

## Chapter 46

# The Sport as an Element of Appreciation for the Cities. The Case of Pontevedra and Its Treatment in the Digital Media

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**Abstract** Pontevedra is a capital of a province in Spain with more than 80,000 habitants that is looking for a different position in the Galician ambience for tourism. In this city, sport have always been important, like soccer (the team of the city has climbed this year to 2<sup>a</sup>B), and other sports that obtain less visibility in media, for example handball, basketball, indoor soccer, judo. In this way, the city has thought about how to be reinvented across town-planning, cultural and social actions, and even with sports, what it has been allowed to place the city itself in a place privileged in activities of this type, celebrated throughout the whole year in very different disciplines but that leads to the city receiving national and international participants in events of a very big importance, like tests qualifying rounds for world and European in triatlon, championship of the world of duatlon, concentrations of judo, championship of Spain of rhythmic gym. It has meant a big change and an important implication of the city, not only of its institutions but also of its inhabitants, who accompany all these activities on its presence and support.

**Keywords** Sport · City · Tourism · Participation

### 46.1 Prelude

There are a lot of cities that they bet for realizing campaigns for tourist promotion based on its diverse local references. Most of them emphasize its sceneries (well be of interior or of sea), in its nature (rivers, seas, mountains, lakes...), or in a tourism already settled down (tourism of the sun and beach, rural tourism, green tourism, gastronomic tourism...)... but there are less cities that bet for attracting specific

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publics with sport actions, as there can be the congresses, the professional fairs or the sports meetings.

There are many difficulties to find a good position or an element of really interesting differentiation between the territories, so we believe in the celebration of sport activities and the development of all this type of actions destined to improve the promotion of the cities, in our case, the small capital of Pontevedra, in the Galicia region. This is a city that has elected the sport as a revitalizing element and, of course, like an economic revulsive for the local activity. In the year 2012 more than 120 sports events were organized. We emphasize this year, because of the large number of sport activities celebrated there and because in all of them the city was involved. Since then the number of sports events has not stopped growing.

## **46.2 Theoretical Context**

### ***46.2.1 Historical and Sociocultural Context***

The city of Pontevedra is the capital of the Rías Baixas in the Galicia region. It is a city between the sea and the river, and in whose waters and streets have developed centuries of sports activities of very diverse nature. The legend says that the city was founded by Teucro, son of Telemón and Hersione, who after the end of the war of Troy, went to Galicia and baptized the city where he stayed with the name of Helenes.

On one stone of the building of the town hall exists an inscription recorded of unknown author which alludes to the origin of the city: “Fúndote Teucro valiente/de aqueste rio en la orilla/para que de España fueres/de villas, la mar-avilla”. Leaving its legend origin, traditionally, the historiography has affirmed that there exist studies that relate the foundation of Pontevedra to the establishment of Turoqua, mansion of the roman route XIX founded on the south shore of the river Léz, after the Gallaecia integration in the Roman Empire. The name of the city derives from the latin and its meaning is an old bridge. In 1833 it turns in the capital of the province of the same name. It transforms the city in an administrative metropolis that attracts bureaucrats, bourgeois, professionals and all kinds craftsmen. The social and cultural splendor made possible the town planning, commercial and industrial development of Pontevedra.

## **46.3 Methodology**

The sport is one of the elements about the government of the city which has thought about how to turn into revitalizing, not only to announce the city, but also like a form of civil implication in the urban development. To get it, we analyze de

aftereffect that the different sports event meant for the city, basing our study in the local and autonomic media and their social media. We select the three most important newspapers of the city, *Diario de Pontevedra*, *La Voz de Galicia* (Pontevedra edition) and *Faro de Vigo* (also Pontevedra edition). We have prepared the study in its digital formats, after the access of the contents turned out to be simpler, from the year 2007 up to the actuality. We complete the information with the web of the Instituto Municipal de Deportes (IMD), entity dependent on the town hall and that organize the sport activity of the city. We also analyzed their social media: Twitter and Facebook.

