

The development status and countermeasures research on Chinese university table tennis championships

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Abstract: by means of literature, statistical analysis, comparison and logical argumentation this paper studies the Chinese university table tennis championships (abbreviated as CUTTC hereafter) which is organized by the Chinese university table tennis association (abbreviated as CUTTA hereafter) affiliated to the federation of university sports of China in recent 10 years. Combined with years of firsthand experiences in the organizing work and reflection, the authors introduce the progress achieved, analyze and sum up its existing deficiencies and propose the countermeasures and improvement suggestions accordingly.

Keywords: the Chinese university table tennis championships, development status, countermeasures.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese university table tennis championships (CUTTC), the fixed event organized annually by Chinese university table tennis association (CUTTA) affiliated to the federation of university sports of China (abbreviated as FUSC hereafter), represent the highest table tennis level of about 20 millions of Chinese college students. According to the requirement of FUSC, each branch association holds one championship, one seminar and one training class yearly for its member universities, implementing the strategy of a pilot scheme of establishing elite athletic teams in colleges which was set forth by former state sports commission and former state education commission. Since 1990, CUTTC has achieved successfully 17 times with event setting, eligibility, entry, registration, playing method and system of reward and punishment getting more and more perfect, commercial operations being gradually introduced and the scale and influence been increasingly notable. CUTTC provide the exchanging platform for about 40 universities eligible to enroll elite table tennis players, promote the full development of the table tennis teaching and training as well.

Meanwhile CUTTC also has its deficiencies. The current frequency and scale of championships can't

fully satisfy the participating needs of about a thousand universities. The division and player's eligibility check has yet to be perfected and improved. The source of funding channel is monotonous and the operation of marketing is not ideal. The internal cultural value of event lacks attention and exploitation. Therefore the purpose of this study is to put up pertinent proposals to further perfect the CUTTC. The paper is structured as follows. First, the current progress and limitations of CUTTC is described, followed by data collection and analysis methods. Results are presented and discussed, with concluding remarks and future suggestions ending the paper.

2. PROGRESS OF CUTTC ACHIEVED

2.1 Increased scale and influence

Since 2001, the number of participants has been increased each year with 60 member universities, 11 in North China, 6 in North East, 24 in East China, 16 in Central China, 2 in South West and 6 in North West. This is partly due to CUTTA's efforts to improve its work and actively enroll new members, partly because table tennis is developing vigorously among universities of different parts of China and each university pays much attention to CUTTC. Especially the participation of the Hong Kong polytechnic

university, the city university of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong institute of education has boosted the exchanges between the mainland and Hong Kong and Macau area.

Table 1 General information of the CUTTC since 2001

Year	Event	Location	Number of universities	Number of athletes
2001	The "DHS Cup" 10 th CUTTC	East China University of Science and Technology	36	347
2002	The "Sanjing Pharmaceutical Cup" 11 th CUTTC	Heilongjiang University	31	309
2005	The "729 Cup" 12 th CUTTC	Tianjin University of Science and Technology	40	311
2006	The "Sada Cup" 13 th CUTTC	Luneng Tennis School, Shandong	42	269
2008	The "Bright Cup" 14 th CUTTC	East Mount Huangshan Sports Center, Anhui Province	46	374
2009	The 15 th CUTTC	Inner Mongolia Normal University	48	428
2010	The "HejiaTianjian Cup" 16 th CUTTC	Xihua University, Sichuan	49	399
2011	The 17 th CUTTC	Shandong Agricultural University	56	460

2.2 Professional organization level

CUTTC has established a relatively rational competition system and a sound management procedure through years of exploration and practice. Except the year in which National University Sports Games and Universiade were held in China, CUTTC is hosted in July or August each year for a period of 8 days. Fixed competition time favors the planning, preparation and organizing work of host parties and facilitates the training, enroll and travel arrangements of participating universities. In competition management, a relatively complete method regarding entry, grouping, draw, scheduling, athlete registration,

input and inquiry of athlete information, qualification examination, racket control, umpiring, arbitration, rewards and disciplinary sanctions and results publicity has been gradually formed.

