

Research on the Construction and Development of High-Level Sports Teams in Chinese Universities

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Abstract

To ensure that high-level sports teams in universities develop faster, higher, stronger, and healthier, it is very urgent and urgent to study how to develop high-level sports teams in universities. Using the methods of questionnaire, interview, and case analysis, this paper analyzes the current situation of the development of high-level sports teams in Chinese universities (CUHST), identifies the existing problems, and takes the relatively leading table tennis team of East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST) in Shanghai as an example to explore their solutions to the corresponding problems, to provide reference for the further development of high-level sports teams in other universities. The results showed that the contradiction between learning and training was still the main problem perplexing the construction and development of high-level sports teams in universities. At the same time, the problems of injury problems, low training quality, and less competition times also directly lead to the decline of student athletes' sports levels. The table tennis team of East China University of Science and Technology has taken targeted measures on the above problems and achieved good results. Therefore, to accelerate the construction of high-level sports teams in universities, the key is to grasp the core of the problem, sort out the existing effective methods, and form experience. For government departments, system innovation is needed, and for universities themselves, concepts need to be updated.

Keywords: Universities, High-Level Sports Team, Student Athletes.

Introduction

Sport is an important part of higher education. As a new attempt to reform the training mode of competitive sports talents in China, the essence of high-level sports teams in Chinese universities (CUHST) is to integrate the training of competitive sports talents into the campus with profound cultural heritage and open up a new way to cultivate competitive sports talents with comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, sports, and beauty. On the other hand, it also promotes the reform and development of college sports (Li, Bian, & Li, 2022; Yang, 2022). Therefore, accelerating the construction and development of CUHST and striving to build a scientific management system of high-level sports teams that are in line with international standards and compatible with educational reform are not only the needs of national competitive sports system reform and sustainable and healthy development of competitive sports but also the needs of accelerating the development of college sports.

CUHST refers to the organizational form of extracurricular sports training in Chinese universities. The purpose is to improve the school's sports technology level, cultivate outstanding talents with socialist

consciousness, scientific and cultural knowledge, and a high level of sports technology, participate in domestic and foreign sports competitions, achieve good results, promote school sports exchange, and promote the popularization and improvement of school sports (Lu, 1996). Since the pilot work of CUHST in 1986, ordinary universities have been brave in exploration, which has improved the technical level of CUHST to a certain extent, cultivated several excellent sports talents for the country, and promoted the comprehensive development of sports work in ordinary universities (Ma, 2018). Up to now, 283 universities have recruited high-level athletes, and they are still growing (Wang, Ge, & Wu, 2021). Looking at the development of CUHST in the past 40 years, many scholars have found that there are still some deviations and problems in the holding concept, target positioning, and specific implementation of CUHST, which affect the sustainable and healthy development of CUHST (Liu, 2018).

From the research results in relevant fields, the current research on CUHST mainly focuses on keywords such as construction, development, current situation, and countermeasures (Zhang, 2017). It is obvious that CUHST is still in the process of development and construction, and the exploration of its construction and

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development ideas is also a hot research topic. However, from numerous studies, more research is conducted at the speculative and top level (Huang et al., 2022; Ma, 2018; Yang, 2022), lacking empirical and fundamental research. Since the beginning of the 21st century, it has been an inevitable trend for the development of CUHST in the new century to cultivate two-way talents with excellent ideological quality, modern scientific and cultural knowledge, and high-level sports ability (Yan, 2014). It is more urgent and urgent to study how to develop CUHST in China, which is to ensure that CUHST develop faster, higher, stronger, and healthier. In recent years, CUHST in China has been developing rapidly, and some excellent examples have emerged, such as the table tennis team of East China University of Science and Technology in Shanghai. However, the overall construction status of CUHST in China is not clear now. In particular, whether the CUHST in China has been developing in a very correct and efficient direction or is still facing various problems in the exploration and development, this needs to be further determined. If the construction and development of CUHST in China are still facing certain difficulties, we must find appropriate ways to solve them as soon as possible. Therefore, this study is expected to clarify the current situation of the development of high-level athletes in Universities in China. From the policies, student-athlete motivations, liking for majors, competition participation, sports level changes, school measures, the level of coaches, and other aspects of the current situation of a comprehensive study. To clarify the existing problems and take the relatively leading table tennis team of East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST) in Shanghai as an example to explore their solutions to the corresponding problems, to provide a reference for the further development of high-level sports teams in other universities.

