



# **Sports instructors: the Greek case**

DIMITRA ITD

Presentation of the vocational accreditation system in  
Greece regarding Sport Instructors

7/10/2009

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

## Sports instructors: the Greek case

In this paper we aim to present the vocational accreditation system in Greece regarding the sport instructors. In this particular research we chose to leave out the university departments and thus the Physical Education curricula and certification procedure in order to follow the same methodology as the rest of the group of the project.

In order to be able to better distinguish between schooling and training, vocational training of sport instructors it is useful to have an overview of the overall education system in Greece and then see where the sports education fits in.

### Greek Educational System

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in Greece is compulsory for all children 6 -15 years old; namely, it includes Primary (*Dimotiko*) and Lower Secondary (*Gymnasio*) Education. The school life of the students, however, can start from the age of 2.5 years (pre-school education) in institutions (private and public) called " *Vrefonipiakoi Paidikoi Stathmi*" (creches). In some *Vrefonipiakoi Stathmoi* there are also *Nipiaka Tmimata* (nursery classes) which operate along with the *Nipiagogeia* (kindergartens).

Attendance at Primary Education (*Dimotiko*) lasts for six years, and children are admitted at the age of 6. Along with the regular kindergartens (*Nipiagogeia*) and the *Dimotika*, All-day primary schools are in operation, with an extended timetable and an enriched Curriculum.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education, according to the reform of 1997, consists of two school types: *Eniaia Lykeia* (Unified Upper Secondary Schools) and the Technical Vocational Educational Schools (*TEE*). The duration of studies in *Eniaia Lykeia* (EL) is three years and two years (a' level) or three years (b' level) in the Technical Vocational Educational Schools (*TEE*). Mutual student transfer from one type of school to the other is possible.

Along with the mainstream schools of Primary and Secondary Education, Special *Nipagogeia* (kindergartens), *Dimotika*, *Gymnasia*, *Lykeia* and upper secondary classes are in operation, which admit students with special educational needs. Musical, Ecclesiastical and Physical Education *Gymnasia* and *Lykeia* are also in operation.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education also includes the Vocational Training Institutes (*IEK*), which provide formal but unclassified level of education. These Institutes are not classified as an educational level, because they accept both *Gymnasio* (lower secondary school) and *Lykeio* (upper secondary school) graduates according to the relevant specializations they provide.

Public higher education is divided into Universities and Technological Education Institutes (*TEI*). Students are admitted to these Institutes according to their performance at national level examinations taking place at the second and third grade of *Lykeio*. Additionally, students are admitted to the Hellenic Open University upon the completion of the 22 year of age by drawing lots.

The following graph presents concisely the structure of the Greek education system, as it consists of

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

institutions of the formal, classified or unclassified education.

Formal education is characterized by the fixed length of study, the possibility of repetition and the award of a formal school-leaving certificate which is the official authorization.

As a consequence of the classification of the education institutions, a title (school -leaving certificate, degree etc.) is compulsory for students at each education level in order to continue to the next.

It should be outlined that the graph offers a general overview of the education system with its main aspects being supervised by the Ministry of Education and which form the major part of it. However, a broader analysis shows that the total of the education services provided for in Greece form a much more complex, multilevel and differentiated infrastructure. Moreover, many other educational services, classified or unclassified, are provided for in the formal education system, either in co -operation with it or completely independently.

A detailed description of the Greek Education System is offered in EURYBASE , the EURYDICE database of the European Education Systems.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Labour market  |  |
| Higher Education   |  |
| Postgraduate studies(Universities, TEI - Hellenic Open University) - Hellenic Open University  |  |
| Universities   |  |
| Conventional ----- Technological Education Institutes (TEI)  |  |
| Formal and Informal Post Secondary Vocational Training IEK - KEK   |  |
| Secondary Education  |  |
| Lykeia:<br>- Musical<br>- Ecclesiastical (self sufficient and autonomous)<br>- Physical Education Schools B' grade<br>- Special A' grade | TEE:<br>B and A Level<br>C and B Level |
|  | IEK                                    |
| GYMNASIO:<br>(General, Musical, Ecclesiastical, Physical Education, Special) compulsory education  |  |
| Primary Education  |  |
| DIMOTIKO (mainstream, All-day, Special)  |  |
| NIPIAGOGGIO (mainstream, All-day, Special)   |  |
| NIPIAKA TMIMATA  |  |
| PAIDIKOI STATHMOI  |  |

(Source: The Ministry of Education)

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

### **Physical Education Schools**

As can be deduced from this table Physical Education can be met at both the Lower Secondary (Gymnasio) and Higher Secondary (Lykeia) levels.

