

**THE NEW UZBEKISTAN SYSTEM OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS:
REFORMS, PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES, RECENT RESULTS AND FUTURE
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Annotation: This article is devoted to the pedagogical aspects of developing physical education and sports within the education system of Uzbekistan and analyzes recent reforms and the prospects outlined in the “Uzbekistan–2030” Strategy. The study examines mechanisms for engaging young people in mass sports through the President’s Five Important Initiatives, the “Five Initiatives Olympiad,” the Presidential Olympiad, and the Student League. Achievements recorded in 2025, including the expansion of sports participation to 15 million people, international sporting results, and the implementation of large-scale sports infrastructure projects, confirm the pedagogical effectiveness of ongoing reforms. The role of physical education and sports in overcoming hypodynamia and in fostering willpower, moral values, and spiritual development among young people is emphasized. The objectives set for 2026 are aimed at advancing inclusive pedagogical approaches in physical education. The article concludes with proposals at the community (mahalla) level focused on educating a healthy and well-rounded generation.

Keywords: physical education, mass sports, pedagogical reforms, “Uzbekistan–2030”, youth education.

Аннотация: Данная статья посвящена педагогическим аспектам развития физического воспитания и спорта в системе образования Узбекистана и анализирует последние реформы и перспективы, изложенные в Стратегии “Узбекистан–2030”. В исследовании рассматриваются механизмы вовлечения молодежи в массовый спорт с помощью Пяти важных инициатив Президента - “Олимпиады пяти инициатив”, Президентской олимпиады и Студенческой лиги. Достижения, зафиксированные в 2025 году, включая расширение охвата спортом до 15 миллионов человек, международные спортивные результаты и реализацию масштабных проектов в области спортивной инфраструктуры, подтверждают педагогическую эффективность проводимых реформ. Подчеркивается роль физического воспитания и спорта в преодолении гиподинамии и в воспитании силы воли, нравственных ценностей и духовного развития молодежи. Задачи, поставленные на 2026 год, направлены на продвижение инклюзивных педагогических подходов в физическом воспитании. Статья завершается предложениями на уровне общины (махалли), направленными на воспитание здорового и всесторонне развитого поколения.

Ключевые слова: физическое воспитание, массовый спорт, педагогические реформы, “Узбекистан–2030”, воспитание молодежи.

Introduction. With the aim of providing comprehensive support for young people across all spheres of society and strengthening their role as a key social force, the Youth Union of Uzbekistan was established on June 30, 2017, and this date was officially proclaimed as “Youth Day” in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Five Important Initiatives proposed by President

Shavkat Mirziyoyev, which are directed toward enhancing the spiritual development of young people and ensuring the meaningful organization of their leisure time, clearly reflect the growing priority given to youth—particularly those not formally engaged in education or employment—at the level of state policy. Within the framework of these initiatives, the widespread promotion of physical education and sports among young people has been identified as a strategic priority.

Physical education and sports play a crucial role not only in strengthening physical health but also in promoting psychological well-being, expanding functional capacities, fostering moral consciousness, reinforcing ethical values and beliefs, and cultivating a sense of pride and social responsibility. Moreover, regular engagement in physical activity contributes to the development of self-confidence, willpower, and resilience, while encouraging individuals to resist injustice and actively participate in socially constructive behavior.

Taking into account the above-mentioned pedagogical and ethical characteristics of physical education and sports, it is considered appropriate to propose the following recommendations:

- ✦ to ensure the inclusion of a higher-educated specialist in the field of physical education and sports within the staff structure of community citizens' assemblies (mahalla committees), and to establish, under the leadership of this specialist, a working group consisting of proactive youth and veteran athletes;

- ✦ to assign this group the responsibility for systematically organizing sports competitions among young people at the community level, identifying talented youth, and arranging as well as promoting competitions in national sports during traditional wedding ceremonies;

- ✦ to conduct sports competitions among young people on a continuous basis at the community, sector, district, and regional levels;

- ✦ to establish a visual display entitled "Pride of Our Community" in front of community citizens' assembly buildings, showcasing exemplary photographs of talented youth from the respective communities.

The effective implementation of the aforementioned tasks largely depends on the responsible and systematic oversight of relevant institutions, administrative bodies, and educational organizations, with particular emphasis on sector-level leadership. Ensuring coordinated supervision and accountability may lead to positive and sustainable outcomes. In the context of globalization, addressing youth-related challenges as a nationwide priority represents one of the most pressing demands of contemporary social development.

Modern production processes and living conditions have led to a significant reduction in human physical activity. According to data reported by Academician A. I. Berg (2000), while approximately 94 percent of energy expenditure in the previous century was associated with muscular activity, this figure has declined to only about 1 percent in the present day. Insufficient physical activity (hypodynamia) has a detrimental impact on human health. Regular participation in physical education and sports, morning exercises, active breaks during work or study, walking, and recreational tourism contribute to mitigating the negative consequences of hypodynamia. These findings are supported by research conducted by specialists at Stanford University in the United States, where numerous empirical studies substantiate the health benefits of regular physical exercise.

