

## THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF SPORT IN THE CONTEMPORARY SYSTEM OF MANAGING SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper offers an overview of the economic dimension of sport as an integral component of the contemporary system for managing sports organizations, focusing on key features of the labor market, financial flows, and institutional processes in the sports sector. The study is based on a descriptive and theoretical analysis of selected aspects of the sports economy, with an interpretative explanation of the observed phenomena. The theoretical framework is based on modern models of sports economics that explain the specific nature of the sports product, the competitive structure of leagues, and the characteristics of the sports labor market. The empirical section of the study uses Eurostat data on employment in sport, including distribution by gender, age, and educational level, in order to identify key demographic and socioeconomic patterns within the workforce. The analysis also covers the economic impacts of sporting events, investments in infrastructure, and the role of public policy in financing sports activities, with the aim of assessing broader economic implications. The results indicate the existence of structural challenges affecting the sustainability of sports organizations, including pronounced financial disparities, job volatility, and limited institutional capacity. The identified issues highlight the need to redefine managerial strategies, particularly regarding revenue diversification, optimization of business models, and strengthening of institutional support mechanisms. In

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doing so, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of economic and managerial processes in sport and offers empirically grounded guidelines for the development of more efficient and sustainable systems for managing sports organizations.

**Keywords:** sports economics, sports management, labor market, financial flows, sports organizations, economic effects of sport

## **EKONOMSKA DIMENZIJA SPORTA U SAVREMENOM SISTEMU UPRAVLJANJA SPORTSKIM ORGANIZACIJAMA**

### **APSTRAKT**

Ovaj rad nudi pregled ekonomske dimenzije sporta kao sastavne komponente savremenog sistema upravljanja sportskim organizacijama, fokusirajući se na ključne karakteristike tržišta rada, finansijskih tokova i institucionalnih procesa u sportskom sektoru. Studija se zasniva na deskriptivnoj i teorijskoj analizi odabranih aspekata sportske ekonomije, sa interpretativnim objašnjenjem posmatranih fenomena. Teorijski okvir zasniva se na savremenim modelima sportske ekonomije koji objašnjavaju specifičnosti sportskog proizvoda, kompetitivnu strukturu liga i karakteristike sportskog tržišta rada. Empirijski deo istraživanja koristi podatke Eurostata o zaposlenosti u sportu, uključujući raspodelu prema polu, starosti i nivou obrazovanja, kako bi se identifikovali ključni demografski i socioekonomski obrasci radne snage. Analiza obuhvata i ekonomske efekte sportskih događaja, investicije u infrastrukturu i ulogu javnih politika u finansiranju sportskih aktivnosti, sa ciljem sagledavanja širih ekonomskih implikacija. Rezultati ukazuju na postojanje strukturnih izazova koji utiču na održivost sportskih organizacija, među kojima su izražena finansijska neujednačenost, volatilnost radnih pozicija i ograničeni institucionalni kapaciteti. Identifikovani problemi upućuju na potrebu redefinisanja menadžerskih strategija, posebno u pogledu diversifikacije prihoda, optimizacije poslovnih modela i jačanja institucionalnih mehanizama podrške. Rad time doprinosi unapređenju razumevanja ekonomskih i menadžerskih procesa u sportu i nudi empirijski utemeljene smernice za razvoj efikasnijih i održivijih sistema upravljanja sportskim organizacijama.

**Ključne reči:** ekonomija sporta, sportski menadžment, tržište rada, finansijski tokovi, sportske organizacije, ekonomski efekti sporta

## Introduction

Building on the aforementioned theoretical and practical premises, the aim of this paper is to provide a systematic analysis of the economic dimension of sport within the contemporary system of managing sports organizations, with particular emphasis on the labor market, financial flows, the economic effects of sporting events, and the role of institutional mechanisms. The empirical section of the paper is based on Eurostat data on employment in sport for the period 2019-2024, disaggregated by gender, age, and educational level, which enables a comprehensive examination of the structural characteristics and recent trends of the workforce in the sports sector.

In line with the research objective, the study is grounded in the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Economic specificities of the sports sector are reflected in the characteristics of managerial practices in sports organizations.

**H2:** The demographic and educational characteristics of employees in sport reflect the growing professionalization and structural differentiation of the workforce.

