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## Croatian Sport - 50th Golden Spin of Zagreb

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## About Croatian Sport - 50th Golden Spin of Zagreb

It is difficult to give the exact date when ice skating started in our city, but the local people have been skating since the ancient times on the frozen lakes of Maksimir, inlets of the river Sava and in private courtyards. Ice skating was an accepted part of the fun social life of Zagreb. The first ice skating club / not a society yet! / was established in Zagreb on Nov. 15th, 1874 with the first organised ice skating area on what is today known as Mažuranić Square. On Christmas Eve, December 24th, 1874, they organised the first public ice skating night. It was noted in the chronicles that it was the official beginning of organised ice skating in Zagreb. Those who

were working in the field of ice skating made a clear announcement for the public and the authorities: "We have an ice skating rink and ice skaters. Now we need manmade ice!". The wait lasted from 1874 to 1961. Ice skating endured the 87-year wait: on November 21st, 1961, Veco Holjevac, the Mayor of Zagreb, opened the first ice skating rink on Šalata in Zagreb featuring manmade ice. This laid the foundation for sports ice skating. Members of the Medveščak and Mladost clubs, former ice skaters and those working in the field of ice skating, gathered boys and girls on Šalata and started systematic training. Between 1963 and 1965 they organised exhibitions of top European ice skaters on Šalata. Grownups were surprised and delighted, and the youth accepted the challenge and signed up for ice skating clubs. Young skaters quickly progressed to a gradual appearances of the global scene. They participated in international competitions, such as the city duels between Zagreb and Sofia in 1965 and 1966. Those city duels were successful both in terms of organisation and competition. The reaction to that was the decision to organise the first international ice skating championship of the City of Zagreb. It took place between December 8th and 10th, 1967 featuring ice skaters from Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania and our own competitors, Dunja Vujčić, Bojan Lipovščak and Zoran Matas. It was the first live broadcast by the Zagreb Television that has continued until nowadays. Exemplary organisation and implementation echoed throughout Europe. The special contribution of the Golden Spin of Zagreb in terms of establishing certain event rules and regulations was noted in the professional circles. The ice skaters of Zagreb entered the Winter Hall in 1972. Zagreb was assigned the task of organising the 1974 European Championship that would mark a century of organised ice skating. As many as 21 countries sent their best ice skaters to the 1973 Golden Spin of Zagreb that was broadcast live to the entire Europe. It was the first live colour broadcast for us. In 1992 there was an official commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Gold Spin of Zagreb under the patronage of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia. It would be unforgivable not to repeat the congratulatory words of the President of the International Skating Union of the time, Olaf Poulsen: "On behalf of the International Skating Union, I would like to express how amazed I am by the 25 events organised by the Golden Spin of Zagreb. This competition has been very important for the development of figure skating worldwide. Most of the top ice skaters started their careers in Zagreb and it has become a tradition within the skating family. I want to congratulate Zagreb and the Organisation Committee headed by the President, Radovan Lipovščak, on this jubilee and I hope they continue organising this important competition in the future as well." Even today, 25 years later, we can repeat his words of congratulation. We would just have to add many things that have been accomplished during the past 25 years...

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