

# **STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KARATE SPORTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

**Nazim KURTOVIC**

*American University of Europe FON, Skopje 1000, North Macedonia  
Corresponding author e-mail: nazim.kurtovic@fon.edu.mk*

---

## **Abstract**

In this text, we present a strategy for the systematization of the Karate Federation of Republic of North Macedonia (KFM) that created conditions for the continuous achievement of the highest sports goals. The imposed tempo with a strong focus on all factors in KFM towards achieving success resulted in the realization of a strong social authority. Such position put karate on the list of one of the sports in the country with most trophies won and entered the narrowest circle of the most successfully organized sports institutions. In order to achieve that in KFM, it was necessary to set sustained general and specific objectives and relationships that will regulate this activity while determining the strategy of its development. By that strategy, we meant a target-oriented, dynamically organized set of interventions and actions that included tasks, deadlines and their implementation method. Seen from this temporal distance, with all its good and bad sides, the established strategy led to an organizational and result renaissance that will generally be remembered as a golden era in the history of sports in North Macedonia.

*Keywords:* KFM, Karate, Strategy, Results, Organization

---

## **Introduction**

At the moment, karate sport has a special place in the Republic of North Macedonia. The karate sport is an integral part of the identity of a large number of citizens, enriches our general and sports culture, helps in the development of the mind and body of all generations, and makes us better and more prepared for the challenges of the modern world. Due to its specificity, karate is particularly valuable because it provides a real opportunity to develop the abilities of self-confidence, discipline, honesty, socialization, solidarity, rational setting of one's own goals, respect for rules, respect for others, tolerance, acceptance of competition, appreciation of work, etc. In the continuation of this text, we briefly present the platform on which the adopted strategic plan was adopted.

## **Basic directions of the strategy**

### **Vision**

The vision of this strategic plan was aimed at improving the conditions and the quality of the work of the clubs and individuals who are members of the KFM by creating an organized system of functioning with high-quality professional staff. Such a system was supposed to create conditions for the synergy of all organs and bodies in the Federation, and thus a realistic expectation of high sports results at the international level.

## **Mission**

The mission was aimed at creating conditions for everyone to get the opportunity to create and play sports equally, and to develop their own technical, professional, and competitive staff, which will later be able to achieve top organizational and sports results over a longer period.

Expected results

The results we expected from this strategic plan were:

- enabling better coordination between all factors of the sports system in KFM and respecting all regulations and acts that regulate the area of good functioning of KFM, including establishing greater control over the implementation and realization of this strategy as well.
- dispersion of quality outside the capital, i.e. increasing the number of athletes and clubs that can equally and successfully participate in domestic and international sports competitions;
- more children and youth of school age to participate in organized sports activities within the framework of KFM;
- more volunteers to be involved in the sports activities of KFM;
- KFM athletes to win more medals at major international sports competitions;
- introducing organized instructions for coaches and competitors in order to improve the professional work primarily by increasing the number of professionally educated and trained sports experts;
- improving the coherence of the system of financing athletes at all levels, including a more precise and clear definition of criteria and procedures for transparent financing of programs in the field of top karate sports;
- establishing a system of self-sustainability of sports organizations, by improving and strengthening the partnership between the sports and the business sector;
- establishing equally systematic planning of the development of the sports branches kata and kumite.
- increasing the participation of promising athletes in major competitions in the field of top sports;
- increasing the capacity of the sports system factors in KFM by organizing trainings for writing programs and projects;
- inclusion of more women in sports, participation in the managerial work of the sports clubs, as well as in the KFM bodies, including the refereeing and coaching apparatus.
- improving the existing conditions in which the sports clubs operate and construction of all the missing sports infrastructure;
- KFM to share the sports resources and facilities with other National Sports Federations from the region, especially in cases where it reduces costs and provides better conditions for all the participants in the sports system;
- reducing the presence and impact of negative occurrences in sports;
- connecting sports with other areas of social life;
- promoting the true values through the media and bringing karate closer to all citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia;
- increasing the number of top sports results at international sports competitions;
- increasing the number of international karate competitions that are organized in the Republic of North Macedonia.
- organizing sports camps, increasing the number of athletes participating in these camps.
- increasing the number of scholarship athletes who receive a scholarship for sports training.
- increasing the number of qualified sports experts engaged in KFM;

## **Implementation**

We defined the implementation of the planned Strategy with an Action Plan, which was an integral part of the strategy. The plan defined general and specific objectives, measures and activities for their implementation, factors in charge of their implementation, time frames and, finally, an assessment of whether material resources are needed for their realization.

## **Monitoring**

We carried out the monitoring at regular intervals, in accordance with the elements of the Action Plan. To establish a unique and formal reporting system, KFM established transparent procedures and formats for reporting in accordance with the practice to cooperate with the public sector, the Agency for Sports and Youth, the MOK, and the Anti-Doping Agency of the Republic of Macedonia.

## **Evaluation**

With the evaluation we identified the progress in the implementation of this strategy and, depending on the results, we continuously proposed corrective measures and changes. The evaluation was carried out regularly, once every six months, using different data sources, including the annual report on the work of all organs and bodies. The Expert Council of the KFM was used as a basic data source, and the same is based on defined indicators. All the internal information was systematically compared with the external sources of information, such as interviews of individuals, surveys of the sports clubs' management representatives, and other sources. Depending on the type of indicator, we assessed the effects of the planned and implemented activities.

