

WEIGHTLIFTING IN SERBIA FROM 1857 TO 1992

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1.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEIGHTLIFTING IN SERBIA BEFORE THE WORLD WAR II.

The competitions “who can lift more weight” began very early. The attempt to find proof of the first such competition may look like a scholastic discussion. From the half of the last century, the organized development of weightlifting began in the countries of western Europe and Russia. Also, in some cities in Serbia at the time, people “competed” in lifting the “bakrach” (copper cauldron, in Turkish) full of water, and in stone lifting.

In 1857, Stevan Todorovic founded “The First Serbian Society for gymnastics and fighting”, in which weightlifting was also being developed as an additional sport.

In 1891, the society changed its name into the Belgrade gymnastics society “Soko” (Falcons), which joined the “Gymnastics Society Dusan Silni” before the World War I, and got the name “The Association of the Sokol Societies Dusan Silni”.

In 1880, in Sombor, Alexander Sane Demetrovic “laid” a foundation of the sport in this city. Some of the main elements of sports equipment were also weights. From 1894 to 1896 Dr. Petar Tadic, a great expert in weightlifting at that time, stayed in Sombor.

In 1880, in Subotica, the Vermes brothers also went in for weightlifting in the “Subotica Sport Society”.

In 1882, Vladan Dordevic founded “The Belgrade City Society for Gymnastics and Fighting” in which weightlifting was practiced. Some cannonballs were acquired from the commander of the Belgrade fortress Bogicevic which were used for practicing strength. The most eminent athletes who practiced with weights were Ljubomir Popovic and Emerih Stajnehner.

On 30 November 1890, the Belgrade Gymnastics Society “SOKO” organized the ‘gymnastics evening’ in which the weightlifters Lazar Savic, Jovan Stojanovic and Ljubomir Stanojevic took part.

On the blessing of the flag of the gymnastics society “Dusan Silni” in Belgrade 1897, the competition in the lifting the weights of 50 kilograms was held. The winner was

Radislav Jovanovic from Belgrade. By the end of 1909, Alexander Catovic founded the Belgrade club Milos Obili. In this club, weightlifting and wrestling were practiced.

In 1912, the 6th Czech all Falcons rally was held in Prague. Serbs from Zajecar took part in this rally and ranked eleventh. Dragisa Nejc, Dragutin Dordevic and Vojislav Dimitrijevic competed in two handed lifting of 50 kilogram weights as many times as possible.

On 11 September 1921 in Zagreb (CRO), the Yugoslav Athlete Association was founded and it included athletics, weightlifting, wrestling and hazena. On 9 September 1922, the association separated again and a "section for weightlifting, boxing and wrestling" was formed. The representatives of the "Amater" from Sombor participated in this conference. After the association had been formed, the interest in weightlifting started to increase, especially on the territory of Vojvodina, where there was a great influence of the Hungarian experts in weightlifting, boxing and wrestling. Sombor wrestling club "The Sombor sport association" and "Hakoah" from Subotica had a significant influence on the development of weightlifting. "Hakoah" was a Jewish club and its members were mostly Jews of Hungarian nationality. Thanks to them weightlifting was popularized in Zagreb and in Serbia.

1.2 PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

The organization of the Olympic Games in Athens, in 1896, had the greatest echo in the Kingdom of Serbia, primarily due to the presence of the King of Serbia HEM Aleksander I Obrenovic in Athens. As the guest of the organizers and patrons of the Olympic Games, he was the only ruler in this world sports event from outside Greece. Playing the national anthem and raising the flag of the Kingdom of Serbia meant the official presence of the Serbian King and also the presence of Serbia at the re-opened Olympic Games.

Serbia sportsmen officially took part for the first time in the Games of the Fifth Olympiad, in Stockholm in 1912, when the Serbian Olympic Club was accepted by the IOC. Unfortunately, Serbian weightlifters did not participate in the Olympics until after World War II. But it should be noted that the Serb weightlifter Momcilo Tapavica from Nadalj (near Novi Sad) took part as an Hungarian during the Games of the First Olympiad in Athens in 1896. He shared the third place with four others, lifting 90 kilograms in the discipline 'two hands clear and jerk'. Unfortunately, he was not successful in lifting 100 kilograms.

