

Vasile Mureșan, the man, the coach and the professor **Vasile Mureșan, omul, antrenorul și cadrul didactic**

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Abstract

The 50th anniversary of the winning of the first title of the National Junior Men's Basketball Champion by the Student Sports School team trained by Professor Vasile Mureșan was an occasion for us to write a paper presenting the most significant moments and results of the activity of this iconic specialist of juvenile male basketball in Cluj-Napoca.

In the first part, the authors refer to the period of his early professional training, his activity and the results obtained by the Student Sports School teams during his first years as a coach. Then, the main achievements in national school competitions, national student sports school competitions and national junior championships are reviewed. The paper also presents the results of the national junior basketball teams in the Balkan Championships and the Friendship Competition in the period when Vasile Mureșan was a member of the technical staff in charge of their training. The final part highlights his activity and results as a pre-university teacher and a professor at the Polytechnic Institute in Cluj-Napoca.

Key words: coach, junior basketball, sports history, Vasile Mureșan

Rezumat

Aniversarea a cincizeci de ani de la cucerirea primului titlu de campioană națională de juniori la baschet masculin de către echipa Școlii Sportive de Elevi, antrenată de profesorul Vasile Mureșan, ne-a determinat să elaborăm o lucrare care să prezinte momentele și rezultatele cele mai semnificative ale activității acestui specialist emblematic pentru baschetul masculin juvenil din Cluj-Napoca.

În prima parte, autorii se referă la perioada sa de formare profesională inițială, activitatea și rezultatele obținute de echipele Școlii Sportive de Elevi în primii săi ani ca antrenor. Apoi, sunt trecute în revistă principalele realizări la concursurile republicane școlare, cele ale școlilor sportive de elevi și campionatele naționale de juniori. De asemenea, lucrarea prezintă rezultatele echipelor naționale de juniori ale României la Campionatele Balcanice și Concursul Prietenia în perioada când Vasile Mureșan a făcut parte din colectivul tehnic care a asigurat pregătirea acestora. Partea finală se referă la activitatea și rezultatele sale în calitate de cadru didactic în învățământul preuniversitar și la Institutul Politehnic din Cluj-Napoca.

Cuvinte cheie: antrenor, baschet juniori, istorie sportivă, Vasile Mureșan.

Introduction

This paper continues the series of articles that present the activity of representative athletes and coaches of Cluj sports movement (Maroti et al., 2014; Doboși et al., 2013; Manasses et al., 2016).

In Cluj-Napoca city, basketball has gained a place of honor in the history of Romanian sport through the results obtained during the course of years both by senior and junior players (Cacoveanu, 1991). Alongside athletes, coaches, through their vocation, through the way in which they use their professional competence, their psycho-pedagogical, moral and socio-relational skills in the selection, training and education of athletes, are at the head of the entire activity, being responsible for the quality and

efficiency of work carried out to obtain sports performance. Vasile Mureșan, along with Horia Pop, Voicu Moldovan, Liviu Moraru, Elena Popescu, is a coach with a recognized contribution to the best achievements of junior basketball players in Cluj (Radu et al., 1993).

Today, half a century after the Student Sports School team trained by Vasile Mureșan won the first title of National Junior Champion for Cluj basketball, we consider that this anniversary is an occasion to write a paper recalling and revealing the activity of one of the most representative specialists who worked in Romanian juvenile basketball in the 1970's.

We believe that the elaboration of papers related to such subjects is of interest to many sport lovers. Also, the presentation of the work and achievements of sports

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personalities is a homage to the top representatives of this field of activity and contributes to the knowledge and promotion of sports history in our city.

The years of childhood and early professional training

Vasile Mureșan was born on 22 November 1939, in Bădești, Cluj county. Ever since his childhood and adolescent years, he demonstrated a special aptitude for sport. After he graduated the Boys Middle School no.1 in Turda in 1956 (***, 1956), he attended the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport in Bucharest, the most prestigious higher education institution in Romania, which trained physical education teachers and coaches in various sports branches (Mureșan, 1967). In order to meet the specific requirements of the faculty, he worked hard both intellectually, by participating in courses and seminars and by individual study, and physically, in practical classes, training programs and competitions. His tenacity, his wish to acquire professional knowledge and skills, his seriousness and diligence throughout the study years, his determination in pursuing his goal to become a good physical education teacher and coach helped him cope with the demands of student life and obtain good results. In the summer of 1961, Vasile Mureșan was one of those who started with confidence and youthful enthusiasm on the difficult road of the profession for which they had trained for four years in the Institute of Physical Culture (***, 1961).

The first years of training as a basketball coach

Although following an administrative error he had to work in a different specialty than that for which he had trained during the study years, Vasile Mureșan started his coach career with confidence, with a wish to prove that he could successfully fulfill his task, showing a great work capacity.