The cross-section was presented according to the degree of implementation of the activities:

- an implemented program meant that the activity was carried out in accordance with the expectations and that no additional measures were needed;
- partially implemented program - the activity has been implemented, but additional measures were needed to improve the quality of the performance to upgrade to the planned level;
- not implemented - the activity has not been implemented and additional measures were needed to implement the planned activity.

The Management Board of KFM evaluates the degree of realization of the activities via the annual report and can revise the Strategy in order to improve its efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation contains recommendations, conclusions, lessons learned and shows the best practice in the matter of implementing the Strategy.

## **Notification**

The Management Board of KFM annually prepares and publishes reports on the implementation of the work performed on its website. Based on that, we reviewed the priorities and planned activities in the Action Plan, in order to ensure that they remain relevant and can meet the needs at the professional and organizational levels.

## **Implementation of the strategy**

After the reforms made by the new management of the KFM, the most optimal direction for the further development of the karate sports was the creation of a large national project in which it will be necessary:

- to gather data for the present status and to analyze the situation with all the factors for karate development;
- to define the standards and the value of the optimal state of the karate sports in North Macedonia;
- to decide on the priorities and goals of the development of the individual elements of the sports system;
- to define a development strategy that will include an action plan, action methods, implementation deadlines, follow up and control of the development, as well as an evaluation of the achievements in the sports system of KFM.

While collecting data for the actual condition we identified the most important elements of the organization system, and the training and contest process. Those were supposed to become an integral part of the total strategy of karate development in North Macedonia. In the analysis of the initial status we noticed several basic flaws, for e.g.

- Missing the transparent interaction between the sports clubs and NSF
- Less coordinated bodies of KFM
- Low level of referee staff and unorganized referee organization
- Low level of education of the professional and technical staff in KFM
- Low implementation of professional and scientific research work in the sports system
- Unprofessional staff in the commission for contests
- Inappropriate technology for sports preparations, inconsistency of the procedures for selection of the national teams and monitoring of the potential top athletes.
- Missing the international collaboration on professional and competition levels.
- Low media coverage of the karate sports activities
- No existing plan for improving the financial capacities and sports infrastructure
- Missing program for prevention of negative occurrences in karate sports
- Missing the inclusion of qualified experts of science and professional areas
- Missing serious inclusion of KFM representatives in international sports associations like BKF, EKF and WKF.

## **Challenges in the implementation of the strategies and strategic frames**

We should define the ways of acquiring the identified challenges for a successful implementation of the Strategy priorities. As a starting point for the creation of the strategy for the KFM development, we used the abovementioned results of the previously done qualitative and quantitative analysis of the current organizational state, as well as the sports achievements to the available capacities of the organs and bodies (space capacities, material possibilities, professional and scientific staff, top athletes, talented athletes, technical staff etc.). We located our strong and weak sides in the internal factors, while in the section on external factors we noted the possibilities and the eventual difficulties or dangers. In addition, we took into account the current interests, wishes, and needs - at the club and individual levels of all participants in the Karate Federation. To be legally sure, it was necessary to include experts with theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as basic knowledge of the regulating laws for the relations between subjects in sports and the state of technological processes typical of karate sports.

## **Strategy Priorities**

### **Creating standards in relation to sports organization**

Since karate is characterized by a wide range of organizational forms ranging from rehabilitation measures to top sports competitions, it was important to meet the specific requirements of the training and competition process in this range of offers and forms of action. It was necessary to determine the functions and mutual relations of the basic institutions in the organizational scheme consisting of the National Olympic Committee, the Agency for Youth and Sports, the sports associations and the faculties of sports in our country. In a strategic sense, the organizational structure of the karate sports should have been supplemented with research actions, especially for the representative team, in cooperation with the Faculty of Sports and Health and the commission for science and sports within the Olympic Committee of the Republic of North Macedonia. The organizational prerequisites for achieving top sports results referred to the creation of a system of different organizations and institutions that are in synergy with each other and are organized in such a way that they will have a pyramidal character that is, they will enable massiveness in the base - the clubs, and at the highest levels, a filtered elite a perch focused on high sporting achievements. In each level of dealing with the general and competitive activity, there should be a clear definition of the participants, the content of engagement, the level and type of professional treatment, the conditions for carrying out the activities, and the ways to control the effects. All this had to be incorporated into one system, and be part of a network of internal organs and bodies of the federation and institutions from different systems in the order for them to be able to implement their goals and tasks through primary and secondary forms of action.

### **Establishment of an expert body that will coordinate and manage the implementation of the strategy**

In order to facilitate the realization of the tasks we formed an expert body called the EXPERT COUNCIL, which was at the top of the pyramid of all organs and bodies in the KFM. The expert council was supposed to constantly generate progressive ideas that, implemented in a strategy, would move forward the KFM. The first step was the creation of clear and unambiguous rules for the work of all organs and bodies in the KFM, namely:

- Registration Regulations
- Competition Regulations
- Referee's Rulebook
- Disciplinary Rules

The second step was the creation of quality criteria for the selection and work of the national coaches, for the selection and financing of the national representatives, as well as criteria for the ranking of clubs and individuals. The first two steps were of particular importance as they had to create the legal trajectory inside the federation. The implementation of a strategy required teamwork, while the set rules and clearly defined carriers of the implementation of the activities required for the implementation of this strategy were a good prerequisite for a completed task. After defining the priority areas, we focused the strategy on:

## **Networking of all KFM organs and bodies in one team**

After the rules were established inside the KFM, the goal was to raise the capacities at all levels. Based on the proposals and suggestions of the Expert Council, approved by the headquarters of the KFM, all organs and bodies require a capable and motivated staff, i.e. the organs and bodies of the KFM should consist of capable, motivated and coordinated individuals who will provide quality conditions for the realization of the tasks within their competences.

