

A Study on the Basic Connotation, Realistic Issues and Implementation Paths of High-quality Development of China's Sports Industry

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Abstract

This study aims to clarify the current status of development of China's sports industry, explore the fundamental meaning and basic elements of high-quality development of the sports industry, identify and analyze the main challenges faced by the sports industry, and provide theoretical inspiration and practical guidance for achieving sustainable and high-quality development of China's sports industry. This study adopted the literature method and logical analysis method. Through extensive reference to relevant literature and policy documents, the theoretical basis for the high-quality development of the sports industry was systematically sorted out. Using the logical analysis method, its internal relationship and framework were explored, and the current status of the development of China's sports industry was comprehensively evaluated. The research results show that in the process of achieving high-quality development, China's sports industry is faced with problems such as insufficient technological innovation capabilities, unreasonable industrial structure, unbalanced regional development, and weak international competitiveness, which have become the main factors hindering the high-quality development of China's sports industry. In order to promote the high-quality development of China's sports industry, efforts should be made in the following aspects. Firstly, deepen the integration of science and technology in the sports industry, and enhance innovation capabilities and total factor productivity. Secondly, optimize the structure of the sports industry, and promote field collaboration and efficient allocation of resources. Thirdly, increase sports industry brand building and improve product quality and market influence. Fourthly, practice the green and low-carbon concept of sports, and balance environmental protection and economic growth. Last but not least, strengthen the collaboration between the government, enterprises and all sectors of society to form a joint force to promote the upgrading of China's sports industry. It is hoped that this study can provide a theoretical framework and practical guidance for the high-quality development of China's sports industry, provide inspiring value for relevant policy makers and practitioners in the sports industry, and enhance the international competitiveness of China's sports industry.

1. Introduction

As an important part of the national economy, the sports industry is undergoing unprecedented changes and developments^{[1][2]}. The vigorous development of the global sports industry not only reflects mankind's pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, but also reflects the profound impact of scientific and technological progress on the industrial model^[3]. Therefore, its development level has become the focus of attention of governments and all sectors of society^[4].

The scale of the global sports industry market continues to expand, especially in emerging markets such as China, India, and South Korea. With the rise of the middle class and the improvement of living standards, it has become an important driving force for promoting high-quality development in multiple fields of the country. Especially in China, the sports industry is placed at the core of the strategy of building a healthy and strong country^{[5][6]}. Its high-quality development not only carries the important task of improving the health and well-being of the whole people, but is also regarded as an important engine for driving the optimization and upgrading of China's economic structure and promoting the high-quality development stage of the industry^[7]. In recent years, China has attached great importance to the development of the sports industry and issued a series of policies such as "Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Sports Industry to Promote Sports Consumption", which provide strong policy guarantees for the development of the sports industry^[8]. With the rapid development of China's economy and the improvement of people's living standards, the public's demand for sports fitness and leisure activities is increasing^[9]. According to statistics from the General Administration of Sport of China, the national sports industry reached a total scale of 3.3008 trillion yuan in 2022, with an added value of 1.3092 trillion yuan, reflecting increases of 5.9% and 6.9% respectively compared to the previous year^[10]. This indicates significant potential for economic value creation within China's sports industry, along with positive development momentum. Additionally, a favorable policy environment, strong market demand, and the influence of scientific and technological innovation provide excellent opportunities and robust support for the sector's growth. However, the current landscape of China's sports industry faces considerable challenges. The industry suffers from an unreasonable structural imbalance, where some regions are overdeveloped while others lag behind, limiting balanced and comprehensive growth^{[11][12][13][14]}. Additionally, a lack of innovation restricts sports products and services from satisfying the diverse and high-quality demands of the market, which in turn affects the industry's competitiveness. This deficiency in international competitiveness has hindered China's sports industry from establishing a strong presence in the global market, further limiting its opportunities for internationalization and globalization^[15]. Consequently, addressing the challenges confronting China's sports industry, unlocking its growth potential, and fostering high-quality development in the new era have become pressing issues that require immediate solutions.

In this context, this study performs a comprehensive analysis of the essential meanings and key components of high-quality development within China's sports industry by employing literature review and logical analysis methods. It evaluates the current development status of the industry, highlighting its achievements, challenges, and future trends. Furthermore, the study provides strategic recommendations designed to promote the advancement of China's sports industry, aiming to deliver practical measures and insights that support its high-quality growth, transformation, and upgrading. Additionally, it seeks to establish a theoretical framework for formulating policies and regulations pertinent to China's sports sector.

