# Y.M.C.A. THESSALONIKI
# THE “CRADLE” OF GREEK BASKETBALL

THE CONTRIBUTION OF Y.M.C.A. THESSALONIKI
IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASKETBALL
IN GREECE
1919-2019

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**The story of an overturned chair**

The story goes back to 1891 at the YMCA College in Springfield, Massachusetts, with two peach baskets ... Outside it snows heavily whereas inside the gymnasium the young students, under the instructions of James Naismith, learn how to play the new game with a ball and two baskets by using their hands ...
At the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the next, demonstrations of the new sport are being organized in Europe: in France, Italy and elsewhere.
In 1918, members of the YMCA staff as well as volunteers arrive in Greece and set up in Thessaloniki the Soldier's Homes for the Entente Allied Forces: entertainment, education, sports, aimed at assisting foreign and Greek soldiers camping for a long time in the city.
This way, in 1919, exactly 100 years ago, basketball is played for the first time in Greece. On an improvised open field, near the White Tower, in the area of Pedion tou Areos. Instead of peach baskets, there was an overturned chair...The executives of (being set upat that time) Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, along with the YMCA executives, set up the first courts.
Since then and until nowadays, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki has been fostering, teaching, developing and spreading the sport of basketball in Greece. It is the forefront and encourages the establishment of teams and clubs that want to pursue basketball. It spreads the sport in schools, it teaches and publishes manuals of regulations, continuously "produces" athletes and administrative agents, organizes referee schools, leads in the founding of the Hellenic Basketball Federation (H.B.F.), the local federations (E.K.A.S.TH.) and FIBA itself.
The main purpose of the people of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki is to spreadthe sport and Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki becomes the cradle of Greek basketball. The historic outdoor court of Y.M.C.A Thessaloniki has been recognized as the cradle of the sport in Greece.
Y.M.C.A Thessaloniki brought, taught, spread and established basketball in our homeland. It did it with love and devotion. Its purpose has always been to develop the sport along with the spread of its principles and its philosophy: balanced development of soul, spirit and body, love for sports, teamwork, respect towards the opponent, adherence to the rules of the game, "fair play".
The School of Sports of Y.M.C.A .Thessaloniki has never stopped supplying basketball in Greece and abroad with young athletes - sport lovers. With consistency and firm commitment to amateur athletics!
And the journey continues …
The anniversary album you are holding flashes back to this 100-year journey, from the era of the overturned chair and externally-seamed leather ball up to today's enviable conditions and facilities.
The connecting link among all these decades, from 1919 to the present, is the contribution to young people, the love for sports and the passion for basketball.
Happy Anniversary to the Greek Basketball!

October 2019
Yiannis Sossidis
President of the Council Board of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki



## Who we are

The Young Men's Christian Association of Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A.-Th) was founded in 1921. It is a charitable, non-profit association that through the National Council of YMCAs of Greece is also a member of the European and the World Alliances of YMCAs. It plays an important role in both sport and culture in Greece. Y.M.C.A.-Th is housed in one of the city's most historic buildings and a landmark in its urban development. It is located between the White Tower and the new City Hall and marks the entrance to the city center. The building is home to the administrative offices and serves as a venue for the Association's sport and educational activities. It includes outdoor athletic facilities and a modern sports centre with a covered court, fitness studio and the first Basketball Museum in Greece. The Organisation is active in the broader area through two branches, in Kalamaria since 1954 and in Asvestohori since 1989, where all programmes and activities of Y.M.C.A.-Th pillars are cultivated and are integrated in the local societies.

Y.M.C.A.-Th has more than 1,000 regular and 12,000 ad hoc members, who take part in its programmes and activities. It is managed by 24 volunteers (regular members), members of its Council Board (elected), who are assisted by 250 volunteer members serving on special committees and advise and make recommendations to the Council Board to enhance the functions of the Association in its various activities. Y.M.C.A.-Th's regular functions are supported by 50 regular staff members, 185 occasional employees and 50 seasonal employees. Through sports, education, physical exercise, camps, social contribution and action, based largely on volunteer work, the Association aims at a balanced development of young people's spirit, mind, body and sociability. These goals are reflected in the .Y.M.C.A.-Th logo - an equilateral triangle bisected by a line of equal length.

## Our Vision

Y.M.C.A.-Th's vision is to be an inclusive, participatory and democratic organisation centred on young people and their care. With respect for tradition, while steadily focused on innovation, the aim of Y.M.C.A.-Th is that its members contribute as volunteers and serve its purposes through the actions and programmes it implements.With an open and creative spirit and faith in the universal principles of practising Christianity without dogmatism, it promotes justice and supports a complete society, with dialogue and respect for diversity, a society of equality and love without discriminations.

## Our Mission

The aim and steadfast concern of Y.M.C.A.-Th is for children and young people.Its priority is to contribute to society by strengthening characters and cultivating a culture of volunteerism amongst youth.The Association endeavours, through actions and hands-on programmes, to help young people believe in themselves, to develop their potential, to prepare to take on positions of responsibility, and to become active and useful citizens.

## Y.M.C.A.-TH TODAY

### SPORTS & WELL-BEING

Having a long tradition in sporting activities, Y.M.C.A.-Th fosters teams in 10 sports, exclusively and strictly oriented to amateur athletics.At the same time, YMCA-Th runs sports academies in 14 sports to develop future generations of athletes,while each summer organizes both weekly sports camps for learning more sports and specialty camps for specific sports.With a deeply held belief in the sporting culture, it provides all necessary infrastructure, while its specially trained athletic staff is constantly at the side of young people at their every step, bringing out their skills and strengthening their competitive development by applying best athletic practices.

For Y.M.C.A.-Th, a healthy mind together with physical exercise constitute the ideal recipe for a good, healthy way of life. Everyone has a right to well-being and that is why the experienced trainers at Y.M.C.A.-Th seek out modern methods of fitness training each year bringing even more total fitness programmes to the city for children, teens and adults.Pool programs stand out as the citizens of Thessaloniki can use the only indoor heated swimming pool in city-center, modern fitness and alternative gym classes, activities tailored to preschool children and of course the Dance School with different types of dance and ballet.

## EDUCATION & CULTURE

Each academic year, Y.M.C.A.-Th develops and implements a number of educational seminars for people of all ages. Acquiring new knowledge becomes a daily goal and those taking part can cultivate their interests and make creative use of their free time. They also have the option of earning a certificate in innovative and targeted programmes through its Centre for Education and Life-long Learning.Theatre workshops for children and adults, workshops in art, music lessons in various instruments, crafts and photography classes, activities for children as young as 6 months, are just a few of the programmes offered.In the event hall of the Y.M.C.A.-Thare given Karagiozis and Puppet performances, while in school holiday periods are organized weekly, constructive employment programmes.

Since 1990, Y.M.C.A.-Th has been running a three-year, informal training school for staff and young volunteers (Youth Leadership Training School).The programme is aimed at teens aged 14 to 16, who are trained in cooperation, leadership, responsibility and initiative through team-building games and activities. A hands-on, experiential approach is used for teen training.

Y.M.C.A.-Th operates since 1965 a nursery school and a kindergarten, where it follows a model programme. Children aged 2½ to 6 have the opportunity to engage in activities outside their home for the first time in a pleasant and friendly environment designed in accordance with modern specificationsand under the guidance of trained teachers.

Y.M.C.A.-Th in 1991 developed in cooperation with the Hellenic Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage the "Walks through the City" programme. This ground-breaking initiative is offeredso the citizens learn about Thessaloniki's history and culture.

Since its start in 1983, the Y.M.C.A.-Th Folk Dance Club aspires to preserve the music and dance traditions and customs of Greece. As part of its scope, the Folk Dance Club runs classes to teach and showcase traditional dances along with a traditional chorus.

Of course, in the education and culture pillar of Y.M.C.A.-Th there is also the Basketball Museum, which is referred to later.

## CAMPS & ENVIRONMENT

Generations of citizens from Thessaloniki and all of Greece have passed through the Y.M.C.A.-Th camps, where all of its members come together and where the friendships created there last a lifetime.

The Y.M.C.A. camp at the seaside village of Ag. Ioannis -Pelion was established in 1924 and was the first organised camp for children in Greece.Through its long history, it welcomed tens of thousands of Greek children to its tents, as well as campers from all over the world, as its operation gained a national reputation and became a point of reference for all camps in Greece.

The camp at Ag. Nikolaos - Chalkidiki opened in 1972.The camp extends over a pine-covered, privately owned slope of 12 hectares, leading to the sea and a beach of 350 m.The Chalkidiki camp includes an additional water sports programme, with small sail boats and canoes, and also features a unique Adventure Trail.

Since 1980, YMCA Thessaloniki has implemented a unique backpacking programme of 12 days in nature along the Pindosmountains. It comprises a number of activities such as climbing to the peak of Mount Smolikas, traversing the Vikos Gorge, rafting along the Voidomatis River and spend the evenings around the camp fire.

Y.M.C.A.-Th decided in 1990 to launch its camp educational programme outside the mountain village of Nymfaion-Florina at an altitude of 1,350 min a beech forest. The education centre programme includes horse riding, mountain biking, lake activities, visits to the Arcturos wildlife refuge and to the Nikeios School, cleaning actions in the settlement of Nymfaio and environmental activities.

Y.M.C.A.-Th introduced two special innovative programmes: a programme for teens on sail boats in the Northern Sporades region and a backpacking programme in Northeast side of Mount Pelion.

Overall in camping programmes of Y.M.C.A.-Th live unique experiences in total contact with nature every year over 2,800 children and adolescents.

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Helping young people to strengthen their social skills is one of the Association's key priorities. Y.M.C.A.-Th encourages youth to learn to work together and to contribute for the benefit of the common good. Through dozens of programmes adapted to the needs of the times, it trains its volunteers both in offering solidarity and assistance to fellow citizens in need, and in actions and interventions that highlight the positive aspects of every city district, contribute to the urban environment and culture and encourage the adoption of a responsible way of life as active citizens.

Respecting the right of children to equal opportunities in education, sports and recreation, it provides dozens of scholarships for its programmes to children from institutions and social organisations and youngsters from vulnerable social groups.

Y.M.C.A.-Th has a long history in meaningful assistance for refugees. Since 2015, a team of its volunteers has worked at the hotspot in Eidomeni and at the refugee facility in Diavata continuing a course of providing assistance to all those who arrive in Greece as refugees. Meanwhile, Y.M.C.A.-Th participates together with the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, the Municipality of Thessaloniki and other organizations to offer sport and recreation activities to refugee children aiming at their smooth integration into Greek society.

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# THESSALONIKI GETS ACQUAINTED WITH BASKETBALL

## 1.1. Thessaloniki: a melting-pot of people and a base of military operations

Macedonia and Thessaloniki, after their liberation in 1912 and their integration in the Greek State, became the main attraction of the Greek populations living abroad who come and settle in them. Greeks of Diaspora [Greeks living outside Greece (translator's note)], coming from areas that were not liberated after the Balkan wars, emigrated and settled in Thessaloniki, seeking for a better future in liberated Greece. The liberated regions were given a new name that will follow them for many years: they are named the "New Lands".

A few years later, after the outbreak of World War I, Thessaloniki is gradually becoming a "military outpost" of the Entente Allied Powers. Because of its important geopolitical position, the Allies start using Thessaloniki as a springboard to their military operations on the Macedonian Front. This large surge of troops, immigrants and refugees alters dramatically the city's character, adding a multicultural atmosphere and turning it to a melting pot of people, religions, morals and customs.

Upon the Movement of National Defense (by Venizelists) in 1916 and the establishment of the "State of Thessaloniki", Greece officially joins the Entente Alliance, thereby the presence of foreign troops in the city is intensified and the city and its surrounding areas are turned into a vast military camp.

"[...] In 1916 large troopships are daily arriving to the Thermaikos Gulf carrying soldiers, weapons and ammunition. Thessaloniki is probably the most crowded city in the world. I couldn't believe it ten years ago, when this city looked asleep in the Middle Ages. Now, there are new shops, new hotels, people of all races are met in the streets, British soldiers, British and French colonial units with soldiers from Africa and Asia, Vietnamese, French-Senegalese, Italians, Albanians, Serbs [...]" is written in the diary of an English war correspondent.

The great fire of 1917 completely destroys the 2/3 of the city center, devouring public buildings, churches, synagogues, mosques and thousands of homes. However, what remains unchanged is the presence of thousands of soldiers, including Greek Armed Forces.

In 1918, in the bustling and multicultural Thessaloniki, in this colorful "mosaic of people", an ... American "touch" will be added: a Y.M.C.A. mission arrives at that time, aiming at helping, entertaining and elevating the morale of the afflicted from the constant hostilities soldiers, something that similar British, French and American missions had already done earlier on the various European war fronts.

Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association) is an organization with a strong social, voluntary and athletic activity that focuses on young people. Founded in 1844 in England by Sir George Williams, it quickly gained wide acceptance in Europe and America as it provided young people with a spiritual outlet and sporting activity in the difficult years after the industrial revolution.

In the context of the cultural diplomatic effort of the Governance of President of the United States of America Thomas Woodrow Wilson that aimed to achieve the infiltration in the Eastern Mediterranean, the American Red Cross and the American Y.M.C.A. begin working in Ottoman Turkey (Izmir, Istanbul, Edirne), in Greece and in other Balkan countries. In Thessaloniki, where the rear-line of the Macedonian Front was, they assume responsibility for the operation of the "Soldier's Homes", originally founded by the French army and now being expanded and developed with excellent results.

