

Research on the Dilemma and Path of Retired Competitive Sport Athletes' Resettlement in China

Li Mengzi

College of Physical Education, Hunan University of Technology, Zhuzhou, Hunan, China, 412000

Abstract: *With the continuous development of China's sports industry, the corresponding resettlement policy issues of competitive sport athletes after retirement have become more prominent. This article uses methods such as literature review and on-site investigation to understand that the current social security policies for athletes are not yet perfect, and there are still some athletes who cannot achieve career conversion after retirement, causing employment difficulties. If this problem is not solved for a long time, it will seriously affect the sustainable development of competitive sport in China. Therefore, by studying the current situation and solutions of competitive sport athletes' post-retirement resettlement, we can provide some theoretical reference for the development of competitive sport athletes' post-retirement resettlement.*

Keywords: *Competitive Sport, Retired Athletes, Retirement Resettlement*

1. Introduction

The placement policy for retired athletes is the fundamental institutional guarantee for athletes to achieve career transformation. Every year, approximately 4000 athletes in China retire. During the Olympic and National Games years, the number of retired athletes will continue to increase. The main ways for their employment placement are through organizational placement and independent career selection. In order to encourage them to better integrate with the society after retirement, the Ministry of Personnel, the Ministry of Finance and the General Administration of Sport of China issued the Measures for Financial compensation of Retired Athletes in Independent Career Selection, and the General Administration of Sport of China issued the Opinions on Further Improving the Security of National Outstanding Athletes, and the Twelfth Five Year Plan for the Development of Sports, which particularly emphasized the need to "further improve the employment and resettlement of retired athletes" and other policies. A series of dividends have laid a strong foundation for retired athletes to diversify their development amidst opportunities and challenges^[1].

2. Retired Athlete Human Capital

Athlete human capital refers to the collective term for sports resources with economic value that are obtained by various investment entities (the country, society, and athletes themselves) through investing in athletes' sports talents in order to obtain benefits (economic and social benefits) and are dependent on professional athletes' competitive abilities and reputation^[2]. According to the formation law of competitive ability, the formation of competitive ability should go through a development period, a growth period, a peak period, and a decline period in sequence. This determines that the human capital of athletes with competitive ability as the core has a clear "timeliness", which can generally be maintained until around the age of 30. Most of their career over a decade takes place during their youth period. Therefore, athletes are also known as a "youthful" profession^[3].

The "youthfulness" and "transience" of the human capital life cycle of athletes determine that their competitive ability gradually declines after entering the peak period, and they ultimately have to choose to retire and reintegrate into society from scratch. Finding and adapting to new employment positions is a challenge that all athletes must face. Faced with new work environments, tasks, objects, and cultures, how to quickly and high-quality integrate into society has become an important issue that troubles the sustainable livelihood of retired athletes, and must be highly valued by the country, society, and athletes themselves^[4].

3. Reasons for the Difficulty in Resettlement of Retired Athletes

Qionghuan Xie, former director of the Policy and Regulations Department of the General Administration of Sport, pointed out that whether athletes can smoothly enter society after retirement is the responsibility of society. Therefore, clarifying what conditions and assistance the country and society should create for the social integration of retired athletes, and how retired athletes should leverage their strengths and make up for their weaknesses, are all basic prerequisites for ensuring the rapid and high-quality integration of retired athletes into society.

3.1. Policy reasons for the "national system"

Policy is the primary factor affecting the resettlement guarantee for retired athletes in China. The national system is a talent training model for competitive sport athletes in China. The development of competitive sport in China started late, but China can make amazing achievements in just a few decades, which is inseparable from the role of the national system. Under the national system, elite athletes who have achieved outstanding results in various stages and categories of security policy resources tend to be arranged according to their competition level and ranking. Retired athletes are also arranged at the provincial or municipal level, in different places or belonging to different regions. According to the training and competition results, the resettlement standards and the transportation place resettlement regulations that restrict mobility have been used so far. The "one size fits all" mode is simple to operate, but it is increasingly unable to meet the individual diversity and social mobility needs of current retired athletes. Due to policy reasons, retired athletes are unable to meet the needs of the social labor market, resulting in a structural fracture in the career transition of retired athletes for re-employment^[5].

3.2. Responsibilities of relevant departments

Retired athletes are often placed in positions such as coaches and physical education teachers. The main supervisory department for retired athletes is the Department of Human Resources and Social Security, while the main supervisory department for re-employment is the Department of Education. In the practice of athlete security work, athlete cultural learning is marginalized and fragmented due to the priority of training and competition, and the learning time and quality cannot be guaranteed; The organization and resettlement are generally jointly organized and implemented by the Provincial Sports Bureau, Provincial Public Security Department, and Provincial Human Resources and Social Security Department. The Provincial Department of Education has not included the main responsibility for cultural education and organizational placement of athletes, and inadequate coordination among departments has led to a lack of cultural education for athletes. The low level of cultural education for athletes has led to low employment quality for self-selected athletes; The resettlement work of the Sports Bureau has resulted in mutual blame and poor communication among departments, resulting in a mismatch in employment needs, resulting in low efficiency and slow progress in the reemployment and resettlement of athletes.

