

# **An Examination of the Problems and Optimization Paths of China's Sports Market Environment in the Post-Detachment Era**

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**Abstract:** The de-administration reform of sports associations has been ongoing for over 30 years and has entered the post-de-administration era. This reform not only has a significant impact on enhancing the capabilities of sports associations and their self-sustaining functions but also enables sports associations to gradually grow and develop by relying on the market, making full use of social and market resources to nourish the sports market and promote the development of China's sports industry. Based on this, this paper uses methods such as literature review and logical analysis to explore the problems and optimization paths of the sports market environment in the post-de-administration era in China. The research suggests that in the post-de-administration era, the sports market environment in China still faces issues such as scarce market resources, difficulties in the survival of sports associations, an unstructured market supervision system, and weak top-level design, which need to be further strengthened. Therefore, it proposes optimization paths such as integrating the sports resource environment, improving its flow efficiency and development intensity; clarifying the functions of sports associations and fostering their self-development capabilities; improving the regulatory environment and deepening multi-party collaborative governance; and optimizing the top-level design environment to effectively build an active public institutions externally.

**Keywords:** Post-De-Administration Era; Sports Associations; Sports Market Environment; De-Administration Reform; Market-Oriented Transformation

## **1. Introduction**

In 2019, the National Development and Reform Commission issued the "Implementation Opinions on Fully Promoting the Decoupling Reform of Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce from Administrative Organs", marking a watershed moment for China's association-type social organizations. They have gradually shifted from the traditional development model of being dependent on the government system to a self-construction and self-management model, signifying the beginning of the "post-decoupling era"[1]. Sports-related social organizations have adhered to the direction of market-oriented reform. During this process, they have separated from government administrative organs, and their institutions, functions, assets, and finances have undergone changes. The rapid development of sports associations has simultaneously influenced the sports market environment, playing a positive role in optimizing resource allocation, innovating social governance, strengthening self-regulation within the sports industry, and fulfilling social responsibilities [2]. However, it has also brought about complex issues that need to be addressed urgently. Chinese scholars have analyzed the development of sports associations in the post-decoupling era, such as sorting out the three models of reform for national single-sport associations [3]; proposing multiple paths for local single-sport associations to integrate into the modernization of sports governance [4]; and analyzing the governance logic and governance paths of sports associations against the backdrop of the newly revised "Sports Law"[5]. However, there is almost no research on the sports market environment in the post-decoupling era. The sports market environment has undergone a qualitative transformation under the influence of the decoupling of associations, and there are many problems such as a lack of market resources, lagging development of associations,

insufficient technological innovation, a lack of regulatory systems, and weak top-level design. This paper aims to seek the optimized development of China's sports market environment in the post-detachment era and promote the realization of the goal of building a sports power.

## **2. Realistic Characteristics of China's Sports Market Environment in the Post-Detachment Era**

### **2.1 Active Sports Market Economy and Initial Formation of Industrial Closed Loop**

In the post-detachment era, China's sports industry is transitioning from a high-speed development stage to a high-quality development stage, with an active sports market economy. The reform of sports associations, from the perspective of the sports industry, aims to stimulate market potential and promote the establishment of an efficient industrial circulation system among the government, associations, and clubs, fully leveraging the key roles of various social entities in the development of sports. On June 17, 2019, ten ministries jointly issued the "Opinions on Fully Promoting the Detachment Reform of Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce from Administrative Organs," emphasizing the principle of "detaching as much as possible," making the detachment reform of industry associations and chambers of commerce imperative[6]. Under the market economy system, most sports associations, in the process of de-administration, have gradually severed their dependence on the government, no longer bearing the interests of administrative departments, and maintaining their independence and autonomy. They fully leverage their own advantages and demonstrate greater value. This effectively promotes the rooting of sports associations in the market, directing more resources into the market, and simultaneously addressing the issue of insufficient government-supplied resources. Taking industry associations as an example, they serve as a bridge between the government and enterprises, not only promoting the development of their respective industries but also providing innovative ideas for social management [7]. The goal of the detachment of the government from industry associations is not merely to formally sever the connection

between the two, but rather, on the basis of clarifying responsibilities, to grant industry associations more autonomy, providing the necessary environment and support for their self-development and improvement, enabling them to play a more active role in perfecting the market economy system [8]. For instance, the national industry sports association, the Silver Eagle Sports Association, operates relatively independently under the umbrella of a legal social organization [9]. It actively promotes mass fitness activities in the financial industry and successfully holds large-scale events, contributing to the prosperity of the sports market economy.