2. The Basic Connotation and Core Elements of High-quality Development of China's Sports Industry

2.1 The Basic Connotation of High-quality Development of China's Sports Industry

High-quality development of China's sports industry means that within the field of sports industry, the new development concept is used as the guide to improve development efficiency through optimizing industrial structure, transforming development momentum, and transforming modern factors such as green and sustainable development^{[16][17]}. This will facilitate a transition in the sports industry from a focus on "quantitative" growth to "qualitative" enhancement, leading to comprehensive upgrades and sustainable success. The concept of high-quality development in China's sports sector is multifaceted and goes beyond merely increasing industry scale or economic gains. It encompasses the optimization of industrial structure, the strengthening of innovation capabilities, the enhancement of service quality, and the adoption of sustainable development strategies^{[18][19]}. This approach highlights the need for an overall enhancement of both quantity and quality in the sports industry while improving the economy's quality and efficiency.

First, the high-quality development of China's sports industry focuses on optimizing and upgrading the industrial structure^[20]. This involves enhancing the integration of sports manufacturing and service sectors, fostering the improvement and expansion of the sports industry chain, and creating competitive clusters within the sports industry. Additionally, it prioritizes the growth of emerging sectors such as green sports and smart sports to address the diverse needs of consumers.

Secondly, enhancing innovation capabilities is essential for advancing the high-quality development of China's sports industry^{[21][22]}. This can be achieved by boosting investment in scientific research, reinforcing the research and development of sports technologies, and facilitating the transformation of achievements into practical applications while fostering brands with independent intellectual property rights. Additionally, there should be a strong encouragement for sports companies to embrace new technologies and business models to increase the added value of their products and services.

Thirdly, the high-quality development of the sports industry should focus on improving service quality^{[23][24]}. By improving the hardware conditions such as stadiums and facilities, the professionalization and standardization of sports events, fitness and leisure services can be improved, and the professional quality and service level of practitioners can be improved.

Finally, the high-quality development of China's sports industry must adhere to a sustainable development strategy^{[25][26]}. While facilitating rapid industry growth, it is crucial to prioritize the protection of the ecological environment, foster social harmony and stability, and uphold the principles of green sports development. This approach emphasizes not only immediate economic growth but also the long-term advancement of China's sports industry, aiming to establish a healthy, stable, and sustainable ecological system for the sports sector.

2.2 The Core Elements of High-quality Development of China's Sports Industry

The high-quality development of China's sports industry involves more than just increasing industrial scale and economic benefits. It focuses on thoroughly optimizing the industrial structure, significantly enhancing innovation capabilities, improving service quality, and adopting sustainable development strategies. To ensure the long-term prosperity and steady progress of

China's sports industry, it is crucial to concentrate on the key elements that promote its high-quality development.

These elements are crucial for elevating China's sports industry to a higher level. First, technological innovation is the core driving force for the high-quality development of China's sports industry^[27]. This involves utilizing advanced technologies like new-generation information technology, biotechnology, and new materials to facilitate the intelligent and digital upgrades of sports equipment, facilities, and services. Through technological innovation, the sports industry can create new products, enhance the sports experience, optimize event operations, and cater to the increasingly diverse and personalized needs of consumers. Second, optimizing the industrial structure is essential. To achieve high-quality development of China's sports industry, it is necessary to adjust and optimize the industrial structure and promote the integrated development with other industries such as tourism, culture, and education^{[28][29]}. This has created a diversified sports industry ecosystem, which has not only broadened the scope of the sports industry and enriched its content, but also significantly improved the competitiveness of the sports industry. Third, talent support is vital. The industry must cultivate and attract a pool of high-quality professionals in areas such as sports management, services, technology research and development, and marketing^{[30][31]}. These individuals should possess innovative thinking, extensive management experience, and sharp market insights, enabling them to introduce new ideas and lead innovation trends within the industry. They will also be able to accurately assess market dynamics and devise effective development strategies, promoting the sports industry towards higher quality and more sustainable growth. Fourth, brand building represents an important aspect of high-quality development. By focusing on brand development, the China's sports industry can enhance the value and popularity of its products and services^{[32][33]}. This requires a commitment to improving product quality, service experiences, cultural significance, and effective brand marketing and promotion. Fifth, market demand orientation is essential for high-quality development. The development of China's sports industry must pay close attention to market trends and changes, actively explore new market opportunities, deeply understand consumer needs and preferences, and adjust product and service strategies in a timely manner^[34]. This understanding allows for timely adjustments to product and service strategies. Lastly, green and sustainable development is a fundamental requirement. It is necessary to prioritize environmental protection, resource conservation, and low-carbon practices throughout the production, consumption, and management processes of the sports industry, establishing a strong foundation for sustainable development in the future^{[35][36]}. In the process of promoting the high-quality development of China's sports industry, the six elements constitute a mutually reinforcing and coordinated system, forming a mutually reinforcing closed-loop system to comprehensively promote the high-quality and sustainable development of China's sports industry. The specific content is shown in Figure 1.

