

## THE SPORTS OFFER – THE CORE PART OF THE SPORT ORGANIZATION’S MARKETING PROGRAM

UDC 796.01

502.7:061

**Milan Gašović<sup>1</sup>, Djurdjica Vukajlović<sup>2</sup>,  
Nikola Ćurčić<sup>3</sup>, Miroslav Zivković<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Management, University Singidunum,  
Belgrade, Serbia

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Applied Management, Economics and Finance, University Bussines Academy,  
Belgrade, Serbia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Management, University Union – Nikola Tesla, Belgrade, Serbia

<sup>4</sup>College of Sports and Health, Belgrade, Serbia

**Abstract.** *The sports offer (product), as a central part of the sports organizations, i.e. clubs or athletes - individuals, as a marketing program, can be considered through five of its levels, depending on the hierarchy of value for interested parties (visitors, media, advertisers, sponsors, sports agents, and the like.). These five levels are: sport experience, sport events, sports scores, the image of sports organizations and sport individuals (sportsman) and sports brand. The sports offer must be of high quality in order to attract interested parties, and increasing the popularity of the sports offer is done through numerous marketing activities.*

**Key words:** *Sport offer, sport experience, sport event, sport scores, the image of sports organizations*

### INTRODUCTION

Philip Kotler (2006, 9) defines product as “Anything that can be offered to the market in striving to meet the specific desires and needs. Sometimes used are the other terms such as offer or solution”. Kotler and Keller (2017, 369) point out that marketing planning begins with an offer that will meet the needs and desires of targeted customers.

---

Received December 03, 2016 / Accepted March 20, 2018

**Corresponding author:** Milan Gašović

Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Management, University Singidunum, St. Danijelova 32, 11000  
Belgrade, Serbia

Phone: +381 11 309 32 42 • E-mail: lsmg@ptt.rs

The mentioned authors also state that the products offered on the market include: physical goods, services, experiences, events, destinations, property, organization, information and ideas (2017, p. 368).

Based on the nature of the product and its complexity, Kotler (2006, 431) explains the opinion that marketing experts, in the process of creating a comprehensive marketing program, and marketing mix for a previously identified target market - must take into account the five levels of products, which make up the hierarchy of values for all stakeholders interested in their offer, which include: the essential benefit, the basic product; the expected product; enriched product and potential product.

Comprising the premise that the product sometimes uses the term offer, some authors connect these two terms, claiming that the “product offering is the central part of the organization marketing program and, usually, the starting point in the creation of marketing mix” programs (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2013, 164)

The above mentioned basic marketing principles motivate authors engaged in the sport marketing to seek answers to the question what could be a central part of the marketing program of sports organizations.

### **Theoretical framework**

Mullin, Hardy & Sutton (2014, 257), under the term of sport marketing include “all activities designed to meet needs and desires of sports customers through the process of exchange”. However, they do not indicate what would be a central part of the new creation and offer for the stakeholders interested in the offer.

According to Masterman (2014, 206), a sports product includes a sporting event as a whole and all the various elements of which it consists (idea, field, time, services). For this key role, participants of events, i.e. teams, and even the audience create a special atmosphere. It follows from the above attitudes that the author emphasizes the key role of the teams when it comes to the nature of the sporting product, but this also includes a variety of products and services related to sports events.

Pitts & Stotler (2006) use the term “sports industry” in order to connect on this basis, to “clean sports activities”, as well, “sport-related businesses”. They treated the sport industry as part of the entertainment industry, resulting in entities interested in products offered by sports organizations, which fulfill the need for entertainment.

Pope (2011) considered marketing applied to the field of sport as involving marketing sporting events or performances. For him, the sports product is actually a sports event. He discusses that people come to sports venues to meet the need for entertainment. However, the question is which kind of needs meet other entities interested in what is offered by sports organizations. Primarily, it refers to the media, advertisers, sponsors, sports agents, and so on. Fullerton (2007, 189) thinks that by a narrower understanding the sporting product itself is a game taking place on the ground. However, it also offers a wider interpretation of the sporting product, according to which there are three categories: the sports spectrum, sports participants and sports goods.

