

EuroBasket 07 Draw - Palacio Municipal de Congresos de Madrid



Alicante

Granada

Palma de Mallorca

Sevilla

Madrid

03rd to 16th september 2007

www.eurobasket2007.org

EuroBasket
España



EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Welcome to the EuroBasket07 Draw

España



EuroBasket 2007: Madrid - Sevilla - Granada - Palma de Mallorca - Alicante



MADRID

Population: 3,155,359 Inhabitants

Surface area: 607 km²

Distances to the venues:

Madrid - Alicante 432 km

Madrid - Granada 434 km

Madrid - Palma de Mallorca 692 km

Madrid - Seville 538 km

THE CITY OF MADRID

Located at the heart of the Iberian Peninsula, Madrid is a cosmopolitan city with more than 3 million residents, and it covers 600 km². It is the administrative, cultural and commercial capital of Spain.

Madrid is known for its unlimited possibilities of cultural and artistic events. The city has more than 100 museums, and a concentration of artistic treasures almost unrivaled in Europe. The "Golden Triangle" stands out; it is formed by connecting the points of the Prado Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum and the Reina Sofia art center.

Other cultural heritage collections can be found in the Real Academia de las Bellas Artes de San Fernando Museum and at the Royal Palace. Madrid has an abundance of parks and gardens with more than 30,000 hectares of public parks such as the del Moro Royal Botanical Gardens in the Casa de Campo.

Over the last few years Madrid has become a point of reference in Europe for its fairs and conventions. The city is a preferred location for business meetings in Europe, and according to the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), it is the number two European location for holding international meetings.

In 1561, King Felipe II chose Madrid as the capital of Spain and of his empire. Since then, Madrid began to grow rapidly and began to develop new plazas, palaces, churches, and other public buildings. One of the most popular tourist attractions is in the historical center of the "Madrid de los Austrias" neighborhood. The Plaza Mayor itself is one of the most visited locations by tourists.

HISTORY

The town of Madrid originated in the Muslim Mohamed I era (852-886), when a fort was ordered to be constructed on the left side of the Manzanares river. Alfonso VI conquered the fort in 1083. Felipe II moved his court to Madrid and from that point on the town transformed itself under the impulses of the monarchs of Asturias. Felipe III and Felipe IV had the goal of making Madrid larger and more beautiful, and they did so with the magic architecture of Juan Gómez de Mora. In the seventeenth century, a wall was built to protect the poorer areas, and traces can be noted in modern day Segovia, Toledo and Valencia. It was a Bourbon, Carlos III, who modernized it in the eighteenth century. It traced the main arteries of the city, such as the Castellana, Recoletos, Prado and Acacias walkways. The nineteenth century was marked by the War of Independence and the May 2nd executions. What's more, José Bonaparte undertook the reformation of the Puerta del Sol plaza and surrounding areas. The reign of Isabel II notably changed Madrid's urbanization. At the end of the century, enlargement of the city was projected. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Grand Via was opened and urbanized, and halfway through the century the Castellana road was lengthened and modern constructions substituted old palaces. These new buildings house the most important companies in the business world. Nowadays, Madrid is a cosmopolitan and open city with an intense culture and night life. It is the site of one of the first art galleries in the world, the Prado Museum.

BASKETBALL

Basketball in Madrid is represented in the ACB league by three teams: Real Madrid, MMT Estudiantes and Alta Gestión Fuenlabrada.

Real Madrid has been the champion of the league on 29 occasions since its first championship in the 1956-57 season, and keeps eight European Cups in its display cabinet. The MMT Estudiantes



The Royal Palace in Madrid

team is another historic team in this category. This team has won the King's Cup three times and was very close to getting its first league title in the 2003-04 season, although FC Barcelona won. Alta Gestión Fuenlabrada, founded in 1983, debuted in the ACB league in the 1996-97 season. The dropped a category level 2003/04, only to rise back up again in the 2004-05 after they became LEB league champions. The Madrid Basketball Federation celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

TRANSPORTATION

Madrid is in the center of Spain and enjoys one of the most extensive networks of transportation in Europe which connects it to the majority of all the major cities in the world.

By Air

The Madrid Barajas airport, strategically located in the center of Spain, is located 12 kilometers northeast of Madrid in a plain in the Jarama river valley. Due to improvements in infrastructures and services the airport has become one of the most important links between Latin America and Europe. In 2005, Barajas registered the traffic of 42,146,784 passengers, 415,704 air operations, and 333,137 tons of cargo.

The Barajas airport receives almost 2,000 national and international flights from 131 destinations. All of the important airlines in the world fly daily to Madrid, and it is a bridge between Europe, America, Asia and Africa. The Madrid Barajas airport is very well connected to the city highways. The M30, the A2, the N11 and the M40 highways all lead to the airport. The airport is only 20 minutes from downtown, and what's more, it's well connected to Madrid by bus and the Metro.

By Train

Madrid is the center of a very modern railway network that covers all of Spain and reaches the rest of Europe. There are two stations in the center of the city, Chamartín and Atocha, and the high speed AVE train connects Madrid with Seville in 2 hours and 15 minutes.

City Transportation

Madrid has one of the largest railway (Metro) networks in Europe, and its 11 lines connect every neighborhood of the capital. As part of a modernization project, Line 8 (with stops at Nuevos Ministerios, Campo de Naciones, and the airport) was lengthened and connected to Lines 6, 9 and 10. As a result, one can get from the airport to downtown Madrid in less than 12 minutes. There is also an ample bus network which consists of 148 urban bus lines, 9 regional lines, and 21 nocturnal bus services.



Photo: Graphic Archives AENA



EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

V E N U E S

THE STADIUM

Name: Telefónica Arena Madrid

Year of construction: 2005

City: Madrid

Capacity: 10,500 spectators

Owned by: Empresa Municipal Madrid Espacios y Congresos

Address: Casa de Campo Fair Grounds.

C/ De las Aves s/n Phone: 91 588 93 93

DISTANCE TO THE SPORTS CENTER

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|
| From downtown: | 0.5 km | 10 min. |
| From the team hotels: | 2 km | 20 min. |
| From the airport: | 10 km | 30 min. |



EuroBasket 2007: Madrid - Sevilla - Granada - Palma de Mallorca - Alicante



EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

V E N U E S

THE STADIUM

Name: Palacio de Deportes Felipe II

Year of construction: June 2004

City: Madrid

Capacity: 15,500 spectators

Owned by: Comunidad de Madrid

Address: Plaza de Felipe II s/n

Phone: 91 258 60 16

DISTANCE TO THE SPORTS CENTER

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| From downtown: | 1 km | 5 min. |
| From the team hotels: | 1 km | 20 min. |
| From the airport: | 10 km | 30 min. |



EuroBasket 2007: Madrid - Sevilla - Granada - Palma de Mallorca - Alicante



MADRID

Exemplary sports organization

After postponing the Olympic dream for Madrid 2012, new ideas are in the pipeline for the games of 2016, and Madrid will host the second eliminating round of EuroBasket '07. Preparations for the Olympic Games have left visible marks on the city in the form of new, advanced infrastructures. Madrid's City Council and the Madrid General Sports Management Office are taking on this important European event with ease due to their extraordinary background. Renowned events such as the Madrid Marathon, the Master Tennis Series or the latest basketball King's Cup are endorsements for EuroBasket success in Spain's capital. Some related events held with the collaboration of various Madrid and/or Spanish sports federations include:

| 2006 SPORT EVENTS | MASTER SERIES MADRID 2005 |
|--|--|
| BASKETBALL KING'S CUP | WOMEN'S WATERPOLO QUEEN'S CUP |
| MADRID MARATHON | C.M. BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT. |
| MOUNTAIN BIKE WORLD CUP | EUROPEAN KAYAK POLO TOURNAMENT |
| TRIATHLON WORLD CUP | SPANISH ICE SKATING TOURNAMENT |
| MADRID SPORTS MEETING | WATERPOLO S.M. KING'S CUP |
| LAST CYCLING LEG, SPAIN'S CYCLING TOUR | SPANISH MOTORCROSS TOURNAMENT |
| KICKBOXING WORLD TOUR | WORLD CYCLING TOURNAMENT |
| BADMINTON WORLD TOUR | SPANISH WOMEN'S BOXING TOURNAMENT |
| FLORETE WORLD CUP | |
| RALLYE, COMMUNITY OF MADRID | 2004 SPORTS EVENTS |
| HANDBALL C.M. TOURNAMENT | EUROPEAN SWIMMING TOURNAMENT |
| 2005 SPORTS EVENTS | MOUNTAIN BIKE WORLD CUP |
| EUROPEAN TRACK AND FIELD INDOOR TOURNAMENT | INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT, MADRID 2012 |
| JUDO WORLD CUP | TRIATHLON WORLD CUP |
| TAEKWONDO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT | SPANISH CYCLING TOUR |
| MOUNTAIN BIKE WORLD CUP | TENNIS MASTER SERIES, MADRID 2004 |
| TRIATHLON WORLD CUP | II INT. CLASSIFYING TOURN. JJO WOMEN'S WRESTLING |
| ARCHERY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT | WORLD UNIHOCKEY TOURNAMENT |
| WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROAD CYCLING RACE | WHEEL CHAIR FENCING WORLD CUP |
| | EUROPEAN HOCKEY CUP |



ALICANTE

Population: 319,380 Inhabitants

Surface area: 202 km²

Distances to the venues:

Alicante - Madrid: 432 km.

Alicante - Palma: 334 km

Alicante -Granada: 343km

Alicante -Seville: 609km

CITY OF ALICANTE

Alicante is a seaside city and has integrated the Postiguet beach into its old town, as well as two marinas, and a commercial port. Pedestrians can stroll through the zone in the Paseo de Gómiz walkway, the Paseo de Conde de Vallelano walkway, and the Paseo del Almirante Julio Guillén Toto walkway. There are other points of interest to see including the famous Explanada de España building.

The Santa Barbara Castle

The Santa Barbara Castle is one of the largest in all of the Mediterranean region, as far as its surface area and buildings. Its privileged enclave kept it inhabited from the Middle Ages, and traces from the Bronze, Iberian and Roman ages have been found as well.

The current fort has Muslim origins and dates from the end of the 9th century. The sea surrounding Tabarca island is an officially declared natural Mediterranean marine reserve. It is considered an excellent example marine life and is almost completely intact due to the clean water quality and the flora and fauna diversity.

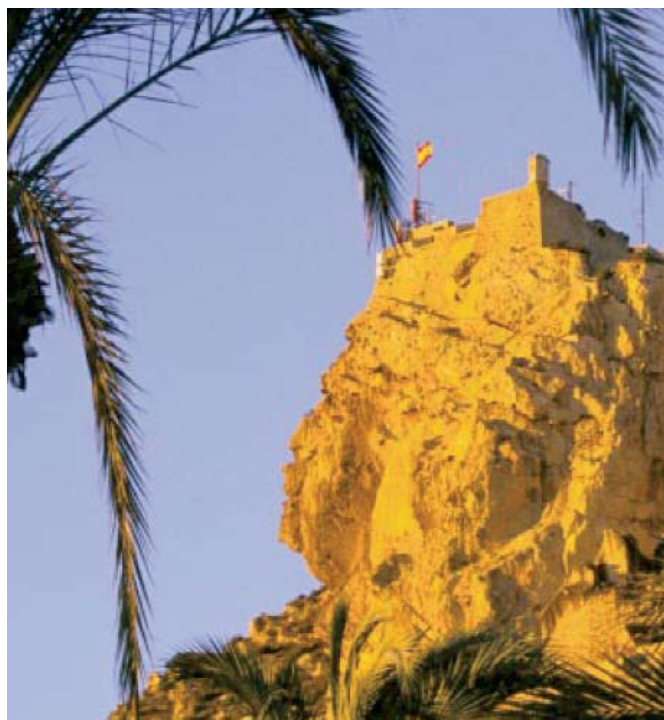
The large variety of museums in Alicante is constantly growing. What's more, there is the CAPA sculpture collection and the Asegurada Contemporary Art Museum, the Alicante Museum of Bulls, the MARQ Archeological Museum, and the Gravina Fine Arts Museum (MUBAG).

The most important monuments include the City Hall, the Santa Bárbara castle, The Church of Santa Maria, the San Nicolas de Bari Cathedral, the Santa Foz Monastery, and ruins from and Iberian settlement in Tossal de Manises.

HISTORY

The location of Alicante was decided upon because it favored human settlements. Traces from the Bronze age were found in the Serra Grossa area, and dated from the second Millenium B.C. There are also numerous ruins from the Iberian era, and the existence of a Roman city called Lucentum has been discovered. Alicante was made into a sea supply stop and its commerce flourished.

In 1244 the borders between Castilla and Aragón were set which made Alicante part of the Castilian territories. Three years later, in 1247, the city was conquered by la ciudad Alfonso X and made into "Vila Nova". In 1296, Jaime II incorporated himself in the town of Alicante, in the Valencian kingdom, and in 1490, Fernando II, the Catholic, elevated the status of Alicante to that of a city. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the port was dynamic in making urban transformations in the city. In the 19th century, the mural was demolished, new neighborhoods were created, and the train system arrived. Yet in the twentieth century secondary and third level activities intensified, making Alicante a service center, and developing tourism which provoked the city's current developments.



View of the Santa Bárbara Castle

BASKETBALL

Etosa Alicante, founded in 1994 by a group of fans, was promoted to the ACB league in the 1999-00 season, after various years of play in the LEB league. The players from Alicante have participated in the playoffs on two occasions and excelled themselves in the 2004-05 season, leading the league on various occasions.

