

スロベニア共和国のバスケットボール

ーペトロール・オリンピヤの事例研究ー

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Basketball in the Republic of Slovenia: a case study of the Petrol Olimpija Basketball Club

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スロベニア共和国のバスケットボール：ペトロール・オリンピヤの事例研究

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要約

スロベニア共和国のバスケットボールは男子代表が欧州チャンピオンになるなど強豪国にも関わらずその内実に関する研究は多くはない。そこで本研究はスロベニア共和国の一クラブを現地調査し、その運営の実情の報告を目的とした。

調査対象クラブはペトロール・オリンピヤとし、2010年12月14日から20日に現地で視察・調査を行った。そこで各カテゴリーの公式戦、練習を視察し、GM 他スタッフにインタビューを行った。

ペトロール・オリンピヤの育成組織はバスケットボールスクールとチーム形式のものに大きく二分される。スクールは8～15歳が対象で130人以上が所属していた。チーム形式の方はU-19、U-17など6カテゴリーあり選手数は200人以上である。より本格的に練習するのは14歳以上である。育成組織での指導方針と身長に関する考え方も示された。また育成組織専属のリクルーターがいることもわかった。

プロチームに関しては3つのリーグ戦に出場していることとその仕組みや練習の状況などが明らかになった。またリーグ戦別の観客数もわかり、ユーロリーグが最も人気があることが示された。

1. Introduction

The Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter, Slovenia) Men's National Team won the European basketball championship (FIBA Eurobasket) held in 2017. Although Slovenia is a small country with a population of about 2 million people, they were able to become champions of Europe. Nevertheless, few

studies have specifically examined basketball in Slovenia. Drvaric (2003)¹⁾ reported a study of basketball in the Slovenia, examining a training program operated for young players by the Slovenian Basketball Federation. No report describes how each basketball club in Slovenia is managed of the general policies of the Federation. Therefore, this study was conducted to clarify the management system,

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training system, training policies of different age groups of basketball players, and fan relations, particularly addressing this basketball club in Slovenia.

2. Methods

The Petrol Olimpija Basketball Club (hereinafter, Olimpija) was surveyed because the youth team and senior team of this club had the best results in Slovenia in past competition. A field survey was administered during 14–20 December 2010 to gather observation-based information related to official and practice games of the teams in different categories in the Olimpija. Interviews were conducted of general managers, coaches, trainers, and other club staff members. At the same time, documents and video materials related to basketball in the Slovenia were collected. After completion of the field survey, additional questions, confirmation, and interviews were conducted from Japan as necessary. Analyses were undertaken based on data obtained from field surveys, interviews, documents, and earlier related research.

Slovenian notation is kept to a minimum, as in full names. In addition, some Slovenian language notation replaces some Slovenian alphabet characters with Roman characters. Affiliations and titles are those of the time the field survey was conducted.

3. Results and Discussion

Based in Ljubljana, the capital of the Slovenia, Olimpija is among the strongest clubs of Slovenia. It was known for a long time under the name the "Union Olimpija" during 1997–2017 because of its sponsorship. The senior team of this club is a professional team. They have the

most victories in the Men's Division 1 league of Slovenia. Furthermore, they have participated in Euroleague competitions many times.

A new arena, the "Arena Stožice," was completed in 2010. Although located somewhat distant from the city center, it is an attractive arena. Its standard seating capacity available for basketball events is 12,480 seats. The spectator seats of this arena are green, which is the club color.

(1) Olimpija youth training organization system

The youth training organization of Olimpija is divided into two main parts: a basketball school department and a team style group department. The target age of the basketball school players is 8–15 years old. The more than 130 people of this basketball school practice twice a week at several venues in the city. Young coaches such as university students specializing in sports studies teach at this basketball school.

The team style, the other part of the youth training organization, is extremely important. The team style categories of U-19, U-17, U-15, U-13, U-11, and U-9. All are boys teams. The same age category can have more than one team, depending on the season. Each team has about 10–23 players: more than 200 players are members of the teams. Practice is held three times a week for teams of 7–8-year-old players (U-9), four times a week for teams of 10-year-old (U-11), and 4–5 times weekly for the U-13 team. The team with 7–13-year-old players does not practice hard. Members of this club practice quite seriously if they are on teams with players of 14 years old (U-15) or older. In the Olimpija, practice sessions of U-15 and older teams are held twice a day, in principle. The Olimpija team of players who are 14 years old and older is made up of selected players. It is also the top level

team in the Slovenia. Therefore, it might be in this system. The starting times of night practice of the U-15 and U-17 teams were almost all fixed at 7:30 pm. During the morning session, their practice sessions were at 10 am to 12 noon in many cases.

The youth team training organization takes part in league matches with regional clubs. These games are the basis for activities. It is possible to register multiple teams from one club in the same age category: for example, two or more U-15 teams from one club can register and participate in official matches as different teams. Additionally, they might participate in short-term international tournaments. For example, the U-19 team of the Olimpija in the 2017–18 season participated in the ABA Junior League international tournament. International tournaments might have different age classifications depending on the event. For that reason, before joining the game, the club organizes players according to the regulations.

