

Historical Development of Football through Media Reporting in Serbia

D. Milenković, V. Milenković

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As the most important of the least important things in the world, football captures the attention of millions of people who receive information through the media every day. The role of the media in professional football is important not only because of the financial aspects of the sport but also because of the powerful position of broadcasters. Football, as one of the most popular sports in the world, also occupies a significant place in media reporting in Serbia. Regardless of the results that Serbian football players have achieved, both at the club and national team levels, football has always been reported on the front pages of the press with the largest number of articles and photographs, that is in the breaking news of the electronic media, and most media space is dedicated to the broadcast of football matches. Fans analyze important club and national football matches every day. Great victories are celebrated and great defeats are mourned. Given the role football plays, this paper will present the historical development of football in media coverage of this sport in Serbia since its emergence on the Serbian sports scene at the end of the 19th century until the last decade of the 20th century, and also briefly outlines the connection between media and football in general. The paper will focus on the influence of print and electronic media in the periods when the media were most influential.

Keywords: football, media, Serbia, sport, media reporting.

Историческое развитие футбола через средства массовой информации в Сербии

Д. Миленкович, В. Миленкович

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Будучи самым популярным видом спорта, футбол привлекает внимание миллионов людей, которые ежедневно получают информацию через средства массовой информа-

Dejan Milenković — PhD, Associate Professor, Coaching in Sport Department, Faculty of Sport, University “Union — Nikola Tesla”, 30/I, Narodnih Heroja st., Belgrade, 11070, Serbia; dejan.milenkovic2309@gmail.com

Деян Миленкович — PhD, доц., Университет «Юнион — Никола Тесла», Сербия, 11070, Белград, ул. Народных героев, 30/I; dejan.milenkovic2309@gmail.com

Vesna Milenković — PhD, Associate Professor, Sport Journalism Department, Faculty of Sport, University “Union — Nikola Tesla”, 30/I, Narodnih Heroja st., Belgrade, 11070, Serbia; vmilenkovic58@gmail.com

Весна Миленкович — PhD, доц., Университет «Юнион — Никола Тесла», Сербия, 11070, Белград, ул. Народных героев, 30/I; vmilenkovic58@gmail.com

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ции. Роль СМИ в профессиональном футболе важна не только из-за финансовой составляющей, но и из-за мощного влияния информационных средств. Большое внимание футболу уделяют массмедиа в Сербии. Независимо от результатов, которые имели сербские футболисты, будь то на уровне клуба или сборной, футбол всегда освещался на первых полосах прессы с наибольшим количеством статей и фотоматериалов. Последние новости электронных СМИ и большая часть массмедиа освещают события, связанные с футболом. Болельщики каждый день анализируют важные клубные и национальные матчи. Празднуются великие победы и оплакиваются великие поражения. Принимая во внимание значимость футбола для общества и роли, которую этот вид спорта играет в информационном пространстве, помимо краткого обзора связи между СМИ и футболом в целом, в этой статье будет представлено его историческое развитие посредством освещения этой игры в Сербии с момента ее появления в Сербии с конца XIX в. до последнего десятилетия XX в. Основное внимание при этом уделено влиянию печатных и электронных информационных средств в те периоды, когда СМИ были наиболее влиятельны.

Ключевые слова: футбол, СМИ, Сербия, спортивные репортажи.

Introduction

Sport as an integral part of people's daily activities, as the most popular and most productive media event, has been promoted in the form of a super spectacle based on its aesthetic appeal¹. An important aspect of media activities in promoting sports and affirming the link between these two social areas are the three traditional types of messages within media culture: sports in print media, on radio, television, and lately, the most modern offer in social media — social networks, sports internet portals, blogs². All these media contents, together with the comments, videos and audio recordings by Internet users, provide a complete picture of the sporting event but also a sense of involvement and the presence of the audience, on the one hand, and on the other, media standpoint, increase in circulation/viewership/number of followers, which creates marketing benefits³.

Football is the sport with the largest media coverage in the world. As the most important of the least important things in the world, football captures the attention of millions of people who receive information through media every day. The role of media in professional football is very important, not only because of the amount of money that circulates in the sport thanks to the media but also because of the powerful position of companies who broadcast football live to audiences around the world⁴. Therefore, the media are no longer just intermediaries between spectators and football but equal business partners who help the football industry to strengthen its brand, as, for example, in the case

¹ Wann D. L., Schrader M. P., Wilson A. M. Sports Fan Motivation // Journal of Sport Behavior. 1999. Vol. 22. P. 114–139; Krohn F. B., Clarke M., Preston E., McDonald M., Preston B. Psychological and Sociological Influences on Attendance at Small College Sporting Events // College Student Journal, 1998, vol. 32. P. 277–288.

² Nicholson M., Kerr A., Sherwood K. Sport and the Media — Managing the Nexus. New York, 2015. P. 3–16.

³ Blain N., Boyle R. Sport kao svakodnevnica: Medijska kultura i sport // Uvod u studije medija. Beograd, 2005. P. 632.

⁴ Manoli E. A. Media relations in English football clubs // Contemporary sport marketing. London; New York, 2017. P. 120–138.

of individual clubs, and also to expand the impact on current and potential consumers⁵ so that the connection of the media and football industry brings benefits to both parties.

Football, as one of the most popular sports in the world, also occupies a significant place in media reporting in Serbia. Regardless of the results that Serbian football players achieve, both at the club and national team level, football has always been reported on the front pages of the press, that is in the breaking news of the electronic media, and most media space is dedicated to the broadcast of football matches. It is often said that Serbia, which has a population of seven million people, has the same number of football selectors who know better what tactics the coach should set before each game. Fans analyze important club and national football matches every day. Great victories are celebrated and great defeats are mourned. Unfortunately, there have always been more defeats.

Given the role of football in the public and media coverage that indicates the level of its popularity in Serbia, this paper will present the historical development of football in media coverage of this sport in Serbia since its emergence on the Serbian sports scene at the end of the 19th century until the last decade of the 20th century, and also briefly outline the connection between media and football in general. The paper will focus on the influence of print and electronic media in the periods when the media were most influential.

Football and sports reporting in the world — the beginning

Sports journalism has built its special place in the journalistic profession by focusing on sports events and by directly broadcasting, commenting, analyzing them both before and after sports matches, by broadcasting statements of participants in the event, by reporting on the reaction of the audience and the effects of the achieved sports score. This interaction between sports and media dates back to the first reports published in the print media in the 18th century, although from the end of that century and the beginning of the 19th century sport had been on the margins of daily reports of respectable newspapers of the time. In England, the world's first sports edition, *Sporting Magazine*, was published in 1792, while the first sports daily newspaper, *Sporting Life*, came out in 1821, and the English dailies introduced a regular sports column: *Morning Herald* in 1817, *The Globe* — in 1818⁶. The first sports photograph showing tennis player Laine was taken in 1843⁷. That sport became an integral part of media content was also indicated by *The Illustrated London News* magazine, which published a photograph of a rower from the University of Oxford on July 4, 1857, at the time of the beginning of the development of the press. The economic basis for further development of the sports press was made possible by the development of popular betting⁸. Over time, daily reporting in sports columns of daily newspapers that brought news of incredible sporting success expanded into radio reports and interviews in the twentieth century⁹, and afterwards — into television broadcasts when

⁵ Manoli E. A. COVID-19 and the solidification of media's power in football // *Managing Sport and Leisure*. 2022. Vol. 27, issue 1–2. P.73–77.

⁶ Beck D., Bosshart L. Sports and Media (Sport and the Press) // *Communication Research Trends*. 2003. Vol. 22, issue 4. P.7.

⁷ Stamenković M. Sports Photography and Historical Development // *Physical Education and Sport through the Centuries*. 2018. Vol. 5, issue 1. P.105.

