



**Stanislav M. Paunić:  
GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
BASKETBALL  
Female basketball club «Kovin»,  
Kovin, 2007.**

## 1.

In front of us is the life work of Stanislav M. Paunic, PhD, a life-long professor at the Faculty of sport and physical education in Belgrade, today a retired professor, master of written and spoken word, a man in love with basketball, volleyball, swimming, gymnastics, skiing, mountaineering, in one word, with physical culture, on the whole.

Stanislav M. Paunic was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, 1928, in the village Badovinci in Macva. He finished primary school in his native place and grammar school in Sabac. He completed the studies at the State institute of Physical Training, where he was also retired in 1991.

His first job was at The secondary school of physical training in Sarajevo (subject: basketball). Then he moved to Novi Sad: Technical secondary school, The industrial school “Jugodat” and The grammar school “Svetozar Markovic”. After that he worked at the High Pedagogical school in Cetinje and again at the College of Physical Education in Sarajevo (subject: basketball), and finished his teaching and professional career at the Faculty of Physical Education in Belgrade (subject: Basketball).

Since his teenage years he has been involved in basketball-related work; first he came into contact with basketball at the youth working action “Samac-Sarajevo”. Then he specialized in basketball as a student, entering the State Institute

of Physical Training the so called “DIF”, where he was a permanent member of the “DIF” team and once he played for Belgrade University team. Gaining a college diploma at the DIF, he started working in his field and profession and besides many jobs that he did as a physical training teacher in schools, he mostly paid his attention and worked in narrow professional discipline so near to his heart and to which he devoted all his life, that is to say BASKETBALL.

He finished his master studies in Belgrade at the Faculty of Physical Education in 1974 with the topic “*Some problems in interpretation of the data on the historical development of basketball in our sources*”. Joking (and in reality) he loves saying that he finished his master work once again by writing the piece: “Basketball, the spirit of the game”, but that work was not appreciated, and it did not experience its professional and real promotion since the ideological and spiritual time, did not accept that sort of work. But his enormous practical and professional experience, and his searching efforts, contributed to his successful defense of doctoral thesis in 1982 at the Faculty of Physical Education in Belgrade, entitled: “Genesis and development of Basketball in Yugoslavia”.

In front of the eminent panel consisting of the professors: Nikola Kurelic, PhD, Janko Leskosk, PhD and Milivoje Matic, PhD.

After a quarter of century, the cited doctoral dissertation was revised and edited in the form of a publication and promoted on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in Belgrade. The following experts spoke about the book: Bora Stankovic, honorary general secretary of the FIBA, Milivoje Matic, PhD, retired university professor, Vladimir Koprivica, PhD, professor at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education in Belgrade and the author himself, Stanislav M. Paunic, PhD, retired university professor.

## 2.

The dissertation defended in 1982, and published in 2007 represents a rarity in our field. neither because of the fact that the defended dissertation was published later, nor because there were many similar cases before, but because of the fact that it was published 25 years later. Is such an act in the profession and science, and especially in publishing business excusable, first of all because of the actuality of data and problems that are offered to out of faculty public a quarter of a century after its first publication? Do the historical facts and relevant scientific conclusions, to which the author came in the cited dissertation “Genesis and development of basketball in Yugoslavia”, still have the historic and scientific relevance? Was it justified to deduct a narrow theme (“Genesis and development of basketball in *Yugoslavia*”) into a broader one without supplementary subsequent changes (“Genesis and development of *basketball* in the world / added by B.B.)?”

The question contains the answer whether the publication of “25 years old” theme is justified, but firstly we have to get acquainted with the contents of the published material.

## 3.

A quantitative review of the book is: 376 pages of A/4 format (dissertation original has around 700 pages); 694 footnotes; 556 original bibliographic units (in eight world languages) more than 500 various sources (bulletin, propaganda,

publications, magazines, letters); 66 voice records on tape (recorded material from talks with representative sample of home and foreign authors); 16 years of hard work. All these facts take our breath away because of such a devotion the author showed in his work “*Genesis and development of basketball*” and on the other hand our respect toward the research efforts and relevant research material, that becomes a model for younger researchers, and especially since it is known that the dissertation work lasts on average from 3 to 5 years, and that the relevant professional and scientific material in such approaches is poorer. In comparison to the original dissertation copy, this publication lacks photographs and facsimiles of the original historic documents that the author collected, which is “an essential fault” of this, but by all other characteristics this is a grandiose work.

