

Sports events as a determinant of sport tourism

Authors' Contribution:

- A Study Design
- B Data Collection
- C Statistical Analysis
- D Data Interpretation
- E Manuscript Preparation
- F Literature Search
- G Funds Collection

Wojciech Ratkowski^{ABCDEG}, Jadwiga Ratkowska^{ABFG}

Faculty of Tourism and Recreation,
Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport in Gdansk, Poland

abstract

The origins of sport tourism are strictly associated with sport emerging as competition and a show. Its roots date back to ancient Greece. The 20th century marks a dynamic development of this branch of tourism, which uses sports shows as the main purpose for traveling.

The concept of sport tourism should be narrowed down to those who passively participate in all kinds of sports events and to the actual participants of these events. Thus there will be two groups of people who can be called sports tourists.

All kinds of sporting events are an important factor contributing to the development of regions, because they significantly affect the image of the place and are a strong factor in attracting tourists. Their effectiveness as a tourist product requires developing a long-term strategy which takes into account both economic and social aspects.

Key words: sports event, sport tourism, traveling.

article details

Article statistics: Word count: 2,517; Tables: 2; Figures: 2; References: 28

Received: February 2017; **Accepted:** September 2017; **Published:** March 2018

Full-text PDF: <http://www.balticsportscience.com>

Copyright © Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Poland

Indexation: Celdes, Clarivate Analytics Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), CNKI Scholar (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), CNPIEC, De Gruyter - IBR (International Bibliography of Reviews of Scholarly Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences), De Gruyter - IBZ (International Bibliography of Periodical Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences), DOAJ, EBSCO - Central & Eastern European Academic Source, EBSCO - SPORTDiscus, EBSCO Discovery Service, Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, J-Gate, Naviga (Softweco, Primo Central (ExLibris), ProQuest - Family Health, ProQuest - Health & Medical Complete, ProQuest - Illustrata: Health Sciences, ProQuest - Nursing & Allied Health Source, Summon (Serials Solutions/ProQuest, TDOne (TDNet), Ulrich's Periodicals Directory/ulrichsweb, WorldCat (OCLC)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of interests: Authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Corresponding author: Prof. nadzw. dr hab. Wojciech Ratkowski, Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation; ul. K. Górskiego 1, 80-336 Gdańsk; e-mail: wojciech.ratkowski@awfis.gda.pl

Open Access License: This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and is otherwise in compliance with the license.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as an interdisciplinary phenomenon, involves three research areas: the geographical-spatial, the social and the economic one [1]. They comprise issues regarding natural values, land development and spatial planning, ethics of tourism, its impact on local communities and the connected with it intermingling of cultures. Tourism is also perceived as an economic phenomenon [2].

It is a form of business activity which has developed various types of tourist services offered to travellers, among which accommodation services, catering services and transport services are of greatest importance. Opportunities to earn huge revenues from providing tourist services are a driver of economy in many countries [3].

The dynamic development of tourism which took place in the 20th century and has continued to the present day is undisputed. In its early years tourism was elitist; nowadays it is a mass phenomenon involving millions of people. It has also become one of the best developed and modern branches of global economy.

The essence of tourism lies in human activity through which a person realises specific objectives related to travelling. This creates difficulties in a single, simple definition of the concept of tourism and persons participating in it, defined as tourists.

The present paper has reviewed the literature in terms of concepts of tourism with a special focus on sport tourism. Also, based on an analysis of the available data (statistical data), it shows the major, mass sport events in Tri-City which can become markers for sport tourism (ST).

THE CONCEPT OF SPORTS TOURISM

In 1943 Walter Hunziker formulated a classic, widely accepted by most economists till today, definition of tourism, saying that tourism is "a complex of relations and phenomena arising from travelling and staying of visitors unless it is associated with settling down and undertaking paid employment" [4]. Similarly, Kornak's definition stipulates that tourism is a set of relationships and socio-economic phenomena that arise from travelling and staying of visitors unless there is associated with it settling down and undertaking paid employment [5].