⁸ Boyle R., Haynes R. *Power Play, Sport, the Media and Popular Culture*. Edinburgh, 2009. P.22.

⁹ Oriard M. *King Football: Sport and Spectacle in the Golden Age of Radio and Newsreels, Movies and Magazines, the Weekly and the Daily Press*. Chapel Hill, 2001. P.23.

sport played an important role in the development of television¹⁰. A special contribution to the live broadcast of football matches was the slow-motion footage invented by Tony Verna, a television director and producer. The first broadcast within which this idea was realized was the broadcast of the military-naval match of American football in 1963¹¹.

Football, which at first was one of the cheapest media programs, became much more expensive content because it attracted a growing audience and became a kind of institution that depicted the cultural life of a country¹². In the 19th century, they developed a strong interconnectedness, so in England there was a football magazine, *Athletic News*, and it was considered *The Times* of football, and by 1919 it had a circulation of 170,000¹³. In Argentina, the skill of writing about football in the print media was comparable to the skill of Argentine footballers, and it revealed certain aspects of the national character. Argentine journalists, preoccupied with national identity and football as one of its manifestations, and with the establishment and spread of a specific Argentine style of football, wrote in the weekly sports magazine *El Gráfico* as well as in the sports newsroom of the evening edition of *Crítica*¹⁴.

Despite the fact that newspapers remained the primary source of information, with the advent of radio in the 1920s, football found its place and became an important segment in the work of radio media stations¹⁵, such as the English BBC, which initially covered only national events, e. g., the FA Cup final, and then began to follow football (sports) events since sport, in general, became a BBC priority. Radio had a huge significance in shaping football culture as a medium that could provide immediacy and real excitement to sports fans and radio listeners in different parts of the world¹⁶. Thanks to the radio, information could be broadcast in real time, and not only a “live” word but the sounds of the game could also be heard, the atmosphere could be felt, and the uninterrupted course of events could be followed¹⁷.

The connection between television and football was love at first sight that continues even today. The first World Cup in football was broadcast on television in 1954 in Switzerland, while in 1970, audiences around the world could watch the same competition in color. The rights to broadcast the World Cup in Japan and South Korea were sold in 213 countries around the world in 2002¹⁸. Television rights to broadcast football competitions bring a lot of money to the organizers of the competition because the television audi-

¹⁰ Whannel G. Television and the Transformation of Sport // *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 2009. Vol. 625, issue 1. P. 205–218.

¹¹ Tingle J. K., Armenteros M. Instant Replay in the National Football League // *The use of video technologies in refereeing football and other sports*. London, 2020. P. 164.

¹² Blain N., Boyle R. Sport kao svakodnevnica. P. 634.

¹³ Carter N. Managing the Media: The Changing Relationship Between Football Managers and the Media // *Sport in History*. 2007. Vol. 27, issue 2. P. 220.

¹⁴ Karush M. B. National Identity in the Sports Pages: Football and the Mass Media in 1920s Buenos Aires // *The Americas*. 2003. Vol. 60, issue 1. P. 14–15.

¹⁵ Haynes R. There's Many A Slip 'Twixt the Eye And The Lip: An Exploratory History of Football Broadcasts and Running Commentaries on BBC Radio, 1927–1939' // *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 1999. Vol. 34, issue 2. P. 143–155.

¹⁶ Huggins M. BBC radio and sport 1922–39 // *Contemporary British History*. 2007. Vol. 21, issue 4. P. 494.

¹⁷ Wyllie J., Woodward K., Goldblatt D. Tuning in to football on the BBC World Service // *Soccer & Society*. 2011. Vol. 12, issue 1. P. 11.

¹⁸ Chisari F. When Football Went Global: Televising the 1966 World Cup // *Historical Social Research*. 2006. Vol. 31, issue 1. P. 43.

ence around the world wants to follow all the content related to the most popular sport¹⁹. The profitable television deals, which rose from £ 304 million in 1992 to £ 4.46 billion for the rights in the UK for 2019–2022 cycle, helped the English Premier League become one of the richest professional sports leagues in the world²⁰. Business financial reports of the football industry point out that 59 percent of the total income of clubs comes from the right to TV broadcasts. Therefore, it is not surprising that the World Cup breaks television ratings records. In addition to the amount of money invested in sports, the importance of television in professional football also means the powerful position of companies who broadcast football live to a global audience²¹, so powerful that, for example, it dictates the dates of playing matches. Football matches of the 1994 World Cup in the USA were played in the afternoon instead in the evening due to convenience of spectators in Europe, and Premier League matches were held outside their term on Saturdays due to adjustments to satellite television broadcasts²². Although with the advent of the Internet, the media market has expanded²³, and individual freedom and opportunities for easier communication have increased²⁴, television remains inviolable²⁵. By broadcasting football matches, it constantly introduces certain innovations that give a new quality to sports reporting²⁶.

Historical development of football through media reporting in Serbia

The emergence of football in Serbia. A little over two decades after the foundation of the first football association in the world (Football Association, 1863), football emerged in Serbia too. While studying in Berlin, Hugo Buli, who is considered the founding father of Serbian football, got acquainted with the new game, and on his return to the country in 1896, he brought the first soccer ball²⁷. In the same year, he organized the ball-play section at the Belgrade gymnastics association *Soko* (Falcon), which was under the “highest protection of His Majesty King Aleksandar I”. The members of the society “*Soko*” played the first football match on May 19, 1896, in the square between Nebojša Tower and Kalemegdan Park reported by the press at the time, more precisely, *Večernje novosti* (Evening News)²⁸, which was published daily on four small pages. This short information with the inconspicuous headline “*Soko*” is the first report about a football match that was printed thanks to the fact that for the first time the ball was kicked with the feet, and because King

¹⁹ Evens T., Lefever K. Watching the Football Game: Broadcasting Rights for the European Digital Television Market // *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*. 2011. Vol. 35, issue 1. P. 34.

²⁰ Wilson R., Ramchandani G., Plumley D. Parachute payments in English football: Softening the landing or distorting the balance? // *Journal of Global Sport Management*. 2018. Vol. 3, issue 4. 3. P. 351–368.

²¹ Manoli E. A. Media relations in English football clubs. P. 120–138.

²² Blain N., Boyle R. Sport kao svakodnevnica. P. 627.

²³ Ha J.-Y., Dick S. J., Ryu S. K. Broadcast via the Internet: Technology, market, and the future // *Trends in Communication*. 2003. Vol. 11, issue 2. P. 155.

²⁴ Havick J. The impact of the Internet on a television-based society // *Technology in Society*. 2000. Vol. 22, issue 2. P. 273–287.

²⁵ Hutchins B., Rowe D. Sport Beyond Television: The Internet, Digital Media and the Rise of Networked Media Sport. New York, 2012. P. 1.

²⁶ Giulianotti R. Sport — kritička sociologija. Beograd, 2008. P. 267.

²⁷ Todić M. 110 godina fudbala u Srbiji. Beograd, 2006. P. 25.

²⁸ Ibid. P. 26–27.

Aleksandar Obrenović supported the proper physical education of the youth²⁹. Without a basic knowledge of the football game, the journalist described it as an event that differentiated from throwing a stone from the shoulder, fencing, riding, or swimming. Football was presented as a game with “a big ball which, according to certain rules, was thrown alternatively high up and long way, and what was most interesting only with the feet... The game was led by Mr. Fejfar, a social teacher and Mr. Hugo... There could also be up to fifty spectators”³⁰. The report did not specify the score nor were the names of the players published. This first sports report from the first football match is very important not only because of its informativeness but also because of its contribution to football and journalistic history.