Physical activity constitutes an integral component of a healthy lifestyle, as insufficient physical activity adversely affects not only physical health but also psychological well-being and cognitive performance. Exercise programs proposed by American scholars emphasize not

the targeted strengthening of specific muscle groups or the isolated development of particular physical qualities—such as agility, endurance, or speed—but rather the central role of aerobic exercise in maintaining overall health and promoting a sustainable healthy lifestyle.

Pedagogical achievements and practical outcomes in 2024–2025. In 2025, the integrated system established within Uzbekistan’s sports sector began to yield its initial practical results. The number of individuals engaged in mass sports activities reached 15 million, while the number of people regularly participating in sports increased by nearly 1.5 times over recent years. These indicators are directly associated with improved effectiveness of physical education classes within the education system, as well as the expansion of mass sports events in schools and local communities (mahallas).

Uzbekistan’s youth have achieved notable success in the international arena, including a 13th-place finish at the World Universiade, second place at the Youth Games in Bahrain and the Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia, and first place at the Youth Para Asian Games held in the United Arab Emirates. In football, the national team secured qualification for the FIFA World Cup for the first time in its history. Furthermore, in 2026, chess player Javohir Sindarov is scheduled to participate in the Candidates Tournament competing for the world championship title.

Last year, the Olympic Village and the National Football Center were officially commissioned, marking a significant milestone in the development of the national sports infrastructure. At present, 17 Olympic sports federations and several other sports organizations have relocated to the Olympic Village, transforming these facilities into a unified national sports cluster and a symbolic center of Uzbek sport.

Future Goals and Strategic Milestones. As emphasized by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, it is essential not to be confined to the achievements already attained, but rather to ensure the full and effective utilization of existing infrastructure and institutional capacity. It has been noted that, in certain sports disciplines, current performance outcomes do not yet fully correspond to the conditions and opportunities that have been created.

One of the most important objectives is to increase the number of individuals engaged in mass sports activities to 17 million in the near future. To establish a strong reserve of athletes for international competitions and the Olympic Games, it is necessary to further strengthen an open and transparent selection system through the Presidential Olympiad. During the first edition of the competition, 103,000 athletes participated, and more than 3,000 athletes competed in the final stage across 11 sports disciplines for 135 gold, 134 silver, and 227 bronze medals. Going forward, it has been instructed to organize these competitions twice a year, expand participation among the 13–14 age group at the regional level, and gradually increase the number of sports disciplines to 20.

Enhancing a scientific approach to the development of the sports sector remains a central priority. Achieving high athletic performance depends not only on infrastructure and competitions, but also on the systematic advancement of all branches of sports science, including sports pharmacology, dietetics, functional and physical training, rehabilitation, and individualized workload planning. Intensifying research activities, implementing advanced scientific developments in practice, and strengthening knowledge exchange through national and international scientific conferences have been identified as key tasks.

It is also essential to actively involve the private sector and investors in the development of sports infrastructure, training centers, and the sports services market. Expanding the network of sports schools to the community (mahalla) level, strengthening early talent identification, and

establishing targeted training systems for gifted youth are crucial for increasing participation in mass sports and ensuring sustainable athletic development.

In January 2026, a series of major international events to be held in Tashkent—including the Executive Bureau meeting of the World Aquatics Federation, the meeting and international forum of the Central Asian Regional Anti-Doping Organization (RADOCA), and the 46th General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia—are expected to be organized at a high international standard. Representatives of the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic Council of Asia, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), leaders of international sports federations, and more than 360 foreign guests are anticipated to participate in these events.

To further promote the national sport of wrestling (kurash), the establishment of a Regional Academy of Sports Wrestling has been planned. Beginning in 2026, competitions such as the Presidential Cup, the “Heroes of Uzbekistan” tournament, the Prosecutor General’s Cup, and wrestling championships among military personnel will be held on a regular basis. By the end of the year, at least one kurash sports club will be established in every district and city, and newly constructed schools across the regions will provide training not only in national kurash but also in Greco-Roman, freestyle, and women’s wrestling. In addition, the participation of the Uzbekistan delegation in the 25th Winter Olympic Games to be held in Italy has been discussed.

Recent Reforms in Physical Education and Sports in Uzbekistan. The Five Important Initiatives proposed by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, aimed at enhancing the spiritual development of young people and ensuring the meaningful organization of their leisure time, clearly demonstrate that youth—particularly unorganized segments—are receiving focused attention at the level of state policy. Within the framework of these initiatives, broad engagement of young people in physical education and sports has been identified as a priority task.

One of the key practical mechanisms of this initiative is the five-stage “Five Initiatives Olympiad,” established on the basis of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-201, “On Measures to Elevate the Engagement of Youth in Mass Sports in Local Communities to a New Level.” This Olympiad serves to ensure the meaningful organization of young people’s leisure time at the community (mahalla) level and promotes their comprehensive development through competitions in reading culture, arts and culture, intellectual games, information technologies, and various sports disciplines.