Method

Questionnaire Survey Method

The questionnaire design takes the theoretical conception as the starting point and arranges the content and form of the questionnaire around the theoretical thinking and purpose. In this study, the author designed two sets of questionnaires for coaches and athletes of high-level sports teams according to the research questions and assumptions and referring to the relevant research results at home and abroad (the validity of the questionnaire was tested by 8 professors in related fields and the validity of the content and structure of the questionnaire was unanimously recognized). The content

of the questionnaire is mainly to understand the current development status of CUHST. And it included the policies, student-athlete motivations, liking for majors, competition participation, sports level changes, school measures, the level of coaches, and other aspects. According to the geographical location of China, divided into North China, Northeast China, East China, Central South, southwest, northwest, and other regions, no less than 5 universities with high-level sports teams were randomly selected from each region to issue the corresponding questionnaire (the same method as Wang et al. (2021)). A total of 87 coaches' questionnaires were distributed, 83 valid questionnaires were recovered, 452 athletes' questionnaires were distributed, and 426 valid questionnaires were recovered. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested by the repeated test method (after two weeks, 10 coaches and 30 athletes were randomly selected for repeated tests, $R=0.86$).

Interview Method

According to the content of this research, three heads of provincial education departments or sports departments were randomly selected from North China, Northeast China, East China, Central South, Southwest China, and Northwest China, and two coaches of CUHST were randomly selected from North China, Northeast China, East China, Central South, Southwest China, and Northwest China, and six well-known experts in related fields were selected. A total of 36 people were interviewed, including 18 persons in charge of provincial education departments or sports departments, 12 coaches of CUHST, and 6 well-known experts in related fields conducted interviews on the problems, opportunities, and development ideas faced by high-level sports teams in colleges and universities in China.

Case Analysis Method

This paper makes a case study of ECUST, which has characteristics in organizing high-level table tennis teams in Universities. It makes a detailed analysis of the objectives, main tasks, and operation methods of the team, and probes into how the table tennis team of ECUST solves the problems faced by other CUHST. It is hoped that this can provide a reference for the development of high-level sports teams in other universities, and the idea of case analysis can refer to Ge (2018).

Result

The Main Policies and Regulations of High-Level Sports Teams in Chinese Universities

Table 1

List of Major Policies and Regulations on CUHST Issued by China Over the Years

No.	Year	Issuing Department	Name of Policy and Regulation Document	Primary Coverage
1	1986	State Education Commission, State Sports Commission	The plan of carrying out extracurricular sports training and improving the technical level of school sports.	The main tasks and objectives of after-school training were determined, 10 implementation measures were formulated, and it was stipulated that the fundamental purpose of school after-school training was to "improve the national quality, produce more talents, and produce good talents"
2	1987	National Sports Commission	Notice on the trial enrollment of high-level athletes in universities.	Specific enrollment methods.
3	1987	National Sports Commission	Management measures for training high level athletes in Pilot Universities.	Including organizational leadership, ideological and moral education, teaching and student status management, sports training, coaches, funds and life management, evaluation and reward.
4	1990	State Education Commission	Measures for evaluating the pilot work of extracurricular training in universities	Check and evaluate the specific work.
5	1990	State Education Commission	Interim Provisions on sports competitions for students of ordinary national universities and middle schools.	It should be conducive to the all-round development of students' morality, intelligence, physique and beauty, with the purpose of educating people.
6	1995	State Education Commission	Notice on the trial establishment of high-level sports teams in some ordinary universities	Specific enrollment methods.
7	1998	State Education Commission	Notice on the inspection and evaluation of national pilot middle schools for cultivating reserve talents and Pilot Universities for cultivating high-level student athletes.	Purpose, scope, implementation and timing of the assessment.
8	2000	General Administration of sport of China	2001-2010 Sports Reform and development outline.	We will strengthen the construction of excellent sports teams, and gradually make the transition from sports teams to universities, so as to provide more convenient admission and further study conditions for excellent athletes.
9	2002	General Administration of sport of China	2001- outline of the 2010 Olympic glory program.	The "combination of sports and education" to jointly cultivate high-level reserve talents system and incentive mechanism have taken shape.
10	2005	Ministry of education, General Administration of sport of China	Opinions on Further Strengthening the construction of high-level sports teams in Chinese Universities.	The construction of CUHST is an organic part of higher education; This paper puts forward some concrete measures to attract excellent coaches to teach in Universities.
11	2006	Ministry of education, General Administration of sport of China	Opinions on further strengthening school physical education and improving students' health quality.	The evaluation of CUHST must take the situation of group activities and the level of forming sports characteristics as important conditions; Specific measures such as reasonably solving the contradiction between learning and training.

