

Sports for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Russia and the Un Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Reality and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

The present article substantiates the necessity of implementation for two development programs within adaptive sport for persons with intellectual impairment in order to meet the requirements of THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES in each nation, which ratified this document.

These programs include:

- Program of the International Sport Organization SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTERNATIONAL (SOI) and
- Program of the International Sport Association (Federation) of Persons with Intellectual Impairment VIRTUS

Program of SOI uses the unconventional, "mild" model of performance evaluation and denies the special athletes the right to compete according to the rules based on the conventional model of performance evaluation, which is general for Olympic, Paralympic and Deaf Olympic Sports. It leads to the impairment of rights for ID persons with mild impairment in comparison with able-bodied, physically impaired and sensory impaired athletes. Therefore, SOI upholds the rights for severe ID athletes regarding their participation in sport events with "mild" model of performance evaluation which is optimal for them. As regards ID persons with mild impairment, it leads to the violation of THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES or to their discrimination because it does not give them a chance to use the conventional model of performance evaluation and it considers them incapable to adequately perceive, for example, their defeat in competitions. This problem does not exist completely in Paralympic Sport for persons

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with intellectual impairment run by VIRTUS. So, only joint work of SOI and VIRTUS as well as corresponding national organizations (associations) fully allows implementing THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES in the area of ID Sport with various levels of impairment. The present article tells about Russian experience of implementation for two programs—SOI and VIRTUS—taking into account particularity of social situation in our country and special aspects of the national content of both programs.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of two models for adaptive Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities worldwide and in various nations makes actual comparison study for Special Olympics within Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities and its Paralympic Direction in the world sport community as well as in separate nations. Discovery of universal components and unique manifestations of national and international aspects gives an opportunity to elaborate proposals on development of Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities and on its more active advancement in different nations. Taking into account significant rehabilitation, educative and socializing potential of Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities, updating of its information and organization content allows enhancing of life quality of this specific population category in different nations worldwide.

Keywords: Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities, Special Olympics within Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities, Paralympic Direction within Sports for persons with intellectual disabilities: similarities, differences, structure of these Sports worldwide and in Russia.

ID SPORTS IN RUSSIA

The purpose of the present paper is to consider experience of appearance and implementation of ID sports in Russia

Technologies, means and methods of adaptive sports focused mostly on comprehensive rehabilitation, habilitation and socialization of persons with disabilities and health limitations, depend to a great extent on social environment, climate and spirit of the target audience, as well as national, religious and other characteristics, unlike, for instance, medical technologies, which are universal and independent of national, religious and other issues of the patients and attending staff. This fact supports a conclusion that we should exchange experience in national sports practices for persons with intellectual disabilities (PID), as one of the key

areas of comprehensive rehabilitation and habilitation for that social group.

Current development of ID sports in Russia can be understood better if we take into account social, economic and values context, in which this adaptive sports originated and developed.

The first organization aimed at development of ID sports model formulated by the private charitable organization Special Olympics International (SOI) (1968, USA) was the “Soviet Union National Special Olympics Committee”, formed in February 1990 [1], that is, approximately one year before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Further development of ID sports in Russia was influenced by two ideological policies generated during the Soviet period of its development [2-4].

The first policy stated that a number of negative social phenomena, the so-called social ulcers (alcoholism, drug addiction, etc.), including a negative phenomenon of disability, were treated as atavisms of decaying capitalism, with its merciless exploitation of the labor force by employers in order to gain maximum profits. Rejection of market economic relations and introduction of a planned socialist economy guaranteed overcoming of these atavisms, and cure of the social ulcers, which, on the one hand, were largely underestimated, and on the other, shaped a negative social attitude towards them.

So, according to official statistics, former Soviet Union had 7, 5 million disabled people. However, such good statistics (for example, USA had 20 million disabled persons) is a result of the following manipulations. Firstly, only those who received disability pensions could be considered as disabled persons. Secondly, children less than 16 years old could not be considered as disabled persons because they received allowance. Thirdly, disabled persons from official military personnel of former Soviet Army and from other defence and law enforcement agencies were not taken into account because they received their disability pensions directly from corresponding agencies. Finally, fourthly, those persons who changed disability pensions to age pensions were not taken into account. Therefore, really, former Soviet Union had 28-30 million disabled persons (according to a number of surveys) [5,6].

