



TURKEY IN 1968 MEXICO CITY OLYMPIC GAMES

Mehmet Yildiz¹ⁱ,
Özbay Güven²

¹Res. Assist., Gazi University, Institute of Education Sciences,
Physical Education and Sports Department, Turkey

²Gazi University, Faculty of Sports Sciences,
Prof., Physical Education and Sports Teaching Department, Turkey

Abstract:

State of the Republic of Turkey the first time in 1924 in Paris participated in Olympiads, which is the most important of international sport organizations. For sports organization of young Republic of Turkey has been new, Turkish sportsmen couldn't show any success in these Olympic Games. They gained an experience by participating in such international organization. Later on, Turkey participated in 1928 Amsterdam, 1936 Berlin, 1948 London, 1952 Helsinki, 1956 Melbourne, 1960 Rome and 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games [1]. Turkey participated in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games with group of 49 people, 29 of which were sportsmen in such branches as athletics, boxing, wrestling and shooting [2]. Due to high altitude of the Mexico in addition to problems came up between the President of Turkish Wrestling Federation of that period and Turkish national wrestlers before 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, Turkey contented itself with championship of Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık in freestyle wrestling and with fourth place of İsmail Akçay in athletics marathon branch.

Keywords: Olympics, sports, Mexico City, Turkey

1. Introduction

Turkish wrestling national team started to its preparations with Turkish Freestyle Wrestling Championship on May 4, 1968 in Adapazarı, with participation of 230 wrestlers [3]. For the purpose of preparation to the Mexico City Olympic Games Total of 66 wrestlers, 38 of which were freestyle wrestlers and 28 were Greco-roman wrestlers, were invited to wrestling national team camp to be started on July 20, 1968 in Bursa [4]. Cemil Erkök, the President of Turkish Wrestling Federation, announcing that American athletics conditioning coach Frank Medina and Cahit Önel will undertake condition training and technical works will done by trainers, stated that they will take

ⁱ Correspondence: email mehmetyildiz58@gmail.com

different course in the preparation of sportsmen for the Mexico City Olympic Games[5]. The first selections of wrestlers during the camp was held in Bursa between 13-14 August and as a result of these selections 19 freestyle and 18 Greco-roman style wrestlers were invited to the second camp[6]. As a result of the second selection performed in August 27, 1968 the Olympic staff was assigned [7]. After the last selection, Turkish wrestling national team staff continued its trainings to left Turkey on September 11, 1968 [8]. While Turkish boxing national team continued its preparations during May in Bursa, for determination of the candidates of national team staff, boxing match with Bulgaria boxing national team was performed between May 31, and June 2, 1968 in Ankara and staff candidates were determinate for Olympic preparation camp to be started on July, 20 in Bursa [9]. Moreover, Ster Suvior, the Finn boxing trainer, arrived in Turkey for Mexico City Olympic Games and trained boxing national team sportsmen [10].

For determination of the Turkish Shooting national team, a selection competition was held on May 1968 in Bursa and sportsmen passed the Olympic barrage were included in the Olympic candidate staff [11].

Turkish athletes of marathon branch passed Olympic barrage in athletics branch continued their preparations for Olympic Games by participation in marathons held in Turkey-Erzurum, and abroad-Spain before Olympic Games [12].

Turkish national teams: athletics, shooting, boxing and wrestling left Bursa, where they were continuing their Olympic preparations, in 6.30 on September 11, 1968 and arrived in Istanbul and in 9:30 moved from Yeşilköy to Brussels. The group on September 12, 1968 traveled from Brussels to New York and afterwards to Mexico [13]. Turkey was the first among the groups arrived at the Olympic Village [14]. Turkish sportsmen arrived at Mexico one month before the Games to adapt to high altitude; however, they faced various challenges because of intensive training at high altitude [15].

Before 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, there was a tension because of the fact that demand and requests of Turkish wrestlers were not met by Turkish sport manager. After this tension, wrestlers by not participating in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games preparation camp boycotted the Turkish Wrestling Federation. Upon this boycott, Turkish Wrestling Federation terminated its activities in Sport Toto by forwarding 17 wrestlers to the Central Assembly of Criminal Chambers. Incidents reflected to Kamil Ocak, the Minister of State responsible for sport and Senate of Republic of Turkey asked Turgut Cebe and Yiğit Köker, Ankara Senators, to make a senate investigation about incidents. Senators in their resolution accused Ulvi Yenil, General Manager of Physical Training, and Cihat Uskan, President of Wrestling Federation of Turkey, of being "incorrect and partial". Kamil Ocak, Minister of State responsible for sport taking action as a result of directives of Suleyman Demirel, the Prime Minister of Republic of Turkey, gave instruction to Ulvi Yenil, General Manager of Physical Training, to terminate offices of such Turkish wrestling national team trainers as Mehmet Oktav, Nasuh Akar and of camp director, Kemal Erkmen. This process ended with resigning of Cihat Uskan, the President of Wrestling Federation of Turkey, in July 10, 1968, taking of his

