

INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL ACTIVITY IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA**Petar D. Pavlović¹, Slobodan Simović¹, Zrinko Grgić²
and Kristina Pantelić¹**¹ Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Univerzity Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina² Croatian Sports Museum, Zagreb, Croatia

Review paper

Abstract

International basketball activity in Yugoslavia started in the mid-1930s. At the end of spring in 1935 the first public basketball game took place before Zagreb audience with the competing teams of Sokolsko drustvo Zagreb II and Bulgarian students. The basketball team of YSC „Victoria" from Sušak played two basketball matches hosting teams from Italy. On December 25, 1935, on Christmas Day, «Victoria» played against DA Fiume from Rijeka followed by the game versus «ROMSA» from Rijeka on February 12, 1939. Student national basketball selection of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia played its first international game against the B national team of Italy, which took place in Rome on March 20, 1938. In July of the same year, at Sokol competition in Prague, the Yugoslav national team played its first international game against Czechoslovakia. The initiative to admit Yugoslavia into the International Basketball Federation was made by the Sokol Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During 1936 FIBA received two requests to admit Yugoslavia into its membership. By the mid-December 1936, FIBA reported to the Sokol Association of the K.of Yugoslavia that it was to be regarded as a representative of Yugoslavia and the 31st member of FIBA.

Key words: basketball, Sokol movement, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, international games, FIBA**Introduction**

A class of students at Springfield College made a request to their teachers to introduce some new and more interesting games within their regular physical education lessons, which were primarily based on gymnastics and some less-known sport games. Naismith, attending one seminar, showed off that he could make up a new game as to meet the demands of their students. Doctor Gulick, a teaching administrator, was willing to give Naismith this class in order to, among other things, encourage experimental work. Naismith had been working on this assignment for thirteen days by combining numerous variants of the existing sport games. On the fourteenth day he presented the world his new creation – basketball. This probably happened on December 21, 1891. As of the next year, 1892, this new game started spreading around the globe. Today, there is practically no country in which people do not play basketball. On December 1, 1939 Reverend Theodore Aszman of the First Presbyterian Church, in Lawrence, Kansas, giving service at James Naismith's funeral, said the following words: „It might be the sign of the God's providence to have the privilege and fortune of creating and leaving, as a heritage, to the next generation such thing as the basketball, a game of refined value and importance, which became a symbol of his life, resting upon a man of such virtue as James Naismith. (Colombo & Eleni, 1991, 7). France was the first European country to introduce the game of basketball. It was in 1893 following professor Rideout's arrival in Paris after his specialist's course for teachers of physical education at Springfield. Alongside with Emil Thies, a manager at YMCA in Paris, he started propagandizing for this new game.

Professor Rideout put the first basket construction in Europe at Young Men's Christian Association gymnasium in Rue de Trensse in Paris on December 27, 1893. (Colbeck at all, 1972, 85-86). Basketball appeared early in the Czech Republic as well. As early as 1897, the school celebrations at grammar schools in Vysoké Mytė, Bohemia, basketball was played on the initiative proposed by teacher Jaroslav Karasek. (Colbeck at all, 1972, 77). After a basketball presentation in Venice in 1907, at gymnastics competition organized by teacher Ida Nanni Pesciolini from Siena, this game was introduced in Italy. (Colbeck at all, 1972, 100). These two countries had a major influence on the development of basketball in former Yugoslavia. In this country basketball was first played by the students of Maribor Grammar School in the school year of 1905/06, as an initiative proposed by physical education and gymnastics professor Josip Jorga, PhD. As a substitution to football which was banned that year, the game of basketball was introduced. The first game was played between the teams of the Second Public Grammar School from Graz and the Royal Grammar School from Maribor. The game took place in Maribor on May 23, 1906. (1909 report, 52, according to Hočevar, 24.02.1970, 1). William Wailland, a mission delegate of the Red Cross, came to Belgrade at the end of September 1923 in order to organize youth games and playgrounds. The course for elementary school teachers, gymnastics teachers, Sokol and scout leaders, took place on the playgrounds of Elementary School Savamali and the Cathedral from September 23 to October 18, 1923. Among other games, the course attendants were shown the basics of the game of basketball.

