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THE HISTORY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE "SHO'RTAN" FOOTBALL CLUB DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract. *This article examines the history and development of FC Shurtan during the years of independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to the club's formation in Guzar district, its participation in Uzbekistan's professional football competitions, achievements in the national championship and cup, international appearances and contribution to the development of football in Kashkadarya region. The article highlights Shurtan's successful periods in the top division, its strong performance in the 2010 Uzbekistan Championship, its appearance in the 2011 Uzbekistan Cup final and its participation in Asian club competitions. The study also analyzes the club's role in developing young football players and promoting football among the population of Guzar and Kashkadarya. Historical, chronological, comparative and statistical methods are used to evaluate the major stages of the club's development. The findings demonstrate that Shurtan has played an important role in the regional football system of Kashkadarya and has contributed to the development of professional football in Uzbekistan.*

Keywords: *Shurtan, Guzar, Kashkadarya, football, Uzbekistan Championship, Uzbekistan Cup, Super League, Pro League, AFC, professional football, sports history, independence.*

INTRODUCTION. After the Republic of Uzbekistan gained state independence, fundamental changes were implemented in the system of physical education and sports, as in all other spheres of public life. The formation of a national



sports system, the development of sports infrastructure in accordance with international standards, the upbringing of a physically healthy and spiritually mature younger generation, and the enhancement of Uzbekistan's prestige in the international sports arena became among the priority areas of state policy.

Football acquired particular importance in this process. The establishment of the national football championship, the Uzbekistan Cup, and other professional competitions in independent Uzbekistan created new opportunities for the development of football clubs in the regions. In particular, football teams operating in regional and district centers became an important component of the national football system.

The Qashqadaryo region is one of the historically important areas of Uzbek football. Alongside the "Nasaf" club of Qarshi and the "Mash'al" club of Muborak, the "Sho'rtan" team of Guzar also made a significant contribution to the development of football in the region.

The history of the "Sho'rtan" football club is directly associated with Guzar district of Qashqadaryo region. The development of the club was closely connected with the region's oil and gas industry, local sports infrastructure, and growing interest in football.

During the years of independence, "Sho'rtan" gradually established its position within the professional football system and became a team competing in Uzbekistan's high-level football competitions. In particular, the team's sporting performance improved significantly in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

One of the important stages in the history of "Sho'rtan" was the team's competition for high positions in the Uzbekistan Championship in 2010. The following year, in 2011, "Sho'rtan" reached the final of the Uzbekistan Cup, further strengthening its position in the country's football system.



The relevance of this topic lies in the necessity of studying not only the most prominent football clubs but also the activities of regional teams in researching the history of Uzbek football. The example of "Sho'rtan" makes it possible to examine the formation of professional football in Guzar district, the development of regional sports infrastructure, and the process of training young football players.

The study was conducted based on the principles of historicity, chronological consistency, and objectivity. The activities of the "Sho'rtan" football club during the years of independence were examined in connection with the broader processes that took place within Uzbekistan's football system.

The study employed historical-chronological, comparative, statistical, systemic, and retrospective analysis methods.

The historical-chronological method was used to examine the various stages of the club's activities in a consistent manner. The comparative method was applied to identify similarities and differences between "Sho'rtan's" sporting results in different years and the activities of other professional football clubs in Qashqadaryo region. The statistical method was used to assess the team's results in national championship and cup competitions.

A systemic approach made it possible to analyze the sporting, organizational, social, and regional aspects of the club's activities in their interrelationship. The source base of the study consisted of data from the Professional Football League of Uzbekistan, the Uzbekistan Football Association, the Asian Football Confederation, sports publications, football statistics, and historical materials related to the club's activities.

The activities of the club can be conventionally divided into the following periods:

The 1990s — the club's adaptation to the football system of independent Uzbekistan;

2000–2006 — the formation of the club's position in professional football;

2007–2011 — a period of significant sporting development;

2012–2017 — participation in the top division and continuation of international experience;

The period after 2018 — restructuring within the professional football system and the beginning of a new stage of development.

MAIN PART. The formation of the "Sho'rtan" football club is closely associated with the development of football in Guzar district and throughout Qashqadaryo region. Interest in football had existed in the Guzar area for many years, while the formation of a professional football system in the country after independence created new opportunities for the development of local teams.

