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**SCIENTIFIC, THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF THE SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINE “PROFESSIONAL SPORT”**

In the history of civilization, sport always has been of importance and served as the basis for creating and maintaining the reputational capital of the country. This methodological issue, which has not been solved for the past 100 years, is addressed in the theory of sport as well. As a result of recent transformations, modern sport gained a new quality, i.e., today's sport is not only a physical activity, but a service industry, which produces and distributes goods. An effective resolution to any problem requires certain theoretical and methodological basis. Sport as an object of scientific research involves the study of social, organizational, legal, economic, informational, and other aspects. The formation of sport, professional sport in particular, began in Ancient World. Its development had certain unique features in the Middle Ages and Modern Age. The analysis of modern theories has as its aim the formation of the idea of the general trends of the development of sport in the 20th – 21st Centuries, as well as the evaluation of its modern status and the prospects for further development [1 – 10].

The research was conducted in the context of topic *1.2. Modern Professional Sport and the Ways of Its Development in Ukraine* as part of *Physical Culture and Sport in 2011 – 2015 Research Master Plan* of the Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sport of Ukraine (state registration number: 0111U001714).

Modern sports sciences embrace the entire complex of academic disciplines that study sport: social and natural sciences, as well as the interdisciplinary scientific areas that perform various functions in the scientific study of sport. Some sciences (philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies) develop general methodological approaches and evaluation tools, which deepen and extend the subject of study. Other

sciences (history, sociology, and statistics) aim at collecting data and systemizing facts on the processes and events in the sphere of sport by means of a variety of tools. The third group of sciences (psychology, pedagogy, biology, physiology, political science, and economics) analyses the individual aspects and elements of sport, the mechanisms of the influence of the external and internal developmental factors. The plurality of scientific measurements and characteristics is caused by the fact that sport is one of the important regulators of social relations; it penetrates all spheres of life, which requires its interdisciplinary study and the use of the potential and tools of social and, in some cases, natural and technical sciences.

The purpose of the article is to define the theoretical and methodological foundations of the scientific discipline “Professional Sport”.

The methodology of the research includes: analysis, synthesis, and generalization; comparison, correlation, and analogy; abstraction, induction, and deduction; modeling; analysis of scientific and methodological literature and documents; logical historical, concrete historical, and comparative historical analyses; system approach, structural and functional analysis; survey and observation; and methods of mathematical statistics.

The most important question of the development of the professional sport as a scientific discipline is defining the lines of its research, which can be presented as the unity of three interconnected aspects: social life, social subjects’ type of activity, type of social relations (fig. 1).

