

SOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPROVING THE PEDAGOGICAL MECHANISM FOR EDUCATING AND LEGALLY PROTECTING YOUNG ATHLETES

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Abstract

This article examines the social and pedagogical characteristics of improving the pedagogical mechanism for the education and legal protection of young athletes. It argues that in contemporary society the upbringing of young athletes should not be limited to physical and technical preparation, but must also encompass psychological stability, legal awareness, moral development, and social adaptation. The study analyzes the role of state policy, educational institutions, sports schools, coaches, families, and the broader social environment in shaping the personality of young athletes. Particular attention is given to the theoretical foundations of psychological safety as an essential condition for both educational effectiveness and legal protection in sports education. The article further explores the importance of social capital, motivation, communication, and harmonious interpersonal relations in fostering the successful development of young athletes. On this basis, recommendations are proposed for improving the pedagogical mechanism of educating and legally protecting young athletes through a holistic system integrating pedagogical, psychological, and legal components.

Keywords: young athletes, legal protection, sports education, pedagogical mechanism, psychological safety, healthy lifestyle, legal awareness, socialization, motivation, pedagogical support

Introduction

At the present stage of national development, Uzbekistan is creating all necessary conditions for the younger generation to grow into physically healthy, intellectually mature, and socially responsible individuals. In order to ensure the continuity of this process, the state is pursuing a strong social policy based on long-term development priorities. Within this framework, physical education and sport are increasingly recognized not merely as recreational activities, but as socially significant educational processes with strategic national importance.

In educational institutions, preschool organizations, schools, and other social establishments, physical education and sport perform important developmental, preventive, and value-forming functions. The organization of mass sports and health-improving activities has been supported by a number of laws, governmental resolutions, and sectoral reforms, which have already demonstrated positive results in practice. These efforts are aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle, strengthening young people's confidence in their own abilities through competition, developing courage, patriotism, and devotion to the homeland, as well as identifying talented athletes and preparing them systematically for future achievement.

In all regions of the country, important tasks remain on the agenda: promoting the significance of mass sport in individual and family life, emphasizing sport as the foundation of



physical and spiritual well-being, protecting youth from harmful habits, creating conditions for the realization of their talents, and improving the system for identifying and training gifted athletes, especially in rural and remote areas. Thus, the development of physical culture and sport has become one of the key priorities of state policy in the field of education and youth development.

Development of Physical Education and Sport in the Educational Sphere

Targeted efforts are being carried out in Uzbekistan to further develop physical education and sport in the education sector. These include support for institutions that train, retrain, and improve the qualifications of specialists in physical education and sport; scientific and methodological assistance to sports schools; and the provision of highly qualified coaches and medical personnel.

Comprehensive measures are also being implemented to organize health-improving activities, physical education programs, and mass sports events among schoolchildren, university students, and the wider population. These measures include the organization of complex sports competitions, the identification of talented young athletes, and their targeted preparation for higher levels of performance. Another important direction involves improving the activities of sports societies and clubs, as well as enhancing the professional work of physical education teachers in preschool institutions, general secondary schools, and higher educational institutions.

In cooperation with local public authorities, citizens' self-government bodies, sports societies, educational institutions, and public organizations, broad-based initiatives are being undertaken to popularize sport, especially among young people. Particular attention is being paid to attracting children to regular sports participation, improving the quality of children's sports education, and expanding the network of sports facilities throughout the country, particularly in remote and rural regions.

At the same time, Uzbekistan is strengthening international sports relations, attracting foreign investment and grants, supporting popular sports programs, and publishing literature and audiovisual materials on sport and physical education. The successful participation of Uzbek athletes in Central Asian competitions, Asian Games, international tournaments, world championships, and Olympic Games has contributed to enhancing the country's international prestige. These sporting achievements also reinforce national self-awareness, solidarity, and patriotic feeling.

