
KICKBOXING IN YOUTH SPORTS SYSTEM

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- kickboxing,
- youth sport,
- Polish Federation of Youth Sports.

Abstract:

Kick-boxing as other martial arts may be a mean of physical development and a way to shape personality of children and youths. It is a sport that combines elements of box and other Far Eastern martial arts.

The results of sports competition under the Youth Sports System have been analyzed. Detailed results of sports competition under the Youth Sports System in the years 1999-2012 are published on the PFSM website in "Sports competition" section. An oral, uncategorized interview with the President of the Polish Association of Kick-boxing Andrzej Palacz has been used.

Kick-boxing has been included in the SSM competition since 2007. In 2012 the number of the clubs involved in the SSM was the biggest and reached 47. However, this number represented only 26% of the total number of clubs when taking into account the whole number of 183 clubs affiliated in PZKB. A constant fall in the percentage of the participation of School Sport Clubs in the competition has been noticed.

Findings:

1. In the years 2007-2012, ninety-five Kick-boxing clubs took part in the SSM competition (including 11 UKS).
2. Analyzing the clubs competing in SSM and presenting the highest sports level, a very high turnover in the particular centers has been observed. Only Polonia Leszno managed to remain at the forefront throughout the analyzed period.
3. The number of UKS with kick-boxing sections that take part in the SSM is small.
4. The number of the clubs with combat sport sections that represented particular disciplines in the SSM was comparable.

INTRODUCTION

Kickboxing is a combat sport that combines elements of European box and Asiatic combat sports and martial arts. It involves fighting with the use of fists and legs. In the history of Kickboxing we can observe two ways of development: the Japanese and the American way. Kickboxing emerged in Japan in the 60s and was created by boxing promoter Osamu Naguchi and a competitor and instructor Kenji Kurosaki. They analyzed the techniques of muay thai (that was deriving from Thailand) and they combined these techniques with Karate Kyokushin that they were training. As a result, a new sport came into being and was named Kick-boxing by Noguchi in order to differentiate it from Thai Boxing. Japanese kickboxing as compared to American according to permitted techniques, was very similar to Thai Boxing. What is more, in the early stage of Kickboxing, head hits and throws prohibited in muay thai were allowed (Cynarski, Ziemiński 2010).

Kick-boxing in its pure form derived from the United States. Its sources can be found in the Japanese Karate and Korean Taekwondo that were brought to the United States by the soldiers who performed military service in these countries. Along with the American soldiers, to the USA came many immigrants who started to found martial arts schools. Very soon, a rapid growth of Far Eastern martial arts occurred in both, Europe and the USA. As a result of the beginning of sport competition combined with granting sport titles and organizational disorder reflected in the fragmentation of the styles, it became necessary to create sporting rules that would enable the organization of over stylish competitions. The first person who undertook an attempt to create such sporting rules in the 60s was karate instructor Mike Anderson. He combined classic box techniques with kicks deriving from Karate and Taekwondo. As a result of those changes a new sport came into being and was initially called American Karate or Full Contact Karate and eventually Kick-boxing (Ufel, 1991; Wiczorek, 2008; Cynarski, Zimiński 2010). In the 1974, a new association called Professional Karate Association (PKA) was founded by Mike Anderson and Don and Jude Quine. In the same year, under his aegis a first unofficial World Championships in Kickboxing in Los Angeles were held. They were organized on Karate mats and gained huge popularity in the media and among fans. At that time, the term 'karate full-contact' was replaced by currently used term kickboxing for the first time (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_Karate_Association).

In Europe in 1976, a German industrialist Georg Brukner founded the first European Amateur Organization – World All Style Karate Organization (WAKO). It soon became a strong competition for the American PKA and in 1980 it changed its name to World Association of Kick-Boxing Organizations (retaining the abbreviation WAKO). However, unlike PKA, WAKO initially focused on organizing amateurish sport (Cynarski, Ziemiński 2010; www.wakoweb.com)

