The Change of Chinese Government’s Sports Policy: A Historical Review

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Pre -1949

• **Red Sports Movement (1929-1934)**
  It was a mass movement in which exercise was viewed as the basis of physical, cultural and military training for those in the Communist areas.

• **New Sports Movement (1936-1948)**
  ‘everybody is to do exercise’
The principle of sport of the PRC

Sport should socialize the population into the new establishment system of values including loyalty, conformity, team spirit, cooperation and discipline. All workers, parents, soldiers, students and the citizens of the New China should be involved in the mass sports movement as pre-training for work and military defense.

New Policy: promote Mass Sport

All China Sports Federation - non-governmental organisation

- **The All China Physical Education and Sport Commission** – a governmental organisation

- **The Soviet Model:**
  - **Competitive Sport** - Producing Elite Athletes;
    - The Competitive Sports System of the PRC
    - Spare-time sport schools
  - **Mass Sport** - GTO (Gotov k trudu I oborone - Ready for Labour and Defense) - Lao Wei Zhi Programme

The policy focused on using the limited resources to provide special and intensive training for potential athletes in a particular sport so that they could compete on the international sporting stage.

The system had changed from “two legs” to “one leg” – the elite one.
Sport, Diplomacy and the Nation
1966-1976 Cultural Revolution

Two legacies:

First, sport had proved extremely valuable for diplomacy.
Second, mass sport developed with a historically unprecedented scope.
Sports Reformation after the 1980s

- **The Olympic Strategy**
  
  “Elite sport is the priority”
  
  “The highest aim of Chinese sport is success in the Olympic Games”
  
  “Ju guo ti zhi” – whole country support elite sport system

- **The National Fitness for All Programme**

  “Produce young stars” and “produce healthy citizens”

- **Institutional Change with the Commercialisation of Sport**

  “Sport was expected to stand on its own feet and not rely on State support”
Problems within Chinese Sports System

• Unbalanced governmental resources to elite sport and mass sport;
• Unbalanced development of different sports;
• Ignorance of rights of athletes;
Conflicts between Sports System and Social Reformation

- The communist ideology of sports V.S. the changing social value;
- Centralised and planned sports administrative system V.S. Market rules;
- Governmental roles in sport V.S. Sports organisations
Post-Beijing 2008

• Change?

The Chinese government sports policy won’t have significant changes

• To which direction?
  - Objective: become world leading sports power
  - Institutional change
  - Sports industrialization and commercialization
  - Socialisation of sports activities
Conclusion

- Sport has played an important part in Chinese society.
- The development of sport policy has always been state-controlled.
- The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games strengthened elite sports system.
- Reformation of sports system is an unavoidable process and new concept of sports development will be formed.