

## Rule of Law Study on Safety and Risk Management of Sports Events from the Perspective of Sports Law

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**Abstracts:** With the rapid development of the sports industry, the scale of sports events is expanding and the number of participants is increasing year by year, the safety and risk management of sports events has become a key issue of concern to all sectors of society. Sporting events involve not only the athletes' competitive performance, but also the management and legal responsibilities in a number of areas such as event organisation, spectator safety and media communication. From the perspective of sports law, this paper discusses the safety management and risk control mechanism in sports event activities, analyses the current legal problems, and puts forward legal proposals to improve the safety management system of sports events. The article firstly reviews the basic framework and theoretical foundation of sports law, systematically combs through the types of risks in sports events and their management methods, and finally puts forward the legal safeguards for the safety and risk management of sports events through the comparison and study of relevant laws, aiming to provide useful theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting the construction of the rule of law in sports in China.

**Keywords:** Sports Law; Sporting Events; Security Management; Risk Management; Rule of Law

### 1. Introduction

With the boom of modern sports, sporting events have become important cultural and economic activities around the world. In the context of globalisation and informatisation, sports events are not only a platform for the display of competitive sports, they also carry multiple functions such as cultural exchanges, national image display and social entertainment. At the same time, the safety of

sports events has become increasingly prominent and has become the focus of extensive attention from all sectors of society. The safety of large-scale sports events not only involves the organisation and management of the event itself, but also relates to the physical health of the athletes, the safety of the spectators and the legal responsibility of the event organiser. How to effectively respond to unexpected security incidents and ensure the safety of events has become an important issue for the global sports community to address.

At present, the safety and risk management of sports events around the world has gradually established corresponding norms and standards, and many international sports organisations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) have formed some relatively mature systems in terms of event safety management [1]. Meanwhile, due to the differences in the legal culture and social background of each country, there is a certain degree of variability in the safety management of sports events. For many developing countries or regions, it is still a great challenge to establish effective early warning and emergency response mechanisms outside the venue [2]. An effective safety and risk management system for sports events should be based on the principle of the rule of law, forming a legal, fair and transparent mechanism for the distribution of rights and responsibilities among event organisers, athletes, spectators, media and other parties [3]. Through the intervention of the law, it can prevent and reduce the occurrence of various potential risks from the source, and provide clear legal basis and operational guidelines in the event of emergencies, in order to maximise the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of all parties to the event.

From the perspective of sports law, this paper will discuss the safety and risk management in sports events. By analysing the main safety

hazards and types of risks existing in sports events, and combining relevant domestic and international laws and regulations and judicial practice, it will put forward rule of law proposals to improve the safety and risk management of sports events, and provide policy recommendations for relevant departments and organisations.

## **2. Basic Framework and Theoretical Foundations of Sports Law**

### **2.1 Definition and Development of Sports Law**

Sports law refers to the sum of a series of legal norms in order to guarantee the smooth development of sports activities, regulate all kinds of behaviour in sports activities, protect the legitimate rights and interests of sports participants, and maintain social public safety and order [4]. As a cross-discipline, sports law covers a variety of legal fields such as civil law, administrative law, criminal law and so on, which has a strong speciality and relevance.

The development of sports law has gone through a process from initial regulation to gradual improvement. In the early days, the management of sports events relied mostly on industry self-regulation and agreements, and lacked clear legal regulation. With the commercialisation and internationalisation of sports activities and the increasing scale and complexity of sports events, single administrative means and industry regulation can no longer meet the actual needs, and the gradual introduction and improvement of sports law has become an inevitable trend.

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundations of Sports Law**

The core theories of sports law include competitiveness, fairness, public safety and rule of law guarantee. In sports event activities, one of the core tasks of sports law is to guarantee fair competition and safe operation in event activities, to prevent various potential risks and to provide legal remedies [5]. Therefore, sports law as a part of public law, it also has important significance in guaranteeing public safety and maintaining social order.

## **3. Types of Risk and Management Needs in Sporting Events**

### **3.1 Main Types of Risk in Sporting Events**

#### **3.1.1 Athlete safety risks**

In sports events, the safety risks faced by athletes are usually the most immediate and severe. High-intensity athletic competitions not only test the technical and psychological qualities of athletes, but also place high demands on their physical endurance. Whether in team sports or individual events, the intense competitive environment and rapidly changing game situations can lead to different types of physical injuries, and even, in some extreme cases, life-threatening injuries.

