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**CONTROVERSIES REGARDING THE SPORTSMEN ACCESS TO
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS PODIUM IN ROMANIA**

Daniel Rosu (a)*

* Corresponding author

(a) University of Pitesti, Tg din Vale, 1, Pitesti, Romania, daniel.rosu@upit.ro, +40744437883

Abstract

The research identified and analysed four controversies linked to the Romanian performance sports, which present both positive and negative aspects that characterise the adaptation process of the contemporary Romanian society to the European community ideals.

The decrease of Romania's Olympic performances cannot be attributed to participant sportsmen, but to the antiquated sports system in Romania, within which specialists carry a great responsibility.

In Romania sport is a dynamic sector, with a rapid development and a more and more significant macro-economic impact; within it, mass sports has a sure development while performance sports manifests a light drawback. Taking into consideration that Romania has never had developed mass sports, we can anticipate a revival of performance sports in the future.

As far as present negative connotations of the Romanian sports system are concerned, the research analysed issues connected to the decrease of the number of performance sportsmen, the increase of doping cases, poor school training of performance sportsmen, the declining status of performance sportsman.

In final, author suggested the reasonable solution for this bed aspects.

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Keywords: Performance sportsmen, doping, sports system, national championships.

1. Introduction

Sport represents an especially complex social phenomenon, influencing human personality through the values it promotes. The basic research was prompted by the European community's statement regarding the acknowledgement of the values generated by practising sports: team spirit, solidarity, tolerance, fair play, personal fulfilment and development, competence, determination, commitment, non-



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violence, all these being, nonetheless, influenced by changeable issues such as culture and society (Comisia Comunităților Europene, (2007). Over the years, Romania has won the respect of other nations by exceptional sports results and great human personalities. Present Olympic results alongside the scandals linked to the Romanian sport, require firm measures in the Romanian sports system.

2. Subjects and Methods

In this study were investigate Sportsmen engaged in the Romanian performance sports and used study of specialty literature, hermeneutics, case study, statistical and mathematical analysis

3. Findings and Data Interpretation

The research is focused on identifying and analysing 4 controversial situations which encumber the Romanian performance sports at the beginning of an Olympic cycle (3.1-3.4):

3.1. More and More Elaborated and Diversified Championships Versus Inefficient Selection of Talented People Able to Outstand Internationally

Over the last decade, sports federations in Romania increased the number of national competitions due to sports diversification, the emergence of new sports branches, the acknowledgement of national championships for more age categories (especially for children), as well as due to the implementation of scarce sports training strategies. These have a positive effect by fostering the motivation of sportsmen and trainers, but they decrease the performance relevance in spite of the fact that the number of sportsmen stagnates or decreases. Table 1 and table 2 highlight the report between the number of participant sportsmen and the number of medals brought into play in national championships (abbreviated RSM), for sports federations in Romania, which support Olympic sports

$$RSM = \frac{\text{no.sportsmen}}{\text{no.official.national.medals}} \quad (1)$$

Table 1. Top regarding the relevance of sports medal in relation to the number of participant sportsmen in internal national championships of seniors, young people, juniors and cadets – team Olympic sports (*Anuarul sportului* ,2014)

No.	Olympic federations	Total sportsmen	Number medals	RSM
1	Football	102292	15	6819,5
2	Handball (2013)	7845	24	326,9
3	Basketball	7528	35	215,1
4	Rugby	2894	27	107,2
5	Polo	933	15	62,2
6	Volleyball	1369	36	38

Results in Table 1 prove football advancement within society, a sport with professional status, whose championship has a pyramidal structure of competitions for categories of age or level of training. Within non-professional team sports, there outstands handball with a high value report, the top being ended by volleyball, case in which we can resume that a medal is brought into play (a place on the national podium) for every 2-3 competing teams (a team having approximately 15 members).

In Table 2 there can be noticed that in tennis a national medal can be obtained, on average, in a competition between 11 sportsmen, whereas in the case of sports such as weightlifting and swimming, each sportsman has ensured, on average, approximately 2 medals! Out of the concrete situations presented in Tables 1 and 2, there results that, in the case of some federations (ranged towards the end of the tops), obtaining national medals is far from being relevant.

