

PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE FOOTBALL EDUCATIONAL-TRAINING PROCESS AND THE COMPETITION PROCESS AT THE UNIVERSITIES LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF SOFIA, BULGARIA

(Preliminary communication)

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Abstract

The goal of the conducted study is to research some problems related to the football educational-training process and football competition process at the universities located in the town of Sofia, Bulgaria. The study was conducted during the month of May 2014, at the end of the 2013/2014 academic year and 92 students from the representative teams of 5 Sofia universities took part in it, distributed as follows: 20 from the "St. Kliment Ohridski" Sofia University (SU), 20 from the "Vasil Levski" National Sports Academy (NSA), 20 from the University of national and World Economy (UNWE), 16 from the technical university (TU) and 16 from the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG). The conducted study explores strategic issues regarding the students' satisfaction with the practice methods used by their coaches; the difficulties faced by the students during the educational-training process; the necessary improvements in the facilities and the conditions of the training process and the competition process; the opinion of the students regarding the number of the competitions organised by the "Academic" University Sports Association (USA), as well as the opinion of the interviewed persons about the incentives which could be provided by the universities as an additional motivation for the students to take part in the competition. The conducted study gives us the necessary information about the accompanying problems faced by the student footballers during the educational-training process and the competition process, which should be taken into account by the management of the sports departments at the universities and especially by the football coaches-lecturers in order to improve the quality of the work they do for the representative teams and this raise the level of the student football in the Republic of Bulgaria as a whole.

Keywords: *student football, practices, competitions, difficulties, problems, recommendations, percentages*

INTRODUCTION

Football is the most popular and most played sport in the world. It is played and watched by millions of fans. The term "social phenomenon" is becoming more and more widely used for characterising football's presence in the daily life of a large segment of society. The massive popularity of the game of football and the huge number of people playing it didn't happen by chance. This can be explained by its accessibility, originality, dynamic nature and wide variety of options. Football is a successful combination of an original form (the rules and the system of play), specific content (mobile and intensive play on offence and defence) and the emotional reaction caused by the skill, creativity and and fantasy of the individual and the collective game actions when creating scoring chances and when achieving the end goal of the game - scoring a goal (Angelov (Ангелов), 1987; Shishkov, Stojanov, Genchev, Madanski & Simov (Шишков, Стоянов, Генчев, Мадански, & Симов), 1992).

Today too football education remains at the same leading

and prestigious place in the physical education of students. The main direction in our work is towards making an effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of the training of the students who have chosen to practice football in the universities (Ignatov (Игнатов), 2010).

The educational process in Physical Education and Sport in the universities asks of the students before all to be ready and motivated to actively and fully participate in it. Internal preparedness and positive motivation are equally important for both parts - for the educational-sporting activity of the student and for the pedagogic functions of the teacher. The attitude towards the educational process in Physical Education and Sport, which is represented psychologically by the motives, is the first and structure defining component of the complex and dynamic system called educational content. This component comes before all others - forming motor skills and habits, ability development, etc. It is fundamental for the entire school activity in sports education and it has an emphasised integrating importance for the quantitative and quality characteristics. This is why it is often regarded as "motivational structure of the activity" (Ignatov

(Игнатов), 2010).

The process of Physical Education (PE) and Sport, and in particular football is done in all universities in Bulgaria is organized in the following forms: selective-mandatory (sport chosen by the student), elective (optional) and sporting improvement (Colov & Ivanov (Цолов & Иванов), 1998). The students themselves choose the forms of its football training. In the selective-mandatory form the training is conducted in specialized footballing groups. Students who have not played football in an organised way before, take part in the specialised classes. What is being taught in these groups are some technical and tactical elements as well as the rules of the game. In the elective (optional) groups the focus is on the measured functional training loads, which mostly have an energising and prophylactic effect. All students who wish to attend the classes Physical Education and Sport (specialty football) are included in these groups. But the classes are not included in their study load. The sporting improvement groups are formed by students with pronounced football skills, who had gone through the academies of football clubs. They represented the respective university in competitions at different levels. Their training is more intensive and they study more complex technical elements and tactical combinations.

It is exactly the students placed in the sporting improvement groups who make up the student football team of the respective university, which participates in the Student Football Championship. Bulgarian student football has a long history and is a major part of the amateur football and a part of the pyramid structure of Bulgarian football, namely: kindergarten football, school football, children and youth football at the football clubs, student football, amateur football, professional football (Gavrilov (Гаврилов), 2004).

