

No **4**
2009



**8th World
Lithuanian
Sports Games**



**“Lithuania in Sports”—
reflections of Lithuanian
sport in photographs**



NEWSLETTER

In Celebration of the Millennium!



Photo by Valdas Malinauskas.

After a rather long break, I am pleased to greet you again!

We are half way through a year that has been exceptional for our nation. This year, Lithuania is celebrating the millennium of the first mention of Lithuania's name and Vilnius has the great honour of being a European Capital of Culture 2009.

The sports community, of course, has not been on the sidelines of such significant events. During the sports events we organise, we also inform the rest of the world about the events important to our country.

And, despite the global economic crises, the first half of the year was not short of sports events either in Lithuania or elsewhere in the world. Lithuania hosted the European Wrestling Championship and

Men's World Ice Hockey Championship Division I Group A. Soon, on July 16–19, the best young track and field athletes will come to Kaunas for the U23 European Track and Field Championship and on August 6–16, young basketball players will test their abilities in the same city at the European Men's Junior Basketball Championship, which will be good training prior to hosting the 2011 Men's European Basketball Championship.

Sports fans have participated in traditional sports events, two of which deserve special mention. These are the Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren, organised during the school year for the past 4 years and gaining scale, and the World Lithuanian Sports Games, organised in Lithuania after a break of 4 years. We represent a small nation and each Lithuanian is of great importance to us. Therefore, the games that bring together Lithuanians scattered across the world have become yet another highlight in the festive programme dedicated to the millennium celebrations and the programme of the European Capital of Culture 2009. Both sports events are covered more widely in this issue of the newsletter. You will find descriptions of these events, information about the key victories of our athletes at world competitions, and other news from Lithuania in this issue of the newsletter.

*Interesting reading and a joyful
and sporty summer!*

Sincerely yours,

Algirdas Raslanas

General Director, Department
of Physical Education and Sports
under the Government
of the Republic of Lithuania

Events

The march of the delegations participating in the games through the streets of Vilnius.

The Lithuanian flag is carried by Olympic basketball champion Modestas Paulauskas.



An oak tree for the millennium of Lithuania to commemorate world Lithuanian sports is planted by (from left to right) Algirdas Raslanas, Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports, Antanas Laukaitis, representative of the Union of Physical Education of Australian Lithuanians, and Arturas Poviliunas, President of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee.



Sport Unites Lithuanians Scattered across World

On June 25–28, the 8th World Lithuanian Sports Games, dedicated to the commemoration of the millennium of the first mention of Lithuania's name and the occasion of Vilnius being the European Capital of Culture 2009, took place in Vilnius. The games—the main idea of which is to unite Lithuanians scattered across the world—have their established traditions and were first organised by Canadian Lithuanians in Toronto, Canada in 1978.

Around 500 Lithuanians from 16 countries of the world—the U.S.A., Canada, Australia,

The flame of the games was lit in Kalnu Park in Vilnius by Olympic champion Daina Gudzineviciute.



Belarus, Russia, Latvia, Poland, Estonia, Great Britain, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Finland, Sweden, and Argentina—attended the 8th World Lithuanian Sports Games. The largest delegation, 97 athletes, came from the U.S.A., 95 athletes of Lithuanian origin represented Canada, and 70 came from Australia. Lithuania was represented by 2,500 sports amateurs.

June 27 was the main day of the games, when the competitions of a majority of the branches of sport and festive events of the games took place. These included mass at Vilnius Cathedral, where the flag of the 8th World Lithuanian Sports Games was consecrated. Then there was a colourful parade of the participants of the games through the streets of Vilnius. The opening ceremony of the games was held in Kalnu Park in Vilnius. The flame of the games in Kalnu Park was lit by Daina Gudzineviciute, the Olympic champion in rifle shooting, from the torch carried by Lithuanian runners through all the historical capitals of

Delegation of Lithuanians from abroad.



Events

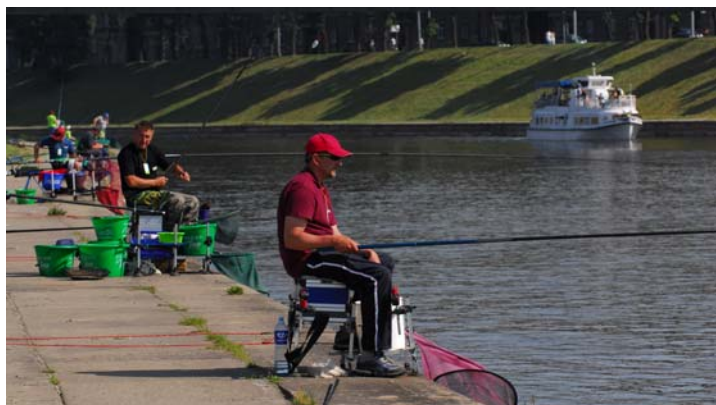
World Lithuanians are greeted by Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus.