Multiple factors, such as the different types of sports programmes, the intensity of competition, the individual physical condition of athletes and their psychological state, all have an impact on the safety of athletes. For example, certain high-risk extreme sports, though challenging and ornamental, also carry a high risk of accidents due to their unique environmental conditions and speed. As for traditional competitive sports, such as athletics and swimming, although they seem to have fewer injuries, long-term high-intensity training and competition may likewise lead to chronic injuries such as arthritis and soft tissue injuries in athletes.

The physical condition of athletes is also an important factor affecting safety risks. Each athlete's physical condition, skill level, and injury history can directly affect his or her safety in competition [6]. For example, an athlete who has lacked adequate training for a long period of time, or who competes due to an old injury that has not healed, may face a higher risk of injury. Another athlete who is scientifically trained and in good physical condition may have a lower probability of injury in the same event.

#### **3.1.2 Audience security risks**

As the scale of sports events continues to expand, the surge in the number of spectators also brings increasingly serious security challenges. In modern large-scale sports events, especially those international or top-level events, the number of spectators in the venue often reaches tens of thousands or even more, which greatly increases the difficulty of venue management and security. The concentration of spectators not only increases the likelihood of security incidents, but also makes the consequences of accidents more serious.

In crowded venues, overcrowding can lead to a range of potential safety hazards. For example,

when spectators rush towards exits, aisles or public areas at the beginning or end of a match, without strict guidance and control, it is easy for crowds to gather excessively. When the density of crowds in a localised area is too high, minor pushing and squeezing may quickly spread into a stampede.

Large sports venues often need to accommodate large numbers of spectators when hosting high-profile events, and at the same time need to meet complex security requirements. However, due to improper management, insufficient security measures or inadequate contingency plans, potential safety hazards are not investigated and eliminated in a timely and effective manner, greatly increasing the potential safety risks. For example, if the evacuation routes in the venues are not properly designed, the number of exits is insufficient, or the broadcasting system fails to function in time during emergencies, it will greatly reduce the chances of spectators escaping from unexpected accidents.

As mentioned above, the safety equipment and emergency response mechanism inside the venues are also of paramount importance. For example, whether emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, escape routes and first-aid facilities are adequate and effectively available will directly affect the survival of spectators in unexpected accidents. In some cases, the venue's emergency plan may lack practicality, and security personnel may not be adequately trained or experienced in emergency response, all of which may result in the inability to effectively evacuate spectators or respond to emergencies.

### 3.1.3 Site and facility risks

Venues and facilities for sports events are often the basis for the smooth running of the event. Whether it is an indoor sports event or a large outdoor competition, the quality of the design, construction and maintenance of the venue facilities directly affects the smooth running of the event and the safety of the spectators and athletes. Therefore, in the actual process of event organisation, the quality and maintenance of venues and facilities, as well as their insufficient emergency response capability, may become potential factors leading to accidents, thus affecting the safety and credibility of the event.

An ill-designed race track is a major safety hazard. For racing, marathon, skiing and other

events, the design of the track directly determines the difficulty of the race and the safety of the athletes. If the track is not reasonably designed, there may be problems such as too sharp a turn, too steep a slope and improperly arranged obstacles, all of which greatly increase the risk of accidents. For example, in the case of a motor racing event on a motorway, if the design of the track does not have sufficient safety measures, such as buffer zones and isolation belts, the collision of the racing cars will directly cause fatal injuries to the racers.

The completeness of the venue's safety facilities is the key to ensuring the safety of the event. At the initial stage of construction, many sports venues focus mainly on the function of the event and the spectators' experience, while neglecting the planning of safety facilities. For example, problems such as ill-designed emergency access routes, substandard fire-fighting facilities, and unclear evacuation instruction signs can play a fatal role in unexpected accidents.

The maintenance and renewal of venue facilities is a long-term endeavour to ensure the safety of events. Some old sports venues may have many potential safety hazards due to long-term use, ageing facilities or inadequate maintenance. The problems of outdated facilities and lagging maintenance are particularly prominent in some venues with a long history or insufficient funds.

## 3.2 Legal Needs for Safety and Risk Management at Sporting Events

As can be seen from the types of risks mentioned above, in the safety and risk management of sports events, in addition to the joint efforts of sports organisations, event organisers and relevant administrative departments, the introduction of legal means is crucial to ensuring event safety and responding to unexpected risks. Sports events not only involve a large number of people, property and time resources, but also may pose a threat to the life and property safety of athletes, staff, spectators and related parties when unexpected risks occur [7]. It is necessary to build a systematic legal framework, which can not only regulate the behaviour of all parties, but also provide solid legal support for risk management in practice.

