

PROMOTION AS AN ELEMENT OF MARKETING MIX IN SPORT AND SPORT TOURISM: THE CROATIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract:

The economics of sport, sport marketing, sport management and entrepreneurship in sport are relatively new concepts, both in Croatia and in the world, as regards their analysis and possibilities of implementation. Therefore, studies of these concepts contribute valuable knowledge that will encourage further research into the development of corresponding marketing strategies and their implementation.

The finding that sport activity participation has beneficial effects on the health status of people on the one hand, and on the other, the boom of sports industry led to the development of a new type of tourism, namely, the sport tourism.

The importance of promotion as a marketing mix element employed in sport and tourism is indisputable, and the selection of promotional mix strategies is crucial for the realization of marketing goals.

Key words: *promotion, sport, sport marketing, sport tourism*

PROMOTION ALS ELEMENT DES MARKETING-MIX IM SPORT UND SPORT-TOURISMUS: KROATISCHE ERFAHRUNGEN

Zusammenfassung:

Ökonomie des Sports, Sport-Marketing, Sport-Management und Unternehmertum im Sport sind ziemlich neue Konzepte, sowohl in Kroatien als auch auf der Welt, bezüglich deren Analyse und Anwendung. Die Studien von diesen Konzepten werden deswegen als Resultat wertvolle Kenntnisse haben, die dann die weitere Entwicklung entsprechender Marketing-Strategien und deren Anwendung fördern werden.

Der Befund, dass sportive Betätigung vorteilhafte Wirkung auf den Gesundheitszustand der Menschen hat, einerseits, und die außerordentliche Expansion der Sportindustrie andererseits führten zur Entwicklung einer neuen Art vom Tourismus, nämlich, Sport-Tourismus.

Die Bedeutung der Promotion, als ein Element des Marketing-Mix, das im Sport und Tourismus angewendet wird, ist unbestreitbar, und die Auswahl von Strategien, die dieses Marketing-Mix-Element gestalten, ist entscheidend für die Realisierung von Marketingzielen.

Schlüsselwörter: *Einführung auf dem Markt, Sport, Sport-Marketing, Sport-Tourismus*

Introduction

Due to the skyrocketing industrial progress in the twentieth century on the one hand and, on the other, due to the exceptionally fast development of science, technology, communication technologies and world trade that reduced the differences both between the markets and between consumers, various strategies were developed and employed to improve, increase and diversify the

supply of products and services offered on the market. Marketing in general, as well as various topics within this broad field, became the focus of interest of many authors (e.g., Kotler, 1991; Rocco, 1988; 1994; Senečić & Vukonić, 1993; Meler, 1999; Previšić & Ozretić-Došen, 1999; Johansson, 2000; Dvorski & Dobrinčić, 2002; Renko & Pavičić, 2003). Consequently, many types of marketing, applied in various industries,

emerged, for example, travel marketing, tourism marketing, etc. The boom of sports industry prompted the development of sport marketing that then drew the attention of scientists (e.g., Freyer, 1991; Bartoluci, 1997; Brooks, 1994; Pitts & Stotlar, 1996). Thus, sport became the subject of research of various economic disciplines – economics of sport, sport management, entrepreneurship in sport, and, as already mentioned, of sport marketing. Studies were conducted that addressed the topics within these disciplines. One of the basic studies in the economics of sport was carried out by Heinemann (1984).

Further, sport and its development led to the origination of new scientific disciplines such as kinesiology, sociology of sport, sport psychology, sports medicine, etc. Sport interconnected with other phenomena as well, for example, with tourism. Although being two very different socio-economic phenomena in contemporary society, sport and tourism have nowadays become increasingly interconnected (e.g. Čavlek, 1999), resulting in a new type of tourism, namely, the sport tourism.

Since tourism is one of the most developed industries in Croatia, efforts are made by Croatian scientists and tourist workers to diversify the range of tourist services. Sport became one of the constituent elements of this range of services and, accordingly, the focus of interest of researchers. In Croatia, for example, Bartoluci (1996a) analysed entrepreneurship models in sport within the transition process of Croatian tourism, Meler and Maglica (1986) and Vukonić (1997) dealt with marketing in tourism, and in his paper presented at the 3rd international conference 'Kinesiology – New Perspectives' in Opatija (Croatia) in 2002 Vukonić dealt with management in sport and tourism.

Since, as previously said, the economics of sport is a relatively new scientific discipline and since in Croatia the first studies in this field were conducted only about 25 years ago, all research results are valuable contribution to the possibilities of their implementation in practice.

This paper will, therefore, try to address the promotion of sport, sports products and sports services in Croatia for the purpose of the development of sport and sport tourism.

