

## On the Development of the World Tennis Culture and Its Enlightenment to China

Yongshan Peng

School of Physical Education, Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, Nanchang 330013, China

pengyongshanjxcd@sina.com

### Abstract

**Tennis sport is a project with deep cultural connotation. In recent years, with the rapid development of China's tennis industry, some problems like the players' technical style, the watching etiquette of audience are exposed. Comparing to the development of world tennis culture, it is found that there are some problems in the development of tennis in China. People in China usually pay attention to "objects" and "outer pattern" but ignore the development of "players" and "sports spirit". The author puts forward that, along with the experience of world tennis, China should focus on innovation and manage to create tennis sports with Chinese culture style.**

### Keywords

**tennis culture, national culture, tennis etiquette, professionalization.**

### 1. Introduction

Tennis is a sport that originated in France, but bred in the United Kingdom. At first, tennis is a real noble sport, which is called "noble movement", "gentleman sport" and many others with good reputation. The noble tennis contains deep cultural accumulation. Because of the unique charm and culture, tennis has been favored by people, and been popular all over the world.

Encyclopedia of China defines culture as "the total of material wealth and spiritual wealth created by people in the practice of human society, including people's way of life, various heritage behaviors, the ideology of beliefs, attitudes and values, and the relative system and organization form." The tennis culture is the sum of material wealth and spiritual wealth in tennis activities through constant summary, innovation, and development with the tennis features, which also refers to the combination between the thinking mode and the behavior way of tennis participates, and the combination of sports theory, tactics, customs and institutions in general. The development of tennis culture mainly lies in evolution of tennis technology, improvement of tennis social organizational system and ideology development of tennis intrinsic value concept, thinking mode, aesthetic taste and moral sentiment. The research on the development of the world tennis culture has great significance to the development of Chinese tennis career, which is an important guide to the development in China.

### 2. Public governance theory and sports development mode

#### 2.1 The evolution of tennis culture

From the initial "palm ball game", tennis has become to the second largest sport in the world, which has experienced the development for several centuries. In the long history, the tennis courts, tennis courts, equipment, racket, ball, competition rules and techniques, tactics, and so on all have changed greatly.

Originally, tennis courts were in different shapes and with many different rules as well. Until 1890, the rules of the game were basically determined; the racket evolution has developed from nothing, "palm ball play" was originally played with people's palm, later emerging leather gloves, then turning into a plate, next to racket, which has experienced from wooden, metal to new-type fiber; with the development of the racket, the ball also changes. The original ball is the solid ball with layers of cloth

wrapped, then a relatively solid ball, being filled with sawdust and spinning. After the emergence of string racket, people made the ball with leather, cotton and stitched up. Until 1845, the rubber tennis was born. The science and technology and the modernization of the tennis equipment, court, rackets and balls make tennis competition increasingly fierce, and the tennis match has a high requirement on the plays' physical and psychological quality. Thus, the current top tennis players in the world have more and more comprehensive and precise technology and more and more rich and varied competition tactics.

Thus, tennis experiences the evolution from a simple game to the second biggest sport in the world. In the process, the rules of tennis and equipment are gradually improving, and game skills and tactics become more and more rich and complex.

### **2.2 The development of humanistic culture in tennis**

Science and humanities are two basic cultures of human beings. Science is for truth, while the humanity is seeking the good and the beautiful, the humanities belong to the value rationality. Tennis is a sport for any people not just for gentleman, and its profound cultural heritage embodies the humanistic side. First of all, tennis is a sport of civilization, because people should pay much attention to etiquette in the game. In the past, at Wimbledon, contestants must wear a white shirt and curtsy to the members of the royal family and the audience before the start of the game. Although tennis has removed the specification of some trivial rules in the development up to now, but players must respect each other when playing, pay attention to courtesy and obey some tennis ornamental etiquette, such as, the audience must keep quiet and be prohibited to move around when playing in the match; secondly, the tennis is a very elegant movement, a combination of beauty of strength, body shape, autistics and clothes. Flowing swing, moving rhythm, and fashion hat and dress are bring people to enjoy the beautiful sport feast; thirdly, from the aristocracy to general civilians in different classes, many new elements are involved to the tennis movement, which is also an inevitable development trend of tennis human culture. Globalization and popularization of tennis sports can involve more and more people to enjoy the happiness of tennis, so tennis culture development can be summarized as moving in a direction of popularization of globalization along with inheriting and carrying forward the elegant traditional characteristics of civilization etiquette.