Therefore we can state an apparent tendency to formally confirm positive influence of socialistic style of life on the number of people with disability.

The second policy claimed that international sports success of Soviet athletes seriously demonstrated the world all

advantages of a socialist economic system and a planned economy; which resulted in ultimate state support of high-performance sports both in economic, administrative and managerial issues, it being an effective tool in the struggle for and spread of socialist ideology.

These two policies gave rise to corresponding psychological environment for ID sports to develop in Russia.

So, the first policy played negative role in ID Sport development because it required considerable efforts for pushing relevant negative psychological stereotypes, while the second policy played positive role as it provided a possibility to use substantial potential of socialistic sport system for ID persons which were integrated in it within mainstream.

In particular, it is the first policy that is reliable for the fact that only in September 1999, nine years after creation of Soviet Union National Special Olympics Committee, Russian public charitable organization for persons with mental retardation, the Special Olympics of Russia (SOR), was duly registered to develop a special (unconventional) ID sports model, proposed by the American organization SOI [1,4].

The same policy and psychological stereotypes associated with it also led to the fact that only in 2012, twenty-six years after the International Sports Association (Federation) of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (INAS-FMX, later INAS-FID, INAS, and since 2020 VIRTUS) was created to develop a conventional ID sports model, typical for non-handicapped and Paralympic athletes, the Russian Sports Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (RSF-ID) was created in Russia to implement this ID sports model, called Paralympic model, because ID sports were included in the program of the Paralympic Games [3,4].

The second policy, resulting in a strict state control over sports development in Russia, led to dramatic differences in the work of the two ID sports organizations: SOR and RSF-ID.

Almost complete state financing of the overwhelming number of sports included in programs of major international competitions (primarily the Olympic Games) gave a background for state regulation of sports development through a number of procedures and administrative documents [4].

For instance, in Russia a competition can receive the status of a sport and (or) sports discipline only if such competition (contest) has undergone an approval procedure regulated by the Ministry of Sports of Russia and is registered with (recorded in) the Russian National Sports Register (RNSR),

with the rules to be approved by the Ministry of Sports. For example, competitions must not lower human dignity, inflict damage to athlete health, run counter to ethical and aesthetical principles and other requirements of official sport. However, the RNSR, despite being a kind of gateway to the world of sports, by no means exhausts all public requirements for the status of a sport. A Sports Federation in Russia that develops an approved sport shall also develop a whole package of managerial documents and ensure their approval by the Ministry of Sports of Russia. Such documents shall include: the Unified Russian Sports Classification (URSC), which specifies norms, requirements and conditions for receiving 7 sports categories by the athletes (III, II, I youth categories, III, II, I candidate master of sports categories) and 2 sports titles (master of sports and international master of sports); the Federal Standard of Sports Training (FSST) for the sport, which specifies requirements for inventory and technical support of trainings, for coaching and teaching staff, for athletes at different educational and training levels, for content of each level and other requirements; Qualification Requirements for Referees in the sport, as well as other documents [3,4].

So, sport federation developing the recognized sport (included into All-Russia Sport Register) is also obliged to undergo accreditation process in Russian Ministry of Sports and must be registered in the relevant Register of Sport Federations.

Given that the above-mentioned procedures, regulations and documents are at odds with the official General and Sports Rules of the Special Olympics, especially in terms of divisions and qualifying draws of athletes with intellectual disabilities (“athletes”) and athletes without intellectual disabilities (“partners”), competitions under the Special Olympics program in Russia are not classified as real sports competitions, and the sports thereunder are not officially recognized as sports. The Ministry of Sports of Russia treats organizations practicing the Special Olympics programs as those implementing programs of mass adaptive sports, adaptive physical education, adaptive motor recreation, complex rehabilitation and habilitation and other competition programs, not considered as sports programs.

In fact, Russian Ministry of Sports follows out full general supervisory responsibility and funding Special Olympics Russia in the field of health and fitness and recreational activities.

So, broadly using competitions and trainings of persons with intellectual disabilities, the Special Olympics of Russia and

the Russian Sports Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities have much in common in terms of targets and objectives, but also have principal differences in terms of competitive models and methods of results assessment. These differences impeded work of the public sports organization-Russian Association (RA) Olympus created in 1993—which was aimed at combining the two, considered ID sport models [1]. Olympus not only failed to achieve its goal, but was not able to put into life at least one of adaptive sports models.