Promotion as an element of the sport marketing mix

Today sport marketing is a special field of the marketing concept application in sport. It is a social process in which individuals and the society, by applying the concept of marketing in all sub-

areas of sport, satisfy their consumer needs with the help of a set of activities by means of which sports products are exchanged on the market (Bartoluci, 2003:241).

Promotion (the term *promotion* is derived from the Latin word *promovere* which means *to move forward, to advance* as a service, company, club, etc., both goods and services) is one of the marketing mix elements and it is considered to be a controllable variable (Bartoluci, 1997:233). In other words, it can be purposefully employed, changed, adapted, or perfected in order to achieve the desired level of selling a product on the target market.

In accord with its general meaning, promotion, as an element of the sport marketing mix, is a sum total of various activities, that is, of attempts of companies to acquaint the prospective consumers with the products which they produce and which should become and remain known. By employing various media these companies promote the sale and provide a constant demand for their products (Bartoluci, 2003:255). This relates particularly to sporting events (e.g. basketball championships) that are considered as examples of pure sports products.

Additionally, sporting events have some specific characteristics. One of them is best expressed in the sentence: "A sport spectacle is always new, never before seen and cannot be repeated; it's a premiere without a re-run." (Džeba & Serdarušić, 1995:202) Large sporting events such as the Olympic Games, World Championships, or European Championships, regardless of the sport we are talking about, have their own promotion programs that cannot be applied to any other sporting events, although, conceptually, it is not impossible. However, there exists a whole series of subjective elements that are not the same (for example, goals, interests, etc.) and that cannot be incorporated into the promotional programs intended for different sporting events.

Further, promotion is regarded as a constant dynamic process that depends on other elements of the sport marketing mix as well, because of the existing cause-and-effect relationship between all the relevant elements. In accord with the intention of a company, of the organizer or the agency to acquaint the market with the product, promotion represents a complex activity that is recognized as a promotional mix.

According to Bartoluci (1997:244) the promotional mix encompasses: 1) advertising, 2) personal selling, 3) publicity and 4) public relations. Senečić (1998:10) differentiates between the following promotional mix elements in tourism marketing: a)

advertising, b) personal selling, c) sales promotion, and d) public relations.

Regardless of the classification, each of the promotional mix elements contains some principles that are constant. However, each element is an open set of activities and the ways of realization of those principles. Let us take as an example two promotional mix elements, namely, advertising and public relations.

Advertising can be done through mass media such as television, radio, the daily press, periodicals, etc. The result of the expanding competition among the producers of products and renderers of services is the augmented innovativeness of their ways of promoting the products. To exemplify, nowadays we talk about promotion at stadiums at which large sporting events take place. This site of promotion, besides the already well known advertising inscriptions on the sides of the playing area (stadium signage) and the commercials and advertisements on the huge flashing poster boards near the stands, encompasses the so-called in-stadium advertisements that are placed on the seats so that the person sitting in a particular seat selected at random receives a small prize (e.g., a free sample of a product), or walk-in advertising which implies that, for example, the first one hundred visitors to enter the stadium receive a gift from a company producing some product (Pemberton, 1997:118-119).

The Internet, whose expansion gave complete meaning to the term *global*, became the new means of operation of many tourist agencies. These agencies realize a large portion of their business transactions, thus also of promotional activities, on the Internet. Advertising on the Internet is more and more one of the promotional tools employed within integrated marketing communications. The article written by Tkalac (1999) relates to the perceptions of experts about the Internet as a part of the strategies of marketing communications.

However, it is not only the promotion, as a marketing mix element, of goods and services that is realized on the Internet. The Internet has become the place where the suppliers may realize their ultimate goal, namely, the selling of the product on the target market.

Television and radio are still the inevitable means of advertising, and, since they are, together with the daily press, still on the top of the scale as for the number of people who watch, that is, listen to them, or, in case of the newspapers, read them, it is necessary to pay significant attention to the quality of promotion of any products and services in these two media.

Public relations are an excellent and an efficient way to increase the sale of a product, thus also of the sports product. The term *public relations* implies the activities connected with the communication with newspaper reporters, with advertising, with marketing, sponsorship, exhibitions, etc. (Vajić, 1997:64). Public relations are an important element of each promotion. Therefore, the person who is in charge for public relations is crucial for the realization of economic effects.

Promotion of sport

As in any other type of promotion, the promotion of sports products must be narrowed, or better to say, the target market, and consequently the prospective consumers, should be accurately defined with regard to the sports product advertised (a sporting event, sporting equipment, sports preparation programs for athletes, recreational-sport activity programs, nutrition, etc.). Within sport marketing, the target consumer group may be top athletes, coaches, people who participate in sport on a recreational basis, or for the purpose of preserving good health, or those who are 'passive' participants in sporting events – either the participants who watch a sporting event live, that is, on the field, or TV viewers, or people who read sports magazines, etc.

