

The Role of University Basketball Competitions in Promoting Sport and Developing the Academic Community

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Abstract

Basketball games at universities are an important part of students' intellectual, social, and personal growth. This article examines the effects of these incidents on mental and physical health, on the strengthening of university identity, and on the development of leadership and collaboration skills. It also describes the duties universities have to provide athletic scholarships, maintain sports facilities, and cultivate outside alliances. Alongside specific suggestions for improvement, common issues such as funding shortages and students' hectic schedules are also addressed. The essay highlights the need for a well-thought-out plan to promote collegiate basketball. The Bucharest University of Economic Studies is used as a case study to illustrate regional efforts and their growth prospects. In summary, university athletics, and basketball in particular, are vital to academic life and can positively and sustainably influence future generations.

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1. Introduction

A vital part of contemporary academic life is university athletics. University basketball, in particular, is increasingly significant in fostering social cohesiveness, supporting educational values, promoting physical activity [1, 2], and developing social skills [3]. Research indicates that playing organised sports is associated with better social integration, academic achievement, and physical and mental health [4, 5].

Basketball is a team sport that requires fast play, physical skills, strategic thinking, and the ability to respond effectively to competitive, changing situations [6]. Basketball games at universities help build institutional identity, establish leadership, and provide opportunities for individual growth [7]. In this regard, colleges are essential in assisting these projects by making investments, promoting them, and building sustainable infrastructure [8, 9]. With an emphasis on the experience of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, this study seeks to demonstrate the benefits of these competitions for the academic community and to

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offer specific recommendations for advancing them within the Romanian university system.

The influence of university basketball contests on the academic community is significant and complex, evident in student life dynamics, the institution's public perception, and the social connections formed via sports activities.

These competitions are crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and reinforcing university identity. The university's athletic team serves as a symbol of the institution, fostering pride and unity among current students, alumni, and professors. This communal identity is bolstered by mutual support and the commemoration of sporting triumphs.

Secondly, competitions foster inclusiveness, diversity, and social engagement within the university milieu. Engagement in sporting activities—whether as participants, volunteers, or observers—facilitates networking and collaboration among students from diverse faculties, social strata, and cultures.

A significant factor is the economic potential of these events. Competitions can generate revenue through sponsorships, collaborations, or ticket sales, thereby supporting additional educational or sports infrastructure initiatives.

Moreover, collegiate athletics offer tangible opportunities for student-athletes to excel at a higher level. Access to scholarships, national or worldwide competitions, and media exposure provides a platform for professional and academic progress.

Indirectly, advocating for an active lifestyle significantly benefits the entire society. Sport enhances the physical and mental well-being of players, mitigates sedentary behavior, and promotes healthy habits.

Ultimately, these competitions enhance the institution's external contacts by fostering linkages with other universities, student organizations, and private sector firms. This fosters a network of reciprocal support and advocacy, bolstering the institution's reputation and strengthening the community's cohesion.

2. The Benefits of University Basketball Competitions

University basketball competitions offer numerous advantages for both students and higher education institutions.

- Enhancement of athletic, physical, and technological competencies within a competitive and stimulating setting [10, 11].
- Engagement in sports fosters a healthy lifestyle, mitigating hazards linked to sedentary behavior and enhancing both mental and physical well-being [12, 13].
- Students acquire the ability to collaborate towards common objectives, establish mutual trust, and enhance their collaborative and communicative competencies [14, 15].



- Engagement in competitions enhances pupils' drive and resolve. The obstacles encountered during matches prompt them to expand their boundaries, manage stress, and cultivate resilience [5].
- Fosters active interest and engagement in university life, motivating students to partake as athletes, spectators, or volunteers.
- Achievement in these events can elevate the university's reputation and attract interest in its academic offerings.
- Sporting competitions enhance institutional identity by fortifying relationships among students, staff, and alumni.
- Exceptional performances in these tournaments might create prospects for sports scholarships, thereby assisting outstanding kids in pursuing their university education [8].