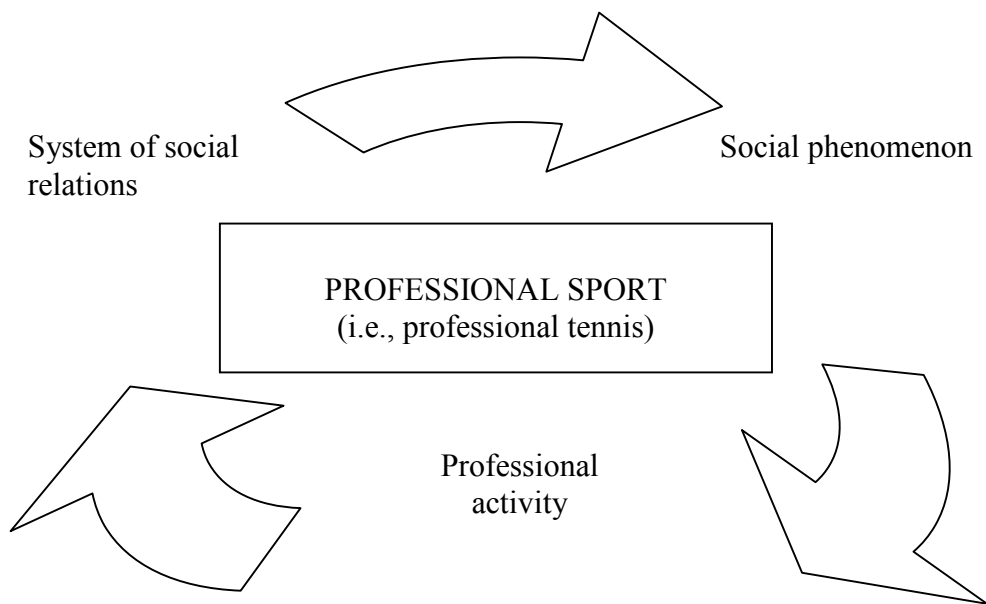


Fig. 1. Professional Sport. Aspects of Study

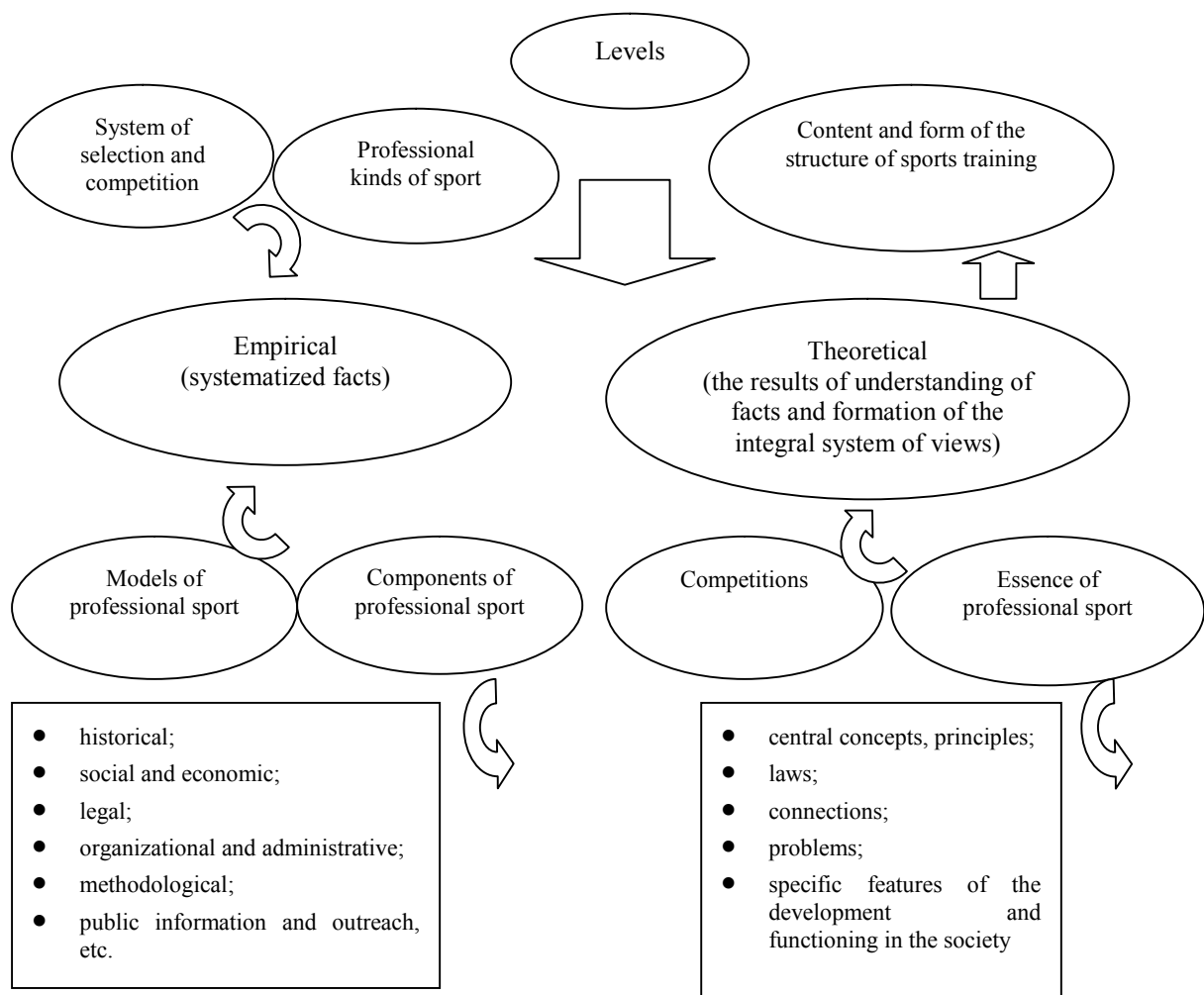


Fig. 2. Professional Sport Knowledge System (according to V. Platonov and S. Hus'kov) [4]