The name of the club is associated with the "Sho'rtan" gas field and the oil and gas industry in the Guzar area. The sporting ties between the industrial enterprise and the local community played an important role in the formation of the team. Support for sports provided by local industrial enterprises made it possible to establish the material and technical base necessary for a professional football team. A similar pattern can also be observed in the history of many professional football clubs in various regions of Uzbekistan. Similar to "Mash'al's" links with industrial enterprises in Muborak, the connection between "Sho'rtan" and the industrial base of Guzar was an important factor in the team's initial development.

As the club entered professional football, greater attention was devoted to team formation, improvement of coaching activities, and development of football infrastructure. The 1990s were a difficult but simultaneously important period of formation for Uzbek football. Organizational foundations were established for a new national football system, a national championship, and the independent operation of football clubs. "Sho'rtan" also gradually developed its activities within this process.



Initially, the club's main objectives were to adapt to the professional football system, build a squad capable of competing at a high level, and develop local football players. The geographical location of Guzar district and the strong football traditions of Qashqadaryo had a positive impact on the development of "Sho'rtan".

Throughout the 1990s, the team expanded its sporting capabilities and sought to establish a worthy position within the national football system. This period can therefore be regarded as the stage of "Sho'rtan's" organizational and sporting formation.

In the 2000s, the sporting results of the "Sho'rtan" football club gradually began to improve. The recruitment of experienced footballers, the strengthening of the coaching staff, and improvements in football infrastructure contributed to the club's growing position within the professional football system. The team began to develop its distinctive strengths. Teamwork, discipline, and rapid transitions from defense to attack became important characteristics of "Sho'rtan's" playing style. Alongside local footballers, experienced players recruited from other regions also played an important role in the club's development.

By the middle of the 2000s, "Sho'rtan" had become one of the competitive teams in Uzbek football. During this period, the club's main objectives were to move toward the upper positions of the national championship and perform successfully in the Uzbekistan Cup.

The year 2010 occupies an important place in the history of the "Sho'rtan" football club. During this season, the team achieved a strong result in the Uzbekistan Championship, demonstrating that it belonged among the country's leading clubs. The stability of the squad and the effective work of the coaching staff were important factors contributing to this achievement.

The success achieved in 2010 also gave "Sho'rtan" an opportunity to participate in international competitions. This achievement represented a major sporting event for



Guzar district. The success of a professional football team at the national level further increased interest in football among local young people. “Sho‘rtan’s” success in 2010 laid the foundation for the next stage in the club’s history — its entry onto the international football stage.

Another important event in the history of “Sho‘rtan” occurred in 2011, when the team reached the final of the Uzbekistan Cup. Reaching the final was an important achievement that confirmed the club’s position in Uzbek football. Cup competitions require teams to demonstrate a high level of sporting skill, psychological stability, and the ability to achieve maximum results in decisive matches. “Sho‘rtan’s” progress to the final demonstrated that the team had reached a certain level of development in these areas.

Although “Sho‘rtan” did not win the cup, its participation in the final remained one of the most significant achievements in the club’s history. The sporting results achieved in 2010–2011 can be regarded as one of the most successful periods in the history of “Sho‘rtan”.

Success in the national championship and cup competitions gave “Sho‘rtan” the opportunity to represent Uzbekistan in international football. The club participated in competitions organized under the auspices of the Asian Football Confederation and competed against clubs from different countries. Participation in international competitions played an important role in increasing the team’s professional experience. By competing against representatives of different football traditions in Asia, the players were able to test and improve their technical and tactical abilities.

International matches also provided valuable experience for the coaching staff. This was because opponents in international competitions could differ considerably in terms of playing style, tactics, and level of preparation. “Sho‘rtan’s” participation in Asian competitions also contributed to increasing the recognition of Guzar in the international football arena.



One of the important areas of “Sho‘rtan’s” activities was the development of young football players. The development of youth football is one of the key factors in ensuring the sustainable operation of a professional football club. Therefore, considerable attention was devoted within the club’s system to identifying talented young players, improving their skills, and integrating them into the first team.

“Sho‘rtan” became an important sports center providing talented young people from Guzar and other parts of Qashqadaryo with opportunities to enter professional football. Young players had the opportunity to improve their skills by training alongside experienced footballers and participating in professional matches. The club’s experience in working with young players also had a positive impact on the development of the Qashqadaryo football school.