TRANSPORTATION

By air

Alicante's airport is located 9 kilometers to the southeast of the region's capital. The Elche municipal terminal is in a zone with high business and economic activity. The attractive tourist area makes for the fact that 80% of travellers on international flights are tourists. In 2005, the airport in Alicante registered 8,795,705 passengers, 76, 109 air operations, 5,193 tons of cargo. The N-340 and N-332 highways lead to the airport.

By road

Alicante is located off the A-7 highway that connects Spain to France. The N-340 national highway connects Alicante with Valencia and Barcelona. There are also highways to Murcia and Madrid.

By Train

There is a direct train route from the border of France by way of Valencia and Barcelona. With connections all over Spain, Alicante enjoys excellent train service.

By Boat

Direct routes and regular ferry service connect the Balearic Islands to the peninsula.





EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

V E N U E S

THE STADIUM

Name: Centro de Tecnificación de Alicante

Year of construction: 1992

City: Alicante

Owner: Generalitat Valenciana

Capacity: 5,425 spectators

Address: C/ José Ramón Gilavert Davo s/n

Phone: 965 255 863

DISTANCE TO THE SPORTS CENTER

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|---------|
| From downtown: | 2 km | 10 min. |
| From the team hotels: | 4 km | 20 min. |



EuroBasket 2007: Alicante - Granada - Palma de Mallorca - Sevilla - Madrid



ALICANTE

A dream come true

The City Hall of Alicante and the Generalitat Valenciana have bent over backwards to accommodate EuroBasket'07 since the first moment. They have been willing to do whatever it takes to participate in this very important event. This initiative confirmed Alicante as a venue candidate and that dream has become a reality. Here are a few of the most significant events held in the city of Alicante in the last few years, keeping in mind that all events have been organized, sponsored by and always depended on the collaboration of the Generalitat Valenciana and Alicante's City Council Athletics Department.

2006 SPORTS EVENTS

TAEKWONDO SPANISH TOURNAMENT
XXII TENNIS MATCH-1 INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT
IX INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD MEETING
SPANISH RYTHMIC GYMNASTIC ECA TOURNAMENT
XXXVI RALLY ALICANTE-COSTABLANCA
ELEMENTARY LEVEL NATIONAL SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS
NATIONAL BEACH HANDBALL TOURNAMENT
NATIONAL CEACH SOCCER CIRCUIT
INTERNATIONAL MIRIAM BLASCO JUDO TOURNAMENT
C.T.G. BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT SPAIN-SERBIA
7TH EDITION OF THE HALF MARATHON AT ALICANTE'S PORT
SPAIN SUPERCUP INDOOR SOCCER TOURNEY
TRACK AND FIELD EUROPEAN TEAM TOURNAMENT
FOURTH ROUND ELIMINATING MATCH OF THE FED CUP: SPAIN & AUSTRIA

2005 SPORTS EVENTS

XLIII QUEEN'S CUP OF WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
XIII ONCE SPAIN TRACK AND FIELD TOURNAMENT
VII INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD MEETING
SPANISH RYTHMIC GYMNASTICS TEAM TOURNAMENT
SPANISH YOUTH HANDBALL TOURNAMENT

35 RALLYE ALICANTE-COSTA BLANCA
CALPE MATCH RACE WORLD TOURNAMENT
IMS 670 CRUISE WORLD TOURNAMENT ALICANTE
EUROPEAN BEACH VOLLEY TOURNAMENT (VALENCIA)
SPANISH WINDSURF CUP (BURRIANA)
SM QUEEN'S CUP WOMEN'S SOCCER
EUROPEAN WATER SKI TOURNAMENT IN OROPESA
FLYING DUTCHMAN TOURNAMENT ALTEA

2004 SPORTS EVENTS

VI INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD MEETING
XXXIV RALLYE COSTABLANCA
OFFSHORE WORLD TOURNAMENT
SPANISH RYTHMIC GYMNASTIC INDIVIDUAL TOURNAMENT
VIII MIRIAM BLASCO JUDO INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT
IITH LEG OF THE SPANISH 2004 CYCLING TOUR
DAVIS CUP SEMIFINALS
ALICANTE PORT HALF MARATHON
LIV SPANISH ARTISTIC SKATING TOURNAMENT
WOMEN'S HANDBALL SUPERCUP
EUROPEAN TRIATHLON
SPANISH 25 METER POOL TOURNAMENT



GRANADA

Population: 237,663 Inhabitants

Surface area: 88 km²

Altitude: 680 metres

Distances to the other venues:

Granada - Madrid 434km

Granada - Alicante 343km

Granada - Palma de Mallorca 698km

Granada - Seville 256km

CITY OF GRANADA

The province of Granada offers a great variety of tourist attractions in a surface area of only 13,000 km². The Alhambra, which is the most visited monument in Spain and one of the most beautiful in the world; one of the best ski slopes in Europe, at the Sierra Nevada, and at just an hour and a half the snow is switched for the beaches of the coast where pleasant temperatures are enjoyed year round.

The city Granada charms its visitors with its history and monuments. It has a first class cultural calendar, a variety of festivals and traditions, and a vibrant atmosphere thanks to the 60,000 students who attend the University of Granada.

There are very few places in the world like Granada, with its history reflected in the streets and monuments. One can't see and visit Granada in just one day. The historical complex of the Alhambra and the Generalife require a visit of many hours to fully enjoy their charm. Tourists shouldn't leave Granada without strolling through the streets of the Albaicín neighborhood, which is perfumed with jasmine, or without seeing the mausoleum of the Catholic Kings in the Royal Chapel, the cathedral, the Science park (the most visited museum of Granada).

The whole province has historical monuments and cultural attractions, from the Poniente to the Altiplano, passing through the Marquesado, and the Alpujarras Coast. Some of the villages surrounding the capital have made their mark in history and in world culture as well. Santa Fe was built by the Catholic Kings to besiege Granada, and it was there that Columbus planned his trip to America. Fuentevaqueros was the birthplace Federico García Lorca, one of the most important poets and writers in Spanish literature.

HISTORY

The city of Granada sprung up from the Albayzín hill, the time of the Ziríe rulers corresponds to the foundation and building of the backbone of the city in 1010. The Nazari Kingdom worked with this base (between 1238 and 1492) and the last touches and bastion are credited to the Al Andalus, who made the Alhambra and gave refuge to a dream of art, science and coexistence. Almost 100 years later, there was a rebellion and the Morisco people were expelled from Granada (1568-1571) and the city still stood. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Granada was one of the most frequented destinations by the so called romantic travellers who were drawn to its beauty and legends.

BALONCESTO

CB Granada, formed on the 28 of June in 1994, initiated its long voyage to the ACB league 1996, and this year will play in its seventh ACB season, after pla-



The majestic Patio of the Lions in the Alhambra

ying three seasons in the LEB league in the 1999-00, 2000-01 and 2003-04 seasons. Granada's team finished thirteenth last season, assuring their ACB presence for another year.

TRANSPORTATION

By Air

The Federico García Lorca Granada-Jaén Airport is situated in the Genil region, just 17 kilometers from Granada and 106 from Jaén. The airport's name is a tribute to the poet from Granada and both city names of Granada and Jaén were added to familiarize these two Andalusian provinces on the international tourist circuits. In 2005, the airport recorded a total of 875,827 passengers, 15,746 operations, and 65.8 tons of cargo.

By Road

Granada is well connected with the highway to Madrid (N-323) and Seville's as well, until the city of Baza (A-92). The national N-432 highway connects the city with Córdoba. The A-92 passes through Puerto Lumbreras and Murcia after Baza and connects to the "Mediterranean Highway" which goes through Alicante and Barcelona before reaching France.

Distance in car from downtown Granada to the tourist sights:

Sierra Nevada Ski Slopes - 45 min

Salobreña, on the coast (closest beach with sand) - 50 min

Granada Airport - 15 min

By Train

Granada's train station is located downtown near Avenida de la Constitución street.

The Talgo train arrived takes five and a half hours to arrive from Madrid and four and a half from Seville. The majority of people coming from Málaga or Almería opt to travel in bus.





EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

V E N U E S

THE STADIUM

Name: Palacio Municipal de Deportes

Year of construction: 1991

City: Granada

Owned by: Granada City Council

Team: C.B. Granada

Capacity: 7,500 spectators

Pavilion address: Avda. Salvador Allende s/n

Phone: 958 131 117

DISTANCES TO THE SPORTS CENTRE:

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|
| From downtown: | 2.5 km | 5 min. |
| From team hotels: | 1 km | 2 min. |
| From official hotels: | 14 km | 20 min. |





GRANADA

A firm promise for success

Granada's City Council (by way of the Patronato Municipal de Deportes) and the Junta de Andalucía have worked side by side during the last years for Granada to be a successful host of athletics events of all kinds and of varying levels. The result is that Granada, which has the highest number of tourists visiting each year in all of Spain, was chosen as a site for the first round of EuroBasket'07 play on September 3rd to 16th, 2007. There are many events that the before-mentioned organizations have recently promoted. The organization of the Dakar Rally should be emphasized as should the games of Spain's national select basketball team, who have repeatedly played preparation games in the Palacio Municipal de Deportes.

2006 SPORTS EVENTS

INDOOR TRAIL WORLD CUP.
LEG OF CYCLING TOUR OF SPAIN.
ARMES FORCES RACE.
I RAID EQUESTRIAN EVENT OF ANDALUSIA.
CITY OF GRANADA RALLY.
SPANISH DISABLED PEOPLE SPORTS TOURNAMENT FOR VARIOUS ATHLETIC EVENTS
CORPUS TROPHY FOR VARIOUS ATHLETICS EVENTS.
GRANADA HALF MARATHON.
COCA COLA SOCCER CUP.
GRANADA CITY SWIMMING TROPHY.

2005 SPORTS EVENTS

'SHOWTIME' ACB AND SPANISH SUPERCUP.
INDOOR TRAIL WORLD CUP.
ANDALUSIAN TOURNAMENT OF RYTHMIC GYMNASTICS.
STARTING POINT FOR THE CYCLING TOUR OF SPAIN.
LEG OF THE BARCELONA-DAKAR RALLY.
GRANADA HALF MARATHON.
EUROPEAN AND WORLD SNOWBOARD CUP.
INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL GAME: SPAIN-CROATIA.

SPANISH TOURNAMENT OF OFF ROAD CAR RACING RALLY.
SPANISH TOURN. OF OFF ROAD MOTORCYCLE RACING RALLY.
SPAIN UNIVERSITY TOURNAMENT.
CITY OF GRANADA RALLY.
SPANISH DISABLED PEOPLE SPORTS TOURNAMENTS VARIOUS ATHLETIC EVENTS
INTERNATIONAL BADMINTON GRAND PRIZE TOURNEY.
GRANADA CITY SWIMMING TROPHY.
RACE AGAINST CANCER.

2004 SPORTS EVENTS

INDOOR TRAIL WORLD CUP.
LEG OF CYCLING TOUR OF SPAIN.
UMBRO INDOOR SOCCER STREET CUP.
GRANADA HALF MARATHON.
SPANISH TOURNAMENT OF OFF ROAD CAR RACING RALLY.
SPANISH TOURNAMENT OF OFF ROAD MOTORCYCLE RACING RALLY.
INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL GAME: SPAIN-CROATIA.
GRANADA HALF MARATHON.
CITY OF GRANADA RALLY.
GRANADA CITY SWIMMING TROPHY.



PALMA DE MALLORCA

Population: 375,773 Inhabitants

Surface area: 213 km²

Distances to the venues:

Palma de Mallorca - Madrid 692km

Palma de Mallorca - Alicante 334km

Palma de Mallorca - Granada - 698km

Palma de Mallorca - Seville - 931km

CIUDAD DE PALMA DE MALLORCA

Situated on the southern coast of the island of Mallorca, in the middle of the Palma Bay, this city offers a mix of history, culture and nightlife. There is a fascinating zone of narrow streets among the high walls of old buildings. It is comfortable to walk in the downtown area which goes all the way downtown the port. The most representative monuments are the Cathedral and the Royal Palace.

These magnificent monuments were built on the ruins of the Morisco people which were taken from the Palace and the Mosque when the Christians recuperated the island.

ACCOMODTIONS: The best hotels are concentrated in the zone of the Boardwalk to the west of the city. There are many bars and restaurants. Golf players can find first class accomodations at the Son Vida course.

SHOPPING: There are many shops on the Old Town streets and on the surrounding avenues of this neighborhood. La Via Sindicato, San Miguel street, Jaime II street, Colon street and the Rambla are a few important commercial roads. On Saturdays there is a market called el Baratiillo.

TOURISM: Each tourist's itinerary must include the Cathedral(la Seu); the Almudaina Palace; la Lonja and the Arab bath houses, which are all located in Old Town and near the Port. A little bit further, the Bellver Castle is located on a hill as well as The Spanish Village (with reproductions of typical buildings from various parts of Spain).

Nightlife is the most vibrant in the Terreno neighborhood, although nights in the Old Town and surrounding streets lined with trees are also very lively. The tourism office offers a monthly calendar of concerts, festivals, expositions, theater and ballet.

HISTORY

The prehistoric residents of Mallorca left marks of their long history in the form of cyclopean constructions. The well-known Talayots, which are megalithic monuments of colossal dimensions. The most illustrious villages moved on to Mallorca. Once called Palmaria, the area was founded by the Romans in the Middle Ages as the Ciutat de Mallorques. Nowadays it is an authentic prototype of a modern and cosmopolitan city. In 1229 it was conquered by King Jaime I, who created his will in the Kingdom of Mallorca, made up of the Balearic Islands and the Catalan territories in southern France. During the reign of Fernando II the island, and the rest of the archipelago, together with Aragón, became a part of the Spanish Kingdom. In the nineteenth century, Mallorca incorporated itself in commercial traffic and industrial civilization. Staindustrial. Stately houses and mansions located in the Old Town of the city and built to reflect Italyno Rennaissance influences which arrived to Mallorca due to the commercial relations with the Italian states.



