

Original empirical article

PHYSICAL ABILITIES OF POLICE OFFICERS AS PREREQUISITE FOR SUPPRESSING VIOLENCE AT SPORTING EVENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Goran Vučković, Dane Subošić, Dalibor Kekić

The Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade

Abstract. *Violence at sporting events is seen as a particularly serious problem in the Republic of Serbia. In response to it, the police are entrusted with performing specific security tasks related to security of public assembly, focusing on maintaining public order or reinstating it in the case of serious disturbances. In order to ensure that police officers are capable of performing these assignments lawfully and efficiently, they should be properly prepared, which is achieved by maximizing the compatibility of their training (what they should know) and their working profiles (what they should do). The preparation and implementation of specific security tasks can be represented as an equilateral triangle, each side representing one element of the educational and working profile. The sides would thus represent: 1) physical capabilities of police officers, 2) their equipment, and 3) the engagement tactics. The paper focuses on the problem of physical fitness of police officers as a prerequisite for the prevention of violence at sporting events in the Republic of Serbia, as can be inferred from the title.*

Key words: *violence, sporting events, police officers, physical fitness, applied physical activity.*

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Corresponding author: Goran Vučković

The Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade

Tel: + 381 (11) 3107136 • E-mail: goran.vuckovic@kpa.edu.rs

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INTRODUCTION

In the course of performing their official duty, as part of pursuing their social role, the police carry out regular and special security tasks. The latter include securing public gatherings, among which sporting events have a very prominent part, in terms of the very high level of risk of large-scale disorders, occurrence of violations and criminal offences. The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia (RS MI) deploys a number of police units specifically formed for performing special tasks, including the security arrangements for sports events. These units include, most frequently, Gendarmerie, the Police Brigade of the Police Department for the City of Belgrade, Mobile Unit (*IJP*) and, depending on the security issues involved, they may include the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (*SAJ*) and the Counter-Terrorist Unit (*PTJ*).

The complexity of tasks performed by police officers, especially the ones within the above mentioned specific purpose units, demand permanent physical fitness and the so-called special abilities. In order to ensure continuous preparation of police officers for performing security tasks, physical training has been incorporated in the daily working schedule, the aim of which is to continually develop and maintain physical fitness and special abilities, as well as to ensure proficiency in weapons handling (*The Professional Development Curriculum of the Ministry of the Interior*, 2009). The existing curricula of physical training and special development programmes for police have reached the level which ensures adequate reactions of police officers (*The Professional Development Curriculum of the Ministry of the Interior*, 2009).

The affiliation to fan groups and supporting clubs present a modern way of expression of individuals, and participation in and attendance of sporting events have been marginalized because supporting is a spectacle in itself. There are frequent reports of misconduct in the sporting facilities and violence outside them, targeting members of fan groups, as well as a large number of instances of violent behavior and conflicts targeting police officers.

The violence of supporters at sporting events is, in a sense, a constant value that accompanies the development of sport as an important human activity. Namely, sport has a complex and ambivalent nature, which is manifest in the simultaneous presence of its homogenizing (integrative) social potential and antagonistic (disintegrating) one (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1999).

In order to determine the importance of physical abilities of police officers in the situations of securing sporting events and possibly reinstating public order in the case of large-scale disturbances, it is vital, among other things, to identify the basic characteristics of violence at sporting events in the Republic of Serbia. This creates prerequisites for establishing cause-and-effect relations between violence at sporting events and the level of physical activity applied by police officers.

MANIFESTATION OF VIOLENCE AT SPORTING EVENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The contemporary society in Serbia faces serious violence-related issues. Violence at sports events is particularly severe and frequent, which makes it a topical security issue. The complexity of the problem lies in the fact that violence is part of the fan subculture, which is more often manifested in the desire to inflict physical or mental pain to the opponent, than to support one's own club (Otašević & Subošić, 2010).

