

The Balkan Football Cup as an Instrument of Political Rapprochement in the Balkans (1929–1936)

Nemanja Mitrović, Nikola Mijatov

Abstract: During the interwar period, the Balkan states were plagued by mutual mistrust, which hindered any possibility of deeper cooperation among them. Despite ongoing political issues, efforts were made to improve relations, and football emerged as a means to bridge the divides. In the late 1920s, football players became national symbols, with their successes and failures reflecting on their countries' reputations, but also on relations with other nations. Eventually, the growing popularity of football in the Balkans led to the organization of the Balkan Cup, a football competition between Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, which was also intended as a political tool to bring this region's countries closer together. In total, there were six Balkan Cups, and each one had its distinguished political background. What should have been used as a tool for closer relations had become an area where current political issues had been manifested in sports. As a result, football suffered, and politics overshadowed the potential for sport to foster unity in the region. The Balkan Cup was canceled due to the shifting political landscape in Europe and the diverse sports and political aspirations of the Balkan nations. This paper explores precisely the role of the Balkan Cup as a political instrument aimed at fostering cooperation among Balkan states between 1929 and 1936.

Keywords: Balkan Cup, Football, Politics, Balkan, Sport

“” Mitorvić N.&Mijatov N. (2025), The Balkan Football Cup As An Instrument Of Political Rapprochement In The Balkans (1929–1936), *Journal of Balkan Studies*, 5(2), 279-308.

✉ Research Associate, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade-Serbia, nemanja.mitrovic@isi.ac.rs
Research Associate, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade, Serbia, nikola.mijatov@isi.ac.rs,

🆔 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7322-0691>
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6499-4484>



Balkan Studies Foundation

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51331/A065>

Journal of Balkan Studies, 5(2), 2025

balkanjournal.org



Received: 30.04.2025

Revision: 19.07.2025

Accepted: 23.07.2025



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY NC)

Introduction

The legacy of World War I left a tense atmosphere in Southeast Europe. By creating the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Romania at the expense of the former territory of the Habsburg Empire and territories claimed by countries such as Italy and Bulgaria, it led to the fact that states with revisionist aspirations surrounded the two mentioned kingdoms. In the Balkans, such friendly relations prevailed only between Belgrade and Bucharest. It should be emphasized that even here, higher interests, the desire to preserve the Versailles order, were essentially the main factors of their good neighborliness.

From the very beginning, football followed foreign policy, supported its goals, and often served as a means of polling public opinion and improving relations between nations. Not by chance, the creation of the Little Entente was accompanied by football matches. The Little Entente represented the military alliance of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, created based on bilateral agreements signed in the period 1920-1922. The purpose of the alliance was defense against Hungarian revisionism. More precisely, from the claims of Hungary and Austria to the territories of the former Habsburg Empire, which belonged to the mentioned countries after the Versailles peace negotiations. The alliance later expanded to include cooperation in the economic and socio-cultural spheres. It existed until the Munich Agreement in 1938 and the division of Czechoslovakia (Сладек, 2019: 280-290; Vanku, 1969: 313-316).

The Yugoslav national team made its first appearances against its allies, Czechoslovakia and Romania, during 1921 and 1922 (Oprișan, 2022: 6-7; Stanišić, 1969: 17-18). This period is also associated with the creation of the first tournaments. Namely, the representatives of the football organizations of Belgrade and Bucharest, with the great support of the two monarchs, created the Cup of Friendly Countries, which lasted throughout the interwar period. During the interwar period, two such cups were held. The first, which lasted from 1922 to 1930, was named after King Aleksandar I Karađorđević, and the other 1936 to 1940, it bore the name of the Romanian king Charles II of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. The winner of the first cup after seven games was the national team of Yugoslavia, and the second after four matches was the national team of Romania.

A little later, when the Little Entente exceeded the borders of the political-military alliance, the Little Entente Football Cup was created in 1937–1938, which was named after one of the biggest supporters of the alliance, the Czechoslovak president Edward Benes (Mitrović et Mijatov, 2025, 37-58; Stojković, 1999: 65-66).

The Balkans and sport cooperation

The year 1929 was crucial for Balkan sports cooperation. Although the focus of this paper is football, it should also be mentioned that cooperation in the field of athletics laid the foundation of the Balkan sports games. The roots of seeing sport as a powerful means of bringing people together appeared in 1927. Petko Zlatev, representative of the Bulgarian Sports Association, suggested that sports contacts be established between Greece and Bulgaria to create and later promote friendly relations between the two nations. At that moment, there was great hostility between the two countries, especially because of the small war on the border from 1925. Zlatev's proposal, therefore, had a strong political connotation. In October, the Greek Athletics Association managed to organize a successful competition between Bulgarian and Greek athletes. It was also the first meeting between the two countries, which took place in a friendly atmosphere. The unexpected success of the competition attracted a lot of attention from politicians who began to look at sports more and more as a useful political tool. When the idea of organizing the Balkan Athletics Games took shape among the Greek athletes, their Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, strongly supported it (Balkan games, 2016). He believed that such a competition would be a convenient place for formal and informal meetings and discussions between the athletes themselves and diplomatic representatives ready to work in the direction of developing cooperation. Many politicians in Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, and Turkey shared the same viewpoint (Kissoudi, 2016: 10-11).

Along with the final preparations for the Balkan Athletics Games in 1929, negotiations were also conducted for the Balkan competition in the most popular sport - football. As in athletics, Greece was the initiator of the idea due to its long sports tradition, so in football, it was Yugoslavia and Romania, where football was at a higher level. The first conference of football representatives

of Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria was held in the “Palace” hotel in Belgrade on April 14, 1929 (Konferencija delegata sportskih saveza Rumunije, Grčke, Bugarske i Jugoslavije, 1929). Although Turkey was interested, it did not send its delegate, but stated in the letter that it accepts all solutions adopted by the conference. The position around which all the delegations gathered was that the competition be organized without outside interference and in accordance with the rules that were applied in the Central European Cup. The Central European or European International Cup of Nations was a competition between the football teams of Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, which was first organized in 1927. The idea for the competition came from long-time coach of the Austrian national team and prominent European football worker, Hugo Meisl (1881-1937). As it was a double-point system, the first tournament lasted until 1930. Cup 1927-1930, it was also known as the Cup of Antoni Švehla, the Czechoslovak prime minister who donated the “crystal cup”. In the period 1927-1960, a total of six cups were organized, and in the last one, in addition to the mentioned countries, Yugoslavia also participated (D’Avanzo, 2020: 214-217).

However, the meeting in Belgrade concluded that the Balkan federations independently organize a competition under the double cup system for two years, that the federations independently finance the costs of their national teams, that they allocate an equal amount for the purchase of a cup on which the tricolors and coats of arms of the countries would be engraved, that the judges be exclusively from the participating countries, as well as that the competition is managed by the Cup Committee, which will meet every year at the end of the games. Until the next meeting, which was scheduled for May 9 in Bucharest, the Yugoslav Football Association was given the task of drafting a Statute that would prescribe all the rules, as well as penalties in case of non-appearance at the scheduled match or other violations. Also, it was agreed in Belgrade that the cup would start in the fall of the same year (Balkanski kup ostvaren, 1929).

