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FROM SPECIFIC TO PROFESSIONAL: HISTORICAL RETROSPECT AND REFLECTION ON THE CHINESE TEAM'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ASIA HOCKEY LEAGUE

Jianwen Zhao

¹Shanghai University of Sport, Beijing, China

Abstract

The Asia Hockey League is the top ice hockey event in Asia and an important witness to the transition of the Chinese ice hockey team from specialization to professionalism. This study takes the teams representing China to participate in the Asia Hockey League as the research object, and uses the methods of literature and expert interviews to review the history of Chinese teams participating in the Asia Hockey League. Based on the name of the Chinese team, the competition process is divided into two stages: competition in the name of the local team and competition in the name of the national team. Among them, the 2014-2015 season is the key node for the Chinese ice hockey team to move from specialization to professionalism. To review the value and significance of the Chinese team's participation in the Asia Hockey League and summarize its useful experience in the past. The study believes that the Chinese team's participation in the Asia Hockey League will help to improve the competitive strength of Chinese ice hockey, accelerate the reform process of Chinese ice hockey professionalization, improve the declining situation of Asia hockey, and promote the peace and friendship of Asian nations. During the competition, the Chinese ice hockey team has accumulated a lot of experience in team management, team training, the introduction of foreign players, foreign coaches and the market-oriented operation of the league, which plays an important role and positive significance for its real professional development.

Keywords:

specialization; professionalization; China; Asia Hockey League; history; reflection



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Introduction

The Asia Hockey League (AHL) is the highest level ice hockey event in Asia, providing a platform for competition and communication between Asian national ice hockey teams. In the ice hockey competition of the Asian Winter Games, the Chinese men's ice hockey team won gold medals twice and dominated Asia. However, in the late 1990s, China's ice hockey declined rapidly, and Japan, South Korea and other countries' ice hockey also showed a declining trend. How to get rid of the low ebb and improve the competitive strength as soon as possible has become a major issue for ice hockey managers in various countries. In this context, a hockey league aiming at revitalizing the cause of ice hockey in Asia came into being. At present, the research on ice hockey events mainly focuses on techniques and tactics 1, offensive and defensive capabilities 2, foul statistics 3, etc., mostly from the perspective of sports training, lacking historical combing and review. By tracing back to the history of Chinese team's participation in the AHL we will consider the value of the AHL in China and even in Asia. On this basis, summarize the experience and lessons of the Chinese hockey team in the past, and provide theoretical reference and reference for the Chinese hockey team to return to the AHL and embark on a mature professional development path.

Results

Review of the Course of China's Participation in the AHL

The Asia Hockey League began in 2003, and its predecessor was the Japanese Hockey League (JIHL). Later, upon the proposal of the Japanese Hockey Association, three ice hockey associations from Japan, South Korea and China jointly held the AHL to resolve the Asian ice hockey crisis. Since 2004, the Chinese team has experienced the ups and downs of 13 seasons in this event, and the participating teams have changed several times.

Competition in the name of local team (2004-2007)

Harbin Ice Hockey Team and Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team (2004-2005)

On September 25, 2004, China sent a team to participate in the AHL for the first time. In this season, eight teams from four countries participated, including Nippon Paper Cranes, Kokudo Ice Hockey Team, Oji Ice Hockey Team, HC Nikko Icebucks, Harbin Ice Hockey Team, Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team, Anyang Halla Winia and Golden Amur. As a traditional Chinese hockey team, Harbin and Qiqihar volunteered to form teams to represent China. However, unlike the enterprise teams and club teams in Japan and South Korea, the two teams in China are professional teams growing within the system, which implement strict semi military management and have a strong professional atmosphere. The team manager is the main person in charge of the sports administration system, such as the leader of the local sports bureau or the winter sports center. The team members and coaches are



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mainly Chinese. During the competition, although Harbin Ice Hockey Team introduced Czech ice hockey players as foreign players, it was still difficult to compete with strong players. In March 2005, Harbin Ice Hockey Team won 9 games and tied 1 games with 32 negative points, ranking 7th. Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team, however, only gained 4 points due to a large number of fumbles, making it the bottom of the table. After the game, some scholars made a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the goalkeepers' skills of Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team, pointing out that their adaptability needs to be improved. This season, the Chinese team lacked experience and suffered heavy losses.