## **Transparent interaction between home clubs and NSF**

It was important for the federation to function with maximum transparency, i.e. all activities of the headquarters, and of the bodies of KFM to be automatically shared via email correspondence with all the member clubs of the KFM. It turned out to be extremely important because we had excellent feedback from the base. They were familiar with all the decisions of the KFM headquarters and could immediately, if needed, give opinions, suggestions, criticisms, etc. which was an ideal corrector of the organizational and professional work, but also the KFM policy in general.

General objective: improving the internal communication

Specific objectives: creating conditions for trust in the work of the headquarters and the expert bodies in KFM;

## **Reforming the referee organizations;**

Based on the analysis made, and the general conclusion of all clubs and individuals from KFM, the referee staff was one of the weakest points in KFM, which was quite ignorant and subjective. As a first step, we proposed to hire a person-mentor from abroad who will have a formal high referee title and the capacity to educate the domestic referee staff. In addition, we proposed that the domestic competition system, especially the state championships and optional tournaments for the higher age categories, be covered by at least two, and in some cases, more foreign referees (called from the region) per arena with the aim of impartial and objective judging. In that way, great mental relief was possible for the competitors and coaches when the judging factor was in question. This is how the best competitors who were supposed to represent the country at major competitions were filtered. Moreover, the enviable number of foreign referees was an excellent tactical move and a long-term investment in the direction of logistics and support for our competitors at major international championships.

General objective: improving the quality of refereeing competitions

Specific objectives: education of the referee staff and creation of conditions for international logistics of major competitions.

## **Education of the coaching staff;**

The level of load to which athletes are subjected, the choice and time of training programs, and the application of methods to control the achieved effects, require that the training process be led by educated and professionally competent trainers. Within the framework of the strategy, we proposed to organize a school for coaches, or rather a karate academy for coaches, in which the lecturers will be eminent professors from sports and auxiliary sciences. It was mandatory for all the coaches of the home clubs to participate, but also for the interested athletes. The education of the coaches and other professional staff was based on the most up-to-date educational workshops that were supposed to increase their level of knowledge. The lectures were designed to be held long-term, theoretically, and practically in annual cycles. We felt this approach was necessary due to the demands set by the top sports, and due to the large number of factors that need to be

programmed and controlled. The idea was for the coaches to learn that science and experts from different profiles must be involved in the training process - doctors, kinesitherapists, nutritionists, psychologists, biomechanics, engineers, computer professionals, etc. They were involved in certain segments of sports preparation as advisors. And, if they needed, they were involved in direct work with the athletes as well. From a strategic point of view, it was necessary because we believed that the areas of professional competencies, tasks, and responsibilities of experts from different profiles should be demarcated into sports preparation, athletes, and sports results. It was much easier for the team of experts led by educated practitioners with extensive coaching experience to realize the projected tasks in such an environment.

General objective: creating a competent coaching staff

Specific objectives: education of the coaching staff and creation of conditions for building new generations of top athletes.

### **Professional and scientific research work in the sports systems**

A federation whose goal is for athletes to achieve top results simply has to have a high level of scientific and professional work, so cooperation with centers and individuals engaged in scientific and professional work in the field of sports is a new dimension and gave an additional impetus to the development of sports achievements. The experts from auxiliary sciences could solve many theoretical and methodological issues of sports training and determine the conditions for achieving optimal conditions of training. The transfer of knowledge was complete precisely because coaches, athletes, and sports scientists participated together in seminars and workshops during the karate academy. Although we predicted it, unfortunately, the conditions were not created to form a scientific research center at KFM that would primarily deal with research in the field of karate sports and martial arts in general. It was very realistically feasible since we have an enviable number of high-quality scientific staff with a karate background. The plan also foresaw the construction of a facility for martial arts, in which a diagnostic and rehabilitation center with a scientific research laboratory would function. However, although this did not come true within the framework of the KFM, with our suggestions and projects as members of the commission for science and sport at the National Olympic Committee, we managed to make that idea a reality and such a center is already in operation.

General objective: the creation of a regional scientific research base

Specific objectives: establishment of a diagnostic and rehabilitation center with a scientific research laboratory, organization of congresses, professional consultations, round tables, in the domain of martial arts, education of the coaching staff, and creation of conditions for the creation of new generations of top athletes.

