

BASKETBALL IN THE TERRITORY OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA FROM 1ST OF JANUARY 1942 UNTIL THE 9TH OF MAY 1945

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SUMMARY

Development of basketball in the territory of former Yugoslavia in the time of II World War remained quite un-researched. Even though it was truly played, with almost same intensity as before the War, for a long time people were silent and wrote very little about it. During the period (1942 – 1945) several sport clubs existed in Belgrade: Sk. 1913, Bask, Bsk, Btk, Bob, Obilić, Sask, Bankarac, Izbeglice (Refugees), Vladan Matić's club and others who cherished basketball in newly-formed teams. Besides many games, they organised championships and did their best to promote basketball among school youth. Beside Belgrade, basketball was played in other places too: Novi Sad, Subotica, Petrovgrad, Šabac, Kragujevac, Niš, Prizren, Split, Zadar, Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Kotor and other, with different intensity. Most of the games and championships happened during 1942 and 1943. During writing historical method was used (finding of primary historical sources, their analysis, as also finding and analysis of secondary historical sources). Numerous sources made in that time were reviewed and consulted (magazines, newspapers, papers, records, reports, overwrites, etc.) in: archives, libraries, institutes, private archives and museums of sports of former Yugoslavia, as also the sources made afterword.

Ključne riječi: Basketball, WW II, competitions, "Novo vreme" ("New times").

INTRODUCTION

Development of basketball in the territory of former Yugoslavia in the time of II World War remained quite un-researched so far. There are a few papers about basketball development from that particular period and from that area. Pavlovich names one of the reasons for that:

People here treat historical part of physical culture with a lot of negligence, better said historical sciences have been passive towards this area of human culture for quite some time, what brought a significant lack of methods and attention towards keeping and studying of those materials. From those reasons a very small number of primary historical documents were saved as same as other archive materials about physical culture during the war. That is also one of the reasons why in historiography literature, a part from relative-

ly rich memoir materials and popular affairs, we can rarely find scientific papers talking about the areas of physical culture (Pavlović, 1989, p. 3).

Meaning and the role of sports in culture in our country and also around the world, simply cannot be out of the attention of science, and by that out of the history science, and that is why more and more attention is given to the research of sports history and also history of basketball.

We could think that, in those troubled times and all the hardness of the II W.W. on the territory of Yugoslavia at the time, people did not pay any attention to sport activities. But that was not the case. Researches have shown that people, even in those difficult times, did pay attention, among other things, to diversity of sports activities where was also basketball.

Even though it was truly played during the War, for a long time people were silent and wrote very

little about it. In Belgrade the intensity of basketball was almost the same as before the occupation. It was played not only by pre-war players, but also by other athletes and school youth.

During 1941, several sport clubs existed in Belgrade: Sk. Jugoslavija, Bask, Bsk, Btk, Obilic, Bob, Sask, Vladan Matics' club and others who cherished basketball in new-formed teams. Besides playing in teams they also played games, organised championship of Belgrade and did their best for promoting basketball among school youth. Most games were on Kalemegdan court (playground of Bob) and Tašmajdan (playground Btk). First Belgrade championship was held on 27th and 28th September 1941. (Simović, Pavlović, Pantelić, & Grgić, 2010)

Besides Belgrade basketball was played in other places of former Yugoslavia: Novi Sad, Petrovgrad, Subotica, Šabac, Kragujevac, Niš, Prizren, Split, Zadar, Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Kotor and other, with different intensity. In the next "war-years" (42 – 45) basketball activities continue.

This issue was very little written about, because of just a few scientific papers about this topic, and due to the fact that mentioned period of basketball development (42 – 45) remained un-researched so far, our goal throughout this paper is to research, analyze, highlight and bring out of oblivion that same period. We hope to stir up sport historians and readers of all sorts, especially basketball fans, to indulge themselves into further research.

METHOD

During writing, the historical method was used (finding of primary historical sources, their analysis, as also finding and analysis of secondary historical sources). Numerous sources made in that time were reviewed and consulted (magazines, newspapers, papers, records, reports, overwrites, etc.) in: archives, libraries, institutes, private archives and museums of sports of former Yugoslavia, as also the sources made afterward.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Work of the Serbian Basketball Association

In the first half of September 1941 Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association was founded. Svetislav Vulović was elected for the first President. Technician was Boro Jovanović. Beside spreading

basketball in Belgrade and all Serbia, beside competitions, new clubs and sections, association also worked on their own rules, rules of basketball as also on the improvement and organisation of referees.

Nenadović in "Novo vreme" magazine from 2nd March 1943 writes about the work of the Association:

After a longer brake, which started along with the winter days, and still stands, basketball and volleyball are being re-woken. Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association used that period to make their own rules, as also the rules for basketball and volleyball, so that in the future everything goes on normally. Future games will be attended by more referees, because they gave their best to train and make a few of them, which will attend basketball and volleyball games and earn the confidence of both players and audience (cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 181).

Association in a little over a year, has achieved notable success: more than three hundred registered players in Association, 23 registered clubs, all participate in the competition, they organized the Championship of Serbia, the first national team game, and created basketball rules, a good referee staff and so on.

The Steering Committee of the Association has decided to hold the First regular annual Conference on the 6th of July 1943. Text of Nenadić in "Novo vreme" magazine from that same date is the best way to describe the work of the Association until that period:

That day will be historically and undeniably the most important date for this sport. Basketball and volleyball for little over a year of organized promotion have interested a lot of athletes, in the first place, because today there are over 300 verified players in the Association, as also the whole sports public. It is considered that a total of over 15.000 viewers attended a so – far basketball and volleyball games. Association managed to organize its first championship and gain its first champion for 1942, as also to organize one very beautiful game between representations of Belgrade and National Guard. Only that kind of addicted work could attract 23 clubs to sign and actively participate in the championships of the Association. Yet, the Association had one big lack. Because of the preoccupation about the many games going on, Technical Board

had no time to make the rules. They worked by the combination of several rules, which had their differences, and none of them were accepted as official ones. That is why referees could not be synchronized. Fortunately for the Association and all players, Aksentijević, Popović and Dimić, great fans of this game, managed to do that. It was probably a great practice and a dedicated work that gave these young men the opportunity to end this work. Boro Jovanović, a technical referent of the Association for basketball and the first member of the Commission for the acceptance of the rules, gave his opinion and a good word for them (cited in Paunić, 2007, pp. 181–182).