**H3:** A review of the existing literature indicates that financial flows, investments, and public policies represent important elements of sustainability and the economic performance of sports organizations.

Such a conceptual and empirical framework allows for a deeper understanding of the economic and managerial mechanisms that shape the contemporary sports sector and provides a basis for formulating recommendations aimed at enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of sports organizations.

**Figure 1.** *The Economic Dimension of Sport*



Source: Author's illustration

The significance of studying the economic dimension of sport stems from the fact that sport today represents a substantial contribution to the overall economy. It generates revenue through consumer spending, media rights, and sponsorships, creates jobs, and influences infrastructure development. Managers of sports organizations face complex economic mechanisms (Vladislavljević, V., et. al., 2023) including cost management, revenue diversification, investment planning, and ensuring the financial sustainability of sports institutions (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2014). At the same time, policymakers at the local and national levels need to understand the economic value of sport to make rational decisions regarding investments in sports infrastructure, support for sports programs, and sector regulation. Sport thus becomes relevant not only for public finance but also for regional development and economic planning (Baade & Matheson, 2016).

The first objective of this paper is to analyze the theoretical frameworks of sports economics (Zbiljić, G., & Isaković, M. 2025), including the specific characteristics of the sports product, market structures, and institutional mechanisms that influence the functioning of the sports sector. The second objective is a quantitative examination of the demographic characteristics of the sports workforce based on Eurostat data, including employment by gender, age, and education level. The third objective involves assessing the economic impact of sporting events, investments in infrastructure, and the broader

contribution of sport to economic development. The fourth objective is to identify the key challenges facing the sports sector and to formulate recommendations for managers and policymakers.

## **Methodology**

The research is designed as a descriptive and theoretical study aimed at providing a systematic overview and interpretation of the economic dimension of sport within the contemporary system of managing sports organizations. The methodological framework is based on the analysis and synthesis of relevant scientific literature in the fields of sports economics and sports management. The study applies a non-experimental, non-causal, and interpretative approach, focusing on conceptual explanation and structured description of key economic phenomena related to sport, including the sports product, market structures, labor market characteristics, financial flows, and institutional mechanisms.

The empirical component of the research relies on secondary data obtained from the Eurostat database, covering the period 2019–2024. The data refer to employment in sport and are disaggregated by gender, age, and educational attainment level. Data analysis is conducted exclusively through descriptive interpretation of trends and structural changes, without the application of inferential statistical techniques, econometric models, or causal testing procedures. This methodological approach enables a clear and consistent examination of the dynamics and structural features of employment in sport, as well as their interpretation within the broader economic and managerial context.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Sports economics represents a branch of applied economics that examines the specific mechanisms of the sports market, the behavior of its actors, and the processes of value creation within the sports sector.

The economic dimension of sport represents a complex system in which market mechanisms, institutional structures, and social values are intertwined. Analysis of theoretical frameworks shows that the specific characteristics of the sports product and the interdependence of actors play a crucial role in the functioning of the sports market (Fort & Quirk, 1995; Andreff & Szymanski, 2006). However, recent research indicates that market (Joksimović, M. 2023). conditions in sport are increasingly being transformed due to digitalization, changes in work models, and the rise of flexible forms of engagement (Deloitte, 2025; Weight et al., 2021). Financial flows in sport, combining commercial revenues, public investment, and managerial strategies, confirm that sport

requires complex financing and revenue management models (Kudinska et al., 2025).

Unlike conventional markets, the sports market is characterized by a high degree of interdependence among competitors, as the quality of a sports product depends on competitive balance rather than the complete dominance of a single participant. This principle, known as competitive balance, remains a key determinant of demand, as confirmed by recent research (Preuss, 2021; Watanabe, Soebbing & Fu, 2022).

Sport as a product encompasses a combination of physical activity, competitive uncertainty, entertainment content, and symbolic identity, while its economic value is manifested through audience attendance, media consumption, digital platforms, and commercial activities of related industries. Recent literature particularly emphasizes the growing importance of digitalization, sports streaming, and the global fan market, which have become crucial elements of the economic value of sport (Smith & Stewart, 2020; Ratten, 2022; Zbiljić, G., Perović, A., & Đurić, Z. 2025).