Palma de Mallorca Cathedral

BASKETBALL

The Balearic Islands have an important presence in the most important national level leagues, in both men's and women's basketball. Llanera Menorca has participated in its first ACB season with the goal of financing their dream in one of the toughest leagues in Europe achieved. In Mallorca's two teams, Drac Inca and Palma Aqua Mágica, successfully participated in the LEB league, where both teams placed in the top eight in the 2005-06 season. In the women's league, the EBE Promociones PDV Santa Eulalia team, based out of Ibiza, enjoyed its fourth year in the top women's category.

TRANSPORTATION

By air

The Palma de Mallorca's Son Sant Joan airport, is located eight kilometers from the city. Due to intense tourist traffic, the airport is highly international (with 15,217,279 passengers in 2005), reaching its peak in summer. The airport also plays an important role in connections to the peninsula. In 2005, Son Sant Joan saw a total of 21,240,736 passengers, 182,028 operations and 21,025 tons of cargo.

Public transportation

A bus service connects the airport with most tourist attractions on the island. An excellent urban bus service also exists.

By boat

Mallorca has an excellent ferry service that connects the island to the mainland. There are three ferry companies: Balearia, Transmediterranea and Iscomar, with service from Palma de Mallorca and Denia (Alicante), Valencia and Barcelona every 2-3 hours.



Photo: AENA graphic files



THE STADIUM

Name: Velódromo de Palma

Year of construction: 2006

City: Palma de Mallorca

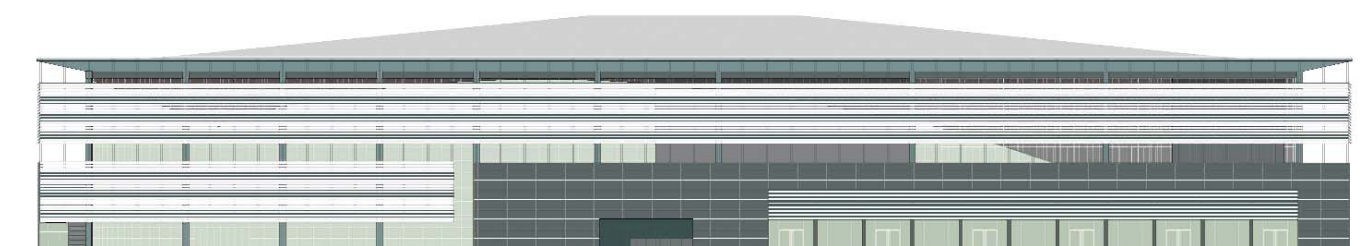
Owned by: Consorci Velòdrom de Palma

Capacity: 6,000

Pavilion address: Avda. Uruguay s/n

DISTANCES TO THE SPORTS CENTRE:

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|---------|
| From downtown: | 1 km | 10 min. |
| From team hotels: | 4 km | 15 min. |
| From official hotels: | 9 km | 20 min. |



The Palma de Mallorca Velodrome, one of the four arenas where the EuroBasket 2007 will host the groups of the Preliminary Round, is a multifunctional space with the capacity to host different sport events. The construction, an investment of 46, 4 millions of euros, will have a capacity of 5,000 seats that will grow up to 6.000 for the EuroBasket 07 and will be covered by a 17.000 square metre roof. The inauguration of the arena will take place in December. This announcement has been made to the members of the COEB '07 by the General Director of Sports in the Govern de les Illes Balears, Mr. José Luis Ballester.

The velodrome will host the Senior Track Cycling World Championships in March 2007 (March 29th - April 1st).



PALMA DE MALLORCA

Constant sports activity

In the last few years, the Govern de les Illes Balears and the Palma City Council have been constantly active in organizing high level sports events. The Direcció General d'Esports, a department which makes up the Conselleria de Presidència i Esports, and the Institut Municipal del'Esport (IME) have demonstrated a lot of interest and dedication in hosting many different kinds of tournaments and competitions of a variety of sports. The Govern, the City Council and the Consell Insular have great enterprising capacity united with broad experience in carrying out such events, which led Palma de Mallorca to be named a EuroBasket venue for September 3rd - 16th, 2007. The following is a list of recent sports events which demonstrates the Balearic Islands' great organizational record.

2006 SPORTS EVENTS

PRINCE OF ASTURIAS BASKETBALL CUP
INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE OF MALLORCA
XIV PALMA HALF MARATHON
PALMA SAILING REGATTA 2006
TOUR OF MALLORCA
CRITERIUM DRACH - PALMA CITY TROPHY
TRIATHLON, CITY OF PALMA
EUROPEAN JUNIOR SWIMMING AND DIVING CIRCUIT DE MATCH RACING (WORLD UNIVERSITY CIRCUIT , SAILING)
INTERNATIONAL CYCLING MASTERS WEEK
TUI MARATHON
III BALEARIC ISLAND TENNIS TOURNAMENT
XXXI S.M. KING'S CUP, VOLLEYBALL

2006 SPORTS EVENTS

SUMMER BASKETBALL LEAGUE, 20
INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE OF MALLORCA
VOLLEYBALL FINAL FOUR
XIII PALMA HALF MARATHON
MALLORCA OPEN MASTER
PALMA SAILING REGATTA 2005
TOUR OF MALLORCA
CRITERIUM DRACH-PALMA CITY TROPHY

TRIATHLON, CITY OF PALMA
MASTERS TOURNAMENT OF SPAIN
PALMA-CALVIÀ HALF MARATHON
PALMA CITY MARATHON
3 NATIONS SWIMMING TOURNAMENT
BALEARIC ISLANDS SOCCER TROPHY 2005
VODAFONE BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT 2005
2ND BALEARIC ISLANDS TENNIS TOURNAMENT SEAT ALTEA

2004 SPORTS EVENTS

SUMMER BASKETBALL LEAGUE 2004
S.M. QUEEN'S CUP, BASKETBALL
MASTERS TOURNAMENT OF SPAIN, SWIMMING
S.M. KING'S CUP, VOLLEYBALL
PALMA CITY TRIATHLON
WATERPOLO WORLD LEAGUE
WORLD UNIVERSITY TRIATHLON CIRCUIT
KING'S CUP, SAILING
SPANISH SAILING TOURNAMENT, CLASS 420
WORLD UNIVERSITY INDOOR SOCCER CIRCUIT
CITY OF PALMA MARATHON
PRE-OLYMPIC ANTONIO DÍAZ MIGUEL MEMORIAL
RUGBY A 7. EUROPEAN FINALS TOURNAMENT 2004
2ND BALEARIC ISLANDS TENNIS TOURNAMENT SEAT ALTEA



SEVILLA

Population: 709,975 Inhabitants

Surface Area: 141 km²

Distances to the venues:

Seville - Madrid 538 km

Seville - Alicante 609 km

Seville - Granada 256 km

Seville - Palma de Mallorca 931 km

CITY OF SEVILLE

Seville, the thousand year old rich heir of distinct cultures that rest on the banks of the Guadalquivir, conserves and pampers the monumental architecture it has which has made it a world famous city. Brilliant and proud at the same time, Seville keeps a secret to itself that romance writers have tried to discover in mythical works such as Carmen, The Barber of Seville, and Don Juan, among others. Nevertheless, the Seville of today that likes to be put on display is a summary of the values of a past heritage with a modern twist of today's reality. It's a symbiosis that holds on to its historical character while also offering modern infrastructures which makes it a prime tourist destination, not just for independent visitors, but also for conferences, conventions, and incentive trips.

Seville, the capital of Andalusia, is the fourth largest city in Spain as far as inhabitants. There are 704,114 people living in the metropolitan area and 1,758,720 total in the province and 105 surrounding villages living throughout 14,042 square kilometers. Seville, without a doubt, can be considered the artistic, cultural, financial, economic, and social center of southern Spain.

In Seville, the historic heritage is the fruit of the different civilizations that were living in the city in the past. Made up of buildings of civil and religious architecture, the layout of the city has the biggest old town in Europe. The 1929 and 1992 World Expos raised the cultural heritage and contributed to the demographic and surface area growth of the city.

The major international festivals of the city are the April Fair and the Holy Week. At these celebrations, festive and cultural aspects combine and result in a warm welcome open to all who wish to join in the celebrating during the always favorable spring climate of Seville.

HISTORY

The origin of the ancient Roman Hispalis is dark and uncertain. It may have been a Tartesso or Ispal village founded in the thirteenth century on a small elevation at the banks of the Guadalquivir river. After the Roman Punic wars, the Hispalis was an important commercial center and capital Roman Betica people. In the year of 712, the area was conquered by the Arabs who called it Isbiliya, which is where the current name is derived from. In this era, Seville experienced a great peak in science, art, and commerce. On November 23rd, 1248, after a long siege, the city fell under the power of King Fernando III of Castilla, making it the center of the king's court. The discovery of America led to unthought of splendor for Seville, due to its river and port. In the twentieth century, with the 1929 Latin American Expo and the 1992 World Expo, Seville got back a big part of its ancient glory, making itself a modern city with no limits.

BASKETBALL

Caja San Fernando, formed in 1987, is one of the classic teams in the top category of Spanish hoops. In the 1992-93 season, Seville's team won a spot in the Korac Cup. In the



The Torre del Oro in Seville and the Giralda behind

1995-96 and 1998-99 seasons, in the team's most brilliant moments in history, they were league Sub-champions. In 1999, the team was very close to winning the King's Cup in Valencia, but lost the final game to Tau Vitoria.

TRANSPORTATION

By Air

Seville has a new terminal at its San Pablo airport, which allows for 4,000 travelers/hour to pass through. It has two levels, one for arrivals, the other for departures, although at first it was thought that they would be used for domestic and international flights. Located ten kilometers northeast of the capital of Andalusia, it was remodeled in 1992 to prepare for the World Expo. A new terminal was constructed and the airplane parking area was enlarged. New access to the national N-IV highway was also added, as well as a new control tower. In 2005, 3,521,112 passengers travelled through in 55,423 air operations with 6,352 tons of cargo.

By Train

Seville has a new terminal at its San Pablo airport, which allows for 4,000 travelers/hour to pass through. It has two levels, one for arrivals, the other for departures, although at first it was thought that they would be used for domestic and international flights. Located ten kilometers northeast of the capital of Andalusia, it was remodeled in 1992 to prepare for the World Expo. A new terminal was constructed and the airplane parking area was enlarged. New access to the national N-IV highway was also added, as well as a new control tower. In 2005, 3,521,112 passengers travelled through in 55,423 air operations with 6,352 tons of cargo.

By Boat

Seville's port is the only interior port with access to all of the Iberian Peninsula, since one can sail the Guadalquivir river all the way up to this point. Although the port isn't highly developed for tourism, visitors occasionally do sail out of the port.





EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

V E N U E S

THE STADIUM

Name: Pabellón Municipal San Pablo

Year of construction: 1988

City: Seville

Owned by: City of Seville

Capacity: 10000 spectators

Address C/ Efeso s/n

Phone: 954 674 000 / 954 250 622

DISTANCES TO THE SPORTS CENTRE:

| | | |
|-------------------|-------|---------|
| From downtown: | 5 km | 10 min. |
| From team hotels: | 3 km | 7 min. |
| From airport: | 10 km | 20 min. |





SEVILLA

An alliance of guarantees

In the last fifteen years more than 80 international sports events have been held in Seville (6 World championship games, 6 European championship games, 2 Pre-Olympic games, and various pre-world championship trials, among other events). Practically all of these events have been in collaboration with Seville's City Council and the Junta de Andalucía. Both institutions have frequently cooperated to make the Hispalense city into a clear reference point for all kinds of athletic competitions. The locals have, over the course of many years, demonstrated unconditional support for their Spanish representatives, regardless of which sport is being played in the city. Spain's national select basketball team will play the first EuroBasket 07 round in this Andalusian city, and the warmth of the fans will be an important motivation factor. The following list of events prove that Seville has experience in hosting prestigious athletics tournaments:

2006 SPORTS EVENTS

XXII CITY OF SEVILLE MARATHON
FORMULA 1 - FERNANDO ALONSO ROAD SHOW
OPEN WATER SWIMMING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CUP
SEVILLE 2006: WORLD ATHLETIC GAMES
XII EDITION FISA TEAM CUP AND AND ANDALUSIAN REGATTA
II INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS CONVENTION
SPANISH WOMEN'S CUP & ANDALUSIAN CYCLING CIRCUIT
XIV INTERNATIONAL CITY ROWING TROPHY
KING'S S.M. AQUATIC BIKES CUP
TOP CATEGORY NATIONAL ROWING TOURNAMENT
EUROPEAN WATER BIKE TOURNAMENT
XLIV INTERNATIONAL SEVILLE CHALLENGER CUP
XLI GUADALQUIVIR UP RIVER RACE

2005 SPORTS EVENTS

SEVILLE ICE SKATING CITY TROPHY
INTERNATIONAL TROPHY, MEN'S RUGBY
XI FISA TEAM CUP & XI INT. ANDALUSIAN ROWING REGATTA
XXXVI SPANISH SEA KAYAK TOURNAMENT
INTERNATIONAL RUGBY GAME, SPAIN-CROATIA,
NATIONAL HORSE JUMPING COMPETITION
NATIONAL AMERICAN-STYLE FOOTBALL STUDENTS FINALS

EUROPEAN OPEN WATER SWIMMING CUP
SPANISH BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT
WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS SPANISH TOURNAMENT
XLIII EDITION INT. CHALLENGER'S CUP SEVILLE, ANDALUSIA
OXFORD INTERNATIONAL REGATTA -CAMBRIDGE-SEVILLE-BETIS
EUROPEAN REGIONAL RUGBY CUP
IV INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S TENNIS III TOURNAMENT

2004 SPORTS EVENTS

S.M. KING'S CUP, BASKETBALL
XVII S.M. KING'S CUP, ROWING
PGA OPEN EUROPEAN GOLF CIRCUIT
SNOOKER WORLD CUP
VI EDITION OPEL PADEL TOUR
WOMEN'S CYCLING SPANISH CUP
EUROPEAN OPEN WATER SWIMMING CUP
SPANISH UNDERWATER HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
XLII EDITION INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGER'S CUP OF SEVILLE, ANDALUSIA
V SPECIAL OLYMPICS NATIONAL GAMES
MEN'S INDOOR SOCCER, SPANISH SUPERCUP
GOLF WORLD CUP
DAVIS CUP FINAL

EuroBasket 07 Draw - Palacio Municipal de Congresos de Madrid



EuroBasket 07

03rd to 16th september 2007

www.eurobasket2007.org

EuroBasket
España



Q U A L I F Y I N G R O U N D

The qualifying round for EuroBasket '07 was concluded last September 6th and six national teams are guaranteed to play in the tournament in Spain from September 3rd-6th, 2007. Poland, Portugal, Russia and Croatia, first in their respective groups, and the Czech Republic and Latvia, the best second places of the four groups, are also on the list shared with the nine teams who played in the World Championship Games in Japan (Spain, Greece, France, Turkey, Lithuania, Germany, Serbia, Slovenia and Italy).