### **2.2 Tendency Towards Independent Property Rights and Autonomous Innovation in Enterprises**

With the development of the market economy, sports associations, as a bridge between the government and sports enterprises, have gradually become a key force in addressing "market failure" and "government failure." On May 13, 2007, the General Office issued the "Several Opinions of the General Office on Accelerating the Reform and Development of Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce," stating that industry associations should earnestly fulfill their mission of serving enterprises. Industry associations represent the interests of enterprises in their respective industries and must truly serve enterprises, actively helping them expand into international markets. Sports industry associations, as a bridge between enterprises and the government, play a crucial role in promoting the independence of sports enterprises' property rights and enhancing their autonomous innovation capabilities. Under the supervision of administrative organs and the regulation of industry associations, sports enterprises exhibit a spontaneous growth trend. When formulating compliance plans or establishing compliance management systems, sports enterprises pay close attention to aligning with legal norms, industry standards, and business practices to ensure the standardization of their operations [10]. In the post-detachment era, an increasing number of sports enterprises join industry associations and develop rapidly with their assistance. Industry associations help member enterprises improve their quality, enhance their innovation capabilities, improve their

management and operations, and create conditions for sports enterprises to expand their markets. At the same time, domestic member enterprises, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, act in unison under the active organization of industry associations to expand into foreign markets. Against the backdrop of the detachment reform of sports industry associations, sports enterprises have the ability to make flexible decisions based on market demands and their own conditions, enjoying greater freedom in aspects such as sports products, services, and market expansion. Some sports enterprises have begun digital transformation, promoting industrial upgrading and transformation through technological support and optimizing the reorganization of various production factors. Meanwhile, the diversified demands of the sports market have prompted sports enterprises to enhance the supply level of sports products and services and to innovate and upgrade. Sports enterprises regulate market behavior in the sports market by determining pricing strategies, product and advertising strategies, etc., and improve market performance from the dimensions of resource allocation efficiency and profit margin levels, constantly optimizing the sports market environment [11]. In the post-detachment era, the adjustment of the relationship between industry associations and administrative organs is related to reducing the resistance to the development of enterprises, improving the service level of mutual-benefit social organizations for enterprises, and activating market development. Although the de-administratization reform of industry associations has achieved phased results, there are still many problems that need to be solved urgently.

### **2.3 Enhanced Autonomy of Sports Associations and Increase in Bottom-Up Organizations**

The "disengagement of associations" is similar to de-administration, highlighting the leading role of industries and professions on the basis of re-establishing the relationship between the government and the market [12]. In the post-disengagement era, the de-administration reform of sports associations not only brings new development to the associations themselves, transforming their functions, enhancing their business capabilities and

comprehensive qualities, and strengthening internal democracy and autonomy. It also promotes the development of the sports industry and optimizes the sports market environment. The "Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption" proposed to accelerate the disengagement of sports industry associations from administrative organs, and transfer public services and matters that can be handled by sports social organizations to these organizations. Currently, the majority of sports associations have completed the disengagement process, although they are still in the reform pain period with many remaining issues. However, the "Implementation Opinions on Fully Promoting the Disengagement of Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce from Administrative Organs" released by the National Development and Reform Commission in 2019 has clearly listed the specific names of the disengaged associations, with as many as 89 sports associations. It has been clearly stated that this reform will be basically completed by 2020. Since then, the internal governance of sports associations no longer relies on administrative power, but has developed into independent and autonomous non-governmental legal organizations. The professional service capabilities, autonomous governance capabilities, and independent civil liability capabilities of various sports associations have been continuously improved [13]. In the post-disengagement era, with the continuous growth of people's participation in and demand for sports, as well as the increasing recognition of the importance of community sports development, bottom-up sports social organizations have increased, providing more people with opportunities to participate in sports and promoting grassroots sports development. It is certain that the de-administration reform of sports associations is a long and arduous road. Successfully disengaging from administrative organs is not the end, but a necessary path for their integration into modern sports governance and achieving high-quality sports development.