3. The Role of Universities in Promoting University Sports

- Universities are obligated to invest in sufficient sports infrastructure, offering contemporary facilities and high-performance equipment. Moreover, incorporating competition observation into course syllabi constitutes a novel and stimulating teaching approach [16].
- Providing scholarships for athletic performance draws talent and offers students tangible assistance to reconcile academic excellence with sports accomplishments. Exemplary practices are evident at universities such as the University of Michigan and the University of North Carolina [8].
- Collaborations with sponsors, sports federations, or student unions can enhance the financing and promotion of contests [9]. Consequently, athletics serves as a conduit between the intellectual sphere and the economic or civic domains.

4. Competitive Activity at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies – Basketball Section

The Department of Physical Education and Sport at Bucharest University of Economic Studies engages in a vigorous and varied competitive program, characterized by tradition and a notable influence on university life. The basketball section is very active, organizing and participating in numerous contests that substantially foster student growth and elevate the institution's reputation.

Among the internal competitions, the following are notable:

The Economist Cup, inaugurated in 1997, is among the most enduring and esteemed sporting championships at ASE. It encompasses all university faculties and unites their representative teams in a competitive, engaging format. In 2022, the competition was rebranded as Cupa Fila Andrei to honour its creator, Professor Filofteia Andrei, acknowledged for her significant contributions to the advancement of university athletics.



Dracula Cup, founded in 1996, is a notable competition featuring an inter-university element. It unites teams from universities in Bucharest and is characterized by its mixed format: male and female players compete collaboratively under specific regulations intended to promote balance and cooperation [17].

University Days, reinstated post-pandemic, is an annual festival featuring basketball competitions for both genders, as well as other sports events. The festival has creative performances (dance, cheerleading) that draw a substantial audience, despite the existing infrastructure constraining spectator capacity.

ASE's basketball teams participate in external tournaments, specifically the **Bucharest University Championship** and the **National University Championship**, both organized by the Romanian Basketball Federation (FRB) and the Federation of School and University Sports (FSSU). ASE's men's and women's teams often compete in the Bucharest university center tournaments, where the leading two teams advance to the national phase. ASE teams have achieved exceptional results at this level, often qualifying for the final rounds of the National University Championship.

National tournaments organized by the FRB, in which the CSU ASE (University Sports Club) takes part. Presently, three ASE students are members of the premier league squad, and the student body actively supports their involvement. Initially, student attendance at matches was motivated by course credit; however, over time, students began attending willingly, reflecting their commitment to the team and the community spirit cultivated around it.

This competitive aspect is a fundamental component of the sports curriculum and corresponds with contemporary educational goals: promoting participation, enhancing performance, and fostering a robust sports culture within the academic setting.

5. The Role of Universities in Promoting University Basketball Competitions

Contemporary universities, in addition to their role as purveyors of academic knowledge, are becoming proactive entities that promote students' holistic and multifaceted development. In this context, endorsing university basketball competitions becomes a strategic obligation for higher education institutions. The following are the primary methods via which colleges can and ought to engage:

- Capital allocations for athletic infrastructure. Universities are obligated to invest in modern and adequate sports facilities, including well-equipped training halls, competition-standard courts, and recovery and video-analysis facilities. These investments enhance the quality of sports training and establish a professional setting for conducting competitions.