## 1.2. Y.M.C.A. captivates Thessaloniki

In 1919, the decision of the American Y.M.C.A. to dispatch entertainment units for the military units camped in Thessaloniki, fascinate the citizens, as people in Thessaloniki are thrilled with the Y.M.C.A. action, which they immediately embrace. Y.M.C.A. rapidly develops a solidarity network for the most deprived persons and organizes soup kitchens. In the "Soldier's Homes", restaurants, barbershops, cinemas, libraries start operating and stationery is distributed for correspondence. Lectures are also given to raise the soldiers' morale, free foreign language courses are introduced, while sport constitutes a very special and at the same time very important chapter in the program of Y.M.C.A. It was Y.M.C.A., which a few years earlier, in 1891, invented and developed both basketball and volleyball at its Educational Institute, at Springfield College, Massachusetts, USA.

Through the encouragement of the Greek military leadership and as Greek soldiers find themselves fighting incessantly since the Balkan Wars, to World War I, the Crimean Campaign and to Asia Minor, the "Soldier's Homes" are multiplied and expanding their activity in other cities, too.

## 1.3. A professor of Y.M.C.A. teaches "Basket Ball"...

An exquisitely informative description of the Y.M.C.A. action in Thessaloniki is given in the newspaper "Tachidromos tis Voriou Ellados", which in its edition dated 17.11.1921 hosts an interview of Ulius Louis Amoss, Head of the US mission, Director of the Thessaloniki Red Cross and the first General Director of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. The interview was given in the at the time offices of Y.M.C.A., which were housed in a three-storey building at no 19, Evzonon Street, where the offices of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki were also hosted for some time. The reportage reveals actions from the "Soldier's Home", which was located near the White Tower. It is written: "For more than three years we have been watching the action of an American association whose initials are Y.M.CA., standing for the Young Men's Christian Association […] The management of the sports department has been assigned to Professor Mr. Butley, who teaches for free to the various military corps the games of Volleyball, Basketball, Handball, Baseball, Football and other sports as well. [...] Mr. Butley also teaches in schools and teaches athletics to the army coaches, so that they will teach these exercises to their soldiers". In addition, the reportage provides the following information: "Within the Soldier's Homes, the soldiers were receiving paper and envelopes for free, playing various sports and spending their time in the reading rooms and pool halls. Coffee was sold there for five cents and tea, cigarettes and chocolates were all sold very cheap. […] Cinema movies were screened three times a week while concerts or karagiozis [shadow puppet fictional character of Freek folklore (translator's note)] shows or mandolinata performances were also given three times per week. [... inside the homes] there was a barber shop, board games, dominoes, chess, backgammon, library and restaurants".
The action of Y.M.C.A. in Thessaloniki, in a city with no sports infrastructure and sports culture, is fully embraced by its residents and slowly but steadily a solid relationship is starting to build between them. A relationship which in the following years will be strengthened, through the contribution of its prominent citizens, who witness the multidimensional work of the Organization (charitable, social, athletic, cultural) and come to realize that a "Y.M.C.A." is necessary for the youth of the city.
As such, the founding of the Greek Y.M.C.A. is now a matter of time.

## 1.4. The Young Men's Christian Association of Thessaloniki "takes shape"

In 1919 a committee of prominent members of Thessaloniki's society is set up with the aim of establishing a Greek Y.M.C.A. in Thessaloniki. In April 1919, a letter was sent to the International Committee of Y.M.C.A.'s, which was then based in New York, and it was signed by the Metropolitan Gennadios of Thessaloniki, the Commander-in-Chief of Macedonia Konstantinos Adosidis, the Mayor of Thessaloniki Konstantinos Aggelakis, the President of the Trade Association Athanasios Makris and the President of Associations and Guilds Konstantinos Rompapas. The letter referred to the necessity of establishing a Y.M.C.A. in Thessaloniki and was followed by proposals regarding the prospect of erecting a privately-owned building to operate in a plot that was to be granted by the State for this kind of purpose.
In 1920 the activity of Y.M.C.A. in Thessaloniki, even before its official founding, had become well known throughout Greece. Indicatively, King Alexandros of Greece responded by a letter in March 1920 to the - being set up - Y.M.C.A.'s of Thessaloniki letter, in which it had informed him of its intentions to obtain legal status: "The Young Men's Christian Association, linking the religious sentiment with physical training, produces both Christian and Hellenic work, so I have no doubt that today's Greek youth will hasten to collaborate with it."
A similar letter was written in April 1920 by the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Armed Forces of Asia Minor, Leonidas Paraskevopoulos, in which he praises the work of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki: "By establishing the "Soldiers' Homes", the Young Men's Christian Association not only succeeded in brightening up the time the soldiers spent in there, but at the same time it trained their souls and bodies. The relentless passing of our soldiers from the various "Soldier's Homes" proves



the great success of this beneficial project. Under the capacity of the Army leader, I would like to express my warm thanks to the Young Men's Christian Association ".
So, on September 2, 1921, the founding act was signed and on October 27, 1921 its Statute was recognized by the Thessaloniki Court of First Instance. Y.M.C.A. of Thessaloniki acquires legal personality as a non-profit organization, in the form of a Legal Entity under Private Law.
Georgios Paraskevopoulos, the Prefect of Thessaloniki, was appointed as the Chairman of the first Council Board of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, while this first Board of Directors consisted of: the Macedonian Freedom Fighter and General of the Army Dimitrios Kakkavos, the President of the Municipal Council Spyros Tzamtzis, the Vice-President of the Municipal Council An. Brachalis, the Municipal councilman and a man who was engaged in Sport Apostolos Kosmpopoulos, the Appeal Court Judge A. Agapinos, the Curator of Antiquities Stratis Pelekidis, the High School Principal Evangelos Tanos, the doctor Anastasios Mitsopoulos, the Police Director T. Papaconstantinou, the Captain of Gendarmerie P. Polychronakos, the Principal of the Teacher Training School Nikolaos Louvaris, the trader Ar. Zachos, the Professor Xenophon Konstantinidis and L. Gatenio, Nikolaos Kotas and the Primary School Inspector Ioannis Velkos.
Going back to the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki archives, it is plausible that many other important names of business executives are mentioned, who had emerged as sport personalities in the following years, such as Apostolos Nikolaidis, Symeon Mavroskoufis and the American Lewis Riess (to whom there is an extensive reference hereafter).
Y.M.C.A.-Th immediately informs the Authorities and political structures of its prospective plans. Eleftherios Venizelos, an "ally" from the very first moment of the actions of Y.M.C.A. in Greece, embraces in a letter the new effort, which is initiated in Thessaloniki. In his letter to Y.M.C.A.-Th, he states, amongst others: "I am so much espousing your plans, so I am seizing this opportunity to thank you and all the members of our wonderful organization for the services offered in Greece."
Eleftherios Venizelos and his government, in addition to supporting the founding of Y.M.C.A.-Th, equally supports the establishment of similar educational institutions, such as the Hellenic American Educational Foundation of Athens College, the transfer and installation of the American Anatolia College from Merzifon, Pontus to Thessaloniki, but also the further development of the American Farm School in Thessaloniki.

## 1.5. A beautiful basketball "journey" begins

Thessaloniki, of course, is not the only city, not even the first city in Europe, to enthusiastically welcome the new sport of basketball.
There are reports describing the first basketball shows held by the French branch of Y.M.C.A. at Trevise Street (at the heart of Montmartre) in Paris in 1893, just two years after the game was invented by a professor and member of Y.M.C.A. James Naismith at the University of Springfield. An extremely important event was the famous "Inter-Allied Games" (June 22, 1919), which took place between the French and Americans at the newly-built Pershing Stadium, constructed by the US army and the Y.M.C.A., in the Vincennes forest in Paris and which was offered from USA to France as a gift.
That same year, citizens of the Southeast Europe became acquainted with basketball for their first time: In 1919 at the Milan Stadium, thousands of spectators were entertained watching this new sport, awaiting the arrival of cyclists of the Italian cycling tour. In this competition the army, and more specifically Malpensa aviators and motorists of the 2nd Artillery Park take the lead (as is the case in Greece).

## 1.6. Thessaloniki watches basketball

Along with the establishment of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, a beautiful journey begins: that of the history of basketball in Greece, which is inextricably linked to Y.M.C.A.-Th, a historically documented fact.
In the summer of 1919, the photographic lens "captures" a moment that no one could possibly have imagined and it was to be considered the first historical basketball photographic proof: A group of men, members of Y.M.C.A. staff (including Ulius Amoss and Jerry Sab) are depicted playing the new sport of Basketball (probably in the Pedion tou Areos, in Thessaloniki, where the 3rd Army Corps is found today) dressed in civilian clothes and holding a leather externally-seamed ball and having placed a straw overturned chair on a wooden pole for a basket!

According to reports from the US mission in Thessaloniki, a couple of competition shows of this new sport were held this same year (1919) by soldiers in the same place.
The first "seed" of the development of basketball, the sport that was invented by the Professor of Physical Education James Naismith at the Y.M.C.A. College in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1891, falls into a fertile ground and suitable for its growth.
Upon careful study of the first steps of basketball in Greece, it comes out that Y.M.C.A.-Th lies behind every effort of creating the appropriate conditions for the development of the sport (either at the level of facilities, at the level of know-how or at the level of human resources training).
In the decades to come, Y.M.C.A.-Th maintains an "open communication" with USA and remains the central "entrance gate" of basketball in Greece. Y.M.C.A.-Th organizes the Thessaloniki championships, holds basketball seminars, opens-up horizons to the outside world by playing friendly games with the US Army teams, encourages the formation of new teams, produces players, coaches and referees, while paving the way for establishing basketball.



## 1.7. Naismith makes history

An integral part of the history of Y.M.C.A. is James Naismith, a Physical Education Professor, widely known as the inventor of Basketball. Naismith was born on November 6, 1861 in Ramsay, in Ontario County, Canada, coming from a family of Scottish immigrants. From a young age he loved sports, gymnastics and especially lacrosse (Canadian sport), as well as the American rugby. He studied Physical Education in Montreal, yet his later engagement with teaching at Y.M.C.A. International Training School (in Springfield, Massachusetts, USA) would definitely change his life. In 1891 he was instructed by college officials to create a sport that could be played indoors. After having studied the other sports played at his time (football, rugby, lacrosse, hockey and baseball), he came up with a new sport played with hands. On December 15 of the same year, he gathered 18 students in the indoor gym, split them into two groups of nine people and instructed them to fix two peach baskets to the opposing walls. He had initially thought of using trash bins, however the idea was rejected by the school superintendent Mr. Stebbins.
One month later, on January 15, 1892, Naismith formally published the 13 regulations and announced the first college basketball tournament to take place.
The original manuscript involving the 13 Regulations was until a few years ago owned by his grandson, Ian Naismith, who sold it in December 2010 at Sotheby's auction house in New York for $ 4.3 million!
The buyers were the couple of David and Susan Booth (wealthy businessmen from Kansas, USA), who in turn donated this relic to the University of Kansas, where it has been exhibited since 2012.



1924. View of the port of Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





1921. The Central Club of the "Soldier's" operated by the American Y.M.C.A. in Pedion tou Areos (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1920-1921. In the area of Top Hané there was the “Soldier’s Home” of the American Y.M.C.A. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive).



At the Central “Soldier’s Home” the teaching of the Bible was being held (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



Reading room at the Central “Soldier’s Home” (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1919. The first photographic proof on the introduction of basketball in Greece. One of the first basketball demonstrations by members of Y.M.C.A. staff, turning a straw, overturned chair into a basket (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1921. Ulius L. Amoss, Director General of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, 1921 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

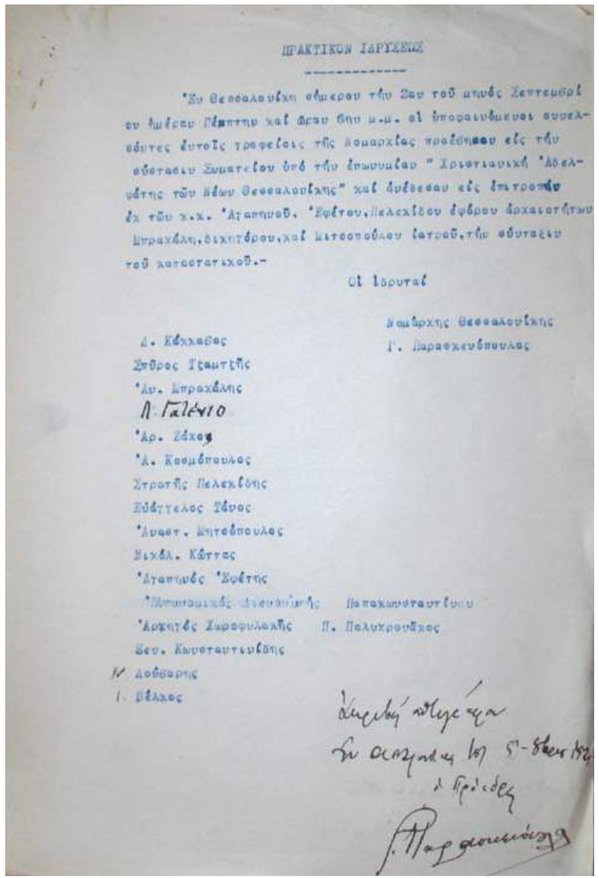


Clyde M. Bosley was the first Director of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, 1921 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





