

KURASH AS A UNIQUE SPORTING DISCIPLINE OF UZBEKISTAN

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Orziev Abdulrazzak Abduvali ugli

*Teacher of the Department of Physical Education
Andijan State Pedagogical Institute*

Abstract

This paper explores the conceptual foundations of sports development in Uzbekistan, focusing on Kurash as a unique form of sport. It analyzes the historical, cultural, and social aspects that define the popularity and significance of Kurash in Uzbek society. The evolution of this traditional wrestling style and its impact on the country's sporting culture are discussed. The study also covers the current state of Kurash, its organizational structures, participation in international competitions, and prospects for development. This work is of interest to specialists in the fields of sports, cultural studies, and sociology, as well as those interested in sports traditions and their role in shaping national identity.

Keywords

Uzbekistan, Kurash, sport, tradition, wrestling, history, culture, society, development, organization, international competitions, national identity.

Introduction

At present, physical culture and sports in Uzbekistan and developed countries have reached a high level of development. The organization of physical education in Uzbekistan is studied and included in the curricula of preschool educational institutions, general education schools, secondary specialized and higher educational institutions, and special sports schools.

A special place in the development of sports in Uzbekistan is occupied by Kurash. The basic rules of modern sports wrestling were developed in several European countries in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1912, the International Federation of Amateur Wrestling (FILA) was established (currently with 144 member countries, Uzbekistan has been a member since 1993). Greco-Roman wrestling, freestyle wrestling, judo, sambo, and other forms of sports wrestling gained widespread popularity on the international stage. In subsequent years, Uzbek wrestling was also recognized as a distinct form of wrestling at the global level.

In Uzbekistan, significant efforts are being made to develop sports, particularly to popularize physical culture and sports among the youth, to foster a physically healthy and spiritually developed generation, to improve the population's living standards and health, and to build sports grounds and complexes. The promotion of sports has become one of the priorities of state policy. Specifically, on March 4, 1993, the "Soglom Avlod Uchun" Order was established, on April 13, 1995, the "Soglom Avlod Uchun" month was announced, in 1998 the title "Uzbekistan Iftikhorlari" (Pride of Uzbekistan) was introduced, in 2000 "Soglom Avlod" (Healthy Generation), in 2001 "Year of Mother and Child", and on October 24, 2002, a decree was passed to create the Fund for the Development of Children's Sports in Uzbekistan. The year 2005 was declared the "Year of Health", 2008 the "Year of Youth", 2010 the "Year of Harmonious Generation", 2012 the "Year of a Strong Family", 2013 the "Year of Wellbeing", 2014 the "Year of the Healthy Child", and 2016 the "Year of Healthy Mothers and Healthy Children."

Under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, large-scale work is being carried out in the country to improve the management system in the field of physical culture and sports, the development of mass sports, the selection and training of talented athletes, and the strengthening of the sector with qualified personnel.

Literature Review

The development of sports and physical culture in Uzbekistan also has its own peculiarities. In the process of religious education, based on the conceptual and methodological heritage of Eastern thinkers and the traditions of folk pedagogy, the people of Uzbekistan have not lost their values and have actively used the scientific works of Abu Nasr Farabi, Abu Rayhan Biruni, Ferdowsi, Alisher Navoi, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Mirza Ulughbek, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, and other scholars on physical education. As Abu Ali Ibn Sina, the patron of the medical world, said in his work "The Canon of Medicine": "A person who regularly engages in physical exercises will never need medical treatment."

Sahibkiran Amir Timur in his "Tuzuklari" states: "When accepting young recruits into the army, three rules were followed: the first was to be healthy and strong, the second was to master the sword, and the third was to be able to control one's mind and perfection."

The pedagogical views of the great astronomer and statesman Mirza Ulughbek are noteworthy. The importance of his words: "If you want your child to grow up healthy and energetic, train and strengthen them from an early age," shows the priceless value of these statements.

Kurash is one of the means of educating a person to be strong, agile, resilient, and determined. Kurash is allowed from the age of 12 under the supervision of doctors. Archaeological findings and historical manuscripts confirm that Kurash has been an integral part of the lifestyle of Uzbeks since ancient times. A cylindrical ceramic vessel from the Bronze Age, found in ancient Bactria (southern Uzbekistan), depicts two wrestlers, one of whom is striking the other. Another archaeological find from this period shows wrestlers demonstrating wrestling techniques.

These unique findings testify that wrestling was part of the way of life of our ancestors as far back as 1,500 years BCE. According to the Greek writer Claudius Aelianus (2nd-3rd centuries CE) and other historical figures, girls from the Saka tribe, who lived in this area, chose their husbands by competing with young men. Later, the girls set the condition that it would be decided by a wrestling match. An example of this can be found in the heroic Uzbek epic "Alpomish". One of the two wrestlers grabs the opponent by the belt and pulls them towards themselves while simultaneously taking measures to get rid of the opponent. This definition closely resembles the rules of modern Kurash.