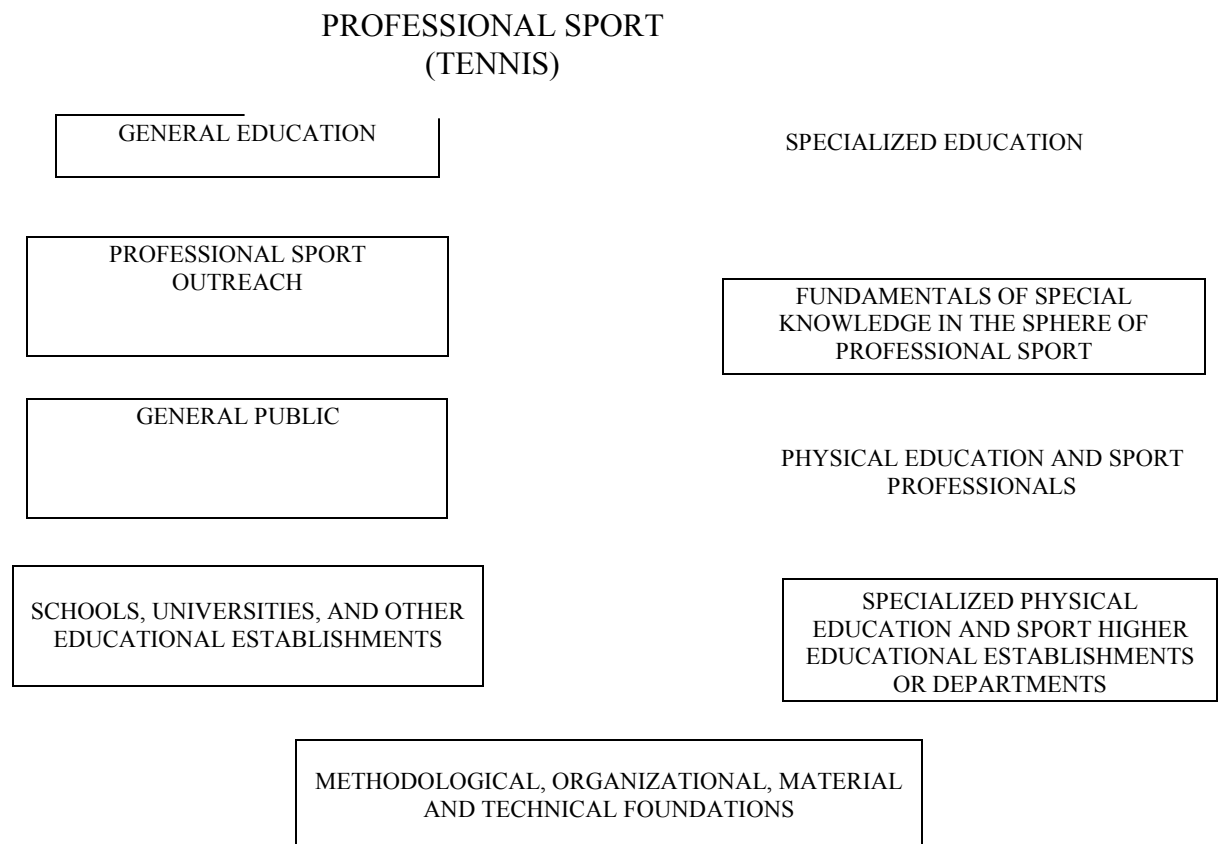


Fig. 3. The mechanism of acquiring knowledge in the sphere of professional sport in Ukraine (according to V. Platonov) [4].