All participants of the sports manifestations are exposed to violence. This includes all persons present at the sports event venue, as well as the persons in the vicinity of sports facilities, who have no contact with the sports event itself. On the other hand, violence at sporting events also affects police officers, spectators, referees, and other categories of people. Table 1 shows the number of registered sports events, as well as the consequences of violent behavior to life and health of the participants of these events in the period from Jan. 1 - June 30, 2010 and the same period in 2011. The overall number of sports events held in the two observed periods totaled at 42,725 sporting manifestations, visited by approximately 6,000,000 spectators. Within the same period, the number of injured police officers was 41 and of other participants 124. As for the severity of injuries, all injuries sustained by police officers were minor injuries, whereas in the second group, 83 people sustained minor injuries, while in 41 cases the injuries were characterized as grave bodily injuries. If the two periods are observed separately, there were 21,355 sports events in 2010 and 21,370 in 2011. In 2010, 13 police officers were injured during riots, whereas in 2011 this number was 28, all of them having sustained minor injuries. Among other participants, 62 were injured in 2010, 13 seriously, and 49 less seriously. In 2011, the number of injured persons was also 62, but 28 of them sustained grave injuries, whereas 34 had minor injuries. (Table 1) (*Violence at sporting events*, Department of Analyses RS MI, Belgrade, 2011)

Table 1. Consequences of violent behavior at sporting events to life and health of their participants in the periods 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011.

| Period of observation | Registered number of sports events | Attendance | Bodily injuries | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | | Police officers | | | Others | | |
| | | | Minor | Grave | Total | Minor | Grave | Total |
| 01/01/2010 - 30/06/2010 | 21.355 | approx. 3.000,000 | 13 | 0 | 13 | 49 | 13 | 62 |
| 01/01/2011 - 30/06/2011 | 21.370 | approx. 3.000,000 | 28 | 0 | 28 | 34 | 28 | 62 |
| Total | 42.725 | approx. 6.000,000 | 41 | 0 | 41 | 83 | 41 | 124 |

During sports events, violence also results in substantial material damage, reflected in the damage to sports facilities (e.g. caused by breaking and burning seats and other inventory), public transportation means (caused by throwing stones at them or damaging their interior, etc.), police vehicles, private cars, etc. Within the two periods of observation, 39 vehicles and 14 facilities were damaged, out of which 22 vehicles and 10 facilities in 2010 and 17 vehicles and 4 facilities in 2011 (Table 2) (*Violence at sporting events*, Department of Analyses RS MI, Belgrade, 2011).

Table 2. Damage to vehicles resulting from violence at sporting events during the periods 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011.

| Period | No. of damaged vehicles | No. of damaged facilities |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 | 22 | 10 |
| 01/01/2011-30/06/2011 | 17 | 4 |
| Total | 39 | 14 |

When the story of fan subculture is combined with the number of sports events in the Republic of Serbia held on the annual basis, it is not surprising that there are vast numbers of serious violations of public order directly or indirectly related to them, and the incidence of violent behavior even appear to be comparatively small when compared to the overall number of events. However, the problem becomes complex when specific cases of public order disturbance are analyzed because, for instance, only within the two observed periods (01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011) there was a total of 207 criminal charges, out of which 98 were filed in 2010 and 109 in 2011, all related to violent conduct during sporting events or on the occasions of public assembly as defined in Section 344/a of the RS Penal Code.

The number of persons against whom the criminal charges were pressed indicates that there were 403 of them within the observation periods, 187 in 2010 and 216 in 2011 (Table 3). As for the distribution of all the charges, in 34 cases they were filed against juveniles - 6 in 2010 and 28 in 2011 (Table 3). (*Violence at sporting events*, Department of Analyses RS MI, Belgrade, 2011).

Within the observed periods, there was a total of 33 criminal acts against police officers, 15 of which occurring in 2010 and 18 in 2011, as well as 35 criminal offences involving others, their number in 2010 and 2011 being 23 and 12, respectively (Table 4). The overall number of reports concerning violations in the observation periods was 105, 47 of which taking place in 2010 and 58 in 2011. The violations involved 183 legal persons and 205 natural persons or 84 legal persons and 92 natural persons in 2010 and 99 legal persons and 113 natural persons in 2011 (Table 4). (*Violence at sporting events*, Department of Analyses RS MI, Belgrade, 2011).

Table 3. The main features of violent behavior at sporting events and the consequences to the life and health of the participants during the periods 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011.

| Period | Number of criminal charges ¹ | Number of offenders against whom criminal charges were pressed | Number of juveniles against whom criminal charges were pressed |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| 01/01/2010 - 30/06/2010 | 98 | 187 | 6 |
| 01/01/2011- 30/06/2011 | 109 | 216 | 28 |
| Total | 207 | 403 | 34 |

¹ The filed charges involve the criminal offence of violent conduct at a sporting event or public assembly, Section 344/a, RS Penal Code.