Since the very beginning, Polish kick-boxing sport competition was similar to that from the western countries and ran on the two separate tracks. On the one hand there were initially dominant, light and non-contact forms in which the competition takes place on mats and the aim is to earn possibly the biggest number of points without physically affecting the opponent. Those sub-disciplines include: Kick-boxing Musical Forms, Semi Contact, Light Contact, Kick Light Contact. The second group of presently most popular sub-disciplines are those in which the competition takes place on a ring and the level of physical contact is much greater. The aim is to earn possibly the greatest number of points as well, but contrary to the first group, points are granted only for the techniques that cause the elimination of the opponent. This group includes: Full Contact, Low Kick, K1 Rules and Oriental Rules (Muay Thai, Thai Boxing). The both aforementioned groups characterize with totally different training goals and as a result with totally different methods and ways of training, which causes great differences in the training process itself. In 2012 PZKB (Polish Association of Kick-boxing) associated 183 clubs including 19 school sport clubs (uczniowskie kluby sportowe (UKS)). In order to organize the training process properly, the competitions are organized on the local and national level. In the light contact sub-disciplines the competitions take place in age categories of younger cadets, older cadets, juniors, youths and seniors. In the full contact sub-disciplines contests are held in categories of younger juniors, older juniors, youths and seniors. From the point of view of achieved results in the senior group and in the international competitions it is necessary to begin the training process and the participation in sport competition as early as possible. Analyzing the results of World and Europe Championship we can particularly see the gap between the sport level of our competitors and the competitors from the countries of the former Soviet Union and Asiatic countries where the older juniors in particular dominate the Polish competitors thanks to their huge experience and routine. The described situation meets the growing understanding of trainers and coaches.

That is why, since several years in PZKB we can observe increasing participation of the younger groups of competitors in the contests.

Many authors highlight the significance of appropriate recruitment for professional sport and the importance of rational training of children and youths and selection on particular stages of training with the elements of competition during the combat. (Ryguła, 2005; Sozański, 2005; Raczek, 1989).

These tasks have been realized by the Polish Youth Sports Federation (Polska Federacja Sportu Młodzieżowego (PFSM)) for over a dozen of years. PFSM oversees the sport competition of children and youths in tens of disciplines under the Youth Sports System ("System Sportu Młodzieżowego" (SSM)). Regulations of training and competition organization of physically gifted youth have been worked out, realization of which is subsidized with public funds allocated annually for the development of children and youth sport. "The aim of SSM is to provide for the physically gifted youth the optimum conditions for sport training and the possibility to raise the sport level and to prepare the youth to represent the country in the international competition in youth categories and in the future Olympic perspective." (<http://www.sportmlodziejowy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/regulaminy-2012/zasogol-2012.htm>).

The events organized in the system of sport competition: Polish Youth Championships (Młodzieżowe Mistrzostwa Polski (MMP)), Polish Junior Championships (Mistrzostwa Polski Juniorów (MPJ)), Nationwide Youth Olympics (Ogólnopolska Olimpiada Młodzieży (OOM)), Intervoivodship Youngsters Championship (Międzywojewódzkie Mistrzostwa Młodzików (MMM)), School Youth Olympics (Igrzyska Młodzieży Szkolnej) and other competitions for children and youth organized and judged by associations of physical culture. In accordance with the Statute, the Polish Federation of Youth Sports (PFSM) is an interdisciplinary association of physical culture associations. Its ordinary members are Interdisciplinary Provincial Physical Culture Associations (Wojewódzkie Interdyscyplinarne Stowarzyszenia Kultury Fizycznej (WISKF)) and other incorporated nationwide organizations that deal with children and youth sports.

AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of the study was to analyze the participation of the clubs that organize the Kick-boxing sport sections in the Youth Sports System. An analysis of quantitative and qualitative results of children and youth sport competition organized by PFSM has been made as well as the comparison of Kick-boxing to other combat sports has been carried out.

Following research questions have been asked:

1. Since when the clubs organizing Kick-boxing sections participate in SSM?
2. How did the number of competing clubs change in subsequent years?
3. What is the sport level of clubs participating in SSM depending on voivodship?
4. Which clubs presented the highest sport level?
5. What is the number of school sport clubs that organize Kick-boxing sections in SSM in subsequent years?
6. What is the number of Kick-boxing clubs as compared to other combat sports?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The results of sports competition achieved by Kick-boxing clubs under the Youth Sports System have been analyzed. Detailed results of sports competition under the Youth Sports System in the years 1999-2012 are published on the PFSM website in "Sports competition" section. Additionally, regulations pertaining to the rules of Youths Sports System and to the organization of sports competition in this system are published on the aforementioned website. (<http://www.sportmlodziejowy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/wspol.htm>).

The data from the Main Statistical Office published in the report: “Physical Culture in Poland in 2008-2010” is also included. The additional data is provided by the reports from the factual activity of the Polish Association of Kick-boxing submitted to Ministry of Sport in the discussed years.

For the purpose of research analysis the oral, uncategorized interview with the President of the Polish Association of Kick-boxing Andrzej Palacz was used.

Additional information about the participation of clubs and the number of contestants nominated to compete is provided by the pages dedicated to particular competitions on www.kibo.pl website.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In 2012 the competition under the SSM was held in 51 individual and 19 team disciplines and sports competitions.

