cycle for Olympic and non-Olympic sports games (namely, improving the levels of research and methodological as well as medical and biological support for training highly qualified athletes for the major international events, efficient integral sports training, and high level of logistics and financial support).

- The focus on the development of children's sport, maximal availability of sporting venues and equipment for youth and junior national teams in a kind of sports (improving the quality of training and the number of reserve athletes for the main squad using logistics and financial support of children and youth's sport).

- Development of logistics for mass sports and high performance sport.

- Improving the level of media as well as informational and educational activities within a kind of sports (reporting on the events in mass media, television broadcasts).

- Forming the calendar of national competitions in the kind of sports taking into consideration international events with copying the peculiarities of holding the major tournaments (high qualitative and quantitative indicators of holding national championships).

- Obligatory advanced training for the coaching staff of the national teams in the kind of sport (licensing, advanced training courses, research and methodological as well as research and practical seminars and conferences).

- Cooperation between the trainers of the national teams as well as the ones of children and youth schools with scientific and research institutes and expert scientists, using researches and

developments in the course of the athletes' long-term training (the presence of the research and methodological support system).

- Implementation of the mechanisms of arbitration and mediation to resolve the disputes in the sphere of sport by the model of International Council of Arbitration for Sport, and legal support of sports activity.

- Holding international and European level events annually and gradual increase of their number (cooperation of the national and European as well as world international organizations).

- Ensuring the motivation systems for trainers and athletes towards high sports achievements (awards and scholarships for the national teams' and individual athletes' achievements on the international scene).

- Increasing the national teams' funding in the kind of sport (existence of state funding and development programs).

- Controlling the federations' activity towards forming the national teams' coaching staff and conducting efficient selection of athletes to the national teams' squads in the kind of sport (developing an efficient staff policy system).

- Providing cooperation of personal trainers and the national teams' trainers in the course of planning the training of highly qualified athletes for the major events of the cycle.

- Implementation of a constant monitoring mechanism as well as international standards in the sphere of combating doping in the kind of sport.

- Creating a highly efficient system of training and advanced training among the athletes, trainers, managers, and officials in the sphere of physical



education and sports.

- Development of legal regulation of sponsorship and patronage giving an opportunity to engage additional source of funding for developing the kind of sport.

On the second stage of the research, 160 trainers, academic and teaching staff, athletes, and officials took part in evaluation of the priority of the efficiency factors for competitive activity among highly qualified athletes in sports games. Every expert was given an opportunity to choose three

most important factors, as they saw it.

As we can analyze from the fig. 1, the experts chose the factors influencing on the efficiency of competitive activity among highly qualified athletes in sports games almost unanimously: «Creating the required conditions for the national team's training and participation in qualifying and major events of the cycle for Olympic and non-Olympic sports games» (81.25%±1.8%), «Logistics development for the national team's training and participation in

