

THE LATEST REFORMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AZERBAIJAN STATE ACADEMY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJAN SPORT

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Annotation: This article aims to explore the role and significance of the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Culture and Sports in the development and progress of the country's sport in recent years. In particular, it will demonstrate how recent changes at the academy have made a positive impact on sport education in Azerbaijan, as well as on the future potential of the academy's students. Major renovation work at the Academy, changes in the educational process, new programmes and collaboration with international experts have all played their part in boosting the academy's development prospects. The organisation of consistent and continuous activities, process regulation, the emergence of new experts and educational systems are reflected by remarkable progress at the academy. This article also highlights the numerous achievements of academy students over the past few years, driven by the dedicated and self-esteem of the graduates, founded on the values of the academy. At the same time, the reorganisation and investment at the academy, and the planned outcomes that are now becoming reality, illustrate the government's commitment to making Azerbaijan a global sporting capital.

Key words: ASAPES, Development, Reforms, Sport education

Introduction. Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Education and Sport (ASAPES) has a rich history of 89 years in the development of Azerbaijan sport. The academy was established in 1930 and the first cohort of 39 physical education and sporting professionals laid the foundations of sporting passion, commitment and fairness that remain in place to this day.

In the first years, 11 departments were established at the institute. The training was conducted in Azerbaijani, Russian, Georgian and Armenian languages, initially for three years, and later for four years. From 1936, the academy was known as the State Physical Education Institute in Transcaucasia. At that time, the Institute opened departments of social sciences, anatomy, biology, chemistry, hygiene, physics, physiology, mathematics, physics and technique of physical education.

Many academy students and graduates have represented Azerbaijan in international competitions. But while the academy has earned a reputation for producing exceptional athletes, it has never lost its focus as a scientific and pedagogical center. The Academy's teachers are the authors of more than 3,000 textbooks, monographs, teaching aids and articles.

In more recent times ASAPES has been a trailblazer for Azerbaijan education, pioneering new innovation in vocational and academic learning. In 2017, three new English-language Master's programmes were launched: Sport Medicine and Rehabilitation, Sport Management and Sport Journalism. All make the most of international experience while creating a platform that encourages the development of Azerbaijan's education and learning.

The academy's recent development that has seen dramatic improvements to facilities as well as advanced learning techniques are part of Azerbaijan's wider sport investment strategy. The aim is to harness the power of sport to inspire a more healthy, motivated society as well as demonstrate the achievements and potential of Azerbaijan on the world stage. At ASAPES this strategy took the form of a reform of academy structures, upgrading and renovation of facilities as well as the introduc-

tion of new education programmes and processes. Students remain the heart of the academy, and the recent changes have all been made with a longer-term goal in mind: to inspire and prepare a new generation of world-class sporting professionals, with the passion and skills to fly the flag for Azerbaijan - and the academy - in any sporting environment the modern world presents.

In 2015, Fuad Hajiyev was appointed as the new rector of the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Education and Sport. Fuad Hajiyev, the seventh rector in the Academy's history, made the renovation of the academy and improvement in the quality of education his personal mission.

One early manifestation of this vision was the visit by academy staff to Russia, Belarus, Turkey, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Germany to study international experience and establish collaborative relationships with leading universities in the field of sports education. Much attention was paid to the modern approaches and education model practiced by the Cologne German Sports University at the Academy.

In addition to ensuring transparency, efforts have been made to provide students with the most relevant textbooks and information resources. New methodological resources meeting modern standards have been developed, while the acquisition of course materials and translation into Azerbaijani is ongoing. There is also a great opportunity to use digital resources to improve the quality of the teaching process: A fully functional electronic library based on the American Follett Destiny Electrification System has been created and has created a basis for the academy's academic capacity building.

In addition, in 2017, the academy launched three new English-language Master's programmes in Sport Journalism, Sports Management and Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. These innovative specialties are a first in the Azerbaijani education system. In addition, ASAPES has developed partnerships with a number of well-known UK universities and applied their experience to the Azerbaijani education system. Several of the main modules across these new programme

are taught by British and international teachers who are recognised leaders in their fields.

Media expert and international trainer Dan Mason devised and launched the MA Sport Journalism programme, combining his experiences in over 20 countries with knowledge of the Azerbaijan media landscape. The Master's programme in Sports Management was initially developed in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University and is now undergoing further development to reflect the growing importance of international management skills.

The Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation programme is led by Michael Lusmore, of University College London (UCL). Michael is also vice-president of the Sports Medicine Department of the Royal Medical Society (2).

The total area of repair and reconstruction works at the academy is over 3,000 square metres. This includes the electronic library (450 sq. m), administrative rooms (700 sq.m), chairs (450 sq.m), student center (300 sq.m), cafe (70 sq.m), educational auditoriums (650 sq.m). At the same time, the gymnastics, basketball and handball halls have been renovated and football stadium upgraded.