Combat sports were represented by: box, judo, karate kyokushin, traditional karate, karate WKF, kickboxing, sumo, taekwondo ITF, Olympic taekwondo and wrestling. According to the discipline specificity (emphasis on striking techniques) similar to one another are: box, karate, kickboxing and taekwondo. PFSM makes the results of competition publicly available since 1999, however, Kick-boxing came into PFSM activity relatively late – in 2007.

During the discussed time, the Polish Association of Kick-boxing was organizing sports competition in the following sub-disciplines: Kick-boxing Musical Forms, Semi Contact, Light Contact, Kick Light Contact, Full Contact, Low Kick, K1 Rules and Muay Thai (since 2012 under the name of Oriental Rules). In the all aforementioned sub-disciplines at the master level the sports competition was organized in the age categories of juniors and youths and additionally in the Semi Contact, Light Contact and in Musical Forms the competition took place in the age categories of younger juniors and cadets. Polish Junior Championship in Kick Light formula was the only sports competition from the all sub-disciplines that was included in Youth Sports System.

1. ANALYSIS OF THE NUMBER OF THE COMPETING CLUBS IN THE SUBSEQUENT YEARS ACCORDING TO THE PZKB AND GUS DATA

Kick-boxing has been participating in the Youth Sports System (SSM) competition since 2007. Thirty-two clubs (25% of the overall number of clubs affiliated in the Polish Association of Kick-boxing) have participated in the SSM competition this year. In 2008 the number of the participating clubs raised to 35. Although because of the fact that the total number of the affiliated clubs raised, the percentage fell from 25% to 24%. The same fall was observed in the following year when the number of participating clubs lowered to 33 and the overall number of the affiliated clubs rose to 170, as a result the proportion of the clubs participating in SSM to the total number of clubs fell to 19%. In 2010 this unfavorable trend was inhibited and as a result of the higher Kick-boxing clubs' interest in the SSM the percentage of the participating clubs rose to 22%. However, the year 2011 brought another drop. In the situation that the number of the clubs affiliated in the Polish Association of Kick-boxing (PZKB) has risen by approximately 50% as compared to the overall number of 248 clubs, the percentage of the clubs participating in the SSM competition (despite the slight increase in their overall number to 38) has fallen to 15%. Re-growth of the number of participating clubs was noted in the last year – 2012 when the number of the clubs involved in SSM was the biggest so far – 47. However, this number represented only 26% of the total number of clubs when taking into account the whole number of 183 clubs affiliated in PZKB and was still not a significant value. It is necessary to add that many of the clubs have been liquidated or were unable to function independently due to disastrous economic situation this

year. This situation led to the drastic decline in the number of the affiliated clubs. After the data from the GUS report has been analyzed, the situation also proved negative tendencies. GUS data pertains only to years 2008 and 2010. This selectivity of the data stems from the fact that its source are KFT-1 reports prepared by the clubs and sports associations regularly every two years. For this reason, in the discussed period the collected data refer only to the years 2008 and 2010. Additionally, the research on KFT-1 form involves the clubs primarily active in the professional sports field and the school sport club which are principally engaged in physical recreation (Physical culture in Poland in years 2008-2010.2011 (Kultura fizyczna w Polsce w latach 2008-2010.2011)). As a result of this, it lacks the sports clubs which do not participate in nationwide sports competition and the clubs which are considered a private company. This situation causes visible discrepancies between the data pertaining to the total number of clubs given by PZKB and GUS. However, also in this case the percentage of clubs competing in SSM fell from 61% in 2008 (57 clubs) to 55% in 2010 (67 clubs). After the analysis of data it has been observed that the minority of the clubs affiliated in PZKB were interested in the competition in SSM. The constant decline of the percentage of the competing clubs in proportion to their total number which is confirmed by both analyses of the PZKB and GUS reports (table 1) is a very worrisome phenomenon.

Table 1. The number of the Kick-boxing clubs participating in Youth Sports System in years 2007-2012

Year	Total number of clubs in PZKB	Number of clubs participating in SSM	Percent of the total number of clubs	Changes in the percentage of the number of clubs
2007	127	32	25%	
2008	143	35	24%	9%
2009	170	33	19%	-6%
2010	170	37	22%	12%
2011	248	38	15%	3%
2012	183	47	26%	24%

Source: <http://www.sportmlodziezowy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/wspol.htm>, Reports on the activity of Polish Association of Kick-boxing in the tasks assigned by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism and PZKB's own tasks from years 2007-2012.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL SPORT CLUB ORGANIZING KICK-BOXING SECTIONS IN SSM IN THE SUBSEQUENT YEARS

In 2007, for the first time thirty-two clubs participated in SSM, including 7 UKS (School Sport Club). One year later the number of clubs rose slightly to 35, however, the number of UKS fell by one. In 2009 there was a fall in the number of participating clubs by 2, which constituted 6%, a further decrease in the number of UKS was noted (by 1). In the following years 2010 and 2011 a slight rise by 12% and next by 3% was noted again. Despite that fact the percentage of UKS decreased to approximately 10%. In 2012 a significant increase in the UKS percentage to 7 was observed, which as compared to the previous year was 75% more, but when confronted to the results of 2007 constituted the same number. Therefore, only the downward trends have been inhibited and the situation came back to the starting position.