Some authors, including Brooks (1994, 217) considered that the sport product consists of tangible and intangible components; the first comprises the very event and its actors. Intangible components of sport products, the same author lists as the following: sublime; caring; pride and pleasure. This attitude is a good basis of defining the central part of the sport organizations’ offer (product).

Shank & Lyberger (2014) define a sports product as a good, service or combination, which should provide benefits for the audience, participants and sponsors. Beech & Chadwick (2010) consider that the sports product combines tangible elements (sports objects, players, etc.) and intangible (fans experience, offered services, etc.) and can be considered to have a multi-level structure. The intent of this work is a clear distinction between the game, that is, what is offered by sports teams or athletes in individual sports on the ground. Publicity, advertisers, media and sponsors are just interested in the game itself and its peculiarities.

Tomić (2007, 87), starting from sport organization offers to targeted segments of the sport market, comes to the conclusion that the sport product is segmented into: sport image, sport event, sport brand and sport services. Ljubojević (2001, 49), on the other hand, rightly notes that when it comes to sports products, the experience of the audience should be envisaged.

Discussing the marketing postulates that the product can be called an offer or solution, and that can be considered over the five levels of the customers' value hierarchy, this paper points to the need for a more precise definition of sport marketing, in order to establish a core of sport organizations' offers. This issue requires separate consideration of marketing applied by sports organizations from the field of marketing for sports-related products - services, marketing entertainment industry, etc. Nevertheless, marketing of sports organizations could be defined as a sport-business orientation which focuses on the current and potential partners (audience, media, advertisers, intermediaries, etc.), interested in the offer of these organizations. This requires separate consideration of the products (offerings) of sports organizations (clubs, athletes, sportsmen) from the offer for sport related products / services, entertainment industry offers, etc. The sports offer, depending on its five levels, is attended by the following subjects from the sports auditorium: audiences, media, advertisers, sponsors, agents, licensed customers, stock buyers, etc. Sport marketing is a combination of four instruments: sport offer, price, place, and promotion. It seems that a sports offer is a more appropriate name for the product which sport organizations offer to their interested parties (Gašović, 2009).

The main issue related to this paper is a detailed analysis of sport offerings (products) consisting of five levels of the hierarchy of values for entities interested in what sports organizations offer. Those levels are as follows: sport experience, sport event, sports scores, sport image and sports brand.

A sports offer which will be known to a wide auditorium must be based on marketing efforts, but the recognition of sports offers depend on the attitude to the supporters of sports clubs and individuals to the products they offer. It is important for sports that marketing people be at every point in the place and at the time where their fans are, but also have to distance themselves from traditional marketing and engage in the marketing communication with contemporary electronic media (Pfahl, 2014). It is extremely important to develop, implement and use marketing to engage partners, sympathizers and staff of sports teams in order to maximize each investment.

In sports, it is extremely important that business is being developed (B2B) in order to attract sponsors of sports clubs, organized season tickets, exclusive broadcasting rights, etc. (Waren, 2015). Of course, the link with sports clubs through the relationship to consumers (B2C) is important, although this connection is only the ultimate result of marketing efforts and investments in business aspects and the link with the economy.

The first assumption from which the sport product is analyzed is the possibility of its more precise interpretation and separate consideration of what sport clubs, teams or sporting events offer at the competitions itself, from products and services related to these competitions.

Another assumption is that, according to the hierarchy of values for stakeholders, it is possible to distinguish five levels of sports products (offers) and that their interest in sport related to products and services are far less significant.

The third assumption is that it is adequately the central offer of sports clubs, individuals and events expressed through the game and competition that is called a sports offer.

The basic method used in this paper is the method of analysis, as a miscellaneous disassembly of a complex phenomenon such as a sports product or sports offer. The methodological procedure of the elementary-logical-formal analysis based on elementary-logical theoretical models (five levels of products according to the hierarchy of values for customers) was used. In doing so, the logical conclusion, or the implementation of a new bet, comes from the starting points, given positions and courts that have been presented by various authors about the sporting product.

