

SWOT Analysis on the Training of Elite Reserve Athletes in Chinese Sports Schools

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Abstract

As the main output position of Chinese elite athletes, sports schools have made great contributions to the development of Chinese competitive sports undertakings. While making great contributions, Chinese sports schools have also revealed some problems. For this reason, this paper investigates and analyzes the training of elite reserve athletes in Chinese sports schools. First, the origin and development of Chinese sports schools are reviewed with the literature method and historical analysis method. On this basis, the research discusses the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and threats of Chinese sports schools based on the SWOT analysis method. This paper believes that: the advantage is "conducive to train competitive projects; the talent transfer system is perfect and the transfer effect is high", the disadvantage is "the imbalance between sports training and cultural education; the athlete's success rate is low", and the opportunity is "Chinese sports schools have a higher status in national sports; China's emphasis on collective sports is gradually increasing," threatened is "the impact of social acceptance of Chinese sports schools". Finally, this paper puts forward the development countermeasures of China's sports schools: strengthen the integration of sports and education, deepen the reform of sports schools, strengthen the scientific nature of sports training in sports schools, and strengthen the construction of distinctive sports schools.

Keywords

Competitive sports; Chinese sports schools; Elite reserve athlete training; SWOT analysis.

1. Introduction

Sports schools are an important position of the development of Chinese amateur sports and the main output channel of Chinese elite athletes. According to statistics, more than 60% of elite athletes in China come from the training of various sports schools at all levels, and among the existing Olympic champions and world champions in China, more than 90% have the experience of studying and training in sports schools [1]. Since 1955, China tried to set the sports school, and it has experienced more than 60 years of development. During this period, with the evolution of Chinese sports strategy, Chinese sports schools have also changed their school-running goals, and gradually formed relatively complete athlete training systems, and contributed to the development of Chinese competitive sports. In the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the Chinese delegation won 100 medals and achieved the top of gold medal tally and the medal tally, all the winning athletes came from sports schools [2], it shows the important role of sports schools in the talent training of Chinese competitive sports. However, from the perspective of training elite athletes with all-round development, at present, Chinese sports schools still need continuous improvement and still have a long way to go in the future. The SWOT analysis method was proposed by Andrews in the 1980s, it is a research method that integrates and analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the target. This research will use the "SWOT analysis method" analyze the issues of elite reserve athletes training in Chinese sports schools, aim to provide references for world sports workers through

the analysis of the training methods of elite reserve athletes in Chinese sports schools, and provide suggestions for the development of Chinese sports schools in the future.

2. Origin and Development of Chinese Sports Schools

At the beginning of the founding of New China in 1949, domestic infectious diseases were rampant, and the people's health level was extremely low, which could not meet the needs of national construction. Under this background, popularizing sports to the masses became the primary goal of the country's development at that time, and the call to "advocate national sports" also appeared for the first time in the National Guidelines established in 1949-"the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference". In 1954, the national-level sports decision-makers formally established the policy of "popularizing and regularizing" sports [3], aimed to popularize sports to the people and improved people's health level. On the other hand, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China has learned from the Soviet Union in all aspects, which is also a socialist country, and sports is no exception. In 1950, 12-member sports delegation set out from China to the Soviet Union to study the sports system, and wrote the "Opinions of the Sports Visiting Group to the Soviet Union on the Sports Work Plan in the Future " [4]. In the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, China's best swimmer Wu Chuanyu was eliminated in the backstroke heat, while the Soviet Union, which belongs to the socialist camp, had a total score of 494 points equal to that of the United States, which ranked first on the medal tally, this undoubtedly inspired the hearts of Chinese sports people and strengthened China's determination to learn Soviet Union sports.

