



# DETINJSTVO JE ZAVRŠENO

CHILDHOOD IS OVER

Nacionalni plan je da se uspostavi veza sa srpskom dijasporom u Australiji, kao put da se prepoznaju vrhunski igrači i novi talenti koji bi mogli igrati za Srbiju, a i kao potencijalna praksa za slanje perspektivnih mladih igrača iz Srbije u Australiju. Srbija trenutno zauzima 11. mesto na svetskoj rang listi, sa velikom ambicijom da još napreduje. Kao deo tog plana, legendarni australijski trener Brajan Smit prihvatio je mesto savetnika nacionalnog tima za predstojeće kvalifikacije za svetsko prvenstvo.

**e** National plan is to establish ties with the Serbian Diaspora in Australia as a way of identifying top players and emerging talent eligible to play for Serbia, and also as a potential route to sending prospective young players from Serbia to Australia. Serbia is now ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the world, with a strong ambition to advance. As part of the plan, legendary Australian coach Brian Smith accepted the position of national team advisor for the upcoming world cup qualification.

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rupa igrača amaterskog ragbija 13 (ragbi liga) iz Srbije, naviknutijih na putovanje šest sati autobusom da bi igrali na blatnjavom ili zaleđenom terenu protiv Sokolova iz Vranja, grada na jugu Srbije, nego na interkontinentalni let od dvadeset sati, našla se na putovanju od Beograda do Sidneja u Australiji.

Ovo neobično sportsko putovanje deo je kampanje Ragbi 13 federacije Srbije u kvalifikacijama za svetski kup, ali je u početku bilo motivisano osećajem nepravde i utiskom da im je pobjeda ukradena.

Kada je najavljeno da se na Kupu Balkana 2015 takmiče Bosna, Srbija, Mađarska i Grčka, u Srbiji su očekivanja da se pobjedi bila velika, s obzirom na nivo domaćeg takmičenja i prethodne rezultate na međunarodnoj sceni. U Srbiji su toliko verovali u pobjedu da se nacionalna federacija nije trudila čak ni da zove igrače koji igraju u francuskim klubovima.

Grčka je pak imala sopstvene ambicije, pa je zvala mnoge „grčke“ talente, iako su to bili samo talenti iz Australije s grčkim poreklom.

Tako se dogodilo da je srpska zajednica ragbija 13 – igrači, uprava i navijači – bila veoma nezadovoljna, uz osećaj da su nasamareni, kada se grčki tim u Beogradu pojavio sa devet australijskih državljana i očekivano savladao reprezentaciju Srbije u premijernom Kupu Balkana.

Tako je rođen australijski projekat Ragbi 13 Federacije Srbije – plan da se uspostavi veza sa srpskom dijasporom u Australiji, da to bude put da se prepoznaju vrhunski igrači i novi talenti koji mogu da igraju za Srbiju, i mogućnost da se mladi i perspektivni igrači iz Srbije šalju u Australiju.

Godina napornog rada i povezivanja rezultirala je putovanjem osmorice srpskih igrača i dva člana uprave, u februaru, u Australiju, gde su se pridružili dvanaestorici australijsko-srpskih igrača koji će igrati na turniru „devetke“ (turnirskoj verziji ragbija 13) i odigrati međunarodnu prijateljsku utakmicu protiv Filipina – još jedne nacije koja napreduje u ovom sportu.

Kako se sledeći svetski kup ragbija 13 održava u Australiji i na Novom Zelandu 2017. godine, ova godina je važna za srpski ragbi. Oktobar 2016. će biti vrhunac, jer se tada igraju kvalifikacioni mečevi protiv Velsa, Italije i Rusije.

Iako to nije poznato, osim najvatenijim navijačima ove igre na međunarodnom nivou, Srbija je napravila velike korake od ponovnog osnivanja Ragbi 13 federacije Srbije 2002. Sa dinamičnom i konkurentnom amaterskom ligom kod kuće, srpski treneri su uspeli da odneguju igrače, od njihovih tinejdžerskih godina, koji sada igraju profesionalno, ili bar poluprofesionalno, u Francuskoj – što je daleko od Vranja. Na međunarodnoj sceni Srbija zauzima jedanaesto mesto, a srpska reprezentacija je aktuelni prvak Evropske lige B, u kojoj su Italija, Rusija i Ukrajina.

Mesto na svetskoj rang-listi i napredak igre na terenu u Srbiji su verovatno i razlozi što je legendarni australijski trener Brajan Smit, trenutno glavni trener Vejkfild trinity vajldketa u Superligi Velike Britanije, prihvatio mesto savetnika nacionalnog tima za predstojeće kvalifikacije.

