

REVIEW

From: **Prof. Dr. Spas Bogdanov Stavrev**

Professional direction: **7.6 Sport,**

Scientific specialty: **Sports (Basketball and basketball 3x3)**

University of National and World Economy

Regarding: competition for "*associate professor*" in scientific field 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.6. Sport, scientific specialty: Sport (Basketball) for the needs of the department "Basketball, Volleyball, Handball" at National Sports Academy (NSA) "Vasil Levski".

1. Information about the contest

The competition has been announced for the needs of the department "Basketball, Volleyball, Handball" at NSA „Vasil Levski“, according to the decision of the Academic Council, with protocol No. 25/29.03.2023 in the State Newspaper, issue 34/11.04.2023. I participate in the composition of the scientific jury for the competition by decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education (protocol No. 6/18.05.2023) and according to Order No. ZP-477/30.05.2023 of the Rector of the NSA "Vasil Levski".

2. Information about the candidates in the competition

The only candidate in the announced competition for "*associate professor*" at the NSA "Vasil Levski" is chief assistant Ph.D Maria Tsankova Tsankova-Kaloyanova. She graduated from NSA "Vasil Levski" with a major in physical education and a second major in basketball coaching in 2011 and continued her studies and obtained a master's degree in "Physical Education" in 2013. Her quest for education and improvement continues and finds expression in the defense of a dissertation on the topic: "*Influence of sports preparation on the competitive performance of adolescent basketball players*" at VTU "St. st. Cyril and Methodius" on July 27, 2017, with which she acquired the educational and scientific degree "*doctor-PhD*". After winning the competition, she was appointed as an assistant in 2018 to the "Basketball, Volleyball, Handball" department at the NSA "Vasil Levski". I am familiar with and have excellent impressions of her work from the very beginning, as a teacher and coach of the representative teams of the NSA, as well as sports-pedagogical and adolescent activities, which require exceptional skills, patience, competence and excellent theoretical-practical preparation.

The sports biography of Maria Tsankova-Kaloyanova is extremely rich and impressive. She participated in six European championships with the national teams of

Bulgaria - girls and women up to 20 years old. During her professional sports career, she competed for clubs in Spain and in the most titled ones in Bulgaria, winning two championship titles with the BC "Neftokhimik" team and another number of calls to the championship and cup of Bulgaria. Among the titles, it is appropriate to mention those with the NSA "Vasil Levski" teams from the student basketball championship and the one from the National university basketball 3x3 championship with the VTU team. She is recognizable in basketball circles as an extremely high level competitor and dedicated to the game of basketball. Good preparation, experience and last but not least the support and example of her basketball family are a sufficient guarantee of professionalism on the path for growth in her professional career.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for occupying the academic position

After presenting scientometric indicators for the academic position "*assistant professor*" with the minimum required points by groups of indicators for acquiring academic positions in the NSA "Vasil Levski" (Decision of the Academic Council of the NSA "Vasil Levski" with Protocol No. 37/24.10.2019), the candidate collects a total of 1006 points (out of the required 590 points), which is almost twice the requirements for this position in the NSA. According to the law on the development of the academic staff (published in State Newspaper, issue No. 30 of 2018) and the Regulations for its implementation in the Republic of Bulgaria, based on minimum national requirements and the requirements of the Regulations for the organization and operation of the NSA "Vasil Levski", chief assistant Maria Tsankova Tsankova-Kaloyanova fully meets the criteria for occupying the position of "*associate professor*", namely, she defends a dissertation for the acquisition of the Educational and scientific degree "*doctor-Ph.D*" (2017), publishes a monograph personal work (2023), 20 scientific publications in the country and abroad are presented, which do not repeat those presented for the acquisition of the Educational and scientific degree "Ph.D". The number of citations of the candidate's scientific publications is 22, of which 3 are in refereed scientific publications, 6 are in monographs and collective volumes, and 13 are in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. She participated in three national research projects. In two of them as an academic mentor (2021 and 2022) and in one as an expert (2018).

The candidate has correctly attached a declaration of reliability of the provided information and data for participation in the competition.

4. Evaluation of teaching and learning activity

Maria Tsankova-Kaloyanova has an employment contract in the "Basketball, Volleyball, Handball" department from 31.01.2018. Her professional experience which

includes teaching is at 9 years and 8 months at the moment. The information provided (for a 3-year period) for the performance of the employment shows an average annual main employment of 535 teaching hours (including exercises and sports improvement) and 235 additional employment (including exams, supervision of coursework, verification of control norms, consultations, expert advice and participation in projects). The total annual average workload is 770 hours, all with undergraduate students. A certificate of skills and competence is the voted trust to conduct classes in English with incoming foreign students under the Erasmus+ program in the implementation of three projects of it.

An important part of her pedagogical work is the sports and training activity with the representative women's team of the NSA in basketball and 3x3 basketball (women and mixed teams). Under her leadership, the teams are one of the best prepared technically, conditionally and especially tactically, proof of the competence, capacity and professionalism are the championship titles and prize rankings in both varieties of the basketball game.