The sports market can be analyzed through several interconnected segments, each contributing to the overall complexity of the sector. The first segment encompasses the market for sports services, which includes recreational programs, commercial fitness services, personalized training, and a wide range of activities aimed at individual users. This segment has experienced rapid growth in the post-pandemic period, especially through digital and hybrid service delivery models (García & Lera-López, 2023).

The second segment, the market for sporting events, encompasses the organization of competitions, leagues, and events that generate revenue through ticket sales, sponsorships, media and streaming rights, and merchandising. This segment remains the primary revenue generator in professional sport, with recent research highlighting the growing importance of global media markets and the international commercial expansion of leagues and events (Franck & Müller, 2022).

The third segment is the sports labor market, characterized by highly differentiated skills, a limited supply of elite athletes, and institutional mechanisms such as draft systems, transfers, salary cap models, and collective bargaining. Recent literature emphasizes that the sports labor market is one of the most regulated markets in the modern economy, with specific features affecting labor mobility, wage distribution, and league competitiveness (Késenne, 2020; Maxcy, 2021). The dynamism of this market is also reflected in the growing professionalization of coaching and management staff, as well as

increased demand for specialized sports managers, data analysts, and experts in sports science and technology. Empirical analysis of data indicates that employment in sport is highly sensitive to macroeconomic shocks. The 2020 pandemic exemplified a drastic reduction in employment, while the recovery from 2021 confirms the sector’s capacity for adaptation. Recent sources highlight that the sports sector increasingly operates with short-term contracts, a higher share of young workers, and a growing need for the development of human and social capital (Morgan, 2022; Weight et al., 2021). The stability of the age and educational structure of employees further emphasizes the professionalization of the sports workforce and the need for strategic competency development (Lindt, 2024).

Financial flows in sport result from the interaction of several key sources: commercial revenues (sponsorships, broadcasting rights, marketing), ticket sales, public subsidies, and infrastructure investments. The growth of revenue from media rights is of particular significance, which has transformed the financing structure of professional sport and increased the economic value of sports leagues and clubs (Gratton & Solberg, 2007). Conversely, non-profit and recreational sports organizations are more reliant on public funding and membership fees, which influence their management and development strategies.

**Figure 2.** Financial Flows in Sport



Source: Author’s illustration

Observing the share of the sports sector in GDP, it is evident that the sector is characterized by both dynamism and limited structural significance. While employment data indicate cyclical, professionalization, and relative stability of more qualified personnel, macroeconomic indicators reveal that the share of sport in GDP remains constant despite strong nominal growth in the sector. This confirms that sporting activities are growing in absolute terms, but their contribution to the national economy remains consistently low – a feature typical of under-diversified sports economies dominated by public funding. The stability of the 0.4% share highlights the limited transformative power of the sector at its current stage of development, while simultaneously indicating opportunities for strengthening private investment, the sports industry, tourism, and infrastructure development. These findings suggest that increasing the economic weight of sport requires strategic orientation toward market diversification and the stimulation of multiplier effects that the sports sector can generate within the broader economic system

In the theoretical framework, macroeconomic perspectives also play a significant role, viewing sport as a source of consumption, investment, and employment, as well as a component of broader economic development. Sport contributes to the economy through direct effects, which include revenue and jobs generated within the sector itself; indirect effects, which manifest through increased demand in complementary industries such as tourism, hospitality, transportation, and media; and induced effects, which arise from increased household consumption due to employment and higher incomes related to sport. These effects form the basis of modern input-output and Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models used to assess the economic contribution of sport at the macro level (Li, Macauley & Wicker, 2021).

The economic impacts of sporting events, including international championships, multisport events, and mega-events, are analyzed through models assessing consumption multipliers, infrastructure investment, and long-term development effects. Recent literature indicates that mega-events can generate significant short-term benefits, particularly in the tourism and service sectors, but the effects vary considerably depending on the institutional framework, investment policies, and infrastructure sustainability (Preuss, 2019; Müller, 2021). Nevertheless, empirical studies continue to emphasize caution, as the economic benefits of sporting events are often portrayed more optimistically in public documents, strategies, and political debates than in independent scientific analyses. Research shows that actual economic effects are often more modest than anticipated, yet still relevant in the context of local development, destination image, and quality-of-life improvements (Baade & Matheson, 2016; Watanabe, 2020).



