



Fair group norms as a socio-psychological criterion of a healthy sports environment

UDC 159.9



PhD, Associate Professor **E.E. Khvatskaya**¹

PhD **O.V. Korshunova**¹

A.L. Shtukkert¹

¹Lesgaft National State University of Physical Education,
Sports and Health, St. Petersburg

Corresponding author: e.hvackaya@lesgaft.spb.ru

Abstract

Objective of the study was a theoretical presentation of the “healthy sports environment” construct through environmental (material), hygienic, pedagogical and socio-psychological criteria, taking into account the type of difficulties / problems of athletes, as well as a partial empirical substantiation of the socio-psychological criterion through the identification of typical rules of a sports group / teams and assessing the appropriateness of fair group norms (hereinafter referred to as FGN) in the real conditions of sports activities.

Methods and structure of the study. Theoretical analysis of literature; method of incomplete sentences for determining typical norms in sports “The rules of the group/team that were in my sports career are...” (at least three) with the participation of ex-athletes of different sports (n=138, men – 75, women – 63, age 21 – 32); content analysis; the feasibility and effectiveness of the development of the FGN was assessed in several teams in St. Petersburg in 2021-2022. in the form of a pilot experiment.

Research results and conclusions. An approach to the definition of the construct “healthy sports environment” in the narrow and broad senses is proposed. A typical number of group rules in a sports career among respondents, the predominance of rules of an organizational nature and their negative formulations (more often they begin with “not” and “not”), and stereotypes are noted. Most of the rules do not correspond to the signs of fair group norms. The conditions for the development of fair group norms for athletes/teams are indicated. The feasibility and effectiveness of the development of FGN was determined when working with several teams in St. Petersburg in 2021-2022.

Keywords: *healthy sports environment, its criteria, fair group norms (FGN).*

Introduction. Sports activity is one of the most powerful spheres of influence on a person. The younger the athlete, the more the nature of this influence is dual and ambiguous: either early involvement in sports as a resource for mastering and improving the social role of an “athlete”, or as a source of emotional distress [2, 3, 5, 6, 7].

An ecological approach to the development of sports gifted children for a successful transition from juniors to elite sports is based on creating an environment that includes the unification of the efforts of all subjects of a sports career (coaches, parents), and on

the long term instead of focusing on quick results, etc. [1, 5, 7, 9].

One of the mechanisms for the formation of the socio-psychological aspect of a healthy environment and its criterion is fair group norms that are the same for everyone, increase the efficiency of the group, do not humiliate its members [5, 8].

Objective of the study was a theoretical presentation of the “healthy sports environment” construct through environmental (material), hygienic, pedagogical and socio-psychological criteria, taking into account the type of difficulties/problems of athletes,



as well as a partial empirical substantiation of the socio-psychological criterion through the identification of typical rules of a sports group/teams and assessing the appropriateness of fair group norms (hereinafter referred to as FGN) in the real conditions of sports activities.

Methods and structure of the study. In the course of the theoretical analysis of the literature, the following methods were used: the method of unfinished sentences to determine typical norms in sports "The rules of the group/team that were in my sports career are..." (at least three) with the participation of ex-athletes of different sports (n=138, men - 75, women - 63, age 21 - 32); content analysis; the feasibility and effectiveness of the development of the FGN was assessed in several teams in St. Petersburg in 2021-2022 in the form of a pilot experiment.

Results of the study and their discussion. Speaking of "sports environment", we will have the sports environment of a sports school. One of our earlier definitions is the "educational environment of a sports school" [4], which in the context of the concept of "sports environment" is its definition in a narrow sense.

The sports environment (= sports school environment) can be considered: a) as the "environment" of all participants/subjects of sports activities; b) as a mode of a sports school (schedule, load of coaches and athletes, taking into account the stage of preparation); c) as a set of conditions for the associated development of sports training tasks in accordance with the stage and age-related tasks of the development of children and adolescents; d) as a system of relationships between all participants/subjects of sports activities.