### **2.3 The development of national culture in tennis**

National culture is the culture of the nation's characteristic in its historical development. Tennis is originated in France and rises in the United Kingdom, after hundreds of years of development, is now popular throughout the world. Although there are no national boundaries for the sport, but the development of the tennis movement is influenced by the traditional culture of various countries, which has its own characteristics in each country. From the point of view of the four major tennis tournaments, Australian Open can show the culture formed in the long-term historical accumulation and reflect the basic characteristics of the cultural type of the Australian nation of immigrants; Roland Garros clay court gives people unrestrained, passionate feelings, so the French Open is a romantic and passionate event; Wimbledon can let a person feel ancient nobility which shows on strict requirements on costume and traditional etiquette, a cautious attitude to commercial sponsorship; American Open is in a luxurious and commercial atmosphere. In addition to the event with different national styles, people can also find the brand of national culture from the game style of tennis players. American athletes can play a ball quite simply, serve with good strength with better net technology and aggressive energy, such as Pete Sampras, Roddick and Blake and so on; players from Argentina, Spain and Germany pay attention to the bottom line, good in clay, such as David Nalbandian; and British players are very good at playing in the Wimbledon lawn, such as Tim Henman, Rusedski. But with the development of internationalization of tennis, players with various tennis culture can learn from each others, and the diversification of tennis culture and development of the national style can complement each other.

## **2.4 The development of tennis commercial culture**

Tennis is a noble sport, the original tennis is a relatively pure amateur activity, and athletes participate in the competition due to interest, the early major tennis tournaments only opening to amateur. So, the early tennis sport contains less commercial factors. However, due to the high cost of tennis match training, a lot of people can not afford it, and with the development of society, economy and culture, many players need to get the bonus from the tennis match. The professionalization, commercialization and marketization of the tennis movement become the inevitable trend. In 1926, the American Charles C Pyle organized the world's first professional tennis game in the world at the New York Madison garden square. Then, French Open, Australian Open and the US Open and other tennis tournaments gradually open to professional players, tennis began the successful professional path. Today, tennis is a highly professional sports program, and the organization of tennis tournament and personnel training are very professional. Bonuses for the professional tennis match soared quickly along with a steady stream of commercial sponsorship and the increasing of the number of audience, thus, tennis is not only a stake for the tennis players to show their skills and tactics, but also has become a major business to compete. The professionalization and commercialization of the tennis have greatly promoted the popularization and development of tennis.

## **3. Thinking on the development of China's tennis**

### **3.1 The development of tennis in China**

From the end of nineteenth century to early in twentieth century, tennis culture was introduced into China as the invasion of the western powers, but the tennis movement was in a slow development at that time. At the initial stage of the founding of New China, the tennis movement in our country still faces zero starting without foundation, and few people involved in the trouble. Until 1980, China formally joined the International Tennis Federation and Chinese tennis began to be generally accepted by the people, and Chinese tennis entered a period of rapid development. In 2004, Li Ting and Sun Tiantian won women's doubles tennis champion in Athens Olympics, and Chinese competitive level of tennis has made a historic breakthrough in recent years with the hold of Shanghai Masters and China Open tennis tournament, all over the country set off a tennis hot, whether competitive tennis or amateur tennis are all presented a scene of prosperity.