The economic effects of sporting events and infrastructure investments demonstrate that sport can generate direct, indirect, and induced effects on local and regional economies (Lee, 2008; Preuss, 2007). Contemporary studies particularly emphasize that investments in sports infrastructure and event organization serve a broader purpose in regional development and employment, yet require careful cost-benefit assessment (Kutluay Tutar & Abukalloub, 2025). However, modern references also caution that publicity and high expectations often lead to overestimated economic effects, underscoring the need for rigorous analysis (Baade & Matheson, 2016).

By examining the theoretical aspects of sport as an economic system, it becomes evident that sport operates at the intersection of market mechanisms, institutional structures, and social values. The theoretical framework thus enables an understanding of how economic value is created, distributed, and consumed within sport, and provides a foundation for further empirical analyses, including the study of employment in sport and economic activity based on relevant statistical sources such as Eurostat.

### **Economic Effects of Sport**

The economic effects of sport are multiple and significant. They manifest through employment in the sports sector, the impact of sporting events on local and regional economies, and investments in sports infrastructure that stimulate growth and development. Firstly, employment in sport represents an important economic channel. According to Eurostat data, in 2023, there were 1.55 million people employed in sport within the European Union, accounting for approximately 0.76% of total employment (Eurostat, 2024). The workforce in sport is significantly younger than in other sectors. In 2023, around 37% of those employed in sport were aged 15 to 29, more than double the share of this age group in total employment (Eurostat, 2024).

Regarding gender, Eurostat records a slight predominance of men (55.2%) in sports employment, compared to 44.8% women. Educational analysis shows that nearly half of those employed in sport (45.9%) had a medium level of education (ISCED 3–4), while 39.6% held a higher education degree (Eurostat, 2024). These data indicate that the sports sector is not only a source of employment but also an important segment of the labor market with a high share of young and educated workers, making it a strategic field for management and economic policy.

The second important economic channel is the impact of sporting events on the host economy. Economists distinguish between direct, indirect, and induced effects:

- **Direct effects** include visitor spending on accommodation, food, transport, and tickets.
- **Indirect effects** arise when that initial spending circulates through local suppliers.
- **Induced effects** reflect increased household consumption resulting from higher income and employment within the community (Lee, 2008).

For example, research by AISTS employs a national accounting framework and multiplier analysis to demonstrate that sporting events can generate substantial additional revenue, increased employment, and long-term consumption (AISTS, 2021). A specific study published in MDPI on the 2020 Winter World Masters Games in Tyrol shows that the regional economic impact of the event amounted to €6.18 million, with approximately €4.40 of economic activity generated for every euro of public subsidy (MDPI, 2018). Organizers accounted for significant costs, including salaries, marketing, and infrastructure, highlighting the need for public funding of such events.

Thirdly, investments in sports facilities and infrastructure represent a long-term economic dimension. Investments in stadiums, arenas, and sports complexes not only contribute to immediate economic activity (through the construction industry and employment) but also serve as catalysts for regional development and tourism. Theoretical and empirical studies indicate that when strategically planned, such investments contribute to urban growth, city revitalization, and increased tourist attractiveness (Kramin, Miftakhov & Manushin, 2021).

Sport has the potential to influence economic growth and regional development. Large events not only boost temporary consumption, but the ongoing development of sports institutions and infrastructure can provide lasting benefits: increased employment, growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, enhanced regional image, and improved quality of life. Research on the socio-economic impact of sporting events often highlights intangible components, such as social capital and community health, which contribute to sustainable development (Sang, 2023).

## **Management and Economic Policy in Sport**

The management of sports organizations, including professional clubs, sports federations, and regional associations, requires the application of principles of economic efficiency and strategic resource management. Sports organizations operate in a complex environment that combines market and non-profit motives, and successful management depends on understanding financial flows, human resources, and institutional frameworks (Smith & Stewart, 2010). From an economic and managerial perspective, clubs and federations must