One cannot help but notice the fact that the first concrete steps in the organization of the Balkan Cup took place at the time of the organization of the first world championship, which is why the interest of FIFE and the federations from

Central Europe in the idea of the Balkan Cup was great. Hugo Meisl, an important figure in European football, supported the idea of the Balkan Cup and was considered one of the “conveners of the conference in Belgrade”. Although the other countries were against interference from the outside, he was supposed to attend the meeting as an observer, but was prevented due to health problems. However, behind his desire was the intention to win over the Balkan federations for the idea of a European championship, in which the Balkan Cup would be one of the branches, and against the French proposal on the World Cup adopted at the 17th FIFA Congress in Amsterdam on May 25-26, 1928 (Minutes of the 17th Annual Congress, 1928).

On May 9, 1929, at the second conference in Bucharest, the Romanian Medea-nu was elected president of the cup, and the Yugoslav Josip Riboli was elected secretary. In addition to the aforementioned, the Cup Committee included two other members, the Bulgarian Dimitar Ivanov (president of the Bulgarian National Sports Federation) and the Greek Kostas Konstantaras. The first session of the committee was also held then. On it, the drawing of pairs was carried out, and the proposal to appoint five judges from each participating country was accepted, with the Bulgarians submitting their list a little later. Although Turkey sent a delegate to Bucharest, he did not have the authority to actively participate in the work and only followed the work of the conference with observer status. Turkey’s problem has been its indecision about emphasizing its geographical affiliation, which is why, in football, it has been between accepting matches with Middle Eastern countries such as Palestine and Egypt or with Balkan countries (Balkanski kup, početak utakmica i izbor sudija, 1929).

The statute drafted by JNS was adopted in Bucharest, and according to it, the competition was defined as amateur, which, as it turned out later, did not suit everyone. The double point system meant that all participants had to play two games against the same opponent, one at home and one away. Since there were a total of four participants, each had to play six games within two years. Such a system, on the one hand, meant less burden for the clubs because the players would be absent from the club competitions three times a year for the purposes of the cup, but it carried with it the risk of losing the interest of the audience,

as well as the participants themselves in the competition. This bad side of the cup was soon noticed by the organizers, and from the next cup, a single-point system was applied, which could be realized in a much shorter time. Since then, tournaments have been organized once a year in the capital of one of the participants and have lasted an average of about a week (Stojković, 1999: 62-65).

The Balkan Cup was initiated and followed by political interests from the very beginning. In political circles, it was believed that “the beginning of a new era of Balkan football” would have a beneficial effect on public opinion and influence the rapprochement of countries in the cultural, economic, and political spheres. The opportunity to hold informal talks, to create a propaganda image of good interstate relations, was something that attracted high state representatives to football. Which is why you could often read that almost all the matches of the Balkan Cups were played in the presence of diplomatic representatives, ministers, generals, and even members of royal dynasties. The year 1929 was of high importance as the Wall Street stock market crashed in October of that year, leading to the Great Depression (Hobsbaum, 2002: 69-86). All of this only contributed to Balkan states looking for allies in their nearest surrounding.

Cup matches were accompanied by various events and had a specific protocol. Apart from the ceremonial opening, the parade, receptions, cocktails, tours of the most important cultural landmarks, etc., were organized. Visiting football players were given attention, no less than that prescribed for the reception of official-held delegations. In addition to each other, football workers often met with various state representatives on those occasions. The relationship between politics and football was close and mutually beneficial. Not only was football used as a political tool for the development of other forms of interstate and regional cooperation, but also the favor of the government contributed to the faster development of this sport. States began to invest more seriously in football and its promotion, to build and expand stadiums and help organize football matches. As the Romanian newspaper *Gazeta Sporturilor* estimated, with the establishment of the Balkan Cup, “a new era has begun for Balkan football” and regional cooperation as a whole (Cupa Balcanică, 1929, 1).

I Balkan Cup

The draw determined that the first Balkan Cup would start with a match between Yugoslavia and Romania, and the date was set for October 6, 1929. As Yugoslavia did not send its best team, the result of the match was 2:1 in favor of the Romanians. The second match, which took place in Zagreb on Vidovdan in 1931, was decisive for the cup. With a 4:2 victory over Yugoslavia, Romania secured first place, while Yugoslavia was second with three wins and three losses (Romania–Jugoslavlavia 2:1, 1929; Reprezentacija Rumunije pobedila je sa 4:2, 1931). The national teams of Greece and Bulgaria followed with two wins and four losses each. The most drastic result difference was recorded during the match between Romania and Greece played on May 25, 1930. Then the Romanian national team triumphed with 8:1. For Romanian football, this was one of the most sensational matches of the interwar period. The Romanian captain, center forward Rudolf Wachter, scored as many as 5 goals (România–Görögország 8:1, 1930; Momento 26. Mai 1930, 1998).

Important for the further fate of the competition was the last match between Greece and Romania, held in Athens on November 29, because the Congress of the Cup was held during that period. During the two-day session on November 28–29, there were disagreements regarding the participation of professionals and the issue of further organization of the competition. The only ones who had professional players were the Romanians. The representatives of Greece were expressly against the use of professional players, while the others, led by Yugoslavia, believed that professional Romanian players were not significantly different in quality from the others. To the Greek proposal presented at the session on November 28 to respect the amateur principle of the competition and ban the use of professionals, Romania responded by being ready to leave the competition. After a sharp debate, which continued into the next day, the Greek representative gave up his request and closed the problem that could lead to the collapse of football cooperation in the Balkans. Interest in holding the tournament prevailed, and the rest of the conference was realized in an atmosphere that contributed to significant changes in the organization of the competition (Grci protiv učešća rumunskih profesionalaca u utakmicama za kup, 1931).

The most significant proposal was presented by Mihailo Andrejević, representative of the Yugoslav Football Association. After his presentation on the problems that arose during the implementation of the competition, he proposed changing the system and the organization itself. He believed that organizing the Balkan Cup according to a single point system and in one place would be more successful and beneficial. It was agreed that the host would change every year, and the choice was made with a die. The draw determined Belgrade as the host for the II Balkan Cup, Bucharest for the III, and Athens for the IV. At the session of November 29, the new Committee Management was elected. Greek Kostas Konstantaras became the president of the II Balkaniad, and Mihailo Andrejević became the secretary due to his support (*Idući kongres i utakmice...*, 1931).

Since Turkey also attended the congress this time, the draw for the II Balkan Cup was richer for one participant. The national teams of Romania and Turkey were supposed to open the cup in Belgrade on June 25. However, shortly after the congress in Athens, the Turkish Football Association decided not to participate in the competition. Meanwhile, the Bulgarian Olympic Committee organized the Balkaniad from September 37 to October 4, 1931, in Sofia. It was a competition in athletics, swimming, cycling, fencing, equestrian games, and, in addition, football. Since matches were played between Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Turkey, that competition is wrongly named as the II Balkan Cup in some works. The first reason why it is wrong is that the organizer was not the Committee of the Balkan Cup, and the second is that the matches were played at a time when the 1st Balkan Cup was still going on. As it was, in that football competition, Bulgaria took first place with two victories, Turkey second with one victory and one defeat, and Yugoslavia took last place with two defeats. (*Grčka i Bugarska počinju program na olimpijadi*, 1931; *Balkanijada u Sofiji je počela*, 1931; *Podela nagrada pobjednicima na Balkanijadi*, 1931).