Thus, the core elements of high-quality development in China's sports industry include scientific and technological innovation, optimized industrial structure, talent support and training, a focus on brand building, market demand orientation, and green sustainability. The measurement criteria encompass economic indicators, innovation capabilities, social impact, and sustainable development. These core elements and standards complement each other, forming the basis of the framework system for evaluating the high-quality development of China's sports industry and providing strong theoretical support.

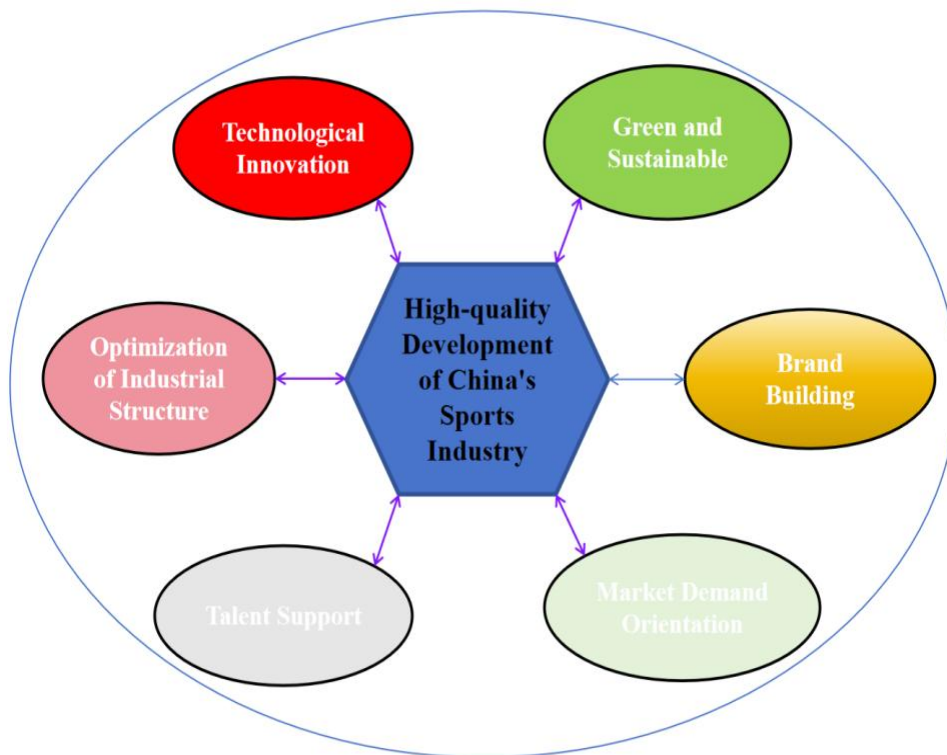


Figure 1. Core Elements of High-quality Development of China's Sports Industry

3. The Current Development Status of China's Sports Industry and Existing Practical Problems

As the global economy rapidly grows, China's sports industry is witnessing substantial expansion and development. According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China and the General Administration of Sport of China at the end of 2023, the total value of the sports industry reached 3,300.8 billion yuan in 2022, with an added value of 1,309.2 billion yuan. These figures represent increases of 5.9% and 6.9%, respectively, compared with the previous year. For four consecutive years, the sports industry's added value has comprised more than 1% of GDP, highlighting its significant role in China's national economy^{[37][38]}. Research predicts that by 2030, the scale of China's sports industry is expected to exceed 7 trillion yuan, with an average annual growth rate of more than 10%, which means huge market potential and development opportunities^[39]. Currently, China's sports industry is in a vibrant and rapidly developing phase, showcasing great potential and promising prospects. The industry is not only expanding in scale, with steady increases in the output value of sports manufacturing but also experiencing rapid growth in the sports service sector. Furthermore, the diversification of the sports industry is becoming increasingly evident, encompassing not just traditional sports competitions and fitness activities but also emerging areas like e-sports, sports tourism, and sports health. Additionally, the ongoing optimization of the policy environment has provided robust support for the high-quality development of the sports industry, creating a favorable external environment for its growth in China.