This publication is qualitatively divided into five basic chapters.

1. **INTRODUCTION** (the subject of he research, the aim of the research, the review of former researches, the hypothesis of research, the characteristics of resources).
2. **ORIGIN OF BASKETBALL IN THE WORLD** (Basketball in the USA; Basketball in Europe; England, France, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Sweden).
3. **GENESIS OF BASKETBALL IN YUGOSLAVIA** (Period 1891-1918; Period 1918-1941; Period 1941-1980, A) Occupation (1941-1945), B) Liberation (1945-1980) : 1 Macedonia 2. Kosovo 3. Serbia 4. Vojvodina 5. Montenegro 6. Bosnia and Herzegovina 7. Croatia 8. Slovenia).
4. **DISCUSSION**
5. **CONCLUSION**

Beside the cited chapters and sub-chapters, the publication contains a preface written by two eminent experts: Bora Stankovic (general secretary of the FIBA) and professor Vladimir Koprivica, PhD. Then, References and Sources, Supplements (Additions), chronology, author’s remark and data about the author.

#### 4.

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION** contains basic methodological presumptions of every research process: *subject, aim, former researches, hypothesis and methods*. Besides, the topics that are researched by historical and theoretical method, as this one, have a specific chapter in the Introduction and that is *Characteristics of the sources*.

Starting with the premises for research, the author emphasizes that “basketball is not the game of our, Yugoslav origin” (page 8) and that is necessary to find the place of its primordial birth and then directions and way of its development within the world scopes and Yugoslavia itself. Therefore the name of the entire research corresponds to the basic **subject of research**, “Genesis and Development of basketball in Yugoslavia” and can be deducted to a more general name “Genesis and development of basketball” (... in the world, comment B.B.) because the methodological and logical approach “from general to particular” had the capacity of making such a deduction. Conversely, in the researches which in concluding, go “from particular to general”, it is impossible to make generalization, since the research results often refer only to the investigated sample.

From so defined a subject of the research, the author determines **The Aim of research** in the following way: “forming of relatively complete opinion about basketball in Yugoslavia based on its complete former achievements”.

To realize the proving of genesis and development of basketball, the author undertook a very broad and complex approach to the research: historical, economical, political, cultural, social and sports circumstances that contributed to such a formation of basketball. Such an approach in the research of events in physical culture is unique, and at the moment of reading the material, you have an impression of reading an economical, political or culturology study. In fact, such an approach was the only possible way because, in a dialectic way, you deal with broader facts, only to be able to explain the narrower ones later: what were the historical, political and economical circumstances in the sociological-culturological

background in which basketball was appearing and developing itself.

**The review of the former researches** has been carried out in a non-standard way without displaying samples and variables, but by taking original works as samples (24 of home provenance and 21 from foreign production) and with the method of theoretic analysis of historical facts the new conclusions-theories are reached. With this methodical approach the analysis of complete works is done, so that the phenomena are not analyzed and understood particularly, but synthetically, deductively, and completely. This procedure leads to a better integral, holistic understanding of phenomena (in this case from basketball field) and enables further, deeper and wider conclusion on a higher theoretical level.

To prove the defined research subject and its focused aim, and starting from the previous experiences, and with the analysis of relevant researches so far, the author formulated **the following hypotheses**:

- Genesis of basketball in Yugoslavia is initiated by the stimuli that come from developed countries;
- Stimuli come from individuals - enthusiastic and institutions
- Openness and dynamic Yugoslav social environment facilitates the contacts and contributes to their establishment ;
- the basketball of European countries (defined as half contact by the author) followed in fact the American basketball (as a bi-contact situation) at the beginning of development of this sport in Yugoslavia
- The adoption of the imported basketball patterns is in a close connection and accordance with the inheritance, background and the moment of arrival.
- Historical facts enable the reconstruction of the flows of genesis process and in that way following of such an adaptation of a foreign pattern into an important sports qualifier of the new circumstances.
- Development of basketball in Yugoslavia is a sports reflection of a period of its growing into an outstanding European and world state individuality

- Research elaboration of Genesis and Development of basketball, by defining this sport as a process caused by crossing and pervading of different cultures, is a special contribution to the understanding of its emphasized presence in individual, institutional and social life of modern Yugoslavia

The methods used by the author in this research are unusually numerous and complex: “historical, descriptive, the method of systematic and participating observation, the method of interview, the method of analysis of pedagogical theory, the method of theoretic analysis and comparative method”. (page 19)

Reasons for such a great number of research techniques and methods lie in the fact that the author did not want to find only historical facts and to present them chronologically, his ambitions were much greater. The same historical facts were checked in theory, which was the aim of his research at the very beginning and expressed by the following hypothetical postulate: “Since **Basketball** is, with this approach, situated into a rather **wide and huge context of game, sport, culture and arts at the same time**, its setting will be reduced to the measure which is in accordance with the necessity to create a clear picture of its genesis in Yugoslavia”. (page 19, B.B.)