Već posle uspešno realizovanog prvog Balkanskog kupa saradnja između regionalnih fudbalskih saveza je dostigla zavidan nivo. Politički naponi za zbližavanjem zemalja regiona plodonosno su uticali i na saradnju fudbalskih saveza. Povoljna atmosfera dovela je i do zajedničkog nastupa pet zemalja Balkana na kongresu održanom u Stokholmu od 13. do 15. maja 1932. godine na kojem je

izvršena reorganizacija FIFE, doneta odluka da ova organizacija ne organizuje olimpijsko takmičenje u fudbalu, izabran Ciriš za sedište FIFE i odabrana Italija za domaćina narednog Mundijala. Cilj zajedničkog nastupa balkanskih fudbalskih saveza bio je aktivno uključivanje u rad ove organizacije, zaštita interesa i posebno prekid prakse da se bez njih donose odluke koje se tiču fudbala na Balkanu

Following the successful implementation of the first Balkan Cup, collaboration among regional football associations reached an enviable level. Political efforts aimed at fostering closer ties between the countries in the region positively influenced this cooperation. The favorable atmosphere led to the joint participation of five Balkan countries at the congress held in Stockholm from May 13 to 15, 1932. During this congress, FIFA was reorganized, a decision was made that this organization would not organize an Olympic football competition, Zurich was selected as FIFA's headquarters, and Italy was chosen to host the next World Cup. The goal of the Balkan football associations' joint appearance was to actively engage in the discussions at this congress, protect their interests, and, crucially, to end the practice of making decisions regarding football in the Balkans without their involvement. After the FIFA congress, football associations of Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece continued to further deepen their ties through the organization of the next cup (Balkanski savezi istupiće zajedno na kongresu FIFE, 1932; Lisi, 2022: 18).

II Balkan Cup

After all the changes and subsequent changes due to the withdrawal of Turkey, the II Balkan Cup started in Belgrade on June 26 and lasted until July 3, 1932. The tournament began with a ceremonial parade of all national teams and the performance of their national anthems at the "BSK" stadium. In addition to this, the FC "Yugoslavia" stadium was also used. The one-week competition was opened by the host match against the Greek national team. The convincing victory of Yugoslavia with an unprecedented score of 7:1 created a feeling among the home crowd, but also among the players themselves, that the cup trophy would remain in Belgrade (Stanišić, 1969: 94).

Due to the rain that prevented the match between Bulgaria and Romania on June 25, the committee decided to play it before the main match. After Yugoslavia, the favorite was the Romanian national team, in which Rudolph Watzer, a Romanian football player from Timișoara, who was important for the development of Yugoslav football, played as a captain. Namely, he was 1924-1925, together with another Romanian, Desideri Laki, the first foreign professional footballer to play for a Serbian club. Thus, Rudolf Rudi Vecer (1901-1993) is one of the most important figures of Romanian interwar football. During his sports career, he played for many teams. He started his career in the club "Kinezul Timisoara" in 1920, and then played for "Unirea", "Juventus" from Bucharest, "Ripensia" from Timisoara, and many others. Among the foreign clubs in the 20s, he played for the Hungarian "FC Terekves", "Ujpest", and "FC Pécs", for the Yugoslav "BSK", and the French club "Jer". He left a significant mark on the Romanian national team, for which he played from 1923 to 1932. He was the captain of the national team that participated in the 1st World Cup in Uruguay in 1930. At the 1st Balkan Cup, he scored a total of 7 goals, which helped win the cup. He played the last game for the national team against Bulgaria in Belgrade during the II Balkan Cup in 1932 (Ionescu et Tudoran, 1964: 420-421).

Romania's defeat of 2:0 encouraged the Yugoslavs on the one hand, and caused surprise on the other. The football played by the Bulgarian national team was at a high level and could have posed a problem for Yugoslavia's quest for the trophy. From the first day, it was hinted that the most important match for the trophy would be between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. That meeting took place on June 30, and to the great disappointment of the audience, the Yugoslav national team lost 3:2. As the newspaper noted, the culprit of the home team's defeat was that "the players took their opponent too lightly and played completely casually." (Praće od pobede, 1932).

As far as the audience is concerned, the first signs of biased and unsportsmanlike cheering appeared at this match, and it can be said during the competition as well. At the beginning of the development path, the fans primarily cheered for football and welcomed the successes of both the home team and the opposing team almost equally. However, already at the beginning of the thirties, the

first signs of a nationalist and chauvinist audience appeared. During the Romania-Bulgaria match, the Belgrade audience wholeheartedly cheered for the Bulgarians, considering them a weaker team whose eventual victory would contribute to an easier path for the Yugoslav national team to the trophy. Such an atmosphere was also typical in other matches, where the audience directed its favor towards the weaker teams. However, at the match of home team against Bulgaria, there was an unexpected reaction from the audience. The poor performance of the Yugoslavs created a shocked and unpatriotic audience, which vented its anger with shouts and whistles in the direction of not the opponent, but the home team. As a journalist from the newspaper *Vreme* noted: “Truly, even in Singapore, ours would not have encountered such a hostile audience.” The citizens of Belgrade, who came in large numbers to the BSK stadium expecting a victory, were met with great disappointment. (O držanju beogradske publike..., 1932)

Even then, it was clear that the cup was in Bulgaria's hands, even though there were two more matches between Bulgaria and Greece and Yugoslavia and Romania before the end of the competition. The first match ended with a score of 2:0 in favor of Bulgaria. However, the trial by the Romanian judge was questionable. The Greeks, therefore, filed an appeal and asked for a replay of the game due to bias, the recognition of an offside goal, as well as the rejection of a regular goal scored by the Greek national team. This issue was discussed at the Committee meeting on July 3. Yugoslavia and Greece were in favor of accepting the appeal, while the other two countries were against it. The dispute was resolved by the chairman of the committee, Greek Konstantaras, who, in case of a tied vote, decided by the right of an additional vote. Due to the fact that some Bulgarian players had already left Belgrade, he decided to withdraw the appeal because a regular replay of the game was no longer possible (Grčka je povukla svoj protest..., 1932).

At the end of the II Balkan Cup, the standings were as follows: Bulgaria with all three wins, Yugoslavia with two wins and one loss, Romania with one win, and Greece with three losses. The cup awarding ceremony took place on the last day of the tournament after the match between Yugoslavia and Romania, which ended 3:1 for the home team. The ceremony began with the raising of the cup

winner's flag, the Bulgarian players coming onto the field and singing the national anthem, after which the teams of Yugoslavia and Romania joined in. The Bulgarians took the cup with them. On July 5, they arrived in Sofia by special train, where a festive welcome was organized for them. Houses were decorated with state flags, shops were closed, and a mass of people followed the team from the train station to the National Assembly, where they were greeted by the mayor of Sofia and other high-ranking government officials (*Kraj turnira za Balkanski kup, 1932; Oduševljeni doček...*, 1932).

In the same year, 1932, the Nazi Party of Germany won the majority in the elections. It was an announcement of the dark ages of Europe, which the whirlwind of war would destroy. That year, no one expected such rise of the Nazi Party, given that the power was firmly in the hands of Paul von Hindenburg (Hobsbaum, 2002: 87-92).

III Balkan Cup

According to the decisions made in Belgrade, the III Balkan Cup started on June 3 at the ONEF stadium in Bucharest. The Romanian authorities invested a lot in this cup. On the opening day, the renovation of the Romanian stadium "Oficiul Național de Educație Fizică - ONEF" was not completely finished. Although the surface was changed, which was the basis for playing the games, the stands were not finished. By June 3, only a part of the stands that could accommodate around 6,000 spectators were ready. It should be emphasized that the stadium's capacity was several times higher. During its grand opening in 1926, it attracted a crowd of over 28,000 people. The very fact that the stadium was renovated and that it was practically the largest in the Balkans at that time speaks in favor of how much the Romanian authorities have invested in the development of their football, but also the development of Balkan cooperation through football. Also, it is worth mentioning that King Carol II was a great fan of sports and often personally advocated for its development in Romania (*Stadion još nije gotov...*, 1932; *Povestea Stadionului ANEF / ONEF / Republicii*, 2022; *Sport, Cupa balcanica*, 1933).

