

SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM "TOWARDS A MORE HUMAN WORLD OF CHILDREN'S SPORT" BELGRADE, 2002

by

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Introduction

Formerly a great theoretical and practical system, also known as the "East-European model", is searching for West-European initiative as a guiding principle of its development. Thus, the European Commission has declared the year 2004 to be the year of "Education through sport". As it has been stated, the Commission wants to encourage co-operation between educational institutions and sports organizations in order to achieve a higher integration of sport and incorporation of its values into education. Doping, health, and sport, that is, education through sport, are some of the ten political issues on the agenda which are to be discussed by the Ministers of Education and Sport of the European Union. The European Commission declaration emphasizes a close relationship between classical values of sport and building of democracy, whereby sport is being used as the means of building a personal identity and experience on the way to democracy; that is, sport can be used in integrative processes and forming of a child's identity. With regard to these and similar notions, sport of children and youth has been discussed in most countries. Still, apart from these, so-called axiomatic orientations, modern theory of sport and practice is looking for models of identification of talents and their integration into national programs of the top sports achievement. In other words, in discussions about sport, compliance with both the Charter on children's rights

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(a right to participate in sports) and national programs, aimed at development of system and search for talents who have "sports capacity" with which they can acquire national reputation in international competitions, can be noticed. Besides these two, opposing views on sport of children and youth, there are also opinions whose professional and scientific effort is focused on studying the axioms of biological and psychomotoric development and finding out the organizational forms in relation to target sports success. No matter what the tendencies regarding sport of children and youth are, each of them has to try to reach the ultimate goal, and that is a "More human world of children's sport". With this same aim of providing better conditions for a more human world of children's sport, the scientific symposium "Sport of youth" with participation of authors from abroad as well, was held in Belgrade from 11-13 December 2002.

Organization and participation in the scientific symposium "Sport of youth"

In order to clarify some problems and present many aspects of sport of children and youth using an interdisciplinary approach, the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education of the University of Belgrade (founded in 1946) and the Yugoslav Olympic Committee organized the scientific symposium "Sport of youth". This was a second meeting related to sport of children and youth organized by these two national institutions. The first symposium, with a subtopic "Systematic programs for identification and development of young talents" was held at the end of 2001. The main characteristic of this first meeting was a high quality and diverse discussions. The reason for organizing such meeting was an unfavorable assessment of success of Yugoslav sportsmen at the Games in Sydney, as well as the influence of the International Olympic Committee and their aim to direct efforts of national committees, besides the Olympic one, towards other organizational forms of sport as well. Among many important conclusions about sports development in today's new state of Serbia and Montenegro, one referred to the necessity of organizing interdisciplinary symposia on sport of children and youth. Based on these conclusions, the organization of the second symposium has started, under the

title "Sport of Youth" held at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in Belgrade on December 11-13rd 2002.

As they become similar organizations, an Organizational Committee has been formed for this symposium and the Committee suggested a program with the following subtopics:

1. The problems of sports training of youth.
2. Long-range planning of development of young sportsmen.
3. Sports training and biological maturation.
4. Inherited abilities, talent and selection.
5. School sport.

A lot of domestic authors sent their application form for participation in this symposium. Having analyzed the submitted abstracts, the Reviewer Commission concluded that proposed subtopics were not challenging enough to domestic researchers, that is, domestic researchers were not conducting research on some of the current aspects of youth sport. Except for insufficient diversity of problems, next characteristic of this period concerning the organization of symposium was a huge number of applications that the Reviewer Commission refused to include in symposium program. The accepted papers were sorted into four subject sections, such as:

1. Theoretical aspects of sports training of youth.
2. Tendencies of sports training of youth.
3. Technology and methodology of sports training of youth.
4. School sport, "Education for living".

Organizational forms of Symposium work were plenary sessions with invited lecturers for particular sections.