Sport today serves not only as a means of achieving high performance, but also as a preventive mechanism against deviant behavior, a productive use of young people's leisure time, and an instrument for preventing socially significant diseases and psychological stress. Regular sporting activity contributes to the development of immunity and helps prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression. Consequently, the state's efforts in this field are strengthening the role of physical culture and sport in social life and helping to cultivate a healthy and active younger generation.

The Formation of the Young Athlete's Personality as a Social and Pedagogical Process

The formation of a young athlete's personality is the result of the interaction of social, psychological, and pedagogical factors. In this process, social values, the family environment, the functioning of sports schools, the qualifications of coaches, and the orientation of state policy all play decisive roles.



From a sociological perspective, P. Bourdieu (1984) described sport as a field for the formation of social capital, where individuals gain opportunities for self-expression, recognition, and social status. This view allows sport to be understood not simply as physical activity, but as a mechanism of social transformation and personal advancement. By succeeding in prestigious competitions, athletes accumulate physical, cultural, and social capital, which significantly expands their opportunities for self-realization and recognition in society.

The educational value of sport is manifested precisely through this formation of social capital. Sports training and competitions teach young people to work in teams, understand their social roles, and subordinate personal ambition to collective interest. Team sports, in particular, cultivate cooperation, trust, and mutual support. Likewise, learning to accept defeat, recover from injury, and make decisions under pressure develops psychological resilience. These qualities equip young people to confront broader social difficulties in later life.

Sport also functions as a channel of social mobility. For talented youth, especially those from disadvantaged families or remote areas, sport may become a pathway to educational benefits, professional opportunities, financial stability, and social respect. Therefore, the pedagogical significance of sport extends far beyond bodily development.

Psychological Dimensions of Educating Young Athletes

In psychological terms, motivation and competitiveness occupy a central place in the activities of young athletes. According to R. Deci and E. Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000), athletic performance becomes stable and healthy only when the athlete derives internal satisfaction from the activity itself. For that reason, any pedagogical mechanism aimed at developing young athletes must include a system of motivational and emotional support.

Modern sports education requires not only the development of physical and technical preparedness, but also the strengthening of each athlete's internal motivation and personal-psychological development. Within this framework, psychological safety becomes one of the core theoretical factors in the sports education environment. Empirical observations demonstrate that the socio-psychological safety of the educational environment in sports schools has a direct positive effect on the development of achievement motivation in young athletes. This provides a theoretical basis for improving pedagogical mechanisms by relying not only on legal norms, but also on appropriate psychological and pedagogical conditions.

Psychological safety in the training process means that the athlete feels physically and emotionally secure, protected, and respected. Such an environment allows the athlete to make mistakes, encounter difficulties, and express concerns openly without fear of humiliation or unfair treatment. As a result, stress decreases and learning effectiveness increases. Individuals with a high level of achievement motivation tend to view difficulties not as failures, but as opportunities for development. However, such an attitude can be formed only in an environment based on trust and support.

In this respect, the role of psychologists in sports schools is becoming increasingly urgent. Not all coaches possess the necessary specialized knowledge to provide comprehensive psychological preparation, and even where such knowledge exists, coaches are often unable to meet all athletes' psychological needs independently. Regular professional development for coaches and the involvement of psychologists capable of creating a positive team environment and identifying the individual psychological characteristics of each athlete are therefore strongly recommended. Understanding the personal characteristics of different athletes helps coaches match athletes' capacities to the demands of specific tasks, find effective forms of

communication, and organize teamwork more efficiently. Nevertheless, only a limited number of sports schools are currently able to employ full-time psychologists.

As noted by Uzbek scholars, the coach must cultivate not only sports technique but also the athlete's psychological balance. Similarly, moral upbringing and legal protection in sport should be viewed as part of a unified educational system. These observations confirm that the psychological and legal support of young athletes must be conceptualized as an integrated pedagogical task.