### **2.4 Separation of Government and Social Personnel, Each Performing Their Own Duties**

Since the National Development and Reform

Commission proposed the "Implementation Opinions on Fully Promoting the Disengagement of Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce from Administrative Organs" in 2019, the personnel autonomy of various sports associations has been fully implemented. A comprehensive labor contract system has been implemented, and each sports association selects and employs personnel independently in accordance with laws and regulations. Leaders and current staff have no authority to approve part-time positions. Various disengaged sports associations have not only improved their comprehensive capabilities but also strengthened exchanges and connections among different associations, established independent personnel systems, and focused on the cultivation of professional talents, attracting more sports management talents and professional talents with international vision and cross-border capabilities. The active cultivation of these talents has greatly promoted the development of sports associations themselves, and at the same time, these compound talents have played a positive role in the management of the sports market through social mobility. Before the disengagement reform, many sports associations that relied on the government for survival had a distinct "semi-official and semi-civilian" nature, with their main leaders mostly holding part-time positions with "official" backgrounds. This "dual role" might cause officials to sacrifice the interests of sports associations for the sake of government interests. However, after the disengagement reform, this phenomenon that seriously affected the development of sports associations has greatly improved. Take the Football Association as an example. Although it faces the predicament of a shortage of professional talents and an urgent need to improve the construction of management teams [14], it is constantly attracting various professional talents to join, improving its governance level, and enhancing the professionalization of its service capabilities. This positive development trend has enabled the Chinese Football Association to continuously progress in the post-disengagement era, bringing positive impacts to the sports market environment. Under the background of "de-linking without entrusting management", where social and government personnel are separated and there

is a shortage of human resources, the separation of government and society ensures that government personnel do not get involved in the management of associations. This prevents the inability to fully play the role of sports associations due to conflicts of interest between associations and the government, thus not hindering the development of the sports market economy. At the same time, the lack of support from government elite talents and the tendency of outstanding talents to seek career development within the system will also lead to the challenge of talent shortage for industry associations. In the post-de-linking era, the continued development of sports associations requires greater emphasis on talent cultivation to enhance the capabilities of sports associations, enabling them to serve the prosperity of the market, perform greater functions, and optimize the sports market environment.

### **3. Review of the Problems in the Sports Market Environment in the Post-Detachment Era**

#### **3.1 Resource Environment: Insufficient Market Resources and Low Allocation Efficiency**

China's sports market is a nascent and gradually developing and improving market. The advancement of the goal of "de-administrativization" of sports social organizations, while optimizing the sports market environment, has also brought many unfavorable factors. Insufficient market resources, low allocation efficiency, and monopolistic phenomena have become prominent. Specifically, this is reflected in the following aspects: First, the quality of sports events is low, and the entry mechanism is not clear. In December 2013, the organization issued the "Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption", proposing to cancel the approval of commercial and mass sports events and activities, and accelerate the reform of the management system for national comprehensive and single sports events. The background and driving force for the reform of the administrative approval system for commercial sports events in China is the reform of the government's administrative management system and the transformation of