The safety and risk management of sports

events is a complex systematic project involving coordination and cooperation among multiple parties. Regulating and safeguarding the safety of events through legal means not only helps to clarify the responsibilities of all parties, but also provides strong legal support for risk assessment, prevention, emergency response and legal remedies. Only under a perfect legal system can we ensure that sports events can be carried out smoothly and safeguard the safety of participants in the face of various environmental risks.

#### **4. Safety Management and Risk Control of Sports Events and Activities**

##### **4.1 Legal Framework for the Safe Management of Sporting Events**

###### **4.1.1 Clarification of legal responsibilities**

Sports event activities are a complex systematic project involving multiple subjects of interest, including athletes, event organisers, venue management, sponsors and spectators. In order to ensure the smooth running of the event and minimise potential safety hazards, it is necessary to clarify the legal responsibilities and obligations of all parties in the preparation and implementation of the event. Only through the clear provisions of the legal framework can we ensure that the safety management of the event is carried out in an orderly and efficient manner.

The safety management of sports events is a complex process involving the responsibilities of many parties, and only by clarifying the responsibilities and obligations of all parties through legal means can we effectively prevent and respond to the safety risks in the event. Event organisers need to fulfil their safety responsibilities throughout the event to ensure that venue facilities, athlete protection, emergency plans and other aspects are adequately safeguarded, and at the same time strengthen communication and co-operation with venue management, sponsors and spectators to ensure that the event can be carried out smoothly in a safe environment.

###### **4.1.2 Rule of law safeguards for security prevention and response mechanisms**

The safety management of sports events is not just a 'post-emptive' response to in-competition emergencies, but also focuses on ex ante prevention and risk control. Preventive safety management is the core way to reduce

and avoid safety risks, and its purpose is to eliminate potential risk factors as much as possible through scientific planning, strict implementation and early intervention, so as to avoid accidents from the source [7]. Specifically, event organisers should formulate a detailed safety risk assessment plan and a hidden danger investigation programme in the preparatory stage of the event, comprehensively identify possible safety risks and hidden dangers, and take effective measures to resolve them.

The safety management of sports events is not just about responding to emergencies after the fact, but is an all-round, systematic endeavour that covers a wide range of aspects, such as event preparation, risk assessment, hidden danger investigation and contingency planning. The law should provide for the event organiser's risk control, hidden danger investigation and emergency management in the preparatory stage of the event to ensure that the event's safety measures are fully implemented. Only through scientific safety management and strict legal constraints can event organisers effectively prevent and respond to all kinds of potential risks and create a safe and stable event environment for all participants and spectators.

###### **4.1.3 Insurance and compensation mechanisms**

In order to effectively manage risks in sports events, event organisers can adopt various means to reduce potential financial losses, among which commercial insurance plays a key role as an important risk transfer tool. In fact, event organisers can effectively share some of the risks by purchasing different types of insurance to protect the economic consequences of various accidents and emergencies that may occur in the course of the event.

Firstly, for the safety of athletes, event organisers can take out personal accident insurance for athletes. This type of insurance can compensate athletes for medical expenses, hospitalisation costs and loss of income if they are unable to continue competing due to injury or accident during the competition. Secondly, event organisers should also take out public liability insurance for spectators. This type of insurance can provide reasonable compensation to spectators in the event that they suffer injuries as a result of accidents in the event. For example, in large-scale events,

the facilities, equipment and environment of the venue may pose a threat to the safety of spectators. Finally, event organisers should also incorporate legal safeguards to ensure that the rights and interests of victims are fully protected. To this end, the law should clarify the responsibilities and obligations of the event organisers and stipulate that in the event of an accident, the organisers must fulfil their liability to pay compensation in accordance with the law.

## **4.2 Rule of Law Path for Risk Management of Sports Events**

### **4.2.1 Improving the legal system for sports safety**

The study found that although China has introduced some regulations on the safety of sports events, such as the Sports Law and the Sports Industry Development Plan, there is still the problem of an insufficiently developed legal system in the actual implementation process. Although these regulations provide a certain framework for the management and development of sports events, the degree of refinement and perfection in the safety and security of events is still insufficient. Especially in the process of organising large-scale events, the complexity and diversity of safety issues require more specialised and systematic laws and regulations to regulate them.

The existing regulatory system has not yet been able to adequately cover the various types of safety risks in sports events. As the scale of sports events continues to expand and the internationalisation process advances, safety issues in terms of event organisation, venue facilities, spectator management and athlete health are becoming increasingly prominent. For example, the possible emergencies such as spectator violence, extreme weather and athlete injuries during the event need to be effectively prevented and responded to through more targeted laws and regulations. At present, some legal provisions are relatively broad and lack specific operational details, which makes the event safety management department in the face of emergencies may not be able to deal with the situation.