By this cup, the opening ceremony had already been established. It consisted of a parade of all the teams in the stadium, lining up in the middle, chanting the anthems of the participants, and an address by the organizer, that is, the president of the association in whose country the competition is organized. After the ceremony, only the teams whose meeting was supposed to start the cup remained on the field. In this case, it was the national teams of Yugoslavia and Greece. Like the Belgrade crowd, the Bucharest crowd heartily cheered for the weaker ones in the matches of the other national teams. Although without support from the stands, the Yugoslavian national team achieved their first victory of 5:3 in this cup (*Prva pobeda Jugoslavije....*, 1933).

The match against Bulgaria, which was played on June 5, was very important for the Romanians. To the delight of around 15,000 fans, the home team recorded a convincing 7:0 victory. The Minister of Labour, Health and Social Protection, Dimitrie Ioanițescu, who watched the match with other high-ranking representatives, congratulated the players after the match and rewarded their success with gifts (*România–Bulgária 7:0, 1933; O strălucită victorie românească...*, 1933).

In the remaining games against Bulgaria and Greece, the Yugoslav and Romanian national teams recorded victories, and their meeting, which ended the tournament, was decisive. The match between the hosts and Greece took place on June 8, coinciding with the Romanian national holiday, which added a special significance to the event. It was attended by King Carol II, Grand Duke Mihai, Prime Minister Vaida Voevod, along with various ministers, military representatives, and members of the diplomatic corps. Due to the holiday, newspapers focused more on the opening ceremony, the parades, and the distinguished guests than on the game itself, which concluded with a 1-0 victory for Romania. Following the match, journalists interviewed numerous Romanian and foreign politicians and diplomats present in the stands, sharing their insights about the game with their readers. The responses led sports journalists to believe that these officials were quite knowledgeable about the sport (*Impresionanta sărbătoare a sportului, 1933; Declarații după matchul de ieri, 1933*).

There was tremendous interest from both the audience and officials during the decisive cup match between Romania and Yugoslavia, which took place on the final day of the competition, June 11, 1933. The stands of the stadium were packed, and according to some estimates, the match was watched by around 28,000 fans, including Crown Prince Mihai and several ministers. The result was 5:0 to the joy of the Bucharest crowd. The sharp play of the Romanian players led to the fact that in most of the match the Yugoslav team played with ten, at one point nine players, which partially explains the result (România-Jugoszlávia 5:0, 1933). Romania won the cup for the second time, while Yugoslavia was second, Bulgaria was third, and Greece was fourth.

The Third Balkan Cup helped establish Romanian football as one of the best in the region. This success positively influenced national pride among the population and improved Romania's image among other Balkan nations. The belief that football could serve as a significant representative of Romania in Europe and beyond led to political interference in the Romanian Football Federation's operations. In August, Viorel Tilea, a prominent politician and diplomat with extensive connections, was appointed to lead the organization. His appointment aligned with Romania's political goals of expanding cooperation and building football ties with various countries, which would foster positive sentiments towards Romania. In an interview following his appointment, Tilea emphasized the importance of sports in educating younger generations, instilling discipline, promoting teamwork, and encouraging physical development. He highlighted football as the most popular, healthiest, and easiest sport to promote. According to him, football held exceptional national significance and should be encouraged even in the smallest Romanian towns. Previously, as a politician, he advocated for the creation of a secretariat for physical education, urging the state to invest more in sports (De vorbă cu d. Ministru Viorel V. Tilea, 1933).

IV Balkan Cup

The draw decided that the match between Greece and Yugoslavia would open the competition, and the match between Yugoslavia and Romania would close (Zaključene su dve utakmice..., 1934). The games were opened with a ceremony

and the laying of wreaths on the tomb of the Unknown Hero in Athens on December 22, 1934, and the beginning of the committee's congress, whose first task was the selection of referees for the upcoming matches. As with the previous cups, part of the Balkan Cup included ceremonial receptions, tours of sights in the city and its vicinity, which is why the cup was more than just a football competition (Danas se otvaraju..., 1934).

Yugoslavia was also considered the favorite at these games. In the forecasts, Romania came after it, then Bulgaria, while the Greek national team was considered the weakest team. A surprise happened in the first game. The favorite was defeated by the outsider, that is, Greece defeated Yugoslavia with 2:1. There was great interest in the match, and around 20,000 Greeks enjoyed the success of their team (I pored teškog poraza..., 1934).

The uncertainty of the competition lasted almost until the last day, when two important games were played, the outcome of which depended on the winner. The first was between Bulgaria and Greece, and it ended with Bulgaria winning 2:1. Greece's defeat created the possibility for Yugoslavia and Romania to win the trophy. Therefore, the winner of the last game was also the winner of the cup. Romania needed only one point to return the trophy won at the last cup to Bucharest, and Yugoslavia only needed a victory. After 90 minutes of intense play and a particularly difficult atmosphere that had a bad effect on the concentration of the players, Yugoslavia emerged as the winner. With a 4:0 victory, the Yugoslav players finally won the Balkan Cup trophy after three missed opportunities (Jugoszlávia–Románia 4:0, 1935).

What marked the games in Athens was not only the unsportsmanlike cheering of the audience, but also the behavior of the people who were in charge of the safety of the participants. Even before the cup, the Greeks earned the epithet of ardent fans, but during the tournament, that cheering reached a special level. The desire to keep the cup in Athens at all costs was also widespread among the players, who often caused injuries to opposing players with their sharp play. Of course, the Athenians applauded every violation by the home team and greeted the referee's decisions in those cases with shouts. As mentioned, the key match for Greece was the match against Bulgaria on January 1, refereed by Yugoslavian

referee Bora Vasiljević. During the entire match, the audience insulted the referee, threw various objects at him, and even stones. However, the height of the scandalous behavior was the moment when a Greek policeman pointed a gun at him, screaming that he was going to kill him. The Greek players also showed no respect for Vasiljević. Goalkeeper Gramatikopoulos, for example, physically assaulted the referee twice, once in the dressing room and the second time after the end of the game (*Balkanski kup je naš...*, 1935; *Jugoslavija je juče u Atini...*, 1935).

The impression that the Yugoslav referee was to blame for the Greek defeat was also reflected in the audience's attitude towards the Yugoslav national team in the match against Romania, which took place on the same day. When they went out on the field, instead of greeting them, the audience greeted them with shouts, ugly words, but also with oranges and various objects that they threw at them. The gendarmes standing next to the field also could not refrain from an outburst. After the duel between goalkeeper Bartul Čulić and Romanian striker Dobaj in the 15th minute of the game, the Romanian footballer was injured. This was met with excitement by the audience, who, together with the gendarmes, stormed the field and attacked the Yugoslav goalkeeper in the goal itself. When the crowd around the goal dispersed, the goalkeeper remained lying on the grass. What happened was that a gendarme hit him in the head so hard that he passed out. Čulić, who was carried off the field on a stretcher, was replaced by reserve goalkeeper Bratulić. In the continuation of the match, the audience got more and more hooliganism. Throwing stones on the field was especially dangerous for the players. At one point, the situation was so critical that it was only thanks to the intervention of the Greek Minister of the Army that further rampage of the crowd and its encroachment on the field was prevented (*Kako smo pobedili Rumune*, 1935). The match eventually ended with a convincing victory of 4:0. The Yugoslav players won the cup, and as a reward, they received another day of stay in Athens from the Yugoslav Football Association. Yugoslav national team member Anđelko Marušić remembered the match like this: "As I said, more emotions bind me to the Athens match against the Romanians." Although the Romanians were not a worthy partner for us at that moment, we still had to beat them in that hot-tempered crowd that whistled nonstop and cheered them

on. If the Romanians had taken only one point from us, Greece would have been the champion of the Balkans. Well, we didn't give that. We won convincingly - out of pure spite!" (Stanišić, 1969: 19, 28).

