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| Master’s Thesis |
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| The Evolution of Basketball in the DPRK: Factors of Ascendancy and Decline |
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The Evolution of Basketball in the DPRK: Factors of Ascendancy and Decline

by

Yong Ja Hong

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under the supervision of Professor Balazs Szalontai

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in North Korea Studies

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# ABSTRACT

The sport of basketball has been played in the DPRK and its predecessor states since the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout that time, basketball has taken on an important role in the nation’s cultural life. Additionally, basketball has intersected with the DPRK’s leadership, domestic policy, and foreign policy. As such, basketball has become an indelible part of the DPRK state as it is known today.

In order to understand basketball’s role in the history of the DPRK, a multi-pronged approach was taken. Firstly, this thesis approaches athletics in general from a theoretical background. Namely, the influence of Soviet ideology and the development of the DPRK’s athletic ideology were examined. Subsequently, this thesis examines basketball as it is understood from the DPRK perspective. This involved examining how the DPRK defines basketball in government published documents, examining the way that basketball is taught in DPRK textbooks, and examining the historical evolution of the DPRK’s basketball terminology.

The next portion of this thesis’ multi-pronged approach was examining DPRK basketball’s development from a historical basis. As such, the DPRK’s history was split into eleven distinct eras according to the changes in athletic policy at the time. Said eras were as follows; Pre-Liberation Korea from 1907 to 15 August 1945, the Establishment Era from 15 August 1945 to 25 June 1950, the War Era from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953, the Reconstruction Era from 27 July 1953 to 27 February 1959, the *People’s Athletics* Era from 27 February 1959 to 30 May 1967, the National Defence Athletics Era from 30 May 1967 to 18 April 1974, the Specialized Athletics Era from 18 April 1974 to 19 May 1986, the Scientific Athletics Era from 19 May 1986 to 4 January 1997, the Basketball Intensification Era from 4 January 1997 to 3 January 2000, the Stagnation Era from 3 January 2000 to 17 December 2011, the Hot Blast of Athletics Era from 17 December 2011 to 25 January 2020, and the COVID Isolation Era from 25 January 2020 to the present day.

Within each examined era, basketball was broken down into specific aspects. These aspects included the following; a general athletics overview, basketball’s relationship with the leaders personal interest, basketball’s relevance to diplomacy, the men’s and women’s national teams, DPRK club teams playing foreign teams, inter-Korean basketball exchange, basketball as part of domestic athletic policy, domestic basketball tournaments, media coverage of domestic basketball teams and individuals, media descriptions of how basketball is played locally, media coverage of basketball’s physical conditions, how media describes basketball as a concept, basketball in art and culture, basketball in propaganda, a summary of shorter local basketball reports, and standout basketball stars.

Lastly, the thesis moves into understanding DPRK basketball as a whole via statistical analysis of match records of the men’s and women’s national team and club teams. The thesis then moves into final conclusions and recommendations.

**Keywords:** North Korea, DPRK, Basketball, Athletics, Sport, Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Un, Ri Myong Hun, Dennis Rodman, Unification Basketball Tournament, Olympics, Asian Games, World Festival of Youth and Students, GANEFO.

북조선 농구의 발전: 우월성과 감소의 요인

홍 영 자

북 한 학 과

지도교수: Balazs Szalontai

# 국문 초록

농구는 20세기 초반부터 북조선과 이전국가에서 하게 되었다. 그 기간 동안 농구는 민족의 생활문화에 중요한 역할을 맡았다. 또한, 농구는 북조선의 지도부 및 외교 정책, 내부 정책과 교차했다. 따라서, 농구는 현재 북조선에서 무시할 수 없는 국가일부가 되었다.

북조선 역사 속에 농구의 역할을 파악하기 위해 다각도 방법을 이용하게 되었다. 첫째, 이 논문은 이론적인 배경에서 전체적인 체육을 접근했다. 즉, 소련이념의 영향과 북조선의 개발을 검토되었다. 다음에, 이 논문은 북조선 관점에서 농구를 살펴봤다. 그 과정은 북조선 정부가 출판한 서류에 농구의 정의를 검토하는 것과 북조선 교과서에서 농구를 가르치는 방법을 검토하는 것, 북조선의 농구 용어를 역사적으로 검토하는 것이 포함되었다.

다음에, 이 논문은 북조선의 농구 발전을 역사적인 기초로 살펴봤다. 그러므로, 북조선의 역사는 체육정책의 변화에 따라 11시대로 나누게 되었다. 살펴본 시대는 해방 전 시대 (1907~1945.8.15)와 전쟁 전 시대 (1945.8.15~1950.6.25), 전쟁 시대 (1950.6.25~1953.7.27), 천리마 시대 (1953.7.27~1959.2.27), 인민체육 시대 (1959.2.27~1967.5.30), 국방체육 시대 (1967.5.30~1974.4.18), 체육 전문화 시대 (1974.4.18~1986.5.19), 체육 과학화 시대 (1986.5.19~1997.1.4), 농구 심화 시대 (1997.1.4~2000.1.3), 체육 침체 시대 (2000.1.3~2011.12.17), 체육열풍 시대 (2011.12.17~2020.1.25), COVID 고립 시대 (2020.1.25~현재)이다.

각 검토된 시대 속에 농구는 특정한 측면으로 나누게 되었다. 포함된 측면은 전체적인 체육 개요와 지도자의 개인 관심과 농구, 농구의 외교 관련성, 남녀 농구 국가대표단, 외국농구단을 상대한 국내농구선수단, 남북 농구 교류, 국내 체육 정책으로 본 농구, 국내 농구 대회, 농구단과 개인에 관한 언론 보도, 지역 농구에 관한 보도, 농구의 물리 사태에 관한 보도, 농구를 개념적으로 보는 언론 보도, 농구에 관한 문화예술, 농구에 관한 선전, 간략한 지역 농구 보도 요약, 우수한 농구 선수이다.

마지막으로 이 논문은 남녀 국가대표와 국내 농구단의 경기 기록의 통계적인 분석을 통해 북조선 농구를 통째로 이해하도록 했다. 다음에, 이 논문은 결론과 추천으로 마무리한다.

**중심어:** 북한, 조선민주주의인민공화국, 북조선, 농구, 체육, 스포츠, 김일성, 김정일, 김정은, 리명훈, 이명훈, 데니스 로드맨, 남북통일농구대회, 올림픽, 아시아 게임, 세계청년학생축전, 가네포.

This thesis is dedicated to all basketballers across the Korean Peninsula in the hope that we will all get to meet on the court one day.

# PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by the author, Yong Ja Hong. For further information on the research methods involved in producing this work, see the relevant section in the main body. The purpose of this work is to provide a comprehensive history of basketball in the DPRK with the resources available at this time period. The author is an aspiring academic in the realm of DPRK Culture and an avid basketball enthusiast.

This thesis Romanises Korean text according to the origin of the word being Romanized. For words of DPRK origin and names of DPRK citizens, the standard method of Romanisation used by DPRK media outlets will be utilized. It should be noted that the DPRK has registered an official system of Romanization with the UN, but that certain aspects of it are not actually used in practice. Specifically, this paper will use neither diacritics nor apostrophes. Furthermore, this paper will Romanize “ㅚ” as “oe” and not “oi”. Words of ROK origin and names of ROK Citizens will be written using Revised Romanization of Korean. Certain terms that do not conform to current transliteration methods but have entered into common usage, such as Kim Il Sung and Pyongyang, will be written as is.

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# List of symbols

Abbreviation

OPPT Opponent

PTS AGA Points Against

PTS FOR Points For

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose and Goal of the Research

Basketball is an athletic discipline which has been played on the Korean peninsula for well over a century. It has also remained one of the core “ball sport” disciplines throughout the entirety of the DPRK’s existence as a state. Indeed, basketball has touched nearly every corner of DPRK society through its’ inclusion in education, all types of workplaces, and elite level athletics. In particular, basketball became a strong focus of the regime’s internal propaganda in the late 1990s, and became used as a tool for both international and inter-Korean diplomacy throughout the early 21st century. Although association football remains the most popular athletic discipline in the DPRK, basketball’s unique relationship with Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un gives it a particular level of socio-cultural importance.

Despite DPRK basketball receiving periodic coverage and speculation throughout western and ROK media, there has been no published research covering the topic whatsoever. Furthermore, there has been very little published about DPRK athletics in general published in the English language. As such, this research thesis will attempt to fill that gap. Using the history of DPRK athletics in general as a basis, the history of DPRK basketball will be explored. Firstly, this thesis will delve into the theoretical background of athletics in the DPRK. This involves understanding the Soviet athletic ideology which was implemented in the DPRK, followed by the DPRK’s indigenous development of their own athletic ideology. Secondly, this thesis will attempt to understand basketball from the DPRK perspective. This involves finding out how the DPRK defines basketball, how basketball is taught in DPRK textbooks, and how the DPRK’s basketball terminology developed. Thirdly, this thesis will explore the development of DPRK basketball era-by-era from a variety of different angles. After a short introduction focusing solely on basketball’s development in Pre-DPRK Northern Korea, DPRK history will be split into the following eras; the Establishment Era (1945.8.15~1950.6.25), the War Era (1950.6.25~1953.7.27), the Reconstruction Era (1953.7.27~1959.2.27), the Mass Athletics Era (1959.2.27~1967.5.30), the National Defence Athletics Era (1967.5.30~1974.4.18), the Specialized Athletics Era (1974.4.18~1986.5.19), the Scientific Athletics Era (1986.5.19~1997.1.4), the Basketball Intensification Era (1997.1.4~2000.1.3.), the Stagnation Era (2000.1.3~2011.12.17), the Hot Blast of Athletics Era (2011.12.16~2020.1.25), and the COVID Isolation Era (2020.1.25~Present). Within each era, after an overview of the overall development of athletics, basketball’s development will be broken down into the following aspects as is relevant; basketball’s relationship with the leader’s personal interest, basketball’s relationship with diplomacy, the DPRK men’s national basketball team, the DPRK women’s national basketball team, basketball as Foreign Exchange, basketball as a part of Inter-Korean exchange, basketball as a part of domestic athletics policy, domestic basketball tournaments, basketball as a Pastime, and standout basketball stars. Additional sections will be added for certain eras for which more information on domestic basketball is available. After each era is explored, there will be a section of overall statistical analysis of data gathered. This includes data on the men’s and women’s national teams, club teams, domestic tournaments, and domestic game results. Lastly, there will be a conclusion section with possible predictions for future trends.

The core hope of this research is to provide a strong reference for future scholars to refer to when considering the history of DPRK basketball. Additionally, this thesis hopes to give a broader perspective of basketball’s role in the DPRK as a society, in order to give future scholars and policy-makers a more well-rounded viewpoint. Lastly, this thesis hopes to clear up several misconceptions and rumours surrounding DPRK basketball.

## 1.2 Research Scope and Method

Initially, research was conducted via Korean-language academic articles, books covering the history of DPRK athletics in general, and books covering Korean-peninsula basketball before liberation in order to gain a broad ideological and historical perspective on the nation’s development in that area. Research then moved to be basketball specific. At first, the basketball research focused on media. The backbone of the media research was an archive of *Rodong Sinmun*, stretching from 1945 to 2018. Other news periodicals, such as the 1940s magazine *People’s Athletics* (인민체육) and the newspaper *Minju Joson* (민주조선) were also consulted. Lastly, the archive of online DPRK media maintained by NK News was also consulted. This archive encompasses several online media outlets from 1996 up until the present day. In order to narrow down results within such vast quantities of information, the search terms “basketball” (롱구) and “athletics” (체육) were used, and other terms were used to occasionally fill out the gaps.

Beyond DPRK Media, DPRK journals were also utilized. “*Chollima*” (천리마) was the most frequently used journal, but several other publications were consulted as well. Articles were pinpointed using search tools available at the Ministry of Unification North Korea Resource Center. Beyond journals, several politically focused publications such as the yearly athletic summary and important speeches by the leaders were also consulted. Lastly, DPRK artistic works, such as posters, poems, songs, movies, and documentaries were consulted whenever possible.

When DPRK basketball was covered via outside sources, both English-language and Korean-language media and records were referenced. This primarily concerned international matches, unification games, the case of Ri Myong Hun, and Kim Jong Un’s visits with Dennis Rodman. This media was found primarily with online search engines, and cross-referenced to ensure accuracy.

Throughout the research process, a rolling spreadsheet was kept of basketball results and basketball terminology. This was done in order to gain a better perspective on the DPRK’s international results, how the DPRK’s domestic leagues have evolved throughout the years, which DPRK teams were the most successful, and how the DPRK has evolved a unique basketball terminology.

All in all, this thesis can be said to be an exhaustive investigation of all DPRK media related to basketball available to this author at this time. This investigation was supplemented by previous investigations into DPRK athletics, as well as foreign media coverage of DPRK basketball. Nevertheless, there remains a great deal of missing information, particularly in the areas of international friendly game results, domestic game results, and standout players.

# CHAPTER 2. Theoretical Background

## 2.1 The Influence of Soviet Athletic Ideology

Jong-pil Ho, via James Riordan’s opinion on socialist athletics, classified DPRK athletics, on the whole, as having five goals; uniting the people, strengthening defence power, increasing labour production, public health, and enhancement of competitive power against foreign powers. When combining these goals with the era of each leader, Ho was able to find what was different about athletics in each era. Firstly, Kim Il Sung, whose goal was defending the motherland, focused on National Defence Athletics. Secondly, Kim Jong Il, whose goal was continuing the regime’s system, focused on group athletics. Thirdly, Kim Jong Un, whose goal was improving the people’s livelihood, focused on athletics as a lifestyle.[[1]](#footnote-1) Scholar Mi-suk Kim defined DPRK athletics in a similar fashion, describing it as not for a fulfilling life, but a method for labour power, national defence power, and maintaining the system.[[2]](#footnote-2) Mi-suk Kim continues on to say that ideological strengthening militarizes people through the Communist ideological revolution, and that is used as a basis in order to acquire deep scientific knowledge and healthy physical fitness.[[3]](#footnote-3) Furthermore, Mi-suk Kim claims that realizing collectivist thought is an important part of the DPRK Sports Ideology.[[4]](#footnote-4) Looking beyond the Communist ideological basis, DPRK Athletics policy in general was developed in an economic environment which demanded rapid development under military pressure. This environment contributed to athletics being used as a base for labour power and military power.[[5]](#footnote-5) As such, it is fair to say that DPRK athletics focused on the welfare of the state, focusing on areas such as military power, labour power, public health, and societal collectivism.

In order to understand how DPRK athletics developed ideologically, it is essential to look at the development of athletics in the Soviet Union. Originally in the Soviet Union, after the Bolshevik faction took power, they wished to create a type of human which agreed with their system’s ideology and values through athletics.[[6]](#footnote-6) A Soviet Human, who was the role model of all Socialist people, was to embody the consciousness of the collective’s benefit and the worth of labour.[[7]](#footnote-7) Socialist thought emphasized that everybody is born with the same ability, meaning that, given the correct training, all could participate on an equal basis.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Athletic disciplines which developed partial physical traits, such as football, which does not develop the upper body, and individual athletics, such as boxing, were initially not welcomed as a part of Socialist Ideology.[[9]](#footnote-9) In the 1920s, two schools of thought emerged; one, the “hygienists”, were against sports deemed dangerous to physical and mental health. The other school of thought, the “Proletkult”, posited that all sports from bourgeois society were part of a decadent past that was to be eliminated.[[10]](#footnote-10) However, it proved impossible to unilaterally ban disciplines that had already achieved broad popularity among the populous.[[11]](#footnote-11) As a result, athletics mostly proceeded through existing institutions domestically and on a very limited scale internationally.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Furthermore, in an attempt to increase brotherhood, there was an emphasis on athletics that were competing against time instead of those where competitors were competing against each other. But this led to an overall wane in athletic interest, and there was no way to see political results through international exchange.[[13]](#footnote-13) Eventually, by 1934, the goal of catching up to Bourgeois records became an official slogan of the Soviet Union. This signalled the broad acceptance of diverse athletic disciplines.[[14]](#footnote-14) Consequently, a hybrid form of athletics emerged, with both formerly bourgeois athletic disciplines and labour and national defence focused disciplines being practiced.[[15]](#footnote-15) The development of competitive domestic leagues soon followed the acceptance of bourgeois athletic disciplines.[[16]](#footnote-16)

From 1931, the Soviets had an athletics level system in order to train expert athletes. It was called the GTO system, and it was aimed at improving physical fitness to a level suitable for a worker or soldier.[[17]](#footnote-17) The GTO system introduced a physical fitness test in which all people participated.[[18]](#footnote-18) The GTO system can be understood from two perspectives; that of international competition and that of developing “Physical Culture”. By the mid-1930s, the GTO System had expanded to encompass three levels and sixteen sports and theoretical subjects.[[19]](#footnote-19) While the GTO aimed to improve the body of the athlete and create a cultured citizen, it often gave way to competition and elitism.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Concerning international competition, the athletic disciplines which were introduced in conjunction with the GTO system were disciplines which had been developed in the 1930s Soviet Union through exchange with European countries.[[21]](#footnote-21) As such, the USSR would begin to develop athletics with the goal of improving international standing through achievement in international sport. This led to the development of “state amateurs” for use in international athletic competitions. Officially, state amateurs were labelled as factory workers or students. But they were, in effect, training under the state and receiving incentives for achievements. The development of state amateurs would only accelerate after the second world war.[[22]](#footnote-22) However, the GTO system’s main goals were specific to introducing mass athletics to the entirety of the people, rather than aiming at training elite athletes.[[23]](#footnote-23)

At the time, the Olympics was for amateurs only, which would have given state-sponsored amateurs a serious competitive boost.[[24]](#footnote-24) However, the USSR was initially dismissive of the Olympics in the 1920s, deeming it a distraction from class struggle and training for imperialist soldiers.[[25]](#footnote-25) This disdain even went to the extent that the Soviet Union attempted to hold their own athletic event, the Spartakiad, in 1928.[[26]](#footnote-26) In fact, the USSR would not participate in the Olympics at all until after World War II. Notably, the USSR shunned the 1936 Olympics in Berlin in favour of the 1937 International Worker Olympics in Antwerp.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Concerning physical culture, the GTO system was aimed at achieving its realization.[[28]](#footnote-28) Put briefly, physical culture was rejecting capitalist competition and developing creative collectivist culture.[[29]](#footnote-29) According to scholar Lee Na-young, physical culture as defined by the Soviet Union consisted of four factors; organizational athletics education, amusement activities and games, socially approved active leisure pursuits, and organizational sports.[[30]](#footnote-30) Lee went on to say that physical culture had a variety of societal functions. Firstly, there was the harmonious development of the human being. Secondly, there was education on the subjects of socialization, unity, politics, morals, psychology, and aesthetics. Thirdly, there was the positive effect on the field of health and hygiene. Fourthly, there was the method of accumulating and transferring knowledge and experience from the improvement of physical capabilities and work capabilities. Fifthly, there was the logical use of leisure time. Sixthly, there was the field of constructing international exchange that people aiming for Socialism fought for peace and shared brotherly love.[[31]](#footnote-31) In sum, the GTO system can be understood as a practical evolution of the Soviets’ initial goal of developing Socialist human beings, catered to the public’s tastes.

Some discussion must also be given to the role of women in Soviet Society. The Soviet-Socialist society rejected the socio-cultural and ideological concept of gender, merely considering it to be a biological phenomenon.[[32]](#footnote-32) In other words, Socialist ideology focused on the development of the personal body and mind in order to construct Socialism, regardless of gender differences.[[33]](#footnote-33) In effect, this meant women entering the working class. Lenin had instructed that housework should be united with the overall socialist economy, and that the government should operate public cafeterias and nurseries. Leninist Russia even allowed freedom of marriage and divorce.[[34]](#footnote-34) It was this ethos that had a profound effect on the ability of women to participate in athletics in the DPRK. On the other hand, it is notable that, due to social and economic pressure, the actual implementation of integrating women into athletics was a very slow process in the USSR up until the 1930s.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Aesthetically, athletics were initially very exciting to artists in the early Soviet Union. As society was exposed to new ways of thinking, the idealized version of the athlete and the excitement of modern athletic competitions provided a vehicle through which artists could express their creativity, philosophy, and vision. But as athletics became more regimented and political pressure mounted under Stalinism, creativity in athletic-related art declined. Nevertheless, athletics still remained as somewhat of a bastion of personal and artistic expression during Stalin’s reign.[[36]](#footnote-36)

In the pre-war DPRK, their concept of athletics was very similar to that of and modelled after the Soviet Union.[[37]](#footnote-37) Indeed, the Korea-Soviet Cultural Association, established in May of 1948, had an athletics sub-committee which provided a window into Soviet athletics culture.[[38]](#footnote-38) The goal of Soviet athletics at that time was to improve the youth’s physical strength in order to prepare them for labour and national defence.[[39]](#footnote-39) It can also be added that the Democratic Youth League (민청), which took on an important role in organizing DPRK athletics, was loyal to international proletarianism.[[40]](#footnote-40) As such, the Soviet influence was sustained to some extent beyond the pre-war period.

## 2.2 The Development of the DPRK’s Athletic Ideology

In a broad sense, the DPRK’s athletics policy is a reflection of their strong level of domestic state power. State power is not just deciding the policy of athletics and sports. But, state power, by combining compulsion and agreement, decides the allocation of resources related to athletics.[[41]](#footnote-41) States with hegemony are stronger and more secure than others. In the case of the DPRK, there is no economically hegemonic class in the Capitalistic sense, but there is a state class of people who control the methods of compulsion and the means to control production.[[42]](#footnote-42) As such, domestic athletic policy in the DPRK can be carried out swiftly and on a large scale.

Given the DPRK government’s vast amount of domestic state power, their athletics are extremely politicized. Political athletics can be used to strengthen relations between friendly countries, systematize competition with enemy countries, and foster internal stability by using it as a distraction from politics.[[43]](#footnote-43) In a similar vein, the DPRK defines athletics as extremely important, because it strengthens the wealth and power of the motherland, strengthens the country’s defence capabilities, affects the health of the people, and showcases the honour of the nation.[[44]](#footnote-44) Although not explicitly defined by the previous definition, the DPRK’s mass athletics are an effective way to get people to participate in collective labour.[[45]](#footnote-45) In other words, the DPRK’s athletics can be seen as a reflection of state power, as well as a tool of the state’s political will.

The DPRK’s athletics can also be seen from a broader Socialist perspective. According to Heo Jeong-pil, Socialist athletics are distinct due to the following traits; Socialist governments support the athletes directly, emphasize a strong political duty, create a class of amateur elites, and emphasize self-sacrifice and inspiration in the name of national pride. Meanwhile, Capitalist athletes receive family or corporate support, their political duty is weak, they are professionals, and they receive cash prizes or other benefits.[[46]](#footnote-46) In another article, Heo, together with Kim Yong-hyon, theorized on five functions of Athletic Politics in Socialist Countries. They were uniting the populous, creating national defence power, promoting the public health, overcoming female prejudice and achieving gender equality, and improving the nation’s competitive power on the stage of foreign diplomacy.[[47]](#footnote-47) Put simply, Socialist athletics focus on ideological and political aspects, as well as the welfare of the society. Capitalist athletics, on the other hand, focus more on personal achievement.

A prime example of the DPRK’s early concordance with the broader Socialist ideals of athletics is their focus on the inclusion of women. Even though the culture of Confucianism was strong in countries such as DPRK and China, the gradual eroding of culturally established gender roles within the realm of physical culture began to take place.[[48]](#footnote-48) For example, although there were restrictions on which women could receive education during the colonial era, these restrictions were lifted in the DPRK.[[49]](#footnote-49) However, the offered athletic disciplines were mostly the same.[[50]](#footnote-50) Specifically, athletics for women in the pre-war DPRK mostly focused on athletic dance, with volleyball also being offered.[[51]](#footnote-51) Still, there were other efforts to get women to participate in more diverse athletic disciplines. One example was to encourage women to participate in apparatus gymnastics or skiing, which had seen a dip in participation due to the perception that they eliminated beauty or were impossible for women to do.[[52]](#footnote-52) In a 1956 issue of the DPRK journal *Korean Woman* (조선녀성), a cited text from a Soviet author proclaimed that women’s achievements in all fields should be often discussed.[[53]](#footnote-53) In comparison, Western society in the 1950s and 1960s still emphasized the familial duties or dependence of women.[[54]](#footnote-54) Taken on the whole, this difference in women’s roles harkens back to the original Socialist ideal of developing the body and mind to develop the society, irrespective of gender differences.

One can better see the DPRK’s implementation of Socialist athletics by means of comparison. Heo Jeong-pil compared athletics in five Socialist countries; China, East Germany, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and the DPRK. The similarities between them were as follows. Firstly, the nation independently emphasized athletic activities, and focused on perfecting physical strength. Secondly, labour-intensive manufacturing power was increased by gymnastics and manufacturing-related athletic activities. Thirdly, National Defence Athletics were carried out in order to strengthen the country’s defence capabilities. Fourthly, athletic activities were obligatory. Fifthly, international athletic games hosted in Socialist countries tended to be used as propaganda for the regimes, although the specifics differ by each country. What was unique about the DPRK was their strong emphasis on ideological education that emphasized the unity of the people and the need to spur the continuation of the ideological system through group gymnastics and popular athletics.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Despite group gymnastics often being described as unique,[[56]](#footnote-56) it should be noted that group gymnastics were in part based upon gymnastics displays at physical culture days in the Stalinist Soviet Union.[[57]](#footnote-57) According to Udo Merkel, the DPRK shows are evidence to the common citizen that “working together for the common good can create works of precision and perfection.”[[58]](#footnote-58) Additionally, mass gymnastics were a manifestation of the nationalistic policy of the government and a way to cultivate revolutionary thought and collectivism among the masses.[[59]](#footnote-59)[[60]](#footnote-60) What is truly unique about DPRK mass gymnastics is its sustained use into the 21st century and its massive scale. Nevertheless, when looked at from a broad perspective, DPRK athletics shared many similarities with those of other Socialist countries. The main difference comes from the intensity of the connection of athletics with the ideology of the state.

As the ideology of the DPRK as a state changed, the ideology of athletics changed along with it. During a June 1958 national meeting of athletic enthusiasts, eliminating heroism, fame, familism, and regionalism was emphasized. Also, beginning in the later part of the 1950s, the ideological education of the revolutionary tradition was combined with athletics. The goal was to internalize collectivism and instil the ideology of following the leader within trained expert athletes.[[61]](#footnote-61)

The most glaring example of a strong shift in DPRK athletics away from its’ Socialist roots came in 1974 with the introduction of Juche athletics. Specifically, the 19 February 1974 National Party Propaganda Workers Lecture by Kim Jong Il solidified Juche Ideology as Kim Il Sungism. This had an effect on the athletics sphere, as the amount of content emphasizing Juche Ideology in relation to athletes increased and the concept of Juche athletics was formed.[[62]](#footnote-62)[[63]](#footnote-63) Juche athletics used Socialist athletics as a basis, but emphasized and superimposed ideological and psychological thought; such as “our style” of competitive tactics.[[64]](#footnote-64)[[65]](#footnote-65) “Our Style” of competitive tactics stemmed from the perception that Korean athletes were too short, that their physical stamina was insufficient, and that foreign tactics were mysterious. This led to the idea of developing better scientific athletic skill.[[66]](#footnote-66) In practice, this meant the establishment of what can be best described as a “Seed System” (원종체계) Policy. Said policy set out to train athletes early, leading to the establishment of athletic high schools and university athletic departments.[[67]](#footnote-67)

Meanwhile, in order to counter the perceived fear and passiveness shown by DPRK athletes, an ideological foundation was used.[[68]](#footnote-68) This included the idea of “Speed Battles” (속도전), or participating in athletic contests at a high rate of speed. This was a strategy said to rest upon the foundation of the ideological and psychological features of Korean people as well as the physical characteristics of Korean people.[[69]](#footnote-69) Another concept was “Combative Struggle” (투지전), or emulating the will of Anti-Japanese guerrilla fighters by fighting with the meaning of risking one’s life and winning with “our style” of unique skill and strategy.[[70]](#footnote-70) These concepts would be continually linked to successful athletes in movies throughout the 90s and 00s.[[71]](#footnote-71) Another concept was “Skill Battles” (기술전), which emphasized “our style” of tactics and winning games through skill.[[72]](#footnote-72) The concept of “Scientific Battles” (과학전) was added to account for the increased emphasis on scientific athletic development during the Kim Jong Il era. Also during that era, the concept of “Ideological Battles” (사상전) was included in order to further emphasize the importance of the athletes’ ideological consciousness.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Kim Jong Il emphasized the idea of developing athletic disciplines in which the DPRK had the best chance of winning.[[74]](#footnote-74) In two speeches regarding athletics in 1986 and 1989 by Kim Jong Il, he emphasized that, through Juche athletics and athletics development, labour power and national defence power would be strengthened and the DPRK’s status in the international community would be heightened.[[75]](#footnote-75) As such, Juche athletics shared many of the same goals as Socialist athletics. But Juche athletics took a hard turn away from Socialist athletics in that they emphasized specific competitive tactics, tied athletic consciousness to that of historical revolutionary guerrilla fighters, and focused on specific disciplines and scientific development in order to win in international competition.

As the DPRK entered the era of Kim Jong Il’s tenure as leader, DPRK athletic policy would change as a matter of economic necessity. During the 1990s famine, government support for group athletics continued its long decline, leading to a further increase of the idea of athletics as an individual activity. Accordingly, the government increased its emphasis on Juche Ideology in athletics, and intensified propaganda aimed at popularizing athletics.[[76]](#footnote-76) Furthermore, the era of “Military-first Politics” (선군정치) put an even more militaristic spin on the ideology used to motivate athletes, equating athletes with soldiers and increasing the importance of military athletics clubs.[[77]](#footnote-77) Kim Jong Il’s invigoration of athletic skills and athletic exchange were posited by Heo Jong-pil to have the following four traits. Firstly, it induced domestic and foreign attention. Secondly, it was utilizing “our style” of athletics on the world stage. Thirdly, it was developing several different disciplines in order to succeed on the world stage. Fourthly, it was propagandizing Kim Jong Il’s leadership on the international stage through gold medallists.[[78]](#footnote-78) To summarize, the DPRK, facing the collapse of the economy and the collapse of the Socialist camp, needed to secure both internal and external stability. Internally, this meant allowing more personal freedom in choice of athletic discipline while also strengthening ideological education. Externally, this meant validating the existence of their state through international athletic achievement.

These new developments in Socialist athletics could be seen within the artistic sphere. In an analysis of 18 motion pictures and television series released from 1985 to 2014, scholar Ahn Ji-young discovered six commonalities. The first commonality was improving the awareness of athletes, due to their ability to improve national prestige in an age of peace. The second commonality was emphasizing great results in international games to be the honour of the motherland, and not individual glory. The third commonality was an encouragement of the promotion of women in athletics. The fourth commonality was the training of reserve athletes and the overall popularization of athletics. The fifth commonality was comparing athletics to a war without weapons, emphasizing the loyalty to the leader and nationalist consciousness of the athletes. The sixth commonality was the need to use science and technology in the development of athletics.[[79]](#footnote-79) All in all, this aligns well with the state’s priorities of international achievement and the need to secure ideological loyalty.

By the time of the Kim Jong Un era, the ideological elements of athletes were slightly de-emphasized, and the concept of mass athletics was re-emphasized. In 2010, athletics as a concept was described in the Athletics Law as follows. “The country makes athletics popular and a way of life, so all people are prepared for labour and national defence. Furthermore, the country develops athletic skill, which is pushed forward according to our country’s state of affairs and modern athletics skill standards.”[[80]](#footnote-80)[[81]](#footnote-81) Kim Jong Un would reiterate these goals in a 2015 statement, while also paying lip service to Juche ideology and creating a “strong athletics nation”, a “strong and economically Socialist country” (사회주의경제강국), and a “strong and civilized country” (문명강국).[[82]](#footnote-82) The early years of Kim Jong Un’s regime also emphasized the concepts of “Kim Jong Il Patriotism” (김정일 애국주의) and “The Construction of a Strong Athletics Nation” (체육강국건설). Both were aimed at sticking to the Socialist system through economic development and a united populous. As such, it harkened back to the days of Kim Il Sung’s Socialist system while also embracing a more dynamic and active athletics policy than Kim Jong Il. Specifically, Kim Jong Un’s regime took the athletics popularization policies of the Kim Il Sung Era and combined them with the patriotic policies of the Kim Jong Il era.[[83]](#footnote-83)

To sum up athletics from an ideological perspective in the DPRK, one can refer to the following summary by scholars Heo Jeong-pil and Kim Yong-hyon. They surmised that Kim Il Sung emphasized mass athletics in order to unite the people, and wanted to increase the people’s physical strength in order to revitalize the economy and guarantee a state of defence readiness.[[84]](#footnote-84) By Kim Jong Il’s era, different aspects emerged. Firstly, mass gymnastics were carried out in order to unite the people. Secondly, athletic exercises were continued in order to develop the economy and defend the country. Thirdly, in order to prevent disease, athletics were made a way of life. Fourthly, in order to overcome female stereotypes, female marathon, judo, and football were supported. Lastly, in order to promote the county’s economy, the DPRK participated in international competitions.[[85]](#footnote-85) Moving into the Kim Jong Un era, there were the following basic traits. Firstly, the fundamental athletic politics of the previous two eras were maintained. Secondly, Kim Jong Un was promoted as a father-like leader through various athletics related construction projects. Thirdly, tangible results in international competition were sought.[[86]](#footnote-86) Heo and Kim’s summary, in essence, encapsulates each leader’s need to adjust the DPRK’s athletics according to the situation of each era. From the basis of Socialist athletics, DPRK athletics ideology would come into contact with more intensive state ideology, reduced state capacity, and the need for international achievement enroute to the form it is in today.

# CHAPTER 3. Basketball from the DPRK Perspective

## 3.1 How the DPRK Defines Basketball

The Korean Great Encyclopaedia defines basketball games as two teams of five people attempting to win the game with points scored by shooting into the opposing team’s basket.[[87]](#footnote-87) Said definition can be somewhat addended by the following description of basketball from an English language textbook. “Basketball is a dynamic and interesting sport which develops will power, collectivist spirit, dexterity and endurance. It is a popular indoor sport that a great many amateurs including young people take up as a favourite sport.”[[88]](#footnote-88) These two descriptions define the dualistic nature of basketball within the DPRK’s overall ideology. On the one hand, basketball is seen pragmatically, as a type of team sport. On the other hand, basketball is seen as an ideological tool, one which is more of a means to developing a certain type of human being.

When seen from a pragmatic perspective, the DPRK’s descriptions of basketball are very accurate. In order to illustrate this, one must look at how the DPRK defines basketball on a historic basis. The 1998 Korean Great Encyclopaedia describes the history of basketball as an athletic discipline invented in the USA in 1891 as a way to have lots of people participate in athletics during winter months. It goes on to describe the early history of the game’s rule development and international spread, rules, and court and hoop dimensions.[[89]](#footnote-89) The USA was not mentioned in the 1983 edition, with the rules section being shorter.[[90]](#footnote-90) This is likely a reflection of the harsher ideological environment of the early 1980s in the DPRK. In an athletics-focused encyclopaedia published in 2008, there was an emphasis on Naismith as Canadian, but some mention of his activities in the USA.[[91]](#footnote-91)

A particularly interesting passage in the 2008 athletics-focused encyclopaedia covers the evolution of basketball up to that point. A summary of the main points is as follows. During the 1950s, tall players got the most recognition, and competition was mostly under the basket. In general, there was not much activity, and skill was simple. In order to develop the game, the three second rule was added in 1952, and a 30 second shot clock was added in 1957. By the 1960s, there was a better balance of defence and attack, with more active defence. During this decade, Brazil’s men’s team, comprised of relatively short players, won the 4th FIBA World Championship. This proved shorter players worth. The 1970s saw a greater specialization of skill and speed with even higher activity. Scrambles for the ball in the air and on the ground were more frequent, and the fast break became a standard counter attack. Fighting for rebounds was particularly intense, as was the battle for aerial supremacy. Also, the 1976 Olympics saw the first Olympics competition. By the 1980s, tall players, after controlling the ball, began to participate in fast attacks. The match level was very high, and there was an increase in player strength. Furthermore, the intellectual ability of players, will, and athletic psychology all combined and became important. By the 1990s, skills became even more diverse with a high level of attack and defence skill. In the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, China achieved second place in the women’s competition, signalling Asia joining the worlds powerful ranks. After the 90s, basketball’s development trends were as follows. Firstly, high speed, play in the air, and artistic skill. Secondly, mental and physical preparedness. Thirdly, aggressive defence. Fourthly, women’s skills were approaching that of men. Fifthly, the organization of teams and especially talented players decided wins. Sixthly, professionals could join the FIBA competitions.[[92]](#footnote-92) Taken on the whole, the preceding description of basketball is accurate and practical. However, one cannot ignore that the description emphasizes particular elements useful to the DPRK’s achievement, such as the success of shorter players, the success of Asian teams, and the evolution of the women’s game.

The athletics-focused encyclopaedia also has a short section on DPRK basketball history. It begins with a description of an ancient Korean sport called “Phoku” (포구) which was said to hold several traits of modern basketball. Basketball was not widespread before liberation, but the first DPRK basketball tournament took place from 24 to 26 May 1946. There is then a mention of how Kim Jong Il claimed that quick body movements, fast fakes, and good shooting can overcome height disadvantages. This is followed by a mention of the DPRK’s First World Festival of Youth and Students win in 1947, and their second place finish at the 1993 Asia men’s basketball championship.[[93]](#footnote-93) In other words, the encyclopaedia wishes to emphasize that basketball is not merely a Western invention, that the DPRK has a successful basketball tradition, and that Kim Jong Il held a great deal of basketball knowledge.

The athletics-focused encyclopaedia also includes a slew of practical information on rules, short anecdotes, skills, drawings of skills and referee motions, types of attack and defence with diagrams, the dimensions of the court, equipment, and different leagues and systems across the world. Even a short description of the NBA is included. Said description described the NBA’s rule peculiarities and mentions the rule allowing NBA athletes to participate in international games from 1989 onward contributing to the NBA’s success. The athletics-focused encyclopaedia describes two famous athletes; Yugoslavia’s Dejan Bodiroga and China’s Wang Zhizhi. Emphasis was put on their performance in international competitions.[[94]](#footnote-94) Nothing in what was described by the athletics-based encyclopaedia is factually incorrect. But it fails to point out the NBA’s status as the world’s premier international league, and goes out of its’ way to promote basketball athletes’ achievements outside of the NBA.

In terms of basketball’s description as compared to other athletic disciplines, one can consult a 2016 published textbook about athletics theory. Said book was published with athletics schools in mind. It states that school athletics in the DPRK are comprised of four categories; gymnastics, traditional athletics, National Defence Athletics, and ball athletics. Basketball is a part of ball athletics.[[95]](#footnote-95) Basketball is described as follows. Basketball is the athletic discipline with the most jumping and running motions, making it a powerful method for quickly increasing height. Basketball has athletes moving lots of different directions in a small court, with quick changes in movements. The team, as a unit, moves as one in close concordance. Agility, elasticity, organ function, diverse exercise functions and capability, persistence, and collectivism are all learned in basketball. In school, ball control, ball passing, ball grabbing, shooting, and game method are taught.[[96]](#footnote-96) When school athletic teams for basketball are organized, a guiding teacher and captain are chosen. The captain is chosen according to hobbies and temperament, and their ability to bring together the Socialist moral character of students. The captain should have good basketball ability, good organizational ability, the ability to connect to teachers and team members, and prepare athletic facilities and equipment.[[97]](#footnote-97) This description of basketball perfectly encapsulates other descriptions of basketball throughout DPRK media that will be seen further along in this study. Essentially, basketball is seen through the lens of the well-being of the individual body and the well-being of the collective. It is not seen as a hobby or amusement. Rather, it is seen as a means to an end.

It must be mentioned at this juncture that the DPRK, throughout its’ history, has trumpeted the idea that basketball is one of a few disciplines that is capable of increasing an individual’s height, particularly during their youth. In more recent years, the DPRK has claimed that basketball increases height the most out of all athletic disciplines. However, there is no direct evidence to suggest that basketball specifically increases one’s height. Height is affected by two factors; genetics and nutrition. Genetics account for the majority of height growth, while nutrition makes up at least twenty percent.[[98]](#footnote-98) Exercise, on the other hand, cannot make one taller. In fact, exercise with high strain, such as gymnastics, can stunt one’s physical growth. It is certain that exercise makes one’s bones stronger, but this is separate from bone growth.[[99]](#footnote-99) In reality, a much more effective tactic for increasing the height of the DPRK population would be to provide better nutrition. This can be directly evidenced by the greater average height of those from the ROK and their greater access to nutrition.[[100]](#footnote-100) The DPRK lacks the capacity to provide better nutrition, and likely continues to promote the idea of basketball for height growth for three reasons. Firstly, basketball players tend to be taller. This makes the idea easy for the layman to believe. Secondly, the idea of certain athletics assisting in growth was directly endorsed by Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. This makes it a hard idea to refute within the socio-cultural context of the DPRK. Thirdly, as speeches from 1966, 1972, and 1985 indicate, the issue of height and physical fitness continued to be an issue over time.[[101]](#footnote-101) As such, the DPRK had incentive to promote the methods to alleviate this issue, even if they were in vain.

All in all, one can surmise that any pragmatic description of basketball in the DPRK will be essentially correct. However, certain details may be emphasized or de-emphasized in accordance with the ideological priorities of the era. Aspects such as rules are very much by the book. Conversely, aspects such as historical facts will deliberately take an international angle, in an attempt to downplay the overwhelmingly strong role the USA played in popularizing the game in Korea and worldwide.[[102]](#footnote-102) Additionally, aspects such as historical development trends will emphasize the success of athletic strategies that were deemed by Kim Jong Il to be advantageous for the DPRK to adapt to.[[103]](#footnote-103) Lastly, the described health benefits of basketball are generally given in a laundry list-like format, and often contain details that are applicable to various sports. However, the most overwhelmingly emphasized aspect of basketball’s health benefits is the claim that basketball stimulates height growth.[[104]](#footnote-104)

## 3.2 Basketball as Taught in DPRK Textbooks

In total, there are seven different athletic textbooks which included basketball lessons that can be consulted. Two of them are from 2003, providing insight into the Kim Jong Il era. The other five are from 2013 through 2016, providing insight into the Kim Jong Un era. Overall, said textbooks provide a window into how basketball is taught in DPRK schools, and hint at the society itself.

The first textbook is a February 2003 athletics guidance plan for higher Kindergarten. It includes one three-hour lesson on basketball. In said lesson, basketball is boiled down into simple game which involves students running to score on 2.5-meter-high basketball hoops and then passing the ball to the next student. The team that scores the most wins. The bulk of the lesson consists of the teacher showing shooting methods and having the students practice. Standing shots are practiced first, followed by running shots. The ball is never dribbled. Also, Kim Jong Il’s encouragement of basketball is mentioned.[[105]](#footnote-105)

The second textbook is a March 2003 athletics guidance plan for lower Kindergarten. It also includes one three-hour lesson on basketball. In said lesson, basketball is boiled down to a shooting game where ten balls are set in front of the basket, and two teams to run and grab the balls and shoot as many of them in as possible. The team that gets the most in wins. The team that wins must shout “manse” (만세), and there is to be no pushing of other players or stealing the ball. The basketball goals are two meters high, and gradual learning of technique is emphasized. Also, basketball as an athletic discipline which increases height, Kim Jong Il’s personal basketball encouragement, and the need to train basketball athletes are mentioned.[[106]](#footnote-106) Taking these two textbooks from the Kim Jong Il era on the whole, it is evident that a very classical method of basketball education is emphasized. There is little diversity in technique, the lessons are three hours long, and emphasis was put upon proper technique. Furthermore, the leader’s personal role in basketball education is included.

The first Kim Jong Un era textbook is an August 2013 athletics teacher reference book for those teaching first year of High School. It begins with a basketball quote from Kim Jong Il, and claims that basketball is good for height increase and intellectual ability.[[107]](#footnote-107) The reference includes instructions on how to teach throwing the ball high and long, doing passing drills according to patterns, dribbling while standing, dribbling while walking, dribbling while running, dribbling with both left and right hands, dribbling around an obstacle, shooting while standing, shooting form, shooting while running out of the paint in order to catch and shoot the ball, shooting while moving, and catching and shooting in motion.[[108]](#footnote-108)[[109]](#footnote-109) Amusement games include dribbling races in a straight line, dribbling races in a circle, and two people passing and then shooting.[[110]](#footnote-110) Basic 5 second, 8 second, and 24 second rules and the concept of a half court violation are taught.[[111]](#footnote-111) Practice after the lesson involves receiving the ball with two hands after running to the free throw line, and catching and shooting ten times but succeeding five times.[[112]](#footnote-112) Although the level is much higher than the textbooks from the Kim Jong Il era, the increase in diversity of drills is apparent. Meanwhile, the level of ideological content remains consistent.

The second Kim Jong Un era textbook is a December 2013 athletic lesson plan for the first year of Primary School. There are four lessons related to basketball drills out of 90 total lessons.[[113]](#footnote-113) The first lesson focuses on basic dribbling within a set area with both hands while standing.[[114]](#footnote-114) The second lesson focuses on throwing and catching the ball above one’s head, with hands above the abdominal region.[[115]](#footnote-115) The third lesson focuses on basic chest and one handed passing.[[116]](#footnote-116) The fourth lesson focuses on more precise dribbling.[[117]](#footnote-117) All lessons begin with instruction from the teacher, and encourage the teacher to correct students. The first and third lessons end with a competition. All lessons include instructions for the teacher to give homework. What can be gathered from this textbook is that basketball is part of a diverse athletic curriculum for primary school students. Furthermore, lessons continue to be focused on developing specific skills.

The third Kim Jong Un Era textbook is a May 2013 athletics education plan for primary school, meant for those attending a schoolteacher’s university.[[118]](#footnote-118) Basketball is taught as an amusement game. Students play on a low rim, dribble in place, and dribble while moving.[[119]](#footnote-119) Basketball and other defined disciplines are not a part of years 1 to 3, but basketball is a part of one of four disciplines in year 4, and one of six disciplines in year 5. Mastering more than one discipline is a part of the curriculum.[[120]](#footnote-120) A particularly interesting passage in the book is as follows. The explanation and lesson plan should be designed to keep students’ attention. In the case of basketball, if running and shooting with two hands is the lesson, doing it for an hour straight causes participants to get bored and they don’t actively participate. As such, the taught skill must be used with game-like methods. For example, one could play a game where only running two handed shots are scored. This will allow students to learn how to use the taught method in different situations, and give them motivation.[[121]](#footnote-121) What can be gleaned from this textbook is that DPRK athletics education has a firm grasp of the need to keep children’s attention and interest, and deem that students in earlier years of elementary school are not yet physically developed enough to play full games of basketball.

The fourth Kim Jong Un Era textbook is a May 2016 middle and high school athletic instruction plan for normal university students.[[122]](#footnote-122) In middle school, basketball is not taught in the first and second years, and is one of seven disciplines in the third year. In high school, basketball is taught in all three years as one of four disciplines. Meanwhile, football is taught every single year. In total, basketball is tied with volleyball as the athletic discipline second most often taught.[[123]](#footnote-123) There is a quote from Kim Jong Il mentioning that basketball and other ball sports are more appropriate for the youth.[[124]](#footnote-124) Later in the book, a specific type of basketball drill is used as an example of how lessons need to use many different methods in order to avoid monotony and grab the interest of the students. For example, if the lesson is using one hand to score, doing just drills is insufficient. A game where only one-handed shots are recognized as points is a better method.[[125]](#footnote-125) This textbook’s most important revelation is that basketball is considered one of the more important athletic disciplines, but it also reiterates Kim Jong Il’s support of basketball and teachers’ use of a diverse array of techniques.

The fifth Kim Jong Un Era textbook is a May 2016 middle school athletics teaching materials analysis textbook for normal university students. The standards that students should measure up to are as follows. Students should be able to pass the ball, grab it, shoot it, pass while moving, shoot while moving, and possess the capability to play a game. In order to achieve this, students need systemization and order. In terms of knowledge, students are expected to know basic game rules like out of bounds, personal foul, double foul, and the 3 second rule. Year by year, there is a gradual increase in complexity of knowledge and ability needed.[[126]](#footnote-126) Overall, basketball is deemed good for those with an outgoing personality.[[127]](#footnote-127) This textbook’s description of the systemized method of teaching basketball fits well with a description given in a textbook of athletics education theory for normal university students. It describes basketball as a complex exercise using cyclical and non-cyclical motions in a system.[[128]](#footnote-128) In sum, it can be determined that this textbook reinforces the idea of basketball as a subject which must be taught systematically, from the fundamentals all the way up to advanced skills.

In closing, one can make the following conclusions about basketball from the seven athletics education textbooks from the Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un era. Firstly, basketball is an athletic discipline taught from the fundamentals up. Specific skills are emphasized on a lesson-by-lesson basis, and rules are taught in the same fashion. Secondly, lessons are taught using a variety of drills and challenges in order to keep the students’ interest. Thirdly, basketball is one of the more important ball sport disciplines. While not as frequently taught as football, basketball, along with volleyball, likely remains a close second. Fourthly, Kim Jong Il’s personal encouragement of basketball on an official level remains echoed throughout the Kim Jong Un Era. By comparison, there were no direct quotes of specific basketball support from Kim Jong Un. Fifthly, there is no mention of physical reprimand for misbehaving students. Sixthly, the stated physical and mental benefits of basketball are very much in line with propaganda norms. Overall, basketball can be seen as one of the important cornerstones of DPRK athletics education culture.

## 3.3 Basketball Terminology

In order to understand DPRK basketball terminology, one must go back to its’ beginnings. In this sense, it is very useful to refer to the athletics magazine “*People’s Athletics*” (인민체육), with issues available ranging from 1948 to 1950. This magazine provides an essential insight into DPRK pre-war basketball vocabulary, as there are many basketball-focused articles.

At this time, the DPRK was going through linguistic changes. This included two campaigns to eliminate illiteracy carried out from 1947 through 1949.[[129]](#footnote-129) Hanja, or Chinese Characters, were also quickly phased out. Articles printed only in Chosongul were printed in 1947, and Hanja characters were officially abolished in 1948.[[130]](#footnote-130) Accordingly, the aforementioned *People’s Athletics* magazine was printed fully in Chosongul. Conversely, the DPRK still used the same set of orthographic conventions as the ROK during the Pre-War period.[[131]](#footnote-131)

What follows is a table of basketball-specific terminology found within the aforementioned issues of *People’s Athletics*.

Table 1: Pre-War DPRK Basketball Terms

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **DPRK Basketball Term (Chosungul)** | **DPRK Basketball Term (Romanized)** | **Original Language** | **Current ROK Equivalent** | **Current ROK Equivalent *Romanization*, Origin** |
| Jul 1949 | 캣취뽈[[132]](#footnote-132) | Catch Ball | English | 잡은 공 | *Jab-un Gong*, Native Korean and Hanja[[133]](#footnote-133) |
| Jul 1949 | 패스[[134]](#footnote-134) | Pass | English | Same | N/A |
| Oct 1949 | 맨투맨[[135]](#footnote-135) | Man-to-Man | English | Same | N/A |
| Oct 1949 | 포스트 플레이[[136]](#footnote-136) | Post Play | English | Same | N/A |
| Oct 1949 | 페인트[[137]](#footnote-137) | Paint | English | Same, with 존 (zone) added | N/A |
| Oct 1949 | 컷[[138]](#footnote-138) | Cut | English | Same | N/A |
| Oct 1949 | 프리드로우[[139]](#footnote-139) | Free Throw | English | 자유튜 | *Ja-yoo-too*, Hanja |
| Dec 1949 | 뿔럭[[140]](#footnote-140) | Block | English | Same, different spelling | N/A |
| Dec 1949 | 리드[[141]](#footnote-141) | Lead | English | 앞서다 | *Ap-seo-da*, Native Korean |
| Dec 1949 | 코-르[[142]](#footnote-142) | Call | English | Same, different spelling | N/A |
| Dec 1949 | 떠블모-슌[[143]](#footnote-143) | Double-motion | English | Same, different spelling | N/A |
| Dec 1949 | 투핸드슡[[144]](#footnote-144) | Two-hand shot | English | Same | N/A |
| Dec 1949 | 드리블때쉬[[145]](#footnote-145) | Double dash | English | 드리블 질주 | Dribble *Jil-joo*, English and Hanja |
| Dec 1949 | 원핸드슡[[146]](#footnote-146) | One hand shot | English | Same | N/A |
| Dec 1949 | 코-치[[147]](#footnote-147) | Coach | English | Same | N/A |
| Feb 1950 | 슡[[148]](#footnote-148) | Shoot | English | Same | N/A |

As can be determined from the table, all of the basketball-specific terminology found consisted of English loan words. The English loan words were used to the extent that even modern-day basketball terminology in the ROK uses less English loan words. It should be noted that the English terms “catch ball” and “double-motion” are somewhat antiquated, but can still be used. Regardless, it can be concluded that English-based basketball terms formed the basis of basketball vocabulary in the pre-war DPRK. This is likely due to the role of actors such as US missionaries, the YMCA, and the US-presbyterian influenced Soongshil School in promoting basketball in northern Korea prior to liberation.[[149]](#footnote-149)

Unfortunately, there is a large gap between *People’s Athletics* and the next available source which uses basketball-specific terminology. The next available source is a 1966 book about rules of various athletic disciplines which includes a chapter about basketball. Perhaps not coincidentally, said book was published during a period of significant language reform in the DPRK. The effort to “establish a style of writing” (문풍의 확립) was announced after the 1956 Party Congress, and said policy began to be implemented in earnest beginning in the 1960s.[[150]](#footnote-150) This included efforts as early as 1960 to make the DPRK’s standard language distinct from that of the ROK.[[151]](#footnote-151) These efforts were intensified by two speeches from Kim Il Sung given in 1964 and 1966. The 1964 speech gave particular criticism to Seoul speech for mixing in English and Japanese words.[[152]](#footnote-152) As such, Japanese, Russian, and English loanwords began to be eliminated.[[153]](#footnote-153) The 1966 speech also criticized Chinese loan words.[[154]](#footnote-154) Accordingly, the DPRK began an effort to replace all words with a Chinese origin with words with a Korean origin.[[155]](#footnote-155)

In accordance with these new language policies, the aforementioned rule book had eliminated almost all of the English-based basketball terms. However, Hanja-based terms were still prevalent. The following are terms found that were specifically changed from their pre-war state.

Table 2: Change in DPRK Basketball Terms from Pre-War to 1966

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pre-War DPRK Basketball Term (Chosungul)** | **Pre-War DPRK Basketball Term (Romanized)** | **1966 DPRK Basketball Term (Chosungul)[[156]](#footnote-156)** | **1966 DPRK Basketball Term (Romanized)** | **Original Language of 1966 Term** | **Current ROK Equivalent (Hangul)** | **Current ROK Equivalent *Romanization*, Origin** |
| 패스 | Pass | 련락 | Ryon-nak | Hanja | 패스 | Pass, English |
| 페인트 | Paint | 제한구역 | Jae-han Ku-yok | Hanja | 페인트 존 | Paint Zone, English |
| 프리드로우 | Free Throw | 자유투 | Ja-yu-tu | Hanja | 자유투 | *Ja-yoo-too*, Hanja |
| 드리블 | Dribble | 몰기 | Mol-ki | Native Korean | 드리블 | Dribble, English |
| 코-치 | Coach | 지도원 | Ji-do-won | Hanja | 코치 | Coach, English |
| 슡 | Shoot | 던지기 | Don-ji-ki | Native Korean | 슡 | Shoot, English |

Although only six terms could be found in the 1966 ruleset that matched up with terms found in the pre-war magazine, a clear trend can be seen. However, there were still many words of Chinese origin. The public effort to eliminate words of Chinese origin and other foreign words began in July of 1966, the same year as Kim Il Sung’s second speech regarding language.[[157]](#footnote-157) This involved all national and local newspapers publishing information regarding the effort to eliminate Hanja and other foreign terms.[[158]](#footnote-158)

Revising basketball terminology was a part of the public language revision efforts in newspapers. Specifically, a set of four articles run in *Rodong Sinmun* by the Cabinet Language Inspection Committee (내각직속 국어 사정위원회) from 1967 to 1973 deal with basketball terminology. These articles were part of a series entitled “Beautify Our Language” (우리말 다듬기). The explicit intent of the articles was to replace as many foreign words with native Korean words as possible. What follows is a table of words that were proposed to be changed.

Table 3: Proposed Changes in DPRK Basketball Terms from 1967 through 1973

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Original Term (Chosungul)** | **Original Term (Romanized)** | **Original Term Origin** | **Replacement Term (Chosungul)** | **Replacement Term (Romanized)** | **Replacement Term Origin** | **English Equivalent** |
| 실격반칙[[159]](#footnote-159) | Sil-kyok-pan-chik | Hanja | 자격잃는어김 | Ja-kyok-il-nun-o-kim | Hanja and Native Korean | Flagrant Foul |
| 호상반칙[[160]](#footnote-160) | Ho-sang-pan-chik | Hanja | 서로어김 | So-ro-o-kim | Hanja and Native Korean | Double Foul |
| 점수판[[161]](#footnote-161) | Jom-su-phan | Hanja | 점수표쪽 | Jom-su-pyo-jjok | Hanja and Native Korean | Scoreboard |
| 투사[[162]](#footnote-162) | Thu-sa | Hanja | 넣기 | No-ki | Native Korean | Shot |
| 야투[[163]](#footnote-163) | Ya-tu | Hanja | 쏴넣기 | Sswa-no-ki | Native Korean | Field Goal |
| 장거리투사[[164]](#footnote-164) | Jang-ko-ri-thu-sa | Hanja | 먼거리넣기 | Mon-ko-ri-no-ki | Native Korean | Long-range Shot |
| 도약투사[[165]](#footnote-165) | To-yak-thu-sa | Hanja | 뛰여넣기 | Ddui-o-no-ki | Native Korean | Jump Shot |
| 한손투사[[166]](#footnote-166) | Han-son-thu-sa | Hanja | 한손넣기 | Han-son-noh-ki | Native Korean | One-handed Shot |
| 벌투[[167]](#footnote-167) | Bol-thu | Hanja | 벌넣기 | Pol-noh-ki | Hanja and Native Korean | Free Throw |
| 중거리투사[[168]](#footnote-168) | Jung-ko-ri-thu-sa | Hanja | Undecided | N/A | N/A | Mid-range Shot |
| 근거리투사[[169]](#footnote-169) | Kun-ko-ri-thu-sa | Hanja | Undecided | N/A | N/A | Short-range shot |
| 준롱구[[170]](#footnote-170) | Jun-rong-ku | Hanja | 롱구놀이 | Rong-ku-nol-i | Hanja and Native Korean | Playground Basketball |
| 반발[[171]](#footnote-171) | Pan-pal | Hanja | 튕기기 | Tuing-ki-ki | Native Korean | Bounce |
| 동시반칙[[172]](#footnote-172) | Dong-si-pan-chik | Hanja | 같이어김 | Kat-chi-o-kim | Native Korean | Double Foul |
| 종련락[[173]](#footnote-173) | Jong-yon-nak | Hanja | 앞으로 보내기 | Ap-u-ro Bo-nae-ki | Native Korean | Forward Pass |
| 횡련락[[174]](#footnote-174) | Huang-yon-nak | Hanja | 옆으로 보내기 | Yop-u-ro Bo-nae-ki | Native Korean | Side Pass |
| 대각선련락[[175]](#footnote-175) | Tae-gak-son-yon-nak | Hanja | 비끼보내기 | Pi-kki-bo-nae-ki | Native Korean | Diagonal Pass |
| 단거리련락[[176]](#footnote-176) | Tan-ko-ri-yon-nak | Hanja | 까까이보내기, 짧은련락 | Kka-kka-i-bo-nae-ki, Jjal-bun-yon-nak | Native Korean and Hanja | Short Pass |
| 장거리련락[[177]](#footnote-177) | Jang-ko-ri-yon-nak | Hanja | 멀리보내기, 긴련락 | Mol-li-bo-nae-ki, Kin-yon-lak | Native Korean and Hanja | Long Pass |
| 중거리 련락[[178]](#footnote-178) | Jung-ko-ri-yon-nak | Hanja | Undecided | N/A | N/A | Mid-range Pass |
| 유니폼[[179]](#footnote-179) | Uniform | English | 단체옷, 경기옷 | Tan-che-ot, Kyong-ki-ot | Native Korean and Hanja | Uniform |
| 트레닝[[180]](#footnote-180) | Training (Clothes) | English | 훈련옷 | Hun-ryon-ot | Native Korean and Hanja | Training Clothes |
| 구기[[181]](#footnote-181) | Ku-gi | Hanja | 공경기 | Kong-kyong-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Ball Sport |

As seen in the table above, all words were changed to include as much native Korean as possible, regardless of whether the original term was of Chinese or English origin. The main conclusion that can be drawn from the 1970s *Rodong Sinmun* articles is that many of these language changing efforts were largely unsuccessful. The introduced term rong-gu-nol-i (롱구놀이) and the terms utilizing no-ki (넣기) are in use today. But other original terms such as ho-sang-pan-chik (호상반칙), ryon-nak(련락), pan-chik(반칙), tan, jung, and jang-go-ri (단, 중, 장거리), and ku-gi (구기) were not effectively replaced, and they remain in use today. It cannot be determined exactly why this is so, but a reasonable hypothesis is reasons of practicality. The introduced terms would often add syllables, making them more burdensome to use. Furthermore, the introduced terms would sometimes lose some of the subtlety of the original terms, as is the case of jung-ko-ri-yon-nak (중거리 련락) having no native Korean equivalent. Lastly, basketball had already been widely distributed throughout the entire society by this point, making any concerted changes to vocabulary more difficult.

Up to this point, one can get a general sense of how the DPRK basketball vocabulary has evolved. From pre-war English-language origins, Korean-language equivalents were introduced after the Korean War. During the intense Juche-ization of the 1970s, there were mostly unsuccessful attempts to eliminate Chinese-based Korean words, as well as any remaining English words. But from the 1970s up until the present, there has been very little concerted change in the basketball vocabulary. What follows is a table of DPRK basketball vocabulary, along with the ROK and English-language equivalents of each term.

Table 4: DPRK Basketball Vocabulary by Date

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **DPRK Basketball Term (Chosungul)** | **DPRK Basketball Term (Romanized)** | **Original Language** | **English Equivalent** | **Current ROK Equivalent (Hangul)** | **Current ROK Equivalent *Romanization*, Origin** |
| 1966 | 뽈 | Ppol | English | Ball | 공 | *Gong,* Hanja |
| 1966 | 륜 | Ryun | Hanja | Rim | 링 | Ring, English |
| 1966 | 차단 | Cha-tan | Hanja | Screen | 스크린 | Screen, English |
| 1966 | 반칙 | Pan-chik | Hanja | Foul | 파울 | Foul, English |
| 1966 | 주장 | Ju-jang | Hanja | Team Captain | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 뽈 정지 | Ppol Jong-ji | Hanja and English | Ball Stoppage | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 몰기 | Mol-ki | Native Korean | Dribbling | 드리블 | Dribble, English |
| 1966 | 투입되는 뽈 | Thu-ip-dwae-nun Ppol | Hanja and English | Inbound Ball | 인바운드 | N/A |
| 1966 | 간접 반칙 | Kan-job Pan-chik | Hanja | Indirect foul | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 조약뽈 | Jo-yak-ppol | Hanja and English | Jump Ball | 점프 볼 | Jump Ball, English |
| 1966 | 다수 투사 | Ta-su Thu-sa | Hanja | Multiple-shot foul | 투샷 파울 | N/A |
| 1966 | 뽈의 경외 | Ppol-ui Kyong-oi | Hanja and English | Out of Bounds | 아웃 오브 바운드 | Out of Bounds, English |
| 1966 | 경기자 | Kyong-ki-ja | Hanja | Player | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 축발 | Chuk-pal | Hanja | Pivot | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 위범 | Wi-pom | Hanja | Violation | 바이얼레이션 | Violation, English |
| 1966 | 요구시간 | Yo-ku-si-kan | Hanja | Timeout | 타임아웃 | Timeout, English |
| 1966 | 심판원 | Sim-phan-won | Hanja | Referee | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 경외 투입 | Kyong-oe Thu-ip | Hanja | Inbounds | 인바운드 | Inbound, English |
| 1966 | 3초 규정 | Sam-cho Kyu-jong | Hanja | Three Second Rule | 3초 룰 | *Sam-cho* Rule, Hanja and English |
| 1966 | 방어자 | Pang-o-ja | Hanja | Defender | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 공격자 | Kong-kyok-ja | Hanja | Attacker | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 신체적 점촉 | Sin-che-jok Jom-chok | Hanja | Physical Contact | Same | N/A |
| 1966 | 호상반칙[[182]](#footnote-182) | Ho-sang-pan-chik | Hanja | Double Foul | 더블 파울 | Double Foul, English |
| Aug 1997 | 곶아넣기[[183]](#footnote-183) | Ko-ja-no-ki | Native Korean | Slam Dunk | 덩크 | Dunk, English |
| Aug 1997 | 조약공[[184]](#footnote-184) | Jo-yak-kong | Hanja | Jump Ball | 점프 볼 | Jump ball, English |
| Aug 1997 | 혼합방어[[185]](#footnote-185) | Hon-hap-pang-o | Hanja | Mixed Defence | Same | N/A |
| Aug 1997 | 돌파전술[[186]](#footnote-186) | Dol-pha-jon-sul | Hanja | Driving Skill | Same | N/A |
| Aug 1997 | 막기전술[[187]](#footnote-187) | Mak-ki-jon-sul | Native Korean and Hanja | BCourtking Skill | Same | N/A |
| Sep 1997 | 기만[[188]](#footnote-188) | Ki-man | Hanja | Fake | 페이크 | Fake, English |
| Oct 1997 | 1대1대인방어[[189]](#footnote-189) | Il-dae-il-dae-in-pang-o | Hanja | 1 on 1 Man-to-man Defence | 맨투맨수비 | Man to Man *Subi*, Hanja and English |
| Oct 1997 | 빼몰기[[190]](#footnote-190) | Ppae-mol-ki | Native Korean | Steal | 스틸 | Steal, English |
| Dec 1997 | 바깥공[[191]](#footnote-191) | Pa-kkat-kong | Native Korean and Hanja | Out-of-bounds ball | 아웃오브바운즈공 | Out-of-bounds *Gong*, Hanja and English |
| 1998 | 고의적인 반칙[[192]](#footnote-192) | Ko-ui-jok-in Pan-chik | Hanja | Intentional Foul | 고의적 파울 | *Go-ui-jeok* Foul, Hanja and English |
| Jan 1998 | 따내다[[193]](#footnote-193) | Dda-nae-da | Native Korean | Grab | 잡다 | *Jab-da*, Native Korean |
| Jan 1998 | 알의 꼴을 넣다[[194]](#footnote-194) | Al-ui Kkol-noh-ta | Native Korean and English | Score | 득점을 낳다 | *Deuk-jeom-ul Na-ta*, Native Korean and Hanja |
| Jan 1998 | 퇴장[[195]](#footnote-195) | Thoe-jang | Hanja | Ejection | Same | N/A |
| Jun 1998 | 주도권[[196]](#footnote-196) | Ju-do-kwon | Hanja | Lead | 앞서다 | *Ap-seo-da*, Native Korean |
| Aug 1998 | 모범경기[[197]](#footnote-197) | Mo-pom-kong-ki | Hanja | Exhibition Game | 시범경기 | *Si-beom-gyeong-gi*, Hanja |
| Jun 1999 | 회전[[198]](#footnote-198) | Hoi-jon | Hanja | Quarter | 쿼터 | Quarter, English |
| Jun 1999 | 공격시간어김[[199]](#footnote-199) | Kong-kyok-si-kan-o-kim | Native Korean and Hanja | Shot Clock Violation | 24세컨드 바이얼레이션 | 24 Second Violation, English |
| Jun 1999 | 벌넣기[[200]](#footnote-200) | Pol-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Free Throw | 자유투 슡 | *Ja-yu-tu* Shoot, Hanja and English |
| Sep 1999 | 륜교체[[201]](#footnote-201) | Ryun-kyo-chae | Hanja | Changing Sides | 코트 체인지 | Court Change, English |
| 2001 | 튄공[[202]](#footnote-202) | Thuin-kong | Native Korean and Hanja | Rebound | 리바운드 | Rebound, English |
| 2001 | 자유던지기[[203]](#footnote-203) | Ja-yu-don-ji-gi | Native Korean and Hanja | Free Throw | 자유투 | *Ja-yu-tu*, Hanja |
| 2001 | 륜밑던져넣기[[204]](#footnote-204) | Ryun-mit-don-jyo-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Shot under the rim | 골밑슡 | *Gol-mit*-shoot, Hanja and Native Korean |
| 2001 | 공빼앗기[[205]](#footnote-205) | Kong-ppae-at-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Steal | 스틸 | Steal, English |
| 2001 | 개별방어[[206]](#footnote-206) | Kae-pyol-pang-o | Hanja | Man-to-man Defence | 맨투맨 수비 | Man-to-man *Subi*, Hanja and English |
| Apr 2004 | 판때려넣기[[207]](#footnote-207) | Phan-ddae-ryo-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Layup | 레이업 | Layup, English |
| Apr 2004 | 먼거리넣기[[208]](#footnote-208) | Mon-ko-ri-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Long-range Shot | 장거리슡 | *Jang-geo-ri* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Apr 2004 | 먼거리던져넣기[[209]](#footnote-209) | Mon-ko-ri-don-jyo-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Long-range Shot | 장겨리슡 | *Jang-geo-ri* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Jul 2004 | 1대 1 대인방어[[210]](#footnote-210) | Il-dae-il-dae-in-pang-o | Hanja | Man-to-man Defence | 맨투맨수비 | Man-to-man *Subi*, Hanja and English |
| Sep 2004 | 3점짜리 투사[[211]](#footnote-211) | Sam-jon-jja-ri Thu-sa | Native Korean and Hanja | Three-point Shot | 3점슡 | *Sam-jeom* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Sep 2004 | 공다루기[[212]](#footnote-212) | Kong-da-ru-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Dribble | 드리블 | Dribble, English |
| Sep 2004 | 2인결합[[213]](#footnote-213) | I-in-kyol-hap | Hanja | Two-man Game | 투맨게임 | Two Man Game, English |
| Sep 2004 | 륜밑넣기[[214]](#footnote-214) | Ryun-mit-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Shot under the rim | 골밑 슛 | *Gol-mit* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Sep 2004 | 륜밑투사[[215]](#footnote-215) | Ryun-mit-thu-sa | Native Korean and Hanja | Shot under the rim | 골밑 슛 | *Gol-mit* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Mar 2005 | 속공공격[[216]](#footnote-216) | Sok-kong-kong-kyok | Hanja | Fast break | Same | N/A |
| Mar 2005 | 구역방어[[217]](#footnote-217) | Ku-yok-pang-o | Hanja | Zone Defense | 지역방어 | *Ji-yeok-bang-eo*, Hanja |
| Mar 2005 | 급출발달리기[[218]](#footnote-218) | Kup-chul-pal-dal-ri-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Running with a fast start | N/A | N/A |
| Mar 2005 | 급출발 및 급정지방향전환[[219]](#footnote-219) | Kup-chul-pal mit kup-jong-ji-pang-hyang-jon-hwan | Hanja | Changing directions with fast starts and stops | N/A | N/A |
| Mar 2005 | 속도훈련[[220]](#footnote-220) | Sok-do-hun-ryon | Hanja | Speed Training | N/A | N/A |
| Apr 2005 | 공소유권[[221]](#footnote-221) | Kong-so-yu-kwon | Hanja | Ball Possession | Same | N/A |
| Apr 2005 | 투입공[[222]](#footnote-222) | Thu-ip-kong | Hanja | Inbounds Ball | 인바운드 | Inbound, English |
| Sep 2005 | 경기의 박탈[[223]](#footnote-223) | Kyong-ki-ui Pak-thal | Hanja | Automatic loss if opposing team does not fairly play the game | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2005 | 주장에게 통고[[224]](#footnote-224) | Ju-jang-e-gye Thong-ko | Hanja | Notification of game resumption 3 minutes prior to the 2nd half | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2005 | 경기 재기시[[225]](#footnote-225) | Kyong-ki Jae-ki-si | Hanja | Game Resumption | 경기 재개 | *Gyeong-gi-jae-gae*, Hanja |
| Sep 2005 | 째인 2,3 련락[[226]](#footnote-226) | Jjae-in I,il, Ryon-nak | Native Korean and Hanja | Organized 2,3 man passing | N/A | N/A |
| Feb 2006 | 3점짜리넣기[[227]](#footnote-227) | Sam-jom-jja-ri-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Three-point Shot | 3점 슛 | *Sam-jeom* shoot, Hanja |
| Mar 2006 | 대인방어[[228]](#footnote-228) | Dae-in-pang-o | Hanja | Man-to-man Defence | 맨투맨수비 | Man-to-man Defence, English |
| Mar 2006 | 먼거리투사[[229]](#footnote-229) | Mon-ko-ri-thu-sa | Native Korean and Hanja | Long-range Shot | 장거리 슡 | *Jang-geori-syut*, Hanja and English |
| Mar 2006 | 득점성공률[[230]](#footnote-230) | Duk-jom-song-kong-ryul | Hanja | Shot Percentage | Same | N/A |
| Sep 2006 | 련속던져넣기[[231]](#footnote-231) | Ryon-sok-ton-jyo-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Consecutive Scores | 연속 슡 | *Yeon-sok* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Sep 2006 | 째인 련락[[232]](#footnote-232) | Jjae-in Ryon-rak | Native Korean and Hanja | Organized Passing | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2006 | 꼴을 넣다[[233]](#footnote-233) | Kkol-ul Noh-ta | Native Korean and English | Score | 골을 넣다 | *Go-reul Neo-ta*, Native Korean and English |
| Sep 2006 | 째인경기조직[[234]](#footnote-234) | Jjae-in-kong-ki-jo-jik | Native Korean and Hanja | Organized Game Management | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2006 | 장거리투사[[235]](#footnote-235) | Jang-ko-ri-thu-sa | Hanja | Long-range Shot | 장거리 슡 | *Jang-geo-ri* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Sep 2006 | 긴밀한 협동[[236]](#footnote-236) | Kin-mil-han Hyop-tong | Hanja | Close Cooperation | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2006 | 완강한 투사[[237]](#footnote-237) | Wan-kang-han Thu-sa | Hanja | Stubborn Shooting | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2006 | 세련된 롱구기술[[238]](#footnote-238) | Sae-ryon-doin Rong-ku-ki-sul | Hanja | Refined Basketball Skill | N/A | N/A |
| Sep 2006 | 3인결합[[239]](#footnote-239) | Sam-in-kyol-hap | Hanja | Three-man Game | N/A | N/A |
| 2008 | 가로채기[[240]](#footnote-240) | Ka-ro-chae-ki | Native Korean | Steal | 스틸 | Steal, English |
| 2008 | 쳐내기[[241]](#footnote-241) | Cho-nae-ki | Native Korean | Block | 블록 | Block, English |
| Apr 2008 | 먼거리넣기[[242]](#footnote-242) | Mon-ko-ri-noh-ki | Native Korean and Hanja | Long-range Score | 장거리 슛 | *Jang-geo-ri* shoot, Hanja and English |
| Apr 2008 | 빠른 공련락[[243]](#footnote-243) | Bba-run Kong-ryon-rak | Native Korean and Hanja | Fast Passing | N/A | N/A |
| Dec 2008 | 능란하다[[244]](#footnote-244) | Nung-ran-ha-da | Hanja | Skilled | N/A | N/A |
| Apr 2009 | 습득하다[[245]](#footnote-245) | Sup-duk-ha-da | Hanja | Mastered | N/A | N/A |
| 2013 | 중앙선[[246]](#footnote-246) | Jung-ang-son | Hanja | Half-court Line | Same | N/A |
| 2015 | 퐁구판[[247]](#footnote-247) | Rong-ku-phan | Hanja | Backboard | 백보드 | Backboard, English |
| Jun 2017 | 압박방어[[248]](#footnote-248) | Ap-pak-bang-o | Hanja | Pressure Defence | 압박수비 | *Ap-bak-su-bi*, Hanja |
| Oct 2017 | 몸빼기[[249]](#footnote-249) | Mom-ppae-ki | Native Korean | Dodging | 피하기 | *Pi-ha-gi*, Hanja |
| Dec 2018 | 선수교체[[250]](#footnote-250) | Son-su-kyo-che | Hanja | Substitution | Same | N/A |
| Dec 2018 | 걷기위반 | Kot-ki-ui-ban | Native Korean and Hanja | Walk | 워킹 | Same |
| Oct 2019 | 경계선[[251]](#footnote-251) | Kyong-kye-son | Hanja | Out-of-bounds line | 아웃 라인 | Out-of-bounds line, English |
| Jan 2021 | 타임아우트[[252]](#footnote-252) | Timeout | English | Timeout | 타임아웃 | Timeout, English |
| Jan 2021 | 위반[[253]](#footnote-253) | Wi-pan | Hanja | Violation | Same | N/A |
| Jan 2021 | 연장전[[254]](#footnote-254) | Yon-jang-jon | Hanja | Overtime | Same | N/A |
| Jan 2021 | 팀반칙[[255]](#footnote-255) | Team-pan-chik | Hanja and English | Team Foul | 팀 파울 | Team Foul, English |

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above list. Firstly, DPRK basketball terminology is distinctly different than ROK basketball terminology, but not indecipherably so. Due to the fact that all DPRK basketball terms are rooted in Hanja or native Korean words, it would not take very long for a Korean speaker who uses ROK dialect to become familiar with the DPRK terms. Secondly, there is a concerted effort to avoid any English-based words in DPRK vocabulary. This avoidance of English words is so pronounced that, in 1997, *Rodong Sinmun* published an article pointing out two international basketball terms and their Korean equivalents; time and line.[[256]](#footnote-256) Still, in the modern day, the English terms “timeout” and “team” have entered common use, indicating that DPRK basketball terminology may head back in the direction of embracing English.[[257]](#footnote-257) Thirdly, basketball terminology in the DPRK is diverse, and there is often more than one term for the same concept. As such, it can be difficult to pinpoint which term is the most common for any particular case.

Looking at the totality of DPRK basketball vocabulary, it is possible to say that it is distinct from ROK vocabulary. Furthermore, it is possible to infer that the government has influenced DPRK basketball vocabulary to stay away from English terms, directly and indirectly. But one must also admit that the DPRK basketball vocabulary is not impractical, and represents a creative application of a native language to a foreign athletic discipline.

# chapter 4. Basketball in Pre-Liberation Korea (1907~1945.8.15)

In order to fully understand basketball’s effect on the DPRK, one must trace basketball’s history to its’ beginnings. The game of basketball was invented by Dr. James Naismith on 21 December 1891.[[258]](#footnote-258) The game was born out of necessity to find a non-contact winter sport for a group of problem students at the International Young Men’s Christian Association Training School in Massachusetts, USA.[[259]](#footnote-259) The game of basketball was popular among students, and was spread to other towns when the students went home on winter break. Furthermore, due to the network of YMCA establishments throughout urban centres in the USA, basketball spread to urban areas. In basketball’s initial decade of development in the USA, it was a sport not only popular amongst white men. Women and those of Jewish decent also took to basketball.[[260]](#footnote-260)[[261]](#footnote-261) By 1907, basketball was introduced to Korea via a US Missionary named P. L. Gillett, with the first game played at the Seoul YMCA.[[262]](#footnote-262) Basketball would spread to the northern part of Korea within the year, with games played in Pyongyang and Sonchon County.[[263]](#footnote-263) Five years later, Soongsil School in Pyongyang would add basketball to its’ list of offered sports in 1912.[[264]](#footnote-264) In general, basketball was part of a wave of ball sports to be distributed in Korea in the 1910s.[[265]](#footnote-265) During this decade, the YMCA was instrumental in fostering basketball’s popularity.[[266]](#footnote-266) By 1916, the first indoor gymnasium was built.[[267]](#footnote-267) In the 1920s, basketball was even more widespread.[[268]](#footnote-268) Kim Il Sung would mention that he went to several middle schools in Pyongyang during his stay from there from 1923 to 1925, but did not see any basketball courts.[[269]](#footnote-269)

In 1928, the first basketball tournament in Northern Korea was held. The Phyongan Province Basketball Tournament (관서농구회) was hosted by the Pyongyang YMCA, and featured three Pyongyang based teams; Kwangsong High School, Soongsil Middle School, and Soongshil School.[[270]](#footnote-270) That same year, Soongshil School would establish the first official basketball club in Northern Korea.[[271]](#footnote-271) In 1929 and 1930, Soongshil Middle School and Haeju High School, two northern teams, would participate in the Seoul-focused Middle School Athletes tournament.[[272]](#footnote-272) In 1931, Soongshil School would host the first league in Pyongyang, although it appears to have been a one-time event.[[273]](#footnote-273)

From this beginning, basketball would begin to spread in the North. The aforementioned Soongshil School Basketball Club would win the 1930 edition of the Middle School Athletes tournament, scoring the first tournament championship for a northern team.[[274]](#footnote-274) In 1931, the northern-based Sungin Business School would participate in the aforementioned tournament, achieving second place.[[275]](#footnote-275) Sungin would eventually win the nationwide Japan middle school tournament in 1936.[[276]](#footnote-276) Meanwhile, the aforementioned Gwangsong High School would win the 1933, 1937, and 1943 editions of the Korea Shrine Tournament, achieve second place in the nationwide Japan Middle School tournament, and first place in the 1942 Edition of the nationwide Japan Meiji Shrine Tournament.[[277]](#footnote-277) Additionally, Pyongyang High School would win the 1934 and 1936 editions of the Korea Shrine Tournament.[[278]](#footnote-278) Pyongyang’s basketball success would play a part in it being informally named as the “city of ball sports”.[[279]](#footnote-279) Indeed, in 1937, Soongsil School promoted their strong basketball team in a school magazine,[[280]](#footnote-280) and basketball hoops could be seen installed in Pyongyang Public Hall.[[281]](#footnote-281) Available DPRK sources corroborate the spread of basketball in Korea in the 1920s and 30s, but do not give much detail.[[282]](#footnote-282)

There was also exchange between Seoul and Pyongyang, with three Seoul-based teams traveling to Pyongyang for games; Northwest Hyopsong Industrial School in 1932, Seoul Basketball Club in 1934, and Yonhui College from 1935 through 1937. Hyonsong would record one win and two losses, Seoul Basketball Club would record three wins and one loss, while Yonhui would record a total of nine wins and two losses.[[283]](#footnote-283) In 1935 and 1937, the two highest placing teams of the national middle school tournament from Seoul and Pyongyang would play a series of two friendlies. In both cases, the teams were Sungin School, representing Pyongyang, and Jungdong Middle School, representing Seoul. Sungin would split the series played in Seoul in 1935 and win both games played in Pyongyang in 1937.[[284]](#footnote-284)

However, the above is all primarily concerning men’s basketball. In terms of all of Korea, women’s basketball began in earnest in the late 1920s. In 1925, Ewha University first held intramural basketball games amongst women.[[285]](#footnote-285) In 1931, the Seoul-based Dongdok Girl’s High School and Sukmyong Girl’s High School played the first women’s international friendlies against the Chinese Yanggang Sports College.[[286]](#footnote-286) By 1935, Ewha University established the first nationwide basketball tournament for women, but it only lasted until 1936.[[287]](#footnote-287)[[288]](#footnote-288) On the other hand, girl’s high school teams would participate in national sports festivals that included basketball as a part of other disciplines. Said girl’s high school teams would also participate in the the Japan national tournament from 1927 until the shutdown of ball sports in 1943.[[289]](#footnote-289) Unfortunately, information about women’s basketball in the northern part of Korea is scarce; this author has not been able to find a single bit of evidence for a women’s team or game existing in the northern part of Korea before liberation.

With the beginning of the Japanese government’s policy to emphasize military training at schools in 1941 and the outbreak of war in the Pacific, basketball and other ball sports began to lose steam.[[290]](#footnote-290) The last basketball game played in Korea before liberation would be in December of 1942, while all ball sports would be officially discontinued by the Japanese government in 1943.[[291]](#footnote-291)

From the above information, it can be inferred that basketball was a well-established athletic discipline at schools in urban centres in the north. Furthermore, the northern teams were competitive with the southern teams. However, there is a lack of information about the development of women’s teams and teams in rural areas. Nevertheless, basketball in pre-liberation Northern Korea was clearly well-established to some extent, setting a reinforceable foundation upon which the DPRK’s basketball future could be built.

# CHAPTER 5. The Establishment Era (1945.8.15~1950.6.25)

## 5.1 General Athletics Overview

The Korean Peninsula was liberated from the Japanese Empire on 15 August 1945. This marked the effective start of the pre-war era. Throughout the pre-war DPRK, the most important institution for carrying out athletics was the school. During the Japanese occupation, schools had already taught athletics. Conversely, within official Worker’s Party policy, the importance of the party’s guidance in education as well as general athletics for the masses was emphasized.[[292]](#footnote-292)

Administratively, management of athletics began on 28 October 1945. On that day, the Soviet authorities established five administrative regions of the DPRK and assigned the education bureau to take care of the athletics field.[[293]](#footnote-293) By 1 November 1945, the North Korean Athletics Alliance was established as an organ to organize regional athletics organizations and guide athletics in a unified manner.[[294]](#footnote-294) Smaller organizations were also made for each province, city, and county.[[295]](#footnote-295) However, problems of organization, direction, and communication led to the decision to dissolve old athletics unions and create a new athletics committee.[[296]](#footnote-296) For example, throughout 1945 and 1946, athletics competitions were held by the Joson Athletics Committee between north and south regions of Korea in order to reinforce the nation’s unity.[[297]](#footnote-297) But from May of 1946, the North Korean Athletics Alliance, chaired by Choe Yong Gon, served as the beginning of the DPRK’s athletics culture and subverted the Joson Athletics Committee.[[298]](#footnote-298)

Meanwhile, the broader society was going through a torrential wave of change. From February 1946, the North Korean Temporary People’s Committee was the region’s first central political organ after the war.[[299]](#footnote-299) A month later, on 5 March 1946, Land Reform was announced.[[300]](#footnote-300) This was followed on 23 March 1946 by the passing of the Worker’s Law and Gender Equality Law in the DPRK.[[301]](#footnote-301) Two days later, on 25 March 1946, the announced party platform aimed to guarantee the ability to enter schooling for all working people’s children. Said platform also focused on providing material support, such as dormitories, to said students.[[302]](#footnote-302) At the time, five years of primary school, three years of middle school, and three years of high school were the basis of the DPRK educational system.[[303]](#footnote-303)

During this wave of change, there were important goings-on in the field of athletics. On 3 May 1946, the first Mass Gymnastics Performance was carried out. Five more such performances were carried out before the outbreak of the Korean War.[[304]](#footnote-304) Also that year, the Pyongyang High Level Normal School’s Athletics Department was established.[[305]](#footnote-305) Kim Il Sung would first turn his attention to athletics via a 6 October 1946 speech. In that speech, he stated that athletics were part of the effort to foster a lively shot at founding the nation.[[306]](#footnote-306) He also stated that athletics used to be the plaything of the privileged classes and served as training to serve Japanese imperialists in war.[[307]](#footnote-307) Kim Il Sung’s speech put forth a vision of athletics for all people, and stated that athletics would train the people’s body and mind. Said vision persists in the DPRK to the modern day.[[308]](#footnote-308) By December of 1946, according to a decision by the North Korean Workers Party Central Committee Working Committee, exercise equipment factories were established in Pyongyang, Wonsan, Hamhung, and Chongjin.[[309]](#footnote-309) Also in December 1946, the Athletics Bureau of said committee encouraged athletics as an extracurricular activity and mandated two hours of athletics per week for all schools.[[310]](#footnote-310) This mandate, however, did not change much in reality. To be specific, in 1945, Primary Schools already had 10% of their overall class time dedicated to athletics. Meanwhile, secondary schools had 5.7% of their overall class time dedicated to athletics. Indeed, by 1947, that time was slightly reduced in primary schools.[[311]](#footnote-311) Overall, 1946, a time of rapid societal change, saw several attempts to establish athletics policy. But things were still in an embryonic stage.

It was on 17 February 1947 that provincial, city, and county committees were convened. They collectively formed the North Korean People’s Committee (북조선림시인민위원회), and had Kim Il Sung as chairman.[[312]](#footnote-312) Out of this committee also came a North Korean Athletics Committee, with accompanying committees for each province, city, and county. This athletics committee was intended to unify the direction of the nation’s athletic policy. However, the new committee struggled to establish athletics organizations at farms and workplaces due to a lack of interest and weak guidance and support.[[313]](#footnote-313) As such, there was still not a firm athletics policy.

1947 saw some minor progress in the athletics field. Beginning in 1947, competitions based on agricultural work were established.[[314]](#footnote-314) This was the genesis of what can be deemed “manufacturing athletics”, a practice which would continue at least until the 1960s. On 22 April 1947, the Young Communist League Gymnasium was completed in the Central District of Pyongyang.[[315]](#footnote-315) In September of 1947, the Ministry of Public Welfare (내무성) Athletics Club was established. The Ministry of Public Welfare Athletics Club would later change its’ name to Lightning (번개) in 1955, and eventually to its’ current name, Amrok River, in 1966. It would later be claimed that the Ministry of Public Welfare team was the first in the DPRK.[[316]](#footnote-316) Its’ successor, the Amrok River Athletics Club, would survive until the modern day. That same month, on 31 September, the Korean Workers Party Standing Committee emphasized improving the working system in order to develop athletics for the entire populous.[[317]](#footnote-317)

Although some progress had been made up to this point, the May 1948 establishment of the North Korean Athletics Guidance Committee (북조선체육위원회) was seen as the beginning of DPRK athletic policy in earnest.[[318]](#footnote-318) By July, seventeen Competitive Discipline Subcommittees were established.[[319]](#footnote-319) Also, new athletics rules were instituted, and the fostering of athletics teachers, coaches, and referees was encouraged.[[320]](#footnote-320) With the central athletics organ now firmly established, 1948 saw two monumentally important institutions introduced; the People’s Physical Fitness Test and the National Athletics Holiday.

The People’s Physical Fitness Test (인민체력검정), based upon the Soviet GTO System, was implemented on 8 July 1948.[[321]](#footnote-321) The original Soviet GTO system, in accordance with Soviet principles, emphasized training physical fitness in order to help the nation’s defence and production capabilities.[[322]](#footnote-322) When implementing the People’s Physical Fitness Test, the Soviet System was used as an example to follow for theories, methods, and skills.[[323]](#footnote-323) Said test was to be carried out yearly.[[324]](#footnote-324) However, by 1949, only 6.7% of participants passed the test.[[325]](#footnote-325) The People’s Physical Fitness Test is notable in that it introduced the concept of National Defence Athletics (국방체육) to the country.[[326]](#footnote-326) In general, examples of National Defence Athletics include mountaineering, marching, obstacle courses, grenade throwing, jump rope, and parachuting.[[327]](#footnote-327) Put simply, National Defence Athletics were military-based fitness drills that encompassed all of the training necessary for one to become a soldier.[[328]](#footnote-328)

The national Athletics Holiday (체육절) was enacted on 2 August 1948, and news of the enactment was published in *Rodong Sinmun* on 8 October. The Athletics Holiday was to be every second Sunday in October. During that day, athletes were to participate in athletic demonstrations and athletic events, and the holiday was supposed to occur during the national general athletics tournament.[[329]](#footnote-329) Around this time, programs were established for athletics to be carried out in schools according to season, as well as activities such as group gymnastics and morning running at the workplace.[[330]](#footnote-330) The holiday would be celebrated every year up until the present day.[[331]](#footnote-331)

Aside from the People’s Physical Fitness Test and the Athletics Holiday, other athletics institutions began to take hold during 1948. On 25 March, the Central Athletics Training School Athletics Team was established. Said team was attached to the People’s Army. The Central Athletics team would later be re-named the 25 April Athletics Club on 25 June 1972. It was named after the foundation day of Kim Il Sung’s Korean People’s Revolutionary Army on 25 April 1932.[[332]](#footnote-332) According to Kim Jong Il, the team was renamed in order to develop athletics and to raise up football to the level of a world power.[[333]](#footnote-333) Indeed, the 25 April Athletics Club is the DPRK’s most successful athletics team in the modern day.

In terms of everyday life, DPRK citizens began to see organized athletics have more of an effect in 1948. Athletic teams began to be organized from organs, economic sectors, administrative units, and schools.[[334]](#footnote-334) By Oct 1948, there were over 600,000 sports clubs.[[335]](#footnote-335) Officially, these athletics teams were billed as being for the enjoyment of the people and not the profit of companies.[[336]](#footnote-336) Aside from athletics teams, other societal athletics activities began in full force. In May 1948, following the previous year’s agricultural work-based competitions, athletic competitions based on manufacturing skill were held.[[337]](#footnote-337) Additionally, 1948 saw public health gymnastics begin to be carried out at workplaces, schools, and villages during the morning or workday.[[338]](#footnote-338) Lastly, the Democratic Youth League, an institution that would play a leading role in organizing societal athletics, vowed to set the example for mass athletics culture. The Democratic Youth League considered mass athletics culture to be training physical stamina and consciousness.[[339]](#footnote-339)

1948 saw significant progress in terms of physical institutions as well. By Summer 1948, after a year of construction, the Wonsan Stadium was completed. It was touted to be the best stadium in the country at the time, indicating that Pyongyang’s later status as a primate city was not yet cemented.[[340]](#footnote-340) Meanwhile, by the end of 1948, there were 4131 multi-purpose Stadiums nation-wide.[[341]](#footnote-341) Additionally, the Pyongyang Normal University Athletics Department, Sinuiju Teachers University Athletics Department, and Haeju Teachers University Athletics Department were founded. Part of the goal in establishing these universities was to rollback Confucianist and Feudalist customs.[[342]](#footnote-342)

By 1949, further athletics-related administrative events took place. On 24 January 1949, the second meeting of the Central Athletics Guidance Committee emphasized the research of the Soviet Union’s superior Socialist athletics.[[343]](#footnote-343) Additionally, the committee emphasized that athletics were not carried out only for athletes, but for the benefit of all workers. Meanwhile, athletes were encouraged to take up multiple disciplines.[[344]](#footnote-344) The third meeting of the Central Athletics Guidance Committee in June emphasized supporting athletes who would participate in upcoming World Youth Athletic Festivals, getting youth to pass the *People’s Athletics* exam, and preparing for upcoming domestic athletic events.[[345]](#footnote-345)

Beginning in the later part of 1949, with war looming, National Defence Athletics began to be emphasized.[[346]](#footnote-346) The importance of the revolutionary army’s strengthening through athletics was emphasized through speeches from 1946 through 1948, but 1949 saw an increased emphasis.[[347]](#footnote-347) On 14 August 1949, the “National Athletes Rally Supporting a Peaceful National Unification Policy” emphasized athletics as a method of reunification, foreshadowing the upcoming conflict.[[348]](#footnote-348) Also in 1949, athletics were promoted as a way of promoting the physical strength and patience needed to conquer environmental factors. For example, athletic training could be used to overcome the traditional custom of resting during Winter.[[349]](#footnote-349) This too could be seen as preparation for the long conflict ahead.

When looking at pre-war DPRK athletics on the whole, it is possible to say that it was a heavily Soviet-influenced system built upon the foundation of the pre-existing school athletics structure of the Japanese colonial era. In practice, this meant that women, the working class, and students were all encouraged to participate.[[350]](#footnote-350) But due to early fighting between athletics organizations, Confucianist values that had been the societal norm for generations, and a lack of material support, the majority of athletics continued to happen in schools.[[351]](#footnote-351) In terms of athletic disciplines, the Soviet Union wielded great influence. Indeed, the newly introduced manufacturing athletics and National Defence Athletics were Soviet creations. On the other hand, despite existing athletic disciplines mostly being maintained, baseball would be almost completely eliminated during this era. There is no definitive explanation for baseball’s disappearance, but it is likely due to baseball’s strong connection to capitalist countries and a lack of baseball equipment.[[352]](#footnote-352)

## 5.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

Although never expressing an explicit interest in basketball during this era, Chairman Kim Il Sung was very much aware of basketball’s existence. Kim, while certainly in leadership positions, did not hold the same extent of power that he would in later eras of the DPRK. Nevertheless, Kim’s tacit approval of basketball and subtle encouragement of basketball would certainly help its’ societal status.

Kim’s first recorded contact with basketball was on 2 November 1947 when he saluted students playing basketball, playing volleyball, and training in machine gymnastics at Pyongyang Teachers’ University.[[353]](#footnote-353)[[354]](#footnote-354) Around the same time, Kim personally met with the men’s national basketball team. This team had recently won the First World Festival of Youth and Students, and Kim congratulated them for their victory. Kim Il Sung was then said to have resolved to create a permanent athletics team with the football and basketball athletes from that tournament. This eventually resulted in the aforementioned creation of the Ministry of Public Welfare Team. Said team would become Amrok River.[[355]](#footnote-355)

A year later, Kim would have his closest encounter with basketball yet. According to an official anecdote, on 11 November 1948, Kim Il Sung went to Haeju Teachers’ University and watched the freshman play basketball. The students, wanting to impress the leader, showed off their training. Kim was satisfied with their skilled passing and shooting. While watching the match, Kim mentioned to students on the side that they should sweat as much as those playing basketball when they were training. Kim went on to teach that in creating the new nation, physical training was very important. Also, Kim, aware that the students he was talking to were future teachers, imparted that teachers had to train athlete-workers. Lastly, Kim stated that the newer the university, the more effort was needed to organize gymnasiums and make more athletic equipment.[[356]](#footnote-356) Kim’s last pre-war encounter with basketball would come in mid-February 1949. Then, Kim Il Sung visited Mangyongdae School and mentioned basketball as one of the athletics that should be played.[[357]](#footnote-357)

At this point, basketball is just another sport to Kim Il Sung. Nevertheless, Kim, having seen basketball played on two occasions, must have been aware of its popularity among the people. Furthermore, Kim’s use of basketball players’ hard training as an example for other athletes to follow and his creation of a permanent team based upon the national team’s success is a testament to his respect of basketball as an athletic discipline.

## 5.3 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

A basketball team representing Northern Korea would play their first international games after liberation at the 1947 World Festival of Youth and Students held from 2 July to 20 August 1947 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. This was the first international athletics competition in which Northern Korea would participate.[[358]](#footnote-358) The basketball team’s participation specifically was not authorized by FIBA until 6 August, well after the overall festival had begun.[[359]](#footnote-359)

Amazingly, during this tournament, the Northern Korea men’s basketball team achieved first place.[[360]](#footnote-360) However, the quality of opponents was not exactly world class. Enroute to their victory, the Korean team defeated a Czech sporting club, a Czech worker’s athletics unit, Mandatory Palestine, and Poland. All of said opponents came from nations recently devastated by war.

That is not to take away from the achievement of the Northern Korean team. In an interview regarding the Koreans basketball victory, Tullio Micol, an Italian basketball player who was present at the games, claims that the Northern Korean team was utilizing jump shots and jump passes. Micol went on to claim that said tactics were revolutionary for the time, and that all onlookers, including those from the United States, had never seen such tactics.[[361]](#footnote-361) The history of the jump shot is quite murky, but it is very likely that it was invented at some point in the 1930s or the 1940s in the USA.[[362]](#footnote-362) The jump shot then became popularized and well-known in the USA through inter-military games during World War II.[[363]](#footnote-363) Indeed, by the 1950s, jump-shooting would become the norm.[[364]](#footnote-364) Meanwhile, the jump pass is seldomly used in today’s game. While the jump shot gives one an advantage over their defender by making the ball harder to block, a jump pass gives the defender the advantage by forcing the ball handler to commit to a pass too early.[[365]](#footnote-365) All in all, while the Northern Korean team’s use of the jump shot could be seen as on the cutting edge of basketball trends of the time, their use of the jump pass was downright unconventional. In any case, the bold use of said tactics may have certainly contributed to baffling their opponents enroute to victory.

It would be the only time that any Northern Korean national team, men’s or women’s, ever achieved a first-place finish in an international competition held outside of Pyongyang. This win would be mentioned in state media late as 2018 as an example of the DPRK’s basketball success.[[366]](#footnote-366) As mentioned in the previous section, the win had a profound impact in gaining the early favour of Kim Il Sung and leading to the creation of the Ministry of Public Welfare basketball team.

The men’s national team would re-surface in July 1949, competing at the Second World Festival of Youth and Students in Hungary.[[367]](#footnote-367) The DPRK sent a 24 person delegation, larger than that of Mongolia, Scotland, Austria, Belgium, and Finland put together.[[368]](#footnote-368) There were preliminary selection games for the Festival held in Pyongyang that May.[[369]](#footnote-369) The DPRK’s basketball team was such a big draw that they held a farewell demonstration game in Pyongyang before their departure.[[370]](#footnote-370) The entire team even had each player’s name published in *Rodong Sinmun*.[[371]](#footnote-371) Before arriving to Budapest, the team practiced with the Soviet Athletics University and the Estonian National Team in Moscow.[[372]](#footnote-372) However, this may have had a negative effect, as players were suffering from exhaustion at the time of the tournament.[[373]](#footnote-373) The competition took place from 14 to 21 August.[[374]](#footnote-374) The DPRK team would capture fifth place, with five victories and two losses. One loss was to France in the Semi-Final, and the other loss was to the Soviet Union in group play.[[375]](#footnote-375)[[376]](#footnote-376)

In analysis of the games in *People’s Athletics*, it was said that the level of opposing teams was higher than that of the First World Festival of Youth and Students two years prior. In particular, the DPR Korea team was surprised by horseshoe shaped post plays from France as well as precise fast-break passing from the USSR. The same article went on to describe the modern facilities upon offer in Hungary in great detail, and asserting that they were superior to DPRK facilities. In order to improve, the author demanded more ideological Marxist-Leninist Education for the athletes, absorbing Soviet sport culture, more precise timing of training so as to prepare while avoiding fatigue, logical training methods adjusted to physical constitution, and a dedicated coach, as the team did not have one.[[377]](#footnote-377)

The early success of the DPRK’s national basketball team can be seen, somewhat, as an extension of basketball’s established popularity in Pyongyang during the colonial era and Pyongyang’s successful school teams during that time. While the DPRK supported their national team officially as a state, the lack of basketball teams outside of schools, the need to host preliminary selection games months prior to the team’s departure, the brutally planned travel schedule, and the team’s lack of a coach are all indicators of a program still requiring a great deal of development. Meanwhile, the thinly veiled criticism of the DPRK’s facilities in *People’s Athletics* provides a level of brutal honesty that would be all but impossible to express publicly in the DPRK’s later years.

Table 5: Men's National Team Results, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 00-Aug-47 | Sparta Progue | Czechoslovakia | Prague | ? | Preliminary Round | 1st World Festival of Youth and Students | 54 | 46 | Win |
| 00-Aug-47 | Dělnická Tělovýchovná Jednota | Czechoslovakia | Prague | ? | Preliminary Round | 1st World Festival of Youth and Students | 40 | 20 | Win |
| 19-Aug-47 | Mandatory Palestine | Czechoslovakia | Prague | ? | Preliminary Round | 1st World Festival of Youth and Students | 38 | 34 | Win |
| 00-Aug-47 | Poland | Czechoslovakia | Prague | ? | Final | 1st World Festival of Youth and Students | 55 | 15 | Win |
| 14~17-Aug-49 | Soviet Union | Soviet Union | Budapest | ? | Group Match | 2nd World Festival of Youth and Students | 24 | 48 | Loss |
| 18-Aug-49 | France | Hungary | Budapest | ? | Semi-Final | 2nd World Festival of Youth and Students | 57 | 65 | Loss |

## 5.4 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

There is very little information regarding the pre-war women’s national team. Still, it is known that they participated in the Second World Festival of Youth and Students, achieving what was reported as an “excellent result”.[[378]](#footnote-378)

## 5.5 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

In 1946, a basketball competition between Seoul and Pyongyang known as Kyong-phyong-jon (경평전) was held in Seoul for the last time.[[379]](#footnote-379)[[380]](#footnote-380) The competition had originally taken place through a series of periodic matches in the early to mid-1930s. The 1946 competition was held from the 25 to 26 March at Seoul Stadium. A team from Pyongyang beat Yonhui College 30 to 24 in the first game, while a team from Pyongyang beat the Seoul Tax Office 82 to 45 in the Semi-Final.[[381]](#footnote-381) Unfortunately, no further results are known. There is no express reason for the halting of North-South matches, but the infighting that began to take place among northern athletics organizations in 1947 as well as the increasingly tense atmosphere between north and south certainly played a part in this outcome.

Table 6: Inter-Korean Match Results, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 25~26-Mar-46 | Unknown (Pyongyang) | Yonhui College | USA Military Army Government in Korea | Seoul | Seoul Sports Grounds | Seoul-Pyongyang Competition/Overall Athletics Competition | 30 | 24 | Win |
| 25~26-Mar-46 | Unknown (Pyongyang) | Seoul Tax Office | USA Military Army Government in Korea | Seoul | Seoul Sports Grounds | Seoul-Pyongyang Competition/Overall Athletics Competition (Semi-Final) | 82 | 45 | Win |

## 5.6 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

As mentioned in the previous section, by 1 November 1945, the North Korean Athletics Alliance was established as an organ to organize regional athletics organizations and guide athletics in a unified manner.[[382]](#footnote-382) Smaller organizations were also made for each province, city, and county. This is notable because basketball athletes participated in this process.[[383]](#footnote-383) As such, basketball can be said to have been a part of DPRK athletics policy from the very beginning.

The next basketball related policy would come a year later, in December of 1946. According to a decision by the North Korean Workers Party Central Committee Working Committee, exercise equipment factories were established in Pyongyang, Wonsan, Hamhung, and Chongjin. Among other equipment, the factories made clothes and basketballs for farms, schools, and other factories nationwide.[[384]](#footnote-384) However, in reality, fees for balls and uniforms continued to be an issue, and said fees were often wasted.[[385]](#footnote-385)

By 1948, when full athletics policy was already underway, the Ministry of Public Welfare basketball team toured to North Hamgyong Province, South Hamgyong Province, and Kangwon Province. During their tour, the Ministry of Public Welfare would give technical guidance and improve competitive skill among workers. This was followed by another tour of the same team in March, featuring visits to Sinuiju, Sonchon, and Jongju in North Phyongan Province and Haeju, Jaeryong, and Sariwon in Hwanghae Province for roughly three days each over an eleven day period.[[386]](#footnote-386)

On 9 September 1948, the Central Athletics Committee and provincial athletics committees were established on the day of the founding of the nation. This committee effectively cooperated with lower-level organizations, such as work alliances, farmers alliances, and democratic youth alliances, in order to organize competitive tournaments at workplaces, farms, and schools. This included basketball tournaments.[[387]](#footnote-387) By the end of 1948, there were 4131 multi-purpose Stadiums nationwide which could be used for basketball, volleyball, or tennis.[[388]](#footnote-388)

Around 1949, available editions of the magazine *People’s Athletics* give more detailed insight into the DPRK’s basketball policy. In the July 1949 issue, Kim Hwa Yong, the Chairperson of the basketball department of the Central Athletics Committee, stated that the DPRK had caught up to world standards of basketball but still had a lot of developing to do. He stressed the need to start with proper instruction of beginners.[[389]](#footnote-389) In the same issue, Kim Hwa Yong penned an article describing the proper method for teaching and executing basic passes.[[390]](#footnote-390)

That same month, the Referees Bureau was reorganized so that each athletics committee had basketball as one of 17 discipline sub-committees. Each sub-committee consisted of those who were most excellent in skill, excellent in theory, and passionate about research. The basketball committee’s plan was to train more coaches, have coaches for working teams, train said coaches, research training beginners, research individual skill, and research strategy.[[391]](#footnote-391) Accordingly, in 1949, a five day long referee training course took place over the course of five days. Seventeen males participated, but no females participated.[[392]](#footnote-392) This helped relieve the referee shortage outside of the capital.[[393]](#footnote-393)

In December of 1949, the Chairman of the Basketball Committee, Kim Hwa Yong, wrote an analysis piece about the basketball games in the Athletics Holiday tournament that November. He emphasized the need for lower-level teams to practice the fundamentals more regularly. He also emphasized the need for better foul management, substitution patterns, and free throw shooting. In particular, he asserted that teams outside of the capital played at a lower level, and that the Athletics Committee needed to pay more attention to this issue. This article is also the only case of extensive statistics of different teams being published.[[394]](#footnote-394) Furthermore, in early 1950, there was a three-page article discussing how to attack different types of zone defences, drawing upon previous matches of the national team and featuring various diagrams.[[395]](#footnote-395)

Looking back on basketball as a part of domestic policy during the Establishment Era, one can draw the following conclusions. Firstly, through clinics for both players and referees, efforts were given to expand basketball out into the provinces. Secondly, through government-published magazines, it is clear that there were basketball specialists working to improve the nation’s overall level of basketball. Thirdly, due to a lack of organizational structure and physical equipment, the overall accessibility of basketball was limited to some extent.

## 5.7 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

On 9 May 1946, the first DPRK Athletics Tournament was held in Pyongyang.[[396]](#footnote-396) Basketball was not a contested discipline in this tournament, but basketball would be contested just a couple of weeks later for the first time in the DPRK. In total, seven known basketball tournaments were held from 1946 to 1950, with nearly all of them held as part of larger events.

Table 7: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| Competitive Basketball Tournament | 롱구경기대회 | 24-May-1946~26-May-1946 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Celebratory Athletics Festival | 5․1절 경축 체육체전 | 1-May-1947~2-May-1947 | Kangwon Province | ? |
| 15 August Commemorative Athletics Festival | 8·15기념 체육축전 | 24-Aug-1947~28-Aug-1947 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Festival | 5.1절기념 평양특별시 체육대회 | 1949-05-01, 1949-05-08 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Stadium |
| 4th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative Athletics Festival | 8.15 해방 4주년 기념 전국 체육 축전 | 16-Aug-1949~17-Aug-1949 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Stadium |
| First Annual Athletics Holiday Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 제1회 체육절 기념 전국체육대회 | 30-Oct-1949~4-Nov-1949 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Stadium |
| Western Seaboard Athletics Tournament | 서해안체육대회 | 20-Apr-1950-24-Apr-1950 | Nampho | ? |

Most of the tournaments were in celebration of holidays; the 1 May Workers’ holiday, the 15 August Liberation Holiday, and the newly established Athletics Holiday. Additionally, most of the tournaments were held in Pyongyang during warm months. However, Nampho and Kangwon Province also hosted a tournament each.

Table 8: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Competitive Basketball Tournament | 24-May-1946~26-May-1946 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Celebratory Athletics Festival | 1-May-1947~2-May-1947 | Fishing Cooperative | ? | Worker's Party Provincial Committee | ? | (*Hanmil* Secondary School beat Yongsa Secondary School in the Student Division) |
| 15 August Commemorative Athletics Festival | 24-Aug-1947~28-Aug-1947 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | (Pyongyang won the male student division) |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Festival | 1949-05-01, 1949-05-08 | Electric (Workplace) Normal University (University) Chaejon (High School) Middle School #1 (Middle School) | ? | Education (Workplace) Medical University (University) Sajon (High School) Middle School #4 (Middle School) | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative North Phyongan Province Athletics Festival | 1-May-1949~4-May-1949 | Lorry | ? | North Phyongan Province Communications | ? | ? |
| Selection Championship for Participants in the World Festival of Youth and Students | 14-May-1949~18-May-1949 | Ministry of Public Welfare | 10 Points | Pyongyang City | Ministry of People's Security | 2. 8 Points 3. 6 Points 4. United Provincial Team A (4 Points) United Provincial Team B University Team |
| 4th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative Athletics Festival | 16-Aug-1949~17-Aug-1949 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Public Welfare North Phyongan Province Ministry of People's Security Hwanghae Province |
| First Annual Athletics Holiday Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 30-Oct-1949~4-Nov-1949 | Ministry of Public Welfare (Normal) Sinuiju Normal University (University) | ? | Pyongyang City (Normal) Haeju Normal University (University) | ? | Normal Division: Ministry of People's Security Hwanghae Province South Phyongan Province North Phyongan Province South Hamgyong Province North Hamgyong Province Jagang Province Ministry of Transportation  University Division: Normal University Hamhung Medical University Pyongyang Industrial University Agricultural University Kim Il Sung University Russian Language University Pyongyang Medical University Chongjin Medical University Hungnam Industrial University Chongjin Normal University |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Festival | 16-Apr-1950~Apr-1950 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Western Seaboard Athletics Tournament | 20-Apr-1950-24-Apr-1950 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | Hwanghae Province National Defense Ministry |

Table 9: Women’s Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Competitive Basketball Tournament | 24-May-1946~26-May-1946 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Celebratory Athletics Festival | 1-May-1947~2-May-1947 | Teaching/Law Specialty School (Student Division) | Sungjong Secondary School | ? | ? |
| 15 August Commemorative Athletics Festival | 24-Aug-1947~28-Aug-1947 | Hwanghae Province (Student Division) | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Festival | 1949-05-01, 1949-05-08 | Normal University (University) Girls Middle School #2 (Middle School) | Medical University (University) Girls Middle School #4 (Middle School) | ? | ? |
| 4th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative Athletics Festival | 16-Aug-1949~17-Aug-1949 | Kangwon Province | ? | ? | Hwanghae Province Pyongyang City |
| First Annual Athletics Holiday Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 30-Oct-1949~4-Nov-1949 | Pyongyang City | Kangwon Province | ? | Hwanghae Province South Hamgyong Province South Phyongan Province North Hamgyong Province North Phyongan Province Jagang Province |
| Western Seaboard Athletics Tournament | 20-Apr-1950-24-Apr-1950 | Hwanghae Province | ? | ? | ? |

The following conclusions can be drawn from the participants of the men’s and women’s teams. Firstly, the participants are almost entirely schools, central organs, or provincial representatives. Individual businesses and farms had yet to establish their own teams. Secondly, as indicated by Pyongyang City’s three total league wins and the Ministry of Public Welfare’s two league wins, Pyongyang was the centre of basketball success. Thirdly, the Pyongyang City team, at least in name, can be said to date back to 1947. Pyongyang City would go on to be an elite athletics club throughout the DPRK’s history, but it would not be officially organized until 30 April 1956.[[397]](#footnote-397)

Table 10: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 02-May-47 | Regular | Fishing Cooperative | Worker's Party Provincial Committee | 30 | 22 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 02-May-47 | Student | Hanmil Secondary School | Yongsa Secondary School | 22 | 17 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | Workplace | Electric | Education | 46 | 29 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | University | Normal University | Medical University | 36 | 22 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | High School | Chaejon | Sajon | 31 | 18 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | Middle School | #1 Middle School | #4 Middle School | 16 | 14 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | N/A | Lorry | North Phyongan Province Communications | 32 | 26 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 16~17-Aug-49 | N/A | Pyongyang City | Ministry of Public Welfare | 38 | 29 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 16~17-Aug-49 | N/A | North Phyongan Province | Ministry of People's Security | 40 | 27 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 16~17-Aug-49 | N/A | Pyongyang City | Hwanghae Province | 46 | 29 | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 16~17-Aug-49 | N/A | Pyongyang City | North Phyongan Province | 45 | 31 | 3W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 01~04 Nov 49 | University | Pyongyang Normal University | Agricultural University | 45 | 35 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01~04 Nov 49 | Normal | Ministry of Public Welfare | Pyongyang City | 45 | 42 | 1W 1L | 3W 1L |
| 01~04 Nov 49 | University | Sinuiju Normal University | Haeju Normal University | 51 | 33 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 20-Apr-50 | N/A | Hwanghae Province | ? | ? | ? | 1W 1L | ? |
| 20-Apr-50 | N/A | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | 2W 1L | ? |
| 20-Apr-50 | N/A | National Defense Ministry | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 21-Aug-50 | N/A | Minju Joson | ? (륙사?) | 61 | 50 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |

From this table, it can be determined that Pyongyang City, with three wins and one loss, and the Ministry of Public Welfare, with one win and one loss, were likely the two best teams in this era. Both possessed a similar level of talent when facing each other, but Pyongyang City was able to beat two provincial opponents by an average of 15.5 points. Furthermore, the low levels of scoring reflect the slow-paced style of basketball at the time, before the invention of the shot clock.

Table 11: Women's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Establishment Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 02-May-47 | Student | Teaching/Law Specialty School | Sungjong Secondary School | 20 | 6 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | University | Normal University | Medical University | 29 | 1 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-49 | Middle School | Girls' Middle School #2 | Girls' Middle School #4 | 32 | 10 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 16~17-Aug-49 | N/A | Kangwon Province | Hwanghae Province | 11 | 9 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 16~17-Aug-49 | N/A | Kangwon Province | Pyongyang City | 18 | 16 | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01~04 Nov 49 | Normal | Pyongyang City | Kangwon Province | 26 | 17 | 1W 1L | 2W 1L |

From this table, it can be determined that the women faced a much greater difference in talent pool than the men. Extremely low scoring games, coupled with several losing teams having their score more than tripled by the winning team indicate that certain clubs were very inexperienced. This is in line with the low development level of women’s basketball compared to the men’s during the colonial era, particularly in the North.

## 5.8 Basketball as a Pastime

Compared to later years, there is not as much information on basketball played at leisure during the Establishment Era. Nevertheless, on 30 May 1948, *Rodong Sinmun* stated that basketball was being played nationwide, and that basketball, along with football, must be given priority in the curation of high-quality teams.[[398]](#footnote-398) In 1949, there were not yet any full-time professional clubs, with the overwhelming majority of clubs coming from workplaces, farms, or schools.[[399]](#footnote-399) By February 1949, there were reports of basketball teams in Wonsan in *People’s Athletics.*[[400]](#footnote-400)In 1950, it was reported that the Hungnam Ponkung Chemical Factory in South Hamgyong Province achieved first place in men’s basketball at the Hungnam City 15 August Liberation tournament.[[401]](#footnote-401) It was also reported that the Korean Central News Agency athletics team had one hour practice of basketball and other disciplines twice a week.[[402]](#footnote-402) While these reports are short, they provide valuable insight into the fact that basketball had spread into the provinces, and that some businesses had given priority to developing their basketball teams.

## 5.9 Standout Basketball Stars

Although there are no singularly amazing basketball standouts from this era, there are certainly exceptional athletes that merit mentioning. In the men’s circuit, Pak Yong Dae and Pyon Sung Mok were noted for their performance in the Second World Festival of Youth and Students. Pak was praised for his double-motion two-handed shots, while Pyon was praised for his dribble-dash one-handed shot. Also, Pak Pyong Jun was noted for his mid-range shooting while playing for Phyongan Province against the Ministry of Public Welfare.

In the women’s circuit, Kim Ha Jong of Kangwon Province was mentioned in two separate articles. She showed good activity in a final against Pyongyang City in August of 1949, and she scored 12 of her team’s 13 points in the second half of another final against Pyongyang City that November. Meanwhile, Kim Ki Po of Kangwon Province scored her team’s winning shot in the August 1949 final against Pyongyang City.

# chapter 6. The War Era (1950.6.25~1953.7.27)

## 6.1 General Athletics Overview

The Korean War can be seen as a turning point at which the DPRK’s athletics became more focused on strengthening national defence and labour power.[[403]](#footnote-403) Along these lines, in 1951, the Pyongyang City Athletics Teacher Short-term Training Centre was established. At said centre, 30 men and 20 women were trained. Kim Il Sung did not show any interest in the training of expert athletes, but did guide a women’s volleyball game during wartime.[[404]](#footnote-404) Additionally, ideological discourse during the war equated the nation and the family, internalizing nationalism for DPRK women.[[405]](#footnote-405)

In January 1952, the Korean People’s Army Athletics Team was organized, and they conducted specialized training in the basements of destroyed buildings and deep in the mountains.[[406]](#footnote-406) Due somewhat to this training, athletes from the Korean People’s Army and Ministry of People’s Security(민족보위성) would often succeed domestically after the war.[[407]](#footnote-407) Also during the war, the DPRK would participate in the third and fourth World Festival of Youth and Students.[[408]](#footnote-408)

## 6.2 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

Due to the war, there was no basketball related domestic policy, basketball tournament, or recreational basketball activity during this era. Still, the DPRK men’s national team was active abroad. In early August 1951, the DPRK men’s national basketball team participated in the 11th Academic Summer Games, playing matches against England, Poland, and Hungary. The DPRK decidedly lost their first match to Hungary.[[409]](#footnote-409) Before the match against England, the Korean and English captains greeted each other in the name of peace. Aftwerwards, the Korean team lost their game to England quite handily.[[410]](#footnote-410) It was later reported that Kim Il Sung played a part in the dispatch of the athletics delegation, as well as their return and the subsequent organization of the KPA Sports Group.[[411]](#footnote-411)

The DPRK hoped to participate in the Helsinki Olympics from 19 July to 3 August 1952, and a men’s basketball team was part of the proposed delegation. However, due to the ROK’s prior presence at the games, the DPRK was not allowed to participate.[[412]](#footnote-412) All in all, although the DPRK put forth an effort to recapture their previous success by fielding men’s teams internationally, the ravages of war would materially and politically obliterate any chances they had.

Table 12: Men's National Team Results, War Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 08-Aug-51 | Hungary | East Germany | East Berlin | Berliner Sportpark | Group Match | 12th Academic Summer Games | 49 | 79 | Loss |
| 10-Aug-51 | England | East Germany | East Berlin | Berliner Sportpark | Group Match | 12th Academic Summer Games | 30 | 98 | Loss |

# chapter 7: The Reconstruction Era (1953.7.27~1959.2.27)

## 7.1 General Athletics Overview

The Reconstruction Era encompasses the post-war restoration period of the DPRK.[[413]](#footnote-413) The Korean War was devastating for the DPRK, as approximately 8,700 factories, 70,000 homes, and 5,000 schools were destroyed. Industrial production was down over 40%, and agricultural supply was down over 2.5%.[[414]](#footnote-414) As such, post war, the DPRK was focused on constructing a new Socialist economy.[[415]](#footnote-415) This economic construction included the sphere of athletics. At the sixth plenum of the Party Central Committee on 5 August 1953, popular athletics for the increase of physical fitness was brought up, as it was thought that this would help the public health, which would help revitalize the economy.[[416]](#footnote-416) Beginning in the mid-1950s, the DPRK began to emphasize athletics as a basis for increasing production as part of the larger *Chollima* economic revitalization movement.[[417]](#footnote-417) In essence, the popularization of athletics was part of the “Socialist Competition” of the era, showcasing the influence received from the *Chollima* movement.[[418]](#footnote-418)

In terms of administration, reforms began right away. On 23 June 1954, the Athletics Guidance Committee was established as subordinate to the cabinet, and provincial and unit-level athletics committees were also established.[[419]](#footnote-419) This signalled the first effort to form a unitary and organizational athletics administration.[[420]](#footnote-420) In May 1955, the People’s Army Athletics Association, People’s Security Worker Athletics Association, Transportation Worker Athletics Association, Trade Union Athletics Association, and Students Athletic Association were renamed. Additionally, seven sector wide athletics associations for individual industries, such as metal, machinery, and coal were organized and supplied.[[421]](#footnote-421) On 1 November 1955, Ministries of Athletics Training were established in multiple provinces. This fostered the creation of athletics teams at multiple workplaces, schools, and farming villages.[[422]](#footnote-422) By the end of 1956, there were over 7,400 athletic teams with over 670,000 participants. Roughly 30% of said participants were women.[[423]](#footnote-423) The war had further strengthened the role of women, who had to support the economy by entering the workforce while men were off to war. As such, women took on jobs such as that of a mechanic or sailor.[[424]](#footnote-424) The continued participation of women in athletic teams reflects women’s increased role in society at the time.