3.3. Athlete level and mass foundation

The higher the level of exercise, the better the performance and performance of athletes in service. The influence of athletes' own values is greater, and they are more likely to receive the care and support of coaches and sports team leaders, as well as the attention and favor of central leaders and others^[6]. Elite athletes and athletes with a large mass base can easily switch careers after retirement, and career transitions can be easily completed after retirement. For example, sports with a large mass base such as ball games have better job placement for athletes after retirement; On the contrary, in sports with a small mass base such as athletics, the situation of athletes being re-employed after retirement is not optimistic. Relevant departments should pay more attention to the reemployment of retired athletes with a relatively small mass base. After the reform and opening up, the penetration of the market economy development model has led to a gradual shift in the government's resettlement policies for retired athletes towards multi-channel, market-oriented, and socialized approaches. The importance of sports performance has been highlighted in the resettlement policies for retired athletes, such as their enrollment, employment, and retirement compensation calculation^[7]. The "efficiency" of this placement method is based on the athletes' performance as a clear standard, while the "fairness" currently has lost the institutional guarantee and emotional foundation under the previous planned economy system. Although the central government has always conveyed the policy meaning of emphasizing fairness in resettlement work in policy formulation, due to economic system changes and limited resources, local governments are bound to pay

more attention to the pursuit of efficiency in policy formulation, and the focus of policy will inevitably tilt towards excellent athletes, resulting in negligence towards a larger number of ordinary athletes.

4. Diversified solutions for the placement of retired athletes

4.1. Government level

4.1.1. Adhere to the value concept of "people-oriented"

The report of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that "We must adhere to the principle of putting people first. It is the fundamental purpose of the Party to serve the people wholeheartedly. All the efforts and work of the Party are aimed at benefiting the people. We must always take the realization and safeguarding of the fundamental interests of much of the people as the starting point and result of all the work of the Party and the country, respect the dominant position of the people, protect the rights and interests of the people, take the road of Common prosperity, and realize the all-round development of people." The placement policy for retired athletes should first comply with the value concept of "people-oriented", with the goal of achieving "more comprehensive and high-quality employment", and at the same time, guided by reform and innovation to support the professional development of athletes. We should grasp the general laws of the changes in the placement system for retired athletes and seek breakthroughs in institutional innovation based on history and reality.

4.1.2. Expanding the scope of protection

The government should implement the notice issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Finance to expand the scope of unemployment insurance and should do a good job in the resettlement of retired athletes, expand the guaranteed scope, and effectively provide a basic guarantee for the resettlement of retired athletes. The resettlement policy should focus on the issue of retired athletes' employment being embedded into the social structure, and the scope of protection should be expanded from focusing on completing organizational resettlement to improving the employment rate and quality of self-employment groups and expanding the employment and resettlement channels for retired athletes. The scope of protection has changed from "supporting minority elites" to "promoting the overall development of the group". While paying attention to the job matching and professional adaptability of the organization and placement of athletes, more policy resources have been invested to support vulnerable groups with occupational injuries, low education, insufficient skills and poor family circumstances, so as to achieve the harmonious unity of Instrumental and value rationality and value rationality of retired athletes' security.

4.2. Social forces

During retirement, social support is a necessary condition for athletes to actively face the challenges of retirement transformation and employment. During the retirement period of athletes, the support of peers, parents, and sports team coaches or leaders can greatly alleviate the retirement burden of athletes, providing substantive assistance for their retirement transformation and development, thereby enabling athletes to better adjust and adapt to society. Therefore, when families, peers, and sports teams provide more psychological care, physical care, and material assistance to athletes during their retirement transition, their own positive attitude towards retirement can be significantly improved.

The support of social forces can enable athletes to obtain employment security after retirement, transition from retirement to re-employment, and enter society. It is necessary to carry out in-depth learning and promotion of re-employment policies, regulations, and employment situations among athletes, enhance their awareness of re-employment, and guide them to prepare for career planning and career transformation with ideas and skills. The supply of social forces is aimed at athletes, conducting various vocational skill training, implementing corresponding training certificates and vocational qualification certificate systems, and improving the comprehensive quality and vocational skills of athletes through comprehensive knowledge training, specialized vocational skill training, and professional skill training appraisal for specific types of work in the sports industry, in order to obtain relevant vocational qualification certificates.

4.3. Athletes themselves

4.3.1. Engaging in physical education work

After retiring, athletes should make reasonable use of relevant preferential policies to enter universities for learning or training, continuously enrich their theoretical knowledge and educational skills, and participate in school physical education and training. Firstly, in recent years, with the gradual deepening of the reform of physical education in primary and secondary schools by the Ministry of Education, the proportion of physical education scores in higher education has gradually increased. In physical education teaching, attention should be paid to adjusting or changing the management methods of professional teams for athletes to prevent students from feeling rebellious^[8]. Secondly, retired athletes can choose to enter the physical education system of universities, middle schools, and primary schools, which is a traditional system with established norms and principles. In this system, athletes can obtain a relatively stable income and a better working environment, but it may also limit their performance in specialized fields to some extent. Thirdly, retired athletes have gone through the process of developing sports skills from scratch, from low to high levels, and have a good understanding of the growth trajectory and development needs of a young athlete. Therefore, working as a coach is very suitable for retired athletes. Fourthly, retired athletes can provide guidance on their understanding of the sport itself, their psychological grasp of the new generation of athletes, the improvement of project techniques, and the formulation of training loads. At the same time, they can also engage in technical support work related to the original sport, such as assistant and sports technical consultant.