Russian Olympic Committee and several physical persons (who set a main goal to combine Special Olympics and ID Paralympic Sports) were founders of non-governmental (public) organization-Russian Association OLYMPUS. However, since its first days, during writing of its Constitution, this Association met a wide range of contradictions.

Firstly, the name RA OLYMPUS was unacceptable for Special Olympics International (SOI) as it did not contain the word “Special” and for the Federal body of executive power in the area physical culture and sport as the name of sport federation should meet the name of adaptive sport included into All-Russia Sport Register.

Secondly, during the process of creation RA OLYMPUS Constitution and Sport Rules it was found out that SOI Rules and Rules of ID Paralympic Sports were incompatible.

Thirdly, RA OLYMPUS had got initial governmental support and then could not fulfil the requirements set for ID Sport. In particular, RA OLYMPUS could not work out and approve a range of documents, like All-Russia Unified Sport Classification Codex etc.

A failure of Olympus, coupled with principal differences in the competitive models of the two ID sports directions in Russia resulted in independent operations of two separate organizations: Special Olympics of Russia (SOR) and Russian Sports Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (RFS-ID) that practice two different models of adaptive sports.

However, similar goals and objectives pursued by these organizations, and, most importantly, the same target audience - persons with intellectual disabilities as participants in trainings and competitions provided by both organizations, allow analyzing goals and objectives of SOR and RFS-ID in terms of parallelism.

Despite some differences in the Articles of Association, both SOR and RFS-ID have a common goal: help persons with intellectual disabilities to become full-fledged members of

society and take part in social life, by providing opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents in sports training and competition, by improving public awareness of their opportunities and needs, by eliminating discrimination and segregation against them and building inclusive communities.

In Russia it may be very difficult to pursue the goals and objectives listed above due to effect of the first ideological policy described herein, since the policy gave rise to many psychological stereotypes of public attitudes, especially towards this social group.

Ideas that persons with intellectual disabilities, usually offensively called mentally retarded in medical documents, are inferior, incapable for learning, or good for nothing create obstacles for pursue of the goals and a large-scale introduction of adaptive sports into work with such persons, thus leading to discrimination against them, and not only against non-handicapped athletes, but also against athletes with disabilities of other medical classification groups: persons with visual or hearing impairments or musculoskeletal disorders.

Unlike other countries where children with intellectual disabilities live in families, and adults with intellectual disabilities work with non-handicapped ones, performing easy functions and bearing responsibilities, in Russia institutional and territorial segregation of this social group population prevailed. Children were educated in special correctional institutions that afforded no contacts with children of mainstream schools; PID lived in separate orphanages, neuropsychiatric boarding schools, and no non-handicapped children or adults without special education and permits (access) were admitted there, save for volunteers, coaches and other specialists. It was done in order to isolate and keep the mentally retarded away from the society, as they may create a negative psychological effect on the non-handicapped.

Situation in Russia reversed at regulatory level after ratification of UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012. Presently we can consider situation in Russia as a movement from segregation to inclusion

Both organizations-SOR and RFS-ID-are focused on inclusion and involvement of persons, regardless of their intellectual health, in joint trainings and competitions and have been working in two main directions:

- Helping persons with intellectual disabilities to become full-fledged members of the society and

- Making the society ready to accept persons with intellectual disabilities by improving public awareness of their opportunities and needs.

There are several ways to implement both directions:

- Use the same sports facilities, sports halls, outdoor sports grounds, swimming pools, sports equipment and gear for both non-handicapped persons and persons with ID;

- Attract non-handicapped athletes, coaches, volunteers, fans, assistants to the trainings and competitive events for persons with ID;

- Use the same sports rules, regulations and procedures, sports referees and organizers to ID sports competitions, save for ways of identification of winners, ranking of athletes, selection for higher-level competitions, as developed by SOI and used in Russia by SOR;

- Attract viewers to the ID sports competitions, and representatives of the media to cover the events as much as possible;

- Use focused promotion campaigns to make the public aware of the skills and capabilities of PID;

- Develop and promote regulatory legal ID sports documents.

