

Women, Sport and Baby-is it possible to do/have all?

Robert Kuchar

University of Economics, Department of Strategy, Faculty of Business Administration, Prague, Czech Republic

ABSTRACT

Many women stand in their lives before one question-of family or child? When is the best time to have it, and what I want to accomplish before and also after childbirth. The same applies to the world of sport. On the contrary, many times it happens that successful athletes decide to end the career at an early age because of prioritizing the family, or vice versa—they prioritize sport at the expense of their family. The aim is to show that it may not always be the choice of either-or, but that it may be possible to combine maternal duties with the sport provided certain principles are followed. The research consists of two parts. The first part focuses on the period of pregnancy, ongoing changes in it (physical, psychological, etc.) and exercises that can be included in this period. The second chapter focuses on the period after childbirth and also on sports possibilities for mother and child life. To find the right path between sport and family life is not an easy way, but not impossible. Although motherhood is a relatively long time when a woman has to leave the sport, so it is not impossible to return and gain others sporting achievements. This study is descriptive and the data are secondary and were collected from valid documents. This study aims to investigate the way for girls and women's how to do not stop with sport and also have a „normal“ family.

Key words: mother, baby, sport, health, family

Introduction

Sport has always been an integral part of human life. Already in prehistoric times we can talk about some form of sport in the form of religious rituals, hunting and fighting simulation. At the beginning the sport was only the prerogative of men. For the first time women at the Olympic Games started from 1900 in Paris, where they were admitted to the races in tennis and golf (Novotný, 2011). Some opinions says, that sport can have a negative impact on women's health. He appeared to claim that the sport causes infertility and women change in men. Embarrassment evoked and sportswear for women. Although the contents of women's sports expanded, still where there a lots of doubts about women's in sport and impact of professional sport on the health of women. "Women's, are losing womanhood" (Yüksel, 2008).

Anyway the proportion of woman's at the Olympic Games continues to a rising trend, however it still does not correspond to the current development of women's sports industry and is significantly behind man's (Dovalil, 2004). So the question is: whether this distinction can be overcome in the future and achieve equality of men and women?

Much discussed is the fact that unlike men, woman often must choose between sports career and a family. Women athletes (and particularly the top), it never had in the sport easy. This paper are focusing on female athletes (professional and recreational), which decided to give up the sport even in the case of family. Aim is to show that it may not always be the choice of one or another way, but that may be path following by certain principles combine maternal duties with the sport, and even at professional level.

Many authors focus on the similar problem before this paper (Hargreaves, 1996; Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003), but any of those specifically on the same problem.

Methods

The paper consists of three parts. The first part focuses on the period of pregnancy, ongoing changes in it (physical, psychological, etc.) and exercises that can be included in this period. The second part of the paper focuses on the period after childbirth and also on sports possibilities for mother and child. Last part consists of some examples from the successfully comeback after child. This study is descriptive and the data are secondary and were collected from valid documents. This study aims to investigate the way for girls and woman's how to do not stop with sport and also have a „normal“ family life.

Results

Pregnancy

In pregnancy, it is necessary to compensate specifically targeted exercise unilateral burden that arises during this period. The whole body of a woman affects several processes: the development of the fetus and placenta, hormonal changes etc. Changes which take place in a woman's body during pregnancy, essentially concern all organs'.

With increasing weight of the embryo woman balances the weight of abdominal curl in the lumbar spine. Exceptions are backaches. Among others, also occurs to weaken or rectus abdominis muscles. Peristalsis slows down and there are frequent constipations, breast muscles are stretched and subsiding due to an increase in volume of the mammary gland, musculoskeletal system is burdened with increasing weight. Pregnancy is also associated with stomach and nausea, loss of appetite and moods, especially in the early months of pregnancy (Brown, 2014).

Doctors consider a reasonable increase in the weight of women during pregnancy from 11.5 to 14.0 kg. From this in-

crease should be a child 3.5 kg, 0.5 kg placenta, 1.5 kg increase in blood volume, 1.0 kg magnification uterus, 1.0 kg amniotic fluid, and 1.5 kg enlarge breasts, fat depot 2.5 to 5.0 kg. Especially because pregnancy affects the female body, it is appropriate to include adequate physical activity to offset the negative effects. Of course, only if it is a low-risk pregnancy. Examples of suitable health exercises may be:

- Exercise for pregnant women (Fit ball).
- Exercise for the development of habits of correct posture, focusing on the correct position of the pelvis.
- Exercises to strengthen muscle balance.
- Exercise to maintain good condition soles feet (Bejdáková, 2011).

