

Competitive Fencing Activities at Different Stages of Preparation: Features and Consequences in the Context of COVID-19

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Abstract: This study addresses the content of fencers' competitive activities, analyze the organization and conduct of competitions, taking into account COVID-19, content of regulations of the International Fencing Federation, Fencing Federation of Russia, Ministry of Sports of the Russian Federation and others responsible organizations for fencing competitions affecting all aspects of competitive activity. Problems of competitions' holding changes nowadays related to restrictions COVID-19, athletes' preparation for different levels competitions are considered. Factors of COVID-19 extension, which radically influenced the structure organization and content of competitive activities in fencing are revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sports fencing is a dynamic, spectacular sport that has long traditions, fights are held in three types of weapons, competitions in each form are held in personal and team competitions (Britsky, 2021). Fencing is characterized by small and accurate weapon movements and light maneuvers. From time to time, long-term attacks are made with the force of the blade on the enemy's weapons and subsequent attempts at injection into the torso or leg, after which close combat often ensues (Dakhnovsky, 2017). The unpredictability of events associated with the outbreak of COVID-19 virus has affected all spheres of life and sports, unfortunately, there was no exception. Since March 2020, and to date, we have seen an avalanche-like phenomenon of the cancellation or transfer of sporting events of various levels from interregional competitions to the Olympic Games. Outbreak of new and dangerous virus raised important questions for sports industry on its adaptation to current realities. Finding and developing solutions to overcome all the consequences: practical, how we will prepare in terms of the content and organization of the training process, competitive activities, socio-economic consequences that inevitably arose, as well as legal

and legal aspects of the pandemic. Sports fencing in the modern world is characterized by constant growth of popularity both in traditional "fencing" countries and in new ones, which, starting especially from the 21st century and to the present, firmly occupy a prominent place in competitive at the same time, we must note several significant factors: fencing is expensive from the point of view of ammunition and equipment and at the same time inexpensive as a commercial project, sport. Also international fencing is a good global project where international starts of different levels take place around the world. Sports peak of fencing world are Olympic games, as quintessence of all sports confrontation. It is the paralysis of the entire international sporting movement, which has particularly painfully affected fencing, which has affected the competitive activity of all its sides. This makes our study important and relevant.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The main research methods were:

- analysis of literature on the problem of research and sources devoted to the study of the

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structure of modern international sports fencing;

- analysis of materials, regulatory acts that regulate the content and regulation of competitive activities.

3 STUDY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Olympic and university sports are organically integrated into the general social space, which implies the most active interaction with all phenomena, processes and trends characteristic of society as a whole (Mikhalev and Recutina, 2014). In the field of the sports industry, in March 2020 there was a "perfect storm," all sports events were consistently canceled... "The Ministry of Sports of Russia recommends that all-Russian sports federations and executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the field of physical culture and sports cancel or postpone all official sports competitions in the Russian Federation from March 21, 2020 until a special order. The Ministry of Sports of Russia also recommends excluding the participation in all physical and sports events of athletes, coaches and other specialists from the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, in which... " (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia).

At the moment, in connection with the current situation of COVID-19, the authorities of an increasing number of countries are making appropriate decisions. These decisions include cancellation/postponement of competitions, entry restrictions, mandatory quarantines, flight cancellations, etc. FIE (International Fencing Federation) in March 2020 stated the impossibility of holding international competitions and holding the Olympic selection "thus, March 11 and 12, 2020... Immediate suspension of all international competitions for a period of 30 days. The decision to resume the competition will be made during this thirty-day period (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia).

The next XXXII Summer Olympic Games were to be held in Tokyo from July 22 to August 9, 2020, but, in connection with the incident of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, they were forced to be postponed for almost one year. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has approved new dates of the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo - competitions will be held from July 23 to August 8,

2021 (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia).

The postponement of the Olympic Games to 2021 significantly influenced the entire structure of competitions in the international sports movement. "For months, the world has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage all fencers, federations and the fencing family to continue to follow the recommendations of WHO and your countries After the International Olympic Committee announced the new dates for the Tokyo Olympic Games, the FIE Executive Committee made the following decisions:

Given the global situation with COVID-19, it was decided to cancel all competitions, scheduled for April, May and June 2020, also as recommended by the FIE Medical Commission.

Selection for the Tokyo Olympics and the results and qualifications obtained until March 2020 are preserved. Ratings are "frozen" and will be activated as soon as we can hold the last subsequent competitions included in the Olympic selection and which have been postponed." (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia).