As early as the late 1930s, the Soviet Union established children and adolescent sports schools supported by the state budget and funds, subsequently, children and adolescent sports schools in various places were established under the support of government budget and fund, almost all the Olympic champions in the Soviet Union and the world and European champions have taken the first step in sports in sports schools [5]. In 1955, China imitated the Soviet Union, ran the youth amateur sports school in Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai for the first time, the State Sports Commission issued several policies to popularize the amateur sports school to the whole country the following year. In the making of the teaching plan, it is recommended to refer to the Children Amateur Sports School Affiliated to the Moscow Children Stadium. The first and second grades of the Children Amateur Sports School attached to the Moscow Children Stadium have 286 hours of teaching time per year, of which 186 hours are skill training, 60 hours are theory lessons, and the remaining 40 hours are auxiliary sports. Subsequently, in April 1956, China issued the "Constitution of Youth Amateur Sports School (Draft)" [6] and "Articles of Youth Amateur Sports School (Draft)" [7], providing the policy basis for the popularization of amateur sports schools throughout China. At this time, the amateur sports schools mainly carry out sports training after work and cultural classes, train reserve talents for competition. In the following ten years, with the improvement of national sports policies and athlete training mechanism, China's sports industry has also entered the first period of rapid development, and outstanding athletes have repeatedly broken national and world records.

After the 1960s, China favored the key point of sports development from popularization to improvement, and paid more attention to the improvement of athletes' skill level. As the link between popularization and improvement, amateur sports schools have received national attention. In 1963, the State Sports Commission issued "Regulations on Trial Implementation of Sports Team Work", put forward the policy of sticking to policy of "walking on two legs" for the training of excellent athletes and teenager amateurs, and pointed out that as the main method of amateur training of teenager, amateur sports schools should be vigorously developed, excellent athletes all should come from this. In 1964, the State Sports Commission issued the "Rules on the Trial Implantation of Teenager Amateur Sports Schools (Draft)", which

made detailed regulations for the establishment of amateur sports schools and strengthened the standardization of amateur sports schools. In 1965, the National Mass Sports Work Conference once again stressed the importance of teenager amateur sports schools, proposed that district and county sports schools, municipal sports schools, and provincial sports schools constitute the hierarchical system for training competitive sports talents, required all regions to concentrate on running key amateur sports schools based on ordinary amateur sports schools. Since then, the training methods of athletes in China's amateur sports schools have begun to develop towards professionalism.

The development of Chinese sports was stagnant due to the influence of the domestic environment from 1966 to 1972. In 1972, The State Council Teaching and Research Group and the State Sports Commission jointly issued the "Summary of Work Symposium of the National Teenager Amateur Sports School", pointed out that the teenager amateur sports school is an important organization to resume sports work, and ordered to resume the teenager amateur sports school as soon as possible [8]. In 1978, the National Sports Work Conference proposed: all regions first built the training network linking layer by layer form grass-roots sports teams (middle and primary schools)-ordinary amateur sports schools-key amateur sports schools (sports schools)-excellent sports teams in large and medium-sized cities, and conscientiously do a good job in the continuity and interconnection of the four-level training network" [9]. In February 1979, China formally established the development policy of "sports work puts particular emphasis on improvement under the premise of combining popularization and improvement". The following month, the State Sports Commission and the Ministry of Education jointly released and implemented the Constitution on Children Amateur Sports School", which further made the tasks of the amateur sports school clear. In June 1979, the State Sports Commission promulgated the "Regulations on the Skill Hierarchy of Coaches of the People's Republic of China (Draft)", which greatly improved the enthusiasm of coaches in amateur sports schools, moreover, it improved the training and teaching quality amateur sports schools [10]. In November 1979, the International Olympic Committee officially announced the restoration of China's legal seat, and Chinese competitive sports began to fully enter the world stage, which further strengthened Chinese determination to develop competitive sports.

In 1984, the State Sports Commission published the research report on "2000 Sports in China", first proposed the Olympic strategy. As the foundation of the Olympic strategy, teenager amateur sports schools have also achieved great development, until 1990, number of students in teenager amateur sports schools had exceeded 300000, and the number of full-time coaches had reached 18000 [11]. In 1994, the State Sports Commission implemented the "Outline of the Olympic Honor Program (1994-2000)" further made the core position of the "Olympic Strategy" in China's competitive sports clear. At the 2000 Sydney Olympics, China ranked third in the world in both the medal tally and gold medal tally, and achieved the historic breakthrough. After the 21st century, the development of China's competitive sports walked to new peak. In 2001, China obtained the right to host the Olympic Games, in the following year, the General Administration of Sport issued the "Outline of Olympic Honor Plan (2001-2010)" and the "Action Program of 2008 Olympic Honor Action" aimed to further improve the development of competitive sports and enhanced the country's performance in the Olympics. During this period, as the main source of high-level athletes in China, amateur sports schools achieved impressive results. "During the 2001-2004 Olympic cycle, China won totally 391 world championships, of which 95% of the athletes came from sports schools of all levels and types." [12] In the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China won 51 gold medals, 21 silver medals, 28 bronze medals, totally 100 medals, and was the top in the gold medal tally, the development of Chinese competitive sports has also reached the highest level in history. As the training place for Chinese competitive sports talents, amateur sports schools at all levels and types in our country have also made full contributions.