However, according to Kaspar, "tourism covers all links and phenomena that appear as a result of changes in place and hence the resulting stay of persons, on condition that for these persons the new place of stay is neither a permanent place of residence nor a place of work" [6].

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as a whole of activities of people who travel and stay for leisure, business or other purposes for no longer than a continuous year away from their everyday environment, except for travels whose main purpose is paid employment remunerated in the visited town [7]. This definition has been adopted for statistical purposes, hence, among others, time limit of up to a year.

All of these definitions characterising tourism have common characteristics. These include:

- travel which leads to a stay outside the place of residence,
- stay in a new place (not longer than a year),
- temporality of the travel and the stay (the travel and the stay are temporary, which distinguishes them from other types of migration),
- the subjective element (the traveller decides about the place of stay and the reasons for the trip),
- the objective element (using the tourist infrastructure determines the implementation of the purpose the visit [8]).

Additionally, the concept of a tourist must also be specified as it is unequivocal. In 1963 at the United Nations conference in Rome, the term “visitor” was introduced, which includes persons staying in the visited country, for whatever reasons. It comprises two categories: tourists and day-trippers.

Tourists are those who spend at least 24 hours in the destination, and the purpose for staying is: leisure, treatment, sightseeing, business, sports, religious, family, social, etc. In turn, day-trippers are persons spending less than 24 hours in the destination. In addition, for statistical purposes, the World Tourism Organization recommends a breakdown into international visitors (tourists and day-trippers) and domestic visitors (overnight tourists and day-trippers, who do not use accommodation).

Tourism, as a complex phenomenon, is difficult to classify both from a scientific and a practical point of view. The criteria for its division are very diverse. They include motivation for the choice of the destination, types of tourism (leisure, medical, sports, family, club, educational, congress, business, etc.), the tourism subject (the number of participants, age, length of stay, season of the year, means of transport, type of financing, accommodation, tourist’s origin), forms of tourism (individual, group, seniors, youth, active, passive, etc.) [9].

It is also difficult to clearly define the concept of sport tourism. The relationship between sport and tourism are multi-faceted. They include both the areas of health, recreation and leisure and the management of free time; they have cognitive values and are also important in the economic area. In this context, sport becomes a tourist phenomenon, and for example host cities of great global events (the Olympic Games, the World and European Championships) are the most popular destinations for tourists [10]. For them special local attractions are prepared and volunteers and tourist staff are trained so they can best showcase of the city, the region, the country, so that at the end of the event the participants want to return to this place, not only having the sport experience in mind [11, 12].

Sport as a form of human activity is a process of improving the psychophysical efficiency, satisfying the need for competition and striving to achieve results within the accepted rules of competition. Sport is one of the components of the system of physical culture. This, in turn, is the expression of a specific attitude towards one’s body. Conscious and active care for one’s own development, fitness and health means an ability to organise and spend leisure time with the biggest benefit for physical and mental health [13]. The task of physical culture is to aim at human development from high physical and motor fitness to

an ability to apply physical capacity in different life situations. One should keep in mind that physical culture is one of the areas of widely understood culture, by which we understand the whole of spiritual and material achievements of the society as well as patterns of behaviour and products absorbed by people in the course of their social development. Such placement of sport raises its rank and perception in the society.

Despite the rapid development of sport and tourism in general, the term “sport tourism” has been interpreted in many ways. The origins and the scope of sport tourism were studied in the 1980s, especially in German and English language literature. Various classifications and divisions were proposed. Creating models and identifying the place and the role of sport tourism took into account its wide and narrow understanding [14].

Thus Glyptis [15] points to 5 areas comprised by sport tourism:

- sports camps (searching for better climate conditions or better infrastructure) for training purposes,
- specialized or generally active holidays (commercial and non-commercial offers),
- “expensive sports holidays” (specialist, luxury sport disciplines),
- holidays with an available sports offer (a form of club vacations),
- spectators of sports events.

