

ELITISTIC INTERPRETATION OF FUTURE TOP-LEVEL SPORT

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Review paper

Abstract

The purpose of this article was review of deliberation connected with future sport elitism. Approach was generic, i.e. with elaboration of elitism genesis as phenomenon. It was consulted numerous literature, but with unsatisfied accordance and without unique aspect of it, so discussion was oriented forward to only one remaining direction – management. It was concluded that in sport there exists only one real elite and that is manager's elite, and that it is the only one real chance for sport development in the future. Value of article can be recognised in open-minded access and accentuation of management role that is expected to be only sport elite, but exclusively according to abilities of salvation of actual and strategic tasks.

Key words: elitism, sport, future, management, knowledge

Introduction

Top sport is a living matter that keeps changing according to new discoveries and transformations that accompany man on his path of development and as such it's a subject of this work. However, that living matter recently appears with a certain group of sports managers and mostly functioning within the group or with support of that group. So the problem of this work is top sport existence in the hands of elite – so called sports elite, and the aim of the work would be to present an objective view of positive and negative consequences without taking sides.

Top level sport's features

Sport (Latin *disportare*) according to definition is every activity that includes competition and desire to win. Therefore, the main goal of sport's game is winning, and in top sport it's achieving maximal top results. Besides that basic tendency, training activity in sport is directed toward man's skill development.

There are many different views on a sports structure, but it is interesting to notice that according to generic criteria (or foundation criterion Bonacin, 2006), the basic sport's structure determinants are as follows: a) competition, which includes athletes, referees, public, media, sponsors, politics..., b) movement realization, which means there is no sports without movement (locomotion and all anthropological characteristics) and c) specific skills demonstration. Each sport has its characteristic skills (Adizes, 1998; Malacko & Rađo, 2005).

Basics

The morphological characteristics of top sport include process of growth and development of man's psychically measured manifestations (morphological, functional, physical, cognitive dimension, conative characteristics etc) (Bonacin, Bilić & Bonacin, 2008). Top sport is the most interesting in management structure since it is on the highest level, brings the most publicity and profit and large management area is dealing with it such as human potentials, sports manifestations etc. Besides above mentioned components, sport is conditioned by many other components which include economical as well. Considering that top sport is a promoter of all forms of mass sports and also a sport matter for sports industry development and matter of assertion (sport's result), national identity etc. (Bartoluci, 2003) All levels (state and other levels) support it through public financing system and other forms of support and top sport can individually act on the market - commerce principle and have income from other resources such as sponsors, donators ... (Bartoluci, 2003). Simply because it is on the top, it is usually popular as well (at least two on the top) which collects more income since it's attracting investors, who invest in advertising, sponsor's contracts, memberships etc. Therefore, in economical sense, top players are making a lot of money. This puts them to the top and among very few people. At the same time, sociological basis is one of important characteristics of top sport and as such makes a subject of this work (Katić & Bonacin, 2001). The reason for that is that the biggest and the most important changes are happening in society.

In society, where sport is an integral and very important part, and its network creates different types of elite groups. Individual reacts differently on the environment and its influences are inevitable and continuous. Technology advance makes this influence more complex and demanding managing people in a very specific way. In macro sociological (Saksida & Petrovič, 2006) stratification society systems are divided into socialization, institutional and sanction systems. In micro sociological sense (Bonacin, 2006) we can recognize clicks and certain elements. As adequate as individual went through above mentioned abilities as much positive results or values will be incorporated into the foundations necessary to make him a top athlete.

Elite and elitism

Term: "elite"

A term elite comes from a French word *élite* which means *to choose, elected, a chosen level*, the top of social strata, dominant group in society. In sociological sense that is a group of people that owns certain characteristics and social roles and positions (Šverko et al., 1994; Fanuko et al., 1995). Criteria to form such groups are different but usually achieve advantage over others based on the wealth, origin and social power. It is strongly connected with governing structure, but mostly includes only its top (Encyclopaedia, 1977). Elites are formed according to social roles and as such we have culture elite, sports elite etc. In this case elitism is an attitude according which individuals achieve superior roles in all fields of life and community work, behavior specified by the higher value criteria.

Elite in sport

Although it might not appear a term elite in sport is not new. Actually it exists since the beginning of sport, we could say from the times when people lived in caves. Even then only the best hunters were using the best weapons, therefore in a way engaged in physical activity, the chosen ones. Through all the phases of human existence, there was a tendency that only some, the chosen ones, engage in physical activity (fighting, playing), and other people participated as audience. We have examples of knights, mercenaries, gladiators (slaves but volunteers for money) and they all have had similar treatment. They enjoyed popularity privileges and in return they entertained the audience. With further development of science and technology of that age, instruments for fighting and play became more and more complicated, dangerous and demanding regarding their usage. The question is asked; How far this can go?

