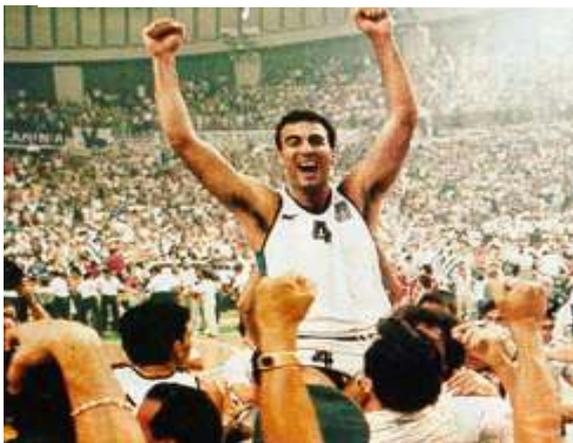


# Basketball: the most popular sport in Greece

According to the survey of sportanalytics the most popular sport in Greece is basket. As 5/6 Greeks declares, that they like this sport, 3/10 say, they have dealt with it, while ½ say, they watch their domestic and international struggles of Greek local and national teams.

The above fact is not accidental, as Greece is a country, that has a long tradition in this sport . It is the first Greek national team, that won the European title of men in any sport and the only one that has achieved consecutive pan-European and global awards. Greece is regarded as major strength of world basketball, winning the Eurobasket twice, the World Youth Championship in 1995, 2008, 2015 and having reached the Final Four in three of the last 6 World Championships of FIBA (1994, 1998, 2006).



In 1987 Greece was the host country of Eurobasket 1987, but nobody expected what would follow. The triumph of Greece in the European championship of 1987 was of crucial importance Greek sport. The victory of the national team with two points (103-101) over the USSR in the final, along with the rest of the course during the competition, made the basketball our national sport.

In the following years, and in the mid-90s, they came numerous awards in international competitions, both nationally and collectively.



At Eurobasket 2005 held in Belgrade the young team of Greece, under the guidance of the "Dragon" Panagiotis Giannakis, managed to get back the first place after 18 years. In the semifinals, Greece won 67-66 France in a dramatic match. France was ahead 51-58 a minute before the end of the game, but Greece managed to come back and win the game with a three pointer by Dimitris Diamantidis, three seconds before the end of the game. In the final, Greece won Germany with 78-62 and was crowned European champion for the second time.

At the World Championship 2006, the National Team won the second place and the silver medal as well . The Greece began striking at groups with 5 wins against Qatar, Lithuania , Australia , Brazil and Turkey. In Round 16 overcame with ease China ( 95-64 ) and in the quarter finals we won France ( 73-56 ). In the semifinal the national team defeated the US National team reaching the final unbeaten ( 101-95 ). In the final we failed to win the national spanish team and complete the hitherto impressive path ( 47-70 ) .



Then followed a decade with not so amazing performances. But the above story was the inspiration for the triumph that succeeded our national teen in recent years with the unique achievements of Eurobasket 2008, held in the Pyrgos. There national teen won the gold medal unbeaten. In the finals they defeated with 57-50

Lithounias national teens and Eurobasket 2015 held in Volos national team won the gold medal. In the final they beat the national Turkey teenagers with 64-61.

Moreover, the national local teams have achieved a lot: for instance Panathinaikos, who is the lord of Greek basketball with 6 hitherto achievements of the European Championship (1996, 2000, 2002, 2007,2009, 2011) and Olympiakos, which is «the Legend» of European and Greek basketball at the moment with the continuing achievements of the European championship (1997, 2012, 2013). These were the reasons, that led the Greeks to worship the above sport. Playing basketball whenever they can in schools in the vacant lots and even in their homes.