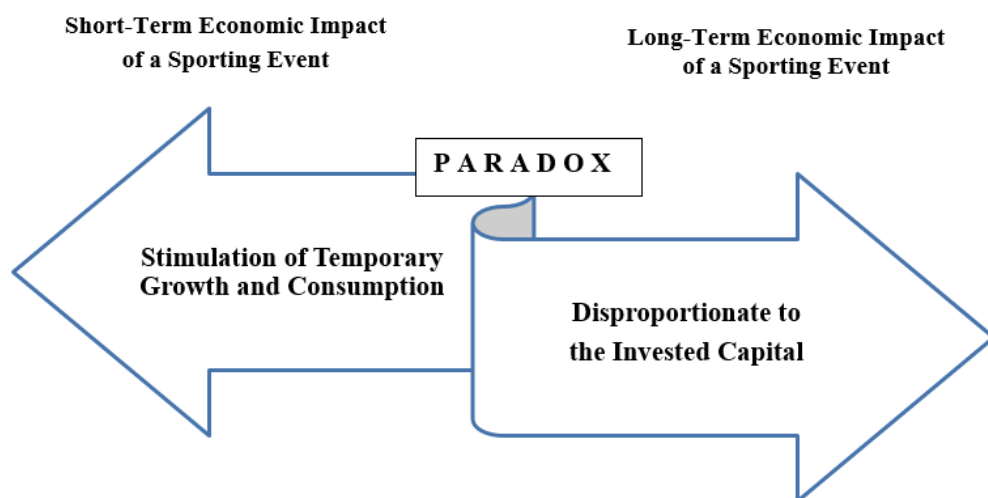
balance revenues from ticket sales, sponsorships, broadcasting rights, and public subsidies with investments in sports infrastructure and talent development. Effective management involves budget planning, cost and revenue analysis, and optimization of resource allocation to ensure the financial sustainability and competitiveness of the organization (Hoye et al., 2015; Mihajlović et al., 2024).

From a management perspective, the successful operation of sports organizations requires a holistic approach, including budget optimization, revenue diversification, human capital development, and strategic adaptation to market changes (Hoye et al., 2015; Smith & Stewart, 2010). Additionally, the modern sports industry increasingly demands multiple competencies. Sport organizations feature both a “back office” and a “front office,” and by 2025, organizations are expected to have specialists in analytics, digital channels, and talent management (Deloitte, 2025). Public policies must focus on creating frameworks that enable sustainable financing, transparency, and a balance between the private and public sectors.

Financing sport represents a key challenge and consists of a combination of public and private sources. The public sector invests in sports infrastructure and programs, using cost-benefit analyses to justify investments in stadiums, recreational centers, and educational programs. Private sources, including sponsorships and the sale of media rights, generate substantial revenues for professional leagues and clubs, while financing optimization ensures maximum value for each euro invested. For example, research indicates that applying budget optimization models in the financing of sports clubs can increase the efficiency of fund allocation, particularly in the context of small and medium-sized clubs with limited resources (Garcia & Rodriguez, 2019).

A specific segment of management and economic policy relates to the organization and financial impact of mega-events, such as the Olympic Games, World Championships, and international competitions. While mega-events generate significant revenue and enhance the attractiveness of the host destination, they also carry high risks and often lead to financial and logistical challenges. Paradoxes in sports economics indicate that, although events can stimulate temporary growth and consumption, long-term economic effects are not always proportional to the capital invested and require careful planning and evaluation (Preuss, 2007; Gratton & Solberg, 2007). Strategic management of mega-events involves assessing direct, indirect, and induced effects, planning sustainable infrastructure, and maximizing social benefits, thereby minimizing risks and increasing the overall value of the event for the local and national economy.

**Figure 3. Paradox of Sports Economics**



Source: Author's illustration

Overall, management and economic policy in sport require the integration of economic analysis principles, financial planning, and strategic management to achieve objectives of sustainability, competitiveness, and contribution to local and national economies. The combination of public and private financing, budget optimization, and careful planning of mega-events represents key instruments through which managers and policymakers govern the sports sector.

### **Analysis of Employment Trends 2019–2024**

The analysis of employment trends in the sports sector from 2019 to 2024 provides valuable insight into the structure and dynamics of the sports labor market, particularly in the context of economic shocks, changes in demand, and the long-term professionalization of activities. Observing the total number of employees, the age structure of the workforce, and education levels allows for a multi-layered understanding of the factors shaping labor supply and demand in sport. From an economic perspective, these trends reflect the cyclical nature of the industry, the sector's sensitivity to macroeconomic conditions, and the role of human capital in maintaining stability (Dašić et al., 2024; L'Abate et al., 2025).