Mirko (Bata) Aksentijević, Nebojša Popović and Ivan Dimić even out and wrote the rules, and a Commission for the acceptance of the rules, whose first member was Boro Jovanović, commanded them and gave their positive opinion. About them "Novo vreme" no. 52 in its Sports department from 27 July 1943 says:

It is not necessary to emphasise the meaning of the creation and the publication of these rules for the development of our basketball. Because it should be considered that even before the foundation of the Association, basketball already existed here (before 1941), and clubs had their "wild" development even then, and every one of them had their own rules. Now this sport will gain its uniformity which is cooperated with the basketball around the globe. By doing that, Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association, a long with the three mentioned players – the writers of the rules, filled a huge emptiness which has stemmed the progress of this young sport in our environment (cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 182).

Association formed a referee team with: Boro Jovanović, Selimir (Sele) Radovanović, Zvonimir Neferović, Mileta Tešin, Mirko (Bata) Aksentijević, Miodrag (Mija) Stefanović, Vaso Stojković, Slobodan Vukanović and others.

It starts with two – referees – per – game practise (older, more experienced referee and the beginner), what seemed to be very good. It was just like the old saying says "More eyes see well."

To improve the work of the referee crew for basketball, as also to answer to all other questions that involve refereeing, on the 14th December 1943 was formed Assembly of the basketball and volleyball

referee association. Constituent Assembly was held in the premises of the Sk. Mitić, starting at 6 p.m. The Assembly was announced in "Novo Vreme": "In the premises of the SK 'Mitić' (entrance from the st. Uskočka) today, 6 p.m. sharp, will be held a Constituent Assembly of Basketball and Volleyball Referee Association" ("Constituent Assembly of Referee Association today", 1943, p. 5).

Basketball becomes more and more popular, more interesting for the viewers, games are more visited (at BSK's and SK 1913's game attended some 1.500 viewers), and other athletes go in for it.

Basketball and volleyball constantly embrace better positions in our sport lives. There are more and more soccer players among competitors and viewers. Basketball and volleyball attract them, by not only their beauty and dynamics, but also by its practical value. They know that there is no better and more complete training than this sport, because in the game all parts of the body are equally active (cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 172).

Basketball activities in Belgrade in 1942

During 1942 basketball continues, and even more intensive than before. A lot of games go on between existing clubs, a lot of tournaments happen, new clubs are founded (National guards), first representative games of the Association are being played.

FIGURE 1

Sk. 1913 team from 1942.

(Source: Stojković, 2005, p. 22)



"Novo vreme" from 1st April 1942 writes that on the first day of Easter, on Btk's playground in Tašmajdan, starting at 10.30 a.m., two basketball games between A – teams of Sk. 1913 and Obilić, and B – teams of Sk. 1913 and Sask took place.

The same source states the teams for the upcoming games:

A-team of SK 1913: Nikolić, Aksentijević, Mađeruh, Neferović, Tešin, Stefanović, Dimić, Galović and Savić. B-team of SK 1913: Petrović, Petković, Ostojić, Mihajlović, Nenadović, Ronac, Kosovac, Denić, Oljača and Vujičić. Obilić: Gajić, Trajković, Sokolović, Kašarin, Aleksić, Jovanović, Golubović, Severin and Bijelić. Sask: Kenig, Kostić, Obradović, Đupanović, Vulović, Dinić, Marković and Novaković ("They play on the first day of Easter", 1942, p. 5).

Planned and announced games took place on Easter, Sunday, 5th April 1942, starting at 10.30 a.m. on Btk playground in Tašmajdan.

On Sunday, 12th April 1942, on Btk playground in Tašmajdan were played two basketball games between Sk. 1913 and Bsk, and A and B women teams of Sk. 1913.

Before the games, in "Novo Vreme" magazine, no. from 12th April of the same year, was announced text as follows:

Today at 15.30 p.m. on BTK playground in Tašmajdan the first game between BTK and SK 1913 will be played. Because of the great interest for the mentioned game, the organizer, SK 1913, has taken all the necessary for everything to be in order [...]

By this game BSK and SK 1913 start a new friendly relations in this type of sports. [...] When BSK manages to gather its best team just then we could say something about prestige of these two soccer rivals, but in this type of sports ("First BSK – S. k. 1913 game", 1942, p. 5).

"Kolo", in no. from 18th April 1942 writes:

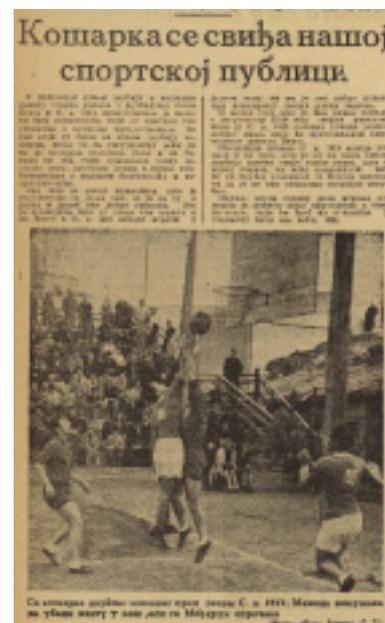
Last week BSK and SK 1913 have met. Around one thousand and five hundred spectators came! Is there really anyone else to claim that our sport audience is not interested in some other sports as well ("Near 1500 spectators in basketball game", 1942, p. 27).