This atmosphere led to serious discussions at the last meeting of the Cup Committee held on January 2nd in Athens, where Konstantaras, the vice-president of the Greek Federation, was elected as the next president, and Petar Stojadinov, the secretary of the Bulgarian Federation, as the secretary. The representative of Yugoslavia, Kostić, together with his Romanian colleague Octav Luchide, suggested that the next matches should be as disciplined as possible. Some of the decisions made were in that direction. It was voted to pay more attention to the safety of the players and take the necessary measures to prevent the crowd from breaking into the field. Also, a ban was passed that anyone can stand behind the goal. Stricter measures have also been introduced in terms of punishing players. The members of the Cup Committee were given the function of members of the penalty committee. Thanks to their dual position, they have since been able to penalize players for rough play or indiscipline without prior notification from the referees. One of the biggest prescribed penalties was a ban on participation in the next games within the cup. As for the next tournament, it was decided that it would be held in June in Sofia (*Specijalne mere za rad...*, 1935).

It is important to note that this was the last cup before the serious tightening of relations in the whole of Europe, including in the Balkans. In 1933, Hitler came to power in Germany, which would contribute to the growth of right-wing forces throughout Europe (Hobsbaum, 2002: 92). In this new geopolitical division of the old continent, the Balkan states would find themselves on opposing sides.

V Balkan Cup

The opening ceremony of the fifth consecutive Balkan Cup took place on June 15. About 10,000 athletes took part in the event, and in a procession accompanied by music and torches, they visited the most important landmarks of the city. The procession ended with the singing of national anthems by all participants and speeches by Bulgarian officials and foreign representatives. The speeches were held next to the monument dedicated to the Russian Tsar Alexander

II the Liberator, which is located near the Bulgarian Parliament. The competition opened with a match between Bulgaria and Greece on June 16, 1935, at Sofia's Junak Stadium. In the presence of around 25,000 spectators and almost the entire Bulgarian Council of Ministers, King Boris announced the official opening of the cup. Although the king said in his speech: "these peaceful, friendly matches will contribute to familiarity and rapprochement between the Balkan youth and will cultivate in them a feeling of mutual respect and friendship", the atmosphere among the participants was quite different (*Svečano otvaranje Balkanijade*, 1935).

The development of political relations in the Balkans, especially since 1934, led to a colder atmosphere. Although it was not highlighted in public, events such as the creation of the Balkan Pact directed against Bulgaria's revisionist aspirations to correct borders, and the assassination of King Alexander in 1934 opened a new stage in regional cooperation. Then came the replacement of the "ring-leaders" in Bulgaria who advocated an alliance with France and unification with Yugoslavia, the coming of pro-German currents to power in Romania and Yugoslavia, and political instability in Greece, which will lead to the fall of the Second Greek Republic and the return of the monarchy in November 1935 year, but also the increasingly strong foreign influence were factors that had a bad impact on the region. Greece and Romania were against the Yugoslav rapprochement with Bulgaria, which led to pressure and a certain cooling down. All this was reflected in the atmosphere in Balkan sports. Due to the issue of Dobrudja, Romania had the most pronounced opinion that Bulgaria should be isolated. The impression that it could not protect its interests from Bulgaria if it were more closely connected, or united with Yugoslavia, was the basis of its Balkan policy (Avramovski, 1986: 199-201). The first hints that the peak of football cooperation has passed and that it is slowly moving towards its end came in Athens, and for the first time in Sofia, there were statements that the cup should be liquidated.

The competition was plagued by problems from the very beginning. The first to arise was the issue of selecting judges. At the meeting of the Cup Committee, the Romanians objected to the participation of the Yugoslav referee Mika Popović, who was supposed to referee the Bulgaria-Romania match. While the

host agreed, the Romanian representatives demanded that the Greek Stavros Hatzopoulos be chosen as the main referee of that match. In the remark submitted to the committee, it was written that the Romanian national team was not satisfied with his refereeing during the match with Bulgaria at the cup held in Belgrade in 1932, when the Romanians lost 2:0. As a compromise solution, it was proposed to invite judge Ružić from Yugoslavia, which was accepted. However, the following day, the representatives of Romania and Bulgaria agreed that the match should be refereed by the mentioned Greek, which made the arrival of Ružić in vain. Because of this solution to the issue of appointing arbitrators, it happened that not a single game was refereed by someone from Yugoslavia. The first match between Bulgaria and Greece was refereed by Romanian referee Costel Radulescu. The matches Yugoslavia-Romania, Bulgaria-Romania and Bulgaria-Yugoslavia were refereed by Stavros Hadzopoulos. The matches Greece-Yugoslavia and Greece-Romania were led by the Bulgarian referee Ivan Dosev (Balkan cup 1935 results, 2025).

The first match between Bulgaria and Greece on June 16 ended with a 5:2 victory for the hosts. The next match was between the predicted favorites, Yugoslavia and Romania, on June 17. He was followed by many problems and misunderstandings, which, in principle, clearly showed the atmosphere in which the Balkan football cooperation was carried out. Due to the rain, the start of the match was postponed several times. Instead of the match starting at 17:00 Sofia time (one hour less in Yugoslavian time), it started at 18:55. The reason for the postponement was a discussion about whether the field was fit for the game. The Romanians advocated a postponement, while Yugoslavia and especially the Sofia audience demanded that the match be held. Due to the darkness, the match could not be finished regularly, but the Greek referee, at the special insistence of the Romanian representative, ended the game in the 78th minute with the score 2:0. As there were still 12 minutes of the game left, it was agreed that that time would be played later. However, on the same evening, the Romanian representatives Davila and Radulescu sent a complaint and a request to the committee to repeat the game, with the explanation that the field was not in condition. Yugoslav representatives Andrejević and Boško Simonović considered such a complaint unfounded. The Yugoslav position was that it was only necessary to

play the remaining twelve minutes. A fierce debate developed around this, and even the Romanians threatened that if the committee did not come up with an acceptable solution for them, they would boycott the rest of the matches, that is, they would leave the Balkan Cup (*Utakmica Jugoslavija – Rumunija*, 1935).

At the Committee meeting held on the night between June 19 and 20, many problems were manifested. Yugoslav judges Ružić and Popović pointed out in a note handed to the organizers that, as a sign of protest for the behavior towards them, they will no longer respond to summonses for trial. In addition to the fact that the Yugoslav referees did not judge a single game, their opinions in the function of line referees were not respected, especially by the Romanian referee Radulescu. To avoid the problem of arbitrators in the future, the committee at the mentioned session adopted the proposal of the Yugoslav and Romanian representatives that, in case the federations of the participating countries do not submit a list of domestic judges, it is possible to hire judges from abroad. Another problem was related to the financing of the competition. All the organizing countries, except Yugoslavia, managed to organize the cup with a certain financial profit. For example, the Bulgarian Federation, as the organizer of the cup, managed to pay the entire costs of the organization only based on a percentage of the sale of specially printed postage stamps of the Ministry of Posts of Bulgaria. So, the income from tickets remained entirely with the Bulgarian Federation (*Bugari prihodom...*, 1935).

