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## **SUCCESS OF OUR ATHLETES AS A WAY OF PROMOTING MONTENEGRO**

### **Introduction**

Wining the independence of Montenegro by independence referendum in year of 2006 was a breaking point in many areas of not only political, but also social acting.

Besides engaging in all relevant international sports organizations, successes of our sportsman begin to appear – water polo players first of all, basket ball players, hand ball players, as well as football representation and individual sportsman. For the first time it was seen that the true feeling of national acceptance and national identity during sports competition and victories, begin to replace hereditary stereotypes that bonded people of Montenegro with glorious history, epic experience of honor and belonging to the governing political parties. But, following years came with economy crises that influenced the world. It is evident that we don't have enough capacity, infrastructure, experts, or financial resources, to fight for a better positioning of our sport relative to other areas in Montenegro and relative to other competitive states, on a higher level. We have young, healthy and talented sportsman, we have a sports public and states that supports them, but all of that is not enough for them to shine as they were shining at the beginning of country independence, because it is necessary to empower the infrastructure, create a strategy and better financing of competitive sports.

### **THEORY OF SPORT PROMOTION**

In the book "The image of Montenegro" dr Dervis Selhanovic gives a significant place to sport and he states: "Sport development and forming of good athletes represent the part of social, cultural and political marketing of the country. Top athletes (besides cultural ambassadors and popular artists) are the best ambassadors of every country and of Montenegro as well. That is exactly the trend and imperative of so called sport diplomacy." (Selhanovic, 2010:157). Selhanovic further states that the development of sport must include many subjects, in order to reach the top results, but also states that besides taking care of by the state, it is necessary for private sector to be engaged, for funding, thus building their own the image in the country and the world.

Author of the book "The image of Montenegro" further states that the best promoters of Montenegro has been footballers Dejan Savicevic and Predrag Mijatović (which are known by many in the world, but those many don't know about Montenegro, prim.aut.), and boxers Ivan Strugar and Goran Radonjic who were on the front pages of sports attachments Washington Post and the annual WAKO. He states further – the smaller the country is the more important sports achievements are.

How significant is potential of promoting successful athletes is demonstrated by the fact that they increasingly become "icons" and the youth is looking up to them, but they are also good commercial bait, and successful companies hire them for advertising. David Beckham is the best example.

“However, it is undeniable that these phenomena reveal the value of an epoch, circumstances and conditions not only of individual lives, but also of the nation. Johan Hujzinga impression that modern man is trying to save his personality by playing sports wasn't accidental. Sport is not just pure skill and strength development, but it is a medium of formation of style and youthful feelings of strength and life. "(Kokovic, 2000: 84).

In the process of good promotion media are irreplaceable, because they inform, animate and thus recreate the public. By displaying sports programs, with national or international content, they achieve record ratings and profit immediately or later.

"Although television network transmission Olympics often suffer financial losses, and they offer all Dalh large sums of money for future broadcast rights. Behind it is an attitude that conveys the Olympics attract a large number of viewers where they can advertise their entertainment shows. Therefore, if these ads can provide a larger audience shows will be disclosed after the Olympics, TV networks will make more than enough money to cover losses from the transfer of the Olympics and on an annual basis will achieve higher overall profit. "(Potter, 2011: 493).

"Although television networks that transmit Olympics often suffer financial losses, they still offer increasingly large sums of money for future broadcast rights. Behind it is an attitude that transmitting the Olympics attracts a large number of viewers for whom they can advertise their entertainment shows. Therefore, if these ads can provide a larger audience for the shows that will be aired after the Olympics, TV networks will make more than enough money to cover losses from transmitting the Olympics and on an annual basis they will achieve higher overall profit. "(Potter, 2011: 493).

So, the media use sport for self-promotion, and it is used the same way by a large advertisers. All this confirms the great potential of the sport, which is a good base for the promotion of others, through which sport is being simultaneously promoted.

### **Results and Discussion**

For this work we interviewed five renowned experts in the field of sports, media and management. The study involved the President of the Montenegrin Olympic Committee, Dusan Simonovic, an adviser in the Directorate of Sports of the Government of Montenegro Marko Begovic, president of the Athletic Federation of Montenegro Milorad Vuletic, a sports journalist Maksim Živaljević and Professor of Management Dr. Marija Jankovic.

#### *SWOT ANALYSIS*

Method that is commonly used in strategic management is the SWOT analysis. Strengths and weaknesses are internal positive and negative elements that can be

affected, while opportunities and threats are external positive and negative factors that can't be affected but they can be predicted and possible they can be adapted. By analyzing conducted interviews and research intervention, we'll make a SWOT table, which will be commented.