The Student Football Championship is one of the best organised student championships and is administered by the Technical Committee at the Academic Association for University Sport (AUS) and the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU). Only students aged 19 to 28 with the status of amateur (students playing for professional clubs are not eligible) are allowed to take part in it. Each year between 22 and 27 university teams participate in it. They are divided into three groups: Group A – town of Sofia, which has the most members - between 12 and 16 teams; Group B – town of Plovdiv - between 4 and 7 teams, and Group C, which encompasses the universities in Northern Bulgaria and consists of between 4 and 7 teams (Ignatov (Игнатов), 2011; 2012; 2014).

METHODS

The factors listed above made necessary conducting a survey with a goal to study some of the problems related to the football educational-training process and the football competition process at the universities in the town of Sofia, Bulgaria. The survey was conducted during the month of May 2014 – in the end of the 2013/2014 academic year, before the finals of the National Student Football Championship. The survey subjects were 92

students from the representative teams of the five major universities in the town of Sofia, which has taken part in the each year in the Student Football Championship each year since its creation, divided as follows: 20 from the St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University (SU), 20 from the University of National and World Economy (UNWE), 20 from the Vasil Levski National Sports Academy (NSA), 16 from the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG) and 16 from the Technical University (TU).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The average age of the students from the Sofia University is 22.7 (the students who took part in the survey were at the age between 19 and 28), of the ones from UNWE – 21.4, of the ones from the NSA – 21.8, the ones from TU – 21.4, and for the ones from UACEG the average age is 22.1. The average age of all surveyed students is 21.9.

The surveyed students are distributed by year as follows: Out of 20 surveyed SU students 3 of them are first year students, 3 of them are second year, 4 of them are third year, 8 of them are fourth year and 2 of them are fifth year. Out of the 20 surveyed UNWE students 5 of them are first year students, 7 of them are second year, 4 of them are third year, 3 of them are fourth year and 1 of them is fifth year. Out of the 20 NSA students 5 of them are first year students, 6 of them are second year, 5 of them are fourth year, and 4 of them are fourth year. No fifth year students. Out of the 16 UACEG students 1 of them is a first year student, 5 of them are second year, 4 of them are third year, 3 of them are fourth year and 3 of them are fifth year. Out of the 16 surveyed TU students 5 of them are first year students, 1 of them is second year, 5 of them are third year, 3 of them are fourth year and 2 of them are fifth year. All 92 surveyed students are distributed by year as follows: 19 of them are first year students, 22 of them are second year, 22 of them are third year, 21 of them are fourth year and 8 are fifth year.

From all examined students, 100% the surveyed student replied with “Yes” to the question „Were you actively practising football before joining the football team of the your university?“

The average length of time since they started practising the game of football for the SU students is 10.9 years, for the UNWE students - 9.6, for the NSA students - 11.4, for the UASG students - 7, and for the TU students - 8.5 years. The average length of time for the 92 surveyed students as a whole is 9.6 years.

The students have been trained in club academies as follows: 59 students - in the academies of professional football clubs, 26 students - in the academies of amateur football clubs and 7 students in the academies of private football clubs.

The question “Have you ever regularly practised another sport?”, was answered affirmatively by 73 students and negatively by 19. The distributions of the sports they had practised is as follows: Volleyball - 4 students. Athletics and Basketball - 3 each, Swimming and Table Tennis - 2 each, Tennis, Skiing, Cross-country Skiing, Karate and Kickboxing - 1 student each.

The question “Are you satisfied by the methods used for conducting the educational-training process and the competition process by your coach-teacher?” was answered with an “Yes”

by all students, which is explained by the fact the all five coaches of the five universities are under the age of 40.

In answer to the question “How would you describe your participation in the footballing educational-training and competition process“, 70% of the SU students, 60% of the UNWE and the NSA students and .56% of the UACEG and TU students said that their participation in this process “helps them develop their motor skills and is beneficial for their fitness (it improves their physical abilities)”. 20% of the SU students, 30% of the UNWE students, 15% of the NSA students, 19% of the UASEC students and 25% of the TU students said that their participation “Helps them unwind from their daily responsibilities”. 10% of the SU and UNWE students, 25% of the NSA and UASEC students and 19% of the TU students replied by saying “It makes my education more difficult, but football is my favourite sport and it is worth the compromises I make”. Out of all students 61% responded that their participation “Helps them develop their motor skills and is beneficial for their fitness (it improves their physical abilities)”, 17% responded that their participation “Helps them unwind from their daily responsibilities”, and 22% replied “It makes my education more difficult, but football is my favourite sport and it is worth the compromises I make” (Figure 1).