- Establishment of athletic scholarship initiatives. Providing scholarships specifically for student-athletes is crucial for attracting and keeping talent. These scholarships should be linked to both sports accomplishments and academic performance to create a balanced, motivating framework. ASE is currently engaged in discussions to broaden these scholarships, with the objective of offering sustained support for high-achieving students.
- Coordination and marketing of athletic activities. Universities are pivotal in originating, promoting, and providing logistical assistance for both internal and external competitions. Promotional strategies, media engagement, campus exhibitions, and the utilization of digital channels enhance event visibility and draw participants and viewers.
- Formation and endorsement of university athletic organizations. University sports clubs provide a structured framework for participation in regional, national, and international competitions. They function as autonomous entities or as components of the university, facilitating performance, coaching advancement, and securing external resources.
- Advancement of educational principles via athletics. Universities must serve as advocates for fundamental sports values, including fair play, ethics, respect, and accountability. These ideals shape students' character development and reinforce an institutional culture rooted in excellence and integrity.
- Collaborations with the private sector and sponsors. By forming strategic alliances with local or national enterprises and sponsors, universities can obtain additional resources to host competitions and enhance training conditions. These collaborations may encompass cash sponsorships, equipment contributions, accolades, or services.
- Involvement of the scholarly community and alumni network. Engaging alumni and the wider community in support of university teams can yield logistical, financial, and moral assistance. Alumni may serve as mentors, sponsors, or advocates for the team, and their participation bolsters the university's brand identification and visibility.

Through these activities, institutions foster not only competitive athletics but also a cohesive educational framework in which sport is a fundamental component of the academic experience.

6. Challenges in Organizing University Basketball Competitions and Proposed Solutions

The influence of university competitions is considerable; however, their organisation faces numerous problems. The following are the primary challenges and proposed remedies:



- Rivalry with alternative extracurricular pursuits. Students have access to a diverse array of academic and extracurricular activities, which may diminish participation in sports tournaments. To prevent scheduling problems, sports events must be meticulously arranged outside of examination periods, university recesses, and national or religious holidays.
- Insufficient financial resources. Organizing tournaments requires substantial financial resources for venue rentals, equipment purchases, team travel, and event marketing. An effective approach is to initiate the funding process promptly by drafting project proposals, pursuing sponsorships, and locating alternative revenue streams.
- Demands of student-athletes' schedules. Reconciling academic obligations with athletic commitments can impose extra stress on students and coaches. Facilitating open dialogue among students, instructors, and coaches, along with acknowledging athletic accomplishments through academic credits, awards, or public recognition, can sustain a balance between the two spheres.
- Absence of sponsors and alliances. The organization of competitions may be constrained without external assistance. Universities must establish durable partnerships with the private sector, offer appealing sponsorship packages, and engage the local community to endorse sports programs.
- Insufficient sports infrastructure. The lack of current, appropriate facilities diminishes the quality of tournaments. It is imperative to prioritize expenditures in sports facilities via modernisation initiatives, partnerships with local authorities, or the utilisation of structural funding.

7. Proposals for Improving University Basketball Competitions

To enhance the influence and attractiveness of university basketball competitions, the following measures are recommended:

- Organizing supplementary events, including competitions, leisure activities, and social gatherings, to captivate and include students in a more comprehensive and engaging sports experience.
- Employing contemporary technologies to deliver live game broadcasts on social media sites or mobile applications, hence enhancing competition exposure and community involvement.
- Meticulously coordinating the competition calendar to coincide with the academic schedule, so preventing conflicts with examination times or academic recesses.



- Employing efficient tactics to secure sponsors and business alliances by enhancing the visibility of companies participating in the events.
- Incorporating athletic competitions into educational curricula and encouraging interdisciplinary cooperation across faculties to advance athletics as a component of academic instruction.
- Engaging student associations in the organization and promotion of competitions, and so fostering initiative and social responsibility.
- Promoting student participation in the organization and execution of competitions, thereby enhancing organizational skills and fostering teamwork.
- Investing in contemporary sports facilities, encompassing the construction or refurbishment of basketball arenas featuring spectator seating.
- Administering satisfaction surveys to participants and viewers to enhance event organization regularly.

8. Conclusions

University basketball contests offer numerous advantages: enhancing students' physical abilities, encouraging a healthy lifestyle, cultivating teamwork, and reinforcing university identity.

Universities are pivotal in fostering and endorsing these events by investing in infrastructure, creating support programs for students, and incorporating sports ideals into academic curricula.

Implementing contemporary strategies — such as technological innovation, fostering partnerships, and engaging the academic community — can enhance the impact and sustainability of university basketball competitions, thereby promoting the cultivation of a healthy, motivated, and socially integrated generation.

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