## Lecture 2: National Identity and Sports: the case of Lithuanian Basketball

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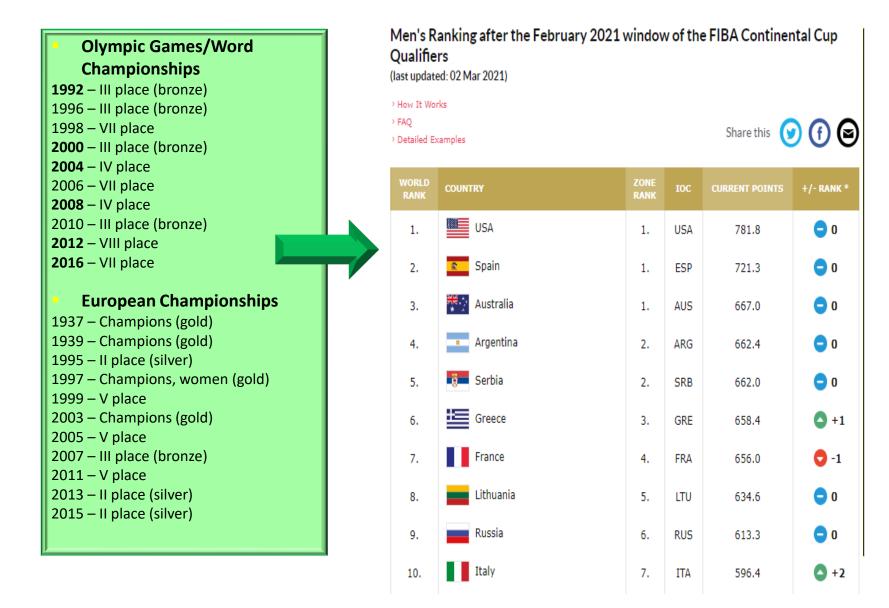
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NYKOLO ROMERIO JNIVERSITETAS

# Content of the lecture

# The role and importance of basketball in Lithuania

## Achievements of Lithuanian Men's Basketball



#### 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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

- 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 playerscurrent players-businessman-politicians
- >Other sport disciplines' attitude towards basketball

\*Čingienė, Damijonaitis, Komskienė, 2014 \*\*Čingienė&Laskienė, 2004, 2007; Čingienė&Mizeras, 2020

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

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

The deliberate adoption of another person's behaviour or ideas as one's own

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)





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 S*port*

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

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





# Euro Basket 2011

# Lithuania

August 31-September 18, 2011

# THE ROAD TO LONDON

#### 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 learn ranked fifth in the FIBA world ranking and basketball being by far the most popular sport in the country, host nation Lithtuaria 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 bradition: Panevarys with its school of new basketball taken development, Siasilai with the Lithuanian Basketball Museum nearby, and Kaunas and Vilnius which are the homes of two historical basketball obust: Kauno Zakgirts and Vilniaus Lietuvos Rytas.

The construction of two new venues and the renovation of three for the occasion also gave a strong logory for the thurs development of basketball. In Kaunas, the Zalgith Arma in particular was built to hold the Final Round of the Championship and with a capacity of 15,000 seats stands out loday as the largest venue in the Ballics.

The start of the Event was officially launchod with the Opening Ceremony in Lithuania's capital city. While Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilus, Vlinius Mayor Arturas Zoukas, FIBA Europe Secretary General Nar Zanolin and Lithuanian baskatbali star Linas Kietza were outling the ribbon, thousands around the country contributed to make it memorable by helping set a new Gaineas world record. More than 61,000 bras bounced a baskatbali simultaneously for a period of the minutes in the six host cities, as they successfully bust the previous record held by Poland with 30,000 baskotbalib bounced in asven cities.

To support the organisation of the Event and welcome the local and International fans as well as guests, the EuroBastel 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 ministion with a second training course in August. For the Final Round only, no less than 450 volunteers were active in the different areas, norm informing taxe to servicing the accessful the local Round is a sessibling with on- court activities.

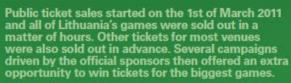
2,000



#### 51,000



#### The Event UNCONDITIONAL FAN SUPPORT ALL AROUND



Basides the green coloured wave of Lithuanians unconditionally supporting their team, the national learns of Georgia, Slovenia, Russie and Latvia had the most tens traveling from their home countries. In total an estimate 240,000 spectators attanded the games.

THE ROAD TO LONDON

Thousands of non-licket holders joined in the histivities by attending the Official Fan Zones set up right next to the arena in each host ofly, mating the most of the opportunity to play basketball, buy official event marchandles 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 Saakashvill of Georgia and French tennis legend Yannick Noah.



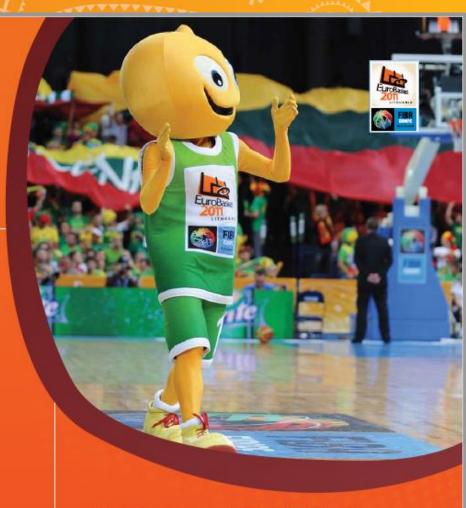
THE ROAD TO LONDON

#### 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 Battic Sea, the genetione is traditionally used for jeweiny. But most netwarit is the common belief that amber brings luck to the one who carrise II and historically, coaches would give a piece of amber to the young basktbal talends joining the Lithuanian basktbal likani. In this contact, Amberts was perceived as the preferred national symbol to promote the Event. To follow the traditions, legoedary player and Event ambasedor Arvydan Sabonis gave his piece of amber to the people of Lithuania





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

Promotion of the Event was also supported by an official Event aong. "Celebrate baskethal" was written and performed by famous Lithuanian singers Mia, Kantas Jankavičkas and Manijonas Mikutavičkas 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 clube as well as the famed "Red Foxer" from Ukraine took to the court during timeouts and break in play to antertain the spochators in music, while sponsors got the public involved at half-times with on-court activities consisting of games and prices at stake.

VVVP

# Scientific study...to be continued\*



## IŠ PATIRTIES -EUROBASKET2011

The main conclusion od 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

#### We Celebrate Basketball





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