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**SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF ETHICAL PROBLEMS OF
TOP-LEVEL SPORT**

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Abstract. *Nowadays in the sphere of top-level sport the commercial scale of interests of sport activists has significantly exceeded the importance of the value of social prestige, which is the reason for the sport crisis as a phenomenon of human culture. The author of the paper considers the development of humanistic models of top-level sport as the solution to the given problem.*

Keywords: *ethics, top-level sport, humanism, commercialization.*

Sport is playing more and more prominent role in modern communities nowadays. A huge amount of people are being involved in the field of sport around the world. The growth of importance of sport is clearly manifested in the social life - politics, economics, international relations and so on. An important role in this process is played by top-level sport, socio-philosophical study of which is particularly informative from the standpoint of understanding the development of a man as a subject of social progress. This focus of analysis is justified in terms of the reasoned answers to the following questions: whether mankind is moving towards a balanced development of the person, or towards its more narrow specialization? whether civilization evolves to strengthen human health or to destroy it? and so on. These and many other questions need to be understood philosophically, what makes the issue of ethics of top-level sport relevant.

The notion of "socio-philosophical analysis of sport" itself has begun to appear in scientific papers on top-level sport in the second half of the XX century. The comprehension of sport in the perspective of the philosophy is practiced in the studies conducted by E. G. Bogatyrev, M.Ya. Vilensky, V. M. Vydrin, L. B. Kofman, S. A. Skulyabina, L.D. Khromtsova. As we approach the present time there is a deepening of socio-philosophical reflection of sport.

The amount of studies dedicated to sport as a socio-value system is growing. Among the scientists who investigate this problem are: S. I. Guskov, K. H. Grantyn, A. G. Dembo, K. V. Dineika, A. V. Kotov, M. M. Linets, L. I. Lubysheva, L. P. Matveeva, V. N. Platonov, S. N. Oplavina, L. E. Sadovski, N. I. Stankin, V. V. Stolbov, V. I. Stolyarov, Yu. A. Fomin, B. N. Yushko). The value of these studies is in their theoretical character.

The range of scientific elaboration of socio-philosophical problems of sport and ethical values of sport extends from the implementation of morality inherent to man and embodied (or recovering) in sport, up to its total negation.

The main sectors of research have been identified recently.

In particular:

- studies, substantial part of which is accentuated on the understanding the concepts of top-level sport of both native and foreign authors;

- analysis and synthesis of the practical component of the value aspects of top-level sport;
- socio-philosophical interpretation of specific sociological surveys on the issue of the moral dimension of professional sport held in our country and abroad;
- construction of humanistic models of top-level sport.

The aim of the given paper is socio-philosophical analysis of the ethical problems of modern top-level sport.

One of the main challenges of the third millennium is the search and the formation of an optimal model of development of the world community. Sport as a medium of settings that are important for the mankind, can become a model of strengthening ethical values of the society in the spirit of the Olympic ideals. It should be noted that in recent decades there is evidence of increasing socio-cultural values of sport in general, and top-level sport in particular. Now we will dwell upon the factors influencing this process.

First of all, free time of most of the population of developed countries is being increased. The percentage of physical labor is being reduced, the risk of a sedentary lifestyle and, hence, physical inactivity is increasing. Physical inactivity, in its turn, stimulates the development of forms of activity, recreation, entertainment and actualizes the development of physical culture and sports.

Secondly, the number and significance of socio-cultural orientations on sport is growing: some orientations refer to the interest in the mass sports, the others – to the growing popularity of top-level sport; and a certain number of value orientations applies to both levels of the sport. The coincidence of these trends and their divergence makes it possible to introduce socio-cultural importance of sport in all its range of interest in it – from the common interest in wellness events, close to the physical education, to the interest in the sport professionalism, reaching the limits of anthropological human abilities.