At 19 Evzonon Street, the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki headquarters as well as the Youth Club operated until 1924 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Achive)



ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΟΝ ΙΔΡΥΣΕΩΣ

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Ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ σήμερον τὴν 2αν τοῦ μηνὸς Σεπτεμβρίου ἡμέραν Πέμπτην καὶ ὥραν δεκάτην μ.μ. οἱ ὑποφαινόμενοι συνελθόντες ἐντὸς τοῦ γραφείου τῆς Δημαρχίας προέβημεν εἰς τὴν σύστασιν Σωματείου ὑπὸ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν " Χριστιανικὴ Ἀδελφότης τῶν Νέων Θεσσαλονίκης" καὶ ἐψηφίσαμεν εἰς ἐπιτροπὴν διὰ τὸν κ.κ. Ἀταμπιὰν. Ἔφορον Μελετίου ἐφόρου ἀρχαιοτήτων Κυριακίδη, διευθυντὴν καὶ Μητσοπούλου ἰατρὸν, τὴν σύνταξιν τοῦ καταστατικοῦ.-

Οἱ Ἱδρυταί

Δημαρχὴς Θεσσαλονίκης
Γ. Παρασχεύοπουλος

Δ. Κάκκαβος
Σπύρος Τσαμτζῆς
Ἀν. Κυριακίδης
Π. Γαλάνης
Ἀρ. Ζάχος
Ἀ. Κεσμπούλος
Στρατ. Πελεκίδης
Εὐάγγελος Τάνος
Δημητ. Μητσόπουλος
Μιχάλ. Κάππας
Ἀταμπιὰς Ἔφορος
Μπουσιούκης Διευθυντὴς Παπαλωνταντίνου
Ἀρχιτέκτ. Ἰωαννίδης Π. Πελυχρονίκης
Θεοδ. Καναταυτσίδης
Δοβόρης
Ι. Βέλλιος

Δικηγορικὴ πληρεξουσία
διὰ συζήτησιν τὴν 5η-18 Δεκ. 1922
Ὁ Πρόεδρος
Γ. Παρασχεύοπουλος

The establishment act of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki on 02/09/1921 (Historical Archive of Macedonia, Archive of the Thessaloniki Court of First Instance, ABE: 483, AEE: DOC 1.10, Fil. 258)





ΤΑΧΥΔΡΟΜΟΣ ΒΟΡΕΙΟΥ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

# ΕΙΔΗΣΕΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΗΜΕΡΑΣ

## ΤΟ ΕΡΓΟΝ ΚΑΙ Η ΔΡΑΣΙΣ
## ΤΗΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΚΗΣ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΤΗΤΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΝΕΩΝ
## ΜΙΑ ΕΠΙΣΚΕΨΙΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ "ΣΠΗΤΙ ΤΟΥ ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΟΥ,,

ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ

ΜΙΚΡΑΙ ΕΙΔΗΣΕΙΣ | ΔΗΛΩΣΙΣ | ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΙΣ

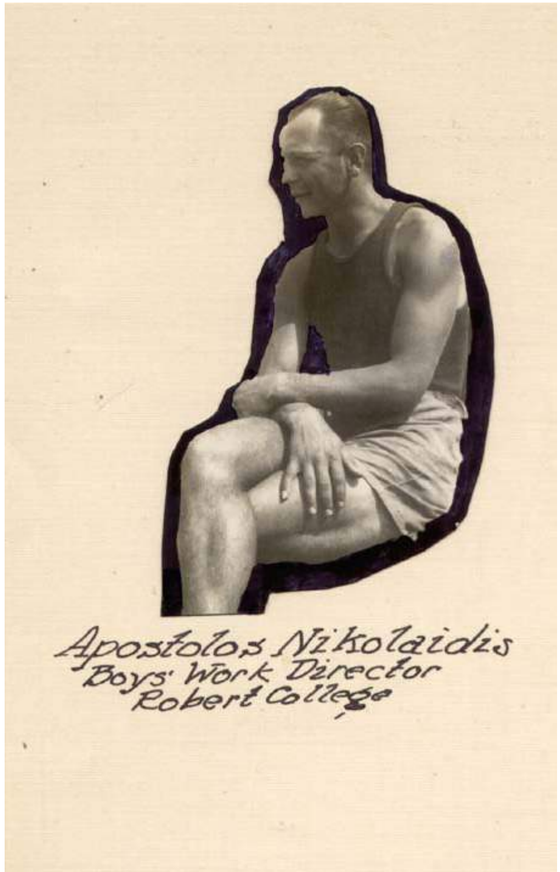
A press report presents the action of the "Young Men's Christian Association of Thessaloniki" in 1921 (Tachidromos tis Voriou Ellados, 27.11.1921)



Dr. James Naismith, who invented Basketball in 1891 at Y.M.C.A.'s College in Springfield, Massachusetts — International Y.M.C.A. Training School –Springfield College (KU University Archives)

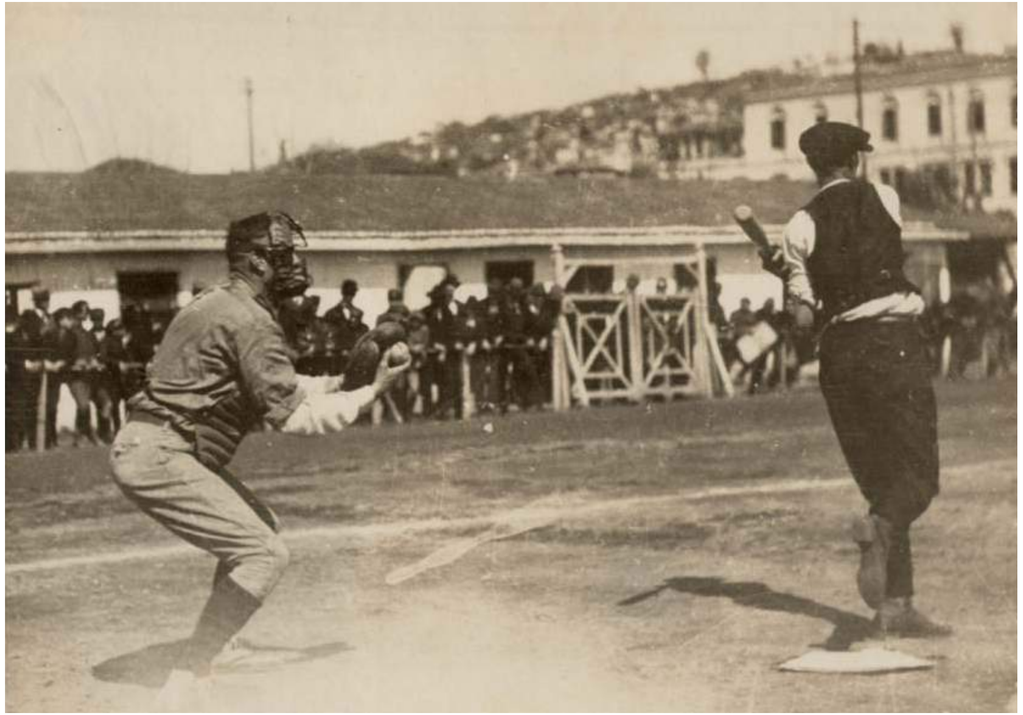



1923. Ulius Amoss, Director General of "Saloniki Y.M.C.A.", in his office (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)




1923. Apostolos Nikolaidis, the First Director of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Children Department (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





1920-1921. A baseball game between the American team of "S.S. Angeles" and "Salonica Y.M.C.A." The game is attended by a passionate audience of Greeks, Turks and Jews at IRAKLIS stadium (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1923. A volleyball game (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

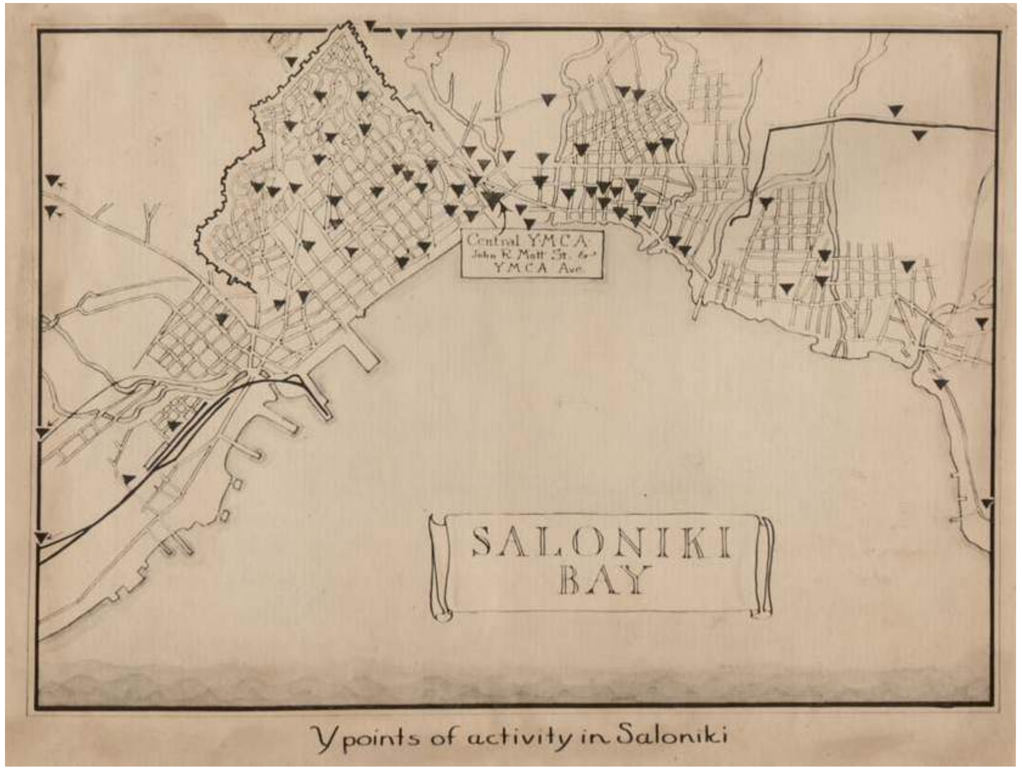


1921. Military Hospital in Thessaloniki, with the support of the American Y.M.C.A. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1922-1923. At the "Boys' Home" of YM.C.A. that hosted orphaned refugees after the Catastrophe of Asia Minor (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)






1924. Surveying of Y.M.C.A.'s points of action in Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

# THE EVOLUTION OF BASKETBALL SUPPORTED BY Y.M.C.A.-TH PER DECADE

## 2.1. «1920-1930» The first steps

### 2.1.1. Y.M.C.A.-Th and the big bang of athletic Thessaloniki

In the 1920s and 1930s, a "Big Bang" took place in Thessaloniki, as the action of Y.M.C.A.-Th changed the athletic map of the city.
Basketball, which was taught by the US sport instructors of Y.M.C.A, was gradually starting to leave the barracks and was becoming a favorite habit of the athletically active residents of Thessaloniki as well as its young people. In 1920 and 1921 various small-scale tournaments take place, in which mainly the Y.M.C.A. staff members participate (there are reports on friendly games between American staff and Greeks). In the trophy case of Y.M.C.A.-Th (much of which is on display at Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum), there is the oldest cup, which was awarded at a basketball tournament and on which it is written: "Y.M.C.A. Basketball 1921".
In 1921 Y.M.C.A. Athens organizes basketball games in Athens upon the initiative of the American coaches Mayer and Marriott, who have come to Greece specializing in basketball and volleyball respectively.
The first press report on the sport of basketball appears in Greece in 1899. According to the athletic journalist-historian, Honorary President of the Panhellenic Association of Sports Journalists, Petros Linardos, in the journal "Cycling and Sporting Review for the East" launched at that era, two pages were dedicated to the new sport of Basketball, enriched with sketches designing the technical side of the sport. Actually it was a translation of a text with the regulations of the game, aiming to help its reader to understand the new sport. The translation was done by the Physical Education Officer at the Ministry of Education, Ioannis Chrysafis, who was initiated in Gymnastics and Pedagogy. In this issue of the journal, there had been mentioned some comments, such as: "The Americans are not only delighted in getting involved in the famous sporting events, but they also invent new ones. Basketball is the newly-born sport that literally means "The ball of the basket". This kind of sporting activity requires excellent agility and skillfulness to be carried out [...]"
In Thessaloniki, the first reference to a basketball game is recorded on October 23, 1921 in the local daily press "TACHIDROMOS VORIOU ELLADOS", in which the author writes about his first contact with the sport: "This game is absolutely original and interesting." The same newspaper refers to the initiatives of Iraklis Gymnastic Club [of Thessaloniki (translator's note)] to create a basketball team, but also to the decision of some High Schools to form teams in order to play agaist each other. In 1922, Y.M.C.A.-Th, according to the newspaper "MAKEDONIA", encourages clubs and schools to engage in basketball and volleyball. Through the American support, balls are distributed to schools and 18 clubs in the city, some of which decide to set up basketball teams in the coming months. In 1923, excavation works begin for the construction of sportsgrounds within the plot of 15,500 m2, which was granted by the Greek State to Y.M.C.A.-Th. The sportsgroundsexten behind the point where the Y.M.C.A.-Th building complex was to be erected. On the west and in front of the Y.M.C.A.-Th temporary building, a basketball court is created, on the east two volleyball courts, while south of the basketball court, tennis courts are created. At the beginning of the 1930's, the sports ground field construction began.
From the very first moment of its operation, this sports complex has become the hot spot of athletic Thessaloniki, where the city's basketball has been nurtured and where fans have been flocking to watch basketball and volleyball games on Sundays after church service was delivered.

