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The Role of Kurash in the Global Sports Arena

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Abstract

Kurash is one of the oldest forms of traditional wrestling originating from Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan. Over centuries, this martial art has developed from a cultural practice associated with festivals and social ceremonies into a modern competitive sport recognized at the international level. Today Kurash is practiced in more than one hundred countries and supported by international sports organizations. The purpose of this study is to analyze the historical origins, cultural significance, and global development of Kurash in the international sports arena. The research also examines the role of international federations, global competitions, and sports diplomacy in promoting Kurash worldwide. The study applies historical and descriptive research methods to investigate the evolution of Kurash and its modern institutional structure. The findings indicate that Kurash has successfully transformed into a globally recognized sport while maintaining its traditional values such as fairness, respect, and honor. Furthermore, international competitions and sports organizations have contributed significantly to the globalization of Kurash and its inclusion in regional multi-sport events. The results demonstrate that Kurash functions not only as a competitive sport but also as a cultural bridge connecting different nations and promoting intercultural dialogue.

Keywords: Kurash, traditional sport, martial arts, international competitions, Uzbekistan, cultural heritage, sports globalization

Introduction

Traditional sports play an important role in preserving cultural identity and strengthening international cooperation. Many nations maintain traditional sporting practices that reflect their historical experience, cultural values, and social traditions. These sports serve not only as physical activities but also as important elements of national heritage[1,2,3].

Among the traditional sports of Central Asia, Kurash occupies a special place. Kurash is one of the oldest forms of wrestling and has a history of more than three thousand years. Historical sources indicate that Kurash was widely practiced during national celebrations, festivals, and important social events. In these contexts, the sport symbolized strength, courage, and respect among participants.

In the modern era, Kurash has gradually transformed from a traditional cultural practice into an organized international sport. The establishment of the International Kurash Association and the development of standardized rules have played an important role in promoting Kurash worldwide[4,5]. Today the sport is practiced in many countries and international competitions are held regularly.

Therefore, the study of Kurash is important for understanding both its cultural significance and its growing role in the global sports arena. The aim of this research is to analyze the historical development,

cultural value, and global importance of Kurash as a modern international sport[6].

Methodology

This research is based on qualitative analysis using historical, descriptive, and comparative research methods. These methods allow a comprehensive examination of the development, cultural significance, and international recognition of Kurash as a traditional sport.

The historical method was used to analyze the origins and historical development of Kurash from ancient times to the present day. Historical manuscripts, archaeological evidence, and scholarly publications were examined in order to identify the early stages of Kurash and its transformation from a traditional cultural practice into an organized sport.

The descriptive method was applied to examine the structure and organization of Kurash competitions, including local tournaments, national championships, and international competitions. This method also helped to analyze the role of international sports organizations and federations in promoting Kurash and expanding its global presence.

The comparative method was used to compare Kurash with other forms of international wrestling and martial arts. Particular attention was given to differences in rules, competition formats, cultural values, and levels of global recognition. This comparison helped to highlight the unique characteristics of Kurash within the international sports community.

Data for the research were collected from academic literature, official reports of sports federations, and documents related to international Kurash competitions. Additional information was obtained from publications of international sports organizations and scientific studies on traditional sports.

Result

The research findings demonstrate that Kurash has undergone a significant transformation from a traditional cultural practice into a modern international sport with growing global recognition.

First, the historical analysis confirms that Kurash has deep cultural roots in Central Asian civilization. Archaeological discoveries, historical manuscripts, and ethnographic studies indicate that Kurash competitions were widely practiced during traditional ceremonies, festivals, and social gatherings[7,8,9]. These events served not only as forms of entertainment but also as a way to demonstrate physical strength, bravery, and respect among participants.

Second, the establishment of the **International Kurash Association (IKA)** played a crucial role in the institutional development and international promotion of the sport[10,11,12]. The organization introduced standardized rules and regulations for competitions, which helped transform Kurash into a modern sport suitable for international tournaments. In addition, the association actively promotes Kurash through training programs, international cooperation, and the organization of global competitions.

Third, Kurash has expanded significantly beyond its regional origins and is currently practiced in more than **100 countries** around the world. International competitions such as world championships, continental championships, and international tournaments have contributed to increasing interest in the sport and attracting athletes from different regions[13].

Finally, Kurash has been included in several major regional multi-sport events, including the Asian Games and the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games. This recognition demonstrates the growing international status of Kurash and confirms its potential to become a more widely recognized sport in the global sports arena.

Discussion

The globalization of Kurash reflects broader trends in the development of international sports. In recent decades, many traditional sports have gradually entered the global sports system through institutional support,

international competitions, and cultural promotion. Kurash represents a successful example of how a traditional sport can adapt to modern sports structures while maintaining its historical and cultural identity.

Kurash represents a unique combination of traditional values and modern sports organization. Unlike many other combat sports, Kurash strongly emphasizes fairness, respect, and sportsmanship. The rules of Kurash prohibit certain aggressive techniques in order to ensure the safety of athletes and maintain the ethical principles of the sport. These characteristics make Kurash not only a competitive activity but also a sport that promotes moral values and discipline among participants[14,15].

Another important aspect of Kurash is its cultural significance. The sport serves as a symbol of national identity in Uzbekistan and plays an important role in preserving cultural traditions. Kurash competitions are often organized during national celebrations and cultural events, which helps strengthen the connection between sport and cultural heritage. At the same time, international Kurash tournaments contribute to the promotion of Uzbek culture on the global stage.

International tournaments and championships play an essential role in popularizing Kurash worldwide. These events attract athletes and spectators from different countries and create opportunities for international cooperation. Through sports competitions, Kurash promotes cultural exchange, mutual respect, and friendship among nations. As a result, Kurash functions not only as a sport but also as an effective tool for cultural diplomacy and international communication.

Conclusion

Kurash has evolved from a traditional cultural practice into an internationally recognized sport with growing global influence. Its long history and cultural significance continue to shape the identity of the sport in the modern world. As one of the oldest forms of wrestling, Kurash represents not only physical competition but also important cultural values such as fairness, respect, and honor.

The establishment of international organizations and the expansion of global competitions have played a crucial role in the development and international promotion of Kurash. Through the activities of the International Kurash Association and national sports federations, the sport has been introduced to many countries and has gained increasing recognition in the international sports community.

Today Kurash is practiced in numerous countries and continues to attract new athletes and audiences. International tournaments, regional championships, and global sporting events contribute to the popularity of the sport and provide opportunities for athletes to compete at the highest level.

The future development of Kurash largely depends on continued international cooperation, the organization of international tournaments, and the promotion of the sport among younger generations. By maintaining its traditional values while adapting to modern sports systems, Kurash has the potential to further strengthen its position in the global sports arena and continue to serve as a symbol of cultural heritage, international friendship, and fair competition.

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