The responsibility for the safety and security of sporting events has not yet been clearly delineated. In the current legal provisions, the main responsibility for the safety of the event

is mostly borne by the organiser, but the division of responsibilities between the parties during the event is not yet clear. For example, the specific responsibilities and obligations of each participant, such as stadium operators, security companies, and medical organisations, in the safety and security of the event are not clearly defined. This can easily lead to the relevant responsible parties shirking their responsibilities and making it difficult to pursue specific legal responsibilities in the event of a safety incident. Therefore, the law should further clarify the responsibilities of all parties in the event security, to ensure that the responsibilities are put in place, to form a joint effort to ensure the smooth running of the event.

Risk management requirements and emergency response mechanisms for events also need to be improved. In modern sports events, various potential risk factors are intricate and complex, involving personnel, venues, climate, technology and other aspects, and these risks are often difficult to predict and control. Therefore, it is particularly important to establish a set of scientific and standardised event risk assessment and management system. At present, although some large-scale events have already adopted contingency plans and risk assessment mechanisms, for small and medium-sized events, especially local events, there may be loopholes in the relevant risk management mechanisms and contingency plans.

### **4.2.2 Strengthening legal regulation of sporting events**

Against the background of the increasing number and scale of sports events, in addition to the self-restraint and responsibility of event organisers in their own management, the regulatory role of government departments in safeguarding the safety of sports events is particularly important. As the main body of social management and public security, the government's function is not only limited to promoting the development of sports, but should also play a key role in ensuring the safety of events and safeguarding public interests. To this end, government departments should increase their supervision of the safety of sports events through a variety of means to ensure that event organisers can perform their due safety responsibilities, avoid safety accidents and protect the lives and property of

participants and spectators.

The Government should set out clearer legal requirements for the safety management of sports events through legislative and policy means. While existing laws and regulations provide a basic framework for the safety management of events, they still lack specific operational norms for different types of events. In order to ensure event safety, the government can introduce special regulations or implementation rules covering all aspects of the event, such as the safety of venue facilities, spectator management, emergency plans, and athlete health management. By improving the legal provisions, the government can provide event organisers with clear safety management standards and avoid oversights in the implementation process due to ambiguous legal provisions.

Government departments should step up the review and approval of event organisers to ensure that they have adequate safety and security capabilities. Event organisers, as the directly responsible body of the event, must fulfil the basic responsibility of guaranteeing safety, but in practice, some organisers may neglect or cut down on safety inputs due to lack of experience, insufficient resources or the drive of economic interests. Therefore, in the process of approving events, the government should not only review the relevant qualifications and operational capabilities of the event, but also focus on the completeness and operability of the event's safety measures. Through strict examination of event organisers, the government can effectively reduce the occurrence of potential safety hazards and lay the foundation for the smooth running of the event.

The Government should step up real-time monitoring of the event process, so as to identify and rectify possible safety hazards in a timely manner. Although event organisers will formulate relevant safety plans and risk assessments during the preparatory stage of the event, new safety hazards may arise during the actual conduct of the event due to unforeseen circumstances at the venue, changes in the weather, and inappropriate guidance of personnel. At this point, government departments should carry out on-site supervision of the event through the dispatch of supervisory personnel, co-operative law enforcement and other means to ensure that

safety measures are implemented during the event, and that potential safety risks are investigated and eliminated in a timely manner. For example, during large-scale events, the government can require the relevant safety supervision departments to send professionals to conduct on-site inspections to check the flow of spectators, venue facilities, emergency equipment, etc., so as to ensure that in the event of emergencies, they can be dealt with quickly and effectively.

While the Government strengthens the regulation of event safety, it should also strengthen public safety education and awareness guidance. Whether it is the event organisers or the spectators, the goal of safety and security can only be truly achieved if there is a general awareness of safety in society as a whole. The government can raise the level of awareness of all parties on the safety of sports events by organising safety training, distributing safety manuals and carrying out safety publicity activities. At the same time, the government should encourage the public to participate in event safety supervision and set up a reporting mechanism to encourage the public to report potential safety hazards and misconduct in the event, so as to form a tripartite event safety guarantee system in which the public, the media, and the government participate in a concerted manner.