The ten teams who didn't qualify will play in a second chance tournament next summer which will decide which countries will make up the total 17 to play in EuroBasket '07. The 16th place team will play a second round beforehand among the ten teams who didn't have luck the Pre-European Games: Sweden, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, Israel, Hungary, Belgium, Estonia and Denmark. Curiously, at least three EuroBasket 2005 participants (Israel, Bosnia, Bulgaria and Ukraine) will miss the EuroBasket 2007 in Spain.

GROUP A

STANDINGS

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----|---------|----|
| 1. Poland | 6 | 4/2 | 457/447 | 10 |
| 2. Sweden | 6 | 3/3 | 453/438 | 9 |
| 3. Ukraine | 6 | 3/3 | 444/431 | 9 |
| 4. Bulgaria | 6 | 2/4 | 440/478 | 8 |

RESULTS

| | | | |
|----------|----|----|----------|
| Bulgaria | 80 | 77 | Ukraine |
| Sweden | 75 | 81 | Poland |
| Poland | 75 | 68 | Bulgaria |
| Ukraine | 66 | 61 | Sweden |
| Bulgaria | 82 | 90 | Sweden |
| Poland | 74 | 58 | Ukraine |
| Poland | 88 | 67 | Sweden |
| Ukraine | 92 | 61 | Bulgaria |
| Bulgaria | 99 | 65 | Poland |
| Sweden | 81 | 71 | Ukraine |
| Sweden | 79 | 50 | Bulgaria |
| Ukraine | 80 | 74 | Poland |

GROUP B

STANDINGS

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----|---------|----|
| 1. Portugal | 6 | 4/2 | 462/447 | 10 |
| 2. FYROM | 6 | 3/3 | 486/493 | 9 |
| 3. Bosnia-H | 6 | 3/3 | 482/459 | 9 |
| 4. Israel | 6 | 2/4 | 431/462 | 8 |

RESULTS

| | | | |
|-------------|-----|----|-------------|
| Israel | 88 | 81 | Bosnia-Herz |
| Portugal | 108 | 90 | FYROM |
| Bosnia-Herz | 78 | 80 | Portugal |
| FYROM | 90 | 87 | Israel |
| FYROM | 81 | 77 | Bosnia-Herz |
| Israel | 61 | 67 | Portugal |
| Bosnia-Herz | 85 | 63 | Israel |
| FYROM | 83 | 63 | Portugal |
| Portugal | 75 | 86 | Bosnia-Herz |
| Israel | 83 | 70 | FYROM |
| Portugal | 69 | 49 | Israel |
| Bosnia-Herz | 75 | 72 | FYROM |



GROUP C

STANDINGS

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|-----|---------|----|
| 1. Russia | 6 | 5/1 | 506/422 | 11 |
| 2. Czech Rep | 6 | 4/2 | 458/440 | 10 |
| 3. Hungary | 6 | 2/4 | 420/439 | 8 |
| 4. Belgium | 6 | 1/5 | 400/483 | 7 |

RESULTS

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|----|-----------|
| Czech Rep | 85 | 67 | Belgium |
| Russia | 82 | 62 | Hungary |
| Belgium | 91 | 80 | Russia |
| Hungary | 76 | 80 | Czech Rep |
| Russia | 104 | 81 | Czech Rep |
| Belgium | 59 | 73 | Hungary |
| Hungary | 70 | 76 | Russia |
| Belgium | 61 | 74 | Czech Rep |
| Czech Rep | 83 | 64 | Hungary |
| Russia | 96 | 63 | Belgium |
| Czech Rep | 55 | 68 | Russia |
| Hungary | 75 | 59 | Belgium |

GROUP D

STANDINGS

| | | | | |
|------------|---|-----|---------|----|
| 1. Croatia | 6 | 5/1 | 498/397 | 11 |
| 2. Latvia | 6 | 4/2 | 454/423 | 10 |
| 3. Estonia | 6 | 2/4 | 365/432 | 8 |
| 4. Denmark | 6 | 1/5 | 405/470 | 7 |

RESULTS

| | | | |
|---------|----|----|---------|
| Croatia | 84 | 56 | Latvia |
| Estonia | 51 | 50 | Denmark |
| Denmark | 67 | 92 | Croatia |
| Latvia | 87 | 57 | Estonia |
| Croatia | 76 | 47 | Estonia |
| Denmark | 74 | 90 | Latvia |
| Denmark | 69 | 68 | Estonia |
| Latvia | 70 | 78 | Croatia |
| Croatia | 91 | 79 | Denmark |
| Estonia | 64 | 73 | Latvia |
| Estonia | 78 | 77 | Croatia |
| Latvia | 78 | 66 | Denmark |

ADDITIONAL QUALIFYING ROUND

The three winners of the group go on to the Additional Qualifying Tournament (AQT) The last three in the group will go to the tournament that decides which teams stay in Division A.

| GROUP F | GROUP G | GROUP H |
|---------|---------|---------|
| F1 | G1 | H1 |
| F2 | G2 | H2 |
| F3 | G3 | H3 |
| | | H4 |

ADDITIONAL QUALIFYING ROUND

AQT

I1 I2 I3

The AQT winner gets the last slot for EuroBasket 07

TP

J1 J2 J3

The TP winner stays in Division A



EUROBASKET 07 DRAW - PALACIO MUNICIPAL DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID - 19TH OCTOBER

COMPETITION SYSTEM

TEAMS

| | | | | | |
|----------|------------|---------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| SPAIN | GREECE | GERMANY | FRANCE | LITHUANIA | TURKEY |
| SLOVENIA | SERBIA | ITALIA | POLAND | PORTUGAL | |
| RUSSIA | CZECH REP. | CROATIA | LATVIA | AD. QUALIFYING TEAM | |

COMPETITION SYSTEM

PRELIMINARY ROUND

3TH-5TH SEPTEMBER

The top three in each group qualify for the second round.



QUALIFYING ROUND

7TH-12TH SEPTEMBER

The top four from each group will qualify for the quarterfinals.

| |
|----------------|
| GROUP E |
| A1 |
| A2 |
| A3 |
| B1 |
| B2 |
| B3 |

| |
|----------------|
| GROUP F |
| C1 |
| C2 |
| C3 |
| D1 |
| D2 |
| D3 |

| | | | |
|--------|----------------|----------|----------|
| | GROUP E | | |
| 7 SEP | A1 vs B3 | A2 vs B2 | A3 vs B1 |
| 9 SEP | B2 vs A1 | B1 vs A2 | B3 vs A3 |
| 11 SEP | A1 vs B1 | A2 vs B3 | A3 vs B2 |

| | | | |
|--------|----------------|----------|----------|
| | GROUP F | | |
| 8 SEP | C1 vs D3 | C2 vs D2 | C3 vs D1 |
| 10 SEP | D2 vs C1 | D1 vs C2 | D3 vs C3 |
| 12 SEP | C1 vs D1 | C2 vs D3 | C3 vs D2 |

QUARTERFINALS

13TH-14TH SEPTEMBER

The four losers will play qualifying games for the 5th-8th places



SEMIFINAL

15TH SEPTEMBER



FINAL

16TH SEPTEMBER

? vs ?



T E A M S

SPAIN

A gold medal in the past world championship games in Japan is a brilliant accomplishment that Spain's national select team should defend in their tournament date for summer 2007. Beyond than excessive pressure, this gold medal provides for extra motivation for the players, and big hopes for the fans who are blown away by seeing their heroes in flesh and blood.

Spain takes on the EuroBasket 2007 tournament as an unarguable favorite to get the gold. It's another stop on the long journey that cumulated last September 3rd. The best team in Spain's basketball history team is arriving to this tournament just as it's maturing. This magical batch of players has united the destinies and talents of Gasol, Navarro, Berni Rodríguez, Cabezas and Reyes.

Nobody doubts that a big part of Spain's team revolves around these golden young players that have known how to make themselves rapidly respected in the jungle of professional basketball. Nevertheless, one can't really understand the recent successes Spain has had at international encounters without keeping in mind the presence of two young veterans, Carlos Jiménez and Garbajosa, who have supported the team for many years and have known how to find their niches as leaders on and off the court. Their experience makes up for the supposed naiveness of these two newest additions to the basketball family. Performances in the world games are also career highlights for Sergio Rodríguez and Rudy Fernández, whose contributions provided them many minutes of play time, and put them of the team honor roll. They are the youngest and cheekiest of the team; they put sparks into the games and get fans on their feet in the most unexpected moments. Marc Gasol has also made his presence know in some of the best plays. We are starting to see the fruits that years of patience and labor could bear and make him into a household name in European basketball. The dozen is completed by two players who always got the gold when younger due to excellent performances: Calderón, who has always played with this team in lower categories, and is the perfect director of this Spanish orchestra, and Mumburú, who has lately exploded on court, and is one of the prized tall forwards that Spain doesn't have a huge supply of.

Nevertheless, the possibility of players that could enter in EB'07 is huge. One of these big names is Fran Vázquez, who didn't go to Japan due to an injury. Raúl López, Trias, Hernández Sonseca, Gabriel, Vidal or Iturbe, among others, shouldn't be forgotten either. This is another one of the blessed tasks that Pepu Hernández, another person responsible for the recent successes of the team, is responsible for. The coach from Madrid has shown that he knows how to get his philosophy to fit the team like a silk glove, by using behind the scenes discretion. His efforts have made for a triumph for all, due to the balance of his intelligence and the strategies he proposes.



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

Pepu will return as Spain's master of ceremonies at the continental tournament, where the national team has never been able to get to the top. They have won five silver medals and two bronzes in the history of this tournament in the Old Continent. Winning the gold is a challenge that Greece, France, Serbia, Germany and Croatia, to name just a few, also aspire to. The fight is open once again, and the team who comes out with flying colors will be the one which knows how to best dominate even the smallest details of play.

PAU GASOL

All heads turn to Pau when making reference to the team. Yet the center from the Grizzlies is not an NBA-style star: Pau is open to sharing the spotlight with his teammates. He sacrifices his numbers for the collective good of the team... He never rejects leadership even when things aren't going well. He's always willing to get his teammates out of a rut. Gasol has matured into this role in a gradual way as he's played with his team from Tennessee. He has now achieved a perfect balance between the mental and physical necessities of a winning mentality. He will be the first to fight until exhaustion for Spain's first EuroBasket gold medal. And he'll be fighting at home.





T E A M S

GREECE

Returning to EuroBasket as defending champions, the Greek National Team is no longer just "a good team". But now they are one of the favourites. The 2005 EuroBasket title from last September in Belgrade and silver in Japan brings back Greek basketball to the top level in the world. This was clearly exemplified when the Greeks stunned the United States 101-95 in the World Championship semi-finals. Greece have an excellent mix of young and talented players together with experienced ones, headed by the legendary Panagiotis Yannakis on the bench.

Yannakis, captain of the 1987 EuroBasket-winning Greek team, is still leading the group as a coach, getting respect just as he did during his playing years. All basketball analysts agreed last September that the European champion team was a "Yannakis creation". The "Dragon" (his nickname in Greece) managed to shut down all his players' egos for the good of the team. "All for one and one for all", as the Three Musketeers used to say. That was the 12-man Greek team, without a super star but playing with heart and mind. They managed to win a thrilling semi-final against France, although they trailed by eight points with 47 seconds to play. In the final, they managed to stop the great Dirk Nowitzki and his German team to easily win the gold medal.

So, which are the strongest parts of Greece's team? Besides the presence of Yannakis, almost all the players have talent in many different areas. For example, if the team needs a good defender, there is two-time Euroleague Best Defender Dimitris Diamantidis, a player who can easily manage a triple-double in scoring, rebounding and assists ...or even blocked shots. If the team wants to run the fast break, there is the "new-born" star - at 29 years old - Theo Papaloukas, the hero of last summer's EuroBasket final and of the Euroleague Final Four for CSKA Moscow. Papaloukas is perhaps Europe's most mature playmaker and one of the best in the world. If the Greek team needs players for special assignments, there are plenty of them: Nikos Zisis, who stars with Benetton Treviso and earned the FIBA Europe trophy for the Best Young Player last year, is the one to make big shots, to play defense and to dish out many assists. Under the basket, there is no longer any need for Jake Tsakalidis. The Memphis center, who last played for the National Team at EuroBasket 2003, is no longer a first option for Yannakis after Lazaros Papadopoulos blossomed during the 2004 Olympics (top scorer and rebounder of the team) and has turned himself in one of Europe's top centers.