The citizens of Belgrade got acquainted with basketball in the first half of October 1923, and after the course it was played by the students of the Second Male Grammar School in Belgrade. After Belgrade, Wailland went to Sarajevo, Novi Sad, Bitolj, Skoplje, Niš, Zagreb, Split and Ljubljana, where he also demonstrated this new game. Soon after that, basketball was being played in almost every town in Yugoslavia. In Rijeka basketball was started playing in 1923, in Novi Sad in 1924, in Nis in 1925, in Mostar in 1926, in Tuzla in 1927, in Zadar in 1928 and in Zagreb in 1929. The aim of this paper is to highlight and bring out of oblivion the following aspects of basketball in this region: the first international team games, the first games of the national team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the admission of the Association of Sokol of the K. of Yugoslavia to the International Basketball Federation. The historical method has been used in the process of writing of this work. We have researched and consulted libraries, archives and sport museum from former Yugoslavia. We hope to stir up sport historians and readers of all sorts to indulge themselves into further research of basketball development in the former Yugoslavia. We here wish to acknowledge the following professionals from the National Library in Belgrade (professors Dragan Barać and Slađana Milošević), Sports Museum in Novi Sad (Jovan Paunović) and Sports Museum in Zagreb (Zrinko Grgić) for their willingness to assist us while searching for specific and important historical sources.

The first international team games

In the mid-1940s of the 20th century the first international team games were played as well as the first national team games of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Based on the up-to-date research it could be believed that basketball was played, first occasionally and without much organization, in Zagreb in spring of 1921, especially among school and Sokol youngsters. The first written information about basketball games dates from 1929. Basketball was started playing more intensively not just among pupils and Sokol members but also among university students. „We were lucky”, remembers Neferović, „to have many Bulgarian students at those days in Zagreb... they had also heard about basketball being played somewhere in Zagreb... at that time basketball was pretty much developed in Bulgaria... they would come to us... and then we would visit them to show us how to play basketball... we even had four Bulgarian national team members studying in Zagreb... so we had a chance to learn from them as well. “ (according to Paunić, 2007, 132). Soon the first practice sessions, promotional and public basketball matches took place. By the end of spring in 1935 the first public basketball game, before spectators in Zagreb, was played between Sokol Zagreb II team and Bulgarian students. A player from this match, Milan Kobali, said among other things: „By the end of spring in 1935, a presentation of Sokol Zagreb II took place, and as the last exercising exhibition was basketball.

Members of Sokol (Milan Kobali, Đan Tomić (Đan is a nickname for Jovan n.b.), Franjo Birtić, John Ames and Tomislav Vrkljan) played against Bulgarian students. Both teams wore white jerseys with Sokol members having red lining and blue belts whereas Bulgarian students had all-white jerseys and no belts. I do not remember who the first refereeing official was, probably Marijan Maržan. As it was just a presentation of basketball, the game duration was reduced to two halftimes of 5 minutes. Sokol won 12-2. The picture 1 shows many spectators around the entire playground (practice court) in the background. This was the first public and promoted game before audience in Zagreb – although it lasted shorter than a normal game. Spectators, mostly players' parents, relatives and Sokol members, saw basketball for the first time in their lives. I was not familiar with the impression the game had made on them – the only thing I know is that my mother liked it, and how couldn't she because I scored the first point”. (Kobali, 1986, 113). By the beginning of summer of the same year, Zagreb hosted one more basketball game. „The game was thought to be played again with the Bulgarian student, but due to the summer break most of them went homes.



Picture 1 – One basketball game in Zagreb in 1935. Back row from left to right: Neferović, a Bulgarian student, Maržan, Rokavec, a Bulgarian student. Front row: Ames, Birtić, Kobali, referee Zdenko Pavić, Stefanini, unknown.¹ Source: Owner of picture Z. Neferović, according to Paunić (1980, 602), according to Kobali (1986, 113).