Regardless of the type of sports product we are talking about, promotion always has an important and inevitable role in the series of activities comprising the marketing mix. With regard to the globalization process, which is evident in sport, it appears that sport has become a very suitable and profitable means of promotion, not only of sports products and services, but also of products that are not directly connected with sports, but that use sport as an instrument of promotion (Freyer, 1991:284).

Taking into account the data that point to the fact that between 1980 and 1997 the spending on sports products in the USA increased almost four times and that in 1999, according to Shannon (1999), sports represented eleventh largest industry in the USA, as well as taking into account that such an increase in the demand for a certain kind of product has not been recorded in any other economic activity (Stipetić & Bartoluci, 1999), it may be said that today the promotion of sports products is an inevitable factor in sport and sports industry. The importance of promotion is even more evident when various concepts of what is included in *sports industry* are considered, namely, "some authors include just the marketing of sporting events and sporting goods in their definition of the sports industry, [whereas] others include marketing

of non-sport products at sporting events, [and] still others include marketing which uses sports figures as product endorsers ...” (Shannon, 1999). Turco, Riley and Swart (2002:23) define sports industry “as the market in which the sport products and services are offered to buyers.”

Pitts, Fielding and Miller (1994, as quoted by Turco, Riley and Miller, 2002:23) regard sport promotion as one of the three segments of sports industry (the other two being the sport performance and the sport production segment).

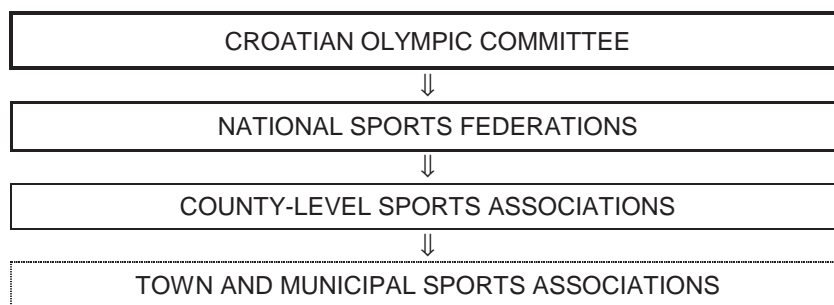
Simultaneously with the increase of the number of athletes, sports enterprises, sports clubs and associations, their interest for the destinations where various sport-related activities and programs, e.g. sports preparation programs, are organized for top athletes who participate in large competitions, grew.

As for the economic effects of sport in Croatia, they are manifested through the realized income from tourism and are estimated to be 3% (realized either directly or indirectly) of this income (Bartoluci, 2003:63). Additionally, sport in Croatia generates its economic effects in, for example, the production and selling of sports products. These effects expressed in numbers are estimated to be 400 million US\$ annually. However, due to the lack of data it is not possible to accurately determine the effects that sport has on the economic development in Croatia.

Organization of sport in Croatia as the basis of sport promotion

Nowadays, sport is regarded as a socio-economic phenomenon (Šugman, Bednarik & Kolarič, 2002:39). It has, or should have, the attribute of being one of the public goods since public goods are regarded as goods that are accessible to all under the same conditions (Andrijašević, 1999: 503). Sport in Croatia mostly has the characteristic of being one of the public goods that is realized as the general social need of consumers (for example, sport for children and the young, competitive sport, sport for the disabled).

Sport in Croatia is organized according to the following scheme (Bartoluci, 2003:152):



This scheme shows that the supreme sport organization in Croatia is the Croatian Olympic Committee, the umbrella organization of national sports federations, sports associations at county, municipal and town levels, as well as of other organizations and associations that are important for the promotion of sport.

According to the *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia* (2001:462-463) in the year 1997 in Croatia there were altogether 3,427 sports associations with 263,365 members. The number of people who worked in sport on a professional basis was 9,066. Out of this number 7,803 were volunteers, 746 were full-time and 517 part-time (working short time) employees (Figure 1). Out of the total number of people working in sport 5,224 were qualified for the job they were doing, whereas 3,842 did not have the necessary qualifications. It is interesting to mention that the number of functionaries working in sports and in the associated fields was 15,063, out of which 177 were professionals, whereas the others were volunteers.

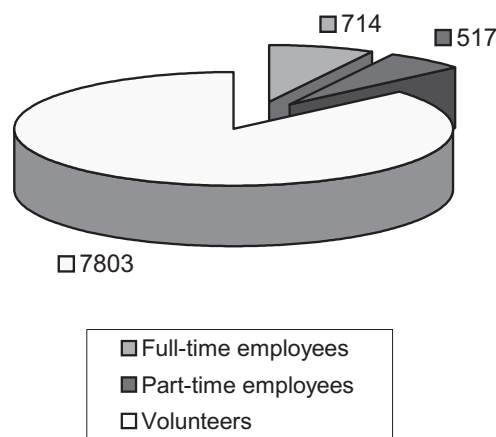


Figure 1. Workers employed in sport in Croatia.