The chapter **Characteristics of sources** in the introduction opens the problems of topics of historical character. The fact that the author in his MA work wrote about the topic entitled: “Some problems of data interpretation in historic development of basketball, express the logically traced path for a more complex topic than “Genesis and development of basketball” is. There are only few authors that dealt with the same theme in continuity in their MA and PhD works. This process gives a bigger critical mass of information that enables a researcher to enlarge his researching context and to cumulatively broaden cognition of the researched topic on a much higher level.

## 5.

**Chapter II: ORIGIN OF BASKETBALL IN THE WORLD**, is the second chapter by its

size (from pp 23 - 80 ). In experimental, historical and theoretical way, this chapter is significant for understanding of the beginning of Basketball in the USA, as well as for its development and moving to other parts of the world, therefore here too. Logically, that’s why this chapter is divided into two parts :”**The movement of basketball in USA**” and “Basketball in Europe”. In the chapter “Movement of basketball in USA”, the author begins with two significant statements, one historical and the other theoretical:

- “... Basket ball is a game of American heritage. The first time it was played at the Springfield college in 1891 among the members of the most powerful Christian movement Y.M.C.A.” (page 26)
- “... if basketball, exactly in that country, made its dialectic jump from the **anonymous** old field game into its own **authentic** character of new field in sport in general, then we can rightfully expect that this process, with the same basis, will also be repeated in other countries, as well as in Yugoslavia, in that shape, but with possible digressions caused by their usual specificities” (page 27)

Why is basketball born in America, followed by the initial model of genesis of basketball in general. The author names the following five facts:

1. 1891 year- the year of the arrival (beginning) of basketball
2. Springfield - the place of the arrival of basketball
3. Massachusetts - The USA state where basketball started
4. Y.M.C.A. (Young Men’s Christian Association)- the religious organization in whose institution basketball started “International Y.M.C.A. Training school”
5. James A. Naismith- the Author of Basketball

Answering the question why Basketball appeared exactly in the USA, the author concludes:

“... preconditions such as “pioneering spirit”, “incomings”, “border”, “culture-crossing” and “school”, - in the measure, needed for constructive situating of facts,- “1891, Springfield,

Massachusetts, Y.M.C.A., and James A. Naismith”,- gathered together only in the USA. Nearest to that were England and even Germany, but something was always missing from this necessary historical, economical, social, scientific, sport and cultural “material”. However, in the USA all of that were “on one place”, with of course inaccessible vantages of rapid rhythm of domestic urbanization and industrialization, which other countries did not have. Therefore, the only possible answer to this question, at this moment, is: “Basketball begins in the USA, because there, at that time the best terms, existed for its appearance.” (page 38)

In the chapter “Basketball in Europe”, the author described, based on the events in the USA, the influence and development of basketball in Europe, through detailed analysis of development of basketball in 10 European countries: England, France, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Sweden. At the very beginning the author says:

“Returnable American wave, which brought with it a new game of basketball, started to “wave” the Europe itself. It was, in fact, an indispensably closing of one circle started on the territory of the Old World long time ago, when the mighty wave of Humanism and Renaissance, started with the entire and deep sense of Greek - antic heritage, arrived into the New World through England. This “come back”, despite its unusual character and freshness, had been accepted with expressive unbelief, which gives it the mark of some “illegality”. (Page 48)

The author observed genesis of European basketball, through three phases: till the end of the First World War, (1891-1918), between the two Wars (1918-1945) and after the end of the Second World War, since the year of 1945 till today. **The first phase** in the development of basketball in Europe, the author names the period of “YMCA-Basketball”. This organization provides the most complete mix of people, culture and flow of basketball ideas. It owns the rules, halls, instructors. **In the second phase**, this organization is still popular in Europe. Wars, as the specificity of European continent, contribute to this, especially “the Great” i.e. the First World War, which brings here the army of the USA, together with one strong and institutionalized YMCA. With

this world and at the same time bloody mixture of the people, comes the new, authentic support to European basketball, whose essentiality was loosing more and more of its national individualities. **In the third phase**, after the Second World War, the impulse comes again from America to European basketball. Among the American soldiers there are also numerous basketball players – professionals, who trace their later legal come back to the European clubs.