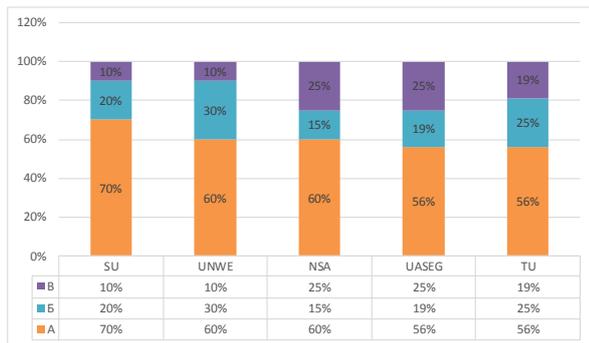


Figure 1. Participation in educational training and competition process for students

To find where changes are necessary in the work with students, we asked the following question: “Which of the listed difficulties do you encounter in relation to your educational-training process?“. 15% of the SU students, 10% of the UNWE, 65% of NSA students, 38% of the UACEG students и 25% of the TU students gave the answer “Inconvenient starting time of the training sessions”. 15% of the SU students, 30% of the UNWE students, 20% of NSA students, 56% of the UACEG students и 25% of the TU students gave the answer “too few training sessions during the weekly cycle”. 70% of the SU students, 45% of the UNWE students, 15% of NSA students, 6% of the UACEG и 25% of the TU students gave the answer “Insufficient facilities (bad quality playing field)”. 15% of the UNWE students and 19% of the TU students gave the answer “Insufficient quantity of training equipment items of good quality: balls, training cones, vests and jerseys”. No students of SU, NSA or UASEC gave this answer.

The answers to this question show that for 34% of the surveyed students the “Low quality fields” are a problem during the educational-training process. 32% consider as a problem “The inconvenient starting time of the training sessions”, 28% think that “There is a too few training sessions during the weekly cycle”, while 6% think that “The training equipment items used in the educational-training process are insufficient in number” (Fig. 2).

In response to the question “Which of the listed equipment related and technical conditions need improvement the most in order to make the organization of the training process better?“, 75% of the SU, UNWE and UACEG students, as well as, 25% of the ones from NSA and 38% of the ones of TU said that the improvement in the “facilities (training field)” is the most urgently needed one. 5% of the SU and UNWE students, 10% of the NSA ones, 6% of the UACEG ones and 25% of the ones from TU said that there should be “an increase in the number (quantity) of the balls and of the supplementary training equipment (training vests and cones)”. 20% of the SU and UNWE students, 65% of the NSA ones, 19% of the UACEG ones and 38% of the ones from TU said that the „Training kits (jerseys, training suits, football shoes)“. 58% of all surveyed students said that the the most urgent need is the improvement of the “training fields”, 32% said that the “training equipment” should be improved, while 10% said that the number of “supplementary training equipment items” should be increased (Figure 3).