## 46.4 Pontevedra and the Triatlon

The bet of the city of Pontevedra for the triatlon was in 2008, like one of the test that were taking part of the European Cup (*Diario de Pontevedra* 2011).

Its aftereffect went so far as to compare Pontevedra with the city of Hamburg, as for services, resources, ambience and popular support. It was the first Galician city that was lodging a test of the continental tournament, entering the European circuit: twelve test in ten countries. It was celebrated on April 19, with more than 150 participants, a champion from Galicia—Gómez Noya—, and approximately 20,000 followers in the streets of the city. In January, 2009 it is confirmed that Pontevedra will receive a test of the European Cup in March: “we try to show that Pontevedra has capacity for the organization of the European Cup of Triatlon, and we will keep on asking for it with the support of the Headquarters of Sports of the Galician autonomous government before the pertinent instances” (*La Voz de Galicia* 2009). More than 2000 people in different categories and more than 40,000 visitors for these dates, they force three administrations “Galician autonomous government, Delegation of Pontevedra and Concello de Pontevedra” to invest to obtain high comeback profitability, especially for hotel trade, restoration or tourism.

In July, 2009, the Executive board of the European Union of Triatlon (ETU) designates Pontevedra head office of the Championship of Europe of 2011, as the second Spanish city doing this important sports competition, after Valencia. In the year 2010 on of the test is organized again for the Championship of the World, and the champion Gómez Noya talks about the possibility of the Championship of Europe of the specialty in 2011, which predicted and investment of close to a million euros (*Diario de Pontevedra* 2010).

Pontevedra received the test basing on this geographical place, next to the airports of Vigo, Santiago and Oporto, its hotel disposition (city and surroundings), its experience in the organization of sports events and the support of the champion Gómez Noya: “... for me is a pleasure to be present in this act, and it is a pride to compete in Pontevedra, the city where I live and it he one that I train every day, and with a test of this level. To compete at home motivates me specially and I would like a repeating victory in Pontevedra” (*Diario de Pontevedra* 2009).

The appointment of 2011 attracted more than 40,000 visitors and 3000 sportsmen. Activities and events were added for a major participation and activity in the city. The inaugural day was reserved for the careers junior, both feminine and masculine. One day later, it was the time for the sportsmen in the categories, feminine and masculine elite and paratriatlon. The third day was for the athletes that they were competing in junior reliefs and reliefs of elite. It there joined the celebration of the University Championship of Spain. With an entire full house as form accommodation it refers, the organization had to freight buses towards nearby towns, like Vigo or Sanxenxo to lodge all the participants and teams. The triatlon allowed to feel as for the locomotion means, since the closest airports (Santiago, Vigo and Oporto, the last one more focused in the international flights) without forgetting of the restoration.

## 46.5 Results

### 46.5.1 *The Sports Activity as New Position for the City*

In the year 2012 Pontevedra celebrated 120 sports events, like the Championship of Spain of Route, or the stages of the Vuelta Ciclista a España the championship of Spain of swimming for persons with disability, the Average Marathon Pontevedra Serviciocío of different test of boating, sport especially loved by the habitants of the city, where the Olympic champions David Cal have trained. And other activities and events of sports like the handball, the fencing, the tumbling, the shot with arch of the PonteRaid, inside the Galician calendar in the league organized by the Galician Association of Clus of Orientation. At the end of the year, the councilorship of Sport of Town Hall was getting the award of the Galician Association of Sports agents for the development of the activities programmed (Instituto Municipal dos Deportes 2013).

The Vuelta Ciclista of Spain had an important presence in the year 2013 in Galicia where it started its journey, specifically in Vilanova de Arousa, receiving the exit of its second state the city of Pontevedra, which was repeating presence in the Spanish round, in 2012, was a protagonist for double entry, the squad was crossing the city in its stage disputed between Puentearreas and Sanxenxo. On the following day, the arrival in the city or Pontevedra. And in the round of 2016, Pontevedra will be part of the trip again. 2013 began with the celebration of the Championship of Spain of Tennis of Table, with more than a thousand sportsman and woman. In March, the celebration of the Open of Spain of Swimming required the coordination for human resources with a staff around 300 people (umpires, representation of the Spanish federation, timekeepers, personnel of assembly, control of accesses, kitchen personnel or secretariat). More than 200 swimmers came from France, England, Portugal, Hungary or Romania, along with its accompanists and that, therefore, allowed to add in the economy of the city. In April