Nordic Vikings, Harbin Ice Hockey Team and Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team (2005-2006)

In the 2005-2006 season, the number of participating teams in the AHL reached 9. Last season, the Russian team withdrew, adding Kangwon Land Ice Hockey Team and Nordic Vikings. Among them, the newly added Nordic Vikings is composed of Nordic amateur ice hockey players and Chinese players, with Jamalainen Jarmo, a Finn, as the head coach and two Chinese coaches as assistant coaches. During this period, Nordic Vikings, Harbin Ice Hockey Team and Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team had frequent exchanges with each other to help China popularize and improve the level of ice hockey, thus driving the progress of ice hockey in the three Asian countries. Harbin Ice Hockey Team and Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team both received a coach and three athletes supported by Nordic Vikings. Before the game, Nordic Vikings went to Sweden for more than a month of high-intensity training to learn advanced training methods and concepts. In 2006, Nordic Vikings won the fifth place, becoming the best place among all previous Chinese teams. In general, the Chinese team is still operating within the system, without attracting investment or ticket promotion. In the Beijing area, there are only 100 spectators in the stands of the Capital Stadium, which can accommodate 5000 people. Ji Junfeng, then Deputy Secretary General of the China Hockey Association, once said, "There is no money for pre match advertising. All the money is spent on renting on the field. In addition, during the training period, the expenditure burden of 10000 yuan a day is also very heavy 4."

Hosa Ice Hockey Team and Changchun FUAO (2006-2007)

The third season was held in China, Japan and South Korea on September 23, 2006, with eight teams participating. Among them, Hosa Ice Hockey Team and Changchun FUAO participated on behalf of China. The former is based on the Harbin ice hockey Team, which is jointly organized by Beijing Hosa Health and Beauty Club and Harbin Sports Bureau. The club provides the ice hockey team with participation funds and hires foreign players; The latter took Qiqihar ice hockey Team as the team background and was sponsored by Changchun Chinese Business Group Co., Ltd. Qiqihar Sports Bureau. The team was named FUAO and moved to



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Changchun for training and competition. Before the game, the Hosa Ice Hockey Team carried out a month of ground transfer training and adopted closed management, which is similar to the national team's preparation mode. In addition, the head coach of the national team, Jarmo, was invited to teach the Nordic Vikings training concept to the Hosa Ice Hockey Team. Although the strength of the Chinese team has greatly increased with the participation of foreign players, the Anyang Halla Winia of South Korea and the Kangwon Land Ice Hockey Team also hired Japanese and Canadian foreign players at high prices, and the overall strength is still higher than the Chinese team. In addition, this event received low attention in China, and the ratings of the two games broadcast by CCTV were less than 0.22% 5. In the end, Hosa ranked seventh and Changchun FUAO ranked eighth, both of which missed the playoffs.

Competition in the name of national team (2007-2017)

China Sharks (2007-2009)

Since the 2007-2008 season, the Winter Sports Management Center of the General Administration of Sport of the People's Republic of China has officially stepped in (hereinafter referred to as the Winter Sports Center). In cooperation with Silicon Valley Entertainment Co., Ltd. of the United States, a Chinese Sharks team with the national hockey team as its team has been established. Merge Harbin Ice Hockey Team and Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team, focus the team members to strengthen the team strength, and change the situation that the Chinese team ranked at the bottom in the past three seasons. The San Jose Sharks in the North American Professional Ice Hockey League (NHL) provide coaches, foreign players, and name the team, and pay salaries. Chinese and western coaches form a coaching team. Among them, Derek Eisler is the team's coach and McKenna Steva is the assistant coach. The state is responsible for the accommodation, transportation, equipment, training, etc. of the sports team, and the team manager is concurrently held by the leader of the General Administration of Sport of China. The team leader is responsible for ideological and political work, and takes turns to talk with Chinese team members, which still has a strong national system atmosphere. However, there have also been some positive changes. For example, the meals are controlled by the players themselves, which tests the self-management ability of "professional players". In this regular season, the China Sharks scored 7 points and ranked 7th.

In the 2008 - 2009 season, seven Asian teams participated. They are the Japanese Seibu Prince Rabbits, Oji Eagles, Nippon Paper Cranes and the HC Nikko Icebucks, the Korean Highl Ice Hockey Team and Anyang Halla Ice Hockey club, and China Sharks. The manager of the China Sharks is Collins Chris. After nearly two years of running in, the whole team has accumulated a lot of good operation methods, training and management concepts, which has played a positive role in promoting. This season, the Winter Sports Center selected Shanghai as the home court of the Chinese team, aiming to popularize ice hockey in the southern region.