4.3.2. Seeking the Development of Combining Sports and Entertainment

After the 2016 Rio Olympics, the combination of sports and entertainment has become a thriving scene in China's sports industry. Introduce the culture of "fan circle" to the sports circle, so that the audience can transfer their love for sports stars to the sports activities they engage in. Seize the appeal of sports stars to the younger generation, in order to inspire a group of young people who follow idols as role models, spread the positive energy of sports, and enable the younger generation to participate more in sports events^[9]. With the correct guidance and demonstration of idols, it can attract fans to participate in the same sports, laying a good foundation for national fitness. The promotion of the integration of sports and entertainment can accelerate the market-oriented operation of the sports media industry, and create distinctive brand sports programs, stimulate the participation of the whole people in physical exercise, guide the public to participate in sports and fitness, promote the integration of sports and entertainment, and respond to the call for the development of a "sports powerhouse".

5. Conclusion

The employment of retired athletes is a fundamental issue related to the healthy and sustainable development of sports. The root cause of the employment dilemma for retired athletes lies in the insufficient demand caused by efficient employment; The imbalance in employment supply caused by the delay of education reform; The poor coupling between the employment supply and demand services for retired athletes and the social system has led to weak transmission of employment supply and demand^[10].

The employment of retired athletes is highly related to the sports system and the national public employment system, involving employment policies, employment organizations, education and training, and many other aspects. The process of solving the employment of retired athletes is a process of deconstructing and reconstructing the employment system of retired athletes. It is recommended to gather a research team under the convening of relevant national functional departments to solve the practical problem of employment for retired athletes through "major projects". At the same time, some provinces and cities will be selected as reform pilots through designated or declared methods, with the aim of providing replicable and promotable practical experience for the reconstruction of the employment system for retired athletes. Quickly establish a market mechanism and a government mechanism to promote both career development and government assistance for athletes and build a public employment system for retired athletes with Chinese characteristics that aligns with economic and social development. The urgent task is to build a layered cultural education and non-skilled training system for athletes, effectively improve the quality of basic education during the training period, strengthen the psychological education, vocational education, and non-sports skill training of athletes during the transition period, further reduce the threshold for retired athletes to enter universities for learning, and fundamentally change the phenomenon of "having a diploma but not a level" while increasing the number of people

receiving higher education for this group. A scientific and reasonable athlete cultural education and non-skill training system enables retired athletes to truly enjoy higher education.

References

- [1] Xianghu L., Ting Z, Shengchun W, Ruolin M. (2017) *Research on the Diversified Development Path of Retired Athletes in China*. *Sports Culture Guide*, 12,18-21+3.
- [2] Jian L, Wenyu S. (2008) *Human Capital and Its Attributes of Chinese Athletes*. *Journal of Shenyang Institute of Physical Education*,27(1),24-28.
- [3] Jian L, Dexin Z. (2012). *Analysis on the Attribute and Value Measurement of Athlete Human Capital*. *Research on Technology Economy and Management*,3,21-24.
- [4] Huiwen W. (2019) *Empirical Study on the Impact of Retired Athletes' Human Capital on Their Social Integration*. *Shenyang Institute of Physical Education*, 38(04),57-63.
- [5] Jun Z, Dexin Z. (2021) *Double Removal and Embedding: Analysis of the Practical Dilemma of the Placement Policy for Retired Athletes - Taking J Province as an Example*. *Research on Sports Science*,35(06),77-83.
- [6] Qian H, You X, Shuqin C, Qian Z, Wenfei Y. (2021) *Social Support, Retirement Preparation, and Athletes' Response Motivation. A Study of Sports Science*, 35(03),19-29+39.
- [7] Shiwei X, Jingshuai N, Jiahong W. (2021) *Research on the Innovation of the Transformation Guarantee System for Retired Chinese Athletes in the Context of Sports Power*. *Journal of Xi'an Institute of Physical Education*, 38(06),689-695.
- [8] Zhiying J. (2016) *Analysis and Research on the Adaptation of Retired Athletes to the Current Situation of Physical Education Teaching in Universities - Taking Some Universities in Nanjing as an Example*. *Hubei Sports Science and Technology*, 35(1),64-66.
- [9] Yiyun C. (2020) *New Integration of Sports and Entertainment under Empathy Communication - Taking "Superstar National Games" as an Example*. *News Sentinel*,9,125-126.
- [10] Chengde Z. (2015) *Optimization of Public Services for the Employment of Retired Athletes in China*. *Sports Culture Guide*, 09,14-18+57.