In Spain, Papadopoulos will not be alone under the basket. Beside him will be the so-called "miracle of nature" that is Sofoklis Schortsianitis. "Baby Shaq" has lost more than 50 pounds, worked very hard since the beginning of the season with Olympiakos and finished third in the voting for the best rookie in the Euroleague despite coming off the bench. Perhaps the most powerful Greek centre in their history. Sofoklis is nearly unstoppable under the basket due to his strength. And he will undoubtedly be a man to watch as the United States learned in Japan.

But there are also many other players coming off the bench who can change a game. Antonis Fotsis has great leaping ability which enables him to rebound and block shots. Center Kostas Tsartsaris can score from the middle and long range.

There is also team captain, Michalis Kakiouzis, from whom everybody is wait-



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

ing to hear what Greece can accomplish in Spain. Last summer, he proved correct when two months before the EuroBasket he said Greece will win the gold.

Added to that group will be the talented Panagiotis Vasilopoulos, the experienced Dimos Dikoudis at the power forward spot plus two other players who had explosive seasons. The first is Vassilis Spanoulis, who made huge improvements in his game going from Maroussi to Panathinaikos. Spanoulis was one of Panathinaikos' two top scorers in the Euroleague, proving to his coach, Zeljko Obradovic, that he is not just a youngster. The other in form player is Loukas Mavrokefalidis. Just 21 years old, Lukas is perhaps the most improved player in all of Europe. After just 2.2 points and 1.6 rebounds last season, he exploded for 16.7 points and 8.7 rebounds this year with PAOK.

THEODOROS PAPALOUKAS

European champion and All-Tournament team selection at the 2005 EuroBasket final in Belgrade and Euroleague champion and MVP of the Final Four - what else can Theodoros Papaloukas expect in one season? He had a year which would make any of basketball's biggest stars jealous. Theo is undoubtedly the superhero and superstar of the past season - not only in Greece but all of European basketball. Papaloukas is a tall playmaker (2.00 m) and a player every coach wants in his lineup. An intellectual player with enormous abilities, he could surely make an NBA team even though he's already 29 years old. More mature than ever and filled with loads of confidence, Theo is a player who makes his teammates better. An assist machine, he can even defend the opposing team's centre if needed to do so. And Theo loves to steal the ball at mid-court and dunk it on the fast break.





T E A M S

GERMANY

Like no other team at EuroBasket 2007, Germany will rely on one player. But Coach Dirk Bauermann is just happy he's got Dirk Nowitzki on his side. Much of the coach's decisions will be based on how to best utilize his other players' skills to best fit around the Dallas Mavericks star. Germany proved at the 2005 EuroBasket that this system can work, as Nowitzki carried his team to the silver medal - the nation's best success since winning the 1993 European Championship in its own country and the bronze medal at 2002 FIBA World Championship. Expect much of the same this time around. But don't expect Nowitzki to have any problems with playing for Germany - something he values very much. He loves playing with his German team-mates, including his friends from back in Wuerzburg Robert Garrett and Demond Greene.

But without a doubt, Germany will only go as far as Nowitzki takes them. Bauermann's offense will revolve around him, and the coach is comfortable enough knowing that Nowitzki will get his team-mates involved if he needs help or is struggling. "The guy is unbelievable. He can do anything. It makes my job easier," Bauermann said of Nowitzki. The NBA All-Star has changed his game since leading Germany to the silver medal in Belgrade last summer. At Dallas, he took on even more responsibility in the leadership department. He also adapted his game from mainly the outside to become a threat in the paint as well. Always an excellent rebounder and passer, Nowitzki added a physicality to his game which some said was missing. And that has made him into a legitimate Top-Five superstar in the world. Added to all his skills will be extra motivation to prove he is truly a champion. He took a great amount of criticism for not leading Dallas to the NBA title after the Mavericks had a 2-0 lead on the Miami Heat.

Still, regardless of how good Nowitzki is, no team can win with just one player. And Bauermann will be called upon to find enough support for his star.

One of the leaders will be veteran Ademola Okulaja. When healthy, he is still a very dangerous scoring threat who can do it all. Okulaja gives Bauermann some good size and a lot of options at the wing position. In addition, the coach can also call upon Robert Garrett, who isn't a great defensive stoppers but can hurt opposing teams in numerous ways on offense. Sven Schultze is another guy who can spell Okulaja - and even Nowitzki at times and come up with mismatches because of his size and quickness.

At center, Bauermann has a lot of experience with Patrick Femerling as his main man in the middle. His defensive presence in the paint allows Germany's guards to really pressure the ball knowing that Femerling is behind them, ready to erase any mistakes they make. And that's crucial in Bauermann's tough-as-nails defensive system, which he emphasises even more than his patient, efficient passing offense. Neither Robert Maras nor Jan Jagla can really dominate a game for any extended periods of time. But both are adequate reserves to give Femerling or Nowitzki a breather.

Bauermann has three different types of players to deploy at the playmaker position. The steady, efficient Pascal Roller may have the inside track after playing so well in Serbia & Montenegro. He made the right decisions in Bauermann's controlled offense. And he made some big shots - with floaters in the paint and bombs from beyond the three-point arc. Steffen Hamann is by far the team's best defensive point guard and will receive plenty of time because of that. But Hamann, who missed the 2005 EuroBasket with a torn ACL, is not the best passer and sometimes plays out of control on offense despite an excellent first step. The third option is



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the diminutive but quick and effective Mithat Demirel, just a couple years removed as the German BBL League Player of the Year.

Demond Greene will likely be Bauermann's starter at the shooting guard spot. The powerful Greene fits well into Bauermann's system by doing a bit of everything well, especially not making mistakes. He can score points in bunches, from either inside or outside, and can bury opponents with his three-point shooting. Garrett will be Greene's main back-up and plays a similar role. Bauermann could also call upon Johannes Herber from West Virginia in the United States as a further reserve.

This is one of final runs for this group of German players. Nowitzki is now 28 years old and has said he would like retire from the National Team after the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. In addition, Okulaja (31), Femerling (31) and Roller (30) are all getting up in age. That leaves Bauermann with the difficult task of bringing some young blood into the team while using the advantages of his experienced players.

DIRK NOWITZKI

As unbelievable as it may seem, Dirk Nowitzki is still improving and refining his game. That's a scary thought when watching him lead the Dallas Mavericks to the NBA Finals in a season many thought the Wunderkind should have been selected the league MVP. There's hardly anything Nowitzki can't do. And the 28-year-old has developed into a vocal leader on the court. He's also crushed all talk that he's just a great jump shooter. He has transformed himself into a dominant low post player, and he is still a great passer. Nowitzki has moved into the elite class in the NBA but will be motivated in Spain to show he can win the big one. He definitely has the ability to lead a team as he proved by taking Germany to the EuroBasket final in Belgrade and collecting the MVP award. He was also the Mavericks' main man in their run to the NBA Finals. Germany's chances at EuroBasket 2007 will rely on Nowitzki.





T E A M S

FRANCE

Potential, potential... This had been the main word for every French team that has lined up for a major FIBA competition since 1999. More athletic than any nation in Europe, high on talent, a defensive force, the blue, white and red country had everything to be reckoned with for the next decade. It made it indeed to the 2000 Olympics final game - a major result since France hadn't won a medal in any major competition in 41 years. But still, it seemed that the French National Team wasn't maximizing its potential. That seemed clear after a disappointing elimination in the semi-final against Spain at the 1999 EuroBasket, and even more so after the terrible ending at the 2003 EuroBasket. In Stockholm, France was a possession away from making it to the final. But Les Bleus lost against Lithuania in the semis, which could have been considered as a fairly good performance. But then came a loss many in France call an absolute shame. The Italian National Team was battered with injuries after being beaten by 33 points against France in the first round. After an overwhelming domination in the first half, some of the players seemed un-interested in the game, arguing that "our team was set up for gold". That quote really got French fans upset since they had been waiting for the first EuroBasket medal since 1959! The comments also infuriated fans because the loss denied France a berth at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

Year after year, it seemed no one was able to find the right mix to make this team the threat it was supposed to be. In 2004, French coach Claude Bergeaud took over and he first tried to change the atmosphere inside the team. It was about the end, but also about the means. Bergeaud wanted players who would respect a group philosophy, which had been the main issue on previous teams. Some players who had caused chemistry problems in the past, such as Tariq Abdul-Wahad, were not even called upon. But there was one thing that Bergeaud couldn't really change. Tony Parker would remain the leader of this team, which made sense considering his outstanding talent and his two NBA championship rings. But at the start of the 2005 EuroBasket, the worst happened. Parker, who was coming off an excruciating season with the Spurs, was lost. Unable to find his groove, he would struggle all the way to the end of the first round (he shot 20 percent from the field). This could have destroyed the young French bunch easily.

But what happened probably helped the team find its identity. Often valuable with the national team, Boris Diaw stepped up and played the way everybody knew he was capable of. Already considered the most talented French player ever when he was only 18, "Babac" had always done it his way. Frustrating many in the French basketball world, Diaw was a reluctant scorer, who would try to find a team-mate in the corner when he was up in the air with the ball near the rim. Pressed to do more, Diaw became the player everybody has seen since then. He's a do-it-all forward, who can play five positions, pass, rebound, score, block shots, steal and do everything else in the book. He's truly a "global" basketball player and a match-up nightmare with no limits to his game.

Diaw helped the team survive the first round and sparked two of the best games a French team has ever played at that level. First, they knocked out hosts Serbia & Montenegro, who were one of the favourites to claim the title. Then, France only allowed 47 points against Lithuania, one of the best offensive teams in the world. By the time Parker had returned to his old self, France were on their way to a 30-point win against powerhouses Spain to claim the bronze medal after a heart-breaking loss at the buzzer against eventual winner, Greece, in the semi-finals. A team was truly born after years



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

of soul searching. Aside from Diaw, France had welcomed newcomer Mickaël Gelabale, a defensive stopper who had made it to the starting five although he had never played in any major tournament before. Bergeaud was also right to pick center Frédéric Weis, when Vincent Masingue got injured. With many thinking the 7-2 Bilbao player would never come back to play for France again, he did and found surprising confidence along the way.

Japan was another tough test for Bergeaud's men and once again, his side left the tournament with both positives and negatives. An injury to Tony Parker saw the star guard withdraw from the competition just days before the first game. But Parker's absence opened the door for Yannick Bokolo to make an impressive debut, while France's eventual sixth-place finish was another encouraging sign that French are finally taking advantage of its talent.

BORIS DIAW

Diaw's evolution with the French team has always been a step ahead of his progression with his club team. It proved right again in 2005, when the young forward who had struggled with the Atlanta Hawks had a memorable tournament at the EuroBasket. Diaw was selected in the All-EuroBasket 2005 First Team and would have been the MVP had France beaten Greece in the semis. Following his trade from Atlanta to Phoenix, Diaw materialized this newfound assertiveness and was named the Most Improved Player in the 2005-06 season. In the playoffs, he even took it to another level, averaging 24.2 points on 52.2 percent shooting during the Western Conference Finals against Dallas. The ultimate versatile and team player, Boris can play every single position on the court, even though he played mostly as an inside man this season with Phoenix due to Amaré Stoudemire's injury. In the summer of 2005, before the EuroBasket, Mike D'Antoni, the Suns' head coach, said Diaw should soon be able to score 30 points in a NBA game and would become an All-Star. In Atlanta and elsewhere, a lot of people laughed. Who's laughing now?





T E A M S

LITHUANIA

Three straight Olympic bronze medals from 1992 to 2000. A fourth place in 2004. A European title in 2003 and a defeat in the final game in 1995. Lithuania - the little country that has built itself a very strong reputation since regaining its independence in 1990. But the World Championship has surprisingly eluded them as they missed three of the four tournaments played since 1994, finishing a distant 7th in 1998.

In Japan, Lithuania was without its perennial leader Sarunas Jasikevicius. Also gone since the national team last made it to the semis at the 2004 Olympics are forward Saulius Stombergas and key defensive center Eurelijus Zekauskas. At 30 and with a record like his, it's fair to say that "Saras" may never come back to the national team. Or maybe for one last EuroBasket and one last Olympics if Lithuania makes it to China. Regardless, Lithuania will have to get use to life without him. So why not start right now? Looking at the team that was assembled by coach Antanas Sireika, it doesn't seem like there's one young player who will probably be, a few years from now, at the same level than the nation's legends, from Sarunas Jasikevicius to Sarunas Marciulionis while Arvydas Sabonis remains in a class of his own. But the talent is there, at every position. Being a nation that has never relied on one individual and always epitomized team play, the lack of a true international superstar such as Germany or Spain with Dirk Nowitzki or Pau Gasol shouldn't be a problem. Even more people believe that after Greece won EuroBasket last year, undoubtedly one of the most competitive FIBA tournaments in the world, without a single NBA player on its roster.

Saying there's no superstar doesn't mean a lack of talent or leadership for Lithuania. With Jasikevicius gone, Macijauskas takes over as the main offensive threat. But the most crucial element should have been probably Ramunas Siskauskas. The Benetton forward is many players merged into one. A multi-tasking wiz, he gives the defense a boost of confidence; the offense a spark; and the playmaking a sense of creativity. His fantastic performance during this year's Italian playoffs, leading Benetton to the title, is a reassuring sign that Siskauskas is at the top of his game. Unfortunately, Siskauskas, exhausted by a very long season, in Italy, with Benetton Treviso, decided to skip the FIBA World Championship in Japan. As far as leadership goes, waiting for new faces to emerge, Mindaugas Zekauskas and Darius Songaila will assume their share of duties. They will lead a young team that has a different profile than the ones that made history for Lithuania.