On Sunday, 10th May 1942, on BTK playground starting at 10 a.m. three basketball games were played: B team of Obilić and Btk (first one), Bask and Bsk (second) and A team of Obilić and Sk. 1913 (third). About the third game, in which Obilić won by 30 : 17 (10 : 13), Nenadović (1942a) writes:

Obilić wanted a rehab against SK 1913 because of the defeat from before. He made it. He attacked hard the basket of its opponent and came to advantage [...] The second part of the game is totally under the play of Obilić which gain 20 goals. Obilić totally broke down the Sk 1913 and gave a great game [...] There was no weak place in their game yesterday. They all played great and deserved to win. The only thing that could be said is for the rough play of Trajković, because of what referee had to exclude him (p. 5).

FIGURE 2

Article in "Novo vreme" journal from April 14, 1942 (Source: Nenadović, 1942b, p. 5)



"Novo vreme" in no. from 16 May 1942 announced that Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association, on Sunday 31 May of the same year will organize the competition in basketball and volleyball for the BTK (Belgrade Tennis Club) Cup. They have also announced that all clubs from Belgrade would participate in competition: Bsk, Bask, Sk 1913, Obilić, BTK, Bob, Mitić and Bankarac. The end of the statement says: "Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association call all member clubs to file a report about the exact number of active basketball and volleyball players" ("Basketball and volleyball tournament for the BTK Cup", 1942, p. 5).

Seven teams took place at the competition, not eight, as it was announced by "Novo vreme". Namely, the "Bankarac" team didn't show up. Following teams have participated: Sk. 1913, Obilić, Bsk, Btk, Bask, Mitić and Bob. They had six games each. First

place won Sk. 1913 team, with 12 scored points, beating all other teams, with total of 238 : 95; second place Obilić, 10 points, 5 victories, total of 151 : 100; third Bsk, 8 points, 4 victories, total of 147 : 127; fourth Btk, 6 points, 3 victories, total of 127 : 133; fifth Bask, 4 points, 2 victories, total of 95 : 132; sixth Mitić, 2 points, one victory, total of 66 : 163 and seventh, last place, Bob, 0 points, no victories, total of 92 : 166.

Sports Board of "National Guard"

In the first half of the 1942 a Sports Board of the National Guard was founded, with Rafael Ban as a head of the team. He was famous sports expert, whose main goal was to promote and spread basketball in the National Guard. Along with his assistants Ban achieved admirable success, not only in Belgrade, but in other parts of Serbia too.

"Novo vreme", edition from 14th August 1942 writes: "Considering the so-far work in Belgrade, Valjevo, Skela, Slepčević and Štitar near Šabac Sports Board of the National Guard had a notable success" (Nenadović, 1942c, p. 8).

On Sunday, 16th August 1942, on Btk playground in Tašmajdan the first representative basketball game among National Guard and representation of Belgrade organized by Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association was played. National Guard team won by 31 : 20 (13 : 8). Nenadović (1942d), among other things, writes:

Nice and fair game quickly wormed up the spectators, so they chirred-up for their representation from the beginning. In fast actions of both teams goals just came along, but the National Guard team had more luck and managed to end the first half-time to their advantage with 13 : 8. In the following part National Guard demonstrated a great play and won against Belgrade with 31 : 20 (13 : 8) (p. 5).

Basketball activities in Belgrade in 1943

Basketball activities in Belgrade continue in 1943.

On Easter, 25th April 1943, on Btk playground in Tašmajdan two games were played, and those two games, according to Novo vreme journal, were the first ones in that year ("Interesting games happen on Easter", 1943).

Organized by Serbian Basketball and Volleyball Association, on Btk playground in Tašmajdan, from 15 – 24 May 1943 competitions were held in basketball and volleyball. Six clubs with seven teams par-

ticipated in competition, three women teams: Sk. Mitić, Sk. 1913 and Bob, and four men teams: Bask, Btk, Sk. 1913 and Obilić. This is the way it is written in "Novo vreme": "There is lot of interest about this tournament, and that is why we expect a lot of spectators and fans of participating clubs" ("Today starts the tournament of the Basketball Association", 1943, p. 4).

On Saturday, 10th July 1943, somewhere in the afternoon, as a part of sports competition on Btk playground there was a basketball game between men teams of Sk. 1913 and Btk ("Gentleman's fight between SK 1913 – BTK", 1943).

Basketball competition for the Bob Cup took place in the period 17 – 20 July 1943 on Bob playground in Kalemegdan. Participated: Bask, Sk. 1913, Obilić and Bob.

Games started on Saturday 17th July of the same year in 4.30 p.m. The game between Bask and Sk. 1913 started at 8.00 p.m. Begović left us an interesting description of the game between the teams of Bask and Sk. 1913.

FIGURE 3

Bob women team from 1942 - Mirković, Petrović, Mladenović, Jančković and Komljenović (Source: Pannić, 1981, p. 626)



Something is wrong in Seismological Bureau. Probably Jelenko's seismographs become senseless. Because, one earthquake that happened on Saturday 17th of July 1943 at 8 p. m. sharp, with the epicentre in one of the Kalemegdan's caves remained un-registered. The walls of the Old Town, which every day are talking to the passers-by about a huge and tumultuous history, have once again trembled and shook. This time the reason was un-remembered delirium among the spectators during the BASK and SK 1913 game. The calm and quiet visitors of Kalemegdans's park, who were resting in the evening sun after a long working day, were shocked "Is it a

thunder or the earth is shaking?" and led by curiosity they flew to the BOB's playground where "something that Belgrade has never seen before" took place (cited in Stojanović, 2005, p. 24).

Competitions ended on Tuesday 20th July of the mentioned year. First place and BOB Cup won Bask team.

On Saturday, 11th September 1943, starting at 4.00 p.m. basketball competition with six men teams took place. Participated: Bob, Sk. 1913, Mitić, Obilić, Bask and Sk. Srbija. Three games happened between: Obilić and Mitić, Bob and Sk. 1913 and Bask and Sk. Srbija ("Basketball players also play for the Red Cross", 1943).