Simultaneously, there was a drop in the total number of UKS in PZKB in the same year due to hard economic situation - their number fell from 31 to 19 which equals 40% fall and is the lowest value since 2007. During the discussed period only 4 clubs (including one UKS) have participated in the SSM competition for the whole researched time span, during the five-year period 7 clubs have participated, during four-year period – 11 (including two UKS),

within the three years next 10 clubs have been participating (including 3 UKS), for two years – 22 clubs (including 2 UKS), a single start has been noted by 42 clubs (including 3 UKS). In the years 2007-2012 the total number of Kick-boxing clubs that participated in Youth Sports System was 95 including 11 UKS. As it has been noticed, despite the overall increase of the number of clubs starting in SSM, the constant decrease of the percentage of School Sport Clubs in the competition has been noted (table 2).

Table 2. The number of Kick-boxing School Sport Clubs participating in Youth Sports System in years 2007-2012

Year	Total number of UKS in PZKB	Number of UKS in SSM	Changes in the percentage of the number of the clubs	Percent of the total number of UKS
2007	18	7		39%
2008	21	6	-14%	29%
2009	21	5	-17%	24%
2010	24	3	-40%	13%
2011	31	4	33%	13%
2012	19	7	75%	37%

Source: <http://www.sportmlodziowoy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/wspol.htm>, Reports on the activity of Polish Association of Kick-boxing in the tasks assigned by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism and PZKB's own tasks from years 2007-2012.

3. KICK-BOXING CLUBS IN SSM DEPENDING ON THE VOIVODSHIP

From all the Kick-boxing contests on the master level only the Polish Junior Championships in kick-light formula were included in SSM competition. The first place was awarded with 9 points, the second place – 6 points, third and fourth places (in Kick-boxing the fight for third place does not take place) – 3 points. Together, 21 points were awarded in one weight category. The contests were held in six women weight categories and nine men weight categories. It was possible to score 315 points in total.

After the analysis of the participation of clubs from particular voivodships the initial domination of the clubs from Mazowieckievoivodship has been noticed. In years 2007-2008 these clubs scored almost a quarter of the total number of points, however, in the next years the clubs' domination has stopped. The situation of the clubs from Wielkopolskievoivodship was different. After a brief collapse in 2008 a change came and the clubs' significance in SSM was rising during the next years. A very small contribution to the scoring of clubs from Świętokrzyskie and Małopolskievoivodships is really surprising. The clubs scored a relatively low number of points in the Polish Junior Championships. The rest of the voivodships presented a similar level of performance. The years 2011 and 2012 in particular showed that the sports level in the voivodships became comparable. Only Wielkopolskievoivodship differed significantly from the other regions by scoring a third of the total number of points in 2011. However, in 2012 its advantage visibly fell. The absence of the two voivodships: Podlaskie and Opolskie and wan participation of Kujawsko-pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskievoivodships (despite the fact that they have many very strong clubs starting in full-contact formulas) were surprising. Additionally, it has been noted that not a single club from Opolskievoivodship has ever participated in SSM competition (table 3).

Table 3.Percentage of the participation of clubs from particular voivodships in Kick-boxing SSM results.

Ordinal number	Voivodship	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1	Dolnośląskie	1,43	7,62	9,05	3,94	4,76	7,94
2	Kujawsko-pomorskie		0,48				3,7
3	Lubelskie	7,62	7,14	1,43	5,42	8,1	4,76
4	Lubuskie	8,57	4,76	6,19	8,87	8,57	15,87
5	Łódzkie		7,14	10,95	16,75	5,24	4,76
6	Małopolskie	6,67	3,33		1,48	1,43	2,65
7	Mazowieckie	25,24	21,9	16,67	12,81	7,62	8,47
8	Opolskie						
9	Podkarpackie	3,81	5,71	4,76	8,87	7,14	5,82
10	Podlaskie	1,9					
11	Pomorskie	9,05	10,48	10,48	6,9	6,67	7,41
12	Śląskie	0,48	4,29	3,81	9,36	5,24	9,52
13	Świętokrzyskie		1,43		0,49	0,95	4,76
14	Warmińsko-mazurskie	4,76	9,52	12,38	6,9	9,05	2,12
15	Wielkopolskie	21,9	6,67	22,38	15,76	33,33	22,22
16	Zachodniopomorskie	8,57	9,52	1,9	2,46	1,9	
	Razem	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: <http://www.sportmlodziezowy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/wspol.htm>

