

OPINION

by **Professor Georgi Vladimirov Ignatov, PhD,**

lecturer from the Sport Games and Mountain Sports Division of the Sports
Department of Sv. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University

**Regarding: reviewed scientific works and academic activity
of Chief Assistant Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova, PhD,**

the only applicant for participation in a procedure for filling the academic position Associate Professor, announced by the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” in State Gazette, Issue 35 of 18 April 2023, under professional strand 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Physical Education and Sports and Non-traditional Sports in the Education System) at the Division of „Sport Games and Mountain Sports” at the Department of Sports of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”.

I.Procedure details

The competition was announced for the needs of the Sport Games and Mountain Sports Division at the Department of Sports of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, according to the Decision of the Departmental Scientific Council of the Department of Sports, Department of Teacher Training, Department of Language Training, protocol №5 / 29 May 2023. I participate in the scientific jury of the competition according to Order № RD-38-295 / 12 June 2023 of the Rector of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”.

II.Applicant details

Marina Nedkova was born on May 3, 1983 in Sofia. He completed his secondary education at 105 „Atanas Dalchev“ Secondary School – Sofia, studying Italian. In 2006, he graduated from Vasil Levski National Sports Academy with two majors – „Physical Education Teacher” and „Ski Coach”. He is also passing an additional qualification in „Sports Journalism“. In 2009, again at the National Sports Academy, he obtained a Master's degree in Sports Management. In parallel, he is undergoing a specialization in „Management of sports facilities“ for 6 months in Virginia/Maryland (USA). Alpine skiing competitor from 1990 to 2000 in the Mladost Ski Club. She was a rugby player in the „NSA“ Rugby Club in the period 2000-2002, where she became the champion of the Republic of Bulgaria for senior girls. In the period 2011-2014, she also played cricket in the „NSA“ Cricket Club, with which she became the State Champion for women. She also participated in the Bulgarian national women's cricket team in the period 2013-2014, with which she became the Balkan champion.

She was a part-time teacher of sports as follows: 2008-2011 at the Todor Kableshkov Higher School of Transport, 2010-2013 at the Vasil Levski National Sports Academy, 2011-2014 at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“ and

2012-2014 at the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy. In 2014, he started working at the SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ as an assistant, and in 2017 he became the main assistant. Again in 2014, he defended his doctoral dissertation and received the scientific title „PhD” under 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... Theory and methodology of physical education and sports training. In the period 2016-2017, he was a coach for alpine skiing disciplines (snowshoes) – men and women at the Special Olympics, Bulgaria. From 2015 to the present, he is the coach of the cricket teams of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ – men and women. In the period 2016-2018, he also coached the University's men's and women's representative Alpine skiing teams, and from 2020 until now, he is the coach of the University's men's skiing team. In the period from 2018 to today, he is a cricket coach for the Association „Bulgarian Student Cricket Union“, with which he became the State Champion.

Chief Assistant Marina Nedkova, PhD, also has a rich public activity: She was the secretary of the organizing committee of the European Rugby 7 Championship – women, division A, in 2012, as well as the Chairman of the technical commission of the 6th European University Rugby Championship rugby 7, in 2013. She held the position of Executive Director of the Bulgarian Student Cricket Union in 2015, as well as Chairman of the Association „Bulgarian Student Cricket Union“ in 2019.

In the work and at the University, the following highlights can be highlighted: a member of the committee on attestations of teachers from the Department of Sports from 2017 to 2019. From 2021 to the present, he is also the chairman of the Attestation Committee. Actively participates in the organization and annual holding of the International Scientific Conference, organized by the Department of Sports. Reviewer of articles from the conference and member of the editorial board of the Yearbook of the Department of Sports. Participates in the organization and implementation of the main activities of the Department of Sports – „Athlete of the Year“, Summer and Winter Sports Forum of sports educators from higher schools in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as in Summer and Winter sports practices for University students.

III. Summarized quantitative and qualitative data for the pedagogical and research activity of the candidate

The scientific production of Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD fulfills the criteria for scientificity such as reliability, innovation, contribution to science and practice and other features specific to scientific knowledge. The evaluation of the scientific results of the candidate, which he presents as scientometric data, written by National Center for Information and Documentation are as follows:

- Indicators in group A: a total of 50 points.
- Indicators in group B: total 100 points.
- Indicators in group G: total 248 points.
- Indicators in group D: total 65 points.

As can be seen, the scientometric indicators of the scientific activity of Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD in all four groups (A, B, D and E) are met and

cover the values of the required minimum requirements, according to Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

As a result of his training, Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD has acquired specialized scientific knowledge and specific professional skills and competencies, which he successfully applies academically and professionally, in research and project activities.

The candidate was the head of a national research project and participated as an expert in 8 more scientific and educational projects in the field of physical education and sports. Evidence of the high professionalism of Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD can also be found in the citation of her 20 scientific works, which is undoubtedly valuable for all specialists.

IV. Description of the scientific works

Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD is the author of 46 scientific papers in the field of physical education and sports. For her participation in the competition she presents for review in theoretical, scientific-applied and practical aspects a total of 31 scientific papers, of which by type:

1. Monograph – 1
2. Book based on a protected dissertation – 1 pc.
3. Articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases – 1 pcs.
4. Articles and reports published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review – 28 pcs.

The authorship of scientific publications is: independent author – 10 works and co-authored – 21 works, of which 12 works are the first, 6 are the second and 3 are the third author.

The presented scientific production can be distributed thematically as follows:

- Current state, development and problems of physical education and sports in higher schools (scientific papers numbered 1, 2, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 24);
- Innovations in the educational process of physical education and sports in secondary and higher education (scientific papers numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 23, 28, 29, 30);
- Physical condition, development and capacity of students (scientific papers numbered 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31);
- New and non-traditional sports and sports disciplines practiced in higher schools (scientific papers numbered 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 19, 23, 28, 29, 30).

