

## SEVERAL INDICATORS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FIELD HOCKEY IN BULGARIA FOR THE PERIOD OF TWENTY YEARS

*(Professional paper)*

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### **Abstract**

*Several chronological indicators are presented for the development of hockey in few countries in the world, in that context as basis for its further development, the indicators also are being analyzed in two phases through a period of the last 20 years. The first phase is characterized by the popularization of the hockey, and the second phase with rapid development of the Bulgarian Hockey Federation (BHF) and the appearance of the children and youth hockey clubs. There were formed 48 clubs and 86 state championships were organized within the period of last 20 years. As a member of the European Hockey Federation, BHF was proclaimed the one with the fastest development in the world. The Federation as a leader in the Balkans has included 3000 children and adults, both male and female. In the last 20 years the BHF took part in 27 Balkan championships (16 in men's competition and 11 in women's competition). They won 7 times the first place, 14 times second and 5 times the third place. Beside of their participation in these championships, BHF with their selections also took part in 27 European championships (18 in men's competition and 9 in women's competition).*

**Keywords:** *lawn hockey, hockey championships, junior and senior hockey teams*

Field hockey is a sport discipline which was played since the oldest civilizations, but the modern hockey first appeared in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England. With the formation of the International Hockey Federation (IHF), which represents that sport at the International Olympic Committee, officially is included in the Olympic Program of the Olympic Games in Amsterdam in 1928. At the beginning only men played hockey, but in the 80's women begun playing hockey as well. Over the years with the development of hockey worldwide, many rules and conceptions had been changed.

Today field hockey is played in more than 120 countries and represents one of the most popular team sport in the world. In some states such as Holland, Austria, Pakistan, India, Argentina it's kind of a traditional sport.

The purpose of the given paper was through studying the period of 20 years of the field hockey development

in Bulgaria to determine the goals and objectives for the future development and popularization of the hockey.

The first beginnings of the field hockey in Bulgaria are dated from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In that period a grass hockey teams were formed in many sports clubs and the first official matches and tournaments were organized. After the 1930<sup>th</sup> all information about this sport was lost and according to some authors this was a shortage of the Federation which should unite the clubs and contribute developing of this sport. After 60 years of stagnation, in 1991 three sport associations formed the Bulgarian Hockey Federation. In period of 20 years functioning of the BHF, six Administrative boards have been changed, all of which were with different goals and visions. The development of hockey in Bulgaria can be divided into two phases.

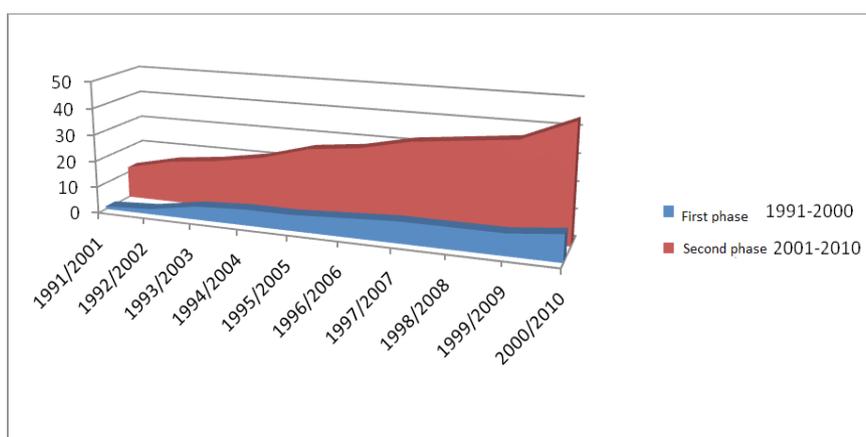
The first phase is the period from 1991 until 2000. Characteristic for this period is that both boards were without specific goals and ideas for the development of

the hockey. Their only goal was not to populate the sport but only to survive. The third board has a mandate from 1997 until 2002. After three years of struggle with the old management, which tried to make upheaval, thanks to the great support of the clubs and some authoritative persons, they managed to keep unity of the Federation and to set grounds for development and popularization of the hockey in Bulgaria.

