



## The Term “Masters” in the Sports Associated with Circumstances and Future Development

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### Abstract

Masters’ Athletics has shown a significant and remarkable role for people's happiness, physically and psychologically. World Masters Athletics (WMA) Championships started in 1975, and two terms of Veterans and Masters were used. Author Konoike was the president of Asia Masters Athletics (AMA) from 1998 to 2013, and established the International Masters Athletics Federation (IMAF) associated with continuing various competition games and research until now. During World competitions in 2000, he emphasized adequate official terms for Masters instead of Veterans. Japan Sports Masters (JSPO) has been established including lots of sports and “Masters” has become a standard common word for sports.

### Keywords

Masters’ Athletics, World Masters Athletics, Asia Masters Athletics, International Masters Athletics Federation, Japan Sports Masters

### Abbreviations

WMA: World Masters Athletics; AMA: Asia Masters Athletics; IMAF: International Masters Athletics Federation; JSPO: Japan Sports Masters

In recent years, an aging society has come and our middle and elderly lives have become longer than before [1]. Current issues include adequate measures to make people participate in various social activities [2]. From these aspects, sports can contribute much to maintaining health, providing communication opportunities to interacting with others [3]. By continuing sports activities, sports participants may obtain physical and psychological benefits associated with happiness in their lives [4]. For our successful aging, the involvement of sports in daily lives has been

emphasized [5]. Among various applicants in various sports, masters’ athletes have been found who like to play in the field and track games for long. They are characteristic for their positive attitude in daily challenges [6]. The attendance is observed in domestic competitions and also world international masters’ games with attracting attention [7].

The authors have continued several research and active practice in masters’ fields [8,9]. They include sports medicine, psychology, rehabilitation, music, and

culture [1,10]. In this article, recent topics related to masters' sports will be described, which are associated with Quality of Life (QOL) and happiness in our society. For current social, sport and health fields, the terminology of the "Masters" has been widely known in the professional field and also in the common social area. The outline of the circumstances will be shown in this article.

The Masters' association is currently known, which was previously called the veterans association [11]. It has been referred to people over the age of 35. The first track and field competition was held in 1932 in England for middle-aged and elderly people. The first World Masters Athletics (WMA) Championships were held in Toronto, Canada, in 1975 [12]. Two terms have been used in middle-aged track and field, which are veterans and masters.

For international masters' athletics championships, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> competitions (1975 and 1977) were called Masters, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> (1979-2001) were called Veterans [13]. The usage of the term "Masters" has been common internationally since 2002, where the reason and background will be described afterwards. The obsession with naming is mainly based on the inconvenient image of veterans from the military, and then, people in North and South America tend to refrain from using veterans. Consequently, the term "masters" is commonly used in the United States and Australia. In contrast, "veterans" are rather more common in European countries.

In 1977, author Konoike and several members participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Masters Championships in Athletics (Göteborg, Sweden). It became the trigger for developing masters' athletics and other masters' sports. In 1980, the 1<sup>st</sup> All Japan Masters Athletics Championships was held in Wakayama, Japan. Subsequently, Konoike became deeply involved in the Japan Masters competition, and expanded various activities. Several meaningful tournaments were held in Japan. The 10<sup>th</sup> Memorial World Championships in Athletics was held in Miyazaki, Japan in 1993. In 1998, the 4<sup>th</sup> World Road Athletics Championships in Akashi Strait Big Suspension Bridge (Kobe, Japan) and the 10<sup>th</sup> Memorial Asian Championships in Okinawa were held successfully. In addition to these achievements, his

deep devotion to Masters Athletics was highly known and evaluated worldwide. Konoike has continued to participate in 22 consecutive world tournaments, which has been the longest record all over the world that only he can have.

The author served as chairman of the Asia Masters Athletics (AMA) from 1998 to 2013. When the 14<sup>th</sup> World Congress was held in 2000 at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Konoike gave a speech for a representative of the Asia region and Japan at the General Assembly. Among them, he emphasized the appropriateness and necessity of unifying the international understanding, where adequate terms would be "Masters" instead of "Veterans" [14,15]. The proposal was recognized with a majority of the votes. Because all participants know well about the continuous management and attendance to the world championship.

Based on the historical situation mentioned above, the term "Masters" became the standard term for domestic and international athletics games. Furthermore, the Masters Games have been developed so far, including various other kinds of sports, such as swimming, table tennis, and so on [16]. For recent decades, Japan Sports Masters (JSPO) has been established including lots of sports [17], and then the "Masters" has become common word for all people for all middle-aged and elderly sports. Konoike proposed the recommendation of using the word "Masters" for the competition in the athletic games at the official assembly. Then, this term was fundamentally established as an official term in 2002 from various sports points of view. He continued to be the representative of Asian Masters Athletics (AMA) until 2013 [18]. Just before his retirement, he established the International Masters Athletics Federation (IMAF) on June 6, 2012 [19].

IMAF has been established in order to make progress in lifelong sports that are related to several kinds of Masters sports [19]. The purpose would be the development of wellness and fitness by inviting lots of participants to championship games. Another purpose would be the accomplishment of excitement associated with cooperation and friendship [20]. Actual beneficial aspects include that anybody who keeps healthy can

begin participating in the IMAF championship as one likes. As regards to the philosophy, the participants can have competitive oriented-direction with more excellent achievement. Simultaneously, they can obtain a healthy feeling of consciousness through daily persistence of fitness, wellness, and health [21]. From our recent research for masters' athletes, sports value awareness included some types of leisure, recreation, abstinence and agon [22,23]. Such results will contribute further psychological investigation, leading to lifelong active QOL lives.

In summary, clinical and actual significance of the term “Masters” were described in this paper. Continuous daily life with Masters' athletics will bring meaningful and remarkable life related to various kinds of sports. IMAF can contribute to the maintenance of health and happiness for people. The current report will hopefully be a useful reference for sport and medical development in the future.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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