Ever since the first months, he realized that in order to meet the exigencies of performance he had to study, to make efforts to measure up to the requirements. In addition to individual efforts for a better knowledge of the basketball game, for improving the specific skills of this sport, he attended the training courses organized by the College of Coaches of the Union of Physical Culture and Sport of the Cluj Region (***, 1962b) and the training courses for a second specialization, basketball, at the Institute of Physical Culture (***, 1962a). Following their graduation, in 1963, he obtained a 3rd category basketball coach license (***, 1963).

Since the first days, the training sessions run by Vasile Mureșan were characterized by a thorough preparation, a high methodical level, punctuality, discipline, high requirements, and personal example. Although in the years over which he worked with the first generation of players he did not obtain remarkable performance, this apprenticeship period was beneficial for his evolution as a basketball coach, because it allowed him to optimize his work methodology and to gain experience, laying the foundations of future performance. One of the aspects of his activity in this period, appreciated by the best Romanian

basketball specialists, was the way in which he achieved primary selection, particularly from an anthropological and genetic point of view (Stănculescu, 1966).

His recognition as a coach

Over the following years, the coach's work, professionalism and high demands, as well as the players' wish to progress and prove themselves led to a qualitative leap. A first remarkable result for coach Vasile Mureșan was the winning of the first place by the team of the Student Sports School Cluj in the final of the National Student Sports School Competition that took place in the summer of 1965, in Gheorgheni (***, 1965). This was the first confirmation of the quality of his work, of his coaching skills.

Being a skillful and ambitious coach aiming at high performance, he created a homogeneous team slowly and consistently, he optimized training, so that in 1966 the Cluj team won the first place in all national school and junior finals. The team of "Nicolae Bălcescu" High School no. 8 ranked first in the National School Competition in Timișoara (Alexe & Stama, 1967). In Mediaș, Professor Mureșan's students won the National Student Sports School Competition (***, 1966). The Student Sports School team, formed by Gheorghe Roman, Tiberiu Bartha, Stelian Scurei, Petru Aștilean, Radu Vana, Lucian Andreițiu, Viorel Moisin, Dan Roman, Dan Nicolau, Ion Munteanu and Ștefan Maroti, won the gold medals in the finals of the National Junior Championships in Bacău (Stănculescu, 1966).



Fig. 1 – The team of the Student Sports School in Cluj-Napoca, ranking first in the 1966 final of the National Junior Championships. Back row: Viorel Moisin, Stelian Scurei, Lucian Andreițiu (team captain), Vasile Mureșan (coach), Gheorghe Roman, Dan Roman, Tiberiu Bartha. Front row: Radu Vana, Petru Aștilean, Dan Nicolau, Ion Munteanu, Ștefan Maroti (Source: ***, 1966)

Vasile Mureșan proved to be a valuable coach, skillfully managing the transition between generations, relying on athletes gifted for basketball, committed to hard work and performance. His work was rewarded by the winning in 1967 of a new National Junior I Champion title by Lucian Andreițiu, Viorel Moisin, Dan Roman, Marius Buleu, Radu Vana, Ștefan Maroti, Ion Munteanu, Miklos Szekely, Bebe Leventi, Mircea Săvuț, Nicolae Coroianu, Octavian Teușan

(***, 1967). In 1971, the team of the School Sports Club Cluj-Napoca trained by Vasile Mureșan, which included Alexandru Vidican, team captain, Marius Crăciun, Ștefan Mathe, Marinelli Banu, George Coadă, Tudor Ursache, Sorin Vidican, Andrei Ganea-Roth, Dan Sălăgean, Liviu Simplăceanu, ranked second in the final of the National Junior I Championships in Sibiu (Radu, 1993).

Table I
Results in national school and junior competitions

Year	Competition	Place of the competition	Ranking
1965	National School Competition	Mediaș	I
1965	National Student Sports School Competition	Georgheni	I
1966	National Student Sports School Competition	Mediaș	I
1966	National School Competition	Timișoara	I
1966	National Junior Championships	Bacău	I
1969	National Junior II Championships	Constanța	I
1967	National Junior Championships	Cluj	I
1971	National Junior Championships	Sibiu	II
1972	National Junior Championships	Ploiești	II
1972	National Junior II Championships	Bacău	III



Fig. 2 – The team of the Student Sports School in Cluj-Napoca, ranking second in the 1971 final of the National Junior I Championships. Back row: George Coadă, Tudor Ursache, Marius Crăciun, Ștefan Mathe, Marinelli Banu. Front row: Andrei Ganea-Roth, Sorin Vidican, Vasile Mureșan (coach), Dan Sălăgean, Liviu Simplăceanu (Source: Vana, 1966-1971).

In the period of their club team training by coach Vasile Mureșan, the following were members of the national junior teams: Gheorghe Oțelac, Viorel Moisin, Radu Vana, Marius Buleu, Gheorghe Roman, Alexandru Vidican, Sorin Vidican, Marius Crăciun, Tudor Ursache, Cornel Voicu, Romeo Țîmbuli. The representative senior team of Romania included Gheorghe Roman, Gheorghe Oțelac, Marius Crăciun, Marineli Banu (Mureșan, 1992).