### 2.1.2. Lewis Riess: A Naismith's student in the "Nymph of the Thermaic Gulf" [as Thessaloniki is called (translator's note)]

1924 is a milestone year for Greek Basketball. Y.M.C.A.-Th.Under its General Secretary Herbert Lansdale welcomes a new Director, who is referred in the correspondence as the Director of Physical Education of all Y.M.C.A.s throughout Greece, an ingenious person with a strong personality and vision for sport. He is Lewis Riess, a graduate of the leadership training school of Y.M.C.A. College in Springfield, Massachusetts, who was a student of James Naismith. At the same time, Ulius Amoss, the first General Director of Y.M.C.A.-Th, moves to Athens, taking action at Y.M.C.A. Athens.
Riess develops intense activity right from the very first first weeks of his presence in Greece, organizing in the best and most effective way the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th, which produced tremendous work in his office term. In particular, as far as basketball is concerned, he organizes a school for learning and applying the rules of the new sport and strives to secure scholarships so that the Y.M.C.A.-Th staff members will be trained in the coming years in Physical Education Colleges abroad.

### 2.1.3. Riess's contacts with Ioannis Chrysafis

The daily Press of the time refers to Riess's meetings with Ioannis Chrysafis, who, upon the rise of Venizelos government, assumes the post of the General Inspector of Gymnastics and later heads the Department of Physical Education of the Ministry of Education. Chrysafis strongly supports the educational reform, achieving an increase in established posts for sports teachers in schools, as well as an increase in gym-classes hours. He is a proponent of the Swedish fitness model (after all, he attended the Stockholm Gymnastics Institute), which he also introduces into the Greek educational system. During his days, the School of Gymnastics is being upgraded and developed into a Gymnastics Academy with a three-year attendance. Chrysafis exchanges views and listens carefully, albeit cautiously at first, to the suggestions of Y.M.C.A.-Th's spokesman Lewis Riess on the need for sport and their inclusion in schools and in the training program for the armed forces. Riess further stresses the need for support by the Ministry of Education of the Y.M.C.A.-Th actions in developing the new sports and particularly basketball and volleyball as well as the importance of the State's involvement in staff training programmes in colleges abroad.

They both foster a relationship of respect and trust that indisputably reinforces the effort to spread basketball across the entire country. This is also evidenced by the fact that, Chrysafis embraces the conduct of basketball championships among high schools.

In 1927, through the support of Chrysafis, the Technical Athletics Committee was set up in Athens for the first time, chaired by Apostolos Nikolaidis, a person familiar to Y.M.C.A.-Th, as he was Head of its Children Department, who had already moved to Athens.

Later on, Michalis (Mike) Stergiadis and Ioannis Tsakiris (both from Y.M.C.A. Athens) will gain a scholarship to study at Springfield, Massachusetts and Symeon Mavroskoufis and Konstantinos Megalos (at different time periods) both from Y.M.C.A.-Th to study in Geneva. In the Archives of the Y.M.C.A. Academy in Geneva there is also a reference to the presence of Stergiadis and Tsakiris in 1928 in Geneva, which means that both had the opportunity to travel and study at both major educational institutions of Y.M.C.A. in America and Europe.



### 2.1.4. The pioneer Mike Stergiadis

Mike Stergiadis was born in 1909 in Constantinople (Istanbul). He graduated from Roberts College and with a Y.M.C.A. scholarship he studied in Springfield College, where he was fortunate to meet James Naismith, the man who invented basketball. Stergiadis's contribution in spreading basketball in Greece had been significant, as he was one of the first to undertake the teaching of the sport. It was no coincidence that the Hellenic Association of Amateur Athletics (abbreviated in Greek SEGAS) decided a few years later, in 1936, to commission him to form the first Greek National Team. Stergiadis was the first coach of the Greek National Basketball Team.

### 2.1.5. Riess's student, Apostolos Nikolaidis

In the meantime, in 1924, Riess had been actively involved in the preparation of the first organized camp in Greece by the Y.M.C.A.-Th, which operated the same year in the seaside settlement of Ag. Ioannis-Pelion. The first Greek Director of the camp was defined to be Apostolos Nikolaidis, born in 1896 in Stenimachos, Eastern Rumelia, a student at the Roberts College of Constantinople, with further studies in Germany.

Some years earlier (1921-1922), Nikolaidis had been a member of Y.M.C.A.-Th staff, he was the Head of The Children's Department and had close collaboration with Ulius Amoss. Apostolos Nikolaidis had been a charismatic and versatile athlete, as besides football, he dealt with basketball and volleyball, and for many years he had remained a champion in track and field, in decathlon, shot put, discus throw, pole vaulting and high jumping.

In the coming years, he will settle in Athens to continue and develop further action as a prominent member of the Panathinaikos Club, serving as an athlete, coach and manager. Nikolaidis is one of the most important personalities in the history of the Panathinaikos Athletic Club and his name has been given to the Stadium of Panathinaikos.

### 2.1.6. "The game…is on!"

In the days of Lewis Riess, Y.M.C.A.-Th undertakes the proclamation of a basketball championship in Thessaloniki.

A "test" for establishing a championship took place in 1924, with a hold of a tournament with the participation of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Aris, Iraklis, Armeniki, VAO, Maccabi and AKOAX. According to Y.M.C.A.-Th Archives, the first championship was finally organized in 1925 with the participation of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Aris, Constantinopolitan Society and American Farm School, however for this particular event there has been not so much evidence and therefore in the past many researchers concluded that this was an informal championship.

In September 1926, five teams took part in Thessaloniki's Championship: Y.M.C.A.-Th, AEK (Thessaloniki), Aris, PAOK and Iraklis. Unlike the 1925 championship, there are many references to this event on the press.

The newspaper entitled "ATHLITIKA NEA" publishes the relevant announcement of Y.M.C.A.-Th, which is signed by the Head of the Physical Education Department K. Megalos: "The Department of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki on its desire to spread, as widely as possible, the various sports team games, which shape the body and refine the soul, announces the first basketball games between the sports clubs of our city. The games will take place on the stadium of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and in accordance with the latest sporting regulations. The statements should be sent to the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. The clubs that do not have a basketball board may use the boards of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki for the purposes of training their athletes upon request. The winning team will be awarded the 1926 championship title".

### 2.1.7. The first "Aris-PAOK" game in the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th

This championship marks the first "battle" at an official championship level between Aris and PAOK, which would attract the interest of sports fans not only of Thessaloniki, but of the entire Greece in the coming years. The Pan-Thessaloniki's Athletic Club of Constantinople (PAOK) was founded in April 1926 and on October 24, 1926 it "clashed" for the first time with Aris, which had been founded in March 1914 [the "yellow-shirts" (Aris) basketball team was created in 1922], in the sport of basketball at the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th. The Thessaloniki Daily Newspaper, "TO FOS" in October 1926, in the midst of political developments, dedicates in its front page a two-column text to basketball: "The fans started arriving very early at Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki stadium, where the basketball championship would take place. At 10 a.m. the parade of Iraklis, Aris, PAOK and Y.M.C.A.-Th would be held. The mayor of the city announced the commencement of the championship, addressing nice words to the athletes" is characteristically mentioned by the writer of the report.

In this historic first game of the two teams, PAOK, though considered an outsider, manages to win by 14-12. "Aris first took the lead but PAOK managed to even the score. Its last efforts have earned PAOK a two-point victory," is the description hosted by the local Thessaloniki newspaper, which concludes as follows: "The game of basketball requires a variety of moves offering a quite enjoyable and spectacular show, the crowd watched with extreme interest the game, gaining the best impression for the sport of basketball."

Aris team members came mainly from the Armenian community of Thessaloniki. Its players were: Kontaxian, Akelian, Jamsjian, Miskedjian, Exuzian, Stefopoulos and Akelaios. PAOK's players were: Georgiadis, Makaronopoulos, Dimitriou, Andreadis, Omourloglou, Pagalos, Pantermalis, Fridas, Jaferis and Haleplian.

Those registered for Y.M.C.A.-Th for the championship of 1926 are: Mouzenidis, Tavlaridis, Voulis, Diamantidis, Rafael, Papagiannis, Jeckof, Michaelidis, Dimitrakopoulos, Papadakis, Xanthopoulos and Koufogiannidis.

These games ended on November 28 with Aris celebrating its first title. The championship is awarded on December 5, 1926 at a brilliant ceremony at Y.M.C.A.-Th stadium, attended by political and military authorities of the city while the event was also accompanied by a friendly game between Aris and Y.M.C.A.-Th.

In the next year's Thessaloniki Championship, held in 1927 and organized once again by Y.M.C.A.-Th, except for the latter, the following teams participate: Aris, VAO, Iraklis, PAOK, AEK, Makedonikos, Thermaikos and M. Alexandros.

Of great interest, at that time, were the clashes of two clubs, Aris and Iraklis, which set up basketball and volleyball teams right after Y.M.C.A.-Th, among which great competition prevailed.

In the championship of the 1927-1928 season, the massive turnout of the fans in the games exceeded all expectations, giving extra motivation to L. Riess and Y.M.C.A.-Th to continue their systematic efforts. As a result, basketball gained loyal fans in Thessaloniki, as well as high-level teams for that time.

In the 2nd Thessaloniki's Championship, Aris again emerges as a champion after its victory over Y.M.C.A.Th with a score of 24-14, in a game played on 10/3/1928.

In spite of occupying the 3rd place that year, Y.M.C.A.-Th does not

compete in the National Championship, which is not surprising, however, as the mentality of the Association, which is strongly supported by L. Riess, advocates: "What is an end in itself in Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki is not conquering titles and distinctions, but promoting "fair play", trying to develop the production process and actions aimed at increasing the positive influence of basketball."
In the same season (1927-1928) at the first National basketball championship, hosted at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, Iraklis, Aris and VAO "steal" the show, with the "blue-and-white shirts" (Iraklis) winning the title and the other two achieving important victories against the Athenian teams: AEK, Panellinios, Near East, Panionios and Ethnikos. The very good performances of the three teams of Thessaloniki cause a delirium of enthusiasm on the fans of the city and the clubs are preparing to warmly welcome the teams upon their return to the city.

### 2.1.8. The appearance of Symeon Mavroskoufis

In 1928, the Directorship of the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th is undertaken by a man who will play an important role in the sports history of Y.M.C.A.-Th, but also in the Greek basketball in general. This is Simeon Mavroskoufis, who arrived in Thessaloniki in 1921 from Constantinople (Istanbul). Lewis Riess perceives his passion for sport and is impressed by his erudition and the fact that he already speaks English and French. Riess employs him and at the age of 18 assigns to him the Physical Education Department. Later on, Riess will take care of Mavroskufis further education. In 1928, what primarily interests Riess and Mavroskoufis is the improvement of the conditions in conducting the games of basketball. The same year, upon Riess's initiative, the rules of basketball were translated into Greek and published in Press.
The championship of the season 1928-1929 begins on 18/11/1928 with the participation of Y.M.C.A.-Th, VAO, PAOK and AEK (of Thessaloniki).
In the book "Θεσσαλονίκη: Η πόλη του μπάσκετ" (Thessaloniki: the city of basketball) written by Vasilis Vlachopoulos, Nikos Karagiorgis, Giorgos Syridis and Panagiotis Horozoglou, it is stated that, several games of the second round, held on the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th were filmed by the city's film crew, "Photo Electric"! This particular film, according to a newspaper report, was to be screened alongside the "Current Topics" of the season at the Dionysia movie theater. What an important legacy it would have been for Greek Basketball, if this particular visual document had been saved!
In the meantime, Aris has won the title for the third consecutive year, completing the championship undefeated. Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the 2nd place with the players: Nanes, Papagiannis, Adamichos, Kapilou, Kantzis and Polymeris.
At this point, it should be noted that, the main body of Aris team consisted of students from Anatolia College. Anatolia College was an American educational institution and especially its athletic program, like of all American educational institutions in Greece, was extremely advanced, which undoubtedly rendered its players more battle-worthy.
On March 31, 1929, the School of Basketball Referees organized by the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th begins to operate, following a relevant order from SEGAS. The main lecturer of the School is Lewis Riess, who along with his translator and close associate Konstantinos Megalos (one of the first basketball referees in Greece and one of the most prominent executives of Y.M.C.A.-Th, who served also as Head of its Physical Education Department) assumes the analysis of regulations to the stakeholders.
Also very important is the help offered by Carl Compton (Principal of Anatolia College) in conducting basketball games in Thessaloniki. C. Compton acts as a referee in dozens of basketball games at the time.
The opening ceremony of the championship season 1929-1930 takes place on 10/11/1929 with the presence of the musical band of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, a parade of the competing teams and the Mayor of the city to greet the commencement of the sporting event, amidst 2,000 fans! Aris reaffirms its supremacy in the sport, beating successively VAO, Y.M.C.A.-Th and Iraklis and winning the title of the champion of Thessaloniki for the 5th consecutive year.
At Easter of 1929 Y.M.C.A.-Th invites Panellinios B.C. in Thessaloniki for a tournament, which acquires the character of an informal national championship. Panellinios appears to be very competitive and in the first game against Aris, which takes place on the second day of Easter, defeats Aris with a score of 29-27. The diary states: May 6, 1929. On the next day Panellinios competes with Y.M.C.A.-Th and the latter is beaten by 44-24. Simeon Mavroskoufis is the referee of the game.
The 1920s-1930s makes Aris extremely elated because of its continued successes. Furthermore, the Council Board of Y.M.C.A.-Th is definitely pleased, as the Association's dynamics is growing, which will be evident in the coming years, when the number of athletes in all sports will sharply increase.