5. General characteristics of the presented scientific works/publications

To participate in the competition for "*assistant professor*", the candidate Maria Tsankova-Kaloyanova submits an independent monographic work (2023, 173 pages). Submitted for review are 20 scientific works published in yearbooks, specialized and indexed journals. Seven of them are in English, the rest in Bulgarian. Four of the publications are in indexed journals. She is an independent author in eight of the publications. The rest are co-authors, being the first author in 3 publications, the second author in 6 publications, the third author in 2 publications and the fourth author in only 1. This speaks eloquently of good teamwork and communication skills of Maria Tsankova-Kaloyanova. One of the articles was published in the Republic of Macedonia and one in the Republic of Serbia.

The scientific developments of the candidate are mainly related to the study of problems of the efficiency and specific working capacity of basketball players of different ages and genders, as well as the main factors for its increase, variability of the signs of team efficiency, the influence of stress factors and analyzes of the realization of basketball players, establishing the technical-tactical preparation of adolescent basketball players, researching the relationship of strength, speed and agility in the different playing positions of NBA players, tracing the 100-year history of basketball in Bulgaria (articles №№1,7,8,9,10,11,13,15,16,17,18,19). Researches the awareness of the physical activity of the population, as prevention of diseases and improvement of the quality of life (article №2), study of the ability to act in students from junior high school classes, through which an assessment can be made of the effectiveness of the educational process in physical

education and sports (articles №№3,6,20), researches ways to improve the quality of sports-educational activities in the preparation of athletes, which is related to the qualification of personnel and the effectiveness of the educational process conducted, as well as the satisfaction with distance learning during of the Covid-19 pandemic (articles №4,14), conducts research to establish the sports readiness of soccer players from the elite youth group up to 15 years of age and analyzes the game activity of elite handball players (articles №5,12).

The presented monograph *"Aspects of technical-tactical training in adolescent female basketball players"* deals with a problem related to technical-tactical training in adolescence, an important and debatable issue in basketball circles. The topic is relevant and at the same time extremely necessary for the young generation coaches (not only). Taking notice of the state of women's basketball and the problem with the transition from girls' to women's basketball, I believe it is extremely important that the players are well prepared for this transition. The problem has been examined in many ways and in great detail. The monograph contains an introduction, five chapters, three appendices and a bibliography. In chapter one, the ability to act and the necessary motor qualities for the game and the exact age period for their development are described. A particularly important point is the indication of the critical periods for the development of qualities. Chapters two and three are devoted to the technical and tactical training of female basketball players in the various phases of the game. All this is excellently illustrated with photos and diagrams. In the fourth chapter, the theoretical-methodical algorithms in the technical-tactical training of young basketball players are considered. The author pays well-deserved attention to the place of operational thinking in the process of tactical preparation and points out ways to improve it by setting different tactical tasks for the coaches. It is extremely important to provide a toolkit to control the technical-tactical training. An important emphasis is placed on the impact of stress on the performance of basketball players, the factors that cause this condition and methods to overcome it. In the last chapter, variation and correlation analysis are applied to interpret the results obtained from the study. Very impressive are the efforts made by the author to show a truly versatile and complex approach in the technical-tactical training of teenage basketball players.

Thus, the scientific publications provided to me by Maria Tsankova-Kaloyanova, I can justifiably evaluate as a scientific achievement, useful for practice from the point of view of the results, analyzes and conclusions therein. Her works are cited in other authors' publications, which is a sign that the subject matter and their results are in demand and significant in sports research circles.

6. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The scientific works of principal assistant Maria Tsankova Tsankova-Kaloyanova, presented for review, are distinguished by their originality and scientific-practical value. Among the most important contributions of her research results I will note:

- The significant motor qualities for teenage basketball players are identified, the sensitive periods of their development are indicated, as well as the critical phases for development within certain age limits;
- The importance of developing and improving operational thinking when solving technical and tactical tasks in complex game situations was studied, with the four phases of training by coaches distinguished;
- The applied variation and especially correlation analyzes of the results for physical development and technical-tactical training are a good starting point for comparison, corrections and improvement of the training programs by the coaches;
- A methodology has been established for researching the game effectiveness of basketball teams (club and national) from Bulgaria and foreign ones, during various forums - state and European championships and qualifications of different ages and genders. To all this, a formula for determining the coefficient of game efficiency is applied, taking into account a number of important indicators of the game. These analyzes and conclusions are of great help and benefit to coaching staffs and methodologists to improve team preparation.
- A new methodology for visualization during the training of adolescent basketball players from 12-15 years of age has been prepared and tested, with the aim of better influencing the development of concentration of attention and operational thinking, leading to higher sports and technical results;
- A survey was prepared to establish the leading stress factors for teenage basketball players and methods of getting out of them before, during and after the matches, a topic extremely current and significant.

7. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical remarks about the candidate. I recommend that in the future she focuses her research on the problems in college basketball and basketball for high sportsmanship, considering her capacity in this sport and potential for future professional development.

Conclusion

The candidacy of chief assistant Maria Tsankova Tsankova-Kaloyanova, Ph.D, fully

complies with the national minimum requirements and the internal rules of the NSA "Vasil Levski" for holding the position of *"associate professor"*. The significant achievements in scientific research and their applicability in sports practice, the accumulated pedagogical and especially practical experience at a high competitive level, with her personal qualities and achievements, give me the reason to confidently express my categorical support that she is worthy of occupying the academic position of *"associate professor"* in professional direction 7.6. Sport, scientific specialty "Sport" (basketball) at National Sports Academy „Vasil Levski“.

Date: 26.07.2023
Sofia

Signature:
(Prof. Dr. Spas Stavrev)