For example is unsuitable training to the exhaustion or exertion, which increases body temperature above 38°C. It is certainly bad induces if the performance of long-term increase in abdominal pressure, or is subject to retention of breath. With such performance degrades supply oxygenated blood to the fetus.

Considerable influence on how a woman should do sports in the pregnancy, also will have a fact how was the woman sporty before becoming pregnant. If a woman is actively practiced sports before pregnancy, it is appropriate to certain attributes of sport pregnancy adapt. Among the sports that are recommended for pregnant women and can make women who have decided to start a sporting activity after pregnancy include:

- Walking. It may be even faster pace. The most suitable is obviously nature one.
- Swimming. Also good make same water exercise.
- Yoga. Pregnant are learned fixed posture, working with the pelvic muscles and will learn to breathe properly. Can help prevent varicose veins and pregnancy constipation. Also regulates hormonal imbalance, thereby avoiding fluctuations moods (Pařízek, 2008).

Inappropriate physical activity:

- Exercise uses of swing and quick movements.
- Jumps, exercise where you have to hold your breath.
- Lifting weights.

Specifically, they are unsuitable sports like tennis, ice skating, cross-country running. One can argue that it depends on how pregnant woman knows sports discipline and how often she was practicing before pregnancy time. In any case, these sports are caring a high risk in the second half of pregnancy. Furthermore shooting, especially of long guns (sporting or hunting) is unsuitable not only for women during pregnancy, but also during lactation. Throwback butt of a gun can cause extensive bruising of the arm or chest.

Pregnant women should be also careful with swim in public pools, ponds, rivers and seas, especially in the second half of pregnancy. There is increased risk of infection (Miňovský, 2008).

Puerperium

In the postpartum period, the uterus and birth canal returns to its original state. Even after birth, the uterus is quite large and retracts during the two weeks following the birth. To ensure that the uterus properly wrapped, it is advisable to exercise, lie on your stomach and breast-feeding. Although it may seem fast, but if a birth was without major complications a woman can begin with training almost immediately. The best positions for exercises are belly position. Particularly, impor-

tant exercises are to strengthen the pelvic. It is also advisable exercises using the shoulders work out, exercises to strengthen the pectoral muscles, positioning the legs (to increase blood circulation), or exercise to create the habit of correct posture.

Inappropriate physical activity:

- Mass load in the form of lifting.
- Strength and endurance exercises.
- Exercise leading to vibration, shock.
- One-sided physical activity.
- Belly work out (Beránková, 2012).

After birth

Movement is important for every human being from the first months of life. Mothers-sportswoman accustomed to regular exercise, are very often realizing this fact, so they are why trying to lead their kids to physical activity from an early age. It is particularly important in terms of psychomotor development. Due to the fact that during pregnancy a woman's body has undergone many changes, it is clear that it will also take some time before the mother returns to its original condition. In addition to impaired physical condition usually occurs as fatigue, gathered kilograms or health complications in the form of back pain or pelvic drop. The recommended rate of shedding excess pounds is around 0.5 kg per week.

Breastfeeding has an irreplaceable importance not only for the physical, emotional and psychosocial development of the child, but also for the mother alone, primarily due to a reduction in the risk of breast and ovarian cancer. Breastfeeding is one of the most energy intensive processes. One ml of human milk is about 3kJ, which means that after the conversion the quantity of breast milk during lactation fully baby breastfeeding is consumed about 2200-3000 KJ per day. During pregnancy, mom creates about 4 kilograms adipose tissue, from which it draws energy during lactation. According to the results of medical studies in developed countries, fully breastfeeding woman reduce her weight by about 0.8 kilograms per month, and that is cause only by breastfeeding (Skalska, 2014).

In the case of demanding physical activity, it is preferable to nurse a child either before exercise or after about 1.5 hours after the physical activity. During more demanding exercise occurs in the muscles of lactic acid, which gets into breast milk, and also affects its flavor, which may bother some babies, so they can even reject breast milk.

Experts recommend starting with a slight movement of the load such as brisk walking, swimming, yoga or pilates until after 6-8 weeks after birth. First, it is advisable to start a ten-minute block of exercise. If it is mastered without difficulty, a woman can gradually start adding the load (duration, intensity). Running, jumping, and similar activities are therefore not suitable movement for sagging pelvic muscles. After giving birth, women should focus as soon as possible to strengthen the pelvic muscles. First, it is recommended to started with Kegel exercises (Stefanik, 2013) and gradually add an additional workout exercises aimed at strengthening the body core. Another advantage of exercises to strengthen the pelvic muscles is also the fact that strength pelvic muscles protect incontinence of urine. If there is leakage of urine, should first strengthen these internal muscles and after than to start with adequate physical activity. A lots of women are asking very important question, when they are ready, after childbirth, to start with exercise. Most doctors leaves the decision about beginning of an adequate physical activity after childbirth on the individual status of the mother, depending on how they feel, but there are also some doctors who recommend to wait with all exercise until the expiration of postpartum period.