Although China's sports industry has made significant progress over the past few decades, evolving from its inception to a phase of growth, this advancement has been supported by proactive national policies, increasing market demand, and strong technological innovation. However, the journey toward high-quality development remains fraught with difficulties and challenges in the current economic and social landscape of the new era. First, there is a marked

imbalance in the development of the sports industry between urban and rural areas. The industry tends to concentrate in cities with better economic foundations, higher income levels, strong sports consumption demand, and abundant sports facilities and events. In contrast, underdeveloped areas face challenges such as economic constraints, a lack of sports facilities, and limited sports awareness, leading to slower development. This disparity has significantly hindered the achievement of China's national fitness strategy. Second, the structure of China's sports industry is uneven, with the sports service industry disproportionately large compared to the relatively underdeveloped sports goods manufacturing sector and related industries. While the rapid growth of the sports service sector has revitalized the industry, an over-reliance on services may cause imbalances along the industrial chain. Furthermore, the lagging development of the sports goods manufacturing sector could hinder the overall innovation capacity and market competitiveness of China's sports industry. This structural imbalance poses significant challenges to the healthy and sustainable growth of the sports sector. Third, the sports industry faces issues such as insufficient technological innovation capabilities and a shortage of professional talent. As the industry undergoes digital transformation, technological innovation is crucial. However, it encounters difficulties, including key technical bottlenecks and a lack of digital expertise, which slow down the high-quality development process. Fourth, numerous barriers remain to the integrated development of the sports industry with other sectors. Integration is a key pathway to fostering high-quality development, yet the industry faces complex challenges, including policy, funding, and technological restrictions. These barriers impede the deep integration and collaboration between the sports industry and other sectors.

Tackling these challenges necessitates collaborative efforts from the government, businesses, and society at large to improve policy coordination and strategic planning, expand financing options, enhance financial support, and advance technological innovation and digital transformation. Only by implementing these measures well can we break down barriers, promote integration, and push the development of China's sports industry and other industries to a higher and deeper level. At the same time, we need to focus on several aspects in this process. First, it is essential to ensure a balanced distribution of sports resources and development opportunities between urban and rural regions. Secondly, we should consistently improve the structure of the sports industry, promote coordinated development across all sectors, and enhance the overall efficiency of the industrial chain. Third, strengthening technological innovation is crucial. We must infuse new vitality and competitiveness into the sports industry by adopting advanced technologies and nurturing professional talent. Additionally, promoting the integrated development of the sports industry is crucial. By actively fostering deep collaboration between sports and sectors such as health, culture, and tourism, we can create a unique and influential new sports industry through cross-sector innovation. This approach not only enriches the content and scope of the sports industry but also enhances its market appeal and overall competitiveness.

4. Implementation Path and Strategic Guidance for Promoting High-quality

Development of China's Sports Industry

4.1 Strengthen Scientific and Technological Innovation and Promote Technological Upgrading of China's Sports Industry.

With the expansion of China's sports sector, technological advancement has emerged as a

pivotal force propelling its progress. To secure the industry's high-quality growth, it is essential to enhance technological capabilities and bolster innovation efforts. This can be achieved by developing a robust system for technological innovation, escalating investment in research and development, expeditiously advancing the establishment of platforms for sports-related technological innovation, and fostering the comprehensive integration of industry, education, research, and practical application.