Physical Education schools provide better training conditions for students that are already athletes (members of an athletic union and holders of an athlete card, issued by the Secretariat General of sports, which is part of the Ministry of Culture) or not and higher possibilities for all their students to get accepted at the University departments of Physical Education through a rather complicated system of percentages in the overall National Level Examinations that all students have to undergo in order to get accepted at the Tertiary education Institutes, because all Greek University Departments are having closed-number Schools.

Physical Education Schools though do not issue, nor have any legal right to issue, any kind of professional accreditation for its students. Vocational accreditation and Qualifications can only come from each Sport Federation.

### **Sport Federations**

Sport Federations for each Olympic and Paralympic sport are all supervised by the General Secretariat of Sports. Each Federation is forming an Association of instructors/coaches and a school of Instructors/coaches. The coaches/instructors can be categorized as class C, class B and class A.

*Who can apply for a Class C training and qualification:*

The basic requirements are

1. They are between 25 to 40 years old.
2. They are holders of Lyceum or High school or other equivalent degree.
3. They held a certification from the Federation or Local union that they practised teams as players for at least five years

*Who can apply for a Class B training and qualification:*

1. They are up to 45 years old.
2. They have diploma C' and corresponding Licence for exercising the profession from the General Secretariat of Sports which was acquired at least one year ago.
3. They held a certification from a Federation or Local union that they practised the profession of trainer for one year or they deposit solemn statement of a Trainer of class A' that they worked as assistant coach to the team for a period of at least one year.

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

4. They have participated at least in (1) training of instructors in Greece or abroad, by producing a certification of a recognized institution.

Exceptions for this article are University Physical Education graduates. that possess secondary speciality of the specific sport, if they fill the conditions of cases 1 and 2 of the present article.

*Who can apply for a Class A training and qualification:*

1. They are up to 50 years old.

2. They have diploma B' and corresponding Licence for exercise the profession from the General Secretariat of Sports which was acquired at least two years ago.

3. They hold a certification from a Federation or Local union that they practised the profession of trainer for two years or they hold a solemn statement of a class A Trainer that they worked as assistant coach to the team for a period of at least two years.

4. They have participated at least in (2) training courses for instructors in Greece or abroad, as instructors of B' Class.

Exceptions for this article are persons which as players offered excellent services and as members of the National Team of Men or Women they have fifty (50) at least attendances for the men and twenty five (25) for the women, they can participate directly in the training for the Class A, if they fill the conditions of cases 1 and 2 of the present article.

The age and the years they have to be practicing as athletes or instructors vary slightly from sport Federation to sport Federation but the basic requirements are the same, as well as the A,B,C categorization

**Class categorization: what it means:**

C' Class is the basic category for acquiring essential qualifications for the exercise of the profession of trainer/instructor/coach. Being the fundamental level, the program of training of Class C has as its sovereign aim the basic knowledge for the exercise and training, mainly of new players and teams of amateur level, also for trainers working in the private sector, recreational activities, outdoor training activities etc while Class B can lead to the coaching of smaller professional teams and athletes or assisting a class A instructor.

This acquired knowledge, with its continuous application into practice, constitutes the essential background for proceeding to the next level e.g from class C to class B and from class B to A etc.

**The Federation, the School of instructors/trainers and the General Secretariat are the primary responsible for the structure and the level of the contents of the curricula that is offered in the**

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

**instructors schools. For this reason they have some common elements but they can also vary a lot from sports Federation to sports Federation, in some cases also depending heavily on the experience of the federation, relatively new or even less known federations tend to have less organized instructors schools or not so structured contents in their curricula**

In the framework of the project “Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF” we have chosen to research the instructors schools of more prominent and popular sports like basketball, football, sailing and tennis and the curricula that follow are a combination of their contents. Although specially for the Class A training the subjects are very oriented towards the specific sport and its needs and requirements

#### *Curricula Class C*

#### THEORETICAL COURSES

The theoretical courses, that support the training work, are covered in 88 hours of teaching. Moreover, two papers are asked as an evaluation method in the course of training for basketball and football. The courses and the distribution of hours:

Introduction to (the sport) 8 hours

Coaching for (the sport) - 40 hours

Pedagogic and Athletic Psychology - 16 hours

Applied Sports Physiology - 16 hours

Special traumatology - 4 hours

Interpretation of regulations of (the sport) - 4 hours

#### PRACTICAL COURSES

The courses of practical application, have as object the study and application the technique and tactic of the sport that is taught, and have a 1 to 2 between theory and practise, that means that for every hour of theoretical teaching correspond two hours of practical application.

They are globally covered in 112 hours of teaching.