Quantitative data of Symposium organization

The scope, professional and scientific contribution of the held Symposium can be estimated on the basis of different quantitative analysis criteria, such as:

- the number of accepted papers (40) - in that regard, it was a Symposium with a small number of national participants and international participation of authors from eight European countries;

- the content of papers - it could be discerned then that the greatest number of authors dealt with the issue of particular sport branches, along with other problems such as school sports organization, training of national athletes, sports philosophy, semantic and terminological confusion, education in the field of the Olympic Games, and European tendencies of sports training of children and youth.
- interest of authors in certain topics - in that case, those topics closely related to theoretical aspects of sport of children and youth were mostly dealt with. Among sport branches, not only national sports such as basketball, water polo, volleyball and football were included, but also so-called "minor" sports such as orienteering, karate, swimming and others.
- supplementary activities – taking this into account it was a Symposium rich in content, since the main program was followed by additional seminar for swimming instructors as well as promotion of Polish sport game "Ringo". The budget corresponded to the financial capacity of organizers. Estimating the funds spent on the Symposium this could be regarded as a Symposium of low-budget organization, which nevertheless managed to provide participation of authors from all university centers of Serbia and Montenegro, print promotional material and set up the presentation in local media and on the Internet.

Qualitative contribution of Symposium

Quality of submitted papers was determined by professional and scientific capacity of the participants. Introductory lecture, under a working title "Selected bio-social conditions determining the effectiveness of sports training of children and youth", was delivered by professor Wlodzimierz Starosta from the Department of Kinesiology of the Sport Institute of Warsaw. This author stressed the importance of childhood and youth to overall sports career. As a serious problem, he singled out sports training of children and youth and described it as problematic in the following parts: selection of sport and its discipline, sensitive and critical periods of ontogenesis in the development of motor coordination, the relationship between coordination and physical fitness, theoretical preparations of young sportsmen, form and content of technique

training, as well as methods and means of restitution. Based on text analysis of this study, it is possible to single out the following aspects of sports training of children and youth. These include:

- an aspect of selection, where the author sets apart and describes human, pedagogical, social and professional aspects of making selection during three periods;
- the age of starting training, and orientation of sports training towards Charter on children's rights by using a motto "sport for children", or doing sports training according to Roman principle: "slow and steady wins the race."
- sensitive and critical periods and their treatment at the age period of 7-11, but also from 11–13.6 years of age when noticeable individual changes can be important for career planning;
- the need for a new educational model that at the ages of 7 –11 would entail orientation of sports training towards intensive work on the development of co-ordination abilities and a limited impact on conditioning;
- the importance of proportions in conditioning and co-ordination development;
- technique training where, according to prof.W.Starosta, it is necessary to learn techniques as a whole respecting its form and content;
- as in every pedagogical activity thus in sport as well it is necessary to plan pedagogical means and methods of recovery (rational structure of individual training, an individualized load, mastering technique ...)

The Organizational Committee received a paper "On the national system of sports training of youth and program propositions of its further development" written by a group of authors from Germany (Martin, D.; Rost, K.; Krug, J.; Reiss, M.). The paper presents a survey of larger number of studies that use scientific and analytical methods to consider objectively the sport situation in Germany. The purpose of these papers is to study the reality of sport in order to offer the obtained results and knowledge to institutions that are responsible for making sports and political decisions. The authors are emphasizing the problem of decline in achieved results of youth sport in a great number of sports branche, which make them conclude that efforts in the

field of sports training of youth are producing rather poor results. They come to the conclusion that if Germany wants to stay on in international sport, it must reorganize sports training of youth, which according to previous conclusions, lacks principled solutions, new directions and a strategy for their implementation; in other words, sport of youth in Germany is neither systematic nor structured; it is sporadic since the basic principles of sports training of youth are missing. The authors are raising a large number of questions in the paper and consequently give their suggestions. One of the suggestions is "The principle of solution" which they present in the form of a program with a larger number of goals. The proposed Program assumes a greater number of solutions regarding organizational structures (a partner chain) and drawing up general plans of individual sports training. Naturally, this group of authors too, in one truly academic discussion, is talking about the search for talents. They point out the relationship between sport and primary education and see that as an opportunity for schools to search for talents and give their support to talented pupils thus improving the sport of children. As a good example of school-sport organization, they mention "Berlin's experimental model" of the so-called school with intensive teaching of sport. They also have a positive attitude towards co-operative model of school-sport relation of so-called "school partnership for top sport" (the first and the second grade of high school) that has become effective in some German provinces.

