

## CZECH TOP MILITARY SPORT – PRESENTATION OF THE SYSTEM

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In the past Czechoslovakia celebrated extraordinary sports successes. A significant portion of them was achieved also by the military athletes. The military top level sport became an integral part of the armed forces in 1948. Since then till the division of Czechoslovakia the military athletes won in total 70 medals both at the Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

At this point I would like to remind you of our historically most successful military athlete respected up to now in the whole world. The athlete I am talking about is Emil ZÁTOPEK, a long-distance runner, a legend of our and world athletics. A quadruple Olympic champion, holder of one silver Olympic medal and 18 world records.

We managed to defend the military top level sport system within a new stand-alone democratic nation after the change of the political regime in 1989 and subsequent division of Czechoslovakia in 1993. In a difficult period of ongoing reforms of the armed forces, the high-quality conditions for military athletes' training remained. The outcome is the current generation of military athletes who achieve very good performance and results in the most significant world as well as European and CISM competitions.

The Sports Furtherance Act, passed in 2001, contributed to the stabilisation and development of sports in the Czech Republic, including the military top level sport. The Sports Furtherance Act assigns the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic to form, within their competence areas, prerequisites for sport development, for training of national sport representation and for training of sport talents and to support activities of their own departmental sport centres. In the Czech Republic there are three departmental sport centres. 1<sup>st</sup> is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2<sup>nd</sup> is the Ministry of Defence and 3<sup>rd</sup> is the ministry of Interior. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport co-ordinates the activities of the departmental sport centres and it provides financial support from the national budget. All tree departmental sport centres co-operate also very closely with the Czech Olympic Committee and the Czech Sports Association.

The most important part of the military top level sport is the Military Sports Centre DUKLA. It incorporates and systematically develops especially individual Olympic disciplines. Parachuting which is not an Olympic discipline, is also its part because the results make our team to one of the best in the world. Aeronautical and Military Pentathlon are managed directly by the general staff. We only coordinate their sport activities.

CASRI PRAGUE – Scientific and Research Institute of Military Sports. A significant role within the military top level sport system is played by the Sports Research Institute of the Czech Armed Forces known under the abbreviation CASRI Prague. This Institute is capable of:  
function, biochemical, psychological, biomechanical, anthropometrical and other examinations in and out of the laboratory,  
research and use of information on organism adaptation potential for the purposes of top athletes' training rationalisation,  
monitoring of the current shape for the needs and training of military professionals.

The military top level sport system is basically financed from two sources of the national budget. The financial support of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport designed to cover sport activities directly related to the national sport representation. The financial support provided by the Ministry of Defence is primarily designed for logistical support of the military top level sport as a whole, but it is also used for the departmental sport representation and related CISM events.

The financial resources are used under a differentiation principle. The best military athletes who represent both the republic and the department can exploit both basic financial sources. On the other hand those who are not in national teams, can make only a limited use of the Czech Ministry of Defence financial sources. This concerns namely the Aeronautical and Modern Pentathlon. Some teams and also individuals are partly financed by advertising or by sponsors.

### **Military Top Level Sport System Analysis**

The subsequent SWOT analysis of the military top level sport system specifies its Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities for further developments and it shows potential future Threats.

#### *Strengths:*

efficient two-stage management system – direct management of the military top level sport system exercised by the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic is quick, operative and it is fully compatible, considerable contribution to the presentation of the Czech Republic and armed forces at the public at home and abroad,

position of the Czech armed forces within the CISM – after 1991 when the Czech Republic had become a CISM member, our military delegations were present at all important events of this sport organization. We are also active organizers of CISM events at home,

prerequisites for the service of military professionals who are morally, professionally, physically a linguistically trained and capable to fulfil other assignments even after the end of their sport careers – like any other professional of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic also a top level athlete – soldier on active duty must comply with the rules of the Career Structure. The basic prerequisite for achieving systematised category of a sports instructor in the Military Sports Centre DUKLA is the sport performance at the international level. The other decisive requirement is military expertise. Any top level athlete – soldier on active duty must complete expert military courses,

sport talents education system – the decisive source for selection and replenishment of systematised posts of sports instructors within the military top level sport system is the inherent education of perspective athletes in junior sport teams called cadets of all supported sport branches.

#### *Weaknesses:*

downsizing in systematised posts for athletes – soldiers on active duty and cancellation of conscription this year reduce the opportunities of participation of the military sport representation in CISM competitions – because of transformation of the military top level sport the division of athletes within the Military Sports Centre DUKLA is as follows:

28% athletes – soldiers on active duty,

22% athletes – civilian employees,

50% athletes – junior category - cadets.

All these military athletes signed contracts with the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and they also have joint activities, however, according to the article 3.19 Participation – Military Status of the CISM Policy Manual only athletes – soldiers on active duty may participate in CISM competitions.

#### *Opportunities:*

Mass media's and sponsors' interest in our top level athletes are good opportunities to form a favourable profile of professional armed forces in the sport area and related quality of life – just to give you an

example, at many official social events the military athletes can be seen in uniforms. Thus they can exercise a significant positive influence over the public's attitude towards the armed forces, CISM membership – to actively foster permanent contacts within the sport environment and those of educational nature among the armed forces in the whole world, to emphasise the system of selection, education and care of sport talents.

*Threats:*

cuts in or termination of national subsidies to non-Olympic sports, change of national administration and related different views of ongoing reform of the armed forces – we should not allow this.

The main objective for the future – to maintain the military top level sport system and its further development within the defence department.

**What should I say at the end?**

The current conditions for athletes' training for the most important sport competitions are sufficient. Thanks to its long-term successes the military top level sport has won its specific position within the recently created professional Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. Our main objective for the future is to maintain this position and to ensure further development of the whole military top level sport system.