Table 4. The basic characteristics of violent behavior at sporting events and its impact on the life and health of the participants during the periods 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011.

| Period | No. of criminal acts against police officers in charge of public order at sporting events | No. of other criminal offences | No. of initiated proceedings for violations defined in Section 21 of the Act on the Prevention of Violence and Improper Conduct at Sports Events | No. of persons against whom proceedings were initiated with respect to violations defined in Sections 21 and 23 of the Act on the Prevention of Violence and Improper Conduct at Sports Events | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| | | | | Legal persons | Natural persons |
| 01/01/2010 30/06/2010 | 15 | 23 | 47 | 84 | 92 |
| 01/01/2011 30/06/2011 | 18 | 12 | 58 | 99 | 113 |
| Total | 33 | 35 | 105 | 183 | 205 |

Table 5. Incidence of violations and preventive measures taken during the periods 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011

| Period | No. of preventive measures related to attending sports events as per Section 23 of the Act on the Prevention of Violence and Improper Conduct at Sports Events | No. of requests for proceedings in cases of violations of the Public Order Act | Distribution of violations as defined in the Public Order Act | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| | | | Taking part in a brawl | Insult, abuse, violent behavior or causing fight | Indecent, insolent or unscrupulous behavior | Quarrel or yelling + other violations |
| 01/01/2010 30/06/2010 | / | 148 | / | / | / | / |
| 01/01/2011 30/06/2011 | 15 | 150 | 35 | 30 | 30 | 18 + |
| Total | 15 | 298 | 35 | 30 | 30 | 18 + |
| | | | | | | 37 |

Generally, within the observation periods, 15 cases involved the decision on the preventive measure of banning the attendance of sports events, all of them in 2011 (11 in Novi Sad and 4 in Belgrade) with reference to Section 23 of the Act on the Prevention of Violence and Improper Conduct at Sports Events (Table 5). In addition to this, there were as many as 298 requests for initiating court proceedings for minor offences in the same period, 148 of them in 2010 and 150 in 2011, all concerning violations of the Public

Order Act (Table 5). In 2011, preventive measures were taken in 35 cases of participation in brawls, 30 because of insults, abuse, vile conduct and causing fights, 30 because of indecent, insolent and unscrupulous behaviour, 18 because of quarrel or yelling and 37 due to other reasons (*Violence at sporting events*, Department of Analyses RS MI, Belgrade, 2011), whereas there had been no such measures in 2010 (Table 5).

Table 6. The number of attacks against sports referees and sports events suspended due to public order disturbance during the periods 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 and 01/01/2011-30/06/2011.

| Period | Number of attacks against sports referees | Number of matches suspended due to disturbance of public order |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| 01/01/2010-30/06/2010 | 27 | 46 |
| 01/01/2011-30/06/2011 | 28 | 32 |
| Total | 55 | 78 |

But violence on the occasion of sports manifestations does not affect only the supporters and the police. All participants of these events are threatened by violence, which is frequently directed against referees and delegates. The number of assaulted referees sets this category of participants aside as one of the most seriously threatened. The data in Table 6 show that due to inadequate security conditions at sporting events, there were 55 assaults on the referees and that in 78 cases the sports events were interrupted because of public order disturbances. Out of this number, 27 attacks against referees took place in 2010 and 46 manifestations were interrupted during the same period (Table 6). In 2011, the number of attacks was 28 and 32 sporting events were interrupted, which practically means that, on average, in the first half of 2011 one sporting event was interrupted in every six days in the Republic of Serbia.

POLICE RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE IN SPORTS EVENTS

A particular problem in our country stems from the police practice of relying on traditional police measures taken in response to security threats at sports events, which are regarded to be outdated in the broader international context (Otašević, 2010). A prominent feature of this traditional approach, referred to as 'high profile' approach in the relevant literature, is the conspicuous presence of uniformed police at the venue of a sports event and around it, made evident through intensive official activities in relation to the participants of the public assembly and the number of deployed police officers, as well as the duration of their engagement. An analysis of the above mentioned elements of the deployment of police officers at sporting events will follow.