Common goals of SOR and RSF-ID are confirmed by the same main objectives attained by these organizations:

- Improve the PID lifestyle, introduce them into the

mainstream society (to the largest possible extent);

- Expand the scope of persons for broader communications;

- Have PID master social roles and functions typical of adaptive sports (athlete, member of a national sports team, assistant coach, etc.);

- Have PID master technological, motor, mobilization values of adaptive physical education and sports, social and everyday skills, life experience, etc.

Apart from that, Special Olympic and Paralympic ID sports have other things in common, like: availability of competitions; compulsory preparation process for events (educational and training process); compulsory medical examination and support of educational, training and competitive processes, including determining if PID are fit for adaptive sports; functional sports classification of participants in a competition; use of the same sports and sport disciplines in the Olympic and Paralympic competitions (athletics, swimming, table tennis, etc.).

ID SPORTS IN THE WORLD SPORT COMMUNITY

Despite a large number of common features, Special and Paralympic movements have principal differences due to different official general and sports rules of SOI and VIRTUS, based on rules of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) (see table 1).

Table 1. Fundamental differences between the Paralympic and Special Olympic Movement of Adaptive Sports

| No | Difference | Key positions on the subject under consideration | |
|----|--|---|--|
| | | Paralympic Movement (supervised by VIRTUS) | Special Olympic Movement (supervised by SOI) |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | Identification of winners and their status | There is one winner (champion) and person taken last place, the rest athletes ranging from the second place to the last but one have a dual status of winner / loser (for example, the athlete who took the second place is the winner in relation to the third place winner and the loser in relation to the champion, etc.) | There are only winners, in fact, all athletes are winners, not only the champion who took the first place, the winners are even those who took the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth places, depending on the number of athletes in the division |
| 2 | Ranking of competitors | By the results of the competition (of individual and team types) all athletes are ranked from the first to the last place, which is registered in the final records of the competition | The athletes are ranked by preliminary results received before the main starts and by previous competitions in the low-key preliminary procedure for dividing all athletes into divisions (from three to eight persons) |
| 3 | Registration of records | Records of the Paralympic Games, the world, Europe, other continents, national and regional records, records of institutions or organizations are registered for public discussion | Record registration is not made or encouraged because the core value of Special Olympics is the people, not the result. |
| 4 | Selection for competitions of a higher level, including international competitions | Athletes are selected according to the sports principle (the best result); for major international competitions they are selected under a license for sports achievements | The athletes are selected by draw, first of all from among the first place winners in all divisions, then the second and third places winners |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| 5 | Identification of competitive groups (divisions) of athletes | Competitive groups are identified in strict compliance with sports results of qualifying competitions to make groups of athletes participating in the quarter finals, semi-finals, finals. To get to the finals, the athletes must be selected in all previous steps and fight for one set of awards in this sport | Athletes are divided into groups (divisions), numbering eight or three participants, under the 10% rule, which in the interval between the best and worst results of athletes of one group (division). These groups (divisions), in fact, are lists of athletes in the finals, each division has a set of medals and award ribbons for everyone who took the fourth and lower places |
| 6 | Attitude towards outstanding achievement, record of any level, including own record | Achievements receive positive assessment as ability to concentrate, mobilize and maximize potential. Achievements are encouraged in different ways, including financial, except of unfair play (accusations of doping, etc.) | Athletes or teams exceeding their pre-qualifying or announced results by 15% shall be disqualified. With no exception Special Olympics athletes will receive a competitor's ribbon. The fact of exceeding result by 15% is interpreted as dishonesty and is strongly condemned |
| 7 | Scope of athletes with varying degrees of intellectual impairment | In training and competition, athletes are not classified by the degree of intellectual impairment . Dominance of the sports principle in selection results in athletes with mostly mild and moderate intellectual impairments | The divisional rule and giving a set of awards in each division allow one to cover persons with all degrees of intellectual impairments (mild, moderate, severe, profound), including athletes with concomitant diseases of the sensory systems and musculoskeletal disabilities. However, athletes are not classified by the degree of intellectual impairment . |
| 8 | National policy. Award ceremony | Competitions are held for athletes who represent national federations (states), which may lead to political confrontation or national rivalry. In honor of the winner, the national anthem is played and the country's flag is raised. The winner and the athletes (teams) who took the second and third places are awarded | Competitions do not involve comparing results between accredited programs of different countries. It is not a competition of national teams, it is a competition of athletes with intellectual disabilities who represent the national programs of Special Olympics and states. In honor of the winner, the anthem is played and the flag of Special. |
| 9 | Component of mass world games | The Paralympic Games program, including the opening and closing ceremonies of the games, awarding ceremony of the winners, etc., makes the large part of the games program | Olympics is raised. All athletes of all divisions are awarded An integral part of the Special Olympics games is a range of creative, social and cultural events, namely: exhibitions, concerts, excursions, theatrical events, etc. |
| 10 | Financial support | Participants in the Paralympic Games pay (themselves or through national sports organizations) for their food and accommodation, for filing protests. Athletes receive financial rewards from their countries for the victory and prize places | Accredited athletes of the Special Olympics Games programs do not make any monetary payments, are provided with free food and accommodation, do not pay for filing protests; Athletes receive medals rather than monetary awards; referees, doctors, coaches, volunteers, and all serving personnel, as a rule , do not receive financial awards. |