### **Reforming the competition commission;**

The competition commission is one of the key commissions that had to implement the tasks in the field. That is why it was of crucial importance to be in the closest relationship with the Expert Council. We influenced the introduction of coaching consultations related to the adoption (refreshing) of the competition rules as well as obtaining a coaching license as a condition for the immediate management of the competitor in the arena. We modified the competition rules according to the WKF rules. We proposed to digitize the competition system with modern software, to hire an agency for physical security - wardens at the arenas to relieve the arenas of unlicensed trainers, athletes, spectators, etc. who don't need to be there. The idea was that all competitors should be registered a week earlier, to be able to create an accurate agenda - an hourly schedule, allowing competitors from certain categories not to exhaust themselves waiting too long in and around the gym, but to come later at an optimal time, to be measured in the afternoon and to perform well-rested. It was of great importance to all the clubs because there used to be no hourly schedule and they had to come early and exhaustingly wait until the evening hours for their members to perform, especially if they were coming from far away. Multiple email reminders were introduced in the registration process for all the

competitions. After the registration is done, the commission sends the completed registration to the club, and then the club confirms the accuracy. In this way, many misunderstandings and unnecessary waiting and delays at the beginning of the competitions are avoided. There were certain conditions for the correct recording of the results, especially through the use of software, with which was possible to later summarize the recorded results more easily and to make a quick and easy ranking. We simultaneously created a criterion for ranking clubs, coaches, and competitors.

General objective: improvement of organizational work in karate sports.

Specific objectives: systematization and highly professional organization and implementation of the competition process in KFM;

### **Elaboration of the criteria for ranking clubs, coaches and competitors**

The idea was to conduct an objective ranking and to create rankings for the most successful club, the most successful coach, the most successful athlete, and candidates for a scholarship awarded by the Agency for Youth and Sports.

Scoring We based the scoring on winning points on the following bases: points for achieved placement; points for electoral victories; points for an optional tie score in the kumite team; points for participation. Thus, we multiplied the total points won for each match with weight coefficients that depend on the rank of the match and the age category of the competitor.

1. Points for achieved placement - the competitors receive them based on achieved ranking in official competitions from the KFM and WKF Calendar for the current year.
2. Points for an optional win or optional tie result - the competitor receives them for each optional victory with an opponent or an optional tie score with an opponent in team kumite.
3. Points for participation - the competitor receive them for participating in official competitions from the KFM and WKF Calendar for the current year, except for the State Championships and State Selection Tournaments.
4. Additional scoring - If two or more competitors have won the same number of points, and it is necessary to choose the better one, additional scoring is applied. The result from the State Championship from the mutual duel between the two competitors is taken as an additional scoring. If the contestants did not have a joint duel at the State Championship, the competitor who has a better ranking at the State Championship is declared the best. If the two competitors have the same ranking at the State Championship (for example, 3rd place) or did not have a mutual duel at the same event, the best competitor is chosen on the proposal of the selector of the appropriate age category, with the decision of the Executive Board..

**Table 1.** Official competitions in the KFM calendar and weight coefficients

No.	Competition rank	Coefficient
1	Olympic Games	18
2	World Championship	12
3	European Championship/European Games	6
4	Karate 1- Premier League	6
5	Karate 1 – Series A	3
6	Karate 1 – Youth League	3
7	Youth World Cup	3
8	Balkan Championship	2
9	Mediterranean Championship	2
10	State Championship/State Selection Tournament	1



**Table 2.** Age categories and weight coefficients

No.	Age Category	Coefficient
1	Seniors	1
2	Seniors U21	0.8
3	Juniors	0.6
4	Cadets	0.4
5	Children aged 11-14	0.2

**Table 3.** Points for achieved placement

No.	Competition rank	1-st	2-nd	3-rd	5-th	7-th
1	Olympic Games	100	70	40	30	20
2	World Championship	100	70	40	30	20
3	European Championship/European Games	100	70	40	30	-
4	Karate 1- Premier League	100	70	40	30	20
5	Karate 1 – Series A	100	70	40	30	-
6	Karate 1 – Youth League	100	70	40	30	-
7	Youth World Cup	100	70	40	30	-
8	Balkan Championship	100	70	40	-	-
9	Mediterranean Championship/Games	100	70	40	-	-
10	State Championship/State Selection Tournament	100	70	40	-	-

### **Points for an optional win or optional tie (a)**

10 points for each electoral victory, 5 points for each electoral tie in team matches of kumite. At the State Championship/State Tournament, only the victories of the competitors who have points for achieved placement are considered. Elected Win/Tie Points are awarded for each elected win/tie an opponent, including wins where the opponent started but did not finish the fight due to KIKEN.

### **Points for participation (b)**

5 points per match; Points for participation are awarded to a competitor who participated in at least one fight in the match.

### **Points won in team performances (c)**

In the kata teams, the competitors receive one third of the team's total points. In the kumite teams, the points for achieved placement and the points for participation are divided by the number of active competitors (5 for the male kumite team, and 3 for the female kumite team) and the same are received by all the competitors who are part of the team. Competitors receive points for an optional victory and an optional tie only for the victories and ties that they personally won against an opponent.

## **Method of calculation of points**

The total number of points that the competitor won in a match is calculated according to the following formula:

$$(a + b + c) * f1 * f2 = N$$

Where: a – participation points; b – points for selected wins/tie scores; c – points for achieved placement  
f1 – weight coefficient for match rank; f2 – weight coefficient for age category; N – total number of points scored in the match

Example: Calculation of points for a competitor - junior, who won a 3rd place at the European Championship, with 4 selected victories.

$$(5 + (4*10) + 40) * 6 * 0.6 = 306$$

General objective: creation of a reasoned ranking criterion.

