



INTERVIEW S ANTOM JELIČIĆEM BELECOM, NAJMLAĐIM
IZBORNIKOM JEDNE REPREZENTACIJE U POVIJESTI

Najbolji ambasadori turizma su - *sportaši!*

NAŠ HVAR SVE JE VIŠE PREPOZNAT kao omiljena destinacija za pripreme profesionalnih sportaša, a najnovije činjenice idu tome u prilog – nakon prošlogodišnje posjete prestižnog biciklističkog tima Bahrain Merida koji je ondje održao svoj zimski pripremni kamp, 19. listopada Hvar je posjetila i australska rukometna reprezentacija, čiji je izbornik upravo – jedan Hvaranin! Ante Jeličić Beleca tim se povodom našao u ulozi našeg sugovornika, te smo ovog intrigantnog i uspješnog mladića, koji osim što je najmlađi izbornik australske rukometne reprezentacije u povijesti, za sobom ima i dvije napisane knjige, pozvali na čašicu razgovora o Hvaru, turizmu, domaćim užancama, Australiji.



INTERVIEW WITH ANTE JELIČIĆ BELECA, THE YOUNGEST SELECTOR OF ONE NATIONAL TEAM OF ALL TIMES!

Our best tourism ambassadors are our – *athletes!*

OUR HVAR IS MORE AND MORE RECOGNIZED as one of the top destinations for preparations of professional athletes. Most recent facts testify of this – after last year’s visit of prestigious cycling team Bahrain Merida, which had their winter preparation camp here, on October 19 Hvar was visited by Australian national handball team, whose selector is actually – from Hvar! On this occasion Ante Jeličić Beleca agreed to give us an interview, so we invited this intriguing and successful young man, who apart from being the youngest selector of Australian national handball team of all times, is also an author of two books, to share his thoughts about Hvar, tourism, traditional customs and Australia.

Poznata je Vaša izjava da su sportaši najbolji ambasadori turizma. Možete li nam malo potkrijepiti svoj stav?

Po mojem mišljenju, sportaši su nekako univerzalno dopadljivi svim ljudima, a k tome su i daleko od pojedinih priča koje vuku određene negativne konotacije - poput političkih peripetija ili “eskapizama” poput partijanja i alkohola. Želim reći da vode jedan uredan život i samim tim su posebna kategorija, te ujedno i najkvalitetniji ambasadori zemlje koju predstavljaju.

Kako ste Vi, kao Hvaranin, doživjeli uspon Hvara i njegovo pozicioniranje na svjetskoj turističkoj mapi? Izjavili ste da smatrate Hvar veoma poželjnom destinacijom i u predsezoni i u posezoni.

Veoma mi je teško biti objektivan, znate onu uzrečicu “Nitko nije prorok u svojem selu”, ali bez obzira na to, tko god je imao priliku vidjeti Hvar, slaže se da ima nešto odista magično što te uvijek vuče da se vratiš. Hvar je jednostavno brend. Takav spoj prirodnih ljepota i znamenitosti na svega jednom mjestu uistinu je Božji dar, koji nam je dan na čuvanje.

Hvar je sve više prepoznat od strane vrhunskih sportaša kao idealno mjesto za sportske pripreme. Iz perspektive jednog profesionalca, što je to što vuče profesionalne sportaše ka Hvaru? Da li je ključna blaga i ugodna klima, tradicionalna gastronomija, prirodne ljepote ili možda splet svih tih faktora?

Vjerojatno splet svih tih aduta. Ja se sjećam još kao dijete, iz priča starijih, da su se na Hvaru još u ono vrijeme pripremale sve renomirane ekipe iz bivše Jugoslavije i poznati svjetski klubovi. Ono što sigurno godi sportaševu organizmu je prekrasan čist zrak, klima kakve nema nigdje drugo, najviše sunčanih sati godišnje u cijeloj Europi, te jedna iznimna mirnoća koja omogućava izvrsnu psihološku pripremu pred važnu utakmicu ili pak iduću sezonu.

Your famous saying is that athletes are the best ambassadors of tourism. Can you elaborate on that?

In my opinion, athletes are universally likeable to all people, at the same time being far from stories that bring certain negative connotations – like political controversy or escapism in form of partying and alcohol. What I mean is, they lead healthy and steady life - they are special in this sense and are the most quality ambassadors of the country they represent.

How did you, as someone from Hvar, experience the rise of Hvar and its positioning on world tourist map? You said that you consider Hvar very desirable destination both in post-and pre-season.

It is difficult for me to be objective, as you know “No one is a prophet in their own land”, but regardless of that, whoever had a chance to see Hvar, agrees that there is something truly magical that lures you back. Hvar is simply a brand. This kind of blend of natural beauties and sights in one place is truly a God’s gift, given to us to treasure it.