¹ It can certainly be said that in both cases of public presentation of this photo, Paunić and Kobali had made mistakes in identifying the picture. Paunić put the following text below the picture: „Playground Zagreb 2, 1936 ... 'a presentational game'... at public practicing... numbers 1 and 5 (white) Bulgarians... the front row: Zagreb 2... referee: Pavić Zdenko... (in the front row with the ball)“. However, Kobali identifies the photo as we have done and additionally puts the following title „The players of a basketball game at a public practice in Zagreb in 1935 “. It is obvious to conclude that this is the second game when, due to the summer break, there were not enough Bulgarian students so they had to make a combined team, which the photo shows. Kobali also said that all the players had white shirts whereas in this photo the two different teams can be easily identified. Furthermore, according to Kobali's memories, the referee at the first game was Marjan Maržan. Both authors undoubtedly claim that the game's referee was Zdenko Pavić, and Marjan Maržan was the player in this picture.

There were only two of them left so we had to fill in their line-up with our players. The referee was Zdenko Pavić". (Kobali, 1986, 113). Basketball at Sušak started during 1938 as a part of Yugoslav Sports Club „Victoria". Ljubo Prosen, who was actively involved in this process, said, among other things, the following: On the other side of the bridge, in occupied Rijeka, you could see young boys and girls throwing a ball, very much like the one you use in waterpolo, into a metal hoop with net, cheered by numerous spectators. People from Sušak were very sceptical about this game in the beginnings but soon they became interested on account of its liveliness. The name of the game was basketball or 'pallacanestro' as Italians called it... Not before 1938 was the basketball court built at Sušak stadium. I have vivid memories of a beautiful sunny morning in autumn when a group of swimmers and waterpolo players gathered at the Krimeja playground and patiently listened to the basketball teacher from Rijeka." (Prosen, 1951, 3). Following the initiative and great dedication of Justin Cuculović, the long-standing president of „Victoria", the basketball club was founded. The club, whose coach was Božo Grkinić, secretary Predrag Miculinić and administrator Nikola Grego, played many games and existed successfully until 1940, thus significantly contributing to the development of basketball at Sušak. Due to the vicinity of Rijeka, they had a possibility to visit this town often. These enthusiasts went to Rijeka almost every Sunday morning and played games with the basketball clubs from there. „We all liked that ", remembers Grego, „because it looked like an international game with all the rituals given from their side ". (according to Paunić, 2007, 139). Apart from Rijeka they also went often to Trieste to watch the championship games of Italian basketball clubs and took the opportunity to introduce themselves to this new game in that way too. The basketball rules of the game were translated from Italian by V. Pavešić and M. Pajalić. They practiced almost every day in order to have better results against the basketball players from Rijeka. This led to the first basketball game at Sušak, on Christmas Day, on December 25, 1938 with the team of DA Fiume from Rijeka. The team of YSC „Victoria" was represented by the following players: Josip Banić, Božo Grkinić, Vlado Polić, Ersilije Šikić, Nikola Grego, Mladen Bezjak and Dušan Zvonaš. According to the article „Is basketball going to reach us", published in a newspaper from Split called „Novo doba", dated December 28, 1938, the basketball players from YSC „Victoria" from Sušak were supposed to visit Zadar and play an international match against the team from that town. „On Christmas Day 'Victoria' played its first international game against Fiumana from Rijeka and was expected to be hosted by the team from Zadar". (according to Marović, 1982, 324). In the early 1939 on February 12, the game between 'Victoria' and ROMSA from Rijeka was played. The final score was 33-32 for the team from Rijeka. The 'Victoria' line-up was Ivica (or Ivan, n.b.) Šafar, Glavaš, Nikola Grego, Josip Banić, Mladen Bezjak, Božo Grkinić, Vlado Polić and Ersilije Šikić. (Pic. 2).



Picture 2 – Victoria from Sušak before the game against ROMSA (February 12, 1939) ending with the final result 33-32. Back row from left to right: Šafar, Glavaš, Grego, Banić, Bezjak, Grkinić; front row: Polić, Šikić. Source: Beganović et al. (2005, 155). During 1939 the basketball players of „Victoria" hosted one more international game against the team of DA Fiume from Rijeka. DA Fiume won 26-20. The following players played for „Victoria": Zdenko Tijanić, Božo Grkinić, Vladimir Polić, Josip Banić, Ersilije Šikić, Mladen Bezjak, Nikola Grego and Ljubo Prosen.

Besides the photo of „Victoria" published in the monograph titled „Victoria – Primorje 1908-1998", other details about the game could not be. The games between the teams from one country were often referred to by international referees. Following this rule the game between YSC „Victoria" from and Sokol Zagreb II, played at the Sušak town stadium on June 8, 1939, was referred to by an Italian, Mr. Artelli from Rijeka.