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
Human resources	Inadequate sport education	Sport education of the youth	Depopulation
Interest in sport	Low finances	Industrial investment in sport	Change of the youth's are of interest
Successes so far	Inadequate legislation	Huge stars as promoters	Competitive environment
Existing capacities	Poor infrastructure	New trends in tourism	Transfers of the top athletes
Media support	Weak management – disconnected system	Interested top players for national team of Montenegro	Lack of sponsors and disconnection

### *STRENGTHS*

Almost all interviewed people highlighted human resources as the most important factor affecting the success of Montenegrin sport.

"The genetic code is a code by which we can explain our sports successes. I think that the traditional Montenegrin magnification can't be match with the assertion that a similar comparative example of a smaller geographical area with a higher concentration of sports aces of world fame can't be found." (Dusan Simonovic).

"In Montenegro, we have a healthy population, healthy youth population, and we are predisposed for better results provided that we are better organized. If we can succeed in that effort, we have shown that we can." (Milorad Vuletic).

In regard to this, there is a large interest of young people in sports.

"The advantage of sport in Montenegro is a great interest for children to be athletes, as well as the physical qualities for many of the sports field."

Past successes of our athletes are certainly the best motive for the country, businessmen, sports workers and future athletes to commit to this field. Also existing infrastructure is in fact very important.

"Montenegro has good infrastructure when it comes to playing sports indoors, because almost every city has a hall or a space for handball, basketball, football, volleyball and many other sports. We also have good grounds for football, especially in the capital city. Although the best of our results are in water polo, we do not have enough indoor pools, which would enable young people qualitatively engagement in sport. What is most striking today, and it might not be sufficiently recognized by Montenegrin public, is that the capital of Montenegro has no athletic stadium. We are on the way to built it (for a maximum of two years), and we expect support from everyone, especially from the media, to provide it for our citizens." (Milorad Vuletic).

Media support is certainly important, not only for attracting sports in Montenegro, but also for the world promotion through satellite channels and internet portals.

“...all Montenegrin media gave an outstanding contribution for the development of Montenegrin sport and such success would not exist without such media support. The role of journalism and journalists is huge, the right way to promote both good and bad things in order to correct the mistakes, and I hope it will continue to be like that, so the Montenegrin sport can rise to the wanted and expected position.” (Milorad Vuletic).

### *WEAKNESSES*

The lack of adequate sports education from an early age is certainly a problem for the development of the sport.

"So, if we take the athletic is a basic sport, first of all, emphasis should be given in particular to the development of Montenegrin sport on a massive scale. This can be done by encouraging the development of school sport, from 5th grade to the end of secondary education. This is a trend that is increasingly popular in the world and what the IAAF is the most persistent about." (Milorad Vuletic).

"Currently hundreds of "schools" of various sports are organized in Montenegro, which in the junior categories take on the role of sports clubs. These "schools" are characterized by a large number of members, and however, there is no room for improvement after 11-12 years. Following is the transition to the clubs which are less and less by number, and which, at least most of them, do not have the money to allow proper development of gifted children. Montenegrin sport is more and more amateurish." (Maksim Živaljević).

Lack of finance is very large, perhaps the biggest problem.

"First of all, the financial crisis is something that is necessary reflected on sport and its functioning." (Dusan Simonovic).

"We must encourage the development of sports in Montenegro on a qualitatively different basis, where there is a talented base for the development of one type of sport, to provide financial structure." (Milorad Vuletic).

Related to this is inadequate normative provision and institutional linkages in Montenegro. Although the sport in our country is defined as a constitutional category and activity of public interest, followed by adopted the National Program for development of sport, still, better legal regulation and application of standards, would contribute to adequate financing of sport, which should be "mixed model" - public private.

"In addition, the system of institutional support is often inert, based on the legislation that is insufficiently adapted to the peculiar nature of Montenegrin sport." (Dusan Simonovic)

Poor infrastructure is a major problem for achieving major sporting success.

"The disadvantages are: lack of qualification structure of coaches, especially in football; insufficient financial investment in the training of coaches and athletes, insufficient investment in technical capacity, especially courts." (Marija Jankovic)

"This is supplemented by the fact that the sports infrastructure is quite outdated and inadequate for accrued social needs." (Dusan Simonovic)

Lack of good management in sport and poor linkages not only among sport ones, but also among other factors in the country that would promote sport, it is certainly a big problem.

"It is necessary to create an organizational scheme, setting out clear responsibilities for stakeholders in the structure of the sport (administration, local government, COK, ...) but also to show the level of centralization, ie., the level of intervention by public authorities in the system of sport in order to closer defining the terms for all participants in the system of sport "(Marko Begovic)

### *OPPORTUNITIES*

Better politic of youth's education would certainly encourage their greater interest in particular sports. Construction of the Athletics Stadium in Podgorica and other facilities, as well as looking up to the world in terms of development of the area, will be useful for education.

"We are talented and healthy nation, we have a lot of quality youth who want to engage in sports, but one of the biggest priorities is a relatively cheap athletic stadium in the capital of Montenegro. We're on our way to do it (for a maximum of two years). "(Milorad Vuletic)

Industrial investment in sport will certainly be an opportunity for encouraging the sports development.