Table 1 shows 10 principal differences between the **unconventional** model of competition, pursued by the Special Olympic Movement, and the **conventional** model, pursued by the Paralympic movement of adaptive sports.

The unconventional or *soft* model for assessing competition, developed by the Special Olympics International (SOI) and strictly controlled by it, relies on the fact that a traditional *hard* model for assessing competition cannot be understood correctly by persons with intellectual disabilities, and may cause inadequate reactions, misunderstandings, anxiety and even stressful conditions.

So, how is assessment of athletic achievements eased *off* in the SOI model? In fact, assessment of the competition results abolishes the concept of a loser or defeated, etc., and prohibits result-based ranking of athletes within a competitive sport. For instance, in the **conventional** Paralympic model of competition, say, in athletics or swimming, they have several preliminary competitions (races or swims) depending on

the number of participants (one sixteenth finals, one eighth finals, quarterfinals, semifinals); results of preliminary competitions help to identify the best finalists, who will compete among themselves for one set of medals (gold, silver and bronze), while the rest athletes will be ranged (ranked) by their results (from the fourth place to the last). In the unconventional model of competition pursued by the SOI, preliminary competition results are used to range all athletes into divisions, the key principle here is that the result of the best and worst athlete within a division shall not differ by more than 15 percent.

After that, each division awards its own set of medals. Each division will have gold, silver and bronze medalists. Besides, the unconventional model prohibits registration (fixation) and celebration of the records (world, European, national, regional, etc.). It is also forbidden to raise the country's flag and listen to the national anthem of the winning athlete, to pay a material reward to the winners and other things (see the table).

Thus, in athletic divisions of the **unconventional** model each participant is treated as a winner, since the winners podium has the number of steps and places equal to the number of athletes in each division; each division has its own set of gold, silver and bronze medals, and the drawing procedure of athletes for competitions has a broader scale and some other features. In fact, all the above-listed excludes the principle of priority of sports results, which, in its turn, makes the backbone of the **conventional** results assessment in the Olympic, Paralympic, and other sports.

As a result, in Russia the Special Olympics competitions are not qualified as sports, they are rather interpreted as physical training and recreation activities that apply competition. However, the mere fact of its application does not give grounds for use of attributes inherent of the public sports system in the Russian Federation (including adaptive sports), namely: granting sport titles and categories to athletes in accordance with the Unified Sports Classification System of Russia (USCSR), paying material award to the athletes, using Federal Standards of Sports Training (FSST) by adaptive sports, etc. It happens because adaptive sports of the Special Olympics are not included in the Russian Register of Sports (RRS), not covered by the Federal Standard of Sports Training (FSST) and not listed in the Unified Calendar Sports Events Plan (UCSEP), etc.

While strongly recommending a soft model for assessing competition to all persons with intellectual disabilities, Special Olympics International, in fact, recognizes inferiority of this category of athletes, their inability to participate in sports under the rules and principles mandatory for persons without intellectual disabilities.

Therefore, by following the above-described approach in work with PID, strictly controlled by SOI, the Special Olympics program essentially deprives this group of persons of the **conventional** model of competition, used in the Olympic and Paralympic sports.

