

Research on the dilemma and sustainable development of youth sports

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Abstract: This study investigates the dilemmas in the development of youth sports. The results show that despite the high attention paid by the Party and government to the work of youth sports, there are still realities such as a decline in the physical health level of adolescents, inadequate implementation of school sports work, and a reduction in the scale of talent training for competitive sports. On this basis, strategic measures for the sustainable development of youth sports are proposed: strengthening the construction of youth sports regulations and systems, deeply carrying out school sports work, further strengthening the construction of youth sports clubs, and improving the training system for competitive sports talents.

Keywords: Youth Sports, Development Dilemma, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

In today's emphasis on the comprehensive development of talents, the youth, as the backbone of the motherland, need not only intelligence but also physical fitness, which is a necessary factor in determining whether they can become pillars of society. For adolescents, sports are not just a form of entertainment or competition; they are also an education and an essential part of the healthy growth of young people. Allowing young people to experience the charm of sports and the joy of emotional experience in sports can not only help them gain a strong physique and a sound personality but also enable them to become high-quality members of future society. This is the real value and significance of the development of youth sports. Therefore, at the new starting point of the development of China's sports history, promoting the sustainable development of youth sports has become even more urgent.

2. Current status of youth sports work

Cultivating a new generation of youth with strong physiques, healthy psychology, and full of vitality is the foundation of national development and social progress. However, contrary to the high concern and emphasis of the Party and government on the healthy growth of adolescents and the need to build a strong sports nation, the development of youth sports is facing dilemmas such as the decline in the physical health level of adolescents, insufficient implementation of school sports work, and the shrinking scale of talent training for competitive sports.

2.1. The physical health condition of adolescents is concerning.

Since 1985, a total of six nationwide surveys on the physical health of adolescents have been organized in China. The national report on the physical health of adolescents in 2010 showed that the overall physical health condition of adolescents in China has improved. Compared with 2005, the physical stature level of adolescents continued to increase; the vital capacity indicator ended a 20-year decline and showed an upward trend; nutritional status continuously improved; the trend of declining physical quality among primary and secondary school students was curbed, and physical fitness such as flexibility, explosiveness, endurance, and strength has been enhanced to some extent. The research report also revealed some problems in the physical health of adolescents that cannot be ignored: the rate of poor vision continued to rise, showing a tendency to be younger; the rate of obesity continued to increase; the incidence rate of dental caries rebounded, etc. From the results of the national monitoring of adolescents' physical health, for more

than 20 years, the issue of adolescents' physical health still needs to be concerned by the society, schools, and parents.

2.2. The implementation of school sports programs is not satisfactory.

From ancient times until now, influenced by Confucian culture and the traditional concept that "those who excel in their studies should serve in government offices," the mentality of "emphasizing the arts over martial skills" is prevalent among people. Nowadays, under the guidance of exam-oriented education and the college entrance examination, the lack of emphasis on physical education by schools and parents has often relegated it to a less prioritized position in school development, leading to the inadequate implementation of national requirements for the advancement of school sports programs. According to a 2005 survey by the National Bureau of Statistics: nearly 18% of primary and secondary schools nationwide do not offer physical education courses, 22% of schools cannot implement the current physical education syllabus, and nearly 50% of schools fail to ensure one hour of daily exercise for students. The situation of sports in rural areas is even more unsatisfactory. Among more than 600,000 primary schools and 78,000 middle schools, 19% of primary and secondary school students do not have the right to physical education, and 12% of schools consider physical education dispensable. The widespread practice of treating physical education as a secondary subject, often giving way to other academic courses, is contrary to the spirit of the No. 7 document issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, and this has also contributed to a certain degree to the decline in students' physical health levels. [1]

2.3. Training reserve for sports: Grim outlook

2.3.1. Training model for reserve talents in competitive sports.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the model for training competitive sports talents has been based on a three-tiered training network with sports schools at its foundation. This pyramid-shaped training model includes, at its base, traditional sports schools and youth clubs, which are general amateur training institutions responsible for cultivating third-tier teams. The middle tier comprises various sports schools and secondary vocational schools focusing on sports, in charge of training second-tier teams. The top tier consists of professional teams from provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions, and the national team, responsible for the training of first-tier teams. This training model is comprehensively managed by the state through administrative methods at all levels, from macro to micro, with the state being responsible for all aspects from formulating overall development plans to selecting and training athletes.