Initially, it's crucial to motivate businesses to boost their spending on R&D and to construct a robust framework for technological innovation. Enhancing partnerships with academic institutions and research organizations is also essential, as is steering companies to intensify their focus on R&D efforts. Establishing a solid system for innovation and escalating R&D funding are vital steps toward advancing the technology within the sports sector. Subsequently, the rapid development of platforms for sports technology innovation, such as research facilities and incubators, is a significant method to foster technological advancement in the sports industry. We can incrementally broaden financial investment and backing for these platforms, cultivate a conducive environment for sports tech innovation, and encourage domestic sports companies to undertake innovation projects. This approach will attract more tech experts to contribute to the industry's innovation efforts, offering a talent boost for the technology upgrade in China's sports sector. Ultimately, enhancing the integration of industry, education, research, and practical application is a strategic move to expedite technological innovation in the sports industry. It's important to continue strengthening the collaboration mechanisms in this area, leveraging the close ties between the sports sector and academic and research entities. Joint efforts should be made to advance the deep integration initiative across industry, education, research, and application, thereby providing robust technological support for the high-quality growth of China's sports industry.

Therefore, advancing technological innovation and promoting technological progress within the sports sector are critical to achieving high-quality growth in China's sports industry. It is essential to establish a robust framework for technological innovation, steadily increase research and development investment, accelerate the creation of platforms focused on sports technology innovation, and encourage deep integration across industry, academia, research, and application. These efforts will inject new momentum into the technological advancement of China's sports industry, supporting its pursuit of qualitative improvement.

4.2 Optimize the Industrial Structure and Promote the Coordinated Development of China's Sports Industry

Enhancing the industrial structure and fostering coordinated development within the sports industry are essential strategies for advancing high-quality growth in China's sports sector. Strengthening the sports industry chain, promoting collaboration between upstream and downstream enterprises, driving deep integration between sports services and manufacturing, and cultivating emerging forms of the sports industry, such as "Internet + Sports" and "Sports Tourism," are vital pathways to achieving this objective.

On the one hand, Strengthening the sports industry chain is a key approach to boosting the overall competitiveness of the sector. The sports industry chain encompasses a broad spectrum of areas, including the manufacturing of sports goods, sports media, training programs, event management, and more. By connecting these links, a complete industrial ecosystem can be formed, thereby improving resource allocation efficiency and reducing operating costs. For example, sports goods manufacturers can cooperate with event operation companies to provide

customized products and services; sports media companies can use event operation resources to create attractive content and enhance audience stickiness. Through coordinating and collaborating across various industry chains can better leverage the strengths of each sector, create mutually beneficial outcomes, and drive the high-quality advancement of China's sports industry.

On the other hand, enhancing collaboration between upstream and downstream enterprises is crucial for optimizing the industrial structure. In the sports industry, upstream enterprises primarily consist of sports goods manufacturers and equipment suppliers, while downstream enterprises encompass service providers like event organizers, sports training centers, and sports media. Through the in-depth cooperation between upstream and downstream enterprises, for example, sports goods manufacturers can join hands with sports training institutions to develop professional equipment for different sports and promote them during the training process to achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages; equipment suppliers can cooperate with event operation companies to provide high-quality competition equipment and technical support. This cooperation model not only improves the quality of products and services, but also enhances the market competitiveness of enterprises, and promotes the deep integration of sports services and manufacturing.

Consequently, it is imperative to enhance the holistic chain structure of the sports industry and to foster robust collaboration among businesses at all stages of the supply chain. We must also vigorously advance the comprehensive integration of services and manufacturing within the sports domain, while continuously seeking out and nurturing new commercial and economic growth areas in sports.

4.3 Strengthen Brand Building and Enhance the Brand Value of China's Sports Industry

Enhancing brand building and increasing the brand value within China's sports industry are essential strategies for advancing its high-quality development. A robust brand not only significantly boosts product market competitiveness but also plays a vital role in upgrading and refining the entire industrial chain. Key approaches include fostering sports brands with strong international competitiveness, amplifying brand promotion and visibility, and strengthening protections for brand intellectual property rights.

Firstly, developing sports brands with strong international influence is essential for elevating the brand value of China's sports industry. While prominent domestic brands like Li Ning and Anta have made significant strides globally, further efforts are necessary to boost their international competitiveness. To achieve this, companies should consistently increase their investment in R&D, enhancing the technological innovation and content of their products. For instance, by collaborating with leading international athletes and designers, companies can create products with higher appeal and performance in both domestic and global markets. Adopting advanced production technologies and materials can further improve product quality and functionality. Additionally, actively participating in major international sports events and exhibitions helps increase global recognition of Chinese sports products. This not only strengthens the global competitiveness of China's sports brands but also allows them to learn from advanced international practices, better positioning Chinese sports companies in the global marketplace.