### **Nature and understanding of the sport offer**

Considering the marketing postulates that the offer (product) are all the goods that can be offered to the market in order to satisfy customer's desires, needs, and demands, marketing experts are obliged to provide answers to three key questions, discussing the very core of the sport offer (product) or offers (products) (Gašović, 2009).

When taking into account the nature of the sports market, key groups of entities interested in sports organization's offer are identified. According to Gašović (2009, 92), they are:

- Sport fans who buy tickets for sporting events, as well as TV subscribers to sports channels
- Annual subscribers and members of sports clubs who buy tickets in advance and pay a membership fee
- Media
- Sponsors
- Advertisers
- Buyers of sports-related products and services, etc.

Thus, what kinds of customer needs do sport organizations need to meet or satisfy through their activities? Some authors such as Pope & Turko (2001) stated that fans or sport events' buyers of tickets come to a sports venue to meet the need for entertainment. Fun, ownership of identity cards, and club membership are a kind of emotional reward. However, reports advertisers and sponsors meet the need for access to the audience.

Analyzing in more detail the above needs for entertainment, emotional reward; access to the audience, etc. The question is what is the "common thread" that links between all these types of customer needs that the offer of sports organizations satisfies? Without discarding the possibility of different interpretations, it seems that all potential stakeholders of sports activities experience those activities in their own way.

The above results in the fact that the sport experience is the common factor of all stakeholders.

### **Sport experience as a first level of sport offer**

Sport experience of entities interested in sports offers, especially for the fans, can comprise the style of play through its appeal, manifested in speed, harmony and movement beauty, strength, physical components and so on. The fullness of experience, first of all, may create world-class sport stars with unpredictable dribbles, goals, defenses and so on. Therefore, sports stars increase the drama of sports experiences, turning them into spectacles. That is they reason why sport organizations or clubs, selecting players and coaches as creators of distinctive and attractive game teams, with one or more top stars, and in this way, starting with the value hierarchy of all stakeholders, creating the most basic level of their offer, creating a full, rich and comprehensive sport event (Gašović, 2009).

Therefore, sports organizations create sports experiences, as the most fundamental part of their offer to interested entities. For example, fans experience sports competitions as a fulfillment of the need for entertainment, socializing, communication, acceptance of the other, a spectacle, belonging to the group, as well as amusement, which includes several levels (excitement, emotion, pride, remembrance), personal satisfaction, respect of others, etc.

Meeting those needs, at least occasionally, makes life more attractive, more beautiful and easier, as a primordial aspiration of people. Whannel (2002, 51) points out: “As with other forms of entertainment, a sport offers a utopia, a world where everything is simple, dramatic and exciting, and there is always the possibility of euphoria. Sport entertains, but can also be frustrating, annoying and depressing. Uncertainty donates a distinctive identity”. Hence, the mass’ attachment to sports activities or sports adventures offered by sports teams and sport individuals.

### **Sport event as a second level sport offers**

Sports events are a second level of the sports offer or, the so-called basic offer according to the hierarchy of value for customers. As Pope (2001) stated, sports events or sports occurrences are any sports program, competition, or each individual item in the program of one or more sports. The occurrence of a sporting event requires the following factors:

- Public
- Place (Sports arena)
- Actors (Teams; competitors, coaches, judges, etc.)
- Equipment and clothing
- Competition rules
- Timeframe

Creating sports events through sports competitions, sports organizations, in relation to Kotler’s product levels, creates the basic offer for the interested parties. It has been said that different segments of customers have specific needs for sporting experiences. They meet their needs through a sport event as a basic range of sporting organizations, and each entity meets them in its own way (Gašović, 2009).

Supporters, through the sports experience and the sporting event, directly meet their needs for sports adventures. Buying tickets, annual season tickets, cheering props, subscriptions to TV sports channels; sports press and publications for sports-related products and so on; actually they buy their own sports experience, with all its features.

