

Investigation on the Reform of the National Single-event Sports Associations and Development Countermeasures in the New Period

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Abstract:

In this study, based on the case study of the governance of the national single-event sports associations in the new era, its reform is investigated from the aspects of governance direction, functional orientation, governance structure and coordination of internal and external governance mechanisms of the national single-event sports associations with the methods of literature, expert interviews, case analysis and other research methods, and the difficulties and problems existing in the current reform of single-event sports associations are discussed. Then, a theoretical analysis is made on how to deepen the reform of the national single-event sports associations to explore their internal and external governance mechanism that is suitable for China's national conditions, which provides a path choice for deepening the reform of governance mechanism of national single-event sports associations.

Keywords: National, Single-event, Sports associations, Reform, Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

More than 40 years of reform and opening-up in China have pushed socialism with Chinese characteristics into a new era, deepened the reform of the state administrative system, and entered a crucial stage in the reform and development of various socialist undertakings. Moreover, China's sports industry has also entered a critical stage of further deepening the reform and accelerating the construction of a sports power. With the reform and development of sports industry entering a deep end and a critical period, various contradictions have become increasingly prominent. Therefore, the reform of the sports system is the key to the development of the sports cause and an important part of the modernization of the national governance system and governance capabilities. The reform of single-event sports associations is a breakthrough in the current sports system reform and one of the key problems to be solved urgently in the reform and development of sports undertakings.

In fact, since the reform and opening up, the reform of sports undertakings and sports associations has always been carried out simultaneously with the reform of various undertakings in our country. In 1981, the substantialized reform of sports associations was put on the agenda at the meeting of directors of the

National Sports Commission. In 1988, the General Administration of Sport of China established the direction of the new institutional reform of the association system with Chinese characteristics, which is to "manage the development of sports events with single-event sports associations as the main management" according to the spirit of the institutional reform of the central government and the state Council. In the subsequent series of reform experiments, such as "pilot entity associations", "sports management center", "sports management center+ entity associations" and "untying the connections of entity associations with sports management departments", the core and key issues such as the materialization of sports associations' self-survival, the virtuous circle operation relying on society, professional development and legal development were explored. At present, the substantialized reform of the "top-down" the national single-event sports associations is stepping into a new era and a deeper governance stage at a higher level. However, facing the reality that sports culture is relatively backward, sports social forces are relatively weak, and sports consciousness is awakened and sports consumption is vigorous, only by speeding up the reform of the governance mechanism of national single-event associations can they give full play to their social organization advantages, speed up the improvement of their own governance systems and governance capabilities, and better serve the construction of a strong sports nation, the growing sports demand of the people, the development of the sports market and the construction of sports culture.

In this study, based on the case study of the governance of the national single-event sports associations in the new era, its reform and development were objectively reviewed from the aspects of governance direction, functional orientation, governance structure and coordination of internal and external governance mechanisms of the national single-event sports associations, and the difficulties and problems existing in the current reform of single-event sports associations were discussed. Then, a theoretical analysis was made on how to deepen the reform of the national single-event sports associations to explore their internal and external governance mechanism that is suitable for China's national conditions, which provides a path choice for deepening the reform of governance mechanism of national single-event sports associations.

II. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE REFORM OF NATIONAL SINGLE-EVENT SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

The substantialized reform of national single-event sports associations has concentrated a series of reforms in China's political system reform, market economy development, social structure transformation, social organization rise and sports power construction. According to different standards, different scholars have divided the stages of the reform process of single-event sports associations since the reform and opening up. Among them, the systematic research conclusions are as follows: Zhang Yiheng divided the reform of the single-event sports associations into three stages: brewing and preparation (1982-1991), full-scale development (1992-1997) and adjustment and improvement (1998-present), and reviewed the reform process of the single-event sports associations, explained in detail the situation of the institutional setup, policies and system reform of the single-event sports associations in various periods, and presented the reform process of the single-event sports associations in China [1]. Based on the reform **history** of China's sports management system and national single-event sports associations, Shi Kangcheng divided the period from 1985 to 2000 into three different stages of development: exploration, promotion and