Picture 3 – Basketball players of Victoria from left to right: Zdenko Tijanić, Mladen Bezjak, Božo Grkinić, Vladimir Polić, Josip Banić, Nikola Grego, Ersilije Šikić and Ljubo Prosen, after the game against D.A. Fiume (20-26) at Sušak in 1939 Source: A photo from „Primoje" sport club archives, Cucilić (1998, 66).

The first games were played with such a zeal and excitement, like the waterpolo games, and the first scores and point were cheered and supported as described in the following text: „There was much enthusiasm and will... all of us were like that... not just me ", remembers Božo Grkinić, „we breathed like one soul... or better to say we had a strong will... the games against Italians were in fact international as we lived in two different countries... but the quality of the performance was not that much international... at least from our side... We used to play waterpolo before that... which gave us certain technique..."

"...There was a shot in waterpolo called 'parabola'... which is similar to every attempt made on basket... we simply took that and applied it to this ground sport of basketball... this was a novelty for Italians, who already had some experience on the ground... their journalists noticed that we have something specific... and this was something we took from waterpolo in which we were better than Italians even then... the war ended every activity at Sušak, but Italians continued playing basketball even so." (according to Paunić, 2007, 140). Those „first matches with the teams from Rijeka were of course 'bitter' " says Prosen, „however, the sport talent and consistency of some individuals soon came to be noticed. Božo Grkinić, a well-known swimmer and a member of national waterpolo team, set his playing performance onto the level of the best players from Rijeka. Other players, who were standing out besides him were Bezjak brothers, Grego, Tijanić, Vlado Polić and others. They gave the team the necessary quality to match their rivals from Rijeka." (Prosen, 1951, 3)

The first international games of the national team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

Following the abovementioned club games at the international level, the national team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia played its first international match in the first half of 1938. Students' national team of Yugoslavia, composed of the players from Sokol Zagreb II played the first international game against the national team B of Italy in Rome on March 20, 1938. Italians won 59-17. The Yugoslavs played so badly in the first half that they did not score a single point. The halftime result was 33-0 for Italians. The players for Yugoslavia were: Milan Kobali, Jovan Tomić, Zvonimir Neferović, Zdenko Tončić, Senio Sinobad, Tonković and Tomislav Vrkljan. Kobali, an active participant and the player in that game, said, among other things, the following about that game: „There were only seven of us who went to play that game (Kobali, Neferović, Sinobad, Tomić, Tončić, Tonković, Vrkljan) under the name of students' national team of Yugoslavia, and we played the first game outside our country in Rome on March 20, 1938. The first halftime was a complete disaster. Italian students took the lead of 33-0. In the halftime break, besides wiping the sweat off, we quickly analyzed Italian game on both offense and defense and agreed to copy their game. And that brought us some success as the second halftime resulted in 26-17 for Italians. So the two halftimes taken combined, the final result was 59-17 for Italians. We consoled ourselves that it had been a valuable experience for us so we were not that much depressed". (Kobali, 1986, 117) (Picture 4). Jovan Tomić, a member of the national team recalls: „We travelled to Rome by train and stayed there for seven days. There were eight of us players and five officials. The preliminary game on a small open stadium was played between Italy and Hungary. There were many spectators, and the Italian players amazed us by how skilfully they played and how dominantly they won the game. We came

there with only white shirts and no numbers, so we were given green jerseys with numbers. After the game a reception was held where we were given medallions." (according to Švegar, 1987, 134). Jovan Tomić confirms in his memories that there were eight players. However, Božidar Mačešić says the following: „In 1938 I played for the national basketball selection of Yugoslavia against Czechoslovakia in Prague. I didn't play against Italy B in Rome although Milan Kobali mentioned my name in book 'Košarka', Zagreb, 1957." (according to Švegar, 1987, 134)².



Picture 4 – Student basketball team of Yugoslavia at its first international competition in Rome in 1938 Source: Beganović et al (2005, 48).