Even without mentioning "Saras", who was the best point guard in Europe two seasons ago, Lithuania doesn't have a "No. 1" who can really make a difference offensively - not necessarily by scoring, but rather by setting everyone up for baskets.

On the sunny side, Lithuania boasts one of the most impressive inside rotations in the world. For the first time since Arvydas Sabonis last played in an international competition 10 years ago, the two-time European champion (1937 and 2003) have a balanced offense, with centers able to make a difference offensively. During the last Euroleague campaign, Darjus Lavrinovic, always considered the lesser player of the twins, showed flashes of brilliance with the ball in his hands. Playing at ease with his back to the bas-



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

ket, he was able to catch the ball in the low post and often make a convincing move with a newfound authority. Combining power, size and much improved footwork, he was a constant threat. With his brother Kystof able to play more on the perimeter, Robertas Javtokas closer to the basket and Darius Songaila as the most precious invisible man, Lithuania has many more offensive options than it used to. That's great news for Macijauskas, who will benefit greatly from this new inside threat. The only problem might be, as mentioned earlier, that without a legitimate world class point guard, Lithuania may have a tough time showing this tremendous potential. On its way to the future with a changing team, Lithuania is looking for a new identity in EuroBasket 2007.

ARVYDAS MACIJASKAS

Headed to the NBA after two successful seasons with Tau Vitoria, Arvydas Macijauskas was at the top of his game. But in a matter of weeks, things quickly turned around for the spectacular guard. First, he was injured during a friendly game in Serbia on his way to the EuroBasket with Lithuania. A ruptured muscle in his leg forced him to withdraw from the European tournament. Needless to say, his presence there would probably have made a huge difference for Lithuania, who managed to finish fifth without many of its best players. Following that disappointing episode, Macijauskas started training camp with the Hornets in Oklahoma City. Coach Byron Scott, who wasn't a fan from the start, never really gave him the opportunity to show his game. Scott didn't want to let such a poor defender on the court too long. After such a disappointing year, Macijauskas will probably be highly motivated to remind everybody the kind of offensive player he is, always able to light the scoreboard from whatever distance.





SLOVENIA

Slovenia went into the 2006 World Championship in Japan just happy to be there. They made it to the Eighth Finals and then were knocked out by Turkey. It was the first time that they had ever qualified for a competition on the world stage. Is there really a potential for more? The answer is self-evident. Five NBA players. One of the best playmakers in Europe. Versatile forwards. Skilled big men. Shooting firepower at all positions. For a small nation with a population under one million, can anyone ask for more? The only country with such a ratio of talent and population is Lithuania. Of course, Slovenia is nowhere near the Lithuanians in terms of success. But this could well change. The explanation for the existence of such a vast pool of talent in small country is in Slovenia's history. Until 1991, it was part of the former Yugoslavia, the basketball school of which has been famed around the world. Slovenian teams played in the common Yugoslav league, one of the strongest in Europe at that time. Players and coaches from all over Yugoslavia found their home in Slovenia and left a deep mark in its basketball. Fifteen years later, Slovenians still yield the benefits of this era, and its players can boast themselves to belong to the "Yugoslav School of basketball".

The Slovenian roster is a perfect combination of talent and experience. Take the guards for example. The most likely to start at point guard is Jaka Lakovic. Panathinaikos' "Commander-in-Chief" is one of the best playmakers in Europe, who is as good a passer and leader as he is a shooter. Alongside him, coach Pipan will probably utilize combo guards Sani Becirovic or Beno Udrih; the first used to be one of the prime talents in Europe prior to a knee injury. After having overcome knee problems, Sani is still one of the most dangerous guards on the continent. Udrih, meanwhile, is a skilled lefty who provides good services to the San Antonio Spurs, backing up Tony Parker. Among other guards to help out the above trio are the likes of the Lakers' Sasa Vujacic, but also Ozbolt, Hafnar, Joksimovic or Domen Lorbek. Talent wise, one will agree, the Slovenian backcourt is on par with the best. But wait. Their swingmen are not less talented. Marko Milic is an athletic beast, who will shut down the opponent's scorer and energize his teammates with high flying dunks. The 207-cm Bostjan Nachbar plays small forward in the NBA and is a mismatch nightmare. Marko Tusek is strong as a bull and bangs inside, but is at the same time lethal from the three point line. The same goes for Matjaz Smodis, who is coming off a terrific year with CSKA Moscow. The icing on the cake are the Slovenian big men.



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

The potential duo of Primož Brezec and Rasha Nesterovic on the same team, let alone the same lineup, is frightening for any opponent. But the two NBA towers are not alone. Backing them up, Coach Pipan will have the young stud Erazem Lorbek as well as bangers such as Jurak, Slokar or Zupan to do the dirty work.

JAKA LAKOVIC

Slovenia's floor general. Jaka Lakovic is living proof that one does not have to be tall to be dominant. He is simply one of the best point guards in Europe. At just 1,86 m, Lakovic was not exactly your typical physical specimen from the former Yugoslav school. After having played out of the limelight his first three senior seasons at Slovan, he took the Euroleague by storm in 2001-2002 with Krka Novo Mesto. Formidable performances earned him a contract with Panathinaikos, where he has been excelling for the past three years. Along with Sani Becirovic and Beno Udrih, he forms a fantastic playmaking trio for Slovenia.





T E A M S

CROATIA

It's been ten years since the Croats have climbed onto an international podium. Recent years have been tough, with the national team missing major international events on regular basis.

As at every European championship, the stakes are high. However, they are particularly high for Croatia, where basketball has traditionally been a matter of national pride. However, the days of the silver medal at the 1992 Olympics or the bronze 1995 EuroBasket in Athens are long gone. Back then, superstars like Drazen Petrovic, Toni Kukoc and Dino Radja made sure their compatriots at home, fresh from a bloody war of independence, felt proud of their country. Of all the former Yugoslav republics to become independent in the early nineties, it was Croatia that raced out of the block the fastest in terms of basketball, stamping its authority on the map as one of the top teams in Europe. But since those heady days, Croatian basketball has faced rough times. Drazen Petrovic, one of Europe's greatest players ever, was killed in a car accident in 1993. In the meantime, Toni Kukoc, Dino Radja and others have hung up their international boots. Their successors have since failed to repeat their exploits. That said, to suggest all has been lost would be an exaggeration. Croatia continues to produce top level talent and its players under the watchful eye of NBA scouts are legion. But you can't keep the flame alight forever just based on talent. Croatians know it, and they want to regain international basketball legitimacy.

The Croatians very nearly achieved that feat with a strong showing at EuroBasket 2005 in Serbia & Montenegro. Croatia welcomed back Nikola Vujcic into the fold as team captain (he missed out on EuroBasket 2003) and he led his players into the quarter-finals after a 74-66 defeat over Olympic silver medalists Italy in the elimination game.

Croatia were on an undoubted high after beating the Italians, but unfortunately, they came crashing back to earth in the quarter-finals against Spain. Just seconds away from a place in the semi-finals, Croatia allowed Spain back into the game when Fran Vazquez put back a missed free throw to send the contest into overtime.

Croatia fell apart in the extra period and ended up losing 101-85. What's more, the game was marred by ugly scenes when both head coach Neven Spohija and point guard Marko Popovic were ejected for arguing.

A World Championship berth was still within Croatia's grasp, but an 89-80 defeat at the hands of neighbours Slovenia in the next game saw their hopes of a trip to Japan turn to dust.

Fast forward one year and Croatia are once more a team on the rise.

Jasmin Repesa was entrusted with the task of leading Croatia through the



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

qualifying round and he rewarded his employers with a superb job. Croatia underlined their potential as a medal threat at EuroBasket 2007 and dispatched each of their four group rivals with clinical efficiency. A loss in the last game to Estonia prevented Croatia from finishing with an unbeaten record, but a place at EuroBasket 2007 had long been assured.

MARKO POPOVIC

No player took the EuroBasket 2005 quarter-final defeat to Spain harder than Marko Popovic. Croatia threw away the chance for victory by allowing Fran Vazquez to rebound an errant Juan Carlos Navarro free throw in the final seconds. His putback basket sent the game into overtime and Spain went on to win 101-85.

It was a tragic way for a very talented Croatian team to suffer elimination and emotions got the better of Popovic in the extra period and he was ejected by the referees.

Whether the lingering pain of that defeat spurred Popovic during qualifying games is debatable, but what is not up for discussion is that the 185cm point guard was clearly Croatia's best player.

Although just 24 years old, Popovic has long been recognized as one of Europe's top play-makers. His career has included stints at top clubs such as Cibona, Zadar, Pamesa Valencia, Efes Pilsen and for the 2006/2007 season, Zalgiris Kaunas.

Popovic was second in scoring with Efes during the 2006 Euroleague (12.8 ppg) and led his side with three assists per game. He did a similar job for Croatia during qualifying and his 17.8 ppg were a team high.





T E A M S

RUSSIA

Even without their star Andrei Kirilenko, Russia showed they were one of the best teams in the EuroBasket qualifying round. With point guard JR Holden leading the way, Russia finished with a 5-1 record under new coach David Blatt. Only Croatia was able to match the Russians with five victories. The lone blemish in their campaign was a setback to Belgium. They wrapped up first place in the group after beating the Czech Republic 68-55 on the final day of qualifying play.

Holden, Russia's American-born point guard, averaged 23 points per game, more than any other player from the qualifying round. Russia will try to improve on their eighth place finish, achieved in EuroBasket 2003 and 2005. With a proven winner such as Blatt leading the squad and with the experience their young players have gained from recent EuroBaskets, Russia will be going into Spain next year with very high expectations.

Russia's dominant frontline is difficult for any country to match. Kirilenko should be a part of Russia's team next year in EuroBasket 2007. Young talents such as Victor Khryapa (24 years of age) and Sergey Monya (25) now have two years of EuroBasket under their belts.

Factor in the experience that Holden has gained representing his new country in 2005 and 2006 and you have the makings of a serious medal



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

contender, something Russia is well acclimated to.

Russia took the silver medal in EuroBasket 1993 and a bronze in EuroBasket 1997. That's not to mention the glory of the former USSR.

The Soviet Union dominated European basketball for the better part of four decades. They won 14 gold medals, to go along with four bronze and three silver.

That's not to mention a host of gold medals at the World Championships and Olympics. EuroBasket 2007 approaches, the talented Russia's will be aiming for nothing less than a return to this glorious past.

ANDREI KIRILENKO

Back in 1999, when Andrei Kirilenko was just an 18 year old starting to make his mark on Europe's biggest stage, his coach in CSKA Moscow, Stanislav Eremkin, made this plea to journalists calling him about his young diamond : "please do not write in your reports how great Kirilenko is". Unfortunately the word quickly spread and a few months later, the kid from Siberia was drafted with the 24th pick by the Utah Jazz, becoming at the time the youngest European ever selected. Six years later, the franchise from Salt Lake City can claim that on this day in June it managed one of the biggest steals in draft history as Kirilenko has now become one of the true stars of the NBA, recently signing an 80 million dollar contract.

For those who attended youth competitions in the late 90's, this was not a surprise. In 1997, during the cadets European Championship, observers were seduced by this incredibly skinny Russian kid with a fantastic feel for the game and a spectacular, above the rim offensive and defensive game. Kirilenko averaged 19.5 points, 9.9 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 4.9 steals, leading Russia to the silver medal and earning tournament MVP honours. Two years later, he received the same honour at the Junior World Championship averaging 19.5 points, 9.5 rebounds and 3.1 assists. These competitions confirmed the formidable talent of a kid who grew up with Spartak St. Petersburg, a club with a reputation for developing promising prospects. In fact, Kirilenko started his professional career at 15, scoring three points against Spartak Moscow. Of course, this is a Superleague record.

The most powerful club in the country, CSKA Moscow tried hard to sign him but Kirilenko made them wait before joining them in 1998. Patience seems to be a virtue for this player as he also decided to wait a couple of years before going to the NBA after being drafted. In that period, he won two Russian league titles and carried CSKA to the FIBA SuproLeague Final Four in 2001. That year, he was named European Player of the Year, beating Dejan Bodiroga in the closest finish ever in the vote published by French weekly magazine "Basketnews". Able to dominate a game without scoring a single point, Andrei Kirilenko can play positions 2-3-4. He's one of the best shot blockers in the NBA and has improved on his outside shot.





T E A M S

TURKEY

EuroBasket 2005 probably was the lowest point for Turkish basketball. The team played so poorly that they only beat Bulgaria in overtime. Apart from that, Turkey lost to Lithuania, Croatia and Germany, without ever giving the impression of being able to go deeper in the tournament. The losing was not the worst part since there are good and bad periods in sport. But there is a huge difference between losing and not competing. And the Turkish team was at the wrong end of that difference. The team, especially the players, were criticized ferociously in the Turkish media when they returned to Istanbul. The locker room infighting between Mehmet Okur and Mirsad Türkcan was highly publicized and commented upon.

The wild card berth for the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan proved to be a time for redemption since there is no doubt that Turkey has tons of talent. The team was able to win back the hearts of the public with a good performance which saw them finish in 6th place.

After the 2005 disaster, players were reluctant to play for the National Team, especially the big guns playing in the NBA. Mehmet Okur and Hidayet Türkoğlu are national heroes in Turkey. Their presence in the NBA in itself is headline news every other day. So they might think that playing in the National Team and giving minimal effort could only damage this reputation. So instead of competing more, they announced that they didn't want to play this past summer in Japan. That created a public frenzy since playing for the National Team is still considered national duty and an honour. For fans, refusing to play for the nation is just unthinkable. Coach Tanjevic did not want to listen to what Okur or Türkoğlu said to journalists. In early June, during a press conference, he indicated he would call the two stars without taking care of their apparent wishes. Probably the only way to put enough pressure on them to make them change their mind...