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In the first game of the ice hockey stadium in Songjiang College Town, Shanghai, the organizing committee vigorously organized 4800-5000 spectators to cheer and cheer. However, after the second and third games were unorganized, there were only hundreds of audience in each game. It can be seen that the attention of the event is low, and the team does not have the self hematopoietic function, so it relies too much on the national support. Although this team has been aiming to become the first professional team in China integrating career, entertainment and fashion since its establishment. However, specialization and professionalization have always been in parallel, and the results are not ideal. In just two seasons, China ended its cooperation with the San Jose Sharks.

China Dragon (2009-2014)

Since 2009, the national team has been the team leader of the Chinese team, following the national system model. That is to say, the government allocates funds to guarantee the completion of national tasks in accordance with national plans, without marketization. In the 2010-2011 season, the China Hockey Association established a team dominated by young players. Although full of momentum, but lack of experience and technology. From the results, its ability is not enough to compete with the Japanese and Korean teams, and has not achieved the desired results. In the end, China Dragon drew 1 out of 36 games and lost 35. During the 2011-2012 season, 7 teams participated in the competition, including 4 teams from Japan, 2 teams from South Korea and 1 team from China. China Dragon formed in this season was different from last year. It was participated by the highest level and most experienced athletes in China at that time. All 22 members of the team were from Harbin and Qiqihar, traditional strong cities of ice hockey, and all had fought in the AHL.

Low overall level and low funding are the biggest problems for the Chinese Ice Hockey Association to organize teams to participate. When the Chinese team was facing difficulties, XEBIO, the main sponsor of the Tohoku Freeblades, offered to cooperate with the Chinese Hockey Association to hire foreign players and coaches for China Dragon. For example, Araki Keisuke was assigned as the head coach of China Dragon. In the 2012-2013 season, Japan increased its support, not only continuing to help China Dragon hire foreign players, but also helping to pay the remuneration and wages of foreign players. This year, a total of 10 foreign players workers from Japan and Canada, as well as a head coach and a physical coach were employed to help China Dragon improve its level and provide learning opportunities for Chinese players. During the 2013-2014 season, the AHL was held in Shanghai Feiyang Ice Center. In order to attract more citizens, the weekend competition is open to the public free of charge.

China Dragon sponsored by Snow Crane (2014-2017)

In 2014, with the consent of the national level and the executive committee meeting of the AHL, Qiqihar took the men's ice hockey team as its team, increased foreign players from Europe, the United States and Japan, established the China Intertek



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Earth Dragon Team (later changed to the Snow Crane Dragon Team), and participated in the AHL on behalf of China. Through market-oriented operation, we actively strive for social capital and seek support from enterprises, breaking the previous survival mode of relying on government funds, and taking the lead in opening the road of China's hockey professionalization reform. There are 9 teams participating in the new season, including 4 teams from Japan (Nippon Paper Cranes, Oji Eagles, Nikko Icebucks, Tohoku Freeblades), 3 teams from South Korea (Anyang Halla Ice Hockey club, High1 Ice Hockey Team, Daemyung Sangmu), Russia Sakhalin Team and China Dragon sponsored by Snow Crane. In the 2014-2015 season, the China Dragon won the High1, Anyang Halla, Nippon Paper Cranes and other traditional teams, and achieved the best results in history.

The 2015-2016 season was hosted by the Asian Hockey Federation, and hosted by the Chinese Hockey Association, the Japanese Hockey Association, the Korean Hockey Association, and the Russian Hockey Association. A total of 10 teams participated in this season, with 48 matches. China hosted 24 of them in Qiqihar, Beijing and Shanghai. The participation funds of the Chinese Dragon are sponsored by Heilongjiang Tianxiang Zhicheng Beverage Co., Ltd. In addition, GoME also sponsored 9 competitions hosted by Beijing and Shanghai. With the support of the sponsors, the Chinese team, on the one hand, introduced European and American coaches, foreign players and excellent goalkeepers, bringing new tactics and systems to the players, on the other hand, increased the training intensity of the local players, and effectively improved their physical strength and technical and tactical level.

In the 2016-2017 season, China Dragon participated in 24 regular seasons at home and abroad. The domestic competitions were held in Jilin, Qiqihar, Shanghai and Beijing respectively. The 22 players of the Chinese team include 14 local players, 5 Japanese players and 1 foreign players from Canada, the United States and Finland. Among them, during the competition in Beijing, Huaxing Group undertook the team building budget of China Dragon, and provided comprehensive support such as training and accommodation to ensure that it completed the last six games of the season. In all 48 matches, the four Japanese teams were ranked in the middle, while the Chinese team ranked ninth with only 21 points, a big gap with other teams. After that, the Chinese team officially withdrew from the AHL. As the only professional ice hockey team in China, the history of China Dragon playing in the AHL has also become the beginning of China's ice hockey from specific to professionalism.