2.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEIGHTLIFTING IN SERBIA FROM 1945 TO 1992.

The steering committee for forming the Association for weightlifting, boxing and wrestling of Serbia and the committee for weightlifting, boxing and wrestling in Belgrade, were founded on 3 August 1949. The members of the com-

mittee for forming the Association were: Milan Ercegan, Doka Veljkovic, Miladin Popovic, Branko Tegeltija, Gojko Babic, Jovan Ruzic, Nikola Adamovic and Fiser Franjo.

However, even before this time, the weightlifters from the territory of Serbia took part in the organized competitions. On 11 July 1948 the first Yugoslav championships for seniors was held in Ljubljana. 1)

By that year, four clubs for weightlifting in the whole republic and nine judges with passed exams were noted. There were already eight clubs in 1949, nine clubs in 1950, and nineteen clubs in 1966. On 1 April 1966 there were 495 registered competitors in Serbia.

The first Serbian Championships for seniors was organized in Novi Sad on 19 June 1949. There were six categories. The winners in the first Serbian Championships for seniors in the various categories were:

Bantamweight: Aleksander Rusic 200.0 (60.0, 60.0, 80.0)

Featherweight: Slobodan Sivic 190.0 (60.0, 55.0, 75.0)

Lightweight: Sandor Tot 195.0 (60.0, 60.0, 75.0)

Middleweight: Davorin Sostaric 240.0 (75.0, 70.0, 95.0)

Half Heavyweight: Sandor Toma 245.0 (70.0, 75.0, 100.0)

Heavyweight: Ferenc Graca 240.0 (65.0, 75.0, 100.0)

At the same time the individual championships for seniors of Vojvodina were also held. The conference to establish the Serbian Association for weightlifting, boxing and wrestling was held in Belgrade on 1st June 1950. Two committees were included into the association: for weightlifting and for wrestling. Team and Cup competitions of Serbia have been held since 1956. The first Serbian championship for older juniors was held in Novi Sad on 15th May 1958.

The first Serbian championship for younger juniors was held in Indija on 23rd March 1974. However, the competitions for women and veterans are elemental.

2.1.1. THE RESULTS OF WEIGHTLIFTERS FROM SERBIA AT THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.

2.1.1.1. The Results of weightlifters from Serbia achieved in SFRJ national team. Stojadin Stosic took the eight place with the result: 340.0 kg. (95.0, 110.0, 135.0) in the category 67.5 kg in the European championships in Bulgaria in 1965.

In the world and European championships in Moscow in 1975, two competitors from Serbia participated for the Yugoslav national team. Marko Ostrogorac in category 56.0 kg took the eight place - 207.5 kg (85.0, 122.5) and Dusan Mirkovic with 300.0 kg (132.5, 167.5) lifted in the category 75.0 kg took the tenth place. Du_an Mirkovic achieved the significant success in the Mediterranean games in Algeria in 1975 by taking third place in category 75.0 kg with the result 287.5 kg (130.0, 157.5).

Two aces of Serbian weightlifting marked the following years. In the 1975 Balkan Championships in Thessaloniki, Dusan Mirkovic took the second place with 300.0 kg lifted

(135.0, 165.0) (category 75.0 kg), and Vladimir Zrnica took also the second place - 315.0 kg (140.0, 175.0) in the category 82.5 kg.

In the 1979 Mediterranean games in Split, we achieved the significant results. Marko Ostrogorac took the second place - 237.5 kg (105.0, 132.5) in the category 56.0 kg; in the category 75.0 kg Dušan Mirković took the second place with 295.0 kg (127.5, 167.5); and in the category 82.5 kg Vladimir Zrnica took the first with 320.0 kg (140.0, 180.0).

In the Balkan championships in 1980 and 1984, Slobodan Surbanović took the second and third place in the category + 110.0 kg.

In the 1983 European junior championship in San Marino, Branislav Ugarković took the fourth place in category 110.0 kg - 285.0 kg (125.0, 160.0) and Stevica Jajić took the sixth place 270.0 (120.0, 150.0) in category +110.0 kg.