To provide a more comprehensive picture connected with the numbers in sports and illustrate, on the basis of the listed data, the relationship between these data and the topic of this paper, let us take a look at some other data from the *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia* (2001: 462-463). These data concern the number of team and individual participation occurrences at international competitions in the Republic of Croatia (2,003 and 4,090, respectively) and abroad (1,025 and 2,197, respectively). The numbers that can be found in the already mentioned *Statistical Yearbook* are not small compared to the total number of inhabitants of the Republic of Croatia. The number of athletes in particular sports and the number of times they participated at international competitions create a realistic economic basis for the promotion of sport or tourist destinations that offer the opportunity for the realization of various sports services. For example, in the year 1997 the number of football associations/clubs in the Republic of Croatia was 802, with 55,604 active members. As many as 2,950 people worked as professionals in football, whereas 170 were part-time employees (Figure 2). Croatian football teams participated in 131 international competitions in the Republic of Croatia and at 94 international competitions abroad. The numbers of qualified and not adequately qualified people working in football were similar – 1,561 and 1,389, respectively.

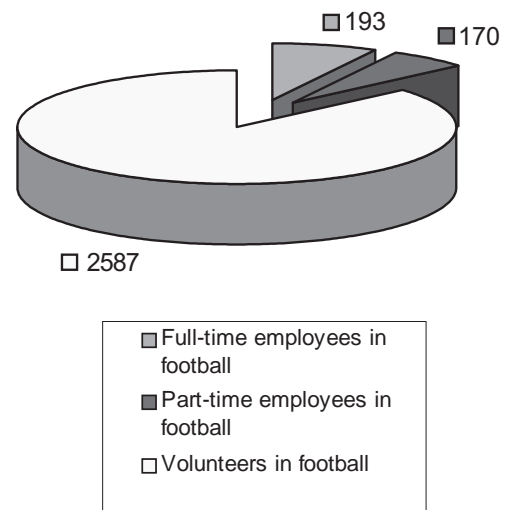


Figure 2. Number of employees who work professionally in football in Croatia.

As a second example let us take tennis and basketball. In the year 1997 in the Republic of Croatia there were 12 tennis associations/clubs, totalling 8,812 active members, and 121 basketball associations/clubs, totalling 9,662 active members (Table 1). The number of active members in the listed sports, the number of people who work professionally in sport, as well as the number of functionaries in sport (these numbers are presented in Table 1) are an excellent index of the economic justification of encouraging the construction industry, and consequently, of the promotion of destinations that, within the total tourist offer, provide the opportunity for the realization of sports-related programs for athletes.

Table 1: Number of sports associations/clubs, active members, employees, functionaries; team and individual participations at international competitions in the Republic of Croatia and abroad.

| Sport | Number of associations/clubs | Number of members | Professionals working in sport | | | Functionaries | | Participation at international competitions | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---|--------|------------|--------|
| | | | Volunteers | Full-time employees | Part-time employees | Volunteers | Professionals | team | | individual | |
| | | | | | | | | in Croatia | abroad | in Croatia | abroad |
| Football | 802 | 55,604 | 2,587 | 193 | 170 | 5,874 | 36 | 131 | 94 | - | - |
| Basketball | 121 | 9,662 | 351 | 66 | 37 | 687 | 21 | 76 | 95 | - | - |
| Handball | 111 | 7,750 | 37 | 43 | 36 | 569 | 6 | 75 | 75 | - | - |
| Tennis | 132 | 8,812 | 235 | 37 | 35 | 590 | 19 | 42 | 13 | 505 | 104 |
| Skiing | 17 | 1,325 | 72 | 2 | 6 | 100 | 2 | 50 | 28 | 56 | 198 |
| Swimming | 26 | 4,280 | 87 | 17 | 27 | 191 | 5 | 71 | 33 | 104 | 61 |
| Water polo | 23 | 2,242 | 50 | 26 | 20 | 137 | 3 | 36 | 19 | - | - |
| Volleyball | 50 | 2,874 | 142 | 15 | 9 | 162 | 4 | 1 | 19 | - | - |

According to the *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia* (2001), pp. 462-463.

Previous examples, connected with the number of athletes in certain sports on the one hand and with the number of employees working in sport on the other, make it possible to conclude that the supply and the promotion of sport-specific contents for various purposes (sports preparation of athletes, sport-oriented active holidays, health-related rehabilitation of athletes and non-athletes, etc.) create a solid basis for the realization of economic effects.

According to Bartoluci (2003:245) there are approximately 980,000 consumers of sports products (25% out of the whole population) in Croatia.

The promotional strategies in sport

The basic elements of promotion must take into account the basic elements of the offer that answer the following questions (Avelini Holjevac, 2002): “for whom (users/consumers), where (in which places), who (personnel), why (purpose) and what are the expenses and the income (economic effects)”.