4. THE BEST KICK-BOXING CLUBS IN SSM

Analyzing the clubs competing in SSM and being in the top ten of the competition, a very high turnover in the particular centers has been observed. Only Polonia Leszno managed to remain at the forefront throughout the analyzed period. In the top ten were also Alien Łódź, UKS Diament Pstrągowa and for a period of three seasons UKS GKJ Głogów. In case of the rest of the clubs it is hard to define some regularities or constant sports domination. Significant changes were noticed particularly in the last year. Several new clubs emerged and the clubs that remained at the forefront during the previous years disappeared. In the group of the best clubs from 2007 four UKS were noted, in 2008 – three, in 2009 – four, in 2010 – three, in 2011 – one and in 2012 there was not any UKS noted. These figures confirm the data illustrated in table 1 and deny the nationwide trends of School Sport Clubs' growing role and significance in our country's sports system (table 4).

Table 4.Kick-boxing clubs in SSM presenting the highest level of sports

Pla ce	2007	P ts	2008	P ts	2009	P ts	2010	P ts	2011	P ts	2012	P ts
	KS	6		5	Polonia	7		7	KS Polonia 1912	1	KS Beskid Dragon	4
1	Piaseczno	9	KS Piaseczno	4	Leszno	2	Alien Łódź	8	Leszno	7	Bielsko-Biała	8
	Sfinks	4	UKS GKJ	4		5	Polonia 1912	5	BKB Team	3	GKSW Legion	4
2	Węgrów	8	Głogów	8	Alien Łódź	7	Leszno	7	Brzeziny	9	Głogów	2
	GOKSiR	4		4	UKS GKJ	5	UKS Diament	3	UKS Diament	3	BKB Ziętek Team	4
3	Brzeziny	8	Alien Łódź	5	Głogów	7	Pstrągowa	9	Pstrągowa	9	Brzeziny	2
	LKSW Dan	4	LKSW Dan	4	Prosna	4	Gwardia	3	ZKS Gwardia	3	SKF Boksing Zielona	3
4	Świdnik	8	Świdnik	2	Kalisz	2	Zielona Góra	6	Zielona Góra	9	Góra	6
	Polonia	3	UKS Diament	3	Sfinks	3	Dragon Bielsko	3	GKSW Legion	3	KS Polonia 1912	3
5	Leszno	6	Pstrągowa	6	Węgrów	6	Biała	0	Głogów	0	Leszno	3

Source: <http://www.sportmlodziezowy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/wspol.htm>

5. KICK-BOXING IN COMPARISON TO OTHER COMBAT SPORTS IN SSM

After the analysis and comparison of data pertaining to related combat sports, i.e. Box, Kick-boxing, various Karate styles and Taekwondo that are included in Youth Sports System it has been concluded that the growth dynamism during the researched period was very differentiated. In case of the Olympic sports (i.e. Box and Olympic Taekwondo) a constant growth has been noted. However, after the analysis of the data it has been observed that the growth was inhibited last year. Outside the Olympic sports only in case of Kick-boxing a rapid growth particularly in the last year was observed. When talking about the rest of the sports a fall in the number of clubs participating in SSM competition during the last analyzed year was identified. Only Karate WKF noted a slight rise, but still, it did not achieve the highest level from the year 2008. The overall number of clubs in SSM that represented particular sports was comparable. The difference was noted in case of the Olympic sports: Box and Olympic Taekwondo in which the number of participating clubs is much higher because it exceeds (three times in case of Box and two times in case of Olympic Taekwondo) the number of competing clubs from the remaining disciplines. Comparing the number of UKS it has been noticed that the participation of those clubs in SSM, except Box and Olympic Taekwondo, was wan. The number of UKS in particular sports oscillates from 4 to 8 so it constitutes low percentage of the total club number. Only in case of the Olympic Taekwondo it has been observed that the UKS comprise almost the half of the competing clubs. Comparing Kick-boxing to other combat sports convergent trends regarding both the growth dynamism and UKS participation have been noticed. The differences in the clubs' participation in SSM pertain to the Olympic sports, however, they rely on the overall bigger number of clubs in SSM and on diametric differences in the School Sport Club participation. A similar situation has been identified in case of the number of contests included in SSM. Analyzing the sports contests included in SSM scoring, in case of the Olympic sports all the contests defined in SSM were taken into account, however, in case of the other only Polish Junior Championships and Polish Younger Junior Championships were included. Such method of scoring has undoubtedly influenced the number of clubs participating in the Youth Sports System competition (table 5).

