

HANDBALL - AN "INVENTED" SPORT: HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS AT THE BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES

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Abstract

Historians say that handball appeared before football, based on the fact that humans in ancient times had greater manual dexterity. It was discovered by transforming popular ball games into a game in which the ball is thrown (with the hand) instead of kicked (with the foot). Handball requires skill, speed, throwing power, overall strength, agility, and endurance. Therefore, handball is a spectacular sport appreciated for its dynamism and the beauty of its plays, a sport with great educational potential for young people, and a discipline that brings great satisfaction to its supporters. In ASE, handball has a rich history supported by achievements and the enthusiasm of students in the representative teams for both girls and boys.

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1. Introduction

"History! Without it, nothing can be understood or explained!" - Pierre de Coubertin

When and how did handball appear? Historians claim that handball appeared before football, based on the fact that humans have always had greater manual dexterity since ancient times. It was discovered by transforming popular ball games practiced in the Middle Ages into dynamic games used in schools in Central and Northern Europe by the end of the 19th century.

Considered a relatively young sport, handball first appeared in the Czech Republic in 1892, under the name "hazena." In 1905, it was named "handball" by physical education professor Vaclav Karas.

Holger Nielsen, a Danish professor who participated in the Modern Olympic Games in 1896 in shooting and fencing, was captivated by the idea of introducing this sport to his students. He established the first rules and introduced handball in schools in 1897, calling it "haandbold." The same year, the first handball match was played according to clear rules, and in 1906, the first official game regulations were

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published. In 1898, in Denmark, the headmaster of the Royal School in Ordrup banned football due to numerous injuries, leading the upper-class students to play handball on the football field.

In 1915, gymnastics professor Max Heiser invented the game "torball" (goal ball), exclusively played by women in outdoor settings. In 1919, another gymnastics professor, Karl Schelenz, changed the name to "handball", expanded the existing rules, and allowed boys to participate, thus making it a mixed and competitive sport.

According to some accounts, the German sports master Karl Schelenz is considered the promoter of handball, while other sources suggest that handball originated in Denmark, Ireland, and the United States. "It is possible that several sports enthusiasts, unaware of each other, simultaneously thought of creating a game where the ball would be thrown (with the hand) instead of kicked (with the foot).... So, we will consider handball to have a multinational origin." (Hristache Naum, *Handball from A to Z*, Sport-Turism Publishing, Bucharest, 1986, pp. 20)

Surprisingly, handball quickly gained popularity in Romania. The first handball match in Romania took place on May 3, 1922, in Sibiu, between two teams of students. This referred to 11-player or field handball, which was played for a long time until the 1960s. In 1936, the first Olympic handball tournament took place in Berlin, where Romania participated (finishing 5th). Handball became an authentic Olympic sport only in 1972 (for men, in Munich) and in 1976 (for women, in Montreal).

Initially designed for women's teams, 7-player indoor handball quickly gained popularity among Israeli teams that preferred indoor venues. More dynamic and spectacular, with a higher number of goals, 7-player handball gradually took over, and by the late 1960s, 11-player handball remained just a memory.

In 1933, the Romanian Handball Federation was established, initially as a branch of the Volleyball and Basketball Federation, and became independent in 1936.

2. Doina Furcoi-Solomonov: A Figure in Romanian Handball, Faculty Member of ASE

Doina Furcoi-Solomonov, born on September 4, 1945, in Ialomița (Miloșești), came to Bucharest to study and play handball. She became a Physical Education and Sports teacher after graduating from the Institute of Physical Education and Sports, and from 1990 to 2004, she was an active member of the Physical Education and Sports Department at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. She had a deep passion for handball, which is evident in her personal achievements. Doina played beautiful and intelligent handball, becoming the national champion and a member of the Romanian national team from 1968 to 1976. A remarkable pivot (165 cm tall and 72 kg), she played handball for the University of Bucharest club, both in the junior and senior teams. As a member of the national



team, she helped Romania maintain its position in the international elite for several years. In 1971, at the World Championship in the Netherlands, the Romanian women's national team finished 4th. They won the silver medal in Belgrade in 1973 and finished 4th again at the World Championship in the USSR in 1975. This success qualified them for the first edition of the Olympic Games in women's handball, held in Montreal in 1976, where the Romanian team finished 4th. In 1975, she was voted the best pivot of the World Championships and selected for the All-Star Team.



Figure 1. Romania-Czechoslovakia, Carpathian Trophy - July 1975. One of the great assets of the Romanian national women's team, pivot-Doina Furcoi

Doina Furcoi-Solomonov is recognised as one of the valuable pivots of the Romanian national women's handball team. For her achievements, she has received numerous awards and recognition. In 1976, she was awarded the "Meritul Sportiv Clasa I" (Sports Merit First Class) by Decree No. 250/18 August 1976. Later, in 1998, she was conferred the title of "Maestru Emerit al Sportului" (Emeritus Master of Sport) for winning the silver medal at the World Championship in Yugoslavia.