Bogdan Tanjevic said of the players: "I don't know if they will come or not. I hope they do." If and when they will come is still a question mark. But this invitation was merely a hope that the two players will feel the heat and eventually have to play for the National Team. Turkey suffered through major chemistry problems in Serbia.

Tanjevic's backup plan is not assuring either. After the disaster of last summer, the only change in the roster was the exclusion of the talented but unpredictable Mirsad Türkcan. And without guys like Okur, Türkoğlu and Türkcan the replacements are all inexperienced at the World level. However, the prized 1986-87 generation is represented by five players, and Tanjevic used this opportunity to further grow these talents for the 2010 FIBA World Championship in Turkey. Cenk Akyol, Ersan Illyasova, Hakan Demirel and Semih Erden all made the trip to Japan with the first three playing significant minutes. What's more, Tanjevic was able to put aside the bad blood that had plagued his team in 2005 and create a harmonious team atmosphere. Drawn in the toughest group in the competition, Turkey beat Lithuania, Australia and Brazil in the first round on the way to a 5-1 record. Victory over Slovenia in the eighth-finals justified their participation as a wild



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

card entry and they finally bowed out of the competition against Argentina in the quarter-finals.

Japan was undoubtedly a success for Tanjevic and Co. but the challenge will be proving that as in 2001, the performance was not just a one-off but one that will underpin the future success of one of Europe's most talented sides.

SERKAN ERDOGAN

Serkan Erdogan was destined for stardom in 2001, but a two-year drug ban put his career on hold. But Serkan got his chance to display his scoring skills in the Euroleague when Ibrahim Kutluay left Ülker.

Erdogan is a very powerful player for his position and uses that strength to his advantage. Being a terrific shooter, defenses have to guard him closely, and he initiates contact knowing his superior strength will prevail. Having played point guard at the junior level, his ball handling skills are also finely tuned. That's why Tau grabbed him at the first opportunity. And he has shown everyone that he can do it in the ACB, too. Erdogan was instrumental in Tau's King Cup success, and his 24 points in Game Three of the Euroleague play-offs at Panathinaikos were legendary. He carried his team to the Final Four. But that's no wonder as he performs best in pressure situations. Serkan is not a great slasher and his not-so-quick feet may give him trouble on defense. But he is the ultimate competitor and has a pair of hands coaches can always count on in big situations.





T E A M S

ITALIA

Italy want to show the world that a new era is now beginning for the National Team - better known as the Azzurri. It's a turning point for the team led by coach Carlo Recalcati. Coming off the disappointing 2005 EuroBasket in Serbia & Montenegro, where the Italians were stopped at the cross elimination stage by Croatia and finished an unsatisfactory ninth place, the FIBA World Championship 2006 in Japan also proved a tough challenge for Italy and they were not able to progress beyond the eighth-finals. For them, the negative outcome at the last EuroBasket meant that their time to replace the veterans had arrived. A large part of the new project is to be ready for the next EuroBasket, held in Spain in 2007, where there will be a tremendous fight for the two Olympic spots.

Two key players that Italy hope to showcase in Spain are Andrea Bargnani and Marco Belinelli.

Bargnani should have made his debut with the National Team in Japan after being drafted as the number one pick by the Toronto Raptors. But on July 15th, because of the pressure the Canadian franchise put on Bargnani, the Italian federation decided not to call its new "Golden Boy" for this summer's competition. Bargnani was seen as the best international power forward ahead of the 2006 NBA draft.

Belinelli had a solid showing at the FIBA World Championship, where he averaged a team-best 13.5 ppg. This past season, he was the best scorer for Climamio Bologna at the age of 20. He runs the floor well, has good overall speed and quickness and is an explosive leaper. But his favourite weapon is his outside shot, which reaches well beyond the NBA three-point line.

Two players, two rising stars. But they are not the team. The key to the four medals Italy won in the last eight years (one gold, silver and bronze each at the EuroBaskets plus the silver medal at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens) was teamwork.

Defense was number one, then sacrifice for the teammates. Italy also controlled the tempo, allowing them to stay within the game plan for 40 minutes. With the potential addition of extremely talented players like Bargnani and Belinelli, the quality of the offense has changed,



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

using more fast breaks and a more effective transition offense. But nothing must change in the team's defensive attitude. Italy will be a team that has to show many things. The main one will be pride for their history and tradition of winning medals in European Championships and Olympic Games. In addition, Italy will also want to show that they can duplicate its history with young guys like Belinelli, and in the shape of upcoming Luigi Datome and Danilo Gallinari. They hope the future is already there but in a new style and with guys who finally can play on top level.

ANDREA BARGNANI



Andrea Bargnani is considered the most talented of a group of excellent Italian youngsters. He's also not far from being considered the best in Europe in his age group. He has been compared to Dirk Nowitzki because of his height and his all-around style of play. Bargnani is a perimeter-oriented forward with a terrific first step and an excellent outside shot. He has good footwork, soft hands even though he's not particularly strong. A player who runs the fast break well, Bargnani needs to work on his rebounding and his post-up game. But he possesses a rare offensive talent. He is also a very good shot blocker. Born in Rome, he has played for Benetton Treviso.



SERBIA

When Dragan Sakota was appointed to the helm of the Serbia & Montenegro national team earlier this year, many in Belgrade and abroad were relieved. The best coaches on the continent weren't exactly elbowing one another aside for the job. Bozidar Maljkovic, Svetislav Pesic and Dusko Ivanovic all knew what their colleague was up against. After three consecutive setbacks, the coach of Red Star Belgrade embarked on a competition he knew he couldn't win. His country's team is no longer feared by anyone and playing decent basketball will be the most fans can expect from the former global leaders. Sure, Serbia & Montenegro won the 2002 FIBA World Championship. But that was in another era. Oh, how things have changed since 2002.

When Divac, Stojakovic, Jaric and company snatched the global title in Indianapolis, little did they know they had written the final episode in a success story that has been going on for decades. In 1961, Yugoslavia won their first ever international medal, silver at the European championship in Belgrade. In the following four decades, the basketball players representing first the Socialist Yugoslavia, then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, earned 14 titles and a total of 29 medals. Nevertheless, it all ended at the 2003 EuroBasket where the same team with a new name - Serbia & Montenegro - failed to grab a medal and broke the above tradition. Since the Swedish adventure, things have never been the same. The Olympics in Greece and the homecoming in Belgrade last summer ended in disgrace. The reputation of the national team is in decline; former stars are not there anymore; and no new ones are on the horizon.

"It's time to turn the page", says Dragan Sakota. In a nutshell, that's what his country's basketball needs right now, at least to lift the spirits. But then again, what country? Montenegro voted its independence on a highly contested referendum in late May and officially became a full-fledged state after 80 years. Sports wise, that means that the 2006 FIBA World Championships could have been the last opportunity for the players of the once-united brotherly nations to play together. No need to point out that the latest split will have consequences for the general quality of basketball in both Serbia and Montenegro.

Political issues aside, problems for Sakota abound. For starters, the biggest star of the team, Predrag Stojakovic, again stated his unwillingness to play for the national team. When Sakota was appointed, the hope in Belgrade was that he would, as his former mentor, lure Peja back with the team after two summers of absence. "Stojakovic couldn't have declined my invitation, for I didn't invite him in the first place", Sakota reportedly told the press after having heard about the news. But the list of problems doesn't end there. Milos Vujanovic is sidelined due to a second consecutive knee injury. Veteran stars such as Bodiroga, Tomasevic and Rebraca have all retired. NBA studs like Jaric, Radmanovic or Cabarkapa, who did not seem interested by the National Team, were not even called upon. Neither were called important players from the past competitions, like Gurovic or Drobnyak.

"I'll work with what I have," says Sakota. His task was to sacrifice success in Japan in order for Serbians to be able to watch their team at the 2007 EuroBasket in Spain and the Olympics in Beijing in 2008. The uncontested



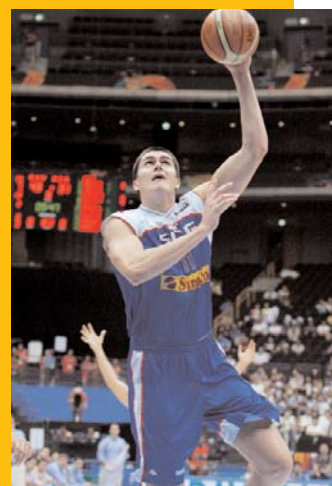
PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

leader of the final edition of Serbia & Montenegro will be Igor Rakocovic. As Jaric didn't show up, backing the guard of Real Madrid will be first timers such as Bojan Popovic and Uros Tripkovic. Pamesa's MVP Vule Avdalovic will probably also be there. Sakota's player from Red Star, Milan Gurovic, could have been the man to replace Stojakovic as prime outside shooter, but in his absence, the coach will again have to rely on young guns with talent but minimum international experience like Cleveland's Sasha Pavlovic or Luka Bogdanovic from Partizan.

Inside, there is a plethora of big men candidates for the four and five spots. Leading them will be Darko Milicic, still eager to prove he's not a bust as the former NBA Draft second pick; and young New Jersey starting center Krstic. Should the Nets not let Krstic come, giants such as Kosta Perovic or Mile Ilic will be more than happy to fill the gaps. Finally, the revelation of last season in the Adriatic League, power forward Miroslav Raicevic (12.0 ppg shooting 60% from the field), could excite many fans in Spain. There you have an exciting young team who could surprise many.

DARKO MILICIC

At last year's European Championship in Belgrade, Milicic was statistically Serbia-Montenegro's MVP per minutes played. This year, Darko is coming out from an encouraging season end with his new NBA franchise, the Orlando Magic. As opposed to the Detroit Pistons, where successive coaches left him to "ride the pine", the Florida team offered the tall Serbian, once deemed one of the top talents on the planet, respectable playing time. Darko responded with excellent performances, particularly on the defensive end. Per minutes played, again he was among the top shot blockers in the league. At only 20, Milicic wants to prove all his critics wrong next year in Spain.





T E A M S

LATVIA

The image is still vivid in the minds of many basketball fans. Ankara. 2001. Lithuania, bronze medalist at the Sydney Olympics, totally outplayed by a fabulous Latvian squad hitting 14 out of 22 three-pointers. The star of the evening was Ainars Bagatskis, forgotten on the bench of Dijon in France, but unstoppable during EuroBasket. Two years later, the team of coach Armands Kraulins could no longer rely on the element of surprise and had to deal with the injury of playmaker Raimonds Miglinieks, a key member of the 2001 run. The first game was, ironically enough, played against a Lithuanian team dreaming of revenge. In a tension packed derby, Lithuania forced overtime and after Sarunas Jasikevicius' two free-throws, Kristaps Valters missed a potentially game winning drive. This loss seemed to demoralise Latvia who then fell to Germany and Israel, returning home winless from Norrköping. At EuroBasket 2005, Latvia once again showed their ability to match up with Europe's big boys. After suffering a loss to Israel in the first game, they took Spain to overtime before eventually losing 114-109. The defeat took the wind out of Latvia's sails and a loss to Serbia & Montenegro in the final game meant another early trip home.

With a population of just over 2,3 million, Latvia has a long basketball tradition. In fact, the country was the first European champion. That was in 1935, in Geneva. It might explain the passion for the game as the clubs and coaches keep on producing extremely talented young players. In the youth categories (U16, U18 and U20), Latvia is a major player and this persistence at the highest level will surely translate into senior success in the long run.

Youth was a key factor in Latvia's qualification to EuroBasket 2007. With longtime leader Roberts Stelmahers unavailable and question marks surrounding Kaspars Kambala's commitment to the national team, Uvis Helmanis was the lone veteran presence on the squad.

It was 24-year old forward Kaspars Cipruss who led Latvia in both scoring and rebounding during qualifying with 14.3 ppg and 6.2 rpg. The 23-year old Kristaps Janicenoks contributed 12.2 ppg while point guard Kristaps Valters chipped in with 11.7 ppg and a team-high 5.5 assists per game.

Drawn together with favourites Croatia, Latvia were always going to have a tough task to take top spot in the group and an automatic EuroBasket berth. That proved to be very much the case as Latvia lost both games to Croatia, 84-56 and 87-80. Nonetheless, solid wins over Estonia and Denmark earned the Latvians runner-up status and qualification as one of the two best second-placed teams.

Now that Latvia have earned a fourth consecutive trip to EuroBasket, the coaching staff will be looking to solidify some of the young talent in preparation for Spain. Maris Laksa, one of the team's top performers at EuroBasket 2003, was unavailable in 2005 due to illness and also didn't participate in qualifying games. Andris Biedrins, one of the top talents to come out of Latvia in recent years, has also yet to wear a senior national team shirt. Drafted by the Golden State Warriors at the age of 18, Biedrins has chosen to spend his summers developing his fledgling NBA career. But Latvian basketball officials will be hoping that summer 2007 will be the right time for him to make his national team debut.

Another young player looking to earn his national team stripes is Ernests Kalve.



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

The 202-cm forward has been a revelation on the youth scene since an outstanding performance at the 2005 U18 European Championship. Kalve was snapped up by Benetton Treviso and is on loan for the 2006-2007 season at German club Giessen. He will undoubtedly feature in Latvia's future plans.

ANDRIS BIEDRINS

It might be a little presumptuous to name Andris Biedrins as Latvia's star player. For one thing, he has yet to even make his debut for the national team and has pretty much disappeared off the European radar since going to the NBA in 2004.

But there is no doubting Biedrins' talent.

The 212-cm center was a revelation in the 2003/2004 FIBA Europe League for club side Skonto Riga. Although just 17 years of age, Biedrins averaged 18.6 ppg, 8.2 rpg and 1.8 bpg during the season.