office by Cemil Erkok in July 12, 1968 and terminating investigation of Turkish wrestler by including provisional article to the regulation of criminal matters. After these developments Turkish wrestler have participated in Mexico City Olympic Games preparatory camp [16].

2. Material and Methods

We utilized document examination and oral history survey among qualitative research methods for analysis and interpretation of this study. Before analyzing 1968 Mexico City Olympics, a related literature research was made and the obtained information were evaluated chronologically and separately for each branch and sportsman. The process of transforming the obtained data into utilizable data was completely carried out under supervision of a specialist academic member. An oral history study was carried out with Ahmet Ayık, Tefvik Kis, Giyasettin Yılmaz, Gürbüz Lü and Fuat Temel who participated in 1968 Mexico Olympics and are still alive. These interviews supplied more perceptible data for the study about the performance and psychological situation of the Turkish National Olympic Team in 1968 Mexico Olympics.

3. Results

3.1 Turkey in Branch of Shooting

Turkish shooting group, participating in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, consisted of Hilmi Gürz, President of Shooting Federation, and such shooters as Mehmet Dursun, Türker Özenbaş and Metin Salihoglu[2]. Mehmet Dursun, the sportsman of Turkish shooting national team, while becoming 51th with 587 score among 85 shooters in “*small bore rifle prone position*” category, in “*small bore rifle three position*” category he has become 54th among 61 shooters at Olympic Games with 1081 score[17]. Metin Salihoglu, the sportsman of Turkish shooting national team, has become 30th among 54 shooters with 188 score in “*Olympic Trap*” category [17].

3.2 Turkey in Branch of Athletics

Turkish shooting group, participating in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, consisted of Jerfi Fıratlı, the President of Athletics Federation, and such athletes as Nurullah Candan, Aşkın Tuna, İsmail Akçay and Hüseyin Aktaş [2].

Nurullah Candan, the sportsman of Turkish athletics national team, competed in high jump branch, competed with 20 sportsmen in B group but couldn't gain the right to compete in final with his high jump of 195 cm [17]. Aşkın Tuna, the Turkish athlete, competed in triple jump, competed with 17 sportsmen in B group but couldn't gain the right to compete in final with his triple jump of 15,43 m [17]. Hüseyin Aktaş, the Turkish athlete, competed in marathon category, competed with 75 sportsmen and became 25th with 2.35.09.5 rank [17]. Other Turkish Athlete, İsmail Akçay, competed in marathon branch, became the most significant hope for the medal in branch of athletics in Mexico City Olympic Games. He expressed his national feelings by saying “*I will run*

only thinking of Turkish Nation at my back and of the star and crescent on my chest” [18]. İsmail Akçay has succeeded by competing with 75 marathoners and becoming 4th with 2.25.18.8 rank [17]

İsmail Akçay, welcomed after Olympic Games with a great excitement upon his arrival in Turkey, expressed his feeling with such words: *“I own this success first of all to my hard work. I experienced in Mexico that I am marathoner who was making the hardest work. This is the most important factor that increased my success”*.

3.4 Turkey in Branch of Boxing

Turkish Boxing group, participating in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, consisted of Şefik Tetik, President of Box Federation, Bülent Kiter, the boxing trainer and such boxers as Fuat Temel -48 kg, Engin Yadigar -51 kg, Seyfi Tatar -57 kg, Yeter Sevimli -60 kg, Ali Kılıçoğlu -63,5 kg and Celal Sandal -67 kg [2].

