



# The Spirit of Game Contained in Leisure Sports

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**Abstract.** Leisure sports, as a thriving life style in this development stage of modern society and history, is full of sacred, noble and pure spirit of game. The spirit of game originated in ancient times and was praised by Chinese and Western philosophers. At present, in the era of leisure, leisure sports, as the carrier, representative and cultural expression of the spirit of game, are endowed with unique significance, but also make the spirit of game full of new vigor and vitality. Under the shape of the spirit of game in leisure sports without traces, it helps to improve the degree of self-recognition of individuals, rediscover the essence of human nature, and promote the sustainable development of the whole culture. This paper mainly focuses on the spirit game contained in leisure sports, based on the in-depth analysis of its significance, discusses its specific characteristics and realistic value, in order to contribute to relevant research.

**Keywords:** Leisure sports · The spirit of game · Spirit · Freedom · Quest for value

## 1 Introduction

In 2015, as the developed countries enter the era of leisure, the proportion of people in social life which leisure takes up is bigger and bigger, consoling the human spirit in a society of pursues utilitarian pragmatism, troubled deeply by unidirectional materialization, pursues instrumental rationality and the efficiency of worship, help people reduce the excessive labor burden, get a pleasurable experience of the heart, promote the value of individual existence. As the important means and one of the main ways in which people realize leisure, the spirit of the game of leisure sports need to get the attention it deserves, for it could make the deconstruction speed of the human existence meaning in the current world slowing down, guide people to reshape the human nature as the main body of leisure, let the light of leisure through the fog of modernity and shines into reality.

## 2 The Deep Exploration to the Spirit of Game in Leisure Sports

In Chinese, “you” and “xi” are used together to express pleasure, playfulness, banter and entertainment. In general, the two words are used together to denote play. The

influence of the word “game” has been enhanced significantly by Confucius’s “you yu yi” and Chuang tzu’s “xiao yao you” [1]. The words for games in Western languages include “play”, “game”, “spiel” and “ludus” [2], while the non-derivative suffix “-inda” in Greek only endows some words “to play something”, which fully reflects the special status of games. Some scholars believe that Heraclitus’s “Great Game of the Urchins of the Universe” is the beginning of “game”, and the study of game originated from Schiller’s “theory of surplus vigor”.

Leisure sports, as a kind of social and cultural activity that people get physical and mental nourishment through sports consciously in their spare time, condenses the spirit of game with inner transcendent temperament and noble cultural realm. This kind of the spirit of game is the natural reveal of poetry in worldly life, the realistic possibility of choice independently of personalized life, and the wonderful window that leads the vision to the unity of the macro whole and micro individual. In which participants consciously or unconsciously into the certain intensity, depth and purity of sincerity [3], forget temporarily all sorts of trouble, displeasure and hardship of life, and return to the immortality of the innocence. Guided by the unconditional order of the game, people beyond logic and reasoning, serious and banter, dispute and entanglements. Through freedom and carefree movement of the body and spirit, creativity was brought infinite float in the sky and superb cultural value was produced. Therefore, being nourished by the spirit is also the perfect opportunity for the individual soul to carry out deep introspection and inward transcendence, and it is a good prescription to treat people’s psychological imbalance caused by many “civilization diseases”. In all kinds of alienation of the undercurrent and bondage of modernity, in the current historical process which China gives great impetus to the implementation of the national strategy of national fitness, the construction of a healthy China and a powerful country in sports, the spirit of game in leisure sports is urgent to return and be advocated, and then realize the popularization gradually.

### 3 The Characteristics of the Spirit of Game in Leisure Sports

In Chinese, “you” and “xi” are used together to express pleasure, playfulness, banter and entertainment. In general, the two words are used together to denote play. The influence of the word “game” has been enhanced significantly by Confucius’s “you yu yi” and Chuang tzu’s “xiao yao you”. The words for games in Western languages include “play”, “game”, “spiel” and “ludus”, while the non-derivative suffix “-inda” in Greek only endows some words “to play something”, which fully reflects the special status of games. Some scholars believe that Heraclitus’s “Great Game of the Urchins of the Universe” is the beginning of “game”, and the study of game originated from Schiller’s “theory of surplus vigor”.

