

## DORIN MARCEL GIURGIUCĂ

ȘERBAN DOBOȘI<sup>1</sup>, ȘTEFAN MAROTI<sup>2</sup>, PAULA APOSTU<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** During a period when the table tennis from Cluj recorded outstanding results Dorin Giurgiuță, along Radu Negulescu, Gheorghe Cobârzan and other players had a great contribution to the prestigious successes at national and international championships. During the documentation phase the authors studied papers on the history of sports from Cluj in general, but mainly papers on the history of table tennis, news articles presenting the events, the athletes, the coaches and the results obtained within this branch of sports, evidence documents of the sports structures. Additionally the coach notebooks of Paneth Farkas, as well as the records of some former athletes, personal documents and photographs made available to us by Dorin Giurgiuță and Ms. ... were of great help. In the first part the paper presents the situation of table tennis in Cluj during the period when Dorin Giurgiuță was one of the best players of this sport in Romania. Then his first years of activity within table tennis are presented, his results at national level, his contribution in obtaining medals and leading positions in official international championships, as well as in international championships in countries such as England, Austria, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary and others. Through its content the paper is of interest for those who deal with the history of table tennis from Cluj, for those who want to know the players, who had an acknowledged contribution in obtaining sports performances, belonging to the heritage of Romanian sports.

**Keywords:** sports history, table tennis, players, Dorin Giurgiuță

**REZUMAT. *Dorin Marcel Giurgiuță.*** În perioada în care tenisul de masă clujean avea rezultate deosebite Dorin Giurgiuță, alături de Radu Negulescu Gheorghe Cobârzan și alți jucători, a avut o contribuție importantă la succesele de prestigiu obținute în campionatele națională și competițiile internaționale. În procesul de documentare autorii au studiat lucrări care tratează trecutul sportului clujean în general, dar mai ales cele care se referă la istoria tenisului de masă, articole de presă care prezintă evenimentele, sportivii, antrenorii și rezultatele obținute în această disciplină sportivă, documente de evidență ale structurilor sportive. De asemenea, de un real folos ne-au fost caietele de antrenor ale lui Paneth Farkas,

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<sup>1</sup> Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, serban\_dobosi@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> Oradea University, Faculty of Geography, Tourism and Sport, Department of Physical Therapy, Sports and Kinetotherapy, Oradea, Romania

Însemnările unor foști jucători, documentele personale, fotografiile puse la dispoziția noastră de Dorin Giurgiucă și doamna ... În prima parte, lucrarea prezintă situația în care se găsea tenisul de masă din orașul Cluj în perioada în care Dorin Giurgiucă a fost unul dintre cei mai buni jucători ai acestei discipline sportive din România. În continuare, sunt evocați primii săi ani de activitate în tenisul de masă, rezultatele sale pe plan național, contribuția sa la obținerea unor medalii și locuri fruntașe în competițiile internaționale oficiale, precum și la Campionatele internaționale ale unor țări precum Anglia, Austria, Germania Federală, Ungaria și altele. Prin conținutul său, lucrarea prezintă interes pentru cei care sunt preocupați de istoria tenisului de masă clujean, pentru cei care doresc să cunoască jucătorii care au avut o contribuție recunoscută la obținerea unor performanțe sportive care fac parte din patrimoniul sportului românesc.

**Cuvinte cheie:** istoria sportului, tenis de masă, jucători, Dorin Giurgiucă

## Introduction

Already from the beginning of practicing table tennis in the first cities of Transylvania, Cluj was one of the cities where this sport was highly popular and which was of great interest for pupils, youngsters, students and intellectuals, whereas the players recorded notable results. (Postolache, 1995) Five decades later table tennis was amongst the most successful disciplines, bringing fame to the city of Cluj through the results obtained at international and national competitions.

During the years valuable athlete generations succeeded one another in Cluj, who were part of the Romanian national teams, who were national champions, who won medals at the World Championships, European Championships, Balkan Games, and who won front-rankings in other important international championships. Out of these the following distinguished themselves through value and rank: Vladone Victor, Goldberg Marin Vasile, Diamandstein Erwin, Paneth Farkas, Kolozsvári Szász Sári, Weisz Éva, Cobârzan Gheorghe, Negulescu Radu, Réthi Adalbert, Giurgiucă Dorin, Crișan Carmen, Doboși Șerban, Böhm Zsolt Georg and others. Due to everything achieved within this sports discipline, table tennis earned a place of honor in the history of Cluj sports and without its contribution this history would be poorer, lacking a gem which completes its glory.