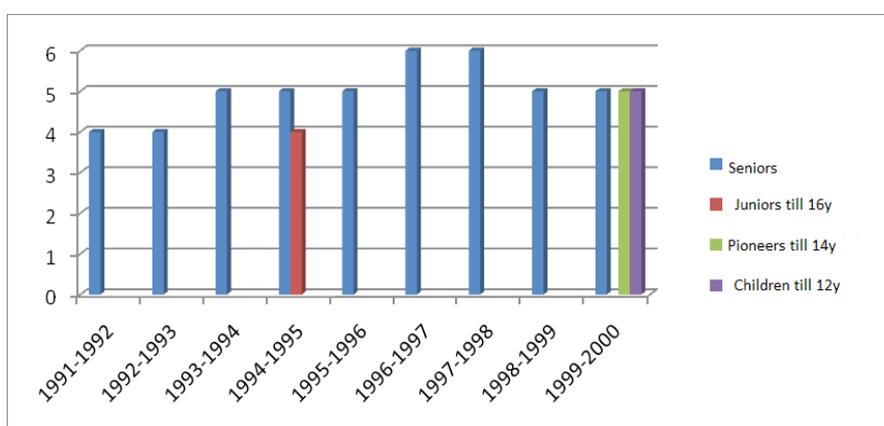
The second phase is the period from 2000 until 2011. What is specific for this period is the huge development of BHF. The main goals of the Federation were to build organizational and structural model for management and administration, standards definition; also they help toward establishing the foundation for developing children and youth grass hockey. Many projects and programs have been being elaborated on national as well as on international level. The first youth representations have being formed in this period. Bulgaria becomes a leader in the Balkans precisely in these categories. In 2002 the old management with a court order returned on position but with the support of the clubs, the Ministry for sports, The International and European Hockey Federation, which supported the third

Board, they didn't allow the old management to take over the position and functions as a BHF.

In 2003 with new court order with the Federation runs the fifth board, which is consisted of various important persons. The goal of the Federation was improvement of the infrastructure – building a artificial grass playing field, hockey popularization, optimization of the administrative structure, establishing normatives, determine the national and international competition calendar, also improvement on sport's and the technical level, taking part and/or organizing professional hockey sport seminars. In 2003 BHF made a project for building the first playing field with artificial grass, which was approved the same year by the International Hockey Federation and the International Olympic committee. The same year four regions were formed: Vitosha, Dobrudja, Mizija and Trakija. In 2004 BHF made a project for development of new clubs according with the program of the International Hockey Federation „B Grand“. In 2006 the new court with artificial grass was open for usage. In 2007 the fifth Administrative Board wins one more mandate of 5 years till 2012. The management continues with the realization of their



Graph 1. The progress of new clubs through two phases



Graph 2. Number of clubs in men's competition who took part in the NC 1991-2000

tasks. Two new regions have being formed: Rodopi and Struma.

The two phases in the development of BHF differ by clearly appointed goals by the managements. In 20 years there were 48 new clubs formed.

In the first phase, from 1991 until 2000, eight new clubs were formed in four cities in Bulgaria.

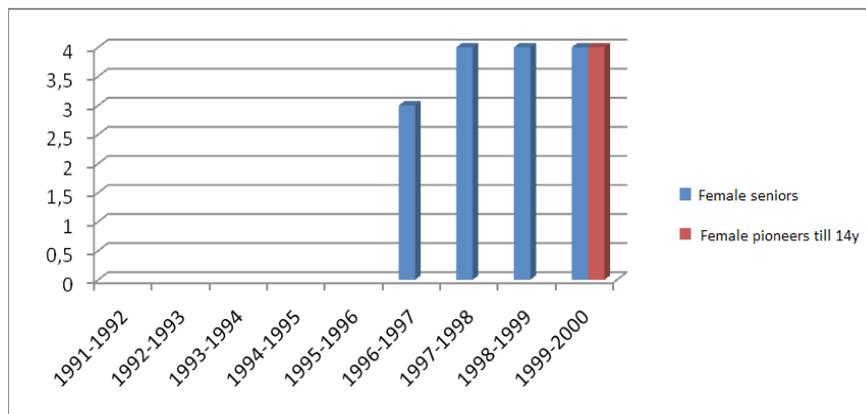
In the second phase, from 2000 until 2011, in Bulgaria were formed 40 new clubs divided in four regions.

The development of the clubs through the years is presented on the Graph 1. It can be seen clearly the progression in the forming of new clubs, particularly in the second period.