Thus, the pandemic by May 2020 stopped all fencing competitions around the world. Competitions were either postponed or canceled due to the impossibility of holding. According to the methodological recommendations of Rospotrebnadzor (Russian Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare) and the Ministry of Sports, the training process of fencers in the Russian Federation took place in an online format (in many youth sports schools until the beginning of 2021). On June 10, the Federation of fencing of Russia (FFR) Executive Committee stated: "FEDERATION OF FENCING OF RUSSIA COACHING COUNCIL Online conference in the program" Zoom "June 10, 2020 where I.Ya. Mammedov asked senior arms trainers to talk about the training process as part of self-isolation. Senior arms coaches and coaches from various regions working with the Russian national team reported that during the period of self-isolation they systematically worked in the format of online training. As restrictions are lifted in various regions of the country, coaches and athletes gradually return to the usual mode of work, observing anti-epidemic safety measures. Rakita M.S. thanked everyone for their participation and noted the convenience of holding a meeting of the coaching council in the online format "(The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). For athletes not included in the national teams, classes were held in an online format in

accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Sports and sports schools; especially this was relevant for athletes in the initial stages of preparation. The absence of a normal training process, special training is especially important for fencing "the most effective working poses and dynamic models in modern fencing were formed by centuries-old traditions, which culminated in a variety of posture control, defense, attack and foot work techniques (Rules of the sport "Fencing", 2019). No home and online workouts can replace the training and competitive process. The change in the planned schedules of training and competitions affected absolutely all fencer athletes around the world.

In July 2020, the International Fencing Federation (FIE), the Executive Committee of this Federation, adopted a number of measures, primarily of a financial nature. An emergency plan of 1 million Swiss francs has been adopted: "the recommendations received and the potential risks in order to develop a plan of further action and make appropriate decisions were analyzed..." but protecting the health of our athletes and all members of the fencing family, as well as creating equal and reasonable conditions for all parties, are priority over all other arguments. Finally, I suggested that the Executive Committee implement an unprecedented support plan with a budget of SAR 1,000,000 francs to help you overcome this crisis (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). It is worth noting that the budget of the International Fencing Federation for 3 terms of the presidency of Alisher Usmanov increased 5 times. The amount of investments of personal funds and funds associated with A.Usmanov during this time, according to various sources, is approaching \$100 million. The decision on emergency support can be called a rescue from bankruptcy and other problems, since the FIE was supposed to receive \$16.3 million for participating in the last Olympics, which is approximately 75% of the entire budget of the Federation. And naturally in 2020 FIE did not receive this money (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). In fact, fencing, as one of many Olympic disciplines, largely forms the budget for money received from the IOC. Unfortunately, having the opportunity to conclude commercially interesting contracts and earn money on it. In this regard, we note important aspects of the decision of the FIE Executive Committee:

- FIE Global Assistance Plan for COVID-19 The assistance plan, which has a budget of one million Swiss francs, will be implemented as follows: Assistance to all federations and confederations: A

one-time grant of 4.000 Swiss franc paid to all federations and confederations to compensate for the potential loss of local subsidies; Cancellation of payment of the annual fee for 2020, and, if the federations have already paid it, postponement to 2021; Assistance to the organizers of the competition in 2020-2021; Cancellation of payment of all organizational fees for the 2020- 2021 season, as well as for the period from January to March 2020; help (in the amount of 1000 euros) to all judges appointed by FIE for the 2019-2020 season. In addition, a financial subsidy for 1 athlete from each federation, intended for participation in the 2020 world championship among juniors and cadets, will be allocated for participation in the 2021 zonal junior championship. This global plan is an addition to the annual FIE assistance programs; transfer of World Championships, as well as Olympic selection to 2021.

Note that the international season was resumed from January 1, 2021. Prior to this, national federations have held competitions since the fall of 2021, taking into account COVID-19 protocols and the requirements of authorities in different countries. This was done in order to ensure equal opportunities for all athletes to be selected for the Tokyo Games.

The organization of competitive activities in the current conditions in the Russian Federation is regulated by the organization and conduct of official physical and sports events in the Russian Federation in the conditions of maintaining the risks of the spread of COVID-19, approved by the Ministry of Sports of Russia and Rospotrebnadzor (Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare) on July 31, 2020 (with changes and additions). In fact, this act regulates the content and organization of training and competitive activities, with the specifics of each region (The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). According to the rules of the competition in the sport "fencing":... 1. Competition doctor: - monitors compliance with sanitary and hygienic standards established for competition venues; - checks compliance with the requirements of sports and technical applications submitted to the mandate commission; - ensures the provision of first aid to participants, trainers, representatives, judges, maintenance personnel for injuries and diseases "(The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). However, these requirements since the fall of 2020 have been quite difficult to fulfill when organizing training and competitive activities. Each region introduced its own rules and restrictions. Let us give a simple example when sports schools in Moscow in fencing (not all) were able to accept children only in February 2021, sports schools in other regions,

