

# Planning and Organising Sports Competitions: Between Strategy, Education, and Performance

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## Abstract

*This paper highlights the strategic role of sports competitions in the academic environment, focusing on the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES). It examines how the university integrates sports into student life through events like the Rector's Cup, inter-faculty tournaments, and initiatives led by the university's sports club (USC - UES). These activities promote physical health and values such as leadership, teamwork, and fair play. The study places ASE's approach within a broader national and international context, referencing frameworks like Romania's Law on Physical Education and the European University Sports Association (EUSA). It also discusses the challenges of funding, infrastructure, and human resources in sports management. BUES's partnership with the Romanian Football Federation to offer a Master's in Sports Management exemplifies efforts to professionalise the field. Overall, the BUES model demonstrates how universities can drive sustainable sports ecosystems and contribute meaningfully to student development and the wider community.*

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## 1. Introduction

Sport claims a central role in modern societies as a form of cultural and educational expression, and sports competitions represent the pinnacle of preparation, discipline, and performance efforts. Physical education supports the development of strategies that aim to increase the attractiveness of schools and improve school results.

Sports competitions serve both as a means of expressing athletic performance and as an essential tool for promoting educational, social, and economic values. The efficient organization of these events requires rigorous planning, inter-institutional coordination, and a deep understanding of the dynamics of contemporary sports.

The effective organization of these competitions goes beyond technical or logistical aspects, involving a holistic approach with implications for education, economy, communication, and social policy. In the university context, the role of

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competitions becomes twofold: as a tool for personal development and as a laboratory for applying sports management principles. Sports competitions are opportunities for students to demonstrate their physical skills, assume responsibilities, be part of a team, and provide mutual support in solving problems, which increases group cohesion (Pop, 2015).

In Romania, state institutions, such as the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, as well as private universities, have demonstrated a constant commitment to promoting university sports, highlighting the importance of integrating physical education into students' professional training.

## **2. Content**

### **2.1 Fundamentals of Organizing Sports Competitions**

According to Pierre Parlebas (1999), competition is a "codified form of confrontation in which participants leverage their skills to achieve a goal, adhering to predefined rules." In sports, competition takes on an institutionalized dimension, organized and regulated by federations, clubs, or academic entities. From a psychopedagogical perspective, competition stimulates intrinsic motivation and contributes to character development (Epuran, 2005). The specialized literature (Dragnea & Teodorescu, 2002; Cucui, 2010) details the following fundamental steps:

- Identifying the competition's purpose: developing sports skills, selecting athletes, promoting a brand, or facilitating social integration;
- Planning the competition calendar;
- Establishing participant categories and technical regulations;
- Assigning responsibilities to the organizing team;
- Managing logistical and financial resources;
- Promoting the event;
- Conducting post-competition evaluations and reporting results.

Organizing a sports competition involves essential steps, from setting objectives and rules to post-event evaluation. According to Ciuvică-Enuși (2024), effective management of sports activities requires a strategic approach, which includes:

- Planning: Clearly defining the competition's purpose, identifying the necessary resources, and developing a detailed schedule.
- Organization: Establishing the organizing committee, delegating responsibilities to its members, and coordinating logistics.
- Leadership: Overseeing the event's execution, ensuring compliance with the rules, and managing unforeseen situations.
- Control: Evaluating results, gathering feedback, and implementing improvements for future editions (such as satisfaction surveys, written impressions, and media publications about the competition).



All these steps are necessary for a positive experience for both participants and spectators.

In the university environment, sports competitions serve as an integrated framework for applied learning. They provide students with not only sports experience but also opportunities for leadership, event organization, sports marketing, volunteering, and communication.

All these steps should be followed regardless of the scale of the competition and the educational level or institution organizing it. I will specifically refer to the university level, the involvement of Romanian higher education institutions, and particularly the Bucharest University of Economic Studies.

## **2.2 Examples of Competitions and Best Practices in Romania and Internationally**

In Romania, sports competitions are regulated by Law no. 69/2000 on Physical Education and Sports, supplemented by methodological guidelines issued by the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Education. Universities, particularly those affiliated with FSSU (Federation of School and University Sports), are encouraged to organize competitions with logistical and financial support from government funds.

A notable example is the National University Olympiads, which involve hundreds of students from major university centres, organized with the support of the Ministry of Education and the host universities.

In the United States, the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) oversees a comprehensive system of university competitions, featuring strict rules, ongoing athlete evaluation, and lucrative media partnerships.