The following value orientations increase the attractiveness of taking up sport:

- orientation on a successful professional career, that is, the opportunity to express oneself via sport;
- orientation on the material aspect of sport achievements, improving the financial well-being of the athlete and his family;
- orientation on an awareness of one's possibilities and the sense of limits of human abilities;
- orientation on the demonstration of strength and power of the state, the increase of the country's prestige.

In the aspect of the social philosophy the most promising trend to the knowledge of the individual is – the one with the help of top-level sport – the limits of human abilities. At the same time it differs from mass sport by absolutely different force of motivation. As a well-known contemporary

philosopher of sport, Olympic champion H. Lenk states, "sport achievement can not exist without an extraordinary motivation". [6]

Top-level sport, in addition to the characteristics, which define sport in general, is characterized by specific experiment on human physical, emotional and spiritual abilities, going to the limit of the abilities and qualities of the human species. It makes top-level sport be different from sport "for everybody", where an experiment can also exist, but only at the level of a person as an individual, acting for himself and for the team. In top-level sport an individual acts as both the representative of himself, his team, the federation (club, league), the country and the mankind. Due to the fact that in the sphere of sport experiment takes place on the limit of human abilities, watching this experiment is interesting for millions of people.

Top-level sport more and more often turns into the arena where athletes measure both mental and physical, emotional and volitional, moral and ethical orientations. In parallel, the impact of top-level sport in the world community increasingly takes the global nature. Also, the scale of moral deviancy in sport is growing. In this regard, let us turn to the moral determinants reference for the consideration of the ethical issues of sport. It should be noted that within the framework of conceptualization of moral dimension of top-level sport, the categories "morality", "rectitude" and "ethics" are used interchangeably. Morality (moral, ethical) is a set of regulators of decent behavior, through which a person manifests itself as a rational, self-conscious and free being. Notions of morality are formed in the process of understanding the correct behavior based on an ideal notion of duty. [3]

The first and most fundamental of philosophical ideas, which laid the foundations of the study of the moral issues of human behavior in extreme situations, is Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics". Aristotle positioned legitimate for the whole period of civilization, from antiquity to the present, the idea of anthropologism under which it is argued that morality is an inherent quality of human rights, especially clearly in a situation of physical and mental stress [1]. However, even before the great Aristotle, Pythagoras gave a philosophical and psychological basis in various sports, promoting or preventing the harmonious development of personality. Mankind will not return to the days when Pythagoras at the Olympic Games in 588 BC was Olympic champion in fist fight, the coach of heavyweight Evrimeniy Samos and teacher of a philosopher Milo of Croton, five-time Olympic champion. [2]. Nevertheless, there is reason to return - at a new stage of evolutionary spiral - to such formation of a man, when the growth of internal strength and energy is accompanied by the development of spirituality.

According to the variety of prognostic assessments, XXI century will be a time of transition from the understanding of man as *homo sapiens* and *homo habilis* to understanding him as *homo agens* (man of action) plus *homo creasoficus* (a human who creates wisdom). It is assumed that the gap between

mental labor and physical culture in the trend will decline because of rising dual requirements of production: to the specialization of the individual and his universality [6, p.184].

One of the likely prospects of top-level sport is the development of Olympism. This process is complicated by the fact that the original Olympic idea in the XX century was a fiasco, and it requires the development of a new philosophical anthropology of creative and personal achievements [6, p.185]. It should be noted that currently the preparation of the athletes is holding not only in terms of the human organism in the areas of physical and psycho-physical, but also regarding their religion. When targeting religious values as national spiritual dominance, in the sport stimulation of spiritual growth of athletes regarding their religion is becoming significant in sport. Apparently, spiritual counsellors of a team perform no less specific and no less important functions for athletic result than the duties of a psychologist. The connection of a spiritual trainer with sport victory becomes more transparent.