According to brief information in the press, it can be found out that neither the journalist nor the owner of *Večernje novosti* Bojović together with the editor-in-chief Mičić knew this new game with the ball, although at that time a “football competition league was held on the British Isles, so the selections of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland competed with each other”³¹. If they had been familiar with the football rules, they would have known that the basis of this sport was the number of goals scored, so they would have completed the report with that information. After a good reception by the audience, football players continued the football competition, but there were no published documents about those matches in the sports reporting.

For a long time, football players in the capital managed in different ways to provide a large enough space where two teams could play a game — from the space in Knez Mihajlova Street to the field on the corner of Jugović and Simina Streets, and at Topčider Hill. Three years later, right at Topčider a fenced football pitch was constructed. The first independent ball-play organization was also founded called the *First Serbian Society for Playing with the Ball*³² which in 1899, “following the example of the English”, passed the temporary rules for ball-play³³. On May 1 of the same year, a framed and enlarged advertisement was published in the newspaper *Male novine* (*Small Newspapers*), which was an invitation to the first extraordinary meeting of the Club for ball games in *Trgovačka kafana* (*Trade Café*) with the agenda: election of the Board of Directors and reading of social rules³⁴.

All these events were an introduction to the foundation of football clubs. In 1903, the first football club was founded in Belgrade as a ball-play club for playing tennis, cricket, and football, called *Soko*. Then, until 1913, the following clubs were founded: the Fighters’ Ball-Play Association *Srpski mač* (*Serbian Sword*) in Belgrade; *BSK* (*Belgrade Sports Club*); *Velika Srbija* (*Greater Serbia*); and the football team of the sports association *Dušan Silni* (*Dušan the Mighty*). While the Belgrade club *Srpski mač* leased a field in the park near The Vuk Monument in 1907³⁵, a playground was built in Košutnjak (park-forest) as part of the

²⁹ Đorđević P. 100 godina srpskog fudbala // 100 godina fudbala u Srbiji 1896–1996. Beograd, 1996. P. 15.

³⁰ Ibid. P. 12.

³¹ Ibid. P. 14.

³² Todorović S. Fudbal u Srbiji 1896–1918. Beograd, 1996. P. 9–10.

³³ Đorđević P. 100 godina srpskog fudbala. P. 16.

³⁴ Vasiljević M. Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao // 100 godina fudbala u Srbiji 1896–1996. Beograd, 1996. P. 65.

³⁵ Stojanović D. Čika Dačine uspomene 1903–1953. Beograd, 1953. P. 56; Todić M. 110 godina fudbala u Srbiji. P. 54.

gymnastics club *Soko*, which was a great step forward in the development of the football game³⁶. The football clubs were also founded in towns all over Serbia: the oldest club in the interior of Serbia, *Šumadija*, in Kragujevac founded in 1903; *Vihor* (*Whirlwind*) in Obrenovac; *Dušan Silni* in Čačak; *Olimpija* in Niš; *Javor* (*Maple*) in Ivanjica and many others³⁷.

One of the pioneers of football development in Serbia and one of the first football players was an engineer Danilo Stojanović called Čika Dača, who applied his football knowledge acquired while studying in Germany to the establishment of *SK Šumadija* in 1903, becoming both its goalkeeper and president of the club. He continued his football mission in Belgrade at the *Soko* club (1906), and afterwards as the vice president of *BSK* (1911). Two years later, he was one of the founders of the club *Velika Srbija*, which was later renamed *SK Yugoslavia*, of which, for a while, he was a president as well. Due to his experience, he helped the work of the then Yugoslav Football Association (JNS) being its vice president³⁸.

The year 1905 was also important for the development of football in Serbia, when the first *Rules of the football game* were published, translated by Anastas Hristodul³⁹. The popularity of football grew, although until the beginning of the First World War, there were no organized football championships. However, football was well received by the public, which brought about the need to report on the results of football matches. Launching of the first sports magazine *Sport i svet* (*Sport and the World*) in 1905 greatly influenced the popularization of football⁴⁰. Four years later, a bi-weekly sports magazine *Srpski vitez* (*The Serbian Knight*) was founded, which published articles on important sports, and most often — on football events. Following the interests of their audience, journalists laid the foundation for sports reporting with thematic newspaper articles long before the advent of radio and television. Sokol's ideas were also spread by the newspaper *Srpski soko* (*The Serbian Falcon*), launched in Sremski Karlovci in 1906, to be published in Belgrade six years later under the title *Srpski sokolski glasnik* (*The Serbian Falcon Herald*), whose task was to spread Serbian culture and report on sporting events. The sports press recorded matches of Belgrade clubs in honor of the successes of the Serbian army in the Balkan wars as well as visits of the clubs *Srpski Mač*, *BSK* and *Velika Srbija* abroad, most often in Austria-Hungary and Romania. *Srpski Mač* achieved great success when it beat Vienna's Rapid with 3:2⁴¹.

Serbian football in the First World War. During the First World War, football was played until the Serbian army started to retreat through Albania. Thus, for example, in 1915, matches were played in Belgrade between the team of Belgrade football players and an English military team, in which the Belgrade national team won in the first match, while, as the Belgrade newspaper *Straža* (*Guard*) reported, the rematch was interrupted by shelling of the Austro-Hungarian army when the Belgrade team was in the lead⁴². Many

³⁶ Todić M. 110 godina fudbala u Srbiji. P.41–42; Zec D. Money, Politics and Sports: Stadium Architecture in Interwar Serbia // *On the Very Edge. Modernism and Modernity in the Arts and Architecture of Interwar Serbia (1918–1941)*. Leuven, 2014. P.271.

³⁷ Đorđević P. 100 godina srpskog fudbala. P. 18.

³⁸ Đurković Ž. Ponos cele Šumadije // 100 godina fudbala u Srbiji 1896–1996. Beograd, 1996. P.85–88.

³⁹ Đorđević P. 100 godina srpskog fudbala. P. 18.

⁴⁰ Protić M. Od tvrđave do velegrada // 100 godina fudbala u Srbiji 1896–1996. Beograd, 1996. P. 32.

⁴¹ Todić M. 110 godina fudbala u Srbiji. P.53.

⁴² Vasiljević M. Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao. P.64.

football players from clubs in the Serbian capital, including Jovan Ružić, the first Serbian international to play for the French club Saint-Etienne (ACF Saint-Etienne)⁴³, and Đorđe Milovanović, withdrew to the interior of the country, using every opportunity to play at least some match. In Kruševac, these two players from Velika Srbija started up and organized a new football club Srbija (Serbia) in 1915. Đorđe Milovanović took two soccer balls with him. A sufficient number of their peers, who fled from different parts of Serbia, gathered very quickly so they put together two complete football teams and regularly played and trained at the Kruševac Fairgrounds⁴⁴.

