

# OPINION

by **Professor Antonio Dachkov Antonov,**

lecturer from the "Football and Tennis" department, "Hockey and Floorball"  
sector at the "Vasil Levski" National Sports Academy

**Subject: peer-reviewed scientific works and educational activity  
of Chief Assistant Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova, PhD,**

the only candidate for participation in the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor", announced by Sofia University (SU) "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the State Gazette, no. 35, page 86 of 18.04.2023 in professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Physical education and sports and non-traditional sports in the education system)

## A. Contest details

The competition has been announced for the needs of the Sports Department (SD), at the "Sports Games and Mountain Sports" Department of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

My participation in the composition of the scientific jury of the current competition is determined by Order No. RD 38-295 on June 12 2023, of the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

## B. Applicant data

Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova was born on May 3, 1983 in Sofia.

In 2006, he graduated from the "Vasil Levski" National Sports Academy, the "Bachelor", with two majors - "Physical Education Teacher" and "Skiing Coach". In the period 2006 – 2009, she upgraded hers scientific educational degree by specializing again in the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" in the master's program "Sports Management". In the period 2004 - 2006, she completed an additional specialization in sports journalism at the "Vasil Levski" NSA, and in 2009 a second specialization in the management of sports facilities at "High Sierra pools", Virginia/Maryland, USA,

In the period 2008 - 2014, Marina Nedkova was appointed as a part-time lecturer, as follows:

- VTU "T. Kableshkov" (2008 - 2011);
- NSA "V. Levski" (2010 - 2013);
- Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (2011 - 2014);
- HTMU (2012 - 2014).

In 2014, after winning a competition, the candidate was appointed as an assistant in the "Sports" department at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2017, she won a new competition for the position of Chief Assistant and until now holds this academic position.

In 2014, in front of a scientific jury at the "Vasil Levski" National Academy of Sciences, he defended a dissertation in the scientific direction "1.3. Pedagogy of training in...TMFV and sports training (incl. methodology of

physical therapy)" on the topic "New approaches to the improvement of physical education and sports in higher schools in the Republic of Bulgaria".

The candidate has practiced following sports:

- Skiing (1990 - 2000);
- Rugby (2000 - 2002);
- Cricket (2011 - 2014), incl. and player of the Bulgarian national cricket team (2013-2014), with which she won the championship of the Balkan Championship.

The candidate's coaching career in the period from 2015 to the current moment is realized mainly in the field of skiing and cricket sports, holding the following positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski":

- Cricket Coach (2015 to present);
- Men's and women's Alpine skiing coach (2016 - 2018);
- Men's alpine skiing coach (from 2020 to present).

In the period 2016 - 2017, the candidate was a coach in alpine skiing disciplines - men and women, snowshoes for the Special Olympics - Bulgaria.

From 2019 till now Chief assistant Marina Nedkova is the Chairman of the Association "Bulgarian Student Cricket Union", which won the championship of Bulgaria in 2019 and 2020 and titles in the European Cricket Series in 2020 and 2021.

Marina, has also implemented a number of additional organizational activities for the sports department at the university, as follows:

- Organization, nominations and conduct of the competition "Athlete and coach of the year of Sofia University" from 2016 to the current moment;
- Organization and holding of a summer and winter forum of sports pedagogues from the University of the Republic of Bulgaria from 2016 to the current moment;
- Organization and conduct of summer and winter student practice from 2014 to the current moment;
- Organization and holding of the SD International Scientific Conference from 2014 till now.

### **C. Summarized quantitative and qualitative data on the candidate's pedagogical and research activities**

The scientific production of Chief Assistant, Marina Nedkova, PhD fulfills the criteria for scientific such as truthfulness, credibility, innovation, contribution to science and practice and other specific signs for scientific knowledge. The assessment of the candidate's scientific results, which he presents as scientific metrics data, issued by National Center for Information and Documentation, are as follows:

- Indicators in group A: a total of 50 points.
- Indicators in group B: not required
- Indicators in group B: a total of 100 points.

- Indicators in group D: a total of 248 points.
- Indicators in group D: a total of 65 points.
- Indicators in group E: not required

### **TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS: 463 ITEMS (AT MIN. CLAIMS 400 p.)**

The values of the scient metrics indicators of Chief Assistant Nedkova, PhD - 463 items assessing the quality of scientific activity, fully meet the necessary minimum requirements of 400 items, according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

This can be seen from the attached evidence Chief Assistant, Marina Nedkova, PhD, has also successful completed acquired specialized scientific and applied knowledge, specific professional skills and competencies, which she successfully applies, academically and professionally, which she successfully applies during researching and project activities. The candidate has also attached evidence of participation in 8 projects, as a participant in 6 (six) scientific and educational projects in the field of physical education and in 3 applied projects under the programs of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Metropolitan Municipality as a leader and coordinator. The candidate has attached evidence for 26 citations, of which:

- Web of Science Clarivate /1950-2023/ – 2 citations;
- Scopus ELSEVIER /1960-2023/ – 1 citation;
- Central and Eastern European Online Library /CEEOL / – 1 citation;
- Google Science - 26 citations;
- established by the author - 11 citations.