Hvar is becoming all the more recognized by top athletes as an ideal place for sports preparations. From a perspective of a professional as you are, what is it that attracts professional athletes to Hvar? Is it mild and pleasant climate, traditional gastronomy, natural beauties or maybe a combination of all this?

It probably is a mixture of all those elements. I still remember as a child, as told by older people, that all renowned teams from former Yugoslavia and world-famous sports clubs came here for preparations. What most certainly pleases athlete’s organism is beautiful clean air, climate you can find nowhere else, the biggest number of sunny hours in the entire Europe, and one exceptional tranquility that empowers great psychological preparation before an important game or upcoming season.

Ne treba zaboraviti ni našu mediteransku hranu, koja je bez premca - riječ je definitivno o jednoj od najzdravijih kuhinja na svijetu. Ovaj "paket" hvarskih blagodati je jednostavno odlična stvar za sport.

Za vrijeme Vašeg boravka na Hvaru, Vaš tim je obišao cijeli otok, uključujući gradove Hvar i Jelsu, i mnoge znamenite "štacije". Da li ste možda razgovarali sa članovima svog tima i saznali što ih se posebno dojmilo?

Ukratko - sve, ali posebno mentalitet ovdašnjih ljudi, ugodna atmosfera mediteranskog načina života. Meni je to normalno i uobičajeno, jer sam tamo odrastao, ali njima je, primjerice, hvarska riva bila senzacija. Po njihovim spontanijim reakcijama vidjelo se koliko su oduševljeni - bili su pozitivno šokirani neposrednošću i pristupačnošću domaćeg stanovništva, s kojim su guštali popit' kavu, zaigrat' karte... takve opuštenosti u Australiji nema. Ništa manje topao nije bio ni prijem u Jelsi, a hvarske znamenitosti ostavile su ih bez daha - kako pogled sa tvrđave Fortice, tako i 400 godina star teatar, za kojeg su s oduševljenjem ustvrdili da je stariji od cijele njihove države! (smijeh). Stigli su se čak i okupati - mada i Australija obiluje veoma lijepim morskim krajolicima, užitak u kupanju u kristalno čistom moru na našim otocima se ne propušta!

I za kraj, za vrijeme Vašeg boravka na Hvaru primjećena je izuzetno zdrava atmosfera u Vašem timu, odsustvo ega i tenzija, nekako su svi složni i djeluju kao jedan. Da li je to zasluga trenera - nekadašnjeg pisca - koji osim za sportska postignuća brine i za dobru vibru?

Teško je pričati o sebi, to biste trebali pitati igrače. (smijeh) Ja kroz svoje igračko iskustvo dajem svoj maksimum, metodika rukometa je važna kao i kod svakog drugog sporta. Okupljamo se 2-3 puta godišnje ili pred neko natjecanje, ali koristim svaku priliku da se angažiram koliko god mogu. Ima tu i dnevnih stvari, problema, svatko nosi sa sobom i svoj privatni život, pa se to treba upakirati na način da momčad ne pati - ključ uspjeha je personaliziran, individualan pristup svakom pojedincu.

One should not forget our Mediterranean diet, which is by far - one of the healthiest cuisines in the world. This "package" of Hvar's blessings is simply a great thing for sport.

During your stay on Hvar your team has circled around the entire island, including Hvar, Jelsa and many other famous sites. Did you maybe talk to team members and find out what they were most impressed by?

In short - everything, but especially mentality of locals, pleasant atmosphere of Mediterranean lifestyle. For me it's normal and ordinary, because this is where I grew up, but for them, for example, Hvar's waterfront was a sensation. Their spontaneous reactions showed how excited they were - they were positively shocked by immediacy and hospitality of the locals, enjoyed their coffee time and playing cards with locals - you can't find such an easy atmosphere in Australia. Equally warm was our welcome to Jelsa, while Hvar's sights left them breath taken - both a view from the Fortica fort and 400 years old theatre which they excitedly stated to be older than their entire country! (laugh). They even had a chance to swim - although Australia abounds in very nice sea drops, pleasure of bathing in crystal clear sea on our islands is a not-to-miss experience!

During your stay in Hvar everyone couldn't help noticing exceptionally healthy atmosphere in your team, absence of ego and tensions, they all seem to be all for one. Is it selector's credit - a former writer - who together with sports results cares also as much for a good vibe?

It's difficult to talk about oneself, you should be asking players (laugh). Through my player's experience I give my maximum, methodics of handball is as important as in any other sport. We manage to get together only 2-3 times a year or just before some competition, but I use every chance to get as much involved as I can. There are some daily issues, problems, every one of us has his own private life, so you need to merge everything in a way that suits the team - key to success is personalized, individual approach to every team member.