Starting in 2003, the training model for competitive sports reserve talents in China has undergone a series of changes, with training units expanding from the sports system to include the education system, social system, and family system. Data from the "China Sports Industry Statistical Yearbook" shows a clear change in the training institutions for third-tier athletes. The number of traditional sports schools has significantly shrunk, especially at the county and municipal levels of amateur sports schools, some of which have even become paralyzed. The number has dropped from 3,687 in 1991 to 1,510 in 2013, a decrease of 60%, indicating a shift in the cultivation of sports reserve talents towards a more diversified and multi-form training approach.

2.3.2. Current situation of reserve talents in competitive sports

First, the number of reserve talents is relatively stable, but the regional distribution is unbalanced, and the talent structure is unreasonable. In the 1990s, the number of reserve talents in China's competitive sports was relatively stable. Over the past 20 years, the total number has not decreased but has increased to varying degrees. There was a noticeable sharp decline in the number of reserve talents at two points in time, 2002 and 2008, and the rate of increase picked up after 2009. By 2013, the number of second-tier athletes had reached 62,974, an increase of 36,777 compared to 26,197 in 1991; the number of third-tier athletes increased from 259,453 in 1991 to 521,932, an increase of 262,479. According to the "2013 China Sports Industry Statistical Yearbook," among the 31 provinces in mainland China, the provinces with a higher number of reserve talents than the average, and with relatively good development, are Guangdong, Sichuan, Hebei, Jiangsu, Shandong, Zhejiang, Shanghai, Henan, Liaoning, Jiangxi, and Hubei, with

Guangdong showing a significant advantage, exceeding the national average by three standard deviations, while Yunnan, Ningxia, and Tibet have the lowest number of reserve talents, below the national average by more than one standard deviation. In terms of the classification of sports events, among the 28 major events of the Olympic Games, only athletics, basketball, table tennis, swimming, soccer, taekwondo, wrestling, weightlifting, and badminton have positive standard scores for the nine major sports. Basic and popularized projects in society such as basketball, soccer, and table tennis have a larger number of reserve talents with a clear echelon, while some less popular and less mass-based projects such as handball and baseball have very few reserve talents. [2]

Second, the training efficiency is poor, and the delivery rate of reserve talents is low. The training of reserve talents in China's competitive sports mainly relies on two forms of investment: national and family. According to the "Trends in the Development of China's Competitive Sports in 2010," taking national investment as an example, professional sports schools invested 5.1274 billion yuan, with 38,571 students and 1,193 first-line players delivered, with a return rate of 3.09%; amateur sports schools invested 6.17092 billion yuan, with 305,937 students and 3,307 first-line players delivered, with a return rate of 5.05%. And according to the study of the rate of return on human capital investment, the general rate of return is about 10%. Therefore, the rate of return on the training of reserve talents in China's competitive sports is at a relatively low level, which means high investment and low return.

3. Promoting the sustainable development of youth sports

When the youth are strong, the nation is strong. Youth sports, which combine both mass and competitive sports, are fundamental and crucial for the development of both types of sports. The enhancement of adolescents' physical health and the emergence of competitive sports reserve talents are important indicators of building a strong sports nation and also guarantee the sustainable development of our country's sports endeavors. [3]

3.1. Youth sports development strategies

3.1.1. Role of youth sports department

In 2007, in response to the continuous decline in the physical health of adolescents, the State Council issued Document No. 7, "Opinions on Strengthening Sports for Adolescents and Enhancing Their Physical Fitness." Against the backdrop of the Party and the state's high emphasis on the work of youth sports, in 2010, the State General Administration of Sports officially established the Department of Youth Sports. The establishment of the Department of Youth Sports is to implement the spirit of the "No. 7 Document" of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, and to implement the strategic deployment of strengthening the country's sports, which is an important decision made by the State General Administration of Sports. The main responsibilities of the Department of Youth Sports are reflected in two aspects. On one hand, it is responsible for the development planning of national youth sports and the formulation of amateur training plans for adolescents; on the other hand, it guides and supervises the implementation of youth exercise standards, guides the construction of sports schools, youth sports clubs, and traditional sports schools at all levels, as well as cultural education work. At the same time, it also shoulders the guidance of amateur training for adolescents and youth-related sports activities, and organizes and guides major international youth sports events.

The establishment of the Youth Sports Department reflects the Party and the state's high regard for the work of youth sports in our country. It is an important measure for the country to fully implement the scientific development concept of youth sports. At the same time, it will play an active role in thoroughly implementing and implementing the "Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Strengthening Youth Sports and Enhancing Youth Physical Fitness" and the "National Fitness Regulation", and promoting the training of reserve talents for competitive sports. Sports and education administrative departments at all local levels should also establish corresponding institutions, strengthen functions, coordinate relevant departments, and increase guidance and supervision of the spirit of youth sports work. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the youth sports regulation system,

improve the existing system, introduce a new round of regulations and systems, and urge the development of youth sports work in schools and society.