there was celebrated the Championship of Spain of Duatlon, with more than 2000 sportsmen and woman in all its categories. It is necessary to remember that it was allowing the punctuation for the Duatlon world cup in the categories paralimpic and age groups. In July we emphasize the I International Tournament of Chess City of Pontevedra, with a hundred of participants in with Nikita Meskovs won. It is necessary to add to these activities events of less importance but that the sport activities maintain in the city the whole year with the celebration of test in disciplines like the Taekwondo, Rugby, Waterpolo, Fitness, Tennis, Fencing, in Sync Swimming, Bicycles BTT... In 2013 there started also the Circuit of Popular careers of Pontevedra, with is provided every year with a hundred of sportsmen and woman. To emphasize that in this year there is celebrated the II Edition of the Galician league of Canicross and Bikejoning, sport with dogs, the participants are running and cycling, accompanied by the dogs.

The year 2014 has kept on consolidating this position in the ambience of the sports activities. So the Mayor of the city has emphasized it in different occasions. Fernández Lores has pointed out that the town hall wants Pontevedra as a regarding city, so much in practice of sport as in the organization of events and sports competitions: “Non creo que haxa en Galicia unha cidade comparable a nós nese aspecto; e só unhas poucas no conxunto do Estado” (<http://imdpontevedra.blogspot.com.es/2013/04/o-concello-de-pontevedra-vive-o.html>). Throughout the year 2014 the Galician Shot championship has been celebrated with arch of the Championship of Spain Junior of Taekwondo, or the winter Challenge of boating in March, the feminine Championship of Infantile Spain of Basketball, the Championship of Spain of Springboard or the Championship in Sync Swimming. But if we emphasizes something in 2014 it is the celebration of the Championship of the World of Duatlon in May and Jun, an international event with an economic impact superior to 2 million euros. On it, there took part a whole of 1412 sportsmen from more than 30 countries, more than 500 volunteers and Pontevedra took a hotel occupation of 100 %.

Pontevedra maintains a special relation with boating, because some international champions are training in the waters of the Lérez, case of David Cal or Paula Portela. In this sense, the city will receive in the year 2016 the championship of Europe of Boating Marathon. In the year 2015, the sports events increased as for disciplines, the innovation has come from the hand of the rhythmic gymnastic that celebrated in Pontevedra the Championship of Spain of Rhythmic Gymnastic of Clubs and regions, with more than 300 gymnasts and 400 sports clubs and that continued with the Championship of Orientation has been celebrated also for the first time with important success of participation.

## 46.6 Conclusions

The celebration of sport events brings to Pontevedra the discovery of an option of urban position, placing it like a model in Spain in the celebration of sports test.

These activities have provided an important economic propulsion because it maintains high hotel occupation, provides through out the year tourist arrival and has influenced sector like restoration and services.

Another achievement to be emphasized is the urban participation, like volunteers, participants and quizmasters in the streets to give fortitude and support to the sportsmen.

We understand that the celebration of test of less importance in the previous years served as experience with this type of events, being the definitive recognition to turn them into engines of the economic and tourist revival of the city in a new position.

The role of the sportsmen was fundamental. There was clear support in the declarations of many of them. The increase of sports activities have been progressive since 2011, year of the gunshot of exit for the achievement of sports test. Since the Championship of the World of Duatlon in the year 2014 and the Championship of Europe of boating Marathon in summer 2016, the confidence of the sports authorities in this city was increased.

The town hall of the city is the main promoter and organizer of the sports events, although the clubs and schools of the city help them a lot. The promotion and communication of these sports events is managed straight from the Council and usually bases its communications on the relation with the mass media and, especially its digital editions, but also giving a big importance to the social media and in particular to Face, Twitter and Instagram. These accounts are managed by the Council itself or the Instituto Municipal dos Deportes.

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