After the Albanian Golgotha (The Great Retreat — retreat of the Serbian army in the First World War in the winter of 1915/1916 across the Albanian mountains towards Greece), football was played in Corfu, Thessaloniki, Corsica, and Algeria within *Serbia (La Serbi)* club. Playing with each other, but also against allied British, French, and Greek teams, sportsmen preserved the tradition of Serbian football. At that time, football players and conscripted students who fled from Serbia studied and played football in France, England, and Italy⁴⁵. That was how a new generation of players who managed to keep the developing of Serbian football was born during the war. Many Serbian officers and politicians stationed on the island of Corfu loved football. Thus, for example, the Minister of the Interior, Ljuba Jovanović, initiated the formation of a Serbian football team in 1916, comprised of football players from numerous military units and various football clubs: Božidar Bota Stanković (*BSK*), Jovan Viktorović (*Soko*), Velibor Andrejević (*BSK*), Milan Mata Miodragović (*Soko*), Vojislav Vukšić (*Srpski mač*), Bogoljub Mihajlović (*Obrenovac*), Milanče Stefanović (*Šumadija*), Nikola Kristof (*BSK*), Dušan Nenadović Kiselina (*Srpski mač*), Đordje Ilić (*Soko*) and Ljubiša Ivković (*Soko*)⁴⁶. Serbian football players played the first game against the Greek team made of officers in reserve (victorious 4:0). They also won the next match (6:0) with the opposing teams of French sailors and soldiers stationed in Corfu, which also included famous football players from Marseille. They played the last game against the English allied soldiers and lost 1:0, which was reported by *Srpske novine (Serbian Newspapers)* from Corfu: “On this occasion, our team competed with the best athletes and Foot-ball players, so even then they also showed their value, because the game ended with the score of 1:0 in favor of the English”⁴⁷. A journalist of the newspaper *Sportista (Sportsman)* Milan Miodragović informed the readers that “the British played with short passes, and the Serbs closed the way to their goal with good markings. The only goal was scored by the British centre-half sending a sudden shot from some 40–50 meters from the goal, and the goalkeeper of the Serbian team slipped the wet ball from his hands, and it ended up in the goal. Although there was still plenty of time for the result to change, the British footballers concentrated on defence and managed to remain undefeated until the end of the game — the result was 1:0”⁴⁸.

The practice of running after the ball with allied British and French soldiers continued in Thessaloniki as well. Vladeta Popović as the disciplinary sergeant of the bakery company of the Drina Division, was credited with the formation of the first Serbian

⁴³ Vasiljević M. Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao. P.65.

⁴⁴ Zec D., Baljkas F., Paunović M. SPORT PAMTI: srpsko-britanski kontakti u vreme Prvog svetskog rata. Beograd, 2015. P.72.

⁴⁵ Vasiljević M. Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao. P.65.

⁴⁶ Todorović S. Fudbal u Srbiji 1896–1918. P.70.

⁴⁷ Zec D., Baljkas F., Paunović M. SPORT PAMTI. P.90.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

football teams on the Thessaloniki front, which competed with the British, French, and Italian teams. Stationed in the vicinity of Thessaloniki, in Zejtinlik (Zeitenlik), the Serbian team achieved a series of successes against much better known and more successful allied teams. On the initiative of the *Soko* worker Velimir Popović, the club *Napredak* (*Progress*) was founded on the Thessaloniki front. In January 1917, they played a match against the soldiers of the French driving company (10:0 victory), and later, in February, — two matches with a British unit. In the first game, the British team won 3:2, while in the second, the Serbian soldiers fought back with 2:1⁴⁹.

The fact that the Serbian soldiers got to know football and good mastery of the new game was not only the merit of the British influence. A large number of Serbs from Austria-Hungary were sent to the Eastern front as part of the Austro-Hungarian army. Unwilling to fight on the side of Serbia's enemies, most of them fled to the Russian side. That was when the Volunteer Corps was founded and when a football team was formed. Stationed in Odessa, they trained with the local club *Vega*, and then played a public match on July 29, 1917 (score 1:1). This match was attended by many spectators, which was a direct result of the advertisement printed in the local newspapers⁵⁰.

Football in the united state of the Yugoslav peoples. The end of the First World War brought the unification of the South Slavic peoples into one state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. New clubs emerged, some existing ones changed their names, their activity intensified, and in 1919 the Yugoslav Football Association was founded⁵¹, which contributed to the strengthening of the football game and its systemic organization. The newspaper *Politika* (*Politics*), founded in 1904, published in October 1924 the news that in Belgrade, a mass of people with a military band and cheers to the football players welcomed the train with the champions of the sport club Yugoslavia⁵² who confirmed their domination with the second consecutive title the following year⁵³. The dominance of this club was interrupted by BSK, which won the national championship in 1930/1931, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1938/1939⁵⁴. The first international match of the national team was played in Antwerp at the Olympic Games against Czechoslovakia. Except for 1920, the national team appeared at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris and in Amsterdam four years later.

The first broadcasting of Radio Belgrade was in October 1924 from the radio-telegraph station in Rakovica. It used to broadcast its shows every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday for an hour with the news prepared by the journalists of *Politika* and *Dnevne novosti* (*Daily News*). Thanks to Borivoje Jovanović, the sports editor of the *Politika* newspaper, on April 7, 1929, the first radio broadcast of the jubilee, fiftieth derby between BSK and Yugoslavia was broadcast. The match was commented by the secretary of the Belgrade Ball-playing sub-Association Rade Stoilović and Dimitrije Stevanović being employed in Radio Belgrade⁵⁵. Since they broadcast the match sitting in the stands, the radio audience

⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 102.

⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 104.

⁵¹ *Sijić M.* Fudbal u kraljevini Jugoslaviji. Aleksandrovac, 2014. P.5; *Vasiljević M.* Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao. P.71.

⁵² *Mihajlović A.* Istorija i teorija fudbala. Beograd, 2017. P. 16.

⁵³ *Zec D.* The Origins of Soccer in Serbia // Serbian Studies: Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies. 2010. Vol. 24, issue 1–2. P. 147.

⁵⁴ *Vasiljević M.* Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao. P. 49.

⁵⁵ *Stanković V.* Montevideo bog te video. Beograd, 2010. P. 12.

could hear the sounds of applause, chanting, whistling and rejoicing of the fans at the stadium of *SK Yugoslavia* on Topčider Hill (7:1). In March 1929, with the radio announcement of Jelena Bilbija, the regular broadcasting of programs from the second floor of the building of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade began⁵⁶. As the first electronic media in the Balkans and one of the oldest electronic media in Europe, due to its informative, cultural and sports content, Radio Belgrade was founded as the most influential radio station in the country and the surrounding area.

As football developed and achieved better results both domestically and internationally, it began to be regularly reported in the print media and in Radio Belgrade news. One of such successes was by the Yugoslav national team in 1930, when, as one of the four European selections (Belgium, France, Romania and Yugoslavia), it went to the first World Championship in Montevideo. The national team consisted only of Serbian players, from the clubs of *BSK*, *Yugoslavia* and *Soko*, because Croatian clubs boycotted the national team⁵⁷. The national team of Yugoslavia, which reached the semifinals, was led by the architect Boško Simonović, who had been elected national team head coach five times, and also was the editor of the newspaper *Sportista*, the body of the Belgrade Ball-playing sub-association and the initiator and editor of the first daily *Sportski dnevnik* (*Sports Journal*) focused on football. Although journalists at that time were not in favor of this football game lover who believed only in attacking tactics, he was confident in himself as well as in the players he had chosen⁵⁸.

The public in Serbia followed the events from the World Cup thanks to the journalist Borivoje Jovanović's reports from the scene, the then editor of the Sports section of *Politika*, who founded and edited several sports newspapers (*Sportski list* 1920, *Sportista* 1924 and *Sport* 1928). *Politika* published his reports from the first football championship on two to three pages, so football became interesting to the mass audience. In the eighteen days of the boat trip *Florida* from Marseilles to Montevideo, on whose deck the footballers trained daily⁵⁹, Jovanović sent two radio telegrams and two or three letters by airmail from Las Palmas and Dakar. In one of Jovanović's radiograms sent on July 14, 1930 it can be found that at the afternoon at three o'clock American time, the match between the national teams of Yugoslavia and Brazil began and that our national team went out on the field in blue jerseys with the national coat of arms on their chests and won 2:1 (2:0). Jovanović sent texts about the results of the matches by telegrams using the telegraphic style of writing news and reports — first he would communicate the most important facts, and then describe the atmosphere and the echoes of the victory. The news arrived in Belgrade on the same day and was ready for the morning edition. Thanks to the this special reporter, upon their return to the country, the national team members were given a ceremonial welcome on the platforms and square in front of the main railway station as well as on the streets of the capital⁶⁰. This was the first official welcome of a representative selection in Serbia after an international competition. From the media point of view, Borivoje Jovanović was the first professional journalist from this area to cover such a large and important international sports event. He successfully rose to all challenges (financial, or-

⁵⁶ Anastasijević S. Uvod u radio novinarstvo // Radio and TV Journalism. Beograd, 2003. P.69.