Only Yugoslavia did not earn from the Balkan Cup. As its minus was a large representative of the JNS, at the committee meeting, he proposed that the other countries raise their share so that Yugoslavia could reduce its deficit. The Romanian representative agreed to pay Yugoslavia 500 dollars more than the previous sum of 1700 dollars. However, such a procedure was accompanied by the condition that the next tournament, instead of Belgrade, be organized in Bucharest. The Bulgarian federation, on the other hand, offered that a match between the national teams take place in Belgrade and that all the revenue from it would go to Yugoslavia as compensation for the deficit created in the Balkan Cup. The Greeks were asked to raise their expenses by \$300, but they did not accept it.

The epilogue of the discussion about playing the remaining 12 minutes of the Yugoslavia-Romania match was that the Romanian representative, according to the score his team achieved, decided to accept the result from the interrupted game as final, which ended the need to make up the remaining time. In the longer term, this example led to the inclusion of a provision in the Statute of the Balkan Cup that “a match that was interrupted for sports-technical or atmospheric reasons must be continued the next day or when the cup committee determines” (Daleko nadmoćnija, 1935).

At the JNS meeting held on June 22, the general line towards the Balkan Cup was determined. The behavior of the Romanian representatives was understood in Belgrade as a desire to break the cup. To preserve the very basis on which the competition rested, a decision was made to give up financial claims and to go over the referee problem, and to preserve the order of organization of the tournament by country at all costs. Therefore, the position of JNS was that the organization of the cup in 1936 must belong to Belgrade. It was precisely around this question that the most heated discussion took place. Romania did not give up its offer and demands, and Yugoslavia was not ready to give in. In the end, that item was put to a vote on June 23. As Bulgaria supported Yugoslavia, and Greece supported Romania, the situation arose that the president decided with his vote. Of course, Konstantaras voted in accordance with his country's position, and the Romanian proposal was adopted. Since such a decision was final, the Yugoslav Football Association was given a period of two months to accept or reject it (Jučerašnja utakmica..., 1935).

At the same time, the decisive match Yugoslavia-Bulgaria to be played on June 24 or not. However, at the insistence of the Yugoslav representative, the Committee decided almost at the last moment to hold the meeting. According to the calculations, the Yugoslav national team needed a win or a draw, and Bulgaria needed a win to climb to the podium. The desire of the Bulgarians to win the cup was manifested in numerous promises of the authorities and the previously unprecedented interest of the population in a football match. The Bulgarian players were promised 20,000 leva and a suit by their association in case of victory. Apart from the authorities and organizers, richer citizens also promised

the players prizes. One of the examples was the free annual entrance to the Sofia cinema for all national team members. Such promises stimulated the players to give their maximum to win. The “spirited Bulgarian national team players” needed some time to consolidate on the field. After the Yugoslav lead of 2:0, there was an unexpected twist. Bulgaria took the lead with 3:2 to the great joy of around 30,000 fans and the Bulgarian Prince Kirill, who followed the game from the first to the last moment. Yugoslavia’s goal in the 75th minute made the final score 3:3, which at that moment meant the victory of the “white eagles” (Jugoslavija je nerešenom igrom..., 1935).

The direction in which the matches were played eventually led to the calculations of the Bulgarians, and they also turned against Yugoslavia. It should be emphasized that her motives were exclusively aimed at winning the cup, because after all the games played, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were equal in terms of points. In such cases, a system of quotients obtained based on conceded and given goals was applied, according to which Yugoslavia was the winner. However, at the meeting where the question of the winner was resolved, the other members sided with Bulgaria, and the trophy remained in Sofia, and arbitration was requested from FIFA, even though the Balkan Cup was an independent tournament. In the end, it was decided that after 10 months, an additional match would be played to determine the winner. As Yugoslavia was no longer interested, the trophy remained with the Bulgarians (Balkan cup (For Nations), 2020).

Due to the overall behavior during the tournament, the Yugoslav Football Association held an emergency meeting immediately after the return of the national team. The key decision of the JNS was to withdraw from the competition and ban local referees from arbitrating in Romania (Jugoslavija je istupila, 1935). After that decision, JNS turned to the Central European Cup, where they were accepted in 1937 (Стојановић, 1953: 49-50; Mitropa Cup 1937, 1999).

VI Balkan Cup

As for the Balkan Cup in Bucharest, it took place with three participants in May 1936. According to the decision of the committee meeting in Sofia, the organizer

of the next cup was given the authority to consider Turkey's request to join the competition. As Romania took over the role of organizer and Yugoslavia left the competition, the question of Turkish participation was of great importance. Although Bucharest made great efforts, in the end, Turkey was not one of the participants this time either. The Balkan Cup was slowly coming to an end.

The first match of the Balkan Cup was played on May 17, 1936, at the ONEF Stadium in Bucharest between the hosts and Greece. Romania won 5:2 in front of around 15,000 fans. The next match was between Bulgaria and Greece. The Bulgarian national team emerged victorious from that match with a score of 5:4, even though they had about 20,000 Romanian fans in the game in addition to the sharp and rough Greeks (România a învins Grecia cu 5:2, 1936, 1; България бие Гърция с 5:4, 1936). This game meant that Romania and Bulgaria would fight for the trophy in the last game. That decisive match was played on May 24. Although the tickets for the game were distributed, due to the rain, about half of the expected 40,000 fans came to the stadium. After the first half, which ended 1:1, the second half was mostly played on the Bulgarian side of the field. During 45 minutes, the Romanian players exerted constant pressure and scored 3 more goals. With a score of 4:1, Romania won the gold trophy of the Balkan Cup (Футболъ, Въ последния мачъ, 1936).

However, in the end, the issue of the whole competition arose. The key for the future of the competition, according to Luchide, was the return of Yugoslavia and the entry of Turkey into the competition. In that direction, JNS and the Turkish Football Federation were contacted by phone and asked to send their representatives for the last session scheduled for May 24. On the other hand, the further participation of Romania was questionable. Like Yugoslavia, it applied to participate in two important competitions: the European Cup (4th International Cup) and the Mitropa Cup (Central European Cup). It was quite clear in the committee that in case she was accepted, in the mentioned competitions, she would leave the cup. Which is why he was pressured to withdraw his request for membership in the Central European Cup (Балканската купа е предъ, 1936; Последнитъ сведения отъ Букурешъ, 1936).

According to the agreement, the subsequent conference of the Balkan Cup was held in Sofia on October 18. Representatives of Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Turkey, but not Yugoslavia, gathered in the hall of the Main Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs (*Šta bi trebalo učiniti*, 1936). Since no new leadership was elected in Bucharest, the first step was to elect the president, secretary, and committee members. Octav Luchide was elected president, and the representative of Turkey, Enel Bey, was elected secretary. Turkey was unanimously accepted as a member, and some changes were introduced. One of the more important ones was that the tournaments be organized either in the period from November 27 to January 1 or from June 25 to July 10. Athens was chosen as the venue for the next tournament, and then the hosts should be Ankara, Bucharest, and Sofia in 1940. The competition system has not been changed, except for the referees. There, the Turkish proposal to choose neutral arbitrators, i.e., foreigners, was accepted (*Turska je postala...*, 1936).