In its turn, that infringes rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, especially with a mild degree, autism spectrum disorders or some other categories, since they are deprived of the opportunity to take part in competitions based on the **conventional** model of sports, common for non-handicapped athletes and disabled persons with impaired musculoskeletal system and sensory systems. Undoubtedly, it must be regarded as violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in the Russian Federation, or, in other words, as social **discrimination** against those persons.

The situation concerned appears in case if this category of persons has no possibility to do conventional model of adaptive sport, implemented by VIRTUS worldwide and RSF-ID in Russia

The Paralympic direction of ID sports, supervised by the World Intellectual Impairment Sport VIRTUS globally and by RSF-ID in Russia, has overcome this problem. Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Sport are executed by the fact that ID sports use the **conventional** model of competition, being an integral part of Paralympic sports.

The **conventional** model of competition allows persons with mild intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and some other categories, constituting the majority in this medical classification, to be socialized and integrated into the real social life, where, alas, there are no *divisions* and *soft models of interactions*, and where it is impossible to avoid harsh situations of loss and defeat. It is necessary to train these persons to the situation of loss and defeat on the basis of conventional model of competitions, creating their experience of avoiding of loss and defeat and experience of obtaining victory and success.

Thus, only cooperation of VIRTUS and SOI, RSF-ID and SOR will ensure comprehensive execution of the main provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relation to persons with different degrees (levels) of intellectual disabilities.

Regrettably, in the Russian Federation, sports for persons with intellectual disabilities have solely been controlled by the Special Olympics programs for more than twenty years. This led to a misconception that adaptive ID sports have only one model, which, as highlighted above, must be interpreted as discrimination against persons with a mild degree of intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorders, which are classified without any serious scientific reason as not able to understand the **conventional** model of competition.

The Russian Sports Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities was established in 2012, before the 2012 Summer Paralympic Games in London, which included ID sports in the program. Prior to that, Russia mainly pursued the Special Olympics programs.

The decision to set up this sport federation has been made by Russian Ministry of Sports and Russian Paralympic Committee to provide training and participation of Russian ID athletes at 2012 Paralympics as well as for further development of ID Sport in Russia.

Recognition of ID sports in Russia and its introduction into work with persons with intellectual disabilities have greatly boosted motivation for adaptive sports both among athletes who can now receive sports categories and titles (master of sports of Russia, for example), and among coaches who can now get the status of The Honored Coach of Russia (awarded by the order of Russian Ministry of Sports for outstanding achievements of athletes trained by this coach according to specially elaborated criteria), receive financial rewards for sports achievements of their coaches and obtain other incentives, such as inclusion into the list of national teams on this sport, governmental awards recommendation.

Athletes of the Federation performed excellently at the largest Paralympic sports competition: The VIRTUS Global Games, held by the World Intellectual Impairment Sport (VIRTUS), in Brisbane (Australia) in October 2019. They won 31 gold, 14 silver and 7 bronze medals (52 medals in total).

Over 1,000 athletes from 49 countries of the world, representing all continents, took part in these games. The Russian sports team included 33 athletes in five (out of ten available) sports (swimming, athletics, table tennis, cycling and five-a-side football), competing in only one class (out of three available), and, nevertheless, managed to get the 2nd award-winning place in the total number of medals, most of which are gold ones, outmatched only by the host Australian team.

Successful results achieved by RSF-ID over seven years of its work relies on the legacy of the second ideological policy originated in the Soviet times, as well as on achievements in sports, scientific, methodological, medical and biological support, together with financial, administrative and managerial support.

Definitely, opportunities of scientific, methodical, medical, biological, financial, institutional and administrative provision for ID Sport are in direct contact with its governmental support

However, the first ideological policy, which interpreted disability, especially intellectual disability, as a negative phenomenon, also had its impact. Regrettably, success of our athletes passed unheeded in the Russian Federation, although the news highlighting effectiveness of the Russian ID adaptive sport and its support by the state, was posted on the website of the Russian Sports Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and reported to the Paralympic Committee of Russia, the Ministry of Sports of the Russian Federation that financed the trip to Australia and to various

mass media.