Motivation through official medal normally acts as an activator (Quantix Marketing Consulting, 2014) but also creates an access to somehow-not-deserved sports allowances and gratifications, which, in some cases, has become a scope in itself for some trainers and sportsmen. The Romanian state issued laws aimed at supporting and compensating the sportive effort, absolutely necessary in a country in which the rate of absolute poverty is of 24,6% (Eurostat, 2016), and access to performance sport is perceived by its citizens as being very low (Institutul Român pentru Evaluare și Strategie –IRES, 2016). Therefore, while the lack of material, financial or logistic resources is often mentioned by top Romanian sportsmen, a part of these resources is spent undeservedly on sportsmen without real perspectives of becoming known.

Table 2. Top regarding the relevance of sports medal in relation to the number of participant sportsmen in national championships of seniors, young people, juniors and cadets – individual Olympic sports (*Anuarul sportului*, 2014)

No.	Sports federation	Total participant sportsmen	Total medals	RSM
1	Tennis	1178	105	11,2
2	Equestrian	270	33	8,2
3	Table tennis	668	98	6,8
4	Athletism	5838	1116	5,2
5	Taekwondo itf+wtf	1425	336	4,2
6	Fencing	659	168	3,9
7	Bobsleigh	395	114	3,5
8	Wrestling	1234	425	2,9
9	Boxing	813	308	2,6
10	Judo	936	387	2,4
11	Ski biathlon	671	284	2,4
12	Gymnastics	496	218	2,3
13	Badminton	276	126	2,2
14	Kayak canoe	660	300	2,2
15	Archery	331	167	2
16	Rowing	608	345	1,8
17	Rhythmic gymnastics	89	60	1,5
18	Triathlon	90	64	1,4
19	Shooting	472	374	1,3
20	Weightlifting	297	697	0,4
21	Swimming and pent mod	659	1648	0,4

The decrease of the number of sportsmen registered in the competition national system, was also generated by national politics, which proved its inefficiency over time, recalling in this respect the phenomenon of ‘multiple legitimation’. By multiple legitimation a larger and larger number of national sports structures were represented in the internal competition calendar by a smaller and smaller number of sportsmen. This national innovation, which seems somehow justified by the necessity of increasing resources, affects, nowadays, the healthy outstanding of sports structures, covers the lack of activity of many specialists and even favours fraud, through discounting the same services by various structures, for the same sportsman and the same actions.

3.2. Honesty and Fairness of Sports Victory Versus Proved Doping

Nowadays, fraud is more obvious than ever in Romanian society. The show of proving financial, electoral, intellectual and many other kinds of fraud is a daily, habitual fact in the contemporary Romanian society. When the society elite defrauds, the consequences in collective culture are easy to infer. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Romanian sport was also contaminated by this calamity, by proving doping in sports for which Romania used to hold international respect and esteem.

Doping undermines the principle of open and fair competition, represents a discouraging factor for practising sports, in general, and exposes the sportsmen to an unjustified stress. This touches significantly the sports image and seriously affects the sportsmen health (Agentia Nationala Anti-Doping, 2016). This national organism claims that ‘Corruption and proved doping represent a true tragedy for sports and for sportsmen all over the world’ mentioning the ‘necessity of changing mentalities’ since ‘proved doping stains irremediably the image of the incriminated nations’.

At the Olympic Games 2016, Romania outstood by the multitude of proved doping cases at sports in which our country used to excel, such as kayak-canoe, athletics and weightlifting, creating irritation and frustration among other competitors (Dragomir, 2016). The exclusion from the Olympic competition in Rio 2016 of the entire Romanian team of kayak-canoe causes hard-to-imagine losses of image, alongside the irretrievable losses of the sportsmen in question. These may be anytime entitled to accuse the sports system for generating such a situation. This thing happened in spite of the fact that Romania assumed the obligation of aligning with the international politics in this field, adopting normative acts (Legea 227, 2006) and initiating national manifestations such as ‘Clean Sport Day’ ‘No to doping’, creating competent organisms such as Anti-Doping National Agency – ANAD.

3.3. Practicing Performance Sports, Versus Bad Results in Learning

Sports and physical education represent in the European Community’s view essential elements for carrying out a high quality education, forming at the same time a way of increasing the degree of school attendance and attractiveness. Through the role it holds in formal and non-formal education, sport contributes to enriching human capital at a European level. The values sent by sport help to develop knowledge, motivation, skills and preparation for individual effort. With a view to ensure the reintegration of professional sportsmen on the labour market at the end of their sports career, the European Commission highlights the importance of early creating a ‘double career’ for sportsmen by

involving some local training centres of high professionalism, capable of protecting the moral, educational and professional interests of these young people (Comisia Europeană, 2007).