12	2012	Ministry of Education	Suggestions on Further Strengthening School Physical Education.	Fully understand the importance of strengthening school physical education, clarify the overall idea and main objectives of strengthening school physical education, implement the key tasks of strengthening school physical education, establish and improve monitoring and evaluation mechanism of school physical education, and strengthen the organization and leadership of school physical education.
13	2017	Ministry of Education	Implementation opinions of the Ministry of education on Further Strengthening the construction of high-level sports teams in Chinese Universities.	Give full play to the leading role of high-level sports teams in strengthening the reform and development of school physical education, and striving to promote students' physical and mental health and all-round development
14	2020	Ministry of education, General Administration of sport of China	Opinions on deepening the integration of sports and education to promote the healthy development of teenagers.	The education and sports departments jointly build CUHST, and further standardize the project layout, enrollment scale, entrance examination, assessment and evaluation. Encourage universities to actively apply for the establishment of high-level sports teams, reasonably plan the enrollment coverage of high-level sports teams, and increase the enrollment of high-level sports teams. The sports and education departments promote the reform of the construction of national teams and provincial teams and the construction of CUHST, give strong support to the training, competition and guarantee of high-level sports teams, and include them in the training sequence of competitive sports reserve talents. Select a certain proportion of excellent athletes and sports teams to enter provincial teams and national teams in accordance with open, fair and just procedures, and they will undertake corresponding international competition tasks on behalf of the country.
15	2021	Ministry of education, General Administration of sport of China	Guidance on further improving and standardizing the examination and enrollment of high-level sports teams in Chinese Universities.	Further deepen the reform of examination and enrollment of CUHST, and strengthen standardized management
16	2022	Ministry of Education	Opinions on Further Strengthening the construction and management of high-level sports teams in Chinese Universities.	The construction of CUHST should be incorporated into the national competitive talent training system, which needs to be further improved in the aspects of connotation construction, competition organization, evaluation and assessment, and organization management, so as to promote the CUHST to serve the development of school sports and the national competitive talent training.

Note: the contents in the table are obtained from the public documents on the official websites of the Ministry of education and General Administration of sport of China. Combining the main policies and regulations on the trial establishment of CUHST issued over the years, it is found that the laws and regulations on the trial establishment of CUHST issued by the Ministry of Education (the former State Education Commission) and the State General Administration of sports (the former State Sports Commission) in China over the past 30 years are few. However, since 1986, the former State Education Commission and the former State Sports Commission have repeatedly promoted the construction of CUHST.

Until 2005, the Ministry of Education and the State General Administration of Sports jointly issued opinions on Further Strengthening the construction of CUHST (giving certain preferential policies to universities hosting high-level sports teams, and also providing corresponding professional measures), By 2020, the Ministry of education and the General Administration of the sport of the people's Republic of China jointly issued the opinions on deepening the integration of sports and education to promote the

healthy development of teenagers (the education and sports departments jointly build CUHST, promote the reform of the construction of national teams and provincial teams to link up with the construction of CUHST and give strong support to the training, competition, and guarantee of high-level sports teams), All these reflect that the national education administrative department and sports administrative department attach great importance to this work.