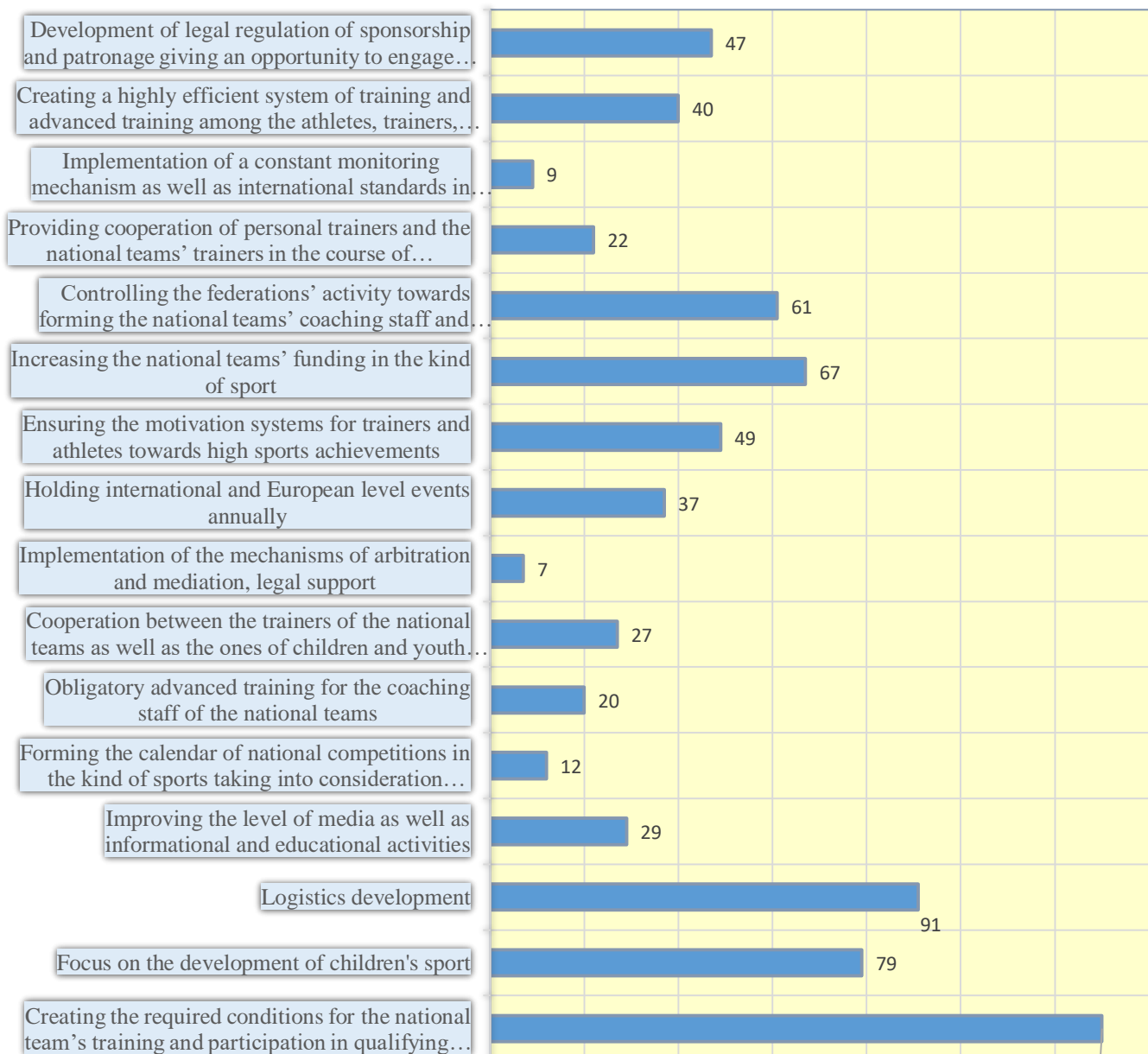


Figure 1. The factors of efficiency of competitive activity among highly qualified athletes in sports games



sports training camps and competitions on the territory of Ukraine» (56.88%±3.7%», and «Focus on development of children's sport for developing a quality reserve for the national teams in sports games» (49.38%±3.8%).

The assessment of the experts' differences of opinions shows that the variation index constitutes 24.45%, which is declarative of adequate level of the experts' like-mindedness.

Conclusions. During the assessment of competitive activity the reliability of the national team athletes' performance in prestigious international events plays a particular role which shows not only the level of mental readiness but is also an integral indicator of assessment of physical, functional, mental, and mobilizing qualities of an athlete.

That is why, the most relevant factors for increasing the efficiency of competitive activity among the national teams in sports games is: improving the levels of research and methodological as well as medical and biological support for training highly qualified athletes for the major international events, efficient integral sports training, and high level of logistics and financial support, improving the quality of training and the number of reserve athletes for the main squad of the national teams by providing logistics and financial support of the children and youth's sport.

Prospects for further research consist in efficient planning of highly qualified athletes' training and achieving the planned result in the major events of the macrocycles in sports games.

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