1. Basic technique of (the sport) - 18 hours
2. Individual offensive and defensive technique (for group sports) - 18 hours
3. Offensive and defensive collaborations (fro group sports)- 18 hours
4. Team tactic - 30 hours
5. Training practice - 28 hours

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

### *Curricula Class B*

The training course covers a curriculum of 150 hours in total divided in 3 different parts of a) theoretical courses, b) practical courses and c) writing of a paper

#### THEORETICAL COURSES

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1. Coaching/instructing (specific sport)       | 36 hours |
| 2. Athletic psychology                         | 8 hours  |
| 3. Ergophysiology                              | 12 hours |
| 4. Specific sport traumatology                 | 4 hours  |
| 5. Evaluation of sport's specific regulations  | 4 hours  |
| 6. Coaching/Instructing: Professional overview | 4 hours  |
| 7. Team coaching                               | 8 hours  |

#### PRACTICAL COURSES

The courses of practical application, have as object the study and application the technique and tactic of the sport that is taught, and have a 1 to 2 between theory and practise, that means that for every hour of theoretical teaching correspond two hours of practical application.

They are globally covered in 84 hours of teaching.

1. Basic technique of (the sport) - 24 hours
2. Analysis of team playing (for group sports) - 30 hours
3. Offensive and defensive situations (for group sports)- 6 hours
4. Training practice - 24 hours

### *Curricula Class A*

The A Class, training is based on the following structure:

Instructive period: Three (3) weeks (Monday - Friday) with 6 hours of teaching daily

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

Examining period: One (1) week for written examination in selected subjects and afterwards evaluation of written exams.

Thesis work: Four (4) weeks for writing and submitting the thesis .

Results: One (1) week for evaluation of thesis and final results

The program of study of A' Class is constituted by presentations on theoretical and practical issues, that is covered in 90 training hours. The courses are delivered mainly under the form of seminars, in which depending on the issue can participate more than one rapporteurs of various specialities.

#### A) ISSUES/SUBJECTS

The following subjects are indicative and they cover a big spectrum that springs from vocational training. The presentations given by the rapporteurs, depending on their content, can become theoretical or practical or something in between .

#### SPORT SPECIFIC TRAINING

1. Metabolic needs
2. Control of intensity of training
3. Planning of Physical condition. Particularities.
4. Evaluation the Physical and technical faculties of players
5. The importance of Scouting in the preparation for a game.
6. Statistical analysis of game data
7. The importance of change of regulations and their effect in the offensive and defensive tactics.

#### APPLIED SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

1. Examination of issues of applied athletic psychology.
2. Social sports psychology (leading behavior, cohesion and unity in the team, communication).
3. Psychological preparation, planning of psychological preparation.
4. Athletic morals and spirit, aggressiveness and violence in the sports: The role of trainer.
5. Stress of trainer

#### APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY OF SPORTS - DIET

1. Special diets.
2. Use of supplements in the diet
3. Biological adaptations of young men athlete with the systematic exercise/training
4. Improvement of anaerobic capacity and muscular strength in athletes of team sports.

#### APPLIED TRAUMATOLOGY OF THE SPECIFIC SPORT

1. The role of skeletal malformations in the challenge and the process of prevention of wounds.
2. First help - Evaluation and functional re-establishment of muscle-skeletal wounds of players

#### TECHNIQUES - TACTICS

1. Individual training of player

“Developing the professional skills of the future sports instructors in accordance with the EQF”

2. Modern tendencies in the team offensive tactics
3. Modern tendencies in the team defensive tactics
4. The importance the special offensive and defensive situations

#### B) THESIS WORK

Development of a thesis on a subject

Indicative issues:

1. Particularities of training of players of small age. Organizational and training approach.
2. Particularities of feminine sports training. Organizational and training approach.
3. Particularities of training of teams of small categories, amateur structure. Organizational and training approach.
4. Particularities of training of teams of professional categories, professional structure. Organizational and training approach.
5. The long-range preparation of Greek talented player. Training programmatic approach.
6. Evaluation of technique of - tactic and physical condition of players.
7. Relations between trainer - player - team - environment. The behavior of trainer.
8. The social cohesion of team. The relation of social cohesion and the result.
9. The stress of trainer. Relation between the stress and effectiveness of trainer, players and the team.
10. The moral dimension of sports. Athletic spirit.
11. Methodology of analysis of game data

#### **Legal Framework issues**

Although the vast majority of the sports have developed more or less organized and well structured instructors/trainers schools and seminars through their corresponding Federation, there are still sports that because of the lack of a Federation (they are not Olympic or Paralympic sports e.g. extreme sports) or because they are relatively new in Greece or not so widely exercised (canoe, curling, baseball etc) they do not present the same development.

This issue becomes more prominent regarding the extreme sports as they have a very specific role in the ever growing industry of athletic tourism, outdoor activities organization and partially in agrotourism development. The legal framework covering most of the extreme sports professional accreditation is generally lacking and in most cases instructors work with work permits based on previous experience certified by different local athletic unions and in some cases with no work permits.