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Reading the team list of the Australian National Handball Team for the World Championships in Croatia, (16th January till 1st February 2009), and finding names like Ognjen Latinovic, Bojan Stojanovic, Mladen Turanjanin, Nemanja Subotic, Dragan Jerkov and Zlatko Ivankovic, one might think that the it is about the National Team of one of the former Yugoslavian republics.

This is, however, only a proof that young people from those regions genetically carry skills of a sport which once used to be the Yugoslavian pride, while winning gold medals in worlds' biggest tournaments.

In Australia, handball is an amateur sport, so these talented boys have to raise part of the funds in order to compete amongst the world best handballers.

- Australian Olympic Committee will provide minimal funds, but we are still required to raise some money ourselves – said the national team goalkeeper, Ognjen Latinovic.

The left wing from the national team, Bojan Stojanovic added to Ognjen's comments:

- Croatian Handball Federation offered their help by providing us with a training camp including free accommodation, food and training matches against three Croatian teams. However, there is not enough money, especially compared to other handball national teams.

This is the reason why our two lads, together with a team mate Daniel Kelly, organized a fundraising event which was held in Serbian-Montenegrin Centre in Brisbane. They invited their handball friends, relatives and generous people to attend this trivia night and all the money raised was just a small help to these handball enthusiasts.

Ognjen (23), Bojan (23), and Mladen Turanjanin (26), who came to Brisbane from Melbourne, are all from Sarajevo. They never met in their homeland. They were too young to play any sport before the war, but faith joined them together in Australia and in the Australian National Team.

Ognjen and Bojan started playing handball together at University of Queensland in 2003. Ognjen joined the national team the same year, while Bojan was a member of the squad in 2005 and joined the first team in 2008. The team is in their final stages of preparations for the World Championships, but neither Ognjen nor Bojan have big ambitions towards the team's placement.

- We have a young and talented team, very good players, but we lack in experience – said Bojan and continued:

- We will play in group A in Osijek from the 17th January against France, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Argentina and we are not expecting anything special because we know the power of all our opponents.

Ognjen Latinovic also looks realistically at the Australian chances at the championships:

- We are coming to Croatia as Oceania champions and we believe that we can secure a couple of wins in the second round to achieve a better placement.

Their relatives and friends have wished them good games and results in Croatia, so hopefully there will be more money for their travels to the future tournaments.

Small Article (bottom left)

Both our boys know about the success of Yugoslavian handball from early years including Metaloplastika from Sabac in the club competitions. Ognjen met former Serbian goalkeeper Dane Sijan and Bojan met fantastic Vlada Mandic, so they had an opportunity to hear directly from the players about the handball successes and great players that Yugoslavia had.

Small Article (top right)

Ognjen before and after the World Championships in Germany in 2007, where he was, beside the conceded goals, named 'The Man of the Match', played in clubs in Denmark and Faroe Islands, where he gained more experience.

- Handball is a big sport over there and is very popular. With that comes the quality, and I have offers to return there and play after Croatia – said Ognjen.
- World Championships is a chance for you to be noticed if you play well and eventually get a call to join some European team – Bojan agreed with his team mate.