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Human capital and recruitment processes for the position of a trainer in Poland

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Abstract

A high sports score is composed of many factors that determine the final result. It is difficult to state clearly which of them are the most important ones. However, it can be said that a right human material is necessary for success in sport. At the same time players with specific predispositions and highly qualified trainers, who together with their mentees aim at a specific goal to a certain degree, are needed. Researchers have already dealt with the designation of the most important predictors of sporting success in the last century. The process of determining the gradation of factors is extremely difficult and complicated. Nevertheless, it is the player's relationship with the coach that seems to be one of the most important aspects in the training process. Hence, the purpose of the work is to try to describe recruitment processes for the position of a trainer in Poland. Referring to the hypotheses and research questions, the authors showed some premises that might affect the selection of trainers in sport. Moreover, they might have some impact on the position of Polish sports disciplines in world rankings.

Keywords: sport, training process, training system, football

Introduction

In the search for predictors of sporting success, it is necessary to be familiar with the current situation and the prevailing processes in the sports market. Polish sport of the glorious summer passed during the communist regime. The reasons for this phenomenon were provided only after the change of a political system in the nineties of the last century (Godlewski 2006). The introduction of the term "Physical Culture" in post-war Poland was in line with the ideological assumptions of the socialist state (Krawczyk 2000). The Marxist concept of sport and physical education originated from the Leninist concept of culture which predicted the impact on the future of humanity in the form of three elements

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such as mental education, technical training and physical education (Godlewski 2006). According to socialist assumptions, physical culture was destined to support polytechnic and mental education, raise morale attitude and shape patriotic one but above all it was connected with defensive adoption. At the same time Lenin and Stalin allocated large amounts of money to mass sport which became their huge propaganda tool (Godlewski 2006). In the post-war years Poland followed the solutions introduced in the USSR. Universality, state financing and general availability of sport have become an advantage because of such a policy. Due to the low level of employees' professionalism, the ruling party encouraged the employment of young people who could be taught by more experienced executives. Criteria for competence and professionalism in recruitment processes were developed (Godlewski 2006). Ten trainers were brought to Poland from abroad in 1948: football, fencing, and motorcycle sport (Godlewski 2006). All in all, a particular focus was put on the trainers' professionalism. After a period of prosperity and a change in the political system in the nineties of the last century, a slow regression of Polish competitive sport took place. Many disciplines such as football, volleyball and basketball have ceased to play a significant role in the international club competitions for years. Clubs cut off from centralized funding began to be dissolved in other countries of the former socialist bloc such as the DDR (Kalinowski et al. 2019). Traditionally clubs lost their importance for 31 years. It can be concluded that history has come full circle. Many disciplines have already been revived such as volleyball or handball. Nevertheless, the revival of these disciplines was related to a satisfying financing, compared to the one in European countries, and the employment of coaches from abroad. However, football is still developing. Despite many favorable changes, the position in club rankings is unfavorable. Due to the greatest popularity of the discipline, the authors of this article are particularly interested in the situation related to football. Polish football in clubs is ranked 32nd in Europe and in 2017 it was ranked 29th in Europe (Kalinowski, Chorążyk 2017). There are certainly many difficulties which can not be overcome easily. Hence, attempts were made to describe the recruitment processes of trainers in Poland. As it was written earlier in the 1950s, the state authorities undertook to employ qualified training staff in our country. Nowadays clubs are independent and autonomous units. The president with the supervisory board makes decisions about the company's profile which is the club regardless of whether it leads to immediate profit or implies long-term activities. It can be assumed that we come to an irrational conflict of interest - quick profit vs patience in developing. In a democratic and a free country, it is difficult to find certain standards or development paths (Kalinowski et al. 2017). Taking this fact into consideration, it was decided to try to analyze human capital among trainers of an almost 40 million country. The focus was put on areas according to the rules for recruiting trainers. The information was obtained on the basis of direct observation, interviews with players, trainers and activists as well as on the basis of analysis of internet sources and a review of literature. At this point it is worth quoting a passage from an article by Kalinowski et al. (2017) in which the authors raise the problem of applying for free coaching internships in football. During a lecture with the students of the Academy of Physical Education with a specialization in trainers a discussion about the situation on the labor market arose. "There was a sad voice of resignation among young valuable people who are supposed to build our future. Talented and ambitious people with their own goals and dreams are slowly being killed by us. Someone will classify them in an unambiguous way as less operative. This may be the case but not necessarily. They unanimously commented that in Poland there is practically no chance of employment or even a free trainer internship at the club

from Ekstraklasa" (Kalinowski et al. 2017 p. 25). Hence, the purpose of the work is to try to describe the recruitment processes for the position of football coach in Poland.