In the first Balkan championship for juniors in Greece in 1985, we achieved a very good result: Srđan Jovanović took the first place with 320 (140.0, 180.0) in the category 110.0 kg. In the 1990 European junior championship in Malta, Nikola Alilomov from Belgrade "Partizan" took the fifth place with 145.0 (62.5, 82.5) in the category 52.0 kg. Finally, our veteran Kostadin Simonovski took the second place in the World Championship for veterans in Austria in 1990, and third place in the European Championship in 1991.

2.1.1.2. The results of the Serbian national team at international meets. The Serbian national team had five international participations. From 1969 to 1973 the Serbian national team competed with the national team of Slovakia and the total result was 3:2 for Slovakia.

2.1.2. THE RESULTS OF THE SERBIAN SPORTSMEN ON THE STATE SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP, 1948 TO 1992.

The sportsmen of Serbia achieved very important results on the senior championships of Yugoslavia. Of 2461 medals, 1086 or 44.13 % belong to the weightlifters from 27 clubs from Serbia. The weightlifters from "Radnicki - Bane Sekulić" from Sombor won 303 medals - 118 gold, 99 silver and 86 bronze. Among the first ten clubs, with the greatest number of medals won on the State championships, are three clubs from Serbia ("Spartak" from Subotica on the seventh place with 120 medals and "Vozdovac" from Belgrade on the ninth place with 104 medals) and among the first twenty, there are nine clubs from Serbia.

The cities from Serbia organized 26 championships, 57.7 percent of all held championships: Belgrade six times, Sombor six times, Novi Sad four times, Sremska Mitrovica three times, Zrenjanin three times, Bac two times, Pancevo one time and Barajevo one time.

2.2 PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

The weightlifters, members of the SFRJ national team par-

ticipated in the Olympic Games in 1972 in Munich and 1980 in Moscow. Two competitors from Serbia competed among 173 participants from 40 countries in Moscow in 1980. In the category 75 kg, Dušan Mirković, a member of "Radnicki" from Sombor, took the 12th place, by lifting 290 kg. Mirković achieved the following success by his attempts: Snatch: 137.5 +; 132.5 -; 132.5 -.

Clear and jerk: 162.5 +; 170.0 -; 170.0 -.

Vladimir Zrnica, also a member of "Radnicki" from Sombor, took the 9th place with 330 kg, lifted in the category up to 82 kg. This competitor achieved the following success by his attempts:

Snatch: 137.5 +; 142.5 -; 142.5 -.

Clear and jerk: 180.0 +; 187.5 -; 187.5 -.

The competition gains the complete importance only by the presence of all relevant factors for the development of sports fight. Vladan Mihajlović took part in the Olympic Games in 1972 (Munich), 1980 (Moscow), 1984 (Los Angeles), 1988 (Seoul), and 1992 (Barcelona) as an official for weightlifting, i.e. as a referee, technical controller or member of the jury.

3. CONCLUSION.

The history of weightlifting in Serbia contains segments which deserve to become part of the world history of sport. The participants in the Olympic Games, winners of medals from the Mediterranean Games, Balkan championships and other great competitions, will always carry the glory of the invincibles. Almost at the same time when the organizing the of the weightlifting meets begins, in Serbia the civil and the sport societies in which pieces of equipment are weights, were founded. The first centres of this sport were in Belgrade and Vojvodina; in Belgrade, as a city in which all learned persons of the last century brought all European novelties and in Vojvodina, which was under dominant influence of Hungarian culture.

The postwar development of weightlifting in Serbia (1948-1992) includes the first significant competitive results. Our sportsmen are winners of gold medals in Mediterranean Games and Balkan championships. Four Serbs had the honour to participate in the modern Olympic Games: Tapavica as a member of the Hungarian national team (1896); Mirković and Zrnica as members of SFRJ national team (1980) and Vladan Mihajlović as an official (1972, 1980, 1984, 1988, and 1992).

(Editor's Note: Momcilo Tapavica from Hungary can be found as Momcsillo Topavicz (born 14.10.1871) in Wolf Lyberg's volume on "weightlifting".)

ISOH Member Vladan Mihajlović died July 1997, at 57.