The “Five Initiatives Olympiad” is organized in the form of sports competitions, contests, and intellectual games among community youth, general secondary school students, students of vocational education institutions, university students, and young employees of ministries, agencies, and organizations.

Among community youth, the Olympiad is conducted in five stages (community, sector, district/city, regional, and national). In particular, the sports component includes 14 competitions, such as football, mini-football, chess, volleyball, workout, kurash, checkers, table tennis, streetball, athletics, gymnastada, arm wrestling, para-sports, cycling, and handball. These competitions represent an important pedagogical tool for engaging young people in mass sports, increasing their physical activity, and fostering a healthy lifestyle.

Among general secondary school students, the Olympiad is held in four stages (school, district/city, regional, and national). The sports program includes chess, checkers, table tennis, athletics, fun starts, football, and volleyball competitions, as well as the “Quvnoqlar va Zukkolar” contest and the “Zakovat” intellectual competition.

For students of vocational education institutions, the Olympiad is organized in four stages (specialization, educational institution, regional, and national), featuring volleyball, chess, and

checkers competitions, along with the “Quvnoqlar va Zukkolar” contest and the “Zakovat” intellectual games.

Among university students, the Olympiad is conducted in four stages (faculty, university, regional, and national), including competitions in mini-football, volleyball, streetball, athletics, table tennis, and various intellectual Olympiads.

For young employees of ministries, agencies, and organizations, the Olympiad is held in two stages (district/city and regional), featuring mini-football, volleyball, checkers, chess, and table tennis competitions, as well as the “Zakovat” intellectual games.

Physical education and sports not only strengthen the human body but also promote psychological vitality, expand personal capacities, awaken moral consciousness, reinforce ethical values and beliefs, enhance a sense of pride, and contribute to the development of willpower and resistance to injustice. Physical fitness fosters self-confidence while simultaneously encouraging individuals to actively oppose injustice.

In higher education institutions, the systematic development of student sports is strongly supported through the “Student League” competitions, which play a significant role in expanding mass sports participation among students. Beginning with the 2025/2026 academic year, “Student League” competitions in team sports have been introduced, further promoting widespread student involvement in physical activity. The league is organized by the Uzbekistan Student Sports Association and is conducted nationwide through regional and final stages.

The “Student League–2025” competitions were organized across a wide range of sports, including football, mini-football (futsal), volleyball, table tennis, chess, kurash, athletics, rhythmic gymnastics, arm wrestling, and others. For example, the Tashkent city stage was held in February–March 2025, followed by national stages in May in Andijan, Bukhara, Samarkand, and other regions. Thousands of students participated in these competitions, with particularly high female participation; 12,250 athletes competed in the regional stages, and 2,274 athletes advanced to the national finals.

The “Student League” is closely integrated with the higher education track of the “Five Initiatives Olympiad” (mini-football, volleyball, streetball, athletics, and table tennis) and holds significant pedagogical value in increasing students’ physical activity, fostering team spirit, and creating a healthy competitive environment. Through these competitions, talented students are identified and systematically prepared for participation in international sporting arenas.

Conclusion and Recommendations. Physical education and sports, as an integral component of the education system, serve as a vital pedagogical instrument that ensures not only physical health but also the moral-ethical, intellectual, and social development of the younger generation. In recent years, the large-scale reforms implemented in Uzbekistan—including the President’s Five Important Initiatives, the five-stage system of the “Five Initiatives Olympiad,” Presidential Decree No. PQ-201, the Presidential Olympiad, and the commissioning of the Olympic Village and the National Football Center—have established a comprehensive and systematic approach to engaging youth in mass sports. As a result of these reforms, participation in mass sports has reached 15 million people, the number of individuals regularly engaged in sports has increased by 1.5 times, and significant international achievements—such as a 13th-place finish at the World Universiade, top placements at the Youth Games and the Asian Para Games, and qualification of the national football team for the FIFA World Cup—clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the pedagogical process.

In the context of modern lifestyles, physical education and sports play an indispensable role in mitigating the risks of hypodynamia and in fostering self-confidence, moral responsibility, willpower, and resistance to injustice among young people. The objectives set

for 2026—including increasing mass sports participation to 17 million people, organizing the Presidential Olympiad twice a year and expanding the number of sports disciplines to 20, strengthening scientific approaches (sports pharmacology, dietetics, individualized training planning), extending kurash to community and school levels, and hosting major international events in Tashkent at a high standard—are expected to further advance inclusive and innovative pedagogical methods within the education system.

Overall, these reforms represent a significant milestone in educating a healthy, morally mature, and competitive generation within the framework of the “Uzbekistan–2030” Strategy. Through the full utilization of existing potential and the intensification of scientific research activities, this sector is well positioned to achieve even higher outcomes in the future.

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