Sportsmen make constantly a lot of effort, thus reducing their free time. In Romania the effects of practising sports in diminishing school performance is augmented by the school system which is mostly based on the student's additional effort. Thus, sportsmen students in Romania do not usually keep up with school requirements, because in their free time they practise sport or have a rest after practising it. The existence of sportsmen students in schools creates, in Romania, more problems than reasons to be proud of, as it would be normal. While in civilised countries all school units hunt valuable sportsmen, granting them a series of facilities, in Romania sportsmen students are being ignored or artificially helped to graduate. The multitude of cases in which Romanian sportsmen students do not succeed in passing the Baccalaureate examination, testify their low school preparation level. Most of the times this aspect decisively influences the subsequent level of young sportsmen success in life.

The improvement of these aspects may be done by carrying out stronger connections between school and sports structures, by identifying some common motives of acknowledging the sportsmen students value, by increasing the role of school physical education teachers in the sports system and last but not least, by growing awareness of trainers as far as their own sportsmen learning process is concerned.

3.4. Performance Sportsman – Idol and Model Versus Handicap in Social Integration

In the European community's view, sport should have an important contribution to economic and social cohesion, as well as in forming better integrated societies, and all UE inhabitants shall have access to sport (Comisia Europeană, 2007). The European trend shows that sport is a dynamic sector, with a rapid development and an underestimated macro-economic impact.

Because of the Romanian society's lateness in growing old in comparison to some European countries, the sportsmen status may seem to be declining in our contemporary society. In Romania there are many parents who advise their children to study more to the detriment of physical activities and there is a great lack of interest for PE classes (Quantix Marketing Consulting, 2014). Although, in general, sport has positive associations in the society, there are also cases in which the pride of being a sportsman has begun to become a complex. In a society which does not have a sufficiently developed sports culture, the performance sportsman is rather perceived as a victim than as a winner, idol or model, reason for which s/he is neither envied nor copied. The sportsman tends to be seen by his fellows as an unavailable individual (because he is usually at his/her training sessions), he/she socialises with greater difficulty, he/she lacks certain cultural elements, he/she develops quite few opportunities of having a fulfilled life and this is probably why, at present, children are in general encouraged to practise swimming for pleasure and not for performance (Quantix Marketing Consulting, 2014).

These aspects of collective perception could be drastically increased when the society members will practice sports to a greater extent. Direct implication in sport, and we mean practising it, fosters a deeper understanding, be it by own experiences or by the opinions of those with whom the citizen interacts. Alongside with the increase of the civilisation level in the society, people shall understand the profound implications which sports may have in their lives over health, fostering passions, fulfilling

ideals, overcoming self limits, having a harmonious life style and, thus, probably they shall value in a superior way the performance sportsman

4. Conclusions

The research identified and analysed four controversies linked to the Romanian performance sports, which present both positive and negative aspects that characterise the adaptation process of the contemporary Romanian society to the European community ideals.

The decrease of Romania's Olympic performances cannot be attributed to participant sportsmen, but to the antiquated sports system in Romania, within which specialists carry a great responsibility.

In Romania sport is a dynamic sector, with a rapid development and a more and more significant macro-economic impact; within it, mass sports has a sure development while performance sports manifests a light drawback. Taking into consideration that Romania has never had developed mass sports, we can anticipate a revival of performance sports in the future.

As far as present negative connotations of the Romanian sports system are concerned, the research analysed issues connected to the decrease of the number of performance sportsmen, the increase of doping cases, poor school training of performance sportsmen, the declining status of performance sportsman. The solutions identified by the author for these problems are the following:

- Diversify the society's efforts on the whole, to attract young generation in performance sports.
- Develop and diversify the material basis for sports
- More precise targeting of existent material and financial resources towards sportsmen with real chances of international acknowledgement
- Establish the conformity level for all performance sportsmen regarding the use of doping and regaining, as far as possible, the international prestige of the Romanian sports
- School greater involvement in offering real support (not just formal) to performance sportsmen; undertake additional efforts in order to increase their school training level.
- Promote on a larger scale some successful human models of Romanian performance sports meant to embed recognized ideals of health, spirituality, career, aesthetics, ethics, etc..

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Corresponding Author: Daniel Rosu

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