From a managerial perspective, the data provide a basis for assessing organizational capacities, the sustainability of workforce structures, and the need for strategic human resource planning. Such an integrated approach enables a deeper understanding of the transformations occurring within the sports sector and the identification of key economic and managerial implications.

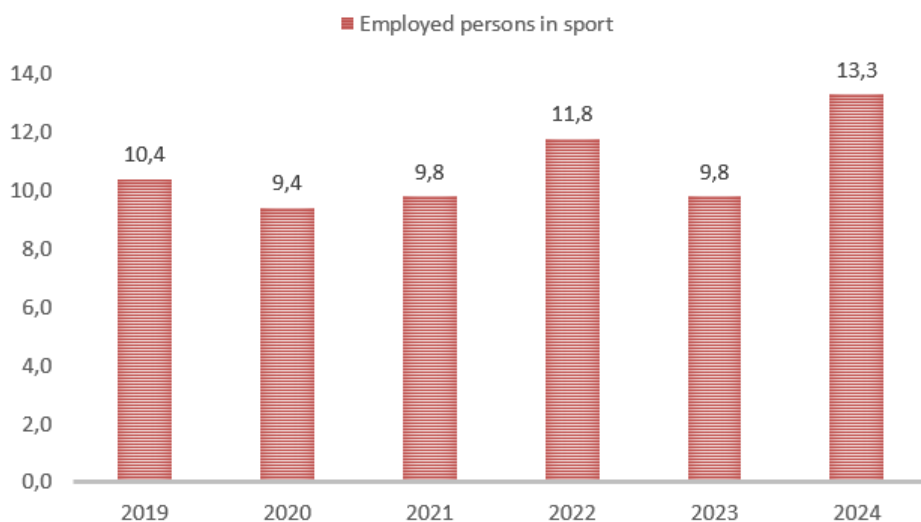
**Table 1.** Employed persons in sport, by age and by educational attainment level  
(thousand persons)

Year	Employed persons in sport	Employed persons in sport by age	Employed persons in sport by educational attainment level
			
<b>2019</b>	10.4	14.3	14.3
<b>2020</b>	9.4	12.2	12.2
<b>2021</b>	9.8	15.0	15.0
<b>2022</b>	11.8	15.2	15.2
<b>2023</b>	9.8	15.9	15.9
<b>2024</b>	13.3	19.4	19.4

Source: Eurostat, 2025.

Data on employment in the sports sector from 2019 to 2024 reveal significant changes largely associated with external economic and social factors. Total employment declined in 2020, which can be attributed to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of sports facilities, and restrictions on public gatherings, while the cancellation of events and reduced activities directly affected the number of employees. This decline clearly demonstrates that employment in sport is not absolutely stable and that the sector responds to economic shocks, confirming the cyclical nature of the labor market in this field. From 2021 onwards, a gradual recovery in employment is observed, and by 2024, total employment reaches 13.3 thousand, suggesting not only a recovery but also the potential growth of the sector following the crisis period.

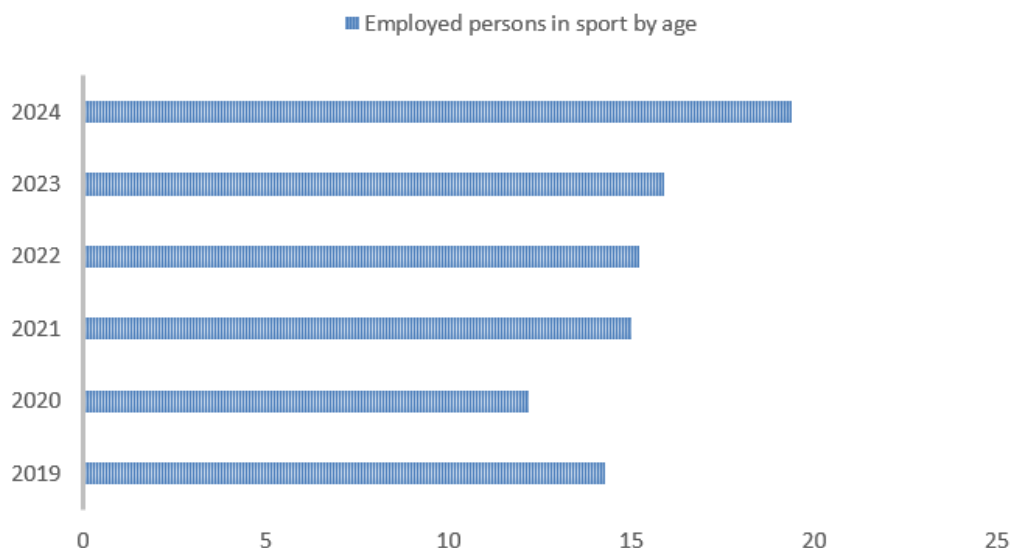
**Figure 1.** Employed persons in sport, 2019–2024.