government functions. The cancellation of the event approval system has stimulated the vitality of the sports event market, but the extension of the industrial chain is restricted. The events approved by industry associations are scarce, and high-quality event supply is insufficient, failing to meet the audience's viewing needs. Second, under the new social background, the problem of unbalanced allocation of sports venue resources has become prominent. Before detachment, the ownership of venues built by associations was unclear, resulting in their being abandoned and neglected or unable to be used for commercial purposes. For example, the Shandong Provincial Sports Center is currently in a loss-making state because it has divested itself of non-sports-related businesses. However, the situation is exactly the opposite for the Jinan Olympic Sports Center. Third, the allocation of funds is the core of resource allocation, and the issue of fund sources needs to be urgently addressed. During the process of gradual de-administrativization of sports associations, the government sometimes mistakenly equates "detachment" with "abandonment of management", causing associations to enter an "uncertain period" after being detached from government management. Without government funding, many sports associations are short of financial resources, making it difficult for them to operate normally and leading to their self-destruction. On the contrary, if sports associations can seek help from the market after detachment, they can not only seek financial sources for their own development and rapidly develop under the influence of the sports market, but also invigorate the market economy and optimize the sports market environment. In summary, in the post-detachment era, the shortage and allocation problems of resources such as events, venues, and funds in detached and detaching sports associations have had adverse effects on the sports resource market environment in China and have also put forward higher requirements.

### **3.2 Organizational Environment: Lagging Development of Associations and Slow Progress in Entity Transformation**

In the post-detachment era, the return of the role and the repositioning of the functions of sports associations can effectively stimulate the

vitality of social organizations, optimize sports governance methods, and achieve a positive interaction between government governance and social regulation. However, sports associations have also encountered many problems brought about by the detachment reform, such as a lack of credibility, unclear positioning due to significant differences in internal governance models, and their own survival pressure, which have affected the development of sports associations and prevented them from playing a positive role in promoting the development of the sports market. First, sports associations face the challenge of credibility. When associations can no longer rely on the authority of the government to establish industry credibility, some associations cannot rapidly grow and establish credibility within the industry in a short period of time by their own strength. Second, after the detachment reform, the internal organizational structure of sports associations has also undergone corresponding adjustments. However, after detaching from the government, their own governance capabilities are relatively weak, and even the management systems, operation mechanisms, and governance methods are quite different and vary greatly. For instance, the issue of the lack of separation between government and society exists in national industry sports associations such as the China Avant-garde Sports Association and the China Water Conservancy Sports Association. Another example is that the China Electric Power Sports Association and the China Petrochemical Sports Association are affiliated with the China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation, and the governance models are complex. Taking these national industry sports associations as typical cases, it can be seen that the differences in governance models make industry management and business guidance very difficult. Finally, the process of promoting the entity status of sports associations in China is slow, and they are facing survival pressure. Many sports associations cannot quickly adapt without a foundation for market-oriented development. When the government no longer dominates sports associations, their ability to obtain social resources is lacking, their service capabilities are insufficient, and the enthusiasm of members to participate is restricted. "Zombie associations" and "quasi-zombie associations"

are widespread. In conclusion, sports associations should adapt to the requirements of the new situation, find a new balance point suitable for their own development, and promote their own market-oriented development.

### **3.3 Regulatory Environment: Inadequate Regulatory System and Lagging Regulatory Transformation**

The administrative reform of sports associations has made some progress, but the lack and imperfection of the regulatory system have led to a long way to go for the associations after their detachment. First, the distribution of regulatory powers in the sports market varies greatly, and the settings of regulatory departments in different regions are rather complex [15]. The "top-level design" at the first-level node cannot be effectively and quickly implemented at the grassroots level, resulting in various regulatory measures and policies remaining superficial and difficult to truly implement. Sports associations cannot clearly define their positions within the market regulatory system, and the corresponding regulatory systems and management measures cannot be effectively followed up. Second, comprehensive regulation is difficult to achieve. The reasons are as follows: Firstly, as one of the subjects participating in market regulation, sports associations gradually participate in market competition in the post-detachment era, and they cannot fully possess the ability to participate in market regulation fairly and impartially. The situation of multiple subjects participating in market regulation has not yet been formed. Secondly, the entity level of sports associations after detachment is relatively weak, and the development levels of various associations are uneven, resulting in a lack of market regulation capabilities of sports associations. Although the participation of multiple subjects in regulation has become a consensus in the field of market regulation, in the sports market regulation, taking individual sports associations as an example, considering their governance structure design, the actual development of the associations themselves, and the particularity of their positioning, the regulation still remains unstable. Third, the transformation and development of regulation are lagging behind. In the era of rapid development of the digital economy, China's