The Purpose of Student Athletes Applying for High-Level Sports Teams in Universities

Table 2

Statistical Table of the Purpose of Student Athletes Applying for CUHST (N=426)

Options	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Because it is easy to go to college	269	63.1%
In order to achieve better performance	219	51.4%
In order to find a good job in the future	198	46.5%
In order to participate in sports	156	36.6%
In order to enter the professional team in the future	79	18.5%
To become a famous athlete	57	13.4%
other	35	8.2%

The results of [Table 2](#) show that the reason for choosing the most is that it is easy to go to college (63.1%); The second is to achieve better sports performance (51.4%); The third is to find a good job (46.5%) and to participate in sports (36.6%) and so on.

This shows that student-athletes have a strong desire to learn, want to pass their specialties to college, improve their sports performance while learning and training, and find a way to solve the problem of employment in the future.

How Much Student Athletes Like Their Majors

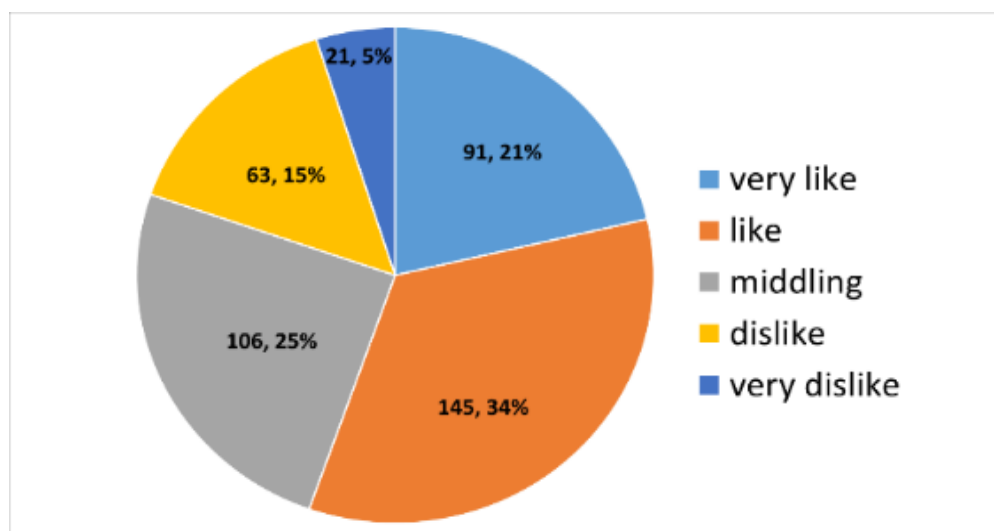


Figure 1: Statistical Chart of Student Athletes' Liking for Their Majors (N=426).

Among the respondents, their majors include 30 majors in different disciplines such as education, law, finance, medicine, management, and agriculture. [Figure 1](#) shows that 145 people chose to like their majors, accounting for 34% of the total number of people surveyed; 21% of the

total respondents liked their majors very much; 84 people don't like and don't like their majors very much, accounting for 20% of the total. In addition, according to the interview, most universities have limited the optional majors of high-level athletes, generally only 1-2 liberal arts

majors and the space for students to choose their own majors is narrow.

Number of Student-Athletes Participating in the Competition Each Year

Table 3

Statistics of the Number of Student Athletes Participating in The Competition Each Year (N=426)

Number of competitions per year	frequency	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
More than 10 times	21	4.9%	4.9%
7-9 times	42	9.9%	14.8%
5-6 times	67	15.7%	30.5%
3-4 times	111	26.1%	56.6%
1-2 times	103	24.2%	80.8%
None	82	19.2%	100%

69.5% of the total respondents participated in the competition less than 4 times a year (19.2% of the total respondents never participated in the competition); 14.8% of the total respondents participated in the competition more than 7 times a year. This shows that most universities participate in fewer competitions. Only through the

competition and exchange of inter-school competitions can we improve the level of competitive sports in universities, which requires the cooperation of the sports system and the education system to organize more events suitable for CUHST, to drive the development and popularization of sports.

