FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF SPORT TOURISM IN COVASNA COUNTY

PERSPECTIVELE TURISMULUI SPORTIV IN JUDEȚUL COVASNA

MONIKA FOSZTÓ[1], A.I. KISS[2]

[1]Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca
Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Sf. Gheorghe Extension, Romania; fmoni77@yahoo.com
[2]Carpathian Association of Transylvania, Romania

Abstract: *Today, tourism is the world's number one industry while sports is regarded as the number one industry in the leisure sector. Sports is an integral part of all culture, and while often viewed as a separate activity, it is inextricably linked to tourism. Sports can now be viewed as an attraction within the broader tourism industry. In the follows we will present what kind of sport tourism you can find in Covasna county, where is located and a short history of them.*

Key words: *definition of Sports Tourism, Sport Tourist, Summer Sports Tourism, Winter Sports Tourism, Sports Tourism places in Covasna County.*

INTRODUCTION

What is sports tourism?

Sports Tourism is defined as a specific travel outside of the usual environment for either passive or active involvement in competitive sport where sport is the prime motivational reason for travel and the touristic or leisure element may act to reinforce the overall experience.

Who are Sport Tourists?

- They must travel more than 80km and/or stay overnight to attend, compete, or otherwise be involved in a sporting event.
- Sport is the reason they travel - they would not have otherwise traveled to that location had it not been for that specific event.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Today, tourism is the world's number one industry while a sport is regarded as the number one industry in the leisure sector. Sports are an integral part of all culture, and while often viewed as a separate activity, it is inextricably linked to tourism. Sports can now be viewed as an attraction within the broader tourism industry.

Two models are hereby presented that illustrate the forms of Summer and Winter Sports Tourism:

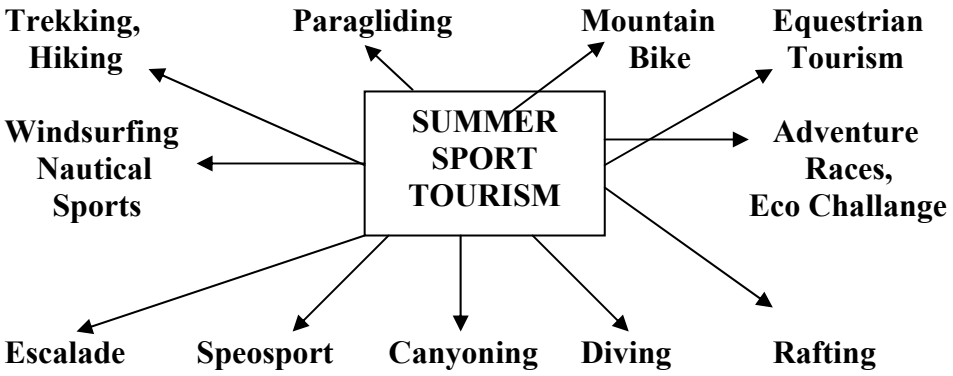


Figure 1. – Forms of Summer Sports Tourism

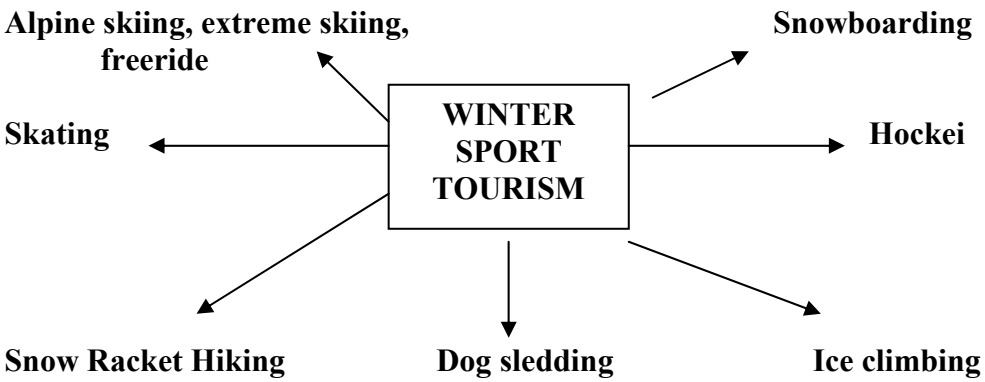


Figure 2. – Forms of Winter Sports Tourism

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Covasna county multiple Sports Tourism activities can be practiced under optimal circumstances being grouped - depending on the certain season- in Winter Sports Tourism activities or in Summer Sports Tourism activities whereby the possibility of the not very old Extreme Sports branch must also be mentioned.

Summer Sports Tourism

Trekking, Hiking - representing important forms of Summer Sports Tourism - can be easily practiced in this zone by reason of the logging roads network, clear paths and traces defining a distance of 134 km. These are allocated along the mountain massive, where the fewest marked routes are found in the Bodoc – Baraolt Mountains, in Nemere Mountain, Vrancea Mountains, small part of the South-Harghita and in the Persani Mountains which separate the county from the Transylvanian Depression.

The next subject to present is the ***Alpinism Tourism.*** The only place in Covasna county, even you have to enter a little bit in Harghita county is in the Persani Mountains the Cheile Varghisului with 10 defined routes also well arranged for speo-alpine techniques schools (organizing SAT courses and courses for advanced -life-guards).