The first aspect views sport as an element of the general social structure, as its part that has a certain place, plays a certain role, and is characterized by unique features and functional specifics. Professional sport serves as a structure that ensures the realization of socially important functions: both general (recreational, educational, entertaining, and communicative) and special (“safety valve”, modeling of behavior, spirituality, sustaining hope, individualization, distraction, and integration) [4]. Another aspect of studying professional sport is looking at it as a method of group and individual activity of social subjects, a kind of human activity and social behavior. In this context, sport is defined as an enterprise and professional activity in relation to which all subjects are divided into the following groups: athletes, coaches,

scholars, managers, politicians, businesspeople, producers of goods and services, mass media, etc., which are characterized by certain attitudes and motivations connected with their participation in sport. The third, and the most important, aspect of the interpretation of professional sport is its inclusion into the complex system of social relations and ties.

Olympic and professional sport as a system of knowledge has been fundamentally studied by professors S. Hus'kov and V. Platonov. It is examined by the authors at two levels of cognition: empirical and theoretical (Fig. 2), and in two major directions: general education and specialized education (Fig. 3), which are different not only in their content, but also in their methodological, organizational, as well as material and technical foundations [3 – 4]. Taking into account the aim of this research, its subject and object, let us examine this in the context of professional sport.

Sports sciences include the empirical and theoretical levels and aspects of knowledge and research, which are interrelated in the majority of research works, which involve the formulation of theoretical models, conceptualization and operationalization of concepts and hypotheses, and initial data collection and analysis. An important characteristic of scientific knowledge is its validation, evidence-based nature, confirmation of the facts (or failure thereof), hypothesis development, establishment of objective laws, principles, etc. Among the essential differences between fundamental and applied research in the sphere of professional sport are the differences in their aims, the role of the subject of cognition, the ways theory and practice are integrated, the phase of research, some space-temporal characteristics [2, 5 – 7]. In other words, if fundamental research is aimed at cognition (gaining insights into various mechanisms and objective laws), applied research is characterized by transformational focus (application of the recognized mechanisms). The role of the subject of analysis is also different: in the first case, it is objectivized (detached and neutral), whereas in the second case it is subjective (active and engaged).

Fundamental research is characterized by an indirect relation to practice; it includes collection and description of concrete empirical data, development of abstract theoretical models and is held in space and time not strictly limited. Applied research deals with practice directly; it entails the transition from abstract theoretical models to their concrete synthesis in applied techniques, is localized in space and limited in time. Applied sports research, therefore, includes the strategies of the development of sport in general and its individual types as the models of sport movement in Ukraine, exercise programs for athletes. Fundamental sport research deals with the theory of sport, comparative research of physical culture and sport, etc. It is worthwhile to note that applied research in professional sport is interdisciplinary, as external factors, i.e., economic, psychological, socio-cultural and other, are studied along with the models of the organizational and administrative system. As a result, applied knowledge in the sphere of sport is not a combination of concrete empirical conclusions reached in different disciplines, but a synthesis of abstract models, which enables the theoretical interpretation of a concrete situation and the formation of a subject within it, combining in such a way the results of theoretical, empirical, and practically-oriented knowledge.

Discussing the interrelation of theory and practice, it is necessary to address the issue of the logics of professional sport as a scientific and academic discipline. To study the problems of professional sport, the National University of Physical Education and Sport of Ukraine created the Department of Olympic and Professional Sport (1992); in 1994 professional sport as an academic discipline was introduced into the curriculum of the specialized educational institutions of the country. The development of this scientific discipline is directed by the *Physical Culture and Sport in 1998 – 2015 Research Master Plan*, presented in the introduction to the article. The structure of the course of study is closely connected with the scientific discipline and the development of professional sport as an objective phenomenon [4].

The following text will be devoted to the discussion of the objective laws of professional sport [9 – 10]. On the one hand, there exist “objective” laws of the development and structuring of the general theory of sport with due consideration of

functional (or correlational) dependences; on the other hand, it is important to take into account the nature and form of the cause-and-effect relations: “rules” and “principles” that work under certain circumstances. As a result, the main components of the sport knowledge are:

- cognitive and evaluative component, which has to do with the process of researching of and gaining insight into the mechanism and objective laws of sport, as well as describing, explaining, and evaluating of certain events and phenomena;
- instrumental and praxeological component, which is pertinent to the use of scientific research findings in sport practice, management, and development strategy in the process of decision-making and techniques of their implementation; and
- educational and socializational component, which relates to the influence of the sport knowledge on the mechanism of socialization of the individual and civic education.