stagnation [2]. Feng Xinxin divided the reform into the initial stage (1949-1985), the reform stage (1986-1997), the stagnation stage (1998-2007) and the breakthrough stage (2008-present) starting from the institutional changes of single-event sports associations [3]. Zhang Yaohong briefly expounded the basic course of the reform of single-event sports associations based on their scale, quantity and system changes. Based on the case analysis of the Football Association, Zhang Xu et al. elaborated the decoupling process of single-event sports associations in terms of identity, power, function and relationship changes. Ding Minglu believed that the reform of China's sports associations has gone through five main stages, namely, the preparation stage of reform (1986-1991), the initial exploration stage of the project center (1992-1998), the strengthening stage of the project center (1999-2008), the gradual stage of association reform (2009-2014) and the deepening stage of association reform (2015-2020) [4]. According to the major historical events of the reform of China's single-event sports associations: the establishment of the first batch of sports management centers in 1994, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the football reform in 2015 and other key time nodes, Wang Yu subdivided the historical process of decoupling of national single-event sports associations into four stages: the initial stage of reform (1988-1993), the pilot stage of reform (1994-2005), the stage of reform promotion (2006-2014), and the stage of reform deepening (2015-present) [5].

The author holds that from the starting point of the reform in 1980s, that is, in 1981, the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission 's putting "substantialized reform of national single-event sports associations" on the agenda, to the implementation of the Program of Deepening the Reform of Sports Management System with the Reform of Sports Project Management Center and Single-event Sports Associations by the General Administration of Sport of China in 2014 and the implementation of the General Plan of Chinese Football Reform and Development issued by the General Office of the State Council in 2015, the reform of national single-event sports associations can be roughly divided into three stages: the initial exploration stage, the reform promotion stage and the comprehensive deepening stage. At present, the reform has entered the deep end.

III. RESEARCH ON THE REFORM AND GOVERNANCE OF NATIONAL SINGLE-EVENT SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

In 1988, the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission established a substantialized reform task aimed at establishing a new association system with Chinese characteristics to manage the development of sports events with single-event sports associations as the main management, and then carried out a series of reform experiments. The research on governance theory accompanying the reform shows the following characteristics: (1) The deepening research on gradual decoupling management, market integration, social integration and national governance in the materialized transformation. For example, the Joint Investigation Team of the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission (1995), Wang Yan et al. (1998), Ma Zhihe et al. (2007), Liu Ciqin et al. (2007), Hu Jiashu (2017) and Wang Jiahong et al. (2018) studied the transformation and change of the associations in government, management center, society, market and national governance from different historical sections. (2) Research on the modernization transformation of roles, structures and functions in the process of materialization. For example, Wang Xuguang et al. (2008),

Liang Wei et al. (2014) and Jiao Haitao (2016) focused on the change of the association's role and dominant position in the process of materialization; Zheng Guohua (2016) and Liang Wei et al. (2017) focused on the changes in the entity structure of the associations; Song Hengguo and Zhou Aiguang (2017) explored the modernization of the association's functions from the aspects of financial power and external powers. (3) Research on the optimization and crisis of the materialized inward governance operation. For example, Shen Fuchun et al. (2013), Qian Jing (2014) and Zhang Chunliang (2015) analyzed the legal and self-discipline challenges of the internal governance in the substantialized change of the association. (4) Research on the challenge of external governance in the era of legalization. For example, Gao Sheng et al. (2009), Liu Jin (2009), Guo Na et al. (2009) and Zhou Qingshan (2017) believed that the materialized associations will have to withstand the development and challenges of the project industry, and the contradiction of governance and legalization is prominent. (5) Still arduous governance task reflected by the **history** of materialized reform. For example, Cao Jihong (2008), Li Tianbai (2008), Li Qidi (2011), Zhang Yiheng (2013) and He Qiang (2015) combed this "top-down" flat governance reform from different perspectives, and came to the conclusion that the associations are isomorphic in government, lacking in organizational functions, unclear in function orientation and irregular in management and operation, which need to be improved.