Fuat Temel, the sportsman of Turkish boxing national team competing in 48 kg, competed with 15 sportsmen but left Olympic Games being defeated by American Harlan Marbley with 5-0 score in first round [17]. Engin Yadigar competing in 48 kg competed with 14 sportsmen but left Olympic Games being defeated by Brazilian Sevilio De Oliveira with 3-2 score in first round [17]. Seyfi Tatar competing in 57 kg competed with 31 sportsmen. Seyfi Tatar defeated Hispanic Andres Martin with 5-0 score in first round and Korean Sung-Eun Kim with 3-2 score but left Olympic Games being defeated by Bulgarian Ivan Michailiev with 3-2 in quarter final [17]. Yeter Sevimli, competing in 60 kg competed with 31 sportsmen. Yeter Sevimli disqualified Uruguayan Juan Rivero in first round but left Olympic Games being defeated by Peruvian Luis Minami with 3-2 score in second round[17]. Ali Kilicoglu competing in 63,5 kg competed with 30 sportsmen and left Olympic Games being defeated by Bulgarian Petar Stoitchev with 5-0 score in first round[17]. Celal Sandal competing in 67 kg competed with 30 sportsmen. Celal Sandal, after defeating Ghanaian Aaron Popoola with 3-2 score in first round and Bulgarian Ivan Kiriakov with referee decision in second round, left Olympic Games being defeated by East German Wolke Manfred with 4-1 score in quarter final [17].

Opinion of Turkish boxer Fuat Temel about 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games as following:

“Turkish group was among the first groups arrived at Mexico. After arriving at Mexico some of sportsmen were affected a little bit by high altitude. In camp, until the competitions the near weights trained with each other. In period of Olympics iron curtain countries and Americans were superior. We were at low classes. While foreigners were training for 8-10 hours in a day we were training only for 1-2 hours. Foreigners were working very hard. Despite this, the expectation of our trainers was high. I was then 17 years old, a high school student. Americans had more referee and sportsmen than we had. I was boxing for one year. My opponent, American Harlan Marbley was boxing for 12-13 years. He hugged and kissed me. He putted my hand up. We were proud of championship of Turkish wrestlers Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık. Mexico became for

us like festival place. We all were crying. Being a national sportsman means work with feeling of representing of 33 million at your back, it is a wonderful feeling. I reaped of moral benefit of being national sportsman. I would like to be a champion too” [20].

3.5 Turkey in Branch of Wrestling

Turkish wrestling group, participating in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, consisted of Cemil Erkök, the President of Wrestling Federation, wrestling manager Mustafa Dağıştanlı, wrestling referees Alim Erdoğan, Şevket Zağyapan and Ümit Demirağ, and following 16 sportsmen and two trainers [2]:

| | Freestyle Wrestling Team | Greco-Roman Style Wrestling Team |
|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Trainer | CelalAtik | Halit Balamir |
| 52 kg | Mehmet Esenceli | Metin Cikmaz |
| 57 kg | Hasan Sevinç | Kaya Ozcan |
| 63 kg | Vehbi Akdag | Metin Alakoc |
| 70 kg | Seyit Ahmet Agralı | Kazım Ayvaz |
| 78 kg | Mahmut Atalay | Sırrı Acar |
| 87 kg | Huseyin Gursoy | Tevfik Kis |
| 97 kg | Ahmet Ayik | Gurbuz Lu |
| Heavyweight | GiyasettinYilmaz | Bekir Aksu |

The Turkish wrestler Mehmet Esenceli competed with 22 sportsmen in 52 kg freestyle wrestling. Mehmet Esenceli drew with German Paul Neff in first round but he left the Olympic Games being defeated with technique superiority by Mongolian Surenjav Sukhbaater in second round [17]. Hasan Sevinç, competed with 20 sportsmen in 57 kg freestyle wrestling, defeated with score Yugoslavian Sutev Simeon in first round, Korean Kyung-Mu Chang in second round, in third round was defeated with score by Indian Bishamber Singh and left the Olympic games drawing with Bulgarian Ivan Chavov in fourth round[17]. Vehbi Akdağ competed with 22 sportsmen in 63 kg freestyle wrestling. Vehbi Akdağ defeated with score German Hans Jurgen Luczak in first round, Czechoslovak Josef Engel in second round and left Olympic Games drawing with Russian Elkan Tedeov in third round and Greek Nikolaos Karypidis in fourth round [17]. Seyit Ahmet Ağralı, competed with 25 sportsmen in 70 kg freestyle wrestling, defeated Mexican Israel Vargas with clear superiority in first round, in second round defeated with score Pakistani Mohammad Taj, in third round was defeated with score by Mongolian Sereeter Danzandarjaa and left the Olympic Games being defeated with technique superiority by Bulgarian Valtchev Enio in fourth round [17]. Mahmut Atalay competed with 19 sportsmen in 78 kg freestyle wrestling. Mahmut Atalay after defeating in first round with score American Combs defeated Italian Ferrary with open difference in second round, Iranian Momeni with score in third round, Korean Suh with pin in 8 minutes and 37 seconds in fourth round but in fifth round he drew with Mongolian Purev. He has become champion in 78 kg freestyle wrestling by defeating with score French Daniel Robin in sixth round [2].

