

Current Status and Development Strategies of Youth Tennis Talent Reserve in Henan Province

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Abstract

By means of documentation, questionnaire, mathematical statistics and interview, this paper investigates the current status of youth tennis talent reserve in Henan province, studying the players and coaches taking part in the 2015 Shengkang Cup Youth Tennis Tournaments in Henan. Having investigated the current status, the author finds that youth tennis talent training in Henan is faced with problems including unbalanced development in different areas, lack of funds and facilities, low recompense for coaches and limited game opportunities. Through analyses, this paper provides referential information for better developing the sport of tennis in Henan province.

Keywords

Henan, Tennis, Youth, Talent Reserve.

1. Introduction

By means of documentation, questionnaire, mathematical statistics and interview, this paper investigates the current status of youth tennis talent reserve in Henan province, studying the players and coaches taking part in the 2015 Shengkang Cup Youth Tennis Tournaments in Henan. Having investigated the current status, the author finds that youth tennis talent training in Henan is faced with problems including unbalanced development in different areas, lack of funds and facilities, low recompense for coaches and limited game opportunities. Through analyses, this paper provides referential information for better developing the sport of tennis in Henan province.

2. Current Status of Coaches for Tennis Talent Reserve in Henan

A solid team of skilled coaches is the foundation and prerequisite for training high-performance athletes. For young tennis athletes, the correct guidance of skills and the education of mentality from the first coach are crucial [15]. Therefore, the proficiency of youth tennis coaches in Henan province significantly determines the successfulness of the province's young tennis players. The following is an analysis on the current status of the youth tennis coaches in Henan based on a questionnaire survey, from which several problems related to the primary tennis coaches can be easily located.

2.1 Age and Coaching Experience

A highly qualified and relatively stable coach team is required for combining theory and practice and for guaranteeing the quality of training. In order to grasp the current status of the age composition and coaching experience of the primary tennis coaches in Henan province, the author make analysis on the basis of the primary coaches taking part in the 2015 Shengkang Cup Youth Tennis Tournaments in Henan.

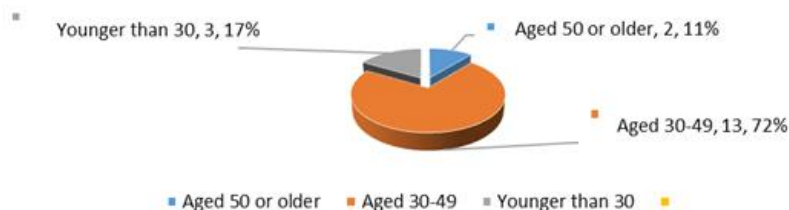


Figure 1: Age composition of the primary tennis coaches in Henan

The statistics in figure 1 show that the numbers of coaches aged 50 and older, younger than 30, and aged from 30 to 49 are respectively 2, 13 and 3, accounting for 11%, 72% and 17% of the total. The fact that coaches aged from 30 to 49 hold the largest proportion shows that Henan’s tennis coaching community is dominated by young and middle-aged coaches, who are vigorous and witted, ready to accept new ideas and with rich experience and the solidness of adults [7]. The ratio of old, middle-aged and young tennis coaches in Henan province is roughly 1:6:2, demonstrating that the youth tennis coaching community of Henan province, as an integration of three generations, is mainly consists of young and middle-aged coaches, with older coaches leading younger ones.

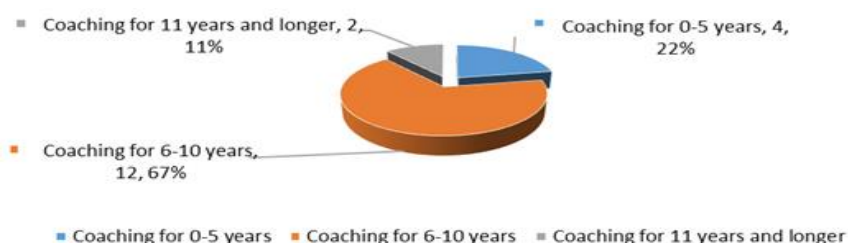


Figure 2: Statistics of coaching experience of the primary tennis coaches in Henan

The statistics in figure 2 show that the numbers of coaches with an experience of 0-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 and longer years are respectively 4, 12 and 2, accounting for 22%, 67% and 11% of the total number of the coaches surveyed. From the figure, it can be discerned that coaches who have been coaching for over 6 years account for 80% of the total number, demonstrating that the primary coaching community in Henan is relatively experienced and stable.