The author believes that, in combination with China's national conditions and the reality of reform and development, there are several shortcomings in previous studies: (1) The research on the materialized governance of China's national single-event sports associations tends to decouple China and Chinese characteristics, and lacks the reality and direction of the times; (2) The research failed to distinguish the essential difference between China's "top-down" self-revolution and foreign "bottom-up" survivable governance, which has the tendency of polarization and affects the integration of the power sources of the materialized governance; (3) The research did not combine the social transformation, the enhancement of social forces and the changes of social stakeholders' demands in China, but simply misplaced or even confused the mechanism of external governance and internal governance of the entities of national single-event sports associations from the aspects of function transformation and management mechanism. (4) The research lacks the original understanding of the reform facts of the national single-event sports association in China, which affects the multi-state mechanism innovation of the national modern governance. Any reform will not be achieved in one move, but must be continuously deepened and improved in the context of national, social, times and international contexts. Therefore, in order to deepen the reform of the governance mechanism after the materialization of the national single-event sports associations, we should, based on Xi Jinping's theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, use western governance theory as a tool, combine the practice of social governance in China and the West, seek a governance mechanism that conforms to the characteristics of the new era, and focus on clarifying the governance direction, functional orientation, governance structure and coordination of internal and external governance mechanisms of national single-event sports associations in the new era, so as to provide theoretical basis and path choice for deepening reform and governance.

IV. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE REFORM OF NATIONAL SINGLE-EVENT SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

In the report of the 19th National Congress, it was clearly pointed out that in order to promote the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity, it is necessary to "give full play to the role of social organizations and realize the positive interaction between government governance, social adjustment and residents' autonomy". In 2014, in the Several Opinions of the State Council on Speeding up the Development of Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption, it was clearly pointed out that the withdrawal of government from social organizations and separation of government regulation from management should be pushed to speed up the untying of sports associations from the connections they have with the sports administrative organs. In 2015, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Master Plan for Disconnections of the FCTACC with the Administrative Organs", proposing to incorporate the substantialized reform of China's sports associations into the national social organization reform. In the Outline of Building a Sports Power, it is proposed that "by 2035, a new pattern of sports development with strong government leadership, orderly social norms, vibrant market, active participation of the people, healthy development of social organizations, perfect public services and in line with the basic realization of modernization will be formed, and the sports governance system and governance capacity will be modernized. [6]" National single-event sports associations are not only an important force to promote the development of sports, but also a difficult point in the reform over the years, indicating that it is urgent to break through in the new round of sports reform and governance and build an effective collaborative governance mechanism. Under the new situation and new requirements, how to change the long-standing isomorphic system between the sports management center and the single-event sports associations so that the single-event sports associations can smoothly untie the connections from the sports administrative departments and become a sports social organization with real substantialized operation, give full play to the huge power in the social field, and better assume the functions of managing sports events and developing sports undertakings is a challenge and a difficult problem that must be faced in deepening the reform of the sports management system.

In July 2015, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the National Development and Reform Commission issued the Notice on Completing the Pilot Work of Disconnection of the FCTACC with the Administrative Organs, which lists the list of associations recommended by the FCTACC for disconnection, with 89 associations included in the scope. As of August 2020, 21 out of 89 associations have been untied, 68 are to be untied, and 42 out of 68 associations are Olympic sports associations, among which 27 have started the substantialized reform implemented by the General Administration of Sports [5]. According to the analysis, there are three main forms of the current association reform: First, the Football Association model led by the central government. In February 2015, the Leading Group for Continuing the Reform Comprehensively under the national leadership issued the Overall Plan of Chinese Football Reform. In August 2015, the National Football Association Reform Office of the State Council formulated the China Football Association Adjustment and Reform Plan, which specifies the goals and methods for the reform of the Football Association, and that the Chinese Football Association shall be adjusted and formed in