On 19 March 1958, the cabinet made a massive reform in the area of athletics. This involved installing an athletic guidance officer at every factory, business, and trade union with over a thousand employees.[[425]](#footnote-425) It also involved a systematic inspection of each athletics club and society in order to institute organizational stability.[[426]](#footnote-426) Furthermore, each provinces’ athletics club was reorganized as an athletics school.[[427]](#footnote-427) This could be regarded as the first general effort to establish an athlete training system.[[428]](#footnote-428)

As part of the larger movement to create more athletics teams, two historically significant clubs were created. Firstly, the athletics club Locomotive was founded. According to modern-day DPRK official sources, this occurred on 11 January 1956.[[429]](#footnote-429) The Locomotive athletics club would go on to be one of the most successful clubs in the nation, even receiving specific praise from Kim Jong Il. However, there is a great deal of conflicting information surrounding the genesis of this club. According to ROK scholars in the early 2000s, the Locomotive Athletics Club was established under the Ministry of Public Welfare in 1950, but was reorganized as the Ministry of Transportation team in 1974.[[430]](#footnote-430) This would seemingly conflict with modern DPRK sources, which claim that the Ministry of Public Welfare team was the genesis of Amrok River.[[431]](#footnote-431) Furthermore, an ROK scholarly source from 2011, as well as a 1959 article in *Rodong Sinmun*, claim that Locomotive was created from the transportation sector in 1958 as part of a broader reorganization of economic sectors into athletic clubs.[[432]](#footnote-432) Suffice to say, one cannot determine the true origins of the Locomotive Athletics Club from available sources. But, due to the fact that Locomotive began to appear in tournament and match records beginning in 1958, one can say for certain that they began activity under their current name in earnest during the Reconstruction Era. By the Mass Athletics Era, Locomotive would be based in Yankggakdo Sports Village, Pyongyang.[[433]](#footnote-433)

Secondly, the Pyongyang City Athletics Club was founded on 30 April 1956.[[434]](#footnote-434) This club would go on to be successful in domestic tournaments and play a significant amount of matches against international teams domestically and abroad. Teams representing Pyongyang City had been playing since the Establishment Era, but the modern organization of Pyongyang City Athletics Club was founded during the Reconstruction Era.[[435]](#footnote-435)

Outside of athletics teams, the working-age population were kept fit by gymnastics and fitness exams. A March 1955 decision by the central athletics committee, the Democratic Youth League Central Committee, and the Trade Union Central Committee decided that people’s public health gymnastics would be carried out by the whole society.[[436]](#footnote-436) From 1953 to 1960, eight mass gymnastics performances were carried out.[[437]](#footnote-437) The most notable of these performances took place in mid-August 1958 at an athletics tournament celebrating the Thirteenth Anniversary of 15 August Liberation.[[438]](#footnote-438) This was the first mass gymnastics performance held on a truly massive scale, setting the bar higher for events that followed it. [[439]](#footnote-439)

Additionally, from 1955 to 1960, the number of people who passed the People’s Fitness Exams increased over sixfold to roughly 667,000. This was partially due to the introduction of a competition system in 1958 and the gradual expansion of participants to eventually encompass the entire populous by 1960.[[440]](#footnote-440) Also, during this era, Physical Fitness Tests would serve a feeder system for athletics kurakbu (체육구락부) in each province.[[441]](#footnote-441) Athletics kurakbu were originally designed to teach athletic skill and train athletes of all ages.[[442]](#footnote-442) However, in practice, athletics kurakbu grew to develop working-age participants as teachers or coaches, while their main focus would be providing additional expert training for elite youth between the ages of 17 and 22.[[443]](#footnote-443) As time went on, this age became lower.[[444]](#footnote-444) Some would be re-designated in 1959 as Youth Sports Schools.[[445]](#footnote-445)

The people’s fitness exams were not the end all be all of an individual’s potential athletic achievement during the Reconstruction Era. On 3 August 1954, a system of athlete levels was established, as well as the procedure for the Athletics Guidance Committee to award the title of Master Sportsperson (체육명수).[[446]](#footnote-446) In order to be a Master Sportsperson, one had to satisfy the level requirements of their individual athletic discipline, achieve an excellent result in international competition, and have a high level on their people’s physical fitness test rating.[[447]](#footnote-447) Below Master Sportsperson was a three-level classification system for athletes. In order to achieve levels one through three of athlete, one had to achieve a relevant score on the people’s physical fitness test.[[448]](#footnote-448) In March 1956, the first Athletics Committee Meeting of the Cabinet was held. At said meeting, rules concerning levels of sportsperson and the certification of referees were decided.[[449]](#footnote-449) This included Master Sportspeople then being eligible to receive a subsidy and material benefits every month.[[450]](#footnote-450) However, as of 1957, only 21 people had achieved this title. Also, only 644 people in total ranked as tier one to three athletes. This was a very low number in comparison to the nation’s population.[[451]](#footnote-451)[[452]](#footnote-452) Further categorization of athletes occurred on 20 April 1955. This involved separating athletes into three levels; youth, level one adults, and level two adults.[[453]](#footnote-453)

The amount of available athletic disciplines increased during the Reconstruction Era. There was some effort to popularize National Defence Athletics in the year following the Korean War, when the term was officially coined.[[454]](#footnote-454) But it wasn’t until the latter half of the decade that more National Defence Athletics disciplines were introduced to the populous and encouraged.[[455]](#footnote-455) Furthermore, on 30 December 1958, the Party Central Committee Working Committee expanded the contents of Socialist athletics, emphasizing the need to have a total and quick development of people’s athletics.[[456]](#footnote-456) Traditional athletics were also introduced. In 1956, a Cabinet order emphasized the need to succeed and develop traditional athletics, resulting in each city and county claiming to boast an archery field, a traditional Korean wresting ring (씨름장), and Korean swinging facilities (그네장).[[457]](#footnote-457) They, along with see-saw (널뛰기) were also integrated into people’s health inspections and major athletics tournaments.[[458]](#footnote-458) From 1959, traditional athletics tournaments began to be held every year.[[459]](#footnote-459) Lastly, innovation in athletics was also emphasized towards the end of the decade.[[460]](#footnote-460) This goes along with the spirit of the era, in that established disciplines could be carried out in another way or even more disciplines could emerge.

It wasn’t just the working-age citizens who saw an emphasis on athletic activities; school aged youth saw an increase as well. After the war, the time dedicated to athletics in each level of schooling was as follows; Primary School 8%, Middle School 5%, and High School 6%.[[461]](#footnote-461) In 1955, Middle Schools saw that time rise significantly, to 13%.[[462]](#footnote-462) In 1959, an effort to improve technology led to technology schools seeing athletics time rise to 10% and technical high schools seeing athletics time rise to 19%.[[463]](#footnote-463) In alignment with this emphasis on school athletics, getting proper facilities for athletics was always seen as a priority among students, teachers, and organizations that supported schools.[[464]](#footnote-464)

Organizations outside of the schools would push for more youth athletics as well. In 1956, the Democratic Youth League took on the role of making low level organizations at each school unit, carrying out school athletics, and carrying out extracurricular athletics.[[465]](#footnote-465) Furthermore, in the 1950s, the Children’s Union and the Democratic Youth League took on the role of guiding students’ lives during holiday break. The Democratic Youth League in particular organized seasonally appropriate athletics and created needed athletic facilities. The Children’s Union, guided by the Democratic Youth League, also organized athletic activities. Both organizations would even combine athletics with other organizational events.[[466]](#footnote-466)

As the Reconstruction Era went on, the emphasis on school athletics only increased. From 1957 to 1959, the number of members of lower-level athletics organizations and the number of students at athletic schools was increased by over four times.[[467]](#footnote-467) From 1953 to 1959, two athletics departments, two training schools, an athletics university, and two athletics schools were established in order to create more athletics cadres.[[468]](#footnote-468) Most notably, this included the 1 September 1958 founding of Pyongyang Athletics University.[[469]](#footnote-469) From 1957 to 1960, the number of referees increased tenfold, and the number of coaches increased fifteenfold.[[470]](#footnote-470) All in all, the emphasis on school athletics wasn’t just bluster. It was supplemented by various rules, institutions, and newly trained personnel.

In terms of international athletics, the DPRK began to see some progress concerning their recognition. In 1956, the DPRK’s women’s volleyball team would participate in the Women’s Volleyball World Championship in Paris, marking the first time the DPRK would participate in an athletics tournament in a capitalist country.[[471]](#footnote-471) From 1956 to 1960, the DPRK joined thirteen different international associations for various athletic disciplines. Also, the DPRK participated in nine different football, volleyball, and track and field competitions with China, Mongolia, and Vietnam. Lastly, the DPRK participated in several other international competitions, mostly with Socialist countries.[[472]](#footnote-472)

## 7.2 Basketball’s Relationship with Diplomacy

The Reconstruction Era was very productive in terms of international exchange. Friendly basketball games with teams from the Soviet Union, China, France, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Mongolia on men’s and women’s sides emphasize this fact. But in terms of international diplomacy, by far the most notable achievement for DPRK basketball was on 3 December 1956. This is when the DPRK Basketball Association joined FIBA, some 9 years after the ROK.[[473]](#footnote-473) The joining of FIBA would pave the way for the DPRK women’s team to participate in the 1959 FIBA World Championship. Also, the DPRK’s joining of FIBA would create many other international basketball opportunities for the country down the line. All in all, said joining was part of a larger effort by the DPRK government to join multiple international athletics associations for specific disciplines in order to achieve more international legitimacy.

## 7.3 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

Throughout the Reconstruction Era, the men’s national team would see a flurry of activity. This began just after the ceasefire of the Korean War, with the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students in August of 1953.[[474]](#footnote-474) The DPRK team would achieve fourth place in the Bucharest-based competition, losing against East Germany and France but beating Lebanon.[[475]](#footnote-475)

The next *Rodong Sinmun* reported instance of the DPRK national team going abroad would be in April 1954. The men’s team would again travel to the Soviet Union, this time playing against the USSR, Leningrad’s Team, and Lithuania in Leningrad, Lithuania in Lithuania, a local team and the Estonian team in Estonia, Ukrainian players in Kiev, Kharkiev players in Kharkiev, and Moscow in Moscow.[[476]](#footnote-476) The DPRK would win their games against Leningrad, Estonia, Lithuania, and Kharkiv. But they would lose to the USSR’s national side and Moscow’s team quite handily.[[477]](#footnote-477) It must be said that this was quite the excursion, as it took the teams roughly six weeks to return home. Upon the team’s return, they made a report on their exploits upon their return.[[478]](#footnote-478)

That August, the men’s national basketball teams competed in the 1955 World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw.[[479]](#footnote-479) No results are available. After the tournament, the team would visit Moscow and several cities in China with the purpose of increasing friendship between the nations.[[480]](#footnote-480)

In August of 1956, there was a national tournament for youth and students in Pyongyang, with the best athletes going on to represent the DPRK at the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow.[[481]](#footnote-481)

In March of 1957, there was a preliminary league in Pyongyang to prepare for the upcoming 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow.[[482]](#footnote-482) The basketball matches at the festival itself occurred from 31 July to 3 August.[[483]](#footnote-483) The group structure of the basketball tournament was explained quite extensively in *Rodong Sinmun*.[[484]](#footnote-484) The men’s team lost against the USSR and France, failing to advance out of preliminaries.[[485]](#footnote-485) In their final match, the men lost against Brazil and ended up in 14th place.[[486]](#footnote-486) Regardless of the disappointing result, a basketball match was played as a welcome to returning athletes.[[487]](#footnote-487) About two weeks late, the experience of the team at the tournament would be analysed in a *Minju Joson* article.[[488]](#footnote-488) Finally, there would also be friendly basketball games between the DPRK, the Soviet Union, China, and Mongolia in 1957.[[489]](#footnote-489)

The Reconstruction Era was, overall, a disappointing era in terms of results for the men’s team. The World Festival of Youth and Students, a competition they had done well in prior to the War, had become a competition in which the DPRK men finished in the back of the pack. Meanwhile, the DPRK men lost friendly matches against the USSR, Lithuania, and twice to China. The team could take some solace in the fact that they beat a number of local Soviet teams, at least showing that they were worthy of being a national side. Nevertheless, looking beyond the results, the DPRK as a state clearly had the political will to use the men’s team for international relations and had hopes for their success.

Table 13: Men's National Team Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Win?** |
| 08-Aug-51 | Hungary | East Germany | East Berlin | Berliner Sportpark | Group Match | 12th Academic Summer Games | 49 | 79 | Loss |
| 10-Aug-51 | England | East Germany | East Berlin | Berliner Sportpark | Group Match | 12th Academic Summer Games | 30 | 98 | Loss |
| 07-Aug-53 | East Germany | Romania | Bucharest | ? | Group Match | 4th World Festival of Youth and Students | 39 | 89 | Loss |
| 08-Aug-53 | France | Romania | Bucharest | ? | Group Match | 4th World Festival of Youth and Students | 48 | 83 | Loss |
| 10-Aug-53 | Lebanon | Romania | Bucharest | ? | Group Match | 4th World Festival of Youth and Students | 69 | 16 | Win |
| 03-Apr-54 | Leningrad | Soviet Union | Leningrad | Leningrad Winter Stadium (Kirov Stadium?) | Friendly | N/A | 96 | 62 | Win |
| 04-Apr-54 | Soviet Union | Soviet Union | Leningrad | ? | Friendly | N/A | 47 | 70 | Loss |
| 07-Apr-54 | Estonia | Soviet Union | Tallinn | Joneekeakss Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 69 | 44 | Win |
| 14-Apr-54 | Lithuania | Soviet Union | Kaunas | Telloi Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 69 | 61 | Win |
| 21-Apr-54 | Ukraine | Soviet Union | Kiev | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | ? |
| 24-Apr-54 | Kharkiv | Soviet Union | Kharkiv | ? | Friendly | N/A | 48 | 33 | Win |
| 28-Apr-54 | Moscow | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Friendly | N/A | 39 | 83 | Loss |
| 31-Jul-57 | Soviet Union | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | ? | ? | Loss |
| 31-Jul-57 | China | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 50 | 108 | Loss |
| 01-Aug-57 | France | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | ? | ? | Loss |
| 03-Aug-57 | Brazil | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 68 | 91 | Loss |

## 7.4 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

The women’s side would participate in many of the same excursions and tournaments as the men’s team, but with more success and on a slightly more limited scale. Firstly, the women’s team participated in the Soviet Union trip. They would defeat Leningrad, Lithuania, and the Estonian Missuronoya team. But they would lose another match to Lithuania, tie in their game against Kharkiv, and lose handily to the USSR’s national side.[[490]](#footnote-490)

The women’s national basketball team would see their first tournament action in the 1955 World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw. There are no individual results available, but they did achieve first place in Group B.[[491]](#footnote-491)

In August of 1956, there was a national tournament for youth and students in Pyongyang, with the best athletes going on to represent the DPRK at the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow.[[492]](#footnote-492)

The women’s side’s next action would come at the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow. In March of 1957, there was a preliminary league in Pyongyang to prepare for the upcoming tournament.[[493]](#footnote-493) Eventually, the women’s team would play international matches from 31 July to 3 August.[[494]](#footnote-494) The team scored victories against Romania, Belgium, and Poland, but lost by 60 points against Czechoslovakia. In total, this would allow them to advance out of preliminaries. But the women would lose handily in a match against Bulgaria, and end up in sixth place.[[495]](#footnote-495) Upon the women’s return to Pyongyang, they would participate with the men in a welcome match.[[496]](#footnote-496) Clearly wanting to improve on their losses, in April 1958, the DPRK Women’s National Team travelled to Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria for training.[[497]](#footnote-497)

Compared to the men’s team, the women’s team was slightly more successful during the Reconstruction Era. Their Group B win in the 1955 World Festival of Youth and Students, their sixth place finish in the 1957 World Festival of Youth and Students, and their wins against Soviet club teams indicate that they were somewhat formidable. On the other hand, their decimation at the hands of the Soviet team served as evidence that they had a long way to go until they could contend with the world’s elite. In any case, the women’s team’s Soviet trip, as well as their trip to Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria for training, were clear indicators that the DPRK government was willing to support their training and use them as tools for political legitimacy. What follows is a table of the women’s team’s results.

Table 14: Women's National Team Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 03-Apr-54 | Leningrad | Soviet Union | Leningrad | Leningrad Winter Sports Grounds (Kirov Stadium?) | Friendly | N/A | 80 | 61 | Win |
| 04-Apr-54 | Lithuania | Soviet Union | Leningrad | ? | Friendly | N/A | 50 | 67 | Loss |
| 07-Apr-54 | Missuronoya | Soviet Union | Tallinn | Joneekeakss Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 48 | 24 | Win |
| 14-Apr-54 | Lithuania | Soviet Union | Kaunas | Telloi Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 30 | 21 | Loss |
| 21-Apr-54 | Ukraine | Soviet Union | Kiev | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | ? |
| 24-Apr-54 | Kharkiv | Soviet Union | Kharkiv | ? | Friendly | N/A | 63 | 63 | Tie |
| 28-Apr-54 | Moscow | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Friendly | N/A | 23 | 71 | Loss |
| 31-Jul-57 | Belgium | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 89 | 51 | Win |
| 31-Jul-57 | Poland | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 63 | 47 | Win |
| 01-Aug-57 | Czechoslovakia | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 30 | 90 | Loss |
| 02-Aug-57 | Romania | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | Group Match | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 44 | 43 | Win |
| 07-Aug-57 | Bulgaria | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | ? | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | 39 | 87 | Loss |
| Jul/Aug-57 | East Germany | Soviet Union | Moscow | Sokolniki Sports Palace | ? | 6th World Festival of Youth and Students | ? | ? | Win |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Win |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Win |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Win |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Loss |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Loss |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Loss |
| 17-Apr-58 | Czechoslovakia | Czechoslovakia | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Loss |

## 7.5 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

Before beginning this section, it is prudent to give some background. China, whose influence on the DPRK had been significant during the time of the Korean War, had a thriving basketball culture. Basketball had been played regularly in China since the early twentieth century, surviving as a pastime throughout a great deal of political upheaval.[[498]](#footnote-498) Many top CCP leaders, including Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, were basketball enthusiasts. Furthermore, the sport was popular amongst all sectors of society.[[499]](#footnote-499) The CCP began to adopt the Soviet model for developing elite basketball in the 1950s.[[500]](#footnote-500) Furthermore, until the 1990s, basketball was the most popular athletic discipline in China. Indeed, basketball was indisputably one of the top two athletic disciplines up through the first two decades of the 21st century.[[501]](#footnote-501) As such, China’s influence, both as a quasi-ally of the DPRK and as a country with a long land border with the DPRK, certainly had an effect on the sustained popularity of basketball in the DPRK.

The first record of a basketball tournament in the DPRK after the war is in late August of 1953, when the Eighth Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament was held. This tournament is notable for the fact that the supervising Chinese People’s Army troops participated in it, marking the only time on record that a foreign team participated in a domestic tournament.[[502]](#footnote-502)

Chinese basketball would return to the DPRK in 1956, when the China Electric Power Sports Association team would embark on a friendship tour. The Chinese team’s arrival prompted a personal welcome from the chairman and vice-chairman of the athletic committee, as well as basketball’s first mention on *Rodong Sinmun*’s front page.[[503]](#footnote-503) The ensuing friendship match was played outdoors at the Moranbong Stadium, with hundreds if not thousands of fans watching the game from outdoor grandstands.[[504]](#footnote-504) The Chinese men’s and women’s team won their match against the Ministry of Public Welfare. The Chinese team would go on holiday in downtown Pyongyang, as well as visit Hamhung.[[505]](#footnote-505) In Hamhung, the Chinese men’s and women’s teams would both emerge victorious against the men’s Korean Builder’s Sports Society and the women’s Hamhung team in front of approximately 10,000 fans.[[506]](#footnote-506) On the next day, the Chinese team would sweep two games against DPRK military teams.[[507]](#footnote-507) The Chinese team would go on to visit Kaesong, where they would visit a historic graveyard of Chinese-Korean People’s Soldiers.[[508]](#footnote-508) A couple of days later, the Chinese team would again sweep men’s and women’s games against military teams.[[509]](#footnote-509) Then, in Sariwon, another two matches against the High School Sports Association’s men’s and women’s sides were held in front of approximately 10,000 fans. However, *Rodong Sinmun* refrained from reporting the results.[[510]](#footnote-510) The Chinese team would return to Pyongyang and have a celebration with the chairman and vice-chairman of the athletic committee.[[511]](#footnote-511) The next day, the Chinese team would return to the Moranbong Stadium, where they would lose both men’s and women’s games to the Korean People’s Army Central Training School. The men’s team won by a single point on crunch time free throws. This marked the first men’s and women’s victories for DPRK club teams against a non-Korean opponent.[[512]](#footnote-512) The Chinese team would later get to meet Choe Yong Gon, who was at that time serving as Sports Minister, before departing on 16 June.[[513]](#footnote-513)

In September of the same year, a French female basketball team from Marseille University visited Pyongyang. They played a match against Korean female university students at the Moranbong Stadium. It was a very close victory for the DPRK, attended by a crowd numbering in the thousands.[[514]](#footnote-514) The French team was the first to enter and leave the country by aeroplane.[[515]](#footnote-515)

On April 18, 1957, the Zalgiris men’s and women’s teams from Lithuania arrived in Pyongyang.[[516]](#footnote-516) The men’s team of Zalgiris had been particularly successful in the Soviet Union up to that point. Specifically, the Zalgiris men had won the Soviet championship in 1947 and 1951, captured second place in 1952, and achieved third place from 1953 through 1955.[[517]](#footnote-517) *Rodong Sinmun* claimed that the Zalgiris women’s team had captured second in the 1957 season, while the men’s team had captured fourth. However, outside sources show that the men’s team claimed third, while the women’s side had only claimed seventh that year.[[518]](#footnote-518) Still, it is possible that there was more than one league competition, or that the Soviet Premier Basketball League was ongoing. Zalgiris was scheduled to play the Army Central Training School team in Pyongyang on 21 April, the Administration of Public Welfare in Wonsan on 28 April, the Traffic Administration in Kaesong on 5 May, and again the Army Central Training School in Pyongyang on 7 May. The first match at Moranbong Stadium was so anticipated that, a day prior to the game, a translated story in *Rodong Sinmun* was dedicated to documenting Zalgiris’ players and previous success.[[519]](#footnote-519) In their first game, the Zalgiris men’s and women’s team achieved runaway victories in front of large crowds.[[520]](#footnote-520) In front of another big crowd in Wonsan on the 28th, the Zalgiris team achieved easy victories against both men’s and women’s Administration of Public Welfare teams. The next day, Zalgiris defeated a team of local army men.[[521]](#footnote-521) Zalgiris was back in Pyongyang on 1 May for International Worker’s Day. On that day, Zalgiris would easily defeat both women’s and men’s mixed Korean teams in front of lots of fans at Moranbong Stadium.[[522]](#footnote-522) In the following scheduled games on the 4th at Kaesong, the Zalgiris men handily beat the Traffic Administration, while the Zalgiris women beat a local people’s army team.[[523]](#footnote-523) This would be the last report on the Zalgiris team’s activities in the *Rodong Sinmun*.

Overall, the visits of the foreign teams to the DPRK shows the DPRK government’s serious interest in developing basketball and using basketball as a tool of diplomacy during this era. The visiting Chinese and Soviet teams conducted weeks-long tours, playing against several opponents each. Furthermore, the ability of the Chinese and Soviet teams to tour the country and *Rodong Sinmun*’s report of their wins indicated an interest in developing the provinces and a certain level of societal openness that was diminished in later eras. Lastly, the presence of a French team coming to the DPRK only accentuates the relatively more liberal attitude of the era.

In terms of the DPRK teams’ ability, it is clear that they were well behind that of their Chinese and Soviet contemporaries. The Soviet team did not lose a single game, and only the Korean People’s Army Central Training School was able to beat the Chinese team after the latter team had been on the road for three weeks. More than anything else, this is emblematic of the DPRK’s lack of state amateur clubs up to that point. Most of the teams that the Chinese and Soviet teams played against were attached to schools, ministries, or military units. It would not be until the mass athletics era until there was a true emergence of quasi-professional athletes in the DPRK.

Table 15: Men's Club Team International Match Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 18-May-56 | Ministry of Public Welfare | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 27-May-56 | Korean Builder's Sports Society | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Hamhung | Hamhung City Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 28-May-56 | Mun Chol Post Military Unit | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Hamhung | Hamhung City Sports Grounds | Friendly | 29 | 45 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 02-Jun-56 | Sim Chong Post Military Unit | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | 59 | 87 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 07-Jun-56 | High School Sports Association | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Sariwon | Sariwon High School | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11-Jun-56 | Korean People's Army Central Training School | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 0L |
| 21-Apr-57 | Korean People's Army Central Training School | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 67 | 98 | Loss | 1W 1L |
| 28-Apr-57 | Ministry of Public Welfare | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Wonsan | ? | Friendly | 45 | 99 | Loss | 0W 2L |
| 29-Apr-57 | Ri Song Gun Post Military Unit | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Wonsan | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 01-May-57 | Korea Mixed Team | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 45 | 90 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 04-May-57 | Transportation Department | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Kaesong | Kaesong General Sports Grounds | Friendly | 36 | 94 | Loss | 0W 1L |

Table 16: Women's Club Team International Match Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 18-May-56 | Ministry of Public Welfare | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 27-May-56 | Hamhung | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Hamhung | Hamhung City Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 28-May-56 | Mun Chol Post Military Unit | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Hamhung | Hamhung City Sports Grounds | Friendly | 36 | 51 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 02-Jun-56 | Sim Chong Post Military Unit | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | 35 | 61 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 07-Jun-56 | High School Sports Association | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Sariwon | Sariwon High School | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11-Jun-56 | Korean People's Army Central Training School | China Electric Power Sports Association | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 0L |
| 13-Sep-56 | University Student Team | Marseilles University (France) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 54 | 53 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 21-Apr-57 | Korean People's Army Central Training School | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 31 | 50 | Loss | 1W 1L |
| 28-Apr-57 | Ministry of Public Welfare | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Wonsan | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 2L |
| 01-May-57 | Korea Mixed Team | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 27 | 43 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 04-May-57 | Kaesong Stationed People's Army | Zalgiris Kaunas | DPRK | Kaesong | Kaesong General Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |

## 7.6 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

In the period immediately following the war, there was understandably not much impetus for either the DPRK or ROK to engage in athletic diplomacy with each other. But just under five years after the armistice, the DPRK, genuinely or not, began to change their attitude. In late March of 1958, basketball was one of the sports proposed in a Minju Joson article to be played in an exchange with the ROK.[[524]](#footnote-524) Later that year, in December 1958, basketball was one of the sport committees in the DPRK to request that the DPRK and ROK put forth a united Olympic team for the upcoming 1960 Olympics in Rome.[[525]](#footnote-525) The International Amateur Basketball Federation, which would later be known as FIBA, would voice support for this proposal in February 1959.[[526]](#footnote-526) United team talks would begin to occur in 1960.

## 7.7 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

During the Reconstruction Era, basketball continued to be a significant part of the government’s efforts to increase athletic participation among the populous. It began at the third meeting of the Cabinet Attached Athletics Guidance Committee on 22 October 1954. There, the Chairperson of the Basketball Section Committee, Jang Chun Ki, participated along with representatives of other sports.[[527]](#footnote-527)

Basketball would occasionally pop up in broader athletic discussions during the following year. In January of 1955, male and female basketball athletes were among those featured in a *Rodong Sinmun* article about a Soviet Athletes Film which was running in DPRK theatres at the time.[[528]](#footnote-528) In May, the need to organize more basketball games, alongside other sports, was emphasized.[[529]](#footnote-529) Also, in August, basketball was mentioned as a sport that showed the nation’s increasing athletic ability.[[530]](#footnote-530)

In terms of facilities, basketball would benefit from the larger construction efforts going on throughout the society. From 1956 to 1959, the number of dual-use basketball and volleyball courts increased over twofold, from roughly 7,500 to roughly 16,000.[[531]](#footnote-531) This included 300 basketball courts that were built in 1958.[[532]](#footnote-532) At the time, it was planned to organize workplaces into tournaments of various sports, including basketball.[[533]](#footnote-533)

Overall, it is enough to see basketball as one of the country’s main athletic disciplines during the Reconstruction Era. It was not given specific emphasis, but it continued to be included in the country’s organizational and construction efforts.

## 7.8 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

The first basketball tournament after the war was in late August of 1953. Overall, 48 men’s basketball tournaments and 35 women’s basketball tournaments were known to have taken place before 27 February 1959. Compared to the ten men’s tournaments and seven women’s tournaments that are known to have occurred before the war, this number is quite high. The difference in numbers can be attributed to the state’s newfound emphasis on athletics as part of the *Chollima* movement, the greater centralization of power during the Reconstruction Era, and possibly the greater availability of sources. Perhaps the most significant tournament of this era was the Thirteenth Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Tournament in mid-August of 1958, as it was the first tournament to feature state amateur teams that were not affiliated with any other organization in name.

Table 17: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| 8th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 8.15 해방 8주년 기념 평양시 체육대회 | 16-Aug-1953~Aug-1953 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Athletics Games Tournament | 체육 경기대회 | 4-May-1954~May-1954 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 15 August Commemorative National Athletics Festival | 8.15 기념 전국 체육 축전 | 2-Aug-1954~16-Aug-1954 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| Korean People's Army Overall Army Games Tournament | 조선 인문군 종합 체육 대회 | 21-Aug-1954~22-Aug-1954 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 9th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation National Athletics Festival | 8.15 해방 9주년 전국체육 축전 | 15-Sep-1954~Sep-1954 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 5th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 체육절 제정 5주년 기념 평양시 체육 대회 | 2-Oct-1954~10-Oct-1954 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Pyongyang City Students' Athletics Tournament | 평양시 학생 체육 대회 | Mid-Oct-1954 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Each Ministry and Department Rivalry Athletics Tournament | 각성 및 국 대항 체육대회 | 9-Nov-1954~Nov-1954 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| World Festival of Youth Commemorative Spring Basketball | 세계 청년 축전 기념하는 춘기 롱구 | 20-Mar-1955~Apr-1955 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Athletics Tournament (On the 1 May Holiday) | 체육대회 | 01-May-55 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 5 Anniversary of 25 June Anti-US Empire Struggle Day Korea People's Army Overall Athletics Tournament | 미제 반대 투쟁의 날 6.25 5주년 조선 인민군 종합 체육 대회 | 26-Jun-1955~1-Jul-1955 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Preliminary Tournament | 8.15해방 10주년 예선 대회 | 26-Jun-1955~27-Jun-1955 | Hamhung | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Preliminary Tournament | 8.15해방 10주년 예선 체육선수권대회 | ~15-Jul-1955 | South Hwanghae Province | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative National Athletics Festival | 8.15 해방 10주년 기념 전국 체육 축전 | 12-Aug-1955~16-Aug-1955 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 체육절 기념 평양시 체육대회 | 9-Oct-1955~23-Oct-1955 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| World Youth Week Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 세계청년주간 기념 평양시 체육대회 | Mar-1956~28-Mar-1956 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National University Student Athletics Tournament | 전국 대학생 체육대회 | 2-Apr-1956~5-Apr-1956 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative National Inter-Industry Overall Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 기념 전국 산별 종합 체육 대회 | 27-Apr-1956~1-May-1956 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Ministry and Attached Department Government Official Athletics Tournament | 성 및 직속 국 정무원 체육 대회 | 13-May-1956~20-May-1956 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Pyongyang City Childrens Athletics Tournament | 평양시 소년 체육 대회 | 6-Jun-1956~7-Jun-1956 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Korea Children's Union Athletics Festival | 조선 소년단원 체육 축전 | 24-Jun-1956~29-Jun-1956 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| National Advanced Secondary School Student Athletics Tournament | 전국 고중 전문학교 학생 체육대회 | 4-Jul-1956~9-Jul-1956 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Jagang Province Workers Athletics Tournament | 자강도내 림업 로동자들의 체육대회 | 28-Jul-1956~29-Jul-1956 | Kangkye City | Kangkye City Stadium |
| 11th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation National Athletics Festival of Youth and Students | 8.15 해방 11주년기념 전국 청년 학생 체육 축전 | 15-Aug-1956-22-Aug-1956 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Korean People's Army 6th Overall Athletics Tournament | 조선 인문군 제6차 종합체육 대회 | 9-Sep-1956~13-Sep-1956 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Athletics Holiday Commemorative Athletics Association Tournament | 체육절 기념 체육 협회 련맹전 | 9-Oct-1956~21-Oct-1956 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Sports Association Winter League | 체육 협회팀간의 동기 롱구 련맹전 | 30-Jan-1957~10-Feb-1957 | Sinuiju | ? |
| Selection League for the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students | 제6차 셰계 청년 학생 축전 선발을 위한 련맹전 | 22-Feb-1957~7-Apr-1957 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Celebratory Pyongyang City Labour Union Athletics Tournament | 5.1 경축 평양시 산별종합체육대회 | 28-Apr-1957~2-May-1957 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National University Student Championship | 전국 대학생체육대회 | 8-May-1957~12-May-1957 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Basketball League | 롱구 련맹전 | Jun-1957~13-Jun-1957 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Sixth Annual Athletics Tournament under the administration of the Ministry of Public Welfare | 제6차 내무성 산하 종합 체육 대회 | 29-Jun-1957~1-Jul-1957 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| National Secondary School Specialist Student Athletics Tournament | 전국 고중, 전문 학생 체육 대회 | 24-Jul-1957~28-Jul-1957 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 12th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Commemorative Sports Association League | 8.15 해방 12주년을 기념하는 스포츠 협회 련맹전 | 2-Aug-1957~16-Aug-1957 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Individual Athletics Championship of Pyongyang Commemorating the 1530th Anniversary of the Founding of Pyongyang and the Athletics Holiday | 평양시 창건 1530주년 및 체육절 기념 평양시 각종 경기 선수권 대회 | 15-Sep-1957~22-Sep-1957 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| National Tournament of Athletes Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Socialist October Revolution and Commemorating the Athletics Holiday | 사회주의 10월 혁명 40주년 경축, 체육절 기념 전국 선수권 대회 | 3-Oct-1957~13-Oct-1957 | Pyongyang | National Federation of Trade Unions of Korea Stadium |
| 10th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Celebratory Athletics Tournament | 조선인민군 창건 10주년 경축 체육 대회 | 2-Feb-1958~11-Feb-1958 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Athletics Tournament | 체육 대회 | 16-Mar-1958~Mar-1958 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| World Youth Week Commemorative Sports Competition League | 세계 청년 주간 기념 스포츠 대항 련맹전 | 5-Apr-1958-Apr-1958 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Inter-Industry Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 경축 평양시 산별 체육 대회 | 2-May-1958~3-May-1958 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory North Hwanghae Province Ball Sport League | 공화국 창건 10주년 경축 황북도 구기 련맹전 | 26-June-1958~29-June-1958 | North Hwanghae Province | ? |
| Sports Association Ball Sport League | 스포츠 협회 구기 련맹전 | 13-July-1958~Jul-1958 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 13th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Commemorative Sports Association League | 8.15 해방 13주년을 기념하는 스포츠 협회 련맹전 | 15-Aug-1958~17-Aug-1958 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| National Student Athletics Festival Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic | 공화국 창건 10주년 경축 전국 학생 체육 축전 | 25-Aug-1958~29-Aug-1958 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| National Athletics Festival Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic | 공화국 창건 10주년 경축 전국 전국 체육 축전 | 8-Sep-1958-13-Sep-1958 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Sports Association Group B Ball Sport League | 스포츠 협회 베 그루빠 구기 련맹전 | 9-Nov 1958~16-Nov-1958 | Hamhung | Hamhung Stadium |
| 1958 Sports Association League 1st Division | 1958년 체육 협회간 련맹전 1급 | 9-Nov-1958-23-Nov-1958 | ? | ? |
| 1958 Sports Association League 2nd Division | 1958년 체육 협회간 련맹전 2급 | 21-Nov-1958-23-Nov-1958 | ? | ? |
| Male and Female Basketball Games | 남녀 롱구 경기 | 8-Feb-1959~Feb-1959 | Pyongyang | People's Army Gymnasium |

Table 18: Women's Basketball Tournament Details (Men's Duplicates Excluded), Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| 10th Anniversary of the Gender Equality Law Proclamation Commemorative Chongjin City Women's Athletics Tournament | 남녀 평등권 법령 발포 10주년 기념 천진시 녀성 체육대회 | 29-Jul-56 | Chongjin | Local Construction Stadium |

What can be determined from the details of the men’s tournaments is the overwhelming presence of Pyongyang as a site. Only six of the 48 tournaments occurred outside of Pyongyang, accounting for twelve and a half percent. No city other than Pyongyang held a tournament more than once. Meanwhile, of those tournaments that occurred in Pyongyang, 21 of them, or the majority, were known to have occurred at Moranbong Stadium. This means that nearly all of the basketball events were contested outdoors. Only one event, the “Male and Female Basketball Games” of 1959, occurred in an indoor gymnasium. As such, it can be concluded that Pyongyang was the definite focus of athletics tournaments during the Reconstruction Era, and that there was not yet the infrastructure to support indoor tournaments.

In terms of naming conventions, tournaments tended to centre around dates that were significant to the nation or the international Socialist movement. National names included tournaments named after Liberation, the foundation of the People’s Army, the foundation of Pyongyang, the proclamation of the Athletics Holiday, or the beginning of the Korean War. Socialist names included World Youth Week, the 1 May Holiday, and the Socialist October Revolution. The rest of the tournaments were named in a practical and blunt manner, either representing an attached organization, the participants, or simply the athletic discipline involved. All in all, the tournament naming conventions of the Reconstruction Era can be seen as a roughly equal mix of indigenous Korean and international Socialist influence.

Table 19: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| 8th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 16-Aug-1953~Aug-1953 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Minju Joson Chinese People's Army Supervisory Squad |
| Athletics Games Tournament | 4-May-1954~May-1954 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 15 August Commemorative National Athletics Festival | 2-Aug-1954~16-Aug-1954 | Ministry of People's Security | ? | ? | ? | North Phyongan Province Kaesong City Jagang Province South Phyongan Province Ministry of Transportation Ministry of Public Welfare South Hamgyong Province North Hamgyong Province Hwanghae Province Kangwon Province |
| Korean People's Army Overall Army Games Tournament | 21-Aug-1954~22-Aug-1954 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation National Athletics Festival | 15-Sep-1954~Sep-1954 | Ministry of People's Security | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 2-Oct-1954~10-Oct-1954 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City Students' Athletics Tournament | Mid-Oct-1954 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University Foreign Language University |
| Each Ministry and Department Rivalry Athletics Tournament | 9-Nov-1954~Nov-1954 | Automobile and Road Department | ? | Ministry of Transportation | ? | ? |
| World Festival of Youth Commemorative Spring Basketball | 20-Mar-1955~Apr-1955 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of People's Security Ministry of Public Welfare Ministry of Transportation Pyongyang City |
| Athletics Tournament (On the 1 May Holiday) | 01-May-55 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Central District North District East District South District |
| 5 Anniversary of 25 June Anti-US Empire Struggle Day Korea People's Army Overall Athletics Tournament | 26-Jun-1955~1-Jul-1955 | Ja Yong Chon Post Military Unit | ? | Mun Chol Post Military Unit | Ho Myong Hui Post Military Unit | Kim Il Post Military Unit Kim Ki Won Post Military Unit Ho Sop Post Military Unit |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Preliminary Tournament | 26-Jun-1955~27-Jun-1955 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Hamhung City Hungnam City Hamju County Yonghung County Pukchong County Danchon City |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Preliminary Tournament | ~15-Jul-1955 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative National Athletics Festival | 12-Aug-1955~16-Aug-1955 | Ministry of People's Security (Group 1) Korean People's Army (Group 2) | ? | Ministry of Transportation (Group 1) South Hwanghae Province (Group 2) | Ministry of Public Welfare (Group 1) People's Security Workers (Group 2) | Pyongyang City North Hamgyong Province |
| Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 9-Oct-1955~23-Oct-1955 | Ministry of Transportation | ? | ? | ? | High School Number One High School Number Four |
| World Youth Week Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | Mar-1956~28-Mar-1956 | Ministry of Public Welfare | ? | Ministry of Transportation | Pyongyang City | 4. Ministry of Construction |
| National University Student Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-1956~5-Apr-1956 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | Chemical Industrial University | Hamhung Medical University | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative National Inter-Industry Overall Athletics Tournament | 27-Apr-1956~1-May-1956 | Metal Industry | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Ministry and Attached Department Government Official Athletics Tournament | 13-May-1956~20-May-1956 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Broadcasting Committee Ministry of Construction Ministry of Transportation Ministry of Legislation |
| Pyongyang City Childrens Athletics Tournament | 6-Jun-1956~7-Jun-1956 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Korea Children's Union Athletics Festival | 24-Jun-1956~29-Jun-1956 | Pyongyang City Middle School Number Two | ? | ? | ? | Kaesong City North Hwanghae Province North Phyongan Province Jagang Province Kangwon Province South Hwanghae Province |
| National Advanced Secondary School Student Athletics Tournament | 4-Jul-1956~9-Jul-1956 | Pyongyang Advanced Secondary School #1 | ? | Anju Advanced Secondary School | Kaesong Advanced Secondary School | ? |
| Jagang Province Workers Athletics Tournament | 28-Jul-1956~29-Jul-1956 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation National Athletics Festival of Youth and Students | 15-Aug-1956-22-Aug-1956 | Korean People's Army (Group A) Pyongyang City (Group B) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Korean People's Army 6th Overall Athletics Tournament | 9-Sep-1956~13-Sep-1956 | Kim Chol Song Post Military Unit | ? | O Jin U Post Military Unit | ? | ? |
| Athletics Holiday Commemorative Athletics Association Tournament | 9-Oct-1956~21-Oct-1956 | Ministry of Public Welfare | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Transportation Korean People's Army Central Training School Construction Workers |
| Sports Association Winter League | 30-Jan-1957~10-Feb-1957 | Ministry of Public Welfare | 8 Wins | N/A | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School Mun Chol Post Military Unit Kang Bom Mo Post Military Unit |
| Selection League for the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students | 22-Feb-1957~7-Apr-1957 | Korean People's Army Central Training School | 8 Wins, 0 Losses | ? | ? | Trade Union, 0 Wins 8 Losses |
| 1 May Celebratory Pyongyang City Labour Union Athletics Tournament | 28-Apr-1957~2-May-1957 | Light Industry Union | ? | Railroad Union | Advisor's Union | ? |
| National University Student Championship | 8-May-1957~12-May-1957 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | Industrial Chemistry University | ? | Kaesong Political and Economic University Kim Il Sung University Sinuiju Normal University |
| Basketball League | Jun-1957~13-Jun-1957 | People's Security Workers | 4 Wins 0 Losses | Military Unit 564 (3 Wins 1 Loss) | Ministry of Transportation (2 Wins 2 Losses) | 4. Pyongyang City (1 Win 3 Losses) 5. Military Unit 276 (0 Wins 4 Losses) |
| Sixth Annual Athletics Tournament under the administration of the Ministry of Public Welfare | 29-Jun-1957~1-Jul-1957 | Ri In U Post Military Unit | 2 Wins, 0 Losses | Pyongyang Ministry of Home Affairs (1-1) | ? | North Hamgyong Province Ministry of Home Affairs South Hwanghae Province Ministry of Home Affairs |
| National Secondary School Specialist Student Athletics Tournament | 24-Jul-1957~28-Jul-1957 | Pyongyang City | ? | South Hwanghae Province | South Hamhung Province | North Phyongan Province North Hwanghae Province Jagang Province |
| 12th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Commemorative Sports Association League | 2-Aug-1957~16-Aug-1957 | Ministry of Public Welfare | At Least 2 Wins | N/A | N/A | Ministry of Transportation Trade Union Korean People's Army Central Training School Pyongyang City |
| Individual Athletics Championship of Pyongyang Commemorating the 1530th Anniversary of the Founding of Pyongyang and the Athletics Holiday | 15-Sep-1957~22-Sep-1957 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | At Least 2 Wins | Pyongyang Coal School | Pyongyang Fiber Business | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School Pyongyang Textile Factory |
| National Tournament of Athletes Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Socialist October Revolution and Commemorating the Athletics Holiday | 3-Oct-1957~13-Oct-1957 | Korean People's Army Central Training School (Association) Pyongyang City or North Hamgyong Province (Normal) | At least 2 Wins and 4 Wins, respectively | ? | ? | Ministry of Transportation Korean People's Army Kyongju Post Military Unit Korean People's Army Kim Hak Chon Post Military Unit Trade Union Kaesong City South Hamgyong Province Korean People's Army O Si Hyon Post Military Unit Ministry of Public Welfare |
| 10th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Celebratory Athletics Tournament | 2-Feb-1958~11-Feb-1958 | Military Unit 725 | ? | Ministry of Public Welfare | Ho Min Kuk Post Military Unit | ? |
| Athletics Tournament | 16-Mar-1958~Mar-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| World Youth Week Commemorative Sports Competition League | 5-Apr-1958-Apr-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Military Unit 725 |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Inter-Industry Athletics Tournament | 2-May-1958~3-May-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory North Hwanghae Province Ball Sport League | 26-June-1958~29-June-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Sports Association Ball Sport League | 13-July-1958~Jul-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Commemorative Sports Association League | 15-Aug-1958~17-Aug-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Locomotive Swallow |
| National Student Athletics Festival Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic | 25-Aug-1958~29-Aug-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University Hamhung Chemical Industry University Pyongyang City North Phyongan Province |
| National Athletics Festival Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic | 8-Sep-1958-13-Sep-1958 | Pyongyang City (State) Wolbi Mountain Prize (Association) | ? | North Hamgyong Province (State) Ministry of Public Welfare (Association) | Kaesong City (State) Locomotive (Association) | North Phyongan Province |
| Sports Association Group B Ball Sport League | 9-Nov 1958~16-Nov-1958 | Chongjin Railroad Administration | ? | Ranam Mining | Kim Chaek Iron Manufacturing Plant | ? |
| 1958 Sports Association League 1st Division | 9-Nov-1958-23-Nov-1958 | 8 Feburary Team | ? | Steel | Wolbi Mountain Prize | Locomotive Swallow |
| 1958 Sports Association League 2nd Division | 21-Nov-1958-23-Nov-1958 | Chongjin Railroad Administration | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Male and Female Basketball Games | 8-Feb-1959~Feb-1959 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |

When looking at the men’s basketball tournament winners, the following teams were the most successful; the Ministry of People’s Security with four wins, the Ministry of Public Welfare with four wins, Pyongyang City with three wins, and Kim Chaek Industrial University with three wins. Meanwhile, the Korean People’s Army and the Korean People’s Army Central Training School got two tournament wins each, and the Ministry of Transportation had one tournament win and three second place finishes. Suffice to say, all of the most successful teams were Pyongyang-based, and all of them, save for Pyongyang City, were attached to central organizations.

Another notable aspect of this era’s teams is the emergence of teams from different sectors of society. Military units, almost entirely absent from pre-war tournaments, now frequently battled against top tier teams. Other sectors broke off into their own, smaller tournaments. This included high schools, universities, smaller tier enterprises and organs, industrial sectors, and labour unions.

Table 20: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| 15 August Commemorative National Athletics Festival | 2-Aug-1954~16-Aug-1954 | Ministry of People's Security | ? | ? | ? | North Hamgyong Province Kaesong City Ministry of Transportation North Phyongang Province Hwanghae Province Kangwon Province Ministry of Public Welfare Pyongyang City North Phyongan Province |
| 9th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation National Athletics Festival | 15-Sep-1954~Sep-1954 | Ministry of People's Security | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Each Ministry and Department Rivalry Athletics Tournament | 09-Nov-54 | Ministry of Transportation | ? | Ministry of Public Welfare | ? | ? |
| 5 Anniversary of 25 June Anti-US Empire Struggle Day Korea People's Army Overall Athletics Tournament | 26-Jun-1955~1-Jul-1955 | Ri Song Kwon Military Unit | ? | Ri Myong Ho Military Unit | Ho Myong Hui Military Unit | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Preliminary Tournament | 26-Jun-1955~27-Jun-1955 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Hamhung City Hungnam City Hamju County Yonghung County Pukchong County Danchon City |
| 10th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Commemorative National Athletics Festival | 12-Aug-1955~16-Aug-1955 | Ministry of People's Security (Group 1) Korean People's Army (Group 2) | ? | Ministry of Transportation (Group 1) Pyongyang City (Group 2) | Ministry of Construction (Group 1) South Hamgyong Province (Group 2) | South Hwanghae Province Ryanggang Province |
| Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 9-Oct-1955~23-Oct-1955 | Ministry of People's Security | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| World Youth Week Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | Mar-1956~28-Mar-1956 | Ministry of Public Welfare | ? | Ministry of Transportation | ? | ? |
| National University Student Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-1956~5-Apr-1956 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | Pyongyang Normal University | Chemical Industrial University | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative National Inter-Industry Overall Athletics Tournament | 27-Apr-1956~1-May-1956 | Ministry of Transportation | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Ministry and Attached Department Government Official Athletics Tournament | 13-May-1956~20-May-1956 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Advanced Secondary School Student Athletics Tournament | 4-Jul-1956~9-Jul-1956 | Pyongyang Advanced Secondary School #1 | ? | Sinuiju Girls' Advanced Secondary School | Anju Advanced Secondary School | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of the Gender Equality Law Proclamation Commemorative Chongjin City Women's Athletics Tournament | 29-Jul-56 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Production Facilities, Residential Quarters, Nearby Agricultural Villages |
| 11th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation National Athletics Festival of Youth and Students | 15-Aug-1956-22-Aug-1956 | Korean People's Army (Group A) North Hwanghae Province (Group B) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Korean People's Army 6th Overall Athletics Tournament | 9-Sep-1956~13-Sep-1956 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Mun Chol Post Military Unit Choe Gwang Post Military Unit |
| Athletics Holiday Commemorative Athletics Association Tournament | 9-Oct-1956~21-Oct-1956 | Korean People's Army Central Training School B | ? | ? | ? | Korean People's Army Central Training School |
| Selection League for the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students | 22-Feb-1957~7-Apr-1957 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Sports Association Winter League | 30-Jan-1957~10-Feb-1957 | Ministry of Public Welfare | 6 Wins |  |  | Ministry of Public Welfare Korean People's Army Central Training School Mun Chol Post Military Unit Kang Bom Mo Post Military Unit |
| 1 May Celebratory Pyongyang City Labour Union Athletics Tournament | 28-Apr-1957~2-May-1957 | Light Industry Union | ? | Advisor's Union | ? | ? |
| National University Student Championship | 8-May-1957~12-May-1957 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | ? |
| Basketball League | Jun-1957~13-Jun-1957 | People's Security Workers | 4 Wins 0 Losses | Ministry of Transportation (3 Wins 1 Loss) | Pyongyang City (2 Wins 2 Losses) | 4. Military Unit 564 (1 Win 3 Losses) 5. Military Unit 276 (0 Wins 4 Losses) |
| Sixth Annual Athletics Tournament under the administration of the Ministry of Public Welfare | 29-Jun-1957~1-Jul-1957 | South Hamgyeong Province Ministry of Home Affairs | 2 Wins, 0 Losses | ? | ? | ? |
| National Secondary School Specialist Student Athletics Tournament | 24-Jul-1957~28-Jul-1957 | North Phyongan Province | ? | South Hwanghae Province | ? | South Phyongan Province Kaesong |
| 12th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Commemorative Sports Association League | 2-Aug-1957~16-Aug-1957 | Ministry of Public Welfare | At Least 2 Wins |  |  | Ministry of Transportation Military Unit 567 Korean People's Army Central Training School Pyongyang City Military Unit 564 |
| Individual Athletics Championship of Pyongyang Commemorating the 1530th Anniversary of the Founding of Pyongyang and the Athletics Holiday | 15-Sep-1957~22-Sep-1957 | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School | At Least 2 Wins | Pyongyang #33 Secondary School | ? | Metal Industry  Pyongyang Kwangsong Iron Manufacturing Cooperative |
| National Tournament of Athletes Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Socialist October Revolution and Commemorating the Athletics Holiday | 3-Oct-1957~13-Oct-1957 | Korean People's Army Central Training School (Association) Kaesong City or North Hamgyong Province (Normal) | At Least 2 Wins Each |  |  | Korean People's Army Si Hyong Post Military Unit Korean People's Army Kim Hak Chon Post Military Unit Pyongyang City North Phyongan Province South Hwanghae Province Kangwon Province South Phyongan Province North Hwanghae Province Ministry of Public Welfare |
| 10th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Celebratory Athletics Tournament | 2-Feb-1958~11-Feb-1958 | Military Unit 725 | ? | Ministry of Public Welfare | Mun Chol Post Military Unit | ? |
| World Youth Week Commemorative Sports Competition League | 5-Apr-1958-Apr-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Military Unit 725 |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Inter-Industry Athletics Tournament | 2-May-1958~3-May-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Commemorative Sports Association League | 15-Aug-1958~17-Aug-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Wolbi Mountain Prize Locomotive Ministry of Commerce 8 February |
| National Student Athletics Festival Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic | 25-Aug-1958~29-Aug-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Il Sung University Sinuiju Teachers University Sariwon Teachers University North Hwanghae Province Pyongyang City |
| National Athletics Festival Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic | 8-Sep-1958-13-Sep-1958 | North Phyongan Province (State) 8 February (Association) | ? | Kaesong City (State) Wolbi Mountain Prize (Association) | North Hamgyong Province (State) Ministry of Public Welfare (Association) | ? |
| Sports Association Group B Ball Sport League | 9-Nov 1958~16-Nov-1958 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1958 Sports Association League 1st Division | 9-Nov-1958-23-Nov-1958 | 8 February Team | ? | Wolbi Mountain Prize | Steel | ? |
| 1958 Sports Association League 2nd Division | 21-Nov-1958-23-Nov-1958 | Chongjin Railroad Administration | ? | ? | ? | Chongjin Cotton Spinning Factory Steel Pyongyang City |

In the women’s tournaments, the powerhouse teams were as follows; the Ministry of People’s Security with five wins, the Ministry of Public Welfare with three wins, the Ministry of Transportation with two wins, the KPA Central Training School with two wins, and Kim Il Sung University with two wins. Much as in the men’s league, all teams were Pyongyang-based and attached to other organizations. The only significant difference is the presence of Kim Il Sung University in lieu of Kim Chaek Industrial University, and the absence of Pyongyang City. The absence of Pyongyang City is particularly interesting; while the men’s tournaments saw only one potential winner among provincial representatives, the women’s tournaments boasted five different provincial representative winners.

Speaking on the women’s leagues in general, despite being slightly fewer in number they still managed to represent a broad swatch of society. Like the men’s tournaments, military teams began to be strongly represented among the elites. Also like the men’s tournaments, smaller organs, high schools, and labour unions were represented.

Table 21: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 13-Aug-54 | N/A | North Phyongan Province | Kaesong City | 31 | 16 | 3W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 13-Aug-54 | N/A | Jagang Province | South Phyongan Province | 43 | 24 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | North Phyongan Province | 31 | 23 | 1W 0L | 3W 2L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Jagang Province | 41 | 26 | 2W 1L | 1W 1L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | South Hamgyong Province | North Hamgyong Province | 22 | 19 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | Hwanghae Province | Kangwon Province | 41 | 11 | 2W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Aug-54 | N/A | Ministry of People's Security | Hwanghae Province | 42 | 41 | 1W 1L | 2W 2L |
| 15-Aug-54 | N/A | Pyongyang City | North Hamgyong Province | 47 | 32 | 4W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 17-Oct-54 | N/A | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Foreign Language University | 44 | 20 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 09-Nov-54 | Ministry and Department | Automobile and Road Department | Ministry of Transportation | 50 | 26 | 1W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 20-Mar-55 | N/A | Ministry of People's Security | Pyongyang City | 89 | 24 | 2W 1L | 4W 2L |
| 20-Mar-55 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Ministry of Public Welfare | 60 | 50 | 2W 1L | 2W 2L |
| 03-Apr-55 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Pyongyang City | 46 | 19 | 3W 1L | 4W 3L |
| 03-Apr-55 | N/A | Ministry of People's Security | Ministry of Public Welfare | 84 | 21 | 3W 1L | 2W 3L |
| 29-Jun-55 | N/A | Ho Myong Hui Post Military Unit | Kim Il Post Military Unit | 92 | 30 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 29-Jun-55 | N/A | Kim Ki Won Post Military Unit | Ho Sop Post Military Unit | 46 | 44 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 12-Aug-55 | State | Pyongyang City | South Hamgyong Province | 38 | 28 | 5W 3L | 1W 1L |
| 12-Aug-55 | State | South Hwanghae Province | Ryanggang Province | 83 | 13 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 09-Oct-55 | Student | High School Number One | High School Number Four | 86 | 22 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 13-May-56 | N/A | Broadcasting Committee | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 13-May-56 | N/A | Ministry of Construction | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 13-May-56 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | ? | ? | ? | 4W 1L | ? |
| 13-May-56 | N/A | Ministry of Legislation | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 13-Sep-56 | Army | Kim Chol Song Post Military Unit | O Jin U Post Military Unit | 60 | 57 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 09-Oct-56 | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School | Ministry of Transportation | 81 | 41 | 1W 0L | 4W 2L |
| 09-Oct-56 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Construction Workers | 70 | 29 | 3W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 30-Jan-57 | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School B | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 3W 3L |
| 08-May-57 | Student | Kaesong Political and Economic University | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | 59 | 38 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 11-May-57 | Student | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | Kim Il Sung University | 76 | 58 | 1W 1L | 1W 0L |
| 11-May-57 | Student | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Sinuiju Normal University | 72 | 50 | 2W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 12-May-57 | Student | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | 64 | 57 | 3W 0L | 1W 2L |
| 13-Jun-57 | N/A | Military Unit 564 | Pyongyang City | 98 | 65 | 1W 0L | 5W 4L |
| 23-Jun-57 | N/A | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School | Ministry of Metal Industry | 99 | 55 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 29-Jun-57 | N/A | Pyongyang Ministry of Home Affairs | North Hamgyong Province Ministry of Home Affairs | 76 | 22 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 29-Jun-57 | N/A | Ri In U Post Military Unit | South Hwanghae Province Ministry of Home Affairs | 98 | 23 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-Jul-57 | N/A | Ri In U Post Military Unit | Pyongyang Ministry of Home Affairs | 83 | 50 | 2W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 24-Jul-57 | Student | South Hwanghae Province | Jagang Province | 50 | 33 | 2W 0L | 1W 2L |
| 24-Jul-57 | Student | Pyongyang City | North Hwanghae Province | 101 | 32 | 6W 4L | 0W 1L |
| 28-Jul-57 | Student | South Hamgyong Province | North Phyongan Province | 64 | 63 | 2W 1L | 3W 4L |
| 28-Jul-57 | Student | Pyongyang City | South Hwanghae Province | 117 | 37 | 7W 4L | 2W 1L |
| 02-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Korean People's Army Central Training School | 82 | 51 | 5W 2L | 2W 1L |
| 03-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Trade Union | 50 | 32 | 4W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 06-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Military Unit 564 | 78 | 73 | 5W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 11-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Trade Union | 61 | 50 | 6W 3L | 0W 2L |
| 11-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Pyongyang City | 60 | 44 | 6W 2L | 7W 5L |
| 11-Aug-57 | N/A | Trade Union | Pyongyang City | 56 | 52 | 1W 2L | 7W 6L |
| 16-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Ministry of Transportation | ? | ? | 7W 3L | 5W 3L |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang Coal School | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | ? | ? | 4W 0L | ? |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School | ? | ? | ? | 2W 0L | ? |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang Textile Factory | Pyongyang Fiber Business | 42 | 39 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 22-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang Coal School | Pyongyang Fiber Business | ? | ? | 2W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 22-Sep-57 | N/A | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Pyongyang Coal School | 94 | 13 | 5W 0L | 2W 1L |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Korean People's Army Kyongju Post Military Unit | 85 | 58 | 6W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School | Korean People's Army Kim Hak Chon Post Military Unit | 95 | 51 | 3W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | Trade Union | 66 | 61 | 8W 6L | 1W 3L |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 1W 2L | ? |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | 9W 6L | ? |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | Kaesong City | ? | ? | ? | 1W 1L | ? |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 3W 1L | ? |
| 12-Oct-57 | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School | Korean People's Army O Si Hyon Post Military Unit | 61 | 57 | 4W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 12-Oct-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | ? | ? | ? | 8W 3L | ? |
| 12-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | 10W 6L | ? |
| 13-Oct-57 | N/A | North Hamgyong Province | South Hamgyong Province | 77 | 76 | 2W 2L | 3W 2L |
| 13-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | North Hamgyong Province | 85 | 57 | 11W 6L | 2W 3L |
| 16-Aug-58 | 1st | Locomotive | Swallow | 68 | 65 | 7W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 28-Aug-58 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | 71 | 51 | 6W 0L | 1W 3L |
| 28-Aug-58 | University | Pyongyang City | North Hwanghae Province | 84 | 47 | 12W 6L | 0W 2L |
| 09-Sep-58 | State | North Phyongan Province | Pyongyang City | 37 | 33 | 4W 4L | 12W 7L |
| 21-Oct-58 | 1st | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 24-Oct-58 | 1st | 8 February Team | Wolbi Mountain | 48 | 42 | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 23-Nov-58 | 1st | 8 February Team | Locomotive | 63 | 58 | 3W 0L | 7W 4L |
| 23-Nov-58 | 1st | Locomotive | Swallow | 72 | 57 | 8W 4L | 0W 2L |

Looking at the match results from the Reconstruction Era, it is important to remember that they are not necessarily indicative of overall performance. These are simply the matches that could be found in state media, and are only a small fraction of the overall matches that occurred. On the other hand, state media is more likely to feature important matches and important teams, meaning that number of appearances can be an effective way of measuring a team’s legitimacy. By this metric, some of the most important teams are as follows; Pyongyang City with 17 appearances, the Ministry of Transportation/Locomotive with 12 appearances, and the Ministry of Public Welfare with 9 appearances. All of them posted similarly successful win-loss records. The reason for Pyongyang City’s spot at the top is likely because, as a city representative team, they were able to compete against both provincial representatives and against other local organizations. Other Pyongyang-based organizations were not eligible to compete against provincial representatives, and provincial representatives could not be continually present in Pyongyang for the tournaments against Pyongyang-based organizations.

No other team logged more than four appearances. But among those teams, there are notable cases. Kim Chaek Industrial University boasted a four win and no loss record. As a university team, their lack of game results is understandable. On the other hand, the Ministry of State Security, who had the most tournament wins out of any team during this era, only appeared four times with a three win and one loss record. Lastly, South Hamgyong, North Hamgyong, and North Phyongan Province all tied for most appearances among provincial teams with five. This is understandable, as they all hold significant urban centres in Hamhung, Chongjin, and Sinuiju, respectively.

Table 22: Women's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Reconstruction Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | Ministry of People's Security | North Hamgyong Province | 30 | 8 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | Kaesong City | Ministry of Transportation | 21 | 4 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | North Phyongan Province | Hwanghae Province | 9 | 3 | 1W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 14-Aug-54 | N/A | Kangwon Province | Ministry of Public Welfare | 11 | 2 | 3W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Aug-54 | N/A | Pyongyang City | North Phyongan Province | 11 | 7 | 2W 1L | 1W 1L |
| 15-Aug-54 | N/A | Ministry of People's Security | Kangwon Province | 56 | 14 | 2W 0L | 3W 2L |
| 10-Nov-54 | Ministry and Department | Ministry of Transportation | Ministry of Public Welfare | 10 | 9 | 1W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 12-Aug-55 | State | South Hwanghae Province | Ryanggang Province | 10 | 3 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 02-Aug-56 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Korean People's Army Central Training School | 50 | 32 | 1W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 11-Sep-56 | Army | Mun Chol Post Military Unit | Choe Gwang Post Military Unit | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 09-Oct-56 | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School | ? | ? | ? | 1W 1L | ? |
| 22-Feb-57 | N/A | Korean People's Army Central Training School B | Pyongyang City | 92 | 23 | 1W 0L | 2W 2L |
| 22-Feb-57 | N/A | Kang Bom Mo Post Military Unit | Ho Min Guk Post Military Unit | 71 | 65 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 22-Feb-57 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Ministry of Public Welfare | 69 | 65 | 2W 1L | 1W 3L |
| 07-Apr-57 | N/A | Korea People's Army Central Training School | Mun Chol Post Military Unit | 85 | 39 | 2W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 12-May-57 | Student | Kim Il Sung University | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | 34 | 29 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 13-Jun-57 | N/A | People's Security Workers | Ministry of Transportation | 56 | 34 | 1W 0L | 2W 2L |
| 13-Jun-57 | N/A | Military Unit 564 | Military Unit 276 | 51 | 19 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 23-Jun-57 | Student | Pyongyang #4 Secondary School | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School | 28 | 24 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 24-Jun-57 | Student | North Phyongan Province | Kaesong City | 73 | 19 | 2W 1L | 1W 1L |
| 24-Jun-57 | Student | Pyongyang City | South Phyongan Province | 61 | 17 | 3W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 30-Jul-57 | Student | North Phyongan Province | South Hwanghae Province | 38 | 26 | 3W 1L | 1W 1L |
| 06-Aug-57 | N/A | Military Unit 567 | Pyongyang City | 46 | 33 | 1W 0L | 3W 3L |
| 11-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Pyongyang City | 43 | 33 | 2W 3L | 3W 4L |
| 11-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Pyongyang City | 68 | 44 | 3W 2L | 3W 5L |
| 16-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | Military Unit 567 | 49 | 46 | 3W 3L | 1W 1L |
| 16-Aug-57 | N/A | Ministry of Transportation | Military Unit 564 | 62 | 61 | 4W 2L | 1W 1L |
| 16-Aug-57 | 2nd | Locomotive | Anju Railroad Administration | ? | ? | 5W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School | Metal Industry | 36 | 15 | 1W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang #33 Secondary School | Pyongyang Kwangsong Iron Manufacturing Cooperative | 49 | 12 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Sep-57 | N/A | Pyongyang #1 Advanced Secondary School | Pyongyang #33 Secondary School | 35 | 20 | 2W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Korea People's Army Central Training School | ? | ? | ? | 3W 1L | ? |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Korean People's Army Si Hyong Post Military Unit | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Korean People's Army Kim Hak Chon Post Military Unit | ? | ? | ? | 1W 0L | ? |
| 03-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | 4W 5L | ? |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | North Phyongan Province | North Hamgyong Province | 53 | 43? | 4W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | South Hwanghae Province | 64 | 20 | 5W 5L | 1W 2L |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | Kangwon Province | South Phyongan Province | 42 | 24 | 4W 2L | 0W 2L |
| 08-Oct-57 | N/A | Kaesong City | North Hwanghae Province | 62 | 27 | 2W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 12-Oct-57 | N/A | Korea People's Army Central Training School | ? | ? | ? | 4W 2L | ? |
| 12-Oct-57 | N/A | Ministry of Public Welfare | ? | ? | ? | 4W 3L | ? |
| 12-Oct-57 | N/A | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | 6W 5L | ? |
| 13-Oct-57 | N/A | Kaesong City | ? | ? | ? | 3W 1L | ? |
| 16-Aug-58 | N/A | Pyongyang City | Locomotive | 49 | 38 | 7W 5L | 5W 3L |
| 16-Aug-58 | N/A | Wolbi Mountain | Ministry of Commerce | 93 | 66 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 28-Aug-58 | University | Kim Il Sung University | ? (명억대?) | 39 | 37 | 2W 0L | ? |
| 28-Aug-58 | University | Sinuiju Normal University | Sariwon Normal University | 32 | 19 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 28-Aug-58 | University | North Hwanghae Province | Pyongyang City | 45 | 44 | 1W 1L | 7W 6L |

Amongst the women’s teams, the following teams appeared the most; Pyongyang City with eleven appearances, the Ministry of Transportation/Locomotive with eight appearances, the KPA Central Training School with seven appearances and the Ministry of Public Welfare with six appearances. Pyongyang City’s middling record of seven wins and five losses lines up well with their lack of success compared to their men’s side. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Transportation/Locomotive, the KPA Central Training School, and the Ministry of Public Welfare all posted winning records, but none of them managed to seriously edge out their opponents.

Among the provincial representatives, North Phyongan Province led the way with five appearances while Kaesong City had four appearances and South Hwanghae Province and Kangwon Province had three appearances each. When compared against the men’s provincial teams, it can be said that North Phyongan Province was the most prominent basketball province of the era. Overall, the women’s division seemed to suffer from a greater chasm between the have and the have nots than the men’s division did. Certain games early on had teams scoring in the single digits, while twelve separate games saw victories with over twenty-point margins.

## 7.9 Basketball as a Pastime

Throughout the Reconstruction era, there were news stories here and there that indicated the wider spread of basketball. The Ministry of People’s Security, whom swept both men’s and women’s divisions of the 1954 anniversary of liberation tournament, had their team featured in a Minju Joson article.[[534]](#footnote-534) In late April of 1955, basketball games were amongst the festivities held to commemorate the upcoming 1 May Holiday.[[535]](#footnote-535) By Mid-October 1956, it was reported that schools in Packchon County or North Phyongan Province had students picking athletics, including basketball, according to their preference.[[536]](#footnote-536)

In a national sport competition for youth farmers from 12 to 16 October 1958, basketball was not on the list of events. This possibly indicated basketball’s place as a city sport at the time.[[537]](#footnote-537) Nevertheless, it was reported in January of 1959 that the Yangtok United Farming Cooperative had organized basketball teams during the previous year.[[538]](#footnote-538)

Basketball teams were spreading to regular workplaces as well. In October 1958, those at the Pyongyang Electrical Factory were encouraged to participate in more categories of sport, and the increased number of teams made it possible for the factory to send more teams to sports tournaments.[[539]](#footnote-539)In February of 1959, the installation of a basketball goal at Chongjin Steel Mill and the organization of a basketball group within the Pyongyang Trust Trade Union was reported.[[540]](#footnote-540)

## 7.10 Standout Basketball Stars

Without a doubt, the biggest standout of the Reconstruction Era is women’s player Kim Pyong Ju. Kim served as captain for three different teams; the KPA Central Training school in June of 1956, the University Student Team in September of 1956, and the DPRK National Team in June of 1957. She also scored the most points on the national team during the Fifth World Festival of Youth and Students Preliminaries, and scored the first point for the University Student Team in their match against Zalgiris. Aside from Kim Pyong Ju, a few other players saw a mention in state media. On the women’s side, Kim Yong Sun was mentioned in the recap of Zalgiris’ game against the DPRK Mixed Team. On the men’s side, Kim Myong Hwan and Kim Pyong Sam were mentioned in the recap of the KPA Central Training School’s win over the Chinese Electric Power Association Team.

# chapter 8. The Mass Athletics Era (1959.2.27~1967.5.30)

## 8.1 General Athletics Overview

The start of the Mass Athletics Era was marked by a cabinet decision made on 27 February 1959.[[541]](#footnote-541) This cabinet decision made a number of reforms which would push the popularization of athletics to a new level amongst the general populous and elite athletes. The most important decrees were as follows. Firstly, all workers were to exercise for an hour or more each day.[[542]](#footnote-542) Secondly, the second week of every March, June, August, and October was to be People’s Athletics Week. During said week, all citizens participated in athletics exams. Thirdly, every district and workplace was to organize an athletics club. Fourthly, by the end of April, every college, university, and level 2 and above business and cooperative farm was to establish a team in one of the main athletic disciplines. Basketball was one of those disciplines. Fifthly, a central athletic medical facility was to be established by the end of April.[[543]](#footnote-543) In essence, this cabinet decision made athletics accessible and mandatory for the working age population.

On top of the establishment of the Central Athletic Medical Facility, several other decisions related to athletics and the central government were also made that year. The day after the cabinet decision, the Athletics Publishing Company was established. Said publishing company would go on to produce *Athletics Newspaper*, several magazines, books, and propaganda educational materials.[[544]](#footnote-544) That year, the Athletic Science Research Office was established.[[545]](#footnote-545) Said institution would exist on into the modern era, serving as a research institution for scholars that graduated from Korea Athletics University.[[546]](#footnote-546) 1959 also marked the official establishment of a general national athletics team, as ordered by Kim Il Sung.[[547]](#footnote-547) The DPRK would also begin focusing on training their athletes for specific athletic disciplines.[[548]](#footnote-548) Lastly, several factories producing athletics equipment were merged into the Pyongyang Athletics Device Factory. This was an effort to make a turning point in athletics development.[[549]](#footnote-549) To sum up, 1959 marked the beginning of a concerted effort from the central government to specialize athletics on an elite level, as well as promote athletics through dedicated propaganda outlets and equipment production.

The ideological messaging behind athletics also saw significant development in 1959. That year, the DPRK began to move away from the influence of the Soviet Union in terms of athletics education by emphasizing patriotism, nationalism, and revolutionary tradition.[[550]](#footnote-550) Athletic education including revolutionary tradition in particular began in 1959, emphasizing the exploits of Kim Il Sung by naming running or marching exercises after the Pochonbo Raid or Kim Il Sung’s Mangyongdae birthplace.[[551]](#footnote-551) However, collectivism was emphasized as well, with activities such as group marching having roots in the USSR.[[552]](#footnote-552) This move towards a more indigenously-influenced athletic propaganda style would only increase in later eras.

Different styles of athletics also continued to emerge in 1959. Kim Il Sung’s February cabinet decision mentioned the development of National Defence Athletics and traditional athletics alongside regular athletics.[[553]](#footnote-553) This decision stated that athletics, national defence, and labour were three factors that needed to be satisfied.[[554]](#footnote-554) However, it could not be said that National Defence Athletics had yet began to encroach upon the space occupied by regular athletics. Another type of athletics to continue development was competitive manufacturing athletics. Said athletic type had grown to encompass engineering, construction, mining, metallurgy, light industry, agricultural machinery, and general agriculture.[[555]](#footnote-555) Beginning in 1960, manufacturing athletics were contested in tournaments at factories, businesses, and farm villages. Disciplines would include fixing tractors, planting rice seedlings, and drilling caves.[[556]](#footnote-556)

Lastly, 1959 can be marked by the continued establishment of regular teams for individual sports, sorted by level.[[557]](#footnote-557) In truth, a cabinet decision on 19 March of 1958 established these new elite-level teams.[[558]](#footnote-558) But it was not until 1959 that the new teams began to see real emphasis in *Rodong Sinmun*.[[559]](#footnote-559) The newly established teams often played against each other during festivals.[[560]](#footnote-560) As of May of 1959, the established regular teams were Steel (강철), attached to the trade union, Locomotive, attached to the transportation sector, 8 February (2.8), attached to the People’s Army, Lightning (번개)[[561]](#footnote-561), attached to the administration of public welfare, Fruitful Year (풍년), attached to the agricultural sector, and Chollima (천리마), attached to the school education sector.[[562]](#footnote-562) Of these teams, Locomotive, Lightning/Amrok River, and 8 February would survive until the modern day. Locomotive would never quite be the DPRK’s premier club, but usually remained near the top of basketball leaderboards. 8 February was named after the foundation day of the People’s Army and formed from the Ministry of People’s Security. [[563]](#footnote-563) It would be the DPRK’s premier athletics club until it was overtaken by 25 April (4.25), another People’s Army team, during the 1970s. Meanwhile, Steel would remain active in basketball tournaments through 1963. There is no record of Chollima or Fruitful Year ever participating in a basketball tournament. All in all, it can be said that this was the true genesis of DPRK state amateurs in earnest.

Moving into 1960, two other important decisions were made in the realm of athletics. Firstly, on 1 January 1960, *Athletics Newspaper* (체육신문) was published for the first time. This gave more options for distributing athletics news outside of national and local newspapers.[[564]](#footnote-564) It also marked the first athletics focused media since the pre-war athletics journal *People’s Athletics*. *Athletics Newspaper* would continue publishing into the modern day. Unfortunately, no issues of this publication are available to this researcher.

The second big development in 1960 was the enactment of the law for designating a Meritorious Athlete of the Nation (공훈 체육인) on 11 November. The designation was to be bestowed by the Supreme People’s assembly to someone who had earned the admiration of the people through sporting activities.[[565]](#footnote-565) Essentially, this established a “Meritorious Athlete of the Nation” as a new tier of achievement for athletes, one higher than the previously established Master Sportsperson. Considering that, by 1960, there were 367 master sportsmen and 9,741 tier one to three athletes, it may have been an effort to increase incentives for elite athletes.[[566]](#footnote-566)

In the broadest terms, the 1960s saw a vast expansion of the organization of athletics activities nationwide.[[567]](#footnote-567) Group gymnastics also saw an increase in scale and a more improved style.[[568]](#footnote-568) From 1961 to 1970, 32 different mass gymnastics performances were held.[[569]](#footnote-569) Additionally, from 1958 to 1994, there were roughly 40 mass games events performed.[[570]](#footnote-570) Group running was also a widespread form of athletics in the 1960s.[[571]](#footnote-571) From 1961 to 1964, the number of athletics facilities steadily increased.[[572]](#footnote-572) From 1960 to 1968, various forms of athletics clubs were established.[[573]](#footnote-573) Even various specialist schools in music, dance, foreign language, art, and et cetera began to educate the talented.[[574]](#footnote-574) To summarize, systemization and organization of athletics were pushed forward in earnest.

Along the same lines as society’s systemization, two cabinet orders in 1962 and 1967 created a systemized gender division of labour. These orders allotted areas perceived to be physically demanding, like mining, forestry, and fishing, for men. Accordingly, jobs such as textile mill repairperson, agricultural water pump operator, managing worker, factory and business statistician, bookkeeper, and economist were allotted for women.[[575]](#footnote-575) Furthermore, the majority of those working in agriculture were women.[[576]](#footnote-576) This had an effect on athletics because certain types of workplaces would have an overwhelming majority of men or women, dictating which types of athletic teams that they could have. For instance, textile mill teams were almost always women, while mining teams were almost always men.

Societal systemization extended to the realm of athletics education in schools as well. Extracurricular (과외시간) athletics began in earnest with an instruction from Kim Il Sung in May 1962.[[577]](#footnote-577) This was followed by a 1964 instruction from Kim Il Sung criticizing the current state of athletics education, ordering an extension of athletics class time in schools, and an increase in the number of disciplines offered.[[578]](#footnote-578) Furthermore, physical training began to be used as a basis for other athletic disciplines.[[579]](#footnote-579) In addition to extended athletics class time and extracurricular athletics, youth sports festivals began to be carried out at the county level nationwide. This continued until at least 2008, and basketball was one of approximately 20 sports offered.[[580]](#footnote-580) All in all, the late 1960s saw a great increase in the size of student athletic tournaments, as well as the number of disciplines which they offered.[[581]](#footnote-581)

Outside of schools for the youth, adult education saw reform in 1964 as well. A university athletics department was established at every provincial Athletics Cadre Training Centre, every Normal University, and every Teachers’ University. Additionally, each athletics society and provincial athletics guidance committee took on a stronger role in leading each school, factory, and business. This led to an increase of athletics cadres by twenty percent.[[582]](#footnote-582)

The increased systemization of athletics went hand in hand with the ever-growing ideological influence upon athletics. In the early 1960s, there was an effort in *Rodong Sinmun* to link achievements in international athletics competitions with the *Chollima* Movement.[[583]](#footnote-583) Additionally, there were mass athletics tied to the Chongsanri Method (청산리방법) of organizing the masses.[[584]](#footnote-584)

In addition to other ideological influences, as a result of various external factors, athletics began to take an even more militaristic turn. Beginning in the 1960s, various international security concerns such as the Sino-Soviet Split, military tensions on the Chinese-Indian border, the 1963 Cuban Missile Crisis, and the expansion of the Vietnam war in the late 1960s all served to spur the DPRK’s will to strengthen their national defence power. As such, the DPRK decided upon the Pyongjin (병진) Policy in a December 1962 Plenum, which emphasized the development of national defence along with the economy.[[585]](#footnote-585) The Pyongjin policy in particular emphasized more diverse National Defence Athletics along the guise of revitalizing the military athletic activities of the era of Anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.[[586]](#footnote-586) The aforementioned 1962 plenum also brought in the concept of “four major military lines” (4대 군사노선), further emphasizing National Defence Athletics.[[587]](#footnote-587) Lastly, the 1962 plenum included National Defence Athletics in school curriculum.[[588]](#footnote-588) In order to develop the National Defence Athletics, athletics cadres, athletes, athletic facilities, and organizations were encouraged.[[589]](#footnote-589) From 1962 to 1967, the number of athletics teachers, coaches, and athletes was steadily increased.[[590]](#footnote-590)

By 1964, National Defence Athletics began to be included in mass athletics competitions.[[591]](#footnote-591) Later, in February 1965, a cabinet decision encouraged the development of several national defence athletic disciplines amongst the populous well as yet undeveloped sports disciplines.[[592]](#footnote-592) However, this same cabinet decision also emphasized the strengthening of overall athletics guidance, school athletics, workers athletics, improvement of athletics skill, and the construction of more athletics facilities.[[593]](#footnote-593)

Scholar Lee Jin-kyu claims that 1965 would be the year that National Defence Athletics would officially be considered the main emphasis of overall athletics.[[594]](#footnote-594) Indeed, 1965 was certainly part of an overall ramping up of National Defence Athletics.[[595]](#footnote-595) This continued to be affected by political factors, such as the DPRK beginning to emphasize political independence in a 1966 party conference and including more socialist ideological elements in athletics.[[596]](#footnote-596) But it would not be until a 30 May 1967 announcement by Kim Il Sung that National Defence Athletics would truly overtake other athletic disciplines in official rhetoric.

Aside from National Defence Athletics, the 1960s saw the DPRK government continue its efforts to train elite-level athletes. In 1962, a cabinet decision emphasized the need to quickly improve the nation’s athletic skill level in order to achieve excellent results in international games.[[597]](#footnote-597) Later, on 19 and 21 December 1963, a speech by Kim Il Sung signalled the attempt to train elite athletes.[[598]](#footnote-598) Moreover, at the end of 1963, a successful result in the effort to strengthen mass athletics was announced.[[599]](#footnote-599) In essence, this can be taken as an overall push towards elite athletics, with mass athletics already having achieved the desired results.

Along the lines of professionalization, in April 1964, the Amrok River Athletics Club was established under the Ministry of Societal Safety (사회안정성).[[600]](#footnote-600) Kim Il Sung would visit the team personally that September, instructing them to get to a world supremacy level.[[601]](#footnote-601) Amrok River would continue as an elite team up until the modern day.

The DPRK’s encouragement of elite athletics would culminate with increased participation in international athletic competitions with Socialist and Non-Aligned countries throughout the 1960s.[[602]](#footnote-602) This most notably included participation the 1963 GANEFO games and the 1965 Games of the Tenth Anniversary of the Bandeung Conference in Indonesia.[[603]](#footnote-603) The First Games of the New Emerging Forces, or GANEFO, were established to exemplify constructing a new free world from the colonialist and imperialism that previously existed.[[604]](#footnote-604) In other words, the DPRK’s participation was a part of their support for the non-aligned movement.

The DPRK also looked to join the larger international athletic competition system. From 1960 to 1963, there were several meetings with the ROK about forming a unified Olympic team. This piggybacked off of the north’s initial overtures to do so in 1956.[[605]](#footnote-605) The unified Olympic team talks would go nowhere, but on 17 October 1963 the DPRK would join the International Olympic Committee as a full member.[[606]](#footnote-606) The IOC initially decided to refer to the DPRK athletics team as “North Korea”, but this was eventually changed to the DPRK in 1969.[[607]](#footnote-607) The first of numerous North-South athletics summits would occur in Switzerland in 1963.[[608]](#footnote-608) Athletic summits with the ROK would continue to be a prevalent part of government policy, with 36 such meetings occurring in the Kim Il Sung era and thirteen during the Kim Jong Il era.[[609]](#footnote-609) In sum, the DPRK, through negotiation, began to normalize its presence in international athletics outside of the Socialist camp. Despite the DPRK’s semi-acceptance into the international athletic community, there were still conflicts. For example, the DPRK originally being slated to compete in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics but suddenly withdrew due to GANEFO athletes being prohibited from the Olympic games.[[610]](#footnote-610)

Perhaps the crowning achievement of DPRK athletics in the Mass Athletics era was the DPRK’s surprise run to the quarter-final of the 1966 FIFA World Cup.[[611]](#footnote-611) This achievement may have been a prime motivator for the enactment of an 8 October 1966 law designating a new highest level of achievement for athletes; the People’s Athlete (인민체육인).[[612]](#footnote-612) Specifically, the People’s Athlete title was to be one level above the aforementioned Meritorious Athlete of the Nation.[[613]](#footnote-613) The new classification system was described thusly; the Meritorious Athlete title was given to an athlete who set two new domestic records twice in one year or achieved an excellent result in an international competition. But the People’s Athlete title, which was a step higher, was given to Meritorious Athletes who had enhanced the national prestige of the nation through achievement at Olympic-level competition.[[614]](#footnote-614) The master sportsperson title and the first tier, second tier, and third tier of athlete continued to exist as descending levels of athletic achievement below the People’s Athletes and Meritorious Athletes.[[615]](#footnote-615) In essence, the DPRK could now systematically bestow greater rewards to those who glorified the nation internationally in accordance with the level of competition at which each athlete’s victory was achieved.

## 8.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

Although there were no direct encounters of Kim Il Sung with basketball found during the Reconstruction Era, Kim Il Sung did show some tacit interest in basketball during the Mass Athletics Era. Kim Il Sung’s first post-war contact with basketball came on 5 May 1959. On that day, Kim Il Sung visited a textile factory and witnessed workers playing basketball after finishing lunch. The match was intense, and each players health was exhibited. Kim remarked that workers using their break time to do athletics in such a manner was great. Kim couldn’t take his eyes off of the game, and forgot to have his lunch. Kim began to walk toward the basketball court, and the workers saw him. One worker quickly grabbed a basketball. Kim asked said worker whether they treasured the ball. The worker couldn’t respond, and the manager said that the worker did treasure the basketball. Kim said that the worker must treasure the basketball. Kim then said that one must do athletics in order to be healthy. Kim then looked at the bodies of the workers and slowly left. The workers, having received such an instruction, could not contain their passion. The workers then began to participate in athletics more actively.[[616]](#footnote-616)

As the preceding anecdote indicates, Kim Il Sung clearly had some interest in basketball, as he took his time to watch the game and forgot his lunch. But Kim’s words were less like that of a basketball enthusiast and more like those of a father. He simply instructed the workers to participate in athletics in general. This is very much in line with the mass athletics policy of the era. However, Kim Il Sung would become more explicit in his encouragement of basketball later on.

On 5 June 1966, Kim Il Sung attended the Children’s Union 20th Anniversary Celebration Event at Moranbong Stadium. In a conversation with a Children’s Union member, the child said to Kim Il Sung that if a US asshole challenged him, he would smash him in a single hit. Kim Il Sung laughed, and said that if he wants to do that, he should do exercise to increase height and have healthy physical stamina. Kim Il Sung mentioned basketball, iron bar, and stall bars as good for increasing height.[[617]](#footnote-617) This would be the closest Kim Il Sung ever came to giving resounding support for basketball, as it was one of three athletic disciplines which he encouraged. But, perhaps more importantly, this was the first instance of basketball being mentioned as an athletic discipline which increases height. This unscientific claim would be repeated hundreds of times by propaganda outlets over the ensuing years. This included everything from newspapers to magazines, textbooks, documentaries, and encyclopaedias. But this anecdote may be the primary reason behind the continued dissemination behind the claim; if Kim Il Sung said it, it is nearly impossible to refute it. Put more explicitly, due to the reverence with which Kim Il Sung is treated in the DPRK’s government and societal structure, even when a claim by Kim Il Sung is known to be untrue, going against it publicly would invite serious consequences. In any case, it can be said with certainty that basketball was one of Kim Il Sung’s favoured athletic disciplines during the Mass Athletics Era.

The Mass Athletics Era also saw the emergence of the DPRK’s leader-to-be, Kim Jong Il. It should be noted that the following anecdotes occurred outside of the public eye. Indeed, Kim Jong Il would not be referred to in *Rodong Sinmun* until 1974.[[618]](#footnote-618) As the following two anecdotes would be published well after the fact, it leaves the door open as to their level of accuracy. Nevertheless, whether one chooses to believe the following anecdotes are true or not, they can certainly be seen as part of a government narrative which wished to paint Kim Jong Il as a lifelong supporter of athletics and basketball.

The first anecdote about Kim Jong Il comes from 7 May 1962, during Kim Jong Il’s time as a student at Kim Il Sung University. Kim Jong Il, upon seeing his fellow students focused on studying and not physical training, suggested regularly organizing basketball games. Kim Jong Il claimed that basketball improves quickness and helps growth in height. He also said that basketball’s most important technique was shooting, and that quick movements, fakes, and speed were keys to success. Additionally, Kim Jong Il went on to say that medium and long-range shots contribute to out-scoring tall opponents.[[619]](#footnote-619) In sum, the first anecdote portrays Kim Jong Il as an unabashed supporter of basketball, foreshadowing his future basketball-related policy decisions. It also reinforces the narrative of basketball as a height-increasing athletic discipline, as it doubles down on Kim Il Sung’s claim by stating that Kim Jong Il made the very same claim.

The next anecdote about Kim Jong Il and basketball occurred on 9 September 1965. Kim Jong Il, in a discussion with the KPA general staff, issued instructions on improving the 8 February Athletics Team’s skill to an international level. Kim Jong Il, having seen a football game between Locomotive and 8 February, complimented the 8 February Team and said that they should train in order to win domestic and international matches. Kim Jong Il’s reasoning was that the 8 February team was the largest in number and had the best fighting ability.[[620]](#footnote-620) Kim Jong Il also emphasized developing the disciplines which held the best prospects of winning; football and women’s volleyball.[[621]](#footnote-621) Furthermore, Kim Jong Il emphasized that as an army team, 8 February should put effort into developing disciplines that fit their characteristics. These included boxing, shooting, and military triathlon.[[622]](#footnote-622) Basketball was mentioned by Kim Jong Il as a discipline which should also be improved, but not to the extent of the aforementioned ones. Kim Jong Il also emphasized that athletes must be ideologically prepared, otherwise they would lose. This meant that they should follow and learn a revolutionary mindset.[[623]](#footnote-623) Lastly, Kim Jong Il emphasized the role of coaches in finding and training athletes, and the material foundation necessary for success.[[624]](#footnote-624) There are three conclusions that can be drawn from this anecdote. Firstly, the 8 February Team, which saw great success in men’s and women’s basketball up until the 1980s, likely prospered on the whole because of the favour given to it by Kim Jong Il. Secondly, Kim Jong Il’s instructions were in line with the athletics policy priorities of the era; international competitiveness in athletics and an increased emphasis on revolutionary ideology within athletics. Thirdly, Kim Jong Il, at that time, did not think that the DPRK could be internationally competitive in basketball. If Kim Jong Il was a fan of basketball at the time, he still kept practicality when it came to policy decisions.

## 8.3 Basketball’s Relationship with Diplomacy

Basketball played a bit of a side-role in the aforementioned struggle to get the DPRK in international competitions during the Mass Athletics Era. Specifically, basketball teams were part of the DPRK’s delegation to the GANEFO games, the failed delegation to the 1964 Olympics, and the Games Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Bandeung Conference. In fact, basketball coverage was part of an unprecedented amount of reporting in *Rodong Sinmun* of the Fifteenth Sports Holiday Commemorative National Athletics Tournament in 1964. The reason for the coverage was likely to appease the local populous, who had been expecting the DPRK’s first Olympic participation up until the very last moment.[[625]](#footnote-625) In addition to the main tournament, there was a lower-level tournament for provincial and second-division teams.[[626]](#footnote-626) The DPRK would host a local basketball tournament as part of a commemorative athletics tournament for the creation of GANEFO that November.[[627]](#footnote-627) The DPRK, China, and Indonesia’s boycott of the 1964 Olympics[[628]](#footnote-628) would even be supported in Japan. It was reported by *Rodong Sinmun* in October that under the direction of Japanese Communist Party Leaders, a sports festival at which basketball was contested was carried out in Mushashino Stadium in a suburb of Tokyo.[[629]](#footnote-629) To summarize, basketball was one of the athletic disciplines which was pushed to the forefront of domestic media as a side-effect of external international political disputes.

Basketball would also play a part in the DPRK’s diplomacy with Cambodia. A basketball delegation was part of the general sports delegation of Cambodia that visited the DPRK in October.[[630]](#footnote-630) There would be joint training between the basketball teams of the two nations from 5to 9 October.[[631]](#footnote-631) Norodom Sihanouk, the leader of Cambodia, would watch a volleyball and basketball match with Kim Il Sung. The results of the games were not announced, but Kim bestowed a cup to the Cambodian athletes, while Sihanouk gave a cup and medal to the Korean athletes.[[632]](#footnote-632) This pronounced presence of basketball at a summit between the two leaders reinforced its status as a main athletic discipline and one which could play a part in international diplomacy.

## 8.4 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

The prominence of the DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team during the Mass Athletics Era was very similar to their role during the Reconstruction Era. They participated in Socialist-led international tournaments and engaged in exchange with friendly countries. But some things had changed. On the one hand, the men’s team gained an increased level of support because it was a part of the establishment of a permanent national athletics team in 1959, and players now had the benefit of playing under dedicated clubs as state amateurs. On the other hand, the men’s team’s lack of success against top-tier international opponents meant that they were not prioritized when it came to promoting elite national teams to succeed.

The men’s teams first activities during the Mass Athletics era were at some point in 1960, when they participated in games in the Soviet Union.[[633]](#footnote-633) Later, in August of 1961, basketball was one of ten athletic disciplines to be a part of general national team training.[[634]](#footnote-634) By 1963, at an athletics tournament celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Korean People’s Army, a demonstration game was played by the men’s and women’s national teams.[[635]](#footnote-635)

After a six-year absence from international play, in November 1963 the DPRK men’s team would participate in The First Games of the New Emerging Forces, or GANEFO, in Jakarta, Indonesia.[[636]](#footnote-636) Many records are not available, but it is known that the men’s basketball team would score a victory against Albania enroute to a third-place finish.[[637]](#footnote-637) This was the highest finish for the men’s team since their first place finish at the 1947 World Festival of Youth and Students, though the GANEFO games was arguably a lower level of competition.

The men’s team was also originally scheduled to participate in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In the first half of April 1964, Second Division leagues were carried out in basketball, football, and volleyball for the Pyongyang Region. Teams mostly consisted of universities, factories, and state enterprises. The best teams would participate in the upcoming Seventeenth National Athletics Competition in May.[[638]](#footnote-638) Said competition, which was also called the Eighteenth Edition, also served the purpose of picking athletes for the upcoming 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo.[[639]](#footnote-639) The competition had two legs, with the second being in July.[[640]](#footnote-640) This entire process would indicate that the primary method of feeding the national team’s roster at the time was domestic tournaments and that the roster was given a great degree of flexibility. The DPRK would eventually withdraw from the Olympics due to GANEFO athletes being prohibited from the Olympic games.[[641]](#footnote-641)

The men’s team’s next international appearance came in April of 1965, when the DPRK participated in a tournament in Jakarta, Indonesia celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Bandung Conference.[[642]](#footnote-642) The men’s team would win four games enroute to a second-place finish.[[643]](#footnote-643) The DPRK’s continued success certainly confirmed that their men’s team was better than that of most third-world nations, but they were unable to test their skill against top-tier international competition during this era.

The men’s team would participate in joint training with the Cambodian national team from 5 to 9 October of 1965.[[644]](#footnote-644) They would then play a match, in conjunction with a volleyball match, in front of Sihanouk of Cambodia and Kim Il Sung. The results of the games were not announced, but Chairman Kim Il Sung bestowed a cup to the Cambodian athletes while Shinaouk gave a cup and medal to the Korean athletes.[[645]](#footnote-645) The men’s team would see their final international appearance at the smaller-scale Asian GANEFO Games during November of 1966 in Phenom Penh, Cambodia, but their results are unknown.[[646]](#footnote-646)

The Mass Athletics Era was the first in which the men’s team, due to a lack of relative success, was arguably given a lower standing than the women’s team in terms of support and international prominence. However, the men’s team still played a role in international diplomacy, and they were still relatively successful compared to most other teams in the non-aligned movement.

Table 23: Men's National Team Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 18-Nov-63 | Albania | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Group Match | GANEFO | 78 | 56 | Win |
| 9~21-Apr-65 | Indonesia | Indonesia | ? | ? | ? | Games of the 10th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference | 81 | 61 | Win |
| 9~21-Apr-65 | Cambodia | Indonesia | ? | ? | ? | Games of the 10th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference | 62 | 56 | Win |
| 9~21-Apr-65 | Pakistan | Indonesia | ? | ? | ? | Games of the 10th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference | 82 | 59 | Win |
| 9~21-Apr-65 | Guinea | Indonesia | ? | ? | ? | Games of the 10th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference | 82 | 54 | Win |

## 8.5 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

The women’s team would see a greater deal of international participation and support in the Mass Athletics Era, especially in comparison to the men’s team. This kicked off with the participation of the women’s team at the 1959 FIBA Women’s World Championship from 10 to 18 October in Moscow. The team received a prize for their first participation, but achieved last place.[[647]](#footnote-647) Although the team lost all of their matches, they lost to Bulgaria, the European Champion of the time, by only six points. They were commended in *Rodong Sinmun* for their performance, despite being the shortest team.[[648]](#footnote-648) Although not mentioned in *Rodong Sinmun*, the women also lost to Yugoslavia by only three points, and Hungary by only five points.

In August and September of 1961, the DPRK women’s basketball team would participate in the Second Universiade in Bulgaria, while the men would not. At said competition, the DPRK women would score a remarkable win of 103 to 15 against Turkey, with Turkey scoreless at halftime.[[649]](#footnote-649) Other results were not reported in *Rodong Sinmun*.

Like the men, the women’s team would participate in the GANEFO games in 1963 and the smaller-scale Asian GANEFO games in 1966. In the 1963 Edition, the women’s team defeated Indonesia enroute to achieving second place.[[650]](#footnote-650) At the 1966 Asian GANEFO games, the women’s team achieved second place.[[651]](#footnote-651)

In 1967, FIBA held the Women’s World Championship in Prague. Although the DPRK had participated in the 1959 edition, held in Moscow, the DPRK did not participate in the 1964 edition, held in Peru. The 1967 Edition, although it was held in a Socialist nation, allowed the ROK to participate. This prompted a condemnation from the Soviet Union, and Cuba elected to sit out the competition as well in protest.[[652]](#footnote-652)

In May of 1967, the Hungarian women’s team would visit Pyongyang, eight years after the Hungarian men’s team had last visited.[[653]](#footnote-653) Two games would be held with the DPRK national team, both of which the DPRK won.[[654]](#footnote-654)

The DPRK Women’s team, much like the men, were better than most mid-to-low tier opponents during the Mass Athletics Era. Their outright stomping of Turkey’s team is testament to this. But, unlike the men, the DPRK women could hold their own against the world’s better teams. Their narrow losses to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Hungary in the World Championship and wins against the Hungarian national team serve as proof. As such, the DPRK women would get slightly more favour when it came to scheduling international tournaments, as evidenced by their participating in the 1959 World Championship, the 1961 Universiade, and the political hubbub surrounding their non-participating in the 1967 World Championship.

Table 24: Women's National Team Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 10-Oct-59 | Romania | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 41 | 52 | Loss |
| 12-Oct-59 | Bulgaria | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 42 | 48 | Loss |
| 13-Oct-59 | Yugoslavia | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 47 | 50 | Loss |
| 14-Oct-59 | Soviet Union | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 24 | 89 | Loss |
| 16-Oct-59 | Hungary | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 57 | 62 | Loss |
| 17-Oct-59 | Poland | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 38 | 59 | Loss |
| 18-Oct-59 | Czechoslovakia | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | 1959 World Championship for Women | 50 | 84 | Loss |
| 02-Sep-61 | Turkey | Bulgaria | Sofia | ? | ? | 1961 Summer Universiade | 103 | 15 | Win |
| 22-Nov-63 | Indonesia | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | ? | GANEFO | 99 | 57 | Win |
| 21-May-67 | Hungary | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 75 | 65 | Win |
| 28-May-67 | Hungary | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 78 | 76 | Win |

## 8.6 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

Much as in the Reconstruction Era, the Mass Athletics Era would see a great deal of athletics exchange between DPRK club teams and foreign club teams. It began on 7 August 1959 when the Hungarian men’s national basketball team played a friendly against the Pyongyang City team. The Hungarian team won the game handily.[[655]](#footnote-655) Pyongyang City would continue to see the spotlight when they were sent to China as part of a cultural exchange program. Pyongyang City played an exhibition against the Chinese Army, otherwise known as 1 August or Bayi, on 6 December 1959.[[656]](#footnote-656) Said team was the predecessor of the Bayi Rockets. The Rockets were a dominant force in Chinese basketball, winning 34 national titles before 1995 and the first six championships of the subsequently established Chinese Basketball Association.[[657]](#footnote-657) As such, Pyongyang City’s one-sided loss by a 31-point margin was not exactly unexpected.

In July 1961, in accordance with another cultural exchange program, the East German Women’s Basketball team would visit Pyongyang. Three friendship games against local clubs that took place in Pyongyang and Hamhung and joint training exercises were carried out.[[658]](#footnote-658) The last game in Pyongyang was attended by Pak Kum Chol and Ri Hyo Sun, whom would be the main victims of the Kapsan purge six years later.[[659]](#footnote-659) The East German women lost all of their matches handily to Pyongyang City, Lightning, and 8 February.

Four years after the 1959 exhibition between 1 August and Pyongyang City in China, the 1 August team came to Pyongyang for training and exhibition games.[[660]](#footnote-660) The team that 1 August faced, the 8 February team, was associated with the Korean People’s Army. Both men’s and women’s 8 February teams had gone undefeated in the domestic league during the previous holiday. As such, it was a top tier international match. 8 February would emerge victorious in the women’s match and lose the men’s match. In accordance with the game’s high profile, it was attended by political figures such as Nam Il, Kim Chang Man, and Hong Myong Hui. It was also the most well attended basketball game up to that point on record, with *Rodong Sinmun* reporting 80000 attendees.[[661]](#footnote-661) A second match between 8 February and 1 August would occur roughly three weeks later, with the Chinese team winning the women’s match and the Korean team winning the men’s match.[[662]](#footnote-662) Vice Premier Kim Kwang Hyop would have an audience with the visiting Chinese team two days afterwards.[[663]](#footnote-663) The Chinese delegation departed two days later.[[664]](#footnote-664) This would be the last time a DPRK team would play a Chinese team until 1971, when the women’s Army teams would play against each other in Beijing. This was partially due to the shutdown of basketball competitions in China during the Cultural Revolution.[[665]](#footnote-665)

The international games would continue two months later, as the visiting Indonesian men’s national team would play against the Pyongyang City team. This game garnered another visit from Kim Chang Man, as well as attendance from Kim Kwang Hyop.[[666]](#footnote-666) A second game was held, this time without the dignitaries and against a youth team.[[667]](#footnote-667) A third game was held against a local professional team, Swallow. This was the first international match in Chongjin.[[668]](#footnote-668) All three games were won easily by the DPRK clubs. After the matches, the Indonesian team, along with their volleyball counterparts, would achieve a personal meeting with Kim Il. This was the highest level of politician to meet with a foreign basketball team to date.[[669]](#footnote-669)

The Albanian men’s BC Partizani Tirani team would visit the DPRK in September and October of 1963 via train. Three games were planned for Pyongyang and Wonsan.[[670]](#footnote-670) The 8 February team narrowly defeated BC Partizani Tirani in the first match, which was attended by Kim Chang Man, Hong Myong Hui and Choi Hyon.[[671]](#footnote-671) In the second match in Wonsan, Maebong Mountain narrowly emerged victorious.[[672]](#footnote-672) The third match, if played, went unreported.

Another visiting men’s basketball team came in October of 1963 by train, this time from Cambodia.[[673]](#footnote-673) This match, which was held in concordance with a table tennis match, was attended by Pak Kum Chol, Kim Chang Man, Ri Hyo Sun, Hong Myong Hui, Ri Ju Yon, and Kim Ik Son. Said match was won by Pyongyang City.[[674]](#footnote-674) Kim Il would personally greet the Cambodian team three days later.[[675]](#footnote-675) The Cambodian team would lose against a team of Pyongyang Workers on 17 October and the Ministry of Societal Safety on 21 October. Neither game was attended by high officials.[[676]](#footnote-676)

In 1965, the women’s Soviet basketball team TTT Riga, from the Latvian SSR, visited Pyongyang after having won their fifth straight Soviet title.[[677]](#footnote-677) In what was the biggest win for DPRK basketball to that date, the newly formed Moranbong Basketball team defeated TTT Riga at the Pyongyang City Gymnasium with Ri Hyo Sun, Hong Myong Hui, Ri Ju Yon, and Kim Ik Son in attendance. The Latvian team stood superior in height, but the Moranbong team used pressure tactics and mid-range shooting to win.[[678]](#footnote-678) A couple of days after that match, the Soviet Embassy hosted a dinner party with TTT Riga and some lower level DPRK politicians.[[679]](#footnote-679) TTT Riga’s second match came against the renowned 8 February Team at Moranbong Stadium. TTT Riga won a narrow match on a field goal in the last minute, with Hong Myong Hui and Choe Yong Jin in attendance.[[680]](#footnote-680) TTT Riga would return home the next day.[[681]](#footnote-681)

On 11 October that same year, men’s and women’s teams representing the KPA departed for China.[[682]](#footnote-682) The Amrok River women’s basketball team was met by Chinese Vice Ministers He Long and Chen Yi in front of 15,000 people.[[683]](#footnote-683) Results from the matches were not announced.

The Men’s disabled basketball team representing the KPA would participate in a basketball tournament amongst army teams from Socialist nations in Czechoslovakia in September of 1966. Results were not announced.[[684]](#footnote-684) This is particularly remarkable, given that it came a number of decades before the DPRK’s first earnest push for disabled athletics prior to the 2012 London Olympics.

In May of 1967, the Hungarian women’s team would visit Pyongyang, eight years after the Hungarian men’s team had last visited.[[685]](#footnote-685) In total, it was the third time a Hungarian team had visited the DPRK. Four games would be held, with two against local teams. In those matches, the 8 February local club would score a victory while the national youth team would net a loss.[[686]](#footnote-686) That same month, the East German Men’s team would also visit Pyongyang. 8 February and a team of workers would score close victories against the GDR, and Amrok River would lose their match by a hefty margin.[[687]](#footnote-687)

Table 25: Men's Club Team International Match Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 08-Aug-59 | Pyongyang City | Hungary National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Sports Grounds | Friendly | 52 | 79 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 06-Dec-59 | Pyongyang City | 1 August Team | China | ? | ? | Friendly | 61 | 92 | Loss | 0W 2L |
| 05-May-63 | 8 February Team | 1 August Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 64 | 80 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 26-May-63 | 8 February Team | 1 August Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 1L |
| 23-Aug-63 | Pyongyang City | Indonesia National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 122 | 68 | Win | 1W 2L |
| 26-Aug-63 | United Youth | Indonesia National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 92 | 78 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 27-Aug-63 | Swallow | Indonesia National Team | DPRK | Cheongjin | Cheongjin Phohang Sports Grounds | Friendly | 114 | 81 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 20-Sep-63 | 8 February Team | BC Partizani Tirana | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 91 | 86 | Win | 2W 1L |
| 26-Sep-63 | Maebong Mountain | BC Partizani Tirana | DPRK | Wonsan | Sinpung Sports Grounds | Friendly | 64 | 60 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 14-Oct-63 | Pyongyang City | Cambodian National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 102 | 93 | Win | 2W 2L |
| 16-Oct-63 | Pyongyang City Worker | Cambodian National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 83 | 73 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 21-Oct-63 | Ministry of Societal Safety | Cambodian National Team | DPRK | Hamhung | Hamhung City Sports Grounds | Friendly | 70 | 62 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 25-May-67 | 8 February Team | East German National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 90 | 86 | Win | 3W 1L |
| 28-May-67 | Amrok River | East German National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 55 | 80 | Loss | 0W 3L |
| 04-Jun-67 | Worker | East German National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 68 | 65 | Win | 1W 0L |

The men’s club teams faced a variety of high-end opponents during the Mass Athletics Era, such as 1 August, BC Partizani Tirana, and four separate national teams. Collectively, the men’s teams more then held their own, compiling a record of eleven wins and four losses. Among the men’s teams, the 8 February Team would begin to stand above the rest. They defeated premier teams from China and Albania and the East German national team. Meanwhile, Pyongyang City, despite appearing in four international matches during this era, was less impressive. Their 27 point loss to Hungary’s national team and 31 point loss to 1 August are evidence of this.

Table 26: Women's Club Team International Match Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 06-Dec-59 | Pyongyang City | 1 August Team | China | ? | ? | Friendly | 54 | 53 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 00-Jul-61 | Pyongyang City | East German National Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | 97 | 35 | Win | 2W 0L |
| 12-Jul-61 | Lightning | East German National Team | DPRK | Hamhung | Hamhung City Sports Grounds | Friendly | 80 | 45 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 16-Jul-61 | 8 February Team | East German National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 101 | 63 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 05-May-63 | 8 February Team | 1 August Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 83 | 74 | Win | 2W 0L |
| 26-May-63 | 8 February Team | 1 August Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 2W 1L |
| 28-Jun-65 | Moranbong | TTT Riga | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 63 | 58 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 06-Jul-65 | 8 February Team | TTT Riga | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Sports Grounds | Friendly | 51 | 53 | Loss | 2W 2L |
| 18-May-67 | 8 February Team | Hungarian National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 64 | 59 | Win | 3W 2L |
| 25-May-67 | National Youth Team | Hungarian National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 57 | 59 | Loss | 0W 1L |

The women’s club teams, despite having overall fewer matches than the men, faced a similarly high quality of opponent. Like the men, the women faced the 1 August team, the East German National Team, and the Hungarian National Team. But the women also faced Soviet Champion TTT Riga, arguably the strongest possible opponent of the era. Out of ten total games, the women’s club teams won seven and lost three. 8 February was the most prominent of the teams, with a respectable three wins and two losses. Meanwhile, Pyongyang City had two wins and no losses.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the international club matches of this era. Firstly, the men’s and women’s 8 February Team and Pyongyang City Club had emerged as the DPRK’s two premier teams. Secondly, the opponents were a reflection of who the DPRK had good relations with; all of them were part of the Socialist Camp or the non-aligned movement. Thirdly, the games were a big enough event to attract the attention of some of the highest-ranking officials in the regime. Fourthly, the DPRK was more willing to bring in opponents from abroad than they were to send their own team abroad, as only two of the 21 recorded matches were outside of the DPRK. Fifthly, Pyongyang had emerged firmly as the DPRK’s primate city, with fourteen of the nineteen matches in the DPRK confirmed as having taken place in Pyongyang. Sixthly, the end of the Mass Athletics Era saw a shift toward indoor arenas as opposed to outdoor stadiums. Indeed, five of the six matches that took place beginning in 1965 occurred at Pyongyang City Gymnasium.

## 8.7 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

Although there were negotiations for a united team in conjunction with the 1964 Olympics, the basketball team was not explicitly mentioned. However, in a December 1960 statement demanding sporting exchange with the ROK, National Athletic Chairman Kim Ki Su mentioned the victory of the DPRK women’s basketball team over a French team as a strong point of the nation’s athletic prowess.[[688]](#footnote-688) This was possibly referring to the visit by a Marseille University basketball team in September of 1956 or possibly to a Group Match at the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957. Later, in a 1962 *Rodong Sinmun* editorial demanding a combined Korean team, the victory of the DPRK women’s team over the East German team at the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students was mentioned.[[689]](#footnote-689)

## 8.8 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

In concordance with the large-scale athletic reforms of the Mass Athletics era, basketball was a very significant part of domestic policy. The 27 February Cabinet decision that kicked off the era included a policy that mandated every worker exercise for at least an hour each day. Consequently, this meant that basketball was also more frequently played nationwide.[[690]](#footnote-690)

The continued construction of basketball facilities was in full force during the mass athletics era. It was later reported that during a March 1959 visit by Kim Il Sung to the Mangyongdae Revolutionary School, their stadium had a basketball court.[[691]](#footnote-691) That April, it was reported that several basketball facilities were being installed and used at the county level in South Hwanghae Province.[[692]](#footnote-692) In May, the East Pyongyang Stadium, under construction since 1956, hosted a basketball tournament for the first time.[[693]](#footnote-693)

Local courts were also nearly doubled. From 1962 to 1964, the number of basketball courts increased from roughly 4,600 to roughly 7,700.[[694]](#footnote-694) Specifically, by the end of 1962, there were 4,600 basketball courts nationwide.[[695]](#footnote-695) By the end of 1963, there were 5,482 basketball courts nationwide.[[696]](#footnote-696) During 1964, an additional 2,255 courts were built.[[697]](#footnote-697) Furthermore, in a 1965 speech, the Pyongyang Sports Committee noted the success in preparing basketball equipment.[[698]](#footnote-698)

Basketball was also developed on an organizational level. In August of 1959, it was reported that the Namsan Middle School had basketball as a part of its’ programs.[[699]](#footnote-699) Later, in April of 1960, basketball referees were among referees of various sports disciplines to be certified by the national sports committee.[[700]](#footnote-700) Also in 1960, there were 36 level two basketball clubs. This number increased to 130 by 1961.[[701]](#footnote-701)[[702]](#footnote-702) In 1962, basketball was noted as one of fifteen disciplines to have level one teams.[[703]](#footnote-703) In short, the number of basketball associated organizations and officials was increasing.

This coincided with the increase of basketball experts. In December of 1959, two basketball athletes were named master sportswomen.[[704]](#footnote-704) Additionally, in October of 1961, basketball athletes were among those to receive medals of the republic (공화국 훈장) for their athletic accomplishments.[[705]](#footnote-705) By August of 1962, at least one basketball athlete was among those awarded the title of master sportsperson.[[706]](#footnote-706) Again in February 1963, basketball athletes were among those named master sportspeople.[[707]](#footnote-707) Lastly, in October 1966, a basketball athlete was among fifteen athletes awarded the title of master sportsperson.[[708]](#footnote-708) One can also point to the fact that a basketball player was among the athletes to give a speech congratulating returning successful speed skaters in February of 1966.[[709]](#footnote-709) Although basketball players were not yet named to the title of Meritorious Athlete, the consistent promotion of basketball athletes to the master sportsperson title indicates its continued development at the top level.

Basketball would see a great amount of emphasis from the government during the Mass Athletics Era. Firstly, Pak Kum Chol would mention basketball as part of a list of sports to be developed in his speech commemorating the opening ceremony of the second National Athletics Tournament of Youth and Students in October of 1959.[[710]](#footnote-710) Later, in an 8 October 1961 *Rodong Sinmun* article by Kim Ki Su, he mentions the DPRK’s national basketball team as being internationally competitive.[[711]](#footnote-711) During a November 1962 meeting of sports enthusiasts from around the nation a day later, basketball was named as one of the sports that was to be developed.[[712]](#footnote-712) The 1962 yearly athletics summary claimed that basketball was one of multiple disciplines to be markedly improved through athletics games carried out that year.[[713]](#footnote-713) An October 1963 *Rodong Sinmun* article boasted of the country’s victory over Indonesian and Albanian men’s basketball teams as a part of the country’s overall athletics development.[[714]](#footnote-714) Lastly, in the yearly athletic review for 1965 and 1966, it was stated that women’s basketball showed unique athletics skill which attracted the world’s admiration.[[715]](#footnote-715) All in all, basketball was consistently encouraged throughout the era at all levels, and achievements of the national team were celebrated.

A book published in December 1964 on Athletic Medicine provides insight into basketball match conditions of the time. Basketball was described as a sport requiring basic clothes; pants, leggings, an exercise shirt, and light shoes. The shoes used were not to be slippery, particularly if used on indoor surfaces. During matches, needles were to be on hand in order to treat wounds.[[716]](#footnote-716) Courts were to be cyclically treated with water and there was to be 1.5 meters of space between the court’s end line and the support for the basketball hoop.[[717]](#footnote-717) Despite these necessary precautions, injuries were rare compared to other athletic disciplines, and fouls that could injure were considered violations. Nevertheless, limbs often suffered wounds. In more extreme cases, a player could suffer an ankle bone fracture and blows if their body fell over. As such, referees were instructed to be strict in order to prevent injuries. Outdoor courts were to be flat. Basketball shoes with rubber soles for protection of joints was ideal. Lastly, preparation exercise was to be carried out, particularly to prevent convulsions of the calf muscle.[[718]](#footnote-718) Of course, there is no way to know the extent to which these medical precautions were carried out. Still, there was a clear understanding of the need for player safety.

In a set of basketball rules published on 10 February 1966, there were no glaring inconsistencies when compared to standard international rules of the time. [[719]](#footnote-719) Some more unusual rules included the referee stopping play during an injury, referees being unable to cancel each other’s calls, spying infractions for players listening in on another teams huddle, automatic losses if one team doesn’t fairly play the game, and a notification of game resumption to the opposing team captain three minutes prior to half.[[720]](#footnote-720) All in all, at least in the way the rules were written, fair and safe play was considered a priority.

## 8.9 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

Basketball tournaments continued at full speed throughout the Mass Athletics Era. In total, there were 67 known men’s competitions and 46 known women’s competitions. Considering the similar length of time of the two eras, this can be considered a slight uptick from the Reconstruction Era. The most notable occurrence at a tournament politically was the presence of Kim Il Sung at the opening ceremony of a national athletics tournament for university students in October of 1962.[[721]](#footnote-721)

In terms of actual achievement, the most notable team of this era was the Kim Chaek Industrial University Men’s Team. In a 1963 university basketball league from June to July, Kim Chaek University finished in first place. Upon their victory, they were pitted against the Central District Public Building Construction Trust, winner of the Pyongyang workers tournament. Kim Chaek University won the game, securing ten straight years of first place results in Pyongyang City Tournaments.[[722]](#footnote-722)

A very unique occurrence was in Late April of 1960. A basketball skills competition was held amongst Level 1 Athletics Clubs in the categories of free throw shooting, mid-range shooting, and long-range shooting.[[723]](#footnote-723) This would be the only known instance of such a specialized competition.

Table 27: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **Court** | **Court** |
| Pyongyang City University Student Athletics Tournament | 평양시 대학생 체육 대회 | 8-Apr-1959~13-Apr-1959 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Stadium |
| 1959 2nd Division Basketball League | 2급팀 롱구 련맹전 | 12-Apr-1959-15-Apr-1959 | Chongjin | Chongjin City Public Stadium |
| National Workers Athletics Tournament Commemorating 1 May Holiday | 5.1절 기념 제2차 전국 로동자 체육 대회 | 1-May-1959~6-May-1959 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| First National Youth Sports School Athletics Tournament | 제1차 전국 청소년 스포츠 학교 체육 대회 | 17-May-1959~19-May-1959 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| National Agricultural Sector Athletics Tournament | 전국 농업 부문 체육 대회 | 19-Jul-1959~23-Jul-1959 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 14th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation National Students and Youth Athletics Festival | 8.15 해방 14주년 경축 전국 학생 소년 체육 축전 | 15-Aug-1959~19-Aug-1959 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 1959 National 1st Division Basketball League | 전국 1급 롱구 련맹전 | 25-Aug-1959-10-Sept-1959 | Haesan | Haesan City Stadium |
| 1959 National 2nd Division Basketball League | 전국 2급 롱구 련맹전 | 23-Aug-1959-28-Aug-1959 | Haesan | Haesan City Stadium |
| 1959 2nd Division Basketball Cup Competition | 컾 쟁탈 롱구 2급 | 4-Oct-1959-??-Oct-1959 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1959 1st Division Basketball Cup Competition | 컾 쟁탈 롱구 1급 | 16-Oct-1959-21-Oct-1959 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| Pyongyang Student Ball Sport League | 평양시 학생 구기 련맹전 | 6-Mar-1960~ | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1960 1st Division Basketball League, Holiday 1 | 제1차 1급 선수단 롱구 련맹전 | 20-Mar-1960-3-Apr-1960 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1st Division Team Track and Field Games Opening Tournament: Basketball Shooting Tournament | 1급 선수단 륙상 경기 개막 대회: 롱구 투사 대회 | 24-Apr-60 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Worker's Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 경축 평양시 로동자 체육 대회 | 01-May-60 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Primary School and Bereaved Children School Student Athletics Tournament | 전국 초등 및 유자녀 학원 학생 체육 대회 | 6-Jun-1960~10-Jun-1960 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Celebratory DPR Korea Sports Tournament | 8.15 해방 15주년 경축하는 조선민주주의 인민 공화국 체육 대회 | 31-Jul-1960-Aug 1960 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation National University Student Athletics Tournament | 8.15 해방 15주년 전국 대학생 체육 대회 | 24-Aug-1960~26-Aug-1960 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Celebratory Korean People's Army 7th Overall Athletics Match Tournament | 8.15 해방 15주년 경축 조선 인민군 제7차 종합 체육 경기 대회 | 30-Aug-1960~9-Sep-1960 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 9th Public Welfare Sector Overall Athletics Tournament | 제9차 내무부문 종합 체육 대회 | 15-Sep-1960~19-Sep-1960 | Pyongyang | Ministry of Public Welfare Stadium |
| 11th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 체육절 제정 11주년 기념 평양시 체육 대회 | 9-Oct-1960~Oct-1960 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1961 1st Division Basketball Championship, Holiday 1 | 제1차 1급 롱구 선수권 대회 | 5-Feb-1961-22-Feb-1961 | Pyongyang | People's Army Gymnasium |
| Pyongyang City Workers' Athletics Tournament | 평양시 로동자 체육대회 | 29-Mar-61 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative National Workers' Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 기념 전국 로동자 체육 대회 | 27-Apr-1961~2-May-1961 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 2nd Friendship Athletics Tournament Among Publishers and Broadcasters | 제2차 출판 보도 일군 친선 체육 대회 | Jun-1961~4-Jun-1961 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 4th National Youth and Student School Athletics Tournament | 제4차 전국 청소년 스포츠 학교 체육 대회 | 11-Jun-1961~24-Jun-1961 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| First National University Student Overall Athletics Tournament | 전국 대학생 제1차 종합 체육 경기 대회 | 1961-07-01. | Pyongyang | ? |
| 4th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea Celebratory Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 조선 로동당 제4차 대회 경축 평양시 체육 대회 | 14-Aug-1961~18-Aug-1961 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 4th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea Celebratory Pyongyang City Teachers Tournament | 조선 로동당 제4차 대회 경축 평양시 교원 체육 대회 | 30-Sep-1961~2-Oct-1961 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| Pyongyang City Public Health Workers Athletics Tournament | 평양시 보건 일'군 체육대회 | 16-Oct-1961. | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1961 1st Division Basketball League, Holiday 2 | 1급 선수단 롱구 련맹전 | 8-Oct-1961-? | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Japanese Guerillas Commemorative National University Student Athletics Tournament | 항일 유격대 창건 30주년 기념 전국 대학생 체육 대회 | 15-Apr-1962~21-Apr-1962 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Japanese Guerillas Commemorative Athletics Tournament | 항일 유격대 창건 30주년 기념 체육 대회 | 25-Apr-1962. | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Worker's Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 경축 평양시 로동자 체육 대회 | 1962-04-29. | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 25th Anniversary of the Pochonbo Battle Victory Commemorative Sosang District Youth and Student Athletics Tournament | 보천보 전투 승리 25주년 기념 서상 구역 청소년 학생 체육 대회 | 13-May-1962. | ? | ? |
| 1962 1st Division Basketball Championship, Holiday 1 | 1962년도 공화국 롱구 선수권 대회 1차 련맹전 | 4-Jun-1962-Jun 1962 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 1st National University Student Haeju Ball Sport Overall Athletics Tournament | 전국 대학생 제1차 해주 지구 종합 체육 대회 | 6-Sep-1962~11-Sep-1962 | Haeju | Haeju City Liberation Stadium |
| 14th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Commemorative 1st Division Athletics Tournament | 공화국 창건 14주년 기념 1급 선수단 체육 대회 | 9-Sep-1962~16-Sep-1962 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| National Secondary School Specialist Student Athletics Tournament | 전국 고등 기술 학교 학생 체육 대회 | 27-Sep-1962~3-Oct-1962 | Pyongyang | Moranbong/East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1st National University Student Athletics Tournament | 제1차 전국 대학생 체육 축전 | 14-Oct-1962~20-Oct-1962 | Pyongyang | Moranbong/East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament: Basketball League | 5.1절 기념 중앙 및 도 선수단 체육 대회 롱구 련맹전 | 1-Apr-1963-14 May 1963 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament: Basketball League 2nd Division | 5.1절 기념 중앙 및 도 선수단 체육 대회 롱구 련맹전 | 1-Apr-1963-14 May 1963 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City University Students Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 기념 평양시 대학생 체육 대회 | 27-Apr-1963~2-May-1963 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 기념 평양시 로동자 체육 대회 | 29-Apr-1963~2-May-1963 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| Pyongyang City Workers' Ball Sport League | 평양시 로동자 구기 련맹전 | 3-Jul-1963~14-Jul-1963 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| Pyongyang City University Student Ball Sport League | 평양시 대학생 구기 련맹전 | 20-Jun-1963~28-Jul-1963 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 15th Anniversary of the Republic DPR Korea Sports Tournament, Holiday 2 | 공화국 창건 15주년 기념 제2차 조선 민주주의인민공화국 체육 대회 | 11-Aug-1963-15-Sep-1963 | Pyongyang | Moranbong/East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 14th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday Commemorative Central Team Athletics Tournament | 체육절 14주년 기념 중앙 선수단 체육 대회 | 13-Oct-1963~ | ? | Moranbong Stadium |
| Pyongyang City 2nd Division Team Basketball Championship | 평양시 2급 선수단 롱구 대회 | 1-Apr-1964-12-Apr-1964 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 18th Olympic Athlete Selection National Athletics Basketball Championship, Part 1 | 제18차 올림픽 선수 선발 전국 종합 체육 대회 (제1차 경기) | 26-Apr-1964~2-May-1964 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| 18th Olympic Athlete Selection National Athletics Basketball Championship, Part 2 | 제18차 올림픽 선수 선발 전국 종합 체육 대회 (제2차 경기) | 12-Jul-1964~Jul-1964 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium |
| 15th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday National Athletics Tournament | 체육절 15주년 전국 체육 대회 | 11-Oct-1964~28-Oct-1964 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium |
| 15th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday National Athletics Tournament (Each Provincial Team and 2nd Division Teams) | 체육절 15주년 전국 체육 대회 (각 도 선수단 및 2조 선수단) | 26-Oct-1964~Oct-1964 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1st Anniversary of the GANEFO Alliance Foundation Commemorative Athletics Games | 가네포 련맹 창립 1주년 기념 체육경기 | 20-Nov-1964~Nov-1964 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Youth Palace |
| Association and Provisional Athletics Training School Athletics Championship Basketball Tournament | 협회 및 도 체육 강습소 체육 대회 롱구 련맹전 | 7-Mar-1965-Late Apr 1965 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 기념 체육 대회 | 25-Apr-1965~ | Kangkye City, Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Individual Discipline Athletics Championship Showing The Development of Our Country's Athletic Skill | 우리나라 체육 기술의 발전성을 보여주는 종목별 경기 대회 | 23-Aug-1965~Aug-1965 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Technology Secondary School Student Athletics Championship | 전국 고등 기술 학교 학생 체육 대회 | 9-Sep-1965~15-Sep-1965 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Party Foundation 20th Anniversary Celebratory Basketball Tournament | 당 창건 20 주년 경축 롱구 대회 | 11-Oct 1965-19-Oct 1965 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium |
| Pyongyang City Publishing Reporting Workers Overall Athletics Tournament | 평양시 내 출판 보도 일군 종합 체육 대회 | 24-Oct-1965~ | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 8 February Commemorative Individual Discipline Athletics Tournament | 2.8절 기념 종목별 체육 경기 대회 | 6-Feb-1966~15-Feb-1966 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Sonkyo District Worker's Athletics Tournament | 선교구역 로동자 체육 대회 | 27-Mar-1966~7-Apr-1966 | Pyongyang | Korea-Cuba Friendship Factory Athletics Grounds |
| Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 평양시 로동자 체육 대회 | 1-May-1966~8-May-1966 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 1 May Commemorative Basketball Matches | 5.1절 기념 롱구 경기 | 7-May-1966~9-May-1966 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative University Student Basketball Matches | 5.1절 기념 대학생들의 롱구 경기 | 1-May-1966~8-May-1966 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Youth Palace |
| National Youth Athletics Kurakbu Tournament | 전국 청소년체육구락부 경기대회 | 7-Aug-1966~11-Aug-1966 | Hamhung | ? |
| 21st Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Central Team Basketball League | 8.15 해방 21주년기념 중앙 선수단 롱구맹전 | 14-Aug-1966-18-Aug-1966 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Youth Palace |
| 17th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday Commemorative Korea Athletics Tournament | 체육절 17주년기념 조선선수권대회 | 9-Oct-1966~16-Oct-1966 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gynmasium |
| 1 May Commemorative Central Team Spring Basketball Game Tournament | 5.1절기념 중앙선수단 봄철 롱구경기대회 | 26-Mar-1967-2-Apr-1967 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium Pyongyang Youth Palace |

From the tournament details, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, tournaments began to be held indoors. By 1960, there were at least eight gymnasiums nationwide, but no major gymnasiums in the capital yet.[[724]](#footnote-724) The People’s Army Gymnasium was used once during the Reconstruction Era and again for the first division in February 1961, but could not be considered a major gymnasium for basketball events. The first regularly used gymnasium would be Pyongyang City Gymnasium. Pyongyang City Gymnasium would be used for at least six tournaments from 1964 to 1967.[[725]](#footnote-725) The Pyongyang Youth Palace would also emerge as a basketball venue, used for three tournaments over the same time period. Not to be forgotten is the East Pyongyang Stadium, which would serve as the effective replacement for Moranbong Stadium as the premier outdoor basketball venue beginning in May 1959.