Specific objectives: objective quantification and evaluation of the results;

## **Development of the ultimate sports system**

A top sports system implies timeliness, optimality, and integrity of the functioning of all its components. Timeliness primarily refers to the influence on home and national coaches to pay attention to the selection procedures, inclusion in the training process, and an appropriate approach in terms of the type and level of training load and timing of the maximum sports form. Compliance with these requirements is of particular importance in the selection process, that is, the selection of young athletes where early or late inclusion in the system of sports preparation can result in irreparable failures. We had the idea through our suggestions to achieve comprehensive coordinated coverage of all the problems (in the professional and scientific sense) and comprehensive treatment of all abilities, characteristics, and knowledge of the athlete relevant to his sports achievements and personal health.

General objective: development of a top sports system

Specific objectives: ensuring changes that will manifest in continuous improvement of the sports achievements;

## **Selection of future top athletes**

Selection is the process of choosing talented individuals who, according to certain criteria, could achieve high sports results. The selection process should start early enough and at a time when it is possible to determine with great certainty the most important anthropological dimensions in potential athletes. The selection of athletes is made by comparing the characteristics of the athletes with explicitly determined characteristics of sports models. And, also, by analyzing the similarity of the anthropological profile of the individual and the dimensions found in the hierarchical structure of the equation for sports' success specifications (Milanović 2019). Therefore, for a successful selection, it is necessary to know what distinguishes an athlete who could achieve a top result in a certain discipline in the sport of karate. Therefore, it was necessary to develop quality criteria for the selection of future top athletes in KFM. We insisted on selecting a group of top and promising competitors first, who will later be provided with conditions for good sports preparation and active participation in as many major competitive events as possible. To create models of top athletes who will become the target of future generations, it was necessary to qualitatively assess the most important characteristics of the selected competitors and monitor their changes (qualitative and quantitative) which happened by the dynamics of the development of their sports achievements in a longitudinal cycle.

General objective: creating a skeleton of established and promising athletes.

Specific objectives: enabling conditions for active participation in major competitive events;

## **Technology for sports preparation and selection of national teams**

According to Milanović (2021), the technology for sports preparation consists of a quality system of measures for training, competition, and recovery. Each stage of the development of the sport should be characterized by clearly defined criteria and standards of training, an appropriate number and level of competing, and appropriate and different methods of recovery. In this field, uncritical recipes are often used that coaches remember from their personal sports development and are recommended without special professional and scientific support. It is especially noticeable during the training of young athletes. Coaches do not distinguish enough between the technology of working with young people and the technology of working with already established elite athletes. Due to this wrong approach, it happens young athletes enter the senior category with incomplete knowledge and incompletely developed basic and specific motor skills. Thus, thanks to inadequate training technology, many of them remained on the threshold of top sports and did not realize their potential. Accordingly, we demanded an end to the premature forcing of talented athletes, especially with performances in various tournaments and championships for children from the youngest age categories in Kumite. According to the standards of EKF and WKF on the EC and WC, the youngest age category with the right to perform is children (cadets) aged 14-16. That argument served as a guiding plane for us to propose the abolition of kumite competitions for children under the age of 14 at the national level. That proposal was accepted by the headquarters and was successfully implemented for several seasons. However, later under the pressure of the leading people from the Balkan federation who officially introduced such an age category into the competition system.

Although in our opinion it was introduced for commercial reasons, the management of the KFM decided to support the decision of the BKF. Unfortunately, that trend later spread like a domino system, so now such tournaments are organized under the name of European and World Cups for children. This hybrid approach (pressing) by accelerating the sports development of young athletes for the benefit of sports clubs, traces the training process to be focused only on competitive fighting or kata. This certainly not only threatens their future development, but also their mental and physical health, and in the long run, their karate development is doomed. In terms of selective and technological sense, special attention should be given to the approach that athletes should pass all stages of development 1-5 (ex. Kurtović & Savova 2016), and then be able to participate in the biggest world competitions. Given the fierce international competition, these athletes should be given a broad general and specific foundation, to be trained based on the latest scientific principles and with a perception of a long-term sports goal. To avoid the subjective attitude during the selection of the national team, we made a standard for the selection of national team members (except for children aged 11-14, who acquire the status of national team members only with achieved results and the placement won in a state championship). The standard is acquired through: results achieved on national championships (which are mandatory), an additional optional tournament that takes place only in years when there is a world championship, the play-off competition, the Balkan Championship, the Mediterranean Championship, the Mediterranean Games, WKF Premier Leagues, WKF World Cup, European and World Championships. Only competitors and teams that win the first 3 places (1.2.3.3.) of the state championship or selection tournament for the world championship can participate in the playoff tournament. The status of a representative in all age categories (children aged 11-14 years, cadets, juniors, juniors aged 18-21, and seniors) for participation in international championships is acquired (only if the competitor has participated in a state championship) according to the points gained by the following methodology: the points obtained for a place won are multiplied by the coefficient, which is provided for each championship (see table 4) and to that score are added the points for each fight won in the matches shown in table 4 and an additional coefficient (table 5) which is taken considering the number of competitors per category only for the international championships.

The points won for the achieved ranking are valued only if the competitor has won with a minimum of 1- per victory. If the result is achieved without a fight or with a defeat, the result will not be valued.

**Table 4**

	State Championship/ State Sel. Tournament	Play-off	Junior/Cadet /U21 World Cup	Balkan Championship	Mediterranean Championship/Games	Premier League/ World Cup	European Championship/ European Games	World Championship
Points	0.5	0.5	1	2	2	4	6	12
70	35	35	70	140	140	280	420	840
50	25	25	50	100	100	200	300	600
30	15	15	30	60	60	120	180	360
20			20	40	40	80	120	240
10			10	20	20	40	60	120

For each fight won in the championships listed in the table, you get +10 points, except for the fights in the state championship and the selection tournament for the World Championship.