Comparison of Sports Level of Student Athletes Before and After Admission

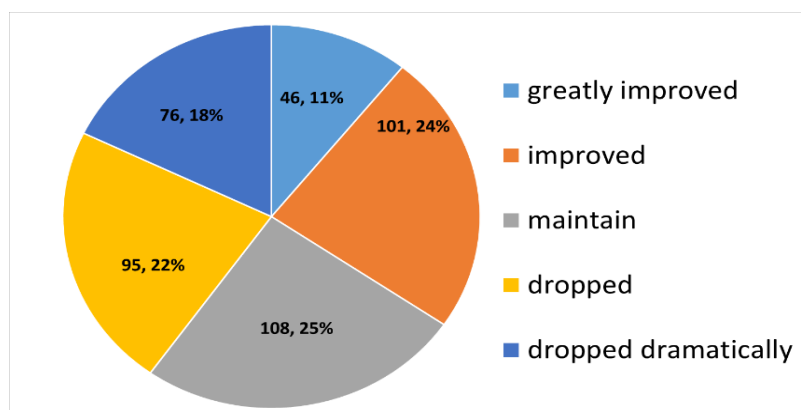


Figure 2: Statistical Chart of Sports Level Changes of Student Athletes After Enrollment (N=426).

The sports level of student-athletes increased significantly and slightly compared with that before entering school, accounting for 11% and 24% respectively, and 25% maintained the original level. The sports performance decreased compared with that before entering school, even

decreased significantly, accounting for 40%. There are many reasons for the decline, including too few participation times of student-athletes, low enthusiasm for training, injury problems, high learning pressure of cultural courses, and so on.

Measures Taken by The School After the Delay of Student-Athletes' Courses

Table 4

Measures Taken by The School After Student-Athletes Delay the Course Due to Training or Competition

Measures Taken by The School After the Delay of Student-Athletes' Courses	Frequency	Frequency Percentage
By self-study	376	88.3%
Make up lessons arranged by the school after the game	50	11.7%
Credits will be awarded for good performance	244	57.3%
The school will directly grant some credits exempted	89	20.9%
No special policies	93	21.8%

For courses delayed by student-athletes due to training or competition, most student-athletes need to make up for missed courses by self-study (accounting for 88.3%), and only a few schools will arrange supplementary courses for students after they return from the competition. On the other hand, 57.3% of student-athletes said that their school would give them some credit rewards after they achieved

good results in the competition, to reduce their burden of cultural studies. 20.9% of student-athletes said that their school directly exempted them from some credits and would not require them to have additional competition results. At the same time, some schools treat student-athletes and other ordinary students equally without any preferential policies.

Education and Sports Experience of Coaches of High-Level Sports Teams in Universities

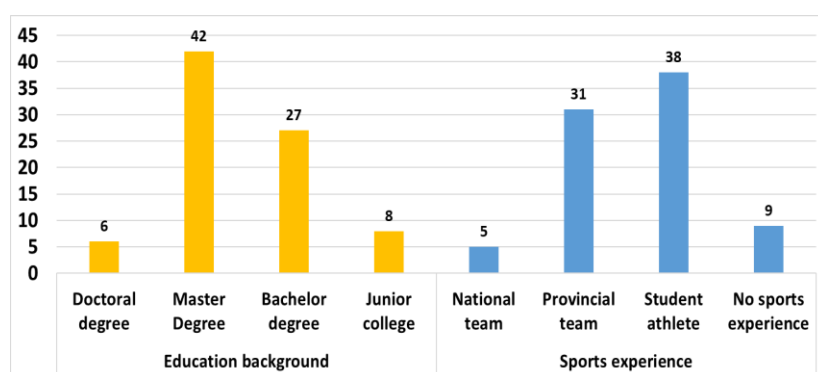


Figure 3: Statistical Chart of Academic Qualifications and Sports Experience of Coaches of CUHST.