The mass media, especially television, newspapers and the radio, as well as the Internet, “experience” sporting events in their own way, realizing a number of goals. First, as public

media they are responsible for following sports events with the help of their commentators, reporters, and TV cameramen, for their viewers and the general public. Their obligation is even greater if the importance of sports events is higher. Second, depending on the rank of the competition and sport results, the media, especially TV companies, buy broadcasting rights to sports events from sports organizations. This enables them the access the public, especially the millions of viewers that follow sports events on TV. Thirdly, the contracts with rights to transmit sporting events include the rights to advertise businesses. Businesses, purchasing the rights from sports organizations, are entitled to display their advertising billboards, by making them visible during sport events at sport arenas. Actually, they purchase access to the audience, trying to direct its attention to them and their products or services.

However, the inclusion of purchase contracts for broadcasting propaganda videos or ads in during the course of the TV coverage of sporting events is of far greater importance for companies. In this way they gain access or attention of the sports audience or public that indirectly via the small screen “experience” sports competitions or events. Businesses want to be a part of that experience provided on TV broadcasts of sports events, because their marketing specialists in the sports auditorium previously identified a number of potential target customers for their products and services. Sport organization revenues for TV rights to broadcast sporting events range from tens of thousands of dollars to an astronomical few billions, depending, certainly, on the size and importance of sport events. Sports organizations have broader interests than those of pure profit, realized through the sale of TV broadcast rights. TV broadcasting and other media attention related to sporting events created by sport organizations, are a chance to attract other customers such as, for example, international TV networks, paid international tournaments, potential transfers of players to richer clubs, etc.

In addition to the role of advertisers, business organizations appear as sponsors of sporting events. Sponsorship as a form of cooperation between businesses, and sports organizations describe the situation as one when entrepreneurs like to present themselves as “good citizens” – a corporative responsible organization. Their interest in these cases is not immediate; it is a tendency towards the creation of the image, through the motto “see, we support sport.” (Gašović, 2009.) Yet, to sponsors, it primarily means, to indirectly expect a certain benefit. Businessmen, sponsors of sporting events, not only attract the media attention, but affection, trust, and even emotional connection with fans - potential consumers of their products or users of their services.

### **Sport result as a third level of sport offer**

According to the hierarchy of values of entities interested in the sport organizations’ offer, a sports result could be the third level. No doubt, sports scores are a key stage of the sports offer, because it is an expression of the expectations of the largest number of stakeholders. The audience, as one which directly observes sporting events, and follows the events in the media, has not only the need for sporting experience but also the desire or the requirements for the best possible sporting results, striving for a win of their favorite teams or sportsman. People are in a constant need to be successful, no matter where: within the family; at work; in a hobby or sport. Therefore, the identification with a successful sportsman or team is essentially identification with success. Only successful sportsmen and sports teams gather masses of viewers – fans, while media agents allow almost immediately the presence of spectators, whose triumph, success, and victory and happiness are experienced simultaneously by the winner. What follows is the conclusion that the experience of success or failure and

victory or defeat is a sports event basically. These new, electronic fans have an additional, heightened impression, as by the repeated shots of successful actions of their favorites, reinforce their impression. The number of direct or “electronic fans” increases along with the sport success of a team.

The fact is that a sports result, both the victory and success “of our sportsman”, is not just a curiosity, an attraction or entertainment, but also “our” success, the essence of a strong emotional charge that the victory activates. In these cases, the attention and affection of public, potential buyers, are not limited to interest, moreover, it exceeds affiliation as a result of identification.

However, during periods of longer sporting failures, or worse sport results, at a greater or lesser pace, there is a declining interest of the audience for sporting events, and the sport organizations, clubs or sportsman offers. The decline in interest that often assumes elements of disappointment, frustration, and even anger, is in direct correlation with the behavior of individual fan segments.

Other stakeholders interested in sport organizations’ offers such as the media, advertisers, sponsors, intermediary agencies, etc., increase their interest in cooperation with sports organizations in proportion to their success and sports scores.

Great sporting achievements of teams or individuals increase the number of interested sponsors, companies that want the ownership or patronage of the sport organizations, as well as the community which finances the construction of sports arenas and supports local to clubs. The situation is similar with corporations that use sports events to direct advertising (billboards) in sports arenas or indirectly, through broadcasting their commercials or ads during the transmission of sporting events. Both have a positive experience assuming that funds invested in propaganda or sponsorship of sport events represent a good investment, as reflected by higher sales of their goods and services related to sports (Gašović, 2009).