Speotourism is also an important branch. Just in the Central Zone there are catalogued more than 200 cavities. The important ones are to find in the Cheile Varghisului and the most presented is the Big Cave (Pestera Mare) in Meresti that defines a longitude of 1527m. Besides the mentioned ones there are catalogued 125 underground holes.

Mountain biking – is an Extreme Sports branch that can be practiced on the logging roads and the marked tourist paths. In the present are two mountain-bike road opened in Low-Háromszék and Baraolt Mountain region (Zeroo, Green Way). In every year in the last 5 year a few NGO's and Sport Clubs organize Mountain-Bike, Bike sport contest. Jaxtrem Sport Club – Saint George Marathon in June, Tri-Aluta – Duatlon in July or August, EKE Háromszék – Háromszék Adventure in September, Alpin Sport Club – MTB Marathon in October.

Windsurfing – this sport is involving over water travel on a small board powered by aeolian acting on a single sail. It is necessary to have a special training and balance skills in order to practice the windsurfing.
The Central Zone of the Covasna County presents ideal places to practice this sport as the Reci Lake and Padureni Lake.

Equestrian Toursim – is a popular form of Leisure Tourism with a reduced impact on the environment, similar to the cyclotourism, representing a mean of transportation passing long distances. Equestrian Tourism is also very popular on the international level defining a gigantic national potential considering that the horse represents a traditional mean of transportation in Romania being used in all the rural localities. There are many offers presented by different pensions from Ghelinta, the Baraolt Mountains – one day trip – Kalnoky Guest Houses from Miclosoara, Poni-horse School at Arcus, Bodoc, Equestrian School at Sancraiu, Ozun, NGO at Martinis with Traditional Equestrian Tourist programs and trips (lodging included) are organized.

Paragliding – some newly appeared activities in the mountain zone such as the paragliding that presents a reduced activity by reason of a relative restrained public. This activity shows however a slow development. Certainly there are certain risk, cost and time barriers that need to be beaten and mostly there has to be an optimal practice space that are hard to find. Such places can be found in Magherus, Lisnau and Ozun.

Winter Sports Tourism

Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding – represents the principal form of the Romanian mountain tourism. Romanian tourists but also international ones practice this sports discipline in the mountain routs or near the chalets and altitude hotels that offer proper skiing conditions. These routs are properly indicated, secure and assisted by rescue-teams. The routes are modern and fitted with cable transport installations. There are several ski-fields in Covasna county, but two out of them are defined by nocturne lighting with EU standards (Sugas –Bai the health resort of Sfantu Gheorghe, lying in the heart of Baraolt Mountains, in a 9 km distance). The total route longitude in the county is 2100 m. long. Skiing Tourism defines also Ski de Fond, Nordic Skiing (practiced on the marked snowbound paths and traces) and Extreme Skiing - also called Freeride – whereby skiing is

practiced in unconventional, more dangerous abrupt zones representing a higher risk for the participants.

Snow Racket Hiking – the ampleness of this very activity is intensively confirmed from year to year. Its success and its popularity is defined by the interest in feeling the freedom on the snow-bound paths. It represents a direct competition for the Ski de Fond due to the fact that it does not require any particular technique hence there is no need for a certain training. Snow Racket Hiking is the best hiking option in the mountains in snowy winter days. It is considered that its success will compete with the success of the Summer Hiking.

In the years of 2008 and 2009 the EKE Haromszek NGO-s organized two times the Covasna County Snow Racket Hiking Sport Competition with 80 participants every time.

Dog Sledding – this sport appeared in Romania in the last millennium - especially - in the central zones of the country. The central zones are Miercurea Ciuc, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Bălan. The first organized sledding competitions started in these centers dating back to the last millennium. The most important zone where this sport is practiced today in Covasna county is in Comandau village.

CONCLUSIONS

Both the tourism and sports industries have recognized sports tourism as a catalyst for economic and tourism growth. It can play a crucial role in:

- making known to people worldwide and nationwide that the Covasna County has an array of magnificent woods and wild places with breathtaking landscapes and wonderful terrains that are very conducive to sports, adventure and recreational activities. That, in the Covasna county, they can:
  - learn diverse kinds of sports;
  - play and experience sports for recreation and leisure;
  - host high-level sports tournaments;
  - organize friendly games
  - hold sports and adventure boot camps;
  - conduct sports conference and other educational gatherings;
  - advance sports professional and academic competencies.

- ❖ persuading visitors to travel to a particular destination;
- ❖ stimulating visitation at particular times of the year;
- ❖ encouraging visitors to stay longer;
- ❖ facilitating repeat visitation;
- ❖ generating media coverage and promotional opportunities for a destination;
- ❖ broadening perceptions of a destination.

REFERENCES

1. **DRĂGOI C.** (2006) - *Tourism and sports activities in the mountains*, Editura EduSoft, Bacău;
2. **LASCU C.** (2006) – *Ghidul turismului de aventură*, Editura House of Guides, București;
3. *** Asociația Carpatină Ardeleană;
4. *** www.erdelyikarpategyesulet.ro