Although the future of the cup seemed to be secured, after a week, there were serious concerns in Sofia about the Yugoslav and Romanian plans to enter the Central European Cup. The fear that, like Yugoslavia, Romania will leave the competition was reinforced by rumors that Italy is setting the suspension of the Balkan Cup as a condition for admission. On the other hand, since April 1936, a change in football orientation was felt in Bucharest. In the article titled "The Last Balkaniad", published in *Gazeta Sporturilor*, it was unequivocally pointed out that Romanian sports interests are no longer in the Balkans but in the West. Sports commentators also underlined the visible differences in the level of development, organization, and popularity of football in Romania and Yugoslavia on the one hand, and other Balkan countries on the other. In the political sense, there was also a clear differentiation. In May 1936, a debate was held in the Romanian Parliament about whether Romania belonged to the Balkans. Her already visible pro-German orientation led to the statement of the vice-president of the Romanian Senate that "the placement of Romania in the Balkans is a geographical heresy" (Breuil et Constantin, 2015: 591-603; *Ultima Balcaniadă*, 1936, 1).

The end of the Balkan Cup

The fate of the Balkan Cup was sealed after the decision of the Central European Cup conference in Prague on October 30, 1936, which admitted Yugoslavia and Romania to that competition. After that, the Romanian Football Association showed less and less interest in this competition, but did not even want to leave it officially. Bulgaria was the only one that wholeheartedly advocated for the competition to survive. The arrival of the Yugoslav national team and JNS officials in Sofia on July 12 on the occasion of the scheduled friendly match was used by Bulgaria to discuss the Balkan Cup. The representatives of the Bulgarian National Sports Federation tried in every way to rekindle the desire of Yugoslavia and to return it to the competition. However, the position of the JNS was unyielding, although some of the officials positively accepted the Bulgarian arguments (Bugarski sportski funkcioneri, 1937).

The Balkan Cup fell into a serious crisis in the spring of 1937. Greece, which was supposed to be the organizer of the competition, left the organization to Turkey due to financial and other difficulties, and for a while, Ankara was promoted as the place of the cup in 1937. Soon, Turkey also gave up, so according to the draw, Romania was the next in line as organizer. On August 12, the Romanian Sports Federation accepted the organization and announced that the tournament would be held in Bucharest from October 3 to 10, and after Bulgaria's request from October 10 to 17 (Kratke vesti, 1937; Bugarska je umolila..., 1937). However, soon Romania also gave up on organizing, thus ending any hope that the competition would take place.

Conclusion

The Balkan Cup was quietly extinguished; different political interests, different sports orientations, as well as financial difficulties, prevented occasional initiatives for renewal from being implemented. The outbreak of World War II put an end to football cooperation within the Balkan region, but the memory of the Balkan Cup remained alive. The benefits of football and the wide possibilities of using sports to build socialism and international cooperation were quickly noticed by the Communists. The Balkan Cup, albeit in a new form, was restored as

early as 1946, and football was widely used to promote the idea of brotherhood and unity among the Balkan people's democracies - Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania (Breuil et Constantin, 2015: 591-603).

In the end, we can say that the Balkan Games have fulfilled, even exceeded, the expectations of political circles during their existence. By creating friendly contacts between athletes, sports workers, journalists, and diplomatic representatives, they greatly helped the efforts of governments to overcome political animosities and create conditions for joint cooperation in the Balkans. Already in the late 1920s and early 1930s, people equated the state with football players. Their successes were the best promotion of a country and its people, and their defeats were a shame. When looking at the period 1929-1934, it can be said that the mentioned sentence of journalist that until then the relations were not good and that the football players reconciled the Balkan peoples with their game was close to the truth.

The period after 1937 represents a time of gradual degradation of football regional cooperation. The speed with which football developed, spread among the people, and created ardent supporters also led to negative phenomena. The ardent fans tried in every way to help their national team win, and sports cheering slowly turned into hooliganism. As far as the Balkan Cup is concerned, the games in Athens in 1934 marked a clear turning point. In the eyes of the audience, sports rivals became enemies, and enemies were allowed to throw various objects and verbal abuse. Even the referees could not avoid the anger of the fans. Football managers also began to violate the spirit of sports competition, and in the matches, they primarily saw their financial background. No matter how bad they were, negative events could not damage the foundation of football, which is the preservation of the competitive spirit, the constant desire to advance, and make new contacts. All in all, football left a positive mark on the Balkans in the interwar period.

Contribution Rates and Conflicts of Interest

Ethical Statement	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited
Author Contributions	
Data Collection	Ni.M (%50), NM (%0)
Data Analysis	KZ (%50), NM (%50)
Research Design	Ni.M (%50), NM (%50)
Writing the Article	Ni.M (%50), NM (%50)
Article Submission and Revision	Ni.M (%80), NM (%20)
Complaints	journalbalkan@gmail.com
Conflicts of Interest	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research
Copyright & License	Authors publishing with the journal retain the-copyright to their work licensed under the CC BY-NC 4.0

References

- Avramovski Ž. (1986). *Balkanska antanta (1934–1940)*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju.
- Balkan Cup (For Nations). 2020. Access address: <https://www.rsssf.org/tables/b/balkancup.html#35>
- Balkan Cup 1935 results. 2025. Access address: https://eu-football.info/_tournament.php?id=BlC-5
- Balkan games. 2016. Access address: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120320224612/http://www.olympics.segas.gr/olympics/en/history/history11.asp>
- Balkanijada u Sofiji je počela (1931). *Vreme* (29. 9. 1931, 8).
- Balkanski kup je naš, pobednicima se sprema svečani doček u Beogradu (1935). *Pravda* (3. 1. 1935, 8–9).
- Balkanski kup ostvaren! Reprezentativne utakmice po dvostrukom kup sistemu počinju još ove jeseni. (1929). *Vreme* (15. 4. 1929, 6).
- Balkanski kup, početak utakmica i izbor sudija (1929). *Vreme* (17. 5. 1929, 7).
- Балканската купа е предъ прага на своето ликвидиране ако Румъния спечели сегашния турниръ въ Букурешъ (1936). *Спортъ* (18. 5. 1936, 3).
- Balkanski savezi istupiće zajedno na kongresu FIFE 13, 14 i 15. o. m. u Stokholmu (1932). *Vreme* (8. 5. 1932, 8).
- България бие Гърция съ 5:4 (1936). *Спортъ* (22. 5. 1936, 1).
- Breuil X. et Constantin P. N. (2015) “The Balkan Cups as a vector of European integration, 1929–1994”. *Sport in History*, 35:4, 591-603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17460263.2015.1073016>
- Bugari prihodom od poštanskih maraka isplatili sve troškove oko Balkanijade (1935). *Pravda* (21. 6. 1935, 8).
- Bugarska je umolila da se takmičenje za Balkanski kup odgodi za nedelju dana (1937). *Pravda* (13. 8. 1937, 11).
- Bugarski sportski funkcioneri koristiće danas priliku da razgovaraju o povratku Jugoslavije u Balkanski kup (1937). *Pravda* (13. 7. 1937, 11).
- Cupa Balcanică (1929), *Gazeta Sporturilor* (18. 4. 1929, 4).
- Daleko nadmoćnija i u svakom pogledu bolja Jugoslavija je juče tukla Grčku sa 6:1 (1935). *Vreme* (22. 6. 1935, 9).
- Danas se otvaraju fudbalske svečanosti Balkanskog kupa u Atini (1934). *Vreme* (22. 12. 1934, 9).
- D’Avanzo M. (2020). *History of European International Cup 1927–1960*. Cuirone: Soccerdata.
- De vorbă cu d. Ministru Viorel V. Tilea, Preşedintele Federaţiei Române de Football (1933). *Gazeta Sporturilor* (11. 9. 1933, 4).
- Declaraţii dupa matchul de eri (1933). *Gazeta Sporturilor* (9. 6. 1933, 3).
- Футболъ, Въ последния матч за Балканската купа България губи отъ Румуния съ 4:1 (1936). *Спортъ* (25. 5. 1936, 3).
- Grci protiv učešća rumunskih profesionalaca u utakmicama za kup (1931). *Vreme* (29. 11. 1931, 7).