Table 5. Combat sports related to Kick-boxing in SSM

Discipline	Contest name		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012/2011	2012/2007
Kickboxing	MPJ	Clubs	32	35	33	37	38	47	24%	47%
		No. of UKS	7	6	5	3	4	7	75%	0%
Box	MMP/MPJ/MPJM/MMM	Clubs	108	116	124	134	131	145	11%	34%
		No. of UKS	16	15	20	23	17	19	12%	19%
Karate	MPJM	Clubs	33	38	36	36	43	40	-7%	21%
		No. of UKS	1	1	0	3	2	4	100%	300%
Traditional Karate	MPJM/MMM	Clubs	34	38	36	38	39	36	-8%	6%
		No. of UKS	5	6	8	7	7	5	-29%	0%
Karate	MPJM/MMM	Clubs	40	45	38	38	42	44	5%	10%
		No. of UKS	9	7	8	8	8	8	0%	-11%
Taekwondo	MPJ/MPJM/MMM	Clubs	53	54	57	54	52	50	-4%	-6%
		No. of UKS	4	5	6	4	4	4	0%	0%
Olympic Taekwondo	MMP/MPJ/MPJM/MMM	Clubs	62	64	63	70	73	74	1%	19%
		No. of UKS	29	28	27	30	31	34	10%	17%

Key:MPJ – Mistrzostwa Polski Juniorów – Polish Junior Championships
MMP - Młodzieżowe Mistrzostwa Polski – Polish Youth Championships
MMM - Międzywojewódzkich Mistrzostw Młodzików - Interoivodship Youngsters Championship
MPJMł – Mistrzostwa Polski Juniorów Młodszych – Polish Younger Junior Championships
Source: <http://www.sportmlodziezowy.pl/wspolzawodnictwo/wspol.htm>

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Kick-boxing competition in Youth Sports System started in 2007. Since this year, Polish Junior Championships in kick-light formula has been included in the competition. In the analyzed period, the peak year concerning the Kick-boxing clubs' participation in Youth Sports System was the year 2012. However, taking into account the rapid growth of the number of the clubs affiliated in the Polish Association of Kick-boxing the number of 47 of clubs constituted only approx. 26% of the total number. For comparison, based on the data contained in the reports on the activity of PZKB and data published on the sub-pages dedicated to particular contests at Kibo.pl portal, in the same year the International Polish Championships of seniors and juniors in the K-1 rules was attended by 65 Kick-boxing clubs, the Polish Junior Championships in low-kick by 48 clubs and the Polish Championships of juniors and youths in K1 (year 2011) by 62 clubs. As it may be noticed, when talking about Kick-boxing the contests included in SSM were not a priority competition for the clubs. For this reason, these contests were attended only by approx. 70% of the overall number of clubs participating in the other contests on the master level. Even bigger dissonance has been observed in the number of participating competitors. The total number of 87 contestants in the SSM competition is hardly comparable to the total number of 304 competitors in the Polish Championships of Juniors and Youths in K1 where in SSM contests participated only 30% of the total number of contestants starting in most prestigious competitions. This fact has its reflection in the sports level of the contests. The analyzed data proved no constant trends, which has been illustrated in tables 2, 3 and 4. The clubs participated in SSM when they were not starting in any other competition at the same time or they treated this participation as low-risk, control contest before the other, more important sports event. The clubs remaining at the forefront in SSM contests i.e. Polonia Leszno, Alien Łódź and UKS Diament Pstrągowa were not participating in full-contact contests or they were ending up without any bigger success. The reason for these trends is the shift of the emphasis from the light-contact to the extreme contact formulas in Kick-boxing such as K1 Rules and Muay Thai (since 2012 Oriental Rules). The formulas that were considered standard concerning the level of contact (Full-Contact) several years ago, today are considered not quite full contact. What is more, competitors' interest is now directed towards maximum degree of contact and effectiveness of the used techniques. The aforementioned trends apply to juniors as well. If the trainers want to train a good competitor in extreme contact formulas, they cannot train them in light-contact formulas as it may result in competitors' later regress. As a result of such approach to the training process the amount of injuries during the competitions is diminishing despite the focus on the effectiveness of the used techniques. This fact indicates that the preparation of the competitors even in the junior age category is constantly improving and at the same time it answers the question of such low percentage of the total number of Kick-boxing clubs participating in the competition under the Youth Sports System. During an interview with the President of Polish Association of Kick-boxing – Andrzej Palacz a following question was asked: Knowing the trends among the clubs and competitors, why PZKB under the SSM is represented only by one competition in Kick-light Contact formula that are known not to be a priority sports event for the clubs? The president has given an answer that the association had been making efforts to make the Polish Federation of Youth Sports include the contests that take place on the ring (and which are currently dominating when concerning the popularity among the contestants and spectators) into the competition. The federation did not agree and