### **D. Description of scientific works, subject areas and original scientific contributions**

For his participation in the competition chief assistant Marina Nedkova, PhD, presents a total of 31 scientific works in the field of physical education and sports (PES) for review on theoretical, scientific-applied and practical aspects, of which by type:

1. Monograph, Group B, indicator 3 – 1 no.
2. Published book based on a protected dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", Group D, indicator 5 - 1 no.
3. Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases, Group D, indicator 6 – 1 no.
4. Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals, Group D, indicator 7 – 28 no.

The author's share of scientific publications is: independent author - 10 works and co-authored - 21 works, of which he is the first author in 12 publications.

The 31 scientific publications proposed for reviews in the competition reveal, original contributions with theoretical and practical aspect in the following thematic areas:

- Research and analysis of the current state, development and problems of physical education and sports in higher schools (1, 2, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 24);
- Implementation of innovations in the educational process of physical education and sports in secondary and higher education (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 23, 28, 29, 30);
- Study and analysis of physical condition, development and capacity of students (1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31) ;
- Introduction of new and non-traditional sports and sports disciplines in the educational process and sports-competitive activities in higher schools (1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 19, 23, 28, 29, 30).

The monograph "Non-traditional sports in the educational system and part of physical education and sports in Bulgarian universities", published in 2023. This is of significant interest, significant value and factorial weight in the formation of my opinion.

The work presented by the author is of high scientific and applied value, as it studies and analyzes, on the one hand the state and importance of physical education and sports in higher schools in the Republic of Bulgaria, and on the other hand the place, role and importance of non-traditional sports such as rugby, hockey and cricket in the education system. The monograph traces the results of the implementation of innovations in the educational process at the Bulgarian universities. For its implementation, the results of the study shows the physical capacity of students engaged in non-traditional sports in universities in Bulgaria. Particular relevance are the data from the study of the state of the physical capacity of students participating in physical education and sports classes in the Bulgarians universities, after nearly two years of online education.

The special feature of this valuable edition is the combination of the author's scientific approach, looking for the connections between the social significance of physical education and sports, and the functionality of the educational system in Bulgarian universities with the inclusion of non-traditional sports in the programs under the PES, with the aim of increasing the health status of student youth. A significant contribution to science is the historical credibility and factual data of the research, with the author's specifics about the overall development of non-traditional sports in the modern history of sports in our country. As the author expresses it - referring to rugby, hockey and cricket. The author is actually a contemporary and direct participant during the last decade in the spread and development of three of the sports - rugby, cricket and hockey in the system of universities education in Bulgaria, which gives me an objective reason to claim that her research and analyzes are "First hand" .

A study was made of the new moments in the sports and competitive activity of students engaged in non-traditional sports in our country. The participations in competitions organized at the European, national and student

level are tracked in detail. Such a study is being done for the first time in the system of physical education and sports in Bulgarian universities, and the implementation of this innovative task ends logically with a proposal for legislative changes related to the implemented policy of Bulgarian universities for the development of student sports

The development of non-traditional sports, characteristic of the European sports student system and the organization of sports competition activity at the student level in a new way, helps to overcome our serious abandonment of the level of European student sports.

#### **D. Educational and research activity**

Chief Assistent Marina Nedkova, PhD, is a lecturer at the "Sports" Department, at the "Sports Games and Mountain Sports" Department of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She led a lecture course for students at the National Academy of Sciences "Theory and Methodology of Physical Education" and SU "Methodology of Teaching Physical Education to Students 1-4 Grades", "Didactics of Physical Education", as well as practical exercises in Zumba-fitness, fitness, cricket, rugby, etc. in VTU "T. Kableshkov", NSA "V. Levski" and SU.

The candidate is the author of a number of training programs on "Zumba-fitness", "Cricket", "Rugby", "Sports in an electronic environment - member of a working group" for the needs of educational work with students from SU. The stated circumstances give me the reason to assert that Marina is an excellent prepared young scientist, who creates, teaches, and updates, the content of the lecture courses and practical activities she leads.

The attached evidence testifies that the candidate systematically, consistently, and purposefully, invests hers efforts to improve academic training at SU in the chosen professional direction.

The scientific production presented to me for review and opinion, does not duplicate the work of other authors, I do not detect the presence of plagiarism. Chief Assistant Marina Nedkova, PhD doesn't have no publications in common with me.

I have not found any procedural and formal violations during the competition.

#### **E. Conclusion**

On the basis of the overall analysis of my presented scientific production and evidence, based on long-term personal observations of the candidate's professional development, I believe that Chief Assistant Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova, has the necessary pedagogical, scientific and applied training in the

professional field for the academic position "Associate Professor". Marina Nedkova, is a respected university professor, successfully combining teaching work with scientific research.

Based on the above, the established qualities and competencies of the candidate, I confidently suggest to the Honorable Members of the Scientific Jury to award Chief Assistant Marina Nikolaeva Nedkova, PhD - the academic position "Associate Professor" by professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Physical education and sports and non-traditional sports in the education system), according to the procedure of a competition announced for the needs of the Department of Sports, at the Department of Sports Games and Mountain Sports of Sofia University "St. . Kliment Ohridski".

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Sofia

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