This is the oldest basketball cup of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki collection. "Y.M.C.A. BASKET-BALL 1921" (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Trophy Collection, Basketball Museum)



1923. Eight young athletes of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki in eight different sports (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





View of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball court during a game in the late 1920s. The spectators are standing, on the left are the tennis courts and on the bottom two volleyball courts (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1927. Snapshot: game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Iraklis on the stadium of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, with K. Megalos as a referee. The players of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki I. Nanes and S. Mavroskoufis can be seen (Anna Mavroskoufi's Archive)



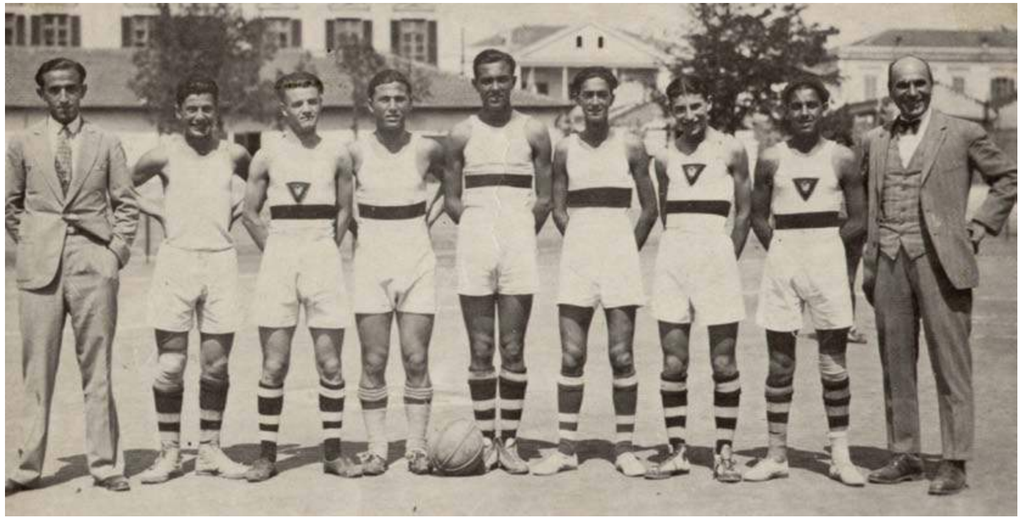


1920s. Basketball and volleyball games played by young members of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki on the first Y.M.C.A.'s sport grounds (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1924. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki's staff welcomes Lewis Riess's family in the port of Thessaloniki, who is going to assume the position of the Director of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A.s Greece, based in Thessaloniki (Album: Young Men's Christian Association of Thessaloniki, 1921-1996, European Cultural Capital Organization, Thessaloniki 1997)

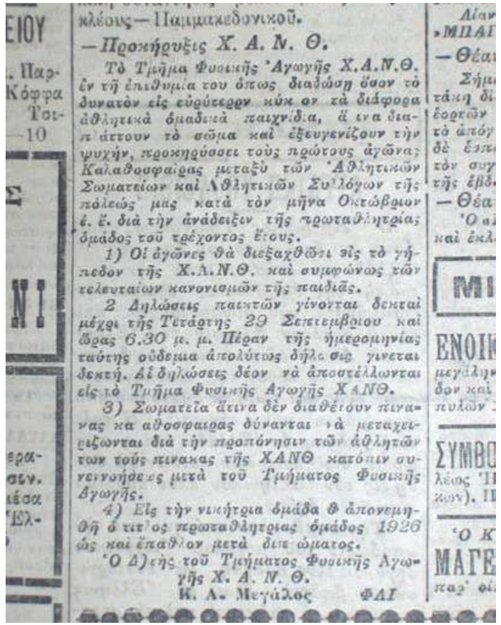




Late 1920s. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team. On the right is Lewis Riess and on the left is Simeon Mavroskoufis, the coach of that time.
The players (from left), Kapilou D., Polymeris, Adamichos M., Nanes G., Bouzanis, Kantzas M. and Papagiannis N. are posing holding the externally-seamed basketball ball (Anna Mavroskoufi's Archive)



Thanks to Riess basketball has been spread and developed in Greece and therefore the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum is dedicated to his memory. Lewis Riess has been the Director of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A.s Greece based in Thessaloniki and founder and Director of the Pelion camp (1924-1933). (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



κλέους—Παμμακεδονικοῦ.

—Προκήρυξις Χ. Α. Ν. Θ.

Τὸ Τμῆμα Φυσικῆς Ἀγωγῆς Χ.Α.Ν.Θ. ἐν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ του ὅπως διαδώσῃ ὅσον τὸ δυνατὸν εἰς εὐρύτερον κύκλον τὰ διάφορα ἀθλητικὰ ὁμαδικὰ παιχνίδια, ἃ ἐνα διαπνέουν τὸ σῶμα καὶ ἐξευγενίζουν τὴν ψυχήν, προκηρύσσει τοὺς πρώτους ἀγῶνας Καλαθοσφαίρας μεταξὺ τῶν Ἀθλητικῶν Σωματείων καὶ Ἀθλητικῶν Συλλόγων τῆς πόλεώς μας κατὰ τὸν μῆνα Ὀκτώβριον ἐ. ἔ. διὰ τὴν ἀνάδειξιν τῆς πρωταθλητρίας ὁμάδος τοῦ τρέχοντος ἔτους.

1) Οἱ ἀγῶνες θὰ διεξαχθῶσι εἰς τὸ γήπεδον τῆς Χ.Α.Ν.Θ. καὶ συμφώνως τῶν τελευταίων κανονισμῶν τῆς παιδιᾶς.

2 Δηλώσεις παικτῶν γίνονται δεκταὶ μέχρι τῆς Τετάρτης 29 Σεπτεμβρίου καὶ ὥρας 6.30 μ. μ. Πέραν τῆς ἡμερομηνίας ταύτης οὐδεμία ἀπολύτως δήλωσις γίνεται δεκτή. Αἱ δηλώσεις δέον νὰ ἀποστέλλωνται εἰς τὸ Τμῆμα Φυσικῆς Ἀγωγῆς ΧΑΝΘ.

3) Σωματεῖα ἅτινα δὲν διαθέτουν πίναν καὶ καλοσφαίρας δύνανται νὰ μεταχειρίζωνται διὰ τὴν προπόνησιν τῶν ἀθλητῶν των τοὺς πίνακας τῆς ΧΑΝΘ κατόπιν συνεννοήσεως μετὰ τοῦ Τμήματος Φυσικῆς Ἀγωγῆς.

4) Εἰς τὴν νικήτρια ὁμάδα θ' ἀπονεμηθῇ ὁ τίτλος πρωταθλητρίας ὁμάδος 1926 ὡς καὶ ἔπαθλον μετὰ δίπλωματος.

Ὁ Δ)ὴς τοῦ Τμήματος Φυσικῆς Ἀγωγῆς Χ. Α. Ν. Θ.

Κ. Α. Μεγάλος ΦΔΙ

Announcement of the first basketball games between sport clubs and sport associations on 24.10.1926 (Macedonian News, 9.9.1926)





1928. Basketball teaching by Lewis Riess to the soldiers of the Thessaloniki Guard (Album: Young Men's Christian Association of Thessaloniki, 1921-1996, European Cultural Capital Organization, Thessaloniki 1997)



1927. Snapshot of School Basketball Games on the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki sport grounds (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team in 1927 (Anna Mavroskoufi's Archive)



Late 1920s. Snapshot of the start of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki- Aris basketball game on the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball court with the athletes taking the jump-ball (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)




The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki temporary building, built to house temporarily the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki offices and the Club until the completion of the mansion (1934). Its use, however, lasted until 1968, when it was demolished (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive - Print of "Aquaroni" printing company)



Photo of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki building with scaffolding during its construction from the side of the temporary building.

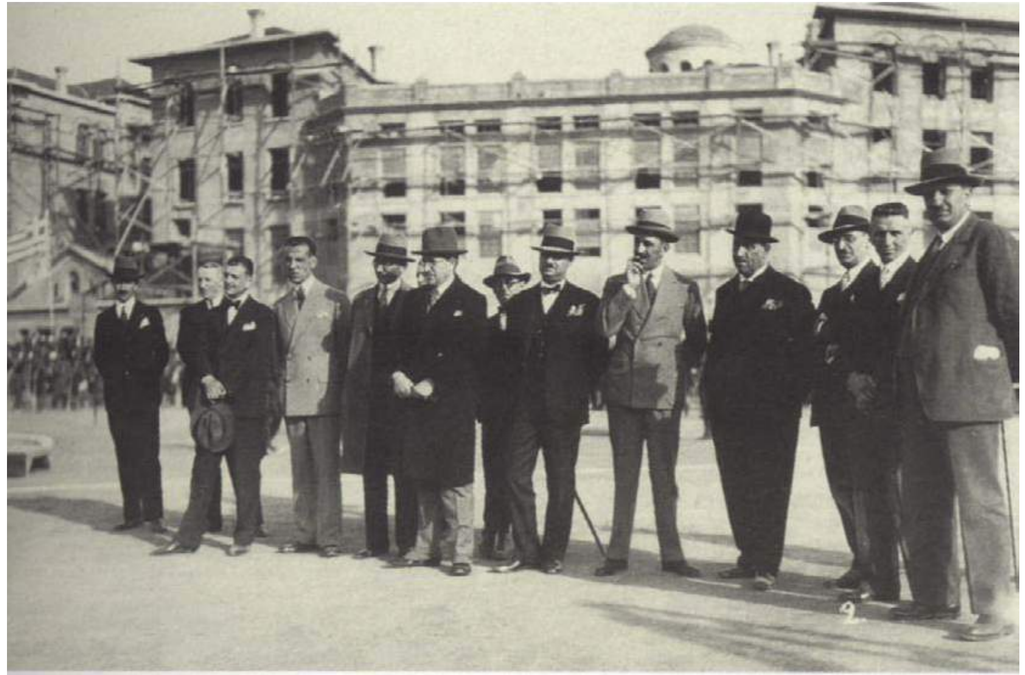


To the right to be seen the tennis courts, in front the basketball court and the volleyball courts at the back (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

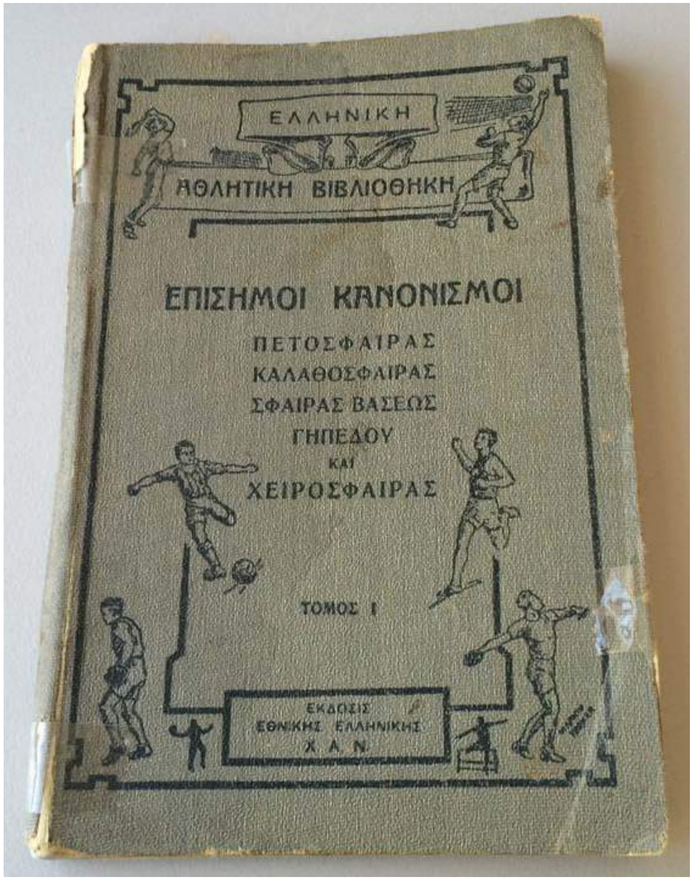


1927-1928. In the volleyball and baseball fields a game or a training of athletes is taking place, with the viewers standing all around. In the background is the building with scaffolding during the construction of its' 2nd floor. This is a general view of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki building with the basketball courts (on the right), volleyball courts (in the background) and baseball court (on the left). (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





1929-1930. The Board of Directors of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (with members of the delegation from the U.S.A., supervising the construction of the building). The building with scaffolding is depicted in the background (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)




1929. Official Regulations: Volleyball, Basketball, Shot put and Handball, Volume I, National Hellenic Y.M.C.A. Edition (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)

## 2.2. “1930-1940” Y.M.C.A.-Th on a rise

### 2.2.1. The first series of championships

In 1930 Y.M.C.A.-Th hosts the Panhellenic Championship in Thessaloniki, in which it participates along with Aris, while from Athens arrive in the city by rail the team of Near East and by steamboat the team of Panionios. Both were hosted in the dormitories of the American College “Anatolia”.
“The opening ceremony was attended by the General Administrator of Macedonia Stylianos Gonatas accompanied by Mrs. Gonata. The musical band of the Craft’s School was playing while Near East, Panionios, Aris and Y.M.C.A.-Th paraded into the stadium and stationed in front of the officials ...” is reported in the newspaper “MAKEDONIA”.
The games start the week after Easter 1930 and Y M.C.A.-Th beats the two Athenian teams: Panionios by 39-14 and Near East by 27-26. After these great performances, it competes with Aris in a game that looks like the final game. The “yellow shirts” (Aris) prevails by 33-22, thus gaining the Pan-Hellenic Championship. Y.M.C.A.-Th is ranked 2nd.
1930 is the year when Simeon Mavroskoufis receives a Y.M.C.A. scholarship to study Physical Education and Pedagogy at the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute of the University of Geneva in a collaboration program with Y.M.C.A. College in Springfield, Massachusetts.
“He always remembered the years in Geneva, they were in his heart. He came to know all sports, from climbing, which he adored, up to cycling. He would return to Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki full of passion and willingness to impart his knowledge received there in the early 1930s,” narrates his daughter, Anna Mavroskoufi.
After the departure of S. Mavroskoufis, Kostas Megalos takes again over the position of the Directorship of Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th. K. Megalos had attended the same program in Geneva two years before, also with a scholarship of Y.M.C.A.-Th.