This first international game of students' national team of Yugoslavia had a multiple influence on the development of basketball in Yugoslavia. It also largely influenced the future successful development of basketball in Zagreb, i.e. Sokol Zagreb II. Kobali says that 1938 was a very important year in the development of basketball in Zagreb. „We had two encounters with the European basketball and we noticed that their quality was better than ours. We were actually autodidacts, without a proper coach, with no knowledge about the possibilities in basketball techniques and tactics. That's why the game against Italy II together with watching the game between Italy I and Hungary had been a valuable experience. We took this opportunity to obtain some basketball literature. The book's title was Pallacanestro and it was in Italian." (Kobali, 1986, 117). At 10th Sokol competition in Prague in 1938, among other competitions in different sports, there was also basketball. The national team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia played at this competition its first international game versus Czechoslovakia on July 5, 1938. The Czechoslovaks won 76-28. The Yugoslav national team was represented by the following players: Johan Ames, Milan Kobali, Josip Kozjak, Božidar Mačešić, Božidar Stefanini, Jovan Tomić, Zdenko Tončić and Anđelko Volzajn.

² An interview given to Švegar on October 13, 1985 in Zagreb. In the book „Košarka“ from 1957 quoted by the author there are only the names of the national team members playing in Prague while the players from Rome are not listed (Kobali, 1957, 8)

The Yugoslav team leader was Zvonimir Neferović and Zdenko Tončić was the team captain. The participant of this event and the player on the team Milan Kobali says: „An opportunity to learn more about basketball was given to us the same year again. During the 10th Sokol competition in Prague on July 5, 1938³ we played against Czechoslovakia as the national team of Yugoslavia. Of course, we lost the game. The result was 76-28.

The Czechoslovaks scored more points than Italians but then again we scored 11 points more than at our first game against Italians. We were still lagging back in our defense but our experience from Rome was used to our advantage. The Czechoslovaks were then rather sound and respectable basketball team “. (Kobali, 1986, 117) (Pictures 5 and 6).



Picture 5 – Prague, July 5, 1938, Sokol national team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at international Sokol competition, from left to right: Tončić, Ames, Stefanini, Volzajn, Neferović (team leader), Kozjak, Tomić, Mačešić and Kobali. Source: Photo documentation of Serbian Basketball Federation, according to Čobović, Raičević & Bogdanović (2005, 10).



Picture 6 – Before the game in Prague on July 5, 1938. Nine Czechoslovakian and eight Yugoslav players (in the same shirts). Back row from left to right: 4. Tončić, 7. Kozjak, 5. Volzajn, 9. Tomić. Front row: 3. Kobali, 8. Stefanini, 10. Ames, 6. Mačešić. Source: Kobali (1986, 114).

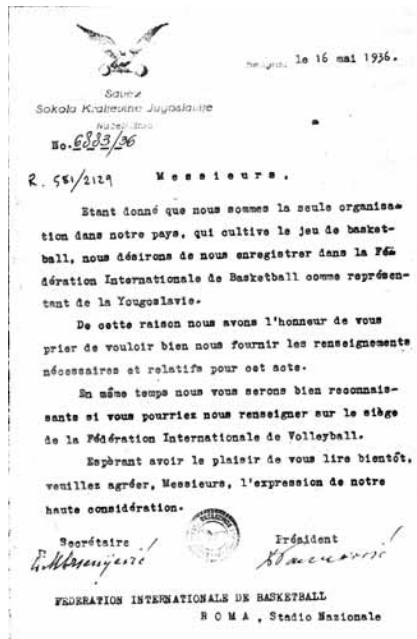
Sokol from Split were there at the competition, and they watched the basketball games together with other sports. Among them was a youngster named Oroš Tominić. He watched basketball games and he liked the game very much so „he bought a basketball in Prague wishing to have this dynamic and beautiful game played in Split “(Marović, 1982, 325).

The admission of the Yugoslav sokol association into the international basketball federation

Following the request submitted by the basketball federations of Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Italy, doctor Elmer Berry, director of YMCA School of Physical Education, sent an invitation letter to the members of International Amateur Handball Federation (IAHF) for a meeting in Geneva to discuss the current basketball issues. The first International Basketball Conference was held on June 18, 1932. The following people attended the meeting: Attilio Ponisio (Argentina), Simeon Mavroskufis and John Anadjoslou (Greece), Count Giorgio Asinari di San Marzano (Italia), Joseph Shadeiko (Lithuania), Henry Brandt (Portugal), D. D. Teica (Romania), Leon Bouffard, Maurice Abramowicz, Emile Huguenin, Henry Luciri (Switzerland) and Ladislav Kapucian (Czechoslovakia). This meeting was the origin of International Basketball Federation (Fédération Internationale de Basket-Ball FIBB). Leon Bouffard (Geneva, Switzerland) was elected for the first president, and Wiliam Jones for secretary-general.

