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**ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ В СИСТЕМІ
ПІДВИЩЕННЯ КВАЛІФІКАЦІЇ ФАХІВЦІВ
ФІЗИЧНОГО ВИХОВАННЯ І СПОРТУ**

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BILLIARDS AS A MEANS OF INCREASING STUDENTS' PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES

Panchenko V. B., stud.
Sumy State University
valpanchenko@yahoo.com

Introduction: Billiards is an umbrella term for a variety of sports played on a special kind of cloth-covered table with the use of a cue and a set of billiard balls. While billiard sports do not appear to be of particular relevance or importance in terms of physical exercise, in fact they do have numerous advantages for both physical and intellectual development. Billiard sports, being relatively undemanding in terms of physical preparation, can be introduced to the higher education system as a new type of physical activities in order to provide an opportunity for universities to encourage better attendance of Physical Training and possibly lay the foundation for competitions between universities.

Intention: To stimulate students' attendance of Physical Training classes by drawing their attention to the possibility of keeping fit both physically and mentally in a recreational way.

Mental health benefits.

While game rules may vary, the basic idea in billiards is either to move the balls to the desired position or "pot" them - to place the desired ball into the table's pocket, using a cue to direct the movement of the balls. Upon trying to reach this objective, the player uses his/her basic knowledge of geometry and physics to calculate the degree and the force at which the ball is to be hit. Having to repeat these calculation- estimation actions throughout the game develops the player's thinking abilities, sharpens his mind and stimulates attention to details.

A game of billiards can have a great impact on the person's concentration capabilities and helps to build focus. The fact that the situation on a billiards table is unpredictable also stimulates the player's cognitive skills, as well as imagination, problem-solving abilities and strategic thinking, as the player is interested in

planning his actions several steps ahead in order to leave the opponent in an unfavorable position. Such combination of mathematical thinking and constant focusing exercise has proved to stimulate logical thinking in everyday situations and to decrease anxiety and the risk of panic attacks.

Physical health benefits. An hour-long game of billiards can burn up to 200 calories, which, while not being a lot in comparison with more physically demanding sports, is still a visible amount. Billiards may not be effective for losing weight or muscle training, but it is most certainly a way to casually keep yourself in a decent shape. One can single out three main types of movements common to a game of billiards: walking, leaning and stretching. Walking provides low-impact stimulation of hip and leg muscles, since a player can make over 100 trips around the table in 1 hour. Leaning and stretching are also common actions, since a player often has to lean over the table to reach the necessary ball or to get the desired angle. While being very mild forms of exercise, such movements still contribute to improving arm and back flexibility in a prospect.

Research: A recent study of the University of Copenhagen in Denmark showed that playing billiards, besides the obvious health benefits, can also slow down the aging process, especially in men as it combines passive and active activity throughout the game. It has also been proved that billiards is an effective tool for socializing and bonding as it suits all ages and social groups.

Conclusion: Even though billiard sports are unlikely to show any immediate results, they can be an advantageous addition to the education process in all higher education institutions, including Sumy State University, for this type of sports provides not only mild physical training that can perfectly suit students who as a rule are not inclined to visiting Physical Training classes, but also contributes to the development of students' intellectual capabilities that undoubtedly play a significant role in the students' performance and in the university environment in general. Notwithstanding the high price of the required equipment, this type of sports can be a valuable asset and improvement to Physical Training in higher education institutions.