In the period 1966-1972, Vasile Mureșan was a member of the coaching staff who trained the Romanian national junior teams and led them to several editions of the Balkan Championships and the Friendship Cup. As such, he contributed to the achievement of valuable performance in official international competitions. The Balkan Championships: 3rd place, Izmir, 1966; 4th place, Hunedoara, 1967; 2nd place, Ankara, 1970; 2nd place Izmir, 1971. The Friendship Cup: 2nd place, Bucharest, 1971; 2nd palce, Plovdiv, 1972 (Mureșan, 1992).

For his work and the results obtained by the teams

trained by him, the National Council for Physical Education and Sport awarded him the distinctions Merits in Sports and Special Merits in Sports (***, 1960).

Vasile Mureșan's work over several decades demonstrated that in order to use their full potential, the players of a basketball team must have, in addition to talent, work and motivation, group cohesion; they must have a coach who, besides a good selection and training process, educates them in a certain spirit, supports them morally and stimulates them. The 1960's generations of basketball players at the Student Sports School in Cluj had the chance to work with a special man, an accomplished pedagogue and a highly respected coach. The players trained by him learned that in order to obtain sports performance they had to work. During the training hours, as well as outside the sports ground, they were infused with the conviction that without work, without the wish to surpass themselves, they could easily get lost in mediocrity. Vasile Mureșan's team players were characterized by a great work capacity, fair play and tenacity in defending their chances, as well as a team spirit reaching its highest form of manifestation, which generated the feeling that the team was a second family for each player.

Teaching positions

In addition to his coaching activity, Vasile Mureșan fulfilled a number of teaching positions both in pre-university education, as a teacher at High School no. 10, and in higher education, at the Department of Physical Education and Sport of the Polytechnic Institute in Cluj-Napoca. In carrying out specific didactic duties, in addition to teaching he studied, making efforts to acquire knowledge, to gain experience, to acquire and optimize methodical skills ensuring his professional progress. He followed the stages for obtaining his teaching degrees: permanent teacher certification (***, 1964), second degree (***, 1968) and first degree (***, 1980). In his university career, he promoted step by step, becoming an instructor in 1970, assistant professor in 1979, and associate professor in 1992 (***, 1960).

As a university professor, he channeled a large part of his efforts towards the goal of committing to his profession; he had a passion for his work, obtaining good results in teaching and education. The value of his didactic activity, his achievements in research and publication – elaboration of a course, of a methodical guidebook on teaching physical education and sport, participation as a member in research teams for optimization of the design, teaching and evaluation of physical education programs in higher education, publication of 29 works – established him as a good teacher, highly praised by students, and an authority among his colleagues (Mureșan, 1989).

Vasile Mureșan understood as few of our professors did that the work of an educator is largely validated by the professional, ethical and social evolution of his disciples. Trained in this spirit, his team players achieved, in addition to their sports results, professional performance. Their great majority attended university studies, becoming teachers, doctors, engineers, psychologists, lawyers, etc., while others are skilled workmen. All are highly respected citizens in the communities where they live and work.

Vasile Mureșan is a servant of physical education and sport who by his work, results, pedagogical tact, relationships with his collaborators, his prestige and recognition among his students, athletes, colleagues and the entire community has established himself as a model. He is loved, respected and appreciated by his students and players both for their achievements in their common work in physical education classes and sports competitions, and for the lessons of life learned from this special man.

Conclusions

1. During the first years of activity, his ambition and continuous training, his wish to form teams capable of obtaining high performance helped him optimize his work methodology, acquire professional experience, and lay the foundations of future performance obtained by the basketball teams of the Student Sports School in Cluj.

2. In the period 1965-1972 the players trained by Vasile Mureșan won two National Champion titles and two silver medals at the National Junior I Basketball Championships, in 1965 and 1966 they won the National Student Sports School Competition, and in 1965 and 1966 they won the gold medals in the National School Competition.

3. As a member of the coaching staff who trained the Romanian national junior teams in the period 1966-1971, he contributed to the winning of three medals at the Balkan Championships and two medals in the Friendship Competition.

4. In recognition of his professional value and merits in the development of junior men's basketball, following the proposal of the Romanian Basketball Federation, he was awarded the distinctions Merits in Sports and Special Merits in Sports.

5. Through his valuable expertise, he contributed to the training of several generations of students at High School no. 10 in Cluj-Napoca. As a professor at the Polytechnic Institute, he channeled his efforts towards committing to his profession; he had a passion for his work, obtaining good results in teaching and education.

6. For all these reasons, professor and coach Vasile Mureșan is loved, respected and appreciated by his students and players, both for their common achievements in physical education classes and sports competitions, and for the lessons of life learned from this special man.

Conflicts of interest

Nothing to declare.

Acknowledgements

Through this approach, we aimed to make known to present generations the activity and results of coach and Professor Vasile Mureșan, to pay him homage on behalf of the generations of basketball players and students trained under his guidance.

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