**Table 5**

Number of matches per category	4		8		16		32		64		128	
	Maximum (complete system)	Minimum (incomplete)	Maximum (complete)	Minimum (incomplete)	Maximum (complete)	Minimum (incomplete)	Maximum (complete)	Minimum (incomplete)	Maximum (complete)	Minimum (incomplete)	Maximum (complete)	Minimum (incomplete)
1-st place	2	1	3	2	4	3	5	4	6	5	7	6
2-nd place	1	0	2	1	3	2	4	3	5	4	6	5
3-rd place	0	0	2	1	3	2	4	3	5	4	6	5
5-th place	-	-	1	0	2	1	3	2	4	3	5	4
7-th place	-	-	0	0	1	0	2	1	3	2	4	3
Coefficients for the number of competitors per category	0.25		0.5		0.75		1		1.05		1.1	

The international championships from Tables 1 and 2 for which competitors can receive points for each calendar year are determined in the international calendar of WKF. The number of representatives in the respective categories (individuals and teams in fights and kata) who can participate in the international championships from table 1 is determined in the propositions for the respective competition. If the best-ranked representative in the category of juniors 18-21 and seniors has not achieved a result, from a minimum of 2 (two) won fights per match in at least 2 (two), and for the category of cadets and juniors a minimum of 2 (two) won fights after a match in at least 1 (one) of the above-mentioned international competitions in the current year (Balkan Championship, Mediterranean Championship, Mediterranean Games, WKF Premier League, WKF World Cup, and European Championship), then such athlete will not be able to represent the country at the world championship. If none of the competitors has fulfilled the criteria of these Regulations,

in that case, the coach of the respective national team for juniors 18-21 and seniors can submit a proposal for up to five competitors who have not fulfilled the set criteria, provided that they have achieved two victories in any international competition shown in table 5, and to be selected as representatives. The coach submits the proposal in written form for each individual separately to the Expert Council of KFM, which gives its opinion, and the final decision is made by the Executive Board. Every competitor who won a medal at the European or World Championships in the same age category during the next election cycle for participation in the European or World Championships, 1/3 of the points won at the European or World Championships are added to their points balance, and if the competitor won a result in a lower age category and then moved to a higher age category (Cadets-Junior, Junior-U21, U21-Senior) during the next election cycle for participation in the European or World Championships, 1/4 of the points won at the European or World Championships are added to their points balance in his age category, provided they are placed 1-3 in the state championship. In the event that a competitor who has acquired the status of a representative (for justified, officially argued reasons) appears, and cannot participate in the Balkan, Mediterranean, European or World Championships, then the selection of a representative who will be a replacement can be proposed from the next ranked one in the appropriate category which is considered as a special case that must go through the following procedure: 1. The coach of the respective national team submits a proposal to the Expert Council of the KFM. 2. The Expert Council of the KFM forwards its opinion on the specific case to the EB of the KFM. 3. The EB of KFM decides whether that representative can be replaced by another one, provided that it is determined that they have the quality for such a level of competitions. For the matches in the team competition in the kumite, the coach of the national team has the discretionary right to freely assemble the team, under the following conditions:

The selection for the team should be made by:

1. Competitors who in the current year are ranked from 1-3 place at the National Championship/Selection tournament for the World Championship.
2. Competitors who participated in the National Championship/Selection tournament for the World Championship, and did not achieve a ranking, but in the last 2 years have won a medal at the World Championship, European Championship, Mediterranean Championship, Balkan Championship, Premier League or World Cup.
3. Competitors who have shown responsibility, discipline, required quality and good sports fit when performing the tasks set during the preparations and control tournaments.

General objective: Objective selection of members of the national selections.

Specific objectives: Developing a national platform for clearly defined criteria and standards for selection, financing and awarding of the national selections.

## **Plans and programs**

The coaches of the national team submit their plans and programs to the Expert Council and the KFM office, no later than the first week of December for the following calendar year, and the Expert Council submits the proposed program for the work of the representative selections for the following year to the EB, no later than the third week of December. The plan and the program must contain the official preparations of the national teams as well as a preparatory competitive activity for the official competitions (following the pre-planned budget by the EB of KFM for that purpose.) All activities related to the representative selections are approved by the Executive Board of KFM, and must be entered into the KFM activity calendar.

## Documentation

Creation of a dedicated software solution with a digital personal card

- In the digital database, the Expert Council records all the current changes of the monitored athletes. The database is programmed to contain: a CV; Detailed biography; Achieved sports results and awards; Photo and video gallery; Database with records and detailed analyzes of all the performed assessments of the Anthropological Status and competitive efficiency; Implemented software with tools for individual planning, programming and implementation of the training and competition process.;
- Reports and analyzes; State representation coaches deliver them to the Expert Council and the KFM office no later than 15 days after the completed activity;
- Activities related to official international appearances under the name of KFM should be recorded by a person exclusively in charge of that task.
- The recordings are of a public nature and belong to KFM and can be used in the function of programming and individualization of the training process as well as for control of the performance of the competitors and the coaching team by the expert bodies of KFM.
- For the purpose stated in the previous points, within the stipulated deadlines, the coach of the respective national team is obliged to submit statistical data on the effectiveness of the competitor after holding the respective competition, supported by the recorded video material, on forms previously prepared by the Expert Council.
- These data will be used to create an individual information file for each representative with a data bank for sports results and professional analyzes and are of a longitudinal nature.
- The Expert Council, on the basis of a previously prepared program, performs tests and expert analysis, fills out the information files individually for each representative with the results of the performed tests and the competitive effectiveness no later than 20 days after receiving the completed forms for the competitive effectiveness and assessment by the state coaches representations with the following content:
  - Whether and how they implement the set tactics of the coach (arbitrary evaluation of the coach of the national team); (applies to all the national team members)
  - Regularity and dedication to the training (on the basis of a control card) (applies to all the national team members)
  - Correct behavior with the management and colleagues (team spirit) (applies to all the national team members)