Lithuania—Kaunas, Kernave, and Trakai. When the national anthem of Lithuania was played, the flag of Lithuania and of the games were raised. Participants in the 8th World Lithuanian Sports Games were greeted by President Valdas Adamkus. “The tradition of the games has been maintained far outside the borders of Lithuania, from Toronto all the way to Adelaide, and finally returned to Lithuania. I am grateful for the significant work carried out in the local communities and the dissemination of the principles of respect, tolerance, justice, and tolerance. These values accompanied us on our way to the freedom of Lithuania; they inspire athletes, bring joy to numerous sports fans, and pave the way to Lithuania’s future”, the president said. Before the games, sports officials and representatives of Lithuanian



Basketball was the most popular sport at the 8th World Lithuanian Sports Games and the one that caused the most emotions. In this photograph—a match between the team from Trakai, Lithuania (dressed in yellow) and Canadian Lithuanians.



Sport fishing fans settle on the bank of the river Neris.

communities abroad planted an oak tree near the Department of Physical Education and Sports. The tree was dedicated to the millennium of Lithuania and is meant to remind people of this sports tradition of Lithuanians across the world.

During the 3 days of competition, participants in the games took part in the competitions of 25 branches of sport. The most popular sport was basketball, which was played by 35 teams of men and women of various age groups.

Photos by Valdas Malinauskas.

Patriotism has no limits. The left leg of this Lithuanian American is decorated with the emblem of Vilnius and his right leg is adorned with the national emblem of Lithuania.



Events

National and sports officials and employees are ready to award the prize winners of the festival and set a new Lithuanian record. From left to right: Algirdas Raslanas, Valdas Adamkus, and Arturas Poviliunas.



Photo by Alfredas Pliadis.

Participants in the festival and other sports fans are ready for the traditional Olympic Day run.



Photo by Alfredas Pliadis.

Lithuanian Record Set during Closing of Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren

In order to involve more young people in the sports movement, the Department of Physical Education and Sports, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee have been organising the Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren for the past 4

years. On June 20, together with the traditional celebration of Olympic Day, the closing ceremony of the 4th Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren at the stadium in Vingis Park turned into a grand festival with congratulations from national and sports officials extended to the prize winners of the festival and a new Lithuanian record set by all the participants, whether prize winners or those who awarded the prizes.

The school-age athletes were greeted by President Valdas Adamkus, the patron of the festival. The head of state pointed out that the Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren makes us proud of our youth and added that he is “pleased that the Olympic sports movement has become a mass movement involving tens of thousands of young people. It is significant that the event coincides with Olympic Day since Olympic ideals and their spirit adopted by the youth develop gentlemanly behaviour and respect for an opponent and encourage an honourable fight for victory.”

Algirdas Raslanas, Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports, said that he was pleased that the Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren had developed into a

Events

Sports gifts to the prize winners of the festival.

large movement and added that “these child athletes are the future of Lithuania. They will carry this bright ray of sport to the future.” Arturas Poviliunas, President of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, stated that he wished that the Olympic flame would continue to burn in the hearts of the young people.

The 4th Olympic Festival of Lithuanian Schoolchildren was attended by approximately 200,000 pupils from 730 general education schools in Lithuania. One hundred and sixty-eight teams received invitations to participate in the competition at Vingis Park and became winners and prize holders at the festival. The award of winners and prize holders set a new record in Lithuania—56 Cups for first place winners were simultaneously awarded, and the winners of second and third places were also awarded. Prize winners were awarded sets of sports balls by the Department of Physical Education and Sports.

Photo by Alfredas Pliadis.



Photo by Valdas Malinauskas.

Prize winners of the festival together with the national and sports officials.





Margarita Ciuplyte,
World and
European
Kyokushin
Karate
Championships
(Women's 65+)

Photo by Valdas
Malinauskas.

Bronze Medal Winners



Photo by Valdas Malinauskas.