Another division was made by Gammon and Robinson, who emphasised the importance of sport [16] (Table 1).

Table 1. Sport tourism and sport in tourism to S. Gammon and T. Robinson [16]

Sport tourism		Sport in Tourism	
hard definition	soft definition	hard definition	soft definition
the main motive for travel is active or passive participation in a sports event (focus on competition is characteristic here)	the main motive is active participation in sports, but of a leisure not a competitive character	travels in order to take active or passive part in competitive sport; however, the main purpose is the holiday itself - sport plays a secondary role here	tourists engage in sport and leisure of a competitive nature; however, such participation is quite accidental

In turn, Freyer [17] in his definition of sport tourism pays greater attention to the participants directly involved in the event. But he also refers to museums, sports centres or people who are not active athletes anymore (Table 2).

Table 2. Sport tourism according to W.Freyer [17]

Sport tourism		
Travels to practice sports actively	Travels supporting sport	Travels to experience sport
Active athletes (amateur professionals) • training	Active sport • coaches • doctors Passive sport • organizers • activists • media • sponsors	Spectators • competitions • training

Standeven and De Knop [18] define sport tourism as a “journey that contains active or passive participation in sports activities outside the everyday environment of the person”.

According to Hinch and Higham [19], sport tourism “is short travel outside the residence environment, aiming at participation in sports, where sport is characterized by specific rules, competition related to everyday fitness and fun”. Sport tourism also comprises extreme tourism related to natural areas appropriate for this purpose and with detachment from civilization [20].

According to other concepts, sport tourism involves all forms of temporary absence in the place of residence whose significant important objective is to deal with sport. Thus it includes tournaments and sport-related activities, sports journalism, manufacturers and sellers of sports goods, sports officials (such as doping control committees or judges), visitors to museums of sport [21].

Sport as a spectacle and competition becomes a product whose offer on the market it to meet the consumer’s needs – the passive one, viewing the competition from grandstands and the active one, directly participating in the event. Sport should be taken into account as a tourist product, as a collection of a variety of items related to taking the trip. These will be goods and services purchased both before going to a sporting event and during it, as well as during the stay at the destination. The price for the package of services and customer satisfaction from the trip will play an important role [22, 23].

However, in order to be in line with the “classic” definition of tourism by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which is recommended, among others, for statistical purposes, and in order to meet the World Classification of Tourism Activities, the concept of sport tourism should be narrowed down to persons who passively participate in all kinds of sports events and to the actual participants in these events. Thus there will be two groups of people who could be assigned the idea of sport tourism or a sport tourist. They can be colloquially called fans and athletes. Such a classification will reflect the purpose of the trip. And the purpose of a sport tourist’s trip is tournaments at various levels (in different disciplines, in different events) which he or she wants to watch or take part in.

Sport is inherently peaceful competition, whose essence is the individual or team rivalry (according to specified rules) conducted in accordance with the fair play principles and to strive to achieve the best results; it is also competition undertaken, among others, for the purpose of recreation and to improve one’s own physical features [24].

Rivalry is an immanent feature of sports. A competitor wants to win, to break the record, to complete the competition at each level of this rivalry (amateur, professional, or recreational participation). On the other hand, there are people who want to watch this rivalry. Therefore, the sport objective of the trip will distinguish a sport tourist from others. According to the UNWTO, tourist purposes may involve rest, recreation, holidays, visiting friends and relatives, business, health, religion, pilgrimages and others. With such a wide spectrum and a lack of a strict definition of sport tourism, among the sport tourists we may include, for example, a person going on a pilgrimage to Fatima and along the way visiting sports venues (the Camp Nou in Barcelona or the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium

in Madrid). On the one hand, this is pilgrimage tourism, but the authorities in Barcelona or Madrid may qualify these persons as sport tourists. Another example, a sports fan arriving for longer than a few hours – a hotel or hostel guest – by definition becomes also a cultural tourist, although he or she treats the cultural offer "incidentally", in the intervals between participation in a sports event.