### 2.2.2. A historic game

At this time, the team of Y.M.C.A.-Th gradually matures and gives a short preview of its prospective great successes. Its first appearances in the 1930-1931 championship season (with victories over Aris and Iraklis) prove that the team that L. Riess had created in the mid-1920s had the potential to lead in the coming years. On this particular season, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the championship of Thessaloniki, beating Aris by 22-21 in the final game, a game that will remain in history.
“MAKEDONIKA NEA” report on 22/5/1931 about this particular game: “Despite the heavy rain and muddy ground, the game was extremely interesting only in the first half. In the second half it was nothing but a wrestling match, since the players were constantly falling down due to the slippery ground and becoming unrecognizable from the mud. Due to the rain it was decided upon the proposal of Y.M.C.A.-Th the postponement of the game and specifically only of the second half. This was unquestionably rejected by the representative of Aris and the game continued. In the second half, Aris managed to even the score, however the opponent scored ten points, giving the opponent the championship which was held by Aris for five consecutive years [...]. This team of Y.M.C.A.-Th, which would sweep the titles in the coming years, consisted of: Nanes, Paraskevaidis, Kapilou, Adamichos, Kantzas, Papagiannis and Polymeris.
Details about this particular historic game are also mentioned by the journalist-researcher Sotiris Theologidis in his book “Ιστορίες μέσα από το καλάθι” (Stories from the basket), describing it as one of the most thrilling local athletic rivalries of the interwar period. His book includes a related account of Kostas Gourlis, a long-time member of Y.M.C.A.-Th, as featured in a periodical issue of Y.M.C.A.-Th: “On the second half, when the score was even, it started to heavily rain and the ground was converted into mud. The spectacle was more reminiscent of mud wrestling because the players were unable to control the externally-seemed ball, so they slipped and fell on each other. In the very last minute, Nikos Papagiannis, who was the shortest player of Y.M.C.A.-Th, found himself under the opposing basket waiting for a passing from the team’s captain and the tall player of the team, Yannis Nanes. This indeed occurred, but in his attempt to catch the ball he “stuck” in the mud and while falling down he threw the ball to

the basket back-board, scoring the last victorious shot. The players of Y.M.C.A.-Th started cheering for the last-minute victory, while opponents argued that the basket was invalid because Papagiannis had thrown the ball in the basket while being seated." The referee of the game is the American Principal of Anatolia College, C. Campton.
For the same game, L. Riess writes: "The game was conducted in a real downpour, yet the players continued to fight like ancient warriors and all spectators remained until the end despite being unprotected from the rain ...".
This reference is included in Spalding's annual guide, on which the Director of Y.M.C.A.s mentions his impressions of his presence in Greece combined with the progress in the sport made in Greece. Riess states that, he is extremely pleased with the progress in the sport in Greece, as well as with the youth's interest in it. He characterizes the team of Y.M.C.A.-Th as "one of the best in the Near East", while also providing information on the rest of the sporting activity of the time (1930-1931) writing: "The Thessaloniki School Championship was won by the American Farm School under the direction of Russell Dandley. Anatolia's team under Carl Campton (who later on became President of the American College) took the 2nd place. In Athens, Near East's team won the title once again. This group of young five are worthy of praise like Y.M.C.A.-Th. The children of Near East are orphans and they are hosted, educated and trained in this organization. Athens College under the directions of Herb Steiner of Springfield College also developed a very good team."

### 2.2.3. Mavroskoufis signs the founding act of FIBA

On June 18, 1932, the founding act of FIBA (International Basketball Federation) is signed in Geneva by the representatives of 8 countries, including Greece, while the other countries are: Argentina, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland. For Greece, the one who has the honor to sign is Simeon Mavroskoufis. He is accompanied by Georgios Ampatzioglou, member of Iraklis team, champion team in 1930.
Among the founding members is William Jones, a personal friend of Symeon Mavroskoufis, who also serviced in Springfield College, who will be appointed as the First General Secretary of FIBA and will remain in the office for the next 43 years (1932 - 1976). William Jones was born in Rome from a Welsh father and French mother, played basketball in Turin in 1922 and traveled to Springfield in 1926 to meet James Naismith in person.
An indication of Lewis Riess's insight is the confession of Simeon Mavroskoufis shortly after the founding of FIBA: "Riess had told me that it was a matter of time for the European prestigious team games to start and that this would have happened if the major financial problems faced by most countries at least in the Balkans had been eliminated."

### 2.2.4. Y.M.C.A on top

In the following years (1931-1934), Y.M.C.A.-Th holds the reins winning the Thessaloniki championships. Leading roles have the players: Nanes, Adamichos, Papagiannis, Paraskevaidis, Kapilou, Polymeris and Kantzas. However, in 1935, key players move to Iraklis, resulting the winning of the championship of 1935-1936 season by the "white-and-blue shirts" (Iraklis). A year before (1934), Y.M.C.A.-Th had received a major blow and this was related to the decision of Lewis Riess to return to the US after ten years of presence in Y.M.C.A.-Th. The legacy left is huge, it seemed difficult to find someone to replace him, yet Simeon Mavroskoufis will prove to be a worthy continuer of his work, while also developing multilevel action.
The year 1934 marks the completion of the building of the Y.M.C.A.-Th mansion, which, amongst others, houses the first indoor basketball court in Greece. There is no other association in Greece with such facilities.

### 2.2.5. The "giants" Mimis Tsikinas, Takis Nikolaidis and the youngster Takis Taliadoros

In 1935, an athlete gets into the basketball team of Y.MC.A.-Th who will play a leading role in the further development of the Y.M.C.A.-Th and of basketball; this is Mimis Tsikinas. M. Tsikinas had already started since 1933 as a teenager to participate in games with the Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team.
After the leave of Nanes, Papagiannis, Adamichos and Polymeris, who continued with Iraklis, the team of Y.M.C.A.-Th in 1935, apart from M. Tsikinas, was composed by: Nikos Tialios, Symeon Mavroskoufis, who had returned from Geneva since 1933 and assisted as a player when needed, Takis Georgopoulos, Giorgos Panagiotopoulos, Takis Nikolaidis and Haris Theocharidis.
Special mention should be made to Takis Nikolaidis, also a very versatile athlete who has won titles in different sports with different teams. In the mid-1930s he played for Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team, celebrating the winning of titles and participating in national championships. After the war he was engaged in football and joined the team of Aris, with which he won the Greek Championship in 1946. What is striking is that, while playing football, Nikolaidis was also a member of the Mixed team with the best basketball players of Thessaloniki!
One more versatile athlete, who first learned basketball on the sports grounds of Y.M.C.A.-Th and in the Y.M.C.A. Camp Pelion, is the "Patriarch" of Greek basketball, Faidon Matthaiou.
Y.M.C.A.-Th competes in the 1935 and 1936 National Championships. 1936 championship was held again in Thessaloniki and Near East celebrated the winning of the title, after beating Iraklis in the final game.
It is worth noting that, this year (1936), the Greek National Basketball Team appears in the first friendly game in its history in Constantinople (Istanbul) against Turkey. Greek National team will lose by 49-12. The first coach of the Greek National Team (as already mentioned) is Mike Stergiadis, staff member of Y.M.C.A. Athens.
In the same year, basketball was included for the first time in the program of the Berlin Olympic Games. James Naismith, himself, was invited to the Games, was proclaimed as honorary President of FIBA and awarded the medals to the winning teams of the first Olympic Tournament (USA, Canada and Mexico).
In 1936, the roster of Y.M.C.A.-Th is renewed and enriched with: Koufas, Sarafopoulos, Zardinidis, Maglis, Pappas, Haratsaris, Fafaliaris, Berachas and Arianoutsos.
In the same year, an eleven-year-old boy is enrolled in the Children's Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th, who in the coming years will establish himself as one of the greatest basketball players of his time. His name is Takis Taliadoros.
And while there is no verified information on the champion of the 1936-1937 season, as there are no reports in daily Press, it is known that in the following year (1937-1938) Y.M.C.A.-Th lost in the final game to the University team, which emerged as a champion, while Iraklis won the title the next (1938-1939) season.

### 2.2.6. Nurtured in Y.M.C.A.-Th the President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee

Since the mid-1930s, the names of Antonis (Ninos) Tzikas and his brother Michalis, appear among the players of Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team and both were athletically nurtured in Y.M.C.A.-Th. Born in 1921 in Thessaloniki, A. Tzikas took his first steps in sport through Y.M.C.A.-Th, by participating in both basketball and volleyball teams. Later, in 1939, he "moved" to Iraklis and returned a few years later to Y.M.C.A.-Th as a basketball player. At the same time he was for many years a camper and a staff member in the celebrated Y.M.C.A. Camp Pelion. He was very active in sport affairs, served since 1974 as a member of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, but also as 1st and 2nd Vice-President and President (1993-1996). For his overall contribution to sports and the Olympic movement, he has been honoured by the Greek State. He always spoke with great love for the Y.M.C.A.-Th and maintained strong communication links and ties. He passed away in 2013 at the age of 91.
Equally close was Michalis Tzika's relationship with Y.M.C.A.-Th. At the end of his career as a player attained a position of high responsibility, in assisting Mimis Tsikinas in scouting players for the Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team. Michalis Tzikas served also for several terms as member of the Council Board in the Y.M.C.A.-Th after 1950.

### 2.2.7. The Metaxas dictatorship

The dictatorship of Metaxas halts the work of Y.M.C.A.-Th, since the National Youth Organization (abbreviated in Greek EON) occupies its building in 1939. Many athletes and members of Y.M.C.A.-Th refuse to recruit in EON and some of them, like Tzikas brothers, Takis Nikolaidis, Takis Taliadoros etc move to other clubs. The athletes of Y.M.C.A.-Th openly oppose to the dictatorship. This results the suspension of the operation of Y.M.C.A.-Th teams in 1939, while the building had already been occupied by Metaxas's EON.

"After the closing down of Y.M.C.A.-Th during the Metaxas's regime, I moved to Iraklis with Ninos and Michalis Tzikas. Throughout the Occupation by the Germans, along with other athletes of Y.M.C.A.-Th we continued to train at the Thessaloniki Sailing Club" Takis Tagliadoros narrated.

The basketball championship of the 1939-1940 season, is organized by Iraklis, begins on 14/1/1940, but for the first time Y.M.C.A.-Th does not participate.

Greece's involvement in the World War II shortly afterwards, suspends all activities. The Y.M.C.A.-Th building during the Occupation is requisited by the Germans and it houses their headquarters in Thessaloniki.

However, Y.M.C.A.-Th will regenerate from its ashes in the coming years at a rapid pace.



### 2.2.8. James Naismith, the man who invented basketball, passes away

On November 28, 1939, the "father" of basketball, James Naismith, passes away and is buried in Lawrence, Kansas. He will be the first to receive a place in the Basketball Hall of Fame, which was created in Springfield in 1968 and honorarily was named after him. Moreover, since 1967 the Basketball World Cup (Mundobasket) is also named after him: Naismith Trophy.