Therefore, adequately to the set goal of the work, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Are the selection criteria for trainers in sports clubs known?
2. How is the competence of recruited trainers checked?
3. Can you find job offers at top football academies?
4. What is the most common coach profile in football academies?

A club as a sports organization

Nowadays sports clubs resemble an organization. They have intangible assets embedded in a specific structure. Correct synergy between all elements is necessary for proper functioning. Hence, proper human selection seems to be justified in the organization (Stosik, Morawski 2009). The performance of a sports club is assessed by achieving its goals. In a club the implementation of tasks and goals is possible only through well-selected human capital. A non-profit organization has evolved into commercial entities. Over the years funding and rules for obtaining sponsors have changed. Clubs began to create specific products that generate revenue using the brand. At this point a trainer, who is jointly responsible for the results of their team on the market, began to play a special role in a training process. In a team a trainer plays an overarching role, namely they divide tasks, define operating principles and directions of an action. The functioning of a team depends on its vision (Kurzawski, Miskiewicz 1977). On a daily basis a trainer selects training measures that help their team to achieve established objectives. A sports result depends on their competence. A trainer often plays the role of an educator, a psychologist or sometimes even a guardian (Gołaszewski 2003). Constant coordination of activities and setting directions brings a desired result. Their conceptual activity leads a team in a certain direction (Naglak 2001). In the past many authors pointed to the need for recruiting highly qualified trainers (Lachowicz 1974). The author paid attention to the relations between people, atmosphere and specialist knowledge as invaluable elements of effective work. In addition to proper competences, skills and resources, in literature it appears slightly problematic to observe appropriate moral standards and attitudes that determine the behavior of the mentees (Żukowski 1994). As a result, such a multifaceted and a complex situation in sports shows a huge role of a trainer. Hence, the articles prove that a trainer is a key worker who sets the directions for their mentees' development (Poczwardowski 2000, Czerwiński J., Jastrzębski Z. 2006). Success is not possible without proper selection of people. The greatest visions or strategies can be ineffective without proper human resources (Welch, Welch 2005). Trainers, regardless of their work style or personality, are assessed on the basis of the effectiveness of their work. Martens (2009) distinguishes three basic styles of team management in his work. An imperative, a liberal or a cooperative style as well as a substantive preparation are the components of success but they do not determine it. A properly selected person and a their manner to work in a team can bring the expected results. A style should be compatible with trainer's personality. Players intuitively feel every inconsistency of the trainer who is exposed to systematic loads and pressure at work (Herzig 2004). The trainer's work can be considered by the need to keep training records, write plans and reports - the need for continuous decision making - daily conflicts arising from the differences in the assessment of player's commitment, reliability, punctuality, taking their comments - the need to care for a positive atmosphere in a team

- the need of taking care of proper interpersonal relations in the section, club and not only
- own physical and mental fatigue - player's fatigue (both physical and mental) - player's expectations towards a trainer - competition pressure and their importance - relationships with other trainers - a significant or a complete limitation of contact with players during competitions - a sense of being obliged to make good decisions during the game (Herzig 2004). All these components reflect the complexity of the situation in which a trainer finds themselves. In addition, under a constant pressure coming from the environment, including people, they are accounted for achieving a set of specific goals. In a sense, the presented requirements illustrate a certain competence and a qualification profile that are necessary to perform this demanding profession. Therefore, a reliable recruitment and a selection of people seems to be necessary in this profession.

