

Lecture 2:

National Identity and Sports: the case of Lithuanian Basketball

Prof. Dr. Vilma ČINGIENĖ

*Institute of Leadership and Strategic Management,
Faculty of Public Governance and Business
Mykolas Romeris University (MRU)*

1 June, 2021, Borys Grinchenko University, Kyiv, Ukraine

MYKOLO
ROMERIO
UNIVERSITETAS

Content of the lecture

The role and importance of basketball
in Lithuania



Achievements of Lithuanian Men's Basketball

- Olympic Games/World Championships**

1992 – III place (bronze)
1996 – III place (bronze)
1998 – VII place
2000 – III place (bronze)
2004 – IV place
2006 – VII place
2008 – IV place
2010 – III place (bronze)
2012 – VIII place
2016 – VII place

- European Championships**

1937 – Champions (gold)
1939 – Champions (gold)
1995 – II place (silver)
1997 – Champions, women (gold)
1999 – V place
2003 – Champions (gold)
2005 – V place
2007 – III place (bronze)
2011 – V place
2013 – II place (silver)
2015 – II place (silver)



Men's Ranking after the February 2021 window of the FIBA Continental Cup Qualifiers

(last updated: 02 Mar 2021)

[How It Works](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Detailed Examples](#)

Share this



WORLD RANK	COUNTRY	ZONE RANK	IOC	CURRENT POINTS	+/- RANK *
1.	USA	1.	USA	781.8	0
2.	Spain	1.	ESP	721.3	0
3.	Australia	1.	AUS	667.0	0
4.	Argentina	2.	ARG	662.4	0
5.	Serbia	2.	SRB	662.0	0
6.	Greece	3.	GRE	658.4	+1
7.	France	4.	FRA	656.0	-1
8.	Lithuania	5.	LTU	634.6	0
9.	Russia	6.	RUS	613.3	0
10.	Italy	7.	ITA	596.4	+2

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: historical aspects

- What is an essence of the phenomenon that the country of about 3 mln. population demonstrates such a high results in basketball?
- In 2022 Lithuanian basketball will celebrate its **100th anniversary**
- The **first** official basketball match in Lithuania took place on April 23, 1922 (official birthday)
- In 1922 the Lithuanian Women's Basketball Championship* was held and in 1924 the national men's championship
- 1926 the book *“Basketball Game (Basketball) and the Official Basketball Rules of the Lithuanian Sports League for 1926–1927”* prepared by Steponas Darius was published
- 1934 A Palace of Physical Culture with a modern games hall was built in Kaunas
- 1936 The basketball committee of the Lithuanian Ball Game Union was approved as a member of FIBA and in 1991 FIBA restored the rights of the Lithuanian Basketball Federation

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: organizational aspects

- Lithuanian Basketball Federation is one of the largest and most influential in the country
- The federation unites:
 - over 135 legal members,
 - 9 leagues,
 - Unique schoolchildren basketball league – 400 teams, 6200 players, 7 age groups (12-19)
 - 10,000 licensed basketball players,
 - More than 440 full-time coaches
- More than 100,000 Lithuanians play basketball for fun

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects

- Relatively low participation in sport in the country *versus* high participation in basketball
- Cultural phenomenon*
- National identity and pride**
- Strong network of personalities: former players-current players-businessman-politicians
- Other sport disciplines' attitude towards basketball

*Čingienė, Damijonaitis, Komskienė, 2014

**Čingienė&Laskienė, 2004, 2007; Čingienė&Mizeras, 2020

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects - National identity and pride

In order to analyse the basketball and national identity in Lithuania it is necessary to define concepts:

- **“Nation”** could be identified as a human community formed on the basis of its common *history, language, territory and economic life*
- **“Culture”** is the way of life of people, including their *attitudes, values, beliefs, arts, sciences, modes of perception, and habits of thought and activity*; is everything that is meaningful to a human being.
 - Individual experiences become culture only when the meaning expressed by one person is recognized by the other one – when meanings are expressed in some understandable human language
- **“Sport”** is defined as a social phenomenon, inseparable from society’s culture - system of preparation and participation in *competitions*; and in a broader sense – all forms of physical activity which *improve person’s physical fitness and spiritual state*

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects - National identity and pride

Identity and Identification:

- self-experience
- self- image and
- self- representation

is supposed to give a person a unique and unified condition of “self”, but must at the same time be in *harmony with the expectations for behavior required by various roles*, so that the individual, despite being unique, is not cut off from communication and interaction