When analyzing the deployment of police forces for securing the public order during sports events, it may be pointed out that the police are equipped with means for dispersing the crowd, special vehicles, as well as service dogs and horses. The officers are grouped into larger police units and engaged at the order of the commanding officer, who accompanies the unit in the location of its deployment. This strategy is based on the classical concept of creating a buffer zone before the opposing groups of supporters, i.e. preventing the contact between them (by forming cordons or intervention lines), which prevents riots possibly originating from their clash, both on the sports facilities and outside

them (but on the occasion of sporting events). Plans and decision-making regarding the number of deployed police officers and their actions frequently fail to take into consideration the specific traits of different groups of fans (their objectives, nationality, number of extremist fans, culture-specific details, etc.). However, when these differences are not taken into consideration and when the police approaches the task of securing the public order at such an event routinely, the risk of large-scale disturbance of the public order increases.

While performing the tasks related to protecting the public order during sports events the police take measures which include physical security measures, in-depth security, traffic safety, operative crime-investigative action, anti-sabotage and fire protection measures. The measures of physical and in-depth security are of utmost importance. Namely, the physical security measures on the location of the sports facility and in its vicinity are taken in three stages (prior to, during and after the event) with the deployment of strong and very conspicuous police force. In these circumstances, the officers are in charge of admitting the fans to the sports facility, controlling the monitors, preventing the physical contact between the opposing groups, maintaining the order at the venue, and overseeing the dispersal of fans following the event, as well as monitoring the developments in the immediate vicinity.

The number of police officers deployed during high-risk sporting events is best illustrated by the fact that 25,000 spectators attended the Serbian derby between the football clubs of 'Partizan' and 'Crvena zvezda' from Belgrade on October 16, 2004, whereas the police force was 1378-men strong, which means that for the purpose of securing this football match a police officer was deployed per every 18 fans / spectators. Five and a half years later, more precisely, on April 16, 2010, when the semi-final match of the championship took place at the stadium of 'Crvena zvezda', there were around 38,000 spectators, whereas 2843 police officers were deployed to secure the event, which meant the presence of one officer per 13 spectators. This implies that the already extensive involvement of police officers in performing security tasks during high-risk sporting events shows a tendency of increasing, especially with respect to fan groups.

The duration of the activity is of immediate importance for determining the duration of the police force deployment and the number of officers engaged. The law defines the duration of a high-risk sports gathering as the time of the actual event plus 120 minutes before and after it. This means that the minimal duration of deployment the police force for the task of securing the public order at a high-risk sporting event is approximately 360 minutes (six hours). However, when the event is a high-risk football match, the gates sometimes open as many as four hours earlier, due to the large number of spectators who must be scanned upon entering the facility, so that two additional hours are added to the above mentioned time of deployment (at least 480 minutes or eight hours). Therefore the engagement of police officers in charge of securing the public order at sports events lasts at least eight hours, provided that there are no riots, but, depending on the security assessment, the deployment may frequently extend to 12 hours, taking into account the postural status of officers (Bubanj et al. 2010).

In addition to their very presence or being engaged in constabulary and patrol activities, stand-by status, marching, regrouping, and other non-intervention measures, there are actions of police deployed at sporting events which are referred to as interventions.²

² The term 'intervention' originates from the Latin word *interventio* which means interfering or mediating, involvement of a third person in a conflict in the capacity as an arbiter or mediator. The verb 'to intervene' is of

Intervention units can be said to possess individual and collective equipment for riot control. The weight of the individual gear ranges from 12 to 15 kilos. The purpose of this equipment is to protect a police officer by preventing possible injury and encouraging restraint in the use of coercive means, even when there are conditions for the use of force. In the situation of securing public order at sports events, this equipment provides protection, but at the same time presents an additional burden, because it limits the maximum or submaximum intensity of running upon arrival at the scene and restricts the anatomic flexibility of the joints. An additional aggravating circumstance is the movement in an already formed line, because this implies that the troops are positioned diagonally with the outstretched non-dominant leg, allowing the movement in line. In addition to the duty belt and the equipment attached to it (handgun, baton, spare magazine, handcuffs, radio-station), police officers engaged in an intervention also carry shields, which prevents them from using the physical force, police baton or restraining means. When using police batons in such situations, it is obvious that the amplitude of strike is reduced because there is not enough space. The officers will therefore use the batons to strike directly forward in the described situation. However, these strikes allow the opposing party to grab a part of the baton (Vučković, 2005) and try to snatch it from the police officer, who must possess sufficient hand strength and be proficient in the baton-holding techniques in order to resist such attempts (Vučković, 2005).

