

ON THE TASKS FACING THE APRIL 25 SPORTS TEAM

Talk to the Members of the April 25 Sports Team
June 26, 1972

It is very important to develop sports. Pointing out that physical culture is one of the means to strengthen the friendly relations with foreign countries, the great leader said that physical culture should be developed to facilitate sports exchanges along with art exchanges. At present, however, the instructions of the great leader are not carried out to the letter in the sphere of physical culture, and sports exchange is not conducted properly, as required by the Party. A common example is the fact that our soccer players were defeated in the recent preliminaries for the Olympic Games.

We have organized the April 25 Sports Team in order to develop athletics in our country and raise the standard of our soccer to that of world stars. The April 25 Sports Team, organized today, should in future win the World Cup Final in soccer. It is entrusted with an important mission of playing a vanguard role in turning Korea into a "kingdom of physical culture".

Although the April 25 Sports Team makes a start today, I planned and prepared for it long ago. At first, we organized games between film studios to achieve unity among the guard detachment and death-defying corps faithful to the Party; then we formed a team involving the entire film sector, and organized games between it and the stage arts sector in order to ensure unity and cohesion in the field of art and literature. At the next stage, we organized a specialized sports team for the cinematic art sector, and expanded and strengthened it step by step. Proceeding from the actual requirements prevailing today, we have dissolved the sports team for the sake of future advance and organized the April 25 Sports Team.

We chose the name "the April 25 Sports Team" to enable the players to copy the loyalty to the leader, the indomitable fighting spirit and the strong sense of discipline displayed by the soldiers of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, which was formed on April 25, 1932. You should be aware of such an idea and intention of the Party. The April 25 Sports Team must be a model for the whole country, both in loyalty to the Party and in its sense of discipline. It should establish its traditions because it has been organized with the name of April 25 under the Party's guidance.

I would like to point out about some tasks facing the April 25 Sports Team.

First, the team members should firmly establish the Party's monolithic ideological system and trust and follow only the leader, whatever the adversity, and carry out the orders and instructions of the Party to the last without any conditions attached.

You should participate in the political and ideological life faithfully

and lead the organizational life properly. In some cases, sportsmen lack a sense of organization and discipline, are indifferent to the political and ideological life and have liberal tendencies. Bearing deep in mind the high trust and care of the Party, you should take part in the political and ideological life conscientiously and lead the organizational life properly, so as not to make even the slightest mistake.

Second, the unity of ideology and will in the rank should be achieved. Fully equipping the rank with the revolutionary idea of the great leader and achieving its unity of ideology and will on the basis of this is an important guarantee for winning victory in the games. The main reason our national team was defeated in the soccer preliminaries for the Olympic Games lies in the fact that our players have not achieved a unified will and ideology to ensure cohesion in their actions.

Most important in strengthening and developing the April 25 Sports Team into a team with its own traditions is to achieve its unity of principle. I heard that at present some players complain about their coaches and follow without any principle the coaches they like. All this proves a hindrance to unity. In future you should see to it that not even the slightest weakening in the identity of ideology and will of the team, such as backbiting, is revealed among the players. You should wage an uncompromising struggle against any practice detrimental to unity, and do your best to achieve team unity. You should follow the example of the February 8 Sports Team to achieve unified ideology and will.

Third, you should foster endurance and a persistent fighting spirit. Every sports event, soccer in particular, requires this kind of fighting spirit and endurance. Without them, it is impossible to overcome physical exhaustion during the games. Persistent fighting spirit and endurance are the lifeblood of soccer players. For example, the game between the February 8 Soccer Team and the National Team, played in Sariwon, shows this well. The players of February 8 played the game with perseverance, but those of the national team played in a soft way, sparing their bodies, only to be defeated. But later all the national team players played well and with perseverance in the game against the cinematic art team, to recover from defeat in the last game.

Players should strive hard to foster their fighting spirit and endurance. Otherwise they will be unable to catch up with the rapid world trends in soccer.

A dogged fighting spirit and endurance are not acquired easily.

Players must sweat a great deal in their daily training. Practice has proven that a player who sweats in training becomes a victor.

Once they enter the pitch, players must throw themselves into the game without sparing themselves, even though their flesh might be torn and their bones broken. We must have players who play to the last moment to implement the ideology of the leader and the Party's intention. You must play vigorously in the matches, like angry soldiers charging forward; you should never spare yourselves. For all that, however, you should not behave violently, but show a noble

moral spirit. And you should display the traits of helping and leading one another, of rallying closely with one mind and will between comrades.

I was told that when our players visited foreign countries, they watched the games of the national teams of other countries and found it hard to distinguish between offence and defence players for their high speed and excellent skill. Some of you are fast; so, if you foster a fighting spirit and perseverance, you will be able to play a fast game and defeat any strong team.

Fourth, you should make positive efforts to improve individual skills. Without building up the individual skills of all players, it is impossible to display the team's power in the game, no matter how good your tactics might be. Perfecting the individual player's skill is a key to victory.