argued that such contests have allegedly high injury rates. This argumentation seems to be rather surprising especially when taking into account the presence of box (in its whole spectrum of competition even in the cadets' category) in the SSM. Analyzing the injuries resulting from the sports contests it is hardly possible to hide the fact that Kick-boxing injuries are primarily orthopedic whereas in box they are characterized as neurological. As it can be concluded, the general health risk is much higher in box than in Kick-boxing. Nevertheless, the Polish Federation of Youth Sports permits box to be included in SSM with its whole scope and permits Kick-boxing to be limited to unpopular mat competition.

Researching the fall and the overall low number of UKS representing Kick-boxing in the SSM it is necessary to answer the question of funding for clubs. A similar tendency can be observed among the rest of the non-Olympic combat sports (Tomik, 2007). Costs of these clubs are relatively high and funds for maintenance are raised practically on their own. In most cases the trainers are at the same time managers and presidents. That is why, it does not make sense for them to create a club in UKS structure as they would get hardly any benefit or advantage and it is much easier for them to manage the club as a common association of physical culture or as a private company. When regarding the Olympic sports, the situation is different. There are much more funds for club financing so that is why the UKS structure is far more attractive especially from the point of view of the organizational perspective. For instance, it has been observed that in Olympic Taekwondo almost half of the clubs are UKS, whereas in non-Olympic Taekwondo despite the similarity of the disciplines the trends are totally opposite (UKS constitute only 8%). Despite the fact that box is an Olympic sport, UKS formula does not work as well and constitutes only 6% of the total number of the clubs, it is caused by significant professionalization of that sport (Tomik, Kudlik, 2008).

W. Cynarski and K. Obodyński (2007) when analyzing the Polish development conditions of martial arts and combats sports that derived from the Far East, concluded that according to the research carried out in Poland only 7 to 14% of the adult citizens exercises regularly, whereas in the European developed countries and in the USA this figure is about 70%. In Poland, the factors which are an obstacle to the development of sport for all, are primarily economic (gradual pauperization of the society and increasing strain of the household budgets) and political barriers (inconsistent country's policy in sport promotion and its uneven availability for the all social groups). These findings can be applied to the interview of PZKB President, A. Palacz and to the comparison of the contests qualified to the SSM in case of box and Kick-boxing. The inconsistency in the sport promotion is clearly visible. Despite the huge similarities in the training process, box as a sport with higher injury rates is represented in the SSM in much wider scope, which in principle is very hard to justify substantially. The aforementioned findings confirm the differences in the UKS role in the Olympic and non-Olympic sports as well. Self-funded sport limits the development of UKS structure in a significant manner, which is plainly visible after the analysis of the obtained data. Cynarski and Obodyński to the barriers inhibiting the development of the Far Eastern martial arts and combat sports include: psychological barriers (which are based on the stereotypes strengthened by primitive companies linking the martial arts and combat sports with violence), cultural factors in which the difference of the Far Eastern martial arts from our cultural patterns is highlighted, and the lack of solid knowledge about this topic, which does not help the promotion of these sports. In order to confirm that thesis it is worth adding that a myth of high rates of injuries in Kick-boxing is still present in Poland. This myth derives from the times of Studio 2 and description of Kick-boxing by A. Hopfer editor. Despite the fact that this myth is not based on any reliable researches or statistical analyses comparing Kick-boxing to other combat sports it still seriously inhibits the promotion of this discipline. Another stereotype is the one regarding the notion of the link between the violence and the