⁵⁷ Stanković V. Montevideo bog te video. P.91.

⁵⁸ Ibid. P.96.

⁵⁹ Zec D. The Origins of Soccer in Serbia. P.151.

⁶⁰ Andrejević M. Dugo putovanje kroz fudbal i medicinu. Gornji Milanovac, 1989. P.89.

ganizational, technical and professional) by setting new standards of sports reporting. At the same time, *Politika* made a step forward by supporting and popularizing football since its founding, dedicating the entire page to it, preparing sports news for the Radio Belgrade program and initiating the first radio broadcast of the football match. That is why sending a special reporter to Montevideo was a normal follow-up to its media activities. As the only newspaper from Yugoslavia that had exclusive reports from the football First World Cup, *Politika* was creditable for the great public interest in football in those years. At the same time, this triumph of the media and football enhanced the reputation of *Politika's* journalists⁶¹, football players who became real sports stars, and a football game that had rapidly conquered the world.

After the success of the national team at the first 1930 World Cup in Uruguay, the clubs were strengthened and played a large number of international matches, which led to greater investments in this sport. After the first World Cup in Uruguay, the national team positioned itself as one of the best national teams in Europe, achieving good results against great opponents (Spain 1933, 1:1; victory over Brazil, 1934, 8:4, as well as over England, 1939, 2:1)⁶². *Politika* also regularly reported on club events in the country. Its editor Jovanović, a member of SK *Yugoslavia* and their long-term official, wrote, for example, in 1935 about the elections within the early Assembly of the Football Association, reporting that the elections had a special character, because the role of some clubs and delegates changed almost diametrically⁶³.

Football won all the sympathies, became the most popular sport and entered the daily lives of people who identified themselves with players and clubs by following and supporting them in matches, ready to enter a verbal duel with the fans of the opposing team at any moment. Those disagreements did not always end only in words. In his statement for the newspaper, the BSK football player Tomašević complained that the angry fans were physically settling accounts with the players⁶⁴. Commenting on the relationship between culture and sports in the country, the Smederevo newspaper *Glas Podunavlja* (*The voice of the Podunavlje Region*) in 1936 pointed out, on the one hand, the lack of cultural institutions, and on the other, it resented the increasingly frequent fights on playgrounds, which led to creating an inappropriate atmosphere for educating young generations⁶⁵. The importance of football in those years, which was related to its establishment as a sport and football competitions, was also evidenced by the fact that the most prominent people of that time were at the head of clubs, organizations and associations. Their work on the promotion of football was awarded during the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Yugoslav Football Association (JFA) at the suggestion of the Minister of Physical Education, with the highest decorations of the then Kingdom. The text published by *Politika* in 1939 followed a list of decorated people (doctors, judges, bankers, lawyers, engineers, ministers, ambassadors) who founded the football game without any compensation by investing their reputation, time, and money⁶⁶.

⁶¹ Stanković V. Montevideo bog te video. P. 195.

⁶² Zec D. The Origins of Soccer in Serbia. P. 153.

⁶³ Ibid; Mihajlović A. Istorija i teorija fudbala. P. 33.

⁶⁴ Sijić M. Fudbal u kraljevini Jugoslaviji. P. 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid. P. 6.

⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 8.

Football in Serbia during the German occupation (1941–1944). Although the intention of most football representatives and players was to stop football activities in Serbia at the beginning of the Second World War, the German occupation authorities, aware of the propaganda capacity of football and its importance in channeling the emotions of the population, insisted on starting playing the matches. *Novo Vreme* (New Time) from May 1941 reported that the team Vitez (The Knight) from Zemun beat the team of German soldiers in three matches⁶⁷. During the friendly football match between the BSK and SK Yugoslavia teams, German soldiers and officers cheered on one or the other team from the stands. The assessment of the *Novo Vreme* reporters was that BSK had more fans⁶⁸. From 1942 to 1944, Belgrade football players played football every week and often visited clubs in the interior of Serbia. Championships on several levels with a great interest from the audience at the stadiums were held regularly during those war years. Forty clubs at the time of the occupation were divided into leagues and classes. The first league, for example, consisted of ten clubs: SK 1913, BSK, Vitez, BASK, Mitić, CSK, Jedinstvo (Unity), Sloboda (Freedom), Obilić, Balkan (Balkans)⁶⁹. It is known that the eternal rivals BSK and Yugoslavia played matches during the war although there was no precise record of the results. At the request of the German occupation forces, SK Yugoslavia had to change its name to SK 1913⁷⁰. Great former or future football stars played football during the German occupation (Aleksandar Tirnanić, Rajko Mitić, Stjepan Bobek) either for financial reasons or to save themselves from persecution and recruitment.

During those war years, several new clubs were founded, and the youth played football on the fields and free lots whenever the opportunity arose, which indicates the popularity of this game. Apart from newspaper reports on football matches, the most significant results were also announced by Radio Belgrade, which started broadcasting in German and Serbian immediately after the German bombing of Belgrade on April 6, 1941, as an occupation radio station Military Radio Belgrade (*Sender Belgrad*)⁷¹. Some of the announcements that remained recorded in the newspapers *Novo Vreme* (*New Time*) and *Službene novine* (*Official Newspaper*) of that time were also broadcast on the radio⁷²:

1. SK Yugoslavia will change its name, but it is not yet known what it will be called (*Novo Vreme* [*New Time*], May 16, 1941).
2. Regulation on the obligatory broadcasting and listening to radio programs in public places (*Službene novine* [*Official Newspaper*], June 4, 1943).
3. The Serbian Ball-Play Federation condemns communists and foreign mercenaries (*Novo Vreme* [*New Time*], August 16, 1941).
4. On Wednesday, BSK will probably play a training match with a German army team which will include several players of Berlin's Tennis Borussia (*Novo Vreme* [*New Time*], May 20, 1941).

⁶⁷ Zec D. Oaza normalnosti ili tužna slika stvarnosti? Fudbal u okupiranoj Srbiji (1941–1944) // Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju. 2011. Vol. 3. P. 52.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Vasiljević M. Ratovi besneli, fudbal cvetao. P. 50.

⁷⁰ Zec D. Oaza normalnosti ili tužna slika stvarnosti? Fudbal u okupiranoj Srbiji (1941–1944). P. 54–55.

⁷¹ Anastasijević S. Uvod u radio novinarstvo // Radio and TV Journalism. P. 69.

⁷² Milosavljević O. Potisnuta istina — Kolaboracija u Srbiji 1941–1944. Beograd, 2006. P. 136–142.

5. Migration of BSK players. Lehner does not know whether he will go to Zagreb or Osijek, and Manola thinks of applying for an Italian club (*Novo Vreme* [*New Time*], May 29, 1941).
6. At the first football match in Niš, German soldiers took the excellent goalkeeper of the football club *Gradžanski* out of the field (*Novo Vreme* [*New Time*], June 13, 1941).