The basis for classifying the sports environment as "healthy" or "unhealthy" is also the type of difficulties/problems that athletes face in the process of mastering and improving sports activities: 1) adequate difficulties/problems are associated with the psychological characteristics of youth sports; crises-transitions and situational crises of a sports career; learning objectives in accordance with the stage of sports training; age-related developmental tasks (life-span) (P. Baltes); 2) inadequate (excessive) difficulties/problems are determined by the impossibility of determining the "ideal" type of children at the initial stage of sports training; discrepancy between the abilities of some young athletes and the requirements of the chosen sport; forced training; destructive attitude of

significant adults (parents and coach) to the child's sports activities, the "either-or" attitude - either sports or study [5].

A healthy sports environment is characterized by: a) according to the environmental (material) criterion - the compliance of all premises, equipment, etc. with sanitary and hygienic requirements; b) according to the hygienic criterion - optimal (i.e. corresponding to the age, gender, stage of sports training, readiness) physical and mental loads of athletes and coaches; c) according to the pedagogical criterion - subject-subject technologies of education and upbringing; d) according to the socio-psychological criterion - fair group norms for building relationships between the administration, coaches, parents, athletes; e) the presence of adequate difficulties / problems of young athletes.

The term "healthy sports environment" applies to a sports group or team in a situation of training sessions and competitions.

Content analysis of 1020 responses of respondents (n=138) in relation to group rules or team rules that were in their sports career, made it possible to highlight typical points (at this stage of the study, we were interested in the "general" category): 1. Number of rules – 3-9 (more rules for men than for women). 2. The list of norms and rules, regardless of gender, included 86.96% of the rules of an organizational nature ("do not be late", "put away inventory", etc.) and only 13.04% of the rules of an interpersonal nature ("stop", "do not fight", "Listen to the coach", etc.) 3. Template ("one for all and all for one", "the coach is always right ...", "we are a team", "do not be distracted", etc.) 4. Formulations. More often, the rules began with "no" and "no" ("no pushing", "no skipping a workout", etc.).

Thus, the function of a positive reference point in behavior and interpersonal interaction in these rules in the systems "coach-athlete/team", "athlete-athlete" was insufficient.

During the "reconstruction" and development of the FGN, a number of effective and previously tested conditions were taken into account [5]:

1. There should not be many rules (no more than 10). The younger the athletes, the less - no more than five.
2. Formulation of more rules in a positive way (as a guideline in behavior) ("listen carefully", "discuss calmly", "support", etc.)
3. From the point of view of ensuring security, there are several prohibition rules.
4. If possible, joint discussion of the rules and their



design in different forms (sneakers, ball, star, T-shirt, etc.) or in a more concise wording or image, the meaning of which is the same for everyone.

The team rules based on the signs of fair group norms were implemented in the process of preparing for the final of the Russian Championship among the teams of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in women's football 2022 U19 in the national team of St. Petersburg, as well as in the process of preparing the team of School №2 of the Nevsky district of St. Petersburg to the semi-final of the Championship of the Russian Federation in volleyball among girls born in 2008 and younger (2021). Their effectiveness is confirmed by the positive assessment of the coaches, the high sports results of the teams, which is reflected in the acts of implementing the results of scientific work into practice.

Conclusions. The construct "healthy sports environment" can be defined on the basis of environmental (material), hygienic, pedagogical and socio-psychological criteria and through the type of difficulties of young athletes (adequate / inadequate (excessive)).

The typicality of group rules/norms in a sports career was revealed on the basis of a retrospective approach in terms of quantity, the predominance of negative and stereotyped formulations and rules of an organizational nature, as well as their general inconsistency with the signs of FGN.

FGN is an indicator of the socio-psychological criterion of a healthy sports environment, contributing to constructive behavior in interpersonal relationships on the basis of the "in order to" principle. The expediency of their development and the effectiveness of their implementation were evaluated in the process of solving specific problems of sports training in real conditions (by sports results, by the satisfaction of team members, which is reflected in the acts of implementation).

The article was made within the framework of the state task of Lesgaft National State University of Physical Education, Sports and Health, St. Petersburg on the research topic "Improving the psychological and pedagogical support of a sports career" (2021-2023).

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