## 6.

**Chapter III: THE GENESIS OF BASKETBALL IN YUGOSLAVIA**, is the largest part of the publication (85-296 page), and with 211 pages of text, it represents the central part of exploration of genesis and development of basketball in ex Yugoslavia and particularly in its every republic and region. Because of the great time period in which the development of basketball is observed, this chapter is divided in three periods: the first period (1891-1918), the second period (1918- 1941) and the third period (1941-1980). The third period is divided into two parts: A) Occupation (1941-1945) and B) Liberation (1945-1980), and during the period between the years of 1941-1980, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Vojvodina, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia are treated separately.

Starting with the examination of the genesis and development of basketball in Yugoslavia, the author refers to the basic results that he discovered in previous chapters (the development of basketball in America and Europe ), which had been taken for the sublimation of all influences on the development of basketball in our areas, and according to that, the author emphasizes:

“Since, it is a part of this world famous and recognized Europe, Yugoslavia was according to its own genesis of this sport, although with certain delay, “accused” to repetition of its European tendencies. In the beginning, “handicapped” by its geographical locality which brought a series of destroyable wars and rebellions, Yugoslavia made it up astonishingly fast at the moment of its most complete historical identification, in other words, Liberation after successfully finished the national liberation war 1941-1945! Using, only then, to the

full extend, the rich heritage of numerous peoples and minorities, that essentially form it, as well as the rarely open social area, Yugoslavian basketball, a specific symbol of the modern and the new, emerges from the forgotten background to the European and world centre! (page 85)

In this part of the thesis, the author opens one **essential ontological question of the GAME, i.e. of basketball, which is based on the game as “the basic phenomenon of survival”** (Fink, E., 1979), and deduces one of the rare characteristics of the peoples of these regions, which is of great importance for theoretical-philosophical determination of basketball:

“Full attention has been paid to the phenomenon of the game, in this area ever since. From the open and naïve phase of numerous children’s communities (...), it passes to somehow hidden and disguised world of grownups. Mostly, it is constantly there, essentially, and not just as a “marginal event” (page 86)

From this relation to the game, the author thinks that one particular symbol had been formed and stabilized in time, as a real distinctive mark of the players from this area in team games with ball, the so called “Yugoslav mentality” (unpredictability, strange turnovers, stratagems, risk, winning of the lost, courage). For new explorers, the question remains of what happens with this mentality today? Why is our club and representative basketball so weak today? Did the mentality change or the basketball?

The **First Period** (1891-1918): in the opinion of the author, is characterized by:

“In this period, basketball is expecting only significant elementary theoretical forming of the players’ interests through the work of outstanding individuals, who use this way to connect their surroundings with “cultural western nations”- and that is why it can be considered on the whole, as a real dialectic preparation for the forthcoming periods through which this genesis would pass. (page 113)

For the **second period (1918-1941)**, the author concludes further:

“This period of basketball genesis (...), contrary to the previous, shows its concrete appearance, isolated points, enthusiastic performers, the first championship (Borovo 1940),

with the seed of new, sport legitimate matches” (page 166)

“Although this is basketball with acquired sports legitimacy, it is still not a real domestic game. The foreign influences and various deficiencies are easily noticed in it. (...) In fact, the procedure of “assimilation“, in which all the rich forms of wittiness and improvisation can be put without any specific difficulties, even with so modest specific knowledge” (page 168)

**The Third period (1941-1980)**, is extremely complex because of the significant international events (the Second World War) and their influence on basketball, so the author divides it in two sub periods: A) Occupation (1941-1945) and B) Liberation ( 1945-1980).

For the **First sub-period (1941-1945)** the author expresses his attitude:

“Basketball, even though it is in so controversial and paradox circumstances of this sub period, finds its way and possibilities not only to sustain but also to improve, compared to the previous period. (Page 187)

**The second sub-period (1945-1980)** is characterized by:

“The time of this sub period (1945-1980), which comes after the foundation of the Basketball society of Yugoslavia (KSJ), makes now one new, special whole, in the complete process of genesis and development of basketball in Yugoslavia itself.