Around the academy, heating, ventilation and cooling systems, water supplies, internet connections electricity and security systems have been updated, and 650 new student desks have been purchased (3). In addition, 160 computers were donated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, eight presentation projectors were installed, as were 18 TV-monitors for presentations and interactive teaching (4). The academy's medical centre has been upgraded, and a cafe and student canteen have opened (5).

All these measures were supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State Examination Center. Raising technical capacities, increasing professionalism among employees, and developing new teaching methods were part of strategy.

These improvements helped provide a springboard for sporting success by the academy's students.

Students studying at the academy

participated in 23 international competitions between 2011 and 2016. In 16 of these, academy students were representing their national teams. Across those same years, students won more than 300 medals. This was also the period during which, as a result of a major shift in focus at government level, Azerbaijan set out to become a global sporting nation. The first European Games in 2015, Islamic Solidarity Games in 2017 and Formula 1 helped establish Azerbaijan as a sporting capital.

It was not only in hosting sporting events that Azerbaijan was determined to succeed. In the first European Games, in which more than 10,000 athletes from 50 countries participated, Azerbaijan was placed second with a medal count 56. Russia led the table with 164 medals. Among the medal winners for Azerbaijani, ASAPES students and graduates occupied a commanding position:

Gold medals

Elvin Mamishzade (Boxing)
Teymur Mammadov (Boxing)
Ilham Zakiyev (Judo)
Firdovsi Farzaliyev (Karate)
Rafael Aghayev (Karate)
Aykhan Taghizade (Taekwondo)
Rasul Chunayev (Wrestling)
Elvin Mursaliyev (Wrestling),
Togrul Asgarov (Wrestling)

Silver medals

Sevil Bunyatova (Fencing)
Marina Durunda (Gymnastics)
Orkhan Safarov (Judo)
Farida Azizova (Taekwondo)
Rafiq Huseynov (Wrestling)

Bronze medals

Niyazi Aliyev (Karate)
Ilaha Gasimova (Karate)
Hasan Aliyev (Wrestling)
Haji Aliyev (Wrestling),
Jabrayil Hasanov (Wrestling)

This result means that ASAPES students and graduates accounted for a third of all medals won by Azerbaijan at the European

Games. It is a remarkable statistic that places into context the significant contribution of ASAPES towards Azerbaijan's sporting success. Such sporting achievements only serve to inspire greater passion and dedication among ASAPES students and to attract a greater number of talented young men and women to the academy, and to sport.

During 2016 ASAPES students participated in several international competitions and distinguished themselves by bringing home medals. In this year alone, 129 students from 54 departments of the academy competed in international (Olympic and non-Olympic) competitions, winning 41 gold, 23 silver and 37 bronze medals. A total of 101 medals in a single year. At the Rio Olympics that year, ASAPES students won 75 medals (32 gold, 16 silver, 27 bronze). At non-Olympic international competitions, ASAPES students won 26 medals (9 gold, 7 silver and 10 bronze). 2016 proved to be a golden year for academy students, with 278 students participating in a national team squad (1).

The indispensable role of the academy in the sporting achievements of Azerbaijan was again confirmed at the Islamic Solidarity Games in 2017. Two years before, at the European Games, graduates of the academy won more medals than active students, but the position was reversed during the Islamic Solidarity Games. At the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games 22 graduates of the academy (19 boys and 3 girls) competed, winning 27 medals (19 gold, 4 silver and 4 bronze). However, in the same games, 28 active ASAPES students (21 boys and 7 girls) won 34 medals (19 gold, 7 silver, 8 bronze) (7). This supports the argument that the investment in teaching quality and facilities at the sport academy did not only pay off, but paid off more quickly than most could have imaged.

Medals awarded to both students and graduates at the 2017 Islamic Solidarity Games

Gold medals

Nazim Babayev (Triple jump)
Teymur Mammadov (Boxing),
Marina Durunda (Gymnastics),

Ruslan Lunev (Shooting),
Hidayet Heyderov (Judo),
Ulkar Karimova (Volleyball),
Orkhan Nuriyev (wrestling),
Mahir Madatov (Football),
Murad Agharzayev (Gymnastics)
and etc.

Silver medals

Qasimov Elmar (Judo)
Qasimova Kifayet (Judo)
Rafiq Huseynov (Wrestling)
Azizova Farida (Taekwondo)
Emin Cafarov (shooting) and etc.

Bronze medals

Firdovsi Farzaliyev (Karate)
Nurana Aliyeva (Karate)
Rasul Chunayev (Wrestling)
Yekaterina Sariyeva (Athletics)
Ilham Zakiyev (Para-Judo) and etc. [8]

The successful trend demonstrated across recent years shows every sign of continuing, with an increasing number of sport academy students and alumni being invited to join national teams, competing at the highest level in Azerbaijan and around the world.