Karolis Bauza, European
Judo Championships
(Men's 90kg)

Vilija Sereikaite, UCI
Track Cycling World
Championships (Women's
Individual Pursuit, 3 000m)

Ramunas Vysniauskas
(Men's 105kg), European
Weightlifting
Championships (Snatch+
Clean&Jerk)



Gold Medal Winners

Edvinas Krungolcas,
Justinas Kinderis and **Tadas
Zemaitis**, European Modern
Pentathlon Senior
Championships (Men's Relay)

Edvinas Krungolcas,
Andrejus Zadneprovskis
and **Justinas Kinderis**,
European Modern Pentathlon
Senior Championships (Men's
Team Competitions)

Rita Pivoriunaite (Women's
Kata) and **Dmitrij
Aleksandrov** (Men's 90kg),
European Kyokushin Karate
Championships



Photo from magazine
"Olimpine Panorama".



Simona Krupeckaite, UCI
Track Cycling World
Championships (Women's
500m Time Trial), **World
Record (33.296)**

Canoeists **Raimundas
Labuckas** and **Tomas
Gadeikis**, European
Canoe&Kayak Championships
(Men's 200m)



Silver Medal Winners

Canoeist
Jevgenijus Suklinas,
European Canoe&Kayak
Championships (Men's 500m)

Ramunas Vysniauskas
(105 kg), European
Weightlifting
Championships
(Men's Snatch)



Photo provided by the
Lithuanian Wrestling
Federation.



Greco-Roman wrestler
Mindaugas Ezerskis,
European Wrestling
Senior Championships
(Men's 96 kg)



Simona Krupeckaite,
UCI Track Cycling World
Championships (Women's
Sprint)

Simona Krupeckaite and
Gintare Gaivenyte, UCI
Track Cycling World
Championships (Women's
Team Sprint)

Inga Miksaite, World
Kyokushin Karate
Championships (Women's
55kg)



Canoeist
**Jevgenijus
Suklinas**,
European
Canoe&Kayak
Championships
(Men's 200m)

Photo by
Valdas Malinauskas.



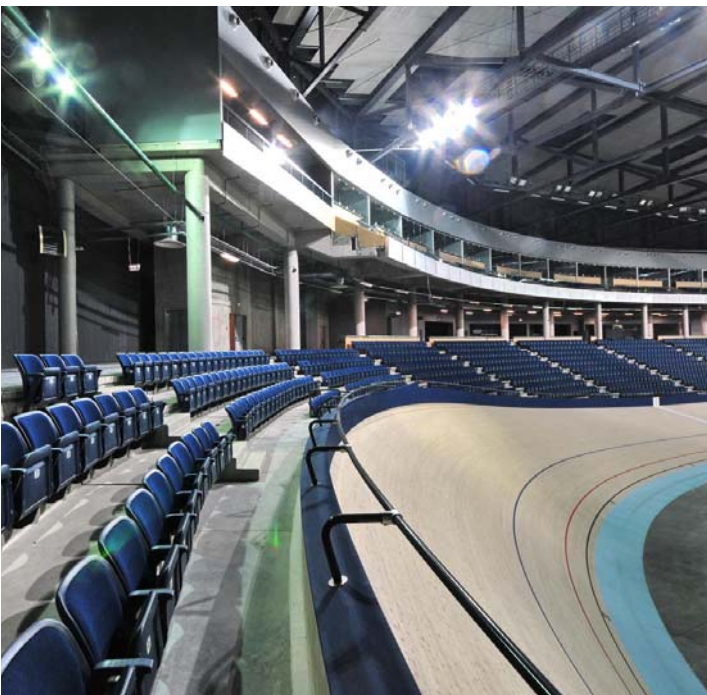
Cido Sports Arena.

Photo from the DPES archive.

2008 Sports Building in Panevezys

The Universal Cido Sports Arena in Panevezys was awarded the prize for best sports building at the traditional contest for the “Sports Building of the Year, 2008” organised by the Department of Physical Education and Sports.

The construction of the Cido Sports Arena, a building of national significance, was started in spring of 2007 and it was opened on 24 October 2008. The arena will be used for the 2011 European Men’s Basketball Championships, and it is also unique as it houses the only 250 m cycling track in the Baltic States, that complies with Olympic standards. The arena may serve as a venue for basketball, handball, boxing, and indoor football competitions. The capacity of the basketball court is 5,600 spectators, and for cycling competitions—3,100 spectators.

Entertainment events can be attended by up to 7,000 spectators.