V. Scientific contributions

Based on the presented publications, scientific summaries, evidence, conclusions and the overall activity of Chief Assistant Professor Marina Nedkova, PhD I allow myself to systematize the main and scientific contributions in the leading works as follows:

1. The monograph „Non-traditional sports in the educational system and part of physical education and sports in higher schools in Bulgaria“ (2023) is of undoubted interest, where the connections between the social significance of

physical education and sports and the functionality of the educational system of higher schools are traced. with the inclusion of non-traditional sports in the physical education and sports programs to improve the health status of student youth. The status and problems of the study discipline „Physical Education and Sport“ in higher schools, the state of modern student sports in our country and the place of non-traditional sports in it are studied and analyzed (№1).

2. In the book „Innovations in the educational process of physical education and sports in higher schools in the Republic of Bulgaria“ physical education as a continuous system of education, which is called to ensure unity and integrity in the development of the originality and uniqueness of the physical and psychological organization, is studied of the person, of the intellectual and physical potential that determine the uniqueness of each individual. Physical education, as a specific activity of students, ensures their socio-cultural position and autonomy in the system of external connections and relations with society, the formation of a personally significant system of views on the world and value orientation (№2).

3. The author presents the creation and introduction of the discipline „Physical Education and Sport“ in the curriculum of higher schools (№16), as well as current data on the state of physical development of students in the Republic of Bulgaria (№18) and on the state of sports activities in higher education institutions in Bulgaria (№14). Norms have been created for evaluation of all tests separately for women and men, enabling an up-to-date evaluation and comparative analysis of physical capacity in the future (№15, 17).

4. An indisputable contribution is the presentation of the current problem related to the study of the state and problems of physical education and sports among students, as a prerequisite for generating ideas for optimization and making management decisions to improve the health status, physical development and physical capacity of the Bulgarian student youth (№13 and 24), as well as the development and state of physical education and sports in universities and colleges in the USA. Conclusions were drawn, based on which recommendations were made to Bulgarian higher schools and universities (№8).

5. The author examines the influence of physical education and sports on the mental capacity of students in higher schools. As well as the interrelationship between motor and mental activity, the motivation for students to participate in the lessons of a given type of sport (№21).

6. A huge contribution to the candidate's work are her studies, where the effect of sports activities – archery, hiking, Zumba-fitness, cricket, rugby, baseball, volleyball, basketball, fitness, tennis and field hockey - has been traced (№5, 6, 7, 12, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31). In the series of articles, the possibilities and motivation of students for sports activity are specifically examined, on the basis of which new sports disciplines are proposed to become part of the physical education and sports curriculum at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“ and other higher schools. An overview of the most famous and popular traditional and non-traditional sports in Bulgaria has been made.

The success of the new and non-traditional sports and sports disciplines practiced by the students in the sports classes at the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“ (№1, 4, 9, 10).

7. The state, development, organization, interactions, dependencies, problems and perspectives of physical culture (№4, 7, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, 24) in the educational system were tracked.

The presented scientific production in a wide spectrum, its content side, results and conclusions give me reason to define the author as a leader in the problems of non-traditional sports and more specifically baseball, zumba-fitness, cricket, rugby, fitness and field hockey in higher schools in our country. From the analysis of the scientific production of Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD impresses with the high competence and interpretation of scientific research.

Proposed by Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD in Scientific Production meets the requirements for the academic position of „Associate Professor“.

VI. Academic and scientific research activities

In reviewing the published data on the teaching and research activities of Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD, it is revealed that the conditions of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“. In particular, the announced competition has a full workload with the relevant compulsory courses.

Chief Assistant Marina Nedkova, PhD is a keynote lecturer of Sport Games and Mountain Sports Division at the Department of Sports at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“.

According to my personal impressions, she is the author of a number of innovative approaches to the needs of academic work with the students of the profiled groups in zumba-fitness, cricket, rugby and fitness, and of course with the students participating in the University's ski team. She is also the author of her own lecture courses, teaching the students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts. This fact testifies that she is perfectly prepared to create, present and continuously update the content of the lecture courses she leads. In terms of content, the created courses reveal the classical aspect of pedagogical science, but also its modern achievements, additionally illustrated with numerous examples from practice. All this makes them not only theoretically-applied oriented, but also particularly useful and attractive for the wide audience of students, doctoral students, and specialists.

Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD, is a member of the editorial board of the Yearbooks of the Department of Sports from 2022 to today and of the Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, organized by the Department of Sports at SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ – from 2016 to today. She has participated in 20 scientific conferences, 18 of which in our country and 2 abroad. All this testifies that she invests long-term, consistent and purposeful efforts in her academic studies and in achieving high professionalism.

The presented production for review does not duplicate works by other authors and there is no plagiarism.

No violations were found during the competition.

VII. Conclusion

Based on the overall analysis of the presented scientific production, my long-term personal impressions, I believe that the candidate for the academic position „Associate Professor“ Chief Assistant Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova, PhD has the necessary professional, pedagogical and scientific training. Stefan Miletiev is a young and extremely modest lecturer, respected by students and colleagues, but at the same time has a very good practical and theoretical training.

Based on the above and the qualities of the candidate, I propose to the Distinguished Members of the Scientific Jury to award Chief Assistant Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova, PhD – the academic position „Associate Professor“ in 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Physical Education and Sports and Non-traditional Sports in the Education System) for the needs of the of „Sport Games and Mountain Sports“ Division at the Department of Sports at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“.

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Sofia

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