3. Present Situation of Competitive Sports Talent Training in Chinese Sports Schools in China

3.1. Advantages of Training Competitive Sports Talents in Chinese Sports Schools

3.1.1. It Is Conducive to Train Superior Projects

The sports school are built under the leadership of the State Sports Commission. After China restored the legal status of the National Olympic Committee in 1979, the project layout of sports schools began to set and adjusted around the Olympics, the country's human, material, and financial resources are all inclined to the Olympics, and had emphasis on the Olympic events. It has been stated in relevant documents: the key points of current project layout are not prominent, the proportion of the football, basketball and volleyball balls is too large, and the basic projects such as track and field are ignored. There are totally 203 gold medals in the Olympic Games, and nearly half of them are track and field, gymnastics, swimming, and weight lifting [13], on the basis of weighing the Olympic event set and the number of medals, as well as the actual situation of our country's sports, table tennis, badminton, track and field, swimming, diving, gymnastics, weight lifting, football, volleyball, shooting, archery, speed skating as national key projects for development, which are significantly invested by the state.

Therefore, China ranks top in the world in table tennis, weight lifting and diving nowadays, and has achieved extraordinary results for China in major international events such as the Olympics. In these events, all elite athletes come from sports schools in China. Beijing Shichahai Sports School alone has trained famous table tennis players such as Olympics champions Ma Long, Ding Ning and Zhang Yining. In addition, the famous diving athlete Guo Jingjing and the Tokyo Olympic weight lifting champion Lv Xiaojun are also trained by the Chinese Sports School. It can be said that the Chinese sports school has provided great help for construction of competitive sports projects in China.

3.1.2. Perfect Talent Transfer System and High Transfer Effect

After more than sixty years of development, Chinese sports schools has become more and more complete in its talent transfer system, the organizational form has been gradually progressive from district and county sports schools and municipal sports schools to provincial sports schools, athletes move from ordinary amateur sports schools to key amateur sports schools, and the selection of athletes enters the next stage, finally, entered the high-level professional team to become high-level athletes. This hierarchical talent transfer system has improved the efficiency of talent transfer, and has greatly avoided the situation where outstanding athletes are underappreciated. In addition, the Chinese sports schools have long been the central link in the training of competitive talents in China, under the background of the country's vigorous development of competitive sports, the Chinese sports schools have also well completed the task of transferring competitive talents. According to statistics, 61% of China's outstanding athletes come from amateur sports schools at all levels, and more than 90% of world champions are trained and transferred by sports schools. [14]

3.2. Disadvantages of Training Competitive Sports Talents in Chinese Sports Schools

3.2.1. The Imbalance Between Sports Training and Cultural Education

From the 1980s to the present, the contradiction between learning and training has been a major problem in Chinese sports schools, although as early as 1991, the State Sports Commission and the Education Commission jointly issued the "Interim Provisions of Running Sports Schools" and "Teaching Plan of Three-Year Secondary Physical Education School" and the "Management Method of Student Status in Sports Schools ", which put forward the

"combination of sports and education" as the key content of China's sports school-running system. At the same time, as the goal of China's socialist market economic system was finally established, in order to improve the international influence of China's competitive sports, China began to make the competitive sports development policy with "Olympic glory" as the core position clear. The success of Beijing's bid for the Olympics in 2001 marked that the development of China's competitive sports has officially entered the Olympic strategy stage, affected by the Olympic strategy, sports schools at all levels still focus on training outstanding athletes, but neglect the training of the cultural quality of school students, therefore, the main contradictions of giving priority to preparing for the Olympics, and once again focus on the talent training system of the "national system". Therefore, the combination of sports and education was hindered, and the market advantage was not fully developed at the right time, resulting in the accumulation of problems. As a result, the educational level of sports school students generally is low, and ultimately indirectly lead to social problems such as employment difficulties of retired athletes.