The Value of China's Participation in the AHL

As another important event following the North American and European ice hockey leagues, the AHL provides a platform for countries in Asia to exchange events. China's participation in the AHL is of great value in promoting the revival and development of Chinese ice hockey and Asian ice hockey.



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Train the team and improve China's ice hockey competitive strength

The important goal of the AHL is to train the team, compete with the strong team, improve and keep up with the pace of the strong team in training. After 13 seasons of experience, the Chinese team has become mature step by step and its comprehensive strength has improved. Although the ranking is not ideal, the score is getting closer and closer. It has accumulated experience in confrontation and competition, and gradually shows his style. Coach Araki Keisuke said, "It is a good thing for the Chinese team to improve their technical and tactical level to compete with strong Asian teams in the league." Take the 2015-2016 season as an example. Before the competition, China Dragon went on the court after only two months of intensive training. In the first leg, the three away games against the Oji Eagles, the runner up of the previous season, lost by 2:3 in two games and 2:4 in one game. Despite the defeat, the Chinese team lost 22 points in the first three games of the last season when the two teams met, and 4 points in the first three games of this season, showing a clear improvement 8. Since then, the Chinese team has defeated the High1 Ice Hockey Team 4:3; three wins in three battles against Daemyung Sangmu; Defeat Anyang Halla Ice Hockey club, the Championship in the league this season. Compared with the statistics of points in the past two seasons, the number of games in which the China Dragon decided the victory or defeat in 48 games in regular time decreased from 43 games in the previous season to 39 games, with 105 goals in total exceeding 101 goals of the Korean Daemyung Sangmu. The competition was more intense, and the gap between the Chinese team and the teams was also narrowing.

Promote innovation and accelerate the reform process of Chinese hockey professionalism

Professionalization is not only the historical trend of the development of ice hockey, but also the inevitable choice of the development of Chinese ice hockey. Before 2014, although China participated in the national team, it was not a real professional model. All management models, including team members, coaches and teams, still operate under the national system. Until the 2014-2015 season, Qiqihar Sports Bureau actively sought sponsors for the men's hockey team, widely relied on social and market forces, introduced social capital, and cooperated with real estate enterprises, electrical enterprises and other name sponsorship. In addition, the management mode of professional hockey club was formally introduced. By updating the team's training and management means, improving the team security system, enriching the ticket category, contacting the media to broadcast the event, etc., the Chinese team will be helped to transition from specific to professionalism. In the 2016-2017 season, the Chinese hockey team reached a cooperation with Huaxing Group, and the enterprise was responsible for the team's budget and venue support to further promote the reform of the hockey management system. In fact, as early as the mid-1990s, China began to try to reform the professionalism of ice hockey, but the effect was still unsatisfactory. In the process of participating in the AHL, Qiqihar Sports Bureau changed its thinking and used social resources to



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successfully build a professional team's operation mode, open up a professional road suitable for the development of Chinese ice hockey, and accelerate the reform process of Chinese ice hockey professionalism.

Work together to improve the decadent situation of ice hockey in Asia

At the beginning of the event, ice hockey developed rapidly in the world. It was extremely popular in Europe and the United States, but it was shrinking in Asia. Only Harbin, Qiqihar and Jiamusi are left in China. Japan's hockey team was reduced from 6 to 4, and the team was disbanded one after another. The Japanese Hockey League, which had been held for many years, was finally cancelled due to the shortage of participating teams. The Korean hockey team is also shrinking. The first team to participate in the AHL is the only two professional teams in South Korea. However, after a long period of competition, the teams of Japan and South Korea participated in professional league matches through market-oriented operation, which strongly promoted the development of domestic hockey and greatly enhanced their comprehensive strength. Especially Korea. In 2017, the Korean national team achieved excellent results in the World Hockey Division A Group A competition, realizing the dream of impacting the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. In addition, participation in the AHL has made the Korean men's hockey team complete the professional reform, the income level of the players has been greatly improved, and the professional quality and professional sense of honor have also been significantly improved.