### **3.2 The problems in the development of tennis in China**

The development of tennis in China has made remarkable achievements. Compared with the world tennis power, there is still a large gap, such as not many professional athletes, tennis facilities are backward, lack of tennis coaching staff, low tennis population ratio and so on. Due to specific historical development, some problems inevitably exist, such as backward tennis facilities, and some problems are caused by lack of attention in the development, such as watching etiquette of tennis audience needs to be improved. Chinese tennis in the development process exist the following problems in three aspects:

#### **(1) Focusing on technical and tactical training, ignoring the education of tennis culture**

Tennis is not only a kind of body movement, but also like a means of education, a kind of lifestyle, a spirit carrier. However, at present, whether it is an amateur tennis training, school teaching or professional tennis training, the tactics is generally laid in a prominent position, and less to allow students to understand the long history and profound cultural connotation of tennis, so the education mode, focusing on "outer performance" but ignoring "inner spirit" without human centered, is bound to lead to utilitarianism of players without integrating this real motion and tennis into your life, which is bound to impede the movement of Chinese tennis development.

#### **(2) Pay attention to the social influence of tennis, ignoring the quality of the participants in the tennis training**

In 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Li Na and Dinara Safina were in the women's singles semi-finals, but the cheer of our audience to Li not only affected the game, but also aroused Li's roar in anger. In recent years, the Chinese women tennis players in major international competition have made

remarkable achievements and Li Na in the women's world ranking in the top ten. On the other hand, China held the Shanghai Masters tournament, China Tennis Open and many other important tournament, tennis social influence is more and more big, and economic benefits is gradually emerging, but in tennis competition, most Chinese viewers can not understand tennis knowledge as well as the etiquette, which can affect the players in the game. It is because that, in the development of tennis, people emphasis too much on the social influence, international influence and economic benefits, while ignoring the tennis movement of enlightenment on people. In fact, tennis contains rich humanistic spirit and the underlying theme of tennis is to cultivate the man with civilized, elegant manners. No matter in any place, a civilized players with good etiquette is welcomed by everyone, so in the development of tennis career, people should pay more attention to the tennis influence on internal quality of participants, avoiding unbalanced development of paying attention to "outer materials" but ignoring "the inner spirit".

### (3) Paying attention to study, ignoring innovation

Tennis came to China in 1885. So far, it has a history of more than one hundred years. China is always in the study of tennis technology, philosophy and organization of the games in the world, but lack of innovation. Western sports pay attention to fairness, struggling for practical, encouraging risk-taking and offensive, so the top players are with some main characteristics like "fast", "hard", "accurate", "steady", while in the traditional culture of Chinese group, people should be "static" but not "dynamic", which seems to be contrary to the sport of tennis. Actually, Chinese culture is broad and profound, which is very useful for the development of the sport, such as "know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight any battles without defeat", "attack others' disadvantages with own advantages", "transform the coming force to attack the opponent" and "with both offensive and defensive strategies" can be a good guidance for athletes' tactical training. Mencius' saying on "being happy together is better than being happy alone" also tells people that the happiness form tennis should share with everyone. Thus, Chinese traditional culture is a rich resource for the innovation of Chinese professional and amateur tennis development. In addition to tennis training, people should also learn from others and strengthen technology and innovative ideas on tennis tournament organization, tennis supplies manufacturing and other aspects.

## 4. Conclusion

The development of world tennis culture tells people that the tennis culture is always the core elements of tennis, and the tennis traditional core value concept has never changed. Courtesy, fairness and elegant in the match are always the soul of tennis, and the tennis culture diversity is the inevitable trend of development, so the ethnic styles of tennis arouse more attractive. The tennis culture diversity and development of the national style complement each other and a high degree of professionalism and commercialization greatly push the development of tennis.

In recent years, the continuous improvement of Chinese tennis sports level has improved the rapid development of amateur tennis career. However, people should avoid only paying attention to the "outer shape" but ignoring "inner spirit" in the development, not only pay attention to the training of tennis technique and tactics, but also lay more emphasis on the education functions of tennis, not only develop tennis professionalization and commercialization, but also lay emphasis on people-oriented training, avoid the unbalanced development of paying attention to "outer materials" but ignoring "the inner spirit", not only learn western advanced idea but also focus on innovation, apply Chinese traditional culture into the tennis movement and form the tennis style with Chinese characteristics.

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