“This independence of this sport, organizational and its liberation from all the tutورشip and any kind of subordination, finally acquired after so many years as the aim of a specific identity and legitimacy.” (page 227)

“Basketball Association of Yugoslavia created its working physiognomy gathering all available powers into the corresponding republic and provincial associations, which as the KSJ itself were doing the same function. Although they appeared as organizations after the KSJ- therefore after 1948 - they presented the key moments of the process of a regional genesis of long duration, repeating the basic flows of a universal model which largely varied in its local features, and which would, thanks to adequate policy, create what is called “Yugoslav Basketball”. (page 239)

The author then analyses in details all the relevant facts, sources, individuals, clubs, political

situations, photographs, collections, archives and other sources in former republics (Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Vojvodina, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia) and all that was relevant for the development of basketball in all federal units separately and in the whole federation into a mosaic of ideas.

## 7.

**Chapter IV: DISCUSSION-** is presented on only 9 pages of the text. Though this chapter is presented on a great number of pages in all research works, in this case it has already been done by the author in the previous chapter. In this chapter the author discusses the key methodological aspects: periodization, methods, sources, hypotheses and tries to deduce main research flows and the results he achieved.

## 8.

**Chapter V: CONCLUSION** is very short, on three pages only, and the author concisely expresses his essential findings achieved through one general and three separate conclusions.

### **General conclusion:**

“Genesis and development of basketball in Yugoslavia” represents in fact the repetition of general traits of the same process previously played, in the distant country, the real appearance of modern games and sport - in the USA and a little later in near European countries.” (page 307)

### **Particular conclusions:**

“1. In the period 1891-1918 while basketball was being formed in the USA and irresistibly was moving by different ways to the world, Yugoslavia does not exist in any common state-legal form, thus there is no basketball there in its classical form (maybe in the form of Korbball - variant, Cook provinces or “children’s game” in some teaching programs...). But there is something else that prepares field for basketball and facilitates its genesis; as in the USA, great national heterogeneity (with all its characteristics), although

on a much smaller area, intensive “mixing” with the changes of specific contents and dynamics leads to a special playing potential...” (page 307)

“2. In the period 1918-1941 the framework for the appearance of basketball was former Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Big contradictions and those realities did not prevent (but undoubtedly made it difficult!) a true creative meeting of the idea of basketball and adequate potentials of the new environment, although on the very margins of social, institutional and individual life that were held and supported by unselfish efforts of the enthusiasts in some places and towns mostly exposed to modern European trends... Powerful and soon official state organization “Sokol”, took new basketball (which had a problem to get its name); “old” Volleyball and Hazena were already involved in “Sokol” and **the phase of Sokol Basketball in Yugoslavia** started.

“3. In the Period 1941-1980, Basketball experiences two different situations, two different developing paces. During the occupation 1941-1945 basketball is not tutored any more by the organization “Sokol”, and in the internationally marked sport - which adapts itself successfully to the existing circumstances - as a section (of athletic, football, tennis club, for example), a group of enthusiasts, as the user of a new shelter, in the sports form it follows its still “poor” development and somehow maintains continuity. Basketball exists and is played even in such circumstances! This is the short-term phase of occupation basketball. The most dynamic and stormiest developing tempo is experienced in the period after the liberation, 1945-1980, and that is the Basketball of New Yugoslavia. With the foundation of the KSJ, it gets finally its sports and real independence (until that time it was involved in habitual and traditional community of “Sport games”).” (pages 308,309)

## 9.

For a well-intentioned reader who was not present at the promotion, it would be interesting to take out some significant accents from the promotion of this publication because they were told by two first-class basketball experts and a retired university professor, who used to be one of

the members of the panel for the defense of the dissertation in 1982.

**Bora Stankovic** (honorary general secretary of the FIBA):

“This work, (...) is something that hasn’t been seen and known not only in our domestic, but European, and even world basketball theory and practice. With his deep interest into essence of basketball, into the precious field of the game (..), the openness of possible engagement of the whole human habitus, body and mind, together with the spheroid magic of a ball, from somewhere, just horizontally set aim (...). Here we find a slow and gradual searching, together with a large strongpoint in the theory of game, only to arrive close to the full understanding of this play phenomenon.” (page 2)

**Vladimir Koprivica, PhD** (University Professor):

“At the time when it was written, this work presented something new in the science of physical culture, not only for its research volume and contents, but for its free, creative interpretation of collected and systemized historical material and rare objectivity of the author who kept the distance from the actual social events even when it was not easy to do it.” (page 3)