Secondly, the Mass Athletics Era is unique in the heavy use of the term “League” (련맹전) instead of “Tournament” (대회) to describe competitions. In truth, this trend had begun in 1956, but it continued through April 1965. After 1965, the term would never be used again. Similar styles of competition would be named “Tournament” (대회) henceforth. It is difficult to determine why, but it likely has to do with efforts to reform the language as well as the fact that most basketball competitions would last for no more than a few weeks at most.

Thirdly, Pyongyang continued taking the lion’s share of tournaments, with only five of the 67 tournaments having definitively taken place outside of the capital. This does not necessarily mean that there were no competitions outside of the capital; it simply indicates that major competitions took place in Pyongyang.

Fourthly, tournaments began to be named in a very practical, matter of fact fashion. Some tournaments and leagues were simply named “Basketball League” or “Basketball Cup Competition”. While the Reconstruction Era favoured tournaments named after major national or Socialist anniversaries, the Mass Athletics era seemed to go away from this convention somewhat. However, those tournaments that were named for important anniversaries shifted away from Socialist anniversaries and into a decidedly nationalist direction. Aside from the Socialist 1 May Holiday, tournaments were named for the Korean Workers’ Party Congress, Anti-Japanese Guerrillas, and Pochonbo Battle Victory. One tournament was even named for GANEFO, in a signal of the DPRK’s political shift towards the non-aligned movement.

Table 28: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Pyongyang City University Student Athletics Tournament | 8-Apr-1959~13-Apr-1959 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University |
| 1959 2nd Division Basketball League | 12-Apr-1959-15-Apr-1959 | Kim Chaek Iron Manufacturing Plant | ? | Ranam Mining | ? | Ministry of Transportation Pyongyang Railroad Management North Phyongan Province Korean Chinese Machine Factory South Hwanghae Province Province Power Supply Department |
| National Workers Athletics Tournament Commemorating 1 May Holiday | 1-May-1959~6-May-1959 | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City South Hamgyong Province |
| First National Youth Sports School Athletics Tournament | 17-May-1959~19-May-1959 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Lightning North Phyongan Province |
| National Agricultural Sector Athletics Tournament | 19-Jul-1959~23-Jul-1959 | Pyongyang City | ? | South Phyongan Province | North Hwanghae Province | North Phyongan Province South Hwanghae Province |
| 14th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation National Students and Youth Athletics Festival | 15-Aug-1959~19-Aug-1959 | Kim Chaek Industrial University (University Group A) Dance School (University Group B) Pyongyang City (Senior Middle School) Pyongyang City (Junior Middle School) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1959 National 1st Division Basketball League | 25-Aug-1959-10-Sept-1959 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Korean People's Army Central Training School February 8 Swallow Maebong Mountain Locomotive |
| 1959 National 2nd Division Basketball League | 23-Aug-1959-28-Aug-1959 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Anju Railroad Management South Hamgyong Province Ministry of Public Welfare |
| 1959 2nd Division Basketball Cup Competition | 4-Oct-1959-??-Oct-1959 | Yongan Mining South Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | South Hamgyong Province |
| 1959 1st Division Basketball Cup Competition | 16-Oct-1959-21-Oct-1959 | 8 February Team | ? | Swallow | Maebong Mountain | Lightning Steel Locomotive Anju Railroad Management Yongan Mining |
| Pyongyang Student Ball Sport League | 6-Mar-1960~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang Light Industry University Pyongyang Water Facilities University |
| 1960 1st Division Basketball League, Holiday 1 | 20-Mar-1960-3-Apr-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 8 February Team Locomotive Chongjin Railroad Administration Steel Pyongyang City |
| 1st Division Team Track and Field Games Opening Tournament: Basketball Shooting Tournament | 24-Apr-60 | Locomotive | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Worker's Athletics Tournament | 01-May-60 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Primary School and Bereaved Children School Student Athletics Tournament | 6-Jun-1960~10-Jun-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Jagang Province Kim Yong Bom School for Bereaved Children |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Celebratory DPR Korea Sports Tournament | 31-Jul-1960-Aug 1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 8 February Team A Maebong Mountain Lightning Korean People's Army Central Training School 8 February Team B Swallow Pyongyang City Wolbi Mountain Steel Locomotive |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation National University Student Athletics Tournament | 24-Aug-1960~26-Aug-1960 | Kim Chaek Industrial University (Group 1) Pyongyang Transportation University (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? | Kim Il Sung University Dance School |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Celebratory Korean People's Army 7th Overall Athletics Match Tournament | 30-Aug-1960~9-Sep-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th Public Welfare Sector Overall Athletics Tournament | 15-Sep-1960~19-Sep-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 9-Oct-1960~Oct-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1961 1st Division Basketball Championship, Holiday 1 | 5-Feb-1961-22-Feb-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Swallow Steel Korean People's Army Central Training School |
| Pyongyang City Workers' Athletics Tournament | 29-Mar-61 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative National Workers' Athletics Tournament | 27-Apr-1961~2-May-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2nd Friendship Athletics Tournament Among Publishers and Broadcasters | Jun-1961~4-Jun-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 4th National Youth and Student School Athletics Tournament | 11-Jun-1961~24-Jun-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | South Phyongan Province Ryanggang Province |
| First National University Student Overall Athletics Tournament | 1961-07-01. | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 4th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea Celebratory Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament | 14-Aug-1961~18-Aug-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 4th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea Celebratory Pyongyang City Teachers Tournament | 30-Sep-1961~2-Oct-1961 | Sonkyo District | ? | Hyongjae Mountain Prize District | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City Public Health Workers Athletics Tournament | 16-Oct-1961. | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1961 1st Division Basketball League, Holiday 2 | 8-Oct-1961-? | ? | ? |  | ? | Maebong Mountain Prize Central Athletics Training School 8 February Team B Steel 8 February Team A Locomotive |
| 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Japanese Guerillas Commemorative National University Student Athletics Tournament | 15-Apr-1962~21-Apr-1962 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | Pyongyang Commerce University | Pyongyang Transportation University | ? |
| 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Japanese Guerillas Commemorative Athletics Tournament | 25-Apr-1962. | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University Pyongyang Transportation University |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Worker's Athletics Tournament | 1962-04-29. | ? | ? |  | ? | ? |
| 25th Anniversary of the Pochonbo Battle Victory Commemorative Sosang District Youth and Student Athletics Tournament | 13-May-1962. | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang Jangsan Machinery Industrial School |
| 1962 1st Division Basketball Championship, Holiday 1 | 4-Jun-1962-Jun 1962 | 8 February Team A | 13W 0L | Central Athletics Training School | Swallow | 8 July Standings 1. 8 February Team A (10W 0L) 2. Central Athletics Training School 3. Swallow 4. Locomotive 5. Wolbi Mountain 8 February Team B  Korean People's Army Central Training School Maebong Mountain Steel Ministry of Public Welfare Ministry of Commerce |
| 1st National University Student Haeju Ball Sport Overall Athletics Tournament | 6-Sep-1962~11-Sep-1962 | Haeju Medical University | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Commemorative 1st Division Athletics Tournament | 9-Sep-1962~16-Sep-1962 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Secondary School Specialist Student Athletics Tournament | 27-Sep-1962~3-Oct-1962 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1st National University Student Athletics Tournament | 14-Oct-1962~20-Oct-1962 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament: Basketball League | 1-Apr-1963-14 May 1963 | Swallow | 7W 2L | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament: Basketball League 2nd Division | 1-Apr-1963-14 May 1963 | Maebong Mountain B | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City University Students Athletics Tournament | 27-Apr-1963~2-May-1963 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang Normal University |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 29-Apr-1963~2-May-1963 | Chunggu Area Public Building Construction Company | ? | Pyongyang Electricity Factory | Pyongyang Overall Printing Factory | ? |
| Pyongyang City Workers' Ball Sport League | 3-Jul-1963~14-Jul-1963 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City University Student Ball Sport League | 20-Jun-1963~28-Jul-1963 | Kim Chaek Industrial University (10th Straight) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 15th Anniversary of the Republic DPR Korea Sports Tournament, Holiday 2 | 11-Aug-1963-15-Sep-1963 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday Commemorative Central Team Athletics Tournament | 13-Oct-1963~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City 2nd Division Team Basketball Championship | 1-Apr-1964-12-Apr-1964 | Chunggu Area Public Building Construction Company | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 18th Olympic Athlete Selection National Athletics Basketball Championship, Part 1 | 26-Apr-1964~2-May-1964 | Central Athletics Training School | ? | ? | ? | 20 April Standings 1. Wolbi Mountain (9W 1L) 2. Department of Societal Safety (8W 1L)  Locomotive Kaesong City North Hamgyong Province |
| 18th Olympic Athlete Selection National Athletics Basketball Championship, Part 2 | 12-Jul-1964~Jul-1964 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Swallow 8 February Locomotive Ministry of Commerce |
| 15th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday National Athletics Tournament | 11-Oct-1964~28-Oct-1964 | Wolbi Mountain | 8W 0L | Swallow (7W 1L) | Maebong Mountain (6W 2L) | 20 Oct Standings T1. Maebong Mountain 4W 0L T1. Wolbi Mountain 4W 0L 3. Swallow 2W 1L 4. Amrok River 2W 2L 5. Tumen River 2W 3L 6. Seagull 1W 2L 7. Locomotive 1W 3L 8. Worker 0W 2L 9. 8 February Team 0W 3L |
| 15th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday National Athletics Tournament (Each Provincial Team and 2nd Division Teams) | 26-Oct-1964~Oct-1964 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1st Anniversary of the GANEFO Alliance Foundation Commemorative Athletics Games | 20-Nov-1964~Nov-1964 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Association and Provisional Athletics Training School Athletics Championship Basketball Tournament | 7-Mar-1965-Late Apr 1965 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Locomotive |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament | 25-Apr-1965~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Individual Discipline Athletics Championship Showing The Development of Our Country's Athletic Skill | 23-Aug-1965~Aug-1965 | Worker | ? | Tumen River | ? | ? |
| National Technology Secondary School Student Athletics Championship | 9-Sep-1965~15-Sep-1965 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Party Foundation 20th Anniversary Celebratory Basketball Tournament | 11-Oct 1965-19-Oct 1965 | Worker | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City |
| Pyongyang City Publishing Reporting Workers Overall Athletics Tournament | 24-Oct-1965~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 8 February Commemorative Individual Discipline Athletics Tournament | 6-Feb-1966~15-Feb-1966 | 8 February Team | ? | Worker | Pyongyang City | ? |
| Sonkyo District Worker's Athletics Tournament | 27-Mar-1966~7-Apr-1966 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 1-May-1966~8-May-1966 | ? | ?0 | ? | ? | Pyongyang Electric Locomotive Factory Passenger Car Workshop Pyongyang Electric Locomotive Factory Construction Area Workshop |
| 1 May Commemorative Basketball Matches | 7-May-1966~9-May-1966 | 8 February Team | ? | Worker | Pyongyang City | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative University Student Basketball Matches | 1-May-1966~8-May-1966 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | Pyongyang Athletics University | Pyongyang Normal University | ? |
| National Youth Athletics Kurakbu Tournament | 7-Aug-1966~11-Aug-1966 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 21st Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Central Team Basketball League | 14-Aug-1966-18-Aug-1966 | Locomotive | ? | Pyongyang City | Sentry | ? |
| 17th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday Commemorative Korea Athletics Tournament | 9-Oct-1966~16-Oct-1966 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Amrok River Locomotive 8 February Team |
| 1 May Commemorative Central Team Spring Basketball Game Tournament | 26-Mar-1967-2-Apr-1967 | 8 February Team | ? | Worker | Amrok River | ? |

From the men’s tournament results, the following conclusions can be determined. Firstly, the tournament results begin to get murkier in this era. *Rodong Sinmun* began to publish less detail about tournaments in general, possibly owing to the increased politicization of the outlet and the additional presence of *Athletics Newspaper*. Secondly, the 8 February Team, with five tournament wins, emerged as the new dominant team of the era. Worker[[726]](#footnote-726), with two wins and three second place finishes, and Locomotive, with two wins, also emerged as contenders. Kim Chaek Industrial University, after their ten years of winning their division in Pyongyang City tournaments in 1963, won another tournament in 1966. Thirdly, there was a firm divide between a “first division” and “second division” in this era. First division teams mainly consisted of State Amateur teams, but second division teams were attached to real businesses. This division would become murkier in later eras. Fourthly, the type of tournaments continued to be diverse. Tournaments for students, youth, orphans, an agricultural tournament, a tournament for publishers and broadcasters, and a tournament for the public health sector were among those held. Fifthly, basketball also began to be competed on its own or with only one or two other disciplines, rather than being attached to a general tournament.

Table 29: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Pyongyang City University Student Athletics Tournament | 8-Apr-1959~13-Apr-1959 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang Medical University |
| 1959 2nd Division Basketball League | 12-Apr-1959-15-Apr-1959 | Wolsan Railroad Factory | ? | Chongjin Cotton Spinning Factory | ? | South Hamgyong Province North Hwanghae Province Manager Ryu Il Ryong's Factory |
| National Workers Athletics Tournament Commemorating 1 May Holiday | 1-May-1959~6-May-1959 | South Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | Jagang Province North Hwanghae Province |
| First National Youth Sports School Athletics Tournament | 17-May-1959~19-May-1959 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Lightning South Hamgyong Province |
| National Agricultural Sector Athletics Tournament | 19-Jul-1959~23-Jul-1959 | Kangwon Province | At Least 1 Win | North Hamgyong Province | North Hwanghae Province | Kaesong City North Phyongan Province South Phyongan Province |
| 14th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation National Students and Youth Athletics Festival | 15-Aug-1959~19-Aug-1959 | Hamhung Medical University (University Group A) Chongjin Normal University (University Group B) South Hamgyong or Phyongan Province (Senior Middle School) Pyongyang City (Junior Middle School) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1959 National 2nd Division Basketball League | 23-Aug-1959-28-Aug-1959 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1959 2nd Division Basketball Cup Competition | 4-Oct-1959-Oct-1959 | Locomotive Anju Railroad Management | ? | ? | ? | Kim Il Sung University Kim Chaek Industrial University |
| 1959 1st Division Basketball Cup Competition | 16-Oct-1959-21-Oct-1959 | Steel | ? | Swallow | Wolbi Mountain Prize | Locomotive Anju Railroad Management |
| Pyongyang Student Ball Sport League | 6-Mar-1960~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Swallow Lightning Korean People's Army Central Training School 8 February Team Wolbi Mountain Locomotive |
| 1960 1st Division Basketball League, Holiday 1 | 20-Mar-1960-3-Apr-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1st Division Team Track and Field Games Opening Tournament: Basketball Shooting Tournament | 24-Apr-60 | Steel | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Primary School and Bereaved Children School Student Athletics Tournament | 6-Jun-1960~10-Jun-1960 | ? | ? | ? | ? | North Phyongan Province South Hamgyong Province Nampho School for Bereaved Children |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Celebratory DPR Korea Sports Tournament | 31-Jul-1960-Aug-1960 | 8 February Team (Group 1) Lightning (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? | Steel Wolbi Mountain |
| 15th Anniversary of August 15th Liberation National University Student Athletics Tournament | 24-Aug-1960~26-Aug-1960 | Hamhung Medical University (Group 1) Chongjin Teachers University (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? | Sinuiju Normal University Pyongyang Commerce University Pyongyang Transportation University Kim Il Sung University |
| 1961 1st Division Basketball Championship, Holiday 1 | 5-Feb-1961-22-Feb-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 8 July Standings 1. 8 February Team (10W 0L) 2. Central Athletics Training School 3. Pyongyang City 4. Steel 5. Swallow 6. Ministry of Public Welfare  Maebong Mountain |
| 4th National Youth and Student School Athletics Tournament | 11-Jun-1961~24-Jun-1961 | ? | ? | ? | ? | North Hamgyong Province South Hamgyong Province |
| 16th Anniversary of 15 August Liberation Celebratory Athletics Games (Final match of a prior basketball tournament) | 1962-08-17. | Pyongyang City | ? | Maebong Mountain Prize | ? | ? |
| 4th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea Celebratory Pyongyang City Teachers Tournament | 30-Sep-1961~2-Oct-1961 | Dongdaewon District | ? | Potong River District | ? | ? |
| 1961 1st Division Basketball League, Holiday 2 | 8-Oct-1961-Oct 1961 | ? | ? |  | ? | ? |
| 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Japanese Guerillas Commemorative National University Student Athletics Tournament | 15-Apr-1962~21-Apr-1962 | Pyongyang Construction University | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Kim Il Sung University | ? |
| 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Anti-Japanese Guerillas Commemorative Athletics Tournament | 25-Apr-1962. | ? | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Public Welfare Central Athletics Training School |
| 1 May Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Worker's Athletics Tournament | 1962-04-29. | ? | ? |  | ? | ? |
| 25th Anniversary of the Pochonbo Battle Victory Commemorative Sosang District Youth and Student Athletics Tournament | 13-May-1962. | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang Jangsan Machinery Industrial School |
| 1962 1st Division Basketball Championship, Holiday 1 | 4-Jun-1962-Jun 1962 | 8 February Team | 11W 0L | Central Athletics Training School | Steel | Pyongyang City Steel 8 February Team Swallow Ministry of Societal Safety Ministry of Commerce Locomotive Pyongyang Athletics University Wolbi Mountain Maebong Mountain |
| 1st National University Student Haeju Ball Sport Overall Athletics Tournament | 6-Sep-1962~11-Sep-1962 | Haeju Normal University | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Commemorative 1st Division Athletics Tournament | 9-Sep-1962~16-Sep-1962 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1st National University Student Athletics Tournament | 14-Oct-1962~20-Oct-1962 | Pyongyang Construction University | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament: Basketball League | 1-Apr-1963-14 May 1963 | Ministry of Societal Safety | 7W 2L | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament: Basketball League 2nd Division | 1-Apr-1963-14 May 1963 | North Hwanghae Province | ? | ? | ? | 20 April Standings 1 (T). 8 February Team (7W 1L) 1 (T). Maebong Mountain (7W 1L) |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City University Students Athletics Tournament | 27-Apr-1963~2-May-1963 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Il Sung University Pyongyang Light Industry University |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 29-Apr-1963~2-May-1963 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City Workers' Ball Sport League | 3-Jul-1963~14-Jul-1963 | Pyongyang Overall Printing Factory | ? | Pyongyang Vehicle Inspection | Pyongyang Textile Factory | ? |
| Pyongyang City University Student Ball Sport League | 20-Jun-1963~28-Jul-1963 | Pyongyang Construction University | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 15th Anniversary of the Republic DPR Korea Sports Tournament, Holiday 2 | 11-Aug-1963-15-Sep-1963 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 8 February Swallow Ministry of Societal Safety Ministry of Commerce Locomotive Pyongyang Athletics University Pyongyang City Steel Wolbi Mountain Maebong Mountain |
| Pyongyang City 2nd Division Team Basketball Championship | 1-Apr-1964-12-Apr-1964 | Pyongyang Medical University | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 18th Olympic Athlete Selection National Athletics Basketball Championship | 26-Apr-1964~2-May-1964 | Central Athletics Training School | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 15th Anniversary of the Sports Holiday National Athletics Tournament | 11-Oct-1964~28-Oct-1964 | Maebong Mountain | 7W 1L (PTS FOR and against tiebreaker) | 8 February Team (7W 1L) | Amrok River (7W 1L) | 20 Oct Standings T1. 8 February 4W 1L T1. Amrok River 4W 1L 3. Maebong Mountain 3W 1L 4. Worker 2W 1L 5T. Locomotive 1W 1L 5T. Wolbi Mountain 1W 1L 7. Pyongyang City 1W 3L 8. Swallow 0W 3L 9. Seagull 0W 4L |
| Association and Provisional Athletics Training School Athletics Championship Basketball Tournament | 7-Mar-1965-Late Apr 1965 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Tournament | 25-Apr-1965~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | Seagull Amrok River |
| Party Foundation 20th Anniversary Celebratory Basketball Tournament | 11-Oct 1965-19-Oct 1965 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 8 February Commemorative Individual Discipline Athletics Tournament | 6-Feb-1966~15-Feb-1966 | Pyongyang City | ? | 8 Feburary | Pyongyang City | ? |
| Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 1-May-1966~8-May-1966 | Pyongyang Electric Wire Factory | ? | Pyongyang Electricity Factory | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Basketball Matches | 7-May-1966~9-May-1966 | 8 February Team | ? | Amrok River | Sentry | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative University Student Basketball Matches | 1-May-1966~8-May-1966 | Pyongyang Normal University | ? | Pyongyang Medical University | Pyongyang Athletics University | ? |
| 21st Anniversary of August 15th Liberation Central Team Basketball League | 14-Aug-1966-18-Aug-1966 | Sentry | ? | Amrok River | Worker | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Central Team Spring Basketball Game Tournament | 26-Mar-1967-2-Apr-1967 | 8 February Team | ? | Amrok River | Worker |  |

From the women’s tournament results, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, much as in the men’s sector, 8 February was the most successful team. Four tournament wins and one second place finish attest to this. Secondly, there was a great deal of competition below 8 February for the second-best team. Steel had two tournament wins and one second place finish, Pyongyang City had two tournament wins, the Central Athletics Training School had one win and one second place finish, and Maebong Mountain had one win. Of these teams, Pyongyang City is notable for continuing to outperform their male counterparts. Meanwhile, Steel is notable for disappearing after 1962.

Table 30: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 20-Mar-59 | 1st | 8 February Team | Locomotive | 85 | 51 | 5W 0L | 8W 5L |
| 20-Mar-59 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Chongjin Railroad Management | 76 | 59 | 13W 7L | 0W 1L |
| 17-May-59 | N/A | Lightning | North Phyongan Province | 57 | 42 | 9W 3L | 4W 5L |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | South Pyongyan Province | ? | ? | ? | 1W 1L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | 5W 6L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 3W 3L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 4W 2L | ? |
| 23-Aug-59 | 2nd | Anju Railroad Management | South Hamgyong Province Ministry of Public Welfare | 73 | 70 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 21-Oct-59 | 1st | 8 February Team | Swallow | 64 | 59 | 4W 0L | 0W 3L |
| 31-Jul-60 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | 8 February Team B | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 31-Jul-60 | 1st | Lightning | Korean People's Army Central Training School | ? | ? | 10W 3L | 4W 2L |
| 31-Jul-60 | 1st | Swallow | Ministry of Commerce | ? | ? | 1W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 31-Jul-60 | 1st | 8 February Team A | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | 6W 0L | 13W 8L |
| 31-Jul-60 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | Steel | ? | ? | 1W 1L | 1W 4L |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | Steel | ? | ? | ? | 2W 4L | ? |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | 8 February Team A | ? | ? | ? | 7W 0L | ? |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | Locomotive | ? | ? | ? | 9W 5L | ? |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | Ministry of Commerce | ? | ? | ? | 2W 2L | ? |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | Swallow | ? | ? | ? | 2W 3L | ? |
| 12-Aug-60 | 2nd | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | 14W 8L | ? |
| 12-Aug-60 | 2nd | Jagang Province | ? | ? | ? | 2W 2L | ? |
| 12-Aug-60 | 2nd | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | 6W 5L | ? |
| 24-Aug-60 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | 7W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 24-Aug-60 | University | Pyongyang Transportation University | Dance School | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 11-Jun-61 | Student | South Pyongyan Province | Ryanggang Province | 61 | 36 | 2W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 3~4-Aug-61 | Exhibition | National Team | Pyongyang Machinery and Technology Secondary School | 87 | 37 | N/A | 0W 1L |
| 02-Oct-61 | Teachers | Sonkyo District | Hyongjae Mountain District | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 29-Oct-61 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | Central Athletics Training School | 69 | 60 | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 29-Oct-61 | 1st | 8 February Team B | Steel | 64 | 47 | 1W 1L | 2W 5L |
| 29-Oct-61 | 1st | Lightning | Locomotive | 64 | 47 | 11W 3L | 9W 6L |
| 25-Apr-62 | 1st | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Pyongyang Transportation University | ? | ? | 8W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 18-Jun-62 | 1st | 8 February Team B | Swallow | ? | ? | 2W 1L | 2W 4L |
| 08-Jul-62 | 1st | Swallow | Wolbi Mountain | 65 | 63 | 3W 4L | 1W 2L |
| 08-Jul-62 | 1st | Ministry of Public Welfare | Ministry of Commerce | 75 | 71 | 12W 3L | 1W 2L |
| 15-Oct-62 | University | Hamhung Medical University | Chongjin Mining Metal Industrial University | 49 | 42 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Oct-62 | University | Pyongyang Construction University | Kim Il Sung University | 51 | 50 | 1W 0L | 1W 2L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Pyongyang Construction University | Chongjin Mining Metal Industrial University | 70 | 62 | 2W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Hamhung Medical University | 94 | 76 | 9W 0L | 2W 0L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Haeju Medical University | 86 | 46 | 2W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Wonsan Agricultural University | Pyongyang Medical University | 88 | 75 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-Apr-63 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Maebong Mountain | 78 | 66 | 15W 8L | 2W 1L |
| 27-Apr-63 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Pyongyang Normal University | 87 | 53 | 10W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 28-Jul-63 | University/Workers | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Junggu District Public Building Construction Trust | 94 | 89 | 11W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 12-Oct-64 | 1st | Tumen River | Locomotive | 67 | 62 | 1W 0L | 9W 7L |
| 12-Oct-64 | 1st | 8 February Team | Maebong Mountain | 67 | 62 | 8W 0L | 2W 2L |
| 12-Oct-64 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | Swallow | 66 | 65 | 2W 2L | 3W 5L |
| 14-Oct-64 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | Worker | 81 | 81 | 2W 2L 1T | 0W 0L 1T |
| 14-Oct-64 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | Seagull | 79 | 45 | 3W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 14-Oct-64 | 1st | Locomotive | 8 February Team | 70 | 67 | 10W 7L | 9W 1L |
| 16-Oct-64 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | Locomotive | 68 | 66 | 3W 2L 1T | 10W 8L |
| 21-Oct-64 | 1st | Locomotive | Wolbi Mountain | 68 | 64 | 11W 8L | 3W 3L |
| 21-Oct-64 | 1st | 8 February Team | Seagull | 58 | 54 | 10W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 23-Oct-64 | 1st | National Team (Overall Team) | Wolbi Mountain | 97 | 62 | N/A | 3W 5L |
| 00-Oct-64 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | Swallow | 66 | 65 | 4W 5L | 3W 6L |
| 09-Mar-65 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Locomotive | 81 | 67 | 16W 8L | 11W 9L |
| 23-Aug-65 | 1st | Worker | Tumen River | ? | ? | 1W 0L 1T | 1W 1L |
| 19-Oct-65 | 1st | Worker | Pyongyang City | 95 | 82 | 2W 0L 1T | 16W 9L |
| 01-May-66 | Workers Preliminary | Pyongyang Electric Locomotive Factory Passenger Car Workshop | Pyongyang Electric Locomotive Factory Construction Area Workshop | 56 | 32 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 18-Aug-66 | 1st | Locomotive | Pyongyang City | 131 | 100 | 12W 9L | 16W 10L |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Sentry | 82 | 56 | 17W 10L | 0W 1L |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | 8 February Team | Worker | 93 | 83 | 11W 1L | 1W 2L 1T |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | Amrok River | Locomotive | 87 | 76 | 13W 3L | 12W 10L |

From the men’s domestic games, it is possible to determine that Locomotive with ten matches, 8 February and Wolbi Mountain with eight matches each, Maebong Mountain, Wolbi Mountain, and Pyongyang City with six matches, and Kim Chaek Industrial University with five matches were among the premier clubs. Among those clubs, 8 February with a seven win and one loss record and Kim Chaek Industrial University with five wins were particularly elite. The rest of the teams won as much as they lost. The lone exception was Maebong Mountain, with three wins, two losses, and one tie. In sum, the amateur professional clubs had taken a clear priority during the Mass Athletics Era.

Table 31: Women's Domestic Basketball Matches, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 17-May-59 | N/A | South Hamgyong Province | Lightning | 30 | 24 | 1W 0L | 5W 3L |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | Kaesong City | ? | ? | ? | 4W 1L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 1W 2L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | 5W 1L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | South Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | 1W 2L | ? |
| 21-Jul-59 | Agricultural | Kangwon Province | ? | ? | ? | 5W 2L | ? |
| 21-Oct-59 | 1st | Steel | Swallow | 44 | 41 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 21-Jul-60 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Swallow | ? | ? | 8W 6L | 0W 2L |
| 21-Jul-60 | 1st | Lightning | Korean People's Army Central Training School | ? | ? | 6W 3L | 4W 2L |
| 21-Jul-60 | 1st | 8 February Team | Wolbi Mountain | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? | 2W 0L | ? |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | Steel | ? | ? | ? | 2W 0L | ? |
| 05-Aug-60 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | ? | ? | ? | 2W 1L | ? |
| 12-Aug-60 | 2nd | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 2W 2L | ? |
| 12-Aug-60 | 2nd | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | 2W 0L | ? |
| 12-Aug-60 | 2nd | North Hwanghae Province | ? | ? | ? | 2W 1L | ? |
| 24-Aug-60 | University | Pyongyang Medical University | Kim Il Sung University | 39 | 38 | 1W 0L | 2W 1L |
| 24-Aug-60 | University | Pyongyang Transportation University | Chongjin Normal University | ? | ? | 4W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 11-Jun-61 | Student | South Hamgyong Province | North Hamgyong Province | 47 | 40 | 3W 0L | 2W 3L |
| 16-Aug-61 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Maebong Mountain | 64 | 59 | 9W 6L | 0W 1L |
| 02-Oct-61 | Teachers | Dongdaewon District | Potong River District | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 01-Apr-62 | 1st | Ministry of Commerce | Ministry of Societal Safety | 67 | 52 | 1W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 26-Apr-62 | 1st | Ministry of Public Welfare | Central Athletics Training School | ? | ? | 7W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 08-Jul-62 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | Central Athletics Training School | 55 | 54 | 1W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 16-Jul-62 | 1st | 8 February Team | Pyongyang City | 78 | 65 | 3W 0L | 9W 7L |
| 15-Oct-62 | University | Pyongyang Medical University | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | 49 | 48 | 2W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 15-Oct-62 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Kim Il Sung University | 48 | 40 | 2W 0L | 2W 2L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Pyongyang Medical University | Chongjin Medical University | 57 | 43 | 3W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Pyongyang Construction University | Hamhung Chemical Industry University | 62 | 55 | 1W 0L | 0W 3L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Wonsan Normal University | 82 | 61 | 3W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 17-Oct-62 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Haeju Normal University | 54 | 43 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 27-Apr-63 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Pyongyang Light Industrial University | 68 | 51 | 4W 2L | 0W 1L |
| 29-Aug-63 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Steel | 63 | 51 | 10W 7L | 2W 1L |
| 29-Aug-63 | 1st | 8 February Team | Swallow | 56 | 53 | 4W 0L | 0W 3L |
| 29-Aug-63 | 1st | Ministry of Societal Safety | Ministry of Commerce | 65 | 61 | 1W 1L | 1W 2L |
| 29-Aug-63 | 1st | Locomotive | Pyongyang Athletics University | 54 | 52 | 6W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 27-28-Aug-63 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | ? | ? | ? | 3W 1L | ? |
| 27-28-Aug-63 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | ? | ? | ? | 2W 1L | ? |
| 27-28-Aug-63 | 1st | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? | 5W 0L | ? |
| 27-28-Aug-63 | 1st | Ministry of Societal Safety | ? | ? | ? | 2W 1L | ? |
| 27-28-Aug-63 | 1st | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | 11W 7L | ? |
| 27-28-Aug-63 | 1st | Locomotive | ? | ? | ? | 7W 3L | ? |
| 12-Oct-64 | 1st | Amrok River | Maebong Mountain | 65 | 63 | 8W 3L | 2W 2L |
| 14-Oct-64 | 1st | 8 February Team | Amrok River | 55 | 49 | 6W 0L | 8W 4L |
| 14-Oct-64 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | Pyongyang City | 67 | 52 | 3W 2L | 11W 8L |
| 16-Oct-64 | 1st | Amrok River | Seagull | 66 | 49 | 9W 4L | 1W 0L |
| 16-Oct-64 | 1st | 8 February Team | Pyongyang City | 61 | 44 | 7W 0L | 11W 9L |
| 16-Oct-64 | 1st | Maebong Mountain | Swallow | 61 | 50 | 4W 2L | 0W 4L |
| 27-Oct-64 | 1st | Worker | Locomotive | 41 | 38 | 1W 0L | 7W 4L |
| 25-Apr-66 | 1st | Seagull | Amrok River | 60 | 58 | 1W 1L | 9W 5L |
| 08-May-66 | Workers | Pyongyang Electric Wire Factory | Pyongyang Electricity Factory | 45 | 44 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 18-Aug-66 | 1st | Sentry | Amrok River | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 9W 6L |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | Amrok River | Sentry | 80 | 59 | 10W 5L | 0W 1L |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | 8 February Team | Locomotive | 78 | 61 | 8W 0L | 7W 5L |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Worker | 59 | 55 | 12W 9L | 0W 1L |
| 26-Mar-67 | 1st | Amrok River | Worker | 68 | 65 | 11W 5L | 0W 2L |

From the women’s domestic games, it is possible to determine that Amrok River with nine matches, 8 February and Pyongyang City with eight matches each, Maebong Mountain with six matches, and Locomotive and Swallow with four matches each were among the elite teams. 8 February in particular with eight wins and no losses was head and shoulders above the rest. Amrok River with six wins and three losses, Pyongyang City with five wins and three losses, and Maebong Mountain with four wins and two losses also had winning records. Meanwhile, Locomotive won as much as they lost with two wins and losses and Swallow lost all of their games. Remarkably, Maebong Mountain would fade from prominence after this era, and Amrok River was considerably more successful and prominent than their male counterparts.

Taken on the whole, the Mass Athletics era would be one of the most prominent eras for domestic basketball, and domestic basketball wouldn’t be exceeded in this level of prominence until the late 1990s. But the Mass Athletics era was notable in particular for its establishment of state amateur teams, the emergence of a clearly dominant 8 February men’s and women’s team, and the sheer number of available tournament and match results.

## 8.10 Local Basketball Reports

The Mass Athletics Era marks the beginning of reporting on the athletics activities of individual factories, businesses, organs, cooperative farms, and schools in earnest. This reporting does include some in-depth articles with genuine details. But, by and large, it would boil down to an extremely formulaic and standardized form of reporting. Specifically, this type of reporting did not reveal many details, relying heavily on pre-determined phrases and terms to describe the form in which athletics were carried out. The standardized nature of this reporting was not as pronounced during the mass athletics era, but would become more pronounced in subsequent eras. As such, with the majority of these reports, it simply does not make sense to try and create a narrative out of them. Said reports are more easily digestible in table format. However, the reports that do give detail will be inspected more thoroughly.

Table 32: Local Basketball Reports, Mass Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Place Type** |
| 1959.3.5 | Pyongyang construction machine factory[[727]](#footnote-727) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1959.3.30 | Rakwon Machinery Factory[[728]](#footnote-728) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1959.3.31 | Pyongyang Textile Machine Factory[[729]](#footnote-729) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1959.2.27 | Jungang County, Jagang Province[[730]](#footnote-730) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1959.9.6 | Union Members in Suan County[[731]](#footnote-731) | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | County/City |
| 1959.9.12 | Hungnam Fertilizer Plant[[732]](#footnote-732) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1959.10.25 | Kaesong Textile Factory[[733]](#footnote-733) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1960.2.17 | Siksong County Agricultural Cooperative[[734]](#footnote-734) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Agricultural Cooperative |
| 1960.6.11 | Transportation Administration Trust in Kaechon City[[735]](#footnote-735) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1960.8.3 | Pyongyang Textile Machine factory[[736]](#footnote-736) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1962.4.10 | 8 February Madong Cement Factory Maintenance Shop[[737]](#footnote-737) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1962.5.12 | Sinchon Honourable Soldiers Foodstuff Factory[[738]](#footnote-738) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1962.5.21 | Pyongyang Jangsan Machinery Industrial School[[739]](#footnote-739) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 1962.5.21 | Pakchon Mine[[740]](#footnote-740) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Mine |
| 1962.5.22 | Changdo Agricultural School in Changdo County[[741]](#footnote-741) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1962.5.27 | Kim Chaek Iron Manufacturing Plant[[742]](#footnote-742) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1962.6.17 | Pyongyang Sonkyo Light Industry Secondary School[[743]](#footnote-743) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1962.9.20 | Ryongchon County Jinhung Secondary School[[744]](#footnote-744) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1962.11.02 | Pukchong Grazing Cooperative in South Hamgyong Province[[745]](#footnote-745) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Agricultural Cooperative |
| 1962.11.03 | Ryonggang Secondary Economic School[[746]](#footnote-746) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1962.11.5 | Songnam Secondary School[[747]](#footnote-747) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 1963.5.8 1963.6.18 | Hungnam Fertilizer Factory[[748]](#footnote-748)[[749]](#footnote-749) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1963.5.14 | Ryongsong Meat Processing Plant[[750]](#footnote-750) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1963.7.5 | Wonsan Jo Kun Sil Machinery Industrial Secondary School[[751]](#footnote-751) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1963.7.5 | Kapsan Machinery Factory[[752]](#footnote-752) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1963.12.23 | Printing Factory[[753]](#footnote-753) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1963.12.23 | Pyongyang Construction Machinery Factory[[754]](#footnote-754) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1963.1.9 | The local sports committee in Hoeyang County, Kangwon Province[[755]](#footnote-755) | No | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 1964.2.1 | Pyongyang Central Party Organs[[756]](#footnote-756) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1964.2.13 | Pyongyang City Central District Public Building Construction Company[[757]](#footnote-757) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Business |
| 1964.2.18 | Hwanghae Iron Manufacturing Plant[[758]](#footnote-758) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1964.3.3 | Kim Chaek Iron Manufacturing Plant Coke Workshop Second Chollima Equipment Workteam[[759]](#footnote-759) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1964.5.4 | 8 February Madong Cement Factory #1 Maintenance division[[760]](#footnote-760) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1964.5.23 | Metal Chemistry Industry Ministry’s Mining Designing Research Laboratory[[761]](#footnote-761) | No | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1965.3.10 | Tokchon Automobile Parts Factory[[762]](#footnote-762) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1965.3.19 | Jagang Province People’s Committee Forestry Planning Office[[763]](#footnote-763) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 1965.3.24 | Changdo County Chombang Agricultural School in Kangwon Province[[764]](#footnote-764) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1965.3.24 | Kangson Steel Mill Youth Construction[[765]](#footnote-765) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1965.5.14 | Mangyongdae Construction Machinery Factory[[766]](#footnote-766) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1965.5.14 | Sinpo City, South Hamgyong Province[[767]](#footnote-767) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1965.9.8 | Musan Mining[[768]](#footnote-768) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 1965.10.17 | Kosan County Sokwangsa Middle School[[769]](#footnote-769) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1964.10.31 | Pyongyang Sanpyo Printing factory[[770]](#footnote-770) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1964.11.14 | rural youth in Pokchong County[[771]](#footnote-771) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1964.11.18 | all iron manufacturing plants with youth[[772]](#footnote-772) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1964.12.16 | Sunchon Tractor Parts Factory[[773]](#footnote-773) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1965.11.03 | Haeju Ryongyol Agicultural Machinery Factory[[774]](#footnote-774) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1966.2.04 | Mangyongdae Construction Machinery Factory[[775]](#footnote-775) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1966.4.10 | Korea-Cuba Friendship Pyongyang Textile Factory[[776]](#footnote-776) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1967.1.16 | Wolsan Planning Research Centre[[777]](#footnote-777) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1967.3.18 | Hoeyang County Middle School[[778]](#footnote-778) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1967.4.23 | Nampho Refinery[[779]](#footnote-779) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |

In total, there were 52 separate reports of basketball being played at organizations across the country. This is a reflection of the continued effort put behind the development of basketball and other athletic disciplines in this era. Nearly all of them had the equipment necessary to play a match. Of the 52 total reports, 36 of them reported regular basketball matches, and nine of them reported teams. In sum, it is possible to say that basketball as a pastime during this era mainly focused on the distribution of equipment, while the occurrence of regular matches and organization of teams was likely up to the individual organization. Of said organizations, 27 of them were factories, ten were schools, five were counties or cities, five were organs, two were mines, two were agricultural cooperatives, and one was a business. This indicates more of a priority for publicizing the activities of working age people, as well as the prevalence of basketball in more urban areas.

Some of the more detailed reports provide important insight into the state of basketball in the DPRK at the time. During late December of 1960, it was reported that students in Nampho were using gymnasiums in order to practice athletics during the Winter holiday, including basketball.[[780]](#footnote-780) This was one of the earliest mentions of the use of gymnasiums. In May 1962, it was reported that at the Sinchon Honourable Soldiers Foodstuff Factory in South Hwanghae Province, a basketball court was made out of unused resources and was used by workers there.[[781]](#footnote-781) As similar story was reported in March 1965. Then, it was reported that the Tokchon Automobile Parts Factory procured basketball equipment and had used it to participate in games.[[782]](#footnote-782) This is interesting because it indicates that, even at the height of public distribution in the DPRK, individual organizations still had to show initiative in order to acquire athletic equipment.

Reports of basketball enthusiasts also came in semi-regularly. A March 1964 report indicated that basketball was one of several sports to be in the process of popularization.[[783]](#footnote-783) In May 1963, it was reported that workers set up a goal at Hungnam Fertilizer Factory.[[784]](#footnote-784) It was later stated in June that the factory had a second-tier basketball club that practiced every day.[[785]](#footnote-785) It was also reported in late October 1964 that the Pyongyang Sanphyo Printing factory had a strong women’s team which achieved first place in the latest local tournament. The factory was said to use running as a basis for basketball training, and that basketball was trained during break times and lunchtime.[[786]](#footnote-786) It was reported in November of that year that all iron manufacturing plants with youth were offering regular basketball in league format as part of a broader athletics hobby curriculum.[[787]](#footnote-787) Lastly, in a March profile of an athletics enthusiast, basketball was listed as one of many disciplines that he participated in.[[788]](#footnote-788) In sum, the national athletics encouragement, through several examples, clearly had some level of influence at the grassroots level.

In addition to regular reports, basketball also made a brief appearance in cinema. A short scene in the 1966 movie *Youth in One’s Sixties* (60청춘) depicted the main character watching his home county losing a basketball match. Disappointed at the loss, said character is hit in the back with the match basketball. In frustration, the character, despite being over sixty, throws the ball into the hoop directly from the stands. Eventually, the character resolves to help his county’s standing in the athletics tournament through the marathon. The basketball match itself was depicted only through a few shots. But one can ascertain conditions of the time; dirt courts, wooden backboards, and canvas shoes reflect how the game was played. Accordingly, the strategy of the game itself also appeared to be rudimentary; a helter-skelter level of team organization and fast game pace reflected the amateur state of county-level basketball in the DPRK.

The DPRK Media also reported on international basketball to a minor extent. In January 1959, the victory of the USSR over the USA basketball team in the 1959 FIBA World Championship received a short mention in *Minju Joson.[[789]](#footnote-789)* In mid-August 1960, various DPRK international basketball victories were mentioned as a point of pride in a *Minju Joson* article.[[790]](#footnote-790) In June of 1962, an international men’s basketball competition among Socialist countries was reported on.[[791]](#footnote-791) In 1964, the popularization of basketball in Indonesia was reported on.[[792]](#footnote-792) In July 1965, the development of basketball in Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Guinea was reported. [[793]](#footnote-793) There was even a report on the first African women’s basketball tournament held in Conakry, Guinea.[[794]](#footnote-794) In sum, it can be determined that these reports had a starkly political emphasis. Nations with friendship towards the DPRK were given positive portrayal, and there was little information about the game of basketball itself.

The media’s emphasis on the Chongryon, or the organization of DPRK friendly Koreans in Japan, is also worth mentioning. In May and September 1963, basketball was played at a sports festival held by the Chongryon in Tokyo.[[795]](#footnote-795) By January 1965, the Chongryon even held their own inter-school basketball tournament in Kyoto.[[796]](#footnote-796) The aforementioned Tokyo tournament was held again in September.[[797]](#footnote-797) By March of 1966, the Tokyo tournament was held again.[[798]](#footnote-798) In September of the same year, the Chongryon held a basketball tournament as part of festivities for the anniversary of the DPRK’s founding.[[799]](#footnote-799) All in all, the reports on the basketball tournaments of the Chongryon were very similar to those of friendly nations; there was very little emphasis on the actual event, and heavy emphasis on the political motivation behind the event.

## 8.11 Standout Basketball Stars

The Mass Athletics Era showcased more individual players than any era before it or since. Among these players, the standout star was Ri Dok Chan of Pyongyang City, the National Team, and the 8 February Team. Ri was praised for his mid to long range shooting and speed against Cambodia, Albania, Wolbi Mountain, and the Hungarian National Team. Other standout male players included Kim Yong Sop, Chon Ku U, and O Sok Nam, who showed vigorous activity in Kim Chaek Industrial University’s tenth straight tournament win. Choe Do Don showed off strong offense in the final moment of the Pyongyang City Workers win over Cambodia. Chan Hak Rim and Kim Ryang had skilful mid-range shooting for the Ministry of Societal Safety against Cambodia. Ju Il Mun made every long range shot for Tumen River in a domestic game against Locomotive. Kim Myong Ja was deemed a corrector and operator in the low post who could score for Wolbi Mountain. An Sin Ja scored mid-range shots in the domestic championship for the Worker team.

Among the women, perhaps the most high-profile figure was Choe Sok Sil. She was mentioned for her good defence against the East German National team in July 1961 for 8 February, and gave a speech congratulating returning speed skaters in February of 1966. Other female athletes with two state media mentions include Han Jong Ja and Choe Chol Ja, 8 February athletes who hit mid-range shots in a April 1967 domestic championship game and showcased quick dodging and long-range shots against the Hungarian Championship team that same month. There was also Choe Dok Sil, U Chu Yong, and Kang Dok Il. All three were praised for their two to three person scoring attack and mid-range shots against the Hungarian national team while playing for the national team in May of 1967. Lastly, Jo Chong Ja and Ri Yong Ja had good mid-range shooting against the Hungarian National Team while playing for the DPRK Youth National Team in May of 1967, Jo In Hwa and Ri Jong Ja were mentioned for scoring for the 8 February team against the East German National Team, and Kim Ki Ok was noted for good defence in that same game.

# CHAPTER 9. The National Defence Athletics Era (1967.5.30~1974.4.18)

## 9.1 General Athletics Overview

The National Defence Athletics Era, as the name implies, was marked by a strong focus on National Defence Athletics while other athletic disciplines were de-emphasized. This is in contrast to the prior Mass Athletics Era, where National Defence Athletics were seen on more of an equal footing, and the following Specialized Athletics Era, where development of specific athletic disciplines was given more of a priority. It’s worth noting that the beginning of the National Defence Athletics Era coincides with the date of the Kapsan Incident. Said incident was important for the DPRK politically as it paved the way for a monolithic ideological system.[[800]](#footnote-800) Accordingly, the National Defence Athletics Era would see strong influence from the leadership cult.

On 30 May 1967, Kim Il Sung announced an effort to popularize National Defence Athletics and prioritize them over normal athletics.[[801]](#footnote-801) This effort included the wide distribution of National Defence Athletics disciplines, a continual expansion of each discipline, and a diversification of forms.[[802]](#footnote-802) These new forms of National Defence Athletics, developed over the next few years, included shooting, model flying, motorcycle, automobile, tractor, parachuting, and wireless communication.[[803]](#footnote-803) Furthermore, National Defence Gymnastics, weapons disassembly and re-assembly, and forced marches were made mandatory disciplines nationwide. Students were to begin to use National Defence Athletics as a basis for their other athletics.[[804]](#footnote-804) This popularization also meant utilizing the students’ Saturdays as National Defence Athletics days.[[805]](#footnote-805)

Meanwhile, other forms of collectivist athletics were also ramped up. Mass Group Gymnastics also began to gain emphasis, meriting their own section in the yearly athletics review.[[806]](#footnote-806) Beginning in 1968, group running began to be emphasized in the yearly athletics summary. It was carried out in addition to morning and rest time gymnastics at each factory, business, office organ, and inminban.[[807]](#footnote-807)

By 1969, the National Defence Athletics system would become a main focus of policy amongst all athletics.[[808]](#footnote-808) In a 4 November 1969 Speech by Kim Il Sung, several elements of the national athletics policy were emphasized. Firstly, physical fitness was cited as key to increasing production, despite advances in science and technology. Additionally, physical fitness was seen as key to developing science and technology, due to the physical fitness demanded by certain specialist fields.[[809]](#footnote-809) This claim is in line with the classical Communist definition of athletics as a key portion of increasing the nation’s productivity. Secondly, Kim demanded that all people participate in athletics.[[810]](#footnote-810) This is in line with the policy of the Mass Athletics Era, in which all citizens were mandated to exercise for an hour or more each day. Thirdly, Kim said that schools were not carrying out athletics very well, as they were not taking it seriously enough and failing to attract interest.[[811]](#footnote-811) In order to rectify this problem, beginning in 1970, a reform of school athletics included the institution of “Saturday Athletics Day” and “National Defence Athletics Day”.[[812]](#footnote-812) Fourthly, Kim demanded that athletes strive for a collectivist spirit, throwing away a mentality that strove for honour or heroism.[[813]](#footnote-813) This is in line with the monolithic ideological system, in which no cult of celebrity can come close to approaching the leader. Accordingly, the athletic achievements of individual basketball stars would become significantly less common in the pages of *Rodong Sinmun* during the ensuing two decades. Lastly, Kim broke off the Athletics Guidance Committee from the cabinet and operated it independently. This increased the leading role of the Athletics Guidance Committee and showed Kim’s interest in developing excellent athletes.[[814]](#footnote-814)

As the DPRK entered the 1970s, DPRK athletics began to focus on National Defence Athletics that emphasized a revolutionary mindset.[[815]](#footnote-815) Put simply, athletes in the 1960s wished to become red athletes, but in the 1970s they became red athletic soldiers faithful to the leader.[[816]](#footnote-816) An apt term for this new athletic mindset is Juche Athletics.[[817]](#footnote-817) Beginning in the late 1960s, National Defence Athletic Tournaments began to get more publicity, reducing the amount of emphasis given to most normal athletic disciplines.[[818]](#footnote-818) Nevertheless, Kim Il Sung did mention that students should play basketball, along with football and volleyball, as part of their athletic training.[[819]](#footnote-819) Indeed, despite the emphasis on National Defence Athletics at the times, there was still a broader movement to get the DPRK ready to participate competitively in international events.[[820]](#footnote-820)

From 1971 to 1977, the party structure of the Korean Athletics Guidance Committee was expanded.[[821]](#footnote-821) Accordingly, in 1970, Kim Il Sung took interest to Olympic preparations and directed that the country was to become a “Kingdom of Athletics”(체육왕국).[[822]](#footnote-822) This was also the first time that the concept of Juche was established within the realm of athletics and the first time that scientific and technological athletic development was emphasized.[[823]](#footnote-823) In the 1970s, the competition between Socialist and Capitalist countries was at its peak. This is because the achievements of athletes could be propagated as evidence of the superiority of the Socialist system. As such, elite athletics were prioritized.[[824]](#footnote-824)

1972 turned out to be a pivotal year in terms of the continued development of elite athletics. Firstly, the provincial athletic clubs were given specific athletic disciplines, training two hours a day each weekday and for four hours on Sunday.[[825]](#footnote-825) Secondly, following a December 1971 directive from Kim Il Sung, the DPRK closed the Sports Schools in each province. They were replaced with High Level Athletics Colleges.[[826]](#footnote-826) The new colleges included Pyongyang Athletics College, Haeju Athletics College, Sinuiju Athletics College, and Kim Chaek Athletics College.[[827]](#footnote-827) Thirdly, in 1972, the higher educational ministry and the normal educational ministry were combined. However, the higher and lower athletic administrative operations were maintained, signalling the priority of athletics and high-end athletes.[[828]](#footnote-828)

Although the DPRK had been accepted into the International Olympic Committee in 1973, the DPRK objected to the decision of the International Olympic Committee to use the name “North Korea”. This played into the DPRK’s decision to refuse participation in the 1964 and 1968 Summer Olympics. However, in 1969, despite the protests of the ROK, the IOC allowed the use of the name DPRK. This paved the way for the DPRK to participate in the 1972 Summer Games.[[829]](#footnote-829) This was seen as an opportunity to show the world the strength of Juche Athletics.[[830]](#footnote-830) The DPRK also began participation in the Asian Games in 1974, in part due to an improvement in relations with Middle-Eastern Countries.[[831]](#footnote-831) The participation of the DPRK in the Olympics and Asian Games would allow them to begin direct competition with the ROK in earnest.[[832]](#footnote-832) In 1972, the DPRK would achieve a higher overall result than the ROK, likely only spurring the DPRK’s will to continue developing elite athletics.[[833]](#footnote-833)

Despite the emphasis on elite athletics, athletics was not neglected at the grassroots level during the National Defence Athletics Era. For instance, in September 1967, a national regular teachers training program was established.[[834]](#footnote-834) Furthermore, the number of teachers’ universities increased with the introduction of the 11-year education system in November of 1973. Under said system, each city and province was allotted two teachers’ universities each.[[835]](#footnote-835)

Encouragement for grassroots athletics came from the top as well. In 1971, according to the yearly athletics summary, manufacturing athletics were carried out nationwide.[[836]](#footnote-836) Additionally, hundreds of athletic teams were established within businesses, cooperative farms, and schools, and roughly 40 athletics grounds were made at workplaces.[[837]](#footnote-837) In February of 1974, Kim Il Sung, when at the Shanghai Electricity Factory, mentioned runners in Beijing training during the Winter in order to emphasize the DPRK’s citizens actively participating in athletic activities.[[838]](#footnote-838)

All in all, the National Defence Athletics Era saw a shift in the focus of athletics. The level of athletics involvement stayed the same as it was during the Mass Athletics Era, but the form in which it was practiced changed. Athletics became more militaristic and collectivist, while athletics teaching became more ideological. Meanwhile, the number of elite athletes grew, as the DPRK began to set up a system of specialist athletics training which would fully take hold during the next era.

## 9.2 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

The National Athletics Era saw the men’s national team continue to participate in foreign exchange and international tournaments. But the main difference between this and prior eras is that results are harder to come by. This is because the team’s activities were less publicized domestically. Things kicked off in in late July 1968, when the DPRK men’s team would participate in the Eighth World Festival of Youth and Students in Sofia, Bulgaria. They would win two matches against Tunisia, but failed to medal.[[839]](#footnote-839)

After a three-year absence, the men’s team would re-emerge in Wonsan, where they would play an exhibition game in from of exiled Cambodian leader Sihanouk.[[840]](#footnote-840) Roughly six weeks later, the Chinese men’s basketball team and the Chinese women’s volleyball team, would travel to Pyongyang. [[841]](#footnote-841) This visit was remarkable in that it was given an incredible amount of political ceremony and coverage, while the game itself received very little fanfare. The Chinese men’s team’s visit went as follows. The team would meet Kim Ryang Ok and be treated to a dinner reception.[[842]](#footnote-842) The Chinese team’s first game with the DPRK men was attended by Kang Ryong Ok, Pak Yong Sun, O Paek Ryong, Kim Chom Man, Han Pyong Hui, Ri Chang In, and Kang Pom Sok. The DPRK lost, but coverage of the game focused on the ceremony and symbolism of China and the DPRK’s united front against US Imperialist Aggression.[[843]](#footnote-843) The Chinese team would later visit Mangyongdae, the first basketball team to be publicized doing so. The team also visited Ponghwa Revolutionary site, a site dedicated primarily to Kim Il Sung’s father, Kim Hyong Jik.[[844]](#footnote-844) This is significant, because it is symbolic of the increased influence of the monolithic ideological leadership cult during this era.

A second friendly game occurred. It was attended by even more high dignitaries, such as Pak Song Chol, O Jin U, Seo Chol Dong, Jong Jun Taek, Pak Yong Sun, Kim Kyong Ryon, Kim Kim Hyon, Kim Jae Pong, Kim Dok Jun, Kim Song Kap, and Ri Chang In. The DPRK men lost the game. Once again, very little coverage of the game itself was given, with favour given to political meaning.[[845]](#footnote-845) Pak Song Chol would personally meet with the teams two days later.[[846]](#footnote-846) The day afterwards, yet another banquet was held at the Chinese Embassy.[[847]](#footnote-847) It was followed by another banquet, this time a farewell from the National Athletics Committee.[[848]](#footnote-848) But the teams had not left yet, as they would visit the Fatherland Liberation War Museum, the Central Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition, and the Sinchon Museum of American War Atrocities.[[849]](#footnote-849) Eventually, the teams would return to China on 4 October.[[850]](#footnote-850) To date, it was by far the most political attention given to a visiting basketball team.

The next year in March, the DPRK men’s basketball team would visit Hungary to little fanfare.[[851]](#footnote-851) By April, the men’s team would visit China via aeroplane.[[852]](#footnote-852) But the team would return uneventfully via train in May, with virtually none of the political coverage given the year earlier.[[853]](#footnote-853) It is perhaps significant that this event occurred after US President Richard Nixon’s visit to China that February.[[854]](#footnote-854) But it is more likely that, by that time, the focus of bringing visiting basketball teams to the DPRK was to legitimize the regime by propagandizing the regime’s social and political achievement. The DPRK men’s foreign trips, unless they included a significant international athletic victory, did not have the same worth to domestic propaganda.

The DPRK’s increasingly selective attitude towards reporting on their own teams in *Rodong Sinmun* was further exemplified in August of 1972. That month, the DPRK Men’s basketball team would participate in the preliminaries of an Olympic tournament for the first time.[[855]](#footnote-855) The results of the tournament and the team’s return, were not announced in *Rodong Sinmun*. The team was able to achieve two wins and three losses in preliminaries, short of what was needed to move into the next round of Olympic qualification games. The team would go on to lose both of their classification games.[[856]](#footnote-856) But, in the end, the DPRK would possess two of the tournament’s top three scorers, Jin Fo Dong and Ryong O Heung. They would also post the second highest point total of all of the tournament’s teams, probably indicating a fast play style in line with Juche athletics.[[857]](#footnote-857) That year’s 1972 Olympics in Munich would be the first time the DPRK participated in the Olympics, albeit without basketball.[[858]](#footnote-858)

The DPRK men’s calibre of play was presumably on a similar level to the Mass Athletics Era. This can be evidenced by their wins against Switzerland and Bulgaria, and narrow loss to Great Britain in the 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament. But their failure to qualify for the main competition left them well short of the standards of the “Kingdom of Athletics” that Kim Il Sung wished to build. As such, throughout the era, they were mostly relegated to being opponents for visiting teams and having short mentions of their visits to foreign tournaments.

Table 33: Men's National Team Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 31-Jul-68 | Tunisia | Bulgaria | Sofia | "나로드아아르미아" | ? | 9th World Festival of Youth and Students | 61 | 32 | Win |
| 01-Aug-68 | Tunisia | Bulgaria | Sofia | "나로드아아르미아" | ? | 9th World Festival of Youth and Students | 83 | 51 | Win |
| 19-Sep-71 | China | DPRK | Pyongyang | Moranbong Youth Outdoor Sports Grounds | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Loss |
| 26-Sep-71 | China | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Children's Palace | Friendly | N/A | N/A | N/A | Loss |
| 10-Aug-72 | Mexico | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Preliminary Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 86 | 101 | Loss |
| 12-Aug-72 | Israel | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Preliminary Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 66 | 93 | Loss |
| 14-Aug-72 | Great Britain | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Preliminary Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 89 | 92 | Loss |
| 16-Aug-72 | Switzerland | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Preliminary Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 98 | 81 | Win |
| 17-Aug-72 | Bulgaria | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Preliminary Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 87 | 86 | Win |
| 18-Aug-72 | Greece | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Classification Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 78 | 90 | Loss |
| 19-Aug-72 | Finland | West Germany | Augsberg | ? | Classification Round | 1972 Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament | 72 | 70 | Win |

## 9.3 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

The National Defence Athletics Era saw the DPRK Women continue to play at a level that exceeded the men. However, they did not have the same opportunities that the men had to prove their legitimacy. The first activities of the women’s team would be their exhibition win against Cuban women’s team in Pyongyang in May of 1968.[[859]](#footnote-859)

In late July of that same year, the DPRK women’s team would participate in the Eighth World Festival of Youth and Students in Sofia, Bulgaria. They would win matches against Czechoslovakia, the United Arab Republic, and Bulgaria enroute to a second-place finish.[[860]](#footnote-860) This would be the women’s highest finish at a World Festival of Youth and Students, and equal the women’s team’s second place finish at the 1963 GANEFO games.

The November following the World Festival of Youth and Students, the Soviet women’s national team would visit Pyongyang. However, records of their games were not announced.[[861]](#footnote-861) Two years later, the women’s East German national team would lose a pair for friendlies against the DPRK women’s national team, following in the footsteps of their male counterparts, who had visited Pyongyang 9 years earlier. Kang Ryong Ok would attend the first game, but not the second one.[[862]](#footnote-862)

Two years later, the women’s national team would get the opportunity to play in an international basketball competition in Cuba in March and April of 1973. However, nothing would be said of it apart from the team’s departure and arrival.[[863]](#footnote-863) As with the men’s team, it would appear that only high-end victories were deemed worth publicizing.

It goes without saying that the DPRK women’s team were limited by the lack of a women’s basketball competition at the 1972 Olympics. Given that the men, a comparatively weaker team, were sent to compete for qualification, it goes without saying that the women would have done the same given the opportunity. However, the DPRK’s politics likely got in the way of the women’s team’s opportunities as well, as the DPRK women likely did not enter the 1971 FIBA World Championship for Women due to the ROK’s continued participation. Nevertheless, the women’s team’s second place finish in the World Festival of Youth and Students stands as evidence of their continued high calibre of play during this era.

Table 34: Women's National Team Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 19-May-68 | Cuba | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 77 | 47 | Win |
| 29-Jul-68 | Czechoslovakia | Bulgaria | Sofia | "나로드아아르미아" | ? | 9th World Festival of Youth and Students | 77 | 68 | Win |
| 01-Aug-68 | United Arab Republic | Bulgaria | Sofia | "나로드아아르미아" | ? | 9th World Festival of Youth and Students | 113 | 48 | Win |
| 06-Aug-68 | Bulgaria | Bulgaria | Sofia | "나로드아아르미아" | ? | 9th World Festival of Youth and Students | 70 | 63 | Win |
| 26-Nov-70 | East Germany | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 83 | 65 | Win |
| 29-Nov-70 | East Germany | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 66 | 58 | Win |

## 9.4 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

The exchange of club teams for foreign matches was even more active during the National Athletics Era than it was during the Mass Athletics Era. However, much as with the men’s and women’s national teams, match results became harder to come by. Furthermore, political pomp and circumstance began to overshadow the basketball matches themselves. Activities began from 10 to 27 June 1967, when the Korean People’s Army Men’s Team visited East Germany and won two out of three games against level one East German Teams.[[864]](#footnote-864) This was likely in reciprocation for the visit of the East German National Team just a week prior. In the yearly athletics summary for 1967, basketball was emphasized as an area of particular success, as various DPRK teams had three wins and one loss against the women’s Hungarian National Team, and two wins and one loss against the East German Men’s national team. In particular, the mid-to long range shooting and speed of the DPRK teams was praised.[[865]](#footnote-865)

The Cuban women’s national team would come to Pyongyang for exhibitions in May of 1968, losing a game each to 8 February, Pyongyang City, and Amrok River.[[866]](#footnote-866) The Hungarian People’s Army men’s team would visit Pyongyang in the next month, losing a game to 8 February, Pyongyang City Youth, and Wolbi Mountain.[[867]](#footnote-867)

That September, the men’s Pyongyang City team would travel to Havana for four friendship games. One match was attended by Fidel Castro himself. The results of the games were not announced.[[868]](#footnote-868) The men’s Cuban national team would reciprocate by visiting Pyongyang the next April, and had a visit with Choe Yong Gon.[[869]](#footnote-869) They would play a friendly against the 8 February Team with Choe Yong Gon and Kang Ryong Ok in attendance, but the game’s result was not announced.[[870]](#footnote-870)

By 1971, a period of exchange with China began to emerge. It started in March, with the DPRK People’s Army women’s basketball team leaving for China.[[871]](#footnote-871) Said team had their dinner party in China given a full article. The DPRK women’s team would lose both games, but the articles about the games that did occur gave little mention of the games themselves. Instead, the articles simply focused on the preliminary ceremonies and the personality cults of both Mao and Kim Il Sung.[[872]](#footnote-872) Two dinner parties afterwards were also given full articles.[[873]](#footnote-873)

That June, the Pyongyang City men’s team went to the Soviet Union, but only a short snippet about their return was published.[[874]](#footnote-874) That same month, the Pyongyang City women went to Cuba, but only a short snippet about their departure was published.[[875]](#footnote-875) Late in October, the Soviet-Russian Women’s basketball team visited Pyongyang to much less fanfare. There was no media mention of their game results, and they only had the opportunity to play the local Pyongyang City Team.[[876]](#footnote-876) The Pyongyang City Women’s team would leave for Bulgaria in December, but with no mention of their game results.[[877]](#footnote-877)

In June of 1972, upon invitation from the DPRK Ministry of Railways, the Shenyang Ministry of Railways Basketball team came to Pyongyang.[[878]](#footnote-878) They were treated to a banquet from the Minister of the Southwest Railways (서남신철도부상).[[879]](#footnote-879) Later that month, the Chinese Ambassador to the DPRK would hold a banquet at Okryukwan for them.[[880]](#footnote-880) No games were mentioned, and no high-end dignitaries would attend.

In July of 1972, the Men’s Youth Team would leave to participate in a youth basketball tournament for Socialist nations in Czechoslovakia.[[881]](#footnote-881) No results were mentioned. In September of 1972, the women’s Chinese Army team would visit the DPRK. This involved attending a banquet hosted by the Chinese Ambassador and attended by Pak Jung Guk and Ri Ki Hwan.[[882]](#footnote-882) No mention was given of matches in *Rodong Sinmun*.

In May of 1973, the Soviet Kazakhstani women’s basketball team would visit Pyongyang.[[883]](#footnote-883) Their first match, a loss to the local Pyongyang City women’s team, was the first time that a match result and score was announced in *Rodong Sinmun* in nearly three years. The game was attended by Kim Dok Jun.[[884]](#footnote-884) The second match with the Kazakhstani team, this time against the 8 February team, was a 8 February loss attended by Kim Chol Man, Kim Dok Jun, and Ri Chang In. The games were held in conjunction with a volleyball friendly against Mongolia.[[885]](#footnote-885) The Soviet Kazakhstani team would return shortly after their second game.[[886]](#footnote-886)

The Burmese Men’s team would visit Pyongyang in July.[[887]](#footnote-887) In a game attended by O Hyon Ju, Hwang Nae Ik, Kim Sok Bong, and Ri Ki Hwan, the 8 February team would crush the Burmese visitors.[[888]](#footnote-888) The second friendly match was played in Wonsan, with the local Tumen River team achieving victory.[[889]](#footnote-889) The Burmese team would return home a few days later.[[890]](#footnote-890)

That August, the Chinese People’s Army would begin their own series of friendlies in Pyongyang.[[891]](#footnote-891), Their first match was against the 8 February team. Reports of the match gave player numbers rather than names, and the match result was not shown. Kim Chol Man and Kim Dok Jun were in attendance.[[892]](#footnote-892) The Chinese People’s Army would visit Mangyongdae, the Museum of the Korean Revolution, and the Pyongyang Children’s Palace.[[893]](#footnote-893) They would leave late in the month, with reports of their other matches not given.[[894]](#footnote-894)

That November, the Chinese national men’s and women’s teams would come to Pyongyang on the same day as the men’s Sudanese team.[[895]](#footnote-895) The Chinese national teams would play games against the men’s and women’s teams representing Pyongyang City. The matches were attended by Kim Dok Jun, but the results were unannounced.[[896]](#footnote-896) On the other hand, the Sudanese Men’s team played the 8 February Men’s team the next day, and 8 February’s victory was announced.[[897]](#footnote-897) The Sudanese team would visit Mangyongdae, the Museum of the Korean Revolution, and the Pyongyang Children’s Palace. They would also see the Revolutionary Opera *Tell O’ The Forest*.[[898]](#footnote-898) The Chinese teams would visit Mangyongdae, the Total Victory Historic Relics Museum, the Party Foundation Museum, and the Pyongyang Children’s Palace. The Chinese teams would also see the Revolutionary Opera *Tell O’ The Forest*.[[899]](#footnote-899) The Chinese teams would return with no further news of their matches.[[900]](#footnote-900) The Sudanese team would depart unannounced.

In December of 1973, the Amrok River team would visit China, with no news of their matches or results.[[901]](#footnote-901) The 8 February men’s and women’s teams would reciprocate the friendlies with China in Pyongyang with a visit to China of their own on 8 December.[[902]](#footnote-902) They would return at the end of the month, with no news of their match results.[[903]](#footnote-903)

Through the international matches by club teams, one can get a true grasp of the vast change that was occurring in DPRK society during the National Athletics Era. Most obviously, the lack of match results accompanied by the extensive reporting on the political meetings of visiting teams exemplifies the extreme politicization of the society at the time. Meanwhile, the lack of detail about the players that played in the matches diminished the ability of athletes to see the results of their own achievements. This is in line with Kim Il Sung’s demand that athletes strive for a collectivist spirit. Lastly, the fact that only two losses were recorded by club teams during this era isn’t necessarily a reflection of their ability; rather, it is the reflection of a desire by the regime to use victories for propaganda and to not speak about their own losses.

Table 35: Men's Club Team International Match Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 10~27 Jun-67 | Korean People's Army | East German Level 1 Club Team | GDR | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 0L |
| 10~27 Jun-67 | Korean People's Army | East German Level 1 Club Team | GDR | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 2W 0L |
| 10~27 Jun-67 | Korean People's Army | East German Level 1 Club Team | GDR | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 2W 1L |
| 17-May-68 | 8 February Team | Hungarian People's Army | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 72 | 54 | Win | 4W 1L |
| 19-May-68 | Pyongyang City Youth | Hungarian People's Army | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 68 | 57 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 28-May-68 | Wolbi Mountain | Hungarian People's Army | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 81 | 67 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 15~21-Aug-68 | Pyongyang City | ? | Cuba | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 15~21-Aug-68 | Pyongyang City | ? | Cuba | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 22-Aug-68 | Pyongyang City | Cuban National Youth Team | Cuba | Havana | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 24-Aug-68 | Pyongyang City | Cuban Party Elites | Cuba | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 22-Apr-69 | 8 February Team | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 07-May-73 | 8 February Team | Burmese National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 91 | 41 | Win | 5W 1L |
| 11-May-73 | Tumen River | Burmese National Team | DPRK | Wonsan | ? | Friendly | 88 | 76 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 05-Aug-73 | 8 February Team | Chinese People's Army | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 13-Nov-73 | Pyongyang City | Chinese National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 16-Nov-73 | 8 February Team | Sudanese National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 78 | 60 | Win | 6W 1L |

The following conclusions can be drawn from the Men’s Club Team International Results in the National Athletics Era. Firstly, the 8 February Team, with five matches, and the Pyongyang City Team, with five matches, had emerged as some of the most favoured teams of the era. Secondly, the dispatching of Pyongyang City to Cuba and the Soviet Union, the KPA to the GDR, and the Youth team to Czechoslovakia indicated an increasing willingness to use club athletic teams as a means of international exchange. Thirdly, the visit of the Burmese and Sudanese national teams were indicative of the DPRK’s sustained interest in improving relations with non-aligned countries. Lastly, the continued exchanges with China, Hungary and East Germany are examples of continued friendly relations with those Socialist countries.

Table 36: Women's Club Team International Match Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 09-May-68 | 8 February Team | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 81 | 45 | Win | 4W 2L |
| 12-May-68 | Pyongyang City | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 77 | 66 | Win | 3W 0L |
| 14-May-68 | Amrok River | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 95 | 56 | Win | 1W 2L |
| 09-Mar-71 | Korean People's Army | Chinese People's Army | China | Beijing | Capital Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 29-Mar-71 | Korean People's Army | Chinese People's Army | China | Beijing | Capital Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 07-Nov-71 | Pyongyang City | Soviet Russian Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11-May-73 | Pyongyang City | Soviet Kazakhstani Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 51 | 46 | Win | 4W 0L |
| 20-May-73 | 8 February Team | Soviet Kazakhstani Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | 52 | 66 | Loss | 4W 3L |
| 13-Nov-73 | Pyongyang City | Chinese National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |

The following conclusions can be drawn from the Women’s Club Team International Results in the National Athletics Era. Firstly, much as on the men’s side, the 8 February Team and Pyongyang City were the most favoured clubs of the era. Secondly, Pyongyang City’s trip to Cuba and Bulgaria and the KPA’s trip to China are examples on the women’s side of the DPRK’s increased willingness to use club athletic teams as a means of international exchange. Lastly, the opposing teams were primarily Socialist, showing the DPRK’s continued commitment to that bloc.

## 9.5 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

In Kim Il Sung’s 4 November 1969 speech reforming athletics, basketball was cited as one of multiple disciplines that should be carried out at schools. Kim also said that a basketball court should be created at every school.[[904]](#footnote-904) Kim Il Sung’s speech was given at a conference of sportspeople which included several other speakers making reference to basketball. Firstly, volleyball athlete Kim Un Ja mentioned basketball as one of the athletic disciplines to have been elevated to a world level.[[905]](#footnote-905) Secondly, the Vice Minister of Normal Education said that basketball was among the sports to be strengthened because of its role as a sport that increases one’s height.[[906]](#footnote-906) Thirdly, the supervising chairperson of the Chollima Oguk Cooperative Farm in Anak County, South Hwanghae Province mentioned that the farm committee and county committee had installed athletics facilities for basketball at each work site and at the county seat.[[907]](#footnote-907) Although not an emphasis, it was clear that basketball was still a part of the nation’s larger domestic athletics plan.

During this era, basketball was given particular emphasis when it came to schooling. In December 1969, the Sariwon City Kurung Secondary School said that the teacher’s role was recently increased in importance in order for males to play more basketball.[[908]](#footnote-908) In the 1969 yearly athletic review, basketball, along with other disciplines, was claimed to be strengthened in schools through the organization of matches during Saturday Athletic Days and out of class athletic times.[[909]](#footnote-909) By 1970, in an October Editorial, *Rodong Sinmun* said that basketball was broadly carried out in order to train students’ athleticism.[[910]](#footnote-910) The next October, a *Rodong Sinmun* editorial said that basketball should be part of an overall diverse school athletic curriculum. The editorial further ordered that the government’s athletic organ, as well as lower levels of government, should work to install basketball courts and other athletic facilities.[[911]](#footnote-911) In a June 1972 *Rodong Sinmun* article, O Hyon Ju wrote that the execution of basketball and other sports at schools gave students a high morality and strong body necessary to become reserves for the revolution.[[912]](#footnote-912) That October, an editorial in *Rodong Sinmun* stressed that basketball, among other sports, should be widely organized at each level of school.[[913]](#footnote-913) *Rodong Sinmun*’s words were echoed in the 1972 athletics summary. There, it was stated that in schools, basketball, along with other athletics, helped the students to achieve high morality and strong bodies. This trained students as the future of the revolution.[[914]](#footnote-914) The following year, the yearly athletics summary claimed that basketball was one of several athletic disciplines at schools which was raised a level.[[915]](#footnote-915) In sum, basketball was by no means the emphasis of the school curriculum, but it was a part of it. This emphasis on school athletics can be seen in a number of ways; the continued effort to continue the Socialist athletic mindset, the new effort to instil Juche athletics, and the new effort to create elite international athletes.

Aside from its role in school athletics, basketball also continued to be a discipline for which high achievement was rewarded. In November 1969, a basketball player and coach were among those named Meritorious Sportspeople.[[916]](#footnote-916) Later, in November 1970, Myong Ui Kyun, a coach for the Pyongyang City Team, would be the third basketball-related person to be named Meritorious Sportsperson.[[917]](#footnote-917) Lastly, on 14 April 1973, three basketball athletes were among those named meritorious sportspeople.[[918]](#footnote-918) All in all, much as in the Mass Athletics Era, basketball athletes could never quite achieve the level of the Meritorious Athlete of the Nation or People’s Athlete. However, basketball athletes did continue to get at least some level of recognition.

During this era, indoor arenas continued to be developed to some extent. On 17 February 1970, the Wonsan Gymnasium was completed.[[919]](#footnote-919) Later, in March of 1971, the Pyongyang Student and Children’s Palace Gymnasium was completed.[[920]](#footnote-920) On 8 April 1973, the Pyongyang City Gymnasium was opened.[[921]](#footnote-921) Indeed, beginning in this era, major basketball matches would be held almost exclusively indoors. The Pyongyang Gymnasium would become a mainstay for basketball matches, while the aforementioned Pyongyang Students and Children’s Palace Gymnasium would be occasionally used for basketball matches.

Basketball for the broader population continued to be a point of emphasis for the government during this era. In the 1969 yearly summary, women’s basketball was said to have achieved a high level.[[922]](#footnote-922) The next year, in the yearly athletic summary for 1970, it was stated that basketball development occurred mainly through hard training and that the process raised many new athletes.[[923]](#footnote-923) The year after that, in a July 1971 *Rodong Sinmun* article, it was emphasized that basketball games should be carried out on Sundays as well as holidays.[[924]](#footnote-924) By November 1972, an article describing the proceedings of the Socialist Youth League’s Fourth General Conference mentioned that basketball is one of several disciplines that should be enthusiastically carried out.[[925]](#footnote-925) Lastly, in the 1973 athletics summary, basketball was said to be at a world class level.[[926]](#footnote-926) Suffice to say, a good deal of the aforementioned media was propagandistic boasting. However, it was also a part of the government’s plans to encourage the society to stay active and train elite athletes.

## 9.6 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

During this era, although basketball still had a place at the mass athletics tournament,[[927]](#footnote-927) the increased emphasis on National Defence Athletics meant that basketball was somewhat de-emphasized in terms of the number of tournaments publicized. The monolithic leader system also played a role in the decreased amount of tournament information. Nevertheless, there is still enough information to get a rough picture of the state of athletic tournaments at the time.

According to the 1967 athletics summary, the men’s 8 February Athletics Club, Amrok River, and Worker team and the women’s Amrok River, 8 February Athletics Club, and Pyongyang City were cited as strong clubs.[[928]](#footnote-928) In the next year, the same clubs were mentioned as comparatively excellent.[[929]](#footnote-929)

A tournament about which a number of details are known is the Fourth People’s Athletics Festival in October 1973. Throughout September, the preliminaries for the Fourth People’s Athletics Festival were held. It was explained that teams which had placed first in their respective disciplines in the previous year’s provincial or city People’s Athletics Festival as well as teams that had placed first in the previous year’s Republic Athletics Championship Tournament would be able to bypass this year’s preliminaries and go straight to the final. During that year, basketball was contested on the west coast. The tournament itself was held starting on 6 October in Pyongyang and provincial cities.[[930]](#footnote-930)[[931]](#footnote-931) As such, it can be determined that a system of qualifications was in place by this time, and that teams had the opportunity to qualify for big tournaments through preliminaries.

On 8 April 1973, basketball games were part of an event where four sports were held simultaneously to commemorate the opening of the Pyongyang Gymnasium.[[932]](#footnote-932) This is unique in that it shows that some events would have disciplines being competed simultaneously in the same stadium.

Table 37: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **Court** | **Court** |
| Korean People's Army Overall Army Games Tournament | 조선인민군종합군사경기대회 | 10-Jun-1967~18-Jun-1967 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Pyongyang City Youth Athletics Tournament | 평양시청소년체육대회 | 9-Jul-1967~ | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Celebratory Korean People's Army Individual Athletic Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | 조선인민군 창건 스무돐 경축 조선인민군 종목별체육경기대회 | 28-Jan-1968~8-Feb-1968 | ? | ? |
| 36th Anniversary of the Glorious Anti-Japanese Guerilla Foundation Commemorative Athletics Tournament for Each Discipline | 영광스러운 항일유격대창건 36주년기념 체육단 종목별 체육경기대회 | 25-Mar-1968~1-Apr-1968 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Celebratory National *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국창건 20주년경축 전국인민체육대회 | 19-Sep-1968~22-Sep-1968 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Celebratory National Secondary School Athletics Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국창건 스무돐경축 전국중학생체육대회 | 6-Oct-1968~12-Oct-1968 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Tournament | <<일당백상>> 쟁탈경기대회 | 1-Feb-1969~15-Feb-1969 | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대컵>>쟁탈체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-1969~Apr-1969 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium |
| National Secondary School Student Youth Athletics Tournament | 전국중학교학생소년체육대회 | 9-Apr-1969~16-Apr-1969 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 5.1절을 기념하는 평양시로동자체육대회 | 01-May-69 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| 20th Anniversary of the Athletics Festival Commemorative National University Student Athletics Festival | 체육절 스무돐기념 전국대학생체육축전 | 5-Oct-1969~12-Oct-1969 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Athletics Games for winning the Mangyongdae Cup | <<만경대컵>> 쟁취를 위한 체육경기 | 15-Apr-1970~Apr-1970 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gynmasium |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Commemorative 9 September Championship Banner | 조선민주주의인민공화국창건 스물세돐기념 <<9.9절우승기>> | 2-Sep-1970~Sep-1970 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Secondary School Student Athletics Tournament | 전국중학생체육대회 | 9-Sep-1970~17-Sep-1970 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 23rd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Commemorative Athletics Tournament for Winning the <<Ildangbaek Prize>> | 조선인민군창건 스물세돐기념 <<일당백상>> 쟁취를 위한 체육경기 대회 | 1-Feb-1971~Feb-1971 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| 24th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Commemorative <<Ildangbaek Prize>> Athletics Tournament | 조선인민군창건 스물네돐기념 <<일당백상>> 체육경기대회 | 8-Feb-1972~17-Feb-1972 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gynmasium |
| Our Party and the Korean People's Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's 60th Birthday Celebratory National Athletics Festival | 우리당과 조선인민의 위대한 수령 김일성동지의 탄생 예순돐을 경축하는 전국체육축전 | 22-Apr-1972~1-May-1972 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 35th Anniversary of the Pochonbo Battle Victory Celebratory Korean People's Army Athletic Tournament | 보천보전투승리 서른다섯돐경축 조선인민군체육대회 | 5-Jun-1972~18-Jun-1972 | Pyongyang | 8 February Team Stadium |
| 10th Anniversary of the Student Holiday National Technical High School Student Competitive Athletic Tournament | 학생절 열돐기념 전국고등기술학교 학생체육경기대회 | 29-Sept-1972~2-Oct-1972 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 23rd Anniversary of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative DPR Korea Each Discipline Athletics Athlete Tournament | 체육절스물세돐기념 조선민주주의인민공화국 종목별 체육선수권대회 | 8-Oct-1972-Oct-1972 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gynmasium |
| First National Fishing Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제1차전국수산부문체육경기대회 | 21-Mar-1973~23-Mar-1973 | Wonsan | Sinpung Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 8-Apr-1973~Apr-1973 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 61st Anniversary of the Birth of the Respected Leader Kim Il Sung Commemorative University Student Ball Sport Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | 경애하는 수령 김일성 동지의 탄생 예순한돐 기념 대학생구기종목경기대회 | 29-Apr-1973~29-Apr-1973 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National Children and Student's "Youth Athletics Master" Title | 전국학생소년들의 <<청소년체육명수>>칭호쟁취를 위한 체육경기대회 | 5-Aug-1973~22-Aug-1973 | Wonsan | Central Children's Union Camp |
| 10th Anniversary of the Student Holiday National University Student Athletics Festival | 학생절 열한돐기념 전국대학생체육축전 | 23-Sep-1973~30-Sep-1973 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium |
| DPR Korea 4th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국 제4차인민체육대회 | 6-Oct-1973~Oct-1973 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Korean People's Army Foundation 26 Year Anniversary Commemorative Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 조선인민군창건 스물여섯돐기면≪일당백상≫체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-1974~28-Feb-1974 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |

The following conclusions can be drawn from the men’s tournament details of the National Defence Athletics Era. Firstly, naming conventions for the tournaments had taken a further turn towards nationalism. Tournaments continued to be named for anniversaries of the country, the army, the Pochonbo Battle Victory, the national student holiday and anti-guerrilla fighters. The only Socialist-based naming convention that remained was the 1 May Holiday, which was not reported on after 1969. Secondly, naming conventions had begun to favour the cult of the leader. Tournaments named after Mangyongdae, Kim Il Sung’s Birthplace, and tournaments named after Kim Il Sung’s birth were a first for the country. Thirdly, tournaments had begun to take place exclusively indoors. With the nation having developed for some twenty years after the war, indoor tournaments were now a possibility. Lastly, Pyongyang continued to be the overwhelmingly favoured tournament location.

Table 38: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Korean People's Army Overall Army Games Tournament | 10-Jun-1967~18-Jun-1967 | Swallow | At Least 6 Wins | ? | ? | Swallow Maebong Mountain Prize Wolbi Mountain Prize Osong Mountain Prize Banryong Mountain Prize Myohyang Mountain Prize |
| Pyongyang City Youth Athletics Tournament | 9-Jul-1967~ | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Celebratory Korean People's Army Individual Athletic Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | 28-Jan-1968~8-Feb-1968 | Swallow | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 36th Anniversary of the Glorious Anti-Japanese Guerilla Foundation Commemorative Athletics Tournament for Each Discipline | 25-Mar-1968~1-Apr-1968 | 8 February Team | ? | Amrok River | Worker | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Celebratory National *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 19-Sep-1968~22-Sep-1968 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Celebratory National Secondary School Athletics Tournament | 6-Oct-1968~12-Oct-1968 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Tournament | 1-Feb-1969~15-Feb-1969 | Worker | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1969~Apr-1969 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Worker Locomotive 8 February Sentry Amrok River Pyongyang City |
| National Secondary School Student Youth Athletics Tournament | 9-Apr-1969~16-Apr-1969 | Pyongyang West Gate Secondary School | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 01-May-69 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Athletics Festival Commemorative National University Student Athletics Festival | 5-Oct-1969~12-Oct-1969 | Pyongyang Medical University | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University Haeju Medical University |
| Athletics Games for winning the Mangyongdae Cup | 15-Apr-1970~Apr-1970 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Commemorative 9 September Championship Banner | 2-Sep-1970~Sep-1970 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Secondary School Student Athletics Tournament | 9-Sep-1970~17-Sep-1970 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 23rd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Commemorative Athletics Tournament for Winning the <<Ildangbaek Prize>> | 1-Feb-1971~Feb-1971 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City 8 February Team |
| 24th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Commemorative <<Ildangbaek Prize>> Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-1972~17-Feb-1972 | Pyongyang City | ? | 8 February Team | Moranbong | ? |
| Our Party and the Korean People's Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's 60th Birthday Celebratory National Athletics Festival | 22-Apr-1972~1-May-1972 | Pyongyang City (Division 1) Taesong Mountain Prize (Division 2) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 35th Anniversary of the Pochonbo Battle Victory Celebratory Korean People's Army Athletic Tournament | 5-Jun-1972~18-Jun-1972 | Bonghwa Mountain | ? | Myohyang Mountain | Jangsu Mountain | Chilbo Mountain |
| 10th Anniversary of the Student Holiday National Technical High School Student Competitive Athletic Tournament | 29-Sept-1972~2-Oct-1972 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 23rd Anniversary of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative DPR Korea Each Discipline Athletics Athlete Tournament | 8-Oct-1972-Oct-1972 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| First National Fishing Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Mar-1973~23-Mar-1973 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Apr-1973~Apr-1973 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 61st Anniversary of the Birth of the Respected Leader Kim Il Sung Commemorative University Student Ball Sport Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | 29-Apr-1973~29-Apr-1973 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National Children and Student's "Youth Athletics Master" Title | 5-Aug-1973~22-Aug-1973 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of the Student Holiday National University Student Athletics Festival | 23-Sep-1973~30-Sep-1973 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University Wonsan Economics University |
| DPR Korea 4th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 6-Oct-1973~Oct-1973 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Korean People's Army Foundation 26 Year Anniversary Commemorative Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1974~28-Feb-1974 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? | ? |

The following conclusions can be drawn from the men’s tournament results in the National Defence Athletics Era. Firstly, Swallow, 8 February, and Pyongyang City with two tournament wins each are the best teams of the era. Interestingly, Swallow would disappear after 1972. Secondly, there is less overall variety in the tournaments; outside of state amateurs and the army, there are less mention of school tournaments or tournaments for specific types of workers.

Table 39: Women's Domestic Tournament Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Korean People's Army Overall Army Games Tournament | 10-Jun-1967~18-Jun-1967 | Seagull | ? | ? | Banryong Mountain Prize |
| Pyongyang City Youth Athletics Tournament | 9-Jul-1967~ |  |  |  |  |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Celebratory Korean People's Army Individual Athletic Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | 28-Jan-1968~8-Feb-1968 | Sentry | ? | ? | ? |
| 36th Anniversary of the Glorious Anti-Japanese Guerilla Foundation Commemorative Athletics Tournament for Each Discipline | 25-Mar-1968~1-Apr-1968 | Sentry | Amrok River | Pyongyang City | ? |
| 1 May Commemorative Athletics Team Individual Discipline Tournaments | 26-Apr-1968~ | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City Workers Athletics Tournament | 26-Apr-1968~ | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Celebratory National *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 19-Sep-1968~22-Sep-1968 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Celebratory National Secondary School Athletics Tournament | 6-Oct-1968~12-Oct-1968 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |
| Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Tournament | 1-Feb-1969~15-Feb-1969 | 8 February Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National Secondary School Student Youth Athletics Tournament | 9-Apr-1969~16-Apr-1969 | North Phyongan Province Ryongchon Women's Secondary School | ? | ? | ? |
| 20th Anniversary of the Athletics Festival Commemorative National University Student Athletics Festival | 5-Oct-1969~12-Oct-1969 | Pyongyang Commerce University | ? | ? | ? |
| 23rd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Commemorative Athletics Tournament for Winning the <<Ildangbaek Prize>> | 1-Feb-1971~Feb-1971 | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City 8 February Team |
| 24th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army Commemorative <<Ildangbaek Prize>> Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-1972~17-Feb-1972 | 8 February Team | Pyongyang City | Amrok River | ? |
| Our Party and the Korean People's Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's 60th Birthday Celebratory National Athletics Festival | 22-Apr-1972~1-May-1972 | 8 February Team (Division 1) Taesong Mountain Prize (Division 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| 35th Anniversary of the Pochonbo Battle Victory Celebratory Korean People's Army Athletic Tournament | 5-Jun-1972~18-Jun-1972 | Swallow | Bonghwa Mountain | Taedok Mountain | ? |
| 10th Anniversary of the Student Holiday National Technical High School Student Competitive Athletic Tournament | 29-Sept-1972~2-Oct-1972 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National Children and Student's "Youth Athletics Master" Title | 5-Aug-1973~22-Aug-1973 | ? | ? | ? | North Phyongan Province South Hamgyong Province |
| Korean People's Army Foundation 26 Year Anniversary Commemorative Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1974~28-Feb-1974 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |

From the women’s domestic tournament results in the National Defence Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, 8 February with four wins is the best team of this era, followed by Pyongyang City and Sentry with two wins. Interestingly, Sentry would disappear after 1969. Secondly, much as in the men’s sector, the diversity of tournaments decreased.

Table 40: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 10-Jun-67 | 1st | Swallow | Maebong Mountain | 96 | 83 | 4W 6L | 3W 3L 1T |
| 10-Jun-67 | 1st | Wolbi Mountain | ? | 82 | 60 | 5W 5L | ? |
| 15-Jun-67 | 1st | Swallow | Seagull | 71 | 45 | 5W 6L | 0W 2L |
| 16-Jun-67 | 1st | Swallow | Banryong Mountain | ? | ? | 6W 6L | 0W 1L |
| 18-Jun-67 | 1st | Swallow | Myohyang Mountain | ? | ? | 7W 6L | 0W 1L |
| 01-Apr-68 | 1st | 8 February Team | Sentry | 90 | 66 | 12W 1L | 0W 2L |
| 01-Apr-68 | 1st | Worker | Locomotive | ? | ? | 2W 2L 1T | 12W 11L |
| 01-Apr-68 | 1st | Amrok River | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | 14W 3L | 17W 11L |
| 02-Apr-68 | 1st | 8 February Team | Amrok River | 77 | 72 | 13W 1L | 14W 4L |
| 02-Apr-68 | 1st | Worker | Sentry | 77 | 71 | 3W 2L 1T | 0W 3L |
| 02-Apr-68 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Locomotive | 73 | 58 | 18W 11L | 12W 12L |
| 03-Apr-68 | 1st | Pyongyang City | Sentry | 90 | 71 | 19W 11L | 0W 4L |
| 03-Apr-68 | 1st | 8 February Team | Worker | 92 | 81 | 14W 1L | 3W 3L 1T |
| 05-Oct-69 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Haeju Medical University | ? | ? | 12W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 05-Jun-72 | 1st | Jangsu Mountain | Chilbo Mountain | 73 | 72 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 15-Apr-74 | 1st | Pyongyang City | 8 February Team | ? | ? | 20W 11L | 14W 2L |

From the men’s domestic match results in the National Defence Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, 8 February, Pyongyang City, and Swallow with four appearances each and Worker and Sentry with three appearances each were among the most active teams of the era. Secondly, Swallow, with four wins, was a powerful team in June of 1967. Thirdly, Pyongyang City with 31 total appearances, Locomotive with 24 total appearances, Amrok River with 18 total appearances, and 8 February with 16 total appearances were beginning to establish a tradition of excellence by this point.

Table 41: Women's Domestic Basketball Match Results, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 16-Jun-67 | 1st | Seagull | Banryong Mountain | ? | ? | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 08-Feb-67 | 1st | 8 February Team | Amrok River | ? | ? | 9W 0L | 11W 6L |
| 05-Jun-67 | 1st | Bonghwa Mountain | Taemok Mountain | 82 | 47 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 05-Aug-73 | Childrens' Union | North Phyongan Province | South Hamgyong Province | 52 | 50 | 6W 1L | 3W 1L |

From the women’s domestic match results in the National Defence Athletics Era, it is difficult to draw any short-term conclusions other than pointing out the fact that individual match results were becoming scarcer by this era and would disappear altogether in the next era.

To sum up, domestic basketball in this era was undoubtedly on a downward trend. The encroachment of National Defence Athletics, the increased role of the military, and the intensified leadership cult made it difficult for basketball tournaments to keep domestic attention. Nevertheless, legacy clubs such as Pyongyang City, 8 February, Amrok River, and Locomotive kept afloat. Meanwhile, Pyongyang continued to serve as the centre for all domestic tournaments, while indoor gymnasiums became the new norm for basketball matches.

## 9.7 Basketball as a Pastime

Much as in the Mass Athletics Era, local basketball reports continued into the National Defence Athletics Era. Although there is not a great deal of detail within these reports, some of them stick out. In early March of 1972, there was an opening ceremony for the start of the Spring Athletics Holiday. In the opening speech, Pyongyang City People’s Committee Vice-Chairman Ri Chang In emphasized the organization of basketball, along with other disciplines, in schools. After the ceremony, basketball, along with volleyball and football, was played at local sites in Pyongyang.[[933]](#footnote-933) Furthermore, in the first week of December 1973, it was reported that basketball was a part of activities commemorating the Winter Holiday athletics opening ceremony at Moranbong Stadium in Pyongyang.[[934]](#footnote-934) As such, it is plain to see that basketball was a part of general athletics festivities during this era.

In August of 1972, the Taeri Middle School in Kangdong County of what was at that time South Phyongan Province emphasized basketball, which was good for increasing one’s height.[[935]](#footnote-935) This is evidence that the myth that basketball increased height was continued during this era.

Reports from the Chongryon in Japan continued to flow in during this era. In October of 1967, the Chongryon held a basketball tournament as part of their larger athletics festivities.[[936]](#footnote-936) Later, during a conference of athletes in November of 1969 at which several reforms were made, a representative of the Japanese-Korean Athletics Union said that basketball facilities were installed at 153 separate Chongryon schools in Japan.[[937]](#footnote-937) By 1971, the principal of a DPRK-backed school in Japan proposed sports games between their High School and a ROK-affiliated High School in Japan. Basketball was one of the sports to be competed.[[938]](#footnote-938) However, the proposal was rejected.[[939]](#footnote-939) The next year, there was a basketball-inclusive tournament with separate divisions for private teams and organizations amongst the Chongryon in Tokyo.[[940]](#footnote-940) All in all, the Chongryon continued to be very active in this era, and counted basketball among their favoured athletic disciplines.

Table 42: Local Basketball Reports, National Defence Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 1968.1.27 | Pyongyang Lorry Repair Factory[[941]](#footnote-941) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1968.3.27 | Paek Tae Gun Geological Survey[[942]](#footnote-942) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1968.8.30 | a certain factory[[943]](#footnote-943) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1968.10.13 | a certain factory[[944]](#footnote-944) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1968.11.9 | Chollima Steel Wire Steelmaking Factory[[945]](#footnote-945) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1969.5.31 | a certain factory[[946]](#footnote-946) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1969.11.3 | a certain factory[[947]](#footnote-947) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1969.11.3 | Chollima Pokchong Secondary Agricultural School[[948]](#footnote-948) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1971.1.13 | a certain trade union research centre[[949]](#footnote-949) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1971.5.19 | Hamhung Textile Factory[[950]](#footnote-950) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1971.5.26 | Pyongyang Textile Factory[[951]](#footnote-951) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1971.7.28 | Wonsan City Kwangsok Secondary School[[952]](#footnote-952) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1971.10.30 | 5 October Electric Factory[[953]](#footnote-953) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1971.11.17 | Thosan County Thosan Agriculture High School in North Hwanghae Province[[954]](#footnote-954) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 1972.1.8 | Chollima Samjiyon High School of Forestry[[955]](#footnote-955) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1972.1.15 | a certain factory[[956]](#footnote-956) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1972.1.22 | Chollima Kangson Steel Mill[[957]](#footnote-957) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1972.3.8 | Chongsong County Okkang Village League of Socialist Working Youth of Korea[[958]](#footnote-958) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 1972.8.9 | Pyongyang City Munhung High School[[959]](#footnote-959) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1972.10.7 | Sariwon Textile Machine Factory[[960]](#footnote-960) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1972.11.18 | Chollima Jaeryong Girl’s High School[[961]](#footnote-961) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1973.1.6 | Chollima Onjong High School in Paechon County[[962]](#footnote-962) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 1973.1.17 | Pukchong County, South Hamgyong Province[[963]](#footnote-963) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 1973.2.10 | Taechon Boy’s High School in North Phyongan Province[[964]](#footnote-964) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1973.7.25 | Sinhung Machinery Factory[[965]](#footnote-965) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1973.12.12 | Ryujong Girls’ High School[[966]](#footnote-966) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |

From the local basketball reports in the National Defence Era, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the organization of teams was not heavily reported, as just one report indicated this occurrence. Secondly, basketball was not given its own separate emphasis during this era. Thirdly, the lack of exact names of certain locations indicated that the monolithic nature of the society had grown to be so great that it enveloped the individual glory that a particular organization could get from *Rodong Sinmun* in some cases. Fourthly, of the location types, thirteen were factories, nine were schools, two were cities or counties, and two were miscellaneous. Schools in particular became more heavily reported during the latter part of the era. This reflected the government’s priority of developing school athletics at that time.

Overall, the local reports paint a picture of basketball played among other athletics, as well as a picture of extreme standardization and systemization. Everything was group based, and not many of the reports indicated anything out of the ordinary.

## 9.8 Standout Basketball Stars

Until the 1990s, the National Athletics Era would be the last in which individual basketball talent could be identified. Still, there were no players who stood head and shoulders above the rest. Among the men, a few had two separate mentions in state media. Sim Kwon Yong of the Pyongyang City Youth cut through man-to-man defence to score under the basket against the Hungarian People’s Army Team on 19 May 1968, and was named a Meritorious Sportsperson in June of 1973. Kim Sung Hyon had 37 points in a game against Swallow whole playing for Wolbi Mountain on 10 June 1967, and was noted for his long-range shooting against the Hungarian People’s Army on 28 May 1968. Myong Ui Kyun was named a meritorious Sportsperson as a Coach of Pyongyang City in November of 1970, and delivered a Speech at a Commendation of Athletes on 5 November of 1969. Although never mentioned in state media, Jon Fo Dong, who was the third best scorer for the DPRK men’s team in the 1972 Olympic Preliminary Tournament merits mention as well.

The following is a list of those with one mention. Jong Dae Jin of Amrok River was noted for good cutting and dodging to score against the East German National team on 28 May 1967. Ri Jae Won of the Worker team was noted for good man-to-man defence, switching, outstanding skill and vehement effort against the East German National Team on 4 May 1967. Sim Kon Ryong, also of the worker team, was noted for good man-to-man defence and switching against the East German national team on the same date. O Dong Jin and O Hong Ryong of the Pyongyang City Youth were noted for cutting through the man-to-man defence to score under the basket against the Hungarian People’s Army team on 19 May 1968. Ro Son Ho of Wolbi Mountain was noted for the first basket against the Hungarian People’s Army Team on 28 May 1968. Han Sun Won of Wolbi Mountain was noted for good team organization against the Hungarian People’s Army Team on 28 May 1968. Ryong O Heung of the DPRK National Team was noted for his good man-to-man defence and backwards movement on 16 Nov 1973.

Among the women, Jon Jun Ja was the only one with two mentions in state media. Jon, while playing for the DPRK National Team, played well and received favourable comments against the Cuban National Team on 19 May 1968. Later, she was named a Meritorious Sportsperson as a member of Pyongyang City on 5 November 1969. The following athletes received one mention. Byon Gyong Ja, Yun Sol Ja, and Choe Ok Nyo all played well and received favourable comments for the DPRK National Team against the Cuban National Team on 19 May 1968. Kwon Kae Ok of the 8 February Team received a Military Meritorious Service Medal while playing for 8 February on 5 November 1969. Ryang Mi Nyon and Jon Son Ok were named meritorious Sportspeople on 14 April 1973.

All in all, the lack of detailed results of the era makes it difficult to isolate the era’s best players. But the discovery of new resources in the future may make it possible to build upon the base list of players above.

# chapter 10. The Specialized Athletics Era (1974.4.18~1986.5.19)

## 10.1 General Athletics Overview

The turning point for the DPRK into the Specialized Athletics Era came on 18 April 1974.[[967]](#footnote-967) On this day, Kim Jong Il mandated the specialization of schools according to a certain academic discipline. Resultingly, 5900 athletics groups of 20 types were organized throughout the country within the next 5 years.[[968]](#footnote-968) This directive would be cited thirty years later, credited as spurring the development of DPRK athletics.[[969]](#footnote-969)

According to the official government narrative, Kim Jong Il was inspired by the girls’ basketball team from Taejong High School in North Hwanghae Province. He heard of their 18 February performance from an official. Said official stated that Taejong High School played against a Pyongyang club, showcasing impressive nimble technique which allowed them to weave through the taller professional team.[[970]](#footnote-970) Indeed, Taejong school, having raised ten female athletes, had been mentioned in the previous year’s athletics summary.[[971]](#footnote-971) Kim Jong Il, impressed, gave gifts in his name to the team in a ceremony in front of the working people of the county and leaders of high schools throughout the province. [[972]](#footnote-972)

1974 was the year in which Kim Jong Il first emerged into the public eye as the “Party Centre” (당중앙), not emerging by name in the headlines of *Rodong Sinmun* until 1977.[[973]](#footnote-973) In essence, Kim Jong Il was undergoing the process of taking on more responsibility. In October of 1980, Kim Jong Il emerged officially at the Sixth Congress of the Korean Worker’s Party, the first time he appeared at such an event. There, Kim Jong Il had his name put on every important organ of power.[[974]](#footnote-974) As such, the Specialized Athletics Era can be deemed one of power transition. Kim Il Sung remained the leader and head decision-maker, but Kim Jong Il was overseeing many aspects of the state.

In any case, in March of 1974, Kim Il Sung specified several athletic disciplines to prioritize development in. The reasoning was that the DPRK had a chance of winning them.[[975]](#footnote-975) This aligned well with Kim Jong Il’s new policy of school and societal athletic specialization. Accordingly, school and education-related athletics policy began to intensify over the ensuing years.

In February 1977, the Central Athletics School was established.[[976]](#footnote-976) It took talented students who had graduated from primary school and trained them to be national representative athletes.[[977]](#footnote-977) Also, athletics colleges were established in each province in 1977. Said colleges offered three-year degree programmes mainly for athletes.[[978]](#footnote-978) Lastly, that same year, Pyongyang Athletic University divided its’ degree programmes into athletics and competition. The athletics programme was for athletics teachers and coaches, while the competition programme was presumably for athletes.[[979]](#footnote-979) Later, in the yearly athletic summary for 1981, it was reported that a concerted effort was undertaken to improve the quality of athletics research facilities, as well as improve the existing athletic facilities.[[980]](#footnote-980) In April 1983, the Drug Research Office was established. It consisted of 60 researchers and eight research offices. It mainly focused on developing sports drinks, and had a sports drink factory with 100 employees.[[981]](#footnote-981) Also in 1983, the Central Athletics Cadre Improvement Office was established, offering a one-year re-training course for teachers.[[982]](#footnote-982) Taken on the whole, the specialization of athletic disciplines, specific schools for athletes, and athletics research were developed in this era.

The designation of “Model Athletic District” began to be awarded around late October 1982.[[983]](#footnote-983) Lastly, starting in 1984, the award for “Model Athletic School” began to be given out to schools that succeeded in certain athletic disciplines.[[984]](#footnote-984) In addition to rewarding specialization, this may have been part of an incentive program to encourage athletics while confronting the reality of decreasing resources and state support.

Of course, as in the previous era, National Defence Athletics continued to be emphasized. Specifically, on 25 April 1975, National Defence Athletics was further emphasized as necessary for all citizens.[[985]](#footnote-985) Furthermore, five guidelines for the strengthening of National Defence Athletics were released. The guidelines broadly emphasized militant athletic disciplines such as boxing, shooting, traditional Korean wresting and archery. However, the guidelines also left room for more pure athletic disciplines such as basketball, football, morning gymnastics, and running.[[986]](#footnote-986)

As time went on, government-based directives like this began to be somewhat undermined. From the 1980s onward, there was a material lack of government support for extracurricular athletic teams. This led to an overall increase in individualism and a decrease in collectivism.[[987]](#footnote-987) Furthermore, athletic disciplines previously seen as decadent and Capitalist began to be accommodated. This included golf, bowling, softball, and baseball.[[988]](#footnote-988) However, this was largely dependent on available equipment, leading to a small number of enthusiasts.[[989]](#footnote-989) Furthermore, the new disciplines were not given the priority of some other athletic disciplines. This led to athletes starting later in life, less training time, and less opportunities to compete.[[990]](#footnote-990) Nevertheless, there was an overall increase in the number of specialist athletic teams from universities, mid-level organs, factories, and businesses.[[991]](#footnote-991)

Another effect of the economic slowdown in the 70s and 80s was a return of women to the home. One reason was the reduction in their rations, leading to them needing to make vegetable gardens at home. The increase in the male workforce that had previously been depleted by the war was also a factor.[[992]](#footnote-992) Starting in the 1980s, although the DPRK had sought competition with the ROK up to that point, they began to concentrate their efforts within the Socialist realm.[[993]](#footnote-993)

On the international front, DPRK athletics began to see some success. But first, some background must be given as to the DPRK’s motivation behind their continued push for success on the Olympic stage. The Soviet Union, a fellow Socialist country, participated in the Olympics for the first time in 1952. That year, 24 of the Soviets’ 71 medals came from female athletes. This trend continued into 1976, when Soviet female athletes, composing roughly 35% of the entire delegation, achieved 36 of the 125 total Soviet medals. Furthermore, East German female athletes, composing roughly 40% of their delegation, achieved over half of their team’s overall gold and silver medals.[[994]](#footnote-994) This was the type of success which the DPRK wished to emulate. East Germany’s success in particular was directly mentioned by Kim Jong Il in 1989, citing their use of science and technology in athletics. Sending foreign exchange students to the GDR were even considered.[[995]](#footnote-995)

The DPRK began participating in non-Socialist and non-GANEFO international athletic games in earnest with their participation in the 1972 Munich Summer Olympics and 1974 Asian Summer Games. Aside from a few absences, the DPRK has achieved overall results ranging from sixteenth to sixtieth at the Summer Olympics and fourth to sixteenth at the Asian Summer Games.[[996]](#footnote-996)

During this era specifically, table tennis began to be the primary athletic discipline in which the DPRK could challenge the ROK for legitimacy on a world-class level.[[997]](#footnote-997) Indeed, the DPRK’s Pak Yong Sun won two world titles in women’s singles in 1975 and 1977.[[998]](#footnote-998) Later, Ri Pun Hui won 12 of 13 matches in the 1985 World Championship.[[999]](#footnote-999) Nevertheless, Pak in particular was publicly portrayed as a filial woman returning the kindness of the leader.[[1000]](#footnote-1000) This image would later be turned into a standardized image of a hierarchically lower, infantilized female athlete who showed filial piety towards the leader.[[1001]](#footnote-1001)

Meanwhile, emphasis was given to developing international football on the national team and club level as well. Kim Jong Il would personally organize and guide the 25 April Football team, and asserted that a united North-South team would win the World Cup.[[1002]](#footnote-1002) Kim Jong Il would even use the Central Broadcasting Committee to record games for later analysis.[[1003]](#footnote-1003) The 25 April Football team was also guided by the national team.[[1004]](#footnote-1004)

Competition with the ROK was not just athletic. It spanned to holding athletic events as well. From 1981, there was a concerted effort to open different types of international sporting events in the DPRK as a result of the successful Seoul 1988 Olympic bid.[[1005]](#footnote-1005) But until the 1989 World Festival of Youth and Students, there would only be minor events. An example is the Pyongyang Marathon. Beginning in 1975 and frequently occurring in the 1980s, foreign runners from friendly Socialist and third-world nations would participate in the Pyongyang Marathon and the Mangyongdae Prize International Marathon, respectively.[[1006]](#footnote-1006)

In accordance with the DPRK’s will to host international events, new stadiums began to be opened. On 5 April 1981, the Chongjin Stadium was completed.[[1007]](#footnote-1007) In October 1981, the Sariwon Youth Stadium was completed.[[1008]](#footnote-1008) On 11 April 1982, Kim Il Sung Stadium was renovated and expanded at the site of the old Moranbong Stadium.[[1009]](#footnote-1009) On 20 February 1986, the Jongju Youth Gymnasium was completed.[[1010]](#footnote-1010) And on 24 February 1986, a new gymnasium was constructed in Sonbong County.[[1011]](#footnote-1011)

## 10.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

Not much information is known regarding both leaders’ basketball-related activities during the Specialized Athletics Era. However, it is known that on the afternoon of 24 April, Kim Il Sung saw students training at the basketball courts of the Beijing Athletics Academy. Kim saw other disciplines trained as well.[[1012]](#footnote-1012)

Perhaps more significantly, the NBA would begin to make inroads to China during this era. This is important because it provided the opportunity for exposure of the NBA to Kim Jong Il, as well as a select few DPRK citizens. A short summary of the NBA’s expansion into China follows. On 24 August 1979, the Washington Bullets would arrive in China, subsequently playing games against the Chinese National Team and the Bayi Rockets in Beijing and Shanghai.[[1013]](#footnote-1013) This came shortly after Deng Xiaoping’s Four Modernizations of 1978, and a thawing of relations with the United States that had been occurring throughout the 1970s.[[1014]](#footnote-1014) Later, in 1982, the NBA Players Association conducted a goodwill tour in China, with several high-profile players competing against China’s national team.[[1015]](#footnote-1015) By 1984, top Chinese basketball players would travel to Los Angeles, playing in the Olympic games. This was followed in 1985 by the men’s national Chinese team scrimmaging against NBA teams, with one game airing on tape delay on Chinese television.[[1016]](#footnote-1016) Although fandom of the NBA wasn’t quite yet developed, it was still at the level to where the DPRK may have begun to feel an effect.

## 10.3 Basketball’s Relationship with Diplomacy

The most significant basketball-related diplomatic event of the era came in January of 1986. On that day, the DPRK Joined the Asian Basketball Federation, nearly 28 years after the ROK did so.[[1017]](#footnote-1017) This would give the DPRK greater access to international basketball competitions.

## 10.4 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

The Specialized Athletics era would mark the beginning of the men’s national team’s foray into the Asian Games, their first matches against the ROK, and continued exchange with Socialist and developing nations. Activities began in in April of 1974, when the DPRK would send a men’s basketball team to an international competition in Bulgaria. There was no news of their result, nor confirmation of which team was sent.[[1018]](#footnote-1018) That September, the DPRK Men’s and Women’s National team would participate in the Asian Games for the first time. The men’s team would finish fifth of eleven in the Iranian-hosted tournament.[[1019]](#footnote-1019) Nevertheless, it was a very competitive showing. The DPRK got out of the first group stage with a convincing win against Kuwait. This was despite a close two-point loss to Iran. In the next stage, the DPRK convincingly defeated Iran, narrowly defeated the Philippines, and lost to China by only nine points. But they could not advance to the next round because of their overall point differential. The team wrapped things up with an easy win against Pakistan and a narrow win against Iran in the consolation 5th-8th Place Tournament.

In December of 1978, the DPRK Men’s Team would play in the 1978 Asian Games in Bangkok.[[1020]](#footnote-1020) The DPRK team would exceed their previous result, achieving third place among fourteen teams. The route to the third-place finish was quite eventful. Initially, the DPRK easily swept their group of Malaysia, Qatar, Japan, and Hong Kong. They qualified for the final round, which was a round-robin group of six teams. The DPRK won their first game against the Philippines, meaning that they were well in position to win the tournament. But the DPRK men’s next opponent was the ROK. It would be the first time that the DPRK men had played their southern neighbours, although the DPRK women had played and forfeited a match against the ROK four years earlier. The men’s result was similar to that of the women’s result. With the DPRK down by fourteen points with just five minutes left to go, someone from the DPRK team grabbed the referee by the collar and protested the calling of the game. The ref did not change their mind, and the DPRK abandoned the game.[[1021]](#footnote-1021) The DPRK would finish the tournament with an easy win against Thailand and a hefty loss to China, putting them in third place. Despite the DPRK’s medal, it was not mentioned in *Rodong Sinmun*. Even with the DPRK men rising nearly to the top of Asia’s elite teams, it would appear that the shame of a loss to the ROK overshadowed their achievement.

On 24 October 1979, less than a year after the Thai-hosted Asian Games, the Thai Men’s team would play a match against the DPRK men’s team in Pyongyang. The Thai team lost by a considerable margin.[[1022]](#footnote-1022) On 27 October 1979, Jong Jun Ki would visit with the Thai men’s basketball team in Pyongyang.[[1023]](#footnote-1023) That November, the Pakistan Men’s national side would play a friendly in the DPRK against the national team, losing the match.[[1024]](#footnote-1024) The DPRK’s encounters with Thailand continued when, from 20 to 27 February 1982, the DPRK Men’s Basketball team participated in the King’s Cup in Bangkok. The team would achieve second place among six nations.[[1025]](#footnote-1025) Roughly two months later, from 23 to 26 April 1982, the DPRK Men’s National Team participated in an international men’s basketball tournament in Halle, East Germany. They achieved second place among four nations.[[1026]](#footnote-1026)

In 1982, the DPRK men would make their third consecutive appearance at the Asian Games. The men would finish fifth of thirteen. In this tournament, despite another hapless loss to China, the DPRK advanced out of the preliminary round with a win over Iraq. In the round-robin Championship Round, after winning their first contest with India, the DPRK was again slated to play the ROK. The DPRK would lose by eight points, but did not walk off the court in protest. The rest of the tournament was somewhat disappointing for the DPRK, as they lost to Japan and the Philippines, both of whom they had beaten just four years prior. However, the DPRK did still defeat Kuwait and Malaysia.[[1027]](#footnote-1027)

The Specialized Athletics Era was notable for the DPRK Men in that they became normalized as an opponent amongst Asian Teams. They regularly competed against Capitalist nations in the Asian Games, and even began to compete against the ROK. In terms of competitiveness, the DPRK men were stronger than ever. Despite the DPRK’s high finishes at Socialist and non-aligned competitions in early years, it is arguable that their competition at the Asian Games was tougher. In any case, it can be said that the DPRK men were firmly among the top five teams in Asia at this point, and could even compete with China and the ROK on any given night.

Table 43: Men's National Team Results, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 02-Sep-74 | Japan | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Preliminary Round | 1974 Asian Games | 75 | 77 | Loss |
| 04-Sep-74 | Kuwait | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Preliminary Round | 1974 Asian Games | 104 | 70 | Win |
| 07-Sep-74 | China | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Second Round | 1974 Asian Games | 77 | 86 | Loss |
| 10-Sep-74 | Iran | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Second Round | 1974 Asian Games | 86 | 65 | Win |
| 12-Sep-74 | Philippines | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Second Round | 1974 Asian Games | 91 | 89 | Win |
| 13-Sep-74 | Pakistan | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Classification 5th-8th | 1974 Asian Games | 107 | 93 | Win |
| 14-Sep-74 | Iran | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | 5th Place Game | 1974 Asian Games | 75 | 74 | Win |
| 10-Dec-78 | Malaysia | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1978 Asian Games | 74 | 63 | Win |
| 11-Dec-78 | Qatar | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1978 Asian Games | 151 | 36 | Win |
| 12-Dec-78 | Japan | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1978 Asian Games | 100 | 75 | Win |
| 13-Dec-78 | Hong Kong | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1978 Asian Games | 100 | 77 | Win |
| 15-Dec-78 | Philippines | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Final Round | 1978 Asian Games | 86 | 71 | Win |
| 16-Dec-78 | ROK | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Final Round | 1978 Asian Games | 37 | 51 | Loss |
| 17-Dec-78 | Thailand | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Final Round | 1978 Asian Games | 108 | 66 | Win |
| 18-Dec-78 | China | Thailand | Bangkok | Nimibutr Stadium | Final Round | 1978 Asian Games | 80 | 115 | Loss |
| 24-Oct-79 | Thailand | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Children's Palace | Friendly | N/A | 107 | 76 | Win |
| 00-Nov-79 | Pakistan | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Win |
| 22-Nov-82 | China | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1982 Asian Games | 87 | 104 | Loss |
| 24-Nov-82 | Iraq | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1982 Asian Games | 86 | 64 | Win |
| 26-Nov-82 | India | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Championship | 1982 Asian Games | ? | ? | Win |
| 28-Nov-82 | ROK | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Championship | 1982 Asian Games | 84 | 92 | Loss |
| 29-Nov-82 | Malaysia | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Championship | 1982 Asian Games | 81 | 66 | Win |
| 01-Dec-82 | Japan | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Championship | 1982 Asian Games | 79 | 90 | Loss |
| 02-Dec-82 | Philippines | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Championship | 1982 Asian Games | 77 | 82 | Loss |
| 03-Dec-82 | Kuwait | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Championship | 1982 Asian Games | 86 | 81 | Win |

## 10.5 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

The Specialist Athletics Era is the first in which the women’s team achieved weak results in comparison to the men’s team. Nevertheless, this era saw the women achieve many of the same things that the men did; semi-regular appearances at the Asian Games, their first matches with the ROK, and continued exchange with Socialist countries. Activities began with the mid-July 1974 visit of the Cuban Women’s national team.[[1028]](#footnote-1028) They would be play one match with the DPRK national team, but the result was unannounced.[[1029]](#footnote-1029) The Cuban team would visit Mangyongdae, Kaesong, and Panmunjom before leaving in early August.[[1030]](#footnote-1030)

In September of 1974, the DPRK Women’s National team would participate in the Asian Games for the first time. They would in principle finish fourth in a group of five, but in reality finished last due to being ejected from the competition.[[1031]](#footnote-1031) The DPRK women started the competition with an easy win against Iran, followed by convincing losses against Japan and China. The DPRK’s final game was against the ROK. It was the first time a DPRK and ROK basketball match had occurred in an official capacity, and the first time aa north-south basketball match of any kind had occurred since 1946. The DPRK team, down by 14 with two minutes and twenty seconds to go, walked off the court in protest. The game was ruled a forfeit, and the DPRK were ejected from the tournament.[[1032]](#footnote-1032) This may have played into why, in December of 1978, the DPRK Men’s Team would play in the 1978 Asian Games but the women’s team would not.[[1033]](#footnote-1033)

The DPRK women would return to action five years after the incident. On 2 February 1979, the DPRK women’s national side played a friendly match against the Cuban national side in Pyongyang Gymnasium. The DPRK lost the match.[[1034]](#footnote-1034) That summer, on 10 and 12 June, the DPRK women’s national side played two friendlies against the Czechoslovakia national team in Pyongyang Gymnasium. The DPRK won both contests.[[1035]](#footnote-1035) Two months later, on 22 August, the DPRK National Women’s team played a game against the 1 August Women’s team in Pyongyang Gymnasium. The DPRK women won the match.[[1036]](#footnote-1036) Lastly, on 4 October, the Hungarian women’s team played a game against the DPRK women’s team in Pyongyang Gymnasium. The Hungarians would lose by four.[[1037]](#footnote-1037) It was the fourth time that a Hungarian basketball team had come to the DPRK, and the second time a women’s Hungarian side had come to the DPRK.