The use of physical force involves the use of different elements of martial arts or similar techniques on the body of another person, aimed at repelling an attack or subduing the individual offering resistance causing the least harmful consequences. An attack is defined as any action taken in order to cause injury to another person or to deprive a person of life, to forcefully enter a facility or the surrounding space wherein the entry is prohibited, or to prevent a law enforcement officer from executing his legal duty. On the other hand, resistance is defined as any opposition offered to lawful official measures and actions in the form of disregarding orders, kneeling, sitting, lying or taking a similar position by way of passive resistance; hiding or holding on to another person or an object; snatching, showing intention of an assault or taking any such actions as present active resistance. Physical force is used in accordance with the rules of self-defense and the use stops as soon as the assault or the resistance of the person is overcome. The use of physical force can result in the cessation of resistance, whereupon the person is cuffed and searched, objects are seized temporarily, and the person is taken in. If the desired objective cannot be achieved by physical force, the police baton is used. So the use of the police baton is allowed if the more lenient action is ineffective or without promise of success.

The service baton is used by hitting a person in the areas of large groups of upper arm or leg muscles, primarily in the regions of upper arm, leg or the gluteus. Restrictions for the use of police baton involve the prohibition to use it in the areas of the head, neck, vertebral column, thorax, genitals and articulations, except as a last resort. The use of the police baton is also limited in the case of children (persons 14 and younger), apparently ill, emaciated or disabled persons, and women whose pregnancy is obvious, against all of whom this means of coercion may be used only if any such person should threaten the life of another person by the use of firearms, tools or other dangerous objects. The use of police baton may result in the cessation of resistance, whereupon the person is cuffed and

the same origin (*intervenire*) which means to interfere or become involved in something, such as a conflict, for instance, as a mediator, to mediate or ... exert pressure, influence someone, act on behalf of someone or advocate something (Vujaklija, 1996/97).

searched, items are temporarily seized and the person is apprehended. If the legitimate objective cannot be achieved using this measure, then more powerful means of coercion can be used, in keeping with the principle of the gradual use of force.

Finally, the means of restraint may be used in order to: 1) prevent resistance of a person or repel an attack against a law enforcement officer; 2) prevent the escape of persons; 3) prevents self-injury or inflicting injury to another person. The means of restraint include, as a rule, the cuffing of the person's hands in front of or behind his back. The restraint means include the handcuffs, zap straps, and other items designed for this purpose. The same restrictions apply to restraining as in the case of police baton.

The police duties related to interventions aimed at ensuring the security of sports events and preventing or suppressing violence take place in the circumstances of high emotional, intellectual and perception tension, as well as stress-inducing effects of being exposed to risks, such as threats to one's physical integrity and endangered lives (Milošević et al. 1995). These are the circumstances in which police troops are to perform various modalities of manifest movements, such as running with or without changing direction (covering both short and long sections), an activity in which cardio-respiration potentials play a prominent role (Zemkova, 2010), then the actions of pulling or pushing, as the segments of the basic motor skills (BMS) and in some situations they use techniques of Special Physical Education (SPE), such as throws, levers, kicks and blocs, using the police baton or means of restraint (Blagojević et al. 2005), as well as firearms (Vučković et al. 2008). The intervening actions of police officers at sports manifestations are very frequent. For instance, the current data for the years 2009 and 2010 point out to the fact that approximately the same number of police interventions was undertaken by the police at sporting events in the course of both years, so that the police intervened 110 times in 2009 and 111 times in 2010 (*The most remarkable results of the Republic of Serbia MI in 2010*, RS MI, Belgrade, 2011).

There has been some foreign research related to the estimation of the physical fitness of police officers and their preparedness. A study carried out in the US proved that police officers were less capable than the persons they arrested (Copay & Charles, 1988). This was the reason why the country introduced a physical aptitude test comprising four elements: a deep seated forward bend to check flexibility, the number of bends per minute to check local muscular endurance, bench press to check the maximum strength of arm extensors, and a running test of 2000 m (1.5 miles) to test aerobic endurance. The police officers must be able to achieve results exceeding 40 percent relative to the age and gender based on the sample nationwide population (Copay & Charles, 1988).