These two examples of content analysis of presented papers at the Symposium in Belgrade, as well as a great international initiative, indicate that there is a great deal of confusion in sport of children and youth. This situation has been an incentive to the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education of Belgrade University to introduce a new subject, "The fundamentals of sport of youth" into its curriculum. The new curriculum (effective from academic year 2002) contains this subject as well taught through 240 classes of lectures and practice. The significance of this subject for education of physical education and sport professional has been discussed in the paper "Student education and their work with children and youth in a reformed curriculum of the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education", presented by domestic authors (Radojevic, J.; Jevtic, B.). The authors have raised a good deal of questions in the text which relate to the situation of sport of children and youth in Serbia and Montenegro.

They hold the staff who work with children responsible for the current situation. "The fundamentals of sport of youth" as a new university subject has appeared as "intention to study and concentrate knowledge connected with needs of children and youth in sport, as well as with their protection against possible abuse." Discussing the name of subject - "The fundamentals of sport of youth", the authors have cited curricula for educating staff who work in sport and physical education. The authors have identified and analyzed reasons (SWOT analysis) for introducing this subject and its syllabus comparing them with European processes and tendencies, national laws, interest of society, professional staff, vertical and horizontal relationship of this subject with studies of sport and physical education, etc.

Supplementary programs, Seminar for swimming coaches

The symposium, organized with the aim of discussing the problems of sports training of children and youth was a good opportunity to present problem-solving solutions related to organization of swimming in Serbia's and Montenegro's neighboring countries. The intention of the organizers was to show the experiences of other, successful nations in swimming as a way which makes possible changes of organization of swimming training and sports swimming in Serbia and Montenegro. Speakers in this part of program were from Rumania, Slovenia, Russia, and Poland. Professor Voronsov as an author who intensively researches young swimmers and long-term swimming career planning has submitted three papers that deal with an impact of individual maturity upon strength in young swimmers, patterns of growth for some characteristics of physical development, functional and motor abilities, swimming speed, stroke rate and stroke distance during maturity. Some other topics that have also been dealt with at this seminar are: the specific sensation of water while demonstrating individual technique (professor Starosta), examples of training activities of swimmers from Rumania, categorization of swimmers in Russia, monitoring and evaluation of competitors' abilities in Slovenia, tendencies in theory and practice with a view to applying and improving organization of swimming in Serbia and Montenegro.

Conclusion

For those who are more familiar with political events in "the West Balkans" in the last decade of the twentieth century it is not necessary to explain thoroughly the significance and position of sport in the process of growing up of the young who have been exposed to political upheavals, economic sanctions and war. In other words, the value of sport is one of the basic problems of everyday life of children and youth. However, to find an answer and be guided towards good solutions in a quality organization of sport of children and at the same time, find solutions to maintain the international trend of success in sport in Serbia and Montenegro in altered living conditions, presents a great professional and scientific challenge of interdisciplinary scope. The Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in cooperation with the Yugoslav Olympic Committee has organized the scientific symposium under the working title "Sport of youth" with a subtitle "Towards a more human world of children's sport". Both domestic authors and those from abroad have participated in the symposium. The necessity for organization and work with staff in the field of improvement of children's and youth's sport have resulted from the fact that both researchers and sports associations deal with this problem sporadically and in an insufficiently professional way. This situation is a "dangerous" tendency that can be overcome only by good national organization. A small number of papers presented at the symposium bear witness to the fact that the research on sport of youth is sporadic and insufficiently contemporary. After the symposium and upon the qualitative analysis of presented papers, an insignificant theoretical basis and inadequate experimental initiative of domestic researchers have been noticed.

In addition to conclusion of this symposium, the following guidelines have been proposed:

1. If sport should be organized for children (not vice versa, children for sport), and the status of sports success in Serbia and Montenegro be maintained, then an intensive and highly organized and professional national initiative is needed.
2. Imperatives for highly professional and organized realization of sport of youth are:

- research and implementation according to its interdisciplinary structure;
- integration with European initiatives;
- new programs for education of the staff;
- a national program which taking account of the previously mentioned leads to "A more human world of children's sport".