The concepts of top-level sport, which are polarized pragmatic (positivist) and romantic (humanistic) values represent the most vivid implementation of socio-cultural values. Romantic group of concepts is characterized by the statement that aesthetic and moral values are developed in the sphere of sport. Sport in a certain sense, can be dangerous because of the ability to destroy personality and still it has the possibility of forming a harmoniously developed personality. Paradoxically, the protection of this group of concepts by their supporters has often an indication that modern sport is experiencing a deep crisis (technocratism, pandemic doping, the commercialization, the escalation of aggression, immorality and subcultural isolationism). The followers of this circle of concepts are characterized by a skeptical viewpoint in regard with the top-level sport and related projects which, as the authors assume, modify the modern sport (integration with art, non-competition and rekordizm, etc.).

The main romantic concepts of top-level sport perform a range of "vouchers" versions.

According to the first concept, the real sport is a product of the spread of oversportive Olympic humanistic foundation. Sports phenomena initially bear the social moral and humanistic values. However, these values tend to decrease due to the real processes in the sphere of top-level sport, the processes that are interpreted as the follows: the structure of the Olympic Movement, and, above all, the IOC shift value orientations of international sports policy in the direction of top-level sport, indirectly inhibiting the development of sport in general, reducing the level of mass sport, minimizing its educational and recreational values.

According to the second conception, it is stated that departed from its fundamental principles, the Olympic movement has lost its connection with the public national sports, becoming transnational commercial enterprise [4, pp.19-20]. It is noted that the nature of the sport evil is a voluntary refusal to follow

sports oligarchy, to follow Olympic ideals. Top-level sport is set the task – to come back to the principles of the Hellenic kalokagathia [4, p.6] or, which is more realistically, to seek humane alternatives to the modern Olympic movement.

According to this variant of the romantic concept sport is “a grounded” spiritual realization (over-spotive) values. In this model, there is no rigid hierarchy of sports life and there is no decrease of humanistic principles in the sport. “Evil” is defined as deficits of humanism. It is believed that in sports activities either humanistic values or anti-humanism come to the fore. This version brings the first supporters of the concept of conviction that the transformation of the Olympic movement in the sports and commercial record leads to the loss of their status and the nature of sports humanistic movement. Supporters of both options of romantic concepts are working intensively to restore human values, not only within the Olympic movement, but also more radical, humanistic, socio-cultural, “spartian movement” [9].

Next concept is “Sport as a part of the culture”. This version of sports excuse – as opposed to the first two ones – does not require a revision of the foundations of the sport and does not insist on the establishment of structures, alternative structures of the Olympic movement. Here, top-level sport is not audited as in the first two models, is not subject to any court or “correction”, but is only explained. The essence of the version is in understanding of sport as a specific representation of culture. It is alleged that sport is an organic part of the body of a living culture. It is stressed that it is impossible to identify the essence of the sport without an understanding of the dehumanization of art, “mass character” of culture, socio-cultural crossroads of post-industrial society. Sport in its modern incarnation is justified against the background of the excuses of the whole culture.

These and other options of understanding of top-level sport in some key are developing both in domestic and in foreign philosophy of Olympism. [8] The spectrum of such a romantic approach is not confined to consideration. At the same time they share the attempt to comprehend the abstract sublime inconsistency of the Olympic ideals and the rough reality, trying to reflect the inevitable mismatch of the ideology and particular practice of the Olympic movement. The deficit of pragmatism does not allow to reduce the isolation of a significant range of humanistic concepts of reality.

Now let us consider the pragmatic concept. The first and most common of the pragmatic concepts is “the concept of controlled commercialization”. Its essence is to describe the current process of commercialization of Russian sport as an unmanaged process. The commercialization of sport is qualified as fatal inevitability. The essence of the commercialization is the following: only the young people in sport can achieve good results. For a short period of time an athlete has a high-end task is to create the material basis for life. In their turn, the titles and regalia have a commercial value and are expressed in the ability to provide a decent life after the sports career.

A separate aspect of stimulating commercialization is the transformation of top-level sport into a kind of arena for the battle of high technology. Companies are investing in the development of new products, hoping to justify the cost. Athletes, in their turn, are interested in sponsorship grants and subsidies, and the state – in the increase of the country's prestige. Commercialization is considered as a necessity by those involved in sports activities.