In Europe, the EUSA (European University Sports Association) coordinates events such as the European Universities Games (EUG), in which Romania also participates, promoting fair play and student-athlete mobility within the European space.

At Bucharest UES, the Department of Physical Education and Sports (DPES) consistently supports events such as the “Rector’s Cup,” the “ASE Cup,” and inter-faculty competitions in football, basketball, volleyball, athletics, and catchball, enriched by the enthusiastic and creative participation of ASE’s representative dance and cheerleading team. These events serve as a model of best practices in university sports education (defs.ase.ro). Physical education lends support to the development of strategies that aim to increase the attractiveness of schools and improve school results.

Among the competitions held annually, as a tradition of the institution, I would mention: the Dracula Cup (basketball), the 3x3 Cup, the Andrei Filofteia Cup, the Academica Cup (volleyball), as well as various Cups marking ASE anniversaries (110, 111, 112 years), and Football Cups for Professors vs. Actors. By including students from other university centers in addition to ASE students, these tournaments



seek to establish examples of best practices in university sports instruction. Each of these contests demonstrates the school's commitment to student participation and athletic performance.

ASE and the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) have launched a master's program in Sports Management, responding to the growing demand for specialists in the field. This program covers topics such as sports marketing, event organization, leadership, and strategic planning (FRF, 2023).

Education plays a crucial role in training professionals capable of organizing sports competitions at high standards. In this regard, ASE Bucharest, in partnership with the Romanian Football Federation (FRF), has initiated continuous training programs and a master's degree in sports management, designed for club managers, sports federations, and other professionals in the field. These initiatives aim to enhance organizational performance and the competitiveness of sports clubs by improving the professional quality of the personnel involved.

Moreover, ASE's internship and volunteer programs allow students to become directly involved in sports activities, thus facilitating the practical application of theoretical knowledge.

### **2.3 Examples of Best Practices: Sports Competitions at Bucharest UES**

The Department of Physical Education and Sports at our university organizes a range of sports competitions across various disciplines, in collaboration with other faculties and institutions. These events not only promote a healthy lifestyle among students but also contribute to the development of leadership, teamwork, and fair play skills.

The University Sports Club (USC UES) is a clear example of the institution's commitment to sports. With sports sections such as chess, catchball, and bodybuilding, the club offers students the opportunity to train and compete at national and international levels. The club's mission is to combine education with sport, thereby building the champions of tomorrow.

### **2.4 Challenges and Perspectives in Organizing Sports Competitions**

Organizing sports competitions involves several challenges, including:

- Funding: Securing the necessary budget to ensure professional-level events
- Infrastructure: Ensuring the availability and quality of appropriate sports facilities.
- Human Resources: Recruiting and retaining trained staff in sports management.

Collaboration among educational institutions, public authorities, and private sector stakeholders is essential to address these challenges. Key components for



developing sustainable sports initiatives include investment in training, infrastructure, and the promotion of youth volunteerism.

## **2.5 Challenges and Solutions in Organizing Sports Competitions**

### ***2.5.1 Identified Issues***

Based on recent studies (Sotiriadou & Shilbury, 2009; Bota, 2013), several key challenges hinder the effective organization of sports competitions:

- Lack of modern infrastructure
- Underfunding of university sports
- Inadequate promotion of events
- Shortage of professionals in sports event management
- Fragmented communication between stakeholders and organizing entities

### ***2.5.2 Proposed Solutions***

To address these challenges, the following strategies are recommended:

- Integrate specialized courses in sports management into the curricula of major universities
- Secure European funding and attract private sponsorships
- Develop a unified digital platform for event registration and promotion
- Encourage sports volunteering and expand Erasmus+ programs in the sports sector
- Foster partnerships between universities and local sports clubs to share infrastructure and resources.

## **3. Conclusion**

The preparation and organization of sports competitions is a complex process that requires a multidisciplinary approach and effective collaboration among various stakeholders. The experience of ASE Bucharest demonstrates that integrating sports into the academic environment can have a positive impact on students' personal and professional development. By continuing to invest in sports-related education, infrastructure, and skilled human resources, Romania can enhance its capacity to host university competitions that not only meet international standards but also become models of good practice for the region.

Organizing sports competitions can no longer be viewed merely as a logistical task, but rather as a strategic element in educational, economic, and social development. Universities, by their role in shaping future leaders, play a crucial part in the professionalization of sports and the support of a sustainable sports ecosystem. The Bucharest UES model, enriched by international best practices, provides a robust framework for understanding and improving the organization of sports competitions.



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