Psychological Safety as a Basis for Educational and Protective Functions

Theoretically, psychological safety may be analyzed through three interrelated components that are especially important for designing the educational and protective functions of the pedagogical mechanism.

The first component is the sense of socio-psychological protection. This refers to the athlete's confidence that he or she is treated fairly by coaches, teachers, and team members, and is protected from humiliation, personal attacks, or psychological pressure. Legal protection should begin with ensuring the athlete's fundamental need for psychological security. Young athletes who possess a strong sense of protection are more likely to be independent, confident, and persistent in achieving their sporting goals.

The second component is satisfaction with communication. This reflects the openness and transparency of the pedagogical process. If an athlete can freely express opinions, dissatisfaction, or ideas without fear, the athlete becomes fully engaged in the educational process. High satisfaction with communication is positively correlated with achievement motivation. Therefore, the pedagogical mechanism should also develop athletes' ability to speak openly about their rights and interests within the educational and sports environment.

The third component is the harmony of interpersonal relations. This includes healthy team relations, mutual support, and a friendly competitive atmosphere. Group dynamics in sport have a profound impact on personal motivation. If an athlete experiences an atmosphere of trust and respect within the team, his or her aspiration for success becomes stronger and more sustainable.

Legal Protection of Young Athletes as a Pedagogical Problem

The issue of educating and legally protecting young athletes occupies a special place among the urgent scientific and pedagogical problems of modern society. Its content, purpose, and objectives are closely connected with state policy, legislation, and the requirements of the educational system. National and international experience demonstrates that creating favorable conditions for the physical and moral development of the younger generation and protecting their rights and interests is a priority not only for sport, but for the entire educational system.

In the context of globalization, the question of helping young people find a worthy place in society through sport, while remaining committed to national and universal values, has become one of the strategic priorities of state policy. The successful implementation of this process depends on the psychological characteristics of young athletes during development, their physiological needs, and their interaction with the social environment.

Particular importance attaches to ensuring the rights and freedoms of young athletes, protecting them from abuse, discrimination, and pressure, and implementing international child rights standards in everyday educational and sporting practice. In this regard, the responsibility of the educational system is especially great. It is no longer sufficient to focus solely on athletic performance. It is equally necessary to create scientifically grounded pedagogical mechanisms

that define the content, structure, and practical implementation of education and legal protection for young athletes.

In Uzbekistan, a number of legislative acts have been adopted in this sphere, including the Law “On Education,” the Law “On Physical Culture and Sport,” and presidential decrees aimed at developing the sector, supporting young talents, protecting their rights and interests, and creating modern infrastructure and resources. However, significant challenges remain. These include an insufficiently developed legal culture, low legal literacy, and the lack of effective mechanisms for integrating legal concepts into the educational process. In some cases, the violation of athletes’ lawful rights or the inadequate protection of their interests leads to negative outcomes. For this reason, from a pedagogical point of view, finding a systematic and purposeful solution to the education and legal protection of young athletes must be regarded as an important pedagogical problem.

Structural Components of the Pedagogical Mechanism

When analyzed structurally as a pedagogical problem, the process of educating and legally protecting young athletes may be divided into several core components.

The first component is a set of purposeful pedagogical influences directed toward the formation of legal knowledge and legal consciousness in young athletes. Athletes should be educated not only in the rules of sport, but also in the basic legal principles governing fair treatment, non-discrimination, discipline, and protection of individual dignity.

The second component is the normative-legal basis of protection, including the content of relevant legislation and the mechanisms through which it is applied in practice. Legal protection should not be limited to preventing physical harm or financial exploitation. It must also include the protection of mental health, dignity, and freedom from excessive pedagogical or coaching pressure.

The third component is the introduction of innovative pedagogical technologies into the educational process in order to develop legal culture among young athletes. Interactive methods, information and communication technologies, digital educational resources, and virtual platforms for legal education may significantly increase effectiveness in this field.