accordance with the principles of separation of government from society, clarification of rights and responsibilities, and autonomy in accordance with the law; the organizational structure of two brands and one team shall be changed between the Chinese Football Association and the Football Management Center of the General Administration of Sports; the Chinese Football Association shall be untied from the General Administration of Sports, and shall have autonomy in internal organizational setup, work plan formulation, financial and salary management, personnel management, international professional exchanges, etc. It is clearly stipulated that the Chinese Football Association has no administrative level and is composed of representatives from the sports administrative department under the State Council, well-known football professionals, social figures and expert representatives, etc., to ensure the specialization of the leading bodies of the Football Association. The thinking and practice of the reform of the Chinese Football Association show that this is a reform of a single-event sport directly led by the central government. With the dual guarantee of system and mechanism reform, on January 5, 2017, the Football Management Center of the General Administration of Sport of China was officially cancelled, marking the complete disconnection of the Chinese Football Association with the General Administration of Sport of China and becoming an independent corporate body. Since China's football reform is a single project association reform directly led and guided by the central government, whose reform efforts and effects can be guaranteed under the protection of all aspects, but the materialization of football associations does not have universality [7]. Secondly, the basketball association model of full autonomy. According to the spirit of documents such as Master Plan for Disconnections of the FCTACC with the Administrative Organs and Opinions on Reforming the Management System of Social Organizations and Promoting the Healthy and Orderly Development of Social Organizations, in March 2017, the General Administration of Sports of China issued the Notice on Matters Related to the Pilot Basketball Reform, requesting that the business responsibilities previously assumed by the Basketball Management Center be officially transferred to Chinese Basketball Association from April 1, 2017, marking an important step in the substantialized reform of Chinese basketball association and its disconnection from the Basketball Management Center. After the substantialized reform, the basketball association has put forward 10 measures to promote the construction of the basketball association and the development of the basketball cause, namely, Independently revised the association's articles of association, elected a new leadership team, strengthened the internal system construction of the association, strengthened the organization construction of the association, issued a series of industry standard documents, defined the mission of the association, formulated the strategic plan and brand construction of Chinese basketball, reformed the management mode and schedule of CBA league, strengthened the reform of basketball national team and strengthened the youth basketball construction, all of which were decided by the association itself, which fully reflects the independence of social organizations and strictly and completely follows the reform requirements of separating government from society and autonomy according to law. The Basketball Association transferred all its shares held in CBA to the 20 teams, realizing the "separating management from enforcement" in the true sense. After the reform, the Basketball Association has become a truly independent manager and promoter of the basketball industry. The author believes that the basketball association model has achieved a real sense of disconnection, which also provides a reference template for the substantialized reform of other national single-event sports associations. Thirdly, the management center and association depend on each other. They are mainly associations that have not been completely

untied, and still remain in the state of "management center+ association". After weighing the relationship between the "Olympic Glorious Program" and the development of the project industry, they have promoted the materialization process of the project association while retaining the original establishment of the project center, forming a unique attachment relationship. From "one team, two brands" to "two teams, two brands", that is, the project center and the project association exist independently of each other and undertake different tasks of project development. In addition, the General Administration of Sport of China has also made some compromises on special events in the process of sports reform around the "Olympic Glorious Program", mainly including diving, weightlifting, volleyball and other competitive events in China's Olympic Games, which maintain the original operation system of the event center and still adopt the mode of the government agency association to manage the project business after 1998. According to the requirements of "five separations and five standardizations", these associations are currently not only lack of organizational independence, but also rely on the support of the management center and even the general administration of sports in terms of funds, office resources, etc., with an obvious administrative color in the operation mode. They are mainly subordinate to and serve the needs of the management center. It is still a long way to go from the "five separations and five standardizations" [8] disconnection requirements of "separation of institutions, standardization of comprehensive supervision relations, separation of functions, standardization of administrative entrustment and division of responsibilities, separation of assets and finance, standardization of property relations, separation of personnel management, standardization of personnel relations, separation of party construction, foreign affairs and other matters, and standardization of management relations".

V. PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES IN THE PROCESS OF REFORM

5.1 Lacking the Top-level Design and Supporting Scheme of General Administration of Sports of China

Many policy documents issued by the State Council are highly oriented and instructive, leading the development direction of sports in China. Although the State Council issued a series of guiding policy documents on the disconnection of industry associations, no specific policies and regulations were issued for single-event sports associations [5]. Since the substantialized reform of the associations, the policy documents are mainly programmatic documents but lack professional guidance documents due to the singularity of the policy, and the General Administration of Sports of China has not yet issued the top-level design and supporting scheme for the disconnection of single-event sports associations. In particular, the contents and methods of the reform have not been discussed and standardized, which makes some project associations "cross the river by feeling the stones", while others "watch others cross the river", lacking a sense of security. Therefore, the General Administration of Sports of China needs to introduce targeted top-level design and supporting schemes to guide the disconnection reform of single-event sports associations.

5.2 Imperfect Composition Form and Implementation Mechanism of Reform Executive Body

The subject and object of the reform are the General Administration of Sports of China and its subordinate project centers, which are too single and responsible for the materialized reform of the associations under the project. When it comes to support work other than sports, it is always difficult for each project center to get good communication with relevant functional units at the first time. The functional reform of sports can be adjusted in time, but it often stagnates because of other related work, which leads to the intermittent progress of sports reform. The semi-promotion of the materialization of the association also leads to incomplete project reform and insufficient innovation and vitality of the operation mechanism, which makes the operation mechanism of most of the association almost identical to that of the previous project center and still attached to the relevant functional departments of the General Administration of Sports of China. In short, the composition of the executive bodies in the process of association materialization is too single at present, which makes it difficult to coordinate cross-department work. Even, the overall operation mode of some associations is almost the same as before the reform, which does not play a real role in the reform and development.

5.3 The Lack of Reform Ability and Confidence within the Association

For a long time, the project center, as the agency of the project association, has fully performed the relevant functions of the project association. The project association has always taken the relevant rules and regulations of the project center as the basis of project governance due to its own inadequate governance structure. Because the project association lacks the real system of congress and Council, it is difficult to formulate policies and systems for project development in a timely and scientific manner after the project association is materialized, and the management will return to the management mode dominated by the secretary general of the association at the time of the project center. Moreover, the imperfect internal governance mechanism of the project association, as a reform executive body, will not only lead to the sports development losing the market development advantage of the association materialization, but also make it lose the original institutional advantage of the project center. In addition, the internal ability and confidence of the executive bodies within the association are not strong. Most of the project associations in the substantialized reform are in the form of coexistence of project associations and project centers. They not only need to complete a new restructuring of the internal governance of the association, but also need to complete a new order reconstruction. Both the decision-making method of the governance process and the establishment of the association departments need self-adaptation and function adjustment. To some extent, the substantialized reform of the association has caused the internal loss of the reform, which makes the confidence of the internal staff of the association decline.

5.4 The Lack of Supervision and Guidance in the Process of Association Materialization

In the process of reform, as the project center has changed from a state institution to a non-profit social organization project association, practical problems such as large interests, wide coverage and large industrial scale will lead to corruption. The process of project association reform involves the

redistribution of interests, and conservatism and radicalism will also play games with each other, which makes the process of project association slow. At the same time, the reform of the association needs to be guided and fed back by the "centralized unit" to deal with the contradictions and problems in the reform process and to be guided and monitored in a timely manner. All these problems have exposed the lack of "centralized units" for supervision and coordination in the association reform process.

VI. PATHS TO DEEPEN THE REFORM OF SINGLE-EVENT SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NEW ERA

Faced with the re-allocation of sports market resources, the people's increasingly diversified sport needs, the structural transformation of sports social forces, and the coordinated development of mass sports and competitive sports, the organizational effect of social forces of the national single-event sports associations, the popularization effect of project culture, the project market-oriented effect and the project competitive talent cultivation effect have become the keys to the construction and governance of a strong sports country in the new era. Therefore, it is also necessary to reform the country's modern governance system and governance capability, continue to deepen the reform, innovate the governance mechanism of national single sports associations, and stimulate and govern the huge potential and capability of national single sports associations with Chinese characteristics to serve the country, government, people, society, economy, culture, etc.