The correct answers to the listed questions and the correct combination of all the available elements will help create an appropriate, high-quality offer that will respond to the demands even of the most demanding consumers.

In sport promotion all the elements comprising the promotional set can be used: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. “The promotion mix elements that are not paid for, such as public relations and publicity, may be very successfully employed in sport.” (Bartoluci, 2003: 266).

The data relating to the question which sport is followed the most on TV, in the papers or on the Internet contribute to the perception and knowledge of how to structure the promotion with regard to the target consumers. For example, a study made in Slovenia on the percentage of adult population that watches sport on TV and on the number of regular spectators to sporting events showed that 37.2% of people out of the population that participated in the study were spectators of sporting events, and that as many as 48.7% watched sporting events on TV on the regular basis (Bednarik & Petrovič, 1998).

The promotion of sports products and services, for example, of sports preparation programs for athletes, can be done at scientific conferences connected with sports, at tourist fairs, through direct mail addressed to sports clubs and sports associations, through the daily press, through scientific and professional periodicals, on the Internet, etc. Large sporting events are also an opportunity

for the promotion of certain sport-specific programs such as sports preparation programs for athletes. For example, the World Championship in skiing in 2003 was an opportunity for the promotion of all types of goods and services connected with skiing, but also with sport in general.

The role of educated and trained personnel in promotional activities

Finally, we must not forget that the quality of the supply depends on one key factor whose task is to unite and put into operation all the elements mentioned previously. That factor is man. A well educated person knows what has to be done and how. Therefore, the structure of education of the personnel working on the preparation of conditions necessary for the realization of the supply, as well as working on the promotion and sale, will help increase the number of consumers, and eventually, the profit. Educated professionals of various profiles will be concerned not only with the structuring of the supply, but also with economic analyses of business transactions. Namely, the economic analyses of business transactions of certain centres in which sports-related programs are offered and realized will be an index of the economic justification of business operations of a certain centre.

Promotion of sport in sport tourism in Croatia

The development of sport tourism is the result of many factors, among which two seem to be the most important. The first factor addresses the fascinating boom of sport and sports industry. Sporting activities are participated in by an increasing number of people. Many of them do sports on a recreational basis. Sporting events attract participants, officials, but also spectators. Mega sporting events such as the Olympic Games also lure sport marketers, sponsors, tourist agencies, etc. Olympic venues become markets where sport marketing, sport management and sport tourism blend.

Until now Croatia has not hosted such a mega sporting event, however, many other sporting events were held in Croatia such as Mediterranean Games in Split in 1979, World University Games in Zagreb in 1987, European Athletic Championship in Split in 1990, European Boccie Championship in Zagreb in 1994, European Taekwondo Championship in Zagreb in 1994, European Handball Championship for men in Zagreb and Rijeka in the year 2000, World Shooting Championship in Zagreb in 2002, World Handball

Championship for women (it will be held in several towns in Croatia - Zagreb, Koprivnica, Osijek, Rijeka, Varaždin) in 2003, EAA Zagreb track-and-field meet held in Zagreb every year in July, Umag Open (tennis), Croatian Bol Ladies Open (tennis), to mention only a few. These events were a perfect opportunity for building sports facilities and the necessary infrastructure on the one hand, and on the other, they attracted the attention of the world sport public and thus promoted Croatia and Croatian sport, for example, in sport and tourism circles. Actually, each sporting event takes place within the domain of tourism.

The second factor addresses the findings, reported by many scientists (e.g., Åstrand, 1999), that moderate, appropriately selected sport activity participation (in terms of recreational sport) has beneficial effects on health. Scientific research of health deterioration revealed that sedentary life style together with other characteristics of contemporary way of living – stress, smoking habits, inadequate nutrition regimens, etc. – is one of the main causes of many cardiovascular and many other diseases occurring in modern society. This finding has turned the floodlights of attention towards the ways of improving the quality of life in order to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates resulting from *unhealthy* life style. Since sport activity participation proved to have beneficial effects on the health status of people, active life style, in other words, sport activity participation drew the attention of scientists, producers, renderers of various sport- and health-related services, and, of course, of consumers themselves.

As a result, the possibility of sport activity participation became one of the motives for visiting a particular tourist destination.

Eventually, sport in general, that is, recreational sport, competitive sport, sport for people with a disability, etc., prompted the development of a new type of tourism, namely, the sport tourism.

Studies conducted in the world on the motives of tourists to select a certain destination where to spend their holidays have shown that sports and sports services rank high on the scale of motives for travelling to a certain destination. The report commissioned by the World Tourism Organization and the International Olympic Committee for presentation at the first World Conference on Sport and Tourism in Barcelona in 2001 (2001) was based on the data from the European Travel Monitor collected on representative opinion polling in 33 European countries. The results showed that 55% of the German tourists (2001:14), 52% of the Dutch tourists (2001:42) and 23% of the French tourists (2001:70) pursued at least some sporting

activity during their outbound holidays. The concept of active sport tourism is analysed by many researchers (e.g., Gibson, 1998).