“Stanislav M. Paunic laid the historic foundations for this world important game. It can be said that the book “**Genesis and development of basketball**” is of capital importance for basketball. It will be a starting point to all future researchers of basketball history. They will have much easier task for the research of this problem after 1980 but also the obligation study it, since time is disloyal to those who do not make use of it.” (page 4)

**Milivoje Matic PhD** (a retired university professor): (Taken from the speech at the promotion: “**When I remember, my dear..**” )

“The present Paunic’s doctor’s elaboration, alias this book, used to be surprising for me, not only because of its weight (it was too heavy to “carry”). It had 700 pages of large A/4 format !?”

That surprise was present because his work differed diametrically from - I would say without hesitation - the “established practice” in projecting operationalization and writing of doctoral dissertations 25-30 years ago. (...)

It is necessary to emphasize that the so called historic-graphical, master and doctoral papers were approved and done before Paunic at this Faculty, but in most cases they were mutants. It seemed to me that Paunic, in 1982, offered to the faculty panel one unusual, freely said, **unique** doctoral work, unique -let’s add - within the field that it belongs to by its theme and method.

My delight, that I am trying to recollect now, was primarily the expression of insight in **quantity of time and energy that Paunic invested in his research**. But what I thought then and I still believe now- these two notions “quantity of time” and “level of energy”, are only metaphors or correlations of a deeper layer inside the soul of, at that time our doctoral student and it was that idiosyncratic pulsation in the dissertation that made me feel so excited.

While I was reading, all the time I kept reminding myself - sometimes I was even amazed – of **the power of spiritual (moral) attachment of Paunic to the problems he researched**. (pages 2 and 3)

“The culmination of impression for me was at that time, one independent, so called “linguistic-graphical relief structure of the text”. Something really endemic in writing of this profession”. (page 4)

“I remember that while writing my text about the dissertation, at the very defense, I rejoined Paunic, emphasizing that he, for example, firstly “wove” his topic, then he skillfully “tailored” it, carefully “fixed parts” and at last “sewed” it with unusual and enthralled threads of mind and language.” (page 5)

“Now, here I am again, standing in front of the author and his work, very delighted, as a colleague and an academician, witnessing modestly that the former opinion about the professional relevance of the book, we are today promoting, as well as methodologically based concept of research of the material, and the judgement about the model of composing of some segments of the project and its forming into a consistent, epistemic and cultural-historic structure – all these judgements expressed at the Faculty a quarter of a century ago, were not only denied by time but, on the contrary, its content was confirmed and proved as we can see by this significant publishing project.” (page 6).

## 10.

At the very end of the review of this book, it is fair to be allowed the writer himself to express **his own valuable opinion** about it. There are not so many books like this in the field of physical culture. This is a book which, in the field of historical researches in sport, i.e. specific sports game - basketball, "blazed the trail" which will be used as the foundation for new explorers. This is a book which traced the path for one in-depth theory of basketball, besides the historiographic facts ("Basketball is played athletics" B. Stankovic, 1979), and it is based on philosophic grounds of the theory of game ("Game, as one of the basic phenomena of the human existing", E.Fink, 1984). Therefore, this is a book which opened up the pioneering spirit for the theoretical and philosophical understanding of basketball, for its own ontological foundation ("Game as the guideline for the ontological explication"; "Game has its own being, independent from the conscience of the players"; "The real subject of the game is not a player, but the game itself. Game has power over the player, which makes him

involved and steady in the game"; "Games have their own special spirit"; "Game is creation, but creation is a game"; "The essence of every game is full performance, the complete performance" H.G.Gadamer, 1978).

It is impossible to express the valuable opinion about the book and not to say something **personal-emotional about the writer himself**. Professor Stanislav M. Paunic - "Bata" is my friend, buddy, older colleague, professor, man and personality from whom I have learned a lot. Even when we played basketball in Sport centre in Kosutnjak, and when we talked about basketball, our professions, science, theory, philosophy, literature and new books, we always wanted to reach something new. That curious spirit which Bata gave us in basketball and life in general, was and still is the spirit of creation and joy, exactly like it is said by H.G.Gadamer: "The joy of recognition, on the contrary, is that we get to know more from already known". Our Bata wins over with that curious spirit even in his vital eighties. Let that spirit of joy and creativity be always joyful and long-lasting.

Professor Božo Bokan