3.2.2. Athlete's Success Rate Is Low

For a long time, the purpose of Chinese amateur sports schools has been to train high-level athletic talents, however, the "crowd tactics" adopted by China's amateur sports schools have caused the waste of many reserve talents in China. Due to the large number of students in school and the uneven talents of athletes, not all the athletes can become professional high-level athletes. Although the training quality of China's amateur sports schools is constantly improving, there are still many factors that restrict the output of many outstanding athletes. On the one hand, the internal structure of China's amateur sports school training has the drawbacks such as unidimensional training goals and premature "specialization" of training content [15]; on the other hand, the overall quality of coaches in Chinese amateur sports schools is not high, and they cannot effectively train athletes in a scientific way, this has also led to problems such as frequent injuries and slow improvement of skill level. According to statistics, only less than 10% of the students in training can be transferred to higher-level sports schools or high-level sports teams to continue their sports careers, and most students can only face the severe test of entering a higher school or getting a job. However, these athletes cannot achieve full development under the training system of sports schools, and it is difficult to adapt to society after they withdraw from this system.

3.3. Opportunities of Training Competitive Sports Talents in Chinese Sports Schools

3.3.1. Chinese Sports Schools Have A Higher Status in National Sports

As early as the 1950s, under the background of the planned economy, in order to promote the development of competitive sports, China began to implement the "national system" that used administrative means to centrally manage competitive sports, and has continued ever since. Under this system, the training system centered on sports schools has been formed. Therefore, since the establishment of the Chinese sports schools, they have always been regarded as the important position for the emergence of competitive sports reserve talents in China. As China began to build the sports power, Chinese sports schools, as the important way for China to develop competitive sports talents in an all-round way, Chinese sports schools have also begun to undertake more important tasks. After the Beijing Olympics, the General Administration of Sport successively promulgated the "Setting Standards of Secondary Sports Schools" [16], "Management Methods of Children Sports Schools" [17], "Management Methods of Secondary Sports Schools" [18] and "Management Methods of National Sports Training Bases" within three years [19], aimed to improve and strengthen the functions of Chinese sports schools, and gave new significance to Chinese sports schools in the new era. In the "14th Five-Year Plan of

Sports Development" promulgated in 2021, it again stressed the need to "strengthen the role of sports schools as the main position and main channel for training talents."

3.3.2. China's Emphasis on Collective Projects Is Gradually Improving

Although Chinese competitive sports have developed rapidly in recent years and has achieved impressive results on the international sports arena, Chinese results in collective events, especially the "Three Big Balls": basketball, football, and volleyball has been unsatisfactory. Among the "Three Big Balls", except the Chinese women's volleyball team is still in the forefront of the world, most of the other events are in the world's second and third-rate levels, especially the men's football and men's basketball which the country focus on developing, in recent years, whether it is the results of international competitions or the level of youth training players, there is a trend of regression. For this situation, the General Administration of Sport released the "13th Five-Year Plan of Competitive Sports" in 2016 [20], put forward the "Three Big Balls" development action plan, aimed to promote the overall improvement of the competitive level of football, basketball, and volleyball. In the "14th Five-Year Plan of Sports Development" [21] released in 2021, it once again stressed the key position of the "Three Big Balls" in the development of competitive sports, and required the full consolidation of the "Three Big Balls". At the same time, the document further proposed the promotion project of collective ball project and the revitalization project of "Three Big Balls", it also made detailed requirements for the development of handball, hockey, and baseball while vigorously developing the three big balls. As an important reserve talent base of these collective ball games, China sports school have also taken more responsibilities.