In the works of Mahmud Kashgari "Divan Lugat al-Turk", Alisher Navoi's "Khamsa", "Kholoti Pahlavon Muhammad", "Badoe al-Waqaye", Zayniddin Vasifi, and "Husayna Waiza Koshifi", valuable information about wrestling from the 9th to 16th centuries is contained. Kurash, one of the forms of sport, has a history spanning over three and a half thousand years. Kurash is a word in Uzbek, mentioned in several ancient Eastern literary sources as a form of sport, one-on-one competition, and social entertainment. The legendary epic "Alpomish" mentions that in ancient times, Kurash was the most popular and widespread sport in Uzbekistan.

A number of philosophers and historians who lived and worked in ancient and medieval times have mentioned Kurash with great respect in their works.

Abu Ali Ibn Sina, one of the great thinkers of the East, said that Kurash is the best way to ensure the health of both the soul and the body. However, there is no precise information about when and where Kurash originated. Nevertheless, this ambiguity has not hindered scholars from recognizing Kurash as one of the oldest sports.

In the 9th century CE, the development of Kurash reached a new level. At that time, people living on the territory of modern Uzbekistan used wrestling as a form of entertainment and relaxation during traditional holidays, weddings, and large public events. Later, Kurash evolved from a form of entertainment into an independent sport and a method of physical training. The strongest wrestlers

became famous, and legends were woven about them. A vivid example of this is Pahlavon Mahmud, who lived in the 12th century. His grave is still a popular pilgrimage site and one of the holy places.

Amir Timur, an unparalleled military leader and statesman who left a lasting mark on the history of the 14th century, used Kurash to train his warriors and improve their physical fitness. It is known that Amir Timur's army was considered the most powerful and invincible army of its time.

Over time, wrestling became one of the most beloved and respected traditions of the people living on the territory of modern Uzbekistan. In this sense, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Kurash is in the blood of Uzbeks. The love for this sport is passed down from fathers to children. Today, the number of regular wrestlers in Uzbekistan has reached two million. The number of fans and enthusiasts of this sport is countless.

Research Methodology

In the early 1980s, famous Uzbek wrestling master, judoka, and sambo wrestler Kamal Yusupov began studying the rich heritage of Uzbek Kurash. The main goal of the representatives of this field, one of the activists of the revival of this sport, was to develop new Kurash rules that would meet international standards. By the early 1990s, he successfully completed this important task and set himself the goal of bringing Uzbek wrestling to the international arena.

Initially, he introduced the public, experts, and fans to the newly developed wrestling rules. The new rules included the most honorable traditions of Uzbek Kurash, special clothing, the location of competitions, and the duration of events, all of which reflected international sports standards. Sports experts recognized that the wrestling rules developed by Kamal Yusupov fully complied with international sports requirements. One of the main advantages of the Kurash rules is that they do not allow the fight to continue while the competitors are on the ground. As soon as one of the wrestlers' knees touches the mat, the referee stops the match, and the competitors continue the fight while standing. This guarantees that the match will be dynamic, interesting, and exciting for the fans. Furthermore, the rules prohibit the use of techniques that involve grabbing the lower part of the belt or causing pain and choking. Thus, wrestling has become one of the safest sports, preventing injuries to athletes.

The Declaration of Independence of Uzbekistan in 1991 gave a new life to wrestling. The government of the republic set itself the task of restoring national values and traditions of the Uzbek people that had been suppressed during the 70 years of totalitarian rule. The restoration of wrestling, considered the national sport, was determined as one of the priorities of state policy.

In 1992, Kamal Yusupov was received by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the development of Uzbek wrestling both within the country and abroad was discussed. The main goal was to turn wrestling into an international sport and later include it in the Olympic Games program.

Following this meeting, a group of activists, led by Kamal Yusupov, began activities aimed at developing Uzbek wrestling on the international level. The success of several major competitions organized by them in different regions of Uzbekistan truly amazed everyone.

Thousands of wrestlers from all corners of the country expressed their desire to participate in the competitions, and millions of wrestling enthusiasts filled the stadiums across the country, eager to enjoy these spectacular contests. The efforts of the wrestling activists were not limited to Uzbekistan. Since 1992, they have participated in events aimed at popularizing Uzbek wrestling at prestigious sports conferences held in South Korea, Canada, Japan, India, the United States, Monaco, and Russia.

Conclusion

As a result of these efforts, the first international wrestling competitions held in Uzbekistan's capital, Tashkent, saw participants from about 30 countries. The 30,000-seat stadium in central Tashkent was filled with spectators. Millions of television viewers in Uzbekistan and abroad followed the competitions, which were broadcasted in detail on television. Kurash is one of the oldest forms of competition. At the same time, it is the youngest sport on the global stage. Despite its long history, wrestling made its first appearance on the world sports arena only in 1998. These steps are neither easy nor short. From the outset, clear steps were identified for wrestling and its expected goal. The goal was to turn Uzbek wrestling into an international sport.

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