Source: Eurostat, 2025.

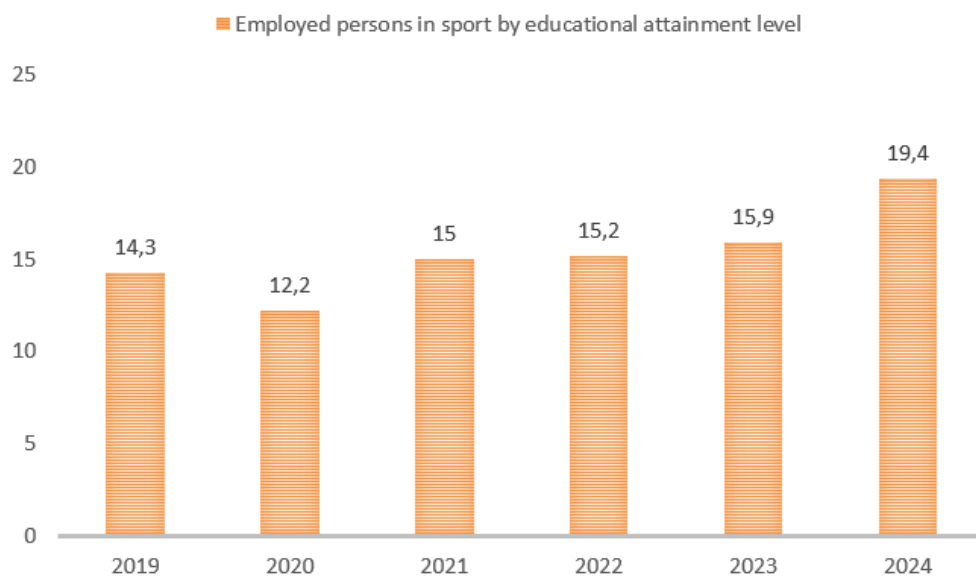
In addition to total figures, the distribution of employees by age and education shows a more stable growth, indicating the resilience of the professional and skilled segment of the workforce. This trend reflects the professionalization of the sector and supports human capital theory (Becker, 1964), which posits that higher levels of education and expertise contribute to more stable employment and higher incomes, even during crisis periods. Furthermore, changes in employment numbers also reflect seasonal and structural effects, including short-term contracts and the nature of activities dependent on seasonal calendars. The gradual growth following the crisis year of 2020 demonstrates the sector's capacity to adapt through innovations, digitalization, the development of e-sports, and the organization of remote training, thereby ensuring employment continuity and strengthening workforce resilience.

**Figure 2.** Employed persons in sport by age, 2019–2024.



Source: Eurostat, 2025.

**Figure 3.** Employed persons in sport by educational attainment level, 2019–2024.



Source: Eurostat, 2025.

Overall, these analyses indicate that the sports sector, although subject to fluctuations, is capable of retaining a skilled workforce and developing its

human capital in the long term, with employment trends clearly reflecting a combination of economic, seasonal, and social factors shaping the labor market in this field.

The analysis of employment data in the sports sector from 2019 to 2024 provides important insights for managerial strategies, particularly regarding human resource management and workforce planning. The decline in 2020 clearly highlights the need for the development of flexible employment models that allow for adjustments in staff numbers and organizational capacities during crisis situations. Given that external shocks, such as pandemics or economic recessions, can significantly impact the normal course of activities, management should develop reserve workforce mechanisms and business continuity plans that ensure the maintenance of key functions and the retention of skilled personnel even during periods of reduced activity.

Furthermore, the analysis clearly emphasizes the importance of developing human capital in the sector. Investing in education, training, and professional development not only enhances employment stability but also contributes to the sector's resilience to labor market fluctuations. Workers with higher levels of education and qualifications demonstrate greater resistance to workforce reductions during crisis periods, implying that strategic human resource management must include continuous skills development and the promotion of professional growth.