The DPRK women would return to tournament action in 1982. In Halle, East Germany, the DPRK Women’s team was able to best East Germany, Romania, and Poland, achieving first place among four nations.[[1038]](#footnote-1038) As a result of their victory, the DPRK women’s return was announced in *Rodong Sinmun*.[[1039]](#footnote-1039) The women would then participate in the basketball tournament at the 1982 Asian Games. The women’s team would echo their previous result, placing fourth of five.[[1040]](#footnote-1040) Even the results were similar, as the DPRK women acquired an easy win against India before a nine-point loss to Japan, a 31 point loss to the ROK, and a 39 point loss to China. Most notably, the DPRK women accepted their loss to the ROK and did not walk off. This was in line with the men, who also accepted a loss to the ROK that same year.

The DPRK women’s basketball team would go on to participate in the “Friendship 84” basketball tournament in Moscow.[[1041]](#footnote-1041) The Friendship Games was an athletic competition primarily amongst Socialist States that had boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The DPRK women’s basketball team would finish seventh of eight.[[1042]](#footnote-1042) The DPRK women’s sole win was a narrow victory over Finland. Among the losses, the DPRK managed to stay within eight points of Poland and twelve points of Czechoslovakia. But the DPRK suffered a nineteen-point loss to Hungary, a 27-point loss to Bulgaria, a 30-point loss to Cuba, and a whopping 75-point loss to the Soviet Union.

It’s hard to find much positive about the DPRK women’s performance during the Specialist Athletics Era. Aside from their victory in a small East German Tournament, they finished near the back of the pack at the 1974 Asian Games, the 1982 Asian Games, and the Friendship 84 Games. On the other hand, the normalization of participation in the Asian Games, the normalization of matches with the ROK, and continued exchange with Socialist Countries was a positive sign.

Table 44: Women's National Team Results, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 16-Jul-74 | Cuba | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | ? |
| 05-Sep-74 | Iran | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Group Match | 1974 Asian Games | 95 | 36 | Win |
| 05-Sep-74 | Japan | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Group Match | 1974 Asian Games | 64 | 77 | Loss |
| 11-Sep-74 | China | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Group Match | 1974 Asian Games | 83 | 98 | Loss |
| 14-Sep-74 | ROK | Iran | Tehran | Aryamehr Basketball Hall | Group Match | 1974 Asian Games | 63 | 81 | Loss |
| 02-Feb-79 | Cuba | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Loss |
| 10-Jun-79 | Czechoslovakia | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Win |
| 12-Jun-79 | Czechoslovakia | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | Win |
| 22-Aug-79 | 1 August Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 89 | 76 | Win |
| 04-Oct-79 | Hungary | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | N/A | 88 | 84 | Win |
| 20-Nov-82 | India | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Group Match | 1982 Asian Games | 103 | 59 | Win |
| 24-Nov-82 | Japan | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Group Match | 1982 Asian Games | 76 | 85 | :oss |
| 28-Nov-82 | ROK | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Group Match | 1982 Asian Games | 62 | 93 | :oss |
| 30-Nov-82 | China | India | New Delhi | Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium | Group Match | 1982 Asian Games | 62 | 101 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Soviet Union | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 60 | 135 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Bulgaria | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 83 | 110 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Cuba | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 68 | 98 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Poland | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 73 | 81 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Czechoslovakia | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 89 | 101 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Hungary | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 77 | 96 | Loss |
| 22~30-Aug-84 | Finland | Soviet Union | Moscow | ? | Group Match | Friendship Games | 72 | 70 | Win |

## 10.6 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

The Specialized Athletics Era saw foreign teams from friendly countries continue to come to the DPRK, but DPRK club teams ceased to go abroad. The first visit from a foreign team was at the end of May 1974. Then, a Chinese women’s team representing the Ministry of Public Security came to Pyongyang. They were met at the airport by the Amrok River team.[[1043]](#footnote-1043) The ensuing match between the two teams was covered with a political slant, and the result was not announced. The game was attended by Ko Kwang Pong, Kim Dok Jun, and Pang Sung Un .[[1044]](#footnote-1044) The team would subsequently visit Mangyongdae, the Museum of the Korean Revolution, the Sinchon Museum of American War Atrocities, Wonsan, and Kumgang Mountain.[[1045]](#footnote-1045) The team then met with Kim Yong Ju, to date the most prominent political figure to personally meet with a basketball team.[[1046]](#footnote-1046) The team would return at the end of June, with no further news of their matches.[[1047]](#footnote-1047)

In May of 1975 the Novosibersk Dynamo women’s basketball team came to Pyongyang.[[1048]](#footnote-1048) The team would visit Mangyongdae, Pyongyang Children’s Palace, and Nampho. There was also a game with Tumen River that was mentioned.[[1049]](#footnote-1049) The team would return later in the month, with no other mention of matches.[[1050]](#footnote-1050) In June 1975, the Locomotive Women’s team went to participate in a league in Romania consisting of railway teams.[[1051]](#footnote-1051) No results were announced, and it was the only time during this era in which a club basketball team went abroad.

By August of 1977, the Albanian men’s and women’s national teams would visit the DPRK and play friendly matches. The results of the matches were not found.[[1052]](#footnote-1052) It was the second time an Albanian basketball club would visit the DPRK, after BC Partizani Tirana visited in September of 1963. That September, the 1 August women’s Chinese basketball team visited the DPRK. The men’s team had visited in 1963. The Chinese Embassy threw a welcome banquet for them. There would be no other mentions of their visit.[[1053]](#footnote-1053)

On 17 June 1978, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security Men’s Team came to Pyongyang. The women’s team had visited four years prior. They were met by Ko Kwan Pong and Kim Dok Jun.[[1054]](#footnote-1054) The Chinese team would later get a visit from Kae Ung Tae, Choe Won Ik, and again Kim Dok Jun.[[1055]](#footnote-1055) The team would also visit Mangyongdae, the Fatherland Liberation War Museum, Pyongyang Children’s Palace, and Kumgang Mountain.[[1056]](#footnote-1056) Their total stay would be roughly three weeks.[[1057]](#footnote-1057) There was no published record of their matches.

In October 1978, the East German Women’s National Team would visit the DPRK and play friendship games, but the results were not recorded.[[1058]](#footnote-1058) It would be the fourth visit from basketball teams of East Germany, and the third visit from a GDR women’s team. On 16 August, the 8 February Women’s Team would return to the DPRK less than a year after their last visit. 8 February narrowly won their match against them in Pyongyang Gymnasium.[[1059]](#footnote-1059)

In mid-to-late November, a series of friendlies were held between local Chinese and local DPRK teams in Pyongyang. In total, the Chinese People's Liberation Army Simyang Military Unit Men's Basketball Team and the Heilongjiang Province Women’s Basketball Team played four friendlies each. On the men’s side, Amrok River and 8 February lost their matches, but Pyongyang City split a series of two games. On the women’s side, Pyongyang City won three games and 8 February won one.[[1060]](#footnote-1060) Also throughout November, the Pakistan men’s national side would play a series of two friendlies. Pyongyang City and Amrok River won said matches against the Pakistani men.[[1061]](#footnote-1061)

In August 1980, *Rodong Sinmun* would report on a youth women’s basketball tournament held in Pyongyang between Socialist countries. There were no individual match results, but full final standings were announced. The DPRK first team captured fourth of 8, while the DPRK second team captured seventh. It was the first time that a basketball tournament featuring foreign teams had been held in the DPRK. All teams had a dinner after the tournament at Okryukwan.[[1062]](#footnote-1062) A follow up tournament in Wonsan was held from 4 to 10 August the next year. There, the DPR Korea first team took the prize among five teams. All nations but the Soviet Union had returned to participate.[[1063]](#footnote-1063) After a year absence, a basketball tournament between Socialist Countries would return to Pyongyang, this time between men’s youth teams.[[1064]](#footnote-1064)

In 1981, three years after their last visit, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security basketball team returned to Pyongyang and met with Jong Jun Gi, Ri Jin Su, and Ri Chang Son.[[1065]](#footnote-1065) No match results were announced.

Table 45: Men's Club Team International Results, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 00-Nov-79 | Amrok River | Chinese People's Liberation Army Simyang Military Unit Men's Basketball Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 4L |
| 00-Nov-79 | 8 February Team | Chinese People's Liberation Army Simyang Military Unit Men's Basketball Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 5W 2L |
| 00-Nov-79 | Pyongyang City | Pakistani National Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 3W 2L |
| 00-Nov-79 | Amrok River | Pakistani National Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 4L |
| 18-Nov-79 | Pyongyang City | Chinese People's Liberation Army Simyang Military Unit Men's Basketball Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 89 | 73 | Win | 4W 2L |
| 25-Nov-79 | Pyongyang City | Chinese People's Liberation Army Simyang Military Unit Men's Basketball Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | Loss | 4W 3L |
| 25-Nov-79 | 8 February Team | Pakistani National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 100 | 89 | Win | 6W 2L |

Table 46: Women's Club Team International Results, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 30-May-74 | Amrok River | Chinese Ministry of Public Safety | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang City Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 19-May-75 | Tumen River | Novosibirsk Dynamo | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 16-Aug-79 | 8 February Team | 1 August Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 102 | 99 | Win | 5W 3L |
| 00-Nov-79 | Pyongyang City | Heilongjiang Province | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 5W 0L |
| 00-Nov-79 | 8 February Team | Heilongjiang Province | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 5W 3L |
| 18-Nov-79 | Pyongyang City | Heilongjiang Province | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 101 | 62 | Win | 6W 0L |
| 25-Nov-79 | Pyongyang City | Heilongjiang Province | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 7W 0L |

From the Men’s and Women’s Club Team International Results in the Specialized Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, Pyongyang City and 8 February continued to be premier clubs, while Amrok River appears to have emerged as a premier club as well. Secondly, their opponents continued to largely represent those of friendly Socialist Countries.

What stands out the most about exchange during this era is the three international tournaments held by the DPRK, as part of their effort to compete against the ROK after the latter’s successful Olympic host bid in 1981. This may have played a heavy role in the DPRK’s unwillingness to invest in sending club teams abroad compared to the previous era. Furthermore, the political implications of some visits, namely those of Chinese teams, tended to continue to overshadow the matches themselves. This was so pronounced that some visits were not covered in *Rodong Sinmun* at all, and results had to be obtained from yearly athletics summaries. In terms of the clubs themselves, it’s difficult to assess their performance properly due to some results and scores being omitted. Nevertheless, their wins make it clear that the DPRK, by this time, had a clearly established level of a handful of elite state amateur teams.

## 10.7 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

No direct Inter-Korean Exchange would occur during this era. But the men’s and women’s national team matches at the 1974, 1978, and 1982 Asian Games were breakthrough moments in that they opened the possibility for future matches between the two nations. Furthermore, the 1982 matches in particular made it clear that the DPRK would accept a loss to the ROK and abide by pre-established rules.

## 10.8 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

Basketball was a part of domestic policy from the outset of the Specialized Athletics Era. Kim Jong Il, based upon the news of the 18 February 1974 performance of the Taejong High School girls’ basketball team, ordered the research of basketballs effect on growth development.[[1066]](#footnote-1066) On a related note, in March 1974, Kim Il Sung specified several athletic disciplines to prioritize development in. The reasoning was that the DPRK had a chance of winning them. Basketball did not make the list.[[1067]](#footnote-1067) Put simply, the Kims wanted to win at basketball, but felt that DPRK citizens were too short to accomplish this goal. As such, the perpetuation of the myth that basketball could increase ones’ height only intensified.

The government’s basketball policy would continue throughout the year. In October of 1974, basketball was listed as a discipline that schools should be doing a lot of in a *Rodong Sinmun* column about athletics policy.[[1068]](#footnote-1068) Later, in the yearly athletic summary for 1974, basketball was mentioned as one of multiple sports that was used in stimulating height growth of young students.[[1069]](#footnote-1069)

On 25 April 1975, the DPRK government implemented basketball training for students as part of a national defence strategy. [[1070]](#footnote-1070) It was reasoned that basketball, along with other sports such as football, boxing, and shooting, would improve students’ height, physical fitness, and ability to run.[[1071]](#footnote-1071) In accordance with this policy, a *Rodong Sinmun* article from March 1975 emphasized the need for all secondary schools to specialize in one sport each. In particular, the article highlighted Singye County’s Taejong Secondary School for its’ work to implement this new policy. The school used new facilities and organized teams according to school year in order to strengthen their already strong basketball program.[[1072]](#footnote-1072)

As elite athletics education continued to develop, basketball was a part of it. In December 1977, four-year athletics colleges were established in each province, along with an eight-year Central Athletics School.[[1073]](#footnote-1073) Said Central Athletics School was established in Nampho, and included basketball as one of 17 disciplines in its curriculum.[[1074]](#footnote-1074)

An October 1977 article in the journal *Chollima* gives more insight into basketball’s perceived role at the time. The article claims that Kim Il Sung stated that youth should put effort into doing height increasing athletics. Kim had the goal of having all youth above 165 centimetres tall. The article goes on to classify iron bar, Swedish bar, basketball, and volleyball as height increasing athletics. Basketball especially gives impact via shooting the ball, grabbing the ball, jumping up and down, and pulling and pushing. As such, basketball increases height quicker than other athletics.[[1075]](#footnote-1075) This type of pseudo-scientific explanation only served to solidify the myth of basketball’s height-increasing properties, and confirm the extent of the government’s belief in it.

The DPRK’s lack of belief in their own basketball ability can be seen in other sources as well. During a 1985 national meeting of athletes, basketball was not included in list of sports as part of a new national directive to make a new turn in athletics from the national meeting of athletes.[[1076]](#footnote-1076) Basketball was also not included in a similar editorial in the next year.[[1077]](#footnote-1077)

Meanwhile, basketball continued to be played at the youth level. In accordance with the new directive, on 30 November 1981, it was mentioned that Kangryong County, Haeju City, and Jangyon County had all decided to set basketball, along with two other sports, as sports to be mastered at their schools.[[1078]](#footnote-1078)

## 10.9 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

The Specialized Athletics Era is the era in which the least is known about domestic basketball tournaments. *Rodong Sinmun* was at the peak of its’ politicization at the time, leaving little to no room for athletic results. The situation was so pronounced that, for three years from April 1977 to April 1980, no tournament results are available whatsoever. To make matters worse, whenever tournaments were covered, propaganda surrounding the event would overtake coverage of the event itself. As such, less is known about tournament winners and participants. Match results began to be omitted as well, and would not reappear in earnest until the 2010s. Other newspapers, such as *Athletics Newspaper*, *Pyongyang Newspaper*, or *Minju Joson* may have had more tournament detail, but their archives for this era are not available.

There are a number of interesting details surrounding tournaments of this era. At some time between August 1974 and March 1975, the first Youth and Student Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National 18 April First Place Cup was held among High Schools.[[1079]](#footnote-1079) This tournament was established after Kim Jong Il saw the performance of the aforementioned Taejong Girls High School Basketball Team. In accordance with Kim Jong Il’s directive that schools specialize in certain athletic disciplines, he also said that a tournament for each discipline should be held every year. Kim Jong Il further mandated that schools who won the same category three years in a row would permanently own said cup.[[1080]](#footnote-1080)

Another interesting detail is that the April 1980 Mangyongdae Prize Competition in Pyongyang was the first and only recorded instance of Koreans from Japan participating as a team.[[1081]](#footnote-1081) In fact, the only other instance of foreign teams participating at all was the 15 August Liberation Commemorative Pyongyang City Athletics Tournament in August 1953, which included a team from the Chinese People’s Army Supervisory Squad.

One piece of information that doesn’t quite fit into the table is as follows. On 16 February 1976, there was an exhibition game between a central team and a provincial team held in Pyongyang Gymnasium. The match was part of a broader athletics exhibition, and held at the same time as other disciplines.[[1082]](#footnote-1082) The lack of detail surrounding participating teams is testament to the nature of tournament reporting during this era.

Table 47: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 15-Apr-1974~10-May-1974 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Korea Children's Union Foundation 28th Anniversary Commemorative Pyongyang City Primary School Athletics Tournament | 조선소년단창립 스물여덟돐기념 평양시인민학교체육대회 | 05-Jun-1974~Jun-1974 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Student and Children's Palace Gymnasium |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<보천보홰불상>> 체육경기대회 | 28-Jul-1974~22-Aug-1974 | Pyongyang | 8 February Team Gymnasium |
| The First Youth and Student Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National 18 April First Place Cup | ≪4월 18일 우승컵≫쟁취를 위한 전국 청소년 학생 제1차종목별체육경기대회 | Aug-1974~Mar-1975 | ? | ? |
| 25th Anniversary of the Athletics Holiday DPR Korean Athletic Discipline Championship Tournament | 체육절 스물다섯돐기념 조선민주주의인민공화국 체육종목별 선수권대회 | Nov-1974~Nov-1974 | ? | ? |
| National Athletics Kurakbu Basketball Championship Tournament | 전국체육구락부생 롱구 선수권대회 | Feb-1975~Feb-1975 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gynmasium |
| 30th Anniversary of the Glorious Korean Worker's Party Foundation National University Student Athletics Festival | 영광스러운 조선로동당 창건 30돐기념 전국대학생체육축전 | 10-Oct-1975~17-Oct-1975 | Nampho | Nampho City Stadium |
| 28th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army National Athletics Kurakbu Competitive Athletics Tournament | 조선인민군창건28돐기념 전국체육구락부생체육경기대회 | 25-Jan-1976~2-Feb-1976 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Athletics Festival Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국체육축전 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 8-Apr-1977~Apr-1977 | Pyongyang | East Pyongyang Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-1980~25-Apr-1980 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 3rd National Youth Festival Athletics Festival Central Championship Match Tournament | 제3차전국청소년축전의 체육축전 중앙결승경기대회 | 10-Apr-1980~Apr-1980 | Pyongyang | Moranbong Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 9-Apr-1981~25-Apr-1981 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 16-Feb-1982~1-Mar-1982 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Socialist Countries Youth International Men's Competitive Basketball Tournament | 사회주의나라 청소년국제남자롱구경기대회 | 17-Jul-1983~24-Jul-1983 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 17-Feb-1984~28-Feb-1984 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 5-Apr-1984~17-May-1984 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Agricultural Workers First Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국농업근로자 제1차체육경기대회 | 16-Sep-1984~18-Sep-1984 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| DPR Korea Championship Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국 선수권대회 | 20-Sep-1984~28.Oct-1984 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| 10th 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제10차 2월 2일상 체육경기대회 | 15-Oct-1984~24-Oct-1984 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Chongjin, Wonsan, Nampho | ? |
| National Workers Athletics Tournament | 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 25-Oct-1984~29-Oct-1984 | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 10-Feb-1985~7-Mar-1985 | Pyongyang, Haeju, Samjiyon | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-1985~17-May-1985 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| 12th National Youth and Students Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제12차 전국청소년학생 전문화체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-1985~8-Jul-1985 | Sariwon, Nampho, Pukchong, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National Teachers' Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국교원체육경기대회 | 3-Aug-1985~11-Aug-1985 | Sunchon | ? |
| National 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국 《9월 5일상》 체육경기대회 | 21-Aug-1985~24-Aug-1985 | Chongjin | ? |
| 40th Anniversary of Party Foundation Republic Championship Tournament | 당창건 40돐기념 공화국선수권대회 | 20-Oct-1985~19-Nov-1985 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-1986~22-May-1986 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |

Table 48: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Specialized Athletics Era (Duplicates Excluded)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| Basketball Tournament for Women's Teams of Friendly Socialist Countries | 사회주의나라 청소년친선 국제녀자롱구경기대회 | 22-Aug-1980-27-Aug-1980 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Basketball Tournament for Women's Teams of Friendly Socialist Countries | 사회주의나라 청소년친선 국제녀자롱구경기대회 | 4-Aug-1981-10-Aug-1981 | Wonsan | ? |

From the men’s and women’s domestic basketball tournament details in the Specialized Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be made. Firstly, beginning in 1984, major tournaments began to be held more frequently outside of Pyongyang. This may have been a side-effect of the DPRK’s efforts to begin hosting more international competitions beginning in 1981. Secondly, at this time, Pyongyang Gymnasium had become the premier venue for basketball games. Thirdly, beginning in 1982, the tournament named for the Paekdu Mountain Prize signalled that naming conventions would continue to be based on the leadership cult. This tournament began in 1977, but 1982 is the first evidence of it hosting basketball. It was hosted around the time of Kim Jong Il’s birthday, emphasizing its’ connection to the leadership.[[1083]](#footnote-1083)

Table 49: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Apr-1974~10-May-1974 | ? | ? | ? | 8 February Team Pyongyang City |
| Korea Children's Union Foundation 28th Anniversary Commemorative Pyongyang City Primary School Athletics Tournament | 05-Jun-1974~Jun-1974 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 28-Jul-1974~22-Aug-1974 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| The First Youth and Student Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National 18 April First Place Cup | Aug-1974~Mar-1975 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 25th Anniversary of the Athletics Holiday DPR Korean Athletic Discipline Championship Tournament | Nov-1974~Nov-1974 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Athletics Club Basketball Championship Tournament | Feb-1975~Feb-1975 | Sosong District Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 30th Anniversary of the Glorious Korean Worker's Party Foundation National University Student Athletics Festival | 10-Oct-1975~17-Oct-1975 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 28th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army National Athletics Club Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jan-1976~2-Feb-1976 | Kangso County Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National Athletics Festival Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Apr-1977~Apr-1977 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1980~25-Apr-1980 | Amrok River | ? | ? | Koreans in Japan Athletics Club |
| 3rd National Youth Festival Athletics Festival Central Championship Match Tournament | 10-Apr-1980~Apr-1980 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9-Apr-1981~25-Apr-1981 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-Feb-1982~1-Mar-1982 | Amrok River (Group 1) Tumen River (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| Socialist Countries Youth International Men's Competitive Basketball Tournament | 17-Jul-1983~24-Jul-1983 | DPR Korea (1st Team) | Czechoslovakia | Hungary | Romania Bulgaria Poland DPR Korea (2nd Team) |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 17-Feb-1984~28-Feb-1984 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Apr-1984~17-May-1984 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Agricultural Workers First Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-Sep-1984~18-Sep-1984 | Ryanggang Province | ? | ? | ? |
| DPR Korea Championship Tournament | 20-Sep-1984~28.Oct-1984 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Oct-1984~24-Oct-1984 | Rakyon Mining | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Athletics Tournament | 25-Oct-1984~29-Oct-1984 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-1985~7-Mar-1985 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1985~17-May-1985 | 25 April Athletics Club (Group 1) Tumen River (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| 12th National Youth and Students Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-1985~8-Jul-1985 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Teachers' Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Aug-1985~11-Aug-1985 | South Hwanghae Province | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Aug-1985~24-Aug-1985 | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | ? | ? |
| 40th Anniversary of Party Foundation Republic Championship Tournament | 20-Oct-1985~19-Nov-1985 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1986~22-May-1986 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |

From the men’s domestic basketball tournament results in the Specialized Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be made. Firstly, Amrok River with three wins, and 8 February and 25 April with two wins each were strong teams during this era. However, 25 April can essentially be seen as the replacement for the 8 February team. Both of them are linked to the Korean People’s Army, and 8 February would disappear from leaderboards until 2018.

Table 50: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Apr-1974~10-May-1974 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Korea Children's Union Foundation 28th Anniversary Commemorative Pyongyang City Primary School Athletics Tournament | 05-Jun-1974~Jun-1974 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 28-Jul-1974~22-Aug-1974 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| 25th Anniversary of the Athletics Holiday DPR Korean Athletic Discipline Championship Tournament | Nov-1974~Nov-1974 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| The First Youth and Student Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament for achieving the National 18 April First Place Cup | Aug-1974~Mar-1975 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Athletics Kurakbu Basketball Championship Tournament | Feb-1975~Feb-1975 | Pyongyang City Sonkyo District Athletics Kurakbu | ? | ? | ? |
| 30th Anniversary of the Glorious Korean Worker's Party Foundation National University Student Athletics Festival | 10-Oct-1975~17-Oct-1975 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 28th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Korean People's Army National Athletics Kurakbu Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jan-1976~2-Feb-1976 | Singye County Athletics Kurakbu | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1980~25-Apr-1980 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| Basketball Tournament for Women's Teams of Friendly Socialist Countries | 22-Aug-1980-27-Aug-1980 | Soviet Union | Czechoslovakia | Hungary | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9-Apr-1981~25-Apr-1981 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Basketball Tournament for Women's Teams of Friendly Socialist Countries | 4-Aug-1981-10-Aug-1981 | DPR Korea A Team | Czechoslovakia | Bulgaria | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-Feb-1982~1-Mar-1982 | 8 February Team (Group 1) South Hwanghae Province (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 17-Feb-1984~28-Feb-1984 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| National Agricultural Workers First Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-Sep-1984~18-Sep-1984 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| DPR Korea Championship Tournament | 20-Sep-1984~28-Oct-1984 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Oct-1984~24-Oct-1984 | Hamhung Woolen Textile Weaving Factory | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Athletics Tournament | 25-Oct-1984~29-Oct-1984 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-1985~7-Mar-1985 | 8 February Team | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1985~17-May-1985 | 25 April Athletics Club (Group 1) Wangjae Mountain Prize (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| National Teachers' Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Aug-1985~11-Aug-1985 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Aug-1985~24-Aug-1985 | Sariwon Number 1 Normal University | ? | ? | ? |
| 40th Anniversary of Party Foundation Republic Championship Tournament | 20-Oct-1985~19-Nov-1985 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1986~22-May-1986 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |

From the women’s domestic basketball tournament results in the Specialized Athletics Era, the following conclusion can be made. 8 February, with seven wins, was dominant during this era. Furthermore, 25 April, who essentially took over from 8 February as the KPA representative, won three tournaments themselves. Aside from Pyongyang City’s two tournament wins, it was clear by this era that the KPA had a virtual stranglehold on basketball dominance.

## 10.10 Basketball as a Pastime

On the back of Kim Jong Il’s directive to develop specific athletic disciplines at schools, reports of schools doing so began to appear in *Rodong Sinmun*. On 22 May 1974, it was reported that the Wasan High School in the Sosong District of Pyongyang had basketball teams that practiced regularly. They also boasted that their Women’s Basketball Team achieved first place in the National High School Athletics Tournament.[[1084]](#footnote-1084) Additionally, three schools; Jonchon County Girls High School, Sungho District Parung High School, and the Hamhung City Ryujong Girls High School were all mentioned as being part of multiple schools’ successful efforts to specialize in developing girl’s basketball.[[1085]](#footnote-1085)

Taejong High School itself also continued to garner attention. On 31 May 1974 they were reported to have students actively participate in basketball games. Additionally, during the after-class athletics times, the students broke into basketball teams which were each supervised by a teacher. In particular, Ra Jong Ho, a teacher, was said to have success coaching the girls’ team. Said team won the Fourth People’s Athletics Tournament Club Sector Tournament. The reporter also observed a match where the club was split into two teams. Their skill was said to be that of a championship at the national athletics level.[[1086]](#footnote-1086)

Other somewhat detailed reports of basketball being played across the country occasionally emerged. On 26 March 1977, the Kaesong Shoe Factory was reported to carry out basketball games between workplaces. Accordingly, their basketball team had achieved first place in city-wide competition.[[1087]](#footnote-1087) Five days later, the Sinuiju Athletics College was reported to have achieved first place in nationwide basketball preliminaries.[[1088]](#footnote-1088) That October, basketball was reported to be played amongst workteams during important holidays and the anniversary of the leader’s on-the-spot instruction at the Pyongyang General Textile Factory.[[1089]](#footnote-1089) Two years later, the Pyongson Kwanggae Machinery Factory was reported to participate in basketball games normally and enhance their physical strength and organizational mindset. Also, the processing workplace in particular was said to have achieved a good result in basketball among other disciplines.[[1090]](#footnote-1090) In essence, achievement in basketball was considered to be a point of collective pride for those who participated.

More general reports of basketball being trained and played were published in this era as well. In November 1974, *Rodong Sinmun* would run a report on the Chinese national athletic leagues.[[1091]](#footnote-1091) On 6 October 1976, a column in *Rodong Sinmun* mentioned basketball as one of many sports to be actively carried out in the pursuit of developing physical strength and will fully and harmoniously.[[1092]](#footnote-1092) On 4 September 1981, it was mentioned that the Party Central Committee mentioned basketball courts in Hamhung City as holding the potential to increase the skill level of the youth.[[1093]](#footnote-1093) On 11 August 1985, it was reported that basketball athletes were training strongly with rising spirit.[[1094]](#footnote-1094)

Some reports revealed more about how basketball was trained and developed. On 1 June 1975, as part of the 1 June Children’s Day 25th Anniversary Commemorative Pyongyang City Kindergarten Children’s Competitive Athletics Tournament in Pyongyang Gymnasium, both foreign and Korean children participated in the basketball shooting game entitled “I will become a basketball player” with their parents as part of the festivities.[[1095]](#footnote-1095) This indicates that children were introduced to basketball through games that taught basic skills. Later, in November 1983, there was an article in *Chollima* about Chang Yong Ae. She set Asian Games records enroute to a gold medal in the 800 and 1500-meter sprints at the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi. Chang played in the basketball club from her days in Middle School and participated in the National Club Competitive Tournament. But, during her training, she was seen to be exceptionally good as running. This led to a track and field expert seeing her talent and beginning to train her.[[1096]](#footnote-1096) This report indicates that athletes could switch disciplines and be scouted.

Other articles reveal how basketball was seen strategically at the time. A March 1985 *Chollima* article about new basketball rules was written in the form of an answer from an expert. The rules explained were the same as international rules. Indeed, the column explained the recent introduction of the three-point line and recent changes in rebound positioning during free throws. It also went on to explain that new rules demand maximum speed.[[1097]](#footnote-1097) This article shows that the DPRK was willing to adapt to the new international trends of basketball at the time. On the other hand, the state was still obsessed with pushing tactics through an ideological lens. On 30 November 1985, a picture of the men’s 25 April basketball team discussing the “Juche Tactics System” was run in *Rodong Sinmun* as part of a larger feature on the goals of the overall 25 April Athletics Club.[[1098]](#footnote-1098)

The Chongryon still saw some attention during this area, but it had waned. On 26 and 27 July 1974, the Chongryon held a basketball tournament as part of larger athletics festivities.[[1099]](#footnote-1099) There was also a 27 June 1976 article about Hwan Dok Su, the president of the Chongryon, visiting the Chinese Basketball team while they were travelling in Japan.[[1100]](#footnote-1100)

Table 51: Local Basketball Reports, Specialized Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game Played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 1974.8.10 | Jongsan High School in Chongam District of Chongjin[[1101]](#footnote-1101) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 1974.8.10 | 26 March Factory[[1102]](#footnote-1102) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1974.10.13 | Chollima Jangyon Girl’s High School[[1103]](#footnote-1103) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1974.11.15 | Chollima Cholwon Girl’s High School[[1104]](#footnote-1104) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 1975.1.11 | Soyang High School in Dongsin County[[1105]](#footnote-1105) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1975.6.22 | Namsa High School in Sakju County[[1106]](#footnote-1106) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 1975.6.22 | Chollima Kiyang High School[[1107]](#footnote-1107) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1976.12.23 | the Socialist Working Youth League and the Children’s Union in Unpyong County | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | County/City |
| 1977.2.14 | the Pyonghwa High School in Moranbong District of Pyongyang[[1108]](#footnote-1108) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1977.2.21 | the League of Socialist Working Youth at the Pyongyang Jukjong Machinery Factory[[1109]](#footnote-1109) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1977.10.9 | Pyongyang General Textile Factory[[1110]](#footnote-1110) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1977.5.11 | Jangyon Machinery Repair Factory[[1111]](#footnote-1111) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1979.6.11 | Haeju Ryongyol Agricultural Machinery Factory[[1112]](#footnote-1112) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1979.8.20 | Chonnae Primary School in Chonnae County[[1113]](#footnote-1113) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1979.10.8 | Kaesong Jaesom Factory[[1114]](#footnote-1114) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1979.10.14 | Pokchong Suji Daily Necessities Factory[[1115]](#footnote-1115) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1979.10.21 | Phungchon High School in Yonan County[[1116]](#footnote-1116) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1982.3.14 | Myohyang Mountain Medical Device Factory[[1117]](#footnote-1117) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1982.9.14 | Chongchon River Thermoelectric Power Plant[[1118]](#footnote-1118) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1982.10.12 | Anbyon County[[1119]](#footnote-1119) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1983.10.9 | Pokchong County[[1120]](#footnote-1120) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1984.1.5 | Pukchong County[[1121]](#footnote-1121) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 1985.7.28 | Songnae Geological Survey Team in Kowon County[[1122]](#footnote-1122) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1985.8.5 | Jonchon Jackhammer Factory[[1123]](#footnote-1123) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1985.3.9 | Jagang Province Power Transmission and Supply Bureau[[1124]](#footnote-1124) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1985.3.21 | all factories and businesses in the Ryungsong District of Pyongyang[[1125]](#footnote-1125) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1985.11.26 | every factory, business, cooperative farm, and school in Taekwan County[[1126]](#footnote-1126) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1985.11.28 | Yonsan County Ryangjong Busines[[1127]](#footnote-1127) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1986.5.8 | workers in Phungsan County[[1128]](#footnote-1128) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |

From the less-detailed local basketball reports in the Specialized Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, establishing teams was a bit more important immediately following Kim Jong Il’s order, as four of the first eight reports included a team being formed. The ratio would have been a bit higher still if a couple of the more detailed reports were included. Secondly, schools were emphasized immediately following Kim Jong Il’s directive, as seven of the first nine reports were of schools. Thirdly, as time went on, reports became mostly about working age people in urban areas. Of the 20 reports made after the initial nine, eleven of them were factories, businesses, or organs and only two were schools.

# chapter 11. The Scientific Athletics Era (1986.5.19~1997.1.4)

## 11.1 General Athletics Overview

The Scientific Athletics Era was marked by an emphasis on developing athletics via scientific means specifically for the purpose of winning international competition. Additionally, the era was marked by the DPRK continuing to host international events. In the face of increasing economic slowdown and international diplomatic uncertainty, Kim Jong Il saw it necessary to further prioritize international recognition via athletics. Meanwhile, due to a reduced state capacity, collectivism in mass athletics continued to decline and participation became more difficult for the average citizen. It should also be noted that, by this point, athletics policy was almost entirely the responsibility of Kim Jong Il; the elderly Kim Il Sung would pass away in 1994.

The beginning of the Scientific Athletics Era can be pinpointed to a 19 May 1986 speech by Kim Jong Il to those working in the athletic sector. Kim Jong Il said that material and technical development up to that point had raised the DPRK’s activity internationally. Kim Jong Il also mentioned the strengthening of the popularization of athletics at schools, organs, and businesses. This was all in line with previous athletic policy. But Kim Jong Il’s mention of scientific research in football, marathon, and other strategic disciplines along with his mention of exercise physiology and exercise nutrition represented a new policy direction. [[1129]](#footnote-1129)

The most radically new policy in Kim Jong Il’s 1986 speech was his declaration that that famous athletes should be introduced via television broadcast, and that athletes should be societally appraised.[[1130]](#footnote-1130) This is almost in direct contradiction to Kim Il Sung’s 4 November 1969 statement that athletes were demanded to strive for a collectivist spirit, throwing away a mentality that strove for honour or heroism.[[1131]](#footnote-1131) To be fair, the years after Kim Il Sung’s demand for athletes to strive for a collectivist spirit did see the promotion of extremely successful athletes like Pak Yong Sun in state media. But Kim Jong Il’s 1986 demand to propagandize famous athletes represented a greater allowance for individualism in academic achievement, and a downshift of previous policy that focused on athletes as part of a collective.

Further developments of Kim Jong Il’s new direction in athletic policy came in 1989. Then, Kim Jong Il would be more detailed and concrete in his demands for the advance of scientific development. He mandated that research be done according to a step-by-step plan. Kim Jong Il also mandated that research into exercise nutrition and fundamental sports science be intensified.[[1132]](#footnote-1132) As an example of what could be achieved with this new focus on scientific training, Kim Jong Il would cite the East German example.[[1133]](#footnote-1133) Kim Jong Il would even consider sending Foreign Exchange students to the GDR as a development method.[[1134]](#footnote-1134) Lastly, athletic medical care was also to developed.[[1135]](#footnote-1135) Despite this focus on development, Kim Jong Il was very careful to preserve the ideological elements of athletics. To this end, he cemented athletics games in “our style” as a matter of policy.[[1136]](#footnote-1136)

Another fundamental shift to come out of Kim Jong Il’s 1989 proclamation is his very specific emphasis on football. Kim Jong Il would say that football is the foundation of athletics.[[1137]](#footnote-1137) He would also emphasize exchange with South American and ROK football clubs.[[1138]](#footnote-1138) Kim Jong Il had certainly showed great interest in football in the past, but this level of public promotion of one specific discipline was unprecedented. This would set the stage for future explicit promotion of other athletic disciplines.

Before the basketball intensification era, Kim Jong Il was known to favour other disciplines. In 1992, a pro boxing association was established.[[1139]](#footnote-1139) Later, around 15 August 1996, Kim Jong Il emphasized the development of shooting and boxing.[[1140]](#footnote-1140) This was likely due to the fact that both disciplines had a relatively large number of medals on offer at the 1996 Olympics; shooting had twelve and boxing had fifteen.[[1141]](#footnote-1141)

Around the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the DPRK began to offer more athletic disciplines that had previously been banned as Capitalist. This continued a trend begun during the late Specialized Athletics era. New events included baseball, softball, golf, bowling, and water skiing.[[1142]](#footnote-1142) Additionally, from 1980 to 1988, the number of events eligible for women to compete in rose to 22.[[1143]](#footnote-1143)

Most of these athletic developments were aimed at elite athletes. Mass athletics, meanwhile, suffered. During this era, athletics teachers began to take up side jobs, the quality of education began to decline, and academic professions began to be avoided.[[1144]](#footnote-1144) In an effort to combat this decline, beginning in March 1992, every second Sunday of each month was declared to be “Athletics Day”. This meant that each area and level of organization would participate in athletics competitions of multiple disciplines, such as cycling, tug of war, running with a ball, and 100-metre dash.[[1145]](#footnote-1145)

For those gifted in athletics, the system had become highly developed. Special Education Institutions for athletic talents and coaches included Athletics Schools, Athletics Colleges, and Athletic Universities. As of 1 September 1993, there were 11 Athletic Universities nationwide. The most notable of them, Pyongyang Athletic University, was established in 1958.[[1146]](#footnote-1146)

Around 1994, there were roughly 230 Extracurricular Athletic Schools (과외체육학교) nationwide, designed specifically to last for five years and produce expert athletes. Ages of students would vary widely, from as low the first year of primary school to those as many as five years removed from high school. Access to the schools was highly competitive, due to the benefits and higher Songbun (성분)[[1147]](#footnote-1147) classification that went along with it.[[1148]](#footnote-1148) Additionally, the people’s physical health inspections were strengthened in 1997 through a revision to the athletics law.[[1149]](#footnote-1149) If an athlete did not improve on their bi-annual physical health inspection, they would be expelled. This made it difficult for athletes to remain in an athletics school for an extended period of time.[[1150]](#footnote-1150)

The domestic club system had also reached a developed level as well. The total number of athletic clubs in the DPRK as of 1994 was around 30.[[1151]](#footnote-1151) By 2000, there were estimated to be roughly fifteen level one clubs, 40 level two clubs, and 80 level three clubs. Generally, level one clubs were national-level experts, level two clubs were provincial-level experts, and level three clubs were normal citizens representing individual factories and businesses.[[1152]](#footnote-1152) Even the elite athletic organs were seeing development during this era. In 1988, the National Athletics Committee became a member of the administrative council.[[1153]](#footnote-1153) Later, on 29 June 1989, the Korea Athletic Guidance Committee’s name was changed to DPR Korea National Athletics Committee.[[1154]](#footnote-1154)

During the Scientific Athletics Era, the DPRK continued to hold international events despite economic difficulties. By far the most notable was the thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students, held from 1 to 7 July 1989.[[1155]](#footnote-1155) It was widely seen as the DPRK’s response to the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The announcement that the thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students would be in Pyongyang was on 18 July 1986.[[1156]](#footnote-1156) After this date, several athletics facilities were constructed on Chongchun Street in Pyongyang as well as other international grade facilities in the city.[[1157]](#footnote-1157) Many of those facilities were part of a Pyongyang region named the “Angol Athletics Village”. By 1 June 1987, said village was deemed to be in the final phase of construction.[[1158]](#footnote-1158) The new construction boom was officially advertised as part of the country’s athletics development, with no mention of international events.[[1159]](#footnote-1159) However, an International Olympic Committee representative group would visit the village during its construction, making the DPRK’s international ambitions clear.[[1160]](#footnote-1160) The construction was deemed complete on 5 September 1988.[[1161]](#footnote-1161) One day later, the Angol Athletics Village was renamed to Chongchun Street.[[1162]](#footnote-1162) Later, on 30 April 1989, the 1 May Stadium was completed.[[1163]](#footnote-1163) This would be the main venue for the opening and closing ceremonies.[[1164]](#footnote-1164)

After the completion of the World Festival of Youth and Students, momentum for hosting international sporting events slowed down. In 1995, the DPRK gave up the right to host the Winter Asian Games in Samjiyon, as well as the right to host the second East Asian Games in Pyongyang. This was likely due to economic difficulties.[[1165]](#footnote-1165) The DPRK would resort to holding smaller events in 1995. This included the fourth edition of an International Figure Skating Competition under the Paekdu Mountain Prize Banner.[[1166]](#footnote-1166) It also included international Pro Wrestling matches held under the name of the Pyongyang International Athletics and Culture Festival for Peace.[[1167]](#footnote-1167) Lastly, the DPRK would hold a three-day conference for the International Army Athletics Board of Directors.[[1168]](#footnote-1168) This was on the heels of the DPRK also sending a sizeable athletics delegation to the World Army General Athletics Competitive Tournament in Italy.[[1169]](#footnote-1169) All in all, the DPRK wished to secure legitimacy through hosting international competitions, but they were hampered by a lack of resources.

In terms of international results, the DPRK had its’ share of victories. Yu Sun Bok defeated Japan and the ROK on her way to the 1989 Asian Cup Table Tennis Tournament Women’s Singles Championship.[[1170]](#footnote-1170) Speaking more broadly, from 1985 to 1990, the DPRK scored impressive results in female disciplines such as speed skating, weightlifting, football, heavy gymnastics, and rhythmic gymnastics.[[1171]](#footnote-1171) Indeed, the DPRK would continue their participation in the Olympics and the Asian Games. The DPRK would achieve an all-time high rank of sixteenth at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics followed by a 33rd place rank at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.[[1172]](#footnote-1172) In particular, 16-year-old Kye Sun Hui’s gold Judo medal in the 1996 Olympics was seen as particularly meaningful during a time of economic need in the DPRK.[[1173]](#footnote-1173) Meanwhile, the DPRK would achieve fourth place at the 1990 Beijing Asian Games.[[1174]](#footnote-1174)

One athletic discipline which saw a remarkable breakthrough during this era was taekwondo. In 1980, Chae Hong Hui established taekwondo in the DPRK. The DPRK would subsequently made their first Taekwondo World Championship appearance in 1987.[[1175]](#footnote-1175) Taekwondo then began to be developed as a health program, established in November of 1993.[[1176]](#footnote-1176) The program was propagated during various national meetings throughout the 1990s.[[1177]](#footnote-1177) From 1991 to 2013, roughly the span of the Kim Jong Il era, the DPRK achieved a staggering 271 medals in Taekwondo, nearly doubling all other medals earned in key disciplines over that time span.[[1178]](#footnote-1178)

The Scientific Athletics Era also saw further progress when it came to North-South relations. In October of 1990, a Unification Football tournament was held. The first match occurred in Pyongyang, and the next match occurred in Seoul.[[1179]](#footnote-1179) The next year, the two Koreas arranged a joint table tennis team for the 41st World Championship.[[1180]](#footnote-1180)

## 11.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

The Scientific Athletics Era was the last in which the founder of the nation, Kim Il Sung, was alive. Athletics was one of the first areas in which Kim Jong Il became active, meaning that Kim Il Sung’s role had been well diminished by this era. However, Kim Il Sung had one last encounter with basketball. On 3 September 1988, Kim Il Sung looked around the basketball stadium and other athletics facilities constructed in the Angol Athletics Village. The party’s appeal was received and the facilities were constructed in a short time, so Kim Il Sung showed great satisfaction.[[1181]](#footnote-1181) Indeed, the construction of the facilities and Kim Il Sung’s visit would be commemorated twenty years later.[[1182]](#footnote-1182) This anecdote about Kim Il Sung serves as a poignant bookend to his relationship with basketball. One could never have branded Kim Il Sung a basketball fan, but he understood basketball’s utility to his regime and showed respect to those who played the game.

As the regime moved towards the Kim Jong Il era, the influence of NBA basketball began to take hold in the nations surrounding the DPRK. China, with whom the DPRK shares a land border and significant political ties, was a nation in which the NBA had great influence. Beginning in 1986, select NBA games were broadcast on tape delay on Chinese state television provider CCTV.[[1183]](#footnote-1183) But the floodgates opened in 1990, when one or two NBA games a week began to be broadcast on tape delay.[[1184]](#footnote-1184) By 1992, the first Olympics to allow professional basketball players was seen in China, only increasing the popularity of the NBA.[[1185]](#footnote-1185) In 1994, the NBA Finals were broadcast live in China in the first time. By 1996, live broadcasting of various NBA events began in earnest, reaching at least 90% of all households.[[1186]](#footnote-1186) The release of the Japanese basketball-based manga, Slam Dunk, also helped to increase the cultural popularity of basketball during the 1990s. Indeed, in 2016, Slam Dunk would be rated as the second most influential Japanese animation in China by Chinese state media outlet People’s Daily.[[1187]](#footnote-1187)

In Japan, the NBA’s influence began to take hold as well. Due to the presence of the Chongryon in Japan, this undoubtedly began to have some degree of effect on the DPRK. Beginning in 1988, the NBA would be viewable on Japanese television.[[1188]](#footnote-1188) The sports department of NHK received lots of fan letters from viewers at the time, and NBA games to be broadcast were carefully selected.[[1189]](#footnote-1189) In November of 1990, the NBA held two regular season games in Tokyo.[[1190]](#footnote-1190) This would be followed by two games in Yokohama in 1992, two more games in Yokohama in 1994, two more games in Tokyo in 1996, two more games in Tokyo in 1999, and two games in Saitama in 2003.[[1191]](#footnote-1191) Additionally, in 1994 and 1996, NBA Stars visited Japan under the sponsorship of Nike to play in exhibition games in Yokohama.[[1192]](#footnote-1192) Lastly, Michael Jordan would appear on a popular Japanese game show in 1996 and 2000, with Kobe Bryant participating on the same show in 1999.[[1193]](#footnote-1193) Although the NBA’s mainstream popularity dropped off beginning in the mid-2000s and wouldn’t pick back up again until the NBA debut of Japanese-born Rui Hachimura in 2019, it is undeniable that the NBA held a significant amount of mainstream interest in Japan throughout the 1990s.[[1194]](#footnote-1194)

It is with this background and context that one must look at the basketball fandom of Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un. The only direct evidence of Kim Jong Il’s basketball interest before this era is a single anecdote published in 2018, making it a strong possibility that Kim Jong Il acquired a taste for basketball during the Scientific Athletics Era.[[1195]](#footnote-1195) Unfortunately, not much is known of the origins of Kim Jong Il’s basketball fandom.

What is known about Kim Jong Il’s basketball fandom is murky at best. In 1991, rumours began to surface in the United States of Kim Jong Il’s personal interest in basketball. Gene Schmiel, in charge of the Korea desk at the US State Department at the time, described an encounter that he had with three DPRK Diplomats. According to Schmiel, the head of the delegation, Ri Gun, was extremely passionate about NBA Basketball. In particular, Ri was passionate about the Chicago Bulls and Detroit Pistons. Schmiel also claimed that Ri got to watch games with “the boss”, who was highly implied to be Kim Jong Il.[[1196]](#footnote-1196) However, it remains uncertain whether Ri actually had access to Kim Jong Il at the time. As of 1991, Ri was somewhat low on the totem pole within the foreign ministry. Ri would not be promoted to Section Chief in the US Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until 1993. [[1197]](#footnote-1197) Even then, that was a position below that of the Deputy Director and Director of the US Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Those positions, too, are under positions that encompass the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself.

Jumping ahead to 1996, it was clear that basketball was on Kim Jong Il’s mind. The first official anecdote of Kim Jong Il’s basketball interest is as follows. On 12 September 1996, Kim Jong Il was at the Mansudae Television Bureau watching basketball footage. He noticed that a foreign basketball player’s name was misspelled in the subtitles. Kim Jong Il stated that French and German athletes could have their names pronounced differently, despite using the same letters as English. The translator, upon hearing this, thought deeply. The translator had visited several European Countries several times, so he could not understand why was it said differently in Latin American states. The translator then opened the English Encyclopaedia and found that pronunciation could be different in the USA, central, or eastern countries. As such, he was in amazement at Kim Jong Il’s knowledge. The translator then discussed with other experts and re-made the document. But the general, upon seeing the document, called again. According to Kim Jong Il, the spelling was different than the dictionary the translator found it in. Thus, the researcher opened several other dictionaries and carefully researched. Eventually, they found the important point. The athlete was referred to by a nickname domestically and internationally. The translator hit his knee again in admiration. Starting then, the translator pledged inwardly to give great effort and know things more broadly.[[1198]](#footnote-1198) Whether or not Kim Jong Il was correct about the original pronunciation of this player’s name, the anecdote reveals Kim Jong Il’s interest in viewing basketball highlights at that time, as well as his keen interest in individual players.

Kim Jong Il’s basketball interest would be revealed again during a 24 November meeting with military police officers at Panmunjom. At that time, Kim said that his hand almost broke when shaking the officer’s hands. Kim Jong Il went on to joke that their great height might indicate that all of the Republic’s basketball athletes had all gathered there.[[1199]](#footnote-1199) The incident would be re-published thrice in 2001 and 2002.[[1200]](#footnote-1200) This would foreshadow Kim Jong Il’s basketball-related policies to be introduced just six weeks after that date. Nevertheless, one cannot discount the effect that Kim Jong Un likely had on spurring his father’s basketball fandom.

In contrast to information about Kim Jong Il’s basketball tastes, more is known about the basketball fandom origins of Kim Jong Un. There are three known influences that helped to spark Kim Jong Un’s basketball interest; Kenji Fujimoto, Ko Yong Hui, and Kim Jong Chol. Each will have their role examined in turn. Firstly, the case of Kenji Fujimoto will be examined. Around the year 1990, a Japanese sushi chef with the pen name of Kenji Fujimoto would begin a close relationship with the six or seven-year-old Kim Jong Un. Available details are inexact, but Fujimoto claims he was responsible for being Kim Jong Un’s playmate in some capacity until Kim Jong Un was eighteen.[[1201]](#footnote-1201) This would imply that Fujimoto maintained this position at least until Kim Jong Un was sent to boarding school in Switzerland in the Summer of 1996, and for a short while after Kim Jong Un’s return to Pyongyang in 2001.[[1202]](#footnote-1202) In the meantime, Fujimoto claimed to travel frequently at the behest of his employer, Kim Jong Il. This implies that there could have been contact between Fujimoto and Kim Jong Un during Kim’s stay in Switzerland. Fujimoto claims that he was the one to have spurred Kim Jong Un’s interest in basketball, providing Kim Jong Un with VHS tapes of Chicago Bulls playoff games sent from his sister in Japan.[[1203]](#footnote-1203)

Meanwhile, journalist Anna Fifield would claim in 2019 that it was Kim Jong Un’s mother, Ko Yong Hui, who encouraged his interest in basketball. Ko believed that basketball would make one taller, noting Kim Jong Un’s relatively short stature. Ko also wished to take Kim Jong Un’s obsession away from planes and engines.[[1204]](#footnote-1204) Thirdly, it is also possible that Kim Jong Chol, the older brother of Kim Jong Un, played a role in Kim Jong Un’s basketball interest. Jong Chol began his schooling in Switzerland four years before Jong Un, in the fall of 1992.[[1205]](#footnote-1205) While in Switzerland, Jong Chol was active in the basketball club, played pickup games with other students, and was photographed wearing a Dennis Rodman Chicago Bulls jersey.[[1206]](#footnote-1206)

Whether it be Fujimoto, Ko, or Jong Chol who inspired Kim Jong Un to take up basketball, it does not appear that Kim Jong Il was the driving force. The only possible sign of Kim Jong Il’s influence comes from a passing statement by Fujimoto. According to Fujimoto, Kim Jong Il installed a court at his Wonsan guesthouse in the hopes that his children would grow taller.[[1207]](#footnote-1207) Nevertheless, Kim Jong Un was very interested in basketball as a youth. Kim, before his departure to Switzerland, once gave Fujimoto a treasured photograph of DPRK basketball star Ri Myong Hun, played basketball daily after dinner on courts at official residences, and intensively analysed basketball games in which he played.[[1208]](#footnote-1208)

## 11.3 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

The men’s national team would go through the decade of the 1980s very quietly, as they saw no reported action whatsoever from 1982 through 1987. They may have competed at the Thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang in 1989, but no records of this competition could be found. In any case, the DPRK men would rise to a never-before-seen level of prominence in the early 90s.

The DPRK men were part of a delegation to the 1987 Summer Universiade. Men’s basketball was one of seven disciplines in which the DPRK would compete.[[1209]](#footnote-1209) However, the men failed to medal or merit a mention in state media.[[1210]](#footnote-1210) After that, the men would return to the Asian Games in 1990 after not entering the 1986 edition. The men would finish eighth of eleven, and again go unmentioned in state media. Aside from the DPRK’s two wins over Saudi Arabia, the rest of their games were convincing losses.[[1211]](#footnote-1211)

Two years after the Asian Games, the men’s team would resurface. Sometime between 12 to 18 June 1991, they would play a friendly against Chinese Youth Men’s Basketball Team. No result was announced.[[1212]](#footnote-1212) That August, the men’s team would participate in the 1991 FIBA Asia Championship. Their play had noticeably improved, as they achieved fifth place among eighteen teams.[[1213]](#footnote-1213) A one point victory over Japan and a one point loss to the Philippines in the Quarterfinal Round were their best two performances.

By 1993, the DPRK men had begun to reach their peak. In the East Asian Games held from 9 to 18 May, the Men’s team was able to achieve a bronze medal. This included preliminary victories over Japan and Mongolia and a victory over the Northern Chinese team in the third-place game. This also included a preliminary loss to the ROK.[[1214]](#footnote-1214) Later that year, from 12 to 21 November, the DPRK achieved a silver medal finish at the 1993 Asia Basketball Confederation Championship.[[1215]](#footnote-1215) Ri Myong Hun would grab the tournament’s MVP honours.[[1216]](#footnote-1216) This was the crowning achievement of the DPRK men up to this point. As such, the team was promoted in state media. Ri Myong Hun was given a brief mention for his extreme height in comparison to the competition. Ri’s three consecutive baskets at the end of the first half of the semi-final to put the DPRK up by 10 were also mentioned. Lastly, Ri was also mentioned as having achieved the MVP award for the tournament.[[1217]](#footnote-1217)

The DPRK’s performance at the 1993 ABC Championship includes some interesting details that bear mentioning. Firstly, the second-place finish earned the DPRK the right to play in the 1994 FIBA World Championship. However, the DPRK would withdraw from the event. This is despite the DPRK mentioning their right to participate in the World Championship both in *Rodong Sinmun* and the yearly Athletic Summary for 1993 as well as mention of intent to participate in the event in a May 1994 magazine article.[[1218]](#footnote-1218) Had the DPRK participated, it would have been the first time their men’s team had entered the World Championship. Secondly, the Preliminary Round game between the DPRK and Chinese Taipei was stopped after 11 minutes, with the DPRK trailing 7 points to 14. Unfortunately, no other information on this incident is available. Chinese Taipei was granted the win. Thirdly, ROK basketball star Hur Jae would later recall having met Ri Myong Hun at the 1993 ABC Championship and the 1990 Asian Games.[[1219]](#footnote-1219) This is significant because it represents one of the first sustained friendships between players from the north and the south. Hur and Ri would have their last meeting in 2003.

Taken on the whole, the Scientific Athletics Era of the DPRK Men’s Team was the most highly skilled edition of the team throughout the entire nation’s history. Furthermore, the DPRK men’s high level of accomplishment happened just at the right time. The combined factors of a leader who liked basketball, a regime starved for international athletic achievement, a DPRK-born NBA-calibre star, an international atmosphere in which basketball was getting more popular, and a growing appetite for Inter-Korean exchange meant that the success of the men’s national team was a partial catalyst for the domestic basketball mania and flurry of basketball-related international exchange that was to follow.

Table 52: Men's National Team Results, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 25-Sep-90 | ROK | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1990 Asian Games | 90 | 111 | Loss |
| 26-Sep-90 | Saudi Arabia | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Preliminary Round | 1990 Asian Games | 84 | 82 | Win |
| 30-Sep-90 | Philippines | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Quarterfinals | 1990 Asian Games | 82 | 98 | Loss |
| 01-Oct-90 | United Arab Emirates | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Quarterfinals | 1990 Asian Games | 74 | 87 | Loss |
| 02-Oct-90 | China | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Quarterfinals | 1990 Asian Games | 87 | 120 | Loss |
| 05-Oct-90 | Iran | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | 7th Place Game | 1990 Asian Games | 71 | 88 | Loss |
| 24-Aug-91 | Chinese Taipei | Japan | Kobe | ? | Preliminary Round | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 68 | 90 | Loss |
| 25-Aug-91 | India | Japan | Kobe | ? | Preliminary Round | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 105 | 88 | Win |
| 26-Aug-91 | Hong Kong | Japan | Kobe | ? | Preliminary Round | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 81 | 71 | Win |
| 27-Aug-91 | ROK | Japan | Kobe | Port Island Hall | Quarterfinal Round | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 82 | 114 | Loss |
| 00-Aug-91 | Japan | Japan | Kobe | Port Island Hall | Quarterfinal Round | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 82 | 81 | Win |
| 00-Aug-91 | Philippines | Japan | Kobe | Port Island Hall | Quarterfinal Round | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 86 | 87 | Loss |
| 31-Aug-91 | Jordan | Japan | Kobe | Port Island Hall | Classification 5th-8th | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 93 | 69 | Win |
| 01-Sep-91 | Iran | Japan | Kobe | Port Island Hall | 5th Place Game | 1991 Men's Asian Basketball Confederation Championship | 97 | 84 | Win |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | China Youth | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | ? |
| 10~17-May-93 | ROK | China | Shanghai | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 East Asian Games | 68 | 77 | Loss |
| 10~17-May-93 | Japan | China | Shanghai | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 East Asian Games | 86 | 67 | Win |
| 10~17-May-93 | Mongolia | China | Shanghai | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 East Asian Games | 101 | 49 | Win |
| 10~17-May-93 | Northern China | China | Shanghai | ? | 3rd Place Game | 1993 East Asian Games | 93 | 76 | Win |
| 12-Nov-93 | Malaysia | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 75 | 70 | Win |
| 14-Nov-93 | Kuwait | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 84 | 77 | Win |
| 15-Nov-93 | Bangladesh | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 123 | 58 | Win |
| 16-Nov-93 | Chinese Taipei | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 7\* | 14\* | Loss |
| 18-Nov-93 | Saudi Arabia | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Quarterfinals | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 80 | 61 | Win |
| 20-Nov-93 | Iran | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Semifinals | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 86 | 69 | Win |
| 21-Nov-93 | China | Indonesia | Jakarta | ? | Final | 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men | 72 | 93 | Loss |

## 11.4 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

Although the DPRK women had historically been superior compared to the men, the women were notably inferior in terms of achievement during the Scientific Athletics Era. However, they did kick off things with a bang. At a 1987 Tournament in East Germany, the DPRK women were able to achieve first place with victories over Poland, Romania, and East Germany.[[1220]](#footnote-1220)

Three years later, the DPRK would send a women’s team to the 1990 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women in Singapore. The DPRK was placed in Level II. This meant that they would only play against other Level II teams, and had no opportunity to play against the higher calibre teams classified as Level I. Against the lower-level competition, the DPRK won all five of their games. Remarkably, the team achieved an overall 407-point positive point differential, the highest achieved by any DPRK Team in an international tournament.[[1221]](#footnote-1221) However, this tournament was not mentioned in *Rodong Sinmun*.

Off the heels of two minor tournament wins, the DPRK would send a women’s team to the 1990 Asian Games. They would finish fifth of six.[[1222]](#footnote-1222) However, the women did lose by only one point to the ROK and Japan, by three points to China, and by six points to Chinese Taipei. Suffice to say, the DPRK women were still competitive when facing the top Asian teams. In the next year, women’s basketball was one of 5 sports in which the DPRK sent a team for the 1991 Summer Universiade.[[1223]](#footnote-1223) However, they did not manage to medal or merit a mention in state media.[[1224]](#footnote-1224)

Sometime between 12 to 18 June 1992, the DPRK Women would play a friendly against the Chinese General Youth Women’s Basketball Team.[[1225]](#footnote-1225) The result was not recorded. The last event in which the DPRK women participated in during this era was the 1993 East Asian Games. They narrowly lost to the ROK and failed to medal, with other results unavailable.[[1226]](#footnote-1226)

All in all, the Scientific Athletics Era was a disappointing era for the DPRK women’s team. Whether it be a lack of opportunity to play against high-end opponents at the 1990 ABC Championship or a series of narrow losses to regional rivals at the 1990 Asian Games, the pieces never quite seemed to come together. It couldn’t have happened at a worse time, as they could have gotten increased exposure from the shift in national policy that was to come during the next era.

Table 53: Women's National Team Results, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| May-87 | Poland | East Germany | ? | ? | ? | ? | 92 | 81 | Win |
| May-87 | Romania | East Germany | ? | ? | ? | ? | 81 | 72 | Win |
| May-87 | East Germany | East Germany | ? | ? | ? | ? | 72 | 42 | Win |
| 12-Mar-90 | India | Singapore | Singapore | Indoor Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1990 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 119 | 47 | Win |
| 13-Mar-90 | Singapore | Singapore | Singapore | Indoor Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1990 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 135 | 30 | Win |
| 14-Mar-90 | Hong Kong | Singapore | Singapore | Indoor Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1990 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 112 | 33 | Win |
| 16-Mar-90 | Sri Lanka | Singapore | Singapore | Indoor Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1990 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 106 | 22 | Win |
| 17-Mar-90 | Indonesia | Singapore | Singapore | Indoor Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1990 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 118 | 51 | Win |
| 24-Sep-90 | ROK | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Group Match | 1990 Asian Games | 67 | 70 | Loss |
| 28-Sep-90 | Thailand | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Group Match | 1990 Asian Games | 103 | 59 | Win |
| 29-Sep-90 | China | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Group Match | 1990 Asian Games | 72 | 82 | Loss |
| 30-Sep-90 | Japan | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Group Match | 1990 Asian Games | 78 | 79 | Loss |
| 04-Oct-90 | Chinese Taipei | China | Beijing | Capital Indoor Stadium | Group Match | 1990 Asian Games | 72 | 78 | Loss |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | China Youth | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | ? | ? | ? |
| 10~17-May-93 | ROK | China | Shanghai | ? | Preliminary Round | 1993 East Asian Games | 70 | 72 | Loss |

## 11.5 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

In comparison to previous eras, the Scientific Athletics era saw a serious decrease in the amount of foreign exchange carried out by domestic teams. In 1992, in the first mention of club teams playing an international opponent in 13 years, *Rodong Sinmun* reported a series of friendly matches between local DPRK teams and the youth teams of China. Both men’s and women’s sides were featured, but no results were announced.[[1227]](#footnote-1227)

The only true international action for domestic teams during this era came from 14 to 26 August, 1996. Then, Pyongyang City’s men’s and women’s teams would participate in the William Jones Cup. Said competition was held in Taiwan, and open to both club and national teams.[[1228]](#footnote-1228) The women’s side would handily lose to the USA national team enroute to a fifth-place finish among ten teams. Overall, the Pyongyang City women would finish with a five win, four loss record. The men’s Pyongyang City team would lose their match with the ROK, 80 to 88, and their match against the USA-based ACC-Select, 67 to 89. The men would fare much worse than the women, garnering a last place finish among 11 teams.[[1229]](#footnote-1229) The results were not mentioned in *Rodong Sinmun*.

Pyongyang City’s appearance at the William Jones Cup is important for two reasons. Firstly, it was the first time that a DPRK club team made a tournament appearance in a non-Socialist nation. Secondly, it provided the opportunity for Ri Myong Hun to be seen by NBA scouts. Ri’s sighting would lead to a significant amount of political drama, as described in the standout basketball stars section of this era.

Table 54: Men's Club Team International Results, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | 25 April Athletics Club | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | Amrok River | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | Pyongyang City | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | Unpa Mountain | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 27-Aug-96 | Pyongyang City | ROK National Team | Taiwan | Taoyuan | ? | 1996 R. William Jones Cup | 80 | 88 | Loss | 4W 4L |
| 00-Aug-96 | Pyongyang City | Atlantic Coast Conference Select | Taiwan | ? | ? | 1996 R. William Jones Cup | 67 | 89 | Loss | 4W 5L |

Table 55: Women's Club Team International Results, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 12~18-Jul-92 | 25 April Athletics Club, | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2~18-Jul-92 | Amrok River | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2~18-Jul-92 | Pyongyang City | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2~18-Jul-92 | Unpa Mountain | China Youth | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14~26-Jun-96 | Pyongyang City | USA National Team | Taiwan | ? | ? | 1996 R. William Jones Cup | 59 | 98 | Loss | 7W 1L |
| 14~26-Jun-96 | Pyongyang City | Various International OPPTs | Taiwan | ? | ? | 1996 R. William Jones Cup | N/A | N/A | 5 Wins, 3 Losses | 12W 4L |

## 11.6 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

The Scientific Athletics era saw government-level inter-Korean exchange begin to occur in football and table tennis. However, government-level exchange had yet to yield any results in terms of basketball. On the other hand, the story was somewhat different in terms of civic organizations. On 16 October 1995, *Rodong Sinmun* ran a report about a southern delegation representing the Motherland Unification Pan-National Youth Student Union visiting the gymnasium of Kim Hyong Jik Normal University. There, the ROK-based group participated in a basketball game with students.[[1230]](#footnote-1230) Another visit by the same group was made to the same place the next year on 23 September. At the time, another basketball game occurred.[[1231]](#footnote-1231) As such, one can say that the first inter-Korean basketball games on Korean soil were held on this date.

## 11.7 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

In the 19 May 1986 speech to those working in the athletics field that kicked off this era, Kim Jong Il mentioned basketball as one of the four ball sports which was most correct for the youth.[[1232]](#footnote-1232) Kim Jong Il also emphasized basketball as one of the eleven athletic disciplines to be promoted.[[1233]](#footnote-1233) On the other hand, in the same speech, Kim Jong Il admitted that football was the most popular athletic discipline.[[1234]](#footnote-1234) In his 1989 speech to those working in the Athletics Field, Kim Jong Il would say that football is the foundation of athletics. Basketball was not mentioned at all.[[1235]](#footnote-1235) During a 19 August 1989 meeting of national athletic enthusiasts, basketball was not mentioned as one of the disciplines which was prioritized for international achievement.[[1236]](#footnote-1236) Again, basketball was not mentioned as part of the previous year’s scientific athletic efforts to raise athletes at the 40th anniversary of the Athletics Holiday Commemorative Report Meeting on 5 October 1989.[[1237]](#footnote-1237) In total, one can conclude that basketball was a part of domestic policy during this era, but by no means the focus of it. Accordingly, as of 1994, the Basketball Association was technically on the same administrative footing as many other athletic disciplines. In otherwords, all of the athletic discipline associations were directly under the National Athletics Committee.[[1238]](#footnote-1238)

As part of the DPRK’s push to host international athletic competitions and their effort to push forward elite athletics, significant basketball facilities were constructed in Pyongyang. By far the most significant of these facilities was the 2000 seat Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium, built for the Thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students.[[1239]](#footnote-1239) In a 1 June 1987 article, the basketball stadium was mentioned as part of the facilities entering the last phase of construction in the Angol Athletics Village construction zone.[[1240]](#footnote-1240) Construction was declared complete on 5 September 1988.[[1241]](#footnote-1241) The basketball stadium was a significant part of the government’s propaganda during the lead up to the festival. In January 1989, pictures of the exterior and interior of the stadium were published in *Chollima*. The stadium was described to have a referee’s office, coaches office, locker room, physical training room, meeting room, sauna, shower, medical toom, international telephone, Telex room, photo transmission room, and television technology control room. As such the stadium was capable of hosting international games.[[1242]](#footnote-1242) An article during the same month in *Rodong Sinmun* even described the stadium as being connected by a hallway to the volleyball stadium.[[1243]](#footnote-1243) On 2 July 1989, basketball games at Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium were a part of four disciplines to be contested on the opening day of the World Festival of Youth and Students. Basketball games were contested at said stadium until 6 July.[[1244]](#footnote-1244) All in all, the stadium was not only significant because of its facilities, but also because it was the first purpose-built basketball stadium in the nation. It would become a mainstay for basketball events up to the present day, and host many other types of athletic events as well.

Kim Il Sung University’s Gymnasium was another important basketball-related facility to be built in the leadup to the Thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students. It was completed on 23 June 1989.[[1245]](#footnote-1245) Basketball was mentioned as one of the gymnasium’s capabilities. Amenities included lecture rooms, broadcast facilities, and medical facilities.[[1246]](#footnote-1246) In the ensuing years, the gymnasium would be used for Inter-University Tournaments, Worker’s Tournaments, and Agricultural Worker’s Tournaments.

Other basketball-capable facilities were built during this era as well. On 30 July 1986, basketball was listed as one of the sports with ample facilities in Pyongyang, Nampho, and Sariwon.[[1247]](#footnote-1247) The next year, in a 19 May article about the Pyongyang Athletics Team, it was mentioned that basketball courts were some of the facilities created within a short time.[[1248]](#footnote-1248) Later, on 31 May 1988, basketball courts were built as a part of Kaesong Youth Stadium.[[1249]](#footnote-1249) On 16 March 1990, there was a mention of the construction of basketball gymnasiums at schools and the organization of basketball matches at Huisang District in Hamhung.[[1250]](#footnote-1250) On 5 July 1991, it was discussed in the Orang County Party Committee that the only way to guarantee students participation in basketball regardless of season was by building a gymnasium at each school.[[1251]](#footnote-1251) On 28 November of that same year, there was a report of a basketball court being built for the youth in a park at the Songrim Port.[[1252]](#footnote-1252) Also in 1991, basketball courts were built as part of the Phyongsong Stadium.[[1253]](#footnote-1253) The next year, on 23 January 1992, there was mention of new athletes lodging facilities near the basketball courts on Gwangbok Street near Mangyongdae.[[1254]](#footnote-1254) That same year, on 29 October, a new gymnasium built in Phyongsan County.[[1255]](#footnote-1255) In the yearly summary of 1992, basketball courts were mentioned as one of several facilities to be built in the country that year.[[1256]](#footnote-1256) The next year, on 15 May, there was a report of the Ryangjong Business in Kusong City building an outdoor basketball court and a gymnasium.[[1257]](#footnote-1257) By 23 January 1994, there was report of a basketball court on the second floor of Yangtok Youth Gymnasium.[[1258]](#footnote-1258) On 5 July, there was a report of basketball courts constructed in Yangtok County, as well as basketball courts prepared at Ryangjong Business.[[1259]](#footnote-1259) By 15 November, there was mention of basketball courts built in Sunan district according to party policy.[[1260]](#footnote-1260) Four days later, there was mention of basketball facilities at the Phyongsan County Gymnasium.[[1261]](#footnote-1261) Lastly, on 27 June 1995, report of basketball courts installed at the Songkan Single Use Product Cooperative Farm in Songkan County.[[1262]](#footnote-1262) Taken on the whole, this consistent construction of basketball facilities on a large and small scale can be taken as a signal of genuine interest in developing the discipline during this era.

In concordance with the spirit of this era’s administrative policy, basketball-related research was proceeding forward. Indeed, in a short historic article published in 1987, there was mention of basketball as one of multiple sports to have shown the honour of Juche Korea on the international stage.[[1263]](#footnote-1263) Thus, there was still some momentum behind the idea of basketball as a sport to develop for the purposes of international achievement. As such, on 14 September 1986, basketball was included in a newly published Athletics Encyclopaedia.[[1264]](#footnote-1264) By 12 August 1993, there was a report of researchers making a new design of basketball. Said basketball was being manufactured to a great extent at the Pyongyang Athletic Equipment Factory.[[1265]](#footnote-1265) The next year, in 1994, a basketball textbook for normal universities was published by Kim Hyong Jik Normal University.[[1266]](#footnote-1266)

Basketball was encouraged to some extent during this era as well. In a 9 December 1986 article, basketball was listed as a sport that must be carried out in schools. The stated reason was that basketball was good for height growth, body strength training, collectivism, discipline, bravery, boldness, fortitude, and quickness.[[1267]](#footnote-1267) Later, on 12 November 1991, it was reported that the education organs in Sunchon City encouraged basketball among students.[[1268]](#footnote-1268) Also, on 24 March 1994, it was reported that the National Athletic Committee was preparing good quality basketballs for soldiers.[[1269]](#footnote-1269) Later, on 30 July of that same year, it was reported that basketball moves were a necessary requirement for graduation at Jaeryong High School in Jaeryong County.[[1270]](#footnote-1270) By 10 November, basketball was mentioned as one of the disciplines in which everyone should participate in a column by the Vice-Chairman of the National Athletic Committee.[[1271]](#footnote-1271) Lastly, in a yearly summarizing article on 28 December 1994, there was mention of how on holidays, Sundays, and Athletics Days basketball games were carried out.[[1272]](#footnote-1272)

Perhaps the most detailed support for basketball among the masses during this era came from articles supporting the claim that basketball increases height. In March 1989, a thoroughly scientifically unproven article was published in *Chollima* which claimed that running, throwing, jumping, and knee bending all help increase height. Due to the variety of motions, the article claimed that basketball gives higher burden than other exercise. Specifically, the shocking stimulus from higher ratio of work compared to other athletics was said to help to increase height. The article even claimed that, if those 13 to 14 years old consistently played basketball, they would be 8 centimetres taller. Last, the article claimed that basketball could even increase height among those over 30.[[1273]](#footnote-1273)

A *Rodong Sinmun* article published in 17 March, 1996 took a much different angle for supporting the state’s height increase claim. The article attempted to explain basketball’s height increasing abilities in a scientific manner. According to the article, basketball is taxing on the body and mind, and thus strengthening muscles. One’s muscles and bones are attached, and they grow the most during one’s young years. Because basketball workouts push and pull the leg muscles, the ends of the bones and the cartilage become strong and grow well. In the end, the muscle and the bones are provided with nutrition, and height is quickly increased. The aforementioned claims were combined with various standard health assertions about basketball’s positive effect on one’s body. This includes one’s control over their nerves, strengthened muscles from the complicated exercise within the limited space, the body’s general nutrition, an increased lung capacity, resistance to disease, better digestion, better metabolism, thicker legs, and better balance. Basketball was even claimed to help increase collectivism and discipline. The article then goes back to the claims about height. Specifically, it claims that basketball increases a child’s height by two centimetres within a year of proper use. In some cases, basketball is claimed to increase a child’s height by 10 centimetres. There is also mention of basketball being played at high schools nationwide, helping students to be better workers for the nation’s bright future.[[1274]](#footnote-1274)

Roughly six months later, there was another article in *Rodong Sinmun* about basketball being good for increasing height. It was basically the same information presented in a different way, with the inclusion of basketball’s positive effect on one’s critical thinking, ability to judge, and will.[[1275]](#footnote-1275) The sheer detail of the aforementioned articles published in 1996 serves as evidence that the sudden push of basketball as a part of public policy in 1997 was somewhat foreseen the year prior. Nevertheless, while the claim that basketball increases height is thoroughly unscientific, it is surrounded by a litany of scientific claims which are true. As such, it seems as if the logic of scientific reasoning had to wrestle with the fact that certain untruths could not be broken under the political climate of that time.

Basketball also found it’s way into the harsh anti-ROK propaganda of the time. On 7 November 1991, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article describing a ROK female athlete who became poor, disabled, and lost her job due to inability to work while injured. This was despite the fact that she was a former basketball star.[[1276]](#footnote-1276) Furthermore, a 3 January 1996 *Rodong Sinmun* article mentioned one young person who had survived ten days in the ruins of Sampung Department Store in Seoul. Upon their survival, said person got a basketball and basketball uniform. But this was claimed to be only a stunt to raise sales.[[1277]](#footnote-1277) In sum, this usage of basketball as a relatable touchstone upon which DPRK readers were supposed to understand the ROK served as evidence of basketball’s popularity at the time.

## 11.8 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

In terms of Domestic Basketball Tournaments, the Scientific Athletics Era sets itself apart from the previous era in that more records of tournament winners are available. However, there is less information about tournament participants. Furthermore, the operation of tournaments was somewhat hampered by the conditions of the time. For instance, in the early 90s, the “Total Victory Cup” was established to commemorate the Korean War Armistice on 27 July. Basketball was initially a discipline, but the event but was truncated to water sports only after 1999 due to economic difficulties.[[1278]](#footnote-1278)

Table 56: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| National High School and College Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국고등중학교 및 고등전문학교 학생《9월5일상》체육경기대회 | 10-Aug-1986~13-Aug-1986 | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament for Individual Athletic Disciplines | 종목별 공화국선수권대회 | 6-Oct-1986~25-Dec-1986 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 중앙일군드의 체육경기대회 | 22-Feb-1987~25-Feb-1987 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 3-Feb-1987~11-Mar-1987 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| National Youth and Student 14th Individual Discipline Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament for Winning the 18 April Cup | <<4월18일우승컵>> 쟁취를 위한 전국청소년학생 제14차 종목별 전문화체육경기대회 | 3-Mar-1987~18-Apr-1987 | Wonsan, Sonbong County, Jongju County, Nampho | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Athletics Festival | 《만경대상》체육축전 | 7-Apr-1987~28-May-1987 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Individual Discipline Athletics Championship | 종목별 공화국선수권대회 | 3-Oct-1987~22-Nov-1987 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 10-Feb-1988~4-Mar-1988 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 20-Apr-1988~15-May-1988 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | ≪보천보홰불상≫체육경기대회 | Early Jun 1988~3-Jul-1988 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Samjyon, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Republic Foundation 40th Anniversary Celebratory National Youth and Student 15th Individual Discipline Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament | 공화국창건 40돐경축 전국청소년학생 제15차 종목별 전문화체육경기대 | 2-Aug-1988~5-Sep-1988 | ? | ? |
| Festival Friendship Athletic Competition | 축전친선체육경기 | 2-Jul-1989~6-Jul-1989 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-1990~1-Mar-1990 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Sinuiju, Chongjin, Wonsan, Provincial Cities | ? |
| 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《2월2일상》체육경기대회 | 1-Mar-1990~21-May-1990 | Several Cities | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 3-Apr-1990~17-May-1990 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National University Student Athletics Festival | 전국대학생체육축전 | 17-Apr-1990~23-Apr-1990 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 1 May Holiday 100th Anniversary Commemorative National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5.1절 100돐기념 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 4-May-1990~6-May-1990 | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 5-Feb-1991~6-Mar-1991 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《2월2일상》체육경기대회 | 3-Mar-1991~5-Apr-1991 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 4-Apr-1991~30-May-1991 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《보천보홰불상》체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-1991~2-Jul-1991 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국 《9월 5일상》 체육경기대회 | 13-Aug-1991~16-Aug-1991 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 18-Sep-1991~Oct-1991 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| 80th Anniversary of The Great Leader Kim Il Sung's Birth Commemorative National University Student Athletics Festival | 위대한 수령 김일성동지의 탄생 80돐기념 전국대학생체육축전 | 8-Mar-1992~Mar-1992 | Hamhung, Chongjin | ? |
| 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《9월 5일상》 체육경기대회 | 14-Aug-1992~17-Aug-1992 | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | Nov-1992~4-Nov-1992 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 15-Feb-1993~25-Feb-1993 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-1993~29-May-1993 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《보천보홰불상》체육경기대회 | Early Jun-1993~Early Jul 1993 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National University Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 정국대학생 《9월 5일상》 체육경기대회 | 18-Aug-1993~21-Aug-1993 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 19th 2 February Prize Athletics Tournament | 제19차 《2월2일상》체육경기대회 | 10-Aug-1993~28-Aug-1993 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-1994~7-Mar-1994 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《보천보홰불상》체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-1994~2-Jul-1994 | Haesan | ? |
| 1st Korean People's Army Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제1차 조선인민군 《일당백상》체육경기대회 | 14-Jun-1994~25-Jun-1994 | Pyongyang | 1 May Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-1995~8-Mar-1995 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 3-Apr-1995~2-May-1995 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Korean People's Army Individual Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | 조신인민군 종목별 체육경기 대회 | Early April 1995 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| The Great Fatherland Liberation War Victory 42nd Anniversary Commemorative Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | 위대한 조국해방전쟁승리 42돐기념 ≪전승컵≫체육경기대회 | 3-Aug-1995~Aug-1995 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 17-Oct-1995~7-Nov-1995 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 8-Feb-1996~Late Feb-1996 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Youth and Student Jong Il Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국청소년학생들의 《정일봉상》체육경기대회 | 13-Mar-1996~27-Mar-1996 | Hamhung, Jaeryong, Nampho | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | Apr-96~Apr-96 | Pyongyang | ? |
| The Fatherland Liberation War Victory 43nd Anniversary Commemorative Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | 조국해방전쟁승리 43돐기념 ≪전승컵≫체육경기대회 | Late Jul-96~12-Aug-96 | Pyongyang | ? |

From the men’s basketball tournament details during the Scientific Athletics Era, the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, naming conventions were mostly static by this point. Secondly, hosting portions of general athletics tournaments outside of Pyongyang became the norm. However, it is uncertain how often basketball specifically was played outside of Pyongyang, as this information was almost never published.

Table 57: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| National High School and College Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Aug-1986~13-Aug-1986 | South Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament for Individual Athletic Disciplines | 6-Oct-1986~25-Dec-1986 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 22-Feb-1987~25-Feb-1987 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Feb-1987~11-Mar-1987 | 25 April Athletics Club (Level 1) Pyongyang Medical University (Level 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| National Youth and Student 14th Individual Discipline Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament for Winning the 18 April Cup | 3-Mar-1987~18-Apr-1987 | Pyongyang City Dongdaewon District Raengchon Girls High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Athletics Festival | 7-Apr-1987~28-May-1987 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Individual Discipline Athletics Championship | 3-Oct-1987~22-Nov-1987 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-1988~4-Mar-1988 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Apr-1988~15-May-1988 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | Early Jun 1988~3-Jul-1988 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Foundation 40th Anniversary Celebratory National Youth and Student 15th Individual Discipline Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Aug-1988~5-Sep-1988 | Pyongyang Dongsong Boys High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Festival Friendship Athletic Competition | 2-Jul-1989~6-Jul-1989 | ? | ? | ? | Guinea-Bissau DPR Korea Czechoslovakia Poland Carribean Nations |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1990~1-Mar-1990 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Mar-1990~21-May-1990 | 10 August Mine | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-1990~17-May-1990 | Locomotive | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student Athletics Festival | 17-Apr-1990~23-Apr-1990 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Holiday 100th Anniversary Commemorative National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-May-1990~6-May-1990 | Kangwon Province | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Feb-1991~6-Mar-1991 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Mar-1991~5-Apr-1991 | 10 August Mine | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Apr-1991~30-May-1991 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-1991~2-Jul-1991 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Aug-1991~16-Aug-1991 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 18-Sep-1991~Oct-1991 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 80th Anniversary of The Great Leader Kim Il Sung's Birth Commemorative National University Student Athletics Festival | 8-Mar-1992~Mar-1992 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 14-Aug-1992~17-Aug-1992 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Nov-1992~4-Nov-1992 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Feb-1993~25-Feb-1993 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-1993~29-May-1993 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | Early Jun-1993~Early Jul 1993 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 18-Aug-1993~21-Aug-1993 | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University | ? | ? | ? |
| 19th 2 February Prize Athletics Tournament | 10-Aug-1993~28-Aug-1993 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1994~7-Mar-1994 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-1994~2-Jul-1994 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 1st Korean People's Army Ildangbaek Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 14-Jun-1994~25-Jun-1994 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1995~8-Mar-1995 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-1995~2-May-1995 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Korean People's Army Individual Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | Early April 1995 | Swallow | ? | ? | ? |
| The Great Fatherland Liberation War Victory 42nd Anniversary Commemorative Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Aug-1995~Aug-1995 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 17-Oct-1995~7-Nov-1995 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-1996~Late Feb-1996 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| National Youth and Student Jong Il Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Mar-1996~27-Mar-1996 | Kang Pan Sok High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | Apr-96~Apr-96 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| The Fatherland Liberation War Victory 43nd Anniversary Commemorative Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | Late Jul-96~12-Aug-96 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |

As mentioned previously, only the tournament winners were published during the Scientific Athletics Era. As such, only the consistently successful teams can be determined. Of those teams, the 25 April Athletics Club with six tournament wins,was clearly the new dominant team. Meanwhile, Amrok River and Pyongyang City with three tournament wins each continued to be competitive. In terms of tournament types, generally only state amateur tournaments, school tournaments, and army tournaments were reported.

Table 58: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| National High School and College Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Aug-1986~13-Aug-1986 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 22-Feb-1987~25-Feb-1987 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Feb-1987~11-Mar-1987 | Amrok River (Level 1) North Hwanghae Province (Level 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| National Youth and Student 14th Individual Discipline Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament for Winning the 18 April Cup | 3-Mar-1987~18-Apr-1987 | Pyongyang City Dongdaewon District Raengchon Girls High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Athletics Festival | 7-Apr-1987~28-May-1987 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Individual Discipline Athletics Championship | 3-Oct-1987~22-Nov-1987 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-1988~4-Mar-1988 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Apr-1988~15-May-1988 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | Early Jun 1988~3-Jul-1988 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Foundation 40th Anniversary Celebratory National Youth and Student 15th Individual Discipline Specialization Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Aug-1988~5-Sep-1988 | North Hwanghae Province Sinje County Daejong High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Festival Friendship Athletic Competition | 2-Jul-1989~6-Jul-1989 | ? | ? | ? | Guinea-Bissau DPR Korea Czechoslovakia Poland Carribean Nations |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1990~1-Mar-1990 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 2 February Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Mar-1990~21-May-1990 | Korea Central Telegraph and Telephone Office | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-1990~17-May-1990 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 May Holiday 100th Anniversary Commemorative National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-May-1990~6-May-1990 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Feb-1991~6-Mar-1991 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Apr-1991~30-May-1991 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-1991~2-Jul-1991 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Aug-1991~16-Aug-1991 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Nov-1992~4-Nov-1992 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Feb-1993~25-Feb-1993 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 18-Aug-1993~21-Aug-1993 | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-1995~8-Mar-1995 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-1995~2-May-1995 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Korean People's Army Individual Discipline Competitive Athletics Tournament | Early April 1995 | Seagull | ? | ? | ? |
| National Youth and Student Jong Il Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Mar-1996~27-Mar-1996 | Pyongyang Ryulgok High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | Apr-96~Apr-96 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| The Fatherland Liberation War Victory 43nd Anniversary Commemorative Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | Late July-96~12-Aug-96 | Un Pa Mountain | ? | ? | ? |

From the women’s domestic tournament results during the Scientific Athletics Era, it can be determined that the 25 April Athletics Club, with a whopping eleven tournament wins, was the overwhelmingly dominant team of the era. The closest to them was Pyongyang City with four wins and Amrok River with two wins.

## 11.9 Basketball as a Pastime

The Scientific Athletics Era brought some of the most detailed reports about the state of basketball among the populous up to this point. The first example of this comes from an article in the April 1988 edition of *Chollima*. In said article, basketball coach Jong Myong Won was interviewed at Kowon Gymnasium. Jong’s team had achieved third place in the National Athletics Team Competitive Tournament, showing physical skill superior to all of the other teams. When asked about his team’s success, Jong credited their scientific training and not their athletic bodies. As such, Jong stressed the importance of research moving forward. Jong went on to boast that his team sent three to four players to the central athletics team every year, and that fifteen of his team’s former members were now active in the central athletics team. Jong also boasted that his former members are all important players on the central athletics team and have participated in international matches. Jong closed his interview by thanking the leader for the gymnasium, equipment, and modern facilities. According to Jong, not accepting the leader’s grand meaning was only pathetic.[[1279]](#footnote-1279) What can be gathered from this article is that Kim Jong Il’s insistence upon scientific style training had trickled down to the lower level.

By late 1996, basketball development began to pick up steam. On 27 October, a *Rodong Sinmun* article from the Basketball Secretary-General of the Athletic Skill Alliance Ball Sport Skill Guidance Office about the development trend of basketball was published. The article mentioned basketball teams’ main players scoring over 30 points and shooting over 55%, players making shots from over half-court, acrobatic movements, and brutal defensive techniques. The article also mentioned the increased height of players via teams in the Olympics, who then sported an average height of over 2 meters. Women’s basketball was also said to be developing at a similar pace. Lastly, there was mention of the increased popularity of basketball, pushing nations to professionalize their basketball leagues.[[1280]](#footnote-1280) All in all, this article represented an unprecedentedly detailed explanation of basketball’s development trends published in a major media outlet. It also foreshadowed the attempted creation of a pro basketball league in the DPRK during the following year.

Nearly a month later, on 24 November, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article about basketball and volleyball being good for health. According to the Basketball Vice Secretary-General of the Athletic Skill Alliance Ball Sport Skill Guidance Office, basketball was recently popular among men in the party, while volleyball was popular among women in the party. The article mentioned basketball being especially good for men due to its effect on height, the activity level of young boys, and the lively and harmonious development of the body. Additionally, this article exhibited many of the same points as previous articles such as emphasis on the development of muscle and bone.[[1281]](#footnote-1281) What can be gathered from this article is that, while basketball was not portrayed as exclusively for men, it was perceived to be more of a masculine sport. Furthermore, the article echoed the standard party lines about basketball’s effect on physiological development, emphasizing the ubiquity of said guidelines by that time.

Although basketball may have been seen as a sport best for young men, there were articles emphasizing basketball’s accessibility to older or higher ranking people. The first example of this is a 10 May 1991 report about the Sinsonchon Coal Mine Concrete Support Factory narrowly winning an overall first place prize at an athletics competition. Said factory was able to gain overall first place due to a victory in a basketball game where lower level party secretary Mun Duk Hyon suddenly changed into a basketball uniform and participated.[[1282]](#footnote-1282) Another example of the advertising of basketball’s accessibility comes from a 31 May 1996 article. In said article, there was mention of Party Secretary Ri Sung Bu, who was said to beat younger athletes when playing amongst workers. This led to many incorrectly assuming that he was a basketball or volleyball player.[[1283]](#footnote-1283)

This era also saw some minor insight given into the state amateur teams of the time, reflecting Kim Jong Il’s new willingness to propagandize athletes. On 28 November 1992, the entire Amrok River athletic club received the Kim Il Sung Medal for development of athletic skills.[[1284]](#footnote-1284) Later, on 21 January 1995, there was a report of the 25 April women’s basketball team practicing three-point shots. Said team was also performing hard training according to high goals self-set during team conferences.[[1285]](#footnote-1285) On 18 May 1996, there was a report of great development achievements at the Locomotive basketball team in recent years due to extensive passionate training.[[1286]](#footnote-1286) Lastly, on 9 September, there was mention of basketball athlete Choe Kum Sun of Amrok River. Said athlete was, as a member of the Youth Alliance, occasionally going to households of kids who had lost their parents and caring for them.[[1287]](#footnote-1287) To sum up, the societal status of athletes certainly occupied a high level during this era.

Mentions were given to the athletic achievement of lower-level basketball athletes as well. On 3 February 1987, Kwail County’s good results in central athletics tournaments as a result of their selection of basketball as an athletic discipline to specialize in were reported.[[1288]](#footnote-1288) A 6 September article that same year described the Sonkyo Sports Club’s athletes often scoring first place in basketball and other athletic competitions.[[1289]](#footnote-1289) This played into Sonkyo district being named as a Model Athletics District on 3 December.[[1290]](#footnote-1290) Three years later, on 30 September 1990, Sonkyo District was mentioned again. Their basketball team was said to definitively achieve first place in athletic competitions.[[1291]](#footnote-1291) On 10 June 1992, there was mention of the Kim Chaek Athletics School’s first place prize in girl’s basketball.[[1292]](#footnote-1292) Lastly, on 3 July 1994, there was a report on the Taejong High School in Singye County specializing in basketball. Taejong High School, whose girl’s basketball team had initially inspired the athletics specialization movement in 1974, had clearly established a basketball tradition by this point. The report claimed that all students know the basic basketball movements, and that efforts were made to intensify training. The school was also reported to have made excellent results in national tournaments that year.[[1293]](#footnote-1293)

A 12 October 1986 retrospective article for the 37th anniversary of the founding of the Athletics Holiday provides interesting insight into how the country’s international basketball achievements were viewed retrospectively at that time. Said article specifically points to the DPRK basketball teams’ participation in the 12th Academic Summer Games in East Berlin in 1951, the 4th World Festival of Youth and Students in Bucharest in 1953, and the 6th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow in 1957.[[1294]](#footnote-1294) None of these competitions saw particularly impressive results from men’s or women’s sides, indicating that the country was self-aware of their lack of basketball achievement up to that point.

In general, this era saw several reports hinting at basketball’s popularity in the DPRK. On 16 and 23 June 1986, in a general advertisement of Pyongyang’s athletic facilities, basketball was listed as one of the athletic disciplines carried out in Pyongyang every year.[[1295]](#footnote-1295) The next year, on 12 March, an article described a reporter meeting with those practicing athletics in the Sonkyo district. Said reporter witnessed taller teenage enthusiasts, who were members of the district club, playing basketball.[[1296]](#footnote-1296) Shortly later, in a 1 April *Rodong Sinmun* article mentioning a 26 February article in a Rwandan magazine, basketball was mentioned as one of the athletic disciplines played widely by students in the DPRK.[[1297]](#footnote-1297) Four years later, on 9 June 1991, it was reported that organs nationwide had had employees participating in basketball games. In said games, competition was reported to be passionate.[[1298]](#footnote-1298) On 7 January 1993, there was another report of basketball increasing collectivist vigour on rest days and holidays.[[1299]](#footnote-1299) That same year, on 28 October, there was a report of an aspiring basketball athlete being among seven siblings profiled in an article.[[1300]](#footnote-1300) Three years later, on 3 November 1996, there was a picture published of female students using extra-curricular time to actively participate in basketball at the Central District Extracurricular Athletics School.[[1301]](#footnote-1301) Lastly, that 17 December, there was a picture published of students putting great effort into their basketball training at Chongjin Sinhyang High School.[[1302]](#footnote-1302) When all of the articles are viewed together, it paints a picture of basketball being played by enthusiasts consistently throughout the era.

Even the Chongryon still had some degree of basketball interest. On 9 February 1991, it was mentioned at the Korea-Japan Athletics friendship meeting by the Chairperson of the Zainichi Korean Athletics Alliance that active effort was being given to strengthen athletic exchange and development, bearing in mind that DPRK athletes were participating in international basketball games.[[1303]](#footnote-1303)

Table 59: Local Basketball Reports, Scientific Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game Played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 1987.3.10 | Sema Cooperative Farm in Jongju County[[1304]](#footnote-1304) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1987.5.18 | Kim Jong Suk County Phungyang High School[[1305]](#footnote-1305) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1987.6.9 | Anju #1 High School[[1306]](#footnote-1306) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1988.1.16 | Thongchon County[[1307]](#footnote-1307) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 1988.1.31 | Dongrim Electricity factory[[1308]](#footnote-1308) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1988.7.17 | Jongmyong County Joyang Cooperative Farm[[1309]](#footnote-1309) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1989.1.25 | Undok County | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1989.2.23 | drilling survey teams | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1989.4.22 | all schools, some organs, factories, businesses, and cooperative farms in Kowon County[[1310]](#footnote-1310) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1989.4.30 | primary schools and high schools in Maengsan County[[1311]](#footnote-1311) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1989.6.13 | Hwasong Chemical Factory[[1312]](#footnote-1312) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1989.8.8 | Unhung County Ryongha Cooperative Farm[[1313]](#footnote-1313) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1989.8.10 | Tanchon Youth Station[[1314]](#footnote-1314) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1989.8.19 | Moranbong District workers[[1315]](#footnote-1315) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 1989.9.3 | Pyongyang Thermal Power Station[[1316]](#footnote-1316) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1989.9.21 | Kumya Coal Mine[[1317]](#footnote-1317) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 1989.11.1 | Huksek Metal Design Business[[1318]](#footnote-1318) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1989.11.24 | Unryul Agricultural Equipment Workplace[[1319]](#footnote-1319) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 1990.1.3 | Ryulsong High School in Jongpyong County[[1320]](#footnote-1320) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1990.3.6 | Pukchong Machinery Factory[[1321]](#footnote-1321) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1990.3.18 | organs and businesses in Orang County[[1322]](#footnote-1322) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 1990.9.22 | Cooperative Farms at Sinhung District in Phanmun County[[1323]](#footnote-1323) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1990.9.22 | Sepo County Songpyong Cooperative Farm[[1324]](#footnote-1324) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1990.11.8 | some schools in Yonsan County[[1325]](#footnote-1325) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 1990.12.4 | Ungjin Knitting and Sewing Factory[[1326]](#footnote-1326) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1991.1.27 | a small branch school in Jangjin County[[1327]](#footnote-1327) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1991.4.3 | Kaesong Watch Manufacturing Cooperative[[1328]](#footnote-1328) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1991.8.29 | Subu Cooperative Farm in Cholsan County[[1329]](#footnote-1329) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1991.9.13 | Chonsong Youth Coal Mine[[1330]](#footnote-1330) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 1991.12.3 | factories, businesses, cooperative farms, and schools in Yontan County[[1331]](#footnote-1331) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1991.12.9 | Sonam High School in Sinpyong County | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 1991.12.12 | Ryosong High School[[1332]](#footnote-1332) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1991.12.16 | the Pyongyang Building Materials Design Business[[1333]](#footnote-1333) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1992.2.6 | Kim Chaek City[[1334]](#footnote-1334) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1992.6.19 | Taechon County Ryangjong Business[[1335]](#footnote-1335) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Business |
| 1992.6.22 | Pujon River Power Plant[[1336]](#footnote-1336) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1992.6.30 | Hwasang Chemical Factory[[1337]](#footnote-1337) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1992.8.2 | an athletics, culture, and amusement district in Pyongyang[[1338]](#footnote-1338) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1992.10.5 | Rakwon Boat Repair Factory[[1339]](#footnote-1339) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1992.11.8 | South Hamgyong Province Telephone and Telegraph Office[[1340]](#footnote-1340) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 1992.11.14 | Undok City Management Business in Sapo District, Hamhung | Yes | Yes | No | No | Business |
| 1992.12.25 | Phyongsan County Combined Animal Feed Factory[[1341]](#footnote-1341) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1993.8.29 | Kowon County[[1342]](#footnote-1342) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1993.9.2 | Phungsan High School in Kim Hyongkwon County[[1343]](#footnote-1343) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1993.9.12 | factories, businesses, and cooperative farms nationwide[[1344]](#footnote-1344) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1993.9.17 | Kangryong County Ryangjong Business[[1345]](#footnote-1345) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 1993.9.25 | Kumya Youth Mine[[1346]](#footnote-1346) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 1993.9.26 | Chollima Jegang United Business Bungwaamyong Workplace[[1347]](#footnote-1347) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1993.10.9. | Hamhung Tractor Accessory Factory[[1348]](#footnote-1348) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1993.10.23 | Songchongang District of Hamhung[[1349]](#footnote-1349) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1993.11.4 | Athletics Association of the Hwaryong Shoe Factory in Hwaryong[[1350]](#footnote-1350) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1993.11.4 | Sindae High School in Tongsan County[[1351]](#footnote-1351) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1993.11.6 | Junggang County State 21 September Factory[[1352]](#footnote-1352) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1993.11.7 | Wonsan Tractor Accessories Factory[[1353]](#footnote-1353) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1993.11.9 | Yupyong Forestry Business in Paekam County[[1354]](#footnote-1354) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1993.11.12 | schools in Undok County[[1355]](#footnote-1355) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 1993.12.14 | Myongam Cooperative Farm in Cholsan County[[1356]](#footnote-1356) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1993.12.25 | Sambong High School in Phyongwon County[[1357]](#footnote-1357) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1994.5.17 | Songpyonchon General Business in Jagang Province[[1358]](#footnote-1358) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 1994.6.16 | A Ranch[[1359]](#footnote-1359) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1995.1.31 | Kumchon County[[1360]](#footnote-1360) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1995.3.31 | Songkan Gymnasium[[1361]](#footnote-1361) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1995.5.19 1995.8.30 | Kaesong Ceramic Ware Factory[[1362]](#footnote-1362) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1995.10.16 | State Owned Ranam Fruit Farm[[1363]](#footnote-1363) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1994.11.9 | Pokchong county[[1364]](#footnote-1364) | Yes | Yes | No | No | County/City |
| 1995.12.8 | North Hwanghae Province People’s Hospital[[1365]](#footnote-1365) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1996.5.18 | Kocham Coal Mine[[1366]](#footnote-1366) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Mine |
| 1996.5.18 | Pyongyang Band Printing Factory[[1367]](#footnote-1367) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1996.5.24 | Phohang High School[[1368]](#footnote-1368) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1996.8.10 | Kaesong Embroidery Export Product Factory[[1369]](#footnote-1369) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1996.11.22 | Samhung Middle School[[1370]](#footnote-1370) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1996.12.21 | Ryongdae Fishery Business in Danchon City[[1371]](#footnote-1371) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |

As can be seen in the above table, the sheer number of available local reports saw a significant increase during this era. Out of 68 reports, seventeen came from factories, fourteen came from schools, thirteen came from counties or cities, ten came from businesses, six came from cooperative farms, three came from mines, three were miscellaneous, and two came from organs. This represents somewhat of an even split between schools and factories that also existed during the previous era. However, the increase in businesses is reflective of the changing economy, and the slight increase cooperative farms may indicate a slight uptick in rural popularity for basketball. Nevertheless, basketball can be seen in this era, as continuing to be primarily an urban sport.

Additionally, no reports from this era mentioned teams, indicating that teams were only mentioned when they had actually achieved results in local tournaments. Another notable result is that, of 68 reports, 40 of them indicated that basketball was not played regularly. This indicated that many saw basketball as an occasional pastime during this era. Lastly, from 1994 to 1996, six of the fourteen reports mentioned facilities only. This indicates a greater emphasis on material need as the economic situation got worse.

## 11.10 Standout Basketball Stars

Any discussion of the standout basketball stars of the Scientific Athletics Era must begin with Ri Myong Hun. Ri, the only DPRK basketballer ever considered for an NBA contract, is easily the best player to ever come out of the country. Ri’s origins are actually quite humble. Ri’s father was a miner in Kowon County, South Hamgyong Province.[[1372]](#footnote-1372) According to another article, Ri grew up in Sudong County, some 30 kilometres west of Kowon County.[[1373]](#footnote-1373) Whatever the case may be, at the age of ten, Ri began to quickly grow in height.[[1374]](#footnote-1374) By the age of twelve, Ri began to train with Pyongyang City. While training there, Ri was subject to six to nine hours a day of running.[[1375]](#footnote-1375) Ri would first meet with Kim Jong Il in 1986, at the age of nineteen.[[1376]](#footnote-1376) Ri would eventually grow to the height of 2.32 metres, eventually making him known as the world’s tallest man.[[1377]](#footnote-1377)

As far as it can be determined, Ri’s first international basketball appearance was at the 1990 Asian Games.[[1378]](#footnote-1378) But Ri would not become internationally well known until his performance at the 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men, where he took home MVP honours.[[1379]](#footnote-1379) Among two hundred athletes who participated in said tournament, Ri was first in points and rebounds.[[1380]](#footnote-1380) Ri’s semi-final performance, which included three consecutive baskets at the end of the first half of the semi-final to put the DPRK up by 10, was essential to the DPRK’s second place finish.[[1381]](#footnote-1381)

In May of 1994, an article published in Kumsukangsan magazine about the men’s national basketball team heavily featured Ri. The article claimed that, compared to his height, Ri showcased quick movements. Furthermore, Ri’s scoring rate under the basket was good, and he had high strategy comprehension. Ri’s daily training goal was to make 600 baskets before leaving the court.[[1382]](#footnote-1382) Around 1995, Ri first learned of the NBA and was shown videotape of a game.[[1383]](#footnote-1383)

Ri’s next tournament would catapult him to the world stage. From 14 to 26 August 1996, Ri’s Pyongyang City participated in the 1996 edition of the William Jones Cup. The William Jones Cup was an international competition held in Taiwan open to both club and national teams.[[1384]](#footnote-1384) Ri’s team would lose their match with the ROK, 80 to 88, and their match against the USA-based ACC Select, 67 to 89, enroute to a last place finish among 11 teams.[[1385]](#footnote-1385) But Ri’s 29 Point Performance against the ACC Select, a team of players from USA Universities in the elite Atlantic Coast Conference, impressed USA scouts and college coaches.[[1386]](#footnote-1386) This, along with Ri’s status as the world’s tallest known human, got the attention of USA Sports Agencies.[[1387]](#footnote-1387)

In truth, interest in Ri from the NBA, the world’s top basketball league, began in the early 1990s. Cleveland Cavaliers scout Pete Newell claimed to have seen Ri at some point around 1992, likely referring to his appearance at the 1993 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship. At the time, Newell said that Ri was a good player who lacked experience against a high level of competition.[[1388]](#footnote-1388) But it was the coaches of the ACC Select team who saw Ri in 1996 who were convinced that Ri could have been an NBA player with more development. They cited the “strong development of [Ri’s] legs, his touch, and ability to run the floor”.[[1389]](#footnote-1389) However, not all shared such a positive opinion of Ri. Around this time, an NBA scouting consultant was on record as calling Ri a “joke”.[[1390]](#footnote-1390)

The process of getting Ri to the NBA was initiated by the USA-based coaches who saw him play in Taiwan. Said coaches, who were assistants at Wake Forest University, notified Michael Coyne, a lawyer who had previously been responsible for bringing a Tanzanian 7-foot basketball player to Wake Forest.[[1391]](#footnote-1391) Accordingly, in June of 1996, Michael Coyne’s sports management group in Cleveland submitted an application to represent Ri at the NBA Draft. However, the NBA rejected it.[[1392]](#footnote-1392) Still, in October of 1996, Kim Jong Il was making certain that Ri Myong Hun could train with no difficulties. According to state media, Kim Jong Il was showing affection for Ri’s development into a world class athlete.[[1393]](#footnote-1393) Still, it wouldn’t be until 1997 that Ri’s NBA plans would move forward.

Although still in the early stages of his career during this era, arguably the second most important male basketballer in DPRK history was Pak Chon Jong. Pak was born in 1969 to a parent who worked at a thermal power plant.[[1394]](#footnote-1394) Remarkably, Pak did not pick up basketball until High School, playing at the Pyongyang Kansong High School. At that time, Pak was known as eager, his team depended on him, and he was prominent. Pak would move on to the Korean People’s Army Athletics School, eventually making his way to the 25 April Athletics Club.

In 1987, Pak would be a part of the men’s team that went to the Universiade. It was said that there, he performed well against strong teams.[[1395]](#footnote-1395) Pak was on the national team as they prepared for the 1994 World Championship. He was known for his quickness, jumping and accurate shooting.[[1396]](#footnote-1396) By 1994, Pak would be awarded the title of Meritorious Sportsperson.[[1397]](#footnote-1397)

Despite Ri and Pak’s prominence on the 1994 version of the national team, their captain was Jong Hyong Man. He was known for his speed, persistency, and game-managing ability. [[1398]](#footnote-1398) Before Ri’s rise to prominence, there were a couple of other men’s basketball stars that performed well internationally. Pak I Nam scored over thirty points three separate times in the 1990 Asian Games, and Kim Ron Kwan scored 28 PTS against the ROK in the same tournament.[[1399]](#footnote-1399) Unfortunately, there is no information available on female basketball athletes during this era to report.

# chapter 12. The Basketball Intensification Era (1997.1.4~2000.1.3)

## 12.1 General Athletics Overview

The Basketball Intensification Era stands out from all other athletic eras in DPRK history in that public policy was focused almost entirely on promoting one athletic discipline above others. The era began on 4 January 1997, with the publishing of a work by Kim Jong Il entitled “We Must Put Efforts to Developing Basketball.”. The work gave instructions regarding development, drills, running the game, training reserve and talented athletes, taking responsibility, the role of coaches, and promoting the sport.[[1400]](#footnote-1400) This work would mark the beginning of a roughly three-year period in which Kim Jong Il showed great interest in developing basketball, and all sectors of society changed to reflect that interest.

Kim Jong Il’s order to develop basketball wasn’t sudden. Indeed, two months earlier, on October 1996, Kim Jong Il issued an order encouraging basketball at schools and organs.[[1401]](#footnote-1401) This indeed had some effect, as during the following months, two pictures were published in *Rodong Sinmun* showcasing high school training.[[1402]](#footnote-1402) But it wasn’t quite the mania which was seen following Kim Jong Il’s January order. In any case, the aforementioned October 1996 order to develop basketball in High Schools was supplemented in July 1998.[[1403]](#footnote-1403) These orders mandated that every High School have a basketball team. The orders also ensured that basketball was taught during athletics class and extracurricular time. Outside of schools, each county was to organize basketball training courses and demonstration lectures by athletics teachers. Furthermore, each people’s committee on the provincial, city, and county level was to make basketball facilities for lots of youth to gather at. Lastly, the orders guaranteed the manufacture of basketballs via a practical administrative policy.[[1404]](#footnote-1404) Taken on the whole, Kim Jong Il’s orders ensured the development of basketball on a lower level.

Kim Jong Il would go on to mandate basketball within the military as well. In a 19 May discussion with the Korean People’s Army Constituent of Command (인민군지휘성원), he said that basketball should be actively encouraged and could be carried out within each squad. By 8 September, Kim Jong Il visited a small Korean People’s Army unit and mandated basketball gymnasiums be constructed at each military school.[[1405]](#footnote-1405)

In terms of administration, there was some noticeable basketball-related shift as well. In 1998, a Basketball Research Office was created within the Athletic Science Research Office. Most notably, said office produced a motion picture explaining basic basketball rules.[[1406]](#footnote-1406) The creation of the Basketball Research Office reinforced the administration’s will to develop elite basketball players through science and specialization.

Following Kim Jong Il’s 4 January order to develop basketball, lower-level organs immediately began to work to implement it. On 8 January, there was an article about how basketball was gaining active popularity among High Schools in Pyongyang.[[1407]](#footnote-1407) By 16 January, the Kim Il Sung Socialist League Central Committee published an article saying that they will encourage basketball in society according to Kim Jong Il’s order.[[1408]](#footnote-1408) That same month, the national Youth Athletics Workers Tournament emphasized basketball. Furthermore, the tournament included the class “A View on the History and Development of Basketball”.[[1409]](#footnote-1409) The effects that this would have will be explored in later sections of this thesis.

Although no copy of Kim Jong Il’s orders is available, one can get an idea from a 5 August 1997 *Rodong Sinmun* article which included a long quote from Kim Jong Il. Said article was part of a section of five articles about basketball taking up over half of page four of *Rodong Sinmun* on that day. The article was about the effort to get basketball to a world class level and claimed that basketball is correct for Koreans physical constitution. Regarding basketball, Kim Jong Il said, “As much as basketball games are carried out at a fast pace in a small space, athletes must prepare their bodies well. Athletes must especially move quickly. Athletes can only achieve this trait through regular training.” The article goes on to claim that basketball prepares people for labour and national defence. It also claims that basketball can be played anywhere, even when there is not much space. At the time, conditions for basketball games were in place, but that the problem was how to make basketball popular. The article said that Korea was establishing its style and skill system, and showed that through a game with the Cuban Women’s National Team. Accordingly, coaches and workers were exploring a way for basketball to be in accordance with Koreans’ physical constitution. The training was scientific, using skill development trends as a basis. The result of training was said to rest on the responsible workers and coaches. They had to realize the Party’s confidence and the people’s expectation in order to achieve a scientific research result. Athletes were to have loyalty and filial devotion to the leader. Furthermore, they were to endlessly create new special abilities, prepare for the modern game, and have the ambition to be masters of basketball globally. The article also emphasized the importance of popularization of basketball and making basketball courts at high schools, colleges, and universities. Basketball was to be a societal trend, with basketball games played at all central organs, factories, businesses, and cooperative farms. Furthermore, basketball was to be raised to a world level and to demonstrate the dignity and honour of the Kim Il Sung nation of people.[[1410]](#footnote-1410) To summarize, this article utilized existing standards in DPRK athletics and simply applied them to basketball. This can be seen through the use of concepts such as basketball for labour and national defence, basketball as a vehicle for nationalist ideology, basketball as a vehicle for national loyalty, the use of specialization, the use of scientific methods, and the desire to be successful at basketball internationally. The only inherent advantages that basketball was claimed to have over other athletics are that it was suited to the physical constitution of Koreans and that it could be played in places without much space. As such, one can conclude that, from a national interest perspective, two primary reasons behind basketball’s promotion were the DPRK’s perceived potential to be internationally competitive and the ease with which it could be played on a grassroots level.

The basketball intensification era has no definitive end point. However, one can point to a couple of athletics-related factors which signalled a downshift in basketball-related policy. Firstly, Kim Jong Il instated a Water Sports Day to occur yearly from 12 July, 1999.[[1411]](#footnote-1411) This represented an administrative shift to put emphasis on athletic disciplines other than basketball. Secondly, Jong Song Ok’s first place on 29 August at the 1999 World Championships in Athletics Women’s Marathon was a cultural phenomenon.[[1412]](#footnote-1412) Indeed, Jong would be featured with articles in *Rodong Sinmun* every day from 1 to 9 September.[[1413]](#footnote-1413) She was named a hero of the republic, the highest honour ever bestowed upon an athlete, and given wide domestic press which named her the glory of the leader.[[1414]](#footnote-1414) Accordingly, on 1 September, basketball athletes were mentioned as aspiring to become dominators of their work like Jong Song Ok.[[1415]](#footnote-1415) A month later, on 1 October, one worker at the Amrok River Political Department spoke of Jang as an example to be followed. Said worker claimed that athletes needed to be like Jong Song Ok, putting the general, country, and nation first. If an athlete’s mettle was there, a high result could be achieved.[[1416]](#footnote-1416) This was followed up by a movie featuring Jang’s journey in 2000.[[1417]](#footnote-1417) All in all, the latter part of the year 1999 can be said to have shifted the attention of the DPRK athletic world away from basketball and basketball-related articles would become less frequent over the ensuing years.

For the purposes of this thesis, the end date of the Basketball Intensification Era is given as 3 January 2000. On that day, Kim Jong Il awarded gold watches to basketball stars Ri Myong Hun and Pak Chon Jong. This symbolized the effective end of Kim Jong Il’s personal interest in basketball on a publicly visible level. Although Kim Jong Il would receive a basketball from Madeline Albright in 2000, it was never admitted in state media that he received the gift as a fan of basketball.[[1418]](#footnote-1418) Additionally, Kim Jong Il would only watch one more basketball game in person after 2000, in July of 2003.[[1419]](#footnote-1419) As such, it seems fitting to end the era of basketball intensification with in the same manner with which it began; according to Kim Jong Il’s publicly visible personal interest.

One question remains. Why did Kim Jong Il suddenly begin a policy of basketball intensification in late 1996 and early 1997? And why did it last for three years? There is no one answer, but one can point to a myriad of factors. Firstly, on a personal interest level, Kim Jong Il was likely affected by the meteoric rise in popularity of the NBA’s Chicago Bulls during their second run of three straight NBA Championships from 1996 through 1998.[[1420]](#footnote-1420) Along those same lines, the subsequent lockout-shortened 1998-1999 NBA Season may have played a part on decreasing Kim Jong Il’s interest.[[1421]](#footnote-1421) There is no direct evidence that Kim Jong Il watched NBA basketball, but he was certainly exposed to basketball through his sons, Kim Jong Un and Kim Jong Chol.[[1422]](#footnote-1422) Furthermore, Kim Jong Il likely had access to NBA broadcasts through Japan and China. [[1423]](#footnote-1423)

Secondly, Kim Jong Il was affected by the basketball mania of his sons at the time. The elder son, Kim Jong Chol, had left for Switzerland in 1992. But the more favoured younger son, Kim Jong Un, left for Switzerland in mid-1996.[[1424]](#footnote-1424) As Kim Jong Un had greater opportunity to engage with his basketball fandom in the outside world, Kim Jong Il may have been looking for a way to engage his younger son in the affairs of state. Making basketball encouragement as a part of public policy could have been a method with which to do so. Kim Jong Un would not return to the DPRK permanently until mid-2001, somewhat after the Basketball Intensification era ended.[[1425]](#footnote-1425) Another theory is that Kim Jong Il may have also missed the presence of Kim Jong Un upon the latter’s departure to Switzerland. Kim Jong Il may have wanted to replace his son’s basketball games with the basketball games of others. Nevertheless, details on Kim Jong Il’s relationship to the basketball fandom of his sons may never be known, and the above is merely in the realm of educated speculation.

Thirdly, Kim Jong Il was affected by the potential of Ri Myong Hun to enter the NBA. This potential was not realized until June 1996, when Ri Myong Hun’s performance at the Taiwan-based William Jones Cup led to him submitting his name for the NBA Draft that same month.[[1426]](#footnote-1426) The application was rejected, but Kim Jong Il began to take personal interest in Ri’s training that October, and plans for Ri’s entry into the NBA would move forward in earnest that following March.[[1427]](#footnote-1427) Ri’s bid to enter the NBA would ultimately lose steam in late 1998 as he reportedly suffered injuries in a car crash.[[1428]](#footnote-1428) By late 1999, Ri stated that he no longer had any interest in playing in the NBA.[[1429]](#footnote-1429) To sum up, Ri’s bid to enter the NBA roughly coincides with the basketball intensification era.

Fourthly, basketball was seen as an effective method to inspire and satisfy the nation during the throes of the Arduous March.[[1430]](#footnote-1430) As the DPRK’s state capacity crumbled, its ability to provide mass athletics crumbled as well.[[1431]](#footnote-1431) But basketball had a lot of factors that made it useful for the purpose of keeping the nation unified. Basketball had an existing infrastructure and culture, and did not require a great deal of equipment compared to other existing team sports. One could argue that football requires a similar level of equipment and may have enjoyed a greater deal of popularity. But football also requires a great deal of space. The DPRK is a mountainous country, and farmland has always been at a premium. The DPRK regime was so desperate for farmland at the time that they went to the extent of clearing forests and utilizing terrace farming.[[1432]](#footnote-1432) As such, basketball, which required comparatively less space, was more practical on a mass level. Even Kim Il Sung had admitted in the past that basketball required less space than football.[[1433]](#footnote-1433) This may have been behind the motivation to popularize basketball in rural areas the through the creation of a National Agricultural Workers Basketball Tournament during this era.[[1434]](#footnote-1434) Volleyball was also a popular sport in the DPRK up to that time, and volleyball courts were often set up on the same physical space that basketball courts were.[[1435]](#footnote-1435) But, according to DPRK propaganda leading up to that point, basketball was more physically demanding and helped children to grow taller.[[1436]](#footnote-1436) As such, basketball was likely seen as something which could both strongly occupy the mind of the youth and increase the overall height of the populous.

Fifthly, the influence of Chung Ju-yung, then honorary chairman of the Hyundai-Asan Group, likely helped continue pushing the basketball intensification era into 1999. Chung would visit the DPRK twice in 1998, and likely had a personal meeting with Kim Jong Il during one of those visits. [[1437]](#footnote-1437) Chung, a basketball fan himself, was likely aware of the basketball mania in the DPRK at the time and had a strong interest in Inter-Korean reconciliation.[[1438]](#footnote-1438) As such, Chung was able to make the arrangements for the first Inter-Korean Basketball Unification Games which occurred in Pyongyang and Seoul in September and December of 1999, respectively.

Sixthly, basketball was seen as a popular discipline in which the DPRK could succeed at an international level. The DPRK men had just seen a historically great run of success. Specifically, they grabbed fifth place at the 1991 ABC Championship, third place at the 1993 East Asian Games, and second place at the 1993 ABC Championship.[[1439]](#footnote-1439) Meanwhile, the DPRK women had seen less success, but still managed to remain competitive.[[1440]](#footnote-1440) Specifically, they had lost to the ROK by only two points during the 1993 East Asian Games and only three points during the 1990 ABC Championship for Women. The women also lost to Japan by only a single point during the latter tournament, and were within striking distance of winning against China and Chinese Taipei. Put simply, during this era, it was likely seen that the DPRK men’s and women’s teams had the potential to be the best teams in Asia. If they could score wins over region rivals, it would have certainly been seen as a boon to the regime’s legitimacy. As such, it likely played into the DPRK’s decision to emphasize basketball during this era.

Seventhly, basketball was seen as something which could capture international attention. The story of Ri Myong Hun’s attempt to enter the NBA attracted the attention of international news outlets such as the Washington Post, The Associated Press, and United Press International.[[1441]](#footnote-1441) Furthermore, Kim Jong Il’s rumoured basketball fandom attracted the attention of the US Government, as they attempted to use Ri’s NBA eligibility to negotiate with Kim Jong Il.[[1442]](#footnote-1442) Accordingly, the DPRK regime at the time was likely hoping to spin future-basketball related attention into international negotiation advantages.

The logic behind the above seven reasons will be discussed in more detail in later sections. Nevertheless, the Basketball Intensification Era would leave an indelible mark on the DPRK athletics landscape which lasts up to the present day. Domestically, this era brought about three basketball-specific tournaments. The 28 August Youth Cup Basketball Tournament would last on a yearly basis up until 2009, the National University Student Competitive Basketball Tournament ran yearly until 2010, and the National Agricultural Workers Basketball Tournament has been held once every two or three years up until the present day. [[1443]](#footnote-1443) Aside from the tournaments, the era created a generation of basketball enthusiasts within the country and reaffirmed basketball as a potential path to individual success.

In terms of inter-Korean negotiations, the era set a precedent for future inter-Korean basketball matches which were held in 2003 and 2018.[[1444]](#footnote-1444) Also, the era arguably helped pave the way for the Unified Women’s Basketball Team which went to the 2018 Asian Games.[[1445]](#footnote-1445) On an international level, the era set a precedent for basketball to be used in US-DPRK negotiations, as shown by the US Government’s use of Ri’s NBA eligibility at the 1997 Four-Party Talks,[[1446]](#footnote-1446) Albright’s gift of a Michael Jordan-signed basketball to Kim Jong Il in 2000,[[1447]](#footnote-1447) the DPRK government’s effort to bring Michael Jordan to the DPRK in 2001,[[1448]](#footnote-1448) Dennis Rodman’s highly-publicised meetings with Kim Jong Un in 2013 and 2014, [[1449]](#footnote-1449) and Kim Jong Un’s demand for basketball players to come to the DPRK as part of de-nuclearization talks at the 2019 US-DPRK Hanoi Summit.[[1450]](#footnote-1450) As such, the importance of this era cannot be overstated when it comes to understanding basketball as it exists in the DPRK today.

## 12.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

During the Basketball Intensification Era, Kim Jong Il had a very active role in carrying out his personal directives to encourage basketball. Said activities began on 9 June 1997. On that day, Kim Jong Il attended a match between Amrok River and 25 April. Kim stressed that the game should be officiated so as to punish those who commit numerous or severe fouls. This was in order for players to be able to show their talent. After the game was officiated in this fashion, Kim Jong Il was satisfied and said that all games should be refereed like that from then on.[[1451]](#footnote-1451)

On 19 July 1997, Kim Jong Il attended the People’s Army Artistic Festival and watched the performance of the sailors from submarine 8003. Said performance included the chorus story *Basketball Games are Good*. It was said to depict a game between “Human Bomb” team and “Suicidal Attack” team.[[1452]](#footnote-1452) Kim Jong Il was reported to have magnanimously laughed at the delightful song and dance numbers of the basketball chorus story. [[1453]](#footnote-1453) In the end, Kim Jong Il gave high praise of the overall performance and was highly satisfied.[[1454]](#footnote-1454) Kim Jong Il’s visit to the festival would be recounted in 2008, indicating its lasting significance.[[1455]](#footnote-1455) One week after Kim Jong Il’s 19 July 1997 festival visit, the basketball chorus story was performed at Mansudae Theatre. Said story was described in state media as an extraordinary conception performed in a lively manner.[[1456]](#footnote-1456) Later, on 16 April 2000, Kim Jong Il would visit Navy Headquarters and see *Basketball Games are Good* again, as part of a larger performance.[[1457]](#footnote-1457) It is likely that the chorus story was given two subsequent performances at least in part due to Kim Jong Il’s approval.