market regulation model is still dominated by traditional methods, and the application of digital technology is not comprehensive, which seriously hinders the efficiency of market regulation. In the post-detachment era, sports associations are both participants in market regulation and market competition. They not only need to accelerate the improvement of their governance capabilities but also enhance their market regulation capabilities to ultimately transform the sports market from government regulation to market governance and co-governance.

### **3.4 Policy Environment: Weak Top-Level Design and Poor Implementation**

Since July 2015, the comprehensive detachment reform of industry associations and chambers of commerce has officially kicked off nationwide. As an important force promoting the development of sports, the policy environment of the external market for sports associations is particularly important. In this regard, the state has issued policy documents at different times to support the detachment reform of associations. However, in the post-detachment era, the entity reform of associations cannot stop here. There is a lack of targeted top-level design and supporting plans, and there are problems such as the need to adjust the relationship between the government and society and insufficient government support. As follows: First, for sports associations themselves, due to their long-term political dependence, they have poor independent consciousness, lack decision-making spirit, and are overly dependent on the government, especially in sports associations with a low degree of marketization. For the government, taking individual sports associations as an example, the sports administrative department still controls the functions of individual associations, with lingering ties and restricted responsibility exercise, which seriously limits the performance of the associations' social functions [16]. Second, government support is insufficient, and implementation guidance is inadequate. Firstly, "detachment" does not mean that the government completely lets go of sports associations. After detachment, some sports associations that cannot smoothly transform or need a long transition period lack resources and are seriously detached from the

market, and can only survive on their own. Secondly, taking the reform of the Chinese Football Association as an example, although the "Adjustment and Reform Plan of the Chinese Football Association" has proposed relatively clear reform goals and implementation paths and improved the relevant contents of the "Charter of the Chinese Football Association", which is more specific than other sports associations, the implementation of these supporting plans is still in the exploratory stage and is difficult, requiring guidance. Third, the external legal system construction is inadequate, with problems such as ambiguous legal provisions, incomplete top-level design, and few targeted laws and regulations, which also affects the internal governance of associations. For instance, the case where Guangzhou Geely sued the Chinese Football Association, which sparked widespread discussion [17], ended in failure due to the distortion of the administrative power granted to sports associations. Another example is that the overlapping functions and unclear division of responsibilities between sports project associations and sports project management centers [18], as well as the lack of legal basis for defining non-profit standards, are sufficient to demonstrate that there is still much room for improvement in the external construction of sports associations in China.

#### **4. Optimization Paths for the Sports Market Environment in the Post-Detachment Era in China**

##### **4.1 Integration of Resource Environment: Enhancing the Efficiency of Sports Resource Flow and Intensifying Market Resource Development**

Since the reform and opening up, the development of industry associations and chambers of commerce in China has been carried out in tandem with the gradual establishment of the market economy system and the continuous reform of the government's institutional functions. With the steady advancement of the detachment reform, various sports associations should change their mindset and no longer rely on the government as the main channel for obtaining various resources. Instead, they should face the market to promote the vitality of the sports market economy and