The image of sports clubs or sportsmen is a central level of the sports offer on the stakeholder’s hierarchy of values. Comprising the image, it is necessary to consider the notion of identity of some sports organizations, clubs or individuals.

The creation of identity of sports organizations includes instruments or funds used to present them on the sports market and to the general public, as well as to position their sports offer. The identity is manifested in the mission, status and the very organizational culture of a sports club.

The image of sports organizations means, in fact, the character or public image of that organization, its sports offer and position on the sports market. It is also multi-dimensional summation of the psychological elements of the sporting event, club or sportsmen, which is predominantly present in the public. The image is created through communication between sports organizations and sports audience. Communication with the sport auditorium is through names, logos, trademark (emblem) advertising media and public relations. The image is defined as the sensory performance of a person or object, expressed by a characteristic external appearance, which produces a special impression of him. The image includes the gestures of individual sportsmen or teams, as their visual identity.

For a long period, sports organizations have been aware of the powerful impact that their image has on those that are related to sports and interested in their sport facilities (fans, members, media, advertisers, sponsors, donors).

All of the previously mentioned fits into the key goals of sports organizations such as the creation of new members, increasing the number of viewers and the establishment of partnership relations between the media, sponsors and advertisers.

Two authors in the field of sports marketing, Ferrand & Pages (1999), indicate the following four key roles played by the image of sports organizations:

- Image creates value for the sports organization
- Image of the club influences the behavior of fans
- Image of the club is to support to differentiation and positioning in relation to rival clubs
- Image as a tool for identifying opportunities for sponsorship.

Starting from the previously mentioned impact of the image of sports organizations as the fourth level of the sports offers' value hierarchy of interested parties, it can be concluded that it is not possible to create a strong image of top results as third-level sport offers: sports events as the second level and of course the sports experience as the first level, as well as subjective and emotional aspects without which there is no performance and no image.

Therefore, the image of clubs or individuals strongly influences the increase of: attachment, the number of fans and club members, which leads to higher ticket sales, subscription, seasonal tickets and membership cards.

The image of the club or individual sportsman affects the differentiation in relation to competitors, as well as better positioning in the minds of current and potential customers, interested in the sports organizations' offer; for example, a club can be differentiated in relation to the rivals by creating international image (achievements in the international arena), attracting in that way the part of rival supporters.

However, what is particularly important to sports clubs and individuals is to attract other partners interested in their sports offer. It is, above all, the media, sponsors, advertisers, media agencies and so on. Again, it should be noted, that they are buying a part of the image to "transfer" it to their products or services, knowing that the image primarily is the product of sports experience, achieved through sports events and sports results. Let us remember the case of the successful transfer of the sports image of the FC Red Star, during its march to the European title, in the 1990's, to the new cigarettes called "Classic". The "Classic" brand of cigarettes in a relatively short time positioned itself as the best national cigarettes on the market (Gašović, 2009).

### **Image of sports organizations as the fourth level of sports offer**

The image of sports clubs or sportsmen is a central level of sport offering on the stakeholder's hierarchy of values. Comprising the image, it is necessary to consider previously the notion of identity of some sports organizations, clubs or individuals.

Creation of identity of sports organizations includes instruments or funds used to present them to the sports market and the general public, as well as to position their sports offer. The identity is manifested in the mission, status and the very organizational culture of a sports club.

The image of sports organizations means, in fact, the character or public image of that organization, its sports offer and position at the sports market. It is also multi-dimensional summation of the psychological elements of the sporting event, club or sportsmen, which is predominantly present in the public. The image is created through communication between sports organizations and sports audience. Communication with sport auditorium is through

names, logos, trademark (emblem) advertising media and public relations. The image is defined as the sensory performance of a person or object, expressed by the characteristic external appearance, which produces a special impression of him. The image includes the gestures of individual sportsmen or teams, as their visual identity.