Categorial and conceptual framework is an essential characteristic of scientific knowledge. Professor V. Platonov [4] distinguishes two types of concepts: basic, pertaining to Olympic and professional sport and its individual aspects, and derived, issuing from the basic ones. Basic concepts are divided into five groups: general concepts (Olympism, Olympic and professional sport), concepts related to the international system (International Olympic Committee, international sports federations, National Olympic Committee, and international sports associations), concepts related to the Olympic Games sequence, their program, and finding the winner (National Olympic Team, Olympic program, Olympic sports, sport discipline, competitive event, system of Olympic events), concepts related to the training of athletes to participate in competitions (system of athletic training, athletic performance, athletic training), and concepts related to the results of athletic training at a certain level of sports perfection and achievement (sports result, sports qualification). The interrelatedness of sport with various social phenomena and the application of knowledge from related areas determine the use of economic, political,

legal, biological, medical, philosophical, sociological and other categories [1; 3 – 4; 9 – 10].

The methodology of sports science is a special branch of science. It is a theory of various methods and their combinations in studying sport related to the correct statement of the problem and the selection of adequate approaches, to the transformation of methodological principles and requirements into an ensemble of specific operations and procedures, and to the use of different tools. Basic research methods and methodology in sport have been developing gradually for more than 100 years of the historical development of not only sport, but also related disciplines, with different methodological approaches (or their combinations) and teaching methods dominating different stages of this development [2, 6]. Among the main methods used in sports studies and sharing the same analysis procedures or the same scope of reality, three groups can be distinguished: general scientific, social humanitarian, and special scientific methods.

General scientific methods use three groups of the means of cognition:

- logical and heuristic means: induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, diagnosis and prognosis, definition and classification, comparison and analogy, specific description and abstract explanatory interpretation, observation and experiment, statistical analysis, logical and mathematical modeling, verification and falsification, and
- philosophical and axiological principles associated with the philosophical and worldview, axiological and evaluative criteria.

The second group of methods include: historical-comparative and synchronic-comparative methods of study, analysis of documents and sources, scaling and tests, interviews, questionnaires and polling, methods of studying stereotypes and traditions, etc.

Special scientific methods are a modification or a combination of several methodological components in an attempt to create a unique tool adequate to the study of a particular subject. Due to the existence of this group of methods, models of

the functioning of professional sport in the country are developed using expert review, programs of development, as well as the statistical comparative analysis of the countries-participants of the international sports movement, etc. is conducted [7].

Another approach to the classification of methods is realized by making a distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods, which came to the fore in the second half of the 20th Century. Modern sports methodology makes but a vague distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches, as modern comparative studies cover hundreds of objects using both qualitative approaches and advanced mathematical tools for collecting and processing information [5]. Those comparative studies that examine phenomena or processes in the broad socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts, presuppose the comprehensive analysis of the prerequisites and consequences, use of historical analogies, and the study of other countries' best practices. The demand for comparative analysis is especially high in the comparative studies of the organizational structures of sport as management models functioning at the state and municipal levels. Applied comparative research analyzes socio-economic and political relations in Ukraine and develops on this basis the scientific foundations of the improvement of the sports organizational system in the country.

The final among the most important criteria for the classification of the methods of sports science is their functional purpose. On the basis of this criteria, there can be distinguished, on the one hand, tools (with induction prevailing) of data description and collection and, on the other hand, predominantly deductive methods of the analysis and interpretation of the collected facts [2]. These functions are associated with the two levels of research activity: specific empirical and abstract theoretical. The first includes such methods of collecting primary data, as content analysis and event analysis, surveys, interviews, direct observation, scaling, etc., while the second is associated with the statement of theoretical hypotheses and the construction of abstract logical and mathematical models, including the means of conceptualization and interpretation, explanation and design.

A very important issue is the definition of perspective lines of the development of the modern sports science methodology to reflect the latest advances and modern

techniques. It is undoubted that comparative method and modeling are among the most promising methodological approaches in the field of fundamental research. It should be noted that many new methods and techniques are used not only in the fundamental, theoretical research, but also to undertake applied studies commissioned by both public and corporate entities to analyze the current situation and choose the optimal solution. In addition, the applied analysis of the post-Perestroika development of sport in the CIS, especially in Russia and Ukraine, most commonly employs such methods as expert review and “event analysis”, taking into account the four key parameters: subject and object, type of interaction, event time and location. Thus, new methods and techniques of the late 20th – early 21st Centuries face the challenge of the optimal combination of adequate qualitative and quantitative methods, which involve the development of the relevant computer software.