enhance the efficiency of sports resource flow. First, regarding event resources, it is necessary to improve the event property rights system under various sports associations and clarify the property rights subjects. For instance, the ownership of the hosting rights of the Chinese University Basketball League once caused disputes, seriously affecting the development of the event [19]. Secondly, efforts should be made to hold high-quality and socially valuable events to increase event supply and promote the transformation and development of sports associations. Take the Pigeon Association, which was the second batch of associations to be detached from the General Administration of Sport of China's Social Sports Guidance Center, as an example. It attracted members and social attention through holding events and demonstrated strong market adaptability, successfully achieving market-oriented transformation. Third, it is necessary to revitalize large-scale sports venues, innovate the operation mechanism of sports venues, and stimulate their vitality. Integrate venue resources and explore new development paths for sports venue associations at all levels and their member units. Take the venue management and operation of the Sichuan Provincial Sports Venue Association as an example. Not only did the government provide financial support after its detachment to help it get through the "painful period" of reform, but it also continuously improved the professionalism of venue equipment maintenance, innovated operation models, and built an information network platform to empower the digital upgrade of sports venues. Fourth, establish an intermediate trading platform, smooth the channels for resource circulation, raise funds from society and the market, and achieve a win-win situation. Take the Huashuo Sports Industry Resources Trading Platform as an example [20]. It provides sports resource trading services for various sports associations, such as releasing information on the rights and interests of partners of the Chinese Athletics Association, covering events, organizations, patents, and operations. In summary, in the post-detachment era, sports associations should adapt to the current sports market environment. Detachment is not the end; it is necessary to remove the blockages and obstacles in the process of sports resource flow and achieve the optimal

allocation of resources to bring new vitality to the sports market.

#### **4.2 Improvement of Organizational Environment: Accelerating the Clarification of Sports Association Functions and Cultivating Self-Development Capacity of Associations**

In May 2007, the General Office issued the "Several Opinions of the General Office on Accelerating the Reform and Development of Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce," which clearly pointed out that the self-construction and standardized management of industry associations should be strengthened. In the post-detachment era, the insufficient capacity of sports associations has led to various problems, such as the limited number of associations capable of undertaking government-purchased services and the difficulty in finding suitable sports associations to undertake social purchase projects. These issues have restricted the advancement of the entity transformation of sports associations in China and affected the organizational system environment for their development. In response, improvement measures should be actively proposed to accelerate the development and growth of sports associations in China. First, it is necessary to change the mindset and establish a service-oriented awareness. Oriented by sports demands, increase the coverage of members and establish effective self-discipline and supervision mechanisms. Sports associations should give full play to their own advantages, clarify the functional boundaries between associations and the government, break away from their dependence on the government, cut off the interest chain, and maintain their independence and autonomy to enhance credibility. Secondly, sports associations should strengthen their self-governance capacity building, root themselves in the market, and, on the basis of solving survival problems, actively promote the reorganization and transformation of associations. For example, compared with other municipal football associations in China, the Chengdu Football Association has a strong social survival ability and a high degree of entity transformation. It has independent personnel and financial rights and achieves self-sufficiency. However, successful cases like that of the Chengdu Football Association are

few and far between. Currently, most sports associations in China, including single-sport associations, are facing huge survival pressures. For instance, the Chinese Senior Citizens' Sports Association, which was part of the second batch of pilot projects, still has its de-linking process on hold. In response, sports associations in China should build knowledge, information and technology platforms, integrate various resources, rationally divide the functions of the centers and associations, establish a complete organizational structure and social network foundation, and form a scientific internal governance mechanism [21]. At the same time, high-quality governance within sports associations also requires legal guarantees provided by the external environment [22].

#### **4.3 Improving the Regulatory Environment: Empowering the Market Supervision System with Digital Technology and Deepening the Diversified Collaborative Governance of Sports**