Another study in the US focused on analyzing the police officers' movement tasks. The sample comprised 267 subjects whose physical activities were monitored. The observation period lasted one month or 14 shifts. The observation included the situations in which the police officers had to intervene. The situations in which a police officer had to approach the scene by running occurred in 50 % of the cases and the average distance they had to run was 87 m, the shortest distance being 5 m, and the longest 350 m. The police officers had to run either changing the intensity of this activity or maximizing it in 43% of the situations. Upon direct intervention, actions that prevailed were that of pushing and pulling, occurring in as many as 93 % of the situations, and these were followed by rotating and turning the persons, as well as exerting control over them in 86 % of the situations (Anderson et al., 2001). The same study concluded that most activities involved in the intervention demanded sub maximal or maximal exertion, which implies

that a police officer must undergo adequate physical preparations that would allow for his successful performance of police tasks. The sample consisting of 34 experienced officers working in urban settings with high crime rates was observed in a study exploring the relations between the aerobic capability levels (VO_{2max}) and the response of the cardiovascular system, focusing on the heart rate and systolic and diastolic blood pressure (HR, SBP, DBP), in situations involving the decision on the use of firearms during an interactive video simulation with two different stress-generating scenarios. Using the multiple regression analysis, a statistically significant positive relation was established between VO_{2max} and the intensity of the monitored reaction variables of the cardiovascular system. The strongest partial relation was established in terms of systolic and diastolic blood pressure variables (ΔSBP i ΔDBP). Thus it proved that the police officers with higher levels of aerobic preparedness were able to compensate faster in stressful situations, using more flexible mechanisms of cardiovascular adaptation (Clayton et al., 1993).

The analysis of individual measures from the aspect of applied physical activity can be reduced to analyzing the elements of offender apprehension because the two other measures (detention and deprivation of liberty) are not possible without it. Besides, the use of coercive means most often takes place in the circumstances preceding or executing this measure, whereas in the cases of detaining individuals or depriving them of their liberty this measure is less likely to occur, and when it does so, it does not deviate from the pattern of the apprehension.

Prior to exercising police powers in the cases of violence during sports events, it is most frequently necessary to gather police units, organize marches aimed at their regrouping, deploying cordons and engaging in intervention. As a result of the intervention, all persons who are identified as perpetrators of crimes and violations should be apprehended.

However, if the person refuses to follow or resists the arrest despite the issued warning, the police officer shall use coercion. This means that in such circumstances the police officer has the right and duty to use coercive means (most frequently open-hand techniques, police baton, firearms, restraining means) in a legally justified and appropriate way, in order to overcome resistance or repel an attack and to bring the said person before the competent authority.

The police officer shall also restrain the persons who resist the apprehension, try to escape, assault the police officer or another person, or attempt to incur self-inflicted injury. In order to subdue the person, it is usually necessary to use coercive means, most often physical force and/or police baton, followed by using the means of restraint.

When using the means of restraint, a physical contact between the police officer and the restrained person is inevitable, which affects the safety of the officer to a great extent and therefore causes tension and stress (Vučković, 2003, 2005^b) which are more easily eliminated by the officers who are more physically apt (Milovanović, 2003).

Having successfully overcome resistance or repelled the attack, a police officer shall search the person he has apprehended in order to find and seize objects convenient for the purpose of attacking other persons or inflicting self-injury. The search is physically demanding because it implies exerting control over a person in the upright position by placing the person against a surface and establishing a body contact between the officer and person searched, whereupon a large portion of the offender's body weight is transferred onto the officer (Dujković et al. 2009). If the searched person is restrained on the ground, the requested level of physical ability is marked by the rotation of the body onto

one side (left or right) as well as the techniques for bringing the person in the upright position (Dujković et al. 2009).

CONCLUSION

Police work and security threats to law enforcement officers raise numerous questions that cannot be answered without exploring the effects of determinants exerting influence on the observed phenomenon. The engagement of police officers during sporting events in the Republic of Serbia is characterized by the following specific conditions: the officers are obliged to expose themselves to danger and work long hours at any location and at any time, to work overtime and at the orders of the superior officer, to be exposed to unfavorable weather conditions, resolve a large number of conflicts under the burden of stress and other factors which may affect their health. Besides these, problems have been identified regarding the continuous likelihood of being wounded or sustaining injuries resulting in permanent disability, as well as stress relating to difficulties in making decisions on the use of force and firearms (where there is a possibility of wounding or killing another person).