For China, in the late 1990s, due to the lack of financial support and the inclination of relevant resettlement policies, the development of the national hockey project encountered unprecedented difficulties. There were only ten or twenty matches a year, and there was an extreme lack of opportunities to compete with high-level international players. After the experience of the AHL, the strength of China Dragon with Qiqihar as its team has been significantly enhanced. In the 2015-2016 season, with the help of sponsors, the Chinese team not only reintroduced foreign players and foreign coaches, but also increased training, and the level of ice hockey improved rapidly. Since then, Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team has successively won the championship of the 14th Heilongjiang Provincial Games, the 13th National Winter Games and the 2017 and 2018 National Men's Ice Hockey League, dominating China's ice hockey. By participating in the AHL, Qiqihar has improved the team's technical and tactical level in a short period of time, supported China's ice hockey team to survive the downturn, and heated up the Chinese ice hockey market. In short, the shrinking trend of ice hockey in Asia has improved.

Enhance exchanges and promote peace, friendship and progress among Asian nations

Sports can transcend racial, religious and linguistic boundaries. Ice hockey events can only be developed and improved through mutual exchanges. Since its inception, the AHL has implemented the home away system, which often attracts wide attention in the host city. For example, in the 2014-2015 season, Qiqihar stood out



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from 17 host cities in China, Japan, South Korea and Russia and won the title of "The Best Ice Hockey Town in Asia". Since then, Qiqihar has regularly held Hecheng International Hockey Invitational Tournament, and many countries have gathered in China to learn from each other. It can be said that the AHL has not only built a stage for ice hockey players from Asian countries to fight and a bridge to communicate friendship, but also promoted exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations, deepened friendship, enhanced trust, and resolved prejudice and differences. Help the team to constantly improve tolerance and understanding in running in, spread their own culture in the "please come in, go out", increase the exchange of ice hockey enthusiasts, and promote the improvement and development of the ice hockey project. The Chinese team cooperated with Japan for three years. Gao Hongqun, the head of China Dragon, said in an interview, "The reason why we invited the Japanese coach is that we learned some advanced concepts through our contact with the Japanese team, which has driven the progress and improvement of our players." In addition, the professionalism of Japanese players are also worth learning. "By training and competing with them, we will definitely promote each other and benefit a lot 10."

Experience of Chinese Team in AHL

As the AHL gradually matures, this event has become the top ice hockey event in the region, and has been recognized and supported by the International Ice Hockey Federation. Japan, South Korea, Russia and other countries have sent teams to participate. In the confrontation and exchange with other countries' teams, the Chinese hockey team has accumulated many beneficial experiences.

Team management

The AHL is a professional competition. The Japanese team and the Korean team both come from enterprises or clubs. For example, four teams in Japan are from three companies and one city club team respectively, and two teams in South Korea are from Anyang Company and High1 Company respectively. While the Chinese team is a national team in essence, relying on administrative power, and its ability to absorb funds is very limited. Although the team included the best Chinese men's hockey players at that time, it was still difficult to compete with the Japanese and Korean club teams. During the competition, the Chinese team insisted on learning from other countries and approaching professional management. In 2007, the Chinese team hired a professional protector, and required the players to wear uniform in their usual training and competitions. In 2014, after Japan's coaches and management teams intervened in China, China actively learned from Japan's advanced concepts and experience, managed in full accordance with the professional team model, and implemented the division of labor responsibility system under the leadership of the general manager. Since then, Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team has continued this process, benchmarking with the international team, equipped with professional physical fitness specialists, masseurs, protectors, nutritionists, etc., to build a professional security team. In addition, the



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corresponding reward and punishment mechanism and management system have been formulated, and the wage standards have been formulated at different levels to ensure fairness, impartiality and openness, and successfully mobilize the enthusiasm of all staff. The professionalized management mode has played a positive role in rectifying the atmosphere of Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team and condensing the will of the team members. During the 13th National Winter Games held in China, Qiqihar Ice Hockey Team insisted on operating according to the international team system and finally won the first place over Harbin Ice Hockey Team.