Kim Jong Il’s support for basketball reached a much higher public level on 7 October. A front-page article of Kim Jong Il attending a basketball match between Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek University on 5 October was published. Ostensibly, it was on the occasion of the 51st Anniversary of the founding of Kim Il Sung University. The article described shouts of support from attendees as well as Kim Jong Il returning the courtesy upon his entrance. There were lots of high-ranking officials in attendance. According to Kim Jong Il, his presence at match didn’t necessarily have basketball implications. Kim would claim that revolutionary and combatant students should not just give everything to explore science for the people, but artistic and athletic activity as well. Kim went on to say that the two universities at the match were to construct the revolution by developing capable nation cadres and skilled geniuses that would have a core role in contributing to the country’s wealth and development.[[1458]](#footnote-1458) In a meeting of faculty and students afterwards, basketball was mentioned as a representative example of athletic disciplines to be popularized. However, basketball was mentioned in conjunction with art and given secondary importance compared to education and scientific development.[[1459]](#footnote-1459) Kim Jong Il’s attendance at the match was later mentioned in an article on 19 October.[[1460]](#footnote-1460) Jong Dong-kil, an ROK journalist, would classify the game as an attempt to show the authorities will.[[1461]](#footnote-1461) Whatever the case may have been, Kim’s public interest in basketball was solidified through his subsequent activities.

On 23 October, Kim Jong Il sent athletic equipment to the national athletic committee in order to further the development of basketball. This was said to make it possible for basketball teams to heighten their training to a new level.[[1462]](#footnote-1462) On 10 November, Kim Jong Il watched a basketball game between soldiers of an uninhabited island garrison at an East Sea front line sentry post. Kim Jong Il was extremely satisfied at the art and athletic activities, high confidence, and moral trends of the soldiers. As such, Kim had confidence in the future. A picture of the game and Kim Jong Il’s attendance was published on page two of *Rodong Sinmun* two days later.[[1463]](#footnote-1463) After the game, Kim Jong Il encouraged the army to continue playing basketball, said that basketball must be distributed widely throughout the society, and implored that cheering methods also must be taught.[[1464]](#footnote-1464)

Three weeks after his last basketball match attendance, Kim Jong Il watched a basketball game among students at Kim Chaek Industrial University while on inspection. Upon seeing the lifestyle and studiousness of the students, Kim Jong Il remarked that what he saw was extremely good. He also maintained that in order to create cheerful revolutionaries, athletics and art needed to be more extensively spread.[[1465]](#footnote-1465) All in all, Kim Jong Il’s presence at three basketball matches throughout a two month-span made it clear that he was fully behind the development of basketball at the time.

Kim Jong Il’s basketball-related activities would carry into the next year. In January, Kim Jong Il, after returning from an on-the-site guidance, placed a call to a senior official in the middle of the night. Kim Jong Il wanted to ask about the result of a women’s basketball game between the Taedonggang team and a foreign team. The senior official informed Kim Jong Il that the Taedonggang team had won 92 to 86. Kim Jong Il praised their win despite their lack of experience. Kim Jong Il then sent a document to the official.[[1466]](#footnote-1466) That same month, Kim Jong Il sent a letter of thanks to the Sunan District Normal Athletics Sector Workers for encouraging athletics through basketball and other athletic disciplines among students.[[1467]](#footnote-1467) Furthermore, in February, Manpho High School was making basketball and other athletics balls by their own effort and sending them to other secondary schools in their province. Kim Jong Il saw a basketball that they made and sent his thanks. This was said to show his benevolent affection.[[1468]](#footnote-1468)

By 12 March, Kim Jong Il was back to attending basketball matches. *Rodong Sinmun* ran a picture and a mention of Kim Jong Il’s visitation to marine unit 406’s basketball game. There, Kim Jong Il remarked on the confidence and optimism about the future shown by the soldiers. Because the soldiers were living happily and full of life, Kim Jong Il was also very happy. Kim Jong Il also remarked that the military’s fighting character and living character was amazing.[[1469]](#footnote-1469) On 20 April, a *Rodong Sinmun* article described Kim Jong Il, attending basketball match of soldiers at some time in the past. Kim Jong Il encouraged the soldiers to make three-point shots and was the first to applaud when seeing special moves. As such, he claimed that the soldiers’ lifestyle was full of revolutionary romance and their dignity was refined.[[1470]](#footnote-1470) Three weeks later, on 11 May, Kim Jong Il watched a students’ basketball game at Kim Chol Ju Artillery General Officer School.[[1471]](#footnote-1471) It would later be claimed that, on this day, Kim Jong Il saw the basketball goal and thought that it was low. Upon measurement, it was found that the goal was indeed one centimetre too low. This was shown as an example of his great power of observation and judgement.[[1472]](#footnote-1472) The visit was mentioned again on 23 June 2001.[[1473]](#footnote-1473) Once again, these visits reinforce Kim Jong Il’s basketball policies by his presence at the game, but the focus of the propaganda is away from the basketball game itself. In total, Kim Jong Il had attended seven basketball games from June 1997 to May 1998.

On 27 August 1998, Kim Jong Il took the opportunity to use basketballs as a way to strengthen the relationship between the army and normal citizens. This took the form of giving 100,000 basketballs to the Korean People’s Army Constituent of Command and ordering the army to distribute the basketballs to schools. This basketball giveaway was part of the “Our School – Our Guard Post” (우리 학교–우리 초소) movement. Kim Jong Il said that the army’s flower must blossom first in amongst the flowers of military and civilian unity.[[1474]](#footnote-1474) This story would be reiterated through *Rodong Sinmun* in 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2007 and the English-language online propaganda outlet *Uriminzokkiri* in 2016.[[1475]](#footnote-1475) Said giveaway would even be remembered in 2015 by a school principal as a part of that school’s obsession with basketball and eventual tournament success.[[1476]](#footnote-1476)

The reasoning behind Kim Jong Il’s decision to give the basketballs to the military is likely twofold. Firstly, it was due to Kim Jong Il’s desire to heighten the prestige of the military under the Songun (선군) policy.[[1477]](#footnote-1477) In other words, Kim Jong Il wanted to prevent a military uprising during a time of economic need.[[1478]](#footnote-1478) Secondly, Kim Jong Il wanted to repair tarnished military-civilian relations. Due to the famine, the army were not fed well, and would occasionally steal from civilians. [[1479]](#footnote-1479) As such, Kim Jong Il was hoping to flip the script and have the army give to the people. Indeed, this was not the only instance of soldiers as gift givers. In June of 2007, there was reference in state media to soldiers bringing gifts to Kang Pan Sok Number 1 Middle School.[[1480]](#footnote-1480) In any case, the basketball giveaway kicked off a broader movement to provide material support for basketball’s development.

Kim Jong Il’s campaign to support basketball on a material basis continued on 28 August. On that day, Kim Jong Il sent basketball equipment to Kim Chaek University. Furthermore, he had earlier made overtures to maintain their gymnasium.[[1481]](#footnote-1481) By 10 October, Kim Jong Il gifted athletic equipment to 10 different universities, including Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek Industrial University. No mention was given of specifics.[[1482]](#footnote-1482) A month later, on 7 September, Kim Jong Il sent thanks to the Korea Computer Centre, Kim Chaek Industrial University, and Korea Athletics University for combining their creative wisdom to develop basketball game skill analysis programs, activity appraisal programs, and nutrition management programs for basketball athletes.[[1483]](#footnote-1483)

Kim Jong Il backed up his material support with some further public praise as well. On 7 September, an article mentioned Kim Jong Il watching Amrok River’s football, basketball, volleyball, and boxing games. The report mentioned Kim Jong Il teaching Juche style skill and strategy, giving the strength of invincibility and bravery with his great expectation and belief, and teaching the properties of morals and dignity.[[1484]](#footnote-1484) The next day, on 8 September, Kim Jong Il made a visit to KPA Unit 963. Kim Jong Il mentioned basketball and volleyball’s wide distribution within the units to be very good, claiming it to be an important element in battle power strengthening. Kim also claimed that, in order to have physical strength, one must continue to have great interest in physical training.[[1485]](#footnote-1485)

After 7 September 1998, Kim Jong Il’s direct support for basketball died down. The only direct contact that Kim Jong Il had with basketball during the rest of the era was in March of 1999. It was brief, as soldiers showed the leader the basketball that they used.[[1486]](#footnote-1486)

Nevertheless, basketball development continued to be a strong part of public policy until roughly the year 2000. Taken on the whole, the above anecdotes of Kim Jong Il make due diligence to not paint an image of him as a basketball fan. Rather, the focus is on Kim Jong Il using basketball to prove larger points about traits that he wished soldiers and students to have. It is true that Kim Jong Il would send material support for basketball specifically. But again, it was usually presented with the idea that it took on some sort of greater significance or encouraged loyalty. In sum, it can be said that Kim Jong Il clearly had an interest in developing basketball, and that his interest in direct basketball involvement curiously coincided with the Chicago Bulls final NBA title run in late 1997 and early 1998. But basketball clearly served more practical purposes for the regime as a whole, and careful consideration was given to separate the image of Kim Jong Il as a leader from that of Kim Jong Il as a basketball fan.

At this point, some attention must be given to the USA-based rumours about Kim Jong Il’s basketball obsession which arose during this time period. These rumours lie on sketchy ground, but they must be given credence because they did a great deal to perpetuate the image of Kim Jong Il as a basketball fan in the outside world. All of these rumours came from one man; Tony Ronzone. Ronzone, beginning in 1997 or 1998, was serving as a scout for the Dallas Mavericks and had just finished a five-year stint as head coach of the United Arab Emirates basketball team.[[1487]](#footnote-1487) Ronzone claimed that he had made two or three trips to the DPRK in 1997 and 1998 at the behest of the DPRK. The DPRK had allegedly requested Ronzone through FIBA offices in Germany, assuming that he was Italian due to his last name.[[1488]](#footnote-1488) Ronzone also claimed that the DPRK wanted video tapes from him.[[1489]](#footnote-1489) Personally, Ronzone went to the DPRK due to his interest in Ri Myong Hun, hosting a basketball clinic in the hopes that Ri would attend.[[1490]](#footnote-1490) Ronzone later claimed that, during those trips, he trained the DPRK national team in front of 10,000 fans, 300 coaches summoned from across the nation, and Kim Jong Il himself. Ronzone also claimed that he had met with Kim Jong Il “face-to-face” and knew Kim to be a basketball fanatic who was obsessed with the Chicago Bulls and Detroit Pistons. Furthermore, Ronzone claimed that he negotiated a deal with Kim Jong Il personally in which Ri Myong Hun would be allowed to play professional basketball if his salary was paid in wheat.[[1491]](#footnote-1491)

Ronzone also claimed that he had visa issues while trying to enter the country, being denied at the border. However, Ronzone has made two different claims in this regard. The first claim is that Ronzone was denied entry to the DPRK due to visa problems, spent a week in Thailand trying to get the issue resolved, and then got it resolved two months later while in the USA.[[1492]](#footnote-1492) The second claim is as follows. Ronzone flew to China through Thailand, and was to receive a visa in China. The DPRK delegation never showed, leading to Ronzone’s eight-hour detainment in China followed by a deportation back to Thailand. Ronzone then waited for three days in Thailand and made it into the DPRK nearly a week later, where he would see Ri Myong Hun for only one day.[[1493]](#footnote-1493) Both claims have similar circumstances, but differ significantly in detail. Upon the conclusion of Ronzone’s trip, he brought basketball information materials, which the Sports Minister wanted to copy. However, Ronzone’s interpreter allegedly told Ronzone in private that Kim Jong Il wanted to see the materials himself.[[1494]](#footnote-1494)

How much of Ronzone’s story is true remains up for debate. Ronzone heading to the DPRK for at least one coaching clinic is a very plausible story, especially given the DPRK’s hosting of foreign basketball teams for friendly games during this time period. Ronzone’s motivation for seeing Ri Myong Hun is also very plausible, given that Ri was well-known at the time. Unfortunately, no corroborating records for Ronzone’s claims can be found within KCNA archives or other sources. Furthermore, some of Ronzone’s claims are particularly outlandish. Claims like negotiating directly with Kim Jong Il to pay for Ri Myong Hun’s contract in wheat as well as training the DPRK national team in front of ten thousand fans and three hundred coaches are difficult to believe. Finally, the inconsistency in Ronzone’s stories bring further doubt to their validity. Specifically, Ronzone gave different accounts of important details like how many times he went to the country or how he circumvented his visa denial. Whatever the truth may be, what is most important is that Ronzone’s subsequent interviews with the press brought a significant amount of Western attention to Kim Jong Il’s alleged basketball fandom.

Kim Jong Un, although outside of the country and far from taking power, was a rabid basketball fan during the Basketball Intensification Era. Upon moving to Switzerland in the Summer of 1996, Kim Jong Un would regularly play basketball with his peers after school for up to three hours. During these games, Kim Jong Un was frequently spotted wearing an outfit of Air Jordan shoes and a full Bulls replica Michael Jordan uniform while playing with an official Spalding NBA basketball. Kim would also play basketball with his friends at a hoop installed outside of his house.

On top of actually playing basketball, Kim Jong Un would sleep with a basketball in his bed and play basketball video games on his Sony PlayStation.[[1495]](#footnote-1495) Furthermore, Kim Jong Un would travel to Paris to see the Chicago Bulls play in the 1997 McDonalds Championship. There, Kim Jong Un would get a picture with Toni Kukoc.[[1496]](#footnote-1496) Kim Jong Un would also get a photo with Kobe Bryant. The origins of Kim Jong Un’s photo with Bryant are unknown. However, it is plausible that Kim Jong Un obtained the photo during Bryant’s trips to Japan, the Philippines, and Australia in 1998 as part of an Adidas promotional tour or Bryant’s possible trip to visit his father during the Summer of 2000 in Milan.[[1497]](#footnote-1497) Kim Jong Un treasured his photos with Kukoc and Bryant enough to show them off to his classmates in Switzerland.[[1498]](#footnote-1498)

## 12.3 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

Despite the fact that the DPRK Men’s National Team’s success during the Scientific Athletics Era was a factor behind the government-led basketball push, the team itself was almost completely inactive during the basketball intensification era. After no news throughout 1997, while Ri Myong Hun was in Canada, the team resurfaced on 21 January 1998. A picture of the men’s and women’s national basketball team walking outside of Chungchon Street Basketball Stadium was published in *Rodong Sinmun*.[[1499]](#footnote-1499)

The DPRK men’s team was originally slated to play in the in the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok, but they withdrew suddenly. Injury was cited as the reason for the withdrawal.[[1500]](#footnote-1500) It was reported in outside media that star centre Ri Myong Hun had suffered bad injuries in a car crash.[[1501]](#footnote-1501)

Over a year later, from 28 August to 5 September 1999, the men’s team was slated to participate in the 1999 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Men in Fukuoka. Again, the team withdrew.[[1502]](#footnote-1502) The Japanese foreign ministry claimed that it may have been due to a recent missile test which soured relations with Japan.[[1503]](#footnote-1503) Roughly a month later, on 10 October, a *Rodong Sinmun* article covered the National General Athletics Team. According to the article, there was a heated atmosphere like fire at the basketball training court. Players were sweating like it was raining.[[1504]](#footnote-1504)

As seen by the two mentions in *Rodong Sinmun*, the government had serious expectations for the men’s team at this time. But whether it be due to Ri’s injury or political pressure, the team was never given a true opportunity to shine.

## 12.4 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

In comparison to the men, the women’s national team was able to at least participate in some matches. In July 1997, the DPRK women would play an exhibition match against the visiting Cuban women’s national team, winning by five.[[1505]](#footnote-1505) The next year, on 21 January, the women’s team would be pictured walking outside of Chungchon Street Basketball Stadium next to the men.[[1506]](#footnote-1506)

From 2 to 8 May 1999, the DPRK Women’s team returned to international competition. Unfortunately, they were only able to participate in the second level of competition of the 1999 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women in Shizuoka, Japan. The DPRK women would win all three of their matches handily.[[1507]](#footnote-1507) All in all, the DPRK women did not get to face any serious competition during this era.

Table 60: Women's National Team Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 00-Jul-97 | Cuba | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | N/A | 83 | 78 | Win |
| 02-May-99 | Hong Kong | Japan | Shisuoka | Kusanagi Sports Park Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1999 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 100 | 40 | Win |
| 04-May-99 | Malaysia | Japan | Shisuoka | Kusanagi Sports Park Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1999 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 91 | 71 | Win |
| 08-May-99 | Sri Lanka | Japan | Shisuoka | Kusanagi Sports Park Stadium | Level II Group Match | 1999 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship for Women | 111 | 31 | Win |

## 12.5 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

International club matches for DPRK teams were particularly active during the Basketball Intensification era. Matches began on 14 July 1997, when there was a game between the Youth Women’s DPRK Korea Team and the Cuban Women’s National Team in Pyongyang. Cuba won the match by 2. *Rodong Sinmun* mentioned Cuban players’ superior height, man-to-man defence, rebounding, and mid-to-close range shots. However, the DPRK players used long-range shots, leading Cuba to spread out their defence as compensation. In crunch time, the Cuban team used good dodging, mid-range shooting, and attacked the basket in order to win.[[1508]](#footnote-1508) The DPRK Youth team would win another match against the Cuban team some days later. On 21 July, Storm won their match against the Cuban team in Pyongyang Gymnasium. Storm used long-range shots, while Cuba expanded their defensive zone, had a faster speed, and attacked the basket. In the second half, Cuba attacked from closer to the hoop. Meanwhile, Storm’s active man-to-man defence and long-range attack ruined the opponent’s tactical intent.[[1509]](#footnote-1509) On 23 July, *Rodong Sinmun* published a report of the 21 July match. In said report, there was mention of Cuba’s sixth place result in the 1996 Olympics and their sixth-place finish at the 1994 FIBA Women’s World Cup.[[1510]](#footnote-1510)

From 24 August to 3 September, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Women’s Basketball Team visited, but no match results were reported.[[1511]](#footnote-1511) On 30 December, there was a combined report from a series of women’s basketball games. The Lighting, Storm, and Taedong River teams had played against Cuba, China, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Russia, and Lithuania in DPR Korea. In nineteen total games, the DPRK teams had a record of fourteen wins, four losses, and one tie. Lightning was reported to be especially impressive, showcasing mental spirit, fighting spirit, speed, stubborn perseverance, high skill, and shrewd movements. Lightning broke through the defensive line for consecutive baskets. Women’s basketball on the whole was the shining fruition of the party’s accomplishment. It hastened the people, giving them confidence and encouragement.[[1512]](#footnote-1512)

In 1998, there would be more definitive reports of the women’s matches. On 16 January, the Storm beat the Russian Spartak women’s team 103 to 94. They were said to show stubborn spirit, perseverance, and clever skill. A picture of said game was published as well.[[1513]](#footnote-1513) On 29 May, Storm played against the Yugoslavian Women’s National Team. Yugoslavia won the game, 94 to 83. Both teams were said to have a fighting spirit, perseverance, and clever skill.[[1514]](#footnote-1514)

Upon Ri Myong Hun’s return from Canada, the men’s club teams began to see action as well. On 31 May, Thunder beat a USA University Team, 127-83. Chinese referees officiated the match. Thunder led the game from the start, with a fast pace and consecutive baskets. The USA team showed good individual skill, ball handling, and shooting percentage. But Thunder coped with the USA team’s strategy. Ri Myong Hun’s trusty defence controlled the opponent’s attack. Thunder also used a close two-person combination of Ri and Pak Chon Jong. Those two, Pak Jong Nam, and Pak Kyong Nam tore down the USA’s defensive position, spurred the defence, and hit long range shots at a high percentage. The Thunder were up by 20 at half. The USA tried to change their tactics to overcome the deficit, but the Thunder hit under the basket shots, went on the fast break, broke down the opponent’s strategy system, and consistently scored two and three pointers. In the end, the USA team was vanquished.[[1515]](#footnote-1515) There was a somewhat more detailed article with a picture on the next day. It boasted of a victory over the highly-skilled USA team, claiming that the Thunder plainly showed the Juche Basketball Skill under the benevolent love of the party.[[1516]](#footnote-1516)

On 19 June, the Thunder beat the Italian Fabriano Basket team, 110 to 101. The Thunder used clever skill, stubborn determination, fighting spirit, fast speed, and shrewd movement. The taller Fabriano Basket team used height, man-to-man defence, long-range shooting, and shots under the basket. At the half, Thunder led 50 to 43. Fabriano Basket’s strategy changed at the half, as they increased their defence area and strengthened their attack. Meanwhile, Thunder used Ri and Pak’s two-man game for an under the basket attack. Overall, it was an amazing scoring scene with applause for both teams.[[1517]](#footnote-1517)

On 22 June, Thunder defeated Fabriano Basket again, this time 91 to 87. Thunder used clever skill, stubborn determination, fighting spirit, fast speed, two and three man plays, an under-basket attack, and long-range shooting. Meanwhile, Fabriano strengthened their defence and close and mid-range shots. During the second half, Fabriano came back to take the lead. Thunder were frustrated, but used chippy defence to slow their opponent’s strong attack.[[1518]](#footnote-1518)

Taken on the whole, the men’s games in particular were given excruciatingly detailed recaps in *Rodong Sinmun*. This is unprecedented for the time period, as one would have to go back to the 1950s and 1960s to find similarly detailed reports of basketball matches from the same newspaper. Even the less publicised women’s games were given more detail than was standard for the time. This represented a shift provided by the new basketball development policies of the Basketball Intensification Era which allowed for the propaganda to take a backseat to the athletic action. Nevertheless, the pro-government propaganda was still present in every article, and victories were given more attention than defeats. Furthermore, numerous women’s matches in 1997 were given little-to-no coverage. Accordingly, the governments priorities were clear; matches would be published when they were perceived to bring glory to the regime.

One must consider the type of opponent during this era as well. On the men’s side, inviting a team from the United States was a totally unprecedented move. Even inviting a team from Italy was the first time a Western European basketball team had visited the country since Marseilles University sent their women’s basketball team in 1956. Nevertheless, the quality of the opponents was still somewhat weak on a global scale. The USA University team likely featured players under twenty-two years old, and Fabriano Basket was in Italy’s Second Division at the time.[[1519]](#footnote-1519) As such, one can see these exhibitions as serving three purposes; connecting with the Western world, gathering propagandistically useful wins, and training Ri for a potential move to the NBA. Meanwhile, the women faced strong opponents from Lithuania, Russia, and Yugoslavia. But all of these countries, as former eastern bloc countries, did not necessarily break the historical trend of exhibition matches. In any case, the DPRK women’s wins in these games were impressive.

Table 61: Men's Club Team International Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 31-May-98 | Thunder | USA University Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 127 | 83 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 19-Jun-98 | Thunder | Fabriano Basket | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 110 | 101 | Win | 2W 0L |
| 22-Jun-98 | Thunder | Fabriano Basket | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 91 | 87 | Win | 3W 0L |

Table 62: Women's Club Team International Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 14-Jul-97 | DPR Korea Youth | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 75 | 77 | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 21-Jul-97 | Storm (Amrok River) | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 100 | 83 | Win | 2W 2L |
| 00-Jul-97 | DPR Korea Youth | Cuban National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 102 | 76 | Win | 1W 1L |
| 23-Dec-97 | Storm (Amrok River) | Lithuania | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 107 | 96 | Win | 3W 2L |
| 00-Jan-98 | Taedong River | ? | DPRK | ? | ? | ? | 92 | 86 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 15-Jan-98 | Storm (Amrok River) | Spartak | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 103 | 94 | Win | 4W 2L |
| 29-May-98 | Storm (Amrok River) | Yugoslavia National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Gymnasium | Friendly | 83 | 94 | Loss | 4W 3L |

## 12.6 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

The Basketball Intensification Era was significant for Inter-Korean exchange because it ushered in basketball as a viable method for achieving said exchange. Of course, the national basketball teams had met at international competitions, and a couple of minor non-government level inter-Korean basketball matches had been held in the DPRK. But this era saw professional players from the ROK and state amateur players from the DPRK playing matches in each other’s’ nations with government approval for the first time.

Before beginning discussions of the 1999 Unification Games, it must be mentioned that on 13 August 1999, the Motherland Unification Pan-National Youth Student Union Unification Basketball Game was held Pyongyang at Kim Il Sung University. Female Students from North, South, and overseas were split into teams. Applause at each great scoring scene was reported.[[1520]](#footnote-1520) As far as could be found, this was the third and final instance of such unification games occurring.

Chung Ju-yung, former chairman of Hyundai Asan, would play a pivotal role in starting high-level basketball exchange between the two Koreas. Chung, originally from Kangwon province in the DPRK, took a great interest in Inter-Korean reconciliation. In 1989, Chung visited his hometown in the DPRK and proposed developing the Kumgang Mountain Tourist Zone.[[1521]](#footnote-1521) Later, in 1998, Chung would send a thousand and one cows to the DPRK over the course of two visits. During those visits, he laid the foundation necessary for the opening of the Kumgang Tourist Zone in November 1998, as well as the opening of the Unification Basketball Tournament in 1999.[[1522]](#footnote-1522) It was likely during his two 1998 cow-related visits to the DPRK that Chung had the opportunity to meet with Kim Jong Il in private. Some ten years later in *Rodong Sinmun*, it was written that Chung proposed to Kim Jong Il to construct a basketball stadium. This proposal was eventually realized with Chung’s investment, and given the name of Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium by Kim Jong Il.[[1523]](#footnote-1523) This meeting was mentioned again on 25 September 2008, portrayed as a pathway for the people of north and south to meet.[[1524]](#footnote-1524)

It’s worth noting that the proposal for Unification Games was partially fuelled by Chung’s personal interest in basketball. Chung founded a pro basketball team in 1978. Said team still exists to this day as Jeonju KCC Egis. Chung would frequently attend his team’s games personally.[[1525]](#footnote-1525) Chung’s company also founded a women’s pro basketball team in 1986. Said team continues to exist today as the Shinhan Bank S-Birds.[[1526]](#footnote-1526) Anecdotes about Chung’s basketball fandom include missing a golf appointment to watch a basketball game on television, walking 20 minutes in the snow to a basketball game after his car was stuck, handing out hefty bonuses to players that had won championships for his teams, and frequenting a local gymnasium that he had constructed nearby his house in order to personally encourage the female athletes that practiced there.[[1527]](#footnote-1527)

On 28 and 29 September and 23 and 24 December of 1999, the Hyundai-led Unification basketball games were held in Pyongyang and Seoul. The respective events were two days long each, featuring a mixed match as well as a match between clubs from North and South for both men’s and women’s sides.[[1528]](#footnote-1528) The four games in Pyongyang featured the Thunderbolt men’s team from the DPRK, a united men’s team combining the Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers and Busan Kia Enterprise from the ROK, the women’s Lightning team from the ROK, and the women’s Cheongju Red Fox team from the ROK. The four games in Seoul featured the same teams from the ROK, while Thunder represented the DPRK men and Whirlwind represented the DPRK women. Overall, the DPRK men won both games, while the women’s sides split their two games.[[1529]](#footnote-1529) The men’s team from the ROK decided not to use foreign players, keeping in line with the theme of a North-South game.[[1530]](#footnote-1530) Ri Myong Hun, who played for Thunder, was easily the Seoul men’s game standout performer with 28 points and 20 rebounds.[[1531]](#footnote-1531) There was zero mention of Ri’s performance or attendance at the Seoul matches in *Rodong Sinmun*. However, the English-language arm of the Korea Central News Agency published two short reports on the games in Pyongyang. They also published reports of the DPRK delegations’ departure, arrival with welcome party, and return. According to reports, Song Ho Gyong was head of the ROK delegation.[[1532]](#footnote-1532)

Details about the games are as follows. The DPRK team would fly to Seoul through Beijing.[[1533]](#footnote-1533) The delegation from the ROK consisted of about 80 people,[[1534]](#footnote-1534) while the delegation from the DPRK consisted of 62 people.[[1535]](#footnote-1535) The Pyongyang match was broadcast live in the ROK by SBS, and the Seoul game was broadcast live in the DPRK.[[1536]](#footnote-1536) The matches were held according to FIBA rules.[[1537]](#footnote-1537) For both matches, each side was charged for live broadcast equipment leasing fees and telephone lines. The DPRK side was charged for satellite usage fees.[[1538]](#footnote-1538) The ROK communicated through Japan, while the DPRK communicated through China.[[1539]](#footnote-1539) The Seoul game had a MVP, popularity award, 3 point award, and best 5 which were to be decided by later agreement.[[1540]](#footnote-1540) The DPRK were to decide on how their name would be displayed after the initial written agreement, and let the ROK know via message. [[1541]](#footnote-1541) At the Seoul game, an DPRK acrobatic troupe performed.[[1542]](#footnote-1542)

Honorary Chairman of Hyundai, Jong Ju-yeong, attended matches in both Pyongyang and Seoul, met with Kim Jong Il at the Pyongyang match, and attended the ceremony for the start of construction of the stadium built in his name.[[1543]](#footnote-1543) According to the ROK men’s team coach, Shin Son-woo, the DPRK chairman of the Asia-Pacific Committee, Kim Yong Sun, stated that if Jong Yu Jong stadium was completed within two years, he wished for a North-South joint team to be established and invite an NBA team to face off against them at the stadium’s opening ceremony. Chung Mong-hun, then chairman of the Hyundai Group, said that he thought it was a good idea.[[1544]](#footnote-1544) Jeong and his son would also visit with Kim Jong Il personally two days after the basketball game.[[1545]](#footnote-1545) The Father and Son duo would make one final visit to Kim on 29 June 2000 before their respective deaths. During that visit, Kim would acknowledge Jong and Chung’s contribution to the June 15th North-South Joint Declaration.[[1546]](#footnote-1546)

As a result of this match, the Ryugyong Chung Ju-yung Gymnasium was constructed in Pyongyang. In order to celebrate the opening of the stadium, one thousand and one hundred spectators from Seoul went to Pyongyang to see another edition of the unification basketball games in October of 2003.[[1547]](#footnote-1547) Said matches will be discussed in the next era.

The DPRK’s reporting about the Seoul match was politically focused. On 28 December, *Rodong Sinmun* ran a report from the National Committee for Peaceful Re-unification. The report stated how the national reunification games in Pyongyang in September and Seoul in December were a great opportunity to increase passion for reunification. However, the committee said that Kim Ryong Taek[[1548]](#footnote-1548), a unconverted long-term prisoner (비전향장기수)[[1549]](#footnote-1549), was detained before he could travel to Seoul to see the Unification Basketball Game. In the article, the ROK was depicted as fascist puppets who conducted tyranny. The article also said that there was no reason for this oppression, since seeing the game was something that people wanted to do.[[1550]](#footnote-1550) This incident was mentioned again in *Rodong Sinmun* on 30 December and 10 February.[[1551]](#footnote-1551) ROK sources of the time say that Kim was detained for potentially asking for repatriation or may have broken the law.[[1552]](#footnote-1552)

On 29 March and 12 May 2000, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* report of an employee during the unification games at Seoul’s Jamsil Stadium saying to a co-worker that the stadium was overflowing and prosperous for the first time. The article went on to say that Kim Jong Il made it possible for the two sides to meet and enlightened the true path of unification. Furthermore, the first article claimed that Kim Jong Il was the pillar of all of our feelings and our centripetal force.[[1553]](#footnote-1553)

The 1999 Unification Games were not the first inter-Korean basketball matches, nor were they the first unification-themed athletics matches. But they were significant in that eight total matches were played against high level teams, games were broadcast in both the DPRK and ROK, they triggered the construction of a ROK sponsored stadium in Pyongyang, they opened the door for future basketball exchange, and they helped encourage the first Inter-Korean Summit between Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae-Jung. On the other hand, the 1999 Unification Games did fall somewhat short of their full potential. The death of both Jong Ju-yeong and his son, Chung Mong-hun, likely contributed to a decreased will for inter-Korean basketball exchange. Furthermore, the games failed to really break into the DPRK media at the time, lessening their impact.

Table 63: Men’s Mixed Unification Match Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 28-Sep-99 | Unity (Thunderbolt and Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers-Busan Kia Enterprise United Team Mixed) | Solidarity (Thunderbolt and Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers-Busan Kia Enterprise United Team Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 129 | 104 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 29-Sep-99 | Thunderbolt | Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers-Busan Kia Enterprise United Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 102 | 71 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 23-Dec-99 | Unity (Thunder and Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers-Busan Kia Enterprise United Team Mixed) | Solidarity (Thunder and Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers-Busan Kia Enterprise United Team Mixed) | ROK | Seoul | Jamsil Arena | Friendly | 141 | 138 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 24-Dec-99 | Thunder | Daejeon Hyundai Gullivers-Busan Kia Enterprise United Team | ROK | Seoul | Jamsil Arena | Friendly | 86 | 71 | Win | 4W 0L |

Table 64: Women’s Mixed Unification Match Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 13-Aug-99 | Union (Motherland Unification Pan-National Youth Student Union) | Solidarity (Motherland Unification Pan-National Youth Student Union) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Gymnasium | Friendly | 41 | 30 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 28-Sep-99 | Solidarity (Lightning-Cheongju Hyundai Red Fox Mixed) | Unity (Lightning-Cheongju Hyundai Red Fox Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 133 | 127 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 29-Sep-99 | Lightning | Cheongju Hyundai Red Fox | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | 95 | 93 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 23-Dec-99 | Unity (Whirlwind-Cheongju Hyundai Red Fox Mixed) | Solidarity (Whirlwind-Cheongju Hyundai Red Fox Mixed) | ROK | Seoul | Jamsil Arena | Friendly | 133 | 125 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 24-Dec-99 | Whirlwind | Cheongju Hyundai Red Fox | ROK | Seoul | Jamsil Arena | Friendly | 84 | 86 | Loss | 1W 1L |

## 12.7 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

Put simply, basketball was nearly the entirety of domestic athletics policy during the Basketball Intensification Era. Aside from Kim Jong Il’s activities, many lower-level organizations worked to realize his new policy. This began on 8 January 1997. A *Rodong Sinmun* article on that day mentioned Pyongyang Ryulgok High School. Said High School had established a Basketball Propagation Office and new basketball courts and hoops. Furthermore, Pyongyang Okryu High School, Potonggang High School, and others were working on normalizing basketball propagation during extracurricular time.[[1554]](#footnote-1554)

Reports abounded on the development of basketball talents. On 24 January, there was a report about basketball being among the athletic disciplines to be achieving great innovation among athletes.[[1555]](#footnote-1555) By 20 June, there was an article mentioning Kim Jong Il’s encouragement of basketball among workers and students, as well as his want to develop basketball skill to a world class level. As a result, workers at the Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium were giving effort to guarantee the board and lodging of basketball athletes. Additionally, said workers were patiently operating and managing the modern stadium.[[1556]](#footnote-1556) Beginning in early 1998, there was an effort to find rising basketball stars in primary schools.[[1557]](#footnote-1557)

Athletes themselves promoted the new party policy as well. On 24 July 1997, the coach of the 25 April Athletics Club Basketball Team, Kim Song Ho, gave a speech on the occasion of the entire Athletics Club receiving gifts from Kim Jong Il.[[1558]](#footnote-1558) Also, in early and late 1999, nationwide meetings of Youth Athletic workers and athletes emphasized the need to promote basketball.[[1559]](#footnote-1559)

Meanwhile, construction was severely hampered by economic difficulties. The only mention of any state-level construction comes from 9 November 1999. At that time, Kaechon City had a ceremony celebrating the completion of their basketball-capable gymnasium and stadium.[[1560]](#footnote-1560)

On the administrative level, basketball’s new importance was reflected. In 1998, a Basketball Research Office was created within the Athletic Science Research Office.[[1561]](#footnote-1561) On 29 November, there was an article mentioning how they were researching to bring basketball to a world level. The office combined theory and practice to make new competitive athletic methods. They also guided athletes’ practice in person, and made a scientific fundamental basketball skill film.[[1562]](#footnote-1562)

Other administrative organs voiced their support for developing basketball as well. On 28 June 1998, a department head at Pyongyang Medical University said that basketball and other height increasing athletics should be played during school years.[[1563]](#footnote-1563) On 6 October, there was encouragement to organize basketball and other disciplines according to one’s situation on rest days and holidays.[[1564]](#footnote-1564) The next year, on 26 January, workers at the Ministry of Athletics were working to make a revolutionary turning point in basketball and other athletics.[[1565]](#footnote-1565) That 6 December, the National Workers Organization athletics sector workers had a united meeting in the workers culture palace. It was resolved that on national holidays, on rest days, and during workers leisure time basketball and other disciplines must be organized. Accordingly, all county athletics atmospheres were to rise with revolutionary feeling and overflowing optimism.[[1566]](#footnote-1566)

On the local level, there was a great deal of support reported for basketball as a policy. On 5 January 1998, basketball, along with volleyball, was encouraged by the Sinyang County Party Committee.[[1567]](#footnote-1567) On 26 May, the Pukchong County Party Committee especially encouraged basketball. Basketball courts were made at every factory, business, cooperative farm, school, and neighbourhood unit. Basketball games were organized according to the special features and conditions. This helped the county overflow with revolutionary romance and militant spirit.[[1568]](#footnote-1568) On 14 December, Ryongchon County developed basketball to another level according to the party’s intent. Recently, county wide games were organized. Each school organized them, but Ryongchon and Ryongsong High Schools were so good as to be modeled after.[[1569]](#footnote-1569) On 2 June 1999, basketball games and other athletics were occurring in Phyongsong City. This was popularised by the city party committee.[[1570]](#footnote-1570) On 22 November, Dongdaewon District 1 mentioned the leader mandating basketball courts in playplaces for kids. As such, said courts needed to be made in already constructed sections and included in future plans for new sections.[[1571]](#footnote-1571)

By far the most intriguing development of the time was the short-lived development of indigenous basketball rules. Said rules were announced in 1997 by the Basketball Association though the Youth Alliance Newspaper. The new rules were purported to emphasize the country’s independence, asiwell as to create more interest in basketball.[[1572]](#footnote-1572) These rules differed severely from those of the time, including shots that counted for eight points when taken in the last two seconds and points deducted for certain types of failed shots, such as dunks and free throws. Some rules were intended to encourage a certain style of play, such as a four foul limit per player instead of six, six team fouls instead of seven before the bonus, a four-point line, and four points for swished three-point shots. Other rules were made to penalize poor play, such as deducted points for missed free-throws, and a deducted point for each of the following team incursions after eleven such incursions had been made; a missed pass, a missed catch, a lost dribble, traveling, and three second violations. Some rules were more pedestrian, such as the banning of zone defences and a 24 second shot clock rule. Said rules were reported to be used in the Paekdu Mountain Prize competition in February of 1997, and were to be used between expert school basketball teams beginning in 1998.[[1573]](#footnote-1573) The rules were credited with heightening the level of teams.[[1574]](#footnote-1574)

It is unclear how long the newly developed rules were actually used. As far as is possible to tell, they were not mentioned in any state media after their initial implementation. The only proverbial smoking gun in this regard is a 4 December 2011 *Rodong Sinmun* article about new FIBA basketball rules to be implemented in the next year. Said article demanded that the domestic rules be adapted to the new FIBA standard.[[1575]](#footnote-1575) But it is likely that the rules were dropped even earlier. On 6 June 1999, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article about new basketball rules from FIBA. It stated that, starting in the 2000 Olympics, games would go from two halves to four quarters, from a 30 to a 24 second shot clock, a 4 foul per quarter limit before free throws, and from two to three referees. The new rules were said to make a more interesting and faster game while also developing player skill.[[1576]](#footnote-1576) A September article in *Chollima* regurgitated the same opinion on FIBA’s new ruleset.[[1577]](#footnote-1577) Future rule changes would be announced by propaganda outlets as well.[[1578]](#footnote-1578) If all of that evidence weren’t enough, a six-part video series describing basketball rules that was produced some time before January 2021 made absolutely no mention of the unique 1997 ruleset.[[1579]](#footnote-1579)

Abbreviated versions of the 1997 indigenous ruleset have been published by countless Western and ROK-based media outlets as if the rules were current.[[1580]](#footnote-1580) As such, the DPRK’s one-time ruleset has contributed to the mystique that the DPRK goes out of its way to do things differently from the rest of the world. However, the reality is somewhat different. The indigenous ruleset was intended mostly to encourage a more error-free play style and to speed up the game. This would have benefitted the DPRK players, who were generally shorter and more well-organized than their competition. But the rules were more suited to practice courts than they were actual competition. In the end, the rules were simply the result of overambition that was spurred by the sudden tidal wave of support behind basketball within domestic policy.

## 12.8 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

The Basketball Intensification Era was particularly significant in the area of domestic basketball tournaments, as it saw the creation of three independent basketball tournaments. The first was the yearly 28 August Youth Cup Basketball Tournament, which ran from 1997 until 2009. The second was the National Agricultural Workers Basketball Tournament, which began in 1999 and runs every two or three years up to the modern day. The third was the National University Student Competitive Basketball Tournament, which began in 1999 and ran yearly until 2010. They were the first basketball tournaments to be held independent of a larger tournament since the February 1987 Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament and the National Athletics Club Basketball Championship Tournament in February 1975.

Another interesting, though perhaps less significant development was the attempt to create a professional basketball league in 1997. This may have been following the example of China. In 1995, the Chinese Basketball Association, following a wave of growth of popularity of the NBA and basketball in China, underwent the process of professionalizing their league.[[1581]](#footnote-1581)

But the 1997 attempted professionalization of the DPRK’s basketball teams was much different than China’s attempt. Up to that point, only boxing had become a professional sport, having done so in 1992. As such, there was little precedent for the basketball professionalization to follow. What’s worse, there was a complete lack of clarity as to what professionalization meant on a concrete level. As far as one can tell, it seems that professionalization was a mere re-naming of existing teams. The teams that were re-named already consisted of state amateurs, and there is no indication that the way in which players were paid changed at all. There were also no significant changes to the leagues which the teams played in. In the end, the “professionalization” movement seems to have died out extremely quickly. Teams only used their “professional” names for one domestic tournament, the Total Victory Cup Athletics Tournament in July and August of 1997. [[1582]](#footnote-1582) The professional teams would survive for a series of international friendly matches that took place through 1998, and see their last known matches during the Unification Games in 1999.

In any case, what follows are the known details about the professionalization movement. The first teams to be “professionalized” were the men’s teams named Typhoon, Thunder, and Storm, and the women’s teams named Whirlwind, Lightning, and Taedong River. Typhoon and Storm in particular were given their names by Kim Jong Il. They were formerly known as Amrok River Men’s and Women’s Team’s, respectively, and were the first to be named.[[1583]](#footnote-1583) Thunder was the best known of these teams, as they featured Ri Myong Hun and played an away match in Seoul.[[1584]](#footnote-1584) Journalist Jeong Dong-gil asserted that the professional teams were part of the effort to get Ri to the NBA.[[1585]](#footnote-1585) All in all, 12 men’s and women’s teams were developed.[[1586]](#footnote-1586) Typhoon was the first “professional” winner of the Republic Championship Tournament, and it was said that their training was increased to twice as difficult after becoming pro.[[1587]](#footnote-1587)

Table 65: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **Court** | **Court** |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 10-Feb-97~28-Feb-97 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Athletics Festival | 중앙기관 일군들의 체육축전 | Early Mar-97 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 2-Apr-97~30-Apr-97 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《전승컵》체육경기대회 | 25-Jul-97~13-Aug-97 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| First National Youth and Student 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제1차 전국청년학생들의 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 28-Aug-97~2-Sep-97 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 14-Oct-1997~17-Nov-1997 | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《오산덕상》체육경기대회 | 24-Dec-97~10-Jan-98 | Pyongyang, Samjiyon County, Kangkye, Bujon County | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 2-Feb-98~7-Mar-98 | Pyongyang, Haesan, Samjiyon | ? |
| 4th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제4차 <<백두산상>> 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 18-Feb-98~27-Feb-98 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 4-Apr-98-30-Apr-98 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《보천보홰불상》체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-98~30-Jun-98 | Nampho, Hamhung | ? |
| 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory National Agricultural Sector Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 공화국 창건 50돐 경축 전국 농업부문 근로자들의 롱구경기대회 | 17-Aug-98~19-Aug-98 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Gymnasium |
| 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic National Schoolchildren's Palace, Assembly Hall Athletics Kurakbu Championship Tournament | 공화국창건 50돐기념 전국학생소년궁전, 회관 체육구락부 선수권대회 | 20-Aug-98~26-Aug-98 | Hamhung | ? |
| National Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국롱구경기대회 | 20-Aug-98~28-Aug-98 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium, Others |
| Second National Youth and Student 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제2차 전국청년학생들의 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 25-Aug-98~31-Aug-98 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University, Several University and High School Gymnasiums in Pyongyang |
| 9th People's Athletic Tournament | 제9차 인민체육대회 | 9-Oct-98~20-Oct-98 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국《9월5일상》대학생체육경기대회 | 11-Oct-98~2-Nov-98 | Pyongyang (Final), Provincial Cities (Preliminaries) | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《오산덕상》체육경기대회 | 22-Dec-98-29-Dec-98 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 20-Jan-99-10-Feb-99 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 5-Feb-99~26-Feb-99 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 농업근로자들의 롱구경기대회 | 3-Mar-99~13-Mar-99 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative Mangyongdae Prize Competition | 태양절기념 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 2-Apr-99-29-Apr-99 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National High School Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국고등중학생롱구경기대회 | 00-Apr-99 | ? | ? |
| National University Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 6-Apr-99~11-Apr-99 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Youth Competitive Athletic Tournament | 전국청소년들의 체육경기대회 | 2-Jun-99~Jun-99 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Hamhung | ? |
| Third National Youth and Student 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제3차 전국청년학생들의 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 23-Aug-99~29-Aug-99 | ? | ? |
| National Schoolchildren's Palace, Assembly Hall Athletics Kurakbu Championship Tournament | 전국학생소년궁전, 회관 체육구락부 선수권대회 | 00-Aug-99 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 09-Sep-99 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 5-Oct-1999~29-Oct-1999 | ? | ? |
| Artists Athletic Tournament | 문화예술인체육대회 | 23-Nov-99 | Pyongyang | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《오산덕상》체육경기대회 | 20-Dec-99~25-Dec-99 | Chongjin | ? |

From the basketball tournament details of the Basketball Intensification Era, the following conclusions can be reached. Firstly, tournament naming conventions continued to harken to the leadership cult or nationalism. Notable new tournaments included the Osandok Prize, named for the birthday of Kim Jong Il’s mother, and the 28 August Youth Cup, which commemorated the Sixth Youth Holiday and the 70th Anniversary of the Korea Communist Youth Alliance.[[1588]](#footnote-1588) Secondly, tournaments began to move back toward Pyongyang. This is likely due to the economic difficulties of the time.

Table 66: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-97~28-Feb-97 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Athletics Festival | Early Mar-97 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-97~30-Apr-97 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jul-97~13-Aug-97 | Typhoon (Amrok River) | ? | ? | ? |
| First National Youth and Student 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 28-Aug-97~2-Sep-97 | Pyongyang City (Working Youth) Pyongyang City (University) Pyongyang City (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 14-Oct-1997~17-Nov-1997 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Dec-97~10-Jan-98 | Amrok River | ? | ? | Pyongyang City |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Feb-98~7-Mar-98 | ? | ? | ? | 25 April Athletics Club Amrok River Pyongyang City Locomotive South Hamgyong Province Pyongyang Textile Factory |
| 4th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 18-Feb-98~27-Feb-98 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Apr-98-30-Apr-98 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-98~30-Jun-98 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory National Agricultural Sector Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 17-Aug-98~19-Aug-98 | Ryokpo Pasture | ? | ? | ? |
| 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic National Schoolchildren's Palace, Assembly Hall Athletics Club Championship Tournament | 20-Aug-98~26-Aug-98 | Pyongyang Students and Children's Palace Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National Competitive Basketball Tournament | 20-Aug-98~28-Aug-98 | Pyongyang City (Adult) Pyongyang City (Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| Second National Youth and Student 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 25-Aug-98~31-Aug-98 | Kusong City North Phyongan Province (Working Youth) Kim Hyong Jik Normal University (University) Kang Pan Sok High School (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th People's Athletic Tournament | 9-Oct-98~20-Oct-98 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 11-Oct-98~2-Nov-98 | Kim Jong Tae Haeju #1 Normal University | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 22-Dec-98-29-Dec-98 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Jan-99-10-Feb-99 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Feb-99~26-Feb-99 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 3-Mar-99~13-Mar-99 | Cholsan County Phosan Cooperative Farm | Phyongwon County Tokche Cooperative Farm | Kwail County Songgok Farm | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative Mangyongdae Prize Competition | 2-Apr-99-29-Apr-99 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| National High School Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 00-Apr-99 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 6-Apr-99~11-Apr-99 | ? | ? | ? | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University |
| National Youth Competitive Athletic Tournament | 2-Jun-99~Jun-99 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Third National Youth and Student 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 23-Aug-99~29-Aug-99 | South Hamgyong Province (Working Youth) Pyongyang City (University) Pyongyang City (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| National Schoolchildren's Palace, Assembly Hall Athletics Club Championship Tournament | 00-Aug-99 | Pyongyang Students and Children's Palace Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 09-Sep-99 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 5-Oct-1999~29-Oct-1999 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Artists Athletic Tournament | 23-Nov-99 | Motion Picture and Art Sector | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Dec-99~25-Dec-99 | Tumen River | ? | ? | ? |

Table 67: Men's Domestic Basketball Matches, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 00-Sep-97 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? | ? | 3W 2L | 12W 1L |

From the men’s domestic basketball tournament results during the Basketball Intensification Era, the following conclusions can be reached. Firstly, Pyongyang City with five tournament championships and Amrok River with three tournament championships were the dominant teams of the era. Secondly, smaller tournaments began more frequently announcing winners, sometimes of multiple divisions. Thirdly, even though basketball was emphasized during this era, individual match results continued to be scarce.

Table 68: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-97~28-Feb-97 | Locomotive | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-97~30-Apr-97 | Locomotive | ? | ? | ? |
| Total Victory Cup Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jul-97~13-Aug-97 | Storm (Amrok River?) | ? | ? | ? |
| First National Youth and Student 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 28-Aug-97~2-Sep-97 | Pyongyang City (University) Pyongyang City (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 14-Oct-1997~17-Nov-1997 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory National Agricultural Sector Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 17-Aug-98~19-Aug-98 | Sonbong County Overall Farm | ? | ? | ? |
| 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic National Schoolchildren's Palace, Assembly Hall Athletics Club Championship Tournament | 20-Aug-98~26-Aug-98 | Gumya Students and Children's Palace Hall | ? | ? | ? |
| National Competitive Basketball Tournament | 20-Aug-98~28-Aug-98 | Pyongyang City (Adult) Pyongyang City (Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| Second National Youth and Student 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 25-Aug-98~31-Aug-98 | Kim Chol Ju Normal University (University) Pyongyang Ryulgok High School (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th People's Athletic Tournament | 9-Oct-98~20-Oct-98 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 11-Oct-98~2-Nov-98 | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 22-Dec-98-29-Dec-98 | Amrok River | ? | ? | 28 August Youth |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Feb-99~26-Feb-99 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 3-Mar-99~13-Mar-99 | Cholsan County Posan Cooperative Farm | Yomju County Dobong Cooperative Farm | Kaepung County Sinsong Cooperative Farm | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative Mangyongdae Prize Competition | 2-Apr-99-29-Apr-99 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Third National Youth and Student 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 23-Aug-99~29-Aug-99 | Pyongyang City (University) North Hamgyong Province (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| National Schoolchildren's Palace, Assembly Hall Athletics Club Championship Tournament | 00-Aug-99 | Gumya Students and Children's Palace Hall | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 5-Oct-1999~29-Oct-1999 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Artists Athletic Tournament | 23-Nov-99 | Motion Picture and Art Sector | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Dec-99~25-Dec-99 | Sobaeksu | ? | ? | ? |

From the women’s domestic basketball tournament results during the Basketball Intensification Era, the following conclusion can be reached. The dominant teams were Amrok River with four championships, Pyongyang City with three championships, and Locomotive with two championships. Overall, in both the men’s and women’s sectors, the top teams in this era continued to be those with decades long traditions.

## 12.9 Teams

### 12.9.1 Guided by the Party, Organized by Self-sufficiency

During the Basketball Intensification Era, a new theme began to emerge within reports of basketball being organized and carried out by lower-level organizations. Specifically, the Party was depicted to be the driving force behind the promotion of basketball. Meanwhile, the organizations often had to rely upon themselves in order to acquire the necessary equipment for basketball due to the economic difficulties of the time. Remarkably, this image comes through quite clearly in state propaganda. But, despite propaganda’s admissions that the economic conditions were difficult, the message was always meant to be positive. Basically, those organizations who were able to come up with their own basketball equipment were praised as exemplary.

Before digging into specific examples, it is useful to see how basketball was described within the context of the Arduous March. In a 6 September 1999 *Rodong Sinmun* column, basketball’s popularization was described as a part of the intelligent effort put towards athletics during the Arduous March. The description went on to describe basketball as being quickly distributed, making workteams restless with basketball and the nation thriving even more. Meanwhile, the Arduous March is described as overcoming an imperialistic blockade and pressure. It was said to be a poor, difficult, and disgusting era.[[1589]](#footnote-1589) As such, the aforementioned column continues the theme of basketball as a motivational tool during tough times.

In any case, it was clear that party organizations were in many cases responsible for the organization of basketball games. What follows are some examples. On 5 August 1997, Ryongdae Fishery Business had a basketball court on site. General Kim Jong Il encouraged basketball, so the businesses’ lower-level party committee permeated the importance of athletics and gave effort to popularize basketball specifically. Resultingly, at city tournaments, the businesses’ women’s basketball team got first place every time. Also, all workers at the business took up one or more ball sport discipline.[[1590]](#footnote-1590)

On 21 October that same year, the Pukchong Shoe Factory was reported to be popularizing and normalizing basketball and other disciplines. They had a basketball court and organized basketball games. Due to the lower party committee actively promoting basketball and workers increased interest, basketball was normalized and popularized. Also, the factory achieved first place in the county basketball competition.[[1591]](#footnote-1591)

According to a 1 December article, at Songpyonjon General Business in South Hwanghae Province all workers during holidays and athletics days actively participated in basketball games. In comparison to other disciplines, basketball games were especially often organized due to party policy. They used Sundays effectively, organizing basketball games by workplace. Resultingly, workers had a good physical constitution, basketball skill. The same article also depicted Daesong High School in Sukchon County. There, basketball in particular was actively carried out. Teachers were carrying out basketball training. The school was making organizations to develop basketball according to party policy. The party policy is explained easily, and conditions are set for basketball training to be carried out. This involved teaching rules and one to two hours of training every day. Accordingly, the school got first in county basketball games. Every week, the school carried out games by school level and year and reviewed those who did well.[[1592]](#footnote-1592)

The next year, in January, the Sunan district party committee set up basketball goals at all nursery, primary, and secondary schools in the area. All secondary schools also had a basketball hoop for each grade. Additionally, hundreds of long-term basketball courts and sub-courts were established. As such, lots of vigour for basketball began. The district had quickly ran to keep in line with party policy.[[1593]](#footnote-1593)

On 16 July a report came in from the Pongsan Clothes Factory. There, the Lower Level Party Committee, through several propaganda and instigation methods, taught basketball knowledge, rules, and skills. They also operated athletics days normally. Games were often organized by workplace, and the factory’s basketball level increased. By including basketball in Socialist competition principles, athletic passion increased to another level. Team workplace six in particular actively participated and occupied a high level of basketball skill.[[1594]](#footnote-1594)

On 6 October, basketball games and other disciplines were arranged according to the Central District Party Committee in Pyongyang.[[1595]](#footnote-1595) Lastly, on 18 May 1999, there was an article about the Taehung County Party Committee embracing party directives. They took basketball and computer education seriously, so results were improved.[[1596]](#footnote-1596)

Occasionally, the party committee would participate, on some level, in the construction of facilities. On 17 December 1998, the Songwon Cooperative Farm in Taechon County, under the guidance of the county party committee, quickly built a basketball and volleyball court.[[1597]](#footnote-1597) Later, on 14 January 1999, Phyongsan County party committee was reported to have made the Phyongsan County People’s Gymnasium. Said gymnasium had basketball capabilities.[[1598]](#footnote-1598)

Beginning in 1998, the theme of many reports began to be that of self-sufficiency. Put simply, this meant that the lower-level organizations had to construct basketball facilities and equipment with little to no government assistance. The first such report is from 14 March at Chongsok High School in Jongju. The principal conveyed a meeting about replenishing basketball hoops and other supplies. The school succeeded in acquiring and setting up around ten basketball hoops. Teachers had searched all around the mountain ranges in order to find the materials. This instilled revolutionary passion in the school. They were able to solve the problem of needed supplies themselves.[[1599]](#footnote-1599)

On 4 May, Manpho High School was making basketballs and other athletics balls via their own efforts and sending them to other secondary schools in the province. That 12 February, Kim Jong Il saw the basketball they made and sent his thanks, showing his benevolent affection.[[1600]](#footnote-1600) On 8 May, a grandmother bought a basketball a year prior, but didn’t know how to send it to her grandson’s unit. Finally, the people’s representative group came by to deliver it. When the unit got it, their eyes were wet with gratitude, as they could finally exercise.[[1601]](#footnote-1601)

On 1 September, through a revolutionary mindset of salvation through one’s own effort, the Kangson Metal Department University procured basketballs and other athletic equipment.[[1602]](#footnote-1602) On 19 September, the Wonsan City Party Committee reassigned workers and specialists to a specific factory in order to guarantee manufacture of needed basketballs for schools. This was said to be an example of self-effort.[[1603]](#footnote-1603)

That November, a report was published about the Songrim City Education Equipment Repair Shop. Due to the development of basketball policy, many schools were setting up basketball goals. However, teachers who were to teach basketball knowledge had less balls than needed for the number of students. The Songrim City Education Equipment Repair Shop was not a large business, but decided to make basketballs with their own hands. They needed to look at reading materials for the scientific basics on how to do so. Rubber processing equipment was made and workers were pulling all-nighters. The manufacturing failed at first, but after roughly 170 tests, they made an excellent basketball. This was said to be an example of salvation through one’s own effort (자력갱생). Subsequently, the repair shop began to make all types of balls.[[1604]](#footnote-1604)

The next January, Pyongyang Athletic University, even though things were insufficient, had workers making a basketball court and other athletic facilities.[[1605]](#footnote-1605) On 27 May, the Amrok River Tyre Factory Necessities Branch Factory was actively quickening manufacture of highly demanded products such as basketballs. Their workteam leader made a basketball factory in a short time when there was a need.[[1606]](#footnote-1606)

On 1 June, the Sungbyongjon General Business in Jagang Province purchased logs to make their own basketball hoop, other equipment. *Rodong Sinmun* ran a picture of their workers playing basketball on the completed court.[[1607]](#footnote-1607) Later, on 30 October, the Nammun High School in Songchongang District had students make a big basketball court. Even in a difficult era, the teachers took the party’s intent to heart. The teachers and workers found reserve iron, steel, and wood. They used it to make around 20 basketball hoops and rims. The rims were attached to the back wall of the school office building, making it so that the students could practice shooting.[[1608]](#footnote-1608)

To summarize, the Basketball Intensification Era’s policy priorities were, in many cases, pushed forth by lower-level party organs. However, there was often no available resources to support the party policy which was pushed forward. As such, the government began to promote organizations finding their own ways to create basketball equipment and facilities.

### 12.9.2 Successful Teams

The vast majority of articles describing basketball in daily life discuss the issue from an organizational level. Said articles describe how a particular organization carries out basketball training and what kinds of results that they have achieved. This can be said to have the goal of helping to maintain the collectivism of the society.

Such articled began on 8 January 1997. A *Rodong Sinmun* article was published about how basketball was gaining active popularity among High Schools in Pyongyang. There was a focus on Kan Pan Sok High School, who had captured first place in national competitions. Also, Pyongyang Ryulgok High School, which had secured nine First Place Cups and 20 Gold Medals, was said to be using the teachers’ broad basketball knowledge and diverse skill techniques.[[1609]](#footnote-1609) On 7 March, there was a report from Chongjin Aluminium Bowl Factory that workers played at a basketball court, and that workers achieved the honour of first place every time at area tournaments.[[1610]](#footnote-1610)

On 25 July, in accordance with Kim Jong Il’s directive to quickly develop basketball skill, *Rodong Sinmun* visited the Locomotive Athletics Club. Efforts were being made to develop basketball vigorously in a short time period. There was mention of the training environment and utilization of man-to-man defence tactics. The average age of the second team was said to be five to six years younger than that of the first team. There was great passion from the second team, despite them not being athletes for very long. The women’s team also trained hard. Lastly, there was mention of three members from Locomotive going to the Storm women’s team.[[1611]](#footnote-1611)

On 29 July, there was an article about the Pyongyang Jonu High School Basketball Team members. There were beads of sweat on the bodies of female team members, and they trained with passion. They practiced passing and shooting motion practice. Basketball was selected as their specialized athletic discipline. As such, the school has three first place cups and over 100 first place medals. There was immense effort from students and teachers.[[1612]](#footnote-1612)

On 2 August, there was an article about the Pyongyang Cornstarch Factory. Within the past few years, they won all of the city basketball tournaments. But recently, there was a renewed emphasis on athletics from the factory’s lower-level party committee. This led to increased interest in basketball among the employees. There were men’s and women’s teams. The Mass Athletics Association Secretary-General made sure things ran normally. Every Athletics Day, matches were played between workplaces. Specifically, the men’s basketball team used rest time or after-work hours to play 1 hour or more of basketball each day. The women’s team consisted entirely of married women, but they used their time wisely and also get first place in city tournaments. Overall, the factory had increased health, unity, and innovation.[[1613]](#footnote-1613)

On 4 August, there was an article about Ryulgok High School Basketball Team. They were giving effort to improve basketball, increasing physical strength and height. The team was led by Kim Chae Song, a meritorious teacher. He roused the might of the collective to organize needed equipment and training grounds. They re-organized basketball teams, and had all students participate in basketball training. This meant good teaching from the principal and teachers. There was an emphasis on the development of excellent athletes, and not just popularization of basketball. Staff used their extracurricular time to train. The plan of training separated students age by every two years, focusing on specific skills. Games were carried out amongst those of the same school year. The school won the Jong Il Peak Prize Cup, among other competitions. Due to the encouragement of basketball, this school’s students were claimed 3 to 5 centimetres taller than average.[[1614]](#footnote-1614)

On 5 August, there was an article about the Pyongyang General Textile Factory. The reporter saw very close and competitive games among passionate players. At said games, people were enjoying themselves and laughing. The factory had selected basketball as a special athletic discipline. The young female working athletes had ample facilities. There were six different outdoor basketball courts, along with one indoor court. Everyone had skilful play, enjoying the sport and participating often. As such, they achieved the honour of Model Athletics Factory. The workers exhibited strong physical fitness, passion, ambition, and beads of sweat. It was a magnificent sight.[[1615]](#footnote-1615)

On 5 August, a report was published from Amrok River’s Typhoon Team’s practice court, Pyongyang Gymnasium. Kim Jong Il gave the team their name. They did preparation exercise and revolving athletic training. This involved cast-iron muscle training and skill training. The training method involved a routine of 20 seconds of training and 40 seconds of rest. Exercises included one where a 100-kilogram barbell was worn on the shoulders while athletes bent their knees at 90 degrees. Other exercises included 50-kilogram barbell raising and pushing up a 10-kilogram barbell while laying down. Athletes specialized as attackers and defenders. The weight and speed of the professional athletes was almost two times that of amateur athletes. Other athletes did drills like lifting a 5-kilogram weight behind their head while laying down and lifting 40-kilogram weights. Upon measuring an athlete’s pulse, it was found that said pulse was more than ideal. The athletes were following training orders of the coach. Players regarded weights as loyalty and filial devotion to the leader. Overall, the team was making a raging sensation in the world basketball community.[[1616]](#footnote-1616)

On 28 August, a report was published about Kang Pan Sok High School. Through basketball, extracurricular time was exciting. The students were successors of the revolution and future main characters. They were taught confidence, skill, fundamentals, and rules. In accordance with the psychological features of each age, basketball games were often organized by school year and school level. Games on a large scale were led by a teacher, making it so that first place could be achieved on multiple occasions.[[1617]](#footnote-1617)

On 6 September, there was a report of workers at the Ministry of Transportation. They showed an optimistic lifestyle character and passion in the workplace. They had a table of competition for basketball. One worker was old, but was scoring a lot of points. Basketball courts were made in order to increase interest in basketball. Even a tournament was made in August. With fighting spirit, the older workers joined in, and there are now roughly 70 teams at the workplace. During lunchtime and evenings, leagues were contested by each bureau and office. Recently, a team of responsible workers achieved an excellent result at the Central Organ Athletics Competition. Often during leisure times and on Sundays, they can be found enjoying time at the basketball court.[[1618]](#footnote-1618)

On 9 September, there was a report from Posan High School in Cholsan County. All teachers and students were playing basketball and all were preparing to be basketball athletes. They put in great effort according to the party directive. This involved making more basketball hoops and preparation training. They made basketball teams and played basketball during extracurricular time. They also taught fundamentals and strategy, making amazing revolutionary geniuses. Each day, the basketball skill level was rising. At several athletic tournaments, the school achieved first place.[[1619]](#footnote-1619)

On 13 September, there was a report from Ryujan High School in Unpa County. They were working to popularize basketball. Recently, in the Jong Il Peak Prize and other competitions, they achieved three first place cups and 178 medals. In total, the school raised 48 basketball athletes who now play for central teams. The school made two basketball courts on school grounds, and 40 basketball hoops on the surrounding athletics grounds. There was one ball for every two students, so that they can practice after learning theory and movement. Every week, games by school year and level were conducted so that overall skill increased. There were basketball teams for each school year as well. The school prominently appeared in national basketball competitions, and they were pushing for higher goals and great results in school athletics.[[1620]](#footnote-1620)

On 5 October, there was a report from Wolchon Pit’s front yard at Sonchon Mine. Basketball games were occurring in the evening between Wolchon Pit and Mining Workers. There was lots of clapping, singing, and drumming. This gave the workers collectivist strength. After the game, they resolved to solve a problem related to transporting things out of Wolchon Pit.[[1621]](#footnote-1621)

On 21 October, there was article about all units and departments at Pokchong County Factories, businesses, cooperative farms, and schools playing basketball. They used holidays and rest days to do so. Basketball was implemented according to the party line by the responsible party secretary. There were serious debates on how to popularize and normalize basketball. All factories, businesses, cooperative farms, and schools made a basketball court. There was amazing passion from the party members, workers, and youth. Accordingly, there were no holes in the organization of basketball. This demonstrated group connectivity and force, helping them conclude the Arduous March victoriously.[[1622]](#footnote-1622)

On 25 October, there was a report from Namsi High School in Yomju County. The school was putting effort into basketball. This was done since a long time ago but they were also accepting the party’s line of basketball specialization. Additionally, they had often achieved first place since a long time ago in provincial competitions. They used basketball principles, common sense, and refereeing methods. Every Thursday, teachers would organize basketball games. During extracurricular time, they learned ballhandling, rebounding, and et cetera. Basketball became popular, and in recent years more basketball hoops were installed and the procurement of more balls were guaranteed. The school created teams which strengthened training. Training included mountain climbing, step running, jumping, defence and offense, dodging, and ball control. Older students were encouraging the younger students while training.[[1623]](#footnote-1623)

On 28 October, there was an article about the Kim Il Sung University Athletics Faculty Athletics Club. On 5 October, Kim Jong Il watched the game between students of Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek Industrial University. With a newfound sense of gratitude and excitement, the reporter visited Kim Il Sung University. The players were hard at training. They used man to man defence and long-range shots. They were nimble and quick outstanding athletes. Kim Jong Il had indeed applauded them. Kim Il Sung University was at a high level, with excellent specialization.[[1624]](#footnote-1624)

On 3 November, at the Songdong High School in Pukchong County, their basketball team was worth seeing. They showed skilled dribbling, passing, and precise shooting. Their movements had become natural. They often got first place in county and provincial wide tournaments. All passion and effort had been put forth to train capable basketball athletes. Also, there were basketball courts at the school.[[1625]](#footnote-1625)

On 1 December, there was a report from the Songpyonjon General Business in South Hwanghae Province. All workers during holidays and athletics days actively participated in basketball games. Basketball games were especially often organized due to party policy. They used Sundays effectively to organize basketball games by workplace. This results in a good physical constitution and basketball skill. Also, at Nami High School in Mundok County, teachers were training basketball movements. They often organized basketball games during extracurricular time, Sundays, and holidays. At Taesong High School in Sukchon County, basketball in particular was actively carried out. Teachers executed basketball training. They were also making organizations to develop basketball according to party policy. Party policy is explained easily, and conditions are set for basketball training to be carried out. They were teaching rules, executing one to two hours of training every day, and getting first in county games. Every week, there were games by school level and year, and those who do well were reviewed.[[1626]](#footnote-1626)

On 9 December, there was a report from the Pyongyang Telephone Bureau. It mentioned that basketball courts are well made and maintain according to conditions, and that basketball games are normally carried out as part of a rising athletics atmosphere.[[1627]](#footnote-1627)

On 20 December, in Tosan County, all workers and party members were playing basketball among other sports. Proper equipment was provided. They were following the party directive about basketball and volleyball. Basketball and swimming facilities were built at organs, businesses, and schools in the county. At the County Party Committee, the County Business Administration Committee, and the County Cooperative Farm Management Committee, workers specifically played basketball by department when the opportunity arose. They also often organized basketball games and had solid basketball skill.[[1628]](#footnote-1628)

On 29 December, the Aekuk Knitting Factory made it so that all workers could play basketball at a high level, and holidays and rest days were used to often organize basketball games.[[1629]](#footnote-1629)

On 30 December, basketball in particular was popularized and normalized at the Songchongang District Ryangjong Business. Said business was already a model athletics factory. As instructed by Kim Jong Il, basketball was good for body training and collectivist thought. Also, so that all employees can properly play basketball, fundamental education was given and sufficient conditions were guaranteed. Every athletics day, basketball games were well organized by workplace. This created an overflowing revolutionary and romantic lifestyle character.[[1630]](#footnote-1630)

On 30 December, a report was published by Sinuiju Youth Athletics School. Kim Jong Il said that youth must be encouraged to play lots of basketball. At the time of the reporter’s visit, they were doing fundamental skill training. There was a capable boys coach who had done his job for 20 years. Additionally, there were more than a few basketball athletes from the school who had participated in international games. Students showed diverse ways of dealing with the ball. The students were sweating while training, wanting to train to be athletes of the future. It had been only half a year since establishing the men’s basketball team, but skills were improving by the day. Tall and short athletes were training in two separate groups. They held the conviction of growing into reliable basketball athletes.[[1631]](#footnote-1631)

On 3 January 1998, the Samgae High School in Yomju County was using athletics time and extracurricular time to carry out basketball education and training, and organized matches often. They also put in effort to popularize basketball, and constantly tried to improve their skill level.[[1632]](#footnote-1632)

On 9 January, there was keen basketball competition in a Sunan district school. For each grade they had a basketball hoop. Students started from Kindergarten. The teachers went to great lengths to secure basketballs even though they were insufficient.[[1633]](#footnote-1633)

On 13 January, basketball was reported to be popular at the Rajinpho Cooperative Farm Vegetable Workteam #1 in Yonan County. All in the workteam enjoyed it. It was supplemented by morning running. Five in the team are unmarried women. Recently, county basketball games were held by each farm. There were hundreds of participants, but this team had the youngest average age. None of them had participated on high school teams. But they exceeded expectations. They beat Sinyang Cooperative Farm in the semi-final. As such, 18-year-olds participated in the final, moving the crowd emotionally. There were lots of questions concerning where they learned basketball, and whether they had learned it while working. But really, they had only started during the previous March. Back then, the Sub-workteam leader had been given a party assignment. In the front of the workteam lounge, they widened the area and set up a basketball goal. They then taught the five unmarried women how to do it. They also taught spirit, fitness, skill, effort, game organization, and mid-range shots. All of them were people of conviction. The women worked hard and played basketball well. They achieved prosperity through basketball, and all were able to overflow with confidence and optimism. Work and livelihood were good. The workteam was going for first place in production and basketball, and showing loyalty to the general.[[1634]](#footnote-1634)

On 20 January, there was an on-the-spot report from Sonkyo Gymnasium at the Sonkyo Disctrict Youth Athletics School. There, students were receiving passionate guidance from coaches as they played a match. During winter break, students were engaged in intense basketball matches every day. They handled the ball, skilfully dodge the opposing players, and scored. The youth athletics school had not been in operation for long, but the skill of the players was better than average. Athletes received the ball, passed the ball, and dribbled for a good-looking basket under the hoop. They were said to be among those who would get a gold medal for Juche Korea.[[1635]](#footnote-1635)

Also on 20 January, Pyongyang Beer Factory’s female basketball team was rumoured around the nation. Every member had several children. They showed the real state of the factory’s athletics. They didn’t originally do well, but accepted the party line and made a team according to realistic conditions. They persistently practiced and played matches. Additionally, they made tactics and trained skill. The team was not inferior in organizational power, and grew together. The captain was best at offense and defence and made 1000 goals. Other athletes had special traits, personality, and skill. They showed strategy, high skill, and accurate shooting. The achievement of the team is adding one more level of romance and life for the people, while plainly also showing the legitimacy and livelihood of party athletic policy.[[1636]](#footnote-1636) The same team was given another mention on 20 February as they were getting numerous phone calls and letters asking about basketball rules and organization.[[1637]](#footnote-1637)

On 22 January, there was a mention in English-language media of a team of 18-year-old girls who had advanced to the finals of Rajinpho Cooperative Farm in Yonan County, South Hwanghae Province. They had been learning basketball for less than a year, and were taught under their sub-workteam leader after a day’s work.[[1638]](#footnote-1638)

On 24 January there was a report from Songpyong District Cooperative Farm in Chongjin City. They exemplified basketballs good points, organizing teams and games. Their basketball court used the empty space of the threshing floor, adjusting to the conditions of their space. Said court was also close to the place where workers gathered in morning and night, as well as their resting place. During resting periods, each person grabbed a ball and practiced shots. The county party secretary taught rules, how to grab the ball, shooting, and handling. Matches were organized on holidays and rest days. The farm also awarded prizes, increasing interest and competitiveness. Many capable basketball players were raised. In the district, they got first place, and they appeared in the provincial tournament.[[1639]](#footnote-1639)

On 23 February there was a report from Phohang High School in Chongjin City. They set a basketball court and raised hoops. One hoop was for kids, and another one was for youth. Teachers taught rules, how to grab the ball, handling, shooting, and fundamentals. All teachers, including principals and vice principals, participated. On rest days, basketball matches were organized and great interest rose. As a result, basketball gradually became popularized. The lower grades were taught fundamentals. Meanwhile, higher grades had better mental and physical capacity. As such, tactics of stealing and handling were taught. Team members used their extracurricular time to train, and some acted as referees. Overall, students quickly grew taller, their general basketball skill was increased, and they made high scores in each match.[[1640]](#footnote-1640)

On 23 March, there was a report from Sonchon County Unjong Cooperative Farm. They regarded encouraging basketball as a Socialist forced march to speed up for victory. In order to bring basketball to another level, they exercised by workplace. This increased the role of the popular athletics and introduced fundamental skill. Together with rest days and holidays, each athletic match was carried out by village. Through this, they achieved higher basketball skill. Because of this, those who were good at basketball in the past can do it even better now.[[1641]](#footnote-1641)

On 24 March, there was a report about Phihyon Textile Factory workers maintaining the basketball court and normally carrying out basketball games. Two working units were especially fit and skilled at basketball and volleyball. Tongdaechon High School in Anpyon County also made a basketball court. Teachers there were teaching basketball rules and basic movements. Students were able to participate in a number of ball sports. Teachers emphasized grabbing the ball, stealing, and handling.[[1642]](#footnote-1642)

In the April *Chollima* journal, there was an article about raising reliable basketball reserve athletes at the Central District Youth Athletics School. Coach Ri Sung Su said that they analysed basketball development trends and made a structure to meet a worldwide standard. Students’ movement, stopping, passing, and grabbing was greatly improving, and they practiced one on one dodging training.[[1643]](#footnote-1643)

On 11 May, there was an article about an end of April game at Rimsok Mine between Tangwang Pit and Sosa Pit. It was an intense game. The final whistle blew, and they were sorrowful due to the match ending as a tie. They said they would finish the game in the mine, implying that they would win with better production. The workers showed bravery and youthful spirit as they headed to the workplace. It was a romantic lifestyle image.[[1644]](#footnote-1644)

On 12 June, there was a report from Kim Jong Tae Haeju #1 Normal University. Last August, the boys team got the first-place cup in the national university tournament. Also, they achieved an excellent result in April’s National Youth Loyalty Festival. They were accepting the party’s intent to encourage basketball, and doing well. In provincial tournaments for the past two years, they never got less than first.[[1645]](#footnote-1645)

On 26 June, Kang Pan Sok High School was reported to be teaching basketball education well. The principal emphasized the importance of physical fitness for basketball and other sports. Workers and teachers put basketball skill first. The staff always achieved a high result in the district-wide and city-wide basketball games. They made a nice basketball gymnasium and outdoor basketball court with roughly 30 hoops. As such, they were often prosperous. The school received active guidance from the party structure. Said school was passionate about basketball education work and basketball was the school’s specialty. Teachers taught correct perspective, regulated skill, and used old experience and passionate exploration to get basketball development trends. According to students’ psychological traits and situation, they were given fundamental training, physical training, and skill training. Everything was scientifically run. Teachers lent their strength, students played the game, and parents’ confidence was captured. The school won several first-place cups. Seventeen graduates are now at several different athletics teams.[[1646]](#footnote-1646)

On 20 July, there was a report on Pongui Cooperative Farm. Each rest day and holiday, they often organized basketball games by workteam and subworkteam. This increased their basketball level. All had a high interest in basketball, and the farm was known as a strong team. They made a worker team which played games against teams of teachers, teams at other workplaces, and some of the best teams. Passion for athletics was rising and passion for production and collectivist thought rose just as much. Workteams one and two in particular helped each other through basketball games. Overall, the farm got first in last year’s provincial agricultural workers tournament.[[1647]](#footnote-1647)

On 17 December, the 24 February Construction Corps was actively carrying out basketball among other athletic disciplines. The president of the construction corps took responsibility for basketball, while others took on volleyball and football. Each taught rules and principles of their respective disciplines one by one.[[1648]](#footnote-1648)

On 22 December, Ropyong Cooperative Farm in Yonsa County was reported to be doing a good job of carrying out the party line. They made basketball a popular livelihood. There was a basketball goal for every work team, and they used break times to organize games by sub-workteam. Games by workteams, sub-workteams, age, and job were attracting popularity. Agricultural Production Workteam Four was the best of them. Also, Myokmi High School in Sinpyong County was normalizing extracurricular athletic team activities. Their girls’ basketball team is at the highest level in the county.[[1649]](#footnote-1649)

On 9 May 1999, Songpyonjon General Business in Jagang Province built ample basketball and volleyball courts. The maintenance workplace made their own basketball courts. After work is done, they do active basketball training and achieve great results. As such, they are now raised as basketball athletes.[[1650]](#footnote-1650)

On 28 May, a basketball court was newly made, at a hospital, and employees’ interest was increased. Game rules and game procedure interpretation sessions were organized on several occasions. Now, anyone can learn athletic skill through real games.[[1651]](#footnote-1651)

On 29 May, there was a report on Jagang Province Maternity Hospital. A picture was published of employees playing basketball. Employees cleaned the basketball capable athletics ground. They also disseminated knowledge about basketball and volleyball. As such, they always getting first in city basketball and volleyball tournaments.[[1652]](#footnote-1652)

On 19 June, there was a report on Musan Student and Childrens Hall. They had an extracurricular room for basketball and other pursuits. On the outdoor basketball court, the reporter met with a teaching coach. They talked about the latest basketball team results. Students, by working to show the country’s honour, were showing the happiness to the leader.[[1653]](#footnote-1653)

On 30 November, there was a report on the agricultural machine workplace in Hungwon County. Initially, without a basketball court, there was no victory or defeat. Younger workers had the itch to play, even from watching. The business made a basketball court and other athletic courts. Said courts were always thriving, with several games by workplace. Each time the principles of games organization were presented, the courts were full.[[1654]](#footnote-1654)

On 3 December, basketball’s popularity was given its’ own article in the English-language KCNA. It mentioned basketball being popular amongst industry, agriculture, education, and military sectors. They mentioned O Sang Sik’s family in Kangryong County, South Hwanghae Province, who held their own game in celebration of the grandfather’s birthday. They also mentioned the team of married women at Pyongyang Beer Factory winning national tournaments, and successful teams at the Pyongyang Cornstarch Factory and the Turu Islet Cooperative farm. Individually, they mentioned Ryu Chong Song, an employee at a national organ who, despite being a 42-year-old mother, hit successive three pointers and layups and used fakes well at the 9th People’s Athletic Meet at Pyongyang Gymnasium.[[1655]](#footnote-1655)

In total, the above reports about basketball being organized and carried out at local organizations number around fifty. Considering that these reports were written within the span of three years, one begins to get a sense of just how much effort was put into developing exclusively basketball. But, more than that, one gets an idea of the message that the government was trying to communicate through the reports. Said message was that, if the collective could come together behind the goal of creating a good basketball team, they could achieve happiness, make their country proud, and achieve collective goals. Basketball was depicted as something that was accessible for all ages and genders, and something that could be learned from scratch. All sectors of society were covered, from schools to factories, businesses, cooperative farms, and mines.

### 12.9.3 Passionate Teams

Aside from cataloguing teams that had found tangible success, *Rodong Sinmun* also wrote about a fair number of organizations that put in more effort towards basketball than the others. What follows are a few examples of this phenomenon during the Basketball Intensification Era.

On 31 October 1997, the Hwasan Cooperative Farm in Chongdan County organized several basketball games. The men’s basketball game between Work Team Five and Work Team Eleven was especially worth seeing.[[1656]](#footnote-1656) On 22 November, basketball was practiced at the Sosong District Jangsan Gymnasium, with coaches trying to get the nation’s glory with a gold medal.[[1657]](#footnote-1657) On 28 November, basketball reached a level at which students could play well at the Pukchong County Sinpung High School.[[1658]](#footnote-1658)

On 18 August 1998, the Pyongchon District Party Committee District Administration and Economic Committee, after their daily work, held intense office basketball games.[[1659]](#footnote-1659)On 29 August, there was mention of students at Kim Il Sung University playing basketball among other disciplines as part of the belief and expectation of the leader. As such, they did things politically minded, scientifically skilled and physically prepared. This, it was claimed, helped them to push forward the revolution’s future days and build a prosperous and powerful country.[[1660]](#footnote-1660)

On 2 September, a picture of farmers playing basketball was published. The caption indicated that they showed great interest, enjoying their rest period as the basketball game shined brilliantly.[[1661]](#footnote-1661) On 9 October, Mansudae Art Studio organized basketball games and other disciplines nearly every day. They were also working to expand their basketball and volleyball courts.[[1662]](#footnote-1662) On 18 October, there was a picture of workers persevering to encourage and popularize basketball at a basketball court in front of Mansudae Art Studio.[[1663]](#footnote-1663)

The next year, on 12 January, Songrim High School strengthened their basketball club and other athletic clubs. Basketball was a part of three sports rotated every three weeks, separated by academic level and year.[[1664]](#footnote-1664)On 1 June, Kowon Gymnasium was shown to be basketball training place. There was passionate training under the coach. They had a similar level to basketballers worldwide, showing the level that everyone should achieve.[[1665]](#footnote-1665)

On 2 September, Kangso Clothes Factory had lots of employees go to play basketball. The basketball court was lively and productivity was raised. Recently, there were excellent results by two of their workteams in basketball.[[1666]](#footnote-1666) On that same day, Jangjin Woodwork Furniture Manufacturing Cooperative Farm was doing well at maintaining the basketball court on the cooperative grounds. They also popularized basketball. During rest time or when the day is over, the basketball court thrived. There were various games on Sundays and holidays. Everyone had basketball as a hobby, and the farm was overflowing with romantic emotion.[[1667]](#footnote-1667)

On 12 September, the Haeju Athletic University Lower-Level Party Committee delivered basketball lectures and other lectures. They were overflowing with the will to become world dominators.[[1668]](#footnote-1668)On 30 October, the Kangwon Province Athletic Team basketball coaches and other coaches were working for the honour of the motherland, sweating in training, and getting good results in games.[[1669]](#footnote-1669)

To summarize, the reports of passionate basketball teams during the Basketball Intensification Era serve to emphasize the image of organizations which had previously not put such importance behind basketball suddenly begin to train under the new Party directive. By training basketball, they were hoping to achieve a high level of skill and improve the overall organizational mood.

## 12.10 Individuals

There was an emphasis on national unity and collectivism during the Basketball Intensification Era, but there was also some credit given to individuals who had promoted basketball in one way or another. What follows are some examples of this phenomena.

On 30 January 1997 there was mention of a Compressor Operator School’s Principal having been the captain of a basketball team that won multiple gold medals in his university days. On 30 August, at the National Pyongyang Youth Vegetable Greenhouse, there was mention of a basketball team captain showing good results for his division in a game on the basketball court during the evening.[[1670]](#footnote-1670)On 30 October, there was mention of a lower-level party secretary in Haeju that played basketball with the youth.[[1671]](#footnote-1671)

The next year, on 8 June, there was an article about a platoon leader in the KPA. He proposed that they all wipe down the basketball court. Everyone leaned on his strength, and he whistled while he worked. They all eventually finished. The court was subsequently named Camel Hill Basketball Court because of peaks and valleys in succession in the surrounding terrain.[[1672]](#footnote-1672) On 5 October at the 5 December Youth Mine, there was mention of a miner winning a gold medal during his time on the high school basketball team.[[1673]](#footnote-1673)

On 10 March 1999 at the Anju Tractor Accessory Factory, a lower-level party secretary became a basketball coach. He taught basketball fundamentals to workers one by one.[[1674]](#footnote-1674)On, 25 May, at the Central Bank Jagang Province Branch, a department head, nicknamed the points master, and a coach were advancing basketball.[[1675]](#footnote-1675)On 28 November, in a thanks from Kim Jong Il, there was specific mention of the basketball sector committee secretary. They had allegedly helped with a female honorary soldier’s disease and heartily gave lifestyle necessities and foodstuffs.[[1676]](#footnote-1676)

What’s notable about the above reports it that, while they emphasize the individual, they are still unavoidably focused on the collective. Specifically, they are praised for what they do for the collective, rather than what they have achieved individually.

## 12.11 Lifestyle

### 12.11.1 Holidays

During the Basketball Intensification Era, basketball was reported to be a part of various holiday festivities. This included the 1 May holiday in 1997, 1998, and 1999. The reports mainly centred on workers in Pyongyang.[[1677]](#footnote-1677) Basketball was also reported as a part of national Youth Day Celebrations in 1997 and 1999.[[1678]](#footnote-1678) In Pyongyang, basketball matches were a part of the Children’s Day activities in 1998.[[1679]](#footnote-1679) Lastly, the Foreign Ministry organized basketball amusements for the 80th birthday of Kim Jong Suk in 1997.[[1680]](#footnote-1680)

### 12.11.2 The Atmosphere of a Basketball Match

In addition to depicting the process undergone in order in order to create amateur basketball teams, there were a number of articles which described the atmosphere of basketball matches during this era. The first was on 8 August 1997. On that day, there was a report of basketball games popularization on the Taedong Riverside. One could hear the echoes of basketball game cheers and court noises. At the Taedong River Storage Battery Factory Athletics Grounds, the Sujiham Workplace and the Hwasong workplace were facing off. The game had a two-point differential. Anyone, regardless of age or gender, could participate. The game ended with a whistle as a tie. Shift relief, rest days, holidays, and lunchtime were used for basketball games. Even though the game was a tie, the teams worked to win in competitive manufacturing afterwards. Such was the romantic life of the working class.[[1681]](#footnote-1681)

On 19 September, there was a report of university basketball games in Pyongyang. At Pyongyang Gymnasium, Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek University were playing. There was great interest in the match. Both teams showed excellent skill and techniques, such as speedy dribbling, long-range shooting, fast break strategy, and fakes. Players exhibited a stubborn spirit, and skilful game structure. Kim Chaek University in particular had a fast break and shot cleverly under the basket. However, stubborn perseverance and collectivism helped Kim Il Sung University win. There was lots of cheering and clapping from students. This was followed by a game between Kim Hyong Jik Normal University and Jang Chol Ku Pyongyang Business University. University basketball athletes were training their body and mind, while also showing collectivist thought.[[1682]](#footnote-1682)

On 21 October, at Pokchong County Stadium, the game between the district Cooperative Farm and Juksang Cooperative farm was becoming more intense with time. Every farmer was playing basketball. Female farmers were playing just as well as athletes. The teams were working in harmony, increasing speed. It was fiercer towards the end. There was ambition and passion on the players’ faces. They were concluding the Arduous March victoriously and show all countries an optimistic and revolutionary face.[[1683]](#footnote-1683)

On 30 October, in an article about evening activities, there was mention of an intense basketball game next to the Pyongyang Grand Theatre. The game had clever dribbling and baskets that went in with a good-looking drop. People in a passing fast rail electric tram cheered. People were having the life they wanted, even during the Arduous March.[[1684]](#footnote-1684) On 19 November, there was another mention of basketball played among working youths next to the Pyongyang Grand Theatre. It was a seesaw battle that captured people’s hearts.[[1685]](#footnote-1685)

On 20 August 1998, there was a report from a factory. There was passionate cheering at the basketball court. Regardless of their office, teams were assembled. The lightning team was attacking with handsome passes. A player with a striped shirt scored. He yelled in triumph to lots of applause. This allowed the workers to ignore the heat and enjoy their rest. This view of the basketball court showed the working classes’ beautiful idealism, high culture, and romantic emotion.[[1686]](#footnote-1686)

On 15 June 1999, Namap Cooperative Farm’s Number One Workteam’s basketball game was at the climax. Players were skilfully guiding the ball and sweating, while fans were cheering. A long-range shot went in. The fans began to talk of this being their great harvest year. One could hear the cheers and hear the pride and dignity of the people. In this situation, it was the honour of the people that always won. There was new meaning to the cheering. The match showed excellent disposition, endless affection, revolutionary spirit, militant spirit, and optimism.[[1687]](#footnote-1687)

As is seen by the above reports, basketball matches were to create an atmosphere of unity, excitement, and happiness. The winner was not important, nor was the talent of any individual player. Rather, the comradery acquired by the players and the collective motivation to carry out their daily tasks is what was truly valued. Basketball matches were seen as a desirable group event in which everyone could participate, rather than a vehicle through which one could prove their greatness.

### 12.11.3 Shorter Match Descriptions

In addition to the more detailed match descriptions, there were also briefer mentions of other matches going on during this era as well.

* As part of the new year celebrations for 1998, a game between the Pyongyang City men’s team and Locomotive men’s team was carried out at Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium.[[1688]](#footnote-1688)
* On 17 April, a basketball game in the afternoon showed the power of the collective at the fish farm construction site in Jongju City.[[1689]](#footnote-1689)
* On 5 August, there was a report from Sonchon Mine. After work, according to plan, an exhibition basketball game between Mining Platoon 2 and Tunnelling Platoon 3 was held. [[1690]](#footnote-1690)
* On 11 October, the 5 October Automotive General Factory hosted a Staff Officer Workers vs. Business Workers basketball game on the factory basketball court. There was also a picture of a game at the factory.[[1691]](#footnote-1691)
* On 11 November, the Central District and Moranbong District High Schools played games at Kim Il Sung Stadium.[[1692]](#footnote-1692)
* On 3 December, the Kumya Salt Field death-defying corps waved to a shock troop battalion who were playing basketball and other disciplines.[[1693]](#footnote-1693)
* On 13 January 1999, Sonkyo Knitting Factory had a basketball game at their basketball court which was attracting attention.[[1694]](#footnote-1694)
* On 6 March, Sinpo City Childrens Athletics School hosted a basketball game in the gymnasium with intensity. The students were under the guidance of a teaching coach.[[1695]](#footnote-1695)
* Also on 30 October, Hwasan Cooperative Farm in Chondan County commemorated the 20th anniversary of KIS’s on the spot guidance. Basketball and other games were organized in a holiday atmosphere. Agricultural Farm teams ten and four women’s basketball teams were worth seeing.[[1696]](#footnote-1696)

### 12.11.4 General Nation

Some articles reflected on the vast change in the athletics landscape going on in the country at the time. In terms of concrete statistics, 1997 on the whole saw 134 new basketball teams established within the athletics clubs for each province and city.[[1697]](#footnote-1697)

Other articles expounded upon this basis. On 16 December, an article mentioned the people using basketball popularization to increase vigour and spirit.[[1698]](#footnote-1698) On 19 December, in an article about athletic achievements of that year, basketball was mentioned with volleyball and swimming as athletic disciplines which were encouraged. Additionally, basketball and volleyball courts were built nationwide. All party members, workers, and students used rest time and off-days effectively to play basketball and volleyball.[[1699]](#footnote-1699)

The next year, on 29 March, there was an article mentioning the whole country enjoying basketball games and other pursuits.[[1700]](#footnote-1700)By 26 January of 1999, there was another general article about basketball. Korean players were said to be flying like lightning and were to become basketball kings through “our style” of tactics. They were doing everything to make a new turning point.[[1701]](#footnote-1701)

## 12.12 Physical Conditions

### 12.12.1 Manufacturing/Equipment

In accordance with the economic need across the nation at that time, state media outlets began to put somewhat of an emphasis on those who were able to get the equipment necessary to play basketball. This began on 24 March 1997, when workers in Haeju city were getting an ample number of supplies for the upcoming school studying and training. This included basketballs.[[1702]](#footnote-1702)

On 22 June, there was an article about a woman in Songchongang District of Hamhung who made lots of athletics clothes for the soldiers. The soldiers, upon receiving the clothes, were encouraged to play basketball.[[1703]](#footnote-1703) On 27 April, Janghyon Cooperative Farm in Byoksong County, starting this year, gave workers new basketballs among other equipment. The farm also ended the days when only athlete level people could participate in athletics and made it so that every farmer could play basketball and other disciplines.[[1704]](#footnote-1704) On 6 December, Pyongyang Knitting and Sewing Factory had basketball a court on their grounds and had recently put forth a renewed effort to maintain it better.[[1705]](#footnote-1705)

All in all, the reports of organizations getting supplies in one way or another had two effects. Firstly, it encouraged others that there was hope for them to get supplies as well. Secondly, it distracted others from their own material insufficiencies by reassuring them that said inefficiencies had ways of being remedied.

### 12.12.2 Court Construction

Despite the dire economic situation, some basketball courts were built during this time. On 19 November 1998, Songphyong District in Chongjin’s construction of tens of basketball courts was said to contribute to their acquisition of the Model Athletics District honour.[[1706]](#footnote-1706) On 4 November, Moranbong Automated Furniture Factory made a basketball court and other athletics facilities. They made them indoors so that they could be played regardless of weather. After work was done, diverse athletic and basketball games thrived.[[1707]](#footnote-1707) On 14 December, the agricultural machine workplace in Changdo county made basketball hoops and other athletic facilities. Basketball was sometimes carried out using said facilities.[[1708]](#footnote-1708)

## 12.13 As a Concept

### 12.13.1 Rules and Skills

Articles about basketball rules had been published somewhat sparingly up until the Basketball Intensification Era, but said era saw a significant increase. On 10 August 1997, an article was published in *Rodong Sinmun* about basketball history and development trends. Basketball was said to be developed in some country.[[1709]](#footnote-1709) The development was basketball was split into five stages. The first stage was its invention. The second stage was its development, spread to Europe and Asia, and worldwide fame. The third stage was the organization of FIBA and the Olympics. The fourth stage was the development of basketball skill under increased interest. The fifth and current stage too place from 1965 to 1997. Said stage saw diverse skill and 170 nations as members of FIBA. Basketball’s current special features were said to include strong physical preparation, jumping, speed, and strength. Basketball had tall players, long-range shooting, and high jumping. Specialized players were said to decide the game with vigorous activity and extraordinary speed. Fast breaks off of rebounds and an increase on the unity of the team in the fast break helped the attacker put on pressure and control the game. Cutting skill was an example of a highly skilled tactic that made for a captivating competition. The fast development and skilled tactics led to extraordinarily increased modern demands. As such, some rules had been changed and supplemented.[[1710]](#footnote-1710)

A week later, on 17 August, there was an article about basketball rules and skills. It was written by the coach of the Amrok River basketball team. They began their article by quoting Kim Jong Il, who said that organizing basketball games often is good. Basketball had 20-minute halves, 28 by 15 metre courts, and out of bounds rules. Rules described included basic court dimensions, the three second violation, the jump ball, the 30 second shot clock, and timeouts. The coach went on to say that, even with physical strength and good tactics, skill is needed to win. These skills included fast break tactics, blocking tactics, man-to-man defence, zone defence, defensive breakthrough defence, and mixed breakthrough defence. As such, skill was becoming more diverse.[[1711]](#footnote-1711)

That December, *Chollima* published the rules for a jump ball and out of bounds violation. Jump balls were to be called conservatively. Specifically, they were only to be called after a moment had passed, or when injury is a concern.[[1712]](#footnote-1712) In January of the next year, an article was published about things to know about basketball in *Korean Woman*. It included a quote from Kim Jong Il about basketball making one taller and quicker. The article covered general rules and possible actions.[[1713]](#footnote-1713)

In February, there was article in *Chollima* about dribbling, passing, and rebounding. This included tactics like fast dribbling, changing direction, fooling the opponent, boxing out, and running for offensive rebounds.[[1714]](#footnote-1714) That same month, there was an article in Science World about making a basketball team well. Athletes were to have the four following characteristics; skill ability according to the activity, the ability to master the skill activity, the ability can replace the skill and strategy level of other players, and the ability to stage a comeback. The article also included a long list of general basketball traits and skills.[[1715]](#footnote-1715) The next year, in October, *Chollima* published an article about the development of rules, size of the court, size of the ball, size of the basket, and et cetera.[[1716]](#footnote-1716)

What one can gather from these articles about basketball rules and skills is that many of those in society knew very little about basketball. Advanced tactics, while perhaps mentioned briefly, were not discussed at all in these articles. Also, these articles were strictly technical in nature. Lastly, the presence of quotes from Kim Jong Il reflect the continued politicization of the society.

### 12.13.2 Tactics

On 5 August, there was an article written by O Hung Ryong, the head of the National Athletics Committee Athletic Skill Alliance Basketball Skill Leading Office. He was discussing the development of his students over a number of years, and how they had become captain of the national team or coaches. He also espoused how Kim Jong Il had enlightened a new path of the country’s athletics development and seen a basketball game last October. At said game, Kim Jong Il emphasized how the basketball players needed to overcome their height disadvantages by developing their own style of play. According to O, this was something that experts had never thought of, and they were enlightened. Up to that point, researchers had been saddened at the situation of not being able to overcome the height disadvantage and achieve a satisfactory result. Kim Jong Il solved this with a fast game system, development of exceptional players, and regulation the players’ physical condition. The basketball training system was developed scientifically according to proper world trends. Kin Jong Il sent basketball video recorded materials, publication materials, and the best basketball equipment in the world as a gift. No researchers or athletes were as happy as them in the world. This will lead to quick development, and within a few years they would become a basketball power to surprise the world. The researchers had a conviction to do so.[[1717]](#footnote-1717)

On 26 December, Room 27 at the Korea Computer Centre developed a programme for the development of basketball. It was a skill analysis programme. Compared to previous methods, it provided more detailed, exact, and fast analysis. Room 27 also completed a basketball athlete nutrition management programme. One could exactly calculate an athlete’s physical burden, energy consumption standard, define the nutrition and calorie provision amount, and compose a standard logical meal plan. Thus, athletes could manage nutrition and scientifically train through said programme.[[1718]](#footnote-1718)

### 12.13.3 Health Benefits

Although basketball’s health benefits had been extolled in previous eras, the Basketball Intensification Era saw the government turn up the intensity behind this campaign. This began in May 1997 with an article in *Chollima* about basketball’s health effects. If one has a basketball goal and a small ball, basketball could be played anywhere. The complicated exercise of basketball contributed to bone growth through stimulation. Basketball required nimbleness and quickness. Basketball also improved nerve stimulation, critical thinking, judgement ability, one’s respiratory system, lung capacity, digestion, metabolism, resistance to disease, strong will, and collectivist thought.[[1719]](#footnote-1719)

On 30 May 1997, *Rodong Sinmun* published an article detailing how the ROK Magazine *Weekly Korea* had written in April about how the DPRK was putting effort into basketball. The magazine mentioned basketball’s role in increasing height and improving organization and discipline. The ROK Youth Avant Garde Newspaper also introduced it, specifically the height concept and games at each school.[[1720]](#footnote-1720)

That June, an issue of *Korean Woman* claimed that basketball is a discipline good for the Korean people’s special constitution. Basketball could be played even within a small space. Additionally, tall players had the advantage. Basketball was said to be good for nerve stimulation, critical thinking, respiration, digestion, metabolism, and resistance to disease.[[1721]](#footnote-1721)

The next year, on 7 January, Kim Jong Il sent a letter of thanks to the Sunan District Normal Athletics Sector Workers for encouraging athletics through basketball and other athletics among students.[[1722]](#footnote-1722) This was reinforced by an article on 9 January saying that the students had a strong physical strength thanks to basketball.[[1723]](#footnote-1723)

That same month, there was a report of a basketball court and other athletic facilities at Manpho City People’s Hospital. There, athletics were combined with patient treatment.[[1724]](#footnote-1724) Lastly, on 30 June, the Kangryong County Ryangjong Business claimed all employees were passing health examination due to basketball and other disciplines.[[1725]](#footnote-1725) Lastly, Scientific World published an article that June about why basketball exercise is good. First, it improved wit, quickness, speed, and patience. Secondly, it led to height increase, thick legs, and physical character. Thirdly, it improved intellectual ability. Fourthly, it could be played anywhere.[[1726]](#footnote-1726)

In sum, the majority of the benefits of playing basketball that were propagandized during the Basketball Intensification Era were essentially benefits of aerobic exercise and team sports. There was very little that was specific to basketball itself. The only exception was that basketball could be played within a small space. As described in the overview of this section, this was beneficial for a country which held land space at a premium.

### 12.13.4 History

On 23 August 1999, there were materials at the Korean Folklore Museum folk game exhibition hall which suggested that folk games similar to basketball and other sports were popular since long ago.[[1727]](#footnote-1727) This would the beginning of a series of similar reports during subsequent eras. The reason behind linking basketball’s history to an indigenous Korean sport is likely to distance it from its’ foreign roots and spark nationalism surrounding the sport.

## 12.14 Art and Culture

The Basketball Intensification era was unique in that it contained a number of domestically produced artforms. This ranged from films to propaganda posters, poems, and songs. Each will be examined in turn.

The film *A Family Basketball Team* was inspired by a true story. On 30 May 1997, *Rodong Sinmun* ran an article about a family basketball team. They lived in Yangdong District of Unpa County. There was an exhibition game between the family team and a men’s basketball team in Sariwon. There was a father, three sons, and three daughters. The family team was losing by three at the half, but eventually won 52 to 43. This was met by applause from the fans. A game before that was won by a level 2 business team 20 to 7. In the family basketball team, the father had played basketball and volleyball as a youth. The whole family runs in the mornings and works out on self-made exercise equipment. The father had decided to concentrate on one athletic discipline as a family. The whole family used break times to practice ballhandling, high jumping, weightlifting, running, and et cetera. The offspring practice basketball on their school teams as well. The three daughters became basketball athletes, and the boys became athletics school teachers and students. All of them worked for the nation’s development of basketball. The second son coaches the Yangdong High School Girls’ Team, which had achieved first place in the province two years running. The daughters working at the factory and businesses score high results at every competition. The daughters went to different families, but if they come back together, they often competed in basketball. All of them contributed to the county’s development, labour, and national defence. Their average height is 1.77m. The leader must be proud of them.[[1728]](#footnote-1728)

Said story of the family basketball team attracted quite a bit of attention. On 12 August, there was mention of the extraordinary family basketball team being a hot topic of conversation in a broader article about the people of Unpa County overcoming environmental damage and advancing.[[1729]](#footnote-1729) Later, on 25 December, there was mention of the family basketball team attracting the people’s attention in an article about that year’s cultural life.[[1730]](#footnote-1730)

In the end, the family’s story would be the basis for the film *A Family Basketball Team*.[[1731]](#footnote-1731) In the actual movie, the family team, consisting of youth and women, was able to win a nationwide tournament final against a team of men from a machine factory. A last second shot from one of the daughters secured the victory. The movie was one of a minority of DPRK films to have an official English translation.[[1732]](#footnote-1732) Additionally, *A Family Basketball Team* was listed first among two movies playing on 12 April 1998 at the People’s Palace of Culture in Pyongyang.[[1733]](#footnote-1733) The film would go on to be screened nationally in early September 2003 as part of the 55th anniversary of the founding of the republic.[[1734]](#footnote-1734) Even in the ROK, *A Family Basketball Team* was given a detailed video synopsis for an MBC program in 2011.[[1735]](#footnote-1735)

The family basketball team’s story was continued to be talked about into 1998. On 1 October, Taedong Foodstuffs Factory claimed that, due to the articles about the family basketball team, there were good reverberations throughout the employees. The factory’s worker organizations tought basketball strategy and rules. The factory, through its own effort, quickly set up its own basketball goal and several basketball backboards for practice. Employees supplied basketballs for everyone to use when getting off work. With the active help of the county party committee, employees were encouraged into basketball passion. According to the rising passion for basketball, games often occurred between workplaces. All employees were then said to have high basketball skill, play basketball formally, and always have overflowing revolutionary romance and passion.[[1736]](#footnote-1736)

Other stories of similar family basketball teams would emerge. On 2 February, an article was printed about Hwangkumphyong Cooperative Farm in Sindo County. It was an island village. A basketball tournament was occurring. There were nine other teams from workplaces, but all interest was on the family team. They used short passes, long passes, good looking scores, and long shots enroute to a championship. The oldest daughter was a school athlete and the team’s pillar. Also, the wife was a basketball player in her youth. Plays emerged such as the wife passing to the daughter for a quick score, or a fast break score from husband to wife. People wanted to see their next game. In the village, each workplace then had a court. During rest days and lunchtime, the court was often thriving. Furthermore, another family was now practicing together. It was hard to say which family will win next time. This was the intent of the party realized. The village was thriving and overflowing with optimism. It helped make a strong and prosperous country.[[1737]](#footnote-1737)

The same year, on 1 June, there was an article about a family basketball team in Kangryong District in Kangryong County, Inminban Number Four. O Song Sik’s family’s basketball games were grabbing people’s attention. The Son team versus the Daughter team was an intense game. The match was played on the grandfather’s birthday. The sons, daughters, sons in law and daughters in law had various professions; officer of the KPA, worker, discharged soldier, university student, factory manager, and nursery school teacher. The shooting skill during the match was great. The daughter team won. All of them could feel the pride of mass athletics on that day.[[1738]](#footnote-1738)

To sum up, the massive push behind the ideal of a family basketball team was not necessarily designed to extol the singular greatness of one family’s basketball ability. Rather, it was to inspire and encourage citizens to organize their own family basketball teams. This can be seen by the multiple different stories featured, and the focus on making members of the family relatable. Furthermore, in a time of economic need, the family basketball team concept was designed to bring hope and optimism for the government and society.

One other video-based basketball related artwork was made during this era. The children’s animated film *Child Athletes of Sunny Hill*, made some time before the year 2000, centres around a team of small and misfit animals from Sunny Hill teaming up and training in basketball. Eventually, they defeated a group of fearsome and taller animals from Mushroom Hill.[[1739]](#footnote-1739) Said film was amongst a group of seven animated films that were the first to be officially imported to the ROK, during the period of reconciliation after the first North-South Summit in 2000.[[1740]](#footnote-1740) Taken on the surface, said film was designed both as an allegory for the DPRK overcoming more fearsome opponents in athletics and battle, while also attempting to inspire children who may not be that inherently talented at basketball to participate.

Figure 1: “Let's popularize basketball in all fields and all units!”, 24 August 1997



Another prominent form of artwork with which basketball was promoted was propaganda posters. The first poster was promoted on 24 August 1997 in *Rodong Sinmun*. The text on it reads, “Let’s popularize basketball in all fields and all units!”. According to the article, the poster was made in order to call and spur people. It was a proud fruition of “our style” of Socialism. The poster was intended to depict physically strong athletes achieving the Juche revolution. A female athlete was the main character. The poster was, however, not simply depicting physical strength. The poster was also depicting labour and national defence of the new era. Healthy physical strength and high athletic skill were to spread Juche Korea’s honour and wisdom in all directions of the world.[[1741]](#footnote-1741)

One interesting detail of this poster not included in the official description is that the female athlete is wearing a jersey of the “professionalized” team of the time, Lightning. But the men playing basketball in the background are wearing unmarked jerseys. As such, one can surmise that by putting a professional player at the forefront and non-professional players in the background that the poster is aiming to promote basketball’s accessibility. This is in line with the poster’s slogan as well.

Figure 2: "Let's popularize basketball in all organs and businesses!", November 1997



The next poster emerged in November of 1997. [[1742]](#footnote-1742) The text on it reads “Let’s popularize basketball in all organs and businesses!”. It depicts a fully coloured man in the foreground in shooting position. He is wearing a jersey with the word “Steel” on it. In the background, there are silhouettes of five men. One is defending near the basket, one is going for a layup, one is shooting, one is dribbling, and one is holding the ball high in the air. In the background, there is an industrial skyline. All in all, this poster is very similar to the previous one, but puts more of an emphasis on men’s basketball for ordinary urban workers.

Figure 3: "Let's popularize basketball!", December 1998



Yet another propaganda poster was released that same year, on 28 December. The text on it reads, “Let’s popularize basketball!”. The poster depicts a basketball falling through a basketball net in the foreground and fans enthusiastically cheering in the background. A scoring table sits in the centre, manned by a score keeper. The score is fourteen to eighteen, and a banner under the score reads “Athletics Game”. Two red flags are held up by fans on the left and right. The left flag has the word storm printed on it, and the right flag had the word lightning printed on it. Fans are holding up other, smaller banners in the background as well. From left to right, they read, “Bravery”, “Fighting Spirit Battle”, and “For Labour and National Defence!”. According to the official description, the poster was meant to encourage developing athletics, promote exceeding confidence and optimism, and encourage resolutely ploughing through hardships. The same description claims that basketball popularization showed the excellence of the nation and established an optimistic lifestyle trend. The description goes on to say that Kim Jong Il made excellent facilities around the country. As such, the people were able to use their fitness to participate a socialist construction struggle and live as happiness creators and enjoyer in a worthwhile life. Lastly, basketball was said to create bravery, boldness, organization, and discipline.[[1743]](#footnote-1743)

The third poster is different from the others in that it depicts fans, rather than players. It attempts to create a culture around the atmosphere of a basketball game which is positive, joyous, and exciting. The poster also attempts to romanticize the basketball game as if it is part of a struggle for another purpose.

In addition to basketball’s presence in video and posters, it also began to take up a presence in written artforms as well. The first instance is on 31 December 1997, in a year-end long-form poem published in *Rodong Sinmun*. In the poem, there is mention of basketballs filled with joy flying in the air. Under this and other enjoyments, Korea’s lifestyle was said to have brightened.[[1744]](#footnote-1744) During 1998, in the March edition of *Youth Literature*, song lyrics about a Military Company’s Basketball Game were published. The lyrics were all about cheering on the team. But there is slight ideological content via enemies losing their minds and running away from the battle cries of the basketball game, and goals being scored in the windpipe of imperialism.[[1745]](#footnote-1745) That July, in *Rodong Sinmun*, controlling a basketball was mentioned as part of a metaphorical passage about the Korean people.[[1746]](#footnote-1746) By August, there was a poem in *Children’s Literature* about a basketball. There was no ideological content, and it was primarily about the excitement surrounding playing the game.[[1747]](#footnote-1747) On 7 September, at the second exhibition of artistic works at the National Children’s Palace, there was a Korean painting entitled *Basketball Game*.[[1748]](#footnote-1748) Unfortunately, the painting is not available, and was only mentioned in *Rodong Sinmun*. Lastly, during that November, there was a short song about basketball in *Korean Art*. There was no ideological content, and it was primarily about cheering on the team.[[1749]](#footnote-1749) Although this was only a cursory look at basketball’s depiction in written art, it can be determined that the main point of the works was to promote the game of basketball itself.

The sheer number of artistic works surrounding basketball during the Basketball Intensification Era trumps any era before or since. As such, it can be concluded that there was a clear push to popularize basketball during this era specifically. Said works attempted to depict basketball as accessible, enjoyable, worthwhile, and exciting. There is very little mention of basketball being a struggle, although it is generally tied to athletic propaganda points that were in use during that era.

## 12.15 Propaganda

As in previous eras, there were some examples of basketball being used for purposes of political propaganda during this this era. In terms of more general propaganda, the following article is enlightening. On 22 September 1997, in an article about revolutionary optimism while following the leader, basketball was used as representative example of athletics being ramped up across the country.[[1750]](#footnote-1750) As such, this reconfirms the idea of basketball hoping to bring optimism and loyalty to the people.

Basketball was also used for anti-ROK propaganda. On 27 October 1998, a ROK citizen’s perspective of athletes playing for money in the ROK versus playing for the nation in the DPRK was published. In the account, there was mention of Kim Jong Il bringing Ri Myong Hun to the national basketball team, teaching principles, and sending gifts in order for him to become a great athlete.[[1751]](#footnote-1751) As such, the life of a star athlete in the DPRK was portrayed to be more noble and glorious than that of an athlete in the ROK.

Also, basketball was shown in examples of negative portrayals of life in the ROK. On 28 March 1999, it was reported that, due to the International Financial crisis, basketball teams were among 89 teams that were dismantled in the ROK.[[1752]](#footnote-1752) On 29 May of the same year, there was mention of an ROK girl high school teacher hanging herself on the schools’ basketball hoop.[[1753]](#footnote-1753) Through these examples, one can see that the DPRK, as they did in the last era, used basketball as a cultural touchstone through which the DPRK audience could understand their negative portrayal of life in the ROK.

## 12.16 Miscellaneous

There are some apocryphal mentions of basketball during this era that simply don’t fit an anywhere else. They will each be mentioned in turn. Firstly, on 16 March 1998, there was a picture of students playing basketball on a four-sided hoop in Phohang High School in Phohang District.[[1754]](#footnote-1754) Additionally, on 7 October 1998, Kansan High School in Hwapyong County was said to have tens of basketball goals.[[1755]](#footnote-1755) There are examples of the scale upon which basketball was to be implemented within organizations.

Secondly, on 28 June 1998, a photo of Pyongyang Tongsong High School showed students standing next to a statue of two basketball players. The caption referred to them as hopeful future basketball stars.[[1756]](#footnote-1756) The next year, on 31 January, it was mentioned that setting up a basketball or football goal was a part of the romance of youth.[[1757]](#footnote-1757) These articles exemplified the intent of the government for basketball popularization to not just be a short-term fad, but a long-term trend.

## 12.17 Local Basketball Reports

Table 69: Local Basketball Reports, Basketball Intensification Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game Played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 1997.3.18 | Hamhung City Hungsong High School[[1758]](#footnote-1758) | Yes | No | No | Yes | School |
| 1997.3.20 | Kaesong Soy and Beanpaste Factory[[1759]](#footnote-1759) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 1997.5.16 | Sonkyo Knitting Factory[[1760]](#footnote-1760) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.7.30 | Inpo Coal Mine[[1761]](#footnote-1761) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Mine |
| 1997.8.5 | 5 October Automization General Factory[[1762]](#footnote-1762) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1997.9.10 | Namchon High School in Phyongsan County[[1763]](#footnote-1763) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1997.9.11 | Yomju Export Clothes Factory[[1764]](#footnote-1764) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1997.9.16 | factories in Sihung District of Phanmun County[[1765]](#footnote-1765) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.9.23 | Ryangjong Business in Kangryong County[[1766]](#footnote-1766) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Business |
| 1997.10.2 | 4 June Vehicle General Business[[1767]](#footnote-1767) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1997.10.4 | 2nd Level Honour Red Flag Samhung Middle School[[1768]](#footnote-1768) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1997.10.21 | female farmers of a county cooperative farm[[1769]](#footnote-1769) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1997.10.22 | Kowon Clothes Factory[[1770]](#footnote-1770) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.11.1 | Amrok River’s basketball gymnasium[[1771]](#footnote-1771) | Yes | No | No | No | Gymnasium |
| 1997.12.5 | Pyongyang General Textile Factory[[1772]](#footnote-1772). | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.12.5 | Pyongyang Corn Starch Factory[[1773]](#footnote-1773). | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.12.5 | Tongdaewon Clothes Factory[[1774]](#footnote-1774). | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.12.5 | 5 October General Automobile Factory[[1775]](#footnote-1775). | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1997.12.5 | Haebangsan Hotel[[1776]](#footnote-1776). | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1997.12.5 | Pyongyang’s Central District[[1777]](#footnote-1777) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1997.12.5 | Pyongyang’s Moranbong District[[1778]](#footnote-1778) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1997.12.5 | Pyongyang’s Tongdaewon District[[1779]](#footnote-1779) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1997.12.5 | Pyongyang’s Photonggang District[[1780]](#footnote-1780) | Yes | No | No | No | County/City |
| 1997.12.8 | Pyongyang Schoolchildren’s Palace[[1781]](#footnote-1781) | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Gymnasium |
| 1997.12.17 | Doksam Cooperative Farm in Pakchon County[[1782]](#footnote-1782) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1997.12.19 | Sonkyo District Gymnasium[[1783]](#footnote-1783) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Gymnasium |
| 1998.1.8 | Sinam High School[[1784]](#footnote-1784) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1998.1.20 | Locomotive Athletes, Unnamed Court[[1785]](#footnote-1785) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Gymnasium |
| 1998.2.24 | Pyongyang Refinery[[1786]](#footnote-1786) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1998.3.10 | North Hamgyong Province Party Athletics Committee[[1787]](#footnote-1787) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 1998.3.14 | Tongsa Cooperative Farm in Mundok County[[1788]](#footnote-1788) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1998.3.20 | Ryongyon Cooperative Farm[[1789]](#footnote-1789) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1998.3.20 | Ministry of City Management[[1790]](#footnote-1790) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1998.3.24 | Honourable Veterans Makeup Factory[[1791]](#footnote-1791) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1998.3.31 | Pyongyang Telephone Bureau[[1792]](#footnote-1792) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1998.5.8 | Haean High School in Sonbong County[[1793]](#footnote-1793) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1998.5.15 | Sungri Automotive General Factory[[1794]](#footnote-1794) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1998.5.21 | Hyangmok Cooperative Farm[[1795]](#footnote-1795) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1998.6.18 | Anju Coal Mine Construction Business[[1796]](#footnote-1796) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 1998.6.30 | Jisin Cooperative Farm Huichon City[[1797]](#footnote-1797) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1998.7.2 | Huichon City[[1798]](#footnote-1798) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 1998.7.14 | 10 February Factory[[1799]](#footnote-1799) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1998.8.24 | Samjiyon Student and Childrens Palace[[1800]](#footnote-1800) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Gymnasium |
| 1998.9.24 | Ministry of Railways[[1801]](#footnote-1801) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1998.10.4 | Kaesong Knitting Factory[[1802]](#footnote-1802) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1998.10.6 | Diplomatic Corps Working Bureau[[1803]](#footnote-1803) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1998.10.12 | Kujang County Party Committee[[1804]](#footnote-1804) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1998.11.4 | Sonkyo District Extracurricular School[[1805]](#footnote-1805) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1998.11.28 | Taedong Textile Factory[[1806]](#footnote-1806) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1998.12.17 | Jikdong Geological Survey Corps[[1807]](#footnote-1807) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1999.1.2 | Pyongyang Namsam Hospital[[1808]](#footnote-1808) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 1999.1.5 | Hamhung Single-use Product General Factory[[1809]](#footnote-1809) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1999.1.7 | South Phyongan Province People’s Hospital[[1810]](#footnote-1810) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 1999.1.24 | 24 February Construction Corps[[1811]](#footnote-1811) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1999.1.26 | Hwangju County Tailoring Business[[1812]](#footnote-1812) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1999.1.31 | Sungho District Ryangjong Business[[1813]](#footnote-1813) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 1999.2.23 | Waehak High School[[1814]](#footnote-1814) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 1999.3.24 | Bukchang Oil Factory[[1815]](#footnote-1815) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1999.4.2 | Sinchon County Town Office[[1816]](#footnote-1816) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 1999.4.3 | Kopung necessities factory[[1817]](#footnote-1817) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1999.4.8 | National Kumpung Factory Lower Level Party Committee in Sukchon County[[1818]](#footnote-1818) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1999.5.1 | Ryugyong Namgo High School[[1819]](#footnote-1819) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 1999.5.2 | Pyongyang General Textile Factory[[1820]](#footnote-1820) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 1999.5.3 | East Pyongyang Stadium | Yes | Yes | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1999.6.12 | Rojung Farm Lower Level Party Committee in Pihyon County[[1821]](#footnote-1821) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1999.6.30 | Jikdong Geological Survey Team[[1822]](#footnote-1822) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 1999.6.27 | Central Wholesale Shipping Office[[1823]](#footnote-1823) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 1999.7.28 | Yomju Chemical Product Factory[[1824]](#footnote-1824) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1999.7.30 | Taean Heavy Machinery United Business 3 Revolutions Red Flag Glass Fiber Factory[[1825]](#footnote-1825) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 1999.8.29 | Ryongjong Business in Kangdong County[[1826]](#footnote-1826) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 1999.9.16 | Phyongsangdae Ri Sok Mine[[1827]](#footnote-1827) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 1999.10.14 | Rinsan County General Farm Labour Rest Area[[1828]](#footnote-1828) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1999.10.17 | Branch Farm of Lower-Level Party Committee[[1829]](#footnote-1829) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 1999.10.30 | Pyongyang Telephone Bureau[[1830]](#footnote-1830) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 1999.11.9 | Jongju Tractor Accessory Factory[[1831]](#footnote-1831) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1999.11.30 | Youth Athletics School in Unsan County[[1832]](#footnote-1832) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 1999.12.4 | National Ranam Fruit Tree Factory[[1833]](#footnote-1833) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1999.12.13 | Kaesong Construction Materials Manufacturing Cooperative[[1834]](#footnote-1834) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 1999.12.14 | Agricultural Machine Workplace in Changdo County[[1835]](#footnote-1835) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Cooperative Farm |

From the local basketball reports of the Basketball Intensification Era, the following conclusions can be reached. Firstly, the reports occurred at 26 factories, eleven organs, ten farms, nine schools, seven businesses, five gymnasiums, four miscellaneous Courts, and two mines. As such, it can be said that basketball was occurring within a broader swath of society than ever before. The sport continued to be urban worker based and school based, but saw greater distribution among organs and farms. Secondly, of the 79 reports, 40 of them did not mention regular basketball matches occurring. As such, it can be determined that depicting regular basketball matches at this time was important, but not necessarily a priority. Thirdly, only seven reports explicitly included teams. This indicates that mostly successful teams were featured in more detailed articles. Accordingly, for lower levels of basketball, teams were not necessarily as important. Lastly, only sixteen of the 79 reports involved facilities, meaning that facility construction was not a priority during this era.

## 12.18 Standout Basketball Stars

During this era, the standout DPRK basketball player, Ri Myong Hun, saw his career become an international political bargaining chip. Lawyer Michael Coyne, after other failed attempts to bring Ri to the USA, worked with Ottawa, Canada based Evergreen Sports Management and the DPRK Mission to the United Nations to bring Ri to Canada beginning sometime after March 1997.[[1836]](#footnote-1836) According to Coyne, Ri was taking English-language classes and ready to leave around that time.[[1837]](#footnote-1837) A report on 23 March 1997 stated that Ri had interest from four NBA teams, including the Utah Jazz.[[1838]](#footnote-1838) At some point before Ri’s departure for Canada, Evergreen would secure financing for Ri’s training from investors, amounting to roughly $1000 a day.[[1839]](#footnote-1839)

On 14 May 1997, Ri Myong Hun arrived in Canada.[[1840]](#footnote-1840) On 18 May, it was reported by the United Press International that Ri had defected, but also reported that the US State Department had told the NBA not to sign Ri.[[1841]](#footnote-1841) The State Department cited the Trading with the Enemy Act, a wholesale financial embargo with the DPRK that had been in place since the Korean War.[[1842]](#footnote-1842) Within a week of Ri’s arrival, the NBA sent a memo to all teams, including the two Canadian teams at the time, declaring that they could not sign Ri unless the US State Department gave permission.[[1843]](#footnote-1843) During his time training, Ri was said to use a ROK emigrant interpreter, but was followed by two DPRK companions while in public. Ri also reportedly took on the nickname “Michael”, in honour of his favourite player, Michael Jordan. Ri trained under Jack Donahue and Loren Goldberg.[[1844]](#footnote-1844) Donahue was fresh off of a two-year stint at the director of international relations and Canadian development for the NBA’s Vancouver Grizzlies, a former two-time NCAA coach of the year, the former coach of Canada’s national basketball team, and the former high school coach of one of the NBA’s top legends, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.[[1845]](#footnote-1845) Goldberg, meanwhile, was a trainer for the NHL’s Ottawa Senators.