For a long period, sports organizations have been aware of the powerful impact that their image has on those that are related to sports and interested in their sport facilities (fans, members, media, advertisers, sponsors, donors).

All previously mentioned fits into the key goals of sports organizations such as the creation of new members, increasing the number of viewers and the establishment of partnership relations between the media, sponsors and advertisers.

The two authors of the field of sports marketing Ferrand & Pages (1999), indicates the following four key roles played by the image of sports organizations:

Image creates value for the sports organization

Image of the club influence the behavior of fans

Image of the club is to support to differentiation and positioning in relation to rivals clubs

Image as a tool for identifying opportunities for sponsorship

Starting from the previously mentioned impact of the image of sports organizations as the fourth level of the sport offers’ value hierarchy of interested parties, it can be concluded that it is not possible to create a strong image of top results as third-level sport offerings; sports event as the second level and of course the sports experience as the first level, as well as subjective and emotional aspects without which there is no performance and no image.

Therefore, the image of clubs or individuals strongly influences the increase of: attachment, the number of fans and club members, which leads to higher ticket sales, subscription, seasonal and membership cards.

The image of the club or individual sportsman affects the differentiation in relation to competitors, as well as better positioning in the minds of current and potential customers, interested in the sports organizations’ offer, for example, a club can be differentiated in relation to the rivals by creating international image (achievements in the international arena), attracting so that way the part of rival supporters.

However, what is particularly important to sports clubs and individuals is to attract other partners interested in their sport offer. It is, above all, the media, sponsors, advertisers, media agencies and so on. Again should be noted, they are buying part of the image to the idea to "transfer" it to their products or services, knowing that the image primarily is the product of sports experience, achieved through sports events and sports results. Let us remember the case of a successful transfer of sporting image of the FC Red Star, during its march to the European title, in the nineties of the past century, to the new cigarettes called "Classic". The “Classic” cigarettes in a relatively short time have been positioned in the market as the best national cigarettes (Gašović, 2009).

### **Sports brand as a fifth element of the sports offer**

The fifth level of sport offers starting from the value hierarchy of interested buyers could be the sports brand. According to the definition of the American Marketing Association (AMA) a brand means the “name, term, sign, symbol, shape or combination thereof which identify good or services of one or more vendors, in relation to the competing brands.” (Kotler, 2006, 11)

Thus, the concept of a brand is related to performances such as:

- Brand name - part of a brand that could be pronounced (e.g. Manchester United)
- Sign of the brand - part from a brand that cannot be pronounced but can be identified by the symbol, shape or distinctive coloring or writing (color of the club)
- Trademark - brand or part of the brand that has the protection of exclusive ownership
- Right of ownership so called "copyright" - the exclusive right to reproduce, publish and sell an article or form into literary, musical, or artistic work.

Creating identities may cause the evolution of the brand or offer. The brand is the backbone identity of supply, whose main purpose is to create a special value of customers that purchase the so-called branded products or whose offers meet their so-called statutory requirements.

According to Vasiljev (2010, 117), a well-known brand offers the customer the following advantages:

- Facilitates the selection and purchase of products
- Contributes to customer's satisfaction and experience
- Provides some specific type of warranty to customers
- Satisfy some emotional (e.g. status) needs.

Creating a reputable brand is not an easy task in the modern, highly competitive, global market world. Achieving familiarity of a brand takes place through a process that has, at least four levels:

- Undistinguished brand - products are homogeneous, so consumers cannot identify them when shopping
- Known brand - consumers have registered and remembered a particular brand
- Preference brand - consumers prefer one brand over another one
- Insisting on the brand - consumers insist on a precise brand.

Analogous to the perception of the brand, the sports brand can be distinguished starting with the value hierarchy of the stakeholders, as well as the level of supply of sports organizations. The sports brand is the name, term, symbol (emblem), symbol or a combination which identifies the offer of a sport organization, sports club or individuals, distinguishing it from the competing brands.

Great sports clubs or sporting individuals that through: creating sports experience; organizing sports events; achieving top results, reach a high level of identity and image. Starting from the principle that a brand is the core of the identity of an organization and its products, the sports brand as the backbone of the identity and image of the sports organizations, and will be the fifth level of the sports offer.