Hüseyin Gürsoy competed with 21 sportsmen in 87 kg freestyle wrestling. Gürsoy defeated Jose Hernandez from Guatemala with technique superiority in first

round, got through to second round, defeated with score Julio Graffigna from Argentina in third round, East German Peter Doring in fourth round, drew with American Thomas Peckham in fifth round and completed Olympic games in 5th Place being defeated with score by Bulgarian Prodane Gardjev in sixth round [17]. Ahmet Ayık competed with 16 sportsmen in 97 kg freestyle wrestling. Ahmet Ayık after defeating with score Turk Said Mustafaov from Bulgarian national team in first round got through to second round. Drawing with American Lewis in third round, Ahmet Ayık after defeating with score Polish Dlugosz in fourth round defeated with pin in 1 minute 2 second Mongolian Kholoogyn in fifth round. Ahmet Ayık after making disqualified with 3 warnings Hungarian Csatari in sixth round and has become Olympic champion in 97 kg freestyle wrestling by drawing with Soviet Shota Lomidze in seventh round. Gıyasettin Yılmaz competed with 14 sportsmen in heavyweight freestyle wrestling and left the Olympic Games being defeated with technique superiority by Alexander Medvedev from Russian in first round and Turk Osman Duraliev from Bulgaria in second round [17].

3.6 Turkey in Greco-Roman Wrestling

Metin Çıkmaç, the sportsman of Turkish wrestling national team in 52 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling, competed with 23 sportsmen and defeated Bulgarian Petar Kirov with score in first round, American Richard Tamble with score in second round, got through to third round and left the Olympic Games by being defeated by Russian Vladimir Bakulin in fourth round [17]. Kaya Özcan competed with 23 sportsmen in 57 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling. Ozcan defeated with score Polish Jozef Lipien in first round, and Moroccan Khalifa Karousne in second round, was defeated with score by Korean Chun-Young An in third round, got through to fourth round and completed Olympic Games at 6th place by being defeated with technique superiority by Romanian Ion Baciu in fifth round [17]. Metin Alakoç competed with 22 sportsmen in 63 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling. Metin Alakoç defeated Portuguese Adriano Morais with disqualification in first round, Iranian Seyed Hossein Moareb with score in second round, Greek Nikolaos Lazarou with disqualification in third round, drew with Japanese Hideo Fujimototo in fourth round and completed Olympic Games at 5th place being defeated with score by Russian Roman Rurua in fifth round [17]. Kazım Ayvaz competed with 25 sportsmen in 70 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling and left the Olympic Games drawing with Romanian Ion Enache in first round and Klaus Rost from Germany in second round [17]. Sırrı Acar, competed with 21 sportsmen in 78 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling, defeated with score Norwegian Harald Barlie in first round, drew with Swede Jan Karström in second round and left the Olympic Games being defeated with score by Bulgarian Metodi Zarev in third round [17]. Tefik Kış competed with 18 sportsmen in 87 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling. Tefik Kış defeated with score Finn Teuvo Ojala in first round and German Ernst Knoll in second round, in third round was defeated with score by East German Lothar Metz and left the Olympic Games drawing with Nicolae Negut from Romania in fourth round [17]. Gürbüz Lü, competed with 15 sportsmen in 97 kg Greco-Roman style wrestling, was defeated with

technique superiority by Swiss Peter Jutzeler in first round, with disqualification by Bulgarian Boian Radev in second round and left the Olympic Games [17]. Bekir Aksu competed with 14 sportsmen in heavyweight Greco-Roman style wrestling. Bekir Aksu got through to first round, drew with Polish Edvard Wojda in second round, was defeated with disqualification by Petr Kment from Czechoslovakia in third round and left the Olympic Games [17].