Best Sports Photographs of 2008 in the Album ‘Lithuania in Sports’

On March 20, the Department of Physical Education and Sport presented awards to the winners of the first photography contest and presented the first photography album Lithuania in Sports 2008. Participants of the contest attending the ceremony were greeted by Algirdas Raslanas, Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports and Arturas Poviliunas, President of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee.

44 professional and amateur photographers took part in the first “Sport in Lithuania” contest and presented approximately 1,900 photographs. 150 photographs were included in the published album.

The winner of the main nomination “Photograph of the Year” was photographer Mindaugas Kulbis who has been working for the Lietuvos Rytas daily since 1998. He was awarded a “still camera” and a diploma by the Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sport. Mr Kulbis was also winner in the “Professional Sports” photography nomination. These awards add to the collection of this well-known photographer who has already won a number of prestigious international awards. Mr Kulbis was a press photographer during the wars in Chechnya and Afghanistan; he worked at the Olympics in Atlanta, Sydney, Athens, and Beijing; and he has worked at all European Basketball

Mr Mindaugas Kulbis, the winner of the nomination “Photograph of the Year”, awarded by Mr Algirdas Raslanas.

Photo by Alfredas Pladis.



Current

The winner of the "Portrait" nomination Rolandas Parafinavicius (on the right),

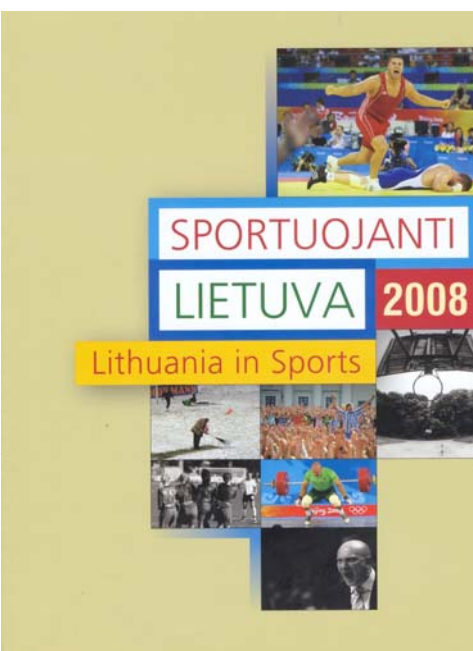
the Head Coach of the Lithuanian Men's Basketball Team Ramunas Butautas (the hero of the photograph) and President of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee Arturas Poviliunas.



Photo by Alfredas Pliadis.

Championships since 1998 and at the World Basketball Championship in Japan.

The winner of the "Sport for All" nomination was the photographer for the Klubas magazine, Ramunas Danisevicius. The winner of the "Portrait" and "Women in Sport" categories was photographer, Rolandas Parafinavicius, and the winner of the topic "A Surprise Shot" category was the photographer for the Ministry



The Album 'Lithuania in Sports 2008' is available to download from our website www.kksd.lt (English version, sections "PE&Sport" and "Newsletter").

of Defence, Alfredas Pliadis. The winner of the best "Report" was the Respublika daily photographer Irmantas Sidarevicius. All winners received diplomas and prizes from the Department of Physical Education and Sport.

Atheletes Honoured by the Heads of State

On 1 April 2009, Lithuanian women cyclists who won medals in the Track Cycling World Championships, as well as their coaches, medics, sports organisers were honoured and awarded at the Government, the President's Office and the Parliament. The majority of congratulations were addressed to the world champion and record-holder, as well as winner of two bronze medals Simona Krupeckaite. President of the Republic of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus awarded the members of the Lithuanian track cycling team who have won medals in the Championships in Poland. Addressing the sportswomen, coaches and organisers of cycling, the President emphasised that the victories of the women cyclists are the best gift for the Millennium of the State.

On 7 April, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania honoured and awarded the Lithuanian men's basketball team Lietuvos Rytas for winning the European Cup 2009. Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius awarded Badges of the Sports Commander of Honour from the Department of Physical Education and Sport to Head Coach of the team Rimas Kurtinaitis; President of the club Gedvydas Vainauskas; and Chairman Jonas Vainauskas. Four basketball players—Chuck Eidson, Arturas Jomantas, Mindaugas Lukauskis, and Marijonas Petravicius—and Vice-Presidents of the club Algimantas Budrys and Sigita Zidonis were awarded Sports Crosses of Honour, and other players, trainers, and medical personnel were awarded medals For Victories in Sport.

The Prime Minister also honored and awarded the other world and European prize winners.