In order to raise individual skills, the coach and trainers should make strong demands in training. At present, some of them are neither enhancing the intensity of training nor making strong demands, lest the players get injured; they should not do this. They should have the ability to distinguish clearly between the times when it is appropriate to make strong demands on the players and the times to be more humane, and tighten supervision over and make strong demands on the players so as to prevent them from falling prey to liberalism. In addition, players should do away with the practice of disobeying the coaches' demands or acting in a liberal way, speaking ill of their style of work behind their backs.

In order to raise their individual skills, the coach, trainers and players should not be given to worldly thoughts. If they are, they might not keep their minds on making strenuous efforts to raise their skills.

Currently some players, concerned only with their future, are not enthusiastic about improving their skills. This is a mistake. You must be loyal to implementing the tasks assigned to you, instead of worrying about your future.

In order to develop individual skills, you should not put the blame on your age. Some players are not trying hard to improve their individual skills, claiming that they are too advanced in years. But if they buckle down to training with a high ideological consciousness, their ages count for nothing. For instance, defenders can play until 35-40 years of age. I was told that a famous goalkeeper of a certain country had played until 41 years of age. I think our goalkeepers, too, can play until that age. In view of their present ages, our players are in their prime.

For high individual skills every player should know clearly his merits and demerits and make every effort to make effective use of his strong points and correct his weak points. Some players are good physically and often look as if flying on the playing field. But, at the same time they have a weak fighting spirit. Such players should concentrate their efforts on fostering a strong spirit. Players unsure of themselves must train themselves to improve their skills with the conviction that if they endeavour, they can enhance their skills and defeat any strong team. If they lose confidence, they will be struck

with fear and be unable to play in high spirits. At this point they will fail to meet the Party's demand for defeating strong teams and winning the championship. The players should take part in training in good faith in order to improve their individual skills rapidly. Substitutes must also train themselves hard to raise their skills. Fifth, the April 25 Sports Team should be a model in every aspect, keeping in mind that it is a team that enjoys the special care of the Party.

The team has a coach, trainers, officials in charge of scientific measuring, and all the other members it needs. The man who trains the defence is a meritorious former player, with rich experience as a defender.

You should make every effort to turn the April 25 Sports Team into a world-class soccer team full of ambition, hope and confidence. The task facing the April 25 Sports Team is heavy indeed, yet honourable. First of all, you must recover the defeat our national team suffered in the Asian regional tournament of the 20th Olympic Games. Our players did not live up to the leader's expectations in the tournament. You must train yourselves hard with confidence to live up to the expectations of the leader without fail.

You should proclaim the birth of the April 25 Sports Team to the world by defeating the foreign team that is shortly coming to our country and make up for the defeat suffered in the preliminaries for the Olympic Games. If you are to emerge victorious in the game against the team, you should learn from its tactics. When the team comes to our country, the Sports Group of the Ministry of the Public Security and February 8 Sports Team must first play against it, then the April 25 Sports Team. As you have some time, you should make good physical preparations and achieve brilliant success in your first game. If the foreign team comes to our country, you had better play a warm-up game before the match. Now you are worried that you might get injured in the warm-up game; you are wrong. Once a player enters the pitch, he should not spare himself. Players should improve their speed and individual skills through the warm-up game.

After this game against the foreign team, we plan to send you to Europe. You should visit Europe and play games against the other national teams. By the next World Cup Final, you should raise the standard of our team further than that of the team we sent to the World Cup Final held in London.

Seeing you full of confidence, I am convinced that you will live up to the expectations of the Party without fail.

The April 25 Sports Team has outstanding wingers, players with high speed. Our defence players are young too. Young defenders are better than old ones. The team should ensure a correct ratio of offence and defence players, and plan the positioning of players well. It is important to change the positions of players according to the circumstances of the games.

You should stick to our present players; in future, you should not change players too frequently.

In the games at home and abroad you should not harbour illusions

about the referees' influence. When you are defeated in an international competition, you tend to think that the defeat was caused by the referee. This is wrong. If you are nervous of the referee's decisions, you may lose your reason. You must be prepared in this ideological way; the referee may be unfavourably disposed towards us; but, whatever the referee might do, we play in our own way. If you win a game with the help of the referee, you will be blamed by the society. Therefore, you need not be nervous about the referee. You should win on your skill and morals. You must not tarnish the honour of the April 25 Sports Team. As you play clad in the uniforms embroidered with the flag of our Republic, the responsibility on you is a heavy one.

Last, I would like to speak about your life.

Those who are in poor health should receive medical treatment without hesitation. As for those whose nerves are on edge, they will get better if they live in tents on Rungna Islet, where they will be training.

I will ensure that the sports equipment you require is supplied to you. I will assign a cameraman to the team and send videotape-recorders. When videotaping, you should set up videotape-recorders in various places and record the games from different angles.

You are making a fresh start, and you should strive with confidence. As the saying goes, well begun is half done. You have taken a first step forward; if you set about with determination, you will scale any fortress. You should plan the daily routine properly and begin training from tomorrow morning, leading a life in an orderly manner.

I believe that you, as the guard detachment and death-defying corps unfailingly faithful to the leader, will live up to his high trust and warm care by carrying out with credit the task of making ours a world-class country in soccer within a short time and winning the championship for the honour of the April 25 Sports Team.

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