Among the 83 coaches of CUHST surveyed, 42 had master's degrees, 27 had bachelor's degrees, and only 6 had doctor's degrees. Coaches with master's and bachelor's degrees were the main group, accounting for 83.1% in total; From the perspective of sports experience, most of the coaches surveyed are former student athletes, a total of 38 people, and a large number of coaches have provincial team training experience (31 people, accounting for 37.3%), only 5 coaches have national team training experience, and 9 coaches have no sports team training experience. On the whole, the educational background and sports experience of the coaches of CUHST are not poor, but after further understanding, it is found that they are not full-time coaches, and most of them are part-time PE teachers.

Discussion

Problems in the Development of High-Level Sports Teams in Universities

Under the condition of gradual improvement of the socialist market economic system, under the condition that the whole society has not paid enough attention to school sports, including the organization of CUHST, it is far from enough for the national education administrative department and sports administrative department to pay attention to it and only rely on the power of administrative regulations to promote the process of organizing CUHST. Eggers et al. (2020), and Yang (2022) also think so in their

research. Through a more in-depth analysis of the current situation of the development of CUHST in China, many existing problems have been found, which need us to actively explore and find practical measures to solve the problems. The main problems are:

First of all, the biggest difficulty of the student-athletes surveyed in school should be the "contradiction between learning and training". The student-athletes hope to go to a good university, but they cannot enter the major they like. The study of student-athletes will still be affected by training and competition, and many schools do not provide convenience for student-athletes in this regard. The "contradiction between learning and training" is still one of the major problems since the establishment of CUHST in China (Zhou, Xiao, & Zhang, 2018). To solve the "contradiction between learning and training", we should not only see the side of mutual opposition, mutual exclusion, and mutual restriction but also see the side of mutual connection, mutual transformation, mutual penetration, and mutual promotion, that is, the unity of opposites of contradictions.

Second, the survey results show that injury problems and poor training quality are the main factors affecting sports performance, which shows that the scientific and technological support system for the construction of high-level sports teams needs to be established, which is consistent with the views of Yu (2010). Modern competitive sports cannot be separated from the scientific and technological guarantee, and it should rely on the multidisciplinary advantages of universities to provide

scientific and technological guarantee for the training and competition of high-level sports teams and the health of athletes (Martin et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2021).

Third, 69.5% of the total respondents participated in the competition less than four times a year, and 19.2% of the total respondents never participated in the competition. At the same time, student-athletes also believe that the main reason for the decline in sports performance is that there are too few entries. This shows that although many universities recruit high-level athletes, they do not organize student-athletes to participate in the competition many times. Because many student-athletes do not participate in the competition, their enthusiasm for training also gradually decreases, which forms a disgusting cycle. Only through the competition and exchange of inter-school competitions can we improve the level of competitive sports in universities, which requires the cooperation of the sports system and the education system to organize more events suitable for CUHST, to drive the development and popularization of sports (Liu, Lan, & Jia, 2021).

Fourth, at present, the educational background and sports experience of coaches of CUHST are not poor, but most of them are responsible for the dual tasks of sports team training and public physical education teaching. Their workload is quite large, which is quite different from foreign full-time coaches in Universities (Dietl, Lang, & Nessler, 2017; Qiao & Liang, 2022). This is to concentrate on high-level sports teams, and improving the competitive level and performance has increased the difficulty.

Case Study of The Table Tennis Team of ECUST

Since the mid-1980s, ECUST has established the goal of cultivating college sports talents with table tennis as the characteristic project. In 1988, the first high-level student-athletes of table tennis were recruited. Since 1992, the women's team has represented the country in various international college table tennis competitions at all levels and won all the championships. At the same time, the club actively explores a new model of "one-stop" training of table tennis reserve talents from universities, secondary schools, and primary schools, and has signed "one-stop" training agreements with Shanghai Middle School, Huayu Middle School, Qixin Primary school, Yifu primary school, etc.