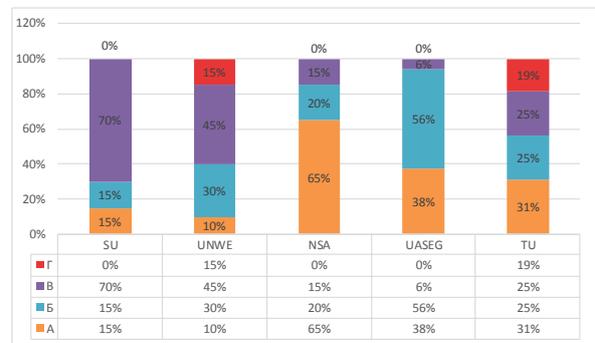


Figure 2. Difficulties in terms of the educational and training process

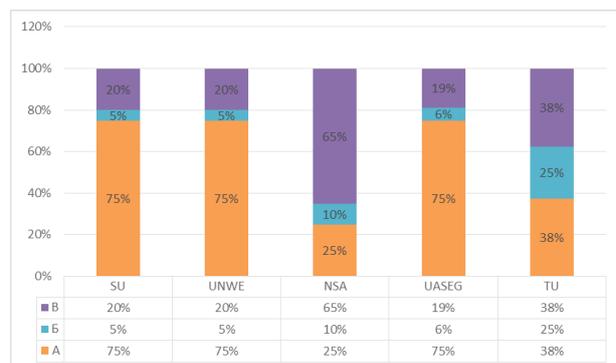


Figure 3. Improvements needed in the training process

In response to the question „For which of the listed conditions, related to the competition process, there is the most urgent necessity for a change?“, 65% of the SU students, 70% of the UNWE ones, 10% of the ones from NSA, 25% of the UACEG ones and 38% of the TU ones said that the most urgent necessity is for a change in the „Facilities (fields for the competitions)“. 20% of the SU students, 5% of the UNWE students, 30% of NSA students, 56% of the UACEG students и 31% of the TU students gave the answer “The starting time of the matches (inconvenient starting time of the matches)”. 5% of the SU students, 10% of the UNWE students, 25% of NSA and the TU students и 13% of the UACEG students said that there should be a change in the “Refereeing of the matches”, while 10% of the SU students, 15% of the UNWE students, 35% of NSA ones, and 6% of the TU and UACEG ones said that they need a new “official kit for taking part in competitions”. Out of all students 43% said that there is the most urgent need for change is in the “Facilities (fields for the competitions)“, 27% said that it is the „Inconvenient starting time of the matching“, while 15% each were in favour of a change in the “refereeing of the matches” and the “Official kit for taking part in competitions” (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Improvements needed in the competitive process

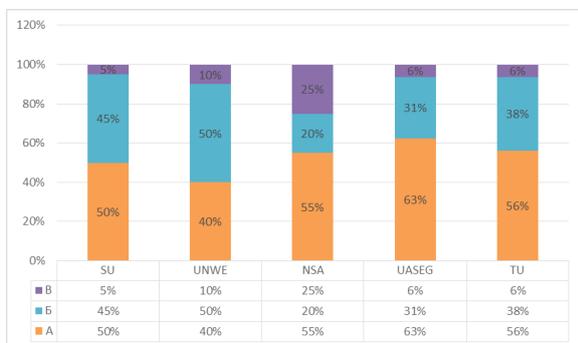


Figure 5. Post the number of races

In response to the question: „What is your opinion about the number of competitions in which you participate during a single academic year?“, 50% of the SU students, 40% of the UNWE ones, 55% of the NSA

ones, 63% of the UACEG ones и 56% of the ones from the TU said that their number is „Sufficient“. 45% of the SU students, 50% of the UNWE students, 20% of NSA students, 31% of the UACEG и 38% of the TU students said that “The number of competitions is too small”. 5% of the SU students, 10% of the UNWE ones, 25% of the NSA ones and 6% of the ones from the TU and the UACEG replied with “No opinion” to the question asked.. 52% of all students said that their number is “Sufficient”, 37% replied that “Their number is too small”, a 11% had “No opinion” (Figure 5).

In response to the question “What incentives could be provided for you by the management of your university?”, 45% of the SU students, 60% of the UNWE students, 65% of the NSA students, 31% of the UACEG ones и 69% of the TU ones said that “Sport scholarships” should be provided.. 5% of the UNWE students, 10% of the NSA students, 38% of the UACEG ones и 13% of the TU ones said that “Free participation in sports camps” should be provided. No students of SU gave this answer. 30% of the SU students, 15% of the NSA and UNWE students, 25% of the UACEG ones и 13% of the TU ones said that “Free participation in international tournaments and competitions” should be provided. 25% of the SU students, 20% of the UNWE ones, 15% of the NSA ones, 6% of the UACEG ones and the TU ones responded by saying: “Being included in the representative team is a sufficient incentive for my active participation”. Out of all surveyed students 54 % of them said that there should be Sport Scholarships” provided, 12% said that “Free participation in sports camps” should be provided, 20% said that “Free participation in international tournaments and competitions” should be provided, while 14% said that „Being included in the representative team is a sufficient incentive for their active participation“ (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Incentives motivating the performances of students

CONCLUSION

Students take part in the football educational-training process and the football competition process because this helps them develop their motor skills. The processes is beneficial to their physical condition and helps them unwind from their daily responsibilities and tasks. Many think that this makes their education more difficult, but

football is their favourite sport and they think it's worth the compromises they make.

The most common difficulties encountered by the students in regards to the educational-training process are the low quality fields, the inconvenient starting time of the training sessions, the small number of training session during the weekly cycle and the insufficient number of the training equipment items used.

The biggest need for improvement in the organization of the training process regarding the equipment and the technical conditions are the training fields, updating the training kits and increasing the number of supplementary training equipment items.

The most urgent change which should be made in the competition process is in regards to the facilities - the fields where the competitions take place, the inconvenient starting time of the matches, the refereeing of the matches and the official kits.

The management of the universities should provide additional incentives for their students which will serve for additional motivation when taking part in competitions. These incentives should be in the form of sport scholarships, free participation in sports camps and in international tournaments and competitions.

The conducted survey can be used for reaching many useful conclusions, which will be useful in the work of the teachers who teach the sport of football. It is necessary that the teachers and the management of the universities make more efforts to improve the quality and the effectiveness of the training of the students who have chosen to practice football in the sporting improvement groups.

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