3.4. Threats of Competitive Sports Talent Training in Chinese sports schools

3.4.1. The Impact of Social Acceptance of Chinese Sports Schools

First, from the perspective of China's social environment. Before the 1970s, Chinese families generally had multiple children to raise, and the pressure of raising them was relatively high, therefore, parents were more willing to send their children to sports schools for accepting sports training, so that they could get a good life while keeping fit. However, with the implementation of the family planning policy and changes in the social fertility idea, according to estimation, by 2005, the number of one-child families in China has risen to nearly 90 million [22]. Under this background, Chinese parents' pressure of raising their children is relatively reduced, parents are more inclined to send their children to ordinary schools for cultural studies relative to sending their children to sports schools for special sports training. Secondly, from the perspective of Chinese educational environment, cultural education in sports schools is special school or junior college. From the mid-1980s to the beginning of the 21st century, the country gave preferential treatment to vocational education, compared to ordinary high schools, vocational education students were admitted by units first, and graduates of special schools and technical schools enjoyed the same job distribution policy as college students [23]. However, this attraction did not last long. After the "Action Plan of Vitalizing Education the 21st Century" was issued, Chinese higher education has fully expanded its enrollment, and the gross enrollment rate increased from 2.7% in 1978 to 45.7% in 2017 [24]. The attraction of vocational education has declined rapidly [25], and the difficulty of enrolling students in sports schools has increased, in addition, China's nine-year compulsory education policy has been implemented since 1986, and the education cost of Chinese school-age children has been greatly reduced. For most Chinese parents, the most cost-effective way to promote children's development is to make children enter colleges and universities as the goal, and enter the country's nine-year compulsory education system for learning. Therefore, the concept of "stressing training and neglecting culture" in Chinese sports schools has been rejected by most people, and the acceptance of Chinese sports schools in society has also been greatly impacted.

4. Development Countermeasures of the Competitive Sports Talent Training in Chinese Sports Schools

4.1. Strengthen the Integration of Sports and Education and Deepen the Reform of Sports Schools

As mentioned above, although China has published policies related to the integration of sports and education as early as the last century, it has not achieved good results, especially in sports schools, the problem of contradiction between learning and training has had a huge impact on the sports schools themselves. On August 31, 2020, the General Administration of Sport and the Ministry of Education introduced the "Guidelines on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education and Promote the Healthy Development of Teenagers"[2+6], in the fourth part, "deepening the reform of sports schools" is proposed for the first time, and the clear reform direction is proposed for sports schools' facilities, teaching services, and teaching staff, etc. The integration of sports and education is based on the combination of sports and education, the policy of sublimating its connotation and truly integrating education and sports has a huge guiding role for the development of sports in China, including the reform of Chinese sports schools in China. In the following year, in the "14th Five-Year Plan of Sports Development" released in 2021, it once again proposed "deepening the reform of sports schools" in the part of the integration of sports and education, it clearly required strengthening the role of sports schools as the main position and main channel for training reserve talents, based on the "Guideline on Deepening the Integration of Sports and Education and Promote the Healthy Development of Teenagers", proposed to "encourage various regions to explore the establishment of new sports schools which integrate sports and education, resource sharing, complementary advantages, and each has its own characteristics, supported sports schools to strengthen cooperation with surrounding primary and secondary schools, and provided the development countermeasures of teaching, training, venues, training, and other services".

Therefore, this study believes that there is still a long way to deepen the reform of sports schools, on the one hand, under the background of the integration of sports and education, sports schools should abandon the concept of "stressing training and neglecting culture", and integrate sports training and cultural learning together. First, the curriculum should be further optimized, the training time should be scientifically arranged, while maximizing the training effect, the density and requirements of cultural classes should be appropriately increased, training and culture should be given equal weight to give athletes more time to learn cultural knowledge. Second, introduce high-quality culture teachers and stricter require them, promote them to output more effective knowledge contents and enrich the classroom form in the classroom, rather than equating the teaching of culture lessons with "forms" as in the past. Finally, the requirements for cultural performance are added in the formative evaluation and summative evaluation of athletes to improve the learning initiative of athletes. On the other hand, some amateur sports schools also need to change their school-running models, in the new era, sports schools are no longer closed sports schools, but should become open sports schools. First, efforts should be made to explore the cooperation with local primary and secondary schools, each takes what he needs, promote the establishment of youth sports training centers, provide primary and secondary schools with sports facilities and professional sports training teaching services, moreover, Promote young athletes to enter elementary and middle schools for cultural studies after training, provide them with better educational resources, create better educational conditions, and continuously improve their cultural and educational levels. Secondly, sports schools should also have closer ties with society, promote excellent coaches to "go out", actively participate in social sports teaching and extracurricular sports activities, and provide special sports skills training services for students and residents, which is conducive to expand the popularization of sports and enhance public recognition of sports.