Future

Term: "future"

Future doesn't begin just like that. That is not something that can wait. It is happening continuously from moment to moment, because what is now, in a moment will be a past and what we are waiting for will be now. Everything is connected. There is not even one man's action that is not connected to the past or a man's action that will not leave a trace in the future. Therefore, it is up to us to leave such traces that will be of use in the future. We have to „invest“ in today, so we make better tomorrow. The investment implies the time that started, intently gathering information – knowledge and incorporating the same in our practice. In sport it's an athlete and the goal he wishes to achieve. In other words, recognize on time, direct in the right direction, study from all aspects and maximally invest knowledge and material and combining this entire have a result – top athlete.

Changes and change mechanisms

What is a change actually? Generally that would be transformation of actual situation into a new one due to a perception of new information and impacts. It means, any initial thing, event etc. That transforms actual into something new. That would be a change mechanism. In sport, for example, training is complex mechanism of change because it transforms the player from one condition to another giving him new information (by training, advising etc) In a core, sport has a change, since it is aiming toward improvement, achieve constant maximum – it is changing. Change mechanisms are present everywhere around us as innovation, new idea and thoughts, new books and songs, new ideologies even new religions. If one move of a butterfly wings moves the whole world, what we can achieve with much more?

Changes in sport

Sport is a constant change. You just arrive to the top, but you have to climb some more. In sport, to an athlete, primarily occur biological and sociological changes, since the day he was born through inclusion in the family and society, then educative changes etc. With engagement in sport, all these changes are brought to one completeness – training process which we use to change above mentioned athlete's characteristics. Exactly the changes of some of these characteristics (or all of them) will lead us to the expected result. We will present only a few examples in sport (besides training). As an example for technical changes we present result in javelin which reached 104 meters.

The problem occurred when with momentum it was 130 m which was the entire length of a stadium. To avoid injuries the changes had to occur, which is why IAAF determined to move center of javelin forward so the javelin would fall faster. With the same beginning conditions the results amounted to 80 m. This introduces the problem of comparing previous and current results. But now, they achieved 100 m and we have the same problem all over again. Further in sprint paths (8 paths) there was a rule with false start we allow athlete one mistake what would make it possible for them to start 16 times under conditions each makes one false start.

That is not rational, especially in the big competitions where we have time limit and all other competitors can not wait for them. That is why they changed the rule and after one false start, anyone responsible for a subsequent false start is disqualified immediately whether it is it the one who is responsible for the first false start or not. Changes in organization are visible on the meetings of Golden League in athletics, since not all disciplines are equally evaluated for all. Some are sprint, some throwing disciplines then they collect points to enter a big race for a million in gold. It is organized in such way so it is exciting and physically possible to achieve so they could include more „big names of sport“ in more meetings. All organizers want to present as much sport stars as possible. Strategic changes are referred to the state level. History of sport presents us in Middle East and Japan there were many martial arts, but mostly they were a part of elite actions (like samurai). This fact made the others, who couldn't participate unsatisfied.

That is why, couple of hundred years ago, Jigoro Kano made a whole new system of body workout including elements of traditional Japanese martial art (jiu jitsu as well) and invented new sport called judo. Accessible for all and includes meditation, spiritual upgrade – philosophy and physical exercise. This was strategically, an excellent idea and the „gentle“ sport became one of the most accepted and also contained possibility of competitive ambition expression (official competitions) as well as individual evaluation of previously acquired knowledge symbolically shown in different colors of belt.

Discussion

Why even think about what will happen in the future? Is there a reason for philosophy? There will be what has to be.... There is nothing we can change... if it's meant to be it's meant to be etc... There is a huge number of reasons which we can use as an alibi not to think about the future. But we keep forgetting, or maybe we don't know how we can move the whole universe with only one move of butterfly wings.

The great Lao Tse said that many years ago, but why we would think about some old man's words? But while we think, or not think about it, some people „out there“ in a sense of superhuman think about it big time. They also realize the role of sport, top sport in today's society and they are aware what will its role be in the future. However, we noticed some changes can not be so easily managed, because in the moment we look at it, we are not aware of what will happen tomorrow. What to do, which direction to go to, how to manage? Finally, who will be the ones who will „decide“ about how and what, but before anything why act at all? Let's define that the bridges are built by the architects and machines by mechanic engineers. People are treated by doctors, teachers teach children and social values are protected by policeman. Who could be the one to set the direction of upcoming changes and actions regarding these changes?