At the beginning of the 1930s, the team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki poses on the camera in "Y" formation (Historical Archives of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki)

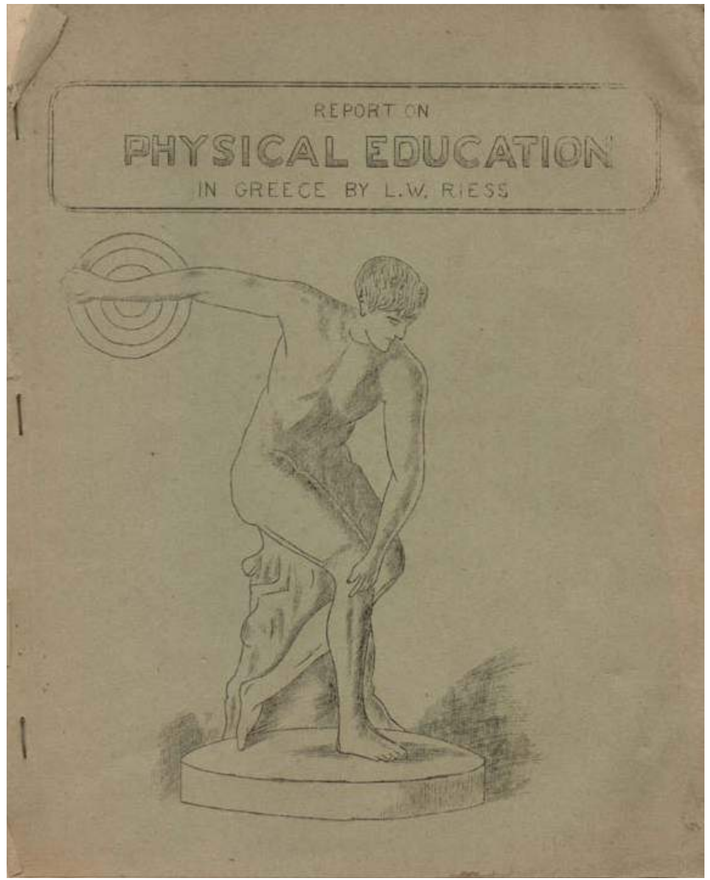


The basketball team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki at the beginning of the 1930s. On the left are K. Megalos (Head of Physical Education Department), N. Papagiannis, Polymeris, M. Kantzas, I. Nanes, M. Adamichos, D. Kapilou along with the Director of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki L. Riess (Athina Adamichou-Vazaka's archive)





Dr. Laurence Locke Doggett after his retirement as president of Springfield College (1896-1936) on his world tour he visits also Greece. On 03/05/1937 he stands in the middle with the teams that participated on the Greek Basketball Championship, First from the right is Michael Steriadis (Springfield College Archive, Archive and Special Collections)




1932. Printed material edited by Lewis Riess for the Physical Education of Y.M.C.A. in Greece (Historical Archive of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki)

Résolution adoptée par la

FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE BASKET BALL

le 18 Juin 1932 à Genève.

---

Vu la nécessité de parvenir à l'unification des règles de Basket Ball,
vu le développement de plus en plus grand du Basket Ball,
Il a été constitué la Fédération Internationale de Basket Ball, qui forme la résolution suivante :
décide de soumettre aux organisations non encore affiliées à la F.I.B.B. les statuts consitutifs de la dite F.I.B.B., et ses règlements d'unification internationale des règles de Basket Ball,
invite ces organisations à adhérer à la F.I.B.B. et à adopter ses règlements internationaux de Basket Ball,
forme le voeux que les autres Fédérations Sportives Internationales prennent acte de la volonté exprimée par la F.I.B.B. de contribuer aussi à la bonne entente harmonieuse et librement consentie de toutes les disciplines sportives.

Ont signé : pour l'Argentine
(Federation Argentine de Basket Ball)

pour la Grece
(sous reserve de ratification)

pour l'Italie
(Federazione Italiana Pallacanestro)

pour la Lettonie

pour le Portugal
(Fed ration Portugaise de Bask ball)

pour la Roumenie

pour la Suisse
(Ligue Suisse de Basket Ball)

pour la Tchecoslovaquie

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FIBA Founding Declaration, 18 June 1932, Geneva. With the signatures of the representatives of the founding members of FIBA (Italy, Argentina, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland). Among them is the name of Symeon Mavroskoufis, as being the representative of Greece (Source: FIBA, House of Basketball, Geneva. Exhibited at Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum.



1935. The basketball team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki on the outdoor court of the Association, with Symeon Mavroskoufis as its coach. Back row from left: Mimis Tsikinas, Nikos Tialios, Symeon Mavroskoufis, Takis Georgopoulos, Giorgos Panagiotopoulos and front row from left: Takis Nikolaidis and Haris Theocharidis in a seated position (Takis Nikolaidis's Archive)






Member card of Takis Taliadoros, Children's Department, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki 1939-1940 (Taliadoros Family's Archives, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



Panoramic view of the plot of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. The athletic field with the basketball and football courts was in the center, the tennis courts on the west side while on the southwestern corner the basketball court was built. (Historical Archive of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki)





1936. A big school event in the sport grounds of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki for the 25th of March (Greek National Day) celebrations.

## 2.3. “1945-1950” Y.M.C.A.-TH on the top of Thessaloniki

### 2.3.1. The reconstruction and the road to glory

After the end of World War II, Y.M.C.A.-Th proceeds rapidly to its reconstitution. The American Orman Moulton was appointed as technical consultant and prioritized as follows: reconstruction of the Education and Physical Education Departments, recruitment of staff members and set up of special committees for each activity.
After the war, the first appearances of Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team were in November 1945 in Athens, where it wins over Sprorting, Panellinios and Triton. The team traveled to Athens by a guided missile destroyer and returned in an army truck (!). “We must not forget that at that time the civil war was still going on in Greece. You couldn’t easily travel around in the mainland, it was dangerous,” Dimitris Fourountzopoulos, key basketball player of Y.M.C.A.-Th for many years, narrates.
Those appearances in Athens were indicative of what was about to follow, as from 1946 a crazy series of championships for the Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team begun. The reasons why Y.M.C.A.-Th seemed unbeatable at this time were many.
Y.M.C.A.-Th maintains close ties with America. Shortly after the war, Y.M.C.A.-Th is the most organized team with the best facilities and the most skilled human resources (coaches, trainers, etc.). Y.M.C.A.-Th was lucky to have in its team roster, the most important basketball player of the time, Takis Taliadoros. His star began to rise before the War, but it reached its peak in the post-war period and offered a unique spectacle to the fans with his talent and inspirations.
In 1946 Y.M.C.A.-Th refreshes its sports facilities. The outdoor basketball court is now relocated to the southwest corner of the Y.M.C.A.-Th’s plot and is improved with the addition of floodlights and wooden stands. It is the most modern basketball court in Greece. No other court has such infrastructure to host games after sunset.
From 1946 to 1957, Y.M.C.A.-Th fails to win the National Championship, yet it swept the local championships, celebrating 12 consecutive titles in Thessaloniki.
In the first post-war championship (basketball season 1945-1946) 7 clubs participate: Y.M.C.A.-Th, Iraklis, VAO, Aris, PAOK, Armenian Union and Anatolia. Y.M.C.A.-Th easily takes the first place.
On 17/9/1946 Y.M.C.A.-Th organizes an evening basketball tournament, in which all sports clubs of Thessaloniki participate (Iraklis, Y.M.C.A.-Th, Anatolia, Aris, VAO, Armenian Union, Aetos and PAOK).
In November 1946 an important basketball event takes place in Thessaloniki, as a mixed basketball team with basketball players of all teams of Constantinople (Istanbul) arrives. The newspaper “MAKEDONIA” reports: “On November 12, 1946, the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki will host a reception in honor of the Turkish basketball players of the mixed team of Constantinople.” The same team had been in Athens before coming to Thessaloniki. Athenian press reported that at a certain point three Turkish teams were in Athens: the National Team of Turkey, Mixed Constantinople (Istanbul) team and Galatasaray B.C.
On November 13, 1946, a large crowd of fans flooded the outdoor basketball court of Y.M.C.A.-Th to watch the game. People were coming up in every possible way to watch the game. “It was something extraordinary, I had never seen so many people watching a basketball game, some climbed on rooftops, others on balconies [...],” Faidon Matthaiou remembered many years later. F. Matthaiou, was one more important personality of Greek Basketball and grew out of Y.M.C.A.-Th. “I had known Y.M.C.A.-Th from a very young age. I used to be a camper in Camp Pelion, where at a young age I got acquainted with all sports and had the opportunity to meet very important athletes. Y.M.C.A.-Th,through the so called quadrilateral clubs actually nurted almost all young people of Thessaloniki” he mentions in an interview in the late 1990s.
The Mixed team with the best basketball players of Thessaloniki in 1946 is composed of the following players: Taliadoros, Tsikinas, Nikolaidis, Nousias, Matthaiou, A. Tzikas, M. Tzikas, Tomopoulos, Mantopoulos, Gratzios, Garezos and Karanasos.
In the first day’s game, Mixed team of Constantinople (Istanbul), including several players of the National Team of Turkey, beats Mixed team of Thessaloniki by 52-42, taking advantage of Taliadoros, Nikolaidis and Nousias been fouled out of the game.
In the second game, held on November 14, the Greek team wins by 33-32 thanks to the amazing performance of Taliadoros: “This athlete has exhibited some rare and unique qualifications. For the Turks, he was the bomber and the terror itself,” was written on the newspaper “ELLINIKOS VORRAS “on November 15, 1946.
This last game was particularly helpful in revitalizing the interest for the game of basketball. This same year the Mixed team of Thessaloniki plays against the National Team of Turkey, which it wins by 41-39. The reputation of Takis Taliadoros is now extended beyond Greek borders, after scoring 39 out of the team’s 41 points! “It’s true, I scored 39, Tsikinas scored one and Ninos Tzikas scored another one”, the “star” of Y.M.C.A.-Th would confess later.
During the Thessaloniki Championship of the 1946-1947 season there were tight games between the participants: PAOK, Y.M.C.A.-Th, Iraklis, Armeniki, VAO and American College. Y.M.C.A.-Th managed to win Iraklis by 38-33 after an exciting game and won the title for a second year in a row. In 1947 a young athlete with great talent plays for the first time in the Y.M.C.A.-Th U18 team: he is Anestis Petalidis and he will emerge as the team leader in the coming years.
The team of 1947 is composed by the following players: Tsimopoulos, Nikolaidis, Tazedakis, Taliadoros, Tzikas, Matsoukas, Fourountzopoulos, Tsikinas, Tsigaridas, Tzivras, Matsoukas, Kalderimtzidis, Kyriakidis, Saratsiotis.

### 2.3.2. “Homeric” games with the … Americans

Indicative of the atmosphere of that time regarding the conditions prevailing in Thessaloniki’s basketball is the narration of Takis Fourountzopoulos, a basketball player and later an international referee: “Y.M.C.A.-Th differed from the other clubs for specific reasons. It was organized, held facilities and had people like Tsikinas, who were truly interested in basketball. We trained almost every day, when other teams were training once or twice a week. We were also lucky for one more reason. We were getting better by the competition with the teams of the American warships that were stationed in Thessaloniki at that time. After 1946 the US 6th Fleet stationed in the Gulf of Thermaikos (Thessaloniki) to help the clearance of German mines. Homeric fights between Y.M.C.A.-Th and the Americans have taken place.” He also narrates about the Y.M.C.A.-Th’s basketball court: “Initially, the court was covered with cement and tar, then a mixture composed by cork was added, thus the ground became softer. The basket boards used to be wooden at that time. It was said that a master carpenter worked for Y.M.C.A.-Th. The boards he carved were incomparable to the other.”
The Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum honored Takis Fourountzopoulos for his contribution to the sport just a few months before he passed away at the age of 87 in 2017.

### 2.3.3. The finals and the period of Tsikinas

The reappearance of Y.M.C.A.-Th at the finals is in 1947. The Pan-Hellenic Games take place in Athens and are hosted on the outdoor courts of Panallinios and Tritonas. The following teams participate in the games: Panathinaikos, Sporting, Triton, Olympiakos, Palaio Faliro, Y.M.C.A.-Th and Iraklis. Y.M.C.A.-Th starts off impressively by defeating Panathinaicos, Greek champion in the 1945-1946 basketball season, by 40-32, but then it looses and as a result it gets the 5th place.
In 1948, a student of Symeon Mavroskoufis and a worthy successor of his work, assumes technical leadership of Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team: Mimis Tsikinas. M. Tsikinas was an emblematic figure of sport’s history of Thessaloniki and his team consists of the following remarkable basketball players: T. Taliadoros, K. Taliadoros, Tzikas, Tsigridis, T. Nikolaidis, N. Nikolaidis, Fourountzopoulos, G. Matsoukas, I. Matsoukas, Tazedakis, Saratsiotis, Petalidis, Kyriakidis, Tsigaridas, Tzivras, Kouloumdzidis and Kyriakidis.
The Thessaloniki Championship games for the 1947-1948 basketball season, take place at the sport grounds of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Anatolia College and Greek Air Forces with the following teams: Y.M.C.A.-Th, Iraklis, VAO, Aris, Anatolia, PAOK, Armeniki and Aetos. In the final game of the championship, Y.M.C.A.-Th defeats Aris by 58-28 and becomes once again champion.
In Thessaloniki, no one can question the superiority of Y.M.C.A.-Th Men’s basketball team. But also all basketball teams of Y.M.C.A.-Th have excellent performances, so have the U18 team as well as the B’ team, the latter winning the respective championship (1947-1948) with the following players: Gaganelis, Dapontes, Panoris, Aggelidis, Gougoulis, Koumenos, Laokratis, Kalderimtzidis and Papavassiliou. A few years later, several players of the B’ team of Y.M.C.A.-Th move to PAOK helping PAOK’s team to become stronger and more competitive.
In Basketball season 1947-1948, there will be no finals of the National championship due to the limited financial resources of SEGAS.
The following season (1948-1949), Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the championship for the fourth consecutive season. It was an exciting game season, as Aris and Y.M.C.A.-Th finished the season with the same points and the final game was decisive in who will become champion. In the final game Y.M.C.A.-Th won with a score of 42-29 with the following players: Taliadoros, Fourountzopoulos, Tsigaridas, Petalidis, Matsoukas, Gaganelis and Tzivras.