It is noticeable that the sports reports were written with the aim of pointing out to the readers the idyllic life in occupied Serbia. Articles on the topic of football players' transfers, reports and results from the matches between German army teams, fashion details of elegant ladies from the hippodrome, etc. could be seen on the sports pages. Sport as the most popular sphere of life was used for propaganda purposes, to form public opinion as an example of how to replace "non-national" sports terms with appropriate Serbian terms taken from the military terminology of the Reich (goal, ball player, shooting line, leader). The daily newspapers *Novo Vreme* (*New Time*), *Obnova* (*Renovation*), and the weekly *Naša borba* (*Our Struggle*) and *Srpski narod* (*The Serbian People*) replaced the abolished ones: *Politika*, *Pravda* (*Justice*), and *Vreme* (*The Time*), and thus became the main reporters in the country. The military Radio Belgrade, which housed the Southeast Propaganda Department, as a "European soldier's radio", operated during the war with the special task of making its central show *Beogradski mladi stražar* (*Belgrade Young Guard*) "the strongest link between the front and the homeland"⁷³.

At the same time, on the other side, on the front, a lull in the fight was used by fighters against the German occupiers to organize social and sports life. A diplomat, historian, publicist, foreign correspondent of *Politika*, editor and director of *Borba* (*Struggle*) Vladimir Dedijer in his book of memories *Dnevnik* (*Diary*) 1941–1944, described in short journalistic reports how matches were played in the liberated territory during the war. Thus, in the spring, on April 26, 1942, "the first football match of the Foča Olympics between the Belgrade and Montenegrin battalions of the First Proletarian Brigade (2:0)"⁷⁴ was played on the liberated territory. Dedijer was the right midfielder, and a General and Yugoslav diplomat Vladimir Velebit — the centre-back; the match was refereed by General Dušan Korać. Everyone quickly realized the importance of football for the morale of the army in those difficult days, so several more matches were held on the Foča field. Only a few days later, the Supreme Headquarters played against the team of Valjevo fighters and lost with the result 6:3. Although tired, everyone was eager to play. "A lot of people gathered. They are looking forward to it. When the Headquarters plays, the situation is not difficult!"⁷⁵ Dedijer further testified in *Dnevnik* that with the help of the youth and the *Politika* journalist Zoran Žujović, he set up the goal posts on the playground and procured a ball. "There was a large audience. General Korać later testified that the match was watched by the Supreme Commander Josip Broz Tito, who had a camera. He took pictures, but later they, as evidence, were lost!"⁷⁶

Reporting on football in Serbia after the Second World War. Having replaced military uniforms with sports jerseys, young football players in the liberated country began to

⁷³ Ibid. P. 47.

⁷⁴ *Dedijer V. Dnevnik, drugo izdanje*. Beograd, 1951. P. 104.

⁷⁵ Ibid. P. 105.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

write out the new pages of the football game in Serbia. After the liberation of Belgrade, the bulletin *Narodni Front* (*The National Front*) recorded that the first public football match was played at the end of November 1944 at the stadium of Yugoslavia with more than 8,000 spectators⁷⁷. The national team of the Anti-Fascist Youth of Belgrade defeated the national team of the Second Proletarian Division with the result 3:2. Apart from the capital, football matches between military teams were also played in Kragujevac, Niš, Užice, Čačak. After the war, a new football history was being written. All the clubs whose teams played matches during the occupation (BSK and Yugoslavia) were closed down, the activities of banned clubs were renewed, and then the foundation of new teams began: on March 4, 1945, *Crvena zvezda* (Red Star) was founded, and on October 4, of the same year, — *Partizan*.

Immediately after the liberation in May 1945, *Fiskulturni odbor Jugoslavije* — FOJ (Physical Education Board of Yugoslavia) was formed, which then changed its name to *Fiskulturni savez Jugoslavije* — FISAJ (Physical Education Association of Yugoslavia), whose task was to organize the First Football Championship according to a single cup system. In September of the same year, the teams of the republics that were part of the federation, the team of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Yugoslav Army team competed. The Serbian team became the first champion of new Yugoslavia⁷⁸. Two years later, the Cup of Yugoslavia was launched, the winner of which was *Partizan*. According to the reporters, the first derby match between *Crvena zvezda* and *Partizan* (4:3) was played in Belgrade in 1947 at the Partizan Stadium in front of 4,000 spectators⁷⁹.

At that time, radio was a very popular medium when the audience followed sports broadcasts, such as the first city derby between *Crvena zvezda* and *Partizan* in 1946. Many journalists were not skillful in radio reporting, and especially in commenting on a football match, so they resorted to different ways. When there was less action, they would add bravura moves of football players as well as non-existent chances for the sake of interesting radio broadcast by using dynamics in the voice and choosing special words and expressions. Later, with the advent of transistors, many sports journalists showed that they were not up to the task, because sports fans carrying transistors to stadiums easily compared actions on the field with the comments of a radio reporter⁸⁰.

Post-war Radio Belgrade produced many legendary presenters/journalists, but few had the “privilege” to read their own texts. The first among them was a journalist Radivoje Marković, who was considered the best sports radio reporter both before and after the Second World War⁸¹. He broadcast numerous matches of eternal rivals *Partizan* and *Crvena zvezda*, and was a reporter at seven Olympics and six world championships. The broadcast of the first post-war May Day parade, in which sports teams that were showing their skills by passing by the ceremonial tribune, had their notable participation, would be remembered precisely after Marković’s seven-and-a-half-hour commentary. His rich vocabulary, proper speech, recognizable, pleasant tone of the voice, knowledge of the subject differentiated him from other reporters. In a particularly intoned voice, Marković

⁷⁷ Mihajlović A. Istorija i teorija fudbala. P. 44.

⁷⁸ Ibid. P. 46.

⁷⁹ Janković D. Zvezda na krovu Evrope, Partizan uz rame komšiji // 100 godina fudbala u Srbiji 1896–1996. Beograd, 1996. P. 103.

⁸⁰ Anastasijević S. Uvod u radio novinarstvo // Radio and TV Journalism. P. 71.

⁸¹ Ibid.

would evoke to his listeners the atmosphere at the stadium, the dynamics of the game, excitement, anxiety, and joy in the stands. When during the match he would say that the football player “sent a long, long ball”, he enchanted the listeners with the image of the ball flying across the entire field⁸². Having exclaimed “Goal, goal, goal, goal, goal”, after the third draw at the football match Paraguay — Yugoslavia, at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, Marković expressed his emotions by identifying himself with other listeners of the radio broadcast. Two years later, an abridged version of this exclamation, became a part of the name of the cult show *Vreme sporta i razonode* (*The time of sports and entertainment*), whose idea was conceived by him⁸³. Television did not have primacy yet, so radio sports programs were very popular in those years, especially because the club football was increasingly winning over the audience.

Apart from the clubs, the national team also achieved brilliant results. From 1948 to 1960, in four consecutive Olympics, the national team played four finals, the last of which, in Rome in 1960, became the Olympic champion. Although the football results both on the national team and club level influenced the fact that this sport became more and more popular, that year few believed that the national team that went to the Olympics would make a better result⁸⁴. This was supported by the writing of the Italian sports press, which was angry because of the semi-final defeat of its selection, so in its newspaper *Unita*, it assessed the defense and attack of the Yugoslavs very badly. Sent to the biggest sports show with insufficient sympathy, upon returning to the country, the football team refused to make statements, so the triumph in Rome did not have the appropriate publicity that the Olympic winners deserved.

At the Belgrade Fair in 1938, for the first time in the Balkans, television shows in which Belgrade actors participated were broadcast. Then, the Dutch company *Philips* set up the first television station with a studio that broadcast the program throughout the duration of the Belgrade autumn fair. It was not until 1958 that an experimental television program began. With the advent and the development of television, media messages began to be announced, and then broadcast directly. Immediacy was much greater than on the radio or in the press, because the power of the image was still crucial. The audience could watch the sporting event live at home and thus, due to different shooting angles, got a multidimensional representation of the match, unlike the one-dimensional image obtained when watching the match from the stands⁸⁵. The television spectacle gave the viewer a sense of immediate presence and participation, as a well-organized broadcast revealed the event from multiple perspectives. The audience was informed at the same time by following the results and statistics on the screen and listening to the comments of the sports reporter. In such circumstances, the television gave birth to new sports journalists: Dragan Nikitović, Vladan Stojaković, Marko Marković, Miloško Pantić and others⁸⁶.