The transformation of the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Education and Sport has shown clearly how education can be the engine-room of Azerbaijan's national sporting strategy and that bold decisions and a spirit of innovation inspire success.

In 2018, ASAPES students and graduates Hidayat Heydarov, Mikhail Malkin, Rafael Aghayev and Jabrayil Hasanov were awarded Sportsmen of the Year titles by Ministry of Youth and Sport. These athletes not only keep the Azerbaijan flag flying and act as role models for the next generation, they are living proof of the power of sport education and the importance of ASAPES at the heart of Azerbaijan's sporting past, present and future.

Conclusion. The transformation of ASAPES has taken place over the past four years. Arguably, it is still too early to take an objective measurement of long-term success. However, sport is one of the fastest-changing industries on earth and Azerbaijan has no choice but to adopt an ambitious programme

of change and innovation if it is to establish its place as a world-class, competitive sporting nation.

The changes at ASAPES have demonstrated beyond doubt that bold decisions and ground-breaking actions do make a positive difference. The focus on teaching quality and facilities has delivered results that can be measured in the performance of ASAPES students in international competitions such as the Islamic Solidarity Games. The introduction of three new Master's programmes sets the expectation that the performance of Azerbaijan's sport journalists, managers and doctors will follow the lead of the academy's Olympic-standard students and graduates.

Furthermore, the changes at ASAPES have set in train a dynamic of progress that places ASAPES at the forefront of Azerbaijan education, and a champion of the national strategy to harness the power of sport for the benefit of the nation and its citizens.

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**Azərbaycan idmanının inkişafında
Azərbaycan Dövlət Bədən Tərbiyəsi və
İdman akademiyasının əldə etdiyi
nailiyyətlərin və həyata keçirdiyi islahatların
rolu**

Ramal İbrahimov

Açar sözlər: ADBTIA, İnkişaf, Reformlar,
İdman təhsili

Xülasə: Bu məqalə Azərbaycan Dövlət Bədən Tərbiyəsi və İdman Akademiyasının son illərdə idmanın inkişafı və inkişafında rolunu və əhəmiyyətini araşdırmaq məqsədi daşıyır. Xüsusilə son dövrlərdə Akademiyada baş verən dəyişikliklərin Azərbaycanda idman təhsili, eləcə də akademiyanın tələbələrinin gələcək potensialına müsbət təsir göstərdiyini nümayiş etdirəcəkdir. Akademiyada əsaslı təmir işlərinin aparılması, təhsil prosesində dəyişikliklər, yeni proqramlar və beynəlxalq ekspertlərlə əməkdaşlıq akademiyanın inkişaf perspektivlərini artırmaqda öz rolunu oynayır. Ardıcıl və davamlı fəaliyyətlərin təşkili, prosesin tənzimlənməsi, yeni mütəxəssislərin və təhsil sistemlərinin yaranması akademiya böyük irəliləyişlərdən irəli gəlir. Bu məqalədə həmçinin akademiyanın dəyərlərinə əsaslanan məzunların son bir neçə il ərzində tərəfindən əldə edilən çoxsaylı nailiyyətləri əks etdirir. Eyni zamanda, akademiya yenidən qurulması və investisiya yatırımı və reallığa çevrilən planlaşdırılan nəticələrin əldə edilməsi hökumətin Azərbaycanı global idman kapitalına çevirmə öhdəliyini göstərir.

**Последние реформы и достижения
Азербайджанской Государственной
Академии Физической Культуры и
Спорта в развитии азербайджанского
спорта**

Рамал Ибрагимов

Ключевые слова: АГАФС, развитие,
реформы, спортивное образование.

Аннотация: Цель данной статьи - изучить роль и значение Азербайджанской Государственной Академии физической культуры и спорта в развитии и

прогнесе спорта страны в последние годы. Академия перестала быть учреждением, выпускающим только учителей физкультуры и тренеров. Теперь спортивный вуз страны может гордиться своими выпускниками - специалистами по самым различным профилям. Организация последовательной и непрерывной деятельности, регулирование процессов, появление новых экспертов и образовательных систем отражены значительным прогрессом в академии. В этой статье также освещаются многочисленные достижения студентов академии за последние несколько лет, обусловленные самоотверженностью и самооценкой выпускников, основанной на ценно стях академии. Англоязычные магистерские программы вызывают большой интерес за пределами Азербайджана. Однако, одной из сложностей является то, что согласно законодательству иностранцы, поступающие в магистратуру в Азербайджане, должны пройти нострификацию диплома. Сейчас правила нострификации меняются, и мы надеемся, что этот процесс будет более простым для иностранцев. Это откроет новые перспективы для нашей академии.