Following this concept, the commercialization “automatically” leads to the modification of the programs of the largest world's and Olympic competitions considering the preferences of spectator sports.

At the same time, within the framework of this concept particular attention is paid to the industry's widespread discrimination against the so-called non-entertaining sports, despite the fact that they have their fans and their traditions. According to this concept any kind of top-level sport can be cost-effective. To confirm the validity of this particular point of view, let us recall the scale of the growing popularity of volleyball due to financial investments and organizational efforts of the Spanish billionaire Okost, establishing the propaganda of volleyball via Media. Over the past few years volleyball becomes a sport of significant interest of many people. It should be noted that athletics has also become to capture a mass audience as a result of targeted financial policies (with connection of advertising, press and television). The popularity of chess has increased markedly when appropriate to their “promotion” in the media since coming to this sport G. Kasparov. Currently, not popular among the mass audience basketball is being professionally “promoted”.

Next concept is a “concept of sport as a factor of human aggression.” An apologetics of sport as a medium of conscious and deliberate cultivation and justify violence is offered. From the viewpoint of its authors [12], the aggression in the sphere of sports is often a positive phenomenon. Justification of the concept of violence by the authors has a functional character: for instance, in professional hockey violence and rough play is perceived by professional players as peculiarities of the hockey game. It is allowed:

- to apply aggression to lead a kind of intelligence that gives information about the possibilities of the opposing team as a whole and for each player;
- to impact on the morale of the opposing team using a direct intimidation (for which many teams have special players).

From the moment this player comes to the ice around him arises a special atmosphere in which cruelty, according to A. Brill et al., “has a value and meaning” [12, p.108]. Being a psychological justification for aggression, the concept serves the interests of commercial sports, giving an aggressive style of hockey as the only possible one.

Next concept – “The concept of sport as a social lightning rod” was designed by Mackintosh and Marquard. [12] According to this concept, a modern top-level sport is a social lightning rod. However, as practice of soccer

matches whose fans have come to represent a particular social threat shows, top-level sport is not only a social lightning rod, but a drive of social energy that can be socially dangerous.

Finally, the concepts of valeological and Olympic education of young people are created, including the part of the younger generation, which tends to be the participants of top-level sport [7].

These examples do not exhaust all the conceptual spectrum; only the most socially and politically visible are systematized here.

As we can see, if the followers of romantic movement worry about the crisis of modern sports due to the loss of humanistic and ethical values of Antiquity and call for their revival, for pragmatists there is no crisis in sport: as a branch of the entertainment (a similar show-business) sport has billions of fans in the world. Its cost-effectiveness is available; there are no visible signs of deterioration in the image of this social institution, therefore there is no need for radical changes in this area. Romance projects of valuable redirection of sports are perceived by pragmatics as unconvincing attempts to revise the foundations of modern sport.

At the beginning of the XXI century professional sport became an integral part of international sports and Olympic movement. Some researchers believe that the processes of commercialization and professionalization took irreversible and unsafe for top-level sport character. At present, in line with the criticism of the current way of development of international sport a qualitatively new understanding of the competitive activity is formed. In particular, we are talking about the concept of spartian which is developed by V. I. Stolyarov and his followers [9, 10, 11].

The idea was born during the ensuing in the sport since the mid XX century crisis, when more and more noticeable spread began to receive “contractual” matches with a predefined result, illegal drugs began to be used increasingly, and all the facts of a larger corruption have become an everyday occurrence. These conflicts, which had more or less prominent place in the past of top-level sport, were gradually becoming its essence, clearly manifested in the existence of a public sport, and in its inner world. Thus, the setting for winning at any cost brought to the maximum activity a policy of “carrot and stick” which has long been practiced by many officials from the sport and some coaches towards the athlete. A wide range of non-typical before (about the middle of the XX century) means of influence on an athlete came to the fore: from monetary promises to insults of an athlete, to swearing and beating him. (There are studies which state that most often coaches have resorted to assault athletes-women). These “working methods” with the athletes had their own logic: the monetary promises stimulated the desire to win, and the insults and beatings awakened reciprocal aggression and - often - power of outrages upon personal dignity, in some cases increased the chances of an athlete to win in the competition [5].