In order for police officers to be successful in their activities of providing public safety at sporting events, in the circumstances characterized by the above mentioned problems, the officers involved should, among other things, possess a certain level of *specific professional skills and capabilities*. Basic motorist capabilities have been identified as a significant factor in the sphere of physical actions of police related to violence at sports events in the Republic of Serbia (as a prerequisite of lawful and efficient engagement). They are to be combined with the skills of self-defense and attack techniques as part of the use of coercive means, especially open-hand techniques, use of the police baton and binding means. There are the prerequisites for both non-intervening activities (stand-by, formation - from inspection line to marching and regrouping, beat and patrol duties, communications, etc.) and interventions (cordons restricting the movement of the crowd, the use of police powers and the use of force) in the given circumstances.

The listed activities of law enforcement officers constitute distinctive features of their working profile. The scope of these activities is not of significance for their working profile with respect to the overall number of criminal offences and violations, criminal reports, injuries of the participants, material damage, and other indices of serious violence at sports events. However, analyses of consequences of criminal offences and violations taking place on the occasion of sports events (the murder of Brice Taton in 2009) and the study of security threats involved therein, make the problem of violence at sporting events and its marked hooliganism one of the most important national security issues in the Republic of Serbia, closely following terrorism and organized crime.

Efficient performance of tasks and assignments relevant for the intervention of RS MI employees in the situations of suppressing violence at sports events depends on the physical fitness of police officers who should timely perform adequate movements of certain amplitudes, speed, synchronization, precision and strength, whether in situ or jumping and moving in different directions and with different intensity, covering shorter or longer distances in various weather, spatial and other conditions. These physical activities are inevitably situational physical activities aimed at preventing violence occurring during sports events.

Bearing this in mind, some questions can be raised regarding the existing educational curricula and the need for continuous redesigning and implementation of new syllabuses focusing on the execution of police duties and the use of police powers. Besides, the permanent development of personal and professional integrity is very important, as well as cherishing the notion of accountability of police officers, which contributes to personal mental and physical development. At the same time, we should bear in mind that successful interventions aimed at reinstating public order at sports events frequently depends both on the officers' mental and physical preparedness for such tasks and on certain educational aspects of his personality, such as neatness, decency, personal and professional respectability. Further research in the sphere of violence at sports events in the Republic of Serbia as a factor bearing impact on the physical actions of the police officers should focus on exploring its mental and educational aspect.

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FIZIČKE SPOSOBNOSTI POLICIJSKIH SNAGA KAO PREDUSLOV ZA SUZBIJANJE NASILJA NA SPORTSKIM DOGAĐAJIMA U REPUBLICI SRBIJI

Goran Vučković, Dane Subošić, Dalibor Kekić

Nasilje na sportskim događajima se smatra naročito velikim problemom u Republici Srbiji. Kao odgovor na to, policijske snage imaju zadatak da obave određene bezbedonosne zadatke pre javnih okupljanja, koja se pre svega tiču održavanja javnog reda u slučajevima velikih nemira. Da bi se osiguralo da su policijske snage sposobne da izvrše ovakve zadatke na zakonit i efikasan način, one bi trebalo da budu dobro pripremljene, što se postiže povećanjem njihove utreniranosti (onoga što bi oni trebalo da znaju) i njihovih radnih profila (ono što bi oni trebalo da rade). Priprema i primena posebnih bezbedonosnih zadataka može se prikazati kao jednakostrani trougao, pri čemu svaka strana prikazuje po jedan element obrazovnog i radnog profila. Tako bi strane prikazivale: 1) fizičke sposobnosti policajaca, 2) njihovu opremu i 3) taktike angažovanja. Ovaj rad bavi se problemom fizičke pripremljenosti policajaca kao preduslov za sprečavanje nasilja na sportskim događajima u Republici Srbiji, kao što se i može vieti iz naslova.

Ključne reči: nasilje, sportski događaji, policija, fizička pripremljenost, primenjene fizičke aktivnosti.