Some illustrative examples of motives of tourists from other countries for spending their holidays in Croatia may be found in the TOMAS research conducted by the Institute for Tourism of the Republic of Croatia. According to TOMAS research sport is advancing on the scale of motives that attract tourists to a particular destination in Croatia – in the year 2001 sport ranked fifth in comparison with the seventh place on the scale of motives for visiting Croatia in the year 1994 (Marušić & Weber, 1999; 2002).

It is, therefore, not surprising that the possibility of tourism sport participation in a particular tourist destination is explicitly specified in promotional media. For example, at the address <http://www.croatia.hr> (Croatian National Tourist Board, 2002) the Croatian National Tourist Board promotes a large number of tourist destinations in Croatia and gives a brief history of a certain destination, provides some general pieces of information about the destination in question, and specifies its essential economic, cultural and geographical characteristics. Additionally, potential tourists may find pieces of information about sport-related *offer* in many tourist destinations in Croatia, that is, the pieces of information on the possibility of doing various sports. Here is a piece of text about tourism sports offer at Bol on the island of Brač in Croatia (Croatian National Tourist Board, 2002): “Sport opportunities include windsurfing, water sports, boccia, bowling, indoor football, basketball, volleyball. Diving, underwater fishing and hang-gliding (from Vidova Gora) are also organized.” Such tourism sports opportunities can be, and are, also found in brochures issued by travel agencies.

On the whole, studies were conducted on the development and the role of sport in Croatian tourism (Bartoluci, 1995; 1996b). Research has shown that it is difficult to quantify some important effects of sport, for example, the effects that sport has on one's health. Some other effects can be assessed indirectly (Andrijašević, 1999), for example, the impact of sport on the development of tourism. Due to the importance of sport for the promotion of Croatian tourism, further analyses of this issue are necessary (Grgona, 1998; Senečić & Grgona, 2002).

The quality of promotional material, for example, of tourist brochures can be evaluated on the basis of various variables – quality level of the promotional material, its informative merit, etc. (Weber, Vrdoljak-Šalamon, Tarlow & Boranić, 1996).

Promotion of sports preparation programs for athletes in tourism

The promotion of sports products and services can and should be an integral part of the entire tourist offer in a certain country, thus also in Croatia. In this way the destinations in the Republic of Croatia can try to attract the consumers from other countries as well. Well known summer resorts, ski centres, spas, etc. contribute to the quality and diversity of the range of services offered to tourists in general, but they also enable the promotion of relatively narrowly specialized programs, such as the sports preparation programs for athletes.

Sport successes in the world are the result of a large number of factors out of which sports preparation of athletes is crucial. Each sport has its specific demands as to the requirements connected with the sports conditioning of athletes. However, there exists "a set of basic requirements that are similar to all sports" (Milanović & Jukić, 1998: 248). The training and competition conditions are the components that determine the quality of the process of planning, programming, realization and control of the training process. This component is comprised of the "destinations, weather conditions, training equipment and requisites, together with a series of other supplementary programs" (Milanović & Jukić, 1998:249).

Taking into account the types of sports and recreational-sport centres (those that are used in top-level sport, centres in the hinterland, mountain centres, coastal centres and universal and specialized sports centres) (Milanović & Jukić, 1998), taking into account their equipment and the range of programs that can be supplied and taking into account the target group of consumers, it is necessary to adapt the promotional activities whose goal will be to attract as many consumers as possible.

When talking about the sports preparation of athletes, the target group of consumers is relatively small and has very clear goals and ways of realization. The promotional mix tools applied will depend on the destination, on weather conditions, on the available training equipment and the supplementary contents. Depending on the sport for which such a program is carried out, it is important, for a certain destination supplying the necessary facilities, that a survey of potential programs be made, that the appropriate communication channels be selected, and that the ways of promotion be properly determined in order to achieve the ultimate goal, namely, to achieve satisfactory economic effects. The price of the product will, naturally depend, on the diversity of the facilities offered

and on their quality, on the quality of accommodation, etc.

The promotional mix tools will have a decisive role for the realization of economic effects in this respect.