The last game of that day was the one between Bask and Sk. Srbija. Bask won with a huge difference, 58 : 1. According to Jevtić:

With one excellent and compact play, where you couldn't say this is better than that, BASK succeeded to break the team of Serbia in that way that its players were simply "swimming on the court". We can say that there was a shot after every forty seconds. And so it kept on in both half-times until Munćan reached 34, and the whole team of BASK a total of 58 – 1. Shooters for BASK: Munćan 34, Šaper II and Dinić both 12. For SK Srbija: Vasiljević 1 (cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 183).

Basketball activities in Belgrade in 1944

During 1944 there was a little bit less basketball than in the years before.

When Slava Stojković asked Nebojša Popović: "With War coming to an end it seems that basketball plays less than before?" he answers:

Yes, especially when Srem Front happened. Because, first of all the liberation of Belgrade happened in 1944 and after that Srem Front. They recruited a lot of people. I volunteered. First they denied my application because of a knee operation I had few months before, but I ran away and went there (Stojković, 2000, p. 18).

There are just a few data about basketball activities in Belgrade in 1944.

According to "Novo vreme" from 26th august 1944 on Saturday 26th and Monday 28th August 1944 in Belgrade were played two basketball games between

representatives of Kragujevac and Belgrade. We didn't find any data about that game. (Paunić, 2007)

According to Stanislav Paunić: "That was the end of the Basketball in those hard times [...] the basketball that was also played in other towns across Yugoslavia" (ibidem, p. 365).

Basketball activities in Belgrade in 1945 – Founding of basketball section as a part of the Phys-culture society Red Star

The group of sports-workers from Belgrade: Zoran Žujović, Slobodan Ćosić, Ljubiša Sekulić, Nebojša Popović, Svetozar Gligorić, Dušan Bogdanović, Mira Petrović, M. Ćirić and others during February 1945 started the initiative to found new sports, or how it was called at that time, new Phys-culture Club in Belgrade.

On the fourth of March 1945 a Phys-culture society "Red Star" was founded in the premises of Sokol society Belgrade – Matica in Deligradska no. 27 (DIF from 1946).

On the Assembly there was a hard discussion about how to name that new sports club, and at the end they decided to call it the "Red Star". Zoran Zujovic, in conversation with Petar Pavlović on March 1979 in "Politika" building in Belgrade says:

A hard discussion was led about the name of the new sports club. There were many suggestions. At the end, I think, Slobodan Ćosić said: "To name our society the Star" and I spontaneously added: "Excellent, only, if it is a Star, let it be Red". All present agreed with this suggestion. And so, that is how Star got its name. I have members' card no. 1 (Pavlović, 1989, p. 555).

It was composed mainly from the rest of the SK "Jugoslavija", they inherited their stadium, the other objects, players, and red – white colours.

Among others, a basketball section was also formed. For the head of the man and woman section was named Mira Petrović. About that Nebojša Popović says:

I was hardly walking on that 4th March 1945 – there was still shooting on Srem Front – when we founded the Red Star. Actually, when I came back from the front and the medical treatment I was active again, that is how it was called in those days. In the House of the youth (Dom omladine) Vračar, in villa Sršković (his son played basketball with me

in SK 1913) it was decided to start with the sports activities [...] in the building of DIF, whose windows were broken from the bombing, we founded the Star. You should remember this: the head of the basketball section was Mira Petrović, she was the first "mom" of basketball, because she led both man and woman. She became the best women basketball player of Yugoslavia and she married also the player of Star, famous otolaryngologist dr Borko Jovanović (cited in Stojković, 2000, p. 18).

How they got their right to use the playground and managed to persuade Russian soldiers to give them one room, how they stole the land from the tennis court of Bob, how they broke the wall to spread the playground and what other kind of problems they ran into Popović says:

FIGURE 4

Kalemegdan, Belgrade, April 1945, team that played first game after the liberation of Belgrade - Alagić, Stojanov, Maderub, Neferović, Aksentijević, unknown, unknown, unknown and Labman (Source: Paunić, 1981, p. 629)



The basketball club Star was born on Little Kalemegdan, were before the War was a tennis court. The club was called BOB (I don't know what it means) and his biggest opponent was BTK from Tašmajdan, Belgrade tennis club. When they played, sometimes a several thousands of fans came. However, in those rooms on Kalemegdan Russian soldiers were. Somehow we managed to persuade them – a little bit with schnapps, a little with cigarettes – to give us one little room and the right to use the playground. And so it started. We, literary, stole the ground from tennis players and the first basketball playground made from black slag was now red from tennis ground. We had to break down the outer wall and we got in a lot of trouble because of it. The writer

Milorad Panić – Surep, who didn't care about the historical and cultural legacy, he sued us, there was a legal procedure, and I was one of those who defended the Star, with the explanation that we didn't break down the fortress as a historical monument, but only the outer wall, between the fortress and that wall was a water, as around all surrounded cities. And somehow we managed to pass by (ibidem, p. 27).

Mirko Aksentijević says about that:

That tennis playground was between the walls [...] almost the same size as the courts [...] and then we got an idea to put the stands in one of these walls [...] **and than through work action** [...] there was no money at the time and everything was on the volunteer bases [...] and we started to break down that wall [...] alone, without any engineer [...] and after few days they stopped us and asked what we are doing [...] that is a historical monument [...] and then I was called to see Surep Panić who was responsible for Belgrade culture [...] and he gave me a hard reprehend [...] he says [...] that is a historical monument [...] **what are you doing** [...] **but I answered him with quite a certainty** [...] listen [...] one thing [...] no one sees that cultural monument [...] and we will make that thousands of people come there [...] and connect even more with that monument and culture [...] ant that past [...] we are not doing anything wrong [...] he looked at me [...] and he was surprised [...] he says all right, but [...] I don't want you to go to the end [...] finish what you have started [...] and don't go any further [...] all right [...] a word is a word [...] we made it that way [...] and it stands even today [...] so we kind of connected eternally basketball with that cultural monument [...] it was empty than [...] there was no tennis [...] BOB was there before [...] we took it (cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 195).