#### 3.1 Entertainment

Recreation is a human’s primitive instinct and inner need outside of necessary labor time. In primitive society, after meeting the needs of survival, feeding and reproduction, physical games and entertainment occupied the rest of time of human life, which greatly promoted the development and progress of human civilization. The functional role of

physical entertainment continues today. Participation in leisure sports can not only relieve and eliminate physical fatigue, get the pleasure of physical after exercising, but also make participants satisfied and happy psychologically, and experience beauty and peace in the soul. In “the book of songs”, there are some records of the body’s leisure activities (“Zheng Feng • DaShu Yu Tian”, “Daya • Xing Wei”, “Zhou Nan • han Guang”, etc.). In the pre-qin period, Confucianism and Taoism also elaborated on the body’s recreational activities of entertainment meaning, such as “On the area of swampy lakes with dense weeds, at empty fields, sit back, fishing and enjoy it, this is the Tao” (“Chuang Tzu • Ke Yi”) and the “A man of noble character treats learning, in class, learn lessons; while rest at home, enjoy the leisure.” (“The Book of Rites • Xue Ji”). Sports in ancient Greece were also entertaining, with physical activity mixed with leisure. Some foreign scholars put forward that sports are based on leisure and entertainment. Through physical participation, people can not only strengthen their bodies but also fulfil their spiritual needs for happiness.

### 3.2 Aesthetic

Aesthetics is people’s attitude and style of living, and it is a unique survey of life which beyond utilitarianism and pragmatism. Due to the characteristics of “seems doing nothing but do” in the spirit of game, leisure sports participants are more likely to jump out of the limitation of utility and application. Participation in leisure sports does not need to be guided by gold medals and winning, and its evaluation criteria and power are grasped in the individual itself entirely, that is to say, whether the sense of freedom, pleasure, happiness, sense of gain and sense of achievement etc. are enhanced through sports. In the target transformation from the external competition and comparison to the inner comfort and serenity, participants’ stress levels were greatly reduced. They can thus focus more sensitively, more subtly, and more deeply on the process. Furthermore, people can more fully understand the spirit of the game in sports, get rid of the deconstruction of human existence and the constraints of alienation of leisure to a larger extent, to experience, appreciate and enjoy the happiness and beauty leisure sports brought simply. This kind of aesthetic exploration, which is fitted in the spirit of game and own purpose without purpose, not only includes the body’s sensory experience of relaxing tendons, but also contains rich aesthetic psychological activities, and sublimates from the functional world to the spiritual world. It is conducive to the cultivation of participants’ philosophical awareness and generosity. Therefore, to some extent, it can also make the participants be harmonious with themselves internal, beyond the limitations of limited time and space external, through the short oblivion of the internal and external, achieving a spirit state of quiet, carefree and lively.

### 3.3 Creativity

When an individual is happily and completely immersed in leisure sports with an aesthetic heart, he or she will experience a state of disengaged from the movement which forget him or herself. In this state of concentrated energy, his or her spirit will be focused and inspiration will generate, making it easier to break through the original cognitive limitations. The spirit of game in leisure sports can stimulate people’s vitality of life.

As the substrate for creative and fertile ground for poetry, it can promote the growth of creativity of thinking and spirit, and induce individuals to think deeply about their own existence, the meaning of life and holographic connection. First of all, the unconstrained spirit of the game can make the thinking break through the conventional, and eclectic. Secondly, the spirit of game in leisure sports requires a variety of sensory linkage, the participants spontaneously mobilize the whole body and mind to put into the movement actively and make their creativity more sensitive and developed. Thirdly, the spirit of game in leisure sports helps people to expand the wings of imagination in physical and mental practice, it helps to develop individual subjective initiative, expand the world of experience and make perceptual life grow faster in personal experience, thus opening the gates of internal creativity in participants. Finally, being integrated into the spirit of game brings a high degree of relaxation that is difficult to find in daily life. Alternate tension with relaxation, an individual can have a deeper, more objective and more comprehensive understanding of themselves and the world, and it is easier to stimulate their original creativity.

### **3.4 Individuality**

Different from competitive sports, the participation degree and goal attainment standards of many leisure sports are mastered in participants themselves. At the same time, the implicit rules of the project are also respected by the participants spontaneously, which unconsciously strengthens the awareness of rules and moral consciousness of the participants. In this way, participants have more options, their interest in participation is stimulated greatly, and their sense of subjectivity as the participants is enhanced significantly, so they are more willing to participate in leisure sports and accept the nourishment of the carefree spirit of game. In addition, leisure sports are based on the conscious physical activities of participants [4], and the participation threshold is a low requirement. People with basic sports levels can participate in it, but the depth of the spirit of game people comprehend is different for players with different skill levels. The spirit of game in leisure sports is full of concern for individuals, in which the game itself is the goal, and each individual can gain something equally. Either by virtue of the exercise effect of sports to improve their own sports skills, strengthen their physical quality, or through the enlightenment of leisure to pursue a beautiful spiritual home of poetic dwelling, or through the guidance of the spirit of games to help the awakening of their subjective consciousness and humanistic spirit, individual independence is greatly respected and built. People become people because of games, games make people become people.

