



Did You know that

Estonians are sport fanatics?

Estonians believe that sport is good, and great athletes always draw much public attention in these parts. Yes, both special sport stars and special sport events are held in esteem in Estonia!

Tiesitkö, että virolaiset ovat urheiluhulluja?

Virolaiset uskovat, että urheilu on hyvää ja suuret urheilijat saavat julkisuudessa suurta huomiota. Kyllä, Virossa osataan arvostaa sekä erityisiä urheilijoita että eri urheilulajeja!

Знаете ли вы, что эстонцы — фанаты спорта?

Эстонцы верят во всеилие спорта и выдающихся спортсменов сопровождает здесь почтение и уважение. Да, в Эстонии умеют ценить как звезд спорта, так и звездные виды спорта!

Kas teadsid, et eestlased on spordihullud?

Eestlased usuvad, et sport on hea ja suuri sportlasi saadab siinmail ikka avalikkuse suur tähelepanu. Jah, Eestis osatakse lugu pidada nii erilistest sporditähedest kui ka erilistest spordialadest!



Georg Lurich 1876 - 1920

Georg Lurich - 5 men with one finger!

The professional strongman Georg Lurich (1876–1920) was the first Estonian to achieve success in the sporting arena. Well known the world over and enjoying the status of a legend in Estonia to this day, Lurich was delighted to complement his performances with various stunts. The photograph shows Lurich's heroic stunt, lifting up five men with one finger!



30 kilogrammes of silver!

The world's most important shooting trophy – the Cup of Argentina, which is awarded for a team victory in free rifle shooting at the World Championships – has been bagged by Estonia's national team on two occasions (1937 and 1939). By the way, it is in Estonia that this fine silver trophy survived the unquiet years of World War II, kept safe in repositories there. When the anxious times passed, the Cup returned to the trophy table of World Championships once more.



World's best marksmen!

For Estonians, shooting has been an incredibly successful sport. As of 2012, Estonians have snapped up 77 gold medals at World Championships, and in the late 1930s they were hard to match in the world!

Estonian national team of marksmen during their World Championships Debut (L'viv, 1931)



Heraldic animal of Tallinn Zoo

Estonia's marksmen supported the creation of Tallinn Zoo! Estonia's team, World Champions in Helsinki in 1937, were given a live lynx cub, Illu, as a present in Finland. Indeed, a lynx became the first exhibit at Tallinn Zoo and also the heraldic animal on its logo.



Estonians won the first basketball match in the Olympic History

Estonia's national team participated in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, participating furthermore in the first-ever basketball face-off at the Olympics. It was a face-off between Estonia and France, with the jump ball tipped off by the inventor of basketball himself, James Naismith. The game was won by Estonia, acquiring the first victory in the history of Olympic basketball to its name.



The first decathlon record was set by an Estonian!

The first officially recorded decathlon world record was set in 1922 by the Estonian Aleksander Klumberg, a future Olympic bronze medalist in the same event.



Yachts on ice

For Estonians, ice yachting is a traditional winter pastime and also a serious sport where medals are gained at major competitions. Monotype XV, one of the better known ice yacht models today, was designed by the Estonian Erik Holst in 1932.



Motor sport craze

The Pirita-Kose-Kloostrimetsa racing circuit in Tallinn has hosted countless different motor sports competitions, from the USSR Championships all the way to the Kalevi Suursõit races. On competition days of the glory years during the Soviet period, spectators along the track are said to have numbered as many as 140,000!



Estonia's Formula 1 cars

Estonia has also hosted Formula 1 races. The main vehicles were locally manufactured. The manufacturing of Formula 1 vehicles called Estonia began in Tallinn in 1957 and lasted until 2000.



Estonia outdoes the US!

In the late 1960s, Estonian basketball was world-class. This was also proved by the victory in 1970 of Estonia's national team over the US team who were preparing for the Munich Olympics. The Americans could not even be helped to victory by the future NBA star Julius Erving (No 6)!

A glimpse of the legendary meet between Estonian and US basketball players in 1970



Special things – special museum!

A glimpse of the serious and not-so-serious sport achievements of Estonians are on display at the Estonian Sports Museum in Tartu and its Otepää Winter Sports Museum branch. The Estonian Sports Museum is the largest sport museum in the Baltic States!