Milorad Sokolović wrote as follows:

You could still hear the enemy cannons in Belgrade, the enemy who was retreating over the Srem plain. A group of young man sat the baskets on abandoned tennis courts of BOB inside the walls of the ancient Kalemegdan fortress. The Red Star was born there, the school and the "garden" of the future bas-

ketball players. On their own, brick by brick, and step by step they were taking over the tennis courts [...] Bata Aksentijević, Nebojša Popović, Vasa Stojković, Ivan Dimić, Mi-odrag Stefanović, Borislav Stanković, Aleksandar Gec, Srđa Kalembur, Rade Jovanović and Relja Meštrović were the first basketball players in Red Star uniforms. Later on they were joined by Aleksandar Nikolić and Strahinja Alagić from KNOJ team, Sokolović from "Metalac" from Belgrade, Vladislav Demšar from "Edjšga" from Novi Sad and Tulio Roklicer from "Zadar". The most famous among women basketball players were: Sonja Mladenović, Ružica Radovanović, Ljiljana Petrović, Mira Petrović, Mirka Janačković, Pelagija Aksentijević, Anica Filipon, Nena Šešlija, Angelina Gavrilović, Aleksandra Dakić, Vera Sretenović, Mima Stefanović, Branka Cipruš, Milica Gručić, Milca Vulović, Cica Ognjenović, Vera Blagojević and others. The initiator of all actions in Kalemegdan was Nebojša Popović, active player, the coach of women and men team, organizer, manager [...] In loved with basketball he didn't mind about what needs to be done, as long as the Red Star, and first of all basketball, starts its way to the stars (Sokolović, 1975, p. 27).

Phys-culture course

In Belgrade, from 26th to 31st March 1945, in the office of the Sokol society Beograd – Matica in Deligradska no. 27 was held the first phys-culture course, for phys-culture heads, organized by School for physical education. As a part of the course there were some basketball classes. Bora Jovanović held the lecture.

In "Dnevnik" of School for physical education, among other things, says:

26th March 1945, Monday: 3rd class Basketball: Short explanation of the game. Leading and catching the ball technique. Bor. Jovanović [...]

28th March 1945, Wednesday: 3rd class Basketball: Leading and catching the ball technique. Shoot from one place in several different ways. Bor. Jovanović...

29th March 1945, Thursday: 5th class Basketball: Leading and passing the ball on the go. Shooting the basket on the go and catching the rebounded balls. Bor. Jovanović (cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 191).

Besides Belgrade basketball was greatly played in other places (Novi Sad, Petrovgrad, Subotica, Šabac, Kragujevac, Niš, Prizren, Split, Zadar, Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Kotor) on the territory of former Yugoslavia too, with different intensity.

In some places occupation army, besides playing basketball, founded clubs, brought the game into schools, promoted and spread it among youth and other population, first of all because of the political and ideological influence, and all in the purpose of changing the nationality of the occupied people. For example in Novi Sad, Petrovgrad and Subotica that was the job of Hungarians, and in: Prizren, Split, Zadar and Kotor of Italian occupation authority.

Novi Sad

During 1941 basketball was mostly played among school youth. In the school year of 1941/42 the first city school championship was held with six teams participating. From 1942, besides halls, basketball starts to play on open courts too.

Playgrounds were built in school yards, but the baskets were still without the panel. Only the new UAC playground, today's soccer stadium of Vojvodina – (north part), had a playground with exact dimensions and proper baskets with panel. In "Odeon" cinema (today's JNA house) were posted panels and most of the high school championship games for the 1942/43 year were played there. On the same year was formed the basketball section in Novi Sad – UVAK (Ujvidéki vasutas atletikai club), with mostly high school students playing (Miklović, 1972, p. 13).

The coach was Gerdov Janoš.

High school basketball championship of the so-called South Hungary was held in Subotica on 21st February 1943. For Novi Sad performed the team of Technical high school (IKY) with: Mišković, Dević, Kiš, Horvat and Gerdov. They won the second place right after the Segedin Gymnasium.

Miklović writes that in 1943 the first women basketball team – UAC in Novi Sad was also formed. "The head of the section was Čorba, and for the team performed Lenc Gizela, Mate Julija, Kirila Irena, Mamutović Spomenka i Biro Ilona" (ibidem, p. 14).

Novi Sad men teams, UVAK and UAC, competed in so-called South Hungary League where also participated teams from Sombor, Subotica and Segedin. In UAC team played: Ištvan Glambož, Tibor Lehel, Jene Feldi, Laslo Pap, Lajoš Sokolaji, Janoš Gal and

Ferenc Nađ, and in UVAK: Janković, Dević, Čizmar, Gerđov, Til, Bičkej, Šudar, Majšaji, Kiš and Berko.

According to Sokolović (1975), in the end of April 1945 in Sports society Radnički from Novi Sad was founded the basketball section, both for man and women. It was founded by players: Oskar Bozo, Jožef Čizmar and Jožef Danijel. In women team played: Pajić, Dorovoić, Ranković, Dević and Seleši, and in men's: Balog, Kiš, Vicko, Pap and Dezidar.

Petrovgrad

Among school youngsters basketball started to play during 1943, in the time of arrival of teacher of physical education from Hungary, Ištvan Kamaraš, to Hungarian Gymnasium in Petrovgrad. Directly from Hungary was brought a basket construction set in the yard of the Hungarian Gymnasium. On the same year Ištvan "formed a school team and trained with them and at the same time with all others interested for that game" (Balog, 1956, p. 5). Although it was continuously trained "yet there was no official game, but the effort was to pick up some basic technical and tactical skills. In this period we only had inner-school competitions with all higher classes of Gymnasium and High school participating" (ibidem). Ištvan Kamaraš says as follows:

[...] when I came to school [...] to so-called Mesinger [...] it's that higher Hungarian Gymnasium [...] now I can say something more [...] because I am one of the participants from that generation (the conversation is translated by Tibor Dudiambrozi, professor from Zrenjanin), former pupil of that Gymnasium where professor Kamarač taught (remark S. P.) [...] and practiced under his guidance [...] he said [...] that one of the things children loved [...] was [...] that he sat the basketball court [...] that the constructions for basketball court were found [...] one portable structure for the hall [...] regardless to the small size of the hall [...] he started some serious trainings [...] like in Pešta [...] and when children saw that there is some serious work there [...] and that there is some improvement [...] so many of them came that he just couldn't find enough time to follow [...] those generations [...] and pupils [...] and the ones who already [...] played in former Sokol system [...] but they [...] Putnik Mile and Tešin Mileta [...] all the ones who already new basketball they learned in that Sokol system [...] he accepted them [...] and Serbian youngsters [...] and who trained along

with Hungarian youngsters too [...] and along with us trained in that Hungarian Gymnasium [...] in one occupied country [...] where was quite risky to accept other generation to come to your school [...] I have to say that [...] I also found strange to have some trainings behind closed doors [...] and he explained right away [...] that he was strictly ordered by Rajscomand [...] because every school had to be secured [...] that no one can accept Serbian youngsters in school [...] only their own [...] no other [...] he accepted that generation of players [...] better-said Serbian youth wanted and knew something about basketball [...] and that is why those trainings were in closed halls [...] I remember [...] and I didn't know why the doors were closed (Kamaraš, 1979; as cited in Paunić, 2007, pp. 185–186).

According to Tot in Petrograd basketball among school youth started to play in 1942. Tot, in conversation with Stanislav Paunić on 12th February 1979 in Zrenjanin, about the mentioned says:

[...] 1942 came to high schools [...] Economics High School and Gymnasium [...] professor Kami brought the portable baskets [...] Kamaraš Ištvan [...] stayed until the end of the occupation [...] right before the liberation [...] all professors from Hungary came back [...] than I saw basketball for the first time (Tot, 1979; as cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 185).

Subotica

There are just a few data about basketball in Subotica during the War. Marjanović says:

[...] I was born In Subotica, and went to school there and [...] during the occupation [...] I saw basketball for the first time when Hungarians who's basketball at the time was [...] like [...] very developed [...] they played a game in Subotica [...] and we had a very ambitious teacher of physical education [...] Actually at the time he even was a basketball representative of Hungary [...] and he started to gather us with a lot of ambition [...] especially the tall ones [...] his name was Sitner [...] I was around 190cm at the time [...] around 42 [...] 43 [...] year [...] than, as a Gymnasium team, we used to travel and play basketball almost every week [...] they loved it that much [...] all expenses were covered [...] we travelled from

one place to another [...] And we had quite some team [...] Pera Šarčević [...] also played with us [...] that bowler [...] Yugoslav record-holder [...] the trainings were very serious [...] already in 1944 we had one very good game with their school for physical education [...] we lost [...] I even remember with 33 – 30 [...] Sitner gave a lot more to basketball than anything else” (Marjanović, 1980; as cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 186).

On 21st February 1943 a high school championship of so-called South Hungary was held in Subotica. The team of Segedin Gymnasium won first place, second Technical high school from Novi Sad, third Subotica Gymnasium and fourth Subotica Trading School.

Šabac

In "Novo vreme" from 16th May 1942 is written that basketball started to play and that there are new formed clubs, not only in Belgrade, but in other parts of Serbia too. It also says that Šabac already has a basketball team. "Basketball started to develop inside the country too. In Niš and Šabac already existed some basketball teams" ("Basketball and Volleyball tournament for the BTK Cup", 1942, p. 5).

FIGURE 5

Sljepčević, Kitog, Mačva (near Šabac), 1942, National Guard of Serbia, Basketball course, participants with diplomas. (Source: Paunić, 1981, p. 620)



In Šabac two basketball teams were formed, Sk. 1913 Šabac and a team of Third group of members of National Guard. Some real games started soon.

On Sunday 2nd August 1942 on "Mihajlo Lac" athlete track in Šabac, somewhere in the afternoon, a basketball and volleyball competitions between Sk 1913 from Šabac and a team of Third group of members of National Guard from Štitar and Sljepčević village were held ("Basketball and volleyball in Šabac", 1942, p. 5).

About basketball in Šabac, Mišković says, in his interview given to Stanislav Paunić on 17th May 1980 in Šabac:

Basketball had just arrived to Šabac [...] during the occupation [...] in 42 [...] my friend [...] I used to know [...] I met him by Dragutin Lazarević [...] he was a triple Serbian record-holder in middle and long tracks [...] Galović Ljubiša [...] he went from Belgrade because of Germans [...] and we together founded a basketball club [...] **first game was with Belgrade [...] on the tracks [...] they sat the baskets themselves [...] we took some wooden fence [...] and we made baskets from that [...] we made hoops in Mala [...] the stands were crowded [...] because we wrote [...] there will be a friendly game in Basketball [...] as when they come to see horse races [...]** (Mišković, 1980; as cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 184).

Kragujevac

In the time of War basketball occasionally occurred in Kragujevac. According to Mišković Miodrag Stefanović brought basketball in Kragujevac during 1943. They played it in school yard of women Gymnasium. There also was one game between representation of Kragujevac and "Working Guard". Kragujevac lost. About that, R. Mišić, in interview given to Stanislav Paunić on 18th February 1979 in Rijeka says:

Mija Stefanović brought basketball to Kragujevac in 1943 [...] one group came to work [...] Mija and Aksentijević [...] together we sat some wooden baskets in school yard of Women Gymnasium [...] demonstration game [...] some "Working Guard" – representation of Kragujevac [...] "Working Guard" won 17 – 14 [...] first equipment and first rules came from Mija (Mišić, 1979; as cited in Paunić, 2007, p. 184).

Petrović writes that Pavle Kostić and Mirko Aksentijević brought basketball ball to Kragujevac in 1942, that they formed basketball sections in sports societies "Trgovački" and "Šumadija", and that there were games between them.