Based on the obtained results, the Expert Council performs quantification and evaluation of the results (for each representative individually). The results of this set of official sports results during the year will be systematically stored in the personal file (available for inspection only by the appropriate authority: Expert Council, the coach of the national team, Office of KFM) of the representative on the official website of KFM. Data recorded on the card after each performance will be used to evaluate the performance of each individual separately.

General objective: Systematization of the professional work in the representative selections.

Specific objectives: Establishment of a database, quantification and evaluation of the professional work in KFM.

## **International cooperation on a professional and competitive level**

Organized sports federations maintain various forms of cooperation with NSF from abroad, thus bringing world knowledge and experience closer to our sports personnel and coaches. This cooperation usually takes place through contacts with national federations and highly qualified instructors. As a formula for accelerated development of competitive quality, it was necessary to establish bilateral relations with a larger number of national sports federations from the region and beyond, which with their quality, knowledge, and position in the WKF could significantly influence the improvement of the quality of our representative athletes. This kind of sports cooperation was an ideal way to strengthen the interests of our national federation by affirming and creating indirect support from those countries for a long-term strategy that will realize the direct interests of KFM for the success of the most important international competitions.

In that context, several joint preparations were carried out with different representative teams, which significantly contributed to raising the quality and sharpening the form of our athletes before the big competitions. Within the framework of those collaborations, several seminars and training were conducted with recognized foreign instructors, but our prominent athletes were also sent to national camps at certain NSFs as part of the final preparations before major competitions.

General objective: improvement of international sports cooperation.

Specific objective: developing a national platform for international cooperation.

## **Development and improvement of financial capacities and sports infrastructure at the level of the entire country and media coverage of the activities of the KFM**

### **Material and technical conditions**

These imply the possibility of optimal use of the sports facilities and the corresponding equipment. In this part of the strategic plan, the correct direction of the modest financial resources of the federation was of great importance. Namely, following the detailed analysis, we determined that a large number of the clubs from the interior had aspiring potential thanks to the arduous work of the coaches and management. Therefore, we believed that if we provide them with optimal conditions, that potential can be turned into quality competitors and they will remain in their home clubs without the need to change environments later. The strategic goal was to diffuse the competitive capacity throughout the territory of the entire country. In this way, in small communities, we created conditions to directly influence the development and affirmation of the clubs, as well as the karate sport throughout the territory of the entire country. The strategy for the development of material and technical conditions defined the financing of the clubs that had potential but did not have enough funds to implement the necessary activities. From a technical point of view, it was important to provide adequate conditions and install appropriate specific apparatus, devices, and equipment that will provide them with conditions for better training. In that way, we could directly influence the motivation of the coaches by providing them with appropriate inventory and requisites for training (mattresses, bags, focusers, kimonos, gloves, guards, etc.). Based on this, the establishment of a direct feedback link between the federation, the club, the athletes, the local government, and the media with the ultimate goal of establishing strong cohesion in the federation was of particular importance.

General objective: diffusion of quality throughout the country

Specific objective: development of a national platform for the development of karate in the entire territory of the Republic of North Macedonia.

## Media coverage of the activities in karate –

We directly influenced the engagement of a NSF spokesperson, a professional employed in the media who will contribute to an adequate representation of karate in the media. The affirmation of our athletes who won important international results was of particular importance.

General objective: improved role and responsibility of the media for the development of karate

Specific objectives: media promotion of the achieved results and karate as a socially useful activity with a healthy lifestyle.

## Prevention of negative occurrences in karate

In 2014, North Macedonia adopted the purified text of the Law on the Prevention of Violence and Misbehavior at Sports Events adopted in 2004. (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, No. 114 of July 31, 2014). International experience has shown that even when all repressive measures are taken, they will not be enough if comprehensive preventive and educational activities are not followed. In that context, during the competitions, the KFM introduced absolute control over the arenas and access to them according to the Law. KFM also made normative acts that regulated the rights and obligations of coaches and clubs when participating in the competition system. They set up an appropriate committee for that purpose and hired a security agency that was responsible for maintaining order and peace in the hall. The Karate Federation of N.Macedonia was among the first organizations that regulated the measures and activities for the prevention of doping in sports with the Law on the Prevention of Doping in Sports of 2008, by which the Anti-Doping Agency of the Republic of N.Macedonia (ADAM) was established. The Anti-Doping Agency of the Republic of N.Macedonia in collaboration with the Karate Federation held/is holding a series of professional lectures intended for the coaches and athletes in the KFM to raise awareness for that problem. In the period when a huge number of national sports federations had not adopted general acts about the fight against doping - established measures and procedures in cases of established doping of athletes, the KFM introduced an anti-doping action and appointed a person responsible for supervision over the implementation of the anti-doping measures, even though constant individual medical monitoring of top athletes was not anticipated.