At practice sessions of the youth team training organization, teams of multiple categories sometimes practice together. For example, a team of U-15 and a team of U-17 might practice together. However, even if different teams practice together, such sessions are often not all practice. In the same example, part of the practice intended to review tactics might have participants divided into a U-17 team and a U-15 team. Such separation occurs in many cases despite their mutual practice session time.

As for the size of the big players of this club, club members might be 210 cm (18 years old), 207 cm (19 years old), 206 cm (17 years old), 205 cm (17 years old), 204 cm (18 years old), 204 cm (14 years old), etc. However, smaller players of 170–179 cm height are also members.

General Manager Janez Rajgelj and other

club staff members offered some remarks about youth player height. Reportedly, height of 185–190 cm or more eventually is desirable if a player wants to become a professional basketball player in Europe. They described the teaching policy of the players of the training organization. This club has a policy of coaching players as all-round players, without a fixed position, even with large players such as those described above. Furthermore, they report that it is unimportant whether a player is "a good player" or not during the youth player period. They regard player development as most important at the age of joining the senior team, after finishing activities at the training organization. They stated that although they teach and coach players as children, they do consider that the players will join a senior team in the future.

Recruiters of this club are dedicated to the youth training organization. Furthermore, the professional team of this club has recruiters apart from them. Recruiters of youth teams recruit young players not only from Slovenia, but from former Yugoslav countries such as Serbia. In addition, some players are from the UK, which demonstrates that they are also targeting countries in which basketball is not popular. Furthermore, because players from Cameroon participate, it is clear that they are targeting not only Europe but also Africa.

(2) Senior team of Olimpija

The senior team of Olimpija is a professional team of the Slovenia Men's Division 1 league. They had 16 victories in the Slovenia Men's Division 1 league during the 2016–17 season, far ahead the Basketball Club Krka (7 wins), which was second place in the championship. Furthermore, they often participate in the Euroleague.

The senior team of the Olimpija took part in the Slovenia Men's Division 1 league, the ABA league, and the Euroleague during the season in which the field survey was administered. The ABA league is not an American minor league, but the Adriatic League. It is an international league with clubs of countries along the Adriatic Sea, but Italian clubs are not participating. Top-level clubs of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia Herzegovina participate with others in the ABA League. In the past, Israeli and Czech Republic clubs also participated.

The system for participating in three competitions during the same season is described below. At the beginning of the season, they played Euroleague games on Wednesday or Thursday. Furthermore, the ABA League games were held on Saturday or Sunday. In the Slovenia domestic league, the top ranked teams taking part in the ABA League are exempted from first round participation. Furthermore, in the latter half of the season, the ABA league competition is completed. The clubs which participated in ABA League join the Slovenia domestic league from that time.

The senior team practice of Olimpija usually practices for about 1 hr 30 min to 2 hr. Their practice centers on the game style. As a special case, in the next day's practice for the game, the older main player practiced for only 1 hr. The young player and the backup player practiced for 2 hr, in principle. They practice for an hour on the day of the game. In such cases, they have stretching, shooting, and a review of tactics for game preparation.

To illustrate how popular the Olimpija are for local people, Table 1 shows the average number of spectators per season in the home game ^{2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10)}. As presented in Table 1, the Euroleague games are the most popular, followed

by Eurocup and ABA league games. Table 1 suggests that a difference exists in popularity among league games. It is noteworthy that the number of spectators might be declining year-by-year, irrespective of the league. It is considered that spectators prefer clubs in countries that are not in Central Europe rather than clubs around central Europe as opponents. Moreover, spectators apparently prefer stronger opponents: the Euroleague has a higher level of competition than Eurocup.

Table 1. Average number of spectator of the Olimpija per game

Season	Euroleague	Eurocup	ABA League
2010–11	12363		
2011–12	6439		
2012–13	6400		
2013–14		3575	
2014–15		3529†	
2015–16		2763	1862
2016–17		1840	1358

†Because the number of spectators was unknown for a certain game, data from that game were removed.

4. Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate and analyze the actual state of activities and circumstances for Olimpija, a basketball club in the Slovenia. Results elucidate the operation of the youth training organization and the management of the professional team. Moreover, they clarify the number of spectators by league.

Therefore, the study purpose has been achieved. The possibility of further study exists. Investigation of clubs other than the Olimpija is

expected to be useful. It will also be necessary for comparison with clubs in other former Yugoslavian countries such as Croatia. Numerous studies have examined basketball in the United States. In addition to these studies, studies of Slovenia and the European area should be undertaken.

This survey of Slovenian basketball provides empirical data that are expected to be useful to sport scientists, coaches, persons in charge of top leagues, and those in charge of developing basketball players while studying and building competition and management systems.

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