Therefore, as an alternative to “hard” models of top-level sport were attempts to create a “soft”, that is, in fact, humane options for sports.

Spartian concept involves:

- expanding the tradition of introducing world championships, international and national awards, not only the winners of the competition, but also the participants who have demonstrated behavior consistent with the principles of fair play (Fair Play);
- strengthening assessments of sporting achievements of aesthetic criteria;
- joining in the same game space sports and art (literature, etc.);
- joining in the same game space of athletes of all ages, races, genders, and physical states (for example, joint participation of healthy athletes and disabled ones in the competition);
- reemphasis of goal-setting of athletes from sports achievements to the process of competition and from rivalry to the mutual help. Determination of the winners and athletes who have achieved the best results, and athletes who have shown generosity, etc.

Spartian method purposes to maintain competitiveness in the sport and at the same time, to make the sport more humane, focused on human dignity and on his comprehensive development. Spartian project provides special awards and recognition by the winner of the athlete whose behavior during the competition was a model of sportsmanship, regardless the outcome of the competition (including the rank and international Olympic and world). Also non-traditional forms of association of sports to art, an unusual composition of the participants (in particular, joint participation of disabled and non disabled people), etc. are provided

Spartian method precludes the pursuit of victory at all costs, as at the cornerstone it puts not the result but the process of participation in the contest. Based on this setting, the approach to the sport gives paramount importance to the mutual help of athletes and, in general, the behavior of the nobility of the athlete in the competition.

This concept is based on the hypothesis of perceived at the end of the XX century a gradual transition from the values of advanced societies' “material well-being” and “customer success” to the settings in the self-realization of the individual. However, its opponents have their arguments. The disadvantage of spartian approach is its apparent problem with record achievement-based values of top-level sport. Noting the inhumane nature, aggression and unilateral commercial and political approaches to the top-level sport, it should be recognized that sport, while remaining itself, can not renounce the antinomy of “winner – loser”. Attempts to eliminate the status of winner and loser and synthesize competitive and non-competitive form of competitions blur the line between sport and physical activity. Imagine spartian principles at the heart of top-level sport is hardly possible. The thing is, essentially, about a qualitative change in the nature of top-level sport, – at least, the exclusion from it the

extreme situations and qualities for which is inherently a combination of positive and negative paradigms of top-level sport.

It makes the positions of spartian founder V. I. Stolyarov and his followers vulnerable (despite the fact that spartian does not deny competitiveness of sports; on the contrary, it is considered an important component of the model). This is from theoretically point of view. But in practice, this model is a logical and valuable space between the physical culture and top-level sport. And the fact that the proposed by V. I. Stolyarov “spartian agony are, according to this author, a combination of competition and non-competitive games; the fact that we are talking about complex forms of competitions that combine sports, arts and other creative activities, does not change business fundamentally: spartian method is still not physical training, but it is not yet an Olympic sport in its modern form. However, it should be noted that the value orientations of spartian method largely determine the ideology of humanistic model of top-level sport.

Conclusions. To sum up, we note that, on the one hand, with a noticeable separation from other uses of top-level sport is increasing its importance – for humanity as a whole – as the range of opportunities for cultivation of positive physical, emotional and intellectual qualities. However, in the study of social and cultural values of top-level sport there is a growing aggravation of the moral and ethical problems of the segment of sports goals and means of achieving them. The divarication between the goals of top-level sport and techniques making it possible to move closer to the goals, I increasing. However, the desire to weaken the contradictions that exist between commercial and humanistic plants operating today, damaging the health of the athlete and the ideology of Olympism as “fair play” is also growing. It is clear that a way out can be found only in the development of the humanistic model of modern sport.

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