2.2 Professional Titles and Academic Background

To some extent, the professional title reflects a coach’s general proficiency and personal achievement. As shown in figure 3, there are 8 intermediate coaches, 7 junior coaches and 3 coaches with no professional title, respectively accounting for 44%, 39% and 17% of the total, and there are no senior coaches among the tennis coaches surveyed. Therefore, the primary tennis training in Henan province significantly lacks senior coaches, and this is a large obstacle for improving the performance of youth tennis in the province.

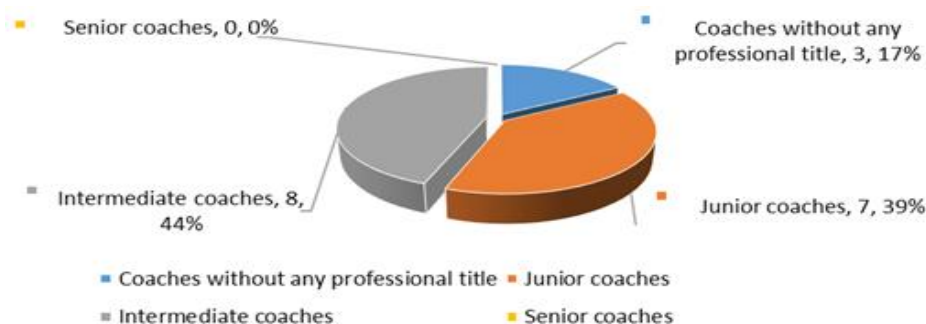


Figure 3: Status of the professional title of coaches (n=18)

According to figure 4, there are 6 coaches with a bachelor degree or higher, 10 coaches with a junior college degree and 2 coaches with a degree lower than the junior college degree, respectively accounting for 33%, 56% and 11% of the total. The fact that 70% of the coaches has a junior college

degree or lower shows that the general academic background of the primary coaches in Henan is not high. From the perspective of the development of modern tennis, a coach with only a junior college degree can no longer meet the requirements of the times.

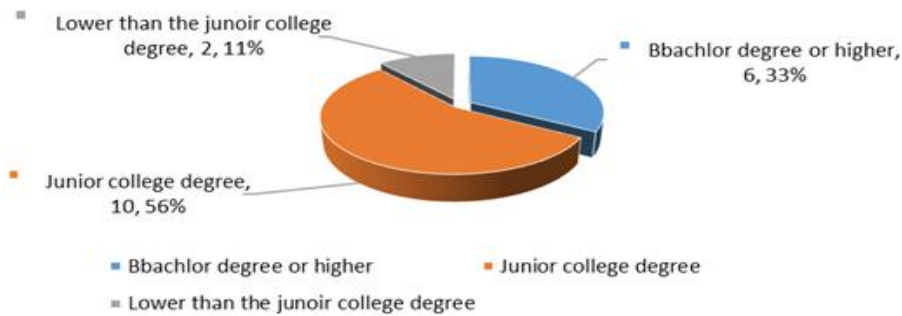


Figure 4: Academic background of coaches (n=18)

2.3 Current Status of Recompense

The conditions of primary tennis train are harsh; coaches usually have to start training at an early time in the morning and, if time permits, have to organize training after school. The situation of recompense reflects the economic condition of an area as well as the degree of attention paid to the work of coaches. As shown in figure 5, the numbers of coaches ranking their recompense as greatly high, relatively high, average, relatively low and greatly low are respectively 0, 1, 5, 10 and 2, accounting for 0%, 6%, 28%, 55% and 11% of the total. The generally low recompense for coaches has a significant impact on their enthusiasm for training.