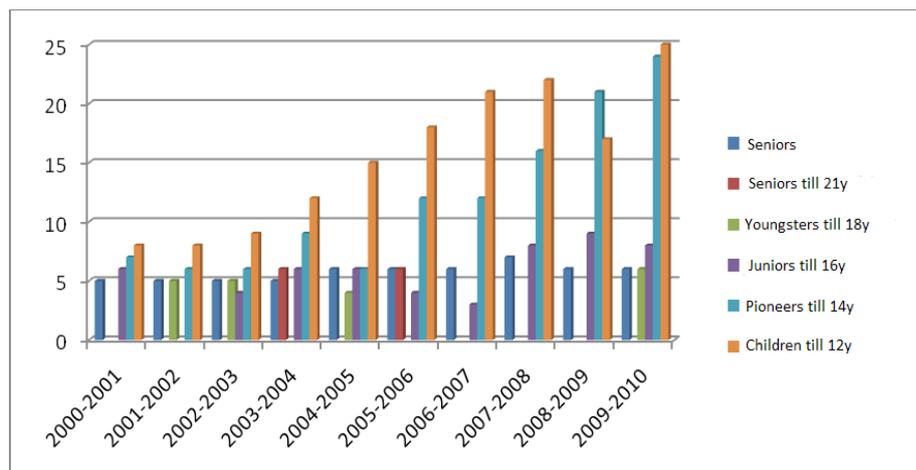
Within the period of 20 years, BHF has organized 86 national championships (NC) in both categories (men and women), from which 17 were in the first phase and 69 in the second phase. The first national championship

was organized in 1992 in senior's category. Until 1997 in national championships took part only senior men teams, but since 1996 in the program also were included the senior women teams (Graph 2. and 3.). In 1994 attempts were made for developing a junior hockey, so in the program of the NC were included 4 junior teams. Since 1999 the goals of the third board for setting the grounds for development of children and junior hockey were very clear, so in the program of the NC youth categories were included: 12 years old children and 14 years old pioneers.

The NC organization in the second phase from 2000 till 2010 are presented on the Graphs 4. and 5. In this period all categories were included in the national championships. The most popular were these categories: 12 years old children and 14 years old pioneers; in the last 3 years we can notice rising number of the junior teams. In women's competition in the period from 2001

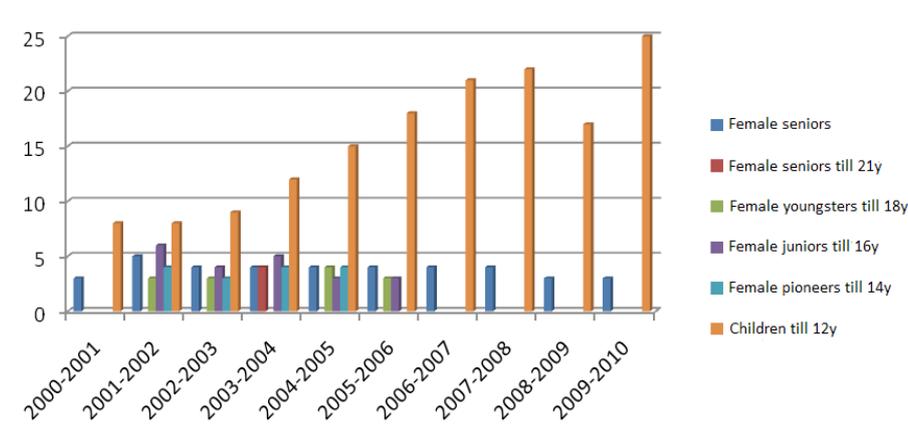


Graph 3. Number of clubs in women's competition who took part in the NC 1991-2000



Graph 4. Number of clubs in men's competition which participated in NC 2000 – 2010

Graph 5. Number of clubs women's competition which participated in NC 2000- 2010



till 2005, the state championships were organized in all categories, but after this period the number of women teams drastically is decreasing and by the year 2010 in women's competition participated only senior women teams.

From the analyses of the development of hockey in Bulgaria, we have come to a conclusion that today in Bulgaria there are 48 hockey clubs, approximately 3000 children and seniors are playing professionally hockey. In past 20 years BHF took part in 27 Balkan Championships from which 16 in men's competition and 11 in women's competition; and won 7 first places, 14 second and 5 third places. Besides the Balkan Championships, BHF with their team selections took part in 27 European Championships – 18 in men's competition and 9 in women's competition.

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