Just one year previously another 17-year old had put up similar numbers in the Champions Cup for Hemofarm Vrsac. His name was Darko Milicic and he went on to become a number one NBA draft pick for the Detroit Pistons. Unfortunately for both Biedrins and Milicic, their NBA careers have also mirrored each other and neither has yet to make a significant impact in the USA.

Biedrins made his debut with the Golden State Warriors during the 2004/2005 season as the NBA's youngest player. He averaged 12.8 minutes per game to go along with 3.6 points, numbers he increased to 14.7 and 3.8 respectively in 2005/2006.

The national team has yet to become a regular fixture for Biedrins and he has chosen to spend his summers honing his game in NBA summer league play. However, it will hopefully only be a matter of time before Biedrins answers his country's call. A tandem of Biedrins and Kaspars Kambala would give Latvia an impressive front line to go along with young talent Kaspars Cipruss (207 cm).



T E A M S

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic is not synonymous with success in men's basketball. Instead those plaudits go to the women, who have dominated the European basketball landscape in recent years. Gambrinus Brno won their first ever EuroLeague Women title in 2006, following up on the national team's gold medal at EuroBasket Women 2005. Although the women have hogged the limelight, that is not to say that the men have not had any influence around Europe.

No discussion of Czech Basketball can take place without mentioning Lubos Barton and Jiri Welsch, two players who have had a considerable impact both in Europe and the USA. Once a proud basketball nation, Czech hoops went into freefall after Czechoslovakia was divided into two separate countries in 1993. Previously, Czechoslovakia had featured prominently in both national team and club competitions.

Czechoslovakia won gold at EuroBasket 1946 in Geneva and would go on to win a further 10 medals at European Championships, the last of which was a silver in 1985.

On the club scene Spartak Brno were runners up in the 1968 European Cup for Men's Champion Clubs while Slavia Prague finished in second place in that year's Saporta Cup.

Since 1993, trophies at any level have been hard to come by for the Czech Republic.

There was a lone appearance at EuroBasket 1999, a tournament at which the Czechs proved to be a major surprise in the first round. Led by the then 19-year old Barton (he averaged 18.7 ppg and 5.7 rpg for the tournament), the Czechs beat Germany, Lithuania and Greece to top their preliminary round group.

Unfortunately they could not carry that success over to the eighth-final round and did not advance to the quarter-finals. Seven years later and the Czech Republic are back on the main European stage. Drawn with Russia, Hungary and Belgium in their qualifying group, the Czech Republic made short work of Hungary and Belgium, but failed to beat Russia in both games.

Nonetheless, second place in the group and a 4-2 record (the same as group winners Russia) proved enough to see the Czech Republic qualify for EuroBasket 2007.



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE



LUBOS BARTON

Lubos Barton is used to shining on the EuroBasket stage. In 1999 Barton had just finished his freshman year at Valparaiso where he had averaged a respectable 13.8 ppg and 5.6 rpg. Nobody expected the 202-cm guard/forward to do much at EuroBasket, especially considering he had turned 19 just three months before the tournament.

Despite his unheralded status Barton went on to become the revelation of the tournament. He shot a red hot 61% from three-point range and added 2.0 apg, 5.7 rpg and 2.0 spg to go along with his team high 18.7 points.

His performance earned him several offers to prematurely end his collegiate career and come back to Europe, but Barton opted to see out his four years in the USA.

After graduating in 2002, Barton found his way to Italy and Fortitudo Bologna. He stayed one season in Bologna before going to Roma for two years and then signing with DKV Joventut Badalona in 2005.

During the 2005/2006 season, Barton played a major role in DKV's return to the top of Europe. Not only did DKV end the season with a European title to their name (the EuroCup), they also finished in the top four of the ACB and earned a berth in the 2007 Euroleague.

Along with Jiri Welsch, Barton was the focal point of the Czech Republic's successful qualifying campaign. He averaged 17.2 points per game, along with seven rebounds and three assists.



T E A M S

PORTUGAL

To say Portuguese basketball fans have waited a long time to see their country play against Europe's best would be an understatement. Certainly no one on their current roster was around in 1951, when Portugal last played in EuroBasket.

The 56-year drought will come to an end when Portugal travel across the border to play in EuroBasket next September as a result of their first place finish in Group B of the qualifying round. No one expected the Portuguese to come out on top in their group, which featured two countries that were a part of EuroBasket 2005 (Israel and Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Portugal got off to a strong start by winning their first three games. But the situation looked bleak after losses to FYR of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

With the top spot in the group at stake in the team's final game, Portugal re-gained their confidence and beat Israel 69-49 thanks to a 20-0 second half run. Portugal's team, led by their veteran coach Valentyn Melnychuk, were probably the only ones that believed qualification to EuroBasket 2007 was feasible. Melnychuk, who hails from Ukraine, has been leading Portugal since 2000 and considers his side's EuroBasket berth as one of his greatest successes. "I must admit that this is one of the best moments of my career," he said. "This qualification shows the value of the Portuguese players. It did not happen accidentally. Last year [for the EuroBasket 2005 qualifying round] we defeated Sweden twice, and we lost in overtime against Hungary. I feel enormously proud of my players." Portugal prevailed despite their tallest player standing at just 205 centimeters. Their opponents in EuroBasket 2007 will be bigger and stronger than their qualifying round competition, but still Melnychuk is confident. "What has been happening during recent seasons is that our players' mentalities have progressed noticeably, even though they lack some height," he said.

"We are not bothered about what could happen in the draw. If we've qualified, it means we deserved it. We will not be going there just to make up numbers." In the EuroBasket qualifying round, a number of different players stepped up on various occasions. This unpredictability will make it difficult for opposition coaches. Each of their four victories featured a different leading scorer



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

and overall six players averaged 9.5 ppg or more. Paulo Cunha, Francisco Jordão and Elvis Evora led the way with 12.5, 12.0 and 10.5 ppg respectively. With their confidence, offensive balance and strong defense, Portugal will look to replicate their performance from the qualifying round.

ELVIS EVORA

Elvis is alive in Portugal. Elvis Evora that is. On a team that doesn't feature one star player, Evora has been one of many key performers in Portugal's run through the EuroBasket qualifying round.

Entering play averaging 7.2 ppg, Evora demonstrated his all-around abilities by tallying 27 points, nine rebounds, five steals and two blocks in Portugal's clinching win which secured their place in EuroBasket 2007.

Evora exemplifies the heart of the Portuguese team. He is the tallest player on the team at 205 centimeters and thus is drawn against taller inside players. Nevertheless, Portugal out-rebounded their opponents in all six of their EuroBasket qualifying round games and Evora played a big part in that with 6.5 rpg.

"At the beginning, the critics said that we were the weakest team of the group, but we proved them wrong," Evora said.

"Now we just need to remain as confident as we've been so far. Facing the best teams in Europe will be another challenge. We are as good as they are."





T E A M S

POLAND

Low expectations have brought Poland high results. Poland will be playing in a EuroBasket for the first time since 1997 after they finished 4-2 in Group A of the qualifying round.

The story of Poland's rise to EuroBasket Division A is quite remarkable, considering they were in Division B to start the year.

The FIBA Europe Executive Committee decided earlier this year to re-admit Poland to Division A for EuroBasket 2007 in order to bring the number of Division A teams to 16. The decision was also intended to help better prepare Poland as they get set to host EuroBasket 2009.



PHOTOS: FIBAEUROPE

The Polish took advantage of their opportunity by opening their qualifying round campaign with four consecutive victories. They dropped their next two, but with a 4-2 record they were able to notch the top place in Group A and thus earn automatic qualification to EuroBasket 2007.

What makes Poland's strong start all the more impressive is that they are playing without arguably two of their best stars: high scoring guard Kamil Chanas and big man Maciej Lampe.

But 36-year old veteran Adam Wojcik, and 32-year-old guard Andrzej Pluta stepped up, averaging 13.3 and 15.2 ppg respectively to lead Poland to their first EuroBasket appearance in a decade.

While they have not fared well in recent years, Poland was once a top contender in Europe.

The Polish medalled in the third edition of EuroBasket with a bronze in 1939. Their best EuroBasket performance was the silver medal in 1963. That was the beginning of the country's best basketball period as they won bronze in 1965 and 1967, and finished fourth in 1969 and 1971.

Poland, however, haven't finished higher than seventh in nine EuroBasket showings since. Still, they did appear in 17 of the 19 continental championships between 1955 and 1991.

Poland's only EuroBasket appearance since 1991 was their seventh place in 1997, a tournament that was also staged in Spain.

Andrzej Urlep has been the architect of Poland's new-found success.

The 49-year-old who won five Polish league titles and reached the finals the past two seasons was hired to bring instant success to Poland.

He passed his first test with fly colours and thus will be able to guide the Polish side in EuroBasket 2007.

While Poland probably wouldn't be considered a favourite to reach the

quarter-finals, Urlep and Co. have already shown they are capable of pulling off a surprise.

A strong performance in EuroBasket 2007 would help in many fronts as Poland prepares the organisation of EuroBasket 2009.

ADAM WOJCIK

For any player, participation in a EuroBasket is special. For veteran Adam Wojcik, the opportunity to play in the event has all the more meaning.

Wojcik has been a mainstay on Poland's national team for almost two decades and thus has endured the many difficult years with the team. There are not many players today that can recall being a part of the 1991 EuroBasket.

Wojcik was a young 21-year old up and coming player at the time and was a part of Poland's seventh-place team at the 1991 event held in Rome. He also took part in the 1997 event. With his years of playing basketball numbered, Wojcik provided in an inspirational performance in EuroBasket qualifying games.

The 2.08-cm forward tallied 13.3 points per game, to go along with 4.7 rebounds and 1.8 assists. Demonstrating his importance to the team, Wojcik tallied 18 ppg in Poland's four wins and four ppg in their two losses.

Wojcik will be counted on heavily for leadership and scoring as Poland takes part in EuroBasket 2007.





HISTORY

| Year | Gold | Silver | Bronze | Place |
|------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| 2005 | Greece | Germany | France | Vrsac; Podgorica; Novi Sad; Belgrade (SCG) |
| 2003 | Lithuania | Spain | Italia | Boras, Lulea, Norrköpping, Södertelje, Stockholm (SWE) |
| 2001 | Yugoslavia | Turquia | Spain | Ankara, Antalya, Istanbul (TUR) |
| 1999 | Italia | Spain | Yugoslavia | Antibes, Clermond-Ferrand, Dijon, Toulouse, Le Mans, Pau, Paris (FRA) |
| 1997 | Yugoslavia | Italia | Russia | Gerona, Badalona, Barcelona (ESP) |
| 1995 | Yugoslavia | Lithuania | Croatia | Athens (GRE) |
| 1993 | F. R. Germany | Russia | Croatia | Berlin, Karlsruhe, Munich (GER) |
| 1991 | Yugoslavia | Italia | Spain | Rome (ITA) |
| 1989 | Yugoslavia | Greece | Soviet Union | Zagreb (YUG) |
| 1987 | Greece | Soviet Union | Yugoslavia | Athens (GRE) |
| 1985 | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | Italia | Karlsruhe, Leverkusen, Stuttgart (GER) |
| 1983 | Italia | Spain | Soviet Union | Limoges, Caen, Nantes (FRA) |
| 1981 | Soviet Union | Yugoslavia | Czechoslovakia | Bratislava, Havirov, Prague (TCH) |
| 1979 | Soviet Union | Israel | Yugoslavia | Mestre, Siena, Gorizia, Turin (ITA) |
| 1977 | Yugoslavia | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | Liège, Ostend (BEL) |
| 1975 | Yugoslavia | Soviet Union | Italia | Belgade, Split, Karlovac, Rijeka (YUG) |
| 1973 | Yugoslavia | Spain | Soviet Union | Badalona, Barcelona (ESP) |
| 1971 | Soviet Union | Yugoslavia | Italia | Essen, Böblingen (GER) |
| 1969 | Soviet Union | Yugoslavia | Czechoslovakia | Naples, Caserta (ITA) |
| 1967 | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | Poland | Helsinki, Tampere (FIN) |
| 1965 | Soviet Union | Yugoslavia | Poland | Moscow, Tbilisi (URS) |
| 1963 | Soviet Union | Poland | Yugoslavia | Wroclaw (POL) |
| 1961 | Soviet Union | Yugoslavia | Bulgaria | Belgrade (YUG) |
| 1959 | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | France | Istanbul (TUR) |
| 1957 | Soviet Union | Bulgaria | Czechoslovakia | Sofia (BUL) |
| 1955 | Hungary | Czechoslovakia | Soviet Union | Budapest (HUN) |
| 1953 | Soviet Union | Hungary | France | Moscow (URS) |
| 1951 | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | France | Paris (FRA) |
| 1949 | Egipto | France | Greece | Cairo (EGY) |
| 1947 | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | Egipto | Prague (TCH) |
| 1946 | Czechoslovakia | Italia | Hungary | Geneva (SUI) |
| 1939 | Lithuania | Letonia | Poland | Kaunas (LTU) |
| 1937 | Lithuania | Italia | France | Riga (LAT) |
| 1935 | Letonia | Spain | Czechoslovakia | Geneva (SUI) |

| Country | Gold | Silver | Bronze | Total |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| URSS | 14 | 3 | 4 | 21 |
| Yugoslavia | 9 | 5 | 4 | 18 |
| Lithuania | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Italia | 2 | 4 | 4 | 10 |
| Greece | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Czechoslovakia | 1 | 6 | 5 | 12 |
| Hungary | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Latvia | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Germany | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Egypt | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Spain | 0 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| France | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Poland | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Bulgaria | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Turkey | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Israel | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Russia | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Croatia | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |



The Greeks, EuroBasket champions in 2005.