Studying the Bibliography of Physical Education and Sports (Postolache & Postolache, 1983) and nonetheless the glorious past of table tennis, we found only little papers dealing with the history of this sports in Cluj. Even if many players from Cluj had remarkable contributions and were famous for their results both at national and international level, no books, research articles or popular articles were written in order to present these representative players from Cluj,

except maybe "Paleta și planeta" (Paneth, 2003) [The racket and the planet] and "Din enciclopedia sportului clujean" (Cristea, 1968) [From the Encyclopedia of Cluj Sports].

We consider that studying this sport and writing some papers in order to present the activity and performance of some athletes contribute to younger generations getting to know different aspects of the past of this discipline and at the same time represents a recognition of the value of this discipline, a tribute to the ones who were amongst the valuable table tennis players from Romania. Dorin Giurgiuță is considered to be one of the best table tennis players from Romania, due to his value, the performances achieved within the team of the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj at the European Champions Cup, and he represents the main reason for us to write this paper.

### **At the beginning in table tennis**

Dorin Marcel Giurgiuță was born in 1944, on December 8<sup>th</sup> in Mihalț, Alba county. During his first years he moved with the parents and other family members to Dej. Here he became acquainted with table tennis, a sport which he began to play in 1956. In 1958 he takes part in his first official championship and shortly after that he is noticed by the coach Paneth Farcas during a game within the championship of the Cluj region, taking part in Bistrita, within a game between the teams from Dej and Bistrita. The versed eye of one of the best table tennis coaches of the time immediately saw the distinctive qualities of Dorin Giurgiuță for this sport, his true possibility of becoming one of the best players in Romania within a short period of time and a player who can also come to the fore at international level. (Blag, 2002)

Beginning with the summer of 1959, Dorin Giurgiuță was transferred to the table tennis department of the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj, and as a student of the Ady-Șincai Highschool Cluj. During this period male table tennis from Cluj was in the ascendancy. At international level this sport was going through important transformations regarding the materials used, (\*\*\*) 1959) the activation of the game by limiting the time span of a set and introducing the activation rule, (\*\*\*) 1961), but also as a result of the novelties emerging from the Japanese players using a new technical procedure, called by that time „the Tokyo devil ball”. (Ardeleanu, 1963) Nonetheless they enforced the evolution of technique, the change in the game conception, taking on new tactics based on offensive playing, while rethinking the preparation and participation process in championships of table tennis players (Comarnischi, 1961).

During this period of time, when specialists were looking for solutions in order to meet the demands imposed by the evolution of table tennis, the visionary mind of the coach Panteh Farcas understood the potential of Dorin Giurgiuță, his responsiveness and his qualities in order to meet to the demands of the modern

game, especially for using the topspin with good results. Results did not fail to come. After one year of preparation, Dorin Giurgiuță very much progresses and his ascension to performance went fast: he was included in the senior team of the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj, national champion, taking part in the Europe Champions Cup, he became national champion and was promoted to the junior representative of Romania. (Paneth, 1962)

### **Results at national level**

He had role models worth following in Cluj in Gheorghe Cobârzan and Radu Negulescu, he had other team members who helped him prepare and Paneth Farcas was a skilled coach, who knew how to improve his qualities, his indisputable talent for table tennis. At the table tennis department of the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj, Dorin Giurgiuță was offered some of the best preparation conditions. Under these circumstances his talent, reliability and diligence with respect to his training allowed him to have a fast ascension.

During the years that followed he obtained results in national championships which placed him amongst the best table tennis players in Romania. Between 1960 and 1962 he won six medals in the Republican Championships. At the national senior competitions taking part between 1962 – 1972 he twice won the first place in the men's single category. His performance also includes a gold medal in mixed double category, results obtained together with players like Maria Alexandru, Carmen Crișan. As a member of the team of the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj, he contributed to winning eleven national team titles. In total he received more than twenty champion titles (\*\* 2002).