These potential offers' levels are reached, eventually, only by famous sports clubs or individuals, which means they are able to create their own sports brands which are interesting for parties in the field to business.

Sports organizations, the owners of a sport brand or its components have, in fact, the license rights, as an exclusive right to use or sell to other organizations.

Additionally, sports organizations through licensing agreements can transfer the right to use registered and protected components or sports brand labels to a third party, or business organization.

The rights to use the sports brand, sports organization, or sportsmen are transferred to other entities (customers) - in whole or in parts. Parts of the sports brand are: the name, logo, sign (emblem), mascot, colors of the club, various signs, flags, and so on. The right to license or license rights indicate the right of the licensee to use the protected features of a sports brand.

Royalties are the fees paid to the sports organizations for the sale of license rights. Today the world has a number of recognizable sports brands, which ensure clubs or owners a great income. In the US, owners of sports brands are some of the most famous hockey, baseball, football and basketball teams. A famous football, cricket and rugby clubs in England possess prominent sports brands. In Italy and Spain, famous sports brands are mostly football clubs.

Research (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler, 2008) conducted among the fans of German football clubs has shown that the club brand is of great importance, that is, the perception of the characteristics of the club and the support given by the clubs. The image of the club itself is based on the brand’s productive and non-productive attributes, as well as the benefit and attitudes that the brand builds on. Certainly, the processes of the sports organizations should set and direct the flow of activities and tasks necessary for the achievement of the goals of the organization (Životić & Veselinović, 2016), thus the success of a sporting product depends on the activities of sports subjects themselves. How they will present their product and make it more attractive to a wide audience depends on the sports organizations or individuals themselves. Numerous studies indicate (Baena, 2016) the significance of brand management strategy by means of the electronic media, but the existence of a website alone is not enough to get supporters of a sports product. Online marketing through social media provides new opportunities to gain insight into what supporters of sports organizations and individuals love, want and expect from them.

#### CONCLUSION

Sports marketing or marketing in sport can be considered from two aspects: marketing of sports organizations and marketing of sports-related products and services.

Marketing of sports organizations is primarily a business-sports orientation focused on the current and future stakeholders (visitors, media, advertisers, sponsors, sports agents, etc.) –interested in the sports offer of these organizations.

Basing on the marketing postulates that the product is all that can be offered on the market to meet the needs and requirements of customers, and that the product is sometimes called the offer - it seems logical that everything will be offered by a sports organization or their partners. The term sports product could be replaced with the term sports offer. It contributes to distinguishing clearly between products and services related to sports (equipment, sports requisites, souvenirs and the like,) and what sports organizations or individuals offer during sports events.

The question is whether the needs of these stakeholders can be met by sports organizations and their activities. It is not difficult to conclude that the fans or ticket buyers come to a sports arena to meet the need for entertainment. On the other hand, the media, advertising companies, and sponsors meet the need for access to the public. If we were to analyze the aforementioned needs of the audience for entertainment in more detail, and the access to the same audience - the question is what the “common thread” of stakeholders’ needs is. It seems that all partners interested in the sports offer rely on the hierarchy of values, which have five levels (sports experience, sports event, sports scores, sports image and sports brand). It is obvious that the common denominator is the sports experience, because the audience in the first place, values the first level – sports experience, while the goal of the other interested parties’ is primarily access to the audience.

Sports organizations and sports individuals, as the most fundamental elements in a sport offer, should create a full, rich and comprehensive sports event realizing significant benefit for the interested parties. Stakeholders, interested in the offer, satisfy their needs for sports experience in a sporting event, each of them in their own way. Sport scores, as a key level of the offer, represent the expectation impression of most of the interested stakeholders. Great sports scores increase the number of fans, advertisers, media, sponsors, sports agents, and the interest of society as a whole. The hierarchy of stakeholders' values is the image of sports organizations and sports individuals. A positive image powerfully influences the increasing commitment to the organization, media attention; the arrival of new sportsmen, advertisers, sponsors, etc. The sports brand is of great importance for the placement of the sports offer, especially in recent times. Great sports clubs and individuals are able, through the creation of sports experience, to organize sports events; the achievement of top results allow them to reach high levels of identity and image. That is a prerequisite for achieving a sport brand level.