1. The act or process of recognizing or distinguishing something or someone
2. The deliberate adoption of another person's behaviour or ideas as one's own

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects - National identity and pride

Objects of identification:

- persons (*authorities, stars and heroes*),
- groups of persons (*a team, a show group*),
- things (*fetishes, symbols*),
- functions (*professional status*),
- institutions (*fans club, members club*) and
- non-material objects (*world outlook, nationality*)



The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects - National identity and pride

Three aspects are important for the relation between Sport and Identity :

- 1.The possibility of confirming **Identity** through **Sport**, independent of social differences
- 2.The use of qualities and abilities in **Sport** without consequences, where – regardless of the rules for tolerance and considerations valid in ordinary reality
- 3.The boundaries between the formation of **Identity** in everyday life and the world of **Sport**

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects - National identity and pride

- **Identity** and its conceptual understanding can be analysed only within a *specific* individual environment interaction
- Therefore, **Sport** as a relatively clearly defined social system could serve for a description and analysis of identity formation process in a special social context
- The major question is how the dynamics of basketball and national identity should be analysed?
- Basketball that all probability is quite deservedly regarded the national game of Lithuanians which has become part in many their's life

The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania: sociological aspects - National identity and pride

The impact of basketball to the formation of national identity confirmed the statement, that

a nation is united not only through its common history or political and spiritual responsibility of its subjects for the nation and the country,

*but also **through the collection of forms and symbols, that make their actions meaningful and help them to understand each other***





EuroBasket 2011

Lithuania

August 31-September 18, 2011



The Event

LITHUANIA IS BASKETBALL

For the second time since 1939, Lithuania took up the challenge of organising the EuroBasket which would not only be the biggest sporting event to take place in the country but also the most extensive European basketball show ever with 24 participating teams. Along with the qualification for the Olympics, the stakes were extremely high and so was the support mobilised to stage the Event.

With a national team ranked fifth in the FIBA world ranking and basketball being by far the most popular sport in the country, host nation Lithuania could count on strong popular and institutional support.

The Event was staged in six cities around the country, four of which have a significant basketball tradition: Panevėžys with its school of new basketball talent development, Šiauliai with the Lithuanian Basketball Museum nearby, and Kaunas and Vilnius which are the homes of two historical basketball clubs: Kauno Žalgiris and Vilniaus Lietuvos Rytas.

The construction of two new venues and the renovation of three for the occasion also gave a strong legacy for the future development of basketball. In Kaunas, the Žalgiris Arena in particular was built to hold the Final Round of the Championship and with a capacity of 15,000 seats stands out today as the largest venue in the Baltics.

The start of the Event was officially launched with the Opening Ceremony in Lithuania's capital city. While Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, Vilnius Mayor Arturas Zuokas,

FIBA Europe Secretary General Nar Zanolini and Lithuanian basketball star Linas Kleiza were cutting the ribbon, thousands around the country contributed to make it memorable by helping set a new Guinness world record. More than 61,000 fans bounced a basketball simultaneously for a period of five minutes in the six host cities, as they successfully beat the previous record held by Poland with 30,000 basketballs bounced in seven cities.

To support the organisation of the Event and welcome the local and international fans as well as guests, the EuroBasket 2011 Local Organising Committee (LOC), together with the Lithuanian Youth Council, selected a total of 2,000 enthusiastic and multi-lingual volunteers after a first training course organised in Kaunas in April. They were then prepared for their mission with a second training course in August. For the Final Round only, no less than 450 volunteers were active in the different areas, from informing fans to servicing the accredited media, as well as assisting with on-court activities.

2,000

Volunteers



61,000

Fans bouncing basketballs on launch day



240,000

Spectators

EUROBASKET 2011 EVENT REVIEW
THE ROAD TO LONDON

The Event

UNCONDITIONAL FAN SUPPORT ALL AROUND

Public ticket sales started on the 1st of March 2011 and all of Lithuania's games were sold out in a matter of hours. Other tickets for most venues were also sold out in advance. Several campaigns driven by the official sponsors then offered an extra opportunity to win tickets for the biggest games.

Besides the green coloured wave of Lithuanians unconditionally supporting their team, the national teams of Georgia, Slovenia, Russia and Latvia had the most fans travelling from their home countries. In total an estimated 240,000 spectators attended the games.

Thousands of non-ticket holders joined in the festivities by attending the Official Fan Zones set up right next to the arenas in each host city, making the most of the opportunity to play basketball, buy official event merchandise and follow the games on a big screen.