The above is of great importance for statistical purposes. Otherwise, an important argument is lost, for example, in negotiations with sponsors and other partners. Many of them would engage financially seeing specific, tangible benefits of such activities, for example by purchasing advertising space at a sports venue expecting a specific number of people to see it [25].

THE BEGINNING OF SPORTS TOURISM

One can talk about sport tourism when sport was born. Highly organized forms of the sport originated only in ancient Greece. In ancient Greece a great role was played by the Pan-Hellenic games being a manifestation of the Greeks' national unity. The greatest Pan-Hellenic Games were held in Olympia, Delphi, Corinth and Nemea. However, those at Olympia were the most important. The year 776 BC is considered to be the date of the origin of the Olympic Games, as well as the first documented historical fact in the history of Greece [26]. The games lasted 5 days. Athletes from all over the country arrived there. For the duration of the competition *ékécheiria* – the holy truce – was proclaimed, which advocated respect for the rules of fairness and respect for the opponent. It was supposed to help athletes and their companions to arrive at competitions. The Greek Olympic Games survived till 393 CE, when Emperor Theodosius I forbade organizing them, treating them as a cultivation of pagan customs.

The modern Olympic Games, which were held in 1896 in Athens, resulted in the development of sport around the world, just as the development of sport tourism. Athletes and fans come from all over the world to global events anywhere they are held. It was noted that different types of events are an important factor contributing to the development of regions, because they significantly affect the image of the place and are a strong factor in attracting tourists, especially out of season [27]. Their degree of impact is very diverse. One can distinguish the following types of events [28]:

- mega events,
- hallmark events,
- regional events,
- local events.

The same author has proposed a more systematic typology of events, dividing them into the following groups:

- cultural,
- political and national,
- arts and entertainment,
- business and commercial,
- educational and scientific,
- sport,
- private.

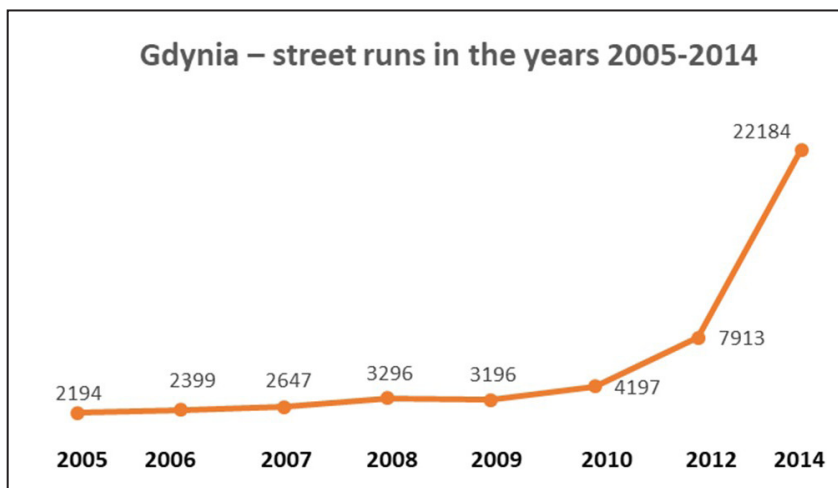


Fig. 1. Number of participants of street runs in Gdynia in the years 2005-2014
Source: Piotr Suchenia, own research