In 2010, during the "Carpathian Trophy" event, the Romanian Handball Federation organised a ceremony for former national team players who had achieved a minimum of 100 selections. Doina Furcoi-Solomonov received a plaque and an excellence diploma, being appointed an Honorary Member of the R.H.F. She played in 117 matches for the national team and scored 204 goals.

Doina Furcoi-Solomonov has remained connected to handball even after retiring as a player. Since 1990, she has dedicated herself to a career as a university



lecturer, inspiring a love for handball among many generations of students and guiding them with patience and knowledge in the intricacies of this sport.

3. Handball at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) - Results of the Men's and Women's Representative Teams

The practice of sports within ASE by an increasing number of students eager for physical activity has a long tradition. Sports competitions, both within the university and outside of it (Bucharest University Championship and National University Championship), have sparked the interest of students and are increasingly appreciated and respected. Among the sports branches that are in high demand among students is handball, also known as "the sport with the small ball."

Handball is a team game in which two teams compete against each other. The duration of the game, for both men's and women's teams, is 2 halves of 30 minutes each, with a 10-minute break. It is played on a rectangular field measuring 40 x 20 meters and includes a playing area separated by a midfield line and two goal areas.

A team is made up of 12 players (2 goalkeepers and 10 field players) who are listed on the score sheet. On the field, a maximum of 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper from each team can be present at the same time, while the remaining 4 players and 1 goalkeeper are substitutes. Goalkeepers cannot replace field players, but a field player can enter the goal area. A field player is allowed to hold the ball in their hand for only 3 seconds, even if they stay in one place. They can take a maximum of 3 steps with the ball in hand, dribble and catch the ball with one hand, or repeatedly push the ball towards the ground with one hand before passing, throwing, catching, stopping, or hitting the ball using their hands, head, arms, torso, and thighs. The goalkeeper is allowed to touch the ball with any part of their body when inside the goal area. The ball is round and complies with the regulations on weight and dimensions.

A goal is considered scored if the ball completely crosses the goal line. The team that scores more goals than the opposing team is considered the winning team.

Practicing handball requires numerous physical skills, execution speed, throwing power, general strength, agility, and endurance. Therefore, handball is a spectacular sport that is enjoyed for its dynamism and the beauty of the game. It offers educational opportunities for young people and brings great satisfaction to its supporters.

This paperwork presents a brief history of this spectacular sport and the results achieved by the men's and women's handball teams of ASE in all competitions held in Bucharest (Bucharest University Championship) and throughout the country (National University Championship) from 1999 to the present.



From 1985 to 1999, the three promoters of university handball within ASE, who closely worked with the representative men's and women's teams, were: Prof. Marin Ivan, Prof. Elena Crișan, and last but not least, Prof. Doina Furcoi-Solomonov, from whom I took over the men's team in 1999. She was present at almost all the training sessions until the first results started to appear.

Here are the results obtained by the representative men's handball team, to which the results of the women's team have been added since 2011:

- 2002-2003 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 3rd place
- 2003-2004 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 2nd place - qualified for the Final Tournament
 - National University Championship Reșița 2004: 5th place
- 2004-2005 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 3rd place UNIFEST Student Festival 2004: 3rd place
- 2005-2006 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 2nd place - qualified for the Final Tournament in Timișoara 2006
- 2006-2007 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 2nd place - qualified for the Final Tournament
 - National University Championship Târgoviște 2007: 5th place
- 2007-2008 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 2nd place - qualified for the Final Tournament
 - National University Championship Târgoviște 2008: 6th place
- 2008-2009 Men's Handball - Cup of the First Year Students: 2nd place
 - Bucharest University Championship: 3rd place
- 2011-2012 Men's Handball - Cup of the First Year Students: 1st place (victory against U.N.E.F.S.)
 - Bucharest University Championship: 5th place
 - Women's Handball - Cup of the First Year Students: 3rd place
 - Bucharest University Championship: 5th place
- 2016-2017 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 1st place - qualified for the Final Tournament
 - National University Championship Suceava 2017: 7th place
 - Women's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 2nd place - qualified for the Final Tournament
 - National University Championship Pitești 2017: 8th place
- 2017-2018 Men's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 1st place - qualified for the Final Tournament in Suceava 2018
 - Women's Handball - Bucharest University Championship: 2nd place - qualified for the Final Tournament in Pitești 2018.



4. Conclusions

Alongside other disciplines practiced within the Physical Education and Sports program at ASE, particularly through the representative team, the promotion of an active lifestyle and achievement in sports is pursued. All students of this institution are encouraged and guided to engage in physical exercises, both as part of the curriculum and individually during their free time. Independent physical exercises, such as fitness or team competitions, bring significant benefits, globally sought after, such as maintaining optimal health, good physical condition, toning muscles, engaging major bodily functions, and, last but not least, providing entertainment, relaxation, a break from daily routine, and socialisation. Handball, along with basketball, volleyball, football, and, more recently, catchball for women, is a sport practiced by amateurs and enthusiasts as a form of exercise and entertainment during leisure time.

By instilling in students a passion for physical activity, we contribute to maintaining a healthy, vigorous, and strong population and future workforce.

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