
ON A STATE-SPONSORED SPORT SYSTEM IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Int J Exerc Sci 1(1): 1-3, 2008. The gold medal success of China in recent Olympic Games can be traced to the advancement of the state-sponsored sport system (SSSS). While the program was developed initially through socialist ideals, it is more than a centralized government system to monopolize resources for glorified sport performance. Participation in competition is an inherent part of the human condition. Success in athletics is associated with national identity and has economic, social, and cultural implications. Because of this, it is essential that the SSSS adjust and improve to keep pace with other facets of China's quickly changing national reform. In association with emerging economic reform, some sports now receive equal or more funds from private investments compared to government allocation. The state-sponsored sport system must continue to adapt to maintain the Chinese tradition of excellence in competition.

KEY WORDS: Olympic Games, Chinese athletics, sport system reform

In 1984, China sent its first delegation to the Los Angeles Olympic Games, where China finished fourth in the gold medal stand. In the following Olympic Games in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004, China stood firm in the first four places. The excellent performances of the Chinese athletes in the Olympic Games have not only promoted China's influence on international sport in recent years, but also consolidated its leading role as a sport power in the world, thanks to the successful practice of its state-sponsored system in sport.

The state-sponsored sport system, or SSSS, is a child of socialism at its initial stage, suitable for the fundamental characteristics of the Chinese nation and adaptive to the development goals and strategies of the competitive sport in the country. By

definition, the mission of the SSSS is to pool together the finite manpower, financial resources and material to bring every positive factor into full play. It requires the effective disposing of national resources to competitive sports to produce excellent athletic results. There is an argument that the SSSS is a reflection of the country's planned economic system and some even argue that the SSSS is but a centralized system in which the government monopolizes everything regardless of costs and people. The argument involves the knowledge of the values and ends of competitive sport. It also relates to the methodology to have the end met.

The core matter is whether or not the government should be highly involved in the organization of competitive sport and

attach great importance to this kind of sport and world records.

There is an opinion that sport should stay away from politics and simply remain a game. Some argue that the country is already having too much trouble and enough work and therefore it is simply not worthwhile to waste so much money on competitive sport and a few gold medals. To answer this question, we have to approach the issue from both historical and dialectical perspectives.

To begin with, to participate and to win is a core value of the competitive sport. It is an indication of human development and progress as well the symbol of the spirit and will of the mankind.

Secondly, sport can not be separated from the nation's identity and ideology. The rise of the nation means the rise of its sport and there can be no sport in a weak nation, a lesson learned by the Chinese through their painful personal experience. Competitive sport at the international level, especially between the sport powerhouses, can lead to multiple implications. Therefore, only through economic, social and cultural perspectives, could one fully understand the overall benefits of competitive sport.

While the SSSS' creation in China is an inevitable result of circumstances, it does not necessarily mean that the system itself is free from defects. It is fair to say that each management system has its pros and cons, and even the fairly advanced systems in developed countries have their own drawbacks.

We realize it is natural and normal for a system to have defects. China's SSSS is no exception with its own strong points, weaknesses and room for improvement. And quick transition is essential especially for today's China, which is making the transition from the planned economy to the market economy in order to adapt to the demands and bring out the best of the new market mode.

As China's economic reform goes further, the disadvantages of the SSSS are gradually exposed. Examples include high administrative costs with weak control and low efficiency rate, the absence of incentives and safeguards mechanisms for athletes and their coaches, rigid competition structure as well as low tech training methods. It is obvious that the SSSS needs to be reformed and improved because only change can lead to progress.

Judging from the current trends, the reform is beginning to infuse the SSSS with new blood. Firstly, a new pattern has been set up with investment from the state, social communities and individuals. Some sports with great market potential have generated, via marketing, more funds than those coming from the government. Quite a number of sport competitions are now managed by private companies and individuals. According to statistics, almost half of the projects administered by the State Sport General Administration are financed by marketing, while the contributions of social communities account for nearly 50% of the administrative expenses of the local sport authorities. In some regions, marketing revenues have outweighed the state financial allocation.

As such, we can conclude that China's SSSS is not immutable and frozen.

In its drive to become a sport powerhouse, the country has continued to adopt the name SSSS, because the system is not only part of the fine Chinese tradition and effective operational mode but also a cohesive and mobilizing force. What needs to be done is to step up the transition of the government's functions and deepen the reform of the management systems of the sport authorities so that the SSSS can be adapted to the needs of the new market-oriented system as well as the reform of the sport structure.

Finally, the reform and improvement of SSSS have to fall in line with the country's economic and political reforms. China's overall reform is an accumulative process and therefore it requires the reform of the SSSS to run its natural course, fast but steady.