Trainer development paths and the situation on the labor market in Poland

Looking from the perspective of expectations of high sport results, choosing the right candidates seems to be an extremely difficult process. In response to the research questions posed, the authors attempted to illustrate in which situations trainers find themselves on the Polish labor market. While the selection of trainers at the highest representative and first-class level seems to be fully justified, the search for trainers at the youth level is a certain incomprehensible phenomenon. Until 2017 no competitive ads from major football academies were found in the history of Google search engines (Kalinowski et al. 2017). Over the next three years only two job offers appeared in Legia Warsaw and Pogoń Szczecin clubs. Therefore, the authors attempted to analyze the training staff of the largest academies. Based on personal analysis, it was found that the largest number of employed trainers are graduates of the University of Physical Education. However, former top-class players are missing (Kalinowski 2019). Based on the interviews, it was determined that this was due to the low earnings offered by football clubs. The situation on the Polish market looks different than e.g. in Germany. In the country of our western neighbors offers are coming from major clubs such as VFL Wolfsburg, Hoffenheim, Borussia Dortmund and HSV Hamburg. In addition, a platform with competition offers is active on the DFB (German Football Association) website (Kalinowski et al. 2017). A certain status quo in employment is maintained between former players playing in the past at the highest level called practitioners and graduates of physical education universities called theoreticians. It is different in Poland. There are more young people with less financial requirements but who are also less experienced. Employment criteria are not clearly defined. There are no systematic open competitions. Such actions may affect the level of Polish club football. Career development paths for trainers are difficult to define. There is no system repeatability in them. These are some restrictions that seem to have a significant impact on picking the best vessels. Hence, there are doubts that make it difficult to determine the qualification criteria and paths of trainers' development. Such important activity is left to intuitive actions. According to these activities, it can be presumed that the low cost of employing the employee is appreciated, not the quality and experience. At this stage, the question of how recruitment for workplaces is carried out arises. Is the selection of human capital supported by scientific research and proven methods? We do not know this but no clear recruitment criteria were encountered. Club environments are hermetically sealed. As you know, restrictions are not conducive to development and there are many ones in Polish football. The problem seems to be very complex. Obviously, clubs functioning as free enterprises have the right to operate according to their own rules. Only are the largest

enterprises characterized by transparency and openness? Effective solutions for acquiring the best specialists on the labor market in business distinguish the best companies. However, it is different in the Polish sports business. Here comes another question: “Does it affect the results of Polish sports clubs in the international arena?”

Results of Polish club teams

As stated in the introduction, the overall situation in Polish clubs is very unsatisfactory. The Polish Premier League is classified 32nd, the best Polish club Legia Warsaw is 81th (Kalinowski 2019). The last time when the Polish team participated in the European Cup final was in the 1969/1970 season (Kalinowski, Kalinowski 2018). From 2017 the Polish team cannot qualify for the European Cup. It is not in the Champions League. For a population of almost 40 million, one may be tempted to state that the situation is dramatic. It is worth noting that there are probably many reasons for it. The authors would like to draw the reader's attention to such important aspect as recruitment of trainers. Perhaps this is an aspect that has a significant impact on the level of Polish football. Although an unambiguous answer will not be received, it is worth looking at the problem from a new perspective.

Summary and conclusions

When looking for factors which influence sports success, it is impossible to consider the role of a trainer. It is worth noting that over the years transformations in Poland and changes in the management of people have undergone metamorphoses. The process of moving from accidental actions, through system solutions, and returning to intuitive actions does not make us feel optimistic. The lack of open systematic competitions, specific criteria or unclear ways of looking for specialists cause concern. In line with modern technologies and progress it is nevertheless worth considering and perhaps analyzing again. Moreover, the role of subjectivity in a broadly understood training process must be emphasized. Nevertheless, human capital still seems to be the most important element. Therefore, it is worth considering whether intuitive actions or existing methods are still the only irreplaceable ones. Modest financial possibilities or poorly developed infrastructure are often claimed to lead to low sports results in clubs. The authors have doubts whether it is right. The assessment from our perspective is similar to the results of the participation of Polish clubs in European cups in recent years. Hence, it can be assumed that options in other countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Croatia which, despite low human resources, achieve high results, must be taken into consideration. Does the recruitment of trainers resemble a similar process there? It is worth checking and comparing it. Nevertheless, the most important thing to keep in mind is that not only the world but also Europe can stop supplying Poland with their assistance and, as a result, new explanations for that should be found. It is possible to look at this phenomenon and just take it for granted which will not necessarily confirm the lack of success but will rather encourage the search of effective solutions (Kalinowski et al. 2017). In the opinion of the authors, previous activities require scientific research, deeper analysis and substantive discussion of experts. In summary, it is worth using the huge human capital that we have in our society. Introduce young, creative people in a systematic, repeatable way that will fully satisfy fans and the environment. In response to the research questions posed, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. No qualification criteria were found for employed trainers.
2. It can be assumed that the competences of recruited trainers are checked on the basis of opinions and interviews.
3. By 2020, two job offers were found in the best football academies in Poland.
4. The most employed coach in football academies at the highest level is a graduate of the Academy of Physical Education.
5. It is worth verifying the hypotheses provided in this article in experimental research.

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