Another question is how the mother can manage a life with the child and the sport and consequently also the work. Very much depends on support from your partner and how she is able to organize time. It is normal when someone from family is helping with babysitting, and mother has a time for herself. So she can devote this time to sport. Some parents try to lead their kids specifically to the same sport, which run themselves. In terms of child development is appropriate show them widest possible range of movements, physical skills and sports, rather than specialized them at very early stage to one type of sport.

Examples

Mother sportswoman-RETURNS

This part is focus primarily on mothers - sportswoman. Same examples of athlete's who's managed a successful return to the sports scene, but also of those whose performance after giving birth was not good any more. Several names were chosen from the Czech and some of them from the rest of the Europe.

The factor that plays a big role in returning back to sports is psyche. Many mothers lose the motivation to race and the main purpose of life will be seen only in motherhood. Quite logically they are favors child's needs instead of their needs, such as sports. Sportswoman is also very hard to cope with the fact that they should leave small children in the care of someone else, leaving them and focus on training. Example, one of the best athlete Barbora Špotáková leaving the training group of Jan Zelezny, and the reasons was the fact that she wants to be more with her son.

According to Catherine Baďurová, she used to be in Czech national team in the pole vault, we can distinguish two kinds of athletes - mothers. She says: „I divide athletes into two categories. First one is in sports as long as they can and they are enjoying it. Then they start with a family and don't want to make a comeback anymore. The second one has a baby during a career break and after baby they returned. Sometimes, even in larger form than before pregnancy" (Baďurova, 2013).

Successful return Czech sportswoman

Barbora Špotáková (30. June 1981 Jablonec and Nisou) is a Czech javelin thrower. She is double Olympic champion, world and Europe champion and also she hold the world record. In November 2012 she takes a break in her careers due to pregnancy, and in May 2013 became the mother of a son Janek. Barbora Špotáková returned to training at the end of the year 2013, and began preparing for the season 2014. The peak of the incoming season was the European Championship in Athletics in Zurich. Her came back was outstanding. She won a gold medal at the European Championship, became the winner of the Diamond League and also she gets an honor athlete of the year 2014. Comeback on top was, in her opinion, easier than she expected. "You just have to learn how to manage your time that is the hardest issue. And also have huge support from family, without them I would not have it done"(Špotáková, 2014)

Katerina Neumannová (15. February 1973 Písek) is the Olympic champion and World champion in cross country skiing. Secondary, she was participant in road cycling races. Katerina Neumannová stop career after the Olympics in Salt Lake City (2002), where she won two silver medals. In 2003, her daughter Lucia was born. Katerina made comeback mainly because the Olympic Games in Turin (2006), where she wanted

to accomplish her successful career to gets gold medal at the Olympics. After a heroic performance, supported by a whole Czech republic, she succeeded at the last possible race and in finish she was celebrating in a big hug with her daughter Lucy. She says: "I came back mentally stronger, I wanted to win. Before motherhood I wanted to be good, but now I wanted to be first"(Neumannová, 2014).

Successful return European sportswoman

Kim Clijsters (8. June 1983 Bilzen-Belgium) won 41 WTA singles titles and 11 WTA doubles titles. She won four Grand Slam singles titles: three at the US Open, in 2005, 2009, and 2010 and one at the Australian Open in 2011. She was also runner-up in four Grand Slam singles tournaments and won the WTA Tour Championships singles title in 2002, 2003, and 2010. She won US Open as first mother in history. "We tried to plan her naptime a little bit later so she could be here today. It's the greatest feeling in the world, being a mother,"(Clijsters, 2009) a glassy-eyed Clijsters told the crowd after her remarkable comeback victory.

Anna Watkins (13. February 1983, Truro, Leek). She is an English rower. She competed at the 2008 Summer Olympics, where she won a bronze medal in Double Sculls and has won 4 medals in the World Championships, most recently a successful defense of her world title with Katherine Grainger, in Bled, Slovenia in 2011. She won a gold medal in the double sculls at the London 2012 Olympics. She says: "If it's disastrous I haven't lost anything in such a short space of time. And if it's a success then maybe we've achieved something bigger than the size of a rowing boat. I will hopefully show other women that we're not old and decrepit and washed-up after having children – as knackered as we all feel. We have plenty left in us and we shouldn't be afraid to use it"(Watkins, 2016).

