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IDENTIFYING THE MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS OF UKRAINIAN ATHLETES OF OLYMPIC SPORTS IN WARTIME CONDITIONS

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Abstract. The most important needs of Ukrainian athletes in Olympic sports in wartime conditions have been identified with the involvement of specialists in the field of physical culture and sports, in accordance with which international organizations will be able to provide the necessary support.

Keywords: needs of Ukrainian athletes, wartime, supporting Ukrainian athletes of Olympic sports.

Introduction. Following the tragic events surrounding the war in Ukraine, which started on 24 February 2022, Russian troops have been destroying many Olympic sports infrastructures and athletes and Olympic sports professionals are suffering serious consequences, and sports talents are being lost.

Therefore, this study aimed to identify the most important needs of Ukraine's Olympic sports in wartime conditions. It sought to formulate priority areas crucial for support during and after the war period, aimed at safeguarding the career prospects of Ukrainian athletes.

The study further aimed to identify well-informed priorities for developing Ukraine's Olympic sports. These priorities, once discerned, can be advocated for promotion and prioritisation in present and future agendas, thereby shaping the

course of international support and ensuring the preservation of Ukrainian athletes' career prospects.

The purpose and objectives of the research. To identify the most important needs of Ukraine Olympic sports in hostile conditions. To develop the priority areas that will be important to support during and after the war period to protect Ukrainian athletes' career prospects and identify targeted and well-informed priorities of developing of Ukraine's Olympic sports that could be promoted and prioritized in the current or future agendas to create the appropriate directions of the international supporting to protect Ukrainian athletes' career prospects.

Research material and methods. analysis of literary sources, methods of mathematical statistics, three-round Delphi study. A total of 42 participants took part in the study. To identify appropriate panellists, we chose practitioners and sports scientists, as athletes with experience in international competitions in Olympic sports, experienced Olympic sports coaches and scientists who conduct research in the field of sports sciences and have relevant publications.

Research results and their discussion. We use a Delphi study which is a structured method to systematically consult a panel of experts included several rounds of data collection and analysis. A three-round Delphi study was conducted with 42 participants who had expertise as a coach, athlete, researcher (PhD, habilitated doctor) in sport science.

To formulate the initial draft of overarching needs of Ukrainian athletes of Olympic sports in hostile condition, we organised meeting with some experts (researchers in the field of Olympic sports) to investigate the main problems and needs of the Ukrainian athletes. From the meeting a list with of 71 needs of the athletes of Olympic sports were proposed.

During the first round of the study, participants were asked to rate the components of the needs of athletes of Olympic sports in hostile conditions (71 items) according to their importance (1 - the least important, 10 - the most important). Mean scores were calculated and ranked in descending order from highest to lowest. From the first round we have chosen the most important 29 items.

During the second round, participants were asked to rate the components of the needs of Ukrainian athletes of Olympic sports in hostile conditions (29 items from the first round) according to their importance.

Also mean scores were calculated and ranked in descending order from highest to lowest. And from the second round we have chosen only ten the most important items.

During the third round of the study, experts were invited to individually discuss the list of most important needs of Ukrainian athletes of Olympic sports in hostile condition identified in the second round. The third round contains the list of ten the most important items, the ratings indicated and the expert consensus. The members were asked whether they agreed with the majority opinion, and if not, they were asked to explain the reasons why they did not agree with the group.

There was strong panellist agreement in the needs of Ukrainian athletes of Olympic sports in hostile condition identified. The list of the final top 10 needs included (I) "Develop and maintain the athlete's fitness level". This was followed by

(II) "Implementation the better system of athlete recovery " and (III)" To ensure a safety training place for athletes".

Conclusions. The needs identified in this study on tremendous value and provide guidance for efforts helping to the Ukraine's sports talents during the wartime and, as a result, will guide the international institutions to direct appropriate aid and international support.

Prospects for further research in this direction consist in analyzing further priority prospects for the development of Olympic sports in Ukraine.

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