To conclude, the SSSS must be upheld and improved. The impressive gold medal standing China experienced in previous Olympic Games would not have been possible without the SSSS. To weaken the current system would likely decrease performance levels on sport's grandest stage. To adapt and enhance the state-sponsored sport system has significant promise to maintain China's tradition of excellence in international competition.

中国竞技体育的举国体制

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随着 1984 年我国第一次参加奥运会取得金牌榜第四名的好成绩之后，在 1992 年、1996 年、2000 年以及 2004 年雅典奥运会上都始终在前四名之列。我国在奥运会上所取得的优异成绩不仅大大地提升了我国竞技体育国际影响力，同时，也夯实了我国在国际竞技体育舞台上的领先地位。那就是我国建国以来形成的竞技体育举国体制。

概括来说，我国竞技体育举国体制是在社会主义初级阶段的历史条件下，与我国国情和竞技体育的发展目标、发展战略相适应而逐步形成的。实行举国体制，就是集中有限的人、财、物力，最大限度地调动各方面的积极性，有效配置全国的竞技体育资源，上下形成合力，创造优异运动成绩。

有一种说法：举国体制就是计划体制，甚至还有有的说举国体制就是集权体制，举国体制就是国家包办，举国体制不计成本、劳民伤财等等。这里涉及到对于竞技体育的价值和目标的认识问题，也涉及到实现目标的方法路径问题。

问题的核心就是，国家有没有必要搞竞技体育，要不要重视

竞技体育，要不要在国际体育竞赛中创佳绩？有这样一种声音：让体育远离政治，回归游戏。有人说，国家面临那么多的问题，要做的事情那么多，下那么大力气、花那么多钱搞竞技体育、夺金牌到底值不值？对这个问题，既要历史地看，也要辩证地看。

第一，从体育自身特征和价值目标看。参与并获胜是竞技体育的核心价值目标之一，是人类发展与进步的象征，是人类精神与意志的体现。

第二，从体育与民族意识、国家意识的密切关联来看。国运兴，体运兴。对此，我国人民有切身的体会；弱国无体育，对此，我国人民有着切肤之痛。竞技体育的国际竞争，特别是大国之间的竞争，往往富有多重意味和丰富内涵。因此，要从经济、社会、文化等多个角度，全面认识竞技体育的综合效应和价值。

我国竞技体育举国体制的产生有其客观性和历史必然性。但是，并不是说，这种管理体制就没有毛病。应该说，任何一种管理体制，都有优缺点。即使是发达的国家，其各项管理体制比较先进，但也有其缺陷。

制度有缺陷是一种客观现象，也是一种正常现象，我国竞技体育举国体制也不例外，有其明显优点，但也存在不足，需要不断改进和完善，尤其是目前，我国正处在由计划经济体制向市场经济体制转型的过渡历史时期，更是需要尽快转变，以更好地适应我国未来市场经济体制的要求，并能够更好地发挥其作用。

随着我国的市场经济体制改革的不断深入发展，我国竞技体育举国体制的一些弊端逐渐显现出来，诸如，管理过程当中，成本偏高，成本约束力较弱，管理效率偏低，运动员和教练员激励和保障机制欠缺，竞赛制度的僵化，训练的科学化程度偏低，等等，都是以往计划经济体制下的举国体制所具有的弊端，为此，竞技体育举国体制需要变革，需要完善，只有变才能更好地发展。

从目前情况来看，我国的竞技体育举国体制已经开始融进市场经济的新鲜血液了。首先，竞技体育经费的投入，已经不是国家一家投入，而是初步形成了国家、社会、个人共同投资的新格局，市场化、社会化、民营化趋势越来越明显。许多市场潜力大的项目通过市场运作，其市场资金来源已经超过了国家的投入。很多体育比赛，已经由体育中介公司来运作。据粗略统计，国家体育总局各个运动项目管理中心发展

项目的经费中，市场开发收入已经占到了一半左右。地方体育部门的事业支出中，来自社会的资金也占到了接近一半。在部分地区，市场开发收入已经大大超过了国家财政拨款。因此说，我国竞技体育举国体制的内容不是一成不变的。

其次，在发展的过程中，之所以要继续沿用举国体制这一名称，因为它既是我们优良传统、有效模式的一种概括，同时具有凝聚剂、动员令的作用。所需要做的就是进一步加强政府的职能转变，进一步深化改革各项目运动管理中心管理体制，使之适应市场经济体制改革以及体育改革的需要。

第三，我国竞技体育举国体制的改革和完善必然与我国政治体制改革以及经济体制改革等相适应。我国的整体改革是一种渐进式的改革，这就要求竞技体育举国体制的改革也必然要遵从渐进改革的客观要求，循序渐进，又好又快地进行改革。

为此，对于竞技体育举国体制，一要坚持，二要完善。没有举国体制，中国就不可能取得这么多的金牌；动摇了举国体制，就必然导致竞技体育水平大滑坡。