3.7 Opinions about Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayik's Olympic Championships

Ahmet Ayık, Tevfik Kış, Gıyasettin Yılmaz and Gürbüz Lü, participated in Mexico City Olympic Games, expressed their opinions about championships of Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık in freestyle wrestling in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games as following:

Ahmet Ayık: *"Mexico as Olympiad was very important to me as much as it was important to all of us and it was milestone of my life. I was aware of that. It was an organization performed once in every four year. Could I keep the same shape for the next time? Would I get injured? I couldn't know what would happen. Mahmut Atalay was my good friend, brother, he was everything to me. We have been friends for 35 years. People argue and dispute with each other. Bu we have not experienced anything like that. Mahmut Atalay was a significant man and good wrestler. He was wrestler both in Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling. Attacking by twirling is a wrestling technique he developed and came into the World wrestling literature as "Mahmut Atalay Technique". He would apply the good underarm holding technique. One of his best tricks was to attack suddenly to the cross chest. Mahmut Atalay after competition would help us in his specific manner. He was helpful man in every respect. He had his own special behavior and words to motivate us. May be it is for our trainers but back then national and moral values were different. Our national spirit was very high then. It was very important for us to cheer up and motivate, instill national feeling for each other" [21].*

Tevfik Kış: *"We had some problems with Cihat Uskan, the President of Turkish Wrestling Federation, in 1967. I didn't participate in 1968 Europe Greco-Roman Championship preparation camp and Mexico City Olympic Games camp. Other my friends did the same. We participated in camp after, in 1968, the President of Turkish Wrestling Federation was changed. The championship was already expected from some people. These sportsmen were Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık. Actually, my situation was good, but I was eliminated haplessly. Mahmut Atalay was the in best form in Mexico City Olympic Games. He got good fit in camp. Mahmut Atalay was my best friend and very good trainer for me. He cared about us. Moreover, he was very strong wrestler. He would lose score not because of technique superiority of his opponent but because of his own mistakes. Mahmut Atalay has the right to be champion. Previously, he lost unduly lots of championships. Ahmet Ayık couldn't show good competition in Mexico City Olympic Games. He couldn't show his true performance in Mexico City Olympic Games. However, he was stronger than his opponents. Sometimes a man has period of weakness. I think that Turkish freestyle wrestling national team was successful in Mexico City Olympic Games but Greco-Roman wrestling national was not that successful. In Mexico City Olympic Games I didn't have matches where I would show superiority over my opponents" [22].*

Gıyasettin Yılmaz: *"Ahmet Ayık would become champion, if he would keep on training today, and for me Ahmet Ayık was the champion of century. Ahmet Ayık is legendary Turkish*

wrestler who through his wrestling life defeated very famous wrestlers as well as such famous Russian wrestler as Medvedev and Lomidze and became European, World and Olympic champion. In our times Turkish wrestlers was famous and among first three best wrestlers. Ahmet Ayık and Mahmut Atalay showed good competition in Mexico City Olympic Games. Mahmut was in his best shape. Mahmut Atalay in his final competition badly defeated French Daniel Robin. Daniel Robin was very fast and flippy wrestler. However, Mahmut was stronger than him. Besides, only Mahmut Atalay and Asım Bülbül of Turkish wrestlers could defeat Daniel Robin. We were very happy when Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık became champions. Is there anything more than this? We were very happy" [23].

Gürbüz Lü: "As Turkish wrestling national team we were prepared before Mexico City Olympic Games. Everybody who entered the national team tried to show their best performance. With this spirit and belief, we went to Mexico City Olympic Games. Our motivation was high than in any day before. In Mexico City Olympic Games there were our friends who competed very well. Ahmet Ayık and Mahmut Atalay were fantastic. We were very happy of their championships. As it was known, Turkey was one of the countries pretending for championship in freestyle wrestling. Turkish wrestling national team also sometimes succeeded in Greco-Roman style wrestling. Turkish freestyle wrestling team once again proved its superiority in freestyle wrestling by earning two gold medals in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games" [24].

4. Conclusions

The problems between Cihat Uskan, the President of Turkish Wrestling Federation, and Turkish wrestlers and Mexico's high altitude considerably affected Turkish sportsmen during Olympic Games. However, despite of all those problems Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık were source of consolation due to their Olympic championships. Mahmut Atalay and Ahmet Ayık during their sportive life always have been planned, programmed and disciplined; they worked very hard to raise the Turkish flag, made play Turkish National Anthem, and became Olympic champions. Our Olympic wrestling champions has always been loved and respected due to their wrestling manners not only in their sportive life but also in every aspects of their life. These champions keep living as model wrestlers for future generations, announcing to the world the words "Strong as a Turk". Other Turkish sportsman needs to be mentioned among Turkish sportsmen in 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games who became fourth in branch of marathon. Besides, Turkish wrestling was in period of stagnation during 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games.

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