including the Moscow region, have already worked. Competitions were held in different regions, national teams since the summer of 2020, were at training camps in different regions. For example, the championship of Russia less than 15 years old, in the city of Togliatti, from October 6-15, 2020, was canceled due to the lack of equal conditions for the competition. The Cup of Russia in Smolensk was also canceled from December 20-26, 2020 and a number of other competitions were canceled "due to the worsening epidemiological situation..." For all competitions rules of admission of athletes were developed, which began to include some points: "An information letter about the All-Russian sword fencing competitions among men and women on October 25 and 26, 2020. The mandatory requirement for participating in competitions is the availability of an FFR athlete's certificate, medical application and insurance, as well as the availability of a certificate (PCR, absence of COVID-19 virus) with results not earlier than 3 calendar days. If they are absent, athletes are not allowed to the tournament. PCR certificates and individual protective equipment (coverings and gloves) are also necessary for team representatives, coaches, judges and spectators. Contactless thermometry will be organized for all those entering the sports facility "(The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). "RUSSIAN FENCING CHAMPIONSHIP AMONG MEN AND WOMEN IN 2021. 3. The mandatory requirement is the presence of a certificate (PCR, absence of COVID-19 virus) with the results not earlier than 3 calendar days or a certificate with the results of quantitative analysis confirming the presence of antibodies IgG in an amount of more than 15 OE/ml, obtained not earlier than two months. If they are absent, athletes are not allowed to the Russian Championship. PCR certificates (or certificates with the results of quantitative analysis) and individual protective equipment (masks and gloves) are also necessary for team representatives, coaches, judges and spectators. Contactless thermometry will be organized for all those entering the sports facility "(The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). Information letter on the All-Russian sword fencing competitions among men and women on May 24-28, 2021. "The mandatory requirement for participating in competitions is: - availability of a certificate (PCR, absence of COVID-19 virus) with obtaining results no earlier than 3 calendar days before the start of the competition; or - a certificate confirming the presence of antibodies IgG to SARS-COV-2 received two months before the start of the competition; or having a vaccination

certificate confirming the administration of the two vaccine components. If at least one of the above documents is not provided, athletes are not allowed to participate in the tournament "(The official website of the fencing federation of Russia). Competitions held at the end of 2021 include requirements for the presence of antibodies obtained no earlier than a month IgG or even some regions require participants only over 18 years old to be allowed to have a vaccination certificate (Krasnodar Territory).

Olympic Games and International Competitions in 2021.

The international federation faced great difficulties in holding the necessary competitions for selection for the Olympic Games. Due to the inability to hold in 2020, it had to be accommodated until April 2021, many countries and cities could not hold them in 2021, but since the Olympic Games were not canceled. Several factors dictated the change in requirements for participants in competitions and the conditions for admission of athletes: the epidemiological situation in the country and regions, the requirements of regional authorities and Rospotrebnadzor. All training and competitive activity has become a hostage to this situation, which is constantly changing. Participation in the Olympic Games and international starts required athletes and the Federation to organize a training and competitive process to complete the selection for the games, organize medical control, test for the COVID-19, isolate athletes and coaches for the preparation period. So, the Russian Championship among juniors in Vyborg and cases of infection of coronavirus among its participants raised the issue of participation of candidates from Russia for the World Championship among cadets 2021 in Cairo. The next competition in Suzdal was removed from the selection system in order to minimize the risks for potential candidates for the trip. Athletes applying for a trip to Tokyo and an expanded team that participated in the preparation of the team for the Olympics were vaccinated and in fact the pre-Olympic training was held in isolation and limited contacts for potential participants. All athletes underwent multi-stage testing on COVID-19 and at the Olympic Games COVID-19 did not interfere with the brilliant performance of Russian fencers. As throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the process of preparation and competition in Russia and in the world has an element of unpredictability depending on the pandemic situation. Sports schools and the training process in them take place in conditions of restrictions and recommendations of Rospotrebnadzor, which imposes an imprint on the

training process. Competitions at the regional level face organizational and medical force majeure. International competitions are held in accordance with the recommendations and rules in these countries. The 2021 World Fencing Championship was postponed to 2022 and will be held as planned in Cairo Egypt, the reason for the transfer was the transfer of the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Competitive activity, an important and integral part of training athletes at all stages of preparation. The pandemic COVID-19 caused paralysis in all the sports industry, competitions around the world were canceled, training in the usual format was banned until the rules were developed and the "interaction" with the new coronavirus infection was understood. Fencing competitions of different levels are held around the world and after the suspension of the competition, then International competitions were canceled until January 1, 2021. The postponement of the Olympic Games, in addition to the sports one, dealt a serious financial blow to FIE and a national federation, since the financial stability of FIE depends on IOC deductions. In many ways, FIE managed to maintain financial stability and stability at the expense of its president and emergency decisions and financial assistance adopted by the executive committee, which allowed to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus.

COVID-19 made dramatic changes to the rules of the competition. Admission of athletes and made adjustments in particular medical admission and control of athletes, spectators, judges. Changes occur constantly depending on the current situation with COVID-19, in a particular country and local legislation. There is a constant adjustment of requirements for athletes participating in competitions and organizers. The uncertainty of the rules for organizing the training and competitive process, starting from the NP groups in the youth sports school to the national teams, introduces uncertainty in the slender process of training athletes. In fact, vaccination, as for adult athletes, becomes the main factors in admission to the opportunity to play sports. However, the unpredictability with the spread of COVID-19, the lack of study of this virus, the inability to predict how this virus will behave further in the human population, the jump in the number of infections leads to a misunderstanding of how to further plan and establish new "rules of the game" of the functioning of the sports industry, including

fencing, taking into account COVID-19. This has never happened in the history of world sports, when the unpredictability of the virus and the inability to take control of it became a huge challenge for everyone.

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