Smitove obaveze u klubu su ga sprečile da predvodi tim u Australiju ovog puta, ali je zato doveo iskusnog trenera ragbija Džejsona Grina, koji je bez sumnje bio iznenađen time da ragbi 13 uopšte postoji u Srbiji, ali je priznao da je zavidljiv momcima koji su otputovali iz Beograda.

„Njihova fizička sprema je impresivna. Snaga i kretanje je ne-



Srpski igrači koji su učestvovali u ovom istorijskom putovanju: Dalibor Vukanović (trener), Stefan Nedeljković i Steva Stevanović (svi iz RK Dorćol), Miloš Zogović, Miloš Čalić, Vojislav Dedić i Vladislav Dedić (svi iz RK Crvena zvezda) i Džavid Jašari (RK Partizan) 🇷🇸 The Serbian players who made this historic journey: Dalibor Vukanović (c), Stefan Nedeljković and Steva Stevanović (all Dorćol RLK), Miloš Zogović, Miloš Čalić, Vojislav Dedić and Vladislav Dedić (all Red Star RLK) and Džavid Jašari (Partizan RLK)

Pripreme za kvalifikacije za Svetski kup 2017. intenzivne su i gotovo neprekidne, iako se radi o igračima-amaterima sa drugim redovnim zanimanjima 🇷🇸 Preparations for the qualification matches for the 2017 World Cup are intense and almost continuous, even though these are amateur players with other ordinary occupations

što što se ističe kod svakog od njih, u pripremama i na mečevima. Takođe, izgleda da veoma dobro poznaju igru, ali kao i kod većine mladih igrača, postoji prostor da da još mnogo toga nauče i dodaju svojoj igri“, rekao je Džejson za *Elevate*.

Gde god se igra, ragbi je veoma popularan sport – Sidnej, Brizbejn, Okland Port Moresbi, Jorkšir, Lankašir, Kambrija, i južna Francuska... ali Srbija?! Čak ni Rasel Krou, vlasnik Rabbitosa iz južnog Sidneja, nije mogao ni da zamisli da će ratnici srpskog ragbija 13 sa Balkana leteti radi borbe na sidnejskom fudbalskom terenu.

„Uvek rado i s ushićenjem dočekujemo timove, kao ovaj iz Srbije, jer većina navijača voli slabije. Za sve navijače u svetu je pravo uživanje gledati kako se nepoznati igrači strastveno bore, uprkos tome što nemaju neku reputaciju“, objašnjava Džejson. „Vole



🇷🇸 A group of amateur rugby league players from Serbia, more accustomed to travelling six hours by bus to play on muddy or icy fields against the Hawks of South-Serbian city Vranje, than to 20-hours intercontinental flight, found themselves travelling from Belgrade to Sydney in Australia.

This unusual sporting journey forms part of the Serbian Rugby League Federation's world cup qualification campaign, but was initially motivated by a sense of injustice and a feeling of being robbed of victory.

The announcing of Bosnia, Serbia, Hungary and Greece as the competing nations for rugby league's 2015 Balkan Cup led to high expectations of victory in Serbia – considering the level of the respective domestic competitions and previous international results. So confident of victory was Serbia that the national federation

didn't even bother recalling national team players based at clubs in France for the cup competition.

Greece, on the other hand, had ambitions of its own, and a mass of "Greek" talent to call on – albeit Greek heritage talent from Australia.

And so it was that the Serbian rugby league community – players, administrators and supporters alike – were left deeply frustrated and feeling somehow swindled when a Greek team featuring nine Australian nationals turned up in Belgrade and duly defeated the Serbian national team, to pinch the inaugural Balkan Cup.

Thus was born the Serbian Rugby League Federation's Project Australia – a plan to establish ties with the Serbian Diaspora in Australia as a way of identifying top players and emerging talent eligible to play for Serbia, and also as a potential route to sending prospective young players from Serbia to Australia.

With the next Rugby League World Cup to be held in Australia and New Zealand in 2017, this year is huge for Serbian rugby league

A year's worth of hard work and networking resulted in eight Serbian rugby league players and two administrators travelling in February to Australia, where they joined 12 Australian-Serb players to compete in a rugby nines tournament and to play an international test match against the Philippines – another of the sport's emerging nations.

With the next Rugby League World Cup to be held in Australia and New Zealand in 2017, this year is huge for Serbian rugby league; 2016 will culminate in October with world cup qualification matches to be played against Wales, Italy and Russia.