combat sports, which according to Cynarski (2001) is a reason for the lack of acceptance by part of the society. The next myth is a stereotype concerning the people who train combat sports and in principle Kick-boxing. A comprehensive social analysis of the people training sport in our country has never been carried out. Nevertheless, negative stereotypes are still functioning. On the basis of these stereotypes particular decisions pertaining to financing and promoting combat sports among teenagers are made. To the economic barriers the authors include the lack of the institutional base, the lack of the sports infrastructure accessible to the whole society and the lack or insufficient support of the state and local authorities for the combat sports development. Applying the theses made by the authors to the Kick-boxing's position in Poland under the SSM, we can observe the confirmation of these theses. The still present in our culture warrior's archetype makes the practitioners more interested in full and extreme contact form of sports competition. Researching the reasons of the choice of the combat sports training, Cynarski and Litwiniuk (2001) showed that the main cause of the choice of these sports disciplines (Karate, Taekwondo and Aikido were researched) are: the desire to improve physical fitness, ability to fight, ability to defend from the attackers and shaping one's personality. These studies are reflected in Kick-boxing sub-disciplines preferred among the competitors. Only the full and extreme contact formulas ensure the effective realization of the above mentioned aims and despite the fact that the research pertained to people who train other kinds of combat sports, it does provide the answer to the question of Kick-boxing competitors' preferences. Gradual pauperization of the society, diminishing significance of the physical culture and sport and huge number of attractive additional activities cause the increasingly smaller participation of children and youths in the sports process so de facto the possible competitors of non and light-contact mat Kick-boxing formulas. This causes the clubs to turn into the direction of full-contact formulas, which is plainly visible while analyzing the clubs' participation in the SSM. The inconsistent state and local policy and the insufficient financial support force the clubs to be practically self-funded, which means they are dependent on the current customers who expect full-contact competition, which is also a reason for withdrawing from the light-contact competition. In case of the lack of the solid knowledge about Kick-boxing and the still present stereotypes, it can be said that the PFSM does not agree to include the ring competition in the SSM, which creates a vicious circle because of the fact that it causes the situation in which only a small part of the competitors and clubs participates in the SSM. The described circumstances cause the Kick-boxing to be marginally represented in the SSM, practically as a niche discipline, despite the fact that in Poland, Kick-boxing is represented by nearly 200 clubs and over 2200 active competitors and tens of thousands of practitioners.

FINDINGS

The following findings were drawn as a result of the study:

1. Kick-boxing clubs have been participating in the Youth Sports System since 2007.
2. In years 2007-2012, 95 Kick-boxing clubs including 11 UKS participated in the SSM competition. During this period a slight rise from 32 clubs (in 2007) and next a fall followed by another rise (to 47 in 2012) in the number of Kick-boxing clubs were noted. From the very beginning UKS joined the competition, however, their number was always relatively low (maximum of 7 clubs in 2007 and 2012)
3. After analyzing the participation of clubs from particular voivodships, an initial advantage of the clubs from Mazowieckievoivodship has been observed. However, in the subsequent years the situation changed and the clubs from Wielkopolskievoivodship started to play a dominant role. A wan participation of the clubs from Świętokrzyskie and Małopolskievoivodship in the scoring has been noticed. The rest of the voivodships presented similar level. The fact of the absence of

- the two voivodships: Podlaskie and Opolskie and wan participation of Kujawsko-Pomorskie and zachodniopomorskievoivodships were surprising.
4. Analyzing the clubs competing in SSM and presenting the highest sports level, a very high turnover in the particular centers has been observed. Only Polonia Leszno managed to remain at the forefront throughout the analyzed period. In the top ten were also Alien Łódź, UKS Diament Pstrągowa and for a period of three seasons UKS GKJ Głogów. In case of the rest of the clubs it is hard to define some regularities or constant sports domination.
 5. In 2007, 7 UKS participated in the SSM. A fall in the number of UKS by one was noticed one year later. In the next year (2009) a further diminishing of the number of UKS occurred (by one). In 2010 and 2011, the participation of UKS fell to approx. 10% and was 3 in 2010 and 4 clubs in 2011. In 2012 a relatively high rise in the number of UKS (to 7) was observed. During the discussed period only one UKS (Diament Pstrągowa) has been participating in the competition for the whole time. The total number of the UKS that participated in the Youth Sports System in years 2007-2012 was 11.
 6. After the analysis and comparison of data pertaining to related combat sports, it has been concluded that the growth dynamism during the researched period was very differentiated. In case of the Olympic sports a constant growth has been noted. However, after the analysis of the data it has been observed that the growth was inhibited last year. Outside the Olympic sports only in case of Kick-boxing a rapid growth particularly in the last year was observed. When talking about the rest of the sports a fall in the number of clubs participating in SSM competition during the last analyzed year was identified. The overall number of clubs in SSM that represented particular sports was comparable. The difference was noted in case of the Olympic sports in which the number of participating clubs was much higher. Comparing the number of UKS it has been noticed that the participation of those clubs in SSM, except the Olympic sports was wan. The number of UKS in non-Olympic sports oscillates from 4 to 8. Comparing Kick-boxing to other combat sports convergent trends regarding both the growth dynamism and UKS participation have been noticed. A similar situation has been identified in case of the number of contests included in SSM.

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