### **3.5 Transcendence**

Leisure sports bring participants not only physical and mental pleasure, its spirit of game can help people discover, accept and know themselves. Participants enter into a movement experience, which is not only a coexistence between the physical and the mental, but also a transcend journey from the physical to the mental. The spirit of game in leisure sports helps people to surpass their normal state, stimulate the physical and mental potential of project participants constantly, and make them surpass their past self and break through the original limit. The spirit of game has a positive influence

on the temperament of the participants imperceptibly, making them live in reality and surpass reality, fully experience and enjoy the fun of life, and give life a clearer meaning themselves. The spirit of game encourages people who participate in sports to focus on, identify with and take care of their own lives [5], experience personally the sureness in their hearts after in-depth communication with themselves, and then transcend all kinds of thinking shackles imposed on them by the society. Their hearts can adapt to things but not against themselves, and they can get into the eternity beyond the time and space which visible and palpable. Thus, the spiritual realm of an individual can be promoted, the living state of human beings can be improved, and man becomes a man from the desire to culture, from instinct to ideal, from food and sex to thinking. Human beings transcend the existence level into life level, beyond the materialistic to spiritual, beyond the unidirectional to multidimensional [6].

## **4 The Value of the Spirit of Game in Leisure Sports**

### **4.1 Meet the Diverse Needs of Individuals**

It is human nature to enjoy games, which are written in our genes. It's an immutable survival instinct. Especially in today's great social pressure, after hard work, individuals need to nourish themselves by experience and comprehend the spirit of game, ruminate and introspect in the game world created for body and mind by leisure sports, and actively reconstruct their inner world after various interactions with the outside world, so as to rejuvenate themselves. In addition, Maslow's theory of needs believes that after realizing the needs for survival, safety and belonging at the lower level, people will turn to the needs for respect and self-realization at the higher level, and the spirit of game in leisure sports can meet the needs of individuals in these aspects.

### **4.2 Improve the Quality of People's Lives**

Leisure sports is a people-oriented cultural activity, its content leads people to pay attention to elegant things and to shape individual ideal personalities. People are absorbed in the process of participation and in a free conscious state, which can play a good effect on exercising the quality of thinking consciousness. Leisure sports games help individuals release their repressed emotions and promote the improvement of the quality of spiritual life. Freedom of people's consciousness has been improved and they have become the subject of self-regulation of spiritual will, which is different from animals. In the holistic game of body and mind with body movement as the media, the healing of participants' own division and the dissolution of the internal and external boundaries of the body make individuals break through the limitations of the body and turn to a certain sense of infinity established through the pursuit for life, thus "communicating with the spirit of heaven and earth".

### **4.3 Realize the Function of Social Education**

Many years ago, the "six arts" in ancient China and the "seven skills of knights" in the Western Middle Ages had the function of social education. The complexity and

changeability of modernity have caused many perplexities, anxieties and uneasiness in the heart of contemporary people, and the unique educational function of leisure sports is becoming increasingly obvious. Under the influence of the spirit of game in leisure sports, the participants' minds gradually focus on the inside instead of the outside, and then cure the heart disease. In the impact of the game domain, the hearts of people in the society are purified, and their attack to the outside world is gradually transformed into the exploration of world beautiful things. Under the guidance of the game order, the participants' morality is improved, so as to better fit in the social network connection, interpersonal relations will become more harmonious, social contradictions decrease gradually, and social construction tends to be fair, just and harmonious.

#### 4.4 Helping Build a Healthy China

Now, the construction of "a healthy China" is acting vigorously. Although the discipline construction of leisure sports in China started late, its characteristics of helping the spirit to achieve freedom will surely make it shine in the construction of "a healthy China". Leisure sports condenses the ancient leisure wisdom of the Chinese, which can not only wash away part of the bad influence of modernity embedded in the national psychology, but also drive the national economic development by attracting leisure sports consumption. Participation in games is a sign of social civilization and national progress. More people participate in leisure sports, which not only reflects the enhancement of China's comprehensive strength from the side, but also contributes to the early realization of the goal of "a healthy China".

## 5 Conclusion

The spirit of game has been handed down since ancient times, and its luster remains undiminished. The spirit of game in leisure sports has the characteristics of entertainment, aesthetics, creativity, individuality and transcendence, and is increasingly popular with the general public in the leisure era. Participants benefit a lot from the integration with the spirit of game, which is indirectly beneficial to the development of the society, the country, human beings and the harmonious coexistence between man and nature. In the many troubles of modernization, we need to calm down to understand the wisdom contained in the spirit of game in leisure sports. While the flower of the individual spirit is blooming, it also promotes more people to seek and comprehend the true meaning of their own life.

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