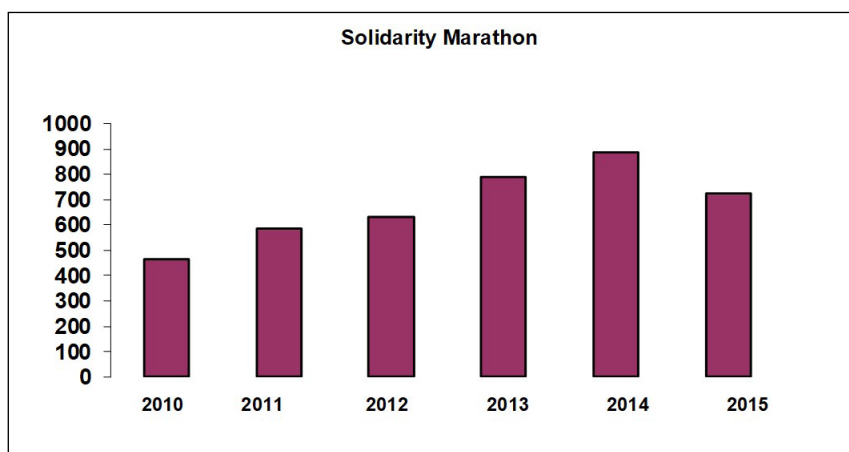


Fig. 2. The number of participants in the Solidarity Marathon in the years 2010-2015
Source: own research

OTHER SPORTING EVENTS IN THE REGION OF GDANSK AND THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Cycling competitions for different age categories and proficiency levels:

- Scandia Lang Team Marathon, June 2015 - 3,108 participants,
- Herbalife Triathlon Half-Marathon, August 2015 - 2,518 participants,
- Westerplatte Street Run, September 2015 - 3,150 participants,
- 1st Gdansk Marathon, May 2015 - 1,825 participants,
- Amber Expo Half-Marathon Gdańsk, October 2015 - 3,276 participants.

In addition to these events, there are league matches in football, volleyball, basketball, handball and other disciplines. Extremely important for the region are also sporting events which are held on an occasional basis, significantly affecting the number of tourists coming to Tri-City. This is particularly important from the economic point of view.

CONCLUSION

What kind of tourist takes part in them? Mostly ones staying for 1-2 day. Fans of league matches mostly come for a few hours. It is for them that competitions are usually organized at noon or in the afternoon, so they can arrive in the morning, relax and participate and then return home in the evening or at night. Unfortunately, Tri-City lacks cyclical events of a national and international range. The events listed above mostly involve people from the region of Gdansk, who spend only a few hours in the place of the competition, limiting their stay to a minimum and, in principle, to the event venue. They hardly ever use what could be called cultural attractions. To a large extent they do not benefit from the culinary offer either. From the economic point of view, their participation in the "consumption" of a tourist product, i.e. the competition, is not large. The higher the rank of the sporting event, the greater the number of tourists visiting the city. The rank is also influenced by the organisation, the venue, accessibility, the tradition of the event, awards for the participants (including the so-called starting package), and the time of the event. Therefore, it seems reasonable to strive to create such a "sports offer" which will attract participants from different parts of the country and from abroad. The attractiveness of the place is beyond dispute; it should encourage prospective sport visitors to come. One just needs to "create" events. These can be sailing, cross-country skiing, biking, hiking and even trekking events. What counts is the idea and good organization. However, such an ap-proach to sport tourism requires developing long-term strategy taking into account economic and social aspects