The study of the social reality of sport determines the application of the methods of sociological theory. The sociology of sport utilizes different approaches to study the relationship between sport and society; micro- or macro-aspects of sport are analyzed in a broad cultural and structural context. American sociologists distinguish between two types of tools in sports science: quantitative (data and facts that can be statistically analyzed) and qualitative (collected by means of interviews, individual and group observation or social characteristics and trends) research methods [7 – 10]. Survey, interview, content analysis, ethnographic, historical and sociological methods are among the most common research methods. Sociological analysis is based on numerous theories, but we will focus on those that are traditionally used in the study of sport as a social phenomenon, namely structural functionalism, conflict theory, and the theory of structuration [10].

Supporters of structural functionalism analyze social processes in the context of the system of relationships as a whole by interpreting them as stable forms [10]. Social institutions as the system components form functional roles and meet the functional needs of the participants. As a result, there can be distinguished four research areas: the interrelation of sport with other social institutions (politics, economics, science, education, etc.); the reflection of generally accepted society

practices in sport (discrimination, sublimation, nationalism, etc.); the impact of the social system (commercialization and professionalization of sport, development of professional sport, impact of mass media); and the mechanisms of role formation and sports motivation.

The theory of conflict focuses on the conflict as a phenomenon inherent in the nature of human society. The theory of conflict was developed by R. Dahrendorf and L. Coser as an opposition to structural functionalism, which emphasizes the stability and balance of the social system [10]. Recently, the theory of conflict gained new momentum in the works of the American scientists D. Bell, K. Boulding, French scholars M. Croze, A. Touraine, and the Norwegian scholar J. Galtung, et al., who look at sport as a social formation that develops due to conflicts [10]. They emphasize that the value of conflict is that it encourages the development of social systems, defuse the tension between the opposing parties and restore the relationship, and help the opponents to come together and to get to know each other. Thus, conflict in sport can lose its significance if the subject achieves a certain goal, such as winning the race. However, conflicts in sport may involve entire countries, e.g., the opposition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which had serious consequences. Such confrontation is complex and involves several spheres of life.

In the theory of structuration, A. Giddens states that the “High modern” society is characterized by the “reflexivity inherent in the modern societies” and describes the relationship between human actions and social institutions [8]. The basic concept of the theory is the term of social agent. In a narrow sense in sport, it is the athlete who is the social agent acting according to a motive (to achieve victory). Rationalization of actions means that the agent understands, knows, and can explain his/her actions. Reflexive monitoring is a constant and continuous tracking by the individual of his/her own actions and the actions of others (competitors), as well as physical and social conditions [7, 10]. In a global sense, this theory calls for the analysis of the situation and the identification of the key lines of the development of high performance sport (target programs of the development of the individual kinds of sport, training program for athletes for the Olympic Games and other

competitions). In addition, in his theory A. Giddens describes structures as a set of rules that are both the condition of the action (as in functionalism) and its result (unlike in functionalism). The agent both reproduces and creates rules. The athlete as an agent is actively involved in the creation of athletic games and the reproduction of rules.

Thus, the afore-mentioned approaches look at sport from different perspectives. Functionalism focuses on the formation of social values and norms, functions of sport, and its interactions with social institutions. The theory of conflict deals with intra- and inter-group relations in sport, studies the process of conflict and its possible resolutions. The theory of structuration focuses on the individual as an agent, who can make an impact on the reality despite the structure that has evolved, external and internal conflicts. It is the statement of the goals and objectives, subject and object of research that determines the choice of the theory (or a number of theories) for a comprehensive study of sport as a social phenomenon.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the scientific discipline “Professional Sport” is laid in the works of domestic and foreign authors in the fields of sociology, history, management, economics and the formation of market relations in the professional sport of the USA, Europe, Russia, and Ukraine, namely:

- role and importance of professional sport in society,
- challenges of the formation and functioning of professional sport, trends of its development,
- directions of sport modification, interconnection between high performance sport and professional sport,
- amateur and professional sport,
- organizational, legal, social and economic foundations, as well as various aspects of the professional sports industry,
- development of market relations in sport in the transitional socio-economic systems,

- challenges of professional sport and the government's involvement in its development,
- political aspects, when achievements of national teams and individual athletes acquire political significance, with many state and public leaders creating their image and raising their significance in the political life of the country owing to sport, and
- interconnections of professional sport with education, economics, art, law, media, and international diplomacy.