4.2. Strengthen the Scientific Nature of Sports Training in Sports Schools

In the teenager sports training of Chinese sports schools, there are mainly problems such as single-dimensional training contents, "premature specialization" of training contents, and excessive training load [27], in short, the main reason for these problems is that the internal training system of Chinese sports schools is unscientific and the coaches quality are not high, most coaches still use old-fashioned training methods to train teenager athletes, they focus too much on obtaining results and ignore the physical development law of the athletes at the teenage stage, leading to athletes' frequent injuries and illnesses, and other problems. In order to improve the success rate of athletes in sports schools, and improve the quality and efficiency of talent training in an all-round way, it is necessary to focus on the scientific nature of sports school training.

To this end, first, the sports schools is required to actively build the coach team, attract more high-quality talents through their own resources and influence, and regularly train coaches at all levels, make them deeply understand and master the development laws of mind and body of teenager, sports training, and competition laws, make training goals clear and conduct scientific training. Secondly, the internal training concept of sports schools needs to be changed, sports schools should abandon the previous idea of "gold medal is all-important" and focus more on the overall development of athletes. And as far as possible to avoid excessive physical training of athletes in order to get results, but better combine physical training and skill training, and set the concept of "giving priority to the skill development" in daily training, to ensure that athletes can use more complex skills in adulthood and better control the game in complex environments. Finally, the country should be based on the physical and mental development laws of all age groups, integrate modern training theories and methods, unify the special training syllabus for athletes at all levels in sports schools, and provide command and guidance on the training tasks and goals of athletes with different age groups, and require sports schools at all levels strictly abide by the scope of the syllabus for training, in order to avoid harm to athletes caused by unscientific training.

4.3. Strengthen the Construction of Sports Schools with Distinctive Projects

Nowadays, the project setting of Chinese sports schools are mainly basic events such as track and field, basketball, and swimming, as well as weight lifting, badminton, and table tennis, and other Olympic advantageous projects, each sports school has formed the training scale with more than ten events, however, this kind of project layout makes the number of projects in some sports schools too large and not precise, it's difficult to highlight the key points, it can also lead to problems such as uneven internal resources of different sports schools, and make it difficult to sustainably develop some competitive projects. Especially with the improvement of other countries' sports level, some Chinese Olympic sports are slowly beginning to be threatened, for example, in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, China regretted losing the gold medal in the finals of the men's gymnastics team and the mixed doubles competition of table tennis, under this condition, the country more needs to accelerate the construction of sports schools with distinctive projects.

In order to strengthen the construction of sports schools with distinctive projects, all types of sports schools at all levels are required to focus on the layout of competitive projects based on their own project settings, and learn the layout advantages of the water project of Zhejiang Wenzhou Sports School and the martial arts project of Beijing Shichahai Sports School, focus on the advantages of a certain project, integrate resources, select talents, and accurately train them to improve the training quality of Chinese competitive sports talent. Secondly, the country should also support and manage the construction of sports schools with distinctive projects, including the implementation of some policies, actively construct the infrastructure of the competitive projects of sports schools with distinctive projects, and improve the basic

guarantees of basic practitioners in sports schools, standardize and accelerate the construction of sports schools with distinctive projects. Finally, different sports schools must break through barriers, realize the transfer of outstanding athletes and coaches across sports schools, realize resource sharing, improve the construction efficiency of distinctive projects of sports schools, gather high-quality training resources, improve the transfer efficiency of competitive sports talents to the maximum, and provide high-level sports talents for the country.

5. Conclusion

Since the development of the Chinese sports schools, they have become an indispensable part of the training of Chinese elite athletes. Facts prove that China regards sports schools as the main position for training Chinese elite reserve athletes, which indeed has a great role in promoting the development of competitive sports. But with the development of society, sports schools have gradually revealed some problems. In the future, Chinese sports schools need to be reformed and innovated based on the origin, select the essence, and discard the dross, strengthen the role as the main front and main channel for training Chinese elite athletes, and make greater contributions to the development of China's competitive sports.

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