From a pedagogical perspective, the process of educating young athletes is therefore a system aimed at comprehensive personal development, the formation of social and legal consciousness through sport, self-awareness, and preparation for socially useful participation in public life.

Sport, Legal Awareness, and Patriotic Education

In the modern world, especially under conditions of globalization and competition, sport has become more than a form of physical exercise. It has become a strategic instrument of soft power, economic development, and national prestige. Uzbekistan’s increasing attention to this sphere reflects its significance for the future of the country.

The economic importance of sport is multidimensional. The construction of modern sports complexes, stadiums, and sports schools creates jobs in construction, tourism, and services. The hosting of international competitions increases tourist inflows, generates foreign currency earnings, and strengthens the positive image of the country. Moreover, mass participation in sport helps prevent disease and reduces the burden on the healthcare system, thereby decreasing public expenditure.

At the same time, the formation of young athletes as patriotic individuals with developed legal consciousness and legal culture constitutes one of the foundations of the modern sports system. Sport teaches discipline, perseverance, fairness, and honesty. These

qualities contribute to the formation of responsible citizens. Compliance with sports rules, anti-doping principles, and competition regulations is itself a practical manifestation of legal culture. Therefore, providing young athletes with knowledge of sports law, sports disputes, and mechanisms for resolving them enhances their overall legal awareness.

International sporting success also strengthens national pride. Victories on the global stage reinforce patriotic feelings among youth and elevate athletes as role models and symbols of collective achievement. In this sense, the education of young athletes should harmonize national traditions, moral and spiritual values, and universal human values. Such harmony enables young people to occupy a worthy place in society and apply legal knowledge in practice.

Recommendations for Improving the Pedagogical Mechanism

The foregoing social, psychological, and pedagogical analysis makes it possible to formulate several theoretical conclusions and practical recommendations for improving the pedagogical mechanism of educating and legally protecting young athletes.

First, the educational approach should be renewed. Upbringing should not be confined to transmitting moral norms; it must also aim to ensure the athlete's internal psychological stability, strengthen self-confidence, and thereby reinforce achievement motivation. Psychological safety should be regarded as the foundation of genuine education.

Second, the meaning of legal protection must be expanded. Legal protection should no longer be understood solely as protection against physical or financial abuse. It must also include the safeguarding of mental well-being, human dignity, and freedom from destructive pedagogical and coaching pressure. In this sense, psychological safety should be recognized as an additional normative level within the system of legal protection.

Third, it is necessary to improve the preparation of coaches and pedagogical staff. Their professional competence, legal literacy, and methodological readiness directly affect the quality of upbringing. For this reason, systematic training, methodological manuals, and regular professional development programs should be introduced.

Fourth, greater emphasis should be placed on cooperation among all stakeholders: the family, sports schools, coaches, psychologists, teachers, public institutions, and the wider community. The protection and education of young athletes cannot be ensured by the state alone; it requires shared responsibility and coordinated action.

Fifth, innovative and digital educational tools should be more actively integrated into the process. Legal education programs delivered through online platforms, interactive resources, and digital learning materials may increase accessibility and effectiveness, especially for young athletes in remote areas.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the problem of educating and legally protecting young athletes cannot be resolved solely through the improvement of legislation. It requires a holistic pedagogical system capable of forming legal immunity in the athlete's personality, ensuring a psychologically safe environment, and strengthening social adaptation. The upbringing of young athletes is therefore not merely a matter of physical training, but a complex pedagogical issue encompassing moral development, psychological resilience, legal consciousness, and social responsibility.

A scientifically grounded pedagogical mechanism must integrate educational, legal, and psychological dimensions into a unified system. Such an approach will make it possible not only to achieve high sporting results, but also to cultivate healthy, competent, legally aware,



and socially active young people capable of contributing to society. Accordingly, further research should focus on developing and experimentally testing an applied pedagogical model based on these theoretical foundations.

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