General objective: to improve the measures for the prevention of all negative occurrences in sports (violence, doping, etc.).

Specific objectives: to establish a mechanism for the consistent implementation of the strategy to fight against violence and misconduct of all factors at sports events. To improve the normative and organizational framework that regulates and ensures the prevention of doping in sports.

## Results achieved - with implemented strategy

At the end of this paper, according to the official data obtained by Karate Federation of North Macedonia, the sports results won, the awards, nominations, etc. (Table 7-12) in the period from 2009-2022 as illustration are presented below.

**Table 7.** Total medals won on official international competitions 2009-2022

Official WKF competitions	World Championship			Youth Olympic			World Championship/Ga Karate Premier			Karate 1 Series A			Karate 1 Youth League			Youth World Cup			Balkan Championship/anean			Championship/Ga			Total medals won					
Place won	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3			
Seniors	-	1	1	-	-	-	3	2	9	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	3	2	1	1	2	1	5



																			6	1			1	5	2	3				
Total	2		1		14		5		-	-	-								55		14					90				
Seniors U21	-	2	1	-	-	-	4	1	8	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	3	2	3	8	2	1	5		
Total	3		-		13		2		-	-	1		2						58		13						95			
Juniors 16-18	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	4	1	6	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	4	9	1	2	3	1	2	5
Total	-		-		22		1		-	-	1		-						55		6							93		
Cadets 14-16	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	8	2	6	-	-	7	8	1	3	
Total	1		-		9		-		-	-	-		-						40		7							57		
Children 11-14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	7	-	-	-	4	4	7		
Total	-		-		-		-		-	-	-		-						169		-							169		
<b>TOTAL MEDALS WON 2009-2022</b>																							<b>502</b>							

Table 8. National sports awards

Sports awards at the level of the Republic of North Macedonia	Male seniors-	Female seniors	Youth Men-	Women	Total
Nominations for the most successful athletes	19		23		42
<b>Chosen athlete of the year</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>21</b>
Nominations for the most successful coaches	2		-		2
<b>Chosen coach of the year</b>	<b>2</b>		-		<b>2</b>
Nominations for the most successful teams	11		-		11
<b>Chosen team of the year</b>	<b>3</b>		-		<b>3</b>

Table 9. National nominations for the most successful federation

Nominations for the most successful federation in MKD	2008	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016	2018	2020
Total	8 times							
<b>Chosen federation of the year</b>	<b>4 times ( 2010; 2015; 2016; 2018 )</b>							

Table 10. International Referee titles passed

Referee titles passed	World rang	European rang	Mediterranea n rang	Balkan rang
Total	9	15	2	11
<b>Overall</b>	<b>37</b>			

**Table 11.** National categorized sportsmen's

National categorized sportsmen's	World category	International category	Promised young sportsman category
Total	3	5	4
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12</b>		

**Table 12.**

Received budget by the AMS/MOK/Lottery of MKD	2008	2020
Denars	AMS 1.514.522,00 / MOK – 00,00 / Lott.- 00,00	AMS 6.487.064,00 / MOK – 932,094.00 / Lott.4.073.127,00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.514.522,00 denars</b>	<b>11.492.127,00 denars</b>

Presented data on all tables are obtained from the official annual bulletins of the KFM for the period from 2008-2021 available on the official website of KFM. (www.kfm.mk)

## Conclusion

The imposed tempo with a strong focus on all factors in KFM towards achieving success resulted in the realization of a strong social authority and winning a large number of high sports results. Such position put karate on the list of one of the sports in the country with the most trophies won and entered the narrowest circle of the most successfully organized sports institutions. Seen from this temporal distance, with all its good and bad sides, the established strategy led to an organizational result from the renaissance that will generally be remembered as a golden era in the history of sports in North Macedonia.

## Reference

- [1]. Bompa, T (1994): Teorija i Metodologija Obuke, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, Iowa. (in Serbian)
- [2]. de Castella, R., W. Cleos (1996.): Smart Sport, Australian Institute of Sport, Canberra.
- [3]. Dick, F.V. (1997.): Principi sportskog treninga, A & C Black, London. (in Serbian)
- [4]. Digel, H. (1995.); Problemi sportova visokih performansi u Njemackoj, Sport visokih performansi, 5, 4-8. (in Croatian)
- [5]. Krug, J., D. Martin (1992): "Institut za Primjenjenu Znanost", Performance 2 sport 3, 22-24. (in Croatian)
- [6]. Milanović, D. (1995.): Modeliranje procesa sportske pripreme u atletskom dekologu, Kineziologija 25, 1-2, 75-98. (in Croatian)
- [7]. Milanović, D. (1997): Osnove teorije treninga, u priručniku za sportske trenere, (ur. Milanović), Fakultet za fizičku kulturu, Zagreb. (in Croatian)
- [8]. Milanović, D., M. Milanović (1992): Sportska aktivnost i okolinski faktori u funkciji razvoja djeteta sportasa, Kineziologija 24, 1-2, 15-20. (in Croatian)
- [9]. Nazim Kurtović & Nadia Savova (2016), developing the optimal performance of top athletes during the kumite in sports karate, David publishing, USA 2016
- [10]. Official annual bulletins of the of Karate Federation of North Macedonia from 2008 to 2021 available on www.kfm.mk