At the suggestion of the French Football Association, in 1960, every fourth year after the qualifying matches, a competition of football selections of European countries was held. The representative successes of Yugoslav football in the 1960s continue with the entry into the finals of the 1960 European Nations' Cup in Paris when the celebrated football

⁸² Sijić M. Fudbal u kraljevini Jugoslaviji. P. 43.

⁸³ Milenković V. Uvod u novinarstvo. Beograd, 2022. P. 160–161.

⁸⁴ Janković D. Zvezda na krovu Evrope, Partizan uz rame komšiji. P. 109.

⁸⁵ Milenković V. Uvod u novinarstvo. P. 161.

⁸⁶ Ibid. P. 162.

player Dragoslav Šekularac was elected to the ideal team of the championship. The Yugoslav national team played the finals in Italy again in 1968. When they defeated the then world champions, the English team, with a goal scored by Dragan Džajić, they played the final game with the home team. After the draw in the first game, a new one was played in 48 hours. The Italian national team ascended the European throne that year (2:0)⁸⁷.

Although the seventh 1962 World Cup held in Chile cannot be said to be a step forward in the development of the football game due to rough starts, dirty shots and lack of efficiency in the game, the national team managed to win the fourth place and repeat the success from Uruguay⁸⁸. In the fight for the third place, the selection of Yugoslavia lost to the team of Chile with 1:0. Only twelve years later, the “blues” would qualify for the World Cup in Germany again.

As the first club to play in the European Cup final, *Partizan* had the full support of the public and the domestic media when they met Real Madrid in 1966 at the *Heysel Stadium* in Brussels. The prevailing opinion was that the black and whites deserved to raise the championship cup with their game and commitment. However, the Madrid team realized their dreams, winning with the result 2:1⁸⁹. Good games of Yugoslav football players became a regular topic of media content especially since 1973, when the RTS Sports Newsroom was singled out as part of the news program. The newly formed newsroom used to work day and night when reporting on major sports events was being prepared. Moving images represented a new quality and a revolutionary novelty in media communication. With the popularization of football, television broadcasts recorded high ratings, which led to additional affirmation of this sport. The first integral television broadcast of the eternal derby of the two most popular clubs in Serbia which gave a new dimension to football competition was broadcast in 1961 from the improvised studio of the Belgrade Fair big hall. The first football derby between *Crvena Zvezda* and *Partizan* in 1961 was commentated at TV by Vladan Stojaković and the later doyen of sports broadcasts Marko Marković as a novice reporter.

The cult sports television shows that greatly influenced the development of football and sports in general in Serbia are remembered: *Sportski pregled* (*Sports Review*), *Svet sporta* (*World of Sports*), *Olimpijski krugovi* (*Olympic Circles*), *Top sport* (*Top Sports*), *Sportska subota* (*Sports Saturday*), *Sportska sreda* (*Sports Wednesday*). One of the most watched sports shows of Television Belgrade was *Indirekt* (*Indirect*). It was edited by a sports journalist Marko Marković, who in his career broadcast a large number of football matches and reported on forty European, world and Olympic championships. This sports show which used to be broadcast for twenty-three years, and since 1972 it was broadcast on national television as well, prominent experts and sports aces were taken part in⁹⁰. The following television reports were especially watched: *Naj gol* (*The Best Goal*), *Kutak za sporni trenutak*, (*The Nook for a Debatable Moment*) hosted by a journalist Vladan Stojaković and *Kucamo na vrata zaboravljenih asova* (*We Knock on the Door of Forgotten Aces*).

Switching to broadcasting via color technology was not only an enormous progress in media development in general, but also remained a special experience of media-sports spectacle viewers. The first color broadcast was watched by the audience in the 1970 foot-

⁸⁷ Janković D. *Zvezda na krovu Evrope, Partizan uz rame komšiji*. P. 114.

⁸⁸ Ibid. P. 111–112.

⁸⁹ Ibid. P. 113; Todić M. 110 godina fudbala u Srbiji. P. 144–147.

⁹⁰ Milenković V. *Uvod u novinarstvo*. P. 162.

ball World Cup, which was held in Mexico⁹¹. Many, today already legendary matches, would have been forgotten if they had not been recorded by the camera, and commented by sports journalists. Standard terms of live broadcasts of clubs and national teams football matches, regular shows of the sports newsroom, regular specialized shows that followed European and World competitions, enabled football to gain affirmation at the wide audience, to fill stadiums to the last seat regardless of television broadcast, to provide descendants in clubs across the country.

The fifth 1976 UEFA European Football Championship was especially important for the Yugoslav national football team because it was played in front of the domestic audience in Yugoslavia. It was the last championship of the old continent in which four selections competed. Other than Yugoslavia, the teams of FR Germany, the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia competed. Yugoslavia lost to FR Germany (2:4) and took the fourth place. In the finals, Czechoslovakia was more efficient than Germany in the penalty shootout (5:3) and thus became the new European champion. The good organization of this championship will be remembered, and especially the extremely high-quality television broadcast of this sporting event.

Moma Martinović, the director of the TV broadcast of the semifinal and final matches, set up nine cameras at the Red Star stadium. Having used new solutions in the realization of the live broadcast, the director enabled the spectators to see the match from different angles. That was how he gained a world reputation. Moma Martinović received the recognition in the form of an invitation to train his colleagues from Argentina (because of the World Cup two years later) about his new way of live broadcast. Thanks to successful lectures, Moma Martinović was part of the team that broadcast football matches at the World Cup “Argentina 1978” at the invitation of the World Football Association (FIFA) and the television pool of reporters. This prominent director with a refined sense of an important sporting moment and innovation in crucial situations on and off the field, also realized the qualifying match for the 1977 World Cup between Yugoslavia and Spain (0:1). When the football player Juanito received a blow to the head with a bottle that flew from the stands, Martinović reacted in an instant, following a close-up of his exit on a stretcher with several cameras (including a mobile one) to cover every moment, because he realized that the activity on the field was of minor importance in relation to fan behavior and player injury. This scene entered the world anthology of television broadcasts⁹².

The first match of the 1979 UEFA Cup final between *Crvena zvezda* and *Borussia Mönchengladbach* was played in Belgrade. Although about 90,000 spectators cheered on the stands of *Marakana*, *Crvena zvezda's stadium* (today it is *Rajko Mitić stadium*), the match ended in a draw (1:1). Since the match played in Dusseldorf ended with the defeat of *Crvena zvezda* (1:0), a goal from the penalty spot, the generation of Pižon, Dule Savić, Šestić, Muslin, Jovin, Petrović... failed to win the UEFA Cup, at that time the second most important European competition. For such an outcome, the public and the media in the country accused the referee Albert Michelotti of inventing a penalty for the host, the Borussia Monchengladbach team⁹³. The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics are remembered for

⁹¹ Chisari F. When Football Went Global: Televising the 1966 World Cup // Historical Social Research. 2006. Vol. 31, issue 1. P. 43.

⁹² Martinović M. Režija programa uživo. Beograd, 1997. P. 25–34.

⁹³ Janković D. Zvezda na krovu Evrope, Partizan uz rame komšiji. P. 129.

the bronze medal. The opinion of most journalists who reported from Los Angeles was that the Yugoslav football players deserved a brighter medal because of their game.