The first basketball ball was brought from Belgrade. Paja Kostić and Bata Aksentijević brought it in 1942. They were sent by the occupation army to create an image of good order under German occupation. In sport societies "Trgovački" and "Šumadija" they

formed basketball groups. In the time of War players of "Šumadija" and "Trgovački" played games among themselves, but there are no written data about that. I relied on oral narratives of Stevan Žilović and Živorad Vasiljević (Petrović, 1969, p. 12).

Basketball representation of Kragujevac had a game with representation of Belgrade on 13th August 1944 in Kragujevac. Kragujevac won. 10 : 9. On Saturday 26th and Monday 28th August of the same year in Belgrade Kragujevac team had two games with representation of Belgrade. The results, as also some other details about those games, so-far remain unknown to us.

Niš

In "Novo vreme" from 16th May 1942 writes that in Niš and Šabac already exist some basketball teams and that very soon Niš will organize basketball championship.

"Basketball started to develop inside the country too. Basketball teams already exist in Niš and Šabac. Soon will be one tournament in Niš" ("Basketball and Volleyball tournament for the BTK Cup", 1942, p. 5).

So-far we do not know if that competition was indeed held.

Prizren

Italian soldiers occasionally played basketball and organized championships in Prizren during the occupation. In the beginning of May 1942 they founded their society named "Federata" where they played basketball as well. They acquired some balls, jerseys, sneakers; they set first baskets in Gymnasium playground in September. They had their basketball teachers. A. Morina writes:

These teachers were mostly Italian and had the task to, as well as practical, give also some theoretical classes. In those theoretical classes they have trained people for military-political purpose, bringing some fascist spirit into them. First public game was played on October 1942 between town team and Italian army (Morina, 1968, p. 21).

Paunić says: "Italians will also play some basketball here during the occupation, but not because they really want to spread the game, but mostly as one way of fascist propaganda" (Paunić, 2007, p. 243).

Prizren youngsters were not fascinated by that game, and they didn't show any great interest in it,

even though Italian soldiers tried to attract as many youth as they could, first of all because of the political influence. S. Đikanović writes about that:

An area, like this one is, which had lived in tradition of hard patriarchy for centuries, was not really friendly to some new kinds of sports and fun, so it was, kind of normal, to take every news about that with such a scepticism [...] how much time it takes to forget this sport or that kind of entertainment in other places [...] **It is interesting to note that the Italians, the invading soldiers, brought some of unusual game in those time and in that territory (volleyball and basketball), which the villagers watched without any special thrill, so there was no higher response, although the Italians tried to influence the political organizing of youth and younger children (Đikanović, 1972, p. 8).**

Split

Basketball started in Split in 1941. During the next few years (42 – 45) basketball activities continued.

In March 1942 one game between representations of Zadar and Split took place. We didn't find any other information about it beside a single photograph, so a lot about that game so-far stays unknown to us.

On May of 1943 players of Split took part in the final championship of G.I.L. of all Italy in Rome. In reviewed documents we didn't find the names of Split players, with whom they played, the results and other. The only thing that is written is that the Split players took part at the final competition in Rome on May 23rd 1943 against Zadar for the 7th place. They won the 7th place by beating Zadar 22 : 17. Perić writes about that:

First affirmation and special phenomena of sports in Split was seen in Rome in 1943 at the final tournament of Italian G.I.L. championship. Before this a lot of smaller, local championships happened, were we could see 150 - 200 teams performing. On the final tournament in Rome, 23rd May 1943, in a game for 7th place, Split defeated Zadar by 22 : 17, even though basketball existed in Zadar for over 15 years, with, of course, regular high school championships (Petrić, 2000a, n.p.).

According to Marović: "With Italian capitulation in September 1943, Split had no basketball until the liberation" (Marović, 1982, p. 329).

According to same author it starts to play again in February 1945 in new-formed Split Phys-culture

Board (FOSK). In May of that same year a women basketball section was formed and existed as a part of FD Hajduk. The initiator of that idea was Marko Leta, who also was a head of the mentioned society at the beginning.

FIGURE 6

Basketball game as a part of newspaper report, took place in Split between Zadar and Split, March 1942 (Source: Košarkaška nostalgija, n.p.)



Spalato, marzo 1942 – Una fase della partita fra le rappresentative di Zara e di Spalato.

Since than a true basketball development starts in our town, says Marović, and exactly in May 1945 when a women section was formed on the initiative of United Association of Yugoslav Youth (USAOH) for Dalmatia, with the idea of spreading phys-culture movement among women. A taught about that came from the youth leaders, better said from the engineer Marko Leta, who led the section for a while. It existed as a part of FD Hajduk, as a sport game section, and had around 15 players: Dragana Kovačić, Sonja i Teny Gizdavčić, Elvira Carbonini, Valerija Zavagni, Mirjana Lučić and others. In the mid 1945 the coach of this group was Uroš Tominić Paja, pre-war basketball player (ibidem, pp. 329–330).

Zadar

In Zadar, during the War, basketball existed in schools, in games against Split and on the official competitions with Italian clubs.

Đuro Vujanić, one of the initiators and founders of basketball section in Zadar in April 1945, in a letter to Stanislav Paunić, from 23 May 1979, among other, says:

During the War I wasn't active in basketball, but I was a regular visitor of trainings and games for both, men and women. A simpli-

fying situation was that you could clearly see everything from the town park, right above the playground. There was a very good man and woman basketball. But, unfortunately, because of the War, such a beautiful activity was kind of dropped down. In the time of the occupation people from Zadar spread basketball to Šibenik and Split. But it all came back to Zadar. I already said that there was a quite good quality man and woman basketball there, so many of players were the main leaders of the game and the standing pillars of after-war basketball in Zadar. I will mention their names because they deserve it. Man: Ermano Vazzalev, Guido Pittoni, Umberto Nadoveza, Tullio Rochlitzer, Antonio Zerauchek, Augustin Zane, Guierino Alluni and some others too. For representation of Yugoslavia participated: Pittoni, Zerauchek and Rochlitzer. Women: Madera Kalmeta, Uccija Cirkovich, Bijanca Kalmeta etc. For representation of Yugoslavia participated Madera Kalmeta (Vujanić, 1979; see in Paunić, 2007, p. 185).