3.1.2. Enhancing implementation and supervision efficiency

To promote the development of youth sports activities, the Party Central Committee of the State Council has introduced a series of regulations and systems. The implementation of youth sports regulations and systems should be government-led, with schools and social organizations strengthening their awareness and efficiency in implementing these regulations. Government agencies must supervise the execution of youth sports regulations and systems effectively. Enhancing the physical health level of adolescents and promoting the development of youth sports work should not merely be about fulfilling paperwork or arranging meetings; it should ensure that all tasks, goals, requirements, and measures are specifically implemented, achieving a state of "speaking must be followed by action, actions must yield results, what is said is decisive, and what is decided is done."

3.2. Comprehensive enhancement of school sports

The "National Outline for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)" has established a strategic theme of comprehensively strengthening and improving moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic education. To enhance school sports work, it is necessary to instill in students the idea that "health comes first," promoting the comprehensive physical and mental development of students. While ensuring students' sports curriculum and extracurricular sports activity time and improving the effectiveness of physical education classes, it is also essential to strengthen students' psychological health education, cultivating their resilience, endurance, team spirit, and sense of cooperation. The premise of carrying out school sports work is "Health First, to cultivate a generation with sound health and mind."

3.2.1. Strengthen the mission of school sports

Seriously implement the deployment of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Party regarding "strengthening physical education classes and extracurricular exercise to promote the physical and mental health and strong physique of adolescents," and enhance the sense of responsibility and mission in doing a good job in school sports work. Firmly establish the concept of "health first," include sports work in the important agenda, place school sports work in a more prominent and important position, continuously increase the intensity of work, promote significant breakthroughs in school sports work, and achieve a noticeable improvement in students' physical health levels.

3.2.2. Deepen innovation in physical education teaching

Further deepen the reform of physical education teaching and continuously explore new teaching methods for physical classes. The reform of physical education teaching should follow the laws of the physical and mental development of adolescents, give full play to the students' initiative, strive to develop students' individuality, and explore the "specialization of physical education" teaching reform that allows students to choose projects independently and break through grade and class boundaries. Fully implement and conduct every physical education class well. All primary and secondary schools should effectively standardize school-running practices, implement physical education courses in accordance with national regulations and requirements, and ensure that the time for physical education classes in primary and secondary schools is fully guaranteed, without reduction or occupation for any reason. Physical education teachers should take each physical education class seriously, allowing students to gain something from every class, cultivate students' interest and enthusiasm for exercise, and make students like and be willing to take physical education classes.

3.2.3. Promotion of sunshine sports activities

Extensive development of sunshine sports activities, ensuring 1 hour of daily exercise, is a basic requirement for the implementation of school physical education work. Include 1 hour of daily exercise in the school curriculum system, incorporate it into the school's teaching plan, schedule it into the students' timetable to truly implement it, ensure the adolescents' right to participate in physical activities, and enable them to receive adequate physical education at school, truly achieving comprehensive development.

3.2.4. Physical fitness monitoring system

Implement the "National Standards for Student Physical Health" earnestly, comprehensively carry out physical health testing for adolescents, and analyze the results of the adolescent physical health tests diligently. Establish a monitoring file for students' physical health, which extends with their academic records to university level. Make the school's physical education work and the student physical health standard achievement rate key indicators for the school's annual assessment.

3.3. Development of youth sports clubs

In order to implement the requirements of the Party Central Committee to further strengthen the physical health of adolescents, in May 2000, the State General Administration of Sports issued the "Notice on Establishing the First Batch of Youth Sports Clubs Nationwide." The youth sports clubs are funded by the China Sports Lottery, aiming to widely organize and carry out a variety of series of activities, create an atmosphere for youth sports activities, attract more young people to participate in sports activities, cultivate the interest of young people in sports, master the skills of 1 to 2 physical exercises, and develop a lifelong habit of sports. [4] As of the end of 2015, China had named and funded 500 national-level traditional sports project schools, 5,033 national-level youth sports clubs, and 164 national-level youth outdoor sports activity camps.