REFERENCES

- [1] Gołembski G. Kompendium wiedzy o turystyce [Compendium of knowledge about tourism]. Warszawa: PWN; 2002. Polish.
- [2] Perić M. Sport tourism and system of experiences. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*. 2010;2(16):16-22.
- [3] Mikkonen J, Pasanen K, Taskinen H. Impacts of cultural events in Finland - Development of a Finnish event evaluation tool. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*. 2010;9:2-3.
- [4] Hunziker W. System und Hauptprobleme einer wissenschaftlichen Fremdenverkehrslehre [System and main problems of scientific tourism research]. *Handels-Hochschule (St. Gallen). Seminar für Fremdenverkehr. Schriftenreihe (in German)*. 1943. OCLC 258154635. Quoted in: Alejziak W. Geneza i rozwój turystyki [Genesis and development of tourism]. *Folia Turistica*. 1998;8:10.
- [5] Kornak A.S. *Ekonomika turystyki [Tourism economics]*. Warszawa: PWN; 1979, 9. Polish.
- [6] Kaspar C. *Management im tourismus*. In: Gaworecki WW, editor. *Turystyka [Tourism]*. PWE: 2010; 27.
- [7] Hadzik A. *Turystyka sportowa ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem międzynarodowych widowisk sportowych [Sport tourism with special consideration for international sports events]*. Katowice: AWF; 2014. Polish.
- [8] Płocka J. *Turystyka wybrane zagadnienia*. Toruń: Escape Magazine; 2009. Polish.
- [9] Gaworecki WW. *Turystyka [Tourism]*. Warszawa: PWE; 2010. Polish.
- [10] Weed M. Sports tourism experience. *J Sport Tourism*. 2008;13(1):46-52.
- [11] Matheson VA. Mega-events: the effects of the world biggest sporting events on local, regional and national economies. 2006. www.college.holycross.edu/RePEc/hcx/Matheson_MegaEvents [access: 12.11.2015].
- [12] Wicker P, Hallmann K, James J. What is influencing consumer expenditure and intention to revisit? An investigation of marathon events. *J Sport Tourism*. 2012;17(3):142-151.
- [13] Pawłucki A. *Nauki o kulturze fizycznej [Sciences of physical culture]*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls; 2014. Polish.
- [14] Kazimierczak M, Ewa Melchrowicz-Moško E. *Turystyka sportowa - specyfika i trendy rozwojowe [Sport tourism - a characteristic and development trends]*. *Folia Turistica*. 2013;28. Polish.
- [15] Glyptis S. *Leisure and unemployment. Milton Keynes. United Kingdom: Open University Press; 1989.*
- [16] Gammon S, Robinson T. Sport and Tourism, A conceptual Framework. *J Sport Tourism*. 1997;4(3):21-26.
- [17] Freyer W. *Kultur Tourismus Management. Grundlagen der Tourismuswirtschaft für den Kultur Tourismus*. Haga: Fern Universität; 1997.
- [18] Standeven J, De Knop P. *Sport tourism*. Champaign: Human Kinetics; 1999.
- [19] Hinch T, Higham J. *Sport tourism development*. Bristol; Buffalo Toronto: Channel View Publ.; 2011, 258: 22.
- [20] Ewert AW, Hollenhorst SJ. Adventure recreation and its implications for wilderness. *Int J Wilderness*. 2000;3:173-179.

- [21] Dreyer A. Der Markt für Kulturtourismus. In: Dreyer A, editor. Kulturtourismus. Oldenbourg, München/Wien; 2000, 86-71.
- [22] Middleton V T C. Marketing w turystyce [Marketing in tourism]. Warszawa: Polska Agencja Promocji Turystyki; 1996. Polish.
- [23] Zmysłony P. Internacjonalizacja zarządzania funkcją turystyczną w dużym mieście [Internationalisation of managing a tourist function in a large city]. Prace Geograficzne. 2013;134:51-68. Polish.
- [24] Mała Encyklopedia Sportu [A small encyclopaedia of sport]. Warszawa; 1987. Polish.
- [25] Piechota N. Wpływ organizacji imprez sportowych na rozwój turystyki miejskiej [The influence of organising sport events on the development of urban tourism]. Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia. 2013;3:68-73. Polish.
- [26] Lipoński W. Historia Sportu [History of sport]. Warszawa: PWN; 2012; 88-89. Polish.
- [27] Goeldner ChR, Ritchie, JRB. Tourism, principles, practice, philosophies. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken; 2003.
- [28] Getz D. Event Tourism, definition, evolution, and research. Tourism Management. 2008;29(3):403-428.