Presumably, lack of information about successes of athletes at the VIRTUS Global Games can be explained by existing stereotypes and position of middle-level employees in the supervising organizations and mass media, which are still skeptical about ID sports and the Special Olympics program.

Even those ID athletes who won medals at 2012 Paralympics were of considerably less interest to mass media representatives in comparison with Paralympic athletes with visual impairment and with physical disability.

Concluding analysis of sports for persons with intellectual disabilities in the Russian Federation, it should be pointed out that since 2012, we have been implementing both programs: ID Paralympic sports (RSF-ID) and the Special Olympics program (SOR), which gives every reason to speak of comprehensive execution of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in our country in this social sphere.

MOTIONS ON UPDATING OF ID SPORT CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Finally, it is necessary to formulate the problems of ID sports arising from the rules, regulations, Articles of Associations of international sports organizations (associations, federations) that develop this kind of adaptive sport and relations between them.

The first issue concerns definition of the terms: inclusion, segregation and classification of athletes with intellectual disabilities or limitations.

In accordance to the official Sport Rules of Special Olympics inclusion in SOI is apparently represented by the program UNIFIED SPORT which has 3 models: 1) Competition model; 2) Unified sport of athletes development and 3) Unified sport recreational model.

In all three models athletes (persons with ID) and partners (persons without ID) take part in the team jointly.

Competition model of the program UNIFIED SPORT contains approximately equal number of athletes and partners of the same age and of the same level of abilities.

Athletes development models and program recreational model are not used as official events at the international, regional and World games. In the first model the level of team participants abilities can be different, in the second model the number of athletes and partners can be at least 25%. It is lower than in competition model.

The idea of inclusion as common activities of handicapped and non-handicapped persons is no news in adaptive sports; it is applied in the sport for athletes with vision impairments, where the leading athlete is a non-handicapped athlete, or in wheelchair dance sport, when a non-handicapped partner (regardless of sex) has the right to take part in competitions.

However, with this kind of inclusion, there is a danger of discrimination against non-handicapped athletes [4,7], who, generally speaking, spend their energy and time in adaptive sports for development of the disabled partners rather than for their personal maximum development. It is especially true for partners of the first model of the Unified Sports program, which uses the *division* rule, the best *effort* rule (previously known as the *fair participation* rule), the *draw* rule and others. In this case, needs and interests of non-handicapped partners are sacrificed for the sake of the Special Olympics, which cannot be considered as a positive aspect of inclusion [4,7], the ultimate goal of the program. Therefore, speaking about inclusion in ID sports, inclusion must be introduced, first and foremost, into training or recreation. However, even there the Special Olympics program has a number of drawbacks: age discrepancy, dominant role of the coach, development of negative images, paternalism and others [7].

In terms of competitive activity, the issue of functional sports classification of athletes, ensuring the principle of fairness (equal opportunities), comes afloat. Just like the Olympian athletes are divided into competitive groups to ensure the principle of fairness (by sex, by age, by weight categories), the Paralympians, (in addition to categories already listed), are also divided by the level of permissible minimum impairment, by severity of the impairment or remaining functional capabilities. Competitions in such groups of athletes with disabilities, including ID sports athletes, cannot be interpreted as segregation if competitions are held on open sports grounds, with a large number of viewers, volunteers, parents, coaches and mass media. Of course, theoretically, it would be perfect if international competitions for non-handicapped athletes, Paralympic athletes and persons with intellectual disabilities could be held simultaneously.

If technically possible, it could be called a real inclusion, however, in our opinion, it is not advisable to introduce disabled persons into competitions with non-handicapped athletes, since this would lead to violation of the principle of fairness, like the case of a weightlifter in the minimum weight category competing with a weightlifter of the maximum weight category.

The second problem is relations between IPC, VIRTUS, SOI.

Paying tribute to the IPC that recognized ID sports and included them in the program of the Summer Paralympic Games, starting from the XIV Summer Paralympic Games 2012 in London, we must consider some problems in relations between IPC and VIRTUS:

- despite the fact that it has been eight years since ID sports were included in the program of the Summer Paralympic Games, with the XVI Summer Paralympic Games in Tokyo being the third games with these sports, ID sports have not been included in the Winter Paralympic Games program;

- ID sports disciplines have very few sets of medals in the program of the Summer Paralympic Games (approximately 4% of the total number of sets), which does not correspond to the structure of morbidity and types of disabilities in the world, where percentage of persons with intellectual disabilities and mental disorders keeps growing and currently reaches 2% of the total world population (about 142 million persons) [8] and greatly exceeds percentage of persons with visual impairment and musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) [4].