It should be noted that the connection between sport and education has been studied from various aspects [3 – 4, 6, 10]. On the one hand, sport contributes to the growth of the need for education, academic success, and social integration and is a catalyst for social activity. On the other hand, it contradicts the basic purposes of education. The latest decade saw the intensification of research aimed at the revision of the theory and methodology of physical education and athletic training. At the same time, today there is a growing gap between the level of competence of the graduates of physical education universities and the mounting needs of modern society.

The importance of professional sport for the society, the professionalization and commercialization of Olympic sport determine the necessity of studying international experience in restructuring the organizational foundation of sport in the country in accordance with modern trends. However, despite the development of scientific thought and the expansion of the range of issues, the works of Ukrainian scholars failed to address the social, economic, ethical, legal, sporting aspects of the development of professional sport in the country, which is the topic of our further research.

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Борисова О. В. Наукові й теоретико-методологічні засади викладання дисципліни „Професійний спорт”

У статті визначено теоретико-методологічні основи наукового аналізу професійного спорту, а також його логіка як наукової й навчальної дисципліни. Методологічну основу дослідження становив діалектичний підхід, заснований на усвідомленні універсальності взаємозв'язків соціальних процесів і явищ, адекватному відбитті реальної дійсності. В основу методології дослідження також покладено знання й досвід, накопичені у сфері олімпійського та професійного спорту. Модифікація сучасного спорту, зумовлена процесами професіоналізації та комерціалізації, свідчить про необхідність наукового обґрунтування реорганізації національних організаційно-управлінських систем спорту відповідно до загальносвітових тенденцій.

Ключові слова: професійний спорт, наукова дисципліна, навчальна дисципліна, методологія та методи дослідження, емпіричний і теоретичний рівні знань.

Борисова О. В. Научные и теоретико-методологические основы научной дисциплины „Профессиональный спорт”

В статье определены теоретико-методологические основы научного анализа профессионального спорта, а также его логика как научной и учебной дисциплины. Методологическую основу исследования составил диалектический подход, основанный на осознании универсальности взаимосвязей социальных процессов и явлений, адекватном отражении реальной действительности. В основу методологии исследования также положены знания и опыт, накопленные в сфере олимпийского и профессионального спорта. Модификация современного спорта, обусловленная процессами профессионализации и коммерциализации, свидетельствует о необходимости научного обоснования реорганизации национальных

организационно-управленческих систем спорта в соответствии с общемировыми тенденциями.

Ключевые слова: профессиональный спорт, научная дисциплина, учебная дисциплина, методология и методы исследования, эмпирический и теоретический уровни знаний.

Borysova O. V. Scientific, Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Scientific Discipline “Professional sport”

The article defines the theoretical and methodological foundations of the scientific analysis of the professional sport, as well as its logic as a scientific and academic discipline.

Professional sport as an object of research requires the study of its social, organizational, legal, economic, and informational aspects at the two levels of knowledge: empirical and theoretical. Furthermore, the methodological, organizational, and material foundation of such study differs depending on whether general education or special education aspect is considered.

The methodological foundation of the research featured in this article was the dialectic approach, which proceeds from the acknowledgement of the universality of the interrelations of social processes and phenomena and the adequate reflection of reality. Knowledge and experience in the sphere of Olympic and professional sport are also put into the foundation of the methodology of the research. The reorganization of the modern sport precipitated by its professionalization and commercialization highlights the need for the scientific substantiation of the reorganization of the national organizational and administrative systems of sport according to global trends.

Key words: professional sport, scientific discipline, academic discipline, methodology and research methods, empirical and theoretical levels of knowledge.

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