3.3.1. Enhance youth sports clubs

Further strengthen the management of youth sports clubs, and the state and government should provide support and assistance to ensure their healthy development. The clubs should adhere to the purpose of "serving young people," and implement the spirit of the "Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Strengthening Physical Exercise for Young People and Enhancing Their Physical Fitness." They should enhance standardized construction, operate and manage in accordance with the law, improve financial management, strengthen the construction of management personnel and coaching teams, enhance the sense of social responsibility and public welfare awareness among service personnel, and improve the club's self-sufficiency and development capabilities to serve the majority of young people.

3.3.2. Innovate youth sports activities

Clubs should consciously use various forms for publicity to expand their influence; organize sports activities and training for youth both inside and outside of school, and continuously innovate in the forms and organization of activities based on different age and gender characteristics, to meet the diverse needs of youth for participating in sports activities, broaden the development space of youth sports clubs, and promote the physical and mental health and robust physique of young people.

3.4. Talent cultivation in competitive sports

The development of competitive sports today is not only a competition of a country's scientific and technological and economic strength, but also a competition for talent. The sustainable development of competitive sports requires a large number of outstanding reserve talents. The quantity and quality of sports reserve talents will directly affect the achievement of the sustainable development goals of China's competitive sports strategy. [5] An important part of developing youth sports is to strengthen the training of reserve talents in competitive sports to ensure the sustainable development of our country's competitive sports.

3.4.1. Sports school development and talent cultivation

During the "Twelfth Five-Year Plan" period, the number of public sports schools in China has reached 2,197, an increase of 264 schools compared to 2010, with a growth rate of 13.7%; the number of athletes in training is about 367,000 people, an increase of more than 80,000 people compared to 2010, with a growth rate of 28%, the continuous shrinking trend of the national youth training scale has been curbed. The reform and improvement of the sports reserve talent system, the construction of a system that conforms to the growth laws of sports talents, and the cultivation of reserve talents with higher sports skills and strong cultural literacy for comprehensive development as the main task, with a moderate scale, reasonable layout,

and a well-structured, vibrant competitive sports reserve talent training system that adapts to social development, is the need for the development of China's youth sports reserve talents. [6]

3.4.2. *Promoting the development of youth sports*

Establish a broad concept of talent, closely integrate sports with education, and effectively resolve the contradictions between study and training for young athletes; establish a security mechanism, focus on strengthening insurance for accidental injuries to reserve talents, and motivate young people to participate in amateur training; improve the success rate of competitive reserve talents, carry out comprehensive physical fitness exercises according to the physiological and psychological characteristics of young people, improve specific qualities and skills, strengthen cultural knowledge learning, and ensure their healthy growth.

Coubertin's true purpose of reviving the Olympic Games is to educate young people through sports and cultivate a generation with strong physique, mental health, and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, the sustainable development of youth sports is the foundation of our country's path to becoming a powerful sports nation. Strengthen government functions, enhance the construction of youth sports regulations and systems; carry out school sports work in depth, and strengthen the main position of school sports education; further strengthen the construction of youth sports clubs to meet the growing sports needs of young people; improve the competitive sports talent training system, and cultivate reserve talents with high sports technical levels and comprehensive development are important measures to promote the sustainable development of youth sports in our country.

4. Conclusion

In today's society, adolescents are the future of the nation, and their all-around development is of great importance. Physical activities not only strengthen the body of adolescents but are also an important path to shape a healthy psychology and personality. However, the development of youth sports in our country faces many challenges, including a decline in physical health levels, insufficient school sports activities, and a lack of talent cultivation for competitive sports. To address these issues, the government has implemented a series of measures, including strengthening the legal and regulatory construction of youth sports, promoting school sports work, developing youth sports clubs, and improving the talent training system for competitive sports. In particular, the establishment of the Youth Sports Department demonstrates the national emphasis on youth sports work, aiming to promote the comprehensive development of youth sports and the cultivation of reserve talents.

School physical education, as the foundation, needs to deepen teaching reforms to enhance the quality and effectiveness of physical education classes, and at the same time, innovate extracurricular sports activities to ensure that students have enough time for exercise every day. In addition, the construction of youth sports clubs provides adolescents with a more diverse range of sports activities, which helps to cultivate their interest and skills in sports. The cultivation of competitive sports reserve talents is key to enhancing the country's sports competitiveness. By strengthening the construction of sports schools, improving training efficiency, and strengthening the cultural education of athletes, talents with both high levels of sports technical skills and comprehensive development can be fostered.

In summary, the sustainable development of youth sports is the foundation for building a strong sports nation in our country, and it requires the joint efforts of the government, schools, society, and families to cultivate adolescents who are physically and mentally healthy and capable of taking on future social responsibilities.

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