Several famous personalities and heads of states came to the Event, such as Prince Felipe of Spain, President Mikhail Saakashvili of Georgia and French tennis legend Yannick Noah.



The Event

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS
CELEBRATING THE
SPIRIT OF BASKETBALL

Representing the Event was the official mascot of EuroBasket 2011, Amberis, a lively character with a head in the shape and colour of a piece of amber.

It was selected by a majority of 130,000 local voters, believing amber best represents their country. Lying on the shores of the Baltic Sea, the gemstone is traditionally used for jewellery. But most relevant is the common belief that amber brings luck to the one who carries it and historically, coaches would give a piece of amber to the young basketball talents joining the Lithuanian basketball team. In this context, Amberis was perceived as the preferred national symbol to promote the Event. To follow the tradition, legendary player and Event ambassador Arvydas Sabonis gave his piece of amber to the people of Lithuania.



Amberis was present in all arenas interacting with the fans on and off the court, inspiring and accompanying them in their celebrations and disappointments.

Promotion of the Event was also supported by an official Event song, "Celebrate basketball" was written and performed by famous Lithuanian singers Mla, Mantas Janikavicius and Marijonas Mikutavicius and elected via a TV voting show in Lithuania. Existing both in

English and Lithuanian, the catchy song was high up in the local charts and enchanted all at the venues throughout the Championship.

Finally, dance groups from the two local clubs as well as the famed "Red Foxes" from Ukraine took to the court during timeouts and break in play to entertain the spectators in music, while sponsors got the public involved at half-times with on-court activities consisting of games and prizes at stake.



Scientific study...to be continued*



MOKYMASIS
IŠ PATIRTIES -
EUROBASKET2011



The main conclusion of the scientific study:
Particularly important was the ability to make decisions regarding specific activities and to assume personal responsibility, make the best use of personal and professional competencies, the ability to learn and teach others. These processes required not only strong will, commitment, creativity but also spiritual strength and self-sacrifice.



* Čingienė & Špokas, 2011

House of basketball: where history and modernity meet





We Celebrate Basketball



Acknowledgment: special thank to the Lithuanian Basketball Federation for the opportunity to create the history, be part of it and carry out a continuous research journey

References

- Laskienė, Skaistė; Čingienė, Vilma. Identity and sport: the Lithuanian case ; 2.7 // Multikulturní výchova ve vzdělávání budoucích učitelů a dalším vzdělávání učitelů : studie : vyd. 1 / Naděžda Pelcová a kol. ; Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Pedagogická fakulta. Praha : Univerzita Karlova - Pedagogická fakulta, 2007. p. 286-296.
- Čingienė, Vilma; Damijonaitis, Mindaugas; Komskienė, Diana. Soft power index extension: The case of the influence of Lithuanian basketball // Transformations in Business & Economics = Verslo ir ekonomikos transformacijos / Vilniaus universitetas, Brno technologijos universitetas, Latvijos universitetas. Brno, Kaunas, Riga, Vilnius : Vilniaus universitetas. 2014, vol. 13, No. 2A(32A), p. 462-482.
- Čingienė, Vilma; Laskienė, Skaistė. Intangible value of the sport event: the case of EuroBasket2011 // The 3rd European Interdisciplinary Forum 2015 (EIF 2015) "Divers for Progress in the Global Society" : June 18-19, 2015 - Vilnius (Lithuania) / Editor Agota Giedrė Raišienė. Bologna (Italy) : MEDIMOND Publishing Company, 2015. p. 143-149.
- Čingienė, Vilma; Laskienė, Skaistė. A revitalized dream: basketball and national identity in Lithuania // The international journal of the history of sport. Abingdon : Frank Cass, Taylor and Francis Ltd. 2004, vol. 21, no. 5, p. 762-779.
- Majauskienė, Daiva; Čingienė, Vilma; Gobikas, Mindaugas. Traits caractéristiques de l'évolution du basket-ball féminin en Lituanie (1920-1940) // Le Continent basket. L'Europe et le basket-ball au XX e siècle / ed. Archambault, Fabien; Artiaga, Loïc; Bosc, Gérard. Bruxelles [et all.] : Peter Lang, 2015. p. 85-91.
- Čingienė, V., Špokas, M. (2011) Mokymasis iš praeities/*Learning from experience* - EuroBasket2011. *Scientific Study*. Kaunas, UAB INDIGO print, 130 p.