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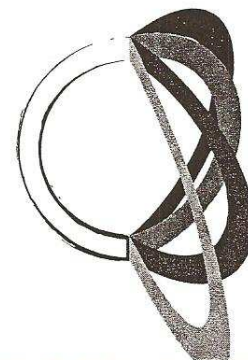
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ORGANISATION OF « SPORT AND STUDIES PROGRAMMES » AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL: THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE STUDENTS AND THE STAFF

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Introduction

It is undeniable that sporting success requires an intensive practice, increasingly early and strictly supervised. This necessarily implies that the young athletes find a balance between the sporting and school education. In many countries, a legal obligation forces the children to assiduously attend the courses. In addition, the randomness of the sporting success should logically encourage any parent to ensure a minimal education to their young promising athletes. All around the world, several organisations were proposed in order to facilitate the task of the sporting hopes and to enable them to ensure their future life as well as possible. The literature on the subject is rather poor. The objective of that paper consists in presenting the results of the analysis of the opinions of the people implied in several Belgian schools (French Community) where a special programme is proposed to meet the young athletes' needs.

Methods

Data come from two studies. In the first one [1], 52 athletes and 283 classmates from four secondary schools located in Wallonia filled in a questionnaire. Principals were interviewed to comment on the results. Athletes practised tennis, volleyball, soccer, judo and rugby. A second enquiry was planned during the 2003-2004 school year in another school proposing a basketball section. All students were 12 to 18 year old. Open questions aiming to identify positive and negative aspects perceived by youths concerning the "Sport + Studies Programmes" existing in their school. Answers were classified into categories by identifying key words. Interanalyst reliability reached 80% of agreement.

Results

In spite of a very positive general opinion about the methods of the special programme, the young athletes underlined their difficulties to combine the workload which is imposed to them (sport + school). Their school-fellows do not seem conscious of these difficulties as opposed to the schools' principals. In the school proposing the training in basketball, located in an underprivileged socio-economic area, the headmaster insisted on the fact that the programme makes it possible to limit the school dropping out of the athletes.

Discussion/Conclusion

Participation to "Sport + Studies Programmes" is perceived as a positive and profitable experience. However, to succeed simultaneously in sport and at the school, a child must always show a determination and scholarly abilities higher than the average. The principal advantage of the programmes concerns an improvement of the time's organization.

References

[1] Cloes M. et al. (2002). *eJRIEPS (e Journal de la Recherche sur l'Intervention en Éducation Physique et Sport)*, 1, 57-72 (<http://www.fcomte.iufm.fr/recherch/sportetudes.pdf>).