- Grčka i Bugarska počinju program na olimpijadi (1931). *Vreme* (28. 9. 1931, 6).
- Grčka je povukla svoj protest, zbog odlaska nekih bugarskih fudbalera u Prag (1932). *Vreme* (4. 7. 1932, 8).
- Hobsbaum E. (2002). *Doba ekstrema: istorija kratkog dvadesetog veka: 1914-1991*, Beograd: Dereta.
- I pored teškog poraza naše reprezentacije, položaj Jugoslavije još nije izgubljen (1934). *Pravda* (25. 12. 1934, 8).
- Idući kongres i utakmice za Balkanski kup održaće se u Beogradu (1931). *Politika* (30. 11. 1931, 9).
- Impresionanta sârbătoare a sportului (1933). *Gazeta Sporturilor* (9. 6. 1933, 1).
- Ionescu M. et Tudoran M. (1964). *Fotbal de la A la Z, Fotbalul Românesc de-a lungul anilor*. București: Editura sport-turism.
- Jučerašnja utakmica za Balkanski kup odložena usled provale oblaka, VI Balkanske igre održaće se u Bukureštu (1935). *Pravda* (25. 6. 1935, 9).
- Jugoslavija je istupila iz Balkanskog kupa zbog nesportskog ponašanja Rumunskog nogometnog saveza (1935). *Vreme* (26. 6. 1935, 9).
- Jugoslavija je juče u Atini u sjajnoj igri tukla Rumuniju sa 4:0 i osvojila prvi put Balkanski kup (1935). *Politika* (2. 1. 1935, 9).
- Jugoslavija je nerešenom igrom sa Bugarskom 3:3 odbranila Balkanski kup (1935). *Vreme* (25. 6. 1935, 9).
- Jugoszlávia–Románia 4:0 (1935). *Sport es kritika Temesvár* (2. 1. 1935, 1–2).
- Kako smo pobedili Rumune (1935). *Vreme* (2. 1. 1935, 9).
- Kissoudi P. (2016) *The Balkan Games and Balkan Politics in the Interwar Years 1929–1939*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Konferencija delegata sportskih saveza Rumunije, Grčke, Bugarske i Jugoslavije. (1929) *Politika* (15. 4. 1929, 9).
- Kraj turnira za Balkanski kup (1932). *Vreme* (4. 7. 1932, 8).
- Kratke vesti (1937). *Pravda* (7. 3. 1937, 12).
- Lisi C. (2022). *The FIFA World Cup: a history of the planet's biggest sporting event*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Minutes of the 17th Annual Congress. 1928. Access address: <https://www.estadao.com.br/blogs/blog/wp-content/uploads/sites/127/2018/05/FIFA-Congress.pdf>
- Mitropa Cup 1937. 1999. Access address: <https://www.rsssf.org/tables/mt37.html>
- Mitrović N et Mijatov N. (2025). Football Between Politics, Royal Families and Sport: Yugoslav-Romanian Football Relations 1922-1941, *Istorijski časopis 20. veka*, 1/2025, 37-58. <https://doi.org/10.29362/ist20veka.2025.1.mit.37-58>
- Momento 26. Mai 1930 (1998). *Adevărul de Cluj, ziar independent* (26. 5. 1998, 13).
- O držanju beogradske publike na utakmicama za Balkanski kup (1932). *Vreme* (6. 7. 1932, 8).
- O strălucită victorie românească, România învinge Bulgaria cu 7-0, *Gazeta Sporturilor* (5. 6. 1933, 1).

- Oduševljeni doček bugarske reprezentacije u Sofiji (1932). *Vreme* (6. 7. 1932, 8).
- Oprisan C. (2022). *100 de ani, Istoria Echipei naționale de fotbal a României 1922–2022*. București: Editată de FRF.
- Parče od pobede (1932). *Pravda* (6. 7. 1932, 9).
- Podela nagrada pobednicima na Balkanijadi (1931). *Vreme* (7. 10. 1931, 8).
- Povestea Stadionului ANEF / ONEF / Republicii, 2022. Access address: <https://uranusacum.ro/stadionul-anef-onef-republicii-2/>
- Последният сведения от Букурешъ (1936). Спортъ (20. 5. 1936, 3).
- Prva pobjeda Jugoslavije na turniru za Balkanski kup (1933). *Politika* (4. 6. 1933, 14).
- Prva sednica Balkanskog kupa (1935). *Vreme* (19. 6. 1935, 13).
- Reprezentacija Rumunije pobedila je sa 4:2 (1931). *Politika* (29. 6. 1931, 9).
- România a învins Grecia cu 5:2, *Gazeta Sporturilor* (19. 5. 1936, 1).
- Románia–Bulgária 7:0 (1933) *Sport es kritika Temesvár* (6. 6. 1933, 1).
- Románia–Görögország 8:1 (1930). *Uj Kelet* (27. 5. 1930, 8).
- Romania–Jugoszlavia 2:1, Balkan-kupa merkozes (1919). *Banati Sport* (7. 10. 1919).
- Románia–Jugoszlávia 5:0 (1933). *Sport es kritika Temesvár* (12. 6. 1933, 1).
- Сладек З. (2019). *Мала Антанта 1918-1938: њене привредне, политичке и војне компоненте*. Београд: Службени гласник.
- Specijalne mere za rad i disciplinu na idućim utakmicama za Balkanski kup (1935). *Vreme* (3. 1. 1935, 9).
- Sport, Cupa balcanică* (1933), *Țara Noastră* (1. 6. 1933, 2).
- Stanišić B. (1969). *Plavi, plavi! 1919–1969*. Beograd: Borba.
- Стојановић Д. (1953). *Чика Дачине успомене 1903–1953*. Београд: СД Црвена Звезда.
- Stojković V. (1999). *Beli orlovi 1920–1941*. Beograd: FSJ.
- Stadion još nije gotov (1932). *Vreme* (4. 6. 1932, 12).
- Svečano otvaranje Balkanijade (1935). *Vreme* (19. 6. 1935, 13).
- Šta bi trebalo učiniti za napredak našeg fudbalskog sporta (1936). *Vreme* (3. 7. 1936, 7).
- Turska je postala član Balkanskog kupa (1936). *Vreme* (21. 10. 1936, 10).
- Ultima Balcaniadă (1936), *Gazeta Sporturilor* (18. 5. 1936, 1).
- Utakmica Jugoslavija–Rumunija prekinuta je u 33 minutu drugog poluvremena zbog mraka kod stanja 2:0 za Jugoslaviju (1935). *Pravda* (19. 6. 1935, 7–8).
- Vanku M. (1969). *Mala Antanta 1920–1938*, Užice: Tucović.
- Zaključene su dve utakmice sa Rumunijom (1934). *Vreme* (21. 12. 1934, 10).