

**THE RESULTS AND PROBLEMS -
THE REVIEW OF HIGH LEVEL SPORT IN THE MILITARY IN CHINA**

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1.Sport has a close relation with military.

Many present sports like Chinese traditional sports, such as wushu, shooting, archery, fencing and so on, originated from ancient military skills. In turn, some nations’ armies also applied some sports events to military training for increasing the army fighting effectiveness. The Chinese military, in all ages, has attached great importance to the sports function on increasing the military fighting effectiveness. Early in slavery society, the military increased soldiers’ fitness through practising wushu and running. In feudal society, some civil sports, like chuju (a kind of Chinese ancient football), became popular in the military. Up to modern times, with west sports introducing into China, the military in China updated military training contents. At some military schools, soldiers practised not only military skills training such as wushu, archery, swimming, climbing, but also entertainment sports such as parallel bars and horizontal bar, basketball, tennis, etc.

From the establishment of PLA in 1927, sport has become the main subject of educational training in the military. Various sports events competition and meeting, including track and field, ball game, Chinese boxing, practising sword bayonet skills, equitation, obstacle run, throwing-grenade, shooting were held in armies, which not only soldiers but also leaders took part in. Even in the hard times of the Second World War, sports activities didn’t stop in the military. In the every longer rest time, the military would organize many sports activities such as climbing mountain, running, high jump, long jump, basketball, volleyball and so on. These sports practised in the military, however, are not truly the high level sport in the military. The foundation of the People's Republic of China opened a new stage of Chinese sport. In order to make a physical cultural exchange, the country desiderated high level sports teams to compete with the foreign counterparts on the same level. Due to the lower sports level in the early days of new China, the military took the lead in setting up elite sports teams, beginning brining up elite athletes. August 1 Sports Work Troop, including man and woman basketball teams, man and woman volleyball teams, football team, table-tennis team, gymnastics team, weight lifting team, track and field team and swimming team, was built in September 1951, which, up to now, have developed a large number of elite athletes and teams.

2 The achievements and contributions of high level sport in the military in China

The high level sport in the military in China has occupied an irreplaceable status in Chinese sports cause. The military team with the symbol of “August 1”, for fifty years, have not only won countless honors and respects for the military and nation, but also made lots of contributions to the country in the process of China becoming the sports power. Statistics showed, in fifty years from 1949 to 1998, military athletes had created and overtook 63 world records. Up to 1984, just August 1 Sports Work Troop had wined 512 golds, 56 team titles, and about 164 athletes in 407 times had broken 126 national records. The Olympics is the top sports events worldwide. Military athletes are the primary force sizing the Olympic gold and silver. (seeing the following table)

Chinese Army Athletes’ Performances at the Olympics

Time	Venue	Athlete	%	Gold	%
1984	Los Angeles	26	11.56	2	13.33
1988	Seoul	23	7.69	1	20.00
1992	Barcelona	17	6.77	1	6.25
1996	Atalanta	28	9.06	3	18.75

In the military sports arena, the Chinese August 1 Military Pentathlon Team is well-known. In 20 years from the setup, together 300 person-times represented PLA to take part in 22 military pentathlon competitions, winning 42 championships, 63 person-times breaking world records. So the team was awarded the Juan Antonio Samaranch Honour Cup by IOC for the great contribution to pushing forward the international military sport.

In addition to outstanding sports performances, the high level teams in the military have cultivated and provided elite athletes and coaches for the country.

In fifty years, the sports teams in the military in China had brought up a large number of elite athletes, such as Chen Jinkai, the first Chinese athlete breaking the lifting-weight world record, Ma Yanhong, the first gymnastics world title in China, Cheng Rong, the first woman shooter creating the world record in China's shooting history, Li Shulan, breaking archery world records 17 times, Dong Xiangyi, overtaking and breaking shooting world records 13 times, Wang Tao, the table-tennis world champion, etc.

In addition, the high level teams in the military explored many key sports skills and experience for the national sport. For example, the press-spray and turnaround skills of the diving event were invented by the sports team in the military, which have been a magic weapon of the Chinese diving team gaining good results at international level competitions. With these precious skills and experience, the development of national sport has a solid foundation.

The high level sport in the military has boosted the development of mass sport in China. It is investigated that, in China's rural area, ex-soldiers occupy 21 per cent of sports core members. Thus, it can be seen that the high level sport in the military plays an important role not only in the national high level sport, but also in the mass sport of China.

3 The problems facing the high level sport in the military in China at present

With China entering the new stage of full opening-up and reform from 1980s, the Chinese sport has undergone a series of complete reforms, like giving prize money to elite athletes and their coaches creating excellent performances; high level sports teams receiving sponsor and making commerce advertisement; some sports events (for example football) building the professional club; introducing foreign players home and exporting players abroad for the market benefit and public support, so as to adapt well to the development of Chinese socialist market economy.

In this situation, the high level sport in the military in China is being faced with unprecedented problems and challenges.

First, the team structure is inequable.

At internal large-scale sports events, sport teams are present with two forms. One form is the team set up in terms of administrative area like province, autonomous region, and the other is the team set up in terms of vocation system like railway, post, aviation. The military team belongs to the latter. As a result, an inequality exists in the internal sports events, such as basketball and football, which one or two foreign players are allowed to compete on the arena, but in the military team no foreign military players who have military rank are allowed to compete for PLA.

Second, the incomes of athletes are inequable.

Internationally, the high level sport is more and more relevant to commerce operation. The Olympic Movement, whose principle is amateur, has to ease the restriction on the professional athlete taking part in competitions. The high level sport of China is so. The reason of the close relation between the high level sport and commerce, or some sports events becoming part of sports industry, makes athletes, the main role in high level sports field, increase their incomes quickly, creating a large number of rich sport stars. But military athletes are not the case. Because of the soldiers' role and their duty, military athletes, however, gained the same performances as nonsoldier athletes, but couldn't be as rich as theirs.

Third, the military is short of high level reserve athletes.

The sustainable development of high level sport must be on the basis of the continuing building of sports reserve talents.

Those adolescents with sports talents form the basis of the continuing development of the high level sport in the military. Service in the military is a vocation with lofty honor, which can attract talented youths to

join the military. The military honor is not enough to attract all youths with sports talents to pursue the high level sport in the military.

In addition, provinces and municipalities are developing their own high level sports teams. What is more, the shortage of reserve athletes is a major problem restricting the development of high level sport in the military.

At present, the Chinese military is faced with many challenges like the above mentioned. Therefore, the best way to advance the high level sport in the military in China is concentrating force, exerting advantages, emphasis on developing events in close relation with military sport.