Team training

Scientific training is also an important experience for the Chinese team in the AHL. During the competition in the name of China Sharks, the foreign coaches' association recorded the training and competition of each member in detail and made data analysis. Organize the Chinese team members to watch the edited match video, analyze and explain it, and assist the teaching with modern means. It emphasizes science, attaches importance to land training, and does not pursue large amount of exercise. Usually, the training method of one day training is adopted. First, land training, then ice training, and then land training. Coach Eisler is very meticulous and has brought advanced training methods abroad. The China Sharks is more active and efficient than before. Moreover, he will randomly combine the match of the forward and the guard to form a team of five, so that the players can find their own match and tacit understanding in training. In the past, in the training of the Chinese team, these five people are a fixed combination, and generally there will be no major changes. In 2014, the Japanese XEBIO Company assisted China by sending foreign coaches and athletes to China. Japanese head coach Araki Keisuke is very strict with the team members, and has formulated a detailed team training plan to highlight special strength training in land training. The Chinese players recognized his training methods and showed high enthusiasm for training. In the training of the AHL, the Chinese team has more and more experience in the competition, and their psychological quality and technical and tactical level have been greatly improved.

Introduction of foreign players and coaches

Hiring foreign players to help our team play is a common practice in all leagues in the world. An important experience in improving the level of the Chinese team is to hire high-level foreign players and foreign coaches, fully integrate with international standards, and make progress and improvement in the exchange and running in. However, the introduction of foreign players is a double-edged sword. It can make the game more enjoyable, but squeeze the playing time of local players and pay them high fees. Most of the players of the teams participating in the AHL are from their own countries, but the league stipulates that each team can hire up to 4 foreign players from Europe and North America to join the team except Asian



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players 11. In addition, players from China, Japan and South Korea employed by each team can transfer freely without occupying the quota of foreign players 12. Before 2008, the Chinese team had tried to hire high-level foreign players from the Czech Republic, Finland and Sweden to join the team, and hired coaches from the Czech Republic and Finland. In 2011, with the support of Japanese enterprises, the Chinese team hired Canadian and Japanese coaches to guide the team members in training and competition. In the 2016-2017 season, China Dragon introduced foreign players from Canada, the United States and Finland. It can be said that these foreign players and foreign coaches have effectively helped the Chinese team speed up the updating of training mode and concept. Under the guidance of coaches who are familiar with advanced training concepts and driven by high-level foreign players, the Chinese team has kept growing its knowledge and ability.

Marketing operation of the league

The operation of professional sports involves market development, ticket income, television broadcasting, enterprise sponsorship and other aspects. During participating in the AHL, the Chinese team expanded from offline ticket sales to online, actively contacted CCTV5+ and other television stations to broadcast the event, and adopted a more flexible and open marketing model. Since 2014, the Chinese team and the league have been sponsored by real estate enterprises, beverage enterprises, electrical enterprises, etc. In addition, XEBIO Company of Japan promises to jointly develop and exercise the sponsorship of China Dragon and the market rights of its players with Qiqihar Sports Bureau. In the 2015-2016 season, as the sponsor of 9 competitions in Beijing and Shanghai, GoME not only provided corresponding expense support for the competitions, but also strengthened interaction with consumers and teenagers online and offline. By placing posters and distributing tickets at the competition site, the masses can further understand and participate in ice hockey, and improve the affinity of GoME brand. In the 2016-2017 season, Beijing Meilong Sports Culture Co., Ltd. was responsible for the commercial promotion of China's participation in the AHL. In the investment promotion plan, there are clear sponsorship structures, forms, fees and interests. For example, one named sponsor, three main partners, six designated sponsors and six designated suppliers are planned to be included in this season. In addition, we will enjoy different rights and benefits and courtesies for different sponsorship levels, including reputation rights and interests, venue rights and interests, publicity and promotion, and constantly learn from the experience of marketing operation of the league.

Conclusion

Before the 1990s, China led Asia in ice hockey, far ahead of South Korea. After the new century, the level of South Korea and Japan has steadily improved, but the development of China's ice hockey has stagnated or even retreated, and the strength gap with South Korea, Japan and Kazakhstan has widened significantly. There is



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no doubt that the AHL is the channel for dialogue between China and the high platform ice hockey competition, and the key touchstone and whetstone for assessing the competitive level of Chinese ice hockey in Asia. Now, NHL and KHL have completed new expansion layout in Europe. From Northern Europe to Western Europe, the pace of the two major leagues is getting faster and faster. NHL and KHL have successively landed in China, and the Fuxing Cup and Silk Road Cup ice hockey leagues have also been launched, squeezing the living space of AHL. At present, China has successfully hosted the Winter Olympic Games. The men's hockey team has made history for the first time and returned to the World Championships in Group B, Division A, after 15 years. At this time point, reviewing the course of China's participation in the AHL, analyzing the important value of the AHL to China and even Asia, and summarizing the experience of the competition will have a profound and significant impact on reviving Chinese ice hockey and continuing to promote the professional reform of Chinese ice hockey.

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