Managers, the ones that can understand and accept characteristics of these changes, their dimensions and determinants and aim future activities. This, of course, puts them in the position of elite, because that is what they actually are. In sport, they are sport managers and automatically they are sport's elite. The top result is now a normal sequence of led moves, procedures and protocols which necessarily leads to the achievement of maximum range, since that is the purpose, form and content value of future sport. The truth is that the people (athletes) will still achieve the results, but how, how much, where that will be decided by sports science and technology and it will be led by managers.

Conclusion

According to Wilfred Pareto (Pareto, 1968), social imbalance and inequality among people, according to value division, are the consequences of different individual skills and material inequality which is impossible to eliminate only to moderate. He imagined the whole history as elite circling which are capable of breakthrough and going all the way to the top of governing. If we assume that the elite will contain the best, then it is inevitable they will act as patrons, teachers and managers toward other members of communities (Wilson, 2000; Gorrel, 2007). Then it is necessary that such elite gets to the top of the hierarchy, that we support it and upgrade it. In ancient Greece and Rome regarding skills elite consisted of the best ones. Wasn't that a characteristic of all communities until present times? (Bonacin & Bonacin, 2009). And now one question needs to be asked that brings disorder and chaos in this balance and harmony in elite definition. If previous history of mankind has shown that the powers of management are smaller and smaller.

Of course, president today has less authority than some medieval age king, and the king had less than pharaoh, a man today has more freedom than peasant, and peasant more freedom than the slave and if we continue such tendency in next million years shouldn't we expect that the managers of the future will have authorities same as the rest of the people!? (Krogstad & Storvik, 2006). That means they will not be managers at all, and they will not be manager's elite where sport belongs in such hypothetical development of social relations? What a top sport presents then? Whether we want it or not educations has its outcomes.

That is why today, we have audience that is rarely coming to the games asking themselves „Why would I pay to watch this and that!? They should pay me! Theaters are empty, concerts less visited, TV shows with 9% rating are considered extremely interesting. Sport facilities (except some) are empty. Consummation is giving advance to personal activity. When all the soaps are sold, when all deodorants are red, all juices are given out and all credits are spent and cheer leaders noticed, who will make the people of the future in one million years to sit in a cold rain on the stadium and cheer for some basketball club Mladost from Donje Selo? Which sponsors will give 1 million Euro for something nobody is interested in? (Dixon & Kouzmin, 1994). What kind of sport vision to offer to young people, when they are well aware of the fact that only 0, 01% of them will be able to become top athletes?

They simply will not want to engage themselves. Moreover, that is the situation today. „Make your kid engage in sport when he is ten, to become stronger, higher, so in age 15 he could become candidate for top athlete, with 18 for Olympic games and with 22 so he could end up „dead in Galipolje battle“.

Wouldn't the next phase be total massacre like „Roller ball“, „Racers“ etc or already present sports like border battles where they can hardly wait for getting killed or at least some bone braking(preferably head). Who will sit and watch for two hours how two fighters are competing on the mat and in refined effects trying to perform the ultimate artificial symbolic motion as Uchi - mata !? Torcida, Grobari, Bad Blue Boys, Delije, Strikeri, Chiroki (football fans) are not coming to the game to watch „the show“. They are making their own show. They are not passive observers any more, they are participating. There is large responsibility of sports management and obligations as well.

Primarily their role is to educate everyone else. Their role is to ensure the conditions for continuity of sport as action of vital importance for mankind and finally to take the world in their own hands and guide it to the road of a lifetime. That is something only elite can do the top elite (Gilbert-Smith, 1979). Then the sport will be a top sport as well. On contrary sport will disappear as activity, completely.

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ELITISTIČKA INTERPRETACIJA BUDUĆEG VRHUNSKOG SPORTA

Sažetak

Svrha ovog članka bio je pregled promišljanja vezanih uz elitizam sporta budućnosti. Pristup je bio generički tj. uz elaboraciju nastanka elitizma kao pojma. Konzultirana je brojna literature, ali je bilo teško pronaći jedinstveno stajalište, te je rasprava orijentirana u pravcu koji je u toj situaciji jedino moguć a to je upravljanje. Zaključeno je kako je u sportu samo jedna prava elita a to je menadžerska, te kako je to jedina istinska šansa za razvoj sporta budućnosti. Vrijednost rada se ogleda u otvorenosti pristupu i naglašavanju uloge menadžmenta, koji će jednom biti stvarna elita, ali to isključivo po sposobnosti rješavanja aktualnih i strategijskih zadaća.

Ključne riječi: elitizam, sport, budućnost, upravljanje, znanje

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