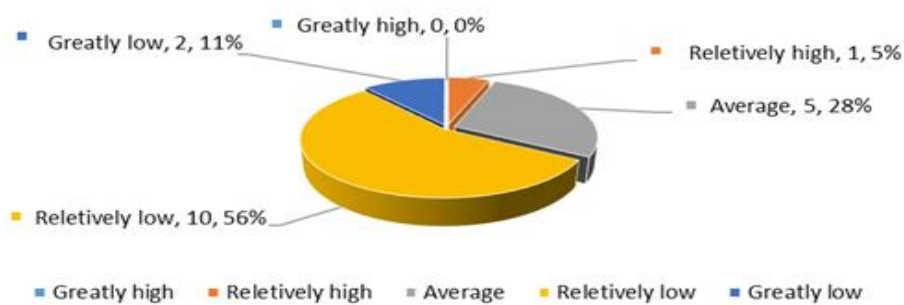


Figure 5: Statistics of recompense of the primary tennis coaches

3. Current Status of Young Tennis Athletes in Henan

3.1 Selection of Tennis Talents

The scientific selection of talents aims at spotting teenagers who are talented in certain sports and offering them specialized training so that their innate ability can be fully utilized and developed to reach a certain level of athletic proficiency [1, 4, 5, 9, 14] Therefore, the initial selection of young tennis talents appears to be more important. The following is a questionnaire survey on the primary coaches' selection of young tennis talents in Henan province.

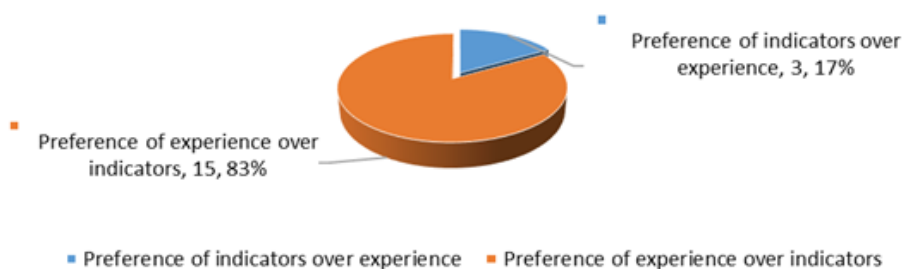


Figure 6: Coaches' basis of selecting reserve talents

It can be seen from figure 6 that most coaches prefer experience over indicators when selecting talents. There are few successful cases in the past several years to which coaches can refer. Besides, primary coaches are generally less educated, and without sufficient motivation and ability to carry out researches, they haven't made deep investigation into talent selection. Therefore, their talent selection is not well-guided, which is also a cause of the low yield of amateur training teams.

Through interviewing coaches and related leaders, the author finds that coaches select reserve talents mostly from their own schools, and factors such as the degree of support from the school, the inclination of parents and the interest of students have to be considered, so coaches don't have many choices.

3.2 Training Motives of Young Tennis Athletes in Henan Province

Only with certain motivation can athletes actively take part in sports training, and the motive of learning is the subjective factor that drives athletes to train. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the training motives of young tennis athletes in Henan province and to promote their enthusiasm and subjective initiative during the process of training through targeted measures.

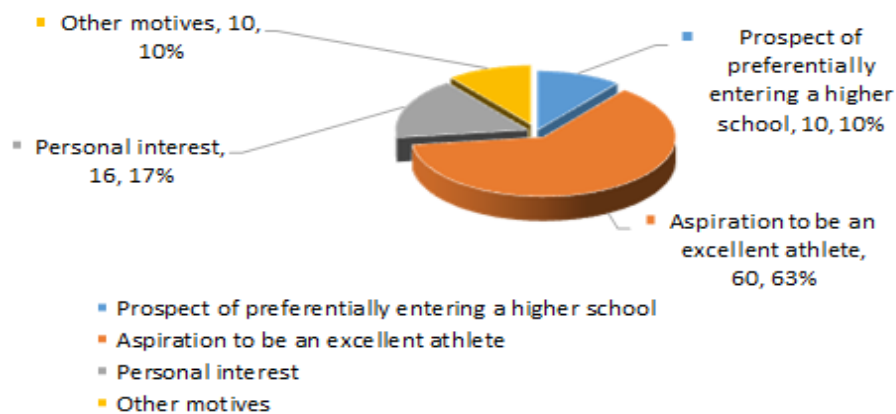


Figure 7: Motives of athletes taking part in amateur tennis training

According to figure 7, there are 10 athletes taking part in the sport because of the prospect of preferentially entering a higher school, 16 athletes regarding amateur tennis training as a hobby, 10 athletes with other motives and 60 athletes who want to be an excellent player, respectively accounting for 10%, 17%, 10% and 63% of the total athletes surveyed. Those who want to be an excellent tennis player subjectively possess motives to actively take part in training, which lays a solid foundation for further development. Besides, coaches must mentally encourage other athletes to train actively.