By August, Ri was said to have been training for more than two months. Meanwhile, the NBA’s Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer claimed that the NBA would not lobby for Ri’s eligibility. Evergreen’s legal strategy at the time was to argue that Ri was a Canadian Immigrant, thus exempting him from the Trading With the Enemy Act.[[1846]](#footnote-1846)

Goldberg, Ri’s assigned trainer, assessed Ri to have been in poor shape upon his arrival in Ottawa.[[1847]](#footnote-1847) Additionally, Ri suffered from foot problems because he wore a shoe that was three sizes too small. During Ri’s seven months of training, he took on a high-protein and high-carbohydrate diet and a rigorous gym regimen. This led to lower body fat and higher muscle mass. Donahue and a sports talent agent reasoned that Ri, known to be 27 years old at the time[[1848]](#footnote-1848), did not have the potential to be a super-star. But, due to solid technique, Ri could have been an effective role player in the NBA. Ri’s lack of mobility, athleticism, bulk, and rebounding ability were cited as serious downsides.[[1849]](#footnote-1849) However, in a video report aired on the Fox Network, a Paediatric Endocrinologist claimed that Ri was not affected by gigantism and quite mobile for someone of his height.[[1850]](#footnote-1850) Chuck Daly, a Hall-of-Fame NBA coach who headed the Magic at the time, wrote a letter that his scouts told him that Ri’s size and skills indicated that Ri could have a long career in the NBA.[[1851]](#footnote-1851) Jack Donahue would later claim that roughly half of the NBA’s teams scouted Ri, and that two or three teams were ready to offer him a contract.[[1852]](#footnote-1852)

In that November’s *Chollima* there was an article about Ri Myong Hun. It stated that he had achieved the award of honourable sportsperson, that he was fundamentally prepared, and that he received an individual award at the 17th Asian Championships.[[1853]](#footnote-1853) However, Ri’s stint in Canada would end in December of 1997. It is possible that this was due to the United States bringing up Ri’s eligibility to play in the NBA during the first session of the Four-Party Talks in Geneva that month.[[1854]](#footnote-1854)

By May of 1998, Ri landed an endorsement deal from sports-apparel manufacturer Nike. Nike was manufacturing shoes in the DPRK at the time, and lobbying the US State Department on Ri’s behalf.[[1855]](#footnote-1855) By June of 1998, Michael Coyne of Evergreen was still lobbying for Ri’s entry into the NBA. Two US Senators from California were reported to have “lent support”, and a few teams were reported to have sent letters to the US State Department claiming that Ri could earn an NBA contract.[[1856]](#footnote-1856)

From 31 May to 22 June, Ri would participate in three matches against foreign opponents. It was around this time that he began to attract attention from domestic press. On 15 June, Ri Myong Hun had an article dedicated to him published in *Rodong Sinmun*. He was the first basketballer to ever achieve this feat. The article mentions his height, and says that he combines it with special abilities to contribute to his team’s victory. Ri’s elaborate training and speed training matched the conditions of his height. Ri, already the best player in Asia, was summoned to the Thunder team for better development. Ri had fast speed, a good jump, and his skill developed every day. Additionally, Ri was a defensive steel wall, and a key to offensive points on attack. Ri also got recognition from the world basketball community. A foreign basketball expert said that Ri’s positioning, attack posture, and scoring skill movement were best in the world. According to Ri, this was not because of his height, but the generals love and belief. strength, Ri hoped to spur further training with revolutionary thought, get victories in international competitions, make the people happier during the hastened march, and decorate the 50th anniversary of the republic meaningfully.[[1857]](#footnote-1857)

A week later, on 21 June, state media made a visit to Ri’s household. Those days, there was lots of talk about him due to his introduction in broadcasts and newspapers. The public also wanted to know his family. Ri lived in Moranbong District in a high-level building. His wife was said to be nice, taller than average, and possessing good physical strength. They had a three-year-old child. Ri believes his son will become taller beginning at ten years old, like himself. In the centre room of Ri’s house, there was a picture of Ri with Kim Jong Il next to a resolution of loyalty letter to Kim Jong Il. Ri received a high-quality watch, a sedan equipped for his height, a television set, and a freezer from Kim Jong Il. Ri was depicted as a very warm person who smiled and had harmony in his household. Ri also exhibited endless pride and happiness through his laughter. Ri also got a letter from his father. According to his father, Ri’s success was due to the leader, not his father or birth. As such, Ri must work harder than others. The author of the column agreed with this sentiment.[[1858]](#footnote-1858)

On 24 June, Ri Myong Hun was shown as an example of many excellent athletes. The reporter witnessed Ri during afternoon training time. Kim Jong Il, who made the Juche style tactics system according to the traits of Koreans, also sent lots of tactics data and physical training equipment. At this time, Ri was doing weight training. The coach explained that Ri is overcoming the disadvantage of his height. Ri’s height makes him move slower, so he was building up muscle in order to move faster. Tactics training was next. This involved two and three man plays. The reporter’s description of practice plays involved players attacking the defence and getting suddenly screened. There was a rebound and a throw to Pak Chon Jong at the other end of the court. Ri then ran past two defenders, grabbed the ball, and dunked it. Ri produced a thrilling strong and skilled scene. Athletes were to have the mind and will united, as well as possess fighting spirit, speed, and skill.[[1859]](#footnote-1859)

In July of 1998, two US Senators, California Democrat Barbara Boxer and Florida Republican Connie Mack, sent a letter to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin and an attempt to allow Ri to play in the NBA. They claimed that “showcasing the benefits of a free and open society to a North Korean hero” would improve DPRK-USA relations.[[1860]](#footnote-1860) Even Hyundai, a ROK based company who would be responsible for the Unification basketball games in the following year, attempted a sponsorship deal with Ri before being nixed by the ROK government.[[1861]](#footnote-1861) Meanwhile, Ri would meet with CNN reporter Mike Chinoy around this time. Ri would claim after the fact that the NBA and US Commerce Department wanted him to play, but that the US State Department was the main barrier to his entry. Ri also claimed that the US State department waited six months to give him a final denial.[[1862]](#footnote-1862)

At some point during the next two months, Ri’s career was derailed. The DPRK men’s team did not participate in the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok, withdrawing quickly and citing injury.[[1863]](#footnote-1863) It was reported that Ri had suffered bad injuries in a car crash.[[1864]](#footnote-1864)

During 1999, Ri would get some passing mentions in state media. On 26 January, Ri penned a short article. He wanted to make a turning point for the strong and prosperous country in the form of basketball. He pledged to put forth all wisdom and passion. He also pledged to honestly train in our style of tactics and skill. Running like lightning, he said that the DPRK would become the world’s basketball kings. He wanted to show the world the might of Juche Korea, the fortitude of spirit.[[1865]](#footnote-1865) On 10 October, there was a picture of Ri, depicting him as an excellent athlete whom had gotten excellent honour.[[1866]](#footnote-1866) By the end of 1999, Ri would state that he had no interest in playing in the NBA.[[1867]](#footnote-1867) He would also participate in two Unification Matches in Seoul in late December.

Ri’s legacy up to this point was a rather mixed bag. State media went to great lengths to pump up Ri’s skill, but those in the United States knew that Ri could never rise above the level of an NBA role player. Ri’s height was perhaps the novelty that allowed him to get the attention of corporate sponsors and US Senators. But in the end, his talent wasn’t high enough to overcome the political barriers that laid before him in terms of getting to the NBA. Ri’s luck took a terrible turn when he returned to the DPRK, but at the very least he had the opportunity to achieve some level of notoriety through three international exhibitions and two unification matches. All in all, Ri’s inability to participate at a high level during these years was a shame.

In 1999, there would be some further attention for the DPRK’s second biggest star, Pak Chon Jong. In a June article, Pak was said to have played in tens of international basketball games and greatly contributed to victories. Against the USA, Pak’s organizational ability, intelligence, vitality, and continuous 3 point makes were beneficial. As such, Pak was a world level basketball player. In each game, Pak scored over 30 points. World media called him king of the basketball world, thus insinuating that he was more perfect than Michael Jordan. [[1868]](#footnote-1868)

In September, there was a *Chollima* article about Pak Chon Jong. He was good at jumping and scoring. Pak was not tall, but disrupted the defence in a split second. Additionally, Pak showed excellent game awareness and had an average of eight long range shots a game. Pak’s scoring ability was better than that of Michael Jordan, and his style was similar to Dejan Bodiroga. Pak could change direction 180 degrees really fast. A European coach who had seen Pak play said that his attack is like no one is defending him. Pak faked well, jumped, rotated, and dunked like he had wings. The article went on to say that Pak had exact judgement, and bold decision making. With resolve, Pak would practice things a thousand or ten thousand times.[[1869]](#footnote-1869)

Pak Chon Jong, although clearly one of the best players to come out of the DPRK, was clearly a step below Ri Myong Hun in terms of talent. Nevertheless, articles describing him are particularly notable in that they mention Michael Jordan twice, insinuating that Jordan was a known name in the DPRK.

There were a couple of other notable players during this era as well. Thunder guard Pak Kyong Nam was from Kichang High School in Songchon County, South Phyongan Province. It was said they were excellent at the 5 September Prize and Jong Il Peak Prize. Pak Kyong Nam would play for the Thunder during the Basketball Intensification Era. Against the USA, he broke down the opponent’s defence, shot well from long range, rebounded well, and was fast. He also participated in the Unification Games in Seoul.

On the women’s side, two players stood out. Ro Song Hui, team captain of the DPRK National Team, showed active long-range shooting and teamwork in the post against Cuba on 21 July 1997. During that same game, O Son Hui exhibited the same traits.

# chapter 13. the Stagnation Era (2000.1.3~2011.12.17)

## 13.1 General Athletics Overview

The Stagnation Era began on 3 January 2000, when Kim Jong Il awarded gold watches to Ri Myong Hun and Pak Chon Jong. According to the article announcing the gift, both had recently worked to developed “our style” of basketball skill. They had also perfected the basketball tactics and training regimen that fit the people and defeated world teams. Resultingly, Juche Korea’s dignity and spirit was shown off with strength. Ri and Pak had become most excellent world athletes.[[1870]](#footnote-1870)

Unlike previous eras, the Stagnation Era does not begin with a significant policy change in the realm of athletics. Rather, it represents a return to the normalcy established under the previous Scientific Athletics Era. The major differences were that basketball’s role had been more emphasized due to the Basketball Intensification Era and that the state’s capacity to support athletics had significantly decreased. Indeed, scholar Heo Jeong-pil identified the period of 2000 to 2004 as a period of recovery and the period of 2005 to 2011 as a period of continued development. [[1871]](#footnote-1871) However, for the purposes of this thesis, the remainder of Kim Jong Il’s reign will be treated as one era. This is because the remainder of the Kim Jong Il era saw no fundamentally new concepts introduced, and continued economic struggles like the 2009 currency reform and increased economic dependence on China hampered any serious development.[[1872]](#footnote-1872)

In terms of administration, some minor changes did occur. On 3 November 1999, the Ministry of Athletics became the Athletics Guidance Committee.[[1873]](#footnote-1873) Just before that change, scholar Song Jae-ho was able to map out how athletics were administrated. According to Song, below the Ministry of Athletics was the Science and Technology Bureau, and below that was the Athletic Science School. Under the Athletic Science School were the Athletic Science Research Office, the Exercise Medicine Research Office, the Drug Research Office, the Sports Information Centre, and the Sports Equipment Research Office.[[1874]](#footnote-1874) The Athletic Science Research Office, established in 1959, consisted of roughly 150 researchers and 11 research offices. Most of the researchers studied at Korea Athletics University. Said office worked to improve the competitiveness of DPRK team in international competition. The Exercise Medicine Research Office carried out research regarding sports nutrition, exercise physiology, and exercise biochemistry. Mainly, it focused on athlete treatment, and operated a Sports Specialist Hospital.[[1875]](#footnote-1875) The Sports Information Centre is mainly responsible for gathering and analysing information, including translating foreign athletics publications and journals.[[1876]](#footnote-1876) The Sports Equipment Research Office was relatively new, and at the time focused mainly on athletic shoes and apparel.[[1877]](#footnote-1877) In total, one can see that the Ministry of Athletics, by that time, had a number of organizations focused on elite athletics.

Below that structure, there were athletic committees in cities and provinces, and athletic clubs in cities and counties.[[1878]](#footnote-1878) Specifically, each province and directly controlled government city had an athletic committee. This was followed up by regular cities and counties and districts of cities.[[1879]](#footnote-1879) Each district also had a training office which was responsible for facilities, and a club which managed general athletics business.[[1880]](#footnote-1880)

A good deal is known about athletics education in this era as well. As of 2005, primary and nursery school teachers were trained at three-year teacher’s universities(교원대학교). The number of these universities increased with the introduction of the 11-year education system in November of 1973, with each city and province being allotted two. However, by 2005, the number had decreased to just 15 nationwide.[[1881]](#footnote-1881) Secondary school teachers were trained at four-year normal universities (사범대학교). There were ten four-year universities nationwide as of 2005.[[1882]](#footnote-1882) One exception was Kim Hyong Jik Normal University, known as Pyongyang Normal University from 1948 to 1975. It was a five-year university and the only normal university to offer doctorate programmes.[[1883]](#footnote-1883)

Scholar Han Min-gil wrote that, as of 2005, the role of teachers in the DPRK was to develop students to be physically strong and instil in the students a conscious will to be a revolutionary genius.[[1884]](#footnote-1884) Teachers were considered to be “professional revolutionaries”, and as such, those students at normal universities were given much less leeway if found to engage in un-socialist activities. Resultingly, expulsion rates at normal universities tended to be higher.[[1885]](#footnote-1885)

As of 2006, athletics at the high school level included many practical and specialized skills. Specifically, national defence strength, practical manufacturing work, human culture for Socialist construction and revolution, and systemization through group athletics and extracurricular athletics were all aspects of the education that are not explicitly tied to the goals of maintaining good health or training athletic skill.[[1886]](#footnote-1886) In other words, they focused on issues of politics or practical use to the national interest. Specifically, they carried forward with the Soviet-based athletics education system which had been infused with nationalist ideological elements of the Kim leadership cult.

On the other hand, there were a significant number of purely athletic aspects of the education. This included developing good habits, learning an athletic discipline, being able to referee two difference disciplines, training athletics teachers, and scouting potentially exceptional athletes.[[1887]](#footnote-1887) Furthermore, people’s physical fitness tests continued to be carried out. One was for youth and teenagers and one for adults.[[1888]](#footnote-1888) The physical fitness test would continue to serve as a feeder system for athletics kurakbu. Those students selected to go to an athletics kurakbu would only attend roughly a third of the amount of normal schooling as those who did not, spending the rest of their time training.[[1889]](#footnote-1889) Some disciplines, such as table tennis, artistic gymnastics, and figure skating would have athletes enter the clubs at ages as young as four and five years old. Meanwhile “ball sport” disciplines would accept athletes around the age of 10.[[1890]](#footnote-1890) All students would receive scholarship money regardless of age, and often travel across the nation.[[1891]](#footnote-1891) For those children too young for athletics kurakbu, primary school sports held athletics festivals with nine total disciplines competed.[[1892]](#footnote-1892)

Athletics teams of the era included the dedicated athletic teams, provincial athletics teams, and teams attached to individual organs, businesses, schools, and cooperative farms.[[1893]](#footnote-1893) Those on dedicated athletic teams were, in principle, active from the ages of 17 to 26.[[1894]](#footnote-1894) Three characteristics common among those admitted to dedicated athletics teams were those who graduated from provincial athletics clubs, those who come from wealthy households, and those who are physically tall.[[1895]](#footnote-1895) If one was able to get into a regular athletics club, they would train for seven hours daily and would have coaches, unlike provincial clubs.[[1896]](#footnote-1896) As of 2001, elite primary school students would also attend specific athletics schools, such as those in Nampho, Ryanggang Province, and South Hamgyong Province.[[1897]](#footnote-1897) Overall, there were eleven athletics schools and 220 athletics kurakbus nationwide.[[1898]](#footnote-1898)

At some point around this era, the titles which were available to the most successful of athletes changed. The title of People’s Athlete was eventually replaced by the title of People’s Hero (인민영웅), likely during the Kim Jong Il Era. Athletes were also able to achieve even higher, more general levels of honour through athletic achievement. The next step up would be Labour Hero (로력 영웅), a title established during the Korean War.[[1899]](#footnote-1899) The most prestigious honour would be Hero of the Nation (공화국 영웅), an award given since the early days of the Korean War.[[1900]](#footnote-1900) By giving awards to athletes reserved for those who had initially fought in the Korean War, the government was elevating the status of athletes to that of national heroes. By doing this, they hoped to encourage greater international athletic achievement, which they hoped would bring international legitimacy to their regime.

In addition to athlete classification, all normal citizens were classified into physical fitness categories. During this era, the classification was as follows. First of all, there was the initial separation between children from 9 to 15 years old and those 16 to 50 years old. Among men, there were four categories of separation according to age; 16 to 18, 19 to 30, 31 to 40, and 41 to 50. Among women, there were three categories of separation according to age; 16 to 18, 19 to 25, and 26 to 40. Furthermore, within each category, people are separated into a higher level group and normal group according to fitness.[[1901]](#footnote-1901)

Speaking on broader societal terms, in 2004, scholar Kim Mi-suk identified six methods by which athletics were popularized and integrated into the people’s way of life. Firstly, each organizational unit in the country would, according to circumstances, do group gymnastics, walking, and running at a set time. Indeed, other sources indicate that group running would occur 200 days a year.[[1902]](#footnote-1902) Secondly, organizational units would use rest days and holidays for planned athletics games and outings. Thirdly, each type of athletic activity would be open to participation by party cadres, workers, and people from all walks of life. Fourthly, extracurricular athletics (과외체육) and team athletic activities were encouraged. Fifthly, each variety of athletics tournaments and events were regularly organized. Lastly, all people were subject to peoples’ physical fitness tests.[[1903]](#footnote-1903)

In order to get a better idea of what athletics were like on the ground, one can look to a series of interviews with various generations of fourteen people who used to live in Tanchon County, South Hamgyong Province, conducted by ROK researchers from 2012 to 2013. According to the study, football, volleyball, table tennis, basketball, chin-up bars, and gymnastics were among the athletic disciplines carried out in leisure time.[[1904]](#footnote-1904) Athletics were mainly participated in through tournaments, which occurred on Labour Day (1 May), National Foundation Day (9 September), and Fatherland Liberation Day (15 August).[[1905]](#footnote-1905) The amount of athletic disciplines was diverse, but one was often limited by their workplace’s capacity to organize teams.[[1906]](#footnote-1906) Furthermore, due to economic difficulties or disinterest, beginning in the 1990s,people began spending their spare time doing things such as tending to a small field, playing cards, or drinking.[[1907]](#footnote-1907)

During this era, athletics exchange was more infrequent than it had been in the past. At the time, scholar Kim Mi-suk stated that the largest hurdle to athletics exchange was the lack of openness of the system as well as the lack of pluralism regarding diversity of organizations within the DPRK as a state.[[1908]](#footnote-1908) Nevertheless, some exchange still did take place. Most notably, Inter-Korean relations saw huge breakthroughs. The DPRK marched under a united flag with the ROK at the 2000 Olympics, the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, the 2004 Olympics, and the 2006 Winter Olympics.[[1909]](#footnote-1909) The DPRK also participated in football unification matches in the ROK in 2002 and the DPRK in 2005.[[1910]](#footnote-1910)

In terms of international athletics events, the DPRK’s participation had become normalized. During this era, the DPRK participated in every Summer and Winter Olympic event, save for the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.[[1911]](#footnote-1911) They would also participate in every Asian Games.[[1912]](#footnote-1912) The DPRK’s medal results ranged from 34th to 60th in the Summer Olympics, and ninth to twelfth in the Asian Games.

In terms of hosting international events, the DPRK did show some openness. In 2001, the DPRK regime allowed sponsorship at the Pyongyang International Marathon for the first time.[[1913]](#footnote-1913) In 2008, the race was sanctioned by the International Association of Athletics Federations.[[1914]](#footnote-1914)

Meanwhile, football’s popularity was clear to foreign observers during this era. The ROK team’s run to the semi-final of the 2002 World Cup and the DPRK’s performance in the 2010 World Cup qualifiers were reported domestically in the DPRK. Also, foreign games broadcast on tape delay each Sunday enjoyed extensive local popularity.[[1915]](#footnote-1915) Domestically-held football matches were raucous as well. Popular DPRK team striker Jong Tae Se had his name chanted at Kim Il Sung Stadium, which was a rare honour.[[1916]](#footnote-1916) Additionally, during a March 2005 friendly match between the DPRK and Iran, thousands of fans stormed the pitch in order to dispute a controversial call by a referee.[[1917]](#footnote-1917) Perhaps most notably, the excellent performance of the DPRK women’s football team on the world stage in the 2000s lead to increased efforts to specialize in it from the DPRK.[[1918]](#footnote-1918) The DPRK women’s under 20 football team’s World Cup Victory in 2006 was of particular importance, even inspiring a five part television mini-drama.[[1919]](#footnote-1919)

## 13.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

After Kim Jong Il bestowed gold watches to basketball athletes Ri Myong Hun and Pak Chon Jong on 3 January 2000, his publicly visible interest in basketball significantly waned.[[1920]](#footnote-1920) There are only a handful of instances which might indicate that he maintained his interest. Firstly, there were two occasions on which Kim Jong Il sent basketballs to organizations. In April 2000, a basketball was among the items received from the leader by Kang Hyon Kun 3 Revolutions Red Flag Small Unit.[[1921]](#footnote-1921) Also, in November of 2003, Kim Jong Il was said to have heard about a particular Middle School’s exceptional basketball team members. Resultingly, Kim Jong Il sent their school athletics and cultural equipment.[[1922]](#footnote-1922)

The most concrete evidence of Kim Jong Il’s continued basketball fandom came from his request to an NBA star. In the year 2001, endorsed by the DPRK government and financed by ROK corporation Samsung, Michael Jordan was presented with an offer to meet Kim Jong Il. Jordan respectfully declined the offer.[[1923]](#footnote-1923)

The most significant public interest shown by Kim Jong Il in the game of basketball was on 16 July 2003. On that day, Kim Jong Il watched a basketball game as part of an inspection of the 264 Military Unit.[[1924]](#footnote-1924) This was the last publicised in-person attendance of a basketball game by Kim Jong Il. It would later be claimed by *Rodong Sinmun* that Kim Jong Il attended roughly 10 basketball and football matches in total.[[1925]](#footnote-1925) If compared to the total amount of basketball games Kim Jong Il was found to attend through this thesis, this means that seven of Kim Jong Il’s ten total combined basketball and football match attendences were basketball games.

Meanwhile, in China, the entrance of Chinese-born players Wang Zhizhi and Yao Ming into the NBA in 1999 and 2002, respectively, would only serve to increase the NBA’s popularity.[[1926]](#footnote-1926) Yao Ming in particular, was a tour-de-force in terms of increasing basketball popularity in China. Indeed, a 2011 survey stated that 37.8% of Chinese basketball fans had started watching NBA basketball due to Yao.[[1927]](#footnote-1927) Four visits of NBA players to China taking place from 1997 to 2005 and semi-regular NBA exhibition games in China beginning in 2004, brought the NBA to Chinese fans in a more personalized form.[[1928]](#footnote-1928) The NBA’s broadcasts on CCTV would continue until 2019 and return in 2022, with games still accessible in China digitally during the three-year gap.[[1929]](#footnote-1929) It is somewhat peculiar that Kim Jong Il’s interest in basketball would die down while interest in China increased. Nevertheless, the increased interest of basketball in China certainly had some level of residual effect on the DPRK leadership and society.

As Kim Jong Un re-entered the DPRK in 2001, the window into his personal life became much opaquer. It is known that Kim Jong Un attended Kim Il Sung University from 2002 to 2006, that he began to be elevated through the ranks in 2009, and that he began to appear in state media by name and make public appearances with his father in September 2010.[[1930]](#footnote-1930) But in terms of his relationship with basketball or athletics in general, little would be revealed until he ascended to the leadership position himself. The only athletics-related visits that Kim Jong Un made with his father were attendance at a synchronized swimming performance on 23 March 2011, attendance at the opening ceremony of the Korean People’s Army Overall Gymnasium on 5 April 2011, and attendance at a figure skating performance on 12 April 2011.[[1931]](#footnote-1931)

## 13.3 Basketball’s Relationship with Diplomacy

Basketball had seen its’ role in DPRK-USA relations suddenly increase during the previous era, specifically due to the issue of Ri Myong Hun’s eligibility. It was most pronounced during the first round of the Four-Party Talks during December 1997 in Geneva, when Ri’s NBA eligibility was used as a bargaining chip by the USA.[[1932]](#footnote-1932) It wouldn’t be until the year 2000 that the State Department gave permission for Ri to play in the NBA, but this offer was reportedly refused by Kim Jong Il.[[1933]](#footnote-1933) However, the USA seemed key to cash in on Kim Jong Il’s rumoured basketball fandom.

On 23 and 24 October 2000, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Kim Jong Il during a trip to Pyongyang.[[1934]](#footnote-1934) Before the talks ended on the second day, Albright, having heard Kim Jong Il was a basketball fan, presented Kim Jong Il with a basketball. Said basketball was signed by Michael Jordan. According to Albright, Kim was delighted.[[1935]](#footnote-1935) However, the gift of a signed basketball would be flipped on its head for the purposes of DPRK state propaganda.

It was mentioned in a late February 2006 *Rodong Sinmun* article that the basketball given to Kim Jong Il by Madeline Albright was on display at the International Friendship Exhibition. The description of the exhibit that explained that the USA, by giving Kim Jong Il a basketball, admitted that only Kim Jong Il can control the politics of the world. This was because the person who is given the basketball in a game can move the basketball according to their will.[[1936]](#footnote-1936) The ball would maintain its prominence in the museum and was mentioned again in a March 2006 *Rodong Sinmun*.[[1937]](#footnote-1937)

## 13.4 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

The DPRK men’s teams activities during the Stagnation Era can be cleanly classified into two periods. The first period encompasses the 2002 Asian Games and the 2003 Unification Games, while the second period encompasses the 2010 Asian Games. Moreover, this period of DPRK men’s basketball is unique in that, other than the 2003 Unification Match, the team did not play any friendlies at all. In any case, both periods of this era will be examined separately.

The DPRK Men’s Team was originally slated to compete in the 2001 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship in Shanghai from 20 to 28 July, but withdrew.[[1938]](#footnote-1938) The reason for their withdrawal was not stated.[[1939]](#footnote-1939) It would be the men’s team’s fourth straight withdrawal from an international tournament. Namely, it followed their withdrawal from the 1994 FIBA World Championship, the 1998 Asian Games, and the 1999 Asian Basketball Confederation Championship.

Remarkably, the men’s team would finally re-emerge for the next major international tournament. From 29 September to 13 October, the men’s basketball team participated in the 2002 Asian Games in Busan.[[1940]](#footnote-1940) The DPRK’s participation almost didn’t happen due to political tensions caused by the Second Battle of Yeongpyeong on 29 June 2002. However, an apology from the DPRK as well as a meeting in mid-August allowed the DPRK’s participation to move forward. [[1941]](#footnote-1941)

The DPRK would capture fifth place, and Ri Myong Hun and Pak Chon Jong were the two standout performers.[[1942]](#footnote-1942) Despite a relatively high finish, the performance can be considered a disappointment for the DPRK Men. They lost by 26 to the Philippines in the preliminary round and barely squeaked into the quarter-finals with a win over the United Arab Emirates. Once there, the DPRK lost by 16 to their rivals from the ROK and lost by eight to Kazakhstan. The DPRK would get into the fifth-place game with a win over Hong Kong and secure fifth place with a win over rival Japan. In comparison to their 1993 performance at the ABC championship, it was certainly a downgrade.

Meanwhile, the DPRK men’s basketball team’s first and only journey to the ROK created quite a bit of hubbub. The athletes and roughly 300 people in the overall athletics delegation would arrive via Gimpo Airport. Meanwhile, the DPRK cheering squad of roughly 370 people would arrive via the Man Gyong Bong 92 at Busan Port. [[1943]](#footnote-1943) While in the ROK, the teams would travel around on a chartered bus and stay in the athlete’s village. The DPRK’s particular lodging was reported to be staffed by unusually tough security guards.[[1944]](#footnote-1944) The DPRK team would march under a united flag with the ROK team in the opening ceremony. The cheering squad consisted of members of a brass band and artists, helping to create an atmosphere of reconciliation.[[1945]](#footnote-1945) Ri Myong Hun was popular due to his height and ability to easily grab the ball with one hand. Pak Chon Jong drew comparisons to Michael Jordan, showcasing brilliant dribbling and layups. It was even reported that the DPRK team could measure up to the ROK team.[[1946]](#footnote-1946) During the DPRK’s basketball game against the Philippines, the ROK crowd’s response to the DPRK cheering squad was positive, and many of those in the ROK cheered the DPRK squad on.[[1947]](#footnote-1947) The cheering squad performed two songs during their farewell ceremony on 15 October at Busan Port.[[1948]](#footnote-1948)

Back in the DPRK, the men’s team would be mentioned when they were successful. On 2 October 2002, there was brief mention of the men’s team win over the UAE.[[1949]](#footnote-1949) On 7 October, there was mention of a picture of the DPRK basketball team at the Asian games showing up in newspapers of India, Pakistan, and Cambodia.[[1950]](#footnote-1950) By 10 October, there was brief mention of the men’s basketball team victory over Hong Kong.[[1951]](#footnote-1951) Lastly, a 22 October article mentioned the DPRK’s worldwide basketball success in the early 2000s.[[1952]](#footnote-1952) Overall, the lack of coverage for the men’s team reflected both their increased age and the continued propagandistic nature of news during this era. This edition of the DPRK national team’s swan song would be at the 2003 Unification Match, when they beat a team of players from the ROK’s top domestic league. However, as their opponent did not officially represent the ROK government, the DPRK men were still winless against their southern brethren.

After the 2003 Unification Match, the DPRK men would not see any publicized action for over seven years. The factors behind this had to do with talent and politics. Talent-wise, the DPRK’s one-in-a-generation star, Ri Myong Hun, had aged past his playing days. Pak Chon Jong, arguably the second-best men’s player in DPRK history, also aged into retirement. This effectively meant that the DPRK men would be much less competitive within Asia. Of course, less competitive men’s national teams had played in exhibitions and international tournaments during past eras. But the DPRK in the 2000s saw a much more politically isolated and economically poorer state. As such, there was simply not sufficient political will and material support to keep funding international competition.

However, the men’s team would return. From 13 to 26 November, the DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team participated in the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou. Due to the DPRK’s close proximity to China and their historically close relations with China, sending a men’s team was an easy feat. But the DPRK men had only gotten comparatively worse, achieving eighth place.[[1953]](#footnote-1953) However, there were small victories along the way. The DPRK men earned their way into the preliminary round with a qualifying round win over Hong Kong. In the preliminary round, the DPRK men would soundly defeat Mongolia and Uzbekistan by over ten points. But they would lose by ten to Jordan, by 30 to the ROK, and by 34 to China. The DPRK would then lose their Quarter-Final elimination game against Japan by seventeen, their 5th-8th Placings match to the Philippines by 27, and their 7th-8th Placings match to Jordan by five. All in all, the DPRK was able to beat low-tier teams, but struggled against mid-tier teams and had no chance against top teams.

The DPRK’s participation garnered some attention from ROK media. The coach of the ROK team said that the DPRK team had good speed and three-point shooting, but lacked strength and experience. Of the DPRK’s loss to China, the DPRK coach said that they would use the game as a learning experience moving forward. An ROK coach who had faced the DPRK in 1993 and 2002 also saw the 2010 contest, remarking that the DPRK’s play style had remained consistent over the course of that time.[[1954]](#footnote-1954) The DPRK team was also noted for a very rough play style and elaborate play calling.[[1955]](#footnote-1955)

Table 70: Men's National Team Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 29-Sep-02 | United Arab Emirates | ROK | Busan | Geumjong Gymnasium | Preliminary Round | 2002 Asian Games | 85 | 64 | Win |
| 30-Sep-02 | Philippines | ROK | Busan | Geumjong Gymnasium | Preliminary Round | 2002 Asian Games | 63 | 89 | Loss |
| 03-Oct-02 | ROK | ROK | Busan | Geumjong Gymnasium | Quarterfinals | 2002 Asian Games | 85 | 101 | Loss |
| 06-Oct-02 | Kazakhstan | ROK | Busan | Geumjong Gymnasium | Quarterfinals | 2002 Asian Games | 89 | 81 | Loss |
| 08-Oct-02 | Hong Kong | ROK | Busan | Geumjong Gymnasium | Quarterfinals | 2002 Asian Games | 74 | 64 | Win |
| 13-Oct-02 | Japan | ROK | Busan | Geumjong Gymnasium | 5th Place Game | 2002 Asian Games | 74 | 65 | Win |
| 07-Oct-03 | KBL United (as "Hyundai Asan") | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugang Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Friendly | 2003 Unification Basketball Tournament | ? | ? | Win |
| 13-Nov-10 | Hong Kong | China | Guangzhou | Huangpu Gymnasium | Qualifying Round | 2010 Asian Games | 78 | 71 | Win |
| 16-Nov-10 | Jordan | China | Guangzhou | International Sports Arena | Preliminary Round | 2010 Asian Games | 80 | 90 | Loss |
| 17-Nov-10 | China | China | Guangzhou | International Sports Arena | Preliminary Round | 2010 Asian Games | 62 | 98 | Loss |
| 19-Nov-10 | ROK | China | Guangzhou | International Sports Arena | Preliminary Round | 2010 Asian Games | 66 | 96 | Loss |
| 21-Nov-10 | Mongolia | China | Guangzhou | Ying Tung Gymnasium | Preliminary Round | 2010 Asian Games | 88 | 67 | Win |
| 22-Nov-10 | Uzbekistan | China | Guangzhou | Ying Tung Gymnasium | Preliminary Round | 2010 Asian Games | 81 | 70 | Win |
| 24-Nov-10 | Japan | China | Guangzhou | Huangpu Gymnasium | Quarterfinals | 2010 Asian Games | 75 | 92 | Loss |
| 25-Nov-10 | Philippines | China | Guangzhou | Ying Tung Gymnasium | Placings 5th-8th | 2010 Asian Games | 69 | 96 | Loss |
| 26-Nov-10 | Jordan | China | Guangzhou | Ying Tung Gymnasium | 7th Place Game | 2010 Asian Games | 74 | 79 | Loss |

## 13.5 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

The DPRK Women’s Team, already cast aside in favour of the men’s team in terms of priority during the nineties, saw very little action during the Stagnation Era. Like the men, they suffered from a lack of success, the DPRK’s lack of allies, and the lack of political will to back them.

The women’s most notable game of the era was a loss in the Unification Match against players from the ROK’s top league. After that, they would only play in one tournament. From 19 to 26 June, the DPRK Women’s National Team played in the 2005 FIBA Asia Championship for Women in Qinhuangdao as a Level II team. They would win all of their games and technically achieve sixthplace.[[1956]](#footnote-1956) The DPRK’s closest wins came by six against India and by five against Kazakhstan. Unlike previous tournaments where they participated as a Level II team, the DPRK women’s wins were less convincing. This would indicate an overall decrease in talent compared to previous eras.

Table 71: Women's National Team Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 07-Oct-03 | WKBL United (as "Hyundai Asan") | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugang Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Friendly | 2003 Unification Basketball Tournament | ? | ? | Loss |
| 19-Jun-05 | India | China | Qinhuangdao | Olympic Sports Center | Level II Group B | 2005 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 86 | 80 | Win |
| 22-Jun-05 | Philippines | China | Qinhuangdao | Olympic Sports Center | Level II Group B | 2005 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 86 | 61 | Win |
| 23-Jun-05 | Kazakhstan | China | Qinhuangdao | Olympic Sports Center | Level II Group B | 2005 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 77 | 64 | Win |
| 25-Jun-05 | Hong Kong | China | Qinhuangdao | Olympic Sports Center | Level II Semi-Final | 2005 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 90 | 42 | Win |
| 26-Jun-05 | Kazakhstan | China | Qinhuangdao | Olympic Sports Center | 6th Place Game | 2005 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 84 | 79 | Win |

## 13.6 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

During the Stagnation Era, domestic club teams saw less international action than they had ever seen before. There were no friendlies played, and club teams were only sent to two tournaments overall. Firstly, from 16 to 21 December 2000, the DPRK Women’s Youth Team participated in the 2000 Asian Championship for Junior Women. They would place fifth, with four wins and two losses. The tournament itself was rather pedestrian for the level of DPRK basketball teams at that time. The DPRK Youth easily defeated India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka in Group Play, but lost by twelve to Japan and were crushed by China. This resulted in a fifth-place game against Thailand, which the DPRK Youth easily captured. Again, it was the same story for DPRK basketball; ahead of the lower-end teams, but nowhere near the top teams. All in all, it would be the only major international competition in which the DPRK youth competed.[[1957]](#footnote-1957)

One rather unprecedented club team trip abroad turned out to be the last international tournament for Ri Myong Hun. From 4 to 11 December, the DPRK sent the 25 April Basketball Team to the Third Military World Games in Catania, Italy. It was likely that the DPRK was looking to take advantage of the lower level of their competition for an easy win. Although the DPRK’s strongest domestic team is the military-backed 25 April, this is not the case on a worldwide basis. 25 April consists of state-amateurs and can acquire the nation’s best athletic talent through incentives, while teams of other militaries consisted almost entirely of career soldiers. In any case, the DPRK’s plan was only partially successful. 25 April would achieve fifth place on the back of Ri Myong Hun, with wins against the USA and Croatia and a narrow loss to the ROK.[[1958]](#footnote-1958) Unfortunately, the full results of the tournament are not available.

Table 72: Men's Club Team International Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 4~11-Dec-03 | 25 April Athletics Club | ROK Army | Italy | Catania | ? | 45th World Military Basketball Championship | ? | ? | Loss | 0W 1L |
| 4~11-Dec-03 | 25 April Athletics Club | United States Army | Italy | Catania | ? | 45th World Military Basketball Championship | ? | ? | Win | 1W 1L |
| 4~11-Dec-03 | 25 April Athletics Club | Croatian Army | Italy | Catania | ? | 45th World Military Basketball Championship | 98 | 77 | Win | 2W 1L |

Table 73: Women's Club Team International Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 16-Dec-00 | DPR Korea Youth | India | India | New Delhi | ? | Preliminary Round, 2000 Asia Championship for Junior Women | 109 | 67 | Win | 2W 1L |
| 17-Dec-00 | DPR Korea Youth | Malaysia | India | New Delhi | ? | Preliminary Round, 2000 Asia Championship for Junior Women | 77 | 48 | Win | 3W 1L |
| 18-Dec-00 | DPR Korea Youth | Japan | India | New Delhi | ? | Preliminary Round, 2000 Asia Championship for Junior Women | 68 | 80 | Loss | 3W 2L |
| 19-Dec-00 | DPR Korea Youth | Sri Lanka | India | New Delhi | ? | Preliminary Round, 2000 Asia Championship for Junior Women | 132 | 36 | Win | 4W 2L |
| 20-Dec-00 | DPR Korea Youth | China | India | New Delhi | ? | Preliminary Round, 2000 Asia Championship for Junior Women | 79 | 110 | Loss | 4W 3L |
| 21-Dec-00 | DPR Korea Youth | Thailand | India | New Delhi | ? | 5th Place Classification Game, 2000 Asia Championship for Junior Women | 78 | 42 | Win | 5W 3L |

## 13.7 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

During this era, the DPRK media buzz around the unification games was mixed. On 17 August 2000, a column mentioned that the unification basketball and table tennis games had thrived. Furthermore, north and south media representatives had held hands in Pyongyang.[[1959]](#footnote-1959) Further positive coverage continued during 2003. In March, the male and female unification basketball games that occurred during September and December of 1999 in Pyongyang and Seoul, respectively, were part of a larger report on Hyundai’s cooperative inter-Korean work from 1998 through that date.[[1960]](#footnote-1960)

On the other hand, in a late September article from the National Committee for Peaceful Reunification, *Rodong Sinmun* blasted the ROK Legislature for attending the unification basketball games that October as an act of tourism. The column insisted that the ROK confront the USA first.[[1961]](#footnote-1961)

The opening of the Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium and subsequent Unification Basketball Tournament was originally slated to take place on 15 August, but was delayed until October following the sudden suicide of Hyundai’s chairman and Chung Ju-yung’s son, Chung Mong-hun, on 4 August.[[1962]](#footnote-1962)

In early October, the Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium was opened. Basketball was stated to be the representative example of designated sports for the stadium, and a basketball team was among attendees to arrive from the ROK.[[1963]](#footnote-1963) The stadium’s namesake, while being present at the stadium’s ground-breaking ceremony four years prior, had died in the intervening time.[[1964]](#footnote-1964) After the official opening ceremony, a Unification Concert was held inside. ROK performers included pop singer Lee Sun-Hee, trot singer Lee Young-chun, and girl group Baby V.O.X. DPRK performers included the State National Art Troupe and the Manusdae Art Troupe. The basketball game was held the day afterwards.[[1965]](#footnote-1965)

When the Unification basketball games were held, the highest DPRK official to attend was Vice Premier Kwak Bom Ki. A men’s and women’s game was played between DPRK and ROK sides.[[1966]](#footnote-1966) The ROK men’s side consisted mainly of the men’s Jeonju KCC Egis team and the women’s side consisted of mainly the Hyundai Hyperion team, but included members from five different clubs.[[1967]](#footnote-1967) Despite a bad back and decreased mobility, Ri Myong Hun played the majority of the game and had a decisive role in his team’s victory.[[1968]](#footnote-1968) The teams would compete under the names of “Hyundai Asan” for the ROK and “Asia Pacific” for the DPRK, but in effect they were nearly national representative teams. The game, opening ceremony, and the opening of the gymnasium were broadcast in the ROK on SBS.[[1969]](#footnote-1969) The game was said to be the last for stars Pak Chon Jong and Ri Myong Hun. Pak planned to go on to become a TV analyst and Ri planned to become a coach. The two were said to have already been in retirement after the previous year’s Asian Games in Busan, but came out to the Unification Games as it was a big event.[[1970]](#footnote-1970) However, later that year, Ri would emerge at the Military World Games in Italy.

Hur Jae, who had played in the 2003 game, recalled in 2018 that the most memorable part of the experience was playing a fun match with the DPRK athletes, regardless of win or loss. He also remembered a light conversation with Ri Myong Hun.[[1971]](#footnote-1971) In an 11 June 2005 *Rodong Sinmun* article, the Unification Basketball Games were mentioned as part of Unification Events that were planning the uniting of the Korean people.[[1972]](#footnote-1972) Despite this success, the Unification Games would not return for another fifteen years. Reasons for this include a conservative administration coming into power in the ROK, leadership changes at Hyundai, Kim Jong Il’s declining basketball interest, a lack of upcoming talent in the DPRK, and a tense international political atmosphere.

## 13.8 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

During the Stagnation Era, basketball still held somewhat of a high position in terms of domestic policy due to the large push during the previous era. But it was clear that basketball had lost some of its’ prestige. One example is basketball’s position within the government’s administration. As of 1994, the Basketball Association was technically on the same administrative footing as other athletic disciplines, directly under the National Athletics Committee.[[1973]](#footnote-1973) However, as of 2001, basketball appears to have been deemphasized in relation to other disciplines, such as football in gymnastics. Basically, football, mass gymnastics, and taekwondo were directly under the teaching and training guidance bureau. Meanwhile, basketball was a step lower, under the guidance of the athletic skill league.[[1974]](#footnote-1974) Basketball continued to be a part of the general athletic curriculum in middle and high school.[[1975]](#footnote-1975) It was also often carried out in athletic time outside of education time.[[1976]](#footnote-1976) Each Saturday’s Athletics Day and after class 1 to 2 hour athletic time was managed by each city and provinces’ athletics club.[[1977]](#footnote-1977) Basketball was one of around 20 athletic disciplines with active teams as of 1994.[[1978]](#footnote-1978) In schools, each student was required to have skills in at least one athletic discipline, and the ability to serve as referee in at least two athletic disciplines.[[1979]](#footnote-1979)

Despite basketball’s lower position within the administrative structure, it continued to be promoted by a number of government entities. Mostly, this meant popularization. On 31 May 2000, those at a Pyongyang City Athletes Rally pledged to actively fight to develop basketball and other disciplines quickly.[[1980]](#footnote-1980) On 19 May 2005, the vice chairman of the Athletics Guidance Committee mentioned regular basketball matches as a part of the country’s popularization of athletics and improvement of athletics skill.[[1981]](#footnote-1981)

Basketball was also promoted through the youth. On 22 July 2000, the Athletics Guidance Committee named basketball as one of the disciplines which heightened the level of athletic science and skill. Workers and coaches, by preparing several different publications, took steps to distribute said disciplines to Pyongyang and provincial athletics teams, athletics schools, and youth athletics schools.[[1982]](#footnote-1982) In a 2006 editorial celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Children’s Union, basketball was mentioned as an activity that was enthusiastically drilled regularly by members of the organization.[[1983]](#footnote-1983) As of 2008, basketball was one of nine sports that were carried out nationwide at primary school sports festivals.[[1984]](#footnote-1984)

Basketball was even seen as a method to improve National Defence Athletics. On 18 July 2006, an article mentioned how basketball needs to supplement National Defence Athletics. The article also implored that basketball be played during lunch times and break times, which will better health and increase unity.[[1985]](#footnote-1985) On 6 October 2006, basketball was mentioned by the vice chairman of the Athletics Guidance Committee. They said that basketball was to be executed as planned in order to better prepare citizens for labour and national defence.[[1986]](#footnote-1986) Overall, this was certainly a far cry from the National Defence Athletics Era, when National Defence Athletics were supposed to supplement Mass Athletics.

Domestic policy also included some court construction projects. Predictably, the number was rather limited due to economic difficulty. On 17 May 2005, ongoing construction of a 5000-seat basketball stadium in Haeju was reported.[[1987]](#footnote-1987) In a mid-July 2005 report, basketball courts were mentioned among the athletics facilities available after a number of construction projects in Doksong County.[[1988]](#footnote-1988) On 5 May 2011, the Korean People’s Army General Athletics Gymnasium was opened. It boasted basketball facilities.[[1989]](#footnote-1989)

## 13.9 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

In terms of Domestic Basketball Tournaments, the Stagnation Era was extremely active. Due to three basketball specific tournaments being established during the Basketball Intensification Era, basketball continued to be one of the most contested athletic disciplines across the nation. Additionally, the Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament was revived during this era. It had previously been competed in 1987, but was run seven times from 2001 to 2008. In any case, *Minju Joson* gives some hard evidence for the prominence of basketball tournaments during this era. On 8 January 2008, *Minju Joson*, through a list of that year’s published tournaments, showed that basketball was the only sport to have two standalone tournaments.[[1990]](#footnote-1990) The next year, on 16 January 2009, a list of the year’s athletics tournaments again had basketball as the most contested discipline. It was the only sport with three dedicated tournaments.[[1991]](#footnote-1991)

One other remarkable development during this era was detail given of tournament structure. It was rarer during this era, but would go into full swing during the subsequent Hot Blast of Athletics Era. There are three examples. The first example was the late August 2004 basketball tournament of Central Organ Workers was competed in Pyongyang. It was unique in that teams were slotted in divisions according to their ability, with the first division assuming a league format and the second division assuming a tournament format.[[1992]](#footnote-1992) A December retrospective from *Minju Joson* covered the tournament.[[1993]](#footnote-1993) The second example is the April 2007 Day of the Sun National Athletics Festival.[[1994]](#footnote-1994) A retrospective article went into detail about the tournament’s preliminaries as well as the finals of both men’s and women’s divisions.[[1995]](#footnote-1995)The third example is the 2010 Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Athletics Tournament.[[1996]](#footnote-1996) Men’s basketball in this tournament was reported to be particularly memorable as it showed high collectivist spirit, skilled ball control, and interesting scoring scenes due to extraordinary tactics.[[1997]](#footnote-1997)

Table 74: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Ministry, Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》성, 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 27-Jan-00~10-Feb-00 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 4-Feb-00~29-Feb-00 | Pyongyang | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 태양절기념 《만경대상》체육경기대회 | 6-Apr-00~27-Apr-00 | Hamhung | Hamhung Athletics Grounds |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 5-May-00~12-May-00 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《보천보홰불상》체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-00~28-Jun-00 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National University Student Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 25-Aug-00~1-Sep-00 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Stadium |
| 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 28-Aug-00~2-Sep-00 | ? | ? |
| First National Individual Discipline Athletic School Level 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제1차전국 종목별 체육학급 《9월 5일상》체육경기대회 | 31-Aug-00~4-Sep-00 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 27th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제27차 ≪정일봉상≫ 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 20-Oct-00~27-Oct-00 | Pyongyang, Kowon County | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 26-Oct-2000~2-Nov-2000 | Hamhung City, Hamju County | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 25-Jan-2001~6-Feb-2001 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《백두산상》체육경기대회 | 7-Feb-2001~28-Feb-2001 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국《9월5일상》대학생체육경기대회 | 00-Jul-01~24-Jul-01 | Hamhung | ? |
| Fifth 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제5차 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 21-Aug-01~27-Aug-01 | Chongjin | ? |
| 53rd Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Non-Manufacturing Sector Central Organ Competitive Basketball Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국창건 53돐기념 비생산부문 중앙기관롱구경기 | 27-Aug-01~6-Sep-01 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 28th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제28차 ≪정일봉상≫ 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 26-Aug-01~3-Sep-01 | Wonsan | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 21-Sep-01~31-Oct-01 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Wonsan, Nampho, Provincial Cities | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 27-Sep-01~7-Oct-01 | Rungna Island | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《오산덕상》체육경기대회 | 20-Dec-01~26-Dec-01 | Pyongyang, Ryanggang Province, South Hamgyong Province | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 16 February Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2.16경축《백두산상》중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 28-Jan-02~7-Feb-02 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Athletics Festival | 《백두산상》체육축전 | 11-Feb-02~28-Feb-02 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| National Workers Athletics Festival | 전국로동자체육축전 | 10-Mar-02~10-May-02 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 5th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제5차 전국농업근로자들의 롱구경기대회 | 11-Mar-02~15-Mar-02 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Athletics Festival | 《만경대상》체육축전 | 10-Apr-02~30-Apr-02 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Wonsan, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《보천보홰불상》체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-02~3-Jul-02 | Haesan | ? |
| 39th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제39차 전국청소년체육학교 체육경기대회 | 00-Aug-02 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 54th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Non-Manufacturing Sector Central Organ Competitive Basketball Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국창건 54돐기념 비생산부문 중앙기관롱구경기 | 29-Aug-02~8-Sep-02 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 25-Sep-2002~15-Nov-2002 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Sariwon, Chongjin, Haeju, Nampho, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Artists Athletic Tournament | 문화예술인체육대회 | 18-Oct-02 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국《9월5일상》대학생체육경기대회 | 15-Oct-02~22-Oct-02 | Haeju | ? |
| Sixth 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제6차 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 15-Oct-02~22-Oct-02 | Haeju | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 《오산덕상》체육경기대회 | 10-Dec-02~24-Dec-02 | Pyongyang, Chongjin, Samjiyon | North Hamgyong Province Gymnasium |
| National University Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 7-Apr-2003~12-Apr-2003 | Sariwon | ? |
| 29th Jong Il Peak Prize National Student Childrens Palace Athletics Club Member Competitive Tournament | 제29차 <<정일봉성>> 전국학생 소년궁전 체육구락부생경기대회 | 20-Aug-2003~1-Sept-2003 | Pyongyang, Tokchon | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 중앙기관일군롱구경기대회 | 22-Sept-2003~1-Oct-2003 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 10th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 제10차 인민체육대회 | 15-Oct-03~Dec-03 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 9th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제9차 <<백두산상>> 중앙기관일군 체육경기 대회 | 27-Jan-04~9-Feb-04 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제9차 <<백두산상>> 체육경기 대회 | 10-Feb-04~Feb-04 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 6th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제6차 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 1-Mar-04~5-Mar-04 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 13-Apr-04~30-Apr-04 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<보천보홰불상>> 체육경기대회 | 4-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Pyongyang, Nationwide | ? |
| 30th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제30차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 7-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Pyongyang, Sariwon, Jaeryong County | ? |
| 30th Jong Il Peak Prize National Student Childrens Palace (Institute) Athletics Club Member Competitive Tournament | 제30차 <<정일봉성>> 전국학생 소년궁전(화관) 체육구락부생경기대회 | 7-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Kowon County, Sukchon County, Unpa County | ? |
| 5th National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제5차 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 19-Jul-04~23-Jul-04 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 8th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제8차 전국청년학생들의 <<8.28청년컵>> 쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 24-Aug-04~1-Sept-04 | Hamhung | ? |
| 56th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory 4th Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 공화국창건 56돐경축 제4차 중앙기관일군롱구경기대회 | Aug-04~30-Aug-04 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gynmasium |
| 35th Artists Athletics Tournament | 제35차 예술인체육대회 | 01-Oct-04 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | Sep-04~Oct 04 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Sariwon, Haeju | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament of Different Sports Types | 종목별 청년선수권대회 | Autumn 04 | Pyongyang, Sariwon, Hamhung, Wonsan | ? |
| 10th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제10차 <<백두산상>> 중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 25-Jan-05~8-Feb-05 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| <<Paekdu Mountain Prize>> Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<백두산상>> 체육경기대회 | 8-Feb-05~28-Feb-05 | Pyongyang, Samjiyon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 4-Apr-05~Apr-05 | Pyongyang, Sariwon, Nampho, Wonsan | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 태양절기념 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 7-Apr-05~12-Apr-05 | Phyongsong | ? |
| 31st Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제31차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 21-Jun-05~7-Jul-05 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 9th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제9차 전국청년학생들의 <<8.28청년컵>> 쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | 11-Aug-05~17-Aug-05 | Pyongyang | Mangyongdae Student and Children's Palace Gymnasium |
| 42nd National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제42차 전국청소년체육학교체육경기대회 | Aug-05~25-Aug-05 | Hamhung | Hamhung Stadium |
| 5th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제5차 중앙기관일군롱구경기대회 | 30-Aug-05~Aug-05 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 10 October Celebratory National Athletics Festival | 10.10경축 전국체육축전 | 5-Oct-05~31-Oct-05 | Pyongyang, Wonsan, Sariwon, Nampho | ? |
| 36th Artists Athletics Tournament | 제36차 예술인체육대회 | 04-Nov-05 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 11th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제11차 <<백두산상>> 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 24-Jan-06~Feb-06 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<백두산상>> 체육경기대회 | 9-Feb-06~Feb-06 | Pyongyang, Samjiyon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 7th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제7차 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 7-Mar-06~10-Mar-06 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Gymnasium |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 태양절기념 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 4-Apr-06~11-Apr-06 | Phyongsong | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 12-Apr-06~28-Apr-06 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 32nd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제32차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 13-Jun-06~5-Jul-06 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 6th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제6차 중앙기관일군롱구경기대회 | 29-Aug-06~7-Sep-06 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 10th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제10차 전국청년학생들의 <<8.28청년컵>> 쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | Sep-06~Sep-06 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 37th Artists Athletics Tournament | 제37차 예술인체육대회 | 27-Oct-06 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | Nov-06~Nov-06 | Pyongyang, Chongjin, Pyongson, Hamhung, Sariwon | ? |
| <<Paekdu Mountain Prize>> Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<백두산상>> 체육경기대회 | 6-Feb-07~2-Mar-07 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Preliminaries for The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 태양절기념 전국체육축전 예선 | Mar-07~Mar-07 | Hamhung, Phyongsong | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 태양절기념 전국체육축전 | 3-Apr-07~26-Apr-07 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 태양절기념 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 4-Apr-07~11-Apr-07 | Jongju | ? |
| 33rd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제33차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 12-Jun-07~Jul-07 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Inter-Province Competitive Athletics Tournament | 도 대항체육경기대회 진행 | 1-Jun-07~28-Jun-07 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon | ? |
| 11th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제11차 전국청년학생들의 <<8.28청년컵>> 쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | Aug-07~9-Aug-07 | Hamhung | ? |
| Youth Holiday Commemorative <<5 September Prize>> Pyongyang University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 청년절기념 <<9월5일상>> 평양시대학생체육경기대회 | 13-Aug-07~23-Aug-07 | Pyongyang | Mangyongdae Student and Children's Palace Gymnasium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | Oct-07~Oct-07 | Pyongyang, Chongjin, Hamhung, Phyongsong | ? |
| 38th Artists Athletics Tournament | 제38차 예술인체육대회 | 31-Oct-07 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| Youth Championship Tournament | 청년선수권대회 | Nov-07~Nov-07 | Pyongyang, Chongjin, Sariwon, Phyongsong | ? |
| 13th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제13차 <<백두산상>> 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 23-Jan-08~Feb-08 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<백두산상>> 체육경기대회 | 12-Feb-08~28-Feb-08 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 80th Anniversary of the Formation of the Farmers Alliance Commemorative National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 농민동맹결성 80돐기념 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 12-Mar-08~17-Mar-08 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 10-Apr-08~Apr-08 | Pyongyang, Chongjin, Sariwon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 태양절기념 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 5-Apr-08~12-Apr-08 | Phyongsong | ? |
| 11th Mangyongdae Prize City Level Organ Workers' Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제11차 <<만경대상>> 시급기관일군체육경기대회 | Apr-08~Apr-08 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 8th National Worker's Athletics Tournament | 제8차 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 29-Apr-08~5-May-08 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 34th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제34차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 15-May-08~20-June-08 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 전국도대항종합체육경기대회 | 9-Jun-08~28-Jun-08 | Chongjin | Chongjin Stadium |
| 12th National Youth and Student's 28 August Youth Cup Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제12차 전국청년학생들의 <<8.28청년컵>> 쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | Aug-08~Aug-08 | ? | ? |
| 45th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제45차 전국청소년 체육학교체육경기대회 | Aug-08~29-Aug-08 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Wonsan | ? |
| 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory Athletics Tournament | 공화국창건 60돐경축 체육경기 | 5-Sep-08~12-Sep-08 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 11th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 제11차 인민체육대회 | 17-Oct-08~31-Oct-08 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 39th Artists Athletics Tournament | 제39차 예술인체육대회 | 31-Oct-08 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 7th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제7차 중앙기관일군롱구경기대회 | Dec-08~11-Dec-08 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Gymnasium |
| Youth Championship Tournament | 청년선수권대회 | Dec-08~20-Dec-08 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Wonsan | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<백두산상>> 체육경기대회 | 6-Feb-09~27-Feb-09 | Pyongyang, Samjiyon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 12th City Level Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제12차 <<만경대상>> 시급기관 일군체육경기대화 | Mar-09~19-Mar-09 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 7-Apr-09~30-Apr-09 | Pyongyang, Sariwon, Hamhung, Phyongsong, Samjiyon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 태양절기념 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 3-Apr-09~10-Apr-09 | Sariwon | ? |
| 35th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제35차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 14-May-09~30-May-09 | Hamhung, Nampho | Hamhung Stadium |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<보천보홰불상>> 체육경기대회 | 3-Jun-09~30-Jun-09 | Pyongyang, Wonsan, Nampho | ? |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 전국도대항종합체육경기대회 | 5-Jun-09~26-Jun-09 | Hamhung | Hamhung Stadium |
| 13th National Youth and Student's 28 August Youth Cup Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제13차 전국청년학생들의 <<8.28청년컵>> 쟁탈 롱구경기대회 | Aug-09~Aug-09 | Hamhung | ? |
| 40th Artists Athletic Tournament | 제40차 예술인체육대회 | 23-Oct-09 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 16 February Celebratory 15th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2.16경축 제15차 <<백두산상>> 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 21-Jan-10~10-Feb-10 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<백두산상>> 체육경기대회 | 10-Feb-10~26-Feb-10 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<만경대상>> 체육경기대회 | 7-Apr-10~30-Apr-10 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 전국대학생롱구경기대회 | 5-Apr-10~12-Apr-10 | Phyongsong | ? |
| 36th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 제36차 <<정일봉상>> 전국 청소년학생체육경기대회 | 17-May-10~May-10 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | <<보천보홰불상>> 체육경기대회 | 03-Jun-10~Jun-10 | Haesan | ? |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 전국도대항종합체육경기대회 | 15-Jun-10~30-Jun-10 | Haesan, Haeju | ? |
| 5 October Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9월5일상 전국대학생 체육경기대회 | Sep-10~19-Sep-10 | Hamhung | ? |
| 65th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory National Athletics Tournament | 당창건 65돐경축 전국체육축전 | 15-Oct-10~29-Oct-10 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Wonsan, Haeju, Nampho | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 41st Artists Athletic Tournament | 제41차 예술인체육대회 | 30-Oct-10 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 16 February Celebratory 16th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2.16경축 제16차 백두산상 중앙기광일군 체육경기대회 | 24-Jan-11~28-Jan-11 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 8-Feb-11~28-Feb-11 | Pyongyang, Samjiyon | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 만경대상 체육경기대회 | 10-Mar-11~29-Mar-11 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Wonsan, Chongjin | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 태양절기념 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 24-Mar-11~28-Mar-11 | Pyongyang | Kim Chaek Industrial University Gymnasium |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기대회 | 3-Jun-11~26-Jun-11 | Pyongyang, Wonsan, Chongjin, Sariwon, Hamhung, Haesan | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 10-Jun-11~30-Jun-11 | Chongjin | ? |
| 42nd Artists Athletic Tournament | 제42차 예술인체육대회 | 23-Sep-11 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |

The following can be determined from the basketball tournament details of the Stagnation Era. Firstly, the addition of tournament names such as the “Jong Il Peak Prize” and the “Songun Beacon Prize” reflect a new focus on Kim Jong Il building up his own legitimacy and legacy. Secondly, while Pyongyang remained the centre of contested tournaments, other cities began to see more tournaments as well. Specifically, 91 tournaments were held all or partially in Pyongyang. But Hamhung hosted 23 tournaments, Sariwon hosted fourteen, Wonsan hosted twelve, Chongjin hosted eleven, Phyongsong hosted nine, Nampho hosted eight, Samjiyon hosted six, and Haesan hosted four. This represents the partial economic recovery following the Arduous March. Thirdly, Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium remained the premier basketball venue, hosting 31 tournaments. Pyongyang Gymnasium was the clear secondary venue, hosting nine events.

Table 75: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Ministry, Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 27-Jan-00~10-Feb-00 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-00~29-Feb-00 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 6-Apr-00~27-Apr-00 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-May-00~12-May-00 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-00~28-Jun-00 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student Competitive Basketball Tournament | 25-Aug-00~1-Sep-00 | Kim Il Sung University | Pyongyang Play and Motion Picture University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | ? |
| 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 28-Aug-00~2-Sep-00 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| First National Individual Discipline Athletic School Level 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 31-Aug-00~4-Sep-00 | Pyongyang Okryu High School (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| 27th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Oct-00~27-Oct-00 | Pyongyang Kallimkil High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 26-Oct-2000~2-Nov-2000 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jan-2001~6-Feb-2001 | ? | ? | ? | Kyonghung Guidance Bureau Minju Joson Ministry of Communications |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 7-Feb-2001~28-Feb-2001 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Jul-01~24-Jul-01 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Hamhung Statistical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| Fifth 28 August Youth Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 21-Aug-01~27-Aug-01 | Pyongyang Kallimkil High School (High School) Rajin Marine Transport University (University) North Hamgyong Province Cooperative Fishery Management Committee (Working Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| 53rd Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Non-Manufacturing Sector Central Organ Competitive Basketball Tournament | 27-Aug-01~6-Sep-01 | ? | ? | ? | Mansudae Art Studio Korea Central Broadcasting Committee  Hydro-Meteorological Bureau |
| 28th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 26-Aug-01~3-Sep-01 | Pyongyang Tongmun High School | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 21-Sep-01~31-Oct-01 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 27-Sep-01~7-Oct-01 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Dec-01~26-Dec-01 | ? | ? | ? | Amrok River 25 April Pyongyang Railway Bureau Locomotive |
| 16 February Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 28-Jan-02~7-Feb-02 | ? | ? | ? | Mansudae Art Studio Foreign Service Bureau Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Land and Marine Transport Sonbong Management Bureau |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Athletics Festival | 11-Feb-02~28-Feb-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Athletics Festival | 10-Mar-02~10-May-02 | Kangwon Province | ? | ? | ? |
| 5th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 11-Mar-02~15-Mar-02 | Pongchon County Jukdong Cooperative Farm | Huiryong City Changhyo Cooperative Farm | Junghwa County Chungryong Farm | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Athletics Festival | 10-Apr-02~30-Apr-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-02~3-Jul-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 39th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Aug-02 | Pyongyang City (Youth) Kangwon Province (Children) | ? | ? | ? |
| 54th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Non-Manufacturing Sector Central Organ Competitive Basketball Tournament | 29-Aug-02~8-Sep-02 | Taesong Overall Trade Bureau Korea Central News Agency Bureau of Welcoming Overseas Koreans | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 25-Sep-2002~15-Nov-2002 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Artists Athletic Tournament | 18-Oct-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Oct-02~22-Oct-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Sixth 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 15-Oct-02~22-Oct-02 | Pyongyang Play and Motion Picture University | Nampho Normal University | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Dec-02~24-Dec-02 | Amrok River (Level 1) Chollima United Steel Manufacturing Business (Level 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 7-Apr-2003~12-Apr-2003 | Kim Il Sung University | Kim Jong Tae Haeju #1 Normal University | Nampho Normal University | ? |
| 29th Jong Il Peak Prize National Student Childrens Palace Athletics Club Member Competitive Tournament | 20-Aug-2003~1-Sept-2003 | Chongjin Students Children's Palace | ? | ? | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 22-Sept-2003~1-Oct-2003 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Group) Minju Joson (Group) Taesong Overall Trade Bureau (Group) Hydro-Meteorological Bureau (Group) | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 15-Oct-03~Dec-03 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 27-Jan-04~9-Feb-04 | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Chemical Industry |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-04~Feb-04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 6th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 1-Mar-04~5-Mar-04 | Unryul County Kwonhae Cooperative Farm | Orang County O Dae Jin Cooperative Farm | Toksong County Imja Cooperative Farm | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Apr-04~30-Apr-04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Amrok River Locomotive |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 30th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 7-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Pyongyang Kallimkil High School | ? | ? | ? |
| 30th Jong Il Peak Prize National Student Childrens Palace (Institute) Athletics Club Member Competitive Tournament | 7-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Pyongyang Students and Children's Palace Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 5th National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 19-Jul-04~23-Jul-04 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| 8th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 24-Aug-04~1-Sept-04 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Hamju County Ryangjong Business (Working Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| 56th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory 4th Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-04~30-Aug-04 | Taesong Overall Trade Bureau (Group 1) Mining Machinery Industry Guidance Bureau (Group 2) | ? | ? | Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mansudae Art Studio |
| 35th Artists Athletics Tournament | 01-Oct-04 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Sep-04~Oct 04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament of Different Sports Types | Autumn 04 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jan-05~8-Feb-05 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | ? | ? | ? |
| <<Paekdu Mountain Prize>> Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-05~28-Feb-05 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | 25 April Sentry |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Apr-05~Apr-05 | Sobaeksu | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 7-Apr-05~12-Apr-05 | Kim Hyung Jik Normal University (University) Pyongyang Machinery Planning College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 31st Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 21-Jun-05~7-Jul-05 | Pyongyang Kallimkil High School | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 11-Aug-05~17-Aug-05 | Kim Il Sung University (University) South Hamgyong Province (Working Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| 42nd National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | Aug-05~25-Aug-05 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 30-Aug-05~Aug-05 | Taesong Overall Trade Bureau (Group 1) Ministry of Trade (Group 2) Ministry of Land and Marine Transport (Group 3) | ? | ? | ? |
| 10 October Celebratory National Athletics Festival | 5-Oct-05~31-Oct-05 | Sobaeksu | ? | ? | ? |
| 36th Artists Athletics Tournament | 04-Nov-05 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Jan-06~Feb-06 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs OR Taesong Guidance Bureau (Group 1) ? (Group 2) | ? | ? | Group 1 Ministry of Trade Ministry of Railways Moran Guidance Bureau Mining Machinery Industry Guidance Bureau |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9-Feb-06~Feb-06 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 7th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 7-Mar-06~10-Mar-06 | Chongjin City | Haeju City | Yonggwang County | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 4-Apr-06~11-Apr-06 | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University (University) Hamhung Statistical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 12-Apr-06~28-Apr-06 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Kim Il Sung University Amrok River |
| 32nd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 13-Jun-06~5-Jul-06 | Pyongyang Kallimkil High School | ? | ? | ? |
| 6th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 29-Aug-06~7-Sep-06 | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Group 1) Minju Joson (Group 2) Moran Guidance Bureau (Group 3) Foreign Service Bureau (Group 4) | Ministry of Trade (Group 1) | ? | Ministry of Trade National Planning Committee Ministry of Railways Ministry of Mining Industry Mansudae Art Studio Ministry of Crude Oil Industry |
| 10th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | Sep-06~Sep-06 | Kim Il Sung University (University) South Hamgyong Province (Working Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| 37th Artists Athletics Tournament | 27-Oct-06 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Nov-06~Nov-06 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| <<Paekdu Mountain Prize>> Competitive Athletics Tournament | 6-Feb-07~2-Mar-07 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Sobaeksu Amrok River |
| Preliminaries for The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | Mar-07~Mar-07 | ? | ? | ? | South Hamgyong Province North Hamgyong Province South Phyongan Province Chollima United Steel Manufacturing Business |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-07~26-Apr-07 | 25 April Athletics Club | Sobaeksu | ? | Sobaeksu Amrok River Locomotive Pyongyang City South Hamgyong Province North Hamgyong Province South Phyongan Province Chollima United Steel Manufacturing Business |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 4-Apr-07~11-Apr-07 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Sinuiju Information Technology College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 33rd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 12-Jun-07~Jul-07 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Inter-Province Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Jun-07~28-Jun-07 | South Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-07~9-Aug-07 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Hamhung Light Industry University (Working Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Holiday Commemorative <<5 September Prize>> Pyongyang University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Aug-07~23-Aug-07 | Kim Il Sung University (Group 1) ? (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Oct-07~Oct-07 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 38th Artists Athletics Tournament | 31-Oct-07 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament | Nov-07~Nov-07 | Sobaeksu | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 23-Jan-08~Feb-08 | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Trade |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 12-Feb-08~28-Feb-08 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Sobaeksu |
| 80th Anniversary of the Formation of the Farmers Alliance Commemorative National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 12-Mar-08~17-Mar-08 | Phyongsong City Jasan Cooperative Farm | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Apr-08~Apr-08 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 5-Apr-08~12-Apr-08 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Chongjin Information Technology College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th Mangyongdae Prize City Level Organ Workers' Competitive Athletics Tournament | Apr-08~Apr-08 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 8th National Worker's Athletics Tournament | 29-Apr-08~5-May-08 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 34th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 15-May-08~20-June-08 | Pyongyang Kallimkil High School | ? | ? | Kangwon Province South Hamgyong Province |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 9-Jun-08~28-Jun-08 | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? |
| 12th National Youth and Student's 28 August Youth Cup Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-08~Aug-08 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Chongdan County Daepung Cooperative Farm (Working Youth) | ? | ? | ? |
| 45th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | Aug-08~29-Aug-08 | Pyongyang City (Youth) Kangwon Province (Children) | ? | ? | ? |
| 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory Athletics Tournament | 5-Sep-08~12-Sep-08 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 17-Oct-08~31-Oct-08 | 25 April Athletics Club (Athletics Club) Pyongyang City (Mass Athletics) | ? | ? | ? |
| 39th Artists Athletics Tournament | 31-Oct-08 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 7th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | Dec-08~11-Dec-08 | Ministry of Railways (Group 1) Ministry of Mining Industry (Group 2) People's Grand Study Palace (Group 3) Rakwon County Guidance Bureau (Group 4) | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament | Dec-08~20-Dec-08 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 6-Feb-09~27-Feb-09 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Pyongyang City |
| 12th City Level Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | Mar-09~19-Mar-09 | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang Number 1 People's Hospital |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 7-Apr-09~30-Apr-09 | Sobaeksu | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 3-Apr-09~10-Apr-09 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Unpa Agricultural College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 35th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 14-May-09~30-May-09 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-09~30-Jun-09 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 5-Jun-09~26-Jun-09 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th National Youth and Student's 28 August Youth Cup Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-09~Aug-09 | Kim Il Sung University (University) O Jung Hup Chongjin Number 1 Normal School Faculty (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 40th Artists Athletic Tournament | 23-Oct-09 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 16 February Celebratory 15th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Jan-10~10-Feb-10 | Ministry of Railways Minju Joson Taesong Guidance Bureau Overall Public Service Bureau | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-10~26-Feb-10 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 7-Apr-10~30-Apr-10 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 5-Apr-10~12-Apr-10 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Hamhung Electrical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 36th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 17-May-10~May-10 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 03-Jun-10~Jun-10 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 15-Jun-10~30-Jun-10 | South Hwanghae Province | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 October Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | Sep-10~19-Sep-10 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | ? |
| 65th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory National Athletics Tournament | 15-Oct-10~29-Oct-10 | Locomotive | ? | ? | Sobaeksu Pyongyang City |
| 41st Artists Athletic Tournament | 30-Oct-10 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 16 February Celebratory 16th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Jan-11~28-Jan-11 | Ministry of Railways (Group 1) Minju Joson (Group 2) Taesong Guidance Bureau (Group 3) Mining Machinery Industry Guidance Bureau | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-11~28-Feb-11 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Mar-11~29-Mar-11 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 24-Mar-11~28-Mar-11 | Jongju City Soju Cooperative Farm | Ryokpo District So Sang Jong Vegetable Specialist Cooperative Farm | Tokchon City Chongsong Cooperative Farm | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-11~26-Jun-11 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Jun-11~30-Jun-11 | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | South Hamgyong Province |
| 42nd Artists Athletic Tournament | 23-Sep-11 | ? | ? | ? | ? |

From the men’s domestic basketball tournament results in the Stagnation Era, the following conclusions can be reached. Firstly, the 25 April Athletics Club, with 22 tournament wins, emerged as the dominant state amateur team of the era. Following behind them were Amrok River with six wins, Pyongyang City with six wins, and Sobaeksu with four wins. Secondly, two teams had emerged as the dominant school teams. Among Universities, Kim Il Sung University captured a whopping fifteen championships. Among High Schools, Pyongyang Kallimkil High School led all others with six championships.

Table 76: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-00~29-Feb-00 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 6-Apr-00~27-Apr-00 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-May-00~12-May-00 | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? |
| National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 14-Aug-00~00-Aug-00 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student Competitive Basketball Tournament | 25-Aug-00~1-Sep-00 | Kim Il Sung University | Hamhung Number 2 Teachers University | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? |
| First National Individual Discipline Athletic School Level 5 September Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 31-Aug-00~4-Sep-00 | Pyongyang Chungjong High School (High School) | ? | ? | ? |
| 27th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Oct-00~27-Oct-00 | Pyongyang Minhung High School | ? | ? | ? |
| National 5 September Prize University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Jul-01~24-Jul-01 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Hamhung Statistical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| Fifth 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 21-Aug-01~27-Aug-01 | Pyongyang Minhung High School (High School) Kim Chol Ju Normal University (University) | ? | ? | ? |
| 53rd Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Non-Manufacturing Sector Central Organ Competitive Basketball Tournament | 27-Aug-01~6-Sep-01 | ? | ? | ? | Mansudae Art Studio Korea Central Broadcasting Committee  Hydro-Meteorological Bureau |
| 28th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 26-Aug-01~3-Sep-01 | Wonsan City Sinpung High School | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 27-Sep-01~7-Oct-01 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 16 February Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 28-Jan-02~7-Feb-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Athletics Festival | 10-Mar-02~10-May-02 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| 5th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 11-Mar-02~15-Mar-02 | Hyongjaesan District Haksan Cooperative Farm | Sonchon County Unjong Cooperative Farm | Yomju County Dobong Cooperative Farm | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-02~3-Jul-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 39th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Aug-02 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 54th Anniversary of the Foundation of DPR Korea Non-Manufacturing Sector Central Organ Competitive Basketball Tournament | 29-Aug-02~8-Sep-02 | Mansudae Art Studio Bureau of Welcoming Overseas Koreans Ministry of Commerce | ? | ? | ? |
| Sixth 28 August Cup Competition Competitive Basketball Tournament | 15-Oct-02~22-Oct-02 | Hamhung Number 2 Teachers University | Jo Ok Hui Haeju Teachers University | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Dec-02~24-Dec-02 | Amrok River (Level 1) South Hamgyong Province (Level 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 7-Apr-2003~12-Apr-2003 | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | Hamhung #2 Teachers University | Phyongsong Teachers University | ? |
| 29th Jong Il Peak Prize National Student Childrens Palace Athletics Club Member Competitive Tournament | 20-Aug-2003~1-Sept-2003 | Chongjin Students Children's Palace | ? | ? | ? |
| Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 22-Sept-2003~1-Oct-2003 | Ministry of Commerce (Group) Mansudae Art Studio (Group) Sonbong County Guidance Bureau (Group) Hydro-Meteorological Bureau (Group) | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 15-Oct-03~Dec-03 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? |
| O San Dok Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Dec-03~24-Dec-03 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-04~Feb-04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 6th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 1-Mar-04~5-Mar-04 | Pujon County Chail Cooperative Farm | Chongjin City Songpyong District Nongpo Cooperative Farm | Un Hung County Dongpo Cooperative Farm | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Apr-04~30-Apr-04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 30th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 7-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Pyongyang Minhung High School | ? | ? | ? |
| 30th Jong Il Peak Prize National Student Childrens Palace (Institute) Athletics Club Member Competitive Tournament | 7-Jun-04~30-Jun-04 | Kumya County Students and Childrens Institute | ? | ? | ? |
| 8th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 24-Aug-04~1-Sept-04 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | ? |
| 56th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory 4th Central Organ Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-04~30-Aug-04 | Jo Myongyong's Working Unit (Group 1) Kyonghung County Guidance Bureau (Group 2) | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Sep-04~Oct 04 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament of Different Sports Types | Autumn 04 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| 10th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jan-05~8-Feb-05 | Sonbong County Guidance Bureau | ? | ? | ? |
| <<Paekdu Mountain Prize>> Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-05~28-Feb-05 | Amrok River | ? | ? | 25 April Athletics Club Sentry |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Apr-05~Apr-05 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 7-Apr-05~12-Apr-05 | Hamhung Number 2 Teacher's University (University) Hamhung Medical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 31st Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 21-Jun-05~7-Jul-05 | Pyongyang Minhung High School | ? | ? | ? |
| 9th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | 11-Aug-05~17-Aug-05 | Kim Il Sung University (University) | ? | ? | ? |
| 5th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 30-Aug-05~Aug-05 | Sonbong County Guidance Bureau (Group 1) Ministry of Commerce (Group 2) Ministry of Mining Industry (Group 3) | ? | ? | ? |
| 10 October Celebratory National Athletics Festival | 5-Oct-05~31-Oct-05 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| 36th Artists Athletics Tournament | 04-Nov-05 | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Jan-06~Feb-06 | ? | ? | ? | Group 1 Ministry of Commerce Diplomatic Corps Business Bureau Sonbong County Guidance Bureau  Group 2 Ministry of Education Ministry of Public Health Korean Central Broadcasting Agency Taesong Bank |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9-Feb-06~Feb-06 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 7th National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 7-Mar-06~10-Mar-06 | Mangyongdae District | Yonggwang County | Yomju County | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 4-Apr-06~11-Apr-06 | Hamhung Number 2 Teacher's University (University) Sinuiju Financial Economic College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 12-Apr-06~28-Apr-06 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 32nd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 13-Jun-06~5-Jul-06 | Pyongyang Minhung High School | ? | ? | ? |
| 6th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 29-Aug-06~7-Sep-06 | ? (Group 1) ? (Group 2) ? (Group 3) Foreign Service Bureau (Group 4) | ? | ? | Ministry of Mining Industry |
| 10th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | Sep-06~Sep-06 | Kim Il Sung University (University) | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Nov-06~Nov-06 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| <<Paekdu Mountain Prize>> Competitive Athletics Tournament | 6-Feb-07~2-Mar-07 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Preliminaries for The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | Mar-07~Mar-07 | ? | ? | ? | Sinuiju Chemical Textile Factory South Hamgyong Province |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-07~26-Apr-07 | Amrok River | 25 April Athletics Club | Locomotive | 4. Sobaeksu 5. Pyongyang City 6. Sinuiju Chemical Textile Factory South Hamgyong Province |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 4-Apr-07~11-Apr-07 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Onsong Machinery College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| Inter-Province Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Jun-07~28-Jun-07 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th 28 August Youth Cup National Youth and Students Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-07~9-Aug-07 | Kim Il Sung University (University) | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | Oct-07~Oct-07 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament | Nov-07~Nov-07 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 23-Jan-08~Feb-08 | ? (Group 1) ? (Group 2) ? (Group 3) | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 12-Feb-08~28-Feb-08 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| 80th Anniversary of the Formation of the Farmers Alliance Commemorative National Agricultural Workers' Competitive Basketball Tournament | 12-Mar-08~17-Mar-08 | Chongdan County Yongsan Cooperative Farm | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Apr-08~Apr-08 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 5-Apr-08~12-Apr-08 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Pyongyang Statistical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th Mangyongdae Prize City Level Organ Workers' Competitive Athletics Tournament | Apr-08~Apr-08 | Pyongyang City District Construction Supervisory Bureau | ? | ? | ? |
| 34th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Tournament | 15-May-08~20-Jun-08 | Pyongyang Palgol Middle School | ? | ? | ? |
| 12th National Youth and Student's 28 August Youth Cup Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-08~Aug-08 | Kim Il Sung University (University) | ? | ? | ? |
| 45th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | Aug-08~29-Aug-08 | Pyongyang City (Youth) Pyongyang City (Children) | ? | ? | ? |
| 11th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 17-Oct-08~31-Oct-08 | 25 April Athletics Club (Athletics Club) Ministry of Railways (Mass Athletics) | ? | ? | ? |
| 7th Central Organ Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | Dec-08~11-Dec-08 | Kyonghung County Guidance Bureau | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Championship Tournament | Dec-08~20-Dec-08 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 6-Feb-09~27-Feb-09 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | Pyongyang City |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 7-Apr-09~30-Apr-09 | Amrok River | ? | ? | 25 April Athletics Club Amrok River |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 3-Apr-09~10-Apr-09 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Pyongyang Statistical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-09~30-Jun-09 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National Inter-Province Competitive Overall Athletics Tournament | 5-Jun-09~26-Jun-09 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th National Youth and Student's 28 August Youth Cup Competitive Basketball Tournament | Aug-09~Aug-09 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | ? |
| 16 February Celebratory 15th Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Jan-10~10-Feb-10 | Ministry of Mining Industry Mansudae Art Studio Myohyang Guidance Bureau Overall Public Service Bureau | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-10~26-Feb-10 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 7-Apr-10~30-Apr-10 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| National University Student Basketball Competitive Tournament | 5-Apr-10~12-Apr-10 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Pyongyang Statistical College (College) | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 October Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | Sep-10~19-Sep-10 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | ? | ? |
| 65th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Republic Celebratory National Athletics Tournament | 15-Oct-10~29-Oct-10 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? |
| 16 February Celebratory 16th Central Organ Workers Mount Paekdu Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Jan-11~28-Jan-11 | Ministry of Mining Industry Mansudae Art Studio Myohyang Guidance Bureau | ? | ? | Ministry of Oil Industry (Group 1) |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 8-Feb-11~28-Feb-11 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Mar-11~29-Mar-11 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Commemorative National Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 24-Mar-11~28-Mar-11 | Kangso District Posan Cooperative Farm | Tokchon City Chongsong Cooperative Farm | Yomju County Naejung Cooperative Farm | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-11~26-Jun-11 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Jun-11~30-Jun-11 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? |

Overall, the results of the women’s tournaments in the Stagnation Era were very similar to that of the men’s. The 25 April team dominated the state amateur division with twenty tournament victories. Amrok River followed behind them with ten and Pyongyang City captured three. Among universities, Kim Il Sung University was easily the most successful with thirteen wins. Lastly, in the High School division, Pyongyang Minhung High School won by far the most with five titles.

Table 77: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 00-Sep-06 | Bureau | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | | Ministry of Trade | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 03-Sep-06 | 1st | Kim Il Sung University Philosophy Department | | Kim Il Sung University Computer Science University | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Apr-07 | 1st | 25 April Athletics Club | | Sobaeksu | 70 | 62 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Jan-11 | Bureau | Ministry of Railways | | National Planning Committee | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Jan-11 | Bureau | Ministry of Trade | | National Planning Committee | ? | ? | 1W 1L | 0W 2L |

Table 78: Women's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 00-Sep-06 | Bureau | Foreign Service Bureau | Ministry of Mining Industry | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Apr-07 | 1st | Amrok River | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | 12W 6L | 0W 1L |

What is most remarkable about the individual domestic match results during the stagnation era is the fact that they exist at all. They represent an ever-so-slight opening of media coverage to allow for sporting events. It was still a far cry from the match results available during the Establishment Era, the Reconstruction Era, and the Mass Athletics Era. Furthermore, the inclusion of match results between bureaus rather than matches between premier teams reaffirmed state media’s priorities. Specifically, this mean that state media was not necessarily concerned about giving detailed coverage of premiere teams, but was willing to give more detail of normal games in order to promote basketball’s relatability and accessibility. But this slight increase in basketball game results would provide precedent for even more sports coverage during the subsequent Hot Blast of Athletics Era.

Taken on the whole, the Stagnation Era’s domestic tournaments represent a standardization of team pecking order and tournament regularity. Regardless of division, one Pyongyang-based team was usually dominant. Lower-end tournaments provided the only opportunity for provincial teams to win. Meanwhile, aside from the newly established basketball-specific tournaments, many other tournaments had established decades long traditions. Examples of this include the Mangyongdae Tournament, the Paekdu Mountain Prize, the Jong Il Peak Prize, and the Pochonbo Torch Prize.

## 13.10 Basketball as a Pastime

When considering basketball as a pastime on the whole, one must consider that the Stagnation Era emerged after an era of extreme emphasis on basketball. It was encouraged throughout all societal organizations, and teams and games were organized everywhere. This likely led to oversaturation, which, in turn, led to a toned-down emphasis on basketball during the Stagnation Era.

There is one excellent example of basketball’s oversaturation during the previous era, and how basketball was treated during the Stagnation Era. On 29 March 2001, there was a report from the Ponghwa Chemical Factory Lower Level Party Committee. They made a basketball and a volleyball court. But recently, when playing basketball games between workplaces, one worker could not enter the game. Instead, said worker just stood around and watched. As such, games were played without said worker. To resolve this problem, the Youth Alliance members made other athletics and short artistic performances, so that all could participate. As such, they then worked to accommodate the psychological particularities of workers.[[1998]](#footnote-1998)

As the above example shows, the extreme effort to popularize basketball likely had negative consequences. If all of the state’s resources are directed towards one particular type of athletic discipline or amusement, many are likely to be left out. The government’s overall objective was to improve collectivism and participation. As such, it likely made sense to leave basketball as a main discipline but decrease its overall emphasis.

## 13.11 Teams

### 13.11.1 Successful Teams

During the Stagnation Era, there were a litany of reports on teams that had achieved organizational success. The reports that included detail generally focused on what type of effort was needed in order to achieve their goal. But these more detailed reports were mostly aftershocks of the bygone Basketball Intensification Era. Indeed, after 2006, the detailed reports of success gave way to brief mentions of success.

The more detailed reports are worth diving into. The first was published in 17 October 2000. Hamjong High School in Jungsan County was rumoured to be a school that played basketball well. Indeed, they ran teams well and trained students to be future basketball stars. The teachers also encouraged basketball. In order to be successful, the teachers engaged in deep research and study, used class time to teach students about basketball, and made the organizational structure to carry out basketball. Those students who had the proper temperament joined basketball teams. The teachers would then work to increase the students’ spirit. Additionally, the teachers were giving everything to make future basketball athletes and raise basketball to a world level. Training was started from fundamental movements in order to scientifically experience the game. Extracurricular time was also used to absolutely perfect the moves they had learned within that time. The school would often organize basketball games with other schools. Basketball team members were doing their best. Rumours spread of them doing well in the country, province, and nationally.[[1999]](#footnote-1999)

The second detailed report comes on 20 January 2001, and was written about the Locomotive basketball team. A reporter visited their training area, where the women’s team was training. Team members were easily scoring the basketball, hitting consecutive 3-point shots. They were said to use Jong San Ok’s struggle mindset. The reporter then witnessed mid-to-long range shot training. The athletes were perfecting their stance, strength control, and shooting principles because they wanted to win each game. Coaches wanted fast passing and exact shooting, so they increased the training intensity. Together, they were working for perfection. Coaches were making sure training guidance was scientific. This included the practicing of skills like ball control, stealing, two man plays, three man plays, and shooting under the basket.[[2000]](#footnote-2000)

The third detailed report comes from an early March 2005 profile of the Amrok River Athletics Club. The women’s basketball team, which had won the Paekdu Mountain Prize that February, was highlighted. They were said to participate in speed training, fast start runs, and fast start and stop direction changes.[[2001]](#footnote-2001)

The above tournaments give insight into the regimented organizational structure which was implemented amongst the best teams. Said structure was worked to be implemented amongst lesser organizations as well. Some examples follow. On 27 January 2001, the Hadan District Union of Agricultural Working People Committee had recently organized women’s basketball games by workplace, along with other events. In order to popularize basketball, they discussed a set policy. Said policy was implemented starting with lower-level workers as a priority. The committee also made a basketball and volleyball court quickly.[[2002]](#footnote-2002) On 2 November 2001 in Chonnae County, teachers held an athletic competition. They were calling a principal an expert basketball athlete, but it was not the truth. She believed that she needed to give effort to improve her capabilities. Because she pushed ahead organized basketball, now the female students always get first place in county competitions.[[2003]](#footnote-2003) On 11 December 2002, Sakju County Kumbu Middle School had basketball as their specialized discipline. Everyone knew the rules, and trained the skills. Extracurricular time games by school level and year were often organized. In order for all students to enjoy the hobby, related recreational games were also often organized. Overall, in order to learn basketball, passion was increasing.[[2004]](#footnote-2004)

Aside from tournaments, the designation of “model athletics unit” was a possible barometer of success. In Mid-April 2005 it was reported that three factories had been initially awarded the honour of being “model athletics units”. After this, other factories, businesses, and organs had the same honour bestowed upon them. Said workplaces had basketball courts provided, and basketball teams were operated among them.[[2005]](#footnote-2005) The model athletics unit designation had existed since at least 1997, but it is notable that the provision of basketball courts was sometimes part of the honour.[[2006]](#footnote-2006)

Table 79: Successful Basketball Teams, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team/Court** | **Details** |
| 2000.1.13 | North Hwanghae Province[[2007]](#footnote-2007) | Didn’t stop playing basketball or other disciplines. They were patiently pushed forward. The first-place honour of province wide athletics tournaments overflowed, and the collective’s unified might was demonstrated. |
| 2000.5.27 | Pyongyang Agricultural College[[2008]](#footnote-2008) | heard of basketballs popularization, which was supported by Kim Jong Il. Resolved to develop the basketball team. Got to a high level. With that passion, got to a prideful reality of today. Picture of women’s team operation. |
| 2000.7.27 | Rajin-Songbong City Ryangjong Business[[2009]](#footnote-2009) | At the recent city athletics competition, achieved first place in basketball and other disciplines. |
| 2000.9.19 | Huiryong Shoe Factory[[2010]](#footnote-2010) | Almost all employees are women, always first at city basketball and other disciplines. |
| 2000.11.9 | Yupyong Forestry Business[[2011]](#footnote-2011) | Haesan Stadium, won the factory basketball and football competitions and Ryangkang Provinces United Business Athletics Competition in Haesan Stadium |
| 2000.12.9. | Honourary Red Flag Jangjin High School in Jangjin County[[2012]](#footnote-2012) | Basketball team was good on a Provincial level |
| 2001.4.21 | Pyongyang Maternity Hospital[[2013]](#footnote-2013) | At the Baby Sector basketball championship, the two person game and long range passes to three point shots were better than a normal level. It was obviously trained every day. Athletic popularization was accepted as a lifestyle. |
| 2002.1.19 | Hungnam City Hungdok 1 District Family Wives Basketball Team[[2014]](#footnote-2014) | Unignorable skill. Even in this year, won many city games. Many were surprised at their result. |
| 2004.6 | Korea 26 April Children’s Filming Studio[[2015]](#footnote-2015) | first-place prize in the culture and art sector athletics games |
| 2004.8.19 | Chail Cooperative Farm in Bujon County[[2016]](#footnote-2016) | Women’s basketball team easily captured the title at that year’s National Agricultural Workers Basketball Tournament and become the pride of their village |
| 2004.10.3 | United Tobacco Business[[2017]](#footnote-2017) | Held basketball games on the monthly Athletics day, had an organized basketball group. Part of the process of achieving the status of Model Athletics Factory, took extra effort to maintain their basketball court. |
| 2004.10.21 | Hamhung Industrial Construction Business[[2018]](#footnote-2018) | Particularly enjoyed basketball and volleyball. The equipment workplace had won a basketball tournament among the Construction Business workers last 15 August. |
| 2004.12.28  2006.1.10 | Chemical Industry Ministry[[2019]](#footnote-2019)[[2020]](#footnote-2020) | Excellent performance at the Paekdu Prize competition in 2004 and 2006. |
| 2005.1.27 | Huichon Construction Equipment Machinery Factory[[2021]](#footnote-2021) | The lathe assembly workplace was reported to have captured the rotating basketball pennant that had been established for teams at the factory. |
| 2005.2.20  2005.5.20 | East Pyongyang Bearing Factory[[2022]](#footnote-2022)[[2023]](#footnote-2023) | Organized basketball teams, among other teams, that achieved high results in athletics tournaments. |
| 2005.4.3 | Athletics Science School[[2024]](#footnote-2024) | Basketball as one of the sports that they were attempting to get to a world-class level. |
| 2005.5.20 | Kallimkil Middle School[[2025]](#footnote-2025) | One of the schools to be named a Model Athletics School due to their male basketball team’s achievement. |
| 2006.1.11 | 50th anniversary of Locomotive[[2026]](#footnote-2026) | Thanked by Kim Jong Il. |
| 2006.2.9 | Osong Cooperative Farm women’s basketball team in Jongju City[[2027]](#footnote-2027) | They were said to always achieve first place at the city agricultural workers tournaments, and one player attributed their success to their active participation in popular athletics activities. |
| 2006.3.14 | Junggu District Youth Athletics School[[2028]](#footnote-2028) | Scored first place basketball victories amongst competitions of Youth Athletics Schools. |
| 2006.4.8 | Anju Soap Factory[[2029]](#footnote-2029) | Achieved first place in basketball and football at the city athletics tournaments every year, despite a small number of employees. |
| 2007.7.24 | A School in Tongchon County[[2030]](#footnote-2030) | Achieved first place in the basketball portion of a competition. |
| 2007.8.4 | Youth Athletics School in Phyongsan County[[2031]](#footnote-2031) | Achieved First Place. |
| 2007.9.5 | Pukchong County Ryangjong Business[[2032]](#footnote-2032) | They often used their basketball court for games and achieved first place results in basketball tournaments. |
| 2007.9.20 | Cholwon County Up Cooperative Farm Three Revolutions Red Flag Vegetable Workplace[[2033]](#footnote-2033) | Often achieved first place in basketball tournaments. |
| 2007.10.16 | Nampho Port[[2034]](#footnote-2034) | Made a basketball court as part of their preparation for getting the distinction of Model Athletics Factory. |
| 2007.11.23 | Tosan County Cooperative Farm[[2035]](#footnote-2035) | Achieved first place in tournaments. |
| 2008.1.13 | Taedong River Storage Battery Factory[[2036]](#footnote-2036) | Had a basketball court and reported good results at basketball tournaments due to consistent development. |
| 2008.6.3 | Pyongyang City District Construction Supervisory Bureau[[2037]](#footnote-2037) | Got first place in women’s basketball at the Mangyongdae Prize city level organs athletics tournament. |
| 2008.6.23 | Yonju Country Naejang Cooperative Farm team[[2038]](#footnote-2038) | Represented their province in the National Agricultural Basketball Tournament and achieved an excellent result. |
| 2008.7.10 | Kyongsong Medical College[[2039]](#footnote-2039) | Often achieved good results in College tournaments. |
| 2008.7.21 | Pyongyang Chungjong Middle School[[2040]](#footnote-2040) | Used the basketball court frequently and achieved excellent results at Youth Athletics tournaments. |
| 2008.11.13 | Sinuiju Makeup Factory[[2041]](#footnote-2041) | Women’s Team got first place in a city athletics tournament. |
| 2009.1.26 | Onchon County’s Ryongwol Cooperative Farm[[2042]](#footnote-2042) | Good basketball performance as a part of their overall first place finish at last year’s Republic Foundations Athletics Tournament in the county. |
| 2010.5.23 | Pyongyang City Number 1 People’s Hospital[[2043]](#footnote-2043) | Achieved first place in the City Organ Workers Athletics Tournament men’s basketball. |
| 2009.10.13 | Nampho City Second Honourary Red Flag Namhung Middle School[[2044]](#footnote-2044) | The basketball playing students of the school were said to have achieved excellent results in national competitions. |

### 13.11.2 Repeat Teams

Among the teams noted for their basketball enthusiasm, two were mentioned on multiple occasions. The first was the Hungnam Medicine Manufacturing Factory. In June of 2005, they were conspicuously carrying out basketball games as part of a heightening of athletics excitement.[[2045]](#footnote-2045) One year later, basketball games were carried out amongst workers on their basketball court.[[2046]](#footnote-2046) Yet again in October, the basketball courts and active participation of working teams in athletics were mentioned.[[2047]](#footnote-2047) During May 2007, there were reports of frequent basketball games.[[2048]](#footnote-2048) Lastly, in 2008, there was a report of a well-used court.[[2049]](#footnote-2049) Five mentions within the span of four years is certainly unprecedented for one organization.

One other organization saw repeated mentions. In an early August article, the Rajin Foodstuffs Processing Factory workers prepared a basketball court, and had several teams playing at their factory. A member of their basketball team was interviewed, and they talked about how surprised and motivated they were to see the various athletic activities available. As a result, they became a factory basketball player.[[2050]](#footnote-2050) The factory’s cleanly maintained basketball court was mentioned again in a late August article.[[2051]](#footnote-2051)

## 13.12 Individual Achievers, Organizers, and Players

The Stagnation Era began to see the emergence of some individuals who were promoted for their dedication to basketball achievement. Said individuals were generally promoted for their sacrifice to the collective, but the emergence of their names and deeds broke from established convention.

Of said individuals, by far the most notable was Yun Sol Hwa, coach at Kang Pan Sok High School. In a April 2000 report, said school’s boys’ team won 16 trophies and 300 medals. Yun herself had played basketball as a child and played for the national team. Since becoming married, she had taken up coaching. By the time of the article, she was over 50. She made individual schedules for every player, focusing on stamina and physique.[[2052]](#footnote-2052) Four years later, Yun, then over sixty, was given the spotlight again. She and her team, the Pyongyang Kallimkil Middle School, were given special attention for their consistently excellent performance. It was also mentioned that Yun was a Meritorious Sportsperson.[[2053]](#footnote-2053) By 21 February 2011, Yun Sol Hwa was mentioned again. At 68 years old, she still trained players at Kang Pan Sok Secondary School. At that point, she had trained students who went on to play for April 25, Amrok River, and Pyongyang City.[[2054]](#footnote-2054) While Kallimkil’s national tournament results were impressive, the reports on Yun are representative of the regime’s ideal of a basketball teacher. She was one who was dedicated to her craft of training others for the nation.

On 2 August, the Hamhung City Hungdok Aluminum Household Products Factory was reported to have a basketball court. In the same article, a district manager was said to perform as a referee during athletics tournaments, and the district’s Party Committee was said to have basketball participants among it.[[2055]](#footnote-2055)

Table 80: Individual Achievers and Organizers, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Name/Designation** | **Place** | **Details** |
| 2000.5.16 | Discharged soldier, a workplace leader[[2056]](#footnote-2056) | Taehongdan County General Farm Agricultural Branch Farm 3 Revolutions Reg Flag Youth Workteam | Saw how tired his team was from planting potatoes, so asked everyone to come in an hour earlier. They played basketball games by sub-workteam. Everyone’s spirit rose. From then, finishing the work plan was no problem. |
| 2000.5.18 | Worker[[2057]](#footnote-2057) | County Cooperative Farm Workteam #4 | Had a conviction to get first place in basketball and volleyball. Games were joyous, with everybody laughing. |
| 2000.8.28 | Youth Athletics School in Hongwon County[[2058]](#footnote-2058) | A teacher and his family. | Met his wife as a basketball athlete, but both did not put down the basketball even after marriage. His aunt has participated in the World Festival of Youth and Students as an athlete during the Korean War. |
| 2000.9.1 | Pyongyang Red Street High School[[2059]](#footnote-2059) | Merited Teacher | Set up a basketball goal as part of larger school stadium improvements. |
| 2001.12.27 | Womens football team members to get first place in the Asian championship[[2060]](#footnote-2060) | Player’s Parent | Normal Athlete. |
| 2004.3.29 | N/A[[2061]](#footnote-2061) | Ri Jin Hui | Sixty years old, but had played basketball as a player and participated as a coach for around 50 years. |
| 2004.4.6 | A certain family[[2062]](#footnote-2062) | The second son | Played basketball and volleyball during his leisure time. |
| 2004.4.21 | Hupyong Middle School[[2063]](#footnote-2063) | Ri Myong Nam | Honoured posthumously, and special attention was given to his work for developing basketball as the specialty sports discipline of his school. |
| 2004.8.10 | North Hamgyong Province[[2064]](#footnote-2064) | A Shock Brigade Worker | Skilfully shooting long-range shots in basketball games during break times at his workplace. |
| 2005.1.25 | Mangyongdae district in Pyongyang[[2065]](#footnote-2065) | Pak Ok Sop | Her three sons had, as they desired, been accepted as school athletes and were training to win first place at athletics festivals. |
| 2005.3.8 | Hamhung Knitting Factory[[2066]](#footnote-2066) | A Worker | Upon visiting the factory’s basketball court, which had fallen into disuse, began to organize basketball and other athletics teams by workplace. |
| 2006.3.27 | Party committee of the South Hamgyong Province Survey Management Bureau[[2067]](#footnote-2067) | Secretary of said committee | In the Fall of 2005, refereed basketball games, along with other sports, for women of a family sidejob platoon. |
| 2007.5.27 | Central Publication Company[[2068]](#footnote-2068) | A Worker | Played basketball in her youth. |
| 2007.1.7 | National Youth Athletics School[[2069]](#footnote-2069) | Jong In Ju | Jong coached their men’s team. He originally coached a very successful men’s basketball team at the Sonkyo District Youth Athletics School. Mention was given in the article to attendance by Kim Jong Il to a certain basketball game, in which he complimented the players and took a commemorative photograph. |
| 2008.2.5 | Central Organ Workers Tournament[[2070]](#footnote-2070) | 60-year-old athlete | Participated. |
| 2008.6.17 | Bonghak Foodstuffs Factory[[2071]](#footnote-2071) | Workplace leader | Rumored to be good at basketball, made maintaining the basketball court at his workplace a priority. |
| 2008.7.29 | Kusong City Construction Business[[2072]](#footnote-2072) | Manager | Very enthusiastic about organizing basketball games |
| 2008.8.2 | Hamhung City Hungdok Aluminum Household Products Factory[[2073]](#footnote-2073) | District Manager | Performed as a referee during athletics tournaments. |

The above chronicles of basketball achievers generally fell into two categories. The first are those who coached, organized, or refereed basketball games. The second are those who played in games themselves. Those who have to do with the organization of basketball games are promoted due to their contribution to the collective. But those who play the game were generally promoted for their relatability; they were senior citizens, workers, sons, and parents. As such, the overall promotion of individuals was focused on the goals of the collective.

## 13.13 Lifestyle

### 13.13.1 Basketball as Army Lifestyle

On the back of Kim Jong Il’s direct order to spread basketball among the Army during the previous era, basketball began to be promoted as a general part of army lifestyle during the Stagnation Era. This began on 12 February 2000. On that day, there was an epic poem in *Rodong Sinmun* about soldier appreciation. In said poem, there was mention of basketball in conjunction with plays and Yut.[[2074]](#footnote-2074) By 8 September, in an epic poem about the motherland and its future, there was a stanza about the General walking past a military basketball court. Said court had been newly cleaned and previously had basketballs flying at it.[[2075]](#footnote-2075)

Two years later, on 2 July 2002, basketball courts constructed from blasting mountains and smashing rocks were depicted as a part of soldier life.[[2076]](#footnote-2076) The next year, it was reported in a general article about athletics on 17 August that every military post had a basketball flying as high as the sky. This was done in a poetic tone.[[2077]](#footnote-2077) In a September 2004 article about a November 1996 on-the-spot guidance of Kim Jong Il, the culture and entertainment equipment of a military unit was said to have included a basketball.[[2078]](#footnote-2078) That same year, in a 29 October longform article about army lifestyle, provided basketballs and cleaned basketball courts were mentioned as part of the amenities to be enjoyed.[[2079]](#footnote-2079) By late November, it was reported that the activities of soldiers who maintained basketball courts was part of the soldier’s optimism.[[2080]](#footnote-2080)

In a 2006 article about the people’s army, making basketball courts and carrying out basketball games on a mountainside was mentioned as one of their activities.[[2081]](#footnote-2081) The next year, on 13 March, it was mentioned that the Tongrim Electricity Factory workers played basketball after the day’s work ended according to department and workplace.[[2082]](#footnote-2082) There was a very similar article on 6 May 2008.[[2083]](#footnote-2083) Lastly, on 8 December 2007, there was mention of basketball played along with volleyball on well-maintained courts at remote posts of the People’s Army.[[2084]](#footnote-2084)

In sum, it can be said that propaganda attempted to adopt basketball as a part of regular army lifestyle for roughly a decade after the initial efforts put into basketball’s popularization. This was part of an effort to portray army life as optimistic and desirable.

### 13.13.2 Holidays

Holidays, considered rest days for workers, were considered prime opportunities to engage in basketball. Of these holidays, the most prominent was the workers holiday on 1 May. The most extensive report of basketball on the 1 May holiday came during 2000. Then, basketball was a part of festivities at the Mangyongdae Student and Childrens Palace, Pyongyang Students and Childrens Palace, Pyongyang Gymnasium, and Total Victory Square.[[2085]](#footnote-2085) Basketball was also reported to be a part of the holiday celebration in Pyongyang during 2001 and 2002.[[2086]](#footnote-2086) Basketball was also reported as part of the holiday festivities in general from 2004 to 2008. [[2087]](#footnote-2087)

Aside from the 1 May festivities, basketball was also associated with two holidays that were dedicated towards the youth. The first was International Children’s Day Festivities. During 2000, basketball games were reported as a general part of the festivities.[[2088]](#footnote-2088) In 2001, basketball games were part of the festivities in Kyongsang and Ryonhwa Kindergarten in Pyongyang and in a joint friendship gathering with foreigners as Mangyongdae Playground.[[2089]](#footnote-2089) The 2004 festivities were also publicized. The day before the holiday, children at Pyongyang Okryu #2 Kindergarten were preparing for an exercise festival by throwing basketballs into a net.[[2090]](#footnote-2090) In an article the next day, basketball games were said to be enjoyed by children, along with crossing stepping stones and other games.[[2091]](#footnote-2091)

The other holiday associated with basketball was the 28 August Youth Holiday. Basketball was reported nationwide during 2000.[[2092]](#footnote-2092) The next year, on 28 August, several businesses in Pyongyang play basketball and other events.[[2093]](#footnote-2093) Basketball was reported as a part of general festivities in 2002, played between youth and party cadres in 2003, and general festivities in 2005.[[2094]](#footnote-2094) All in all, although the youth holiday included the youth, older people participated in it as well.

In addition to holidays celebrating the workers and the youth, basketball was also a part of holidays celebrating the leadership cult. Of those holidays, the Day of the Sun, celebrating the birth of Kim Il Sung, was the most major. During 2000, basketball games and others took place in various places around Pyongyang.[[2095]](#footnote-2095) Later that year, basketball appeared in an epic poem. It was written for the youth construction workers who made the Pyongyang-Nampho Highway. There was a short verse about basketballs and footballs flying as part of Day of the Sun festivities.[[2096]](#footnote-2096) The next year, in Sinuiju, basketball and other athletics played at the city’s factories, businesses, organs by workplace and office.[[2097]](#footnote-2097)

The other major holiday related to the leadership cult was the 15 February, Day of the Shining Star, celebrating the birth of Kim Jong Il. During 2000, basketball was part of the festivities at the Kaeson Square in Wonsan.[[2098]](#footnote-2098) By 2006, it was reported that Sinuiju City county and city officials were preparing basketball games as part of the upcoming holiday festivities for Kim Jong Il’s Birthday.[[2099]](#footnote-2099)

Basketball was included as a part of holidays related to women as well. On 8 March 2000, basketball shooting was part of the Women’s Day festivities at the Chongchun Street Table Tennis Gymnasium.[[2100]](#footnote-2100) That 30 July, Huiryong City Women’s Union members from Pyongyang and the provinces played basketball as part of the celebration of the 54th anniversary of the gender equality law.[[2101]](#footnote-2101)

Lastly, basketball was part of Athletics Day. Athletics Day was every second Sunday of each month, as established in 1992.[[2102]](#footnote-2102) As such, it was not necessarily a holiday, but government encouragement of a monthly rest day to be used for mass athletic purposes. Nevertheless, the first Athletics Day of each year was given particular emphasis in state media. During 2000, basketball was reported as a part of the first athletics day of the year in Pyongyang.[[2103]](#footnote-2103) In 2001, the South Hamgyong Province Union of Agricultural Working People Committee used the first Athletics Day to hold diverse athletics competitions in cities and counties. This included basketball.[[2104]](#footnote-2104) By 2007, basketball was part of the that year’s first Athletics day in South Hamgyong Province.[[2105]](#footnote-2105) The next year, there were reports of basketball games on the first Athletics Day at Hamhung Square.[[2106]](#footnote-2106) The year after that, basketball was a part of festivities in South Phyongan and South Hamgyong Provinces.[[2107]](#footnote-2107) Basketball was occasionally reported during other athletics days during the year as wall. On 5 November 2004, basketball was mentioned as a part of nationwide athletics day activities.[[2108]](#footnote-2108) After that, on 18 May 2006, basketball was reported to be part of “Athletics Day” activities at factories and businesses in Hamhung City.[[2109]](#footnote-2109) All in all, although Athletics Day was not a holiday, the first Athletics Day of the year and subsequent editions of the day were occasionally promoted by the government through media outlets.

### 13.13.3 Match Descriptions

In comparison to the Basketball Intensification Era, match descriptions had seen a significant downturn. But some games were reported. In 2005, a game between the faculty and students of Kim Il Sung University and Kim Chaek Industrial University was the main event of a broader meeting of multiple athletic disciplines.[[2110]](#footnote-2110) The nest year, in 2006, an early September *Rodong Sinmun* featured a men’s inter-mural basketball game between the Computer Science University and the Philosophy Ministry at Kim Il Sung University. However, the focus of the article was on the cheering section, rather than the game itself.[[2111]](#footnote-2111) In February 2008, a picture of the central workers basketball tournament which took place during the prior month was circulated.[[2112]](#footnote-2112)

### 13.13.4 General Nation

Other articles during the Stagnation era reported about basketball’s dissemination nationwide. On 10 February 2001, according to the Korean General Jobs Federation, thousands of basketball courts and teams were created. Football, volleyball, table tennis, and taekwondo were included in the same report.[[2113]](#footnote-2113) By 20 July 2002, an epic poem depicted basketballs flying in the air as part of county united athletic meeting.[[2114]](#footnote-2114) On 23 March 2003, there was an account of students regularly using basketball courts and pull-up bars.[[2115]](#footnote-2115) By 20 December 2005, there was a mention of several basketball facilities in the nation.[[2116]](#footnote-2116) A week later, basketball was mentioned as part of games going on during mornings among sub-workteams nationwide.[[2117]](#footnote-2117) The next year, an article on 31 December mentioned the prevalence of basketball games among other disciplines, nationwide.[[2118]](#footnote-2118) On 29 August 2010, it was mentioned that basketball was a part of efforts by organs, businesses, factories, and trade organizations to achieve the status of “Model Athletics Unit”.[[2119]](#footnote-2119) By 2011, basketball games were mentioned as actively being carried out in an article about the nation’s efforts to develop athletics via immortal principles.[[2120]](#footnote-2120)

## 13.14 The Next Generation

### 13.14.1 Teaching

During this era, effort was given to teach basketball among the adults and the youth. On 13 August 2000, a teacher at the Hanggu High School proudly stated that the height of students had improved since broadly implementing basketball exercise.[[2121]](#footnote-2121) In early September 2004, it was reported that the Jangyeon County Youth Athletics School’s teachers put special emphasis on basketball training. They went so far as to graph on the wall each student’s level of accomplishment according to their level of skill.[[2122]](#footnote-2122)

In 2011, basketball games were played by departments at the Pyongyang City Number 1 People’s Hospital. Knowledge of the game was taught, and clothes and other equipment were provided by workers.[[2123]](#footnote-2123)

### 13.14.2 Children

In addition to basketball being played among children during children’s day, there were other instances of children playing basketball as well. From late August until the first of September 2003, basketball was a discipline in the 29th Jong Il Peak Prize Children’s Athletics Club Tournament.[[2124]](#footnote-2124) In an early June 2005 *Rodong Sinmun* Editorial, the participation of members of the Children’s Union in athletics, one of them being basketball, was emphasized.[[2125]](#footnote-2125) Lastly, in an early June 2007 editorial, it was reported that all members of the Children’s Union participated in athletics. Basketball was one of the contested disciplines.[[2126]](#footnote-2126)

## 13.15 Physical Conditions

Basketball equipment was emphasized during the previous Basketball Intensification Era, but it continued to have a role in basketballs dissemination during the Stagnation Era. Firstly, in May 2002, there was a report of consistently cleaned basketball courts in Taedonggang district of Pyongyang.[[2127]](#footnote-2127) Next, in June 2003, it was reported that the Chongjin City Phohang District Youth Athletics School was manufacturing basketballs and footballs.[[2128]](#footnote-2128) The next year, on 13 October, the Manpho City Party Committee guided all workers to provide basketballs to every school in the city.[[2129]](#footnote-2129) A month later, on 17 November, the Onsong County People’s Committee was reported to be working to provide basketballs and other equipment for residents of the county.[[2130]](#footnote-2130) The next year, the Yonam Forestry Business was said to have a glitteringly maintained basketball court.[[2131]](#footnote-2131) Lastly, on 14 October 2007, there was mention of the availability of basketballs on athletics day at Nampho harbour.[[2132]](#footnote-2132)

## 13.16 As a Concept

### 13.16.1 Rules

Although previous eras had contained some sporadic information about basketball rules, the Stagnation Era saw a proverbial tidal wave of publications discussing rules across several different publications. The first article was on 29 September 2002, in a short article explaining basketball rules. Rules explained included the time-related principles 4 quarters, overtime, a 24 second shot clock violation, and an 8 second violation.[[2133]](#footnote-2133) The next year, in October, there was an article about new basketball rules released by FIBA that encompassed the rules explained during the previous year. The article also mentioned basketball becoming professional in many countries.[[2134]](#footnote-2134)

In late November 2004, guidelines were given to teach basketball in the Teacher’s Propaganda Notebook. Basketball’s academic theory was emphasized as a priority. Basic functions were to be taught in turn. In terms of order, first, ball throwing movement was to be taught. This was followed by teaching a throwing motion and shooting it in the hoop. [[2135]](#footnote-2135)

In 2005, there was a return to rules descriptions. On 22 April, there was a report about changed rules from FIBA in *Minju Joson*.[[2136]](#footnote-2136) That August’s *Chollima* had an article about violations one can commit in basketball. They were the same as international rules.[[2137]](#footnote-2137) That same month, basketball was mentioned as being categorised as an “opposition” type sport, as opposed to a judged sport or a recorded sport.[[2138]](#footnote-2138) A month later, in September, there was a *Korean Woman* report of basic basketball court dimensions, as well as some basic rules. Said rules were the same as worldwide rules.[[2139]](#footnote-2139)

In a November 2006 section about sports information, there was a short column describing the practical reasoning why, in amateur basketball, only numbers four to fifteen were allowed. It was stated that this was to avoid confusion with the referees calling the number of fouls and three second violations.[[2140]](#footnote-2140) In May, a 2009 *Chollima* article about the same topic was published.[[2141]](#footnote-2141)

On 1 July 2008, *Minju Joson* published a set of established time rules meant to better the flow of the game.[[2142]](#footnote-2142) By 4 December, 2011, there was another article about changed basketball rules. This included information about the size of the painted area, a larger three-point arc, and the newly shortened shot clock. They were said to induce better speed, more skilled dunks, and more threes. It was demanded that the domestic rules be adapted to this new standard.[[2143]](#footnote-2143)

### 13.16.2 Tactics

During the Stagnation Era, two tactical articles concerning basketball were published. In November 2010, there was an article in *Chollima* about improving three-point shooting. It involved deciding the height and angle of the shot. It also claimed that one can use the backboard to hit three pointers if one hits it at 25 centimetres above the drawn square.[[2144]](#footnote-2144) The same month, there was mention of ample basketball materials available at the Kim Hyong Jik Normal University’s Athletics Science Library.[[2145]](#footnote-2145) All in all, this late-era push into basketball tactics was rudimentary, but would dip into more sophisticated descriptions of basketball tactics during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era.

### 13.16.3 Health Benefits

As a residual effect of the previous Basketball Intensification Era, there was a continued push of basketball’s benefits. On 16 December 2001, there was an overview of basketball athletics as one of multiple disciplines who carried out mental, physical, and skill challenges.[[2146]](#footnote-2146)

Perhaps the most significant article about basketball’s benefits during this era was an article in a scientific journal. In a March 2004 edition of *Korea Medicine*, there was an article about the proper amount of exercise time for youth according to their age. The experiment was carried out on youth from the ages of 7 to 16, and they were measured by skin temperature and pulse. It was concluded that 7- to 8-year-olds should play for 9 minutes, 9- to 10-year-olds should play for 11 minutes, 11- to 12-year-olds should play for 13 minutes, 13- to 14-year-olds should play for 15 minutes, and 15- to 16-year-olds should play for 18 minutes.[[2147]](#footnote-2147)

Other articles about basketball’s general benefits were published. On 22 August 2004, it was mentioned that basketball was a type of athletics which could assist in preventing disease.[[2148]](#footnote-2148) In a 2008 athletics encyclopaedia, it was claimed that basketball made stubborn will and patience.[[2149]](#footnote-2149) In a 2010 article, there was an article about basketball being good for health. It was claimed to increase the excitement and control abilities of the cerebral cortex and the control of the central nervous system. This resulted in cleverness and quickness being developed. There was also emphasis on its height increasing abilities via speed and speed of movement. While playing basketball, there was allegedly harmony of the internal organs and exercise organs.[[2150]](#footnote-2150)

By July 2010, there was an article in *Chollima* about basketball and bodily training. It was claimed to be good for the visual system, cardiological system, auditory system, vestibular system, muscular system, respiratory system, perseverance, and increase in lung size. Basketball’s role in height growth was also emphasized. In order to grow taller, stimulus must be given to the bone structure. The most important thing in growing taller was said to be consuming nutrients together with mechanical stimulus to the bone structure. Basketball puts way more mind and body burden on the body than other disciplines and leads to bigger muscles and more protein. There were lots of pushing and pulling on the end of the bones, making them stronger. It helped growth and development. In the end, if bones and muscles got nutrients well, height increased. [[2151]](#footnote-2151) This article is essentially an indirect admission that basketball does not make one taller, as it can provide no direct reason as to why this is so. Instead, said article does its’ best to dance around the issue with auxiliary facts that actually were true.

### 13.16.4 History

The Stagnation Era was the first era in which concerted effort was given to describe the history of basketball as a discipline. On 22 December 2002, a short history of basketball was published. There was focus on the genesis of the game with no names or specifics.[[2152]](#footnote-2152) In August, there was an article about the development of women’s basketball. It began at an unnamed university in 1891. Buckingham Primary School teachers entered the gymnasium, saw the game, and were so enraptured that they forgot to have lunch. Then, under the guidance of father of basketball James Naismith, the first women’s game began at Springfield University the next year. Participants consisted of the teachers of the aforementioned primary school. Basketball had no restrictions on members at first, but eventually moved to nine players per team. It then moved to seven players per team, and eventually to the modern day of five players per team. The article also mentioned the first European Championship, the World Championship, and the Olympic Games.[[2153]](#footnote-2153) This article was repeated again in 2003 and 2007.[[2154]](#footnote-2154)[[2155]](#footnote-2155) There was also information on the first women’s game in the 2008 encyclopaedia.[[2156]](#footnote-2156)

Some attention was also given to basketball’s claimed origins. On 19 March, an article comparing the traditional sport of Phogu (포구), a variation of Kyokgu (격구), to basketball was published. It was played during the time of the three kingdoms of Korea.[[2157]](#footnote-2157)

The last article about basketball’s development published during this era came out in 2010. Basketball was said to be gaining great popularity among people. This was accompanied about predictions of basketball’s development. In order to supplement these predictions, basketball’s history was chronicled. The article talked about the development of scoring from the 1930s until now, using the Olympics as a basis. The claims about basketball’s future development included an increase in fast break points. The fast break was said to be powerful weapon used as a turning point to dominate the other team, turning defence into offense. The article also claimed that there will be more taller players. It cited the increase of tall players from the fifties to the seventies and eighties. The article also cited high jumping, shooting, offensive rebounding and scoring, defence under the basket, and stealing rebounds. Lastly, the article claimed that basketball games would be more intense. Collectivism, not individualism, was a fundamental component of basketball from the past to the future.[[2158]](#footnote-2158)

To sum up, the historical articles about basketball during the Stagnation Era were either very technical in nature or focused on the distant past. The articles about the genesis of basketball shied away from its’ origins in the USA. Furthermore, said articles focused on the role of James Naismith as a leader, making it more palatable to DPRK readers who were used to such overtures about the Kim family. Also, articles about the genesis of basketball continued to look to Phogu as a progenitor in order to promote nationalism and decrease the role of the USA. Lastly, articles about the development of basketball focused on tactics and totally omitted specific names or examples in order to avoid promoting international figures.

## 13.17 Art and Culture

The mentions of basketball in the art and culture sector were nowhere near what was published during the Basketball Intensification Era, but some works were published nevertheless. The most notable was 2006 with the publishing of the novel *Basketball Coach*. The synopsis describes it as a story about a coach who dedicates his life to developing the nation’s basketball. Said coach could initially could not find the secret to winning due to the nation’s short athletes. But Kim Jong Il showed an exact method. Accordingly, the coach set about to perfect “our style” of competitive strategy. However, the coach could not go away from the defeatism of skill being height in basketball, and was against his children playing basketball. Upon receiving the Athletic Guidance Committee’s principled criticism, the coach realized his error.[[2159]](#footnote-2159)

There was one other artistic work created during this era. On 20 August 2006, a Kindergarten teacher who created the athletic dance *Basketball is Exciting* (롱구경기 신나요) was mentioned. Particular emphasis was given to this teacher’s rector, who went to several athletics team’s basketball practices in order to revitalize the work.[[2160]](#footnote-2160) Unfortunately, the work itself is not available.

A brief scene revolving around basketball was present in the second episode of the 2011 five-part television drama entitled *Our Women’s Football Team* (우리녀자축구팀). Two members of the team are strolling past a playground when a basketball from a nearby match bounces towards the women. Two teenaged boys request the basketball back, at which point one of the two women offers to shoot the ball with her foot. One of the boys doubts her. The other woman football player assesses the conditions for the shot, and asks the woman with the ball at her feet if she is confident. The woman responds in the positive, and proceeds to kick the ball into the hoop from a distance of ten metres while wearing a high-heeled shoe. The boys and nearby children are amazed, and the woman tells a nearby girl that she too could become a football player. Overall, although basketball is clearly secondary to football in the scope of the series, the scene reasserts the popularity of basketball among the youth during this time. Additionally, the conditions of the court reflected the relative lack of development in basketball equipment in the past fifty years. The basketball hoop had no net installed, the backboard was still made of wood, the ball appeared to be made of rubber, and the court appeared to be a dirt court. In sum, the conditions were similar to that of the match depicted nearly fifty years earlier in the film Youth in One’s Sixties (60청춘).

One foreign work concerning basketball was available during this era as well. In Mid-to-late September, a Hong Kong made movie entitled *Kung Fu Dunk* was screened at the Eleventh Pyongyang International Movie Festival.[[2161]](#footnote-2161) This was the first record of a foreign basketball film being screened in the DPRK since the screening of a film about Soviet athletes in January 1955.[[2162]](#footnote-2162)

All in all, the instances of basketball in broader culture included a novel focusing in basketball as a nationally developed sport, a dance focusing on basketball’s appeal as an exciting sport, and a foreign film focusing on basketball moves combined with martial arts. All of this suggests that basketball was viewed as a vehicle through which one could accomplish other things, whether it be national glory, personal excitement, or martial art skill.

