

PAPER

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SAMBO AND ITS ROLE IN DEVELOPING PHYSICAL FITNESS

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Abstract

This article presents a systematic analysis of sambo wrestling — its history, theoretical and practical principles, techniques and tactics, physical training, and pedagogical aspects. The paper provides recommendations on sambo training methodology, lesson planning for various age and skill groups, injury prevention, and athlete health maintenance. The positive effects of sambo on physical and psychological development are also discussed.

Key words: sambo, wrestling, training, technique, tactics, physiology, injury prevention, pedagogy.

Introduction

Today, physical education and sports are among the most effective means of strengthening human health, developing willpower, increasing social activity among youth, and fostering patriotism. Every sport influences the physical, mental, and psychological development of a person in its own way. From this perspective, sambo holds a special place among different types of wrestling. Sambo (from the Russian “самбо” – “самооборона без оружия”, meaning “self-defense without weapons”) is a sport that develops a person’s ability to defend themselves, think quickly, make decisions, and use their physical capabilities wisely.

It stands out for its variety of techniques and tactics, adaptability to the human body, relatively low risk of injury, and its health-improving and educational effects.

Sambo was formed in the early 20th century in the former Soviet Union and, within a short period, evolved not only as a martial art but also as a comprehensive system that integrates military-applied, sports, and health-promoting directions. Its founders — В. А. Спиридонов and В. С. Ошчепков — combined effective elements of judo, national wrestling styles, and other martial arts to create a new, safe, yet efficient self-defense system. In 1938, sambo was officially recognized as a sport, and since then, it has gained worldwide popularity.

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MAIN PART

The sambo sport emerged during the 1920s–1930s in the former Soviet Union. Its creation resulted from the synthesis of various martial arts, including Japanese judo, national wrestling styles (Russian, Georgian, Kazakh, Uzbek, etc.), and military hand-to-hand combat techniques. The term “sambo” is an abbreviation of the Russian phrase “самооборона без оружия” — “self-defense without weapons.” Initially developed to train military personnel for self-defense in combat situations, sambo later evolved into a widely practiced competitive sport. The founders, Vasiliy Andreyevich Spiridonov and Viktor Stepanovich Oshchepkov, made significant contributions to the development of sambo. Spiridonov combined elements of hand-to-hand combat, jiu-jitsu, and national wrestling to design a safe yet effective defense system, primarily aimed at military training. Oshchepkov, who studied judo in Japan, adapted its techniques to the Soviet physical training system. Their combined experiences formed the foundation of a new martial art distinguished by its unique technical and tactical structure. In 1938, sambo was officially recognized by the USSR State Committee for Physical Culture as a sport, and national competitions began that same year. Over time, sambo was incorporated into military, educational, and sports training programs across the country. Today, sambo has become an international sport practiced in over 120 countries under the governance of the International Sambo Federation (FIAS)**. In 2018, sambo was officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Thus, it is now considered a universal sport with both competitive and health-promoting significance. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, sambo has been developing rapidly in recent years. As of 2020, more than 100 sports schools and training sections across the country offered sambo programs. Uzbek sambo athletes have achieved remarkable success in international competitions, including World and Asian Championships, reflecting the growing attention to this sport.

Main Technical Elements of Sambo:

Throws: breaking the opponent's balance and throwing from the hip, shoulder, or leg.

Locks and joint control: using painful techniques

to immobilize the opponent.

Ground wrestling: maintaining control over the opponent and dominating the fight.

Tactical training focuses on analyzing the opponent's movements, making timely decisions, and maintaining the balance between defense and attack. Thus, a sambo athlete must be not only physically strong but also mentally prepared.

Physical qualities developed through sambo training include:

Strength – essential for throws and overcoming resistance;

Endurance – supports performance in prolonged matches;

Speed and agility – enable quick responses to the opponent's movements;

Coordination – required for precise execution of complex techniques.