Secondly, strengthening brand publicity and promotion is an important means to increase the popularity and influence of sports brands. Brand publicity is not limited to the form of advertising, but also includes many aspects such as the dissemination of brand culture. Sports companies can

use various channels and various forms of publicity to convey the core value and effectiveness of the brand to consumers. For example, by sponsoring large-scale well-known sports events, companies can cooperate with sports stars, entertainers, etc., use their influence to promote the brand, enhance the public awareness of sports brands, expand the brand's service group, and effectively enhance the market influence and competitiveness of sports brands.

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4.4 Promote Green and Low-carbon Development and Enhance the Sustainable Development Capabilities of China's Sports Industry

To advance green and low-carbon growth and strengthen the sustainable development potential of China's sports industry, it is essential to encourage eco-friendly production practices and consumption habits, enhance resource recycling, and improve energy-saving and emission reduction efforts within sports venues and facilities. Additionally, fostering green sports concepts and supporting the industry's eco-friendly transformation are crucial steps toward sustainable development.

Firstly, advancing green and low-carbon production and consumption patterns is essential for the sustainable growth of the sports industry. On the production side, the use of eco-friendly materials and green production technologies in manufacturing sports-related products, such as sportswear and apparel, should be prioritized to minimize environmental impact and resource waste. Simultaneously, companies can optimize supply chain management to lower energy consumption and emissions, achieving green and low-carbon production processes. Regarding consumption, promoting the concept of green consumption is key, encouraging consumers to choose environmentally friendly and healthy options when selecting sports products and services. Through education, awareness campaigns, and market guidance, we can foster green consumption habits and consciousness among consumers, empowering them to play a significant role in the green and low-carbon transformation of the sports industry. This approach will contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly trajectory for the entire industry.

Secondly, advancing energy conservation, emission reduction, and resource recycling in sports venues is a vital approach for guiding the sports industry toward sustainable, high-quality development. Sports facilities hold a significant place within the industry, and their energy consumption and environmental footprint are substantial concerns. Therefore, the construction and renovation of these venues should follow low-carbon, eco-friendly design principles, incorporating advanced energy-saving technologies and equipment to achieve notable reductions in energy use and carbon emissions during operation. This approach minimizes environmental impact. Implementing high-efficiency energy-saving devices, optimizing energy management systems, and encouraging renewable energy usage can not only strengthen the industry's capacity for green, sustainable development but also create mutual benefits for both economic and environmental outcomes.

Finally, promoting the idea of green sports and fostering the eco-friendly growth of the

sports industry are essential for attaining sustainable development. The concept of green sports emphasizes the harmonious coexistence of sports and nature, and advocates that people respect the natural environment and cherish ecological resources when participating in sports activities. The sports industry should actively introduce green innovation concepts, promote the green design and manufacturing of sports equipment, and encourage environmental protection initiatives and green hosting of sports events. At the same time, collaboration between sports organizations and environmental protection groups should be enhanced to collectively advance the development of green sports and guide society toward a sustainable, low-carbon future.

5. Conclusion

To achieve the objective of high-quality development within China's sports industry, this study systematically reviewed its fundamental connotations and core components, and examined the current state and primary challenges the industry faces. The findings indicate that, despite progress, China's sports industry continues to encounter obstacles such as limited technological innovation, an imbalanced industrial structure, uneven regional development, and a lack of international competitiveness, all of which hinder its sustainable and high-quality growth. To address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed: firstly, it is essential to enhance the integration of the sports industry with science and technology, bolster innovation in this field, and advance technological upgrades within the industry. Strengthening innovation and boosting total factor productivity are key aspects to achieving high-quality development. Secondly, efforts should be made to deeply optimize and upgrade the industry's structure, fostering collaboration and integrated growth across various sectors to maximize resource efficiency and overall benefits. Thirdly, emphasis should be placed on brand development—by improving product quality, innovating service models, and enhancing market promotion, the sports industry can increase its brand value and market impact. Fourth, a strong commitment to green and low-carbon development should be actively embraced, allowing the industry to achieve a sustainable balance between environmental protection and economic growth. Finally, the high-quality growth of China's sports industry necessitates collaborative efforts and coordination among the government, businesses, and society as a whole.

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