In the post-decoupling era, the reform of sports associations towards entity status cannot be separated from the development towards marketization. Sports associations will be rooted in the market, participate in market activities, and in the market environment, they will also achieve a transformation from traditional administrative supervision to diversified collaborative governance. In response to regulatory issues such as deficiencies in the market supervision system, difficulties in comprehensive supervision, and slow transformation and development of supervision, the following solutions are proposed: Firstly, regulatory functions should be delineated, and the responsibilities between sports departments and other departments should be clarified. Sports departments should fully understand the regulatory work of other departments, and departments should collaborate in supervision to enhance the efficiency of market supervision. Secondly, regulations on the establishment of supervisory boards should be improved, fully drawing on the experience of international sports organizations in setting up supervisory boards [23], and at the same time, summarizing the advantages that can be learned from successful cases of establishing supervisory boards in some domestic sports associations to ensure



their comprehensive development. For example, the Shanghai Youth Sports Association held an anonymous vote to elect a new supervisory board in November 2023. The supervisory board of this association has been in place for four consecutive terms, and its development has been thriving, improving governance levels and preventing the interests of sports associations from being compromised. Thirdly, the regulatory strength and capacity of sports associations themselves should be enhanced. In the Qingdao Sea Marathon that ended in October 2023, due to problems in competition organization, the organizing committee was disqualified from applying for Chinese Athletics Association certification for the next year. Although the Chinese Athletics Association eventually issued a penalty notice, it was not convincing, and public opinion was in an uproar. From this case, it can be seen that the regulatory capacity of sports associations in China is insufficient. Administrative institutions, having "empowered" sports social organizations, should fully demonstrate their regulatory advantages and establish a complete regulatory mechanism. Finally, the transformation of the market supervision system is imperative. Digital technology should be used to empower the modernization of the sports market supervision system. The core advantages of digital technology, such as convenience, flattening, and interactivity, should be embedded in the means, processes, and standards of sports market supervision to build a more fair and efficient supervision system [24].

#### **4.4 Optimizing the Policy Environment: Formulating Targeted Policies after Decoupling and Effectively Creating an Active Government Externally**

At present, the decoupling of associations is a reform that is in line with the current political system of our country. The smooth progress of the decoupling reform and the entity operation of associations highlights the superiority of the national system. In the field of sports, the policy environment has a significant impact on sports associations. The following promotion paths are proposed: First, the government should delegate power and benefits. Sports administrative departments should gradually delegate their powers. Associations themselves should break away from their dependence on

the government and enhance their self-sustainability. Second, the government and administrative departments should treat various sports associations with different decoupling progress differently and not apply a one-size-fits-all approach. For sports associations with slower decoupling progress, policy support and financial investment should be provided, but it is important to be moderate and distinguish between "support" and "control". For sports associations with a higher degree of socialization, more emphasis should be placed on guidance, helping them to be oriented towards the needs of the masses, improve the quality of services provided by sports associations, create a survival environment, and achieve better development. At the same time, the government can also create growth space for associations through the purchase of public sports services. For example, the Shanghai Sports Bureau first attempted to purchase services through a competitive mechanism in 2014, with significant results, which promoted further reforms and attracted more associations and social organizations to participate. However, it should be noted that the number of associations capable of undertaking government-purchased services is not large. Breaking the shackles of traditional concepts, systems, and mechanisms and enhancing the capacity of sports associations themselves is of crucial importance. Thirdly, a new type of government-association relationship is gradually being constructed. Government management departments should take the decoupling reform as an opportunity to improve laws and regulations after decoupling and create a relaxed external governance environment for sports associations. For sports associations of different types or in different circumstances, specific issues should be analyzed specifically, and support and guarantees in terms of policy, law and economy should be provided to accelerate the process of the entity development of sports associations in our country. Revitalize all kinds of sports associations and promote the prosperous development of the sports market.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The decoupling reform of sports associations, as a significant measure in the process of sports marketization, will promote continuous internal

self-governance and development capabilities of various sports associations, enabling them to undergo a complete transformation. It will also enhance the optimization of the external market environment, accelerate the circulation of sports resources, and intensify the development of sports market resources; improve the sports market supervision system, deepen the multi-party collaborative governance of sports; and effectively build a proactive government externally, accelerating the formulation of targeted policies for sports associations after decoupling. In the post-decoupling era, the entity reform of sports associations will optimize the business environment of the sports market, expand the overall scale of the sports market, and bring new vitality and vigor to China's sports market.

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