## 13.18 Propaganda

### 13.18.1 Arduous March

One interesting aspect of basketball in this era was its use a lens for retroactively viewing the Arduous March. On 14 January 2001, there was an essay mentioning the 1997 spread of basketball as a product of the optimistic consciousness brought about by being mental victors of the Arduous March. It mentioned heavy snow as giving notice to victory.[[2163]](#footnote-2163) By 6 May, it was mentioned that the whole country played basketball during the Arduous March.[[2164]](#footnote-2164) On 31 May, basketball was mentioned as a part of other activities that helped to cope with the Arduous March.[[2165]](#footnote-2165)

Six years later, on 14 September, the Phyongsong Hapsong Leather Factory was reported to have carried out basketball during the Arduous March. This raised the passion for athletics and gave them something to talk about with pride.[[2166]](#footnote-2166) On 27 November that year, there was an article mentioning basketball’s popularity during the Arduous March.[[2167]](#footnote-2167)

In total, the retroactive views of basketball during the Arduous March can be seen as an admission that basketball was abnormally promoted during that time and that it was viewed as a coping mechanism for material inefficiencies.

### 13.18.2 Propaganda and the Leadership Cult

During the Stagnation Era, basketball was occasionally used as a tool of Anti-USA Propaganda and domestic leadership cult propaganda. The first instance involved anti-USA propaganda. A May 2007 *Chollima* article covered the Greece men’s team beating the USA team at the 2006 World Championships in Japan. According to the article, the USA team looked down upon the Greece team, but suffered a crushing defeat and couldn’t even hold up their head as they went home. As such, the USA, an evil empire, should have reflected upon the disgusting crimes that they committed upon humanity. Additionally, the USA should know why the people of the world are happy about the USA’s loss, and why jeers and scorn were raining down upon them.[[2168]](#footnote-2168)

The leadership cult propaganda involved the use of basketball on 29 November 2008, when basketball was mentioned as a part of Samjiyon Number One Middle School’s march to go see the Paekdu Mountain Secret Camp.[[2169]](#footnote-2169) It was mentioned again as part of this process on 6 June 2009, this time in reference to several schools in Samjiyon.[[2170]](#footnote-2170)

## 13.19 International Connections

### 13.19.1 Outside Reports

A pair of international reports written about this era help confirm the popularity of basketball domestically. Bob Carlin, who accompanied Madeleine Albright on her trip with US State Department on the DPRK, said that he saw DPRK citizens playing basketball on their lunch break.[[2171]](#footnote-2171) John Everard, who lived in Pyongyang from 2006 to 2008 as the British Ambassador, described basketball as especially prominent among the sports practiced on holidays. Everard also claimed that factory courtyards often had basketball courts and that military facilities sometimes included basketball courts.[[2172]](#footnote-2172) Furthermore, Chapter Five of Suki Kim’s Book “Without You, There is No Us” described basketball being very popular amongst the male students at the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology during her time teaching them in 2011.

### 13.19.2 International Friendship

Occasionally, basketball was used as a vehicle of international friendship during this era. At the 5th Pyongyang International Science and Technology Publication Exhibition Participants Joint Friendship Meeting in 2006, participants and athletes competitively shot baskets.[[2173]](#footnote-2173) Also, on 4 May 2009, a Joint Friendship Meeting was held between Pyongyang University Students and Chinese exchange students. During said meeting, both participating organizations played a basketball game against each other.[[2174]](#footnote-2174)

### 13.19.3 Chongryon

As in previous eras, the Chongryon’s basketball-related activities continued to be promoted in state media. In late February of 2006, the “Mother’s Basketball Club” amongst the Chongryon in Osaka’s achievement of first place in the regional preliminaries was mentioned.[[2175]](#footnote-2175) In late November of 2006, an article mentioned a basketball tournament as a part of other athletics festivities in Japan that September. It also mentioned the Tokyo area’s basketball victory in both men’s and women’s categories.[[2176]](#footnote-2176) The next year, on 21 August, there was report of a basketball association among Chongryon in Saitama, Japan.[[2177]](#footnote-2177) Lastly, on 20 November of that year, there was mention of the Fifth “Sunflower Cup”. This was a Primary School basketball competition among students at Chongryon schools held in Tokyo and Hyogo.[[2178]](#footnote-2178)

## 13.20 Miscellaneous Mentions

In addition to the previous mentions of basketball, there were also miscellaneous mentions of basketball’s use across the country. On 15 March 2004, it was mentioned that a student at the Nampho Revolutionary School was hugging a basketball. Said basketball was implied to come from the leader.[[2179]](#footnote-2179) The next year, there was an article about the Mining Machinery Industry Guidance Bureau playing basketball games by department. Basketball was said to be the most popular discipline during the previous athletics day.[[2180]](#footnote-2180) In 2006, the ministry of mining was preparing to play basketball at the upcoming 27 July holiday tournament.[[2181]](#footnote-2181)

On 25 October 2006, the manager of the Kusong City Children’s Athletics School used a basketball court as a reference point for discussing the importance of training when raising young athletes to be international stars.[[2182]](#footnote-2182) On 20 October 2009, workers at the Sinchon Factory were able to create better conditions for a wider spread of basketball, meaning brighter smiles and a more revolutionary romanticism.[[2183]](#footnote-2183)

The previous reports are rather disjointed, but they help to solidify basketball’s role as one of the primary athletic disciplines in the DPRK during this era. Basketball was popular, and it was promoted among various sectors of society.

## 13.21 Local Basketball Reports

Table 81: Local Basketball Reports, Stagnation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game Played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 2000.1.18 | 8 November Mine[[2184]](#footnote-2184) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 2000.1.29 | Jonchon People’s Hospital[[2185]](#footnote-2185) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2000.2.26 | Pyongyang Rubber Factory[[2186]](#footnote-2186) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2000.3.12 | North Hamgyong Province People’s Committee Lower-level committee[[2187]](#footnote-2187) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2000.3.28 | Sungho Limestone Factory[[2188]](#footnote-2188) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2000.5.7 | Manpho City Building Maintenance Business[[2189]](#footnote-2189) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2000.5.30. | Nampho Port[[2190]](#footnote-2190) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2000.7.30 | Kaechon-Taesongho Waterway construction site[[2191]](#footnote-2191) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Construction Site |
| 2000.9.4 | Paechon County, Honghyon District[[2192]](#footnote-2192) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 2000.9.30 | Central Medical Product Management Office[[2193]](#footnote-2193) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2000.10.15 | Youth shock brigades constructing roadbeds[[2194]](#footnote-2194) | Yes | No | No | No | Construction Site |
| 2000.10.17 | Chongjin Shoe Factory[[2195]](#footnote-2195) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 2000.10.18 | Youth construction workers constructing roadbeds[[2196]](#footnote-2196) | Yes | No | No | No | Construction Site |
| 2000.10.24 | Tonam Cooperative Farm in Yonan County[[2197]](#footnote-2197) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2000.10.27 | Automized Machinery Factory in Hongwon County[[2198]](#footnote-2198) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2000.11.18 | Hwangju Stream in Hwangju County[[2199]](#footnote-2199) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2000.10.26 | Changpyong Worker’s District in Onsong County[[2200]](#footnote-2200) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 2000.12.3 | Samsu County High Schools[[2201]](#footnote-2201) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2000.12.3 | Kumbu High School in Sakju County[[2202]](#footnote-2202) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 2000.12.6 | Sinhung Cooperative Farm in Phanmun County[[2203]](#footnote-2203) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2000.12.14 | Haean Lodging Raw Material Building Site Youth Workers in Chongjin City[[2204]](#footnote-2204) | Yes | No | No | No | Construction Site |
| 2001.2.1 | Hwangju County Party Committee[[2205]](#footnote-2205) | Yes | No | No | No | City/County |
| 2001.2.12 | Sinuiju School Athletics Grounds[[2206]](#footnote-2206) | Yes | Yes | No | No | City/County |
| 2001.3.9 | Myohyangsan Medical Apparatus Factory[[2207]](#footnote-2207) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2001.3.11 | Kunja Revolutionary Historic Place Survey Camp[[2208]](#footnote-2208) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2001.3.20 | Kyu San Yom Engineering Research Office[[2209]](#footnote-2209) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 2001.5.10 | Kim Chaek City Hakdong Cooperative Farm[[2210]](#footnote-2210) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2001.5.11 | Anak County Wolji Cooperative Farm[[2211]](#footnote-2211) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2001.7.10 | United Tobacco Business[[2212]](#footnote-2212) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 2001.9.23 | North Hamgyong Province Cooperative Fishery Management Committee[[2213]](#footnote-2213) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2001.11.4 | Taedong Mine[[2214]](#footnote-2214) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 2001.11.27 | Sonchon County Ryangjong Business[[2215]](#footnote-2215) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2001.11.29 | Hungnam Medicine Factory[[2216]](#footnote-2216) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 2001.12.27 | Unryong County Children’s Park[[2217]](#footnote-2217) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2002.2.28 | Toksan Coal Mine[[2218]](#footnote-2218) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Mine |
| 2002.2.28 | Ponghak Foodstuffs Factory[[2219]](#footnote-2219) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2002.3.3 | Sonchon County City Management Business[[2220]](#footnote-2220) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2002.4.30 | Hungnamjang Factory[[2221]](#footnote-2221) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2002.7.10 | Kaesong Textile Factory[[2222]](#footnote-2222) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2002.7.13 | Anak County Omgot Cooperative Farm[[2223]](#footnote-2223) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2002.8.31 | Chongjin Revolutionary Historic Place Survey Camp[[2224]](#footnote-2224) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2002.9.3 | Diplomatic Corps General Business Bureau[[2225]](#footnote-2225) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 2002.9.3 | Rakwon Single Use Product Factory[[2226]](#footnote-2226) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 2002.9.10 | Chonbangsan Pleasure Ground[[2227]](#footnote-2227) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2002.9.19 | South Hwanghae Province City Planning Business[[2228]](#footnote-2228) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Business |
| 2002.10.6 | Kujang County Commerce Management Office[[2229]](#footnote-2229) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2002.10.22 | Wonsan City Ryangjong Business[[2230]](#footnote-2230) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2002.11.3 | Hamhung Supply Family Clothes Factory[[2231]](#footnote-2231) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2002.11.10 | Pyongyang Maternity Hospital[[2232]](#footnote-2232) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 2002.11.20 | Rason City Yuhyon District Workers[[2233]](#footnote-2233) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 2002.12.3 | A Business[[2234]](#footnote-2234) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 2002.12.4 | Kumpung Farm workers in Sukchon County[[2235]](#footnote-2235) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2002.12.12 | Sinhung District District Party Committee in Phanmun County[[2236]](#footnote-2236) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2002.12.14 | Kumpung Factory Sukchon County[[2237]](#footnote-2237) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2003.2.3 | Hwangju County Jangchon Farming Cooperative Rest Center[[2238]](#footnote-2238) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2003.2.20 | People’s recreation grounds in Toksun County[[2239]](#footnote-2239) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2003.3.18 | Ushin County People’s Hospital[[2240]](#footnote-2240) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2003.5.21 | Phyongsan County Residents Gymnasium[[2241]](#footnote-2241) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Gymnasium |
| 2003.5.30 | Samho Marine Products Company[[2242]](#footnote-2242) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2003.11.6 | A certain factory[[2243]](#footnote-2243) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2003.12.3 | 10 August Mine[[2244]](#footnote-2244) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 2003.12.3 | Samsu County Gwanhung Middle School[[2245]](#footnote-2245) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 2003.12.14 | Pyongyang City Clothes Industry Department[[2246]](#footnote-2246) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 2004.1.13 | Sinuiju[[2247]](#footnote-2247) | Yes | No | No | No | City/County |
| 2004.3.14 | Paechon County Honghyun Cooperative Farm[[2248]](#footnote-2248) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.3.16 | Kaesong 16 May Construction Company[[2249]](#footnote-2249) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2004.3.25 | Sohung Childrens Athletics School[[2250]](#footnote-2250) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2004.4.3 | Ryongsong District workers[[2251]](#footnote-2251) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 2004.3.2 | A certain company[[2252]](#footnote-2252) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 2004.5.20 | Tosan County Collective Agricultural Cooperative[[2253]](#footnote-2253) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.5.25 | South Hamgyong Province City Management and Planning Research Institute[[2254]](#footnote-2254) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 2004.6.6 | Ichon County Town Cooperative Farm[[2255]](#footnote-2255) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.8.7 | Daehung Youth Mine and children at the nearby village[[2256]](#footnote-2256) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 2004.9.4 | construction corps in Janggang County[[2257]](#footnote-2257) | Yes | No | No | No | Construction Site |
| 2004.9.5 | Hungnam Foodstuff Factory[[2258]](#footnote-2258) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2004.9.5 | Kwail County Yongwang Farm[[2259]](#footnote-2259) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.9.12 | Taedong River Storage Battery Factory, the 25 March Factory, the Pyongyang Silk Factory, and the Pyongyang Shoes Factory[[2260]](#footnote-2260) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2004.9.26 | Various factories, businesses, and party organs in Phyongsong City[[2261]](#footnote-2261) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 2004.9.26 | Huichon Silk Factory[[2262]](#footnote-2262) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2004.10.12 | Mining Industry Ministry[[2263]](#footnote-2263) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2004.10.30 | Danchon City Jangne Cooperative Farm[[2264]](#footnote-2264) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.10.31 | Chongdan County Hwasan Cooperative Farm[[2265]](#footnote-2265) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.11.7 | Mundok County Songbop Cooperative Farm[[2266]](#footnote-2266) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2004.12.3 | Kang Ryong Jang Factory[[2267]](#footnote-2267) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2004.12.5 | Wonsan Machinery Factory[[2268]](#footnote-2268) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2005.1.6 | Danchon City Roun Middle School[[2269]](#footnote-2269) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2005.1.27 | Onchon County Ryangjong Business[[2270]](#footnote-2270) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2005.2.14 | Organizations of the Trade Union[[2271]](#footnote-2271) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2005.2.27 | Kaesong 16 May Construction Company[[2272]](#footnote-2272) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2005.3.8 | Sinpo Canned Fish Factory[[2273]](#footnote-2273) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2005.3.8 | Kujang Cement Factory[[2274]](#footnote-2274) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2005.3.11 | Ongjin County Samsan Cooperative Farm[[2275]](#footnote-2275) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2005.3.19 | Huichon Silk Factory[[2276]](#footnote-2276) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2005.3.27 | A breeding stock farm[[2277]](#footnote-2277) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2005.5.1 | the Yonnan County Haewon Cooperative Farm[[2278]](#footnote-2278) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2005.5.17 | Haeju Shoe Factory[[2279]](#footnote-2279) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2005.6.3 | Chongjin City Waterworks Business[[2280]](#footnote-2280) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2005.7.26 | Cholsan County Sonju Cooperative Farm[[2281]](#footnote-2281) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2005.8.23 | Jongju City Hukrok Cooperative Farm[[2282]](#footnote-2282) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2005.9.30 | Mansudae Art Studio[[2283]](#footnote-2283) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2005.10.17 | Central Athletics School[[2284]](#footnote-2284) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2005.11.13 | Pakchon County Doksam Cooperative Farm[[2285]](#footnote-2285) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2005.11.14 | Mubong Middle School in Samjiyon County[[2286]](#footnote-2286) | Yes | Yes | No | No | School |
| 2005.11.20 | Yangtok Number 1 Middle School[[2287]](#footnote-2287) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2005.11.29 | Pyongyang Textile Factory[[2288]](#footnote-2288) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2005.12.18 | Songwol Export Seaside Cultivation Business in Ongjin County[[2289]](#footnote-2289) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2006.2.3 | Samjiyon Student and Children’s Palace[[2290]](#footnote-2290) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 2006.2.22 | Munpyong Smelting Factory[[2291]](#footnote-2291) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2006.3.3 | Sunchon Shoe Factory Children’s Shoes Workplace[[2292]](#footnote-2292) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2006.3.13 | Wonsan Machinery Factory[[2293]](#footnote-2293) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2006.3.17 | Mangyongdae Construction Machinery Factory[[2294]](#footnote-2294) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2006.3.26 | Gusong City Namchang Cooperative Farm[[2295]](#footnote-2295) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2006.3.27 | Danchon City Yangpyong Cooperative Farm[[2296]](#footnote-2296) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2006.7.4 | Sonkyo District Youth Athletics School[[2297]](#footnote-2297) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2006.7.16 | Yangtok County Ryangjong Business[[2298]](#footnote-2298) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2006.8.13 | Sinuiju Clothes Export Factory[[2299]](#footnote-2299) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2006.8.13 | Unchon County Chogyo Middle School[[2300]](#footnote-2300) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2006.9.10 | Pyongyang Changjon Middle School[[2301]](#footnote-2301) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2006.9.20 | Kim Jong Tae Electric Locomotive Factory[[2302]](#footnote-2302) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 2006.9.21 | Songdowon pleasure ground[[2303]](#footnote-2303) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2006.10.3 | Yonan County Donam Cooperative Farm[[2304]](#footnote-2304) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2006.11.9 | Rason Export Products Processing Factory[[2305]](#footnote-2305) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2006.11.17 | Ongjin County Ongjin Number 1 Middle School[[2306]](#footnote-2306) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 2007.3.6 | Sinuiju Shoe Factory[[2307]](#footnote-2307) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2007.3.6 | Taehongdan County Power Stations Construction Corps[[2308]](#footnote-2308) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2007.3.20 | Sunan District Party Committee[[2309]](#footnote-2309) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2007.3.20 | Wonsan Railroad and Vehicle Factory[[2310]](#footnote-2310) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2007.3.20 | Unryul County Changryon Cooperative Farm[[2311]](#footnote-2311) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2007.4.16 | The party members and workers of Sinuiju[[2312]](#footnote-2312) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 2007.5.1 | Sariwon Coal Mine[[2313]](#footnote-2313) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 2007.5.13 | Pukchong County Number 2 People’s Hospital Lower-Level Party Committee[[2314]](#footnote-2314) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2007.6.12 | North Hamgyong Province Committee[[2315]](#footnote-2315) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2007.7.3 | Unpyong County Kwangmyong Cooperative Farm[[2316]](#footnote-2316) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2007.7.14 | Hamhung City Hungdok District Level 2 Honour Red Flag Hungdok Number 1 Middle School[[2317]](#footnote-2317) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Ni | School |
| 2007.7.24 | Pyongyang Ryongkung Middle School[[2318]](#footnote-2318) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 2007.7.31 | Pyonggang County Sanggap Middle School[[2319]](#footnote-2319) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2007.8.6 | Taehyang Coal Mine Three Revolutions Red Flag Engineering and Repair Workplace[[2320]](#footnote-2320) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2007.8.10 | Ministry of Mining Industry[[2321]](#footnote-2321) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2007.9.24 | Pyongyang City Sosong District Wollim Business[[2322]](#footnote-2322) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 2007.9.29 | Sinchonjang Factory[[2323]](#footnote-2323) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2007.9.29 | Wonsan Railway Vehicle Factory[[2324]](#footnote-2324) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2007.10.4 | The area of Kuwol Mountain[[2325]](#footnote-2325) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2007.10.5 | Kwail Number 1 Middle School[[2326]](#footnote-2326) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Dchool |
| 2007.10.29 | Cholma County Cholma Middle School[[2327]](#footnote-2327) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 2007.11.4 | Central District Youth School[[2328]](#footnote-2328) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 2007.11.8 | Jongpyong County Dong Ho Cooperative Farm[[2329]](#footnote-2329) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2008.2.1 | Haeju Chemical Factory[[2330]](#footnote-2330) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2008.3.7 | Haeju Chemical Factory[[2331]](#footnote-2331) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 2008.3.7 | Munchon Valve Factory[[2332]](#footnote-2332) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2008.3.13 | Jaeryong Mine[[2333]](#footnote-2333) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 2008.3.20 | Riwon County Ryangjong Business[[2334]](#footnote-2334) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2008.3.22 | Pyongyang City Art Studio[[2335]](#footnote-2335) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2008.3.22 | Jongju City Hukrok Cooperative Farm[[2336]](#footnote-2336) | Yes | No | No | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2008.3.25 | South Phyongan Province Yomju County Hasok Cooperative Farm[[2337]](#footnote-2337) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2008.4.24 | Supung Power Station[[2338]](#footnote-2338) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2008.4.27 | Hamhung Knitting Factory[[2339]](#footnote-2339) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2008.5.17 | Schools in Hoechang County [[2340]](#footnote-2340) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2008.5.24 | Yonan County Youth Athletics School[[2341]](#footnote-2341) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2008.7.1 | Ushi County Ryangjong Business[[2342]](#footnote-2342) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2008.8.1 | Ryonglim Woodwork Factory[[2343]](#footnote-2343) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2008.8.19 | Sinuiju Railway Branch Office[[2344]](#footnote-2344) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Organ |
| 2008.8.28 | Sub-workteams of Ushi County Kahari Youth Workteams[[2345]](#footnote-2345) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2008.9.18 | South Hwanghae Province Kwasu Cooperative Business Anak Kwasu Factory Workteam Number 1 Village Party Organization[[2346]](#footnote-2346) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2008.9.20 | Sonchon County[[2347]](#footnote-2347) | Yes | No | No | No | City/County |
| 2008.10.12 | Pyongyang Automized Furniture Factory[[2348]](#footnote-2348) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2008.11.12 | North Phyongan Province Tideland Construction Management Bureau Dasa Mechanized Business Lower Party committee[[2349]](#footnote-2349) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 2008.11.13 | Pyongyang City Gymnasium[[2350]](#footnote-2350) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2008.11.23 | Sonchon County Party Managers[[2351]](#footnote-2351) | Yes | No | No | No | Organ |
| 2008.12.5 | Ryongang Mine Heavy Machinery Workplace[[2352]](#footnote-2352) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 2008.12.16 | Wonsan Communications Cable Factory[[2353]](#footnote-2353) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2009.1.11 | Jongpyong County Dongho Cooperative Farm[[2354]](#footnote-2354) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2009.2.14 | Rajin Namsan Inn[[2355]](#footnote-2355) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2009.3.5 | Kwail County Yongwang Farm[[2356]](#footnote-2356) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2009.3.7 | Sariwon Textile Factory[[2357]](#footnote-2357) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2009.3.13 | Organs, businesses, and cooperative farms in Kopung County[[2358]](#footnote-2358) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 2009.4.5 | Pyongyang Number 1 People’s Hospital[[2359]](#footnote-2359) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Organ |
| 2009.5.8 | Kim Chaek Ship Factory[[2360]](#footnote-2360) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2009.5.22 or 26 | Manpho Pangsa Factory[[2361]](#footnote-2361) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 2009.6.28 | Kosang County Ungok Cooperative Farm[[2362]](#footnote-2362) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Cooperative Farm |
| 2009.7.4 | Chongdan County Kuwolri Party Committee[[2363]](#footnote-2363) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2009.7.12 | Sariwon Kwasu Factory[[2364]](#footnote-2364) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2009.8.4 | Cholsan County Sonju Cooperative Farm[[2365]](#footnote-2365) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2009.9.1 | Sinuiju Construction Materials Factory[[2366]](#footnote-2366) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2009.10.12 | Three Revolutions Red Flag Sonchon County Ryongjong Business[[2367]](#footnote-2367) | Yes | No | No | No | Business |
| 2009.10.17 | Kaechon Coal Mining Machinery Factory[[2368]](#footnote-2368) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2009.10.24 | Kangwon Province Survey Management Bureau**[[2369]](#footnote-2369)** | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2009.11.8 | Pyongyang Chungjong Middle School[[2370]](#footnote-2370) | Yes | No | No | No | School |
| 2009.11.11 | Yuson Coal Mine Kaso Workplace[[2371]](#footnote-2371) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 2009.12.15 | Munchon Mine[[2372]](#footnote-2372) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 2010 | Organs, businesses, and cooperative farms in Kopung County[[2373]](#footnote-2373) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | County/City |
| 2010 | Manpho Weaving Factory[[2374]](#footnote-2374) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2010 | Pyongyang Gymnasium[[2375]](#footnote-2375) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2010 | Ryongchan County Athletics and Culture Hall[[2376]](#footnote-2376) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2010 | Songkan Chicken Factory[[2377]](#footnote-2377) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2010 | North Hamgyong Province Provincial Committee[[2378]](#footnote-2378) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Organ |
| 2010.2.24 | Jaeryong Construction Materials Factory**[[2379]](#footnote-2379)** | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 2011.1.16 | Central District Youth Athletics School[[2380]](#footnote-2380) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2011 | Chongjin City Phohang District Phohang Korean Medicine Factory[[2381]](#footnote-2381) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2011 | Kujang Cement Factory[[2382]](#footnote-2382) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2011 | At offices, branch factories, and workplaces of the Musan United Mining Business[[2383]](#footnote-2383) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2011 | Myongchon Cement Factory[[2384]](#footnote-2384) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2011 | Hamhung University[[2385]](#footnote-2385) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2011 | Waudo Beacon Clothes Factory[[2386]](#footnote-2386) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2011 | Pyongyang 326 Electric Wire Factory[[2387]](#footnote-2387) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2011 | Kangkye City Ryangjong Business[[2388]](#footnote-2388) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |

From the local basketball reports during the Stagnation Era, the following conclusions can be determined. Firstly, among the 205 Courts surveyed, 57 of them were factories, 28 of them were organs, and 14 of them were cooperative farms. As such, nearly half of the basketball reports were aimed at the working age population. However, the 22 school reports, 14 miscellaneous reports, 12 reports from counties and cities, and the 10 reports from mines reiterate the government’s broader agenda to promote basketball across the entire populous.

The majority of reports indicated games played, and games played regularly. The vast majority of reports did not specify the presence of a team. Specifically, 50 of 205 reports did not indicate a match played, 61 of the 2015 reports did not indicate regular matches, and 194 of the 2015 reports did not introduce teams. All in all, basketball was a sport often played for recreation, but teams were only mentioned in state media when they were considered successful.

## 13.22 Standout Basketball Stars

The Stagnation Era saw the end of the careers of Ri Myong Hun and Pak Chon Jong. A 25 January 2000 article chronicled Ri once more. Ri was described as the tallest, and it was said that no one could stop him from rebounding or scoring under the basket. The article went on to describe Ri’s development. Ri was tall from a young age and brought into an athletics team at the age of 12. Kim Jong Il did what he could to make him a world class basketballer. In 1993, through the ABC Basketball Championship in Indonesia, Ri became known to the basketball world. They were fascinated with his diverse skills, as he was faster than other tall athletes. Kim Jong Il brought him to the Thunder team to make him better. There, Ri was a defence steel wall, the key to scores, and the pride of the Korean race. Pak was quick at game management, prominent at scoring, and had the wonder of onlookers. Ri was the captain of 25 April Team, and had basketball as a hobby from a young age. The Party saw Ri’s nature and systematically fostered his talent. Ri was to show Juche style basketball skill to the entire world. Also, Ri appeared in tens of international matches and made a big contribution to the national teams wins. Most notably, he made contributions against the USA college team. Overall, he averaged 30 points per game. Ri was king of the basketball world, more perfect than Jordan, and the pride of our country’s basketball system.[[2389]](#footnote-2389)

On 11 June 2000, there was another short column about Ri with no new content.[[2390]](#footnote-2390) Also in 2000, the US State Department gave permission for Ri to play in the NBA, but were reportedly refused by Kim Jong Il.[[2391]](#footnote-2391) After Ri’s lack of appearances following the 2003 World Military Games, it was widely speculated that Ri Myong Hun was spotted, due to his large stature, at Kim Jong Il’s funeral in late 2011.[[2392]](#footnote-2392) Overall, despite Ri’s initial hype, press coverage of him died down one it was realized that he could not enter the NBA, nor could he lead the DPRK men’s team to any internationally notable finishes.

In addition to Ri, there were a few sporadic reports mentioning players’ performance domestically. On 7 April 2004, Kim Chung Hyok and Ri Song Hak were noted for their layup skills and So Ui Kang and Jo Song Hak were noted for their long-range shooting while playing for Pyongyang Kallimkil Middle School. Also, on 6 March 2005, Kim Ok Hwa was mentioned as the best player for the Amrok River team that had won the Pakedu Mountain Prize, despite her short stature.

# chapter 14. the Hot Blast of Athletics Era (2011.12.17~2020.1.25)

## 14.1 General Athletics Overview

On a broad scale, the early Kim Jong Un Era can be considered an era of great athletic revitalization. Kim Jong Un came into his leadership position with very little experience, meaning that he was eager to leave his mark upon the position and establish his authority. Athletics was an easy way through which to do this, as it served the dual purpose of winning the favour of the populous and showing a prosperous economy.

During the early stages of Kim Jong Un’s rule, he emphasized a “hot blast” of athletics (체육열풍), which this section is named after.[[2393]](#footnote-2393) Scholar Heo Jong-pil classified three traits of this “hot blast” of athletics. Firstly, it was a continuous development of the Juche Athletic Politics of the Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il Era. Secondly, it enhanced Kim Jong Un’s leadership position, which was in danger. Thirdly, it was a way to achieve quick results.[[2394]](#footnote-2394) In order to better understand Kim Jong Un’s new athletic policy, it will be exampled from the following angles; administration, athletics as amusements for the masses, the continued development of elite athletics, international athletics, Kim Jong Un’s personal interest in athletics, individual athletic disciplines, and disabled athletics.

When considering athletics from an administrative perspective, there is somewhat of a difference when considering the Kim Jong Un Era. Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il had the athletics committee under direct control of the cabinet. However, in the first years of the Kim Jong Un era, the cabinet’s importance was decreased and the athletics committee was pushed above it. It was speculated by Heo Jong-Pil that this was a result of practicality, as the leader’s decisions tended to supersede the law. This rendered the cabinet as merely a bureaucratic step. On the other hand, transparency and fairness in the athletics field were a point of emphasis.[[2395]](#footnote-2395) Scholar Lee Na-young considered this and the establishment of the National Athletics Committee to be part of an effort to create a stronger athletics nation.[[2396]](#footnote-2396)

Kim Jong Un’s era is unique for attempting to gain the will of the people through lifestyle improvement and substantive policy aimed at that effect. That included improving cultural and athletic facilities. Furthermore, Kim Jong Un made efforts to directly guide athletics policy and justify the succession of power.[[2397]](#footnote-2397) Other changes included the strengthening of athletics in education, the military, the workplace, and the household.[[2398]](#footnote-2398)

In November 2012, it was decided by the Politburo of the Workers Party Central Committee that having a strong nation in athletics was an important part of constructing a strong and powerful Socialist nation.[[2399]](#footnote-2399) Taken on the whole, the Kim Jong Un regime’s desire to build a “Civilized Socialist Nation” (사회주의문명국) involved giving people the material support needed in order to spend their leisure time as they pleased. As such, constructing a strong athletics nation was seen as a way to show the fruits of this labour.[[2400]](#footnote-2400) Also, athletics began to be referred to as amusement and entertainment, and linked with holidays.[[2401]](#footnote-2401) However, it was explicitly stated that this was all possible under the leadership of the leader and party.[[2402]](#footnote-2402)

Kim Jong Un’s mass athletics were stated by Lee Jin-kyu to be in three sectors; improving and strengthening school athletics, active participation at organs, businesses, and cooperative farms, and competitive matches between cities, counties, organs, businesses, and cooperative farms.[[2403]](#footnote-2403) It was assessed by scholar Lee Na-young that the DPRK’s athletics were still based on the socialist principles of training people for physical refinement. However, due to the effect of international athletics competition being used as a proxy war during the Cold War, international competition’s role had slowly grown.[[2404]](#footnote-2404) According to Heo Jong-pil, Kim Jong Un’s building of the nation into an athletics power held two special traits: the emphasis on the “hot blast” of athletics, and the strategy of putting in a structure of a powerful athletics nation in order to develop Kim Jong Un’s system.[[2405]](#footnote-2405)

The DPRK’s changes in athletic policy, in 2012, were mostly words. An example is how, in 2012, the DPRK declared a Cultural Property Protection law. This asserted that 25 different athletic disciplines were immaterial cultural properties.[[2406]](#footnote-2406) Nevertheless, various concrete changes took place from the years 2013 to 2015. These included the foundation of an international football academy, the creation of athletic and lodging facilities for disabled athletes, athletics events for foreign diplomatic services in Pyongyang, the expansion of mandatory schooling from 11 years to 12 years, the establishment of Athletics Universities in six provinces, the renovation of the Pyongyang Gymnasium, the establishment of Sports Science Research Facilities, the development of cutting edge sports machines, and the refurbishment and construction of provincial athletic facilities.[[2407]](#footnote-2407) The stated goal of specialty athletics under Kim Jong Un was becoming dominant on a world stage.[[2408]](#footnote-2408) As such, intensive training and accompanying coaches were requested.[[2409]](#footnote-2409) There was also continued development of scientific athletics.[[2410]](#footnote-2410)

Furthermore, leisure athletics saw a boost in promotion through the construction of a new Pyongyang roller-skate facility, two water parks, a ski resort, bicycle paths, and various other facilities.[[2411]](#footnote-2411) Also, specific athletics-focused areas were created during the Kim Jong Un era, such as Masikryong Ski Resort, Samjiyon Tourism Area, and Yangtok Hot Springs Cultural Recreation Centre.[[2412]](#footnote-2412) All three aforementioned areas included a touristic focus and included ski facilities.[[2413]](#footnote-2413) The Masikryong Ski Resort in particular was discussed as a potential Winter Olympic venue.[[2414]](#footnote-2414) Additionally, in 2013, a former military mounted company training ground was converted to a horse-riding facility for youth and workers.[[2415]](#footnote-2415) Other early Kim Jong Un era facilities included the Munsu Water Park and Yanggakdo Athletics Village.[[2416]](#footnote-2416) Scholar Heo Jeong-pil surmised that the ideas of Juche Athletics and Military First Athletics were being somewhat transformed into athletics for enjoyment.[[2417]](#footnote-2417) On the other hand, National Defence Athletics continued to be emphasized as main disciplines. Specific emphasis was put on disciplines that overcome geographical conditions.[[2418]](#footnote-2418)

The results of the construction boom of athletics facilities can be seen in a 2018 report on DPRK Athletics Facilities made using satellite imagery. In said report, the DPRK was assessed to have a total of 94 stadiums, with seventeen having polyurethane surfaces and 77 having dirt surfaces. Nine of the seventeen polyurethane surfaced stadiums were in Pyongyang.[[2419]](#footnote-2419) 24 of them had grandstands.[[2420]](#footnote-2420)

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era also saw the regime wax and wane between reconciliation with the ROK and aggressiveness towards the ROK. As defined by the Seoul University Sports Science Research Office, North-South athletic exchange can be split into five eras. The first era, occurring from 1957 to 1983, saw no significant development. The second era, occurring from 1984 to February 1990, saw meetings between the two Koreas. The third era, from March 1990 to 2007, saw both countries have athletic exchange along with joint entrance at the Asian Games and Olympic. The fourth era, from 2008 to 2017, saw a complete absence of exchange. The fifth era, occurring from 2018 onwards, saw a turning point in reconciliation.[[2421]](#footnote-2421) The DPRK had used the 2014 Incheon Asian Games as an opportunity for North-South dialogue, but it was mired by the shelling on Yeonpyeong Island and the Sinking of the Cheonnan a couple of years prior.[[2422]](#footnote-2422) However, under the Moon Jae-in administration, the atmosphere became more conciliatory. This last period of reconciliation saw the two Koreas march under a united flag at the 2018 Winter Olympic Opening Ceremony and the 2018 Asian Games Opening Ceremony. Both Koreas would also form a united women’s ice hockey team for the Winter Olympics and a united women’s basketball team, a united canoe team, and a united rowing team for the Asian Games.[[2423]](#footnote-2423) However, this period of reconciliation lasted only about a year before a halting of relations and the closure of the DPRK’s borders due to the novel coronavirus.[[2424]](#footnote-2424)

Kim Jong Un’s regime also made efforts to promote normalcy through international athletics via efforts such as the 2018 visit of the International Olympic Committee, the 2012 lesson of FIFA high-level coaches at Kim Il Sung Stadium, the dispatch of international gymnastics and football referees, and the allowance of an ROK flag to be displayed for the 2013 Asian Weightlifting Championships in Pyongyang.[[2425]](#footnote-2425) Other efforts were made to connect with the international community through cheering squads, artistic performances, and high-level dignitaries at the 2014 Incheon Asean Games and 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games.[[2426]](#footnote-2426)

The DPRK also hosted some minor international events. Initially, there was planned athletics exchange between the DPRK and Russia in 2012.[[2427]](#footnote-2427) In 2013, there was a friendly game between the 25 April Men’s Football Team and the Indonesia Men’s National Team in Pyongyang.[[2428]](#footnote-2428) By August 2014, there was a visit of Mixed Martial Arts fighters to Pyongyang for an exhibition.[[2429]](#footnote-2429) Also, from 2014 through 2016, foreign amateur runners were allowed to compete at the Pyongyang Marathon.[[2430]](#footnote-2430)

On a personal level, Kim Jong Un, in comparison to his father, made over three times the amount of explicitly athletics-related visits in just one-fifth of the amount of time.[[2431]](#footnote-2431) Indeed, over the first four years of Kim Jong Un’s reign, athletics related visits ranked fourth categorically amongst all of his visits. Athletes came ahead of other sectors such as society, music, agriculture, and general culture.[[2432]](#footnote-2432) Furthermore, 61 out of the 67 athletics-related visits were in Pyongyang.[[2433]](#footnote-2433) Of the facilities visited, football facilities counted for more than double the number of any other type of facility visited, with 18 visits in total.[[2434]](#footnote-2434) Twenty-six of the visits were attendances at competitions, while inspections and on-the-spot guidances came next with fourteen and nine occurrences, respectively.[[2435]](#footnote-2435)

Women athletes in particular were given a more prominent status in media during the early Kim Jong Un Era. This was likely a to show a softer image during a sudden power transition and to keep males in check politically.[[2436]](#footnote-2436) Also notable was the increase in athletic artistic works in the face of a declining motion picture output.[[2437]](#footnote-2437) An example of this was the 2017 novel *Motjaengi* (멋쟁이) which focused on Ri Kum Suk, an actual 2000s era national football women’s athlete.[[2438]](#footnote-2438) The novel traced her path from a Primary School Football Team to a district Youth Athletics School, the 25 April Athletics Club, and finally to the National Team.[[2439]](#footnote-2439) One episode in the novel highlighted the district Youth Athletics School principal’s unwillingness to let her proceed to the 25 April team, but she was able to force him to reconsider his position.[[2440]](#footnote-2440) Also, her resolve was tested when she was unable to adjust to the intensive training of the national team, leading to her leaving and re-entering the athlete’s village.[[2441]](#footnote-2441)

Football in particular saw emphasis as a political tool, with the women’s team winning the 2014 Asian Games in Busan serving as the crowning achievement of a wave of football broadcasts, friendly matches, novels, and motion pictures.[[2442]](#footnote-2442) Kim Jong Il once noted that football was the world’s most popular athletic discipline, stating that if the DPRK could be successful it would be the nation’s honour. Furthermore, *Rodong Sinmun* stated that football was athletics’ symbolic discipline which was adjusted to Korean people’s traits and a discipline which all of the nation’s people liked.[[2443]](#footnote-2443)

Efforts to popularize football in the beginning of the Kim Jong Un Era included renovating the Yanggakdo Football Stadium, making football teams at all primary and high schools part of a football athletes reserve education system, and the establishment of the Pyongyang International Football School.[[2444]](#footnote-2444) Particular emphasis was given to Women’s Football, as they had been a threat to win first place in 11 different international competitions from 2013 to 2017.[[2445]](#footnote-2445)

Football wasn’t the only athletic discipline to be promoted. In 2015, Kim Jong Un declared a mass promotion campaign of Taekwondo, spurring a boost in its relative societal importance.[[2446]](#footnote-2446)

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era also saw rapid developments in the area of disabled athletics. The basic fundamentals of disabled rights to athletics were announced in the DPRK in 2003, and in 2007 there were meetings between the DPRK and the ROK concerning athletics exchanges via the ROK’s disabled athletics tournaments.[[2447]](#footnote-2447) But 2012 and 2013 saw the beginning of a real effort to provide athletics to the disabled. This included the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, associated constitutional changes, the establishment of a disabled athletics association, participating in the 2012 London Paralympics with a 24 member delegation, and becoming an associate member of the International Paralympic Committee.[[2448]](#footnote-2448) Furthermore, a disabled and enthusiast Table Tennis Tournament was held domestically every year beginning in 2010, and every 18 June was Disabled Persons day beginning in 2011.[[2449]](#footnote-2449) Within the 2013 Law on the Protection for the rights for the disabled, disabled athletics were given relative importance.[[2450]](#footnote-2450) In 2014 and 2016, the DPRK participated in the Incheon Disabled Asian Games and the Rio Paralympics, respectively.[[2451]](#footnote-2451)

The 2013 law’s actual effectiveness is given a great deal of scepticism.[[2452]](#footnote-2452) Firstly, the disabled in the DPRK are divided into two broad categories; “honourable soldiers” (영예군인) and other disabled people. “Honourable Soldiers” are those who were disabled due to injury in service of the party or army.[[2453]](#footnote-2453) This divide can affect the opportunities of the disabled; for example, a “honourable soldier” can work in a specifically designated factory and thus have an easier time participating in athletics.[[2454]](#footnote-2454) Furthermore, it is claimed that the disabled who are not “honourable soldiers” cannot live in Pyongyang, and cannot tap into the Social Welfare system.[[2455]](#footnote-2455)

## 14.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

Kim Jong Un has become well-known for his basketball fandom during this era, especially following the internationally publicized visits of Dennis Rodman. But before delving into Kim Jong Un’s basketball related visits, it is important to note that the official government image of Kim Jong Un does not portray him as a basketball fan. Moreover, Kim Jong Un’s public support of basketball is practically measured against other athletic disciplines. The best example of this comes from Kim Jong Un’s 2 July 2017 visit to the recently completed Pyongyang Jungdung School. On said visit, Kim Jong Un entered the multi-purpose gymnasium. There, Kim Jong Un specifically mandated that not just basketball should be played in the gymnasium, but that a diverse amount of athletics should be carried out.[[2456]](#footnote-2456) On top of Kim Jong Un’s balanced promotion of all athletic disciplines, he has appeared at many more football matches than he has appeared at basketball matches.[[2457]](#footnote-2457) In total, it can be surmised that Kim Jong Un enjoys basketball on a personal level, but his taste may have moved towards football. More than anything else, Kim Jong Un should be considered a fan of sport who promoted athletics very actively, but does not promote one discipline to the detriment of others. This is in stark contrast to his father, who oversaw a massive basketball promotion campaign in 1997.

In any case, it is definitely worth examining each of Kim Jong Un’s encounters with basketball in turn. Kim Jong Un’s first encounter with basketball as the leader was on 4 May 2012. Kim Jong Un entered basketball courts and hit the ball several times. Then, he asked workers about the noise they heard, and estimated the noise prevention capabilities of the gymnasium. Kim Jong Un also stated that there needed to be rubber on the court in order to prevent knee injury. The article proclaimed the noise from the basketball to be an endless echo of love.[[2458]](#footnote-2458)

By 11 January 2013, Kim Jong Un sent athletics equipment to athletics clubs in Pyongyang.[[2459]](#footnote-2459) On 24 January, Kim Jong Un visited Mangyongdae Revolutionary School and proposed covering basketball and volleyball courts with a rubber mat.[[2460]](#footnote-2460) By 9 February, a student recalled Kim touching the ground of the basketball court, afraid students may get injured.[[2461]](#footnote-2461) On 19 February, Kim Jong Un sent equipment for matches and training of basketball players across the country.[[2462]](#footnote-2462)

At this point, some background must be given surrounding the visit of Dennis Rodman. In 2009, when Kim Jong Un became the heir apparent, the CIA discussed getting Rodman to go to Pyongyang. However, the trip never came to fruition. By 2012, an economist, in discussion with then-president Barack Obama, suggested getting Steve Kerr, another member of the 1990s Bulls, to visit with Kim Jong Un. This trip also never materialized. The Rodman visit was finally successfully carried out by VICE News through communications with the DPRK Diplomats in the UN. The VICE crew had initially promised to bring Michael Jordan, but resorted to Rodman after failed communications with Jordan’s agent. [[2463]](#footnote-2463)

Rodman, roughly a year prior to his trip to the DPRK, owed $860,000 in child support and $350,000 in back taxes to the state of California. Rodman also struggled to get work due to alcoholism.[[2464]](#footnote-2464) As part of Rodman’s effort to up his profile and pay his debts, Rodman appeared with future US president Donald Trump during two seasons of the reality series The Celebrity Apprentice. Rodman also appeared on two addiction-themed reality shows.[[2465]](#footnote-2465) In recounting his first trip to the DPRK, Rodman recalled being totally unaware of North Korea as a country and who Kim Jong Un was. According to Rodman, he went to North Korea on the premise of playing a basketball match and participating in an autograph session. [[2466]](#footnote-2466)

During Rodman’s initial visit, three members of the Harlem Globetrotters were brought along as goodwill ambassadors. Upon the delegation’s arrival on 27 February, future foreign minister Choe Son Hui informed the VICE crew that she was against the trip.[[2467]](#footnote-2467) The Harlem Globetrotters, Dennis Rodman, and VICE crew’s arrival was shown in a picture in *Rodong Sinmun*. They all showed candid expressions and hand gestures, breaking the mold of previously published *Rodong Sinmun* photographs.[[2468]](#footnote-2468) On 28 February 2013, the Korean under 18 team had training with the USA players at Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium.[[2469]](#footnote-2469)

On 1 March 2013, Kim Jong Un attended mixed games of the Globetrotters and Korea Athletics University Torch Basketball team with Dennis Rodman. The game ended in a tie. *Rodong Sinmun* reported as follows. Special movements got the crowd’s admiration, and players showed an interesting scene. There was a traditional dance and women’s taekwondo performance during breaks. Rodman spoke to the crowd, saying that he was satisfied with the visit to Pyongyang and gave thanks to Kim Jong Un for the excellent special privilege. Rodman also said that he was excited to mingle with Pyongyang citizens. Lastly, Rodman expressed that the USA-DPRK relationship was regrettable, that he was a friend of Korean people, and that he thought of Kim Jong Un as a recent friend. Rodman’s crew gave a special Globetrotter uniform to Kim Jong Un. During the subsequent dinner party, Rodman and Kim Jong Un shared warm conversation. Kim Jong Un mentioned that Koreans liked basketball, that the youth were shown a great game, and spoke happily about the opportunity to have the game. Kim Jong Un expected to normalize this type of athletic exchange. Kim Jong Un concluded by say that he hoped that Koreans, especially basketball fans, would become more familiar through this visit. Lastly, Kim Jong Un said that Rodman was welcome to visit again. *Rodong Sinmun* said that Rodman was the first USA person to visit Kim Jong Un and Ri Sol Ju, which was a great honour. With further athletic exchange, there was continued hope. Rodman showed true gratitude for the hospitality, and respectfully wished for KJU’s well-being. It was a harmonious dinner from start to finish.[[2470]](#footnote-2470) Outside sources confirm that, after the game, Rodman said that Kim was his friend for life.[[2471]](#footnote-2471) On the other hand, participants at the dinner would later describe it as a raucous alcohol-infused affair which ended with Rodman and Kim hugging each other. [[2472]](#footnote-2472)

According to Rodman, during this visit, Kim Jong Un communicated to Rodman that he loved basketball. Kim Jong Un also said that Michael Jordan was his first choice as a guest, but that Rodman was the second person he invited. After the game, Rodman recounted going to the dinner party, where Kim Jong Un invited Rodman to return. Rodman would insist that his relationship with Kim was purely sports based, with the two never discussing politics.[[2473]](#footnote-2473)

On 28 February, *Rodong Sinmun* mentioned Rodman and the Globetrotters visiting Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, paying their respect to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, and writing in the visitor’s book.[[2474]](#footnote-2474) On 1 March, the delegation visited Rungna Dolphin Hall, the Arch of Triumph, and Juche Tower.[[2475]](#footnote-2475) Rodman would leave that day, receiving a farewell from the Olympic Committee Vice Chairman.[[2476]](#footnote-2476)

Shortly after Rodman’s departure, on 3 March, Kim Jong Un gave instructions for the remodeling of Chongchun Street Basketball Gymnasium. He inspected the floor, auditorium, sporting hall, and locker room. He also stressed proper measures for improving sound-arresting and heating devices, and wanted to remodel all facilities.[[2477]](#footnote-2477) Additionally, he taught things that needed to be corrected while the floor was being renovated and maintained.[[2478]](#footnote-2478) Premier Choi Yong Rim followed up on the visit.[[2479]](#footnote-2479) A rally was then held resolving to bring the whole Athletics Village up to modern demands.[[2480]](#footnote-2480) On the tenth anniversary of said guidance, meetings and reports on the achievement of that era were presided over by Kim Il Guk, Minister of Physical Culture and Sports.[[2481]](#footnote-2481)

On 5 March, *Rodong Sinmun* reported mentions of Rodman’s visit in news outlets in China, Russia, the USA, and Japan.[[2482]](#footnote-2482) There was also mention of the Globetrotters visiting the International Friendship Hall, the Kim Il Sung University electronic library, a swimming pool, the People’s Grand Study House, and the Pyongyang Bowling Hall. Globetrotter Jeffrey Raymond said that the friendship hall is an amazing treasure, and that he thankfully thought of the opportunity to see it. The Globetrotters would exit the country on that day.[[2483]](#footnote-2483)

On 15 April Kim Jong Un attended a volleyball and basketball game commemorating The Day of the Sun between the faculty of Kim Il Sung Military General University and Kim Il Sung Political University, including a basketball game.[[2484]](#footnote-2484) Kim Jong Un also examined the ongoing and completed renovations of Pyongyang Gymnasium on 6 August and 14 September.[[2485]](#footnote-2485)

Around 6 September, Dennis Rodman would make his second visit to meet Kim Jong Un. This time, Rodman met with Kim at his Wonsan compound.[[2486]](#footnote-2486) The visit was shown on the second page of *Rodong Sinmun*. However, Rodman’s arrival and departure were not documented, as is custom for significant foreign delegations. State media depicted a warm conversation between Kim and Rodman, and Kim re-invited Rodman to visit anytime. Rodman expressed a will to initiate several types of cultural exchange. The two watched a match between 25 April and Amrok River, the two best domestic clubs in the country at the time. Rodman’s visist concluded with a dinner party.[[2487]](#footnote-2487)

Rodman would recall visiting an island compound on his second visit, and that he brought a baby Rodman jersey for Kim Jong Un’s new-born daughter to wear. Photos were taken with the baby in the jersey.[[2488]](#footnote-2488) Rodman would make the trip with a personal assistant and a geneticist who had previously taught at the Pyongyang Institute of Science and Technology. Rodman spent time drinking, jet-skiing, and horse riding with Kim. Additionally, Rodman met Kim Yo Jong and Kim Jong Chol. In conversation with Rodman, Kim Jong Un would describe his dislike for the showboat style of the Globetrotters, preferring a real basketball game. In response, Rodman committed to showing a serious game on Kim’s birthday the next January.[[2489]](#footnote-2489)

On 13 September, Rodman would hold a press conference in New York City arranged by his sponsor, online sports betting site PaddyPower. Rodman claimed that he intended to host two exhibition games between local DPRK players and former NBA players. Said claim would later come to fruition. However, several other claims fell through; the attempt to name the exhibition games the “Paddy Power Dennis Rodman Invitational”, Rodman’s claim that he would sit down with Kim Jong Un for a month to write a book, Rodman’s claim that he would appear in a military documentary with Kim, and Rodman’s declaration that he had accepted an offer to coach the DPRK Olympic team.[[2490]](#footnote-2490)

On 22 September, Kim Jong Un noted that basketball and volleyball courts would be liked by children at the construction site of the indoor sporting hall Munsu Swimming Complex.[[2491]](#footnote-2491) On 20 November, Kim Jong Un mentioned a basketball court as part of facilities needed to be constructed at the Kim Jong Il Military Postgraduate Institute.[[2492]](#footnote-2492) Ten days later, Kim Jong un toured Samjiyon Schoolchildren’s Palace. There, he stressed the need to install better equipment for athletics, including basketball.[[2493]](#footnote-2493)

Rodman’s third visit to the DPRK was slated for January 2014, and was to involve a team of former NBA players. On 7 January, Dennis Rodman was seen meeting with Ri Myong Hun in Pyongyang.[[2494]](#footnote-2494) The next day, a team of former NBA players faced off against the Torch team in Pyongyang Gymnasium. Kim Jong Un met with the foreign dignitaries and Rodman. The state media account was as follows. Rodman was very happy to see Kim Jong Un and cried. While speaking to the crowd, Rodman wished Kim Jong Un a happy birthday and said he would actively work to promote exchange between the two countries’ athletes. Afterwards, Rodman respectfully gave a gift to Kim Jong Un. The game itself featured two quarters of the USA Athletes vs the Korea University Torch team, and two quarters featuring teams mixed and named white and green. Rodman himself entered the game, but the USA players lost the first half. Both teams and players got a commemorative cup and medal. Kim Jong Un met both teams’ players and paid return courtesy to the cheering fans and players. Kim Jong Un said it was an amazing game, and hoped that the players have a pleasant stay. Additionally, Kim Jong Un took a commemorative picture with the US Players.[[2495]](#footnote-2495)

Outside reports paint a somewhat different picture of the match. In fact, in his remarks to the Pyongyang crowd, Rodman noted that people in the outside world had expressed “different views” about the trip and about Kim. Rodman then expressed that Kim was a great leader and sang Happy Birthday. Despite Rodman and Kim talking throughout the rest of the game, Kim did not show up as promised at the Masikryong Ski resort for a post-game trip. However, Kim Yo Jong and Kim Yong Chol were present.[[2496]](#footnote-2496)

The team itself included former NBA All-Stars Sleepy Floyd, Vin Baker, Clifford Robinson, and Kenny Anderson. The team also included four-time All-Defensive Team member Doug Christie, and former NBA players Charles D. Smith and Craig Hodges. The latter two had played over a decade in the NBA.[[2497]](#footnote-2497) In an interview after the fact, Sleepy Floyd claimed he was not informed about the trip’s purpose. Specifically, Floyd claimed that there was to be an event with children. Furthermore, Floyd said that he was not aware at all that he would be crossing paths with Kim Jong Un, much less participating in Kim’s birthday celebration. When learning of the trip’s true itinerary upon arrival in the DPRK, Floyd made immediate plans to leave the country. In the end, Floyd would not play in the game, but did appear alongside other singlet-clad teammates while wearing a suit.[[2498]](#footnote-2498)

Clifford Robinson also claimed to be misled about the trip’s purpose, stating that what was supposed to be a basketball clinic turned into a practice session with the national team. Robinson also claimed that his opponents were playing in an aggressive manner, and that referees were not calling fouls. Additionally, Robinson claimed that the players nearly decided before the game that they didn’t want to play, but eventually decided in favour of playing because they wanted to accomplish their original goal and did not wish to bring disrespect to their own country.[[2499]](#footnote-2499) Charles D. Smith espoused a somewhat more neutral perspective, claiming that he had no regrets about the trip. Rather, Smith claimed that the meetings he had were impactful, citing the athletics level-relationship that was established and the opportunity for DPRK citizens to meet a black athlete. Smith also claimed that he did not know about the trip’s relation to Kim Jong Un’s birthday until his arrival, but said that it made no difference to him.[[2500]](#footnote-2500) Lastly, Smith claimed that the game’s positive impact was dwarfed by other circumstances, citing politics and Rodman’s emotional boasts of his relationship with Kim Jong Un. The National Basketball Association (NBA) and NBA Players Association denounced the trip.[[2501]](#footnote-2501)

Dennis Rodman’s Pyongyang interview on US news network CNN attracted a great deal of foreign attention. Rodman claimed to use basketball as a bridge for cultural exchange. However, Rodman had an emotional tone when pressed about Kenneth Bae. Furthermore, Rodman claimed that he and other players would face abuse.[[2502]](#footnote-2502) Five years after the interview, Rodman would claim that he had separately asked for the release of Bae. Additionally, Rodman claimed that one of the members of the entourage asked for Bae’s release. In any case, Bae’s release happened a few months later.[[2503]](#footnote-2503) Bae would later thank Rodman for being a catalyst for his release, as the publicity of Rodman’s CNN rant brought attention top Bae’s plight.[[2504]](#footnote-2504)

On 11 January 2014, there was a story reporting the former NBA player game’s mention in foreign media on 8 and 9 January. Said countries included China, Hong Kong, Russia, Japan, India, Nepal, Singapore, USA, and the UK.[[2505]](#footnote-2505) On 18 February, Kim Jong Un watched a basketball game between the Navy and Air Force of the KPA. The teams were under the names of Seagull and Swallow. Tug of War was also competed.[[2506]](#footnote-2506) On 19 March, Kim Jong Un visited the completed renovation of the Chongchun Street Athletics Village and basketball stadium.[[2507]](#footnote-2507)

After the domestic and international press fiasco of the 2014 exhibition match, Kim Jong Un’s public interest in basketball visibly waned. But Kim Jong Un would return to his basketball support over two years later. On 30 May 2016, Kim Jong Un attended a friendly game between Sobaeksu and the China’s Men’s Olympic team in Pyongyang. There were less theatrics than Rodman’s visit. Kim Jong Un was reportedly very satisfied at the amazing basketball game and nice moves.[[2508]](#footnote-2508)

Three days later, on 2 June, Kim Jong Un carried out an on-the-spot guidance of the new Pyongyang Athletics Equipment Factory. He was impressed at the number of basketballs and other balls in the equipment room, despite the short production time.[[2509]](#footnote-2509) On 20 June, there was a report from said Pyongyang Athletics Equipment Factory. A basketball was in the product sample room, and there was mention of basketball as one of multiple athletic disciplines played nationwide.[[2510]](#footnote-2510)

That September, there was a children’s poem about a basketball holding the hopes of a young athlete. The athlete wanted to play for the country because Kim Jong Un came to the Pyongyang Athletics Equipment factory and blessed the future of the children. In conclusion, the poem resolved to make a strong athletics nation.[[2511]](#footnote-2511) In a 2019 video segment entitled *The Time when Happiness Grows Bigger*, Kim Jong Un’s on-the-spot guidance at said physical exercise equipment factory in Pyongyang was highlighted. In particular, the factory manager recalled an incident where Kim picked up a basketball. Kim went on to emphasize the need for both an outdoor and an indoor basketball, and ordered the factor manager to make both types. A picture of Kim holding a basketball was hanging in the factory at the time of the documentary’s filming.[[2512]](#footnote-2512)

Kim Jong Un would reiterate his support for domestic basketball on 4 June through Yun Sol Hwa. Yun had previously had been mentioned in media three times during the Kim Jong Il Era. According to the 2016 state media article, Yun had been a athletics teacher for 40 years. She was stated to be the secret to Kang Pan Sok High School’s success. Yun held basketball matches by class and grade. Just a year after the school’s team was made, they won a gold medal in first national competition. On the day of the article, Yun was named People’s Teacher and got a dinner feast sent by Kim Jong Un on the occasion of her 70th birthday.[[2513]](#footnote-2513)

In early March of 2017, Rodman would speak at an event at the US Military Academy in West Point. During that event, he stated that Kim Jong Un had a desire to visit the United States and watch a New York Knicks game. Rodman also stated that, in talks with Trump, Trump said that he wanted to meet with Kim Jong Un. Trump would later follow through on this intent via next year’s Singapore Summit.[[2514]](#footnote-2514)

From roughly 13 to 16 June 2017, Dennis Rodman made his fourth visit to Pyongyang. This visit was not reported by any state media. Rodman would meet with DPRK sports minister Kim Il Guk, presenting Guk with a copy of Donald Trump’s book “The Art of the Deal”. Rodman also spent time with young DPRK basketball players and other Olympic athletes. Kim Il Guk would describe Rodman as an “old friend”. The visit was seen by foreign pressas a distraction from the ongoing negotiations to release Otto Warmbier, who departed the DPRK just hours before Rodman’s arrival.[[2515]](#footnote-2515)

During the 27 April 2018 North-South Joint Summit, Kim Jong Un expressed his wish that basketball be exchanged between North and South before football.[[2516]](#footnote-2516) By 16 July, Cabinet Vice-Premier Ri Ryong Nam delivers a present from Kim Jong Un to the Russian Far East Minister and the Russian Basketball Federation.[[2517]](#footnote-2517) Lastly, in 2019, before the Hanoi summit with the United States, Kim Jong Un demanded that “famous basketball players” be sent to the DPRK as part of cultural exchange between the two countries. [[2518]](#footnote-2518)

All in all, Kim Jong Il’s basketball interest was primarily during the earlier part of his reign. The Dennis Rodman visit, along with Kim’s visits to basketball facilities, clearly reflected Kim’s personal interest. But the domestic and foreign policy failure of Rodman’s visit clearly had an effect on Kim’s will to promote basketball. Kim would go on to personally shun Rodman, show little interest in domestic matches, and only occasionally mention basketball in terms of international exchange or related state functions. There is no definitive evidence for Kim’s declined basketball interest, but it can be guessed that Kim began to be caught up in the practical realities of statecraft and no longer had time to engage in developing his personal interest.

## 14.3 Basketball’s Relationship with Diplomacy

As previously mentioned, prior to the 2019 Hanoi Summit with the United States, Kim Jong Un demanded that “famous basketball players” be sent to the DPRK as part of cultural exchange between the two countries. Specifically, the DPRK wanted this on the joint statement between the two countries. An exchange of orchestras was also requested. However, no final agreement was reached.[[2519]](#footnote-2519) If negotiations with the USA were to continue, basketball would likely come up again as a peripheral priority.

## 14.4 The DPRK Men’s National Basketball Team

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era, despite seeing a massive effort at developing the nation’s athletics, saw almost no activity from the men’s national team. Their sole match came as a part of the 2018 Unification Games. As such, the Hot Blast of Athletics Era was the least active era for the DPRK men’s team throughout the country’s entire history.

The DPRK would participate in the Asian Games in September and October of 2014, but not in the basketball events.[[2520]](#footnote-2520) By the time the women’s team formed a united team for the 2018 Asian Games, the men’s team did not end up forming a united team. This was largely due to the fact that the DPRK men’s team had not played internationally in eight years.[[2521]](#footnote-2521)

Table 82: Men's National Team Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 05-Jul-18 | ROK (as "Blue") | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugang Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Friendly | 2018 Unification Basketball Tournament | 82 | 70 | Win |

## 14.5 The DPRK Women’s National Basketball Team

Unlike the men’s team, the women’s team would actually be active during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era. The DPRK would participate in the Asian Games in September and October of 2014, but not in the basketball events.[[2522]](#footnote-2522)

From 29 August to 4 September, the DPRK Women’s National Team Participated in Level II of the 2015 FIBA Asia Women’s Championship in Wuhan, China, placing second. Their win in the final qualifying round against Thailand secured them a spot in Division A at the 2017 FIBA Asia Women’s Cup.[[2523]](#footnote-2523) The DPRK women’s only loss was by one point to the Philippines, while the rest of their matches were wins by 13 points or more.

From 23 to 29 July, the DPRK women’s national team played in the 2017 FIBA Women’s Asia Cup, placing in eighth in Division A after losing all of their matches.[[2524]](#footnote-2524) However, Ro Suk Yong would lead the tournament with 20 Points Per Game.[[2525]](#footnote-2525) The DPRK’s closest loss was by one point to Chinese Taipei in the opening match. The DPRK women’s last game of this era was against the ROK in the 2018 Unification Basketball Tournament, where they lost by seven.

In sum, the DPRK women’s team’s performance during this era was similar to their performance during the Stagnation Era. Despite being markedly better than second tier teams in FIBA Asia, they continually failed to compete with top tier teams.

Table 83: Women's National Team Results, National Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **Competition** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 29-Aug-15 | Sri Lanka | China | Wuhan | Wuhan Gymnasium | Level II Group Match | 2015 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 82 | 35 | Win |
| 30-Aug-15 | Philippines | China | Wuhan | Wuhan Gymnasium | Level II Group Match | 2015 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 67 | 68 | Loss |
| 31-Aug-15 | Kazakhstan | China | Wuhan | Wuhan Gymnasium | Level II Group Match | 2015 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 68 | 55 | Win |
| 01-Sep-15 | Malaysia | China | Wuhan | Wuhan Gymnasium | Level II Group Match | 2015 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 83 | 45 | Win |
| 02-Sep-15 | Hong Kong | China | Wuhan | Wuhan Gymnasium | Level II Group Match | 2015 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 66 | 43 | Win |
| 04-Sep-15 | Thailand | China | Wuhan | Wuhan Gymnasium | Qualifying Round | 2015 FIBA Asia Championship for Women | 66 | 50 | Win |
| 23-Jul-17 | Chinese Taipei | India | Bangalore | Kanteerava Indoor Stadium | Group A Match | 2017 FIBA Women's Asia Cup | 76 | 77 | Loss |
| 24-Jul-17 | New Zealand | India | Bangalore | Kanteerava Indoor Stadium | Group A Match | 2017 FIBA Women's Asia Cup | 50 | 71 | Loss |
| 25-Jul-17 | China | India | Bangalore | Kanteerava Indoor Stadium | Group A Match | 2017 FIBA Women's Asia Cup | 53 | 110 | Loss |
| 27-Jul-17 | Australia | India | Bangalore | Kanteerava Indoor Stadium | Quarter-Final | 2017 FIBA Women's Asia Cup | 48 | 81 | Loss |
| 28-Jul-17 | New Zealand | India | Bangalore | Kanteerava Indoor Stadium | 5-8th Place Semi-Finals | 2017 FIBA Women's Asia Cup | 61 | 82 | Loss |
| 29-Jul-17 | Philippines | India | Bangalore | Kanteerava Indoor Stadium | Seventh Place Game | 2017 FIBA Women's Asia Cup | 63 | 78 | Loss |
| 05-Jul-18 | ROK (as "Blue") | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugang Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Friendly | 2018 Unification Basketball Tournament | 74 | 81 | Loss |

## 14.6 DPRK Club Teams Playing Foreign Opponents

In terms of sheer number of international matches for domestic teams, the Hot Blast of Athletics era was similar to the Stagnation Era. On the men’s side, Korea Athletics University would see action against Japanese and USA opponents, while Sobaeksu would play the Chinese national team. Meanwhile, the women’s side would see Korea Athletics University play against a Japanese University and three female DPRK athletes would join the ROK team to form a united team in the 2018 Asian Games.

Activity began on 6 November 2013, when Korea-Japan basketball games occurred at Pyongyang Gymnasium. Specifically, Korea Athletics University played against Nippon Sport Science University. The final score was not announced, but Korea won both men’s and women’s games. Jang Song Taek, the Japan Athletics Exchange League director, and Kanji Inoki were in attendance.[[2526]](#footnote-2526) In May 2016, Kim Jong Un would attend a men’s game between Sobaeksu and the Chinese National Team.[[2527]](#footnote-2527)

Nearly three years later, on 25 February 2017, the Potong River Women’s basketball team played a friendly against a team from Jiangsu Province. Said team was likely the Jiangsu Phoenix of the Women’s Chinese Basketball Association. A one sentence description of various tactics was published, but there was no indication of the result.[[2528]](#footnote-2528)

In late April 2018, it was revealed that the ROK Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism had surveyed 40 individual athletic discipline organizations. In said survey, it was asked whether they intended to form a united team for the upcoming Asian games. Basketball was one of the seven disciplines to respond positively to the inquiry.[[2529]](#footnote-2529) On 18 June, it was agreed during a North-South Athletics Summit at the Inter-Korean Peace House that the DPRK and ROK would march under a joint flag at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2018 Asian Games. It was also revealed that certain athletic disciplines would participate as joint teams. Lastly, it was also decided to hold friendship basketball games in Pyongyang on 4 July and in Seoul during the Fall.[[2530]](#footnote-2530) The Seoul game would never materialize, but the Pyongyang game would.

On 27 June, representatives from the North and South discussed the possibility of a unified team with the Asian Olympic Council. The AOC responded positively, but maintained that more entry slots could not be provided. This left only dragon boat, rowing, and women’s basketball as realistically possible disciplines in which a united team could be fielded.[[2531]](#footnote-2531) On the following day, it was announced by the Secretary General of the (South) Korean Sports Association and the Vice Minister of the (North) Athletics Ministry at the Asian Games organizers headquarters in Jakarta that women’s basketball would be one of the disciplines in which a joint team would be fielded.[[2532]](#footnote-2532) The men’s team did not end up forming a united team, largely due to the fact that the DPRK men’s team had not played internationally in eight years.[[2533]](#footnote-2533)

On 3 July, women’s team coach Lee Moon-kyu stated that he assessed DPRK athletes to be shorter than those in the ROK, but harder working. He also assessed that two or three DPRK athletes joining the ROK team would be an acceptable number.[[2534]](#footnote-2534) Just under a month prior to the tournament, the three DPRK athletes to play on the ROK team were announced.[[2535]](#footnote-2535) Roughly three weeks prior to the tournament, it was unclear when the three athletes would arrive. Furthermore, the team captain of the ROK, Im Yeong-hee, stated that she had never seen the DPRK athletes play.[[2536]](#footnote-2536) It was initially speculated that, had the DPRK athletes arrived earlier, they could have participated in the William Jones Cup in Taiwan with the ROK team, but their arrival was too late.[[2537]](#footnote-2537) The DPRK athletes would arrive in the ROK on 29 July, just sixteen days before the Asian games were slated to begin and the same day on which the William Jones Cup ended.[[2538]](#footnote-2538)

From 15 August to 1 September, three members of the DPRK women’s national basketball team competed in a unified Korea team with ROK athletes at the 2018 Asian Games, capturing second place. All three athletes played in every game, and Ro Suk Yong led the team in points per game.[[2539]](#footnote-2539) During the first game of the tournament, the Korean flag was mistakenly displayed as the Hong Kong flag in the arena until the game’s first timeout.[[2540]](#footnote-2540) After the tournament, ROK athlete Im Yeong-hui said that the team was, for the short time they were together, like a family. She also expressed her wish to meet the athletes again in the future. Furthermore, DPRK athlete Ro Suk Yong expressed her regret at the silver medal result. Ro also expressed her wish that the North and South would unify, so as to allow more mutual training. Ro and DPRK Assistant Coach Jong Song Sim also expressed their thanks to the fans who had cheered them on.[[2541]](#footnote-2541) Coach Lee Moon-kyu noted that it was a shame that Ro Suk Yong was in the North, and said that she cried during the team’s last communal meal.[[2542]](#footnote-2542) ROK athlete Park Ji-su and Ro Suk Yong complimented each other’s play during the tournament.[[2543]](#footnote-2543)

From 8 to 12 October 2018, a delegation of Chinese players would visit the DPRK. On 8 October, there was a welcome banquet for the Chinese delegation.[[2544]](#footnote-2544) On 9 October, there was mixed basketball game among the women’s Chinese National team and the DPRK Korea national team. State media mentioned friendly affection between players.[[2545]](#footnote-2545) That day also saw an exchange of opinions about athletics exchange at the People’s Culture Palace and the Chinese team’s visit to Kumsusan Palace of the Sun.[[2546]](#footnote-2546) On 10 October, the Chinese team made a visit to Mangyongdae, the Mangyongdae Children’s Palace and the Nature Museum.[[2547]](#footnote-2547) On 11 October, there was a mixed game between the men’s sides. State media mentioned happiness after sharing the experience, as both teams got along well. It was said to be the development a new level of friendship between China and DPRK.[[2548]](#footnote-2548) On 11 October, the English edition of *Rodong Sinmun* mentioned Yao Ming explicitly as the head of the delegation and president of the Chinese Basketball Association, and that it consisted of men’s and women’s teams.[[2549]](#footnote-2549) Yao Ming’s presence was not mentioned in the Korea edition.[[2550]](#footnote-2550) There was a banquet for the Chinese team on 11 October, and they made a visit to the Friendship Tower dedicated to Chinese assistance during the Korean War.[[2551]](#footnote-2551) Kim Jong Un did not attend, but separately gave speeches about ties between the two countries.[[2552]](#footnote-2552) Additionally, Kim Jong Un gave the Chinese team a gift indirectly through Choe Ryong Hae.[[2553]](#footnote-2553) On 12 October, the Chinese team made a visit to Kim Il Sung University, had a meeting with Kim Yong Nam, and were treated to a farewell by a delegation.[[2554]](#footnote-2554) An article in China’s Global Times mentioned Chinese analysts deeming the visit as part of the DPRK’s basketball diplomacy. Lu Chao, research fellow at the Liaoning Academy of Global Sciences, said the visit was a part of a strengthening of DPRK-China ties. The Global Times article made mention of Yao as a “star among North Koreans”, and more effective at developing ties with the DPRK than Rodman because he is visiting as part of an official government delegation.[[2555]](#footnote-2555)

On the whole, the visits by foreign teams during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era were similar to visits by foreign teams during Kim Il Sung’s reign, as they served a primarily diplomatic purpose. Gone were the days of the Basketball Intensification Era, when foreign teams were primarily brought in to train domestic teams. In any case, the 2018 mixed games between China and the DPRK would be the last international games played by a domestic team until the present day.

Table 84: Men's Club Team International Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 06-Nov-13 | Korea Athletics University | Nippon Sport Science University | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 0L |
| 01-Mar-13 | Red (Korea Athletics University Torch and Harlem Globetrotters Mixed) | White (Korea Athletics University Torch and Harlem Globetrotters Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | 110 | 110 | Tie | 0W 0L 1T |
| 08-Jan-14 | Korea Athletics University Torch | USA NBA Aces | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Exhibition | 47 | 39 | Win | 2W 0L |
| 08-Jan-14 | White (Korea Athletics University Torch and USA NBA Aces Mixed) | Green (Korea Athletics University Torch and USA NBA Aces Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Exhibition | 63 | 54 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 00-May-16 | Sobaeksu | China National Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | 81 | 70 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 00-May-16 | Sobaeksu | China National Team | DPRK | ? | ? | Friendly | 65 | 56 | Win | 2W 0L |
| 29-May-16 | Sobaeksu | China National Team | DPRK | Pyongyang | ? | Friendly | 82 | 73 | Win | 3W 0L |
| 09-Oct-18 | Unity (DPRK-CHN Mixed Team) | Friendship (DPRK-CHN Mixed Team) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | ? | ? | Tie | 0W 0L 1T |

Table 85: Women's Club Team International Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** | **Overall Record (Team)** |
| 06-Nov-13 | Korea Athletics University | Nippon Sport Science University | DPRK | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | Win | 1W 0L |
| 24-Feb-17 | Potong River | Jiangsu Phoenix | DPRK | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Gymnasium | Friendly | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 15-Aug-18 | Unified Korea | Indonesia | Indonesia | Jakarta | Gelora Bung Karno Basketball Hall | Group X | 108 | 40 | Win | 1W 0L |
| 17-Aug-18 | Unified Korea | Chinese Taipei | Indonesia | Jakarta | Gelora Bung Karno Basketball Hall | Group X | 85 | 87 | Loss | 1W 1L |
| 20-Aug-18 | Unified Korea | India | Indonesia | Jakarta | Gelora Bung Karno Basketball Hall | Group X | 104 | 54 | Win | 2W 1L |
| 21-Aug-18 | Unified Korea | Kazakhstan | Indonesia | Jakarta | Gelora Bung Karno Basketball Hall | Group X | 85 | 57 | Win | 3W 1L |
| 26-Aug-18 | Unified Korea | Thailand | Indonesia | Jakarta | Gelora Bung Karno Basketball Hall | Quarter-Final | 106 | 63 | Win | 4W 1L |
| 30-Aug-18 | Unified Korea | Chinese Taipei | Indonesia | Jakarta | Istora Gelora Bung Karno | Semi-Final | 89 | 66 | Win | 5W 1L |
| 01-Sep-18 | Unified Korea | China | Indonesia | Jakarta | Istora Gelora Bung Karno | Gold Medal Game | 65 | 71 | Loss | 5W 2L |
| 09-Oct-18 | Unity (DPRK-CHN Mixed Team) | Friendship (DPRK-CHN Mixed Team) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | ? | ? | Win | 1W 0L |

## 14.7 Basketball as a Part of Inter-Korean Exchange

As mentioned previously, during the 27 April 2018 North-South Joint Summit, Kim Jong Un expressed his wish that basketball be exchanged between North and South before football.[[2556]](#footnote-2556) This wish would eventually be realized when teams from the DPRK and ROK met that July.

On 3 July 2018, the ROK team arrived in Pyongyang. They made a visit to Okryukwan for a welcome party.[[2557]](#footnote-2557) On 4 July, there were basketball games between mixed teams at Ryugyong Jong Ju-yeong Gymnasium. State Media claimed that it was a consequence of the April Panmunjom Summit. There was mention of passionate cheering and ethnic harmony in the hall.[[2558]](#footnote-2558) On 5 July, there was another Inter-Korean game. This time, it was between DPRK and ROK teams under the names of “Red” and “Blue” respectively. State media emphasized hugs and encouragement between the players. It was said to be an opportunity to increasingly show the dignity and spirit of the nation.[[2559]](#footnote-2559) On 6 July, the ROK team visited Mangyongdae Student and Children’s Palace before leaving. The DPRK Sports minister saw them off at the airport.[[2560]](#footnote-2560)

ROK Government visitors to Pyongyang observed a lack of anti-USA propaganda, as well as a decrease in propaganda compared to previous visits. A KBL in-arena announcer was summoned to the Pyongyang stadium a mere day before his departure and called the game, but was not allowed to use ROK idol music as part of the in-arena entertainment. There were telephones to the ROK provided for reporters, and one reporter was able to call his wife in the ROK with his cellular telephone.[[2561]](#footnote-2561) There was reported to be a possibility of Kim Jong Un attending the game, but he did not show up.[[2562]](#footnote-2562) Upon his return to the ROK, Hur Jae, coach of the men’s team, expressed his regret at not being able to meet Ri Myong Hun. Hur had played with Ri during the 2003 North-South Basketball game. Hur speculated that Ri may have been unwell at the time.[[2563]](#footnote-2563) The ROK women won their game, while the DPRK men won their game.[[2564]](#footnote-2564)

The 2018 Unification Basketball Games were significant in that they occurred on an official level between both governments. This is opposed to previous editions, which occurred between the DPRK Government and Hyundai Corporation on the ROK. These games helped paved the way for a Unified Team at the Asian Games later that year, but did not make any further diplomatic inroads.

Table 86: Men’s Mixed Unification Basketball Game Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 04-Jul-18 | Peace (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | Prosperity (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | 102 | 102 | Tie |
| 05-Jul-18 | Red (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | Blue (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | ? | ? | Win |

Table 87: Women's Mixed Unification Basketball Game Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Team** | **OPPT** | **Country** | **City** | **Court** | **Game Type** | **PTS FOR** | **PTS AGA** | **Result** |
| 04-Jul-18 | Prosperity (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | Peace (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | 103 | 102 | Win |
| 05-Jul-18 | Blue (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | Red (DPRK-ROK Mixed) | DPRK | Pyongyang | Ryugyong Jong Ju Yong Gymnasium | Exhibition | 81 | 74 | Win |

## 14.8 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

During the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, it was seldom that basketball would be mentioned as an area of basketball development on its own. In fact, in a 25 March 2015 speech to the National Athletes Conference, Kim Jong Un did not include basketball in the list of disciplines in which world supremacy must be secured and maintained.[[2565]](#footnote-2565) Nevertheless, on 4 October 2015, there was a three-article spread in *Rodong Sinmun* demanding a stronger basketball “wind” across the country.[[2566]](#footnote-2566)

In June 2017, a book named school athletics being the foundation for *People’s Athletics* and included a compilations of leader anecdotes.[[2567]](#footnote-2567) Along the same lines, on 27 June, there was an article about the struggle to create a strong athletics nation. There was mention of constructed outdoor athletics facilities across the capital, enabling students to play basketball outside of the school. There was also mention of basketball being one of four disciplines to have roughly 50 athletes nurtured and send to pro teams, including 25 April and Locomotive.[[2568]](#footnote-2568)

That 18 December, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article encouraging the development of basketball across the nation. This included a mention of basketball developing intellectual ability, height, and physical strength. Unlike volleyball, basketball did not include standing around. Said article harkened back to Kim Jong Il’s original directives to encourage the sport in 1997. Basketball was said to have an effect on labour and national defence. There was need to make basketball at a world level, to move it to the next generation, to encourage it in all sectors of society, and to include it when organizing mass athletics. If the basics were taught, it was surmised that there would be an excellent next generation of basketball players. This would, in turn, help to defend the party’s leading accomplishments and show a militant spirit, overflowing romanticism, and the Juche spirit.[[2569]](#footnote-2569)

The next year, on 25 March, new constructions and renovations were said to be behind a new wave of basketball and other disciplines.[[2570]](#footnote-2570) The next day, there was an article about constructing a Socialist Civilization. This included mention of rest days as a representative example of an opportunity to play basketball, but that mornings and getting off of work were better for running and walking. Additionally, rest time was better for simple gymnastics. Basketball and other disciplines were said to be played at model athletics schools, model athletics counties, and model athletics units.[[2571]](#footnote-2571)

Taken on the whole, athletic policy during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era tended to focus on basketball as a part of other athletic disciplines. Furthermore, basketball was seen on a practical level in that people were encouraged to play basketball when they reasonably had time in their daily schedule. Lastly, basketball was not seen as a discipline in which the DPRK could be successful internationally. This was somewhat of a harkening back to the policy of the eighties.

In terms of facility construction, basketball saw great expansion. Basketball courts were easy to build and favoured by Kim Jong Un, leading to them to be included in many broader athletics facility development plans. A full list of athletics facility development reports follows.

Table 88: Reports of Basketball Facility Construction, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Outdoor/Indoor** | **Court Type** | **Details** |
| 2012.10.15 | Samma Park in Tongdaewon District[[2572]](#footnote-2572) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2012.10.15 | Sanghung Children’s Park[[2573]](#footnote-2573) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2012.6.1 | Tanchon Port[[2574]](#footnote-2574) | Outdoor | Port | built with the attention of Kim Jong Il during the Songun Era |
| 2012.11.14 | park near the Taedong Gate[[2575]](#footnote-2575) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2012.11.18  2012.12.25 | Pyongyang[[2576]](#footnote-2576)[[2577]](#footnote-2577) | Outdoor | County/City | part of a 25 day park construction push, Kim Jong Un led |
| 2012 | Rungna Island Athletics Park[[2578]](#footnote-2578) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2013 | Anak County[[2579]](#footnote-2579) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2013 | Pyongyang[[2580]](#footnote-2580)[[2581]](#footnote-2581)[[2582]](#footnote-2582) | Outdoor | Park County/City | Tens of parks, in five different districts, under the benevolent affection of the party |
| 2013 | Sinpyong County[[2583]](#footnote-2583) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2013 | Bongsan county[[2584]](#footnote-2584) | Outdoor | Park | On thousands of metres of land |
| 2013.3.8~2014.4.3 | Chongchun Street Basketball Gymnasium[[2585]](#footnote-2585)[[2586]](#footnote-2586)[[2587]](#footnote-2587)[[2588]](#footnote-2588)[[2589]](#footnote-2589)[[2590]](#footnote-2590) | Indoor | County/City | Includes waiting room, interview room, doping test room, physical training room, shower rooms, and distinctive lights and decorations. Capable of hosting international games. Overseen by Kim Jong Un, Premier Pak Bong Ju, and Premier Choe Yong Rim. |
| 2013.4.2 | Kangan Park in Pyongchon District[[2591]](#footnote-2591) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2013.8.9 | Kaesong Youth Stadium[[2592]](#footnote-2592) | Outdoor | Stadium | Remodeling |
| 2013.8.15 | Phyongsong swimming pool in Phyongsong City, South Phyongan Province[[2593]](#footnote-2593) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2013.11.30 | Pleasure Park on the Jangja river in Kangkye City, Jagang Province[[2594]](#footnote-2594) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2014 | Ryanggang Province[[2595]](#footnote-2595) | Outdoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2014 | Munchon[[2596]](#footnote-2596) | Indoor | County/City | 500 seats |
| 2014 | Kaesong Youth Athletics School[[2597]](#footnote-2597) | Outdoor | School | Renovations |
| 2014 | Yomju County[[2598]](#footnote-2598) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2014 | Paechin County athletic parks[[2599]](#footnote-2599) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2014 | Yontan County, North Hwanghae Province[[2600]](#footnote-2600) | Outdoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2014 | Hamhung Water Park[[2601]](#footnote-2601) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2014 | Pyongyang Baby Home and Pyongyang Orphanage[[2602]](#footnote-2602) | Indoor | School | Basketball goal as part of the equipment in the physical exercise room |
| 2015 | Kwaksan County[[2603]](#footnote-2603) | Indoor | County/City | 500 seats |
| 2015 | Orang County[[2604]](#footnote-2604) | Indoor | County/City | 100 square metres, 300 seats |
| 2015 | Rason[[2605]](#footnote-2605) | Indoor | County/City | Two stories |
| 2015.2.11 | Across the Country[[2606]](#footnote-2606) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2015.7.30 | Stadium at the newly built Munsu area of embassies open-air sports ground[[2607]](#footnote-2607) | Outdoor | Stadium | N/A |
| 2015.11.5 | Hwanghae Iron and Steel Complex in Songrim City, North Hwanghae Province[[2608]](#footnote-2608) | Outdoor | Factory | N/A |
| 2016.5.30  2016.9.11 | Pyongyang[[2609]](#footnote-2609)[[2610]](#footnote-2610) | Outdoor Indoor | County/City | 370 constructed and 100 rebuilt athletics facilities |
| 2016.8.7 | Sakju Foodstuffs Factory[[2611]](#footnote-2611) | Outdoor | Factory | N/A |
| 2016.8.14 | Huiryong City[[2612]](#footnote-2612) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2016.8.31 | Sariwon Youth Stadium[[2613]](#footnote-2613) | Outdoor | Stadium | Renovations |
| 2016.10.9 | Samjiyon County[[2614]](#footnote-2614) | Outdoor | Stadium | N/A |
| 2016.10.10 | Pihyon County[[2615]](#footnote-2615) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2016.12.6 | Suyangsan Unha Clothes Factory[[2616]](#footnote-2616) | Indoor | Factory | N/A |
| 2017.12.10 | Nampho Stadium[[2617]](#footnote-2617) | Outdoor | Stadium | Renovations |
| 2017.12.10 | Pyongyang[[2618]](#footnote-2618) | Outdoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2017.12.12  2017.12.26 | Unsan County[[2619]](#footnote-2619)[[2620]](#footnote-2620) | Indoor | County/City | Hundreds of seats, Courtker rooms, and showers |
| 2018.1.12 | Jagang Province[[2621]](#footnote-2621) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2016.1.27 | Samjiyon[[2622]](#footnote-2622) | Outdoor | Stadium | 2000 seats |
| 2017.3.14 | Anak County Cooperative Farm[[2623]](#footnote-2623) | Indoor | Cooperative Farm | N/A |
| 2017.5.10 | Pyongyang[[2624]](#footnote-2624) | Outdoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2017.5.16 | Potong River Athletics Village in Pyongyang[[2625]](#footnote-2625) | Outdoor  Indoor | Park | N/A |
| 2017.10.7 | Rangrim County[[2626]](#footnote-2626) | Indoor | County/City | N/A |
| 2017.11.11 | Ichon County[[2627]](#footnote-2627) | Indoor | County/City | Thousands of seats, Locker rooms, bath facilities, and a refreshments stand |
| 2018.1.30 | Pongsan County[[2628]](#footnote-2628) | Indoor | County/City | Locker rooms and shower rooms |
| 2018.6.4 | Chongjin City Youth Athletics School[[2629]](#footnote-2629) | Outdoor | School | Created with wood transported from hundreds of miles away |
| 2018.6.7 | Sinuiju Stadium[[2630]](#footnote-2630) | Outdoor | Stadium | Renovations |
| 2018.7.12  2018.7.13 | Phyongsong, South Phyongan Province[[2631]](#footnote-2631)[[2632]](#footnote-2632) | Outdoor | Stadium | N/A |
| 2018.9.17 | Chongjin Mining and Metal University in North Hamgyong Province[[2633]](#footnote-2633) | Indoor | School | N/A |
| 2018.9.28 | Pyongyang Municipal Sports Village[[2634]](#footnote-2634) | Outdoor | Park | N/A |
| 2019.1.23  2019.9.25 | East Pyongyang[[2635]](#footnote-2635) | Outdoor | County/City | 14 Districts, International Game Capable |

In total, the reports of basketball facility construction totalled 55. Said reports consisted of 34 reports of outdoor facilities and 21 reports of indoor facilities. Taking into consideration the greater number of resources and effort needed to create indoor facilities, it can be surmised that indoor and outdoor facilities were given roughly equal emphasis in overall construction plans. However, only three indoor courts were constructed from 2012 to 2013, while twelve outdoor courts were constructed during the same span. This indicates that the outdoor courts could be quickly built after Kim Jong Un’s ascension to power, but that gymnasiums required more time to build. In terms of courts, the construction boom included 23 county or city courts, fourteen parks, eight stadiums, four schools, three factories, one farm, and one port. On the whole, this indicates that the construction boom was aimed at civic facilities like those in a county or city, parks, and stadiums. This is a new development for this era, and in contrast to facilities for specific organizations like schools, factories, and farms.

## 14.9 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era was not too different from the Stagnation Era in terms of the number of tournaments and tournaments available. However, one very notable change was that the 2014 National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletic Tournament included only a female basketball section, while the 2015 edition of said tournament only included a male basketball section.[[2636]](#footnote-2636) Unfortunately, available sources do not indicate whether this trend was continued or not. The next edition of the tournament in state media was 2017, boasting only a male section.[[2637]](#footnote-2637) There are no records after this.

Additionally, the Hot Blast of Athletics Era continued with the trend of describing domestic athletics tournaments established during the Stagnation Era. What follows are some of the details of such tournaments. From 26 to 29 March 2013, the National Agricultural Workers Basketball Tournament was held. There was a team from each province, selected via provincial tournament winners.[[2638]](#footnote-2638) There was an in-depth article about the winners of the women’s event on the website Naenara. This included an emphasis on players fulfilling farming responsibilities. Jon In Hwa was the 38-year-old head of the team. She ran to the goal, dodging opponents at high speed. Kim Yong Ran, 23 years old, shot well under the basket. Kim Ok Hwa, 46 years old, was competitive despite her age. Kim even made eleven threes in the recent season. The Agricultural Workers Competition was reported to be broadcast on television.[[2639]](#footnote-2639)

From 5 to 9 September 2016, the National Agricultural Workers Basketball tournament was held. [[2640]](#footnote-2640) An 11 September article about the games made mention of school and factory athletic participation as a reason for teams’ ability to make the tournament. There was also an emphasis on lifestyle athletics and frequent training. This included family teams as well, and a 53-year-old wife was a member of said teams.[[2641]](#footnote-2641)

From 23 January to 14 February 2017, the Paekdu Mountain Prize Central Organ Workers Competition was held.[[2642]](#footnote-2642) The National Port Captain Bureau had few members, but still won their division. They used to not have a basketball court, but constructed one under the guidance of the party. They made four teams, and often organized games. Their skill level rose, and they had preliminary games to decide who would be on their main team. Daehung Guidance Bureau also had high results. Their manager joined in, which reportedly gave strength to others on the team.[[2643]](#footnote-2643)

In February 2019, the Pyongyang City United Business and City Level Organ Competition was held. The Pyongyang City Clothing Industry Management Bureau often carried out games, increasing the level of workers basketball. There was also consistent passion amongst the Pyongyang Thermal Power Development United Business.[[2644]](#footnote-2644)

From 26 to 29 March that same year, the National Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament was held. Posan Cooperative Farm representing North Phyongang Province had reportedly encouraged basketball for approximately 10 years. They carried out games between workteams and villages on rest days and athletics days. This resulted in encouragement and instigation in production.[[2645]](#footnote-2645)

From 1 to 30 April, the Mangyongdae Prize Athletics Tournament was held. There were seven men’s teams and four women’s teams. Men’s teams had a league followed by games for each odd place, while women’s teams had two leagues. However, in the men’s final games, teams would need to hold an overall point differential advantage in order to secure the better place. This created situations in which winning the game is not the priority, but winning by a certain number of points was. The Coach of Amrok River mentioned giving great effort to improving the players physical and technical skills in order to win. Second level teams played at Kowon County from 1 April, while youth level teams played at Yomju County from the 9th.[[2646]](#footnote-2646) That October, the National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament was carried out. Basketball was mentioned first in the recap article.[[2647]](#footnote-2647)

Table 89: Men's Domestic Basketball Details, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| 17th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제17차 백두산상중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 30-Jan-12~3-Feb-12 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 10-Feb-12~28-Feb-12 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 100th Anniversary of Comrade Kim Il Sung's Birth Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize National Athletics Festival | 김일성동지 탄생 100돐경축 만경대상 전국체육축정 | 6-Apr-12~30-Apr-12 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Wonsan, Nampho, Samjiyon | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보왜불상체육경기대회 | 3-Jun-12~15-Jun-12 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Sariwon, Nampho | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 10-Jun-12~20-Jun-12 | Haeju | ? |
| 49th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제49차 전국청소년체육학교 체육경기대회 | Jun-12~13-Jun-12 | Nampho | ? |
| 5 October Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9월5일상전국대학생체육경기대회 | 3-Aug-12~14-Aug-12 | Hamhung | ? |
| DPR Korea 12th People's Athletic Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국 제12차 인민체육대회 | 12-Oct-12~30-Oct-12 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 43rd Artists Athletic Tournament | 제43차 예술인체육대회 | 02-Nov-12 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 18th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제18차 백두산상중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 | 24-Jan-13~8-Feb-13 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 5-Feb-13~1-Mar-13 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| The Day of the Sun Celebratory National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 태양절경축 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 26-Mar-13~29-Mar-13 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Gymnasium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 만경대상체육경기대회 | 2-Apr-13~30-Apr-13 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 39th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제39차 정일봉상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 16-May-13~28-Jun-13 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung | ? |
| 50th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제50차 전국청소년체육학교체육경기대회 | 18-May-13~27-Jun-13 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Nampho, Hamhung, Sariwon, Provincial Cities | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기 | 4-Jun-13~Jun-13 | Dongrim | ? |
| Total Victory 60th Anniversary Celebratory Songun Beacon Prize Athletics Tournament | 전승 60돐경축 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 15-Jul-13~30-Jul-13 | Pyongyang, Hamhung, Wonsan | Songchon River Athletics Club |
| Youth Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Student and Youth’s Competitive Athletics Tournament | 청년절경축 평양시학생청년들의 체육경기대회 | 00-Aug-13 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 1-Oct-13~30-Oct-13 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| National Inter-Provincial Athletics Games | 전국도대항체육경기 | 1-Oct-13~5-Oct-13 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 40th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제40차 정일봉상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 20-Jan-14~Aug-14 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon | ? |
| 19th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제19차 백두산상 중앙기관 일군 체육경기대회 | 23-Jan-14~11-Feb-14 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 4-Feb-14~28-Feb-14 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 만경대상체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-14~30-Apr-14 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 2nd Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제2차 보건부문체육경기대회 | 22-Apr-14~29-Apr-14 | Pyongyang | Rungna Peoples Recreation Ground |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기 | 4-Jun-14~28-Jun-14 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung, Nampho, Haesan | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 16-Jun-14~30-Jun-14 | Phyongsong | ? |
| University Basketball Tournament | ? | Jul-14~28-Jul-14 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 45th Artists Athletic Tournament | 제45차 예술인체육대회 | 24-Oct-14 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 00-Oct-14 | ? | ? |
| 41st Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제41차 정일봉상 정국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 20-Jan-15~Aug-15 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung, Sariwon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 19th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제19차 백두산상 중앙기관 일군 체육경기대회 | 21-Jan-15~12-Feb-15 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 4-Feb-15~27-Feb-15 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon, Samjiyon, Puchon County | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 11th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 제11차 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 16-Mar-15~20-Mar-15 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium Pyongyang Students and Childrens Palace |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 만경대상체육경기대회 | 2-Apr-15~30-Apr-15 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Haeju, Dongrim County | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 3rd Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제3차 보건부문체육경기대회 | 21-Apr-15~1-May-15 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 52nd National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제52차 전국청소년체육학교체육경기대회 | 22-May-15~8-Jun-15 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung, Sariwon, Nampho, Jongju, Kaechon, Mundok County, Sonchon County | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기대회 | 3-Jun-15~29-Jun-15 | Pyongyang, Haesan, Hamhung, Sariwon, Phyongsong | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 15-Jun-15~30-Jun-15 | Pyongson, Sariwon, Nampho, Hamhung | ? |
| University Basketball Tournament | ? | 00-Jul-15 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 2015 National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletics Tournament | 전국도대항군중체육대회-15 | 17-Oct-15~31-Oct-15 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 46th Artists Athletic Tournament | 제46차 예술인체육대회 진행 | 06-Nov-15 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 3rd National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 제3차 전국로동자롱구경기대회 | 9-Nov-15~13-Nov-15 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 42nd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제42차 정일봉상 정국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 21-Jan-16~7-Sep-16 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon, Hamhung | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-16~29-Feb-16 | Pyongyang, Baekdu Mountain Region | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 만경대상체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-16~29-Apr-16 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Sariwon, Kowon County | ? |
| 53rd National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제53차 전국청소년체육학교 체육경기대회 | 22-May-16~10-Jun-16 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon, Wonsan, Hamhung, Nampho, Kowon County | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기대회 | 2-Jun-16~30-Jun-16 | Pyongyang, Haesan, Hamhung, Phyongsong | Haesan Gymnasium |
| National Orphans Athletic Games | 전국 학원 원아들의 체육경기 | 6-Jun-16~7-Jun-16 | Wonsan | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 13-Jun-16~30-Jun-16 | Phyongsong, Sariwon, Hamhung | ? |
| University Basketball Tournament | ? | 4-Jul-16~14-Jul-16 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9월5일상 전국대학생체육경기대회 | 3-Aug-16~12-Aug-16 | Hamhung | ? |
| 4th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제4차 보건부문체육경기대회 | 26-Aug-16~2-Sep-16 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 12th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 제12차 전국농업근로자롱구경기대회 | 5-Sep-16~9-Sep-16 | Pyongyang | Rungna Athletics Park |
| Kim Il Sung University 70th Anniversary Commemorative National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 김일성종합대학창립 70돐기념 전국대학생체육경기대회 | 21-Sep-16~27-Sep-16 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung University Gymnasium |
| 13th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 제13차 인민체육대회 | 13-Oct-16~31-Oct-16 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 43rd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제43차 정일봉상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 19-Jan-17~1-Sep-17 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon, Hamhung | ? |
| 22nd Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제22차 백두산상 중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 23-Jan-17~14-Feb-17 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 백두산상체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-17~27-Feb-17 | Pyongyang, Sariwon, Kowon, Paekdu Mountain Region | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 만경대상체육경기대회 | 3-Apr-17~28-Apr-17 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Phyongsong, Sariwon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 5th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제5차 보건부문체육경기대회 | 20-Apr-17~2-May-17 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기대회 | 3-Jun-17~Jun-17 | Haesan, Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung, Wonsan | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 선군봉화상체육경기대회 | 11-Jun-17~30-Jun-17 | Hamhung, Phyongsong, Sariwon | ? |
| National Orphans Athletic Games | 전국 학원 원아들의 체육경기 | 13-Jun-17~20-Jun-17 | Pyongyang | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국로동자롱구경기대회 | 21-Aug-17~28-Aug-17 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 3-Oct-17~31-Oct-17 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 2017 National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletics Tournament | 전국도대항군중체육대회－2017 | 17-Oct-17~28-Oct-17 | Pyongyang | Pyongyang Gymnasium |
| 47th Artists Athletic Tournament | 제47차 예술인체육대회 | 03-Nov-17 | Pyongyang | Kim Il Sung Stadium |
| 23rd Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제23차 백두산상 중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 22-Jan-18~13-Feb-18 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 44th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제44차 정일봉상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 23-Jan-18~31-Aug-18 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 광명성절경축 백두산상체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-18~27-Feb-18 | Pyongyang, Paekdu Mountain Athletic Village, Sariwon, Kowon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 태양절경축 만경대상체육경기대회 | 2-Apr-18~30-Apr-18 | Pyongyang, Nampho, Phyongsong, Sariwon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 6th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제6차 보건부문체육경기대회 | 19-Apr-18~2-May-18 | Pyongyang and each province | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기대회 | 1-Jun-18~29-Jun-18 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung, Chongjin, Nampho | Haesan Gymnasium |
| Skill Innovation Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 기술혁신봉화상체육경기대회 | 15-Jun-18~29-Jun-18 | Phyongsong, Hamhung | ? |
| National Orphans Athletic Games - 2018 | 전국 학원 원아들의 체육경기 - 2018 | 12-Jul-18~18-Jul-18 | Phyongsong | Phyongsong Primary School, Phyongsong Middle School |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9월5일상 전국대학생체육경기대회 | 2-Aug-18~14-Aug-18 | Hamhung, Each cities' Universities | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 전국로동자체육경기대회 | 7-Aug-18~14-Aug-18 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 3-Oct-18~31-Oct-18 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Sariwon, other cities and counties | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 55th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제55차 전국청소년체육학교체육경기대회 | 00-Oct-18 | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City United Business and City Level Organ Competitive Athletics Tournament | 평양시안의 련합기업소, 시급기관체육경기 | 00-Feb-19 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 광명성절경축 백두산상 체육경기대회 | 1-Feb-19~28-Feb-19 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 24th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제24차 백두산상 중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 4-Feb-19~28-Feb-19 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 13th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 제13차 전국농업근로자롱구경기 | 26-Mar-19~29-Mar-19 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 태양절경축 만경대상체육경기대회 | 3-Apr-19~14-Apr-19 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium Locomotive Athletics Club |
| 7th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제7차 보건부문체육경기대회 | 18-Apr-19~1-May-19 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Chollima Jegang United Business and Four Brothers Factory, Other Businesses Athletics Games | 천리마제강련합기업소를 비롯한 네형제공장, 기업소들사이의 체육경기 | 6-May-19~9-May-19 | Pyongyang | Kangso District Athletics Grounds |
| 2019 Revolutionary School Athletics Games | 《혁명학원체육경기-2019》 | 28-May-19~30-May-19 | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 보천보홰불상체육경기대회 | 1-Jun-19~28-Jun-19 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Hamhung, Sariwon, Nampho, Haesan | ? |
| National Orphans Athletic Games - 2019 | 전국 학원 원아들의 체육경기-2019 | 00-Jul-19 | ? | ? |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9월5일상 전국대학생체육경기대회 | 4-Aug-19~19-Aug-19 | ? | ? |
| 45th Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제45차 소백수상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | Aug-19~30-Aug-19 | Pyongyang and Provincial Cities | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 전국로동자롱구경기대회 | 22-Aug-19~2-Sep-19 | Pyongyang | ? |
| 2019 DPR Korea Foundation Commemorative Ministry, Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 조선민주주의인민공화국창건기념 성, 중앙기관 일군들의 체육경기대회-2019 | 27-Aug-19~Sep-19 | Pyongyang | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 1-Oct-19~30-Oct-19 | Pyongyang, Phyongsong, Wonsan | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 46th Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament (Cancelled Mid-Tournament) | 제46차 소백수상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 23-Jan-20~Feb-20 | Pyongyang, Provincial Cities | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |

Table 90: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, Hot Blast of Athletics Era (Duplicates Excluded)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| 14th National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletics Tournament | 전국도대항군중체육대회-14 | 1-Oct-14~10-Oct-14 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |

From the Domestic Basketball Tournament Details during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, the most notable detail is that the “Jong Il Prize” was eliminated beginning in 2020. From 22 January of said year, the Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competition was begun, but did not finish.[[2648]](#footnote-2648) This could be seen as an example of a slight demotion of the cult of Kim Jong Il. Another development is the introduction of the Public Health Sector Tournament beginning around 2013. This can be seen as a part of the overall increase of domestic athletics during this era.

Table 91: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| 17th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 30-Jan-12~3-Feb-12 | Ministry of Railways Social Science Research Taesong Guidance Bureau Diplomatic Corps Business Overall Bureau | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-12~28-Feb-12 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Sobaeksu | ? |
| 100th Anniversary of Comrade Kim Il Sung's Birth Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize National Athletics Festival | 6-Apr-12~30-Apr-12 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-12~15-Jun-12 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Jun-12~20-Jun-12 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 49th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | Jun-12~13-Jun-12 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 October Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Aug-12~14-Aug-12 | Kim Il Sung University (University) Pyongyang City Management College (College) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| DPR Korea 12th People's Athletic Tournament | 12-Oct-12~30-Oct-12 | 25 April Athletics Club (Athletics Club) Pyongyang City (Mass Athletics) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 43rd Artists Athletic Tournament | 02-Nov-12 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 18th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Jan-13~8-Feb-13 | Ministry of Railways Minju Joson Taesong Guidance Bureau Mining Machinery Industry Guidance Bureau | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Agriculture |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Feb-13~1-Mar-13 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Ryongnam Mountain Prize Locomotive |
| The Day of the Sun Celebratory National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 26-Mar-13~29-Mar-13 | Sukchon County Yoldusamchon Farm | ? | Singye County Daejong Cooperative Farm | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-13~30-Apr-13 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University Pyongyang Architecture General University |
| 39th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-May-13~28-Jun-13 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 50th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 18-May-13~27-Jun-13 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-13~Jun-13 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Total Victory 60th Anniversary Celebratory Songun Beacon Prize Athletics Tournament | 15-Jul-13~30-Jul-13 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Youth Holiday Celebratory Pyongyang City Student and Youth’s Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Aug-13 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 1-Oct-13~30-Oct-13 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| National Inter-Provincial Athletics Games | 1-Oct-13~5-Oct-13 | Daeryong River (In the Final) Chongchon River (In the Final) | ? | ? | ? | Kwanmo Peak Prize Suyang Mountain Prize |
| 40th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Jan-14~Aug-14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 19th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 23-Jan-14~11-Feb-14 | Ministry of Railways Trade Bank Taesong Guidance Bureau Mansudae Art Studio | ? | ? | ? | Korean Revolutionary Museum Taesong Guidance Bureau National Land Environmental Protection Ministry |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-14~28-Feb-14 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-14~30-Apr-14 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2nd Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 22-Apr-14~29-Apr-14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Jun-14~28-Jun-14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-Jun-14~30-Jun-14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| University Basketball Tournament | Jul-14~28-Jul-14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 20 July Standings Kim Il Sung University 5W 0L Kim Chaek Industrial University 5W 0L Pyongyang Foreign Language University 4W 1L Pyongyang Architecture General University 3W 2L "Agricultural University" 3W 2L |
| 45th Artists Athletic Tournament | 24-Oct-14 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 00-Oct-14 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 41st Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Jan-15~Aug-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kang Pan Sok High School Nampho City Hanggu District Undok High School |
| 19th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Jan-15~12-Feb-15 | Ministry of Railways Education Committee Taesong Guidance Bureau Minju Joson | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-15~27-Feb-15 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 11th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 16-Mar-15~20-Mar-15 | South Phyongan Province (Pyongwon County Daejong Farm) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-15~30-Apr-15 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Amrok River |
| 3rd Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Apr-15~1-May-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 52nd National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 22-May-15~8-Jun-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-15~29-Jun-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Jun-15~30-Jun-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| University Basketball Tournament | 00-Jul-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Chaek Industrial University Kim Hyong Jik Nomral University Pyongyang Foreign Language University Kim Chol Ju Normal University Kangkye Normal University North Phyongan University Wonsan Agricultural University |
| 2015 National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletics Tournament | 17-Oct-15~31-Oct-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Jagang Province Hwanghae Province North Hamgyong Province Nampho City |
| 46th Artists Athletic Tournament | 06-Nov-15 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 3rd National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 9-Nov-15~13-Nov-15 | Ministry of Railways | ? | Pyongyang City | North Hamgyong Province | ? |
| 42nd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Jan-16~7-Sep-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kang Pan Sok High School Nampho City Hanggu District Undok High School |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-16~29-Feb-16 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | Pyongyang City Kim Chaek Industrial University |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-16~29-Apr-16 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 53rd National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 22-May-16~10-Jun-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Jun-16~30-Jun-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Sobaeksu |
| National Orphans Athletic Games | 6-Jun-16~7-Jun-16 | Kangwon Province (In the Final) North Hwanghae Province (In the Final) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Jun-16~30-Jun-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| University Basketball Tournament | 4-Jul-16~14-Jul-16 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University | Pyongyang Foreign Language University (Semi-Final) | Kim Chaek Industrial University |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Aug-16~12-Aug-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 4th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 26-Aug-16~2-Sep-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 12th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 5-Sep-16~9-Sep-16 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | Ryonggang County Okdo Cotton Specialist Cooperative Farm Pyongyang City Rakrang District Pyongyang City Sunan District Anak County Mamyong Cooperative Farm Myonggan Fruit Farm |
| Kim Il Sung University 70th Anniversary Commemorative National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 21-Sep-16~27-Sep-16 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 13th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 13-Oct-16~31-Oct-16 | 25 April Athletics Club (Athletics Club) Pyongyang City (Mass Athletics) | ? | North Phyongan Province (Mass Athletics) | ? | Mass Athletics Teams: Jagang Province Ryanggang Province |
| 43rd Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 19-Jan-17~1-Sep-17 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 22nd Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 23-Jan-17~14-Feb-17 | Ministry of the Electric Power Industry National Port Captain Bureau Taesong Guidance Bureau Mansudae Art Studio | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Everyday Foodstuffs Industry Ministry of Agriculture Taehung Guidance Bureau |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-17~27-Feb-17 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Locomotive | Amrok River | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-17~28-Apr-17 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 5th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 20-Apr-17~2-May-17 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Jun-17~Jun-17 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 11-Jun-17~30-Jun-17 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Orphans Athletic Games | 13-Jun-17~20-Jun-17 | Pyongyang City (In the Final) North Hamgyong Province (In the Final) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 21-Aug-17~28-Aug-17 | East Pyongyang Thermal Power Plant Kangwon Province Power Distribution Station | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 3-Oct-17~31-Oct-17 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 2017 National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletics Tournament | 17-Oct-17~28-Oct-17 | Pyongyang City | ? | North Hamgyong Province | Nampho City | ? |
| 47th Artists Athletic Tournament | 03-Nov-17 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 23rd Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 22-Jan-18~13-Feb-18 | Ministry of Railways Public Service Bureau Taesong Guidance Bureau Mansudae Art Studio | ? | ? | ? | Myohyang Guidance Bureau Foreign Construction Guidance Bureau Ministry of the Electric Power Industry |
| 44th Jong Il Peak Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 23-Jan-18~31-Aug-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kang Pan Sok High School Mangongdae District Kim Ju Hyok High School |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-18~27-Feb-18 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-18~30-Apr-18 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Amrok River |
| 6th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 19-Apr-18~2-May-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Jun-18~29-Jun-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Sobaeksu (Youth) Amrok River (Youth) |
| Skill Innovation Beacon Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 15-Jun-18~29-Jun-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Orphans Athletic Games - 2018 | 12-Jul-18~18-Jul-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Aug-18~14-Aug-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 7-Aug-18~14-Aug-18 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 3-Oct-18~31-Oct-18 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 55th National Youth Athletics School Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Oct-18 | Pyongyang City | ? | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? |
| Pyongyang City United Business and City Level Organ Competitive Athletics Tournament | 00-Feb-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Clothing Industry Management Bureau (Semi-Final Loss) United Cigarette Business (Semi-Final Win) Pyongyang Thermal Power Development United Business (Semi-Final) Pyongyang Poultry Farm Management Bureau (Semi-Final) |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-19~28-Feb-19 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Kang Pan Sok High School Mangongdae District Kim Ju Hyok High School |
| 24th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-19~28-Feb-19 | Ministry of the Electric Power Industry Overall Public Service Bureau Myohyang Guidance Bureau Medical Research Graduate School | ? | ? | ? | Koryo Medicine Graduate School |
| 13th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 26-Mar-19~29-Mar-19 | South Hamgyong Province | ? | Kangwon Province | North Hwanghae Province | ? |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-19~14-Apr-19 | Amrok River | ? | 25 April Athletics Team | Locomotive | Pyongyang City Ryongnam Mounthain Kim Chaek Industrial University Foreign Economics Industry |
| 7th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 18-Apr-19~1-May-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Chollima Jegang United Business and Four Brothers Factory, Other Businesses Athletics Games | 6-May-19~9-May-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2019 Revolutionary School Athletics Games | 28-May-19~30-May-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Pochonbo Torch Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Jun-19~28-Jun-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Orphans Athletic Games - 2019 | 00-Jul-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Aug-19~19-Aug-19 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? | Pyongyang Science and Technology University Pyongyang Architecture General University Jang Chol Gu Pyongyang Commerce University |
| 45th Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | Aug-19~30-Aug-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 22-Aug-19~2-Sep-19 | Kangwon Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2019 DPR Korea Foundation Commemorative Ministry, Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 27-Aug-19~Sep-19 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 1-Oct-19~30-Oct-19 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City Locomotive |
| 46th Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament (Cancelled Mid-Tournament) | 23-Jan-20~Feb-20 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | Kang Pan Sok High School Mangongdae District Kim Ju Hyok High School |

From the men’s domestic basketball tournament results during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, the following results can be determined. Firstly, 25 April, with 22 tournament wins, was easily the dominant team of the era. Secondly, Pyongyang City, with two wins, and Amrok River, with one win, had fallen by the wayside in terms of competitiveness. Thirdly, Kim Il Sung University, with three wins, was the best university team of the era.

Table 92: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| 17th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 30-Jan-12~3-Feb-12 | National Planning Committee Taesong Guidance Bureau Diplomatic Corps Business Overall Bureau | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Feb-12~28-Feb-12 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 100th Anniversary of Comrade Kim Il Sung's Birth Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize National Athletics Festival | 6-Apr-12~30-Apr-12 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Songun Beacon Competitive Athletics Tournament | 10-Jun-12~20-Jun-12 | North Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 5 October Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Aug-12~14-Aug-12 | Hamhung Number 2 Teachers University (University) Hamhung Medical College (College) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| DPR Korea 12th People's Athletic Tournament | 12-Oct-12~30-Oct-12 | 25 April Athletics Club (Athletics Club) | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 18th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 24-Jan-13~8-Feb-13 | National Planning Committee Korean Revolutionary Museum Public Service Overall Bureau Trade Bank | ? | ? | ? | Ministry of Agriculture |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 5-Feb-13~1-Mar-13 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| The Day of the Sun Celebratory National Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 26-Mar-13~29-Mar-13 | Ryokpo District Ryuhyon Vegetable Specialist Farm | ? | Sukchon County Yoldusamchon Farm | Singye County Daejong Cooperative Farm | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-13~30-Apr-13 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 1-Oct-13~30-Oct-13 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 19th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 23-Jan-14~11-Feb-14 | Kim Il Sung High Level Party School Ministry of Railways Recreation General Bureau Mansudae Art Studio | ? | ? | ? | Trade Bank National Land Environmental Protection Ministry |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-14~28-Feb-14 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-14~30-Apr-14 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14th National Inter-Provincial Mass Athletics Tournament | 1-Oct-14~10-Oct-14 | Pyongyang City | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 00-Oct-14 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-15~27-Feb-15 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 11th National Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 16-Mar-15~20-Mar-15 | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-15~30-Apr-15 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Amrok River |
| 3rd National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 9-Nov-15~13-Nov-15 | Pyongyang City | ? | South Hamgyong Province | North Hamgyong Province | ? |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-16~29-Feb-16 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Sobaeksu | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-16~29-Apr-16 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Locomotive | ? |
| 12th National Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 5-Sep-16~9-Sep-16 | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | Ryonggang County Okdo Cotton Specialist Cooperative Farm Pyongyang City Rakrang District Pyongyang City Sunan District Unpa County Ryujong Cooperative Farm |
| 13th *People’s Athletics* Tournament | 13-Oct-16~31-Oct-16 | Sobaeksu (Athletics Club) Pyongyang City (Mass Athletics) | ? | ? | ? | Kangwon Province |
| Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-17~27-Feb-17 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Pyongyang City | Locomotive | ? |
| Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-17~28-Apr-17 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Locomotive | Pyongyang City | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 3-Oct-17~31-Oct-17 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Sobaeksu | Amrok River | ? |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-18~27-Feb-18 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Sobaeksu | Kim Il Sung University Pyongyang Medical College Athletic Team | ? |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2-Apr-18~30-Apr-18 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 3-Oct-18~31-Oct-18 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Kim Il Sung University Pyongyang Medical College Athletic Team | 8 February Team | ? |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Feb-19~28-Feb-19 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? | Kang Pan Sok High School Mangongdae District Kim Ju Hyok High School |
| 24th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Feb-19~28-Feb-19 | Ministry of Mining Industry Foreign Economics Ministry Bonghwa Guidance Bureau Korea Central Broadcasting Committee | ? | ? | ? | Medical Research Graduate School |
| 13th National Agricultural Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 26-Mar-19~29-Mar-19 | Nampho City | ? | South Hamgyong Province | South Phyongan Province | ? |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Apr-19~14-Apr-19 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | Amrok River | Pyongyang City | Locomotive |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 4-Aug-19~19-Aug-19 | Kim Il Sung University | ? | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? | ? |
| National Workers Competitive Basketball Tournament | 22-Aug-19~2-Sep-19 | South Phyongan Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 1-Oct-19~30-Oct-19 | Amrok River | ? | ? | ? | ? |

The women’s domestic basketball match results were similar to that of the men’s in that 25 April, with nineteen tournament wins, was the dominant team of the era. As with the men’s tournaments, Pyongyang City and Amrok River, with three wins each, had fallen by the wayside.

Table 93: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 15-Apr-13 | University | Kim Il Sung Military General University | Kim Il Sung Political University | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 03-Oct-13 | Provincial | Daeryong River | ? | 74 | 59 | 1W 0L | ? |
| 21-Jul-14 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Kim Il Sung University | 76 | 63 | 13W 1L | 3W 3L |
| 00-2015 | ? | North Hamgyong Province | Nampho City | 47 | 43 | 4W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Jul-15 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Pyongyang Foreign Language University | ? | ? | 14W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Jul-15 | University | Kim Chaek Industrial University | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? | ? | 15W 1L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Jul-15 | University | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University | Kangkye Normal University | 101 | 38 | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Jul-15 | University | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University | ? | 81 | 57 | 3W 0L | ? |
| 00-Jul-15 | University | North Phyongan University | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 00-Jul-15 | University | North Phyongan University | Wonsan Agricultural University | ? | ? | 2W 0L | 1W 1L |
| 5~14-Jul-16 | University | Kim Hyong Jik Normal University | Pyongyang Foreign Language University | 88 | 84 | 4W 0L | 0W 2L |
| 15-Apr-18 | 1st | 25 April Athletics Club | Amrok River | 73 | 70 | 2W 0L | 14W 4L |
| 00-Oct-18 | Youth Athletics School | Pyongyang City | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | 21W 11L | 4W 3L |
| 00-Feb-19 | Central Organ | Ministry of Railways | Ministry of the Electric Power Industry | ? | ? | 2W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Feb-19 | Central Organ | Medical Research Graduate School | Korea Central Broadcasting Committee | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Feb-19 | City Level Organ | United Cigarette Business | Pyongyang City Clothes Industry Management Bureau | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Mar-19 | Agricultural | South Hamgyong Province | Kangwon Province | ? | ? | 5W 3L | 0W 2L |
| 00-Apr-19 | 1st | 25 April Athletics Club | Amrok River | 87 | 80 | 3W 0L | 14W 5L |
| 00-Aug-19 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | 34 | 22 | 4W 3L | 0W 2L |
| 00-Aug-19 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Pyongyang Science and Technology University | 51 | 19 | 5W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Aug-19 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Pyongyang Architecture General University | 35 | 25 | 6W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Aug-19 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Jang Chol Gu Pyongyang Commerce University | 55 | 29 | 7W 3L | 0W 1L |
| 00-Aug-19 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | 29 | 19 | 8W 3L | 0W 3L |

Table 94: Womens Domestic Basketball Match Results, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 00-Mar-19 | Agricultural | Nampho City | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | 1W 0L | 3W 2L |
| 00-Aug-19 | University | Kim Il Sung University | Kim Chol Ju Normal University | ? | ? | 5W 2L | 0W 1L |

The most significant aspect of the match results of the Hot Blast of Athletics Era were the fact that so many of them were published. With 22 total men’s match results and two total women’s match results, it was the most results available since the Mass Athletics Era. As such, it signals a slight opening in the DPRK’s media coverage of athletics. Secondly, the frequent inclusion of results from matches between organs and universities indicates that the emphasis was not necessarily on the best teams, but on teams within lesser tournaments.

## 14.10 Teams

### 14.10.1 Successful teams

During the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, there were some reports on successful teams, but they were not as numerous as similar reports during the Stagnation Era. What follows is a chronological list of said teams.

Firstly, at the 2013 City Level Mangyongdae Tournament for workers, the Central Information Communication Bureau revealed excellent basketball players. They also had female athletes as part of the teams that won the National Workers’ Athletics Tournament and eleventh and twelfth People’s Athletics Tournament.[[2649]](#footnote-2649)

The next year, on 21 November, there was an article about 25 April Athletics Team mentioning first place in men’s and women’s divisions of that year’s Republic Championship Tournament.[[2650]](#footnote-2650)

The year after that, on 15 July, there was a short article about Pyongyang Minhung High School. In 2003, said high school won basketball at the Jong Il Peak Prize due to a scientific training method taught by Ko Jong Suk. Also, they had won the latest women’s basketball portion of the Pyongyang qualifier for the 41st Jong Il Peak Prize tournament.[[2651]](#footnote-2651)

Later, on 21 September, there was an article about the Pyongwon County Taejon Farm Men’s team. They had won the National Agricultural Workers Athletics Tournament that April and won tournaments at the city and county levels as well. It was claimed that the farm began basketball starting with the wind raised by Kim Jong Il 20 years earlier during the Arduous March. From this basis, the farm took efforts to move it to a new generation. Basketball became a part of their lifestyle and their skill increased. Students played basketball in university, or the army. Then, they brought it to the farm after their military service. Basketball and volleyball games were often organized at the farm. The farmers saved their rest times to play basketball. They also showed collectivist spirit, working for a breakthrough. Lastly, the workers were described as showing liveliness, optimism, passion, revolutionary romance and a delightful tomorrow.[[2652]](#footnote-2652)

Roughly two weeks later, on 4 October 2015, Wonsan City Sinpung Advanced Middle School was rumoured as a good basketball school. Their basketball team operation was always normalized, and the students’ basketball passion was high. In national competitions, students achieved around tenth place. As such, students’ passion was endlessly rising. During extracurricular time, students participated in basketball and other disciplines. The basketball court was especially bright with activity. The team received the leading teacher’s guidance with basketballs by their side and older siblings watching. Students had a competitive spirit, engaged in self-practice, and carried out games by school level. The principal still remembers when the school received the basketballs from Kim Jong Il. From then on, basketball team operation was normalized. This led to an increase in basketball passion which was meant to recompensate the leader’s affection and love. In fact, the first thing that the principal got when becoming a principal was a list of names of the basketball teams at the school.[[2653]](#footnote-2653)

That same day, there was a report from the Speed Battle Youth Shock Troops Second Brigade. They always scored first place in basketball tournaments, but this was not possible in the past. Before said brigade became good at basketball, the situation was as follows. On one Day of the Shining Star, they gathered for a game. One soldier was in love with basketball. Football and volleyball kept going on, but basketball was sporadic. This was a problem from said soldier’s perspective. Accordingly, he reminded the workers of Kim Jong Il’s encouragement of basketball. From then on, basketball was always included in athletic activities. The brigade exhibited an exploration spirit, increasing the level of basketball together. The effort was inclusive, not just encompassing the best athletes. They were able to increase the basketball level by dispatching coaches to intensify training. All battalions used their break time to train. This gave off a romantic image. Under the benevolent affection of the party, they made a modern athletics park. Anyone can use said park. Overall, the battalion was very proud of their first-place finishes.[[2654]](#footnote-2654)

About six weeks later, on 15 November, there was an article about how the Taesong Guidance Bureau’s basketball team was well known for skill. They have played since 2003 and always won their division at the Paektusan Prize since 2004. The bureau spent time at lunch and after work honing skills, and invites specialists to train with them on holidays.[[2655]](#footnote-2655)

The next year, on 28 October, the Central District Sports School won first place at the women’s competition of basketball. They had won the senior division four times running, and the junior division six times running. Junior instructor Kim Myong Hui, had denied a post as the senior team instructor to take the junior team and build a foundation. They emphasized speed, endurance, and intelligence. Kim Ok Sun was the senior instructor. She was a master sportsperson, and won gold medals during her 15 years as a sports woman. As a student, she practiced through the night, sometimes alone, when her team lost a game. As such, she maintained that one must never lose themselves in order to win. This was her trainer’s old motto. Kim wanted to lead the schools to consecutive wins and victories.[[2656]](#footnote-2656)

Just over a week later, on 6 November, there was a report from the People’s Athletic Tournament. The report gave high praise of the Pyongyang City team. The team’s manager, Kim Won Chol, made a new basketball court, organized basketball games the first Sunday of each month and on holidays, and was proud of his team’s performance. There was also mention of the women’s Kangwon Province team, which included workers from the provincial Korean Medicine Production Supervisory Committee. Formerly, they were good at volleyball, but had decided to work on perfecting basketball. Even though they had only begun a few years earlier, through collectivist spirit and unity, they had become one of the top teams.[[2657]](#footnote-2657)

A month later, on 6 December, there was an article about the Central Information Communication Bureau Three Great Revolutions Red Flag Branch Office. They used several basketball courts during leisure time. However, said office had recently made the decision to focus more on athletics. Women’s basketball was a discipline which succeeded in particular. As such, the office made basketball courts and gymnasiums. The women’s team had won three bureau-wide basketball games.[[2658]](#footnote-2658)

The next year, on 14 March, there was an article about female basketball players at Kangwon Province Korean Medicine manufacturing authority. After the men’s team won a province wide competition some years prior, the decision was made to train female athletes as well. Jang Jong Mun, who made the original suggestion, did lots of analysis and methodically organized games and training. Employees played to create opportunities for others, strengthening mutual love and unity. Thus, they achieved a high result in the People’s Athletics Tournament.[[2659]](#footnote-2659) The same day, there was mention of the Electric Power Workers’ first place finish at the Central Organ Workers’ Paekdu Mountain Tournament. They showed good physical preparation and refined skill, earning admiration.[[2660]](#footnote-2660)

The next month, on 23 April, there was mention of the Anak County Mamyong Cooperative farm male basketball athletes. They had represented South Hwanghae Province in the National Workers Basketball tournament the previous year with polished skill.[[2661]](#footnote-2661) The next month, on 14 May, there was an article mentioning the Tokchon City Women’s basketball team being well-known in the province. The enthusiasm from the City Commerce Management Office workers was cited as the main force behind the team’s success.[[2662]](#footnote-2662)

Later that year, on 23 November, Yonan County’s Youth Athletics School achieved good results in the province-wide games, becoming talented athlete reserves.[[2663]](#footnote-2663) A week later, on 30 December, there was an article about the Central District Sports School winning the national title for Pyongyang for 10 years running. Coach Kim Ok Sun was said to train players scientifically. Said coach mentioned video of basketball stars obtained online, and claimed to use video review to help players correct their faults. Additionally, said coach played for the national team a decade prior.[[2664]](#footnote-2664)

The next year, on 1 September, an article came out from Sinuiju Municipal Children’s Athletics School Mountain Training Base. Women’s union shock brigades were reported to be making basketball courts and other facilities in the city. Additionally, they had recently achieved great results in the 56th National Youth Athletics School Athletics Games.[[2665]](#footnote-2665)

One day later, on 2 September, Byokdong High School had basketball gaining popularity among students. The school’s beginner team got first place in the provincial tournament, gaining interest.[[2666]](#footnote-2666) Later that month, on 29 September, Kang Pan Sok High School winning the Sobaeksu Prize National Schoolchildren’s Sports Contest. The Kangwon provincial players could not beat them. Kye Un Jong mentioned each player needing to train to cope with rapid changes of possession. In said training, there was use of visual aids and training for specific positions.[[2667]](#footnote-2667) This was a part of Kang Pan Sok High School’s legacy of success, begun by trainer Yun Sol Hwa during the Basketball Intensification Era.