6.1 Adhering to Chinese Characteristics and Keeping Reform and Innovation

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, with China entering the decisive stage of building a well-off society in an all-round way and the reform stepping into a deep-water area and a crucial period, the central government has put forward clear requirements for deepening the government reform. At the second plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, it was pointed out that the transformation of government functions is the core of deepening government reform. At the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, it was put forward that the overall goal of comprehensively deepening reform is to develop and improve the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and promote the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. At the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, it was clearly put forward that "we must strengthen and innovate social governance, and improve the social governance system with Party committee leadership, government responsibility, democratic consultation, social coordination, public participation, legal protection, and scientific and technological support."

6.2 Strengthening the Top-level Design, Promoting in Multi-departments as a Whole, and Making the Reform Rule-based

We should step up overall planning, clarify the rules of the reform, complete work satisfactorily, and implement strict discipline and the principles that should be followed in the reform and governance of single-event sports associations. To step up the overall planning is to strengthen the top-level design of the

reform and governance of single-event associations and to coordinate the efforts of various departments and parties; to clarify the rules of reform is to clarify the objects and methods of reform and governance of single-event associations, the possible results of governance and other issues; to complete work satisfactorily is to give full play to everyone's role in the reform and governance of single-event associations and to show care for the survival and development of people involved in the decoupling process. Only by combining the actual development of single-event associations can practical reform and governance mode be innovated.

6.3 Promoting Multi-sector Linkage through Collaborative Governance

The National Development and Reform Commission, the working committees of central and state organs, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the State Taxation Administration of the People's Republic of China, the National Audit Office, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and other functional departments are the collaborative management subjects of the collaborative governance mechanism. In the governance of sports associations, these departments, together with the General Administration of Sport, play a role and share responsibilities in policy formulation, coordinated supervision, support and encouragement, etc. In addition, the daily work of the association, such as registration, annual inspection and obtaining necessary guarantees, requires the concerted efforts of various departments. In particular, the means of governance should be changed from the traditional administrative means to the combination of administrative, legal and market incentives and other means to highlight the important position of legal means, which requires the joint efforts of multiple departments under the institutional framework [9].

6.4 Improving the Mechanism and Strengthening the Self-construction of the Associations

After the substantialized reform, the national single-event sports associations will clearly recognize their own role, positioning and value, give full play to their advantages of sports service demand and timely response, and establish the core competitiveness of the organization can not be replaced. The associations should be guided to build up a good organizational image, continuously demonstrate the organization's governance capability and get substantive recognition from various entities by strengthening all-round capacity building such as resource integration capability, market operation capability, service supply capability and risk management capability. On the one hand, the associations should take the initiative to accept and cooperate with the external supervision and governance norms, on the other hand, they should strengthen the construction of internal self-discipline mechanism, enhance the ability and status of self-government, and finally realize the establishment of the conditional and limited self-government subject of the association by continuously improving the association's power mechanism, supervision mechanism and implementation mechanism [9].

6.5 Improving the System and Creating a Benign Growth Environment for the Associations

System is the key factor that affects the organizational growth, function and governance performance

of national single-event sports associations. The research focus should be on the institutional guarantee system of support system, service system, incentive system, restraint system, etc. aiming at the construction of the associations, so that the internal governance of the associations can not only follow the formal system, but also have a certain degree of freedom and autonomy in the internal governance. The government's policy of purchasing public sports services should be improved, and a long-term mechanism of purchasing services from national sports associations and other sports social organizations should be established. The supervision system of national single-event sports associations [10], which is oriented by cultivation and development, standardized by means of supervision and limited by risk control, and the normative supervision system for effective governance of national single-event sports associations should be established.

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