2.3 Harmonious development among universities

The advocacy of harmonious development among universities all over the country is another contribution of CUTTC. In 2008, the 14th CUTTC was organized by East Mount Huangshan Sports Center in Anhui Province a region which has never held a national-wide large-scale event before. The sports fields, equipment and supporting service have been bettered after the championship. The 15th CUTTC held by Inner Mongolia Normal University, landed in the Western inland area for the first time and greatly bridged the communication and cooperation between Eastern and Western universities.

2.4 Progressive event marketing

With the improvement of awareness of sports marketing and the accumulation of practical experience, organizers are gradually marketing CUTTC to societies, strengthening the cooperation with enterprises to achieve win-win results through event organization and publicity. In recent years, many well-known enterprises such as Double Happiness, Tianjin 729 Sports Co, .Ltd, Tianjin Branch of Chinese Property Insurance Limited, Bright Food (Group) Co. Ltd and Amway (China) Ltd. provide funds, goods, service and other forms of sponsorship in table tennis which help the championships run smoothly and successfully. Sponsored enterprises also got good ascension in their image and brand.

3. EXISTING CONSTRAINS OF CUTTC

3.1 Current frequency and scale failed to satisfy the participating needs

Although in recent years the scale of CUTTC is growing, the scale and race frequency at present has failed to fully meet the needs of thousands of universities throughout China. The regulations of CUTTC specify the following rules: "member universities of Chinese University Table Tennis Association (CUTTA) can enroll CUTTC", "for

non-member universities, municipal and autonomous district board of education (Department of Education, Higher Education Bureau) can recommend 1-2 colleges to enroll". Keeping the number and size of events stable benefits a smooth running, but largely limits a number of non-member universities participation rights, dispels their enthusiasm in table tennis events. It also has a negative effect on the overall development and the athletic level of table tennis in colleges and universities of China if things go on like this.

3.2 Athlete's eligibility censorship needs to be improved

In each session the organizing committee of CUTTC sets up the qualification review committee which examines the proves of school certificate (with the official seal of the colleges and the signature of the presidents in charge of recruiting table tennis athletes), Chinese student-athletes registration card, student-athlete registration information website of CUTTA, investigate suspected violations of the units and individuals, cancel the illegal units and personal qualification and competition results, to ensure the fair competition to a certain extent. But as the championships continue to expand, athletes of each division being updated annually, the workload and difficulty of qualification review is increasing. From the actual implementation, each session of CUTTA has various problems in division and qualification, such as "student-athlete of high-level division enrolling for low-level division", "student-athlete borrowed from professional team". These phenomena seriously prejudice the healthy development of competition environment, violate the interests of other law-abiding participants.

3.3 Monotonous source of funding channel

Adequate funding is a key guarantee for the success of the sports events [1]. Although in recent years CUTTC's sponsoring work has achieved some progress and breakthrough, there is still a considerable gap in good marketing and commercial operations. The hosting funds are mainly from allocating funds of CUTTA and entry fees paid by participating units. Limited funds can only maintain basic spending of the

contest. Economic return achieved by means of event exploitation and marketing is quite small, which hampers further development of CUTTC.

3.4 Lack of event internal cultural attention and exploitation

College sports event contains rich cultural heritage and valuable cultural resource [2]. Mining college table tennis culture connotation and potential cultural value can contribute to long-term development and brand building of CUTTC. Planning and implementation of the cultural activities in the previous championships is lacking, partly because the tight schedule which does not allow enough time to hold cultural activities, on the other hand, sponsors and organizers have not paid enough attention to the sports culture, taking this precious opportunity for campus culture exhibition.