"Firstly, I believe (and not just me) that the precondition for the successful functioning of any sport collectives as well as a successful company, is quality of the management. For us in the Olympic movement, although we believe that they are very much needed to each other, sport with its specific role as a social, educational and cultural activity should be in front and sponsorship should provide quality of the sports budget and to further maximize profit to the partner company. "(Dusan Simonovic)

Our big stars as promoters of sports are great potential that we have to use in Montenegro, and in the world.

"Also, giving a chance to our sports aces, which are recognized around the world, using their knowledge, experience and connections, their inclusion in sports forums, giving voting rights in decision-making is one of the modalities of success." (Dusan Simonovic)

Montenegro as an ideal destination, with beautiful nature and pleasant climate, so it would be a good bait for top athletes, but also for those who come for active recreation.

"The potential of the healthy climate, the meet of Mediterranean and harsh climate, gives the possibility of organizing mass camps for summer and winter preparations. In front of Montenegrin sport is a bright future, provided that we make a qualitative strategy for the development of Montenegrin sport. "(Milorad Vuletic).

"I see the activities of the Montenegrin Olympic Committee moving in that direction for the project of building two mini - Olympic center, one at the north and the

other at the south of the country. They would primarily improve the conditions for the preparation of our athletes, then, what is not less important, they would enriched our tourist facilities "(Dusan Simonovic)

These opportunities would add interest of famous athletes in the world to be part of our national team, helping spread the word about Montenegrin sport throughout the world. The fact that an Argentine footballer of Montenegrin origin Ariel Esteban Saveljic and Serbian football player Adam Marusic recently became part of the Montenegrin national team gave us this idea.

### *THREATS*

We need to add an imminent threat to SWOT analysis in order to complete the assessment of strengths and weaknesses. Depopulation and low population growth can certainly diminish the advantages as well as the change of interest of young people, if they are not systematically supported in their interest for the sport. Strong competition in the environment, can certainly affect professional and recreational athletes to decide for other destinations rather than Montenegro, if we don't improve the infrastructure and don't lower our prices. Transfers of athletes are inevitable, which certainly affects the outflow of the best, so we should try to keep them. But when they leave, they are the best advertisement for Montenegro and part of our national teams. Football players and basketball players confirm this fact.

Further systemic lack of connection, and therefore insufficient animation of businessmen for sponsorship, can affect the Montenegrin sport to stay where it is or to regress. We hope that this will not occur.

### **Conclusion**

The motive for writing this paper was to encourage the positive promotion of Montenegro, because we believe that this is insufficiently done so far and that numerous factors which are responsible for the promotion or that could help are poor connected, and therefore the result are very weak. However, by the actualization of this story, we must come to the problems plaguing the Montenegrin sport. We have detected advantages and disadvantages. We are aware that we have a healthy nation that is talented and interested in sport, as well as in tourist destination with an ideal climate for the training of athletes. We also have achievements to be proud of. Insufficient financial support should be strengthened by precise standardization, and by animating successful businessmen to invest in sport and thus promote themselves better. We also need sports capacities, and we should include the private sector into the construction of infrastructure, which would in fact find of interest in that. Adoption and implementation of the overall strategy, which would link all the available capacity, would certainly contribute to strategic performance in further sporting endeavors and successes, within their promotion. The attitude of the authors of this work is that the potential of our famous athletes is under-utilized for the purpose of promoting the sport and tourism of Montenegro. We have players in the world's most prestigious football clubs and in the strongest basketball league, and they could use their positions for

giving publicity to our country in the world, for which they should be marketing specifically advised. Why not say that, during a visit to Montenegro, their symbolic appearance at gatherings of young people would be a motive enough for them to do their best in sports efforts and results. Maybe we can't be like countries that are bigger than us, and whose players are the best products of Montenegrin descent. But it is our obligation to do as much as we can, for at least we owe that to ourselves and Montenegro. We can do more than what we are doing now!

### References

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*The purpose of this scientific work is to determine how the successes of our athletes affect the international media and tourism promotion of our country, since Montenegro independence 2006. The aim of this work is to consider theoretical assumptions and experts' opinions, in order to give recommendations for utilization of sport success into better promotion of Montenegro all over the world in the future.*

*The views of the interviewed experts confirm that sport is more than just a game and competition, that is part of the national identity, and as such, a window to the world of our country. The success of our athletes, especially the handball and water polo teams, confirm the thesis that this branch is one of the best ways for positive quotations of a small country and for being mentioned in international diplomacy, tourism and media circles. Our footballers before Savicevic and Mijatovic and now Vucinic, Savic, Jovetic and Kascelan, are often more famous than our touristic locations. The views of recognized experts suggest that this segment of promotion of Montenegro showed be watched closely, and that it would be useful for marketing campaigns to include our famous athletes, so the Montenegro can be recognizable in the world, and thus become a destination that will attract more tourists.*