#### 4.2.3 Strengthening international co-operation and learning from experience

With the increase in the number of international sports events held in China, the degree of internationalisation of sports events has been increasing, and the integration and interaction between domestic and international sports events has gradually deepened. In this process, sports events are not only a stage for displaying national sports strength, but also a complex system involving security, risk management, social governance and other factors. Many international countries have rich experience in the safety and risk management of sports events, especially in the organisation of the event, personnel evacuation, emergency response, and post-event evaluation, etc., and have accumulated a large number of mature practical experience [8]. In China can further improve the safety management system of sports events in China by strengthening cooperation with international sports organisations, industry associations and other

countries, and drawing on their advanced legal mechanisms and management models, so as to improve the safety and security level of the event, and to ensure the life and property safety of domestic and foreign spectators, athletes and staff.

By strengthening cooperation with international organisations, China can draw on the mature experience of some countries and regions in the safety management of sports events. For example, developed countries in Europe and the United States have accumulated rich experience in the organisation and security management of large-scale events. Taking the European football events and the Olympic Games as an example, some European countries have adopted tight security measures during the events, such as efficient traffic diversion, all-round on-site security and multi-departmental co-operation, etc., to ensure the smooth running of the events. China can, through participating in the conferences and seminars of international sports organisations and other platforms, establish cooperative relationships with the sports management departments, security agencies and relevant experts of these countries and regions, learn from their successful cases in event security management, and make adjustments and optimisations in accordance with China's specific conditions.

Drawing on the legal mechanisms for the safety management of international sports events is crucial to improving the legal system for sports events in China. Taking the International Olympic Committee Safety Manual and the International Federation of Association Football Safety Regulations as examples, these documents provide event organisers with a detailed legal basis and operational standards, covering all aspects of the event from pre-event preparations to post-event summaries, ensuring that potential safety hazards in the course of the event can be detected in a timely manner and effectively prevented. In China, although there are already some relevant laws and regulations, such as the Sports Law and the Regulations on the Administration of Public Safety, when faced with large-scale international events, the relevant legal provisions and implementation details are still insufficient. Therefore, China can learn from international experience and improve the legal framework of event safety

through legislation, especially for the specific operating procedures and emergency response mechanism of large-scale events, to formulate more detailed and specific legal provisions, so as to provide a solid guarantee for the safety management of the event from the legal point of view.

The mode of safety management in international events often emphasises multi-sectoral and multi-party co-ordination and co-operation, which is also an important aspect that our country can learn from. In many international events, the event organisers and a number of departments such as the government, public security, medical care and transport will work together to form a closely linked safety management network. For example, FIFA and the IOC will work closely with local public security authorities, fire departments and emergency medical institutions during the hosting of events to formulate comprehensive contingency plans and to coordinate and cooperate with each other during the actual events. This multi-party co-ordinated security management mode can not only achieve the optimal allocation of resources, but also greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response. Our country can also strengthen this kind of multi-party coordination and cooperation in the safety management of international sports events, especially during the event, the relevant government departments can establish a joint working group, set up an interdepartmental coordination committee, etc., to ensure that the safety management measures during the event are effectively implemented.

The safety management of international events focuses on information sharing and transparency, which is also worthy of our reference. In many international events, safety-related information is not only released in real time to event organisers, staff and athletes, but also made public through multiple channels such as news media and social platforms, to ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the safety requirements, contingency plans and possible risk points during the event. For example, large-scale events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup often issue safety tips to the public through official websites and social media platforms, and respond to emergencies through real-time information updates. This mechanism of

information disclosure and transparency helps to enhance public safety awareness, and also enables the media and social organisations to monitor event safety, forming a good situation of social co-governance. China can learn from this practice, and through the establishment of an information disclosure platform, timely and accurate information related to the safety management of the event will be conveyed to all stakeholders, enhancing the transparency and public trust of the event.

## 5. Conclusion

The issue of security and risk management in sports events is an important topic in the current construction of the rule of law in sports. With the rapid development of the sports industry and the increasing degree of internationalisation, the scale of sports events is growing, and the diversity and complexity of event participants are also increasing, which makes the issues of safety, security and risk management in sports events more and more prominent. Event safety is of paramount importance to athletes, spectators, as well as event organisers and staff. How to strengthen the safety of sports events through legal means, reduce the occurrence of accidents and ensure the healthy development of the sports industry has become a real problem that needs to be solved urgently.

The safety and risk management of sports events is an important part of the construction of the rule of law in sports. By improving the legal framework, strengthening cross-sectoral coordination, enhancing emergency response capacity, promoting social supervision and other measures, it is possible to provide strong legal support for the safety and security of sports events in China and to promote the healthy, safe and sustainable development of sports events.

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