On May of 1943 players of Zadar took part in the final championship of G.I.L. of all Italy in Rome. In reviewed documents we found a data that the Zadar players took part at the final competition in Rome on

May 23rd 1943 against Split for the 7th place. They didn't take the 7th place because Split won by 22 : 17.

On April 1945 a phys-culture society was found in Zadar, and a basketball section as a part of it. Paleka writes:

FIGURE 7

Women players of Zadar on game in Split 1942. Standing: Loli Svirčić, Lia Orlić, Lučana Uča Ćirković, Maria Sala. Down: Madera Kalmeta, Amella Varisco and Sonja Svirčić. (Source: Marić, 1996, p. 16)



The initiators of that society were Đuro Vujanić, Tullio Rochlitzer and Berto Nadoveza. The first one was a famous referee and in one time also a coach, and after even a office-bearer, Rochlitzer and Nadoveza were the players of "Zadar" (Paleka, 1976, p. 27).

Kotor

During the War basketball started in Kotor in 1941, right after the occupation of Boka Kotorska by the Italian army. Basketball activities continue through the following years.

The game between representation of Kotor and the team of Italian army, that was stationed there, took place in May of 1942. That same game remained in the memory of people who were the actual actors of it. Italians won. The result remained unrecorded. For Kotor played: Petar Lubarda, Vjekoslav Pezenti (or Prezenti), Vladimir Šević, Ante Savić, Veljko Tujković, Branko Proročić and Aco Ivanović.

In the beginning of January 1943 players of Kotor G.I.L.L. played a game with the players of the same name from Split who have lost by 14 : 34.

After the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, basketball in Kotor stopped. After the end of War basketball activities continue.

Ljubljana

There are some data which show that during the WW II basketball existed in Ljubljana as well. About mentioned Pavlin (2005) writes:

Basketball didn't totally disappear in the time of the WW II because the interest for Slovenian sports, and so basketball as well, during the Ljubljana occupation, was taken over by CONI (Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano) who engaged Slovenian sport organizations with some kind of autonomy. Sokol was recessed, and all of his property and role took over the fascist organization G.I.L.L. (Gioventu Italiana Littorio di Lubiana) (p. 120).

In 1941 G.I.L.L., among other things, have organized a youth sports games for students 13 – 18 years old including athletics, volleyball, basketball, skating and skiing (Kokalj – Kovačević, 2003).

Zagreb

In reviewed sources we didn't find data about basketball in Zagreb in that mentioned period. But, when we are taking about published materials about basketball, the situation is quite different.

In Zagreb in 1942 a book was published by an unnamed author "Sport games. Basketball", edition of Administrative Command of ustash Youth, Department for physical education, with 112 pages and 102 drawings, printed by printing office "Gaj" from Zagreb.

The cover page says: Professional book, Department for physical education, Sport games, Book I, Basketball, with 102 drawings, Zagreb 1942, Administrative Command of ustash Youth.

In the book: Jajčević Z. (1987). Sport affairs in Croatia. Addition to history of sport affairs. Zagreb: Libraries of Zagreb, in chapter: Material for bibliographic-monographic and periodical publications in sports, edited by Tatjana Nebesny and Jablanka Sršen, states:

Review of monographic publication. Index of author, organizer, editor and translator, page 141, no. 583, author Milan Kobali. Sport games / by Milan Kobali – Zagreb, 1942. 2 SV (professional book of the Department for physical education) SV 1: Basketball – 112 pages, SV 2: Handball – 100 pages (p. 141).

On the basis of the already mentioned we can state that the author of the book Basketball, published

in Zagreb in 1942, was Milan Kobali. It stays unknown for now why the book doesn't have his name, even though he is the author.

The book "Basketball – rules in words and pictures", by Milan Kobali was published in Zagreb 1938/39, printed on the printing machine, hard binding (Kobali, 1986).

It still remains unknown to us if that Kobali's book was printed and published in 1942 without the name of the author.

The book from 1942 is divided in three parts (chapters): Technique of the game, Game practise and Rules of the game. In introduction, among other things, says that basketball develops all muscles and organs of the human body together, that it is a very useful game and it can be used as a basic method of physical education, that it can:

[...] be of great use as a winter practice for athletes [...] Basketball is an inexhaustible well of different actions and moves, because it contains a variety of possibilities for both team and individuals [...] As a team game, basketball develops a sense of a whole and friendship. One of the main characteristics of basketball is that it excludes all kind of rudeness, because every single one is severely punished ("Sports games I volume. Basketball", 1942, p. 5).

FIGURE 8

Book Basketball printed in Zagreb 1942



In the first part (Technique of the game), page 26 says about catching and passing the ball, play-through, one-leg turn, feinting, shooting, free throw and stopping. All actions are illustrated by 37 drawings. At the end of the chapter, in one page, there are thirty short instructions for playing basketball.

In second part (Game practice), in 32 pages of text and 29 illustrations were presented the exercises: without ball and basket, only with the ball, only with

basket, with ball and one basket, with ball and both baskets, practice game with one and with two baskets. At the end of the chapter in one page were given 10 advices for basketball teachers. Advice no. 9 says:

"Be a role model to your players in everything. With kind word, act and example impress your players to gladly love and listen to you. You cannot suppress something if you do it yourself" (ibidem, p. 60).

In the third part (Rules of the game) in 45 pages and 32 illustrations were given 13 rules:

Playground plot; boards, baskets and ball; leaders of the game and their duties; players and substitutions; terms; rules of the game; points, winner, additional time and forced interruptions; outside; počinak i "vrijeme odbiti", held ball; free throw; violation of the rules and sanctions; faults and sanctions (technical faults of players, technical faults of opponents and personal faults).

At the end of the book, before the content, in two and a half pages of text and two pages of drawings instructions are given for construction of basketball devices.

According to research of Pavlović (1989) Sarajevo, as also other places in the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, had no basketball activities in the time of the World War II.

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