President Valdas Adamkus awarded by Mr Algirdas Raslanas.

Mr Vytautas Zubernis Awarded the Highest Award of the Department



Vytautas Zubernis (on the left) and Algirdas Raslanas.

Photo by Bronius Cekanauskas.

On 7 April, Mr Algirdas Raslanas, Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, awarded Mr Vytautas Zubernis, Secretary General of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, the highest award of the Department, the First Grade Order with Chain, for his merits to Lithuanian sport and on the occasion of his 65th birthday.

At the End of His Term, President Valdas Adamkus Bid Farewell to the Heads of Sport

In 1924, the first Lithuanian Olympic sports delegation was sent to the Olympic Games in Paris. To commemorate this event, an exhibition was opened at the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee on 2 June 2009. The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by President Valdas Adamkus and Mrs Alma Adamkiene. It was an occasion for



Photo by Alfredas Pliadis.

the president to meet the heads of the sports sector and bid farewell to them at the end of his term as President of Lithuania.

“When we had just met, Mr Valdas Adamkus gave a lot of useful advice. After becoming President of Lithuania, Mr Adamkus was a great support in word and deed. His contribution to the further development of sports and to the promotion of the Olympic movement in Lithuania is invaluable”, Lithuanian National Olympic Committee President Arturas Poviliunas said.

Mr Algirdas Raslanas, Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports, also extended a word of gratitude to President Valdas Adamkus: “A very nice period in the history of Lithuanian sports is closely related to you. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you on behalf of the sports society of Lithuania.” The Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports decorated President Valdas Adamkus with a First Grade Order with Chain, which is the highest award ever granted by the department.

“Dear members of the family”, President Valdas Adamkus said as he addressed the audience. “The sports movement is necessary for a civic-minded, mature society to exist. I would like the young generation to inhale the heat of the Olympic flame so that it would become the basis of the civil society that is so needed today for our day-to-day communication and mutual understanding”, the President said. President Valdas Adamkus extended his gratitude for cooperation to all the sports organisations.



*The castle of
Trakai, the
medieval
capital of
Lithuania.*

Lithuania Celebrates Its Millennium

In 2009, Lithuania celebrates its millennium anniversary: the 1000th anniversary of the first written mention of Lithuania found in the medieval manuscript the Quedlingburg chronicle in 1009. That year, Bruno of Querfurt, the famous missionary monk, who was preaching Christianity, came to Lithuania, baptised the leader of a Lithuanian tribe and was killed. Later, he was made a saint. The act of baptism in the territory of Lithuania in 1009 was an important act in the early Middle Ages, which witnessed the developing contacts between Lithuanian and European civilisation.

Two centuries later, Lithuania founded its own state – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On July 6, 1253, after uniting local chieftains Mindaugas was crowned King. Lithuania was granted the title of kingdom by Papal Bull. Lithuanians were the only people from the eastern Baltic region who managed to withstand crusades. Having adopted Christianity in 1387, Lithuania finally defeated the crusaders at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, and became part of the Latin Western civilisation. It remained so until 1795, when it was occupied by Russia.

During the 20th century, Lithuania declared independence twice. On February 16, 1918, the Lithuanian National Council – the temporary government of the nation – proclaimed in the Republic of Lithuania “the restoration of an independent Lithuanian state grounded on

democratic principles”. However independence ended in 1940 when Lithuania was occupied by the USSR.

Lithuania freed itself from Soviet occupation five decades later. Lithuania’s fight for independence and the peaceful anti-communist movement was detrimental to the USSR. In the summer of 1988, a revival, which was later called the Singing Revolution, began in the Baltic States. On March 11, 1990, Lithuania’s independence was restored. On March 29, 2004, Lithuania joined NATO, and on May 1, 2004 it joined the European Union. Lithuania returned to the community of European nations.

Thus, this year Lithuania celebrates its millennium, and Lithuania’s capital Vilnius is a European Capital of Culture this year.

Some facts about Lithuania

Territory: 65,300 km²

Geographical location: Lithuania is located on the eastern bank of the Baltic Sea, and has borders with Latvia, Belarus, Poland, and Russia. In 1989, the French National Geographical Institute established that the geographical centre of Europe is located in Lithuania.

State language: Lithuania.

Population: 3,394,000.

Capital: Vilnius.

Ethic composition: Lithuanian – 83.5%, Polish – 6.7%, Russian – 6.3%, others – 3.5%.

Religion: Roman Catholic.

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Vilnius

Photo by Alfredas Pladis.