The economic resilience of the sector is further supported by the fact that, despite variations in total employment, skilled and experienced personnel remain stable and essential for maintaining operational continuity. Based on these findings, it is recommended that management develop additional support mechanisms, including flexible contract models, insurance programs, and other forms of employee protection during crisis periods, thereby not only preserving human capital but also contributing to the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the sector.

### **Macroeconomic Significance of the Sports Sector: Contribution to GDP (2023-2024)**

Following the analysis of variations in employment, age, and educational structure of the workforce, it is evident that the sports labor market is characterized by cyclicity, professionalization, and relative stability of skilled personnel. However, for a comprehensive understanding of the economic dimension of sport, it is necessary to extend the analysis beyond the labor force and consider the sector in terms of its contribution to the overall economy.



In addition to the microstructure of employment, an important indicator of the economic weight of sport is its share in the gross domestic product (GDP), which allows for the assessment of sport’s relative position within the national economy. In this context, data on the value of the sports sector for the period 2023–2024 provide a basis for evaluating the macroeconomic significance of sporting activities and their development.

**Table 2.** Contribution of the Sports Sector to the GDP of the Republic of Serbia (2023–2024)

Year	Value of the Sports Sector (million RSD)	Share in GDP (%)
2023	32.519,4	0,4%
2024	40.543,2	0,4%

Source: RZS, 2025.

Based on available data, the sports sector achieved a value of 32,519.4 million RSD in 2023, contributing 0.4% to the total GDP. In 2024, the nominal value of the sector increased to 40,543.2 million RSD, while its share of GDP remained unchanged at 0.4%. This dynamic requires careful interpretation from the perspective of sports economic analysis.

Firstly, the nominal growth of the sector between the two observed years amounts to approximately 24.7%, representing an above-average increase compared to typical economic growth rates. This growth in the value of sporting activities can be attributed to higher public sector financial support, increased demand for sports and recreational services, and revenue growth generated through the organization of sporting events, sports tourism, and the sports equipment market.

However, the fact that sport’s share of GDP remained unchanged implies that the overall economy experienced a proportionally similar nominal growth. Thus, although the sports sector is growing in absolute terms, its structural position within the national economy remains stable. This indicates a relatively modest macroeconomic significance of sport, which in Serbia, similar to most developing countries, provides a stable but still limited contribution to the formation of total value added.

From the perspective of sectoral economic development theory, this finding is characteristic of economies where sport is not fully market-diversified and public funding dominates. The stability of the 0.4% share suggests that the sports sector has not experienced sufficiently intensive growth to change its relative weight in GDP, highlighting the potential need to strengthen private

investment, develop the sports industry, improve infrastructure, and increase the role of sports tourism.

Although the sports sector shows noticeable nominal growth, its role in the national economy remains structurally limited. This opens opportunities for further research, particularly regarding the multiplier effects of sporting activities, the potential for employment growth, and the possibilities for sport to become a more significant developmental resource in the coming period.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides a comprehensive descriptive and theoretical analysis of the economic dimension of sport within contemporary sports organizations. The findings highlight the specific characteristics of the sports labor market, including its cyclical nature, professionalization, and structural differentiation, confirming the relevance of **H1**, economic specificities of the sports sector are reflected in managerial practices, shaping organizational strategies and workforce planning. Similarly, the analysis of demographic and educational trends in the sports workforce supports **H2**, indicating a growing professionalization and stabilization of skilled personnel, even during periods of economic shocks. The examination of financial flows, investments, and public policies aligns with **H3**, showing that these elements provide a context for understanding sustainability and economic performance, without implying direct causal relationships.

The study also identifies several structural challenges, such as financial disparities, job volatility, and limited institutional capacity, which managers and policymakers must consider. While the analysis is limited by its reliance on secondary data and descriptive methods, it offers valuable insights into employment patterns, economic impacts of sporting events, and infrastructure investment. Future research could expand the scope by incorporating longitudinal data, comparative cross-country analyses, or inferential methodologies to explore causal mechanisms and the effectiveness of managerial strategies in greater depth. Overall, the paper contributes to a better understanding of the economic and managerial processes in sport and provides a foundation for developing more efficient and sustainable management systems in the sector.

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