3.3 Training and Game Performance of Young Tennis Athletes

In order to grasp the current status of young tennis athletes' training in Henan province, we surveyed their time of training in the questionnaire, of which the result is shown below.

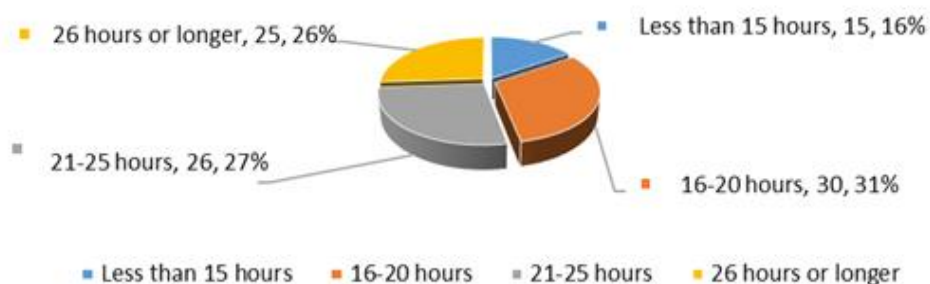


Figure 8: Athletes' hours of training per week

According to figure 8, there are 15 athletes spending less than 15 hours training per week, 30 athletes spending 16 to 20 hours, 26 athletes spending 21 to 25 hours and 25 athletes spending more than 25 hours, respectively accounting for 16%, 31%, 27% and 26% of the total. The difference of training hours is an important cause for the difference of performance, but when the training hour is fixed, coaches should make efforts to improve the athlete’s efficiency in training.

In order to know the performance of young tennis athletes in official games (above city-level) each year in each prefecture of Henan province, our questionnaire carried out a related survey (see in figure 1-9). According to figure 9, 3% of the 96 athletes surveyed have participated in 4 or more games, 60% have participated in 2 or 3 games, 21% have participated in only one game, and 16 % have never participated in any games. This has a direct connection with the fact the limited number of games in Henan. Although competitive tennis has been attached certain importance in late years and some games have been hold, the number of games is still small. There are two ways to increase tennis games; one is to invest more governmental funds and the other is to raise more funds from the society. Considering the current economic strength of Henan and the public’s enthusiasm for tennis, funds raised from the society is not likely to support the development of tennis as a competitive sport. Because of limited game opportunities, athletes cannot acquire competitive ability from games, which hinders the athlete’s excellence in the sport and have a significant impact on the enthusiasm of coaches and athletes for training.

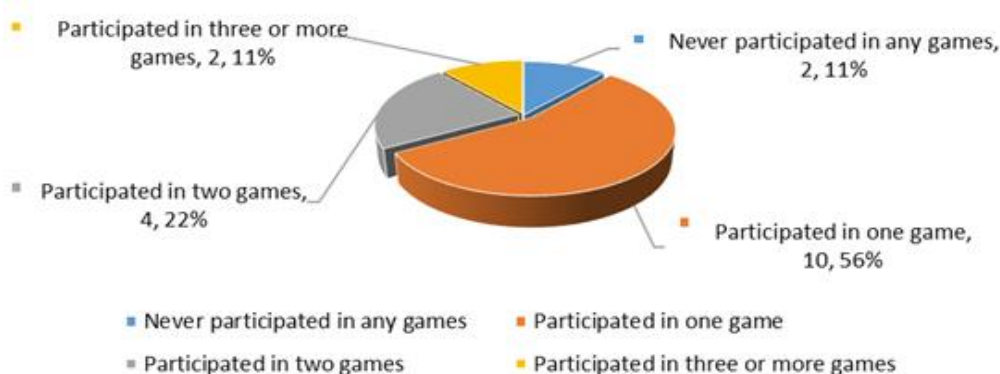


Figure 9: Status of game (above the city-level) participation of the athletes (n=96)