Taking into the consideration that basketball was started playing first among the Sokol youth and in their clubs and the Sokol members were the initiators of the basketball games, it seemed rather logical to have the Sokol Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (SAKY) admitted into the International Basketball Federation (FIBA). SAKY sent a letter (No. 6883/36) dated May 16, 1936 and addressed to „Federation Internationale de Basketball, Roma, Stadion Nazionale“. In that letter, the International Basketball Federation was informed that SAKY is the only association in Yugoslavia with basketball playing activity, and expressed a desire to be admitted into the Federation as a representative of Yugoslavia. Moreover, the Federation was kindly asked to forward all the necessary information and documents regarding the admission process. Here is the entire letter: „Messieurs, Etant donné que nous sommes la seule organisation dans notre pays, qui cultive le jeu de basketball, nous désirons de nous enregistrer dans la Fédération Internationale de Basketball comme représentat de la sentat de la Yougoslavie. De cette raison nous avons l'honneur de vous prier de vouloir bien nous fournir les renseignements nécessaires et relatifs pour cet acte. En même temps nous serons bien reconnais sants si vous pourriez nous renseigner sur le siège de la Fédération Internationale de Volleyball.

³ In his two earlier books, *Košarka* (1957, 8) and *ABC košarke* (1971, 10) Kobali does not state the date of the game in Prague while Bojanić states the date of the game as July of 1938 (1997, 12).



Picture 7 – The letter of SAKY to FIBA dated May 16, 1936 1936. Godine. Source: FIBA archives, according to Paunić (1980, 597).

Espérant avoir le plaisir de vous lire bientôt, veuillez agréer, Messieurs, l'expression de notre haute considération".⁴ (Picture 7). The International Basketball Federation, upon the receipt of the letter, four days later on May 20, 1936, sent a reply (No.S.581/2031) to the president of the Sokol Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at its headquarters in Belgrade, 34 Prestolonaslednikov Trg, Yugoslavia. The reply expressed the pleasure of SAKY having an interest to join F.I.B.A. and sent further instructions for the admission. We have considered it necessary to have the entire letter presented in this paper: „Cher Monsieur, Je vous remercie pour votre lettre du 16 courant. J'ai pris note, avec le plus vif plaisir, de votre désir de devenir membre de la F.I.B.A. Sous plis séparé je vous envoie par ce même courrier une copie du règlement de jeu en Français et en Anglais, ainsi qu'une copie des Centraux et des règlements internes publiés à ce jour. Comme vous verrez, l'article 5 des Statute donne la définition de la qualité de membre de la F.I.B.A. il est notamment nécessaire d'être une organisation d'envergure nationale. Je suppose que tel est le cas avec votre Fédération. La taxe annuelle d'affiliation est de 50.00 francs or (francs suisses). Même si vous n'envosagez pas de prendre part aux prochaines Olympiades de Berlin, je vous conseille de vous affilier immédiatement qui nous parviendrait après le prochain Congrès de la Fédération sera majorée d'une taxe d'admission de 100.00 francs or.

⁴ *Gentlemen, being the only organization in our country in which basketball are played, we wish to be accepted by the International Basketball Federation as a representative of Yugoslavia. Therefore, we would be honored to have all the necessary information sent by you. At the same time, we would also be grateful to be informed about the headquarters of the International Volleyball Federation.*

La demande d'affiliation doit être faite per une lettre signée du Président et du Secrétaire demandant l'affiliation et être accompagnée per le chèque rélatif, deux copies des statuts et des règles du jeu en force dans votre Pays, ainsi qu'un court rapport statistique sur l'activité du Basketball en Jugoslavie. Le Volleyball est contrôlé par la International Amateur Hadball Federation, 9, Hardenbergstrasse, Berlin. Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur, mes meilleures salutation sportives."⁵