In 1996, the table tennis club of ECUST was officially established, and participated in the second China Table Tennis Club Super League, while exploring the path of market-oriented operation. The club has signed contracts with a lot of companies. As the only amateur team, it has been playing in the Chinese Super League for many years. In 2012, the table tennis team of ECUST won the

championship of the Women's Table Tennis Super League, creating a miracle in the history of the league and the only university to win this honor so far. The table tennis team of ECUST is expected to achieve such achievements, which is inseparable from the advanced and reasonable operation mode, which is mainly summarized as follows:

Objectives of the team: to represent Chinese college students in the World University Games and various table tennis events, to represent Shanghai college students in the National University Games and various table tennis events, to participate in the China Table Tennis Super League, to popularize table tennis in universities, to improve the level of table tennis, and to enrich table tennis culture.

Management mode: the management mode of the club system is implemented. In addition to the cultural studies of the table tennis team in the School of Sports Science and Engineering of the University, the training and competition, including the source of funds, are completely independent.

Student profile: full-time undergraduate. All high-level athletes are arranged to study international economics and trade (athletes' class) for further education. The College of Sports Science and Engineering is equipped with special teachers of cultural courses and corresponding credits are required for graduation. In addition, there are reward mechanisms and research guarantee mechanisms for athletes with excellent performance. At present, the graduation rate of athletes is 100%, and the employment rate is 100%.

Coaches: the coaches are mainly full-time coaches, with one head coach and two coaches. Sign agreements with relevant coaches during the preparation period of major events and implement relevant reward and punishment standards according to the agreements.

Training: daily training time is 3 hours; weekly training time is 18 hours. The sports team has independent training venues with perfect conditions.

Funds: the funds are mainly allocated by the Ministry of Education and the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, and the table tennis team has additional sponsorship. The total amount is about 1.5 million yuan per year.

Scientific and technological support: the medical treatment adopts the mode of cooperation with the University Hospital, and the college is also equipped with a fitness and rehabilitation center to serve the sports team. The coaching team of high-level sports teams should complete the scientific research-oriented index every year: 1 paper per capita; The per capita expenditure is 2000. The accommodation of athletes shall follow the relevant standards of the school. During the preparation period for

major events, the canteen has special windows for athletes, and the dormitory is equipped with air conditioning. In general, the table tennis team of ECUST has handled several major problems existing in the current high-level teams of other universities. Therefore, their leadership in development is also based on evidence, and their mode of operation is also worthy of reference for other universities. Of course, all aspects of the table tennis team of ECUST are not perfect. For example, the allocation of specialized management personnel for the table tennis team is still less, the restrictions on the use of funds are still more, and sometimes there are conflicts between the training venues and daily teaching.

Conclusion

On the whole, the construction and development of CUHST are still faced with many problems. The contradiction between learning and training was still the main problem perplexing the construction and development of CUHST. At the same time, the problems of injury problems, low training quality, and low competition times also directly lead to the decline of student athletes' sports levels. However, from the point of view of individual excellent examples, the construction and development of CUHST also exist well-constructed

and leading schools, such as the table tennis team of East China University of Science and Technology has taken targeted measures on the above problems and achieved good results.

To sum up, to accelerate the construction of CUHST, the key is to grasp the core of the problem, sort out the existing effective methods, and form experience. For government departments, it is necessary to innovate the system, create a good social development environment for the construction of CUHST, and give universities the corresponding autonomy and certain preferential policies to support and encourage them; For universities themselves, it is necessary to update the concept, fully understand the significance and role of holding CUHST, follow the regularity of holding CUHST, accurately position, and strive to build a truly high-level sports team, which has become the traditional strength and brand of universities.

However, such a statement may also have certain limitations, after all, different universities are different, each school is different, and each has its own characteristics, the strategy adopted by the table tennis team of ECUST is indeed very good for itself, and certainly can be used as a reference for other schools to imitate, but whether such a practice is completely feasible for other schools still needs to be further determined, and it needs to be targeted and further discussed in subsequent studies.

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