Though it is not well known beyond diehard followers of the game internationally, Serbia has made great strides since the Rugby League Federation was re-established in 2002. With a dynamic and competitive amateur league at home, Serbian coaches have man-





Utakmica sa Filipinima na kojoj su zajedno nastupili igrači iz Srbije i igrači srpskog porekla iz Australije

The match against the Philippines featured players from Serbia and players of Serbian origin from Australia playing together for the first time

da gledaju kako nepoznati tim igra čvrsto, a često se i pojedinci iznenade i zablistaju na velikoj svetskoj sceni.“

Ovaj iskusni trener je rekao da će ubuduće više obratiti pažnju na razvoj srpskog ragbija 13.

„Brajan Smit je mnogim igračima domaće lige napomenuo da treba da shvate šta oni misle da im treba, da bi dalje napredovali, kao i šta su to pronašli u sebi i ragbiju 13 na ovoj australijskoj turneji“, kaže Džejson. „Smiti će rado osmisliti programe i za igrače koji nisu na turneji, ali jesu važni za Srbiju u kvalifikacijama za Svetski kup ove godine. Cilj je da svi igrači koji žele da učestvuju u kvalifikacijama budu izuzetno fizički spremni.“

Na pitanje da li srpski igrači treba da razmotre mogućnost da samostalno u Australiji pokušaju da nađu klub za koji bi igrali, što se pokazalo uspešnim za nekoliko srpskih igrača u Francuskoj, Džejson odgovara potvrdno.

„To bi mogli da urade svi igrači izvan Australije. Mogu mnogo da nauče za kratko vreme igrajući „Ozi stilom“ ragbija 13. To je i veliko životno iskustvo.“

Šta god da budućnost nosi tom sportu u Srbiji, ovo iskustvo će sigurno obogatiti srpski ragbi 13 koji je još u pvoju, a oni koji su bili na ovom putovanju imaju šta da pričaju svojim unucima. ☺

aged to nurture players from their early teens who now play professionally, or at least semi-professionally, in France - which is a long way from Vranje. On the international front, Serbia is now ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the world and the Serbia team are reigning champions of European Group B, which also includes Italy, Russia and Ukraine.

Indeed, it was probably this world ranking and the progress in grassroots development of the game in Serbia that prompted legendary Australian coach Brian Smith - currently head coach at the Wakefield Trinity Wildcats in the UK Super League - to accept the position of national team advisor for the upcoming world cup qualification campaign.

Smith's UK club commitments prevented him from leading the team to Australia this time around, but in his stead he brought in experienced rugby league coach Jason Green, who was no doubt surprised that rugby league exists in Serbia, but was admittedly impressed by the boys who had travelled from Belgrade.

“Their physical aspect was impressive. Strength and general movement stood out in all of the guys throughout training preparation and in the matches. They also seem to know the game quite well, but like most young guys they can

learn a great deal to add to their game,” Jason told Elevate.

Where rugby league is played, it is a “big” and very popular sport - Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland, Port Moresby, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumbria, and Southern France... but Serbia?! Even South Sydney Rabbitohs' owner Russel Crowe probably couldn't have imagined Serbian league warriors would be flying in from the Balkans to do battle on the “footy” fields of Sydney.

“There is a real good will and excitement about teams like Serbia, because most footy fans love the underdog. Watching young unknowns play so passionately, despite not having big reputations, is a real joy for fans of our game all over the world,” explains Jason. “They love watching an unknown team play hard and individuals surprise themselves sometimes on that big stage of international rugby league.”

This experienced coach says he will be paying closer attention to the development of the Serbian domestic league in the future.

“Brian Smith has spoken to many of the players in the domestic competition to understand what they feel they need in order to find further improvement and what they found out about themselves and rugby league from this Australian tour”, says Jason. “Smithy is also very keen to work out programmes with those players who did not make the tour, but are really important for Serbia in the World Cup qualifiers later this year. Getting them all into great physical performance programmes is a goal for all our players who want to be part of the qualifiers.”

Asked if he believes Serbian players should consider travelling independently to Australia to try to find a club to play for - an endeavour that has proved successful for a handful of Serbian players in France - Jason responds positively.

“That's a step almost all players outside of Australia could do. Players can learn a lot in a short time in the Aussie style of rugby league. It's a great life experience too.”

Whatever the future holds for the game in Serbia, this experience will certainly enrich Serbian rugby league, which is still in its infancy, and ensure those who made the trip have a tale to tell their grandkids. ☺



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