Considering that sports offers (products), as the first and the most important element of the sports marketing, cannot be mixed without relying on the key postulates of marketing principles, which are related to five levels of products, sorted according to the hierarchy of value for customers. The sport offer must be supported by adequate marketing activities and must be branded in an appropriate way to be accepted by a wide audience and recognizable among numerous sports products of the same or similar sport organizations and athletes.

#### REFERENCES

- Baena, V. (2016). Online and mobile marketing strategies as drivers of brand love in sports teams: findings from Real Madrid. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 17(3), 202-218.
- Bauer, H., Stokburger-Sauer, E. & Stefanie, E. (2008). Brand image and fan loyalty in professional team sport: A refined model and empirical assessment. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(2), 205-226.
- Beech, J. & Chadwick, S. (2010). *Sportski Menadžment*. Zagreb: MATE.
- Ferrand, A. & Pages, M. (1999). Image Management in Sport Organization: The creation of value. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33 (3/4), 387-401.
- Fullerton, S. (2007). *Sport Marketing*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Gašović, M. (2009). *Marketing sportskih organizacija*. Beograd: Intermanet.
- Kotler, P. (2006). *Upravljanje marketingom*. Beograd: Data status.
- Kotler, F. & Keller, K. L. (2017). *Marketing Menadžment*. Beograd: DATA Status.
- Lamb, C. W., Hair, F. J. & McDaniel, C. (2013). *Marketing*, Beograd: Data status.
- Ljubojević, Č. (2001). *Marketing i menadžment u sportu*, Beograd: Želind.
- Masterman, G. (2014). *Strategic sports event management*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mullin, B. J., Hardy, S., & Sutton, W. (2014). *Sport marketing*, New York: Human Kintics.
- Pfahl, M. E. (2014). Examining brand in sport in a post-television world: have we entered a post-brand paradigm?. *International Journal of Sport Management, Recreation and Tourism*, 16, 1-36.
- Pitts, B. C. & Stotler, F. (2006). *Fundamentals of Sport marketing*. New York: FIT.
- Pope, N. & Turko, D. (2001). *Sport and Event Marketing*. Roseville: Mc Grow-Hill Companies.
- Shank, M. D., & Lyberger, M. R. (2014). *Sports marketing: A strategic perspective*. Routledge.
- Tomić, M. (2007). *Sportski Menadžment*. Beograd: DATA STATUS.
- Vasiljev, S. (2010). *Marketing principi*. Novi Sad: Prometej.
- Waren, C. (2015). Industrial Marketing in Sport: Understanding Season Ticket Renewal Across Account Types. *International Journal of Sport Management, Recreation and Tourism*, 20, 1-19.
- Whannel, G. (2002). *Fields in Vision: Television Sport on Cultural Transformation*. London: Routledge.
- Životić, D., & Veselinović, J. (2016). The significance of the organizing process in sports organizations. *Facta Universitatis, Series: Physical Education and Sport*, 307-313.

## **SPORTSKA PONUDA – KLJUČNI DEO MARKETING PROGRAMA SPORTSKOG DRUŠTVA**

*Sportska ponuda (proizvod), kao centralni deo sportskih organizacija, odnosno klubova ili sportista - osoba, kao marketinški program, može da se razmatra kroz pet nivoa, u zavisnosti od hijerarhije vrednosti zainteresovane strane (posetioce, medije, oglašivače, sponzore, sportske agente, i sl.). Ovih pet nivoa su: iskustvo u sportu, sportski događaji, sportski rezultati, imidž sportskih organizacija i sportskih pojedinaca (sportista) i sportski brend. Sportska ponuda mora biti visokog kvaliteta kako bi privukla zainteresovane strane, a povećanje popularnosti sportske ponude vrši se kroz brojne marketinške aktivnosti.*

*Ključne reči: sportska ponuda, sportsko iskustvo, sportski događaj, sportski bodovi, imidž sportskih organizacija*