Cite this article as:

Ratkowski W, Ratkowska J. Sports events as a determinant of sport tourism. Balt J Health Phys Act. 2018;10(1):86-94.
doi: 10.29359/BJHPA.10.1.09

Sport tourism

Travels to practice sports actively
experience sport

Travels supporting sport

Travels to

Active athletes

(amateur professionals)

- training
- competitions

(obligation)

“Recreational” athletes

- fun
- fitness Active sport
- coaches
- doctors Spectators
- competitions
- training
- events

Sports attractions

- the city of sports
- sports centres
- museums of sport
- (ex-) athletes

Passive sport

- organizers
- activists

- sponsors

Standeven and De Knop [18] define sport tourism as a “journey that contains active or passive participation in sports activities outside the everyday environment of the person”.

According to Hinch and Higham [19], sport tourism “is short travel outside the residence environment, aiming at participation in sports, where sport is characterized by specific rules, competition related to everyday fitness and fun”. Sport tourism also comprises extreme tourism related to natural areas appropriate for this purpose and with detachment from civilization [20].

According to other concepts, sport tourism involves all forms of temporary absence in the place of residence whose significant important objective is to deal with sport. Thus it includes tournaments and sport-related activities, sports journalism, manufacturers and sellers of sports goods, sports officials (such as doping control committees or judges), visitors to museums of sport [21].

Sport as a spectacle and competition becomes a product whose offer on the market it to meet the consumer’s needs – the passive one, viewing the competition from grandstands and the active one, directly participating in the event. Sport should be taken into account as a tourist product, as a collection of a variety of items related to taking the trip. These will be goods and services purchased both before going to a sporting event and during it, as well as during the stay at the destination. The price for the package of services and customer satisfaction from the trip will play an important role [22, 23].

However, in order to be in line with the “classic” definition of tourism by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which is recommended, among others, for statistical purposes, and in order to meet the World Classification of Tourism Activities, the concept of sport tourism should be narrowed down to persons who passively participate in all kinds of sports events and to the actual participants in these events. Thus there will be two groups of people who could be assigned the idea of sport tourism or a sport tourist. They can be colloquially called fans and athletes. Such a classification will reflect the purpose of the trip. And the purpose of a sport tourist’s trip is tournaments at various levels (in different disciplines, in different events) which he or she wants to watch or take part in.

Sport is inherently peaceful competition, whose essence is the individual or team rivalry (according to specified rules) conducted in accordance with the fair play principles and to strive to achieve the best results; it is also competition undertaken, among others, for the purpose of recreation and to improve one’s own physical features [24].

Rivalry is an immanent feature of sports. A competitor wants to win, to break the record, to complete the competition at each level of this rivalry (amateur, professional, or recreational participation). On the other hand, there are people who want to watch this rivalry. Therefore, the sport objective of the trip will distinguish a sport tourist from others. According to the UNWTO, tourist purposes may involve rest, recreation, holidays, visiting friends and relatives, business,

board, religion, pilgrimages and others. With such a wide spectrum and a lack of a strict definition of sport tourism, among the sport tourists we may include, for example, a person going on a pilgrimage to Fatima and along the way visiting sports venues (the Camp Nou in Barcelona or the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid). On the one hand, this is pilgrimage tourism, but the authorities in Barcelona or Madrid may qualify these persons as sport tourists. Another example, a sports fan arriving for longer than a few hours – a hotel or hostel guest – by definition becomes also a cultural tourist, although he or she treats the cultural offer “incidentally”, in the intervals between participation in a sports event.

The above is of great importance for statistical purposes. Otherwise, an important argument is lost, for example, in negotiations with sponsors and other partners. Many of them would engage financially seeing specific, tangible benefits of such activities, for example by purchasing advertising space at a sports venue expecting a specific number of people to see it [25].

The beginning of sport tourism

One can talk about sport tourism when sport was born. Highly organized forms of the sport originated only in ancient Greece. In ancient Greece a great role was played by the Pan-Hellenic games being a manifestation of the Greeks' national unity. The greatest Pan-Hellenic Games were held in Olympia, Delphi, Corinth and Nemea. However, those at Olympia were the most important. The year 776 BC is considered to be the date of the origin of the Olympic Games, as well as the first documented historical fact in the history of Greece [26]. The games lasted 5 days. Athletes from all over the country arrived there. For the duration of the competition *ékécheiria* – the holy truce – was proclaimed, which advocated respect for the rules of fairness and respect for the opponent. It was supposed to help athletes and their companions to arrive at competitions.