After 2012, competition in Uzbek football became increasingly intense. “Sho‘rtan” also had to compete to maintain its position in the top division. The team’s sporting results varied from season to season. In some seasons, “Sho‘rtan” competed for high positions, while in other periods it found itself lower in the standings.

These fluctuations were influenced by several factors, including changes in the squad, coaching staff turnover, financial resources, and the increasing level of competition in Uzbek football. Nevertheless, “Sho‘rtan” sought to preserve the traditions characteristic of a professional football club.

The club’s activities during this period were important in ensuring the continuity of professional football in Qashqadaryo. Several professional clubs played a significant role in the development of football in the region. The teams “Nasaf”, “Mash’al”, and “Sho‘rtan” formed three important centers of regional football. “Nasaf” established Qarshi as a professional football center, “Mash’al” promoted Muborak, while “Sho‘rtan” helped establish Guzar on the professional football map.

The main historical significance of “Sho‘rtan” lies in its contribution to the formation of a football environment in Guzar. The presence of a professional team



increased local residents' interest in football. The team's matches became sporting events that brought supporters together. In addition, the club's activities created new opportunities for local football coaches, sports organizers, referees, and young football players.

The development of football in Guzar district contributed to strengthening the overall sporting potential of Qashqadaryo region.

RESEARCH FINDINGS. The findings of the study demonstrate that the activities of the "Sho'rtan" football club during the years of independence consisted of several important stages. During the first stage, the club adapted to the football system of independent Uzbekistan. The main objective during this period was to establish the organizational and sporting foundations of a professional club.

The second stage occurred during the 2000s. During this period, "Sho'rtan's" position in the top division was strengthened. The team reached a level that enabled it to compete with some of the leading clubs in the country.

The third stage covered 2010–2011 and represented one of the most successful periods in the club's history. The strong result achieved in 2010 and participation in the Uzbekistan Cup final in 2011 strengthened "Sho'rtan's" position within the national football system.

During the fourth stage, the club sought to gain international experience and maintain its position in the top division of Uzbek football.

The experience of "Sho'rtan" demonstrates that the success of regional football clubs depends on several major factors. First, financial stability is essential. Second, the development of football infrastructure is important. Third, the ability to attract professional coaches and experienced footballers plays a significant role. Fourth, the effective operation of youth football programs and football academies is crucial.

The activities of "Sho'rtan" in Guzar district are particularly important from the perspective of regional football development. The club demonstrated that professional



football in Qashqadaryo is not limited exclusively to the regional center. “Sho‘rtan’s” participation in international competitions also demonstrated that a regional club can represent Uzbekistan on the international stage.

At the same time, the club’s further development requires stable financial management, continued development of its youth academy, the establishment of a modern player scouting and recruitment system, and further improvement of football infrastructure.

CONCLUSION. The activities of the “Sho‘rtan” Football Club during the years of independence constitute an important component of the history of football in Qashqadaryo region and Uzbekistan. The club played a significant role in the popularization of football in Guzar district, the formation of the professional football system, and the development of young football players.

The findings of the study make it possible to divide the history of “Sho‘rtan” into several stages. While the initial years of independence were characterized by the club’s adaptation to the new football system, the 2000s represented a period of the team’s professional development. The years 2010–2011 can be regarded as one of the most successful periods in the history of “Sho‘rtan”. The strong results achieved in 2010 and reaching the Uzbekistan Cup final in 2011 strengthened the team’s position in national football. The club’s participation in international competitions also served as an important school of international experience for its players and coaches. Alongside “Mash’al” and “Nasaf”, the activities of “Sho‘rtan” contributed to transforming Qashqadaryo region into one of the important football regions of Uzbekistan. The historical significance of the club is not limited to its sporting achievements. “Sho‘rtan” also contributed to involving young people in Guzar in football, increasing interest in sports, developing local football players, and improving football infrastructure in the region. Thus, the activities of the “Sho‘rtan” Football Club during the years of independence represent an important historical experience

reflecting the regional development of professional football in Uzbekistan. The club's sporting activities, youth development system, and participation on the international stage have further enriched the history of Uzbek football. In the future, in order to study the history of "Sho'rtan" more comprehensively, it would be appropriate to conduct separate research into the club's squad composition in different years, the activities of its coaches, player statistics, the club's material and technical facilities, the development of football infrastructure in Guzar, and the history of supporters' activities.

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