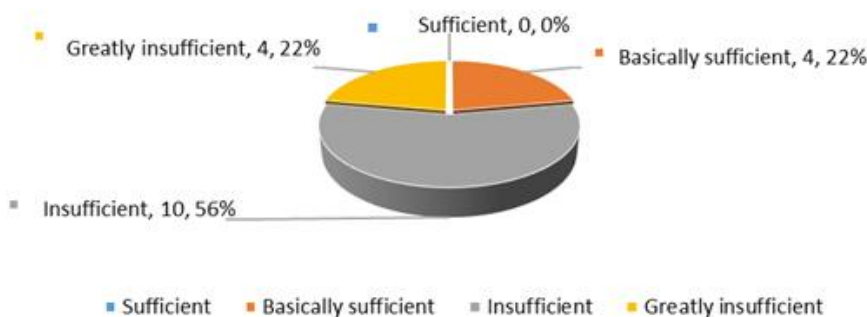


Figure 10: Status of tennis training fields and facilities

4. Current Status of Training Fields and Facilities for Tennis Talent Reserve in Henan

Fields and facilities are the foundation of training. In order to grasp the status of training fields and facilities for young tennis players in Henan, this paper conducts a survey among coaches by means of questionnaire. According to figure 10, none of the coaches considers their fields and facilities sufficient, 4 coaches considers them basically sufficient, 10 coaches consider them insufficient and 4 coaches consider them greatly insufficient, respectively accounting for 0%, 22%, 56% and 22% of the total. As shown above, the insufficiency of fields and facilities is common in Henan. Competitive

tennis is a weakness of Henan in recent years. The province attaches much importance to “elite programs”, in which it has concentrated its investment, while the investment made in tennis is not comparable. Besides, there is a huge disparity between the economic strength of Henan and that of other developed coastal cities, and thus the social investment made into tennis in Henan is limited, which in turn leads to insufficient infrastructure for tennis training. Currently, the insufficiency of fields and facilities significantly hinders the development of competitive tennis in Henan.

5. Strategies for Better Building the Youth Tennis Talent Reserve in Henan

5.1 Achieve a Diversified Funds Structure through Multi-channel Fundraising

The sufficiency of training funds is a basic guarantee for educating young tennis talents. The funds for primary tennis training in Henan depend mainly on governmental grants, which are not enough for maintaining usual training and games, because of the relatively less-developed economy of the prefectures of Henan. If this situation is to be changed, the usual mentalities of waiting for, relying on and asking for governmental grants should be avoided. Besides finding governmental grants, we should enhance the connection with well-developed local enterprises and public institutions, trying to find funds from targeted ways such as group training, sponsorship and advertisement.

5.2 Improve the Building of Coach Community and the Coaching Ability

The coach is a key factor in tennis training. An excellent coach can drive the development of a program, and he/she, especially at the primary level, should at first acquire relevant qualification. Coaches will influence children's interest and skill development at the primary level [8]. Therefore, coaches at the primary level should be consistently trained in various aspects, with a practical training plan made and carried out by the administrative department. Opportunities of education should be regularly offered to coaches, and experts can be invited to give guidance to them in the field. Besides, coaches can be organized to watch and learn from high-level training programs.

5.3 Emphasize Talent Selection, Enhance Scientific Training and Increase Talent Yield

With the development of modern competitive sports, the selection of sports talents has been a crucial part of developing modern competitive sports [10], and thus a scientific, precise and quantified indicator referential system is urgently needed. Well begun is half done; in order to fully develop the natural athletic ability of tennis players, primary talent selection has to be emphasized and the impact of human factors has to be avoided in case some of the potential talents are refused. By doing so, the number of players eliminated can be reduced and the successfulness of competitive training can be enhanced, and in turn the education of competitive tennis talent reserve can be promoted with efficiency.

6. Conclusion

By Henan Province tennis reserve personnel training current situation of investigation and study, found in Henan Province tennis reserve personnel training, such as lack of funding, lack of facilities, coaches pay is not high, participating fewer opportunities and other issues. Therefore, this paper in view of the problem proposed to increase the input of funds, reform of competition system, for the athletes in high level competition to provide more opportunities for, suggestions for improving the professional quality of the coaches, and to provide reference for the better promote the development of tennis sports in Henan Province.

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