In comparison to the Stagnation Era, the articles about successful teams during this era were not significantly different. They generally focused on training tactics and how the team had trained for the goal rather than details on the tournaments that they had participated in. It’s also notable how state media tended to focus on trainers rather than athletes, and that one organization picked up basketball during the Basketball Intensification Era. All in all, these reports were designed to communicate relatability and emphasize that said teams’ success could be emulated.

### 14.10.2 Passionate Teams

Similar to the Stagnation Era, the Hot Blast of Athletics Era saw several teams featured in state media for their passionate basketball participation. What follows is a list of said reports in chronological order.

In 2012, at the 26 April Children’s Film Studio, basketball games are carried out with diverse rules so that all, not just athletes, could participate.[[2668]](#footnote-2668) In 2014, basketball teams at Singye County Youth Athletics School were training with the goal of being the shining stars of the nation and getting gold medals.[[2669]](#footnote-2669)

On 4 October 2015, basketball was played by the female Pyongyang Youth Passenger Train Conductors. They used portable hoops. Initially, the organization thought that basketball might not be the sport for them. They also doubted whether they had time. However, they needed to become the revolutionary vanguard. Volleyball did not fulfil their personality, but basketball had them laughing. As such, they became engrossed in basketball training. All of them eagerly ran. Eventually, jumping and long shots became possible. They showed indomitable spirit and gave off a bright image of the motherland.[[2670]](#footnote-2670)

Two days later, on 6 October, Pyongchon District Park Recreation Ground Management Office Future Athletics Ground hosted 20 somethings who were engrossed in athletics. They were often playing after work, on their lunch hour, during holidays, and on Sundays. One organ had two to three games a week. Participants were emphasizing an increased lung capacity, a higher jump, better flexibility, and agility. They found a united rhythm, doubling their efficiency at work.[[2671]](#footnote-2671)

A year later, on 3 October, employees at the Yonggwang Utility Pole Factory often played games on movable basketball goals. This was despite not having interest in athletics before a few years ago.[[2672]](#footnote-2672) The next year, on 21 August, Technology Complex workers made a basketball court and used it during athletic activity time. There was mention of the use of skill divisions in order to allow those of various skill levels and ages to play.[[2673]](#footnote-2673)

Over a year later on 2 December, Toksong County Uphyopdong Farm had each working unit making basketball courts. Women’s vegetable workteams, when entering the basketball courts, controlled the ball, passed it well, and displayed a good shooting percentage. This workteam was mostly women, and half of the members of other workteams were women as well. The vegetable workteams always won the competitions. They want to win volleyball games as well next year.[[2674]](#footnote-2674)

The next year, on 14 January, the Pyongyang Thermal Power United Business added basketball to their activities played on the year’s first Athletics Day. It was an exciting game with splendid cheering between the Operations Sector and Maintenance Sector. It was a great display of tactful skill and stubborn spirit.[[2675]](#footnote-2675)

On 1 September, the Onsong County Ryangjong Business had athletics games on a Sunday. After the end of the volleyball games, they made preparations for a basketball game. It was a game of middle-aged versus the youth. The middle-aged used strategy, while the youth used strong attack and active defence.[[2676]](#footnote-2676)

The reports of basketball enthusiast teams during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era were similar to those of past era. Emphasis was given to basketball’s accessibility, regardless of skill level, age, or gender. Concrete examples were also given of appropriate times to play basketball and places at which basketball could be played.

## 14.11 Individuals

In stark contrast to previous eras, there was very little emphasis on individual basketball organizers or achievers. The aforementioned Yun Sol Hwa, who had become a famous coach during the previous era, was an exception. There was also one other exception, as seen in the following paragraph.

On 14 June 2013, there was an article about an athletics couple. The husband, Kim Kwang Ho, played basketball on the Taeryong River team in his youth, and now is the head coach for his factory’s women’s team. Said team achieved first place seven times at the Songun Beacon Prize Athletics Tournament. Amongst Kim Kwang Ho’s offspring, there were basketball athletes.[[2677]](#footnote-2677)

## 14.12 Lifestyle

### 14.12.1 Holidays

Although the Stagnation Era made a great deal of emphasis on basketball being played during various holidays, the Hot Blast of Athletics Era began to put emphasis on basketball as being played on Athletics Day only.

On the first Athletics Day of 2013, basketball was played in Pyongyang City and North Phyongan Province.[[2678]](#footnote-2678) In 2014, there were basketball games at factories, businesses, and cooperative farms every athletics day in Jonchon County.[[2679]](#footnote-2679) The same year, there were substantive basketball games on every month’s athletics day in Pungso County.[[2680]](#footnote-2680) In 2015, basketball was part of the year’s first athletics day nationwide. Basketball games showed healthy physical strength, stubborn will, and consistently trained high athletic skill.[[2681]](#footnote-2681) Also in 2015, basketball games were occurring on athletics day at Tokchon District Coal Mine United Business.[[2682]](#footnote-2682) That same year, substantial basketball games were organized during athletics day and Songun Holiday at all units within Songkan County.[[2683]](#footnote-2683) The next year, on 27 January, basketball games were played on the year’s first Athletics Day. There was also mention of Kim Jong Il’s strong emphasis on basketball.[[2684]](#footnote-2684) The year after that, on 26 November, there was mention of basketball organized by department as part of the South Hwanghae Province Industrial University November Athletics Day.[[2685]](#footnote-2685) The next year, on 31 January, basketball was mentioned as part of the year’s first Athletics Day among farmers in Yonan County.[[2686]](#footnote-2686) Lastly, on 13 January 2020, basketball was part of the first athletics day of the year festivities at parks in Pyongyang and factories and businesses in Haeju.[[2687]](#footnote-2687)

Aside from the mentions of basketball as part of the year’s first Athletics Day or subsequent Athletic Days, there are three other mentions of basketball being played on holidays during this era. The first two are on the Athletics Holiday. [[2688]](#footnote-2688) In 2014, basketball was part of the Athletics Holiday festivities in Pyongyang.[[2689]](#footnote-2689) On 15 October 2018, basketball was part of the Athletics Season festivities nationwide.[[2690]](#footnote-2690) The second mention is from the same year, with basketball games at provincial wide tournaments during The Day of the Shining Star.[[2691]](#footnote-2691)

The decreased importance of basketball during holidays during this era can be considered part of a decrease in basketball’s overall status and prestige. However, it can also be considered as a part of a decrease in overall athletic emphasis as well.

### 14.12.2 Match Descriptions

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era saw some general match descriptions, but not as many as the previous two eras. The match descriptions are as follows. On 25 May 2014, a “challenge” game between the women’s Locomotive team and Pyongyang City was played at the Locomotive Team’s court.[[2692]](#footnote-2692) Later that year, on 6 October 2014, there was an article describing a women’s basketball game between North Hamgyong Province and Kangwon province at Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium. The athletes were described as workers, farmers, office workers, normal female innovators, and housewives.[[2693]](#footnote-2693)

The next year, on 30 October 2015, there was an article about a men’s game between North Hamgyong Province and Nampho City in Pyongyang Gymnasium. There was a very short description of the scene followed by a matter-of-fact description of the game. There was no description of what the stakes were, but it was inferred that said game was a part of the Inter-Provincial Tournament.[[2694]](#footnote-2694) Three years later, on 15 April 2018, the 25 April Athletics Club defeated Amrok River at the Pyongyang Gymnasium as part of Kim Il Sung’s birthday anniversary.[[2695]](#footnote-2695)

The above match descriptions differ somewhat from match descriptions in previous eras in that there is not an overwhelming focus on the relatability of players. Nevertheless, there is not enough data to imply that there could be a movement towards matter of fact match descriptions, or that major matches between elite teams may begin to receive coverage.

### 14.12.3 General Nation

In accordance with the emphasis on domestic athletics during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, there were a number of reports focusing on the development of basketball across the nation in general. What follows is a chronological list of said reports.

In 2013, there was mention of basketball games organized at organs, businesses on rest days, and holidays according to plan.[[2696]](#footnote-2696) On 31 December 2013, there was an article rounding up the year which claimed that basketball courts were always crowded with people.[[2697]](#footnote-2697) On 10 January 2016, there was an article describing a rise in family and sub-workteam basketball teams, along with a general increase in athletic interest nationwide.[[2698]](#footnote-2698) On 3 September 2017, there was mention of basketball as a popular discipline with games organized often nationwide.[[2699]](#footnote-2699) On 14 January 2018, basketball was part of lively athletic activities to occur that year.[[2700]](#footnote-2700) On 18 April, an article mentioned increasing interest in basketball games and others between city level organs.[[2701]](#footnote-2701) On 22 November, family basketball teams were often seen, part of the party’s policy of athletics popularization.[[2702]](#footnote-2702) On 22 December, a in summary of yearly athletic accomplishments, there was mention of basketball enthusiasm increasing throughout 2018.[[2703]](#footnote-2703) Early in 2019, basketball was mentioned as being played across the nation.[[2704]](#footnote-2704) That 13 October, basketball was mentioned as a current trend in athletics.[[2705]](#footnote-2705) Lastly, on 24 January 2020, there was a report on DPRK students no longer required to work on homework during break, giving them more time for basketball and other pursuits.[[2706]](#footnote-2706)

Given the lack of data outside of state media reports, it is hard to determine exactly when, how, or why basketball gained popularity. But one can guess that basketball saw a surge in popularity in 2018 following the strong performance of the United Korean Women’s Team at the Asian Games and the visitation of the Chinese National Team.

## 14.13 Physical Conditions

In comparison to previous eras, the procurement of basketball equipment was not necessarily as emphasized during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era. On 28 May 2014, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the Basketball Association with equipment.[[2707]](#footnote-2707) On 3 November 2016, there was a report from the Pyongyang Athletics Equipment Factory about improved production of basketballs. They had also made hundreds of basketball rims despite no prior experience. It was for areas in the north that were damaged from massive flooding.[[2708]](#footnote-2708) On 2 November 2019, the Athletics Research Office created new basketball shoes via a three-dimensional design. Said shoes were getting the attention of athletes and enthusiasts.[[2709]](#footnote-2709) Unlike the Basketball Intensification Era, reports on manufacturing of basketball equipment tended to focus on higher end equipment or equipment given to those in a specific time of need. This is reflective of the relatively higher living standards of the Hot Blast of Athletics Era.

## 14.14 As a Concept

### 14.14.1 Rules

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era saw an incredible burst of activity in terms of articles describing basketball rules. What follows is a list of said articles.

On 18 March 2012, there was a short *Rodong Sinmun* article about the dimensions of basketball courts and hoops.[[2710]](#footnote-2710) That September, there was an article about why amateur basketball only had numbers four through fifteen. The article also discussed free throws and three second violations.[[2711]](#footnote-2711) In 2015, there were two articles in *Minju Joson* describing the dimensions of basketball backboards, stanchions, hoops, nets, balls, and scoreboards. Backboards were said to be made out of wood. It was information for practical use, indicating that many had to make basketball equipment on their own.[[2712]](#footnote-2712) There was also an article describing how to watch sporting events. This included understanding important points, like shots and passes in basketball.[[2713]](#footnote-2713) On 25 October 2015, *Rodong Sinmun* ran an article about the size of a basketball court and hoop.[[2714]](#footnote-2714) 20 December 2015 *Rodong Sinmun* ran an article about time violations in basketball.[[2715]](#footnote-2715)

In January 2016, *Chollima* published an article about court dimensions. It was said to require fourteen chairs for waiting players, the coach, and related people.[[2716]](#footnote-2716) The next month, *Chollima* ran an article about basketball clothes. Said clothes included shorts, pants, dresses, gym shoes, and basketball shoes. The clothes had very specific dimensions, and only included numbers four to fifteen. Referee clothes were described to be the same as athletes.[[2717]](#footnote-2717) A February 2016 article in *Korean Woman* included basic instructions on how to conduct a basketball game. This involved bowing to one’s opponent while standing in a line before the game.[[2718]](#footnote-2718) That March, *Korean Woman* ran an article describing basics on ways to score and how points are counted.[[2719]](#footnote-2719) In October, *Korean Woman* published an article on extremely basic basketball terms of skill, attack, and defence.[[2720]](#footnote-2720) In November, Korean Literature published an article on why amateur basketball only has player numbers four to fifteen.[[2721]](#footnote-2721) In March of 2017, an article in Artistic Education published an article describing why amateur basketball only has player numbers four to fifteen.[[2722]](#footnote-2722)

On 9 December 2018, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article about the dimensions of a basketball court.[[2723]](#footnote-2723) On 18 December, there was an article in *Rodong Sinmun* explaining three types of violations in basketball; out-of-bounds, walking, and double-dribble.[[2724]](#footnote-2724) On 23 December, 30 December, and 6 January there were basketball rules published vis the online outlet *Uriminzokkiri*.[[2725]](#footnote-2725) This was followed up on articles from 19, 20, and 23 October in the same outlet explaining updated rules from FIBA including video review.[[2726]](#footnote-2726) Lastly, some time before January of 2021, there a six-part video series describing basketball rules published online via the Korean World YouTube channel. Said video was likely originally meant for domestic broadcast as well.[[2727]](#footnote-2727)

Overall, the increase in published basketball rules during this era throughout newspapers, journals, and online media services can be attributed to a general increase in basketball interest domestically. Additionally, the articles published concerning court dimensions and equipment manufacturing imply that many local organizations had to create such amenities without help from the central government. Lastly, the increased media presence and availability of DPRK media during the past decade also likely accounts for some of this increase in materials.

### 14.14.2 Tactics

Perhaps the single most relevant indicator of basketball’s development during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era is the vast amount of tactical information published about basketball. Up until the Basketball Intensification Era, very little information was published outside of descriptions of rules. Furthermore, the Stagnation Era only saw one article describing basketball tactics in a concrete and understandable way. On the other hand, the Hot Blast of Athletics Era saw a great deal of articles published that contained useful information for players wishing to increase their basketball development. What follows is a chronological list of those articles, along with related articles describing tactical development.

In December 2011, there was article in *Chollima* about improving one’s rebounding rate. The article claimed that more rebounds would increase points obtained. The article emphasized the following points. Firstly, the ball goes farther if the shot is farther. Secondly, a one-handed tap to the backboard can help one grab the ball better. Thirdly, boxing out was important, particularly if the opposing player is taller. The article also described rules for the shooter during free throws and emphasizing boxing out the shooter after the free throw was taken. Lastly, the article emphasized holding the ball high after a rebound to avoid steals.[[2728]](#footnote-2728)

The May 2013 edition of *Chollima* emphasized attacking skill in basketball matches. Some athletes were selfish and wanted to score more than pass. This maximized the role of the defender. But one must pass to break away from the defender’s stance. The defender will try to block the pass, but one must have a wide stance and block the defender with their back or their hand. The decision to pass must be made quickly.[[2729]](#footnote-2729)

On 30 April, *Minju Joson* reported that students at the Mangyongdae District Youth Athletics School were studying basketball and other disciplines via recorded games, multimedia programs, watching live games, and analysing their training.[[2730]](#footnote-2730) In June, there was a *Chollima* article about developing basketball skill. Kim Jong Il defined basketball as a symbolic discipline and taught solidly how to get it to a high level in an extremely short time. Young athletes should be prioritized and used as a foundation. Skills such as the mid-range shot, free throws, long-range shot, and left and right-hand dribbling should be learned. This way, taller teams can be defeated.[[2731]](#footnote-2731)

A 2014 *Minju Joson* article described Match Analysis Computer Programs introduced at the Athletic Science Research Office that could scientifically analyse basketball players’ quantity of motion, position measurement, and skill.[[2732]](#footnote-2732) A 2015 *Minju Joson* article was published about profound laws of basketball games. It explained general basic strategy tips for intermediate players.[[2733]](#footnote-2733) In March 2016, *Chollima* ran an article about maintaining basketball athletes physical capability. It claimed that carbohydrates were best, and that water, vitamins, and minerals should be consumed for invigoration.[[2734]](#footnote-2734)

An April 2016 *Chollima*, article was published about principles of basketball games. The principles were as follows.

* One must make a flawless first pass in order to trigger the fast break.
* One must have a 80% or higher free throw percentage.
* Rebounding is about advantageous positioning.
* One must constantly move and harass the opponent.
* One must talk with teammates.
* One must stop all attacks, regardless if it is their assignment or not.
* One must have two hands high on defence.
* One must look at the centre of the opponents’ body to know where to move on defence.
* One must coolly defend and observe their opponent. Don’t use tricks too often, or the opponent will know your strengths and weaknesses.
* One must quickly and exactly pass a ball rebounded or received under one’s own basket.
* One must not randomly dribble. This can lead to missing fast break opportunity or give the opponent time to get set on defence.[[2735]](#footnote-2735)

On 25 May, there was mention in *Chollima* of the Athletics Ministry. Through unit competition, they had finished basketball training and game support computer programs and introduced them to athletic clubs.[[2736]](#footnote-2736)

On 15 January 2017, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article about “Our Style” of Basketball Rhythmic Gymnastics. This was released after the development of Rhythmic Gymnastics for football and in conjunction with rhythmic gymnastics designed for wrestling. It involved listening to light music and having mental security. It was meant to help flexibility, agility, and quickness. As such, the team’s inherent rhythm could be found. This included lots of movements, directional changes, and attack and defence movements. The developers of Basketball Rhythmic Gymnastics studied many athletes and found what types of movements to include. Those who have done ball handling gymnastics in particular had improved their shooting rate significantly. Additionally, even if they close their eyes, they feel that the ball is with them.[[2737]](#footnote-2737) Six months later, on 23 July, there was mention of basketball rhythmic gymnastics as being already created in a report of new athletic discipline rhythmic gymnastics being created.[[2738]](#footnote-2738)

A February 2017 *Chollima* article explained some general tactics. According to the article, one could say the best moment of basketball is during a made three point shot or dunk. The best possible angle for a long shot is 45 degrees. If one is to shoot good threes, one must be able to control the speed with which one shoots. If one pushes the ground firmly, they can make a turning point in strength. This is why players slow down before they jump.[[2739]](#footnote-2739)

That March, there was an article in the Teachers Propaganda Notebook about basketball teachers teaching dodging awareness. Basketball was said to be good for height development and intellectual ability. Teaching skill helped to make a strong basketball nation. Generally, the article involved describing a method of demonstrating and organizing drills and things to watch out for in students moves.[[2740]](#footnote-2740)

That June, *Chollima* published an article about improving fast breaks and improving defensive skill. It emphasized things such as passing while still in the air from a rebound, preparing to get out and run, pressure defence, blocking all paths to the rim, and stopping the person who gets the first pass.[[2741]](#footnote-2741)

In September, there was a Teachers Propaganda Notebook article about basketball teachers running matches in order to heighten practical skill. The article explained that one could reach a competitive mindset and responsibility by staged exercises in order to give players more experience. It also suggested teaching methods such as taking points away from players for mistakes and simulating certain game situations. This would give players more awareness of proper motions and team spirit. In conclusion, the article stressed the need to find more reasonable methods in order to make a strong athletics nation. [[2742]](#footnote-2742)

A March 2018 *Chollima* article claimed that one must learn the basic fundamentals to do well. This included the basics of dribbling and shooting.[[2743]](#footnote-2743) That June’s *Chollima* described the turning around skill in basketball. Said skill was combined with scoring, dribbling, passing, dodging, and defence. The article also claimed that a big part of rebounding was obstructing one’s opponent.[[2744]](#footnote-2744)

The October, *Chollima* was about how to become an expert at dribbling the ball. Beginners should use a small ball. The size of the ball scaled up according to age. From the ages of nine to ten, it was handball sized. From the ages of eleven to thirteen, it was football sized. From the ages of fourteen to sixteen, it was the size of an international basketball. Basketball dribbling exercises included rotating fingers, wrists, and shoulders. Finesse training was accomplished by throwing up and down a small ball.[[2745]](#footnote-2745)

On 31 October, the Athletics Scientific Research Office finished a scientific training method based upon the physical characteristics of women’s basketball players.[[2746]](#footnote-2746) The next year, on 8 November, the Korean University of Physical Education invented a basketball training instrument in order to develop high offensive skills.[[2747]](#footnote-2747)

Overall, the descriptions of basketball tactics during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era paint a picture of a nation much more aware of the subtleties of basketball strategy. Furthermore, the creative application of the use of gymnastics, unique training methods, and a specific style of basketball intended to help short players indicates that government organs had a firm grasp on what it took to win in basketball. Lastly, the fact that this information was made public indicated a greater level of openness regarding the dissemination of basketball strategy and a demand for such information among the general populous.

### 14.14.3 Health Benefits

Although somewhat less in number compared to the previous two eras, there were some articles about the health benefits of basketball during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era. The first article was published in 2013 by *Minju Joson*. It concerned basketball and its’ relation to health. Basketball was said to increase quickness and nimbleness, have a good effect on the digestive system and metabolism, improve the height of the youth, and give nutrients to bones and muscles.[[2748]](#footnote-2748)

Another article in *Minju Joson* that same year was about basketball increasing intellectual capability. This included improving a sense of heating, touch, balance, and exercise. It also improved one’s sense of one team against the other, comprehension of the playing space, a sense of where one is moving, ability to imagine strategy, judgement, reasoning, guessing, deciding, setting an imagined movement plan, psychological function, intellectual capability, nervous system’s resistance, intensity, balance, and variableness. Exercise in general was said to increase the speed of one’s cerebral cortex’s nerve stimulation.[[2749]](#footnote-2749)

An article in August 2016’s *Chollima* espoused similar opinions. Basketball was said to improve calorie consumption, heart strength, concentration, self-control, bone structure strength, nervous system harmony, spatial awareness, training strength, thinking ability, psychological stress, and one’s feeling of confidence.[[2750]](#footnote-2750)

The next year, an article in May’s *Chollima* continued along the same lines. The ten reasons why basketball is good included improved digestion, circulation, height, ability to stay within rules, motor skills, body training, feeling of space, psychological development, stress relief, and confidence.[[2751]](#footnote-2751) The next year, an August *Chollima* published ten reasons why basketball is good which were essentially the same as the previous article.[[2752]](#footnote-2752)

In November 2018, there was an article published online via *Uriminzokkiri* about reasons why basketball is good. Basketball was claimed to be good for physical training. There is more running in basketball with your team on the same side, so basketball players have better physical traits than volleyball players. Basketball also increases agility. This is because of running while throwing the ball, grabbing it, fast starts and stops, and changes of direction. Basketball also leads to increased height. This happened through jumping and throwing, grabbing rebounds, and slapping the ball. The more one does it, one’s height quickly increases. Basketball also leads to increased intellectual ability via movements and movement perception in a small space. Lastly, basketball also improves judgement, reasoning, perception, prediction, time perception, determination, and stubbornness.[[2753]](#footnote-2753)

The most glaring example of the promotion of basketball’s benefits is the television program *Basketball, a Good Extracurricular Sport*, released in December of 2021. This ten-minute-long program carries the explicit purpose of encouraging children to play more basketball. The program even goes so far as to claim that playing basketball can make one up to 9.5 centimetres taller if it is done regularly throughout the course of 4 to 5 years.[[2754]](#footnote-2754)

Taken on the whole, the articles about basketball’s tangible benefits during this era tend to follow the pattern established in previous eras. Along with promoting the falsehood that basketball makes one taller, said articles promoted basketball’s general health benefits. This sometimes even went to the extent of promoting basketball over volleyball. However, the sheer volume of mentioned benefits of basketball with little tangible evidence to back them up somewhat decrease the convincingness of said articles.

### 14.14.4 History

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era also saw a slight increase in articles about basketball’s history. The articles are as followes. Firstly, on 27 February 2012 and again in 2021, the ancient Korean athletic game Phogu (포구) was claimed to be similar to basketball.[[2755]](#footnote-2755) In December 2013, there was an article in *Chollima* about family basketball games gaining popularity. Said games first started in 1976 in Lithuania. There were no limitations on age, gender or working position. The only stipulation was that team members should all be from the same family. The article went on to explain how women could have a great effect on the game. In 1988, the Lithuanian tournament had 26 teams. The tournament, the Buturis Cup (브트리스컵쟁탈경기), was named after the first family to participate.[[2756]](#footnote-2756)

In 2015, *Minju Joson* published an article about the historic development of basketball. There was mention of basketball’s origins as a game for nine people per team, played with a football and a net. Basketball was then said to be decreased to seven people, and then five people. Specifically, the article mentioned the founding of FIBA in 1932, basketball becoming an Olympic sport in 1935, the first women’s Olympic debut in 1976, the world championship every four years, and DPR Korea joining FIBA in 1956.[[2757]](#footnote-2757) The same year, *Minju Joson* mention how a DPRK basketball team played at the third festival of world and students despite the outbreak of the Korean war.[[2758]](#footnote-2758)

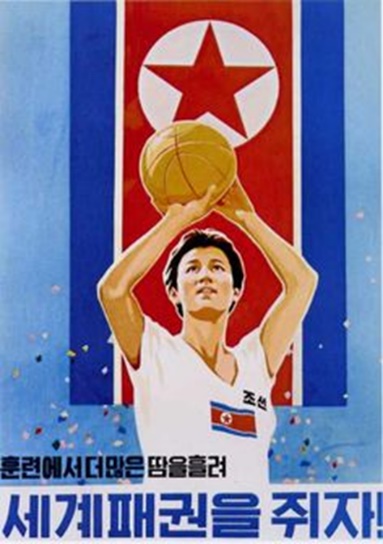
On 13 January 2019, an online Uriminjokkiri article mentioning that Kim Jong Il, due to basketball’s increasing height and intellectual ability, actively encouraged it throughout the society. This led to schools creating basketball facilities and active basketball teams within the schools. Basketball was particularly popular amongst women in textile factories, railway workers, and cooperative farmers. Specific tournaments were created for the students as well as the farmers. Accordingly, sub-workteam basketball teams, basketball teams of wives, and family basketball teams were created. A new confidence and paradise erupted, and Socialism was protected while making a strong nation.[[2759]](#footnote-2759)

The state media retroactive view of basketball was, like previous eras, very narrow. Focus was given to international development of basketball, domestic development of basketball, or family basketball teams that mirrored the image of basketball accessibility that the government wished to portray. No individual stars were mentioned, and everything was viewed in the broadest possible scale.

## 14.15 Art and Culture

There was some very limited inclusion of basketball in larger art and culture during this era, but it does not compare in terms of volume to the two previous eras. Firstly, in November 2012, there was a poem published in Children’s Literature about the basketball goal getting shorter due to the child getting taller because they played basketball.[[2760]](#footnote-2760)

Figure 4: “Sweat more in training and capture world supremacy!”, April 2014

[[2761]](#footnote-2761)

This propaganda poster cannot be dated with absolute certainty, but likely was published in Korean Art in April of 2014. Somewhat surprisingly, said poster emphasizes basketball as a method through which the DPRK could dominate international athletics. This is in direct contrast to Kim Jong Un’s March 2015 speech to the National Athletes Conference in which he did not include basketball in the list of disciplines in which world supremacy must be secured and maintained.[[2762]](#footnote-2762) In any case, the poster’s text implores the reader to sweat more during training and grab world domination. The poster centres on a male in the middle of a basketball shooting motion, with the words “Korea” and the Korean flag printed on a white tee shirt. In the background, confetti is in the air and the DPRK flag is on the wall. All in all, this poster rather directly superimposes nationalism onto athletic effort and achievement.

## 14.16 Propaganda

Basketball-related propaganda was not as frequent as previous eras, but it did exist. During 2014, there was a *Minju Joson* report of SBS and other ROK Media outlets reporting on encouraging basketball for physical training and giving high praise to the “hot blast” of athletics.[[2763]](#footnote-2763)

There also was an August 2016 *Chollima* article about clever tactics used by the Soviet Union against the USA in the 7th FIBA World Championship. In the last game, the Soviets left their two best players on the bench and let the USA think they had the upper hand. Then, the USSR inserted their two best players and caused chaos within the USA team. The USSR won the game, got first, and shoved the USA into third. This article then emphasised the importance of the team’s commander and the correct strategy.[[2764]](#footnote-2764)

Given the lack of overall basketball-related general propaganda in this era, one can infer that it began to be viewed in more of a purely athletic light. One can also infer that the negative anti-ROK propaganda had decreased to some extent.

## 14.17 International Connections

### 14.17.1 International Friendship

Throughout the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, there were some occasional mentions of basketball in state media directly related to international friendship. The first came on 11 August when visiting Italian Senator Antonio Lazi claimed that Kim Jong Un loved basketball and other athletic disciplines.[[2765]](#footnote-2765) In an April 2014 published English textbook for Athletics Universities, Lesson Nine focuses entirely on a conversation about basketball. The lesson’s conversation is extremely matter-of-fact, with a focus on court dimensions and basic rules.[[2766]](#footnote-2766) Basketball was also mentioned twice in other lessons.[[2767]](#footnote-2767)

On 2 August 2018, there were friendship basketball games between the Foreign Culture Liaison Committee and PRC Embassy at the Changdok School Gymnasium.[[2768]](#footnote-2768) On 16 March 2019, there was mention of how China is developing basketball teams of players of male and female under 15, under 17, and under 19.[[2769]](#footnote-2769) On 23 June 2019, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* report on the effort to disseminate basketball among youth in China.[[2770]](#footnote-2770) On 29 October there was a basketball game held at a DPRK-China friendship meeting at East Pyongyang Secondary School Number One.[[2771]](#footnote-2771) Lastly, that 20 December, a DPRK-PRC Athletics Exchange Protocol was signed.[[2772]](#footnote-2772)

Overall, the overwhelming influence of exchange with China at the time is reflective of the increased influence of China economically and politically at the time. It was also reflective of the Chinese public’s taste for basketball in general.

### 14.17.2 Chongryon

The Hot Blast of Athletics Era also saw some continued mention of the DPRK-backed Chongryon organization of Koreans in Japan. In 2015, there was a report on basketball games at a student athletics tournament amongst Chongryon in Japan.[[2773]](#footnote-2773) From 26 September to 7 October 2018, a Zainichi Korean Student basketball team visited Pyongyang and showed their admiration to statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.[[2774]](#footnote-2774)

### 14.17.3 International Clinic

On 19 and 20 May 2012, a basketball referee clinic was held at the Sports Science Library and the Chongchun Street Basketball Gymnasium. It involved referees, coaches, and teachers at sports schools. Said clinic dealt with revised regulations and referee signalling. The clinic was sponsored by FIBA and officiated by FIBA Sports Director Lubomir Kotleba.[[2775]](#footnote-2775) This is the first and only known internationally supported referee clinic of its time.

## 14.18 New Variants

### 14.18.1 3 on 3 Basketball

One of the most fundamentally new basketball developments of the Hot Blast of Athletics Era was the introduction of the 3 on 3 variant. 3 on 3 Basketball is essentially a form of basketball that uses only half the amount of court space and reduced the amount of each team’s members by two. This allowed basketball to be played in a smaller space and with less people.

The DPRK’s first mention of the rules of 3 on 3 basketball was in a 2013 issue of *Minju Joson*. It was branded as street basketball and mentioned as being played in cities around the world.[[2776]](#footnote-2776) That August, there was a *Chollima* article about street basketball increasing in popularity. It included game rules including three person teams, 25-to-30-minute games, one- and two-point margins for scored baskets, the fact that the defensive team has to take the ball outside of the three point line in order to go on offense, and the fact that after seven team fouls all fouls turn into free throws.[[2777]](#footnote-2777) In 2014, *Minju Joson* ran an article about “Small” Basketball games. Said games occurred using only half of the court with three to four players and involved the defence needing to take the ball out at the three point line.[[2778]](#footnote-2778)

On 18 December 2018, *Rodong Sinmun* published an explanation of 3 on 3 basketball. Said variation uses just half of the court and was developed in the 1960s in some country. The variation could be played in a small area, trains the body, and improve health. Additionally, said variation could relieve fatigue accumulated during the workday, exhibit people’s personality, and exhibit people’s potential. In a small area, skill and the body, will and wisdom, psychological confrontation, quicker reactions, more exact judgement ability, and a more flexible body can be developed. Overall, 3 on 3 basketball was said to be a very significant development.[[2779]](#footnote-2779)

On 13, 20, and 27 January and 3 February a four-part series on the rules of 3 on 3 basketball was published in *Uriminzokkiri*.[[2780]](#footnote-2780) On 24 April 2019, Onchon Korean Medicine Factory workers playing 3 on 3 basketball was reported on in *Rodong Sinmun*. Tall and short athletes were succeeding, and one could do it with few people and one hoop. The discipline was carried out by the raw material and manufacturing work teams.[[2781]](#footnote-2781)

On 31 May 2019, there was a *Rodong Sinmun* article about how the Athletics Graduate School published a reference book about 3 on 3 basketball according to the party’s meaning.[[2782]](#footnote-2782) That 12 July, the National Academy of Sports Science also published a reference book on 3 on 3 basketball.[[2783]](#footnote-2783)

All in all, the rapid spread of 3 on 3 basketball during this era indicated the greater ease with which said game could be carried out.

### 14.18.2 Water Basketball and Disabled Basketball

Two other variants of basketball saw media coverage during this era; water basketball and disabled basketball. Firstly, a 2 May 2012 KCNA article mentioned a basketball match between trainees after the opening of a Vocational Center for the Disabled in Pyongyang.[[2784]](#footnote-2784) Secondly, a September 2016 *Chollima* article about water basketball mentioned it as including six people per team, consisting of men and women. Teams were distinguished by different coloured swimming caps, and hoops were two metres above the water. Men’s goals were worth one, while women’s goals were worth two.[[2785]](#footnote-2785)

## 14.19 Local Reports

In total, the number of undetailed local basketball reports during the Hot Blast of athletics era pales in comparison to that of the previous two eras.

Table 95: Local Basketball Reports, Hot Blast of Athletics Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game Played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 2014.4.16 | Training hall with basketball capabilities at Yanggakdo Sports Village[[2786]](#footnote-2786) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2012.12.25 | Yanggakdo Athletics Village Overall Gymnasium[[2787]](#footnote-2787) | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Miscellaneous |
| 2013 | Central District Youth Athletics School[[2788]](#footnote-2788) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 2013 | Ryongdae Coal Mine[[2789]](#footnote-2789) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 2013 | Tosan County Collective Farm[[2790]](#footnote-2790) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2013 | Kangkye Grape Factory[[2791]](#footnote-2791) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2013 | Diplomatic Corps Business Overall Bureau[[2792]](#footnote-2792) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2013 | New parks constructed in at least five different districts of Pyongyang[[2793]](#footnote-2793) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2014 | Haeju city level guidance organs, city business management offices, and the city Ryangjang Business[[2794]](#footnote-2794) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | City/County |
| 2014 | Ryanggang Province[[2795]](#footnote-2795) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2014 | Jungsan Raw Material Mobilization business[[2796]](#footnote-2796) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2014 | Doksong Mine[[2797]](#footnote-2797) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Mine |
| 2014 | Rinsan County Automobile Company[[2798]](#footnote-2798) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Company |
| 2014 | Kim Jong Tae Electric Automotive Enterprise[[2799]](#footnote-2799) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2014 | Ryuwon Shoe Factory[[2800]](#footnote-2800) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2014 | Kangkye City Ryangjong Business[[2801]](#footnote-2801) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2014 | Maengsan County[[2802]](#footnote-2802)[[2803]](#footnote-2803) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | City/County |
| 2014 | Kangkye Wine Factory[[2804]](#footnote-2804) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Factory |
| 2014 | on the side of Jangja River in Jagang Province[[2805]](#footnote-2805) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2014 | Chongam Paper Factory in Chongam District of Chongjin City[[2806]](#footnote-2806) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2014 | Anju Unha Clothes Factory[[2807]](#footnote-2807) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory |
| 2014 | Kang Pan Sok High School[[2808]](#footnote-2808) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | School |
| 2014 | Kangkye City Ryangjong Business[[2809]](#footnote-2809) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2014 | Taeryong River Athletics Club[[2810]](#footnote-2810) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Miscellaneous |
| 2015.1.7 | Fitness centre in Thongil Street, Pyongyang[[2811]](#footnote-2811) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2016.9.5 | Mangyongdae Children’s Camp[[2812]](#footnote-2812) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Miscallaneous |
| 2016.9.20 | Hwangju County Jangchon Cooperative Farm[[2813]](#footnote-2813) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2017.7.9 | Jungsan County Paeksong Raw Material Utilization Business[[2814]](#footnote-2814) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Business |
| 2017.10.2 | Anak County Dokson Cooperative Farm[[2815]](#footnote-2815) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2018.11.12 | Rangrim Youth Mine[[2816]](#footnote-2816) | Yes | No | No | No | Mine |
| 2018.11.22 | Ryanggang Province People’s Hospital[[2817]](#footnote-2817) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Organ |
| 2018.12.4 | Science and Technology Hall[[2818]](#footnote-2818) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2018.12.18 | Amrok River[[2819]](#footnote-2819) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Miscellaneous |
| 2019.3.5 | Sunchon District Shoe Factory[[2820]](#footnote-2820) | Yes | No | No | No | Factory |
| 2019.3.10 | Jongju City Ilsin High School[[2821]](#footnote-2821) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2019.3.24 | Kaesong City Munhwa High School[[2822]](#footnote-2822) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2019.4.3 | Hamhung Power Distribution Station[[2823]](#footnote-2823) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2019.5.6~9 | Kangso District Athletic Grounds.[[2824]](#footnote-2824) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Factory  Business |
| 2019.5.24 | Jangsu Koryo Pharmaceutical Factory[[2825]](#footnote-2825) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2019.5.26 | farm workers in Ushi county[[2826]](#footnote-2826) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2019.6.2 | Jongju City Sema Cooperative Farm[[2827]](#footnote-2827) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Cooperative Farm |
| 2019.6.19 | Hyangsan High School[[2828]](#footnote-2828) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | School |
| 2019.8.12 | Onchon Koryo Medicine and Pharmaceutial Factory[[2829]](#footnote-2829) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |
| 2019.10.14 | Kim Jong Suk Pyongyang Textile factory[[2830]](#footnote-2830) | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Factory |

In terms of the local basketball reports during the Hot Blast of Athletics Era, the thing that sticks out the most is the greater variety in courts. The miscellaneous courts include a fitness centre, a children’s camp, and a technology hall. This indicates the broader diversification of the DPRK as a society. Additionally, there was a great diversity of courts on a broad scale. In terms of sheer numbers of court types, there were eleven factories, ten miscellaneous courts, six businesses, five schools, five cooperative farms, three mines, two counties or cities, and two organs.

The rest of the local basketball reports showed the following results. Out of 44 reports, only four of them indicated equipment only. Again, this indicated the relative prosperity of this era compared to previous eras. Additionally, only nine of the 44 reports reported no regular games. This indicates that most courts had games going on regularly. Lastly, only seven courts had teams formed, indicating that teams were generally indicated when articles were mentioning concepts of success or teambuilding instead of on-the-spot reporting.

## 14.20 Standout Basketball Stars

Ri Myong Hun, the DPRK’s best basketball player of the past, was seen during this era. On 7 January 2014, Dennis Rodman was seen meeting with Ri Myong Hun.[[2831]](#footnote-2831) However, in 2018, Hur Jae, coach of the ROK men’s team, expressed his regret at not being able to meet Ri Myong Hun. Hur speculated that Ri may have been unwell at the time.[[2832]](#footnote-2832) There are currently no available details of Ri’s whereabouts or condition.

In the women’s circuit, two players emerged as potential stars. Pak Jin A had grown to a height of 200 centimetres or 6 foot 7 by the age of 15, and there’s no telling where her skill may be at as she enters her twenties.[[2833]](#footnote-2833) Meanwhile, Ro Suk Yong, while over 30 years old, remains to have the potential to be one of the best players among those in the ROK. Ro was the top scorer in terms of points per game at the 2017 FIBA Asia Cup, and led the Silver Medal winning Unified Korea Team at the 2018 Asian Games in points per game as well. The current coach of the ROK women’s national team, Jong Sun-min, said that Ro possessed great offensive talent and could make a top tier player in the ROK domestic league. However, Jong mentions that Ro lacked a sense of teamwork and defence. Nevertheless, Jong assessed that a ROK team with Ro would be capable of defeating China and Japan.[[2834]](#footnote-2834)

Aside from the big stars, certain male players shined on the domestic level as well. Kang Un Hyok was noted for his high success rate of long-range shots in July 2015. Also, Baek Kwang Myong, O Sum Kong, and Kim Chol Jin showcased clever passing, long range shooting, and overall defensive skill enroute to winning the Mangyongdae Prize for Amrok River in April 2019. Speaking of Amrok River, captain Kim Yong Sik was said to be captain of the team, winning international and national games at an indeterminate date. Lastly, Kim Ji Hyon, a player for Mangyongdae Children’s Palace, was said to have refined skills for his age and was scouted by numerous athletics clubs as of April 2022.

# chapter 15. COVID Isolation Era (2020.1.25~Present)

## 15.1 General Athletics Overview

Overall, the period of isolation in the DPRK triggered by the novel coronavirus represented a new challenge for the regime as a whole. Despite the DPRK’s reputation as an isolated nation, the quarantine measure implemented by the government beginning in 2020 represented a level of isolation which the DPRK had never seen before. In terms of athletics, this meant a total halt of international matches. Specifically, this meant an inability to send and receive teams as a part of international exchange and an inability for the DPRK to take part in international competition. In other words, the ability of the regime to promote legitimacy through athletics was nixed, and athletic policy became entirely focused on the domestic level. Additionally, due to periodic lockdowns, domestic athletics became impossible as well.

Due to the lack of flow of people in and out of the DPRK during this time period, state media is one of the few sources through which one can grasp the athletic situation in the country. In any case, beginning in late January 2020, COVID-19 prevention measures began to be implemented in the DPRK. This included an initial 30-day quarantine period accompanied by a total border closure. [[2835]](#footnote-2835) The border closure for person-to-person movement has remained until early 2023. However, trade via train, ship, and aeroplane has occurred periodically.[[2836]](#footnote-2836) Initial quarantine measures included a total lockdown of school-age children for nearly a year in Pyongyang. Additionally, for more than eighteen months, gyms and other leisure activity centres were closed completely.[[2837]](#footnote-2837)

After the initial lockdown, which lasted roughly a year, other lockdowns followed. From 10 to 29 May 2022, Pyongyang was on lockdown due to a COVID-19 outbreak.[[2838]](#footnote-2838) Other lockdowns occurred to varying degrees throughout the country, at least into June.[[2839]](#footnote-2839) The next year, from 25 to 30 January, a lockdown was instituted in Pyongyang due to rising cases of a respiratory illness.[[2840]](#footnote-2840) Unfortunately, aside from lockdown information, not much is known about changes in DPRK athletic policy during this era in general.

## 15.2 Basketball’s Relationship with the Leaders’ Personal Interest

Somewhat surprisingly, there were a limited number of reports of Kim Jong Un expressing his basketball interest through state media during the COVID Isolation Era. However, all reports were about the past. Nevertheless, due to Kim Jong Un’s limited activities during this era, they are worth mentioning as broader indicators of Kim Jong Un’s continued general support of the discipline. On 6 January 2021, there was mention of Kim Jong Un going to Wisong Primary School Indoor Basketball Court and advising officials that backboards should be installed.[[2841]](#footnote-2841)

On 16 July 2021, there was an anecdote about Kim Jong Un visiting a basketball match. After the first half, Kim met with the players. He said that they did not play dynamically, needing to speed up because of worldwide trends and Koreans’ physical characteristics. The team, following Kim’s directive, improved their scoring rate, raised their playing speed, and employed tactics. This made Kim happy, and he wished them to achieve better results.[[2842]](#footnote-2842) This report is interesting in that Kim Jong Un emphasizes the same tactical strategy as his father did.

On 23 October, there was an article about Kim Jong Il visiting Songdowon Children’s Camp at an earlier date. He ensured that the basketball and volleyball courts were built splendidly.[[2843]](#footnote-2843) Lastly, on 16 November, there was a story of Kim Jong Un visiting Rungna People’s Pleasure Park and appreciating that basketball courts were part of a reasonable use of space.[[2844]](#footnote-2844)

## 15.3 Basketball as a Part of Domestic Athletics Policy

During the COVID isolation era, there was some limited construction of gymnasiums. On 19 April 2020, a new gymnasium in Sinpyong County with basketball capabilities was constructed.[[2845]](#footnote-2845) On 9 June, the basketball-capable Phyongsong Gymnasium was newly created in South Pyongyan Province.[[2846]](#footnote-2846) On 12 August, outdoor basketball courts built in Pyongyang, Huiryong, Haeju, Taedong District, Unsan County, Rangrim County, and et cetera in the past were mentioned.[[2847]](#footnote-2847) On 25 December, Phyongsong Gymnasium was constructed with basketball capabilities.[[2848]](#footnote-2848) On 23 December 2021, a gymnasium in Sariwon was built with 1000 seats, lounges, a physical training room, a sci-tech learning space, and basketball capabilities.[[2849]](#footnote-2849) All in all, despite reports of stadium construction in 2020, the extended isolation and economic difficulties brought on by the nation’s isolation likely ground basketball facility construction to a halt.

## 15.4 Domestic Basketball Tournaments

After the initial COVID lockdown, the first athletics tournament to occur was the Day of the Sun Celebratory National Inter-Provincial Athletics Tournament from 5 to 15 April, 2021.[[2850]](#footnote-2850) However, basketball was not a listed discipline. The first basketball tournament was from 25 January 2022, when the Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Tournament was held.[[2851]](#footnote-2851) As such, there was a full two-year period in the DPRK in which no basketball tournaments were held.

One basketball tournament of this era had some notable details. Until 2 September 2022, the National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games were held.[[2852]](#footnote-2852) There was an article about the men’s team from South Hamgyong Province that won the competition. One of the players had taken up basketball recently. A few years ago, a material supply agency built basketball courts and introduced the rules of basketball. They held matches on national holidays, anniversaries, and during breaks. Prizes were also awarded. The team improved their skills and were selected to be the provincial team. Also, a female worker from Kowon County was encouraged by an official of her farm and eventually made the provincial women’s team.[[2853]](#footnote-2853)

Table 96: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Details, COVID Isolation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Name (Original Korean)** | **Date** | **City** | **Court** |
| 48th Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제48차 소백수상 전국청소년학생체육경기대회 | 25-Jan-2022~Feb-2022 | Samjiyon | ? |
| 25th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제25차 백두산상 중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 3-Feb-2022~1-Mar-2022 | Pyongyang, Samjiyon, Phyongsong, Sariwon | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 광명성절경축 백두산상 체육경기대회 | 3-Feb-2022~1-Mar-2022 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 태양절경축 만경대상체육경기대회 | 1-Apr-2022~29-Apr-2022 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 9th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 제9차 보건부문 체육경기대회 | 3-May-2022~23-Sep-2022 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 9월5일상 전국대학생체육경기대회 | 16-Aug-2022~24-Aug-2022 | Hamhung | ? |
| 14th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | 제14차 전국농업근로자롱구경기 | Aug-2022~3-Sep-2022 | Hamhung | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 공화국선수권대회 | 12-Sep-2022~7-Oct-2022 | Pyongyang, Sariwon, Sohung County | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 2022 National Orphans Athletics Games | 전국 학원원아들의 체육경기-2022 | 28-Oct-2022~31-Oct-2022 | Phyongsong | ? |
| 52nd Artists Athletics Tournament | 제52차 예술인체육대회 | 29-Nov-22 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |
| 2023 Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 2023년 중앙기관일군체육경기대회 | 13-Mar-2023~30-Mar-2023 | Pyongyang | Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium |

From the Men’s Domestic Basketball Tournament Details during the COVID Isolation Era, the following conclusions can be determined. Firstly, basketball tournaments began to return in earnest beginning in 2022. Secondly, Chongchun Street Basketball Stadium continued to be the premier venue of the era. Thirdly, the 2023 Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletic Tournament removed the moniker of Paekdu Mountain Prize. [[2854]](#footnote-2854) This indicated a continued slight weakening of the leadership cult and increased practicality in tournament naming conventions.

Table 97: Men's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, COVID Isolation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| 48th Sobaeksu Prize National Youth and Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 25-Jan-2022~Feb-2022 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 25th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Feb-2022~1-Mar-2022 | ? | ? | ? | ? | 25 April Athletics Club (3x3) Amrok River (3x3) |
| Day of the Shining Star Celebratory Paekdu Mountain Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-Feb-2022~1-Mar-2022 | ? | ? | ? | ? | National Land Environmental Protection Ministry Ministry of Marine and Land Transport |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-2022~29-Apr-2022 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | Pyongyang City (3x3) Locomotive (3x3) |
| 9th Public Health Sector Competitive Athletics Tournament | 3-May-2022~23-Sep-2022 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Kim Man Yu Hospital Pyongyang Maternity Hospital |
| 5 September Prize National University Student Competitive Athletics Tournament | 16-Aug-2022~24-Aug-2022 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | Aug-2022~3-Sep-2022 | South Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 12-Sep-2022~7-Oct-2022 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | (3 on 3 Included) |
| 2022 National Orphans Athletics Games | 28-Oct-2022~31-Oct-2022 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 52nd Artists Athletics Tournament | 29-Nov-22 | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 2023 Central Organ Workers Competitive Athletics Tournament | 13-Mar-2023~30-Mar-2023 | ? | ? | ? | ? | Diplomatic Corps Business Overall Bureau Foreign Culture Liaison Committee |

Table 98: Women's Domestic Basketball Tournament Results, COVID Isolation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **League Winner** | **Winner's Record** | **2nd Place** | **3rd Place** | **Other Participants** |
| Day of the Sun Celebratory Mangyongdae Prize Competitive Athletics Tournament | 1-Apr-2022~29-Apr-2022 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| 14th National Agricultural Workers Basketball Games | Aug-2022~3-Sep-2022 | North Hamgyong Province | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Republic Championship Tournament | 12-Sep-2022~7-Oct-2022 | 25 April Athletics Club | ? | ? | ? | (3 on 3 Included) |

Table 99: Men's Domestic Basketball Match Results, COVID Isolation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 12-Sep-22 | 3 on 3 (Pro) | Pyongyang City | Sobaeksu | 19 | 14 | 22W 11L | 0W 2L |
| 13-Mar-23 | Bureau | Foreign Culture Liaison Committee | Diplomatic Corps Business Overall Bureau | 17 | 15 | 1W 0L | 0W 1L |

Table 100: Women's Domestic Basketball Match Results, COVID Isolation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Division** | **Winner** | **Loser** | **Winner Score** | **Loser Score** | **Winner Overall Domestic Record** | **Loser Overall Domestic Record** |
| 12-Sep-22 | 3 on 3 (Pro) | Pyongyang City | Locomotive | 22 | 16 | 13W 9L | 7W 6L |

From the men’s and women’s basketball tournament and match results, the following conclusions can be determined. Firstly, the 25 April Athletics Club, with two wins on the men’s and women’s sides, continued to be the premier squad. Secondly, the 25th Central Organ Workers Paekdu Mountain Prize Tournament was notable for being the first tournament to feature a 3 on 3 competition. The Republic Championship Tournament later that year would include a 3 on 3 section as well.

## 15.5 Teams

The COVID Isolation Era, despite a lack of matches compared to previous eras, continued the tradition of reporting on successful teams. On 11 July 2022, a report was published about Jonu Middle School in Moranbong District, Pyongyang. Said Middle School won the girls’ basketball event of Sobaeksu Prize eight times consecutively from the 39th to 47th event. According to the article, the 46th event did not take place. Jong Son Hwa was credited with the success by the school’s vice principal. She emphasized basic training, ball control, comparison, strength training, and flexibility training. She also showed them matches of other clubs so that Jonu Middle School could find out their own shortcomings. By using individual attention, she challenged students to view themselves critically. Jon also trains current students with former members.[[2855]](#footnote-2855)

## 15.6 Individuals

### 15.6.1 Individual Achiever/Organizer

A couple of articles during the COVID Isolation era focused on individuals. On 29 September 2022, a report from the Pyongyang Students and Children’s Palace mentioned a young talent named Kim Ji Hyon. He had refined skills for his age and was being scouted by numerous athletics clubs.[[2856]](#footnote-2856)

On 8 December 2022, there was an article about a family of basketball players. They lived in Mangyongdae District of Pyongyang. The father was a coach with Amrok River and used to win medals and cups at international and national games. The mother used to play for Amrok River and was a captain. Two sons played for Amrok River at that time and had medals. The mother treasured her husband’s awards as the family’s treasure. She taught her sons basketball techniques, including the way of holding a basketball, while her husband was always with the athletics team. She now supports the family as a wife and mother. The family resolved to always train harder.[[2857]](#footnote-2857)

All in all, the article about the individual young talent somewhat broke with the mould in that great basketball players, like Ri Myong Hun and Pak Chon Jong, had not been advertised by state media until they were well into their careers. On the other hand, the article about the family was very much in line with previous articles promoting the relatability of basketball players and accessibility of the game overall.

### 15.6.2 Other Players

A couple of people were described in passing as former basketball players in state media during this era. On 14 May 2020, horse rider Ri Song Ju had played basketball as a youth.[[2858]](#footnote-2858) On 23 September 2022, there was an article about a different young horse rider who played basketball in her youth in Chosan County.[[2859]](#footnote-2859) Although these examples are limited, they tend to indicate a continued trend of youth changing athletic disciplines according to their ability.

## 15.7 Holidays

As opposed to previous eras, there were not many mentions of basketball as a part of holiday festivities. However, on 10 January 2022, basketball games at various ministries were reported to be part of the year’s first Athletics Day.[[2860]](#footnote-2860)

## 15.8 Physical Conditions

There were some minor reports of basketball equipment development and manufacturing during the COVID Isolation Era. On 31 May 2020, Kanggye University of Education introduced training instruments for basketball.[[2861]](#footnote-2861) That 14 July, new padding was claimed to be invented for outdoor athletics grounds. This included basketball courts. Said padding was already used throughout the nation.[[2862]](#footnote-2862) On 31 January 2023, basketball goods were produced at the Pyongyang Sports Goods Factory.[[2863]](#footnote-2863)

## 15.9 As a Concept

### 15.9.1 Tactics

Although there was a lack of articles about basketball rules, there were some articles published about basketball tactics during the COVID Isolation Era. On 10 June 2020, there was report of underwater exercise which could relieve the back pain of basketball players.[[2864]](#footnote-2864) On 26 December 2020, basketball training guidelines were made for particular ages, mental qualities, and preparedness of middle school students in order to increase training effectiveness.[[2865]](#footnote-2865) On 29 July 2022, there was mention of how basketball athletes, in order to train speed strength, can jump high after jumping down from a certain height.[[2866]](#footnote-2866) On 2 September, the Korean University of Physical Education created new effective teaching methods via pedagogical principles in order to apply them in education.[[2867]](#footnote-2867) Overall, the above reports indicate a continued effort to develop basketball scientifically.

### 15.9.2 Benefits

Compared to previous eras, there was not much mention of basketball’s benefits. However, on 29 February 2020, basketball was mentioned as an athletic discipline which can help those who are not social to engage in collective activities.[[2868]](#footnote-2868)

## 15.10 New Forms

### 15.10.1 3 on 3

During the COVID Isolation Era, there was a continued effort to promote 3 on 3 basketball through state media outlets. Firstly, on 13 May and 25 September 2020, there was mention of the Pyongyang Sports Good Factory developing a basketball specifically for 3 on 3 competition.[[2869]](#footnote-2869) Secondly, on 23 October, there was a very basic article describing 3 on 3 basketball. The article claimed that it began from a street game from a certain country in the 1960s. It was said to be gaining in popularity because a small number of players can play in a small area with a hoop. This was said to help people experience a basketball game’s atmosphere while relieving work fatigue.[[2870]](#footnote-2870)

### 15.10.2 Water Basketball

Water Basketball did not see nearly the level of distribution that 3 on 3 basketball did, but it likely remained the second most popular variation of the sport. On 26 August 2022, there was mention of Kim Jong Un in 2012 stressing that a basketball court should be built in the wading pool of Rungna People’s Pleasure Park so that the pool was world-level one.[[2871]](#footnote-2871)

### 15.10.3 Deaf Basketball

Not much mention was given of deaf basketball in state media. However, on 15 June 2022, the DPRK Deaf Football team organized basketball games in order to enhance their cultural life.[[2872]](#footnote-2872)

## 15.11 Local Basketball Reports

Table 101: Local Basketball Reports, COVID Isolation Era

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Place** | **Equipment Present?** | **Game Played?** | **Game Played Regularly?** | **Team Formed?** | **Court Type** |
| 2020.4.11 | Moran Hill in Pyongyang[[2873]](#footnote-2873) | Yes | No | No | No | Miscellaneous |
| 2022.11.8 | Mangyongdae Children’s Camp at Mt. Ryongak[[2874]](#footnote-2874) | Yes | Yes | No | No | Miscellaneous |

There were not many reports of local basketball during the COVID Isolation era, likely mostly due to lockdown restrictions. However, it may also signal an end to the format of reporters going to local organizations and writing very basic descriptions of their leisure activities. Only time will tell if this is true.

# chapter 16. Statistical Analysis

## 16.1 Men’s and Women’s National Team

Figure 5: Men’s National Team Results by Opponent



When viewing the graph representing the men’s national team results by opponent, one can come to the following conclusions. Firstly, the DPRK men most often played against their Asian neighbours. Specifically, the only teams to face the DPRK four or more times were all Asian teams. However, among these teams, China, the ROK, Japan, and the Philippines were the only teams to play the DPRK men seven or more times. Of those four teams, the only team the DPRK beat more than they lost was Japan. As such, the second conclusion one can come to is that the DPRK men struggled to beat their rivals. In fact, the DPRK men only defeated the ROK once out of eight matches, and never managed to record a win against China in nine matches. However, this is not to say that the DPRK men were hapless. In fact, the third conclusion one can come to is that the DPRK men put up strong performances against weaker Asian opponents. Specifically, they went undefeated in four matches against Taiwan, three matches each against Kuwait, Malaysia, and Pakistan, and three matches each against India, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand. The final conclusion that can be reached from these results is that the DPRK men did not often play opponents outside of Asia. The sole exceptions to this rule were the DPRK’s three losses each to the Soviet Union and France. All in all, the DPRK men never consistently proved their competitiveness outside of Asia.

Figure 6: Women’s National Team Results by Opponent



When viewing the graph representing the women’s national team results by opponent, one can come to the following conclusions. Firstly, the amount of matches against Czechoslovakia is somewhat of an outlier. Seven of the thirteen matches come from a single trip that the DPRK women took to Czechoslovakia for training in 1953. Nevertheless, even excluding that trip, the DPRK women still played six matches against Czechoslovakia. That is still more than any other team. As such, the DPRK’s close athletic relationship with Czechoslovakia during the Cold War Era cannot be discounted. The second conclusion that can be drawn from the women’s team’s results is that, compared to the men, the women played a great deal of far-flung opponents. Specifically, they played five matches against Cuba, five against Hungary, four each against Bulgaria, East Germany, and Poland and three matches against Romania. This is reflective of the DPRK women’s greater competitiveness during the Cold War years, when Asian basketball was less developed. The third conclusion that can be drawn from the women’s national team results is that, like the men, they struggled against regionally strong opponents. This includes no wins in five games against the ROK, four games against China, and three games against Japan. The last conclusion that can be reached is that the DPRK dominated lesser opponents. This included an undefeated record in four games each against East Germany and Hong Kong, three games each against Kazakhstan and Sri Lanka, and two games each against Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Viewing the men’s and women’s teams results on the whole, the overwhelming conclusion is that the DPRK is stuck in the middle of their region. While they may very occasionally beat a regional power, they are typically stuck in the dead space between the more powerful teams of Asia and the lesser teams of Asia. Both teams have had certain levels of success at Socialist-led competitions or even Asian competitions, but neither had ever managed to achieve a significant first place medal.

## 16.2 Club Teams International Matches

Figure 7: Men’s Club Team International Matches



In terms of the men’s club teams that played matches against international opponents, two teams in particular stick out. Firstly, Pyongyang City, with nine international matches, is clearly the most favoured team. Due to a lack of availability of results, some of their matches could not be recorded. But, regardless of their level of achievement, they seem to have had a certain level of favour from the regime over the course of the DPRK’s history. Secondly, 8 February, with eight recorded matches, was also a very favoured team. However, it should be noted that said team was only active and successful from roughly 1959 through 1984. As such, their high placement on the above graph is an indication of the DPRK’s activity in club team exchange during that time and their tremendous amount of favouritism received from the regime during that time period.

Aside from Pyongyang City and 8 February, there are a few notable squads to discuss. Amrok River, attached to the Ministry of Public Welfare, was successful in their own right. But they could never achieve the level of prestige and success that the Pyongyang or army teams could. This is indicated by their one win and four loss record. Meanwhile, Thunder, with an undefeated record over four games, was merely a short-term result of Kim Jong Il’s effort to “professionalize” basketball teams in 1997. Lastly, 25 April Athletics Club, the historically most successful team of all time, suffers from the fact that they emerged in the modern era. Due to the fact that the DPRK was more isolated during that time, they have had less opportunity to face international opponents.

Figure 8: Women’s Club Team International Matches



In comparison to the men’s club teams records against international opponents, the women’s results are more one-sided toward certain teams. Firstly, Pyongyang City played in sixteen matches against international opponents. This nearly doubled that of the second-place team. Overall, this is representative of Pyongyang City’s favoured status and the success of the women’s Pyongyang City team in comparison to the men. Secondly, the 8 February Team, while slightly less successful than their men’s side, benefitted from the DPRK’s greater international activity during the Cold War Era. Thirdly, Amrok River remains somewhat of a distant third, never able to curry the favour that a Pyongyang or Army associated team would.

Fourthly, the women’s side is unique in that it includes results from the DPR Korea Youth team and the Unified Korea Team. Both teams contain results from only one tournament each, but neither could be considered a national team in the purest sense. As such, their results were put here. In the end, their inclusion indicates the DPRK government’s greater willingness to experiment with different forms of their women’s team to send abroad as compared to the men.

Taken on the whole, the men’s and women’s domestic teams did not have a great deal of opportunity to go abroad after the Cold War. The gradual decrease in the number of friendly countries combined with a struggling economy and increasingly competitive international basketball scene led to a decrease in opportunities for both men’s and women’s teams. As such, these charts generally tend to reflect the DPRK’s Cold War Era more than they reflect the DPRK’s Modern Era.

## 16.3 Club Teams Domestic Match Results

Figure 9: Men’s Club Team Domestic Matches



From the men’s club team domestic matches, the following conclusions can be made. Firstly, it must be noted that roughly 84% of the results come from 1974 or earlier. As such, said graph cannot be taken to be an accurate representation of the modern era of domestic DPRK men’s basketball. Secondly, Pyongyang City was, far and away, the most active team. They had 33 played games, while the next team only had 24 played games. Nevertheless, Pyongyang city only won 66% of their games, so they were far from dominant. Thirdly, Locomotive was a very active team, playing 24 games. However, they only won 50% of their games. Fourthly, Amrok River was clearly a quality club, winning fourteen of their nineteen games. Fifthly, the teams that won the most relative to the number of games they played were 8 February and Kim Chaek Industrial University. They played in different divisions and neither managed to see such success in later eras. But both were certainly dominant for their respective time periods. Sixthly, North Phyongan Province, with eleven played matches, may have been one of the most active basketball provinces during the Cold War Era.

Figure 10: Women’s Club Team Domestic Matches



From the women’s club team domestic matches, the following conclusions can be made. Firstly, much as in the men’s circuit, Pyongyang City, Amrok River, and Locomotive played in the most total matches and were the most featured teams of the era. Secondly, 8 February team, with eleven wins and no losses, were a dominant team for their era. Thirdly, Kangwon Province and North Phyongan Province, with seven games played each, were the most active provinces of their era.

Due to the overall lack of availability of single game results, the above graph is woefully incomplete. Moreover, the graph overwhelmingly represents games played during the fifties and sixties. This was before the increased politicisation of *Rodong Sinmun* eliminated basketball results from the pages. Nevertheless, if one doesn’t put too much stock in the wins and losses, one can get a sense of the most important clubs of that era.

## 16.4 Club Teams Number of Domestic Championships

Figure 11: Men’s Club Team Domestic Championships



From the men’s club team domestic championships, one can make the following conclusions. Firstly, the 25 April Athletics Club, with 56 tournament wins, is by far the most dominant team in the history of DPRK basketball. The fact that they were only active in earnest beginning in 1985 only serves to add to their legend. Secondly, the Pyongyang City and Amrok River Clubs, winning 32 and 25 tournaments respectively, can be considered consistent contenders throughout the history of men’s hoops in the DPRK. Thirdly, Kim Il Sung University, despite Kim Chaek University’s run of success in the 1950s and 1960s, is the most successful university team in the DPRK. Fourthly, the Taesong Guidance Bureau is the most successful bureau team of the recent bureau tournaments in the DPRK. Fifthly, the Pyongyang Kallimkil High School is the most successful High School team in the DPRK. Lastly, if one considers 8 February’s championship in conjunction with 25 April’s championships, one begins to get an idea of the DPRK military’s dominance in athletics competition.

Figure 12: Women’s Club Team Domestic Championships

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From the women’s club team domestic championships, one can make the following conclusions. First of all, the 25 April Athletics Club, more than doubling the amount of their next best competitor’s championship, is the best team in DPRK history. Secondly, the Pyongyang City and Amrok River team, with 24 and 22 championships respectively, can be considered the next best teams. Thirdly, Kim Il Sung University, with seventeen championships, is easily the best University team in the DPRK. Fourthly, the Minhung High School Team, with five championships, is one of the best high school teams in the DPRK. Lastly, as with the men’s side, if one combines the wins of 25 April and 8 February, one gets an idea of the DPRK Military’s athletic dominance.

When examining the men’s and women’s club team domestic championships, it becomes obvious that the 25 April Athletics Club has been the dominant team in DPRK athletics since their emergence in 1985. This followed a period of dominance from the 8 February Team on both sides from roughly 1958 until 1985. Given that 25 April and 8 February are both military teams, it is obvious that the DPRK military has a stranglehold on the best athletes. Meanwhile, the next best teams were attached to government agencies or the city of Pyongyang Itself. Amrok River, originally attached to the Ministry of Public Welfare, Locomotive, originally attached to the Ministry of Transportation, and Pyongyang City, attached to the City of Pyongyang, form a consistent triumvirate of secondary teams that can occasionally rise to the top. However, none of these teams has ever entered a sustained period of dominance. In the state-amateur circuit, the teams below this main group of clubs remain somewhat of a mystery. The lack of published results aside from top winners tends to contribute to this issue.

Aside from the state amateur clubs, there are three divisions which get represented on a semi regular basis; university, high school, and bureau. The university division is almost always dominated by the elite Kim Il Sung University. The sole exception remains Kim Chaek Industrial Universities run of men’s titles in the 1950s and 1960s. Below the university level, there has generally been no dominant team among the colleges. The high school division has seen repeat winners in both male and female divisions; Kallimkil High School and Minhung High School, respectively. However, data remains sparse, and these high schools may have only been successful when results were frequently published during the 2000s. Lastly, the bureau division is mostly restricted to men, and is generally competed as part of what was, until last year, called the Paekdu Mountain Prize in February. Due to the fact that said tournament has four divisions, it is impossible to determine a truly dominant winner. But the regular emergence of the Taesong Guidance Bureau is an indicator of their success. All in all, the basketball success of certain bureaus and organizations is a reflection of their resources and power within the society, and is worth checking on that basis alone.

# chapter 17. Conclusion and implications

This thesis has done an exhaustive search into DPRK basketball through available DPRK state media, outside media, and outside academic sources. Specifically, this thesis first delved into basketball as defined by the DPRK, basketball as taught by the DPRK, and the DPRK’s specific basketball terminology. Next, this thesis delved into DPRK basketball history as separated by eras that were defined via changes in the DPRK’s athletic policy. Within said sections, this thesis has delved into each era’s general athletics developments, each leader’s encounters with basketball, basketball as it relates to diplomacy, the men’s and women’s national teams, international matches of domestic teams, inter-korean matches, domestic policy development in basketball, domestic basketball tournaments, articles about basketball teams and individuals, articles about basketball equipment, articles about basketball conceptually, basketball in art and culture, basketball in propaganda, and basketball’s international connections.

When considering this study as a whole, one can come to the following broad conclusions. Firstly, basketball is a lens through which one can see the development of society as a whole. As the DPRK’s political situation changed, the way in which basketball was played developed along with it. Whether it be the ramshackle games of the 1940s, the halt of sports during the Korean War, the relative amount of exchange and openness of the 1950s and 1960s, the extreme politicization of the 1970s, the gradual government decline of the 1980s, the economic disaster of the 1990s, the stagnation of the 2000s, the new wave of invigoration of Kim Jong Un’s ascension to power in the 2010s, or the complete halt of activities during the coronavirus pandemic, the state of basketball reflected the way in which the society was structured at the time. As such, looking at basketball in each era is an effective way for scholars to observe things such as cultural changes, political strictness, organizational power, international exchange, and daily life.

Secondly, the Basketball Intensification Era from 1997 to 1999 was a time of incredible development for the sport of basketball. What had used to be one of a few “ball sports” appreciated by a few became a total societal priority. This sudden shift towards development of basketball, at the time, was seen as a way of creating optimism and unity amongst the people during a period of economic need. But it ended up creating a stronger culture of basketball domestically. This had two broad consequences; the development of sophisticated basketball tactics published in state media and the gradual opening up of established media outlets which had previously been unwilling to publish basketball results. As such, future researchers of the Arduous March era should take this basketball-centric policy into account when considering the government’s response to the dire economic situation.

Thirdly, the DPRK, beginning in the Kim Jong Un era, has entered a period of unprecedented international isolation. Obviously, the recent pandemic has had the effect of totally isolating the country. But the DPRK, which had been very active in basketball exchange during the Cold War, slowly ramped down the frequency of such exchange in the 1990s. By the 2000s and 2010s, national teams and club teams rarely ventured internationally at all. This decrease of international exchange should be considered by scholars who are attempting to trace the DPRK’s international diplomacy through the years.\

Fourthly, basketball’s development can be driven by the leader’s interest, but is not necessarily reflective of the leader’s interest. Fundamentally, policy decided upon by the government set forth the fundamental direction in which the development of basketball for a certain era went. But the issue gets much more complex as you look into it. For example, in the hey-day of Kim Il Sung, the government's state capacity was at its peak, the leader had a mild interest in athletics, and basketball-related foreign exchange was the norm. But during the Basketball Intensification Era of Kim Jong Il's reign, the government's state capacity was at its' weakest, the leader had a strong public interest in basketball, and basketball-related foreign exchange was intermittent. Further still, Kim Jong Un's pre-COVID years saw an only-somewhat revived state capacity, a leader publicly interested in athletics but not necessarily basketball, and only intermittent basketball-related foreign exchange. This is only a rudimentary example of the complex inter-relation of factors, both domestic and international, that can affect the popularity of basketball, the accessibility of basketball, the methods by which basketball is played, and the DPRK’s success in basketball internationally.

Fifthly, as seen by the great changes in basketball according to shifts in domestic policy or international relations, future scholars should not see each leader’s era as static. Of course, the periodization of each era does not necessarily stray from the idea that the leader could have a decisive role in influencing basketball's development if he had the will to do so. But each leader's rule was dynamic; within each leader's reign there were fundamental athletic-related policy changes and shifts. Furthermore, how much of a role the leader had in deciding the minutia of each policy shift will always be up for debate. For example, Kim Jong Il likely personally decided some of the more minute details of his era's basketball policies, as he had a great interest in it. But Kim Il Sung may have only been interested in the broader decisions of athletic-related policy, and left some of the more minute details to technocrats.

Sixthly, when considering government policy, basketball and athletics in general should be considered within the context of other policies. For example, the National Defence Athletics Era coincided with the DPRK government’s overall Pyongjin policy. Furthermore, overall philosophical trends of the government tended to be reflected in athletics policy. For example, as the Juche philosophy and leadership cult was implemented into the society, methods of athletics instruction and tournament names began to change in accordance with the government priorities and overall media coverage of athletics weakened.

Seventhly, an individual athletic talent can have the effect of changing government policy both nationally and internationally. In basketball specifically, the talent of Ri Myong Hun was so great that he was able to garner fame on an individual level while influencing the government to promote the national team and domestic basketball distribution. Indeed, Ri’s talent was so great that his status as an athlete was used as a bargaining chip between nations. As such, one cannot underestimate the power of athletics to influence other sectors of the government.

Lastly, basketball is a tool that undeniably contributes to the development and liberalization of DPRK society as a whole. Although basketball has been used for political purposes, basketball in and of itself remains apolitical and international. The DPRK has historically proven itself willing to accept new concepts brought on by international developments in the game of basketball. Furthermore, the DPRK has been willing to engage in exchange with international basketball teams when it feels that is has a chance of being competitive. But, perhaps most importantly, basketball has captured the imagination of leaders and athletes alike. Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Un, and Ri Myong Hun were all likely fans of Michael Jordan. In the modern day, Euroleague basketball highlights will sometimes be included as part of a foreign sports package in a domestic news broadcast.[[2875]](#footnote-2875) Video highlights packages of significant domestic games are also beginning to emerge via online outlets.[[2876]](#footnote-2876) All of this means that basketball can be a bridge to both get information about the DPRK society to the outside world and expose information about the outside world to those in the DPRK. With the country’s development of 3 on 3 basketball over the past decade, there are only more opportunities to engage with other nations.

One must also look at the potential that basketball has to increase prosperity in the region. As of 2022, the NBA’s China organization is valued at five billion dollars.[[2877]](#footnote-2877) The NBA was the most watched sports league in China in 2019, and after a drop in viewership, had nearly returned to its’ 2019 level by 2022.[[2878]](#footnote-2878) Furthermore, potential for new DPRK basketball stars lies within the women’s circuit; Pak Jin A had grown to a height of 200 centimetres or 6 foot 7 by the age of 15, and there’s no telling where her skill may be at as she enters her twenties.[[2879]](#footnote-2879) Meanwhile, Ro Suk Yong, while over 30 years old, remains to have the potential to be one of the best players among those in the ROK. The current Coach of the ROK women’s national team, Jong Sun-min, said that Ro possessed great offensive talent and could make a top tier player in the ROK domestic league. This is despite lacking a sense of teamwork and defence. Coach Jong also assessed that a ROK team with Ro would be capable of defeating China and Japan.[[2880]](#footnote-2880)

Of course, basketball can be a double-edged sword. The term “sportswashing” has recently been a hot topic in media and academic circles, as it aims to describe a phenomenon of nations using athletics in order to distract from human rights abuses.[[2881]](#footnote-2881) This is an admitted downside to the potential development of basketball exchange with the DPRK. If DPRK teams are promoted and supported as normal athletic teams, there is the potential that anyone linked to such a venture could be seen as complicit in human rights abuses. But, looking at things on a broader scale, one must understand that the DPRK is a closed society. In this sense, the best way to ignite change is through the backdoor; exposing the society to as much outside information as possible so that the citizenry become more accustomed to international norms. This is the same type of policy that West German Prime Minister Willy Brandt took when dealing with East Germany, and it became one of the reasons behind German Unification. Furthermore, it is important to remember that actions intended to punish the government, such as sanctions, can have the unintended effect of hurting the most vulnerable parts of the population.

In conclusion, it is not necessarily important whether Korean Unification is achieved, nor is it necessarily important how long the DPRK government continues to exist. What is important is the continued improvement of living conditions for those in the DPRK, and the continued movement of life in the DPRK towards openness and accepting international norms. Basketball can help to accomplish this goal, because it is one of the few methods which has been historically been accepted as an inroad for international exchange by the DPRK government. Considering basketball’s special relationship with DPRK leaders in the past, it is not far-fetched to think that it could play a strong role in the DPRK’s future development.

In terms of future research, this thesis is inherently limited by the scarce number of resources available to it. Archives of newspapers that were more specific to athletics, such as *Athletics Newspaper* (체육신문) would undoubtedly open up new information on game results, tournament information, and individual talents. Local newspapers, such as *Pyongyang Newspaper* (평양신문), could also reveal similar information. Furthermore, there are undoubtedly a number of basketball-related books published in the DPRK. These books could reveal new information about basketball terminology, basketball as a concept, and the way basketball in taught. Lastly, interviews with those who have experienced DPRK basketball first-hand would reveal new information about basketball from a more personal angle.

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<8.15해방 10주년을 앞두고>황남도에서 예술 경연 및 체육선수권대회 진행. 로동신문. 1955.7.17. Pg. 3.

<9월 5일상>체육경기대회 진행. 로동신문. 1992.8.20. Pg. 4.

<강행군길에 랑만을 꽃피우는 체육활동><현지보도>미더운 롱구선수후비들(선교체육관에서). 로동신문. 1998.1.20. Pg. 4.

<강행군길에 랑만을 꽃피우는 체육활동>군중체육으로 들끓는다(자강도에서(정상화된 일과, 실정에 맞게, 앞장에 서서)). 로동신문. 1998.1.20. Pg. 4.

<강행군길에 랑만을 꽃피우는 체육활동>소문난 가정부인롱구팀. 로동신문. 1998.1.20. Pg. 4.

<공동사설에서 제시된 과업 관철에 떨쳐나선 미더운 체육인들> 금메달로 조국을 빛내이자 (국가체육위원회에서). 로동신문. 1997.1.24. Pg. 4.

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<공화국 창건 10주년을 기념하여>전국 체육 축전 편지 전달 계주 각지에서 출발. 로동신문. 1958.9.05. Pg. 4.

<구호><건강한 체력은 로동과 국방의 믿음직한 담보이다. 모두다 운동에 참가하자!>모두다 물단련을 정상화하자. 로동신문. 1998.10.6. Pg. 5.

<구호><당중앙위원회 구호를 높이 받들고 석탄생산과 석탄지하가스화를 위한 준비사업을 다그치자!>안주지구탄광련합기업소에서(탄전의 이모저모(연장전《롱구경기》,기사장이 들려준 이야기, 탄전의《보배공장》)). 로동신문. 1998.5.11. Pg. 4.

<군중 체육을 더욱 발전시키자> 모두가 한가지 이상의 체육기술을(황해제철소와 덕천군 내 기관, 기업소들에서). 로동신문. 1964.11.18. Pg. 6.

<김정일장군 슬하에서 누리는 인민의 행복> 뜻깊은 2월의 명절을 맞으며 ≪백두산상≫체육경기대회 개막. 로동신문. 1994.2.2. Pg. 4.

<꽃피는 문화>전국《9월5일상》대학생체육경기대회. 로동신문. 1998.10.11. Pg. 4.

<꽃피는 문화>태양절을 뜻깊게 장식할 롱구경기. 로동신문. 1999.4.4. Pg. 4.

<꽃피는 문화>학생롱구경기대회. 로동신문. 1999.4.21. Pg. 4.

<다채로운 경축 행사> 건국 체육 축전 계속 성황. 로동신문. 1955.8.15. Pg. 7.

<당의 교육정책 관철에서 보여준 훌륭한 모범(순안구역 일군들의 사업에서)>누구나 롱구를 한다. 로동신문. 1998.1.9. Pg. 4.

<당의 교육정책 관철에서 보여준 훌륭한 모범(순안구역 일군들의 사업에서)>당정책요구와 일군들의 일본새. 로동신문. 1998.1.9. Pg. 4.

<당의 체육방침 관철에 한결같이 떨쳐나섰다>기자재들을 그쯘하게. 로동신문. 1994.11.9. Pg. 4.

<대중체육 활발>정주뜨락또르부속품공장에서. 로동신문. 1999.11.9. Pg. 4.

<대중체육활동 소식> 일군들이 앞장에 서서. 로동신문. 1998.12.17. Pg. 4.

<대중화되는 체육과 예술>군중 체육(함남도 북청군 북청 방사 생산 협동조합). 로동신문. 1962.11.02. Pg. 4.

<로동계급의 전투적단결과 위력을 힘있게 과시하는 혁명적명절>당 및 국가지도간부들 로동계급과 함께 5.1절을 뜻깊게 기념. 로동신문. 1998.5.2. Pg. 3.

<롱구를 대중화, 생활화하며 그 기술수준을 획기적으로 높이자>롱구기술 발전에 큰 힘을 넣자. 로동신문. 1997.8.5. Pg. 4.

<롱구를 대중화, 생활화하며 그 기술수준을 획기적으로 높이자>체육활동을 활발히. 로동신문. 1997.8.5. Pg. 4.

<만경대상>체육경기대회 개막. 로동신문. 1981.4.10. Pg. 4.

<만경대상>체육경기대회 페막 21종목의 경기들에서 공화국 신기록을 수립. 로동신문. 1981.4.28. Pg. 5.

<모두가 몸을 단련하여 천리마 진군을 다그치자!>체육을 다양하게. 로동신문. 1965.5.14. Pg. 6.

<방문기>행복넘친 배움의 노래(화평군 가산고등중학교를 찾아서). 로동신문. 1998.10.7. Pg. 4.

<백두산상>체육경기대회 페막. 로동신문. 1994.3.8. Pg. 4.

<사설> 우리 당의 체육의 대중화 방침을 철저히 관철하자. 로동신문. 1970.10.11. Pg. 4.

<사설> 우리 당의 체육의 전민화방침을 철저히 관철하자 (체육절을 맞으며). 로동신문. 1972.10.8. Pg. 5.

<사설> 전체인민이 체육에 참가하여 로동과 국방에 튼튼히 준비되자. 로동신문. 1971.10.12. Pg. 2

<사회주의 10월 혁명 40주년을 앞두고>평양시 대학생 체육 대회 개막. 로동신문. 1957.10.4. Pg. 4.

<생활의 기쁨을 노래하는 5절의 명절>5.1절 경축 평양시 산별 체육 대회 개막. 로동신문. 1958.5.2. Pg. 3.

<세계 청년 학생 축전에서>우리 여자 롱구팀과 권투선수 입성(국제 청년친선 체육대회), 남자팀 배구 예선 종료. 로동신문. 1957.8.6. Pg. 4.

<세계 청년 학생 축전에서>제 3차 국제 체육 경기의 각 부문에서 최종경기들 진행. 로동신문. 1957.8.9. Pg. 4.

<승리의 시심드높이> 열띤 체육경기, 돌격전의 쉴참에. 로동신문. 1998.12.3. Pg. 3.

<신심과 락관에 넘쳐 붉은기 날리며 힘차게 전진>나라의 체육기술발전에서 새로운 전환을 일으키자(평양시내 체육인들의 궐기모임 진행). 로동신문. 2000.5.31. Pg. 1.

<아시안게임> 북한 농구 "달리고 또 달리겠다". 연합뉴스. 2010.11.18. https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20101118058100007

<왕래> 알바니야 롱구단 귀국. 로동신문. 1963.10.3. Pg 3.

<우리 말 다듬기> 지상토론 (418) (체육). 로동신문. 1971.12.1. Pg. 6.

<우리 말 다듬기> 지상토론 (442) (체육). 로동신문. 1972.3.29. Pg. 6.

<우리나라 붉은 체육인들 천리마조선의 영웅적 기개를 시위> 우리나라 체육선수들 제9차 세계청년학생축전 첫날 경기의 모든 종목들에서 승리(우리 나라 체조선수가 첫금메달을 쟁취). 로동신문. 1968.8.2. Pg. 3.

<우리말 다듬기> 지상토론 (417) 체육. 로동신문. 1971.11.27. Pg. 6.

<우리말 다듬기> 지상토론(113) 체육. 로동신문. 1967.9.17. Pg. 4.

<우리말 다듬기> 지상토론(84) (체육). 로동신문. 1967.4.23. Pg. 4.

<우리말다듬기> 지상토론(522) – 체육. 로동신문. 1973.7.29. Pg. 6.

<우리의 붉은 체육인들 천리마조선의 기상을 시위> 세계체육계의 이목을 집중, 수많은 관중들 경탄을 표시(우리나라 선수들이 제9차 세계청년학생축전에서 금메달 5개, 은메달8개, 동메달 3개를 쟁취). 로동신문. 1968.8.4. Pg. 3.

<위대한 김정일동장군님 최고사령관 추대 6돐, 항일의 녀성영웅 김정숙동지 탄생 80돐 기념>《오산덕상》체육경기대회 개막. 로동신문. 1997.12.24. Pg. 5.

<위대한 령도자를 받들어 한마음 한뜻으로 뭉친 인민의 값높은 생활>

<위대한 수령 김정일주석님의 현명한 령도밑에 조선의 통일은 반드시 실현될 것이다>미군이 남조선에서 물러 갈 것을 강력히 요구한다 (조선통일지지인도위원회가 성명 발표). 로동신문. 1977.2.17. Pg. 5.

<위대한 장군님 모시여 존엄 높고 번영하는 사회주의 내 조국> 공화국창건 54돐 기념 비생산부문 중앙기관일군 롱구경기대회 페막. 로동신문. 2002.9.10. Pg. 4.

<위대한 태양을 모시여 세상에 자랑 높은 내 나라>민족의 자랑 세계적인 체육강자들(세계 《마라손녀왕》-정성옥선수, 최우수롱구선수-리명훈선수, 여자힘장수-리성희선수. 로동신문. 2000.6.11. Pg. 4.

<자랑찬 체육성과로 조국과 민족의 영예를 빛내이자> 공화국선수권대회를 우승의 축전장으로. 로동신문. 2002.9.26. Pg. 4.

<전 세계로동계급의 국제적명절 5. 1절에 즈음하여>경축공연 및 체육, 유희오락경기 진행(수도와 지방의 여러 곳에서). 로동신문. 2000.5.2. Pg. 4.

<전국체육인대회에서 한 토론들 (요지)> 경애하는 수령께서 밝혀주신 길을 따라 민주주의적민족권리의 옹호와 조국의 자주적 통일을 앞당기기 위하여 더욱 힘차게투쟁할 것이다 (재일본조선인체육련합회대표단 김태진단장의 축하연설). 로동신문. 1969.11.4. Pg. 5.

<전국체육인대회에서 한 토론들 (요지)> 김일성원수님의 가르치심대로 주체적인 경기체계를 세우고 체육기술을 더욱 발전시켜 세계1인자의 영예를 계속 빚내이겠다 (배구선수 공훈체육인 김은자). 로동신문. 1969.11.4. Pg. 5.

<전국체육인대회에서 한 토론들 (요지)> 농촌실정에 알맞는 대중체육사업은 농장원들을 로동과 국방에 더 잘 준비시키고 그들의 혁명화, 로동계급화를 촉진시킨다(황해남도 안악군 천리마 오국협동농장 관리위원장 김순관). 로동신문. 1969.11.5. Pg. 6.

<전국체육인대회에서 한 토론들 (요지)> 학교체육교원을 개선강화하여 청소년학생들을 수령님께 끝까지 충직한 혁명전사로 참된 공산주의자로 길러내자 (보통교육부상 리희준). 로동신문. 1969.11.5. Pg. 5.

<젊은 세대들은 새 생활과 행복을 창조하고 있다> 각 성 및 국 대항 체육대회. 로동신문. 1954.11.11. Pg. 3.

<정령< 안골체육촌을 청춘거리로 함에 대하여 (조선민주주의인민공화국중앙인민위원회). 로동신문. 1987.9.8. Pg. 2.

<정령> - 체육인들에게 조선민주주의 인민공화국 인민체육인 창호를 수여함에 대하여. 로동신문. 1966.10.9. Pg. 1.

<정령> 조선민주주의인민공화국 최고인민회의 상임위원회에서 체육부문일군들에게 조선민주주의인민공화국 공훈체육인칭호를 수여함에 대하여. 로동신문. 1969.11.6. Pg. 2.

<정령> 조선체육지도위원회를 조선민주주의인민공화국 국가체육위원회로 고칠 데 대하여 (김일성). 로동신문. 1989.6.30. Pg. 1.

<정령>강원도 안변군 모범 체육군칭호를 수여함에 대하여. 로동신문. 1982.8.31. Pg. 1.

<정령>압록강체육선수단에 《김일성 훈장》을 수여함에 대하여. 로동신문. 1992.11.18. Pg. 1.

<정령>조선 민주주의 인민 공화국 최고 인민 회의 상임위원회 정령 : 조선 민주주의 인민 공화국 공훈체육인 칭호를제정함에 관하여. 로동신문. 1960.11.12. Pg. 1.

<정령>조선민주주의인민공화국 체육성을 내각 체육지도위원회로 고칠데 대하여(조선민주주의인민공화국 최고인민회의 상임위원회). 로동신문. 1999.11.4. Pg. 1.

<정령>체육인들과 그 부문 지도 일’군들에게 공화국 훈장 및 메달을 수여함에 관하여(최 용건, 박 문규 1961년 10월 8일). 로동신문. 1961.10.9. Pg. 4.

<정령>최고의 영예인 로력영웅칭호를 제정함에 관하여. 로동신문. 1951.7.22. Pg. 1

<정령>평양시 선교구역에 모범체육구역칭호를 수여함에 대하여(조선민주주의인민공화국 주석 김일성). 로동신문. 1987.12.6. Pg. 1.

<제6차 세계 청년학생 축전을 앞두고>체육부문에서. 로동신문. 1957.4.8.

<조선 인민은 로력적 성과로써 5 ․1절을 맞는다> 경쟁의 앞장에 서서 -진병걸 동무, 오늘은 건설장의 용사 - 서학영 동무, 행복을 창조하는 기쁨 - 김희영 동무,명절전야, 친선의 야회 - 사진 - 모란봉의 해방탑 야경, 써클 경연 - 사진 - 함흥 섬유 공장 로동자들의 노래 보급, 체육경기 - 로동자들의 철봉 경기, 밀림 속에서도, 구락부의 계획, 사진 - 우리의 복구 건설을 방조하고 있는 쏘련 및 중국 기술자들. 로동신문. 1955.4.3. Pg. 3.

<조선공산주의청년동맹창립 70돐과 청년절 6돐에 즈음하여>당과 정부 간부들이 각지 청년들과 함께 뜻깊게 기념. 로동신문. 1997.8.29. Pg. 4.

<조선공산주의청년동맹창립 70돐과 청년절 6돐에 즈음하여>제1차 전국청년학생들의 《8. 28청년컵》쟁탈 롱구경기대회 개막. 로동신문. 1997.8.29. Pg. 4.

<조선민주주의인민공화국창건 51돐에 즈음하여> 전국로동자체육경기대회. 로동신문. 1999.9.10. Pg. 4.

<조선인민공화국 영웅칭호 받은 영예의 용사들의 위훈>적정정찰을 민활히하여 항상 아군진격을 보장(김봉호 정찰중대장). 로동신문. 1951.7.18. Pg. 3.

<조중 친선 월간을 경축하여>전국 농민 청년 체육 대회 개막. 로동신문. 1958.10.14. Pg. 5.

<천리마 시대의 체육인들>생활화되고 있는 군중 체육(북청군 성남 중학교 교원들). 로동신문. 1962.11.5. Pg. 4.

<체육> 1급 선수단 륙상 경기 개막 대회. 로동신문. 1960.4.25. Pg. 8.

<체육> 5.1절 기념 체육 대회가 시작되였다. 로동신문. 1965.4.28. Pg. 6.

<체육> 5.1절 기념 평양시 로동자 체육 대화 페막. 로동신문. 1966.5.9. Pg. 4.

<체육> 8,15해방 15주년 경축 조선 인민군 제7차 종합 체육 경기 페막. 로동신문. 1960.9.11. Pg. 4.

<체육> 8월 인민 체력 검정 주간 성대히 페막 (평양시에서). 로동신문. 1959.8.10. Pg. 4

<체육> 날로 향상되는 체력과 스포츠 기술을 과시 (8. 15 해방 15 주년 전국 대학생 체육 대회 페막). 로동신문. 1960.8.28. Pg. 4.

<체육> 우리 선수들 또 승리(우리나라를 친선방문한 민주독일녀자롱구 종합선수단 2. 8체육단 녀자롱구 선수단과 친선경기 진행). 로동신문. 1961.7.17. Pg. 4.

<체육> 웽그리야 나쇼날 팀과 평양시팀간의 친선 롱구 경기. 로동신문. 1959.8.8. Pg. 5.

<체육> 전국 초등 및 유자녀 학원 학생 체육 대회 페막. 로동신문. 1960.6.11. Pg. 3.

<체육> 전국 학생 소년 체육 축전 계속. 로동신문. 1959.8.17. Pg. 4

<체육> 전국고등기술학교 학생체육대회 개막. 로동신문. 1962.9.28. Pg. 4.

<체육> 조선 로동당 제 4차 대회 경축 평양시 체육 대회 개막. 로동신문. 1961.8.15. Pg. 6.

<체육> 청소년학생들의 단련된 체력과 스포츠 기술을 과시 (전국 학생소년 체육 축전 페막). 로동신문. 1959.8.20. Pg. 6

<체육> 체육사업의 정상화에 노력 (양덕군 사기 농업협동조합에서). 로동신문. 1959.1.3. Pg. 5.

<체육> 체육을 대중화, 생활화하니 만근자대렬이 늘어난다 (신흥기계공장에서). 로동신문. 1973.7.25. Pg. 6.

<체육> 친선의 롱구경기 (월비산체육단 선수들과 웽그리야인민군 선수단선수들간의 남자롱구경기 진행). 로동신문. 1968.5.29. Pg. 4.

<체육> 평양시청소년체육대회. 로동신문. 1967.7.10. Pg. 4.

<체육>2.8절 기념 종목별 체육 경기 대회 페막. 1966.2.17. Pg. 4.

<체육>5.1절 기념 전국 로동당 체육대회 개막. 로동신문. 1961.4.29. Pg. 6.

<체육>8.15 해방 12주년 기념 스포츠 협회 련맹전 개막(남자 롱구경기, 녀장 롱구경기, 축구경기). 로동신문. 1957.8.4. Pg. 4.

<체육>8.15해방 12주년 기념 체육 축전(롱구 경기에서, 배구 경기에서, 축구 경기에서). 로동신문. 1957.8.8. Pg. 4.

<체육>8.15해방 13주년 기념 체육 축전 계속. 로동신문. 1958.8.17. Pg.4.

<체육>도꾜에서 재일본 조선인 롱구 선수권 대회 진행. 로동신문. 1966.3.31. Pg. 4.

<체육>두 번째 친선경기(우리 나라 녀자롱구종합선수단과 웽그리야 국가녀자롱구종합선수단이 대전했다). 로동신문. 1967.5.19. Pg. 4.

<체육>사회주의 10월 혁명 40주년 경축 체육절 기념 전국 선수권 대회(10월 3-13일). 로동신문. 1957.10.4. Pg. 4.

<체육>사회주의 10월 혁명 40주년 경축 체육절 기념(전국 선수권 대회 폐막). 로동신문. 1957.10.15. Pg. 4.

<체육>사회주의 10월 혁명 40주년 경축, 체육절 기념 전국 선수권 대회 계속. 로동신문. 1957.10.9. Pg. 4.

<체육>사회주의 10월 혁명 40주년 경축, 체육절 기념 전국 선수권 대회계속. 로동신문. 1957.10.9. Pg. 4.

<체육>세 번째 친선경기(우리 나라 녀자롱구청년종합선수단과 웽그리아국가녀자롱구종합선수들간의 경기). 로동신문. 1967.5.25. Pg. 4.

<체육>소조 활동을 강화하여 체육을 군중화한다(조선-꾸바 친선 평양 방직 기계 공장에서). 로동신문. 1966.4.10. Pg. 4.

<체육>스포츠 협회 베 그루빠 구기 련맹전 진행. 로동신문. 1958.11.18. Pg. 4.

<체육>열성자. 로동신문. 1966.3.21. Pg. 4.

<체육>우리나라 압록강남자롱구선수단과 독일민주주의 공화국 남자롱구종합선수단간의 친선경기. 로동신문. 1967.5.29. Pg. 4.

<체육>전국 고등 기술 학교 학생 체육 대회 페막. 로동신문. 1962.10.4. Pg. 4.

<체육>전국학생소년들의 《청소년 체육명수》칭호쟁취를 위한 체육경기대회가 열렸다. 로동신문. 1973.8.8. Pg. 6.

<체육>전체 로동자들 한 가지 이상의 체육 종목에 참가(평양 전기 공장로동자들). 로동신문. 1958.10.30. Pg. 6.

<체육>제 2차 출판 일‘군 친선 체육 대회 진행. 로동신문. 1961.6.6. Pg. 4.

<체육>제 4차 전국 청소년 스포츠 학교 체육대회 개막. 로동신문. 1961.6.12. Pg. 4.

<체육>제1차 1급 선수단 롱구, 배구, 축구 련맹전 및 궁술 기록대회 개막. 로동신문. 1959.3.21. Pg. 3.

<체육>조선민주주의 인민공화국 체육대회 축구 및 롱구 경기 시작. 로동신문. 1960.8.1. Pg. 3.

<체육>청소년 학생들의 단련된 체력을 과시(보통강 얼음판에서 8개구역학교 부문 제2차《국방 체력 경기》가 있었다). 로동신문. 1966.1.16. Pg. 4.

<체육>청춘의 기백은 높뛴다-중앙선수단 및 도체육강습소 선수들의 5.1 절 기념 종목별 체육경기대회(롱구경기에서, 배구경기에서, 축구경기에서). 로동신문. 1967.4.4. Pg. 4.

<체육>평양시 로동자 체육대회 진행. 로동신문. 1961.3.29. Pg. 6.

<체육>평양시 창건 1530주년 및 체육절 기념 평양시 각종 경기 선수권대회 페막. 로동신문. 1957.9.24. Pg. 4.

<체육>평양시 창건 1530주년 및 체육절 기념 평양시 각종 경기 선수권대회. 로동신문. 1957.9.17. Pg. 4.

<체육>훌륭한 기술, 완강한 투지(우리나라 녀자롱구종합선수단와 웽그리아 국가녀자롱구종합선수단간의 경기). 로동신문. 1967.5.29. Pg. 4.

<체육>훌륭한 기술과 강인한 투지(2.8녀자롱구단과 웽그리아국가녀자롱구종합선수단과의 첫 번째 친선경기가 있었다). 로동신문. 1967.5.19. Pg. 4.

<체육>훌륭한 기술을 보여준 친선의 경기(2.8남자롱구선수단과 독일 민주주의공화국 남자 롱구 종합선수단간의 친선경기가 있었다). 로동신문. 1967.5.26. Pg. 6.

<체육과 스포츠> 컾 쟁탈 축구, 롱구, 배구 2급팀 경기 진행. 로동신문. 1959.10.5. Pg. 4.

<체육단신>체육 협회팀간의 동기 롱구련맹전 페막. 로동신문. 1957.2.13. Pg. 3.

<체육문화사업의 발전을 위하여>체육문화 시설 확장. 로동신문. 1958.6.29. Pg. 4.

<체육소식>농촌 청년 체육선수들의 단련된 체력과 기술을 시위(전국 농업 부문 체육대회 계속). 로동신문 1959.7.23. Pg. 6.

<체육소식>전국 모형 항공기 선수권 대회 진행, 체육 협회간의 금년도 최종 롱구 련맹전 진행, 스포츠 협회 력기, 레스링 대항전 진행, 2급 팀간의 구기 련맹전 완료. 로동신문. 1958.11.25. Pg.5.

<체육소식>전국 모형 항공기 선수권 대회 진행, 체육 협회간의 금년도 최종 롱구 련맹전 진행, 스포츠 협회 력기, 레스링 대항전 진행, 2급 팀간의 구기 련맹전 완료. 로동신문. 1958.11.25. Pg. 5.

<체육소식>전국농업부문 체육 대회 폐막, 전국 수상경기 대회 페막. 로동신문 1959.7.25. Pg. 5.

<체육을 대중화, 생활화하여> 공장에 넘치는 체육열기. 로동신문. 2002.9.19. Pg. 4.

<체육의 날>을 잘 운영. 로동신문. 1965.10.17. Pg. 6.

<체육절 15 주년 기념 전국 체육 대회> 승부를 가르기 어려운 격전 (구기 련맹 계속 진행). 로동신문. 1964.10.17. Pg. 6.

<체육절 15 주년 기념 전국 체육 대회> 체육 기술 향상의 뚜렷한 과시 (구기 련맹 전 제 3 일 경기에서). 로동신문. 1964.10.15. Pg. 4.

<친선의 왕래> 우리나라를 방문하는 독일녀자롱구 선수단 평양에 도착. 로동신문. 1961.7.9. Pg. 5.

<친선의 정 넘친 경기> 우리 나라 녀자롱구종합선수단과 꾸바녀자롱구종합선수단간의 친선경기 진행. 로동신문. 1968.5.20. Pg. 4.

<친선의 정 넘친 경기> 평양시남자롱구청년선수단과 웽그리아인민군남자롱구선수단가의 친선경기 진행. 로동신문. 1968.5.20. Pg. 4.

<통일농구> 리명훈 `여전히 위력적`. 통일뉴스. 2003.10.8. http://www.tongilnews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=36039

<풍년>체육 협회 각 도 지도 기관 조직을 완료하고 농촌 부문 체육 지도사업을 강화. 로동신문. 1959.5.5. Pg. 3.

<혁명일화> 번역원의 탄복. 로동신문. 1998.2.12. Pg. 2.

<혈육들과 친척, 친우들의 래왕고 남북간의 교류는 하루빨리 실현되여야 한다> 도꾜조선중고급학교 교장이《민단》영향하의 《한국학교》교장에게 두학교 학생들간의 각종 체육경기를 가질 것을 제의. 로동신문. 1971.9.7. Pg. 4.

<흥겹고 즐거운 봄날의 명절>당과 정부 지도자들 5.1절 기념 체육 경기를 관람. 로동신문. 1965.5.2. Pg. 3.

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경애하는 김정은원수님께서 새로 개건하고있는 평양체육관을 돌아보시였다. 민주조선. 2013.

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경애하는 김정은원수님께서 우리 나라와 미국롱구선수들의 경기를 관람하시였다. 로동신문. 2014.1.9. Pg. 1-2.

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경애하는 김정은원수님께서 우리 나라와 미국롱구팀 선수들의 혼합경기를 관람하시고 미국NBA 이전 선수와 일행을 만나시였다. 로동신문. 2013.3.1. Pg. 1-2.

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경애하는 최고령도자 김정은동지께 로씨야원동발전상과 로씨야롱구협회가 선물을 드리였다. 로동신문. KCNA Watch. 2018.7.19. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1531959608-888664139/%ea%b2%bd%ec%95%a0%ed%95%98%eb%8a%94-%ec%b5%9c%ea%b3%a0%eb%a0%b9%eb%8f%84%ec%9e%90-%ea%b9%80%ec%a0%95%ec%9d%80%eb%8f%99%ec%a7%80%ea%bb%98-%eb%a1%9c%ec%94%a8%ec%95%bc%ec%9b%90%eb%8f%99%eb%b0%9c/

경애하는 최고령도자 김정은동지께 중화인민공화국 체육대표단이 선물을 드리였다. 로동신문. 2018.10.12. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1539310825-171040066/%ea%b2%bd%ec%95%a0%ed%95%98%eb%8a%94-%ec%b5%9c%ea%b3%a0%eb%a0%b9%eb%8f%84%ec%9e%90-%ea%b9%80%ec%a0%95%ec%9d%80%eb%8f%99%ec%a7%80%ea%bb%98-%ec%a4%91%ed%99%94%ec%9d%b8%eb%af%bc%ea%b3%b5%ed%99%94/

경애하는 최고사령관 김정일동지께서 공산주의미풍을 높이 발양한 사회안전부문 일군들과 근로자들에게 감사를 보내시였다. 로동신문. 1999.10.28. Pg. 1.

경애하는 최고사령관 김정일동지의 선군정치를 불패의 군력으로 받들어나가자 -조선인민군 지휘성원들 군인들과 함께 건군절을 뜻 깊게 기념. 로동신문. 2000.4.26. Pg. 2.

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공원과 같이, 궁전과 같이: 선천군량정사업소에서. 로동신문. 2001.11.27. Pg. 3.

공화국 내각에서 군중 체육사업을 발전시키며 스포츠 기술 수준을 제고할 데 관한 대책을 강구. 로동신문. 1959.2.27. Pg. 2.

공화국 내각에서 체육 사업을 전 임민적 운동으로 전개할 데 대한 결정을 채택. 로동신문. 1965.2.26. Pg. 1.

공화국 선수권대회 진행(26명의 선수들이 26개 세부종목에서 새 기록수립). 로동신문. 1992.11.5. Pg. 4.

공화국 올림픽 위원회의 성원 단체들인 축구, 롱구, 체조 협회들에서 대한 경기 협회들의 편지. 로동신문. 1958.12.17. Pg. 4.

공화국 창건 10주년 경축 전국 학생 체육 축전 개막. 로동신문. 1958.8.26. Pg. 6.

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공화국 창건 10주년 경축 전국 학생 체육 축전 페막. 민주조선. 1958.8.25.

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공화국 창건 10주년 기념 전국 체육 축전 페막. 민구조선. 1958.9.15.

공화국 창건 10주년을 맞이하여 각지 인민들 김일성 원수를 수반으로 하는 조선 로동당 중앙 위원회와 공화국 정부에 편지(전국 체육 축전 편지 전달 계주 대렬 평양에 도착). 로동신문. 1958.9.11. Pg. 5.

공화국 창건 14주년 기념 1급 선수단 체육대회 개막. 로동신문. 1962.9.11. Pg. 4.

공화국 창건 15주년 경축 제 2차 조선 민주주의 인민 공화국 체육 대회 폐막. 로동신문. 1963.9.17. Pg. 3.

공화국 창건 17주년을 경축하는 재일본 조선인 도꾜도 체육대회 진행. 로동신문. 1965.9.23. Pg. 3

공화국 창건 18주년 경축 재일본 조선인 중앙체육대회가 성과리에 끝났다. 로동신문. 1966.9.25. Pg. 4

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공화국북반부에서 롱구를 장려하고있는데 대해 남조선잡지가 소개. 로동신문. 1997.5.30. Pg. 5.

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우리 나라 롱구 협회를 차별시하는 것과 관련하여 쏘련 롱구련맹이 국제롱구련맹에 합의. 로동신문. 로동신문. 1967.4.16. Pg. 4.

우리 나라 모란봉 여자 롱구 선수단 쏘련 떼떼떼 여자 롱구 선수단과의 대전에서 63대 58로 승리. 로동신문. 1965.6.28. Pg. 3.

우리 나라 보통강녀자롱구팀과 중국 강소성녀자롱구팀 친선경기 진행. 로동신문. KCNA Watch. 2017.2.25. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1530471911-781080573/%ec%9a%b0%eb%a6%ac-%eb%82%98%eb%9d%bc-%eb%b3%b4%ed%86%b5%ea%b0%95%eb%85%80%ec%9e%90%eb%a1%b1%ea%b5%ac%ed%8c%80%ea%b3%bc-%ec%a4%91%ea%b5%ad-%ea%b0%95%ec%86%8c%ec%84%b1%eb%85%80%ec%9e%90%eb%a1%b1/

우리 나라 선수단이 영예의 제1위를 쟁취(사회주의나라 청소년친선국제녀자롱구경기대회 진행). 로동신문. 1981.8.12. Pg. 5.

우리 나라 선수들이 제1차 동아세아경기대회 권투와 유술, 축구, 롱구경기에서 금메달 1개, 은메달 5개, 동메달 3개 쟁취. 로동신문. 1993.5.19. Pg. 4.

우리 나라 여자롱구선수단들이 이룩한 자랑찬 성과. 로동신문. 1997.12.30. Pg. 4.

우리 나라《폭풍》녀자롱구선수단과 유고슬라비아국가종합녀자롱구선수단사이의 경기 진행. 로동신문. 1998.5.30. Pg. 4.

우리 나라를 친선방문하는 중화인민공화국 체육대표단이 평양에 도착. 로동신문. 2018.10.9. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1539044434-969113124/%ec%9a%b0%eb%a6%ac-%eb%82%98%eb%9d%bc%eb%a5%bc-%ec%b9%9c%ec%84%a0%eb%b0%a9%eb%ac%b8%ed%95%98%eb%8a%94-%ec%a4%91%ed%99%94%ec%9d%b8%eb%af%bc%ea%b3%b5%ed%99%94%ea%b5%ad-%ec%b2%b4%ec%9c%a1%eb%8c%80/

우리 나라를 친선방문하였던 중화인민공화국 체육대표단 귀국. 로동신문. 2018.10.13. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1539390056-9530437/%ec%9a%b0%eb%a6%ac-%eb%82%98%eb%9d%bc%eb%a5%bc-%ec%b9%9c%ec%84%a0%eb%b0%a9%eb%ac%b8%ed%95%98%ec%98%80%eb%8d%98-%ec%a4%91%ed%99%94%ec%9d%b8%eb%af%bc%ea%b3%b5%ed%99%94%ea%b5%ad-%ec%b2%b4%ec%9c%a1/

우리 나라와 꾸바 여자롱구선수단들사이의 친선경기가 있었다. 로동신문. 1974.7.16. Pg. 6.

우리 나라와 몽골, 쏘련(까자흐쓰딴)녀자선수들간의 배구, 롱구경기가 있었다. 로동신문. 1973.5.22. Pg. 6.

우리 남자 롱구팀이 세계롱구선수권대회 참가자격 획득. 로동신문. 1993.11.23. Pg. 4.

우리 녀성 배구 및 롱구 선수들 우수한 성과 달성. 로동신문. 1957.8.4. Pg. 4.

우리 당 군사로선의 위대한 승리를 과시! (조선인민군종합군사 경기대회페막식이 있었다). 로동신문. 1967.6.19. Pg. 1.

우리 당과 조선인민의 위대한 수령 김일성 동지의 탄생 예순돐을 경축하여 열렸던 전국체육축전이 끝났다 (수령님의 품속에서 자라는 우리 청소년학생들과 체육인들의 튼튼한 체력과 높은 체육기술을 과시). 로동신문. 1972.5.3. Pg. 6.

우리나라 2.8 롱구단과 중국 8.1 롱구단간에 첫경기 진행. 로동신문. 1963.5.6. Pg. 4.

우리나라 2.8 롱구단과 중국 8.1롱구단 간의 두 번째 친선 경기 진행. 로동신문. 1963.5.27. Pg. 4.

우리나라 롱구 협회가 국제 롱구 련맹에 가입. 민주조선. 1957.1.24..

우리나라 롱구선수단과 꾸바롱구선수단간의 친선경기 진행 (피델 카스뜨로수상이 경기를 관람). 로동신문. 1968.9.4. Pg. 6.

우리나라 번개팀 여자 룡구 선수들이 80대 45로 승리(민주독일녀자롱구종합선수단과의 친선경기에서). 로동신문. 1961.7.14. Pg. 5.

우리나라 선수단과 캄보쟈 남자 롱구, 탁구 선수단 간의 두 번째 친선 경기. 로동신문. 1963.10.17. Pg. 6.

우리나라 체육 기술의 발전상을 보여주는 종목별 경기 대회 진행. 로동신문. 1965.8.25. Pg. 6.

우리나라 평양시 녀자 롱구선수단과 쏘련 까자흐쓰딴 가맹공화국 녀자롱구종합선수단 사이에 첫 번째 친선경기가 있었다. 로동신문. 1973.5.13. Pg. 4.

우리나라를 방문하는 중국 8.1 롱구단 평양에 도착. 로동신문. 1963.5.1. Pg. 4.

우리나라를 방문하였던 중국남자 롱구 및 녀자배구 선수단이 돌아갔다. 로동신문. 1971.10.4. Pg. 4.

우리나라를 방문한 캄보쟈 남자 롱구, 탁구단과의 마지막 경기 함흥에서 진행. 로동신문. 1963.10.22. Pg. 4.

우리나라에 와있는 중화인민공화국 대사가 중국인민해방군 녀자롱구선수단이 우리나라를 방문한것과 관련하여 연회를 차렸다. 로동신문. 1972.9.13. Pg. 4.

우리나라와 독일민주주의공화국녀자롱구종합선수단들간에 두 번째 친선경기가 있었다. 로동신문. 1970.12.01. Pg. 5.

우리나라와 인도네시아 남자 롱구, 배구 선수들 간의 두 번째 경기 진행. 로동신문. 1963.8.26. Pg. 4.

우리나라와 인도네시아 남자 롱구, 배구 선수들 간의 세 번째 경기 청진에서 진행. 로동신문. 1963.8.29. Pg.4.

우리나라와 인도네시아 남자 배구, 롱구 선수들 간에 친선 경기 진행. 로동신문. 1963.8.24. Pg. 4.

우리나라청년종합녀자롱선수단과 꾸바국가녀자롱구선수당사이의 친선경기 진행. 로동신문. 1997.7.16. Pg. 4.

우리남자배구팀 녀자롱구팀 권투 선수 예선에서 승리. 민주조선. 1957.8.1.

우수한 체육선수후비들을: 조선보장을 앞세워. 로동신문. 2003.6.8. Pg. 4.

우승의 길을 함께 걷는 부부체육인. KCNA.co.jp. KCNA Watch. 2013.6.14. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1452057360-11647668/%c2%b7%ec%9a%b0%ec%8a%b9%ec%9d%98-%ea%b8%b8%ec%9d%84-%ed%95%a8%ea%bb%98-%ea%b1%b7%eb%8a%94-%eb%b6%80%eb%b6%80%ec%b2%b4%ec%9c%a1%ec%9d%b8/

우승의 영예를 빛내인 최우수선수들. 로동신문. 1999.10.10. Pg. 5.

우정혁. 높은 목표, 완강한 실천. 로동신문. 2002.10.22. Pg. 4.

원기연. 활기띤 체육경기. 로동신문. 2004.10.30. Pg. 4.

원산시 인민들 훌륭한 주경기장 건설. 인민체육. 창간 호. 1949. Pg. 32.

원상제. 활발히 벌어지는 과외 체육활동. 로동신문. 1990.1.3. Pg. 4.

웽그리 국가녀자 롱구 종합선수단이 평양에 왔다. 로동신문. 1967.5.17. Pg. 4.

웽그리아를 방문하는 우리 나라 남자 롱구선수단이 떠났다. 로동신문. 1972.3.16. Pg. 4.

위대한 김일성동지께와 김정일동지께 미국 NBA(전국롱구협회) 이전 선수와 일행 금수산태양궁전을 찾아 경의 표시. 로동신문. 2013.3.1. Pg. 4.

위대한 당의 령도따라 선군청년전위의 영예와 혁명적기개를 더 높이 떨치자: 각지 청년들 당과 국가의 지도간부들과 합께 청년절을 기념. 로동신문. 2005.8.29. Pg. 4.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 과학연구사업과 봉사사업에서 모범을 보인 단위들에 감사를 보내시였다. 로동신문. 1999.9.7. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 국가체육위원회에 체육기재들을 보내시였다. 로동신문. 1997.10.24. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 김일성종합대학창립절체 즈음하여 대학 교직원, 학생들과 함께 대학생롱구경기를 관람하시였다. 로동신문. 1997.10.7. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 김책공업종학대학에 체육기재를 보내시였다. 로동신문. 1998.8.28. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 남조선 현대그룹 정주영명예회장과 정몽헌회장을 접견하시였다. 로동신문. 1999.10.2. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 남조선현대그룹 정주영명예회장과 현대아산 정몽헌 회장을 접견하시였다. 로동신문. 2000.6.30. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 여러 대학들에 체육기재를 보내시였다. 로동신문. 1998.10.10. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 제시하신 강령적과업을 철저히 관철하자 (김일성종합대학, 김책공업종합대학 교직원, 학생들의 결의 모임 진행). 로동신문. 1997.10.8. Pg. 3.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 창립 50돐을 맞는 기관차 체육단에 감사를 보내시였다. 민주조선. 2006.1.11. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 학교과외체육소조활동을 강화할데 대한 말씀을 주신 30돌기념 중앙보고화 진행. 로동신문. 2004.4.19. Pg. 2.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지께서 혁명임무수행에서 모범을 보인 단위들에 감사를 보내시였다. 로동신문. 1998.1.7. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지를 모시고 조선인민군종합체육관 개관식 진행. 민주조선. 2011.5.5. Pg. 1.

위대한 령도자 김정일동지의 압록강체육선수단현지지도 40돐 기념보고회 진행. 로동신문. 2002.9.20. Pg. 2.

위대한 령도자를 모시여 우리 생활 혁명적랑만과 희열에 넘친다(경애하는 장군님을 모시고 진행된 예술인체육대회를 두고) -대중체육활동의 본보기를 창조하시여. 로동신문. 2000.11.2. Pg. 4.

위대한 수령 김일성동지께 말레이시아군 총참모장일행과 중국인민해방군 녀자롱구선수단이 금수산기념궁전을 찾아 경의 표시. 로동신문. 1997.8.31. Pg. 5.

위대한 수령 김일성동지께서 베이징체육학원을 방문하시였다. 로동신문. 1975.4.25. Pg. 1.

위대한 수령 김일성동지와 위대한 령도자 김정일동지의 동상을 찾아 재일조선학생소년롱구단 경모의 정 표시. 로동신문. KCNA Watch. 2018.9.29. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1538181712-980458480/%ec%9c%84%eb%8c%80%ed%95%9c-%ec%88%98%eb%a0%b9-%ea%b9%80%ec%9d%bc%ec%84%b1%eb%8f%99%ec%a7%80%ec%99%80-%ec%9c%84%eb%8c%80%ed%95%9c-%eb%a0%b9%eb%8f%84%ec%9e%90-%ea%b9%80%ec%a0%95%ec%9d%bc%eb%8f%99/

위대한 수령 김일성동지와 위대한 령도자 김정일동지의 청준거리 경기장, 경기관현지지도 20돐 기념보고회 진행. 로동신문. 2008.9.4. Pg. 2.

위대한 수령님께서 내놓으신 체육의 전민화방침을 높이 받들고 쌓아올린 주체체육의 빛나는 성과를 남김없이 과시하자 (우리당과 조선인민의 위대한 수령 김일성동지의 탄생 예순돐을 경축하는 전국체육축전이 열렸다). 로동신문. 1972.4.23. Pg. 4.

위대한 수령의 현명한 령도밑에 개화발전된 우리나라 체육의 찬란한 성과를 남김없이 시위하자! (조선민주주인민공화국창건 20주년경축 전국인민체육대회 개막식이 성대히 진행되였다). 로동신문. 1968.9.20. Pg. 3.

위대한 장군님을 금메달로 받드는 충신이 되자 (체육인들의 궐기모임 진행). 로동신문. 1999.9.14. Pg. 1.

위대한 장군님의 현지지도길우에 인민의 행복 꽃 핀다: 담배련합화사에서: 희한한 일터. 로동신문. 2001.7.10. Pg. 3.

위대한령도자김정일동지께서롱구선수들을표창하시였다. 로동신문. 2000.1.3. Pg. 1.

유능한 선수들로 키운다 (기관차체육선수단). 로동신문. 1996.5.18. Pg. 4.

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제17차 백두산상 중앙기관 일군 체육경기대회 페막. 민주조선. 2012.

제17차 백두산상 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 개막. 민주조선. 2012.

제18차 백두산상 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 개막. 민주조선. 2013.

제18차 올림픽 선수 선발 전국 종합 체육 대회 (중앙 선수단 축구, 롱구, 배구 련맹전 최고조). 로동신문. 1964.4.22. Pg. 6.

제18차 올림픽선수 선발 전국 종합 체육대회(제 1차 경기)가 끝났다. 로동신문. 1964.5.3. Pg. 4.

제18차 할레국제녀자롱구경기대회에서 우리 나라 선수단이 제1위를 쟁취. 로동신문. 1987.5.25. Pg. 5.

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제19차《2월 2일상》체육경기대회 진행. 로동신문. 1993.9.1. Pg. 4.

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제1차 전국 청소년 스포츠 학교 체육 대회 개막. 로동신문 1959.5.18. Pg. 3.

제1차 전국청년학생들의 ≪8.28청년컵≫쟁탈 롱구경기대회 페막. 로동신문. 1997.8.4. Pg. 4.

제1차 조선인민군 《일당백상》체육경기대회 진행. 로동신문. 1994.6.26. Pg. 4.

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제1회 체육절 기념 전국체육대회 성항. 인민체육. 12월호. 1949년. Pg. 3.

제20차 백두산상 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 개막. 민주조선. 2015.

제20차 백두산상 중앙기관일군 체육경기대회 페막. KCNA.co.jp. KCNA Watch. 2015.2.16. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1452060458-467122551/%c2%b7%ec%a0%9c20%ec%b0%a8-%eb%b0%b1%eb%91%90%ec%82%b0%ec%83%81-%ec%a4%91%ec%95%99%ea%b8%b0%ea%b4%80%ec%9d%bc%ea%b5%b0-%ec%b2%b4%ec%9c%a1%ea%b2%bd%ea%b8%b0%eb%8c%80%ed%9a%8c-%ed%8e%98%eb%a7%89/

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조선민주주의인민공화국창건기념 성,중앙기관 일군들의 체육경기대회-2019 개막. KCNA.kp. 2019.8.28. https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1566941470-48580376/%ec%a1%b0%ec%84%a0%eb%af%bc%ec%a3%bc%ec%a3%bc%ec%9d%98%ec%9d%b8%eb%af%bc%ea%b3%b5%ed%99%94%ea%b5%ad%ec%b0%bd%ea%b1%b4%ea%b8%b0%eb%85%90-%ec%84%b1%ec%a4%91%ec%95%99%ea%b8%b0%ea%b4%80-%ec%9d%bc/

조선소년단창립 스물여덟돐기념 평양시인민학교체육대회가 열렸다. 로동신문. 1974.6.7. Pg. 6.

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조선에서 받은 인상은 영원히 잊을 수 없다-조선 방문 중국 동력 체육협회 롱구단 부단장 장진휘 녀사의 인상담. 로동신문. 1956.6.15. Pg.3.

조선인민군 4.25체육선수단 창립 40돐 기념보고회 진행. 로동신문. 1989.3.29. Pg. 4.

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조선인민군 여자롱구 및 여자배구 선수들의 중국방문과 관련하여 중국주재 우리나라 대사관에서 연회를 차렸다. 로동신문. 1971.4.2. Pg. 5.

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조선인민군 창건 스물네돐기념 《일당백상》 체육경기대회가 끝났다 (3명의 선수들이 4개 종목에서 세계 새 기록을, 31명의 선수들이 26개 종목에서 공화국 새기록을 새웠다. 로동신문. 1972.2.19. Pg. 6.

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조선인민군창건 28돐기념 전국체육구락부생체육경기대회가 열리고 있다. 로동신문. 1976.2.7. Pg. 4.

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726. Worker, simply titled 로동자 in Korean, was likely a team of players who were not state amateurs. [↑](#footnote-ref-726)
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     (지도일‘군들이 앞장에 서서 일을 짜고 들었다, 체육을 다양하게 조직하고 누구나 한가지 이

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