4. COUNTERMEASURES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Innovate the division system

Division system can be learnt from American NCAA League experiences. Based on the factors of athletes admission, athletics level and school size, student-athletes are grouped into division I, division II, division III. Enthusiasm of all universities can then be mobilized to encourage more colleges to participate in CUTTC. The concrete measures are as follows:

Division I consists of athletes participating in the Chinese super league club, national table tennis championships and national games with a high competitive and visual level. It can follow the practice of Chinese super league club: take the socialization, industrialization operational mode with the goal of cultivating high-quality, high level table tennis talents. Division I adopts round-robin system on a home and away basis with increased number of matches.

Division II consists of athletes who attend the university entrance examination, sports test qualified, with academic marks reaching second batch undergraduate admission control scores or 60% to 65% of admits fractional line of the undergraduate course. Division II can emulate Chinese university basketball association league, and be divided into four

districts as Southeast, Northwest, Southwest and Northeast, according to the geographical location. Basic preliminaries are held first, and then deciding the top 8 of each district, and ending with the national top 32 finals.

Division III consists of regular admission students, which is now the requirement of the national university students sunshine sport games. Each student is entitled to represent his or her college only once during 4 undergraduate years to offer more chance to other students. The purpose is to popularize table tennis in colleges and universities and realize universality, edutainment and lifelong of sports participation.

4.2 Enforce the player's eligibility censorship

In order to create a fair, open competition environment, CUTTA should further strengthen athlete registration information management and eligibility review, collect fingerprint of athletes, input and upload the athletes' age, gender, sports experience, style of play and other basic information to the athlete information management center under the legal permission and technology conditions. Before game, publicize athlete's information, keep information exchanged with the table tennis and badminton center of the Chinese general administration of sports, and encourage mutual supervision. After game, further strengthen the qualification examination and punishment to the defaulter, curb behavior of deception and taking another's place by counterfeiting.

4.3 Attach great importance to event image packaging, broaden the funding sources

The CUTTA should set up a full-time department, actively carry out the event development, event marketing, and sports sponsorship. Every year formulate the sponsorship cooperation plan as soon as possible, and determine enterprises which meet table tennis specifications, have a good reputation and actively support the university table tennis. Give enterprises and corporate sponsors maximum possible return to create a long-term cooperation, mutual-benefit and win-win situation through various means of publicity and promotion.

Emblem, slogan, song and mascot logo play a

positive role in event brand construction and organization image enhancement. They reflect the maturity of the event and attract media and businesses as well. A design competition of table tennis characteristic emblem, mascot, slogan, anthem and logo can be launched among the national university students before the game-time.

4.4 Probe the dynamic integration of sports culture and campus culture

American NCAA culture is compelling scenery, which integrates the essence of rich and colorful campus culture into the competition process; turn the competition into a grand cultural festival of spirit, sports and campus culture. It causes widespread concern in the community and youth.

The CUTTC should also pay attention to its cultural connotation. During the game time arrange activities such as academic salon, knowledge contests, photography competition, design competition, art show, cheerleading performance etc. in order to strengthen intercollegiate exchanges, rich game content, promote cultural connotation and spread the table tennis culture.

5. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that as a communication and learning platform for table tennis players and coaches from various colleges and universities in China, CUTTC has made notable progress in its influence, event organizing and management, event marketing and promotion of university table tennis level around China. But several issues exist in the current situation of CTUUC such as the current frequency, the competition division, player's eligibility check, the source of funding channel, the operation of marketing, the internal cultural value of events. Combined with years of firsthand experience in organizing work, investigation and argumentation, we put up pertinent proposals. First, innovate the classification system and improve the system of play and participation methods. Secondly, enforce the player's eligibility censorship to maintain a fair competition arena. Thirdly, attach great weight to event image packaging, actively broaden the funding sources. Finally probe the dynamic integration

of sports culture and campus culture. This study has theoretical and practical meaning in improving university table tennis competition system, optimizing the training system of table tennis reserve talents and facilitating the sustainable development of CUTTC.

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