The Greek Olympic Games survived till 393 CE, when Emperor Theodosius I forbade organizing them, treating them as a cultivation of pagan customs.

The modern Olympic Games, which were held in 1896 in Athens, resulted in the development of sport around the world, just as the development of sport tourism. Athletes and fans come from all over the world to global events anywhere they are held. It was noted that different types of events are an important factor contributing to the development of regions, because they significantly affect the image of the place and are a strong factor in attracting tourists, especially out of season [27]. Their degree of impact is very diverse. One can distinguish the following types of events [28]:

- mega events
- hallmark events
- regional events
- local events.

The same author has proposed a more systematic typology of events, dividing them into the following groups:

- cultural

~~political and national~~

- arts and entertainment
- business and commercial
- educational and scientific
- sport
- private

Regardless of the type of an event (sports or another), many countries and cities wish to organise them. Of course, the most important are cyclical sports events of the greatest range, prestige, and interest, as they can bring the most benefits (the Olympic Games, the World and European Championships). But events of the jog-ging type, for example marathons, are also a “desirable” product for many cities. The largest ones organized by New York, London, Berlin, Paris, Boston, Chicago, and many others gather 20 to 50 thousand participants. Adding as many accom-panying persons (as most often a runner comes to a marathon with another per-son), dozens of thousands of people come to the city and spend time staying in hotels, visiting tourist and attractions entertainment during the event. They usual-ly stay there for 2 to 5 days and their stay is of the utmost importance for the budget of the city.

In the Gdańsk region sport tourism is based on events of a cyclical nature. They gather the most participants.

Fig. 1. Number of participants of street runs in Gdynia in the years 2005–2014

Source: Piotr Suchenia, own research

Fig. 2. The number of participants in the Solidarity Marathon in the years 2010–2015

Source: Own research

Other sporting events in the region of Gdansk and the number of participants

Cycling competitions for different age categories and proficiency levels:

- Scandia Lang Team Marathon, June 2015 - 3,108 participants;
- Herbalife Triathlon Half-Marathon, August 2015 - 2,518 participants;
- Westerplatte Street Run, September 2015 - 3,150 participants;
- 1st Gdansk Marathon, May 2015 - 1,825 participants;

In addition to these events, there are league matches in football, volleyball, bas-ketball, handball and other disciplines. Extremely important for the region are al-so sporting events which are held on an occasional basis, significantly affecting the number of tourists coming to Tri-City. This is particularly important from the economic point of view.

CONCLUSION

What kind of tourist takes part in them? Mostly ones staying for 1-2 day. Fans of league matches mostly come for a few hours. It is for them that competitions are usually organized at noon or in the afternoon, so they can arrive in the morning, relax and participate and then return home in the evening or at night. Unfortu-nately, Tri-City lacks cyclical events of a national and international range. The events listed above mostly involve people from the region of Gdansk, who spend only a few hours in the place of the competition, limiting their stay to a minimum and, in principle, to the event venue. They hardly ever use what could be called cultural attractions. To a large extent they do not benefit from the culinary offer either. From the economic point of view, their participation in the “consumption” of a tourist product, i.e. the competition, is not large. The higher the rank of the sporting event, the greater the number of tourists visiting the city. The rank is also influenced by the organisation, the venue, accessibility, the tradition of the event, awards for the participants (including the so-called starting package), and the time of the event. Therefore, it seems reasonable to strive to create such a „sports offer” which will attract participants from different parts of the country and from abroad. The attractiveness of the place is beyond dispute; it should encourage prospective sport visitors to come. One just needs to “create” events. These can be sailing, cross-country skiing, biking, hiking and even trekking events. What counts is the idea and good organization. However, such an approach to sport tourism requires developing long-term strategy taking into ac-count economic and social aspects