In 1962 he was awarded the title sports master for the results obtained. (\*\* 1994)

### **Dorin Giurgiuță in the international arena**

Dan Giurgiuță continued the tradition of obtaining good results in table tennis at national and international championships for over a decade, counting as one of the most valuable table tennis players from Romania and amongst the Romanian players most appreciated in Europe.

He took part in the World Championships at Prague 1963, Ljubljana 1965, Stockholm 1967 and Sarajevo 1973. In Stockholm he won the bronze medal together with Maria Alexandru in the mixed double event category. In these events he made it three times within the first sixteen and four times within the first thirty-two. As part of the Romanian team he came ninth in Stockholm, eleventh in Ljubljana, thirteenth in Prague and fifteenth in Sarajevo within the men's team category.

At the European Senior Championship in Lyon 1968 he came second together with Maria Alexandru, and at the 1966 edition in London he won the bronze medal, also together with Maria Alexandru. Other important results consisted in coming within the first eight in the men's single category in the European Championships 1966, and men's double in 1968, coming within the first sixteen in the men's single category in 1964 and 1968. In 1964 Dorin Giurgiuță was placed second within the ranking of the best players of the European Table Tennis Union, after the Swedish Alser (1).

**Table 1.** Medals obtained at official international championships 1961 – 1971  
(\*\*\* 1972)

Year	Category											
	Men's single			Men's double			Mixed double			Teams		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
World Championship												
1967									x			
World's Youth Festival												
1962		x				x						
European Senior Championship												
1966									x			
1968								x				
European Junior Championship												
1961		x										
1962	x											
Balkan Championship												
1964				x			x			x		
1965	x			x			x			x		
1966	x											

Dorin Giurgiuță proved to be a valuable junior player. At the Junior European Criterion in Bled 1962 he won the gold medal in the men's single category and came second in the men's double and mixed double category. He was declared the best junior participant at that edition of the European Championship. (Ferarini, 1962)

The World's Youth Festival in Helsinki 1962 also represented an international competition where Dorin Giurgiuță brought glory to Romanian sports by obtaining the silver medal in the men's single category and the bronze medal together with Adalbert Réthi in the men's double category. (Blag, 2002)

As a member of the team of the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj he contributed in obtaining four first places, one second place and one third place at the European Champions Cup. (Paneth, 2003)

As a valuable player, with medals from official international competitions Dorin Giurgiucă was invited to participate and obtained good results in international competitions in countries such as England, Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, The Republic of Federal Germany, Sweden, Hungary and others. He came first in the men's single category within international championships in England, Austria, The Republic of Federal Germany (\*\* 2002)

For the obtained results, for his achievements in his entire sporting activity the Romanian Table Tennis Federation conferred him the title of sports master, the highest sports distinction possible to receive during the respective period. (\*\* 1994).

### **Conclusions**

During the period of table tennis adapting to the requirements of modern games at the beginning of the 1960s Dorin Giurgiucă was considered the most gifted Romanian player, which could meet these demands.

Dorin Giurgiucă record consists of more than twenty gold medals, won in national championships.

Dorin Giurgiucă won or contributed to the winning of medals in World Championships, Senior European Championships, Junior European Championships, World's Youth Festival, Balkan Championships.

His proven value led to him being invited to take part in international championships in countries with the most valuable table tennis of the times, England, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, The Federal Republic of Germany, France, Sweden, where he was unanimously appreciated for the obtained results.

He contributed in obtaining four first places, one second place and one third place at the European Champions Cup by the Workers' Sporting Club Cluj.

For his achievements he was awarded the title of sports master in 1962, and the title of emeritus sports master in 1994.

During the successful period of Cluj table tennis in the seventh decade of the twentieth century Dorin Giurgiucă was one of the most valuable players from Romania due to the obtained results and counted as one of the Romanian players of international recognition.

### **Annotation**

This paper is part of a cycle of articles referring to the history of table tennis from Cluj.

We would like to thank all those who helped us under different perspectives during the documentation process. We are especially grateful to Dorin Giurgiucă, who was kind enough to make available albums and a series of documents on table tennis from Cluj for research purposes.

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