Having approved the system for recognizing persons with intellectual disabilities as fit for ID sports, a group of IPC and VIRTUS researchers keeps studying functional sports classification of persons with MSD disorders and visual impairment in order to apply the same parameters to persons with intellectual disabilities in terms of minimum impairment classification for the Paralympic status and further differentiation by severity of the impairment or remaining functional capabilities. However, when using the ID classification, IPC does not propose further differentiation depending on severity of the impairment (as in persons with visual impairment and musculoskeletal disorders), but, in fact, advocates excluding ID athletes from participation in competitions with non-handicapped athletes, especially in sports with *low cognitive load* (for example, sprint) [8].

A number of research comparing sport progress of ID athletes and non-handicapped athletes, for example, at the university level [8], make conclusions about differences without a due regard to athletes' previous training programs, which reduces reliability of the comparison results. After all, results demonstrated by ID athletes rely on, at least, two factors: characteristics of ID and work under a specific training program. Therefore, comparing any sport achievements of ID athletes and non-handicapped athletes we must consider their training programs in terms of adequacy. RSF-ID experience shows some cases when ID athletes, actively trained by talented coaches, achieved, on average, better

sports results compared to non-handicapped peers, trained by mediocre coaches without due zest or diligence.

Meanwhile, comparing maximum possible sports results in ID athletes and non-handicapped athletes, we should point out that even in sports with *low cognitive* load, final sports result will be influenced, to a great extent, by *cognitive load* of the training process, in which ID athletes will always lose to non-handicapped athletes.

To close analysis of relations between IPC and VIRTUS, it is necessary to appeal to IPC with a request to recognize the VIRTUS decision for increasing the number of ID sports functional classes in Paralympic programs up to three, by adding to the existing class (THIS-1) a class of persons with **additional significant impairments** (Down syndrome, etc.) (THIS-2) and persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (THIS-3), like classes B1, B2, B3 in athletes with visual impairments and numerous classes in persons with musculoskeletal disorders.

CONCLUSIONS

Speaking about global prospects of ID sports, we can expect improved cooperation between the two international sports federations: SOI and VIRTUS. The sports community has been looking forward to an agreement (treaty) to be signed between these organization, which shall identify powers of each of the federations more precisely, outline a plan of joint sports events, taking into account philosophy of sports movements they pursue and individual sports trajectories of ID athletes involved in adaptive sports, unify the system of sports classification of athletes' data and serve many other purposes.

The agreement between SOI and VIRTUS shall become a model for similar agreements between national sports federations developing the Special Olympic Movement, on the one hand, and the ID Paralympic Sports Movement, on the other hand. It must be highlighted that in Russia RSF-ID and SOR signed a cooperation agreement in 2014. This fact proves that ID sports, actively developed in Russia since 2012 by the Russian Sports Federation of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (RSF-ID) and the Special Olympics of Russia (SOR), has been promoted by this agreement, which contributed to progress of high-performance sports of RSF-ID, and mass ID sports of SOR.

Agreement between SOR and RSF-ID gave SOR athletes a possibility to continue training and sport activities at Paralympic ID Sport in case of good sport results. In case

of injury, overpressure and lost trained achievements they could return to SOR.

The most important priority of joint activity between SOR and SRF-ID is competition calendars coordination as well as adjustment of competitions dates when after SOR competitions athletes with good sport results get a possibility to perform on Paralympic rules in order to demonstrate their results for getting athletic titles and categories (III,II, I junior categories; III, II, I categories and master of sports candidate, master of sports of Russia and international master of sports of Russia).

Besides, it was planned to unify the procedure of eligibility for ID Sport and SOR and a wide range of other events.

As regards the achievements of the present agreement we can state that we could increase more than three times the number ID persons doing this adaptive sport as well as provide the best result of Team Russia at VIRTUS Global Games in Brisbane, Australia. There Russia took the 2nd team place while Team Australia took the 1st team place.

Later on it is planned to implement other joint events defined by this Agreement.

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