In a tense atmosphere of uncertainty before the war and the disintegration of the Yugoslav state, the football team was preparing to go to Italy for the 1990 World Cup. Poor execution of penalties in the match with Argentina (2:3) disabled the generation of talented football players to reach the semifinals, so they had to settle for the fifth place in the world⁹⁴.

After years of playing in international cups and several very promising opportunities (*Partizan* played in the 1966 Champions Cup finals; *Crvena zvezda* was in the 1979 UEFA Cup finals) for a Serbian club to win a European competition, it happened in 1991 when the *Red Star* on May 29 became the European champion, defeating *Olympique* from Marseille. On that occasion, RTS (Radio Television of Serbia) reported that the team of the coach Ljupko Petrović made the greatest success of Serbian football by winning the European Cup. Then in the same year, but in the next competitive season, *Crvena zvezda* as the European champion gained the right to fight for the title of the club world champion in Tokyo with the champion of South America. It won the Chilean *Kolo-Kolo* in that match with the result 3:0. The media reported that in front of 60,000 spectators at the National Stadium in Tokyo, *Crvena zvezda* wrote out the brightest period in its club history and completed the continental and world crown⁹⁵. Although football faced many challenges in those years, the best Serbian clubs (*Crvena zvezda* and *Partizan*), which were well-off financially at the time, competed regularly in the Eurocups.

After years of football development and good results, regular appearances at major international club and national team competitions, the difficult social situation in Serbia after the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s led to dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation in the country and growing nationalism reflected in sports reporting with regard to events on football fields and stands. The new face of Serbian football was no longer reflected in sporting success, but in violence and aggression. The situation became even more complicated because of the sanctions against FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), which by the decision of the UN Security Council banned the participation of clubs and selections on the international sports scene. Thus, the football players were immediately excluded from the 1992 European Championship in Sweden⁹⁶.

Images of violence filled newspaper columns and sports programs of electronic media, thus becoming an acceptable phenomenon for a certain number of viewers. Violence in society is reflected in violence in sports. Social problems, the disappearance of the value system are only the initial causes of aggression in sports, which must be solved systematically. The eternal derbies between *Crvena zvezda* and *Partizan* in those years became a meeting place for aggressive incidents and violent behavior of fans, sending through the media a picture of a sports spectacle that promoted a kind of participants in violence at football matches. The media justified their "activities" with the sports spirit of the youth and the aspiration for the victory of their favorite team. For example, in the football derby between *Crvena zvezda* and *Partizan* in 1995, the fans of these two teams threw firecrackers, smoke bombs and torches on the field. The police did not arrest any rioters. The

⁹⁴ Janković D. Zvezda na krovu Evrope, Partizan uz rame komšiji. P.127–128.

⁹⁵ Ljubenović B. Crvena Zvezda moj fudbalski klub. Beograd, 2020. P.59–84; Todić M. 110 godina fudbala u Srbiji. P.181–185.

⁹⁶ Janković D. Zvezda na krovu Evrope, Partizan uz rame komšiji. P.130–131.

match between these two rivals in March 1999 was preceded by a fight between fans in which dozens of hooligans were injured. In 2000, the 115th derby was interrupted after a general fight between fans on the field. On that occasion, football players and the professional staff of *Partizan* who did not manage to escape the attacks were injured⁹⁷.

In order to attract a mass audience and satisfy the interests of the centers of power, defending themselves with the need for objective reporting, the media only “warmed up” the atmosphere before the game by showing scenes of violence and biased commentary. Based on this way prepared matrix, what was taking place was a scenario of violent activities and a well-known and rehearsed vocabulary of fans from the stands, the fans who also followed the instructions of their political mentors.

After the death of Aleksandar Radović in the 113th eternal derby between *Crvena zvezda* and *Partizan* in 1999, nothing was the same, but the situation did not change. A rocket that took off from the south stand of the *Partizan Stadium* stopped the young life of a 17-year-old sitting on the north side of the stadium⁹⁸.

As well as this one, other cases of violence in sports have nothing to do with sporting events. Violence on the field, killings of fans continued after 2000, and the media continued to promote hooliganism in reporting, sending the message that various forms of hatred and intolerance were acceptable and media profitable topics for sensationalist reporting.

Conclusion

The language of football, regardless of linguistic and cultural differences, is understood by people all over the world. For more than 50 years, football has been the most favorite sport on the planet⁹⁹, the sport that has been the most popular and the most represented in media reporting. The football game has long outgrown the level of “the most popular sideline in the world”, moving from the margins to the center of media reporting. How programs that promote one type of worldview will be decoded depends on the broader cultural context, gender, identity, social status¹⁰⁰, education, character, and audience interest. The media influence the ways in which viewers experience the world and shape their behavior accordingly. Although in the global, information age of the media, audiences is approached as active consumers of media content that have their own diversity and distinctiveness, each society tends to impose its own classifications of social, cultural and political through entertainment content¹⁰¹. Sports communication on a global level, which emerged in parallel with the development of sports, and even football¹⁰², took on the characteristics of a media spectacle, especially during international club and national team competitions. Football game owes its place of the number 1 sport to millions of people from all continents, be it the audience, fans or players, highly developed

⁹⁷ Mills R. Serbia // *The Palgrave International Handbook of Football and Politics*. Cham, 2018. P. 298.

⁹⁸ Milenković V., Milenković D. Football in the chain of fan violence — from media perspective // *Sociological Review*. 2022. Vol. 61, issue 1. P. 320.

⁹⁹ Luxbacher J. A. *Soccer: Steps to Success*. Champaign, 2014. P. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Kitzinger J. *Dejstva i uticaji medija // Uvod u studije medija*. Beograd, 2005. P. 425.

¹⁰¹ Hall S. *Encoding/Decoding // Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*. London, 1980. P. 128–138.

¹⁰² Serazio M. *The Power of Sports: Media and Spectacle in American Culture*. New York, 2019. P. 43.

sports infrastructure, rich human resources, financial opportunities, accessibility to the masses, attractive, quality game and media coverage.

Considering the socio-historical development of football with special reference to the events in Serbia, it is possible to point out the dynamics of the development of sports reporting and the conditions that led to the “most important sideline in the world” becoming a planetarily popular sport and a significant factor in social relations. Although the first texts about football matches in Serbia were clumsily written in the daily press in May 1896, sports reports contributed to the simultaneous development of the football game and sports journalism. The next step in strengthening the relationship between football and the media in Serbia was the first radio broadcast of a football match in 1929, as well as the departure of the national team to the first World Cup in Montevideo the next year, from where a series of sports reports that nurtured the telegraphic style of writing and raised the circulation of daily newspapers and the listenership of radio shows was sent. A special contribution to sports reporting and the development of the football game was given by the appearance of television and its power of image, which influenced the immediacy and multidimensionality with its live broadcasts.

The good results of Serbian football culminated at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century, both at the national team and club level. Both print and electronic media informed the audience about the great success of the national team that took the fifth place at the 1990 World Cup in Italy, as well as about the march of FC *Crvena zvezda* to the European and world champion titles in 1991 in Bari and Tokyo. Unfortunately, after the greatest success of Serbian football, fan violence caused by political, social and economic reasons became breaking news from football pitches in Serbia. Instead of goals and winning joy, images of clashes between football hooligans prevailed. Considering the bad political and economic situation in the country, followed by the imposed sanctions of the international community in the 1990s, which included the participation of Serbian football clubs and national teams on the international scene, the level of Serbian football dropped sharply.

However, despite the lack of good sports results, the football game has not been moved to the margins of sports reporting. Football continued to be widely represented on the front pages of sports newspapers, with the largest number of articles and photographs illustrating football activities. The columns dealing with this sports game continued to occupy the front pages in sports magazines, as well as prominent places in radio and television sports programs. The football-media spectacle did not stop at the moment when the referee's whistle marked the end of the match.

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