Enclosed were the Rules of the game of basketball, in both English and French, and a copy of statute and regulations. After they had collected the necessary documents, SAKY sent an admission request to the International Basketball Federation. The original letter could not be obtained even after a thorough review of the related documentation, which left us unfamiliar with the content and the date of the mentioned letter. The letter of the International basketball Federation (No.S.581/2502) dated December 12, 1936 and sent to the president of SAKY, informed them of being acquainted with their request and being welcome to join FIBA. Cher Monsieur, C'est avec grand plaisir que j'ai reçu votre demande d'affiliation à la F.I.B.A. et que, au nom du Bureau Central, at des 30 Pays members, je done e la bienvenue parmi nous à votre Fédération. J'espère que, à l'avenir, nos relations semont frequentes et pleines de bons resultats pour le Basketball de votre Pays et du monde entier. Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur, mes meilleures salutation sportives."⁶

⁵ *Dear Sir, we thank you for your letter dated December 16. We are very much pleased with your request to become members of F.I.B.A. We also send you the Rules of the game of basketball, in both English and French, and a copy of statute and regulations. As you may see, the Article 5 of the statute defines the membership to F.I.B.A. In order to become members of F.I.B.A. you should be an organization at national level. We assume such is the case with your Federation. The annual membership fee is 50 golden francs (or Swiss francs). Even if you do not plan to compete at the forthcoming Olympic Games in Berlin, we kindly advise you to submit your documentation and pay the fee for the year of 1936, as the membership fee will increase up to 100 golden francs (or Swiss francs) after the Congress of Federation. Your request should be submitted alongside with the letter signed by the president and secretary-general and an enclosed cheque and two copies of the Statute and the Rules of the game in Yugoslavia. Volleyball is under the jurisdiction of International Amateur Handball Federation, 9, Hardenbergstrasse, Berlin.*

⁶ *Dear Sir, it is our pleasure to inform you that we have received your request to be accepted as members of F.I.B.A. and, on the behalf of the Central Bureau of 30 member states, we wish to express our welcome to your Federation. We truly hope to stay in touch with you in the future as to achieve good basketball results in your country and the wider world.*

Based on the content of the letter and the following words in it, „and, on the behalf of the Central Bureau of 30 member states, we wish to express our welcome to your Federation“, it can be concluded that by the mid-December of 1936 the SAKY was admitted into the International Basketball Federation as the representative of Yugoslavia. Following the intentions from the letter, „we truly hope to stay in touch with you in the future as to achieve good basketball results in your country and the wider world“, the further contacts were cherished regarding all the important issues on the basketball development. The International Basketball Federation sent a letter to SAKY on February 16, 1940 to inform them about the international exam for referees in order to send the names of the two candidates (referees), who had some previous knowledge to be eligible for the refereeing exam. SAKY replied on March 13, 1940 (No.2111/40) to the International Basketball Federation saying the following: “Nous référant a votre lettre du 15 fevrier, nous avons l'honneur de vous fair connaitre les noms de deux nos juges, qui sont capables de condair les rencontriées intenationales. A savoir; Messieurs, Radovanović Salimir et Kobali Milan.”⁷ (Pic. 8).

In the end, we consider it necessary to quote one note which appeared in Pavić's rules of the game from 1939 saying that: „In the XII Olympic Games in 1940 our Federation will be represented by one team playing for Yugoslavia“. Paunić also says that the note should be trusted because it comes from a „trustworthy“ person.⁸ (Paunić, 1980, 257).



Picture 8 – The letter of SAKY to FIBA dated May 16, 1936
Source: FIBA archives, according to Paunić (1980, 597).

⁷ Replying to your letter dated February 16th, we have the honour to inform you about the names of two referees, who have the necessary knowledge to be eligible to pass the exams for international referees. We suggest Selimir Radovanović and Milan Kobali.

⁸ Vera and Zdenko Pavić, the parents of Marko Pavić, the author, became the members of technical committee of SAKY for the games in 1935.