Training Principles and Health-Promoting Effects of Sambo Training Principles Used by Coaches Modern sambo training is based on scientifically grounded principles that ensure the systematic development of an athlete's physical, technical, and psychological qualities. Among these, the following principles play a fundamental role:

1. Gradual Progression.

The principle of gradual progression implies a systematic and step-by-step increase in training load. This approach allows the body to adapt physiologically to increasing stress, thereby enhancing endurance, strength, and technical mastery while minimizing the risk of overtraining and injury. Coaches carefully regulate the volume and intensity of exercises according to the athlete's preparedness and stage of the training cycle. The adaptation process involves the mechanisms of supercompensation, through which the body restores and exceeds its previous performance levels after each training stimulus.

2. Individual Approach.

Each athlete has unique anthropometric, physiological, and psychological characteristics; therefore, an individualized approach is essential for achieving optimal performance. In sambo training, the selection of exercises, load intensity, and recovery strategies are tailored to the athlete's age, level of physical fitness, technical skills, and emotional state. This principle ensures that the

training process not only enhances performance but also promotes long-term health and sustainable athletic development.

3. Periodization.

Periodization represents the structured division of the training year into specific cycles—preparatory, competitive, and recovery phases. This scientific organization allows for the optimal distribution of training loads and ensures peak performance at major competitions. During the preparatory phase, the emphasis is placed on general physical conditioning and technical improvement; in the competitive phase, the focus shifts to tactical and psychological readiness; and in the recovery phase, restorative exercises and reduced loads help the athlete regain physical and mental balance.

Health-Promoting Effects of Sambo Training

Sambo, as a complex combat sport, exerts a profound positive influence on the human organism. Regular and properly organized sambo training sessions contribute not only to athletic development but also to the enhancement of overall health and personal growth. The key health-promoting effects include:

Strengthening of the Muscular System.

Dynamic and static exercises characteristic of sambo—throws, holds, and defensive techniques—engage all major muscle groups, promoting balanced muscular development, improved coordination, and increased functional strength.

Improvement of Cardiovascular Function.

The high-intensity nature of sambo bouts stimulates cardiac activity, enhances peripheral circulation, and improves vascular elasticity. Over time, these adaptations lead to a more efficient cardiovascular system and reduced risk of heart disease. **Enhancement of Respiratory Efficiency.** The combination of aerobic and anaerobic workloads in sambo training increases lung capacity and oxygen utilization efficiency. This contributes to improved endurance and quicker recovery after exertion.

Development of Psychological Resilience.

Sambo requires concentration, emotional control, and rapid decision-making under stress. Regular

participation develops self-regulation, emotional stability, and resilience in the face of competitive and life challenges.

Cultivation of Discipline, Willpower, and Self-Confidence.

The moral-ethical component of sambo training promotes responsibility, respect for opponents, and adherence to sportsmanship. Athletes develop willpower, perseverance, and confidence through the mastery of complex techniques and the achievement of personal goals.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that sambo is not only a martial art or competitive activity but also a complex system that develops the human body comprehensively while promoting health and education. During sambo training, athletes systematically improve essential physical qualities such as strength, speed, agility, coordination, and endurance. At the same time, this sport fosters psychological stability, determination, discipline, independent thinking, and the ability to make quick decisions. The theoretical foundations of sambo require deep study of its technical, tactical, and methodological aspects. A well-structured training process — based on gradual progression, individualized approaches, and proper recovery — ensures the effectiveness of athletes' physical preparation and stable improvement in performance. Moreover, sambo's health-promoting effects are of great importance: it strengthens the musculoskeletal system, enhances cardiovascular and respiratory efficiency, and increases resistance to stress. Therefore, sambo plays a vital role not only in sports but also in forming a healthy lifestyle among the younger generation. In conclusion, a scientific understanding of sambo's theoretical and practical foundations and its integration into educational and training systems can significantly contribute to developing youth physical fitness, mental stability, and civic consciousness.

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