Discussion

Paper takes a look on the topic of how sportswoman can deal with their carrier and gave us some viewed from several perspectives. Firstly, was focused on historical context associated with woman. Than is offering steps how to deal with a pregnancy and after then. Step by step showing the way how is it possible to became a great athlete and also have a family.

To find the right path between sport and family life is not an easy way, but not impossible. Although motherhood is a relatively long time when a woman has to leave the sport, so it is not impossible to return and gain others sporting achievements. This article points out that, when you progress in this period properly and responsibly with regard to the body and the child, return to the sport career is possible right after birth. As a proof of all this information was used in a paper some successful cases of comeback.

For the future this topics should be communicate more with young sportswomen, but certainly should not ignore this topic even with athletes-men. They are also basic members of family and they should have more information about how they can help and support theirs life partners at a time and after pregnancy. Because they have also their own dreams and desires to accomplish something in the world of sport, and therefore does not have a family to postpone until at the end of their careers, or quit sports career at the expense of the family.

REFERENCES

- Baďurova, C. (2013). Zlaté sportovkyně rodí, aneb Když je máma hvězda. Retrieved 23/11, 2014, from <http://sip.denik.cz/pribehy-a-udalosti/slavne-matky.html>
- Bejdáková, J. (2011). Cvičení a sport vtěhotenství. Retrieved 07/11, 2014, from https://www.ereading.cz/nakladatele/data/ebooks/5248_preview.pdf
- Beránková, L. (2012). Gynekologická oslabení: Zdravotní tělesná výchova. Fakulta sportovních studií Masarykovy univerzity. Zdravotní tělesná výchova. Retrieved 07/11, 2014, from: <http://is.muni.cz/do/fsps/e-learning/ztv/pages/10-gynekolo-text.html>
- Clijsters, K., (2009). Retrieved 14/09, 2014, from <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2009/sep/14/kim-clijsters-comeback-us-open-win>
- Dovalil, J. (2004) Olympismus: Český olympijský výbor. Praha: Olympia, from http://www.olympic.cz/www/docs/osmus/zeny_a_sport_v_olympijskem_hnuti.pdf
- Hargreaves, J. (1996). *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*. North Amerika: Routledge.
- Hartmann-Tews, I., Pfister, G. (2003). *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Heywood, L., & Dworkin, S.L. (2003). *Built To Win: The Female Athlete As Cultural Icon* (Sport and Culture) North Amerika: Univ Of Minnesota Press; 1 edition.
- Majerová, J. (2009), Cvičení po porodu: Všechno, co vás zajímá. Retrieved 09/11, 2014, from <http://www.forexample.cz/view.php?cislocikanku=2010050006>
- Miňovský, J. (2008). Sportování v období těhotenství. Retrieved 17/11, 2014, from http://is.muni.cz/th/176170/fsps_b/Sportovani_v_období_tehotenství.pdf
- Neumannová, K. (2014). Když mám na sobě číslo, bouchají ve mně saze, říká Kateřina Neumannová. Retrieved 23/11, 2014. from: http://rungo.idnes.cz/katerina-neumannova-010-behani.aspx?c=A140617_150728_behani_fro
- Novotný, J. (2011). *Sport v ekonomice*. Prague: Wolters Kluwer.
- Pařízek, A. (2009). *Knih o těhotenství a dítěti, 4. Editon*. Prague: Gálen.
- Stefanik, J. (2013). Kegelovy cviky: Medicína, nemoci, studium na 1. LF UK. Retrieved 09/11, 2014, from www.stefajir.cz/?q=kegelovy-cviky
- Skalska, M. (2014). Kila, kojení a cvičení po porodu: Stob Klub. Retrieved 09/11, 2014, from <http://www.stobklub.cz/clanek/kila-kojeni-a-cviceni-po-porodu/>
- Špotáková, N. (2014). Bojím se snít, ale vrátila jsem se úžasně. Retrieved 23/11, 2014, from <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/sport/atletika/285524-nadsena-spotakova-bojim-se-snit-ale-vratila-jsem-se-uzasne/>
- Watkins, A. (2016). 'I want to show women we're not decrepit after having children' Retrieved 04/01, 2016, from <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/jan/04/anna-watkins-interview>
- Yüksel, A. (2012). Womanhood is dying at Olympic. Retrieved 08/08, 2012, from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/columnist-blasted-online-after-piece-on-chestless-man-like-female-olympians-.aspx?PageID=238&NID=27354&NewsCatID=341>

R. Kuchar

University of Economics, Department of Strategy, Faculty of Business Administration, Nám. W. Churchilla 4130 67, Prague, Czech Republic

e-mail: rkuchar21@gmail.com