Literature

- Beganović, M. et al. (2005). *Basketball je ime košarka dobio u Zagrebu*. [Basketball is the name košarka given in Zagreb. In Croatian.]. Zagreb: Košarkaški savez Zagreba i ARS Media d.o.o.
- Bojanić, Đ. (1997). *Katalog izložbe - Košarka tragom James Naismith*. [Exhibition Catalogue - James Naismith Basketball trail. In Croatian.]. Zagreb: Hrvatski športski i olimpijski muzej.
- Colbeck, L.A. et al. (1972). *The Basketball World*. München: International Amateur Basketball Federation.
- Colombo, D. & Eleni, O. (1991). *100 Yeras of Basketball*. München: International Amateur Basketball Federation.
- Cučilić, S. (1998). *Istorija Primorja 1908.-1998*. [Primorje history 1908 - 1998. In Croatian.]. Rijeka: Športsko društvo „Primorje“.
- Čobović, Z., Raičević, M. & Bogdanović, M. (2005). *60 Golden Years. The History of Men Basketball National Team from Serbia and Montenegro*. Beograd: EVRO and KSSCG.
- Hočevar, C. (1970). *Pismo Pavlovič Mik*. [Letter to Pavlovič Mik. In Slovenian.]. U Žibrav, M. (1996). *Košarka od začetka do danes*. Ljubljana: samostalno izdanje autora.
- Kobali, M. (1957). *Košarka. Sportska stručna biblioteka*. [Basketball. Professional sport library. In Croatian.]. Zagreb: Savez sportova Hrvatske.
- Kobali, M. (1971). *ABC košarke*. [Basketball ABC. In Croatian.]. Zagreb: Sportska štampa.
- Kobali, M. (1986). *Stvaranje košarke u Zagrebu*. [The establishment of basketball in Zagreb. In Croatian.]. *Povijest sporta*, 68, 112-121.
- Marović, D. (1982). *Počeci košarke u Splitu*. [The beginnings of basketball in Split. In Croatian.]. *Povijest sporta*, 53(13), 323-332.
- Paunić, S. (1982). *Geneza i razvoj košarke u Jugoslaviji*. [Genesis and development of basketball in Yugoslavia. In Serbian.]. (Published doctoral dissertation, University Belgrade). Beograd: Fakultet fizičke kulture.

MEĐUNARODNA KOŠARKAŠKA AKTIVNOST U KRALJEVINI JUGOSLAVIJI

Sažetak

Međunarodna košarkaška aktivnost u Jugoslaviji započela je u srednjim 30-im godinama 20. stoljeća. Pri kraju proljeća 1935, prva javna košarkaška utakmica odigrana je pred Zagrebačkim auditorijem s protivnicima 'Sokolsko društvo Zagreb II' i Bugarski studenti. Košarkaška momčad YSC „Victoria" iz Suška odigrala je dvije košarkaške utakmice protiv gostiju iz Italije. Dana 25 prosinca 1935, na Božić „Victoria" je igrala protiv „DA Fiume" iz Rijeke a poslije i utakmicu protiv „ROMSA" iz Rijeke dana 12. veljače 1939. Studentska državna košarkaška selekcija Kraljevine Jugoslavije igrala je prvu međunarodnu utakmicu protiv B državne momčadi Italije, što se odigralo u Rimu 20. ožujka 1938. U srpnju iste godine, na Sokolskom natjecanju u Pragu, Jugoslavenski državni tim igrao je svoju prvu međunarodnu utakmicu protiv Čehoslovačke. Inicijativa da se Jugoslavija primi u Međunarodnu košarkašku federaciju izvršena je od strane Sokolskog udruženja Kraljevine Jugoslavije. Kroz 1936 FIBA je primila dva zahtjeva za primanje Jugoslavije u svoje članstvo. Sredinom prosinca 1936, FIBA je izvijestila Sokolsko udruženje Kraljevine Jugoslavije da ga pozdravlja kao predstavnika Jugoslavije kao 31. člana FIBA.

Ključne riječi: košarka, Sokolski pokret, Kraljevina Jugoslavija, međunarodne utakmice, FIBA

Received: April 23, 2010.

Accepted: May 20, 2010.

Correspondence to:

Asst.Prof. Slobodan Simović, PhD

University of Banja Luka

Faculty of Physical Education and Sport

78000 Banja Luka, Bul.v P.Bojovića 1A, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Tel: 00 381 (0)65 58 07 50

E-mail: ssimovic@hotmail.com