The promotion of sports preparation programs for athletes should be considered from various points of view. Firstly, we can talk about the promotion of destinations in which these facilities may be found together with other supplementary facilities that provide the possibility of executing certain sports preparation programs – for example, accommodation, outdoor sports grounds, sports halls and indoor courts, etc. One destination, together with all the accompanying facilities and sports grounds, can provide various programs that differ as for their structure, application, and quality (Slamar, 1999; Bartoluci & Čavlek, 2000). The total supply in a certain destination should, however, not be limited only to the facilities, but it will attempt to emphasize favourable weather conditions (depending on the sport), the quality of the personnel employed, etc. Further, these destinations should provide, apart from adequate sports grounds, the most modern equipment in terms of the adaptation of the facilities and equipment to include contemporary scientific and professional knowledge in the field of sports preparation of athletes (gyms, saunas, etc.). These elements are decisive for the selection of a destination by a consumer and they therefore create the basis that should be carefully considered and advertised. Therefore, efforts should be made by experts to create a suitable positive image of a destination that would be recognizable and attractive (Senečić, 1998:194) and that would be confirmed after visiting a certain destination.

In Croatia the most frequently selected centres for the sports preparations of Croatian athletes are Medulin, Poreč, Umag, Rovinj, Makarska, Samobor, Tuheljske Toplice, Bizovačke Toplice, Bjelolasica, Delnice, Fužine, etc.

The names and the results of well known athletes are one of the best ways to promote a certain destination in which sports preparation programs are on offer. If a famous athlete has his/her sports preparations in a certain destination, then his/her presence in this particular destination will be a promotion *par excellence*, not only for that one destination, but for the whole country.

The names of eminent Croatian athletes, for example, Goran Ivanišević (tennis), Iva Majoli (tennis), Janica Kostelić (skiing), Ivica Kostelić (skiing), Ana Sršen (swimming), Gordan Kožulj (swimming), Tamara Boroš (table tennis), Zoran Primorac (table tennis), Nataša Vezmar (tae-

kwondo), etc. have a promotional importance for the Republic of Croatia, because they have made it well known in the world sport circles and they attract the attention of the whole world sport public to Croatia. We must not forget the success of the Croatian football players at the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France or the Olympic Gold of the Croatian men's handball national team in Atlanta in 1996 or the gold medal at the World Championship in handball in 2003.

Therefore, it is logical to conclude that skiing, swimming, tennis, table tennis, football, handball, etc. will be the sports that will take a leading role in the sport promotion in Croatia.

Sponsorship as a promotion mix element in sport marketing

Sponsorship is one of the most important sport marketing concepts. Some authors consider it as a component of distribution or communication (Freyer, 1991:312) and some regard it as a promotion mix element (e.g., Shank, 2002:330). In any case, the importance of sponsorship is outstanding since it represents the strongest link between sport and economic activities, and this link is based on mutual interests. Sport sponsorship connotes a systematic development of specific sponsorship programs for sports organizations, athletes, etc. Although it is rather difficult to give an accurate definition of sponsorship, let us say that it is an element of sport marketing and that its task is to realize certain sport-specific and commercial goals. Shank (2002:402) defines sponsorship "as investing in a sports entity (athlete, league, team, or event) to support overall organizational objectives, marketing goals, and promotional strategies". Sponsoring a sporting event, a sports club, an athlete or any other sport subject, either in the form of financial support or in some other form, helps to realize certain results in sport. On the other hand, by sponsoring a sporting event, a sports club or an athlete the sponsor promotes his products or services on the market in the best possible way. Due to the common economic interest of a sponsor and, for example, a sports organization, sponsorship has nowadays become the most widespread way of financing top-level sport. In many sports, e.g. football, basketball, or tennis, sponsorship is extremely important both for the organization and for the financing of sporting events such as European and World Championships, the Olympic Games, etc. Research conducted in the world and addressing various topics within sponsoring in sport marketing (e.g., Copeland, Frisby & McCarville, 1996; Cousens

& Slack, 1996; Ferrand & Pagès, 1996; Kinney & McDaniel, 1996; Berrett & Slack, 1999) contributed valuable perceptions and knowledge in this respect.

The types of sponsorship in sport marketing may vary. Some of them are: sponsoring the name of a sports organization, sponsoring a sports school, sponsoring a sports program, etc. (Retar, 1996:116). *Sponsoring the name of a sports organization* is a widespread form of sponsorship, especially in top-level sport. In Croatia this form of sponsoring is most frequently employed in football, basketball, handball, water polo, tennis, etc., and it is used by many sports clubs, for example, Varteks (football), Cibona (basketball), Zagreb-Badel 1862 (handball), to mention only a few. All the details regarding both the obligations and the rights of a club and the obligations and the rights of a sponsor are determined by special contracts. *Sponsoring a sporting event* usually refers to a one-time sponsoring of a sporting event, e.g. the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup or the like. *Sponsoring a sports school* is frequent in tennis, golf, water sports, etc. The activities of a sports school mostly address the training of beginners in a certain sport, usually the children who are presumed to be talented and who are expected to develop a career in sport. Sports schools become the focus of the sponsors' interest particularly when they are organized by a well known athlete. As an example, let us take the school of table tennis run by Dragutin Šurbek (the famous Croatian table tennis player), or Davor Šuker's Soccer Academy. The sponsor then either participates in financing the sports school or provides, free of charge, the facilities, equipment, etc. *Sponsoring a sports program* usually implies the financing of sporting games and sporting contests for people who participate in sport on a recreational basis. There are many other forms of sponsorship apart from the previously mentioned. However, they are, as a rule, based on common objectives and interests of sponsors on the one hand and sports organizations or any other sport subject on the other, as exemplified previously in the text.

Both the sponsor and, for example, a sports club, an athlete or the organizer of a sporting event have their rights determined in the contract. Some of the rights of the sponsor may be:

- the right to promote the sponsor's product (at stadiums or in sports halls), e.g. the athletes wear the sporting equipment produced by the sponsor,
- the right to get free tickets for sporting events,
- the right to be in the management board of a club.

The rights of a sports club or of any other sports subject may be:

- financial support by the sponsor,
- supply of sporting equipment by the sponsor,
- media-related activities such as free advertisements, television commercials, etc.

Finally, let us say that the importance of sponsorship in sport is undeniable and that it has an almost decisive influence on the development of sport in many countries.

Conclusion

The economics of sport, sport marketing, sport management and entrepreneurship in sport are relatively new concepts in Croatia (as well as in other countries in transition), as regards their analysis and possibilities of implementation. Therefore,

studies of these concepts will contribute valuable knowledge that will encourage further research into the development of corresponding marketing strategies and their implementation.

Since sport activity participation proved to have beneficial effects on the health status of people, active life style, in other words, sport activity participation together with the boom of sports industry prompted the development of a new type of tourism, namely, the sport tourism. Due to the fact that tourism is one of the most developed industries in Croatia, efforts are made to diversify the range of tourist services, so that sport has become one of the constituent elements of this range of services.

Hence, the role of promotion as a marketing mix element employed in sport and tourism is indisputable.

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PROMOCIJA KAO ELEMENT MARKETING-MIKSA U SPORTU I SPORTSKOM TURIZMU: HRVATSKO ISKUSTVO

Sažetak

Promocija kao element sportskog marketing miksa predstavlja zbroj različitih aktivnosti i nastojanja kompanija da potencijalne i stvarne potrošače upoznaju sa svojim proizvodima. Promocija sportskih proizvoda i usluga danas je nezaobilazan čimbenik u funkciji razvoja sporta, jer se sportski proizvodi velikim dijelom realiziraju na tržištu.

S obzirom da turizam predstavlja industriju od koje Hrvatska očekuje velike ekonomske učinke, prilagođavanje turističke ponude neminovno ide u smjeru praćenja svjetskih trendova, što u konkretnom slučaju znači da se turistička ponuda oslanja na rezultate istraživanja po kojima zahtjevi turista za sportski orijentiranim aktivnim odmorima zauzimaju visoko mjesto na ljestvici motiva za odabir određene turističke destinacije.

U ovome su radu prikazani povezanost turizma i sporta te, posljedično, načini promoviranja sportskih proizvoda i usluga u hrvatskom sportu i sportskom turizmu.

Brojnost sportaša u raznim sportovima i broj njihovih nastupa na međunarodnim natjecanjima, kao i broj sportskih natjecanja organiziranih u Republici Hrvatskoj u kojima sudjeluju sportaši iz cijelog svijeta predstavljaju real-

nu ekonomsku osnovu kako za promicanje sporta, sportaša, turističkih destinacija (podjednako onih u kojima se nude sportsko-rekreacijski sadržaji, ali i onih u kojima se nude usko specijalizirani programi, kao što su to, primjerice, programi za sportsku pripremu sportaša), tako i za realizaciju ekonomskih učinaka. Svjetski uspjesi hrvatskih sportaša imaju pri tome snažnu promotivnu ulogu. Njihova imena i rezultati predstavljaju jedan od najboljih načina reklamiranja turističkih destinacija, ali i lokaliteta koji omogućavaju provođenje programa sportske pripreme. Promocija programa pripreme sportaša trebala bi biti dio ukupne turističke ponude neke zemlje, pa tako i Hrvatske.

U sportu je cilj promotivnih aktivnosti privući što veći broj potrošača-korisnika. U promociji sporta te u promociji sportskog turizma moguće je koristiti sve oblike i načine promocijskog spleta: propagandu, osobnu promociju i prodaju, publicitet i odnose s javnošću.

Kvaliteta promocije ovisi, osim o pravilnom odabiru promotivnih strategija i promotivnih sredstava, o još jednom ključnom čimbeniku, čija je zadaća objediniti i staviti u funkciju sve prethodno navedene elemente. Taj je element čovjek. Specijalizirani i dobro obrazovani stručnjak zna što i kako promovirati u sportu. Stoga bi svaka sportska organizacija morala imati plan promocije.

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