The 1949 National Championship would be quite eventful. Y.M.C.A.-Th starts the season once again impressively by winning Panathinaicos by 31-30 in the first game. In the next games it will lose to Tritonas and Olympiacos. Y.M.C.A.-Th will file an objection for violation of the rules against Olympiacos, while Olympiacos will also file an objection against Tritonas after its defeat. SEGAS decided that both games should be repeated. Y.M.C.A.-Th will lose to Olympiacos by 41-39 in the repeat game. Olympiacos will eventually win the championship, while Y.M.C.A.-Th gets the 3rd place. The composition of the teams and the points scored in that repeat game are as follows: Y.M.C.A.-Th: T. Taliadoros 12, K. Taliadoros 7, Petalidis 2, Nikolaidis 2, G. Matsoukas 8, Fourountzopoulos, Tsigaridas 4, Tzivras. Olympiacos: Al. Spanoudakis 18, G. Spanoudakis 8, Koutsoukos, Sinopoulos 7, Sidiropoulos 2, Argyropoulos 4, Chatzinikolaou, Gounopoulos 2.
During the 1949-1950 season, Y.M.C.A.-Th is again proclaimed champion of Thessaloniki and wins the 5th place in the national championship. It also wins the "OXI" Cup" [A cup in honor of Greek national day (translator's note)] for the fourth consecutive year, while its B' team wins the championship held between the B' teams of Thessaloniki. Finally, Y.M.C.A.-Th U18 team also wins the 2nd place that season.
"We had to win the 1949 National Championship, we were really good. But sometimes luck is also necessary and luck was not on our side in those days" says T. Fourountzopoulos.



### 2.3.4. The prize for the winner: a blazer and a necktie!

In 1949, the National Team of Greece, in which Takis Taliadoros was the only athlete coming from Thessaloniki, wins its first medal in the European Championship, hosted in Cairo, Egypt, thus celebrating the 3rd place. Taliadoros comes out as the top scorer of the competition: "The Egyptian federation gave me a blazer for a prize, because I came out as the top scorer, while all players of the team we got six neckties as a gift, because we came out third" says T. Taliadoros.
"Takis, was an amazing player, a pillar of his team along with Matthaiou. He was a fine lad, indeed. He was proud of Y.M.C.A.-Th, he loved it so much" says Alekos Spanoudakis, his teammate in the National Team.
By the end of the decade Y.M.C.A.-Th is at its peak in Greek Basketball. Although its supremacy is not rewarded with a National championship, Y.M.C.A.-Th drives developments and empowers basketball with players, referees, coaches and agents. Apart from the misfortune, that T. Fourountzopoulos mentioned, it was also the circumstances that did not allow Y.M.C.A.-Th to win what it deserved. In particular, from 1945 to 1956 the National championships were sometimes postponed or SEGAS [the Authority responsible of conducting the National Championship (translator's note)] was unable to cover the expenses of the teams. As a result Y.M.C.A.-Th could not afford sometimes to participate and prove its supremacy in a National level.



1947. Snapshot: game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Aris on the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (D. Fourountzopoulos's Archive)

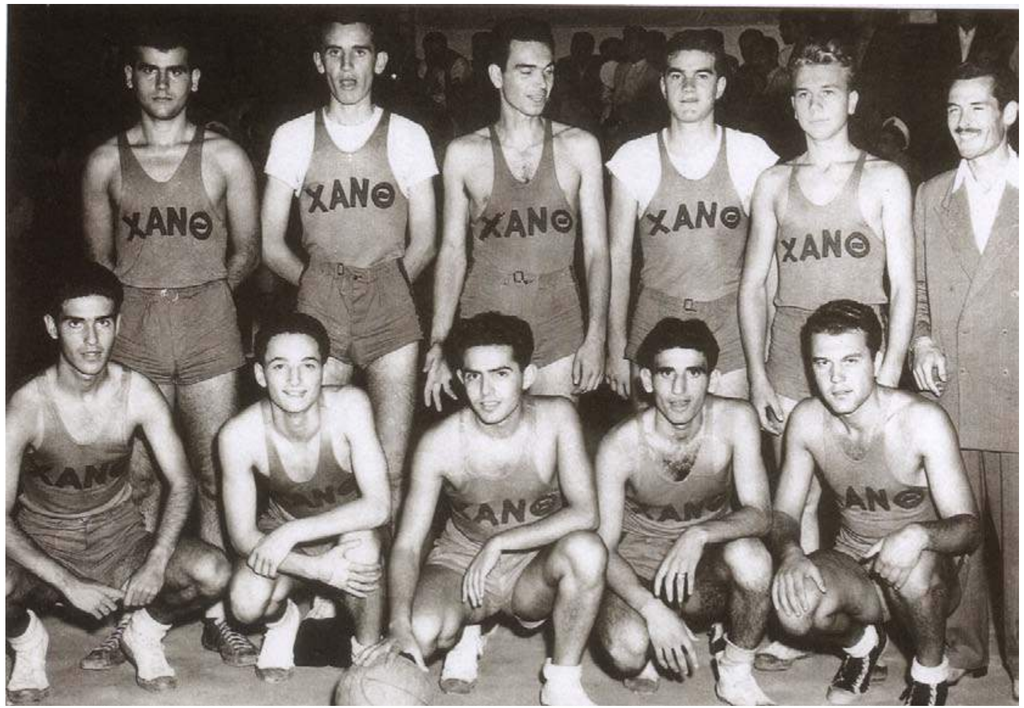


12.11.1947. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Team. Standing from left: Tsimopoulos, Nikolaidis, Tezedakis, Taliadoros, Tzikas, Matsoukas, Fourountzopoulos, Tsikinas (coach), Sitting from left: Tsigaridas, Tzivras, Matsoukas, Kalterimitzidis, Kyriakidis, Saratsiotis, Petalidis (Historical archive of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki).





1948. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Team. From left: Kyriakidis, Tazedakis, Ev. Tsigaridas, N. Nikolaidis, A. Petalidis, K. Taliadoros, G. Matsoukas, T. Taliadoros, Tzikas, T. Fourountzopoulos, M. Tsikinas (coach) (Historical Archive of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki)




1948-1949. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team. Standing from left: N. Nikolaidis, K. Taliadoros, T. Taliadoros, D. Fourountzopoulos, G. Matsoukas and Mimis Tsikinas, Head of the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and coach. In a seated position from left: St.Tazedakis, E. Tsigaridas, G. Tzivras, A. Petalidis and I. Matsoukas (Mimis Tsikinas's Family Archive)



Ο
ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ
ΓΥΜΝΑΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΘΛΗΤΙΚΩΝ
ΣΩΜΑΤΕΙΩΝ

ΑΠΟΝΕΜΕΙ ΤΟΔΕ ΤΟ ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑ

ΕΙΣ [redacted] την Χριστιαν. 'Αδελφότητα τῶν νέων Θεσ)νίκης

ΝΙΚΗΣΑΝΤΑ ΝΙΚΗΝ Α.' εἰς τὸ Πρωτάθλημα Καλαθοσφαίρας

'Εφήβων 1947 — 1948.

ΕΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΣ ΤΗ 28 Νοεμβρίου 1947

Ο ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΣ Ο ΓΕΝ. ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΥΣ



Ο
ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ
ΓΥΜΝΑΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΘΛΗΤΙΚΩΝ
ΣΩΜΑΤΕΙΩΝ

ΑΠΟΝΕΜΕΙ ΤΟΔΕ ΤΟ ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑ

ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ Χ.Α.Ν. ΘΕΣ/ΝΙΚΗΣ

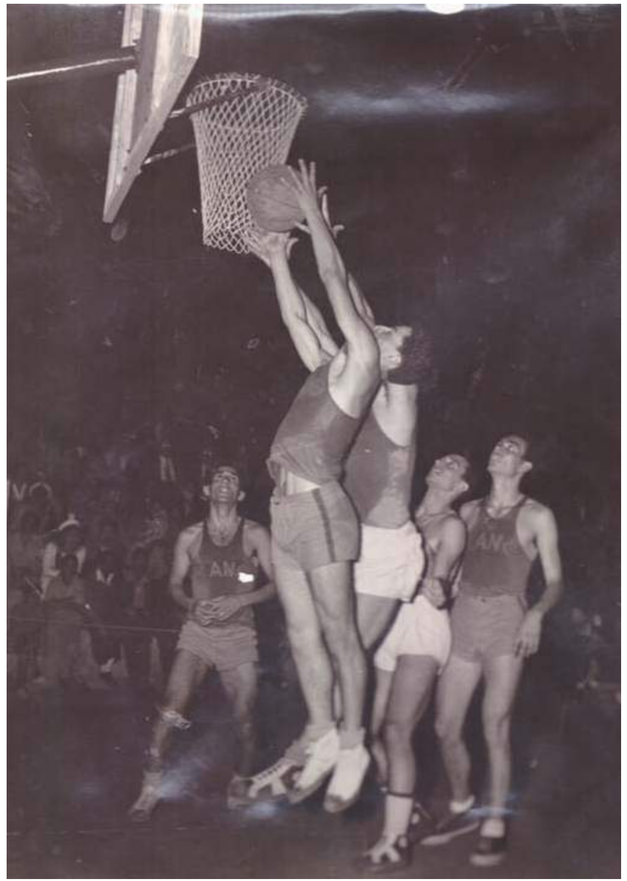
ΝΙΚΗΣΑΝΤΑ ΝΙΚΗΝ Α' ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΑΘΛΗΜΑ ΚΑΛΑΘΟΣΦΑΙΡΑΣ

ΑΝΔΡΩΝ ΘΕΣ/ΝΙΚΗΣ 1947

ΕΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΣ ΤΗ 10 Ιουλίου 1947

Ο ΠΡΟΕΔΡΟΣ Ο ΓΕΝ. ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΥΣ

Awards for Championships of Thessaloniki for the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki teams in categories Men 1947 and U18 1948 )
(Historical Archive of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki)



October 1949. Snapshot: game Panathinaikos - Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki in Athens. The players of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Vaggelis Tsigaridas, Takis Taliadoros and Anestis Petalidis can be seen (Ev. Tsigarida's Archive)





From left to right: Petalidis, Tsigaridas, Matsoukas, Nikolaidis, Tazedakis, Fourountzopoulos, Matsoukas I. Tsikinas (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1951. Teen's derby game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Aris



1949. D. Fourountzopoulos and Ev. Tsigaridas at the Triton's Stadium in Athens (Ev.Tsigarida's Archive)



1949. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team at the Triton's Stadium in Athens. (Ev. Tsigarida's archive)



1949. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team at the Triton's Stadium in Athens. (Ev. Tsigarida's archive)

## 2.4. «1950-1960» The second series of championships

### 2.4.1. The first European competitions of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki

The beginning of the decade finds Y.M.C.A.-Th in the midst of new challenges. Its central philosophy remains directed to the development of basketball. The members of Physical Education Department are highly qualified and give to Y.M.C.A.-Th its prestige and greatness.
It is noteworthy that, in 1951, another skillful staff member of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Mimis Tsikinas, one of the post-war pillars of Greek Basketball, will receive a scholarship from Y.M.C.A.-Th to study basketball coaching at Springfield College, Massachusetts with the top basketball professors as well as to attend adolescent pedagogy and psychology classes.
In the Thessaloniki's Championship of 1950-1951 season following teams participate: Y.M.C.A.-Th, Iraklis, VAO, PAOK, Aris and Anatolia. Y.M.C.A.-Th players are: Taliadoros, Tsigaridas, Matsoukas, T. Fourountzopoulos, Petalidis, Tzivras, Papaharisis, Ortoulidis, Laocratis, Koumenos and Gaganelis. Takis Taliadoros has a role of both coach and player, as M. Tsikinas is in America.
This season, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins one more Thessaloniki Championship, the sixth in a row. It also participates in the "Koloniaris Cup" tournament (games dedicated to the memory of a well-known athletic agent of Aris), which is organized by Aris at its sports court. This court begins gradually to be used to host games.
In the National Championship of the same season (1950-1951), Y.M.C.A.-Th has 4 victories and 3 defeats and ends up in the 5th place. Panathinaicos becomes Greek champion.
In the meantime, T. Taliadoros, who is both player and coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th and team captain and coach of Mixed Team Thessaloniki, receives more distinctions: following his appearances at the European Championship in Paris in 1951, in which Greece was ranked 8th, Taliadoros is ranked among the top 20 European basketball players by the prestigious French sports magazine "Sport Digest".
The following teams take part in the Thessaloniki championship of the season 1951-1952: Y.M.C.A.-Th, Iraklis, PAOK, VAO, Aris, Anatolia, Aetos, Makedonikos and Armenian Athletic Union and Y.M.C.A.-Th wins one more title.
At the National Championship, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the 5th place, registering three victories and three defeats with the following players: Taliadoros, Fourountzopoulos, Tsigaridas, Matsoukas, Gaganelis, Papaharisis, Dedes, Kontotsis, Kasapoglou, Ortoulidis and Valaouris. Meanwhile, at Easter 1952, M. Tsikinas returns from US with an accredited coaching degree from Springfield College. In the following years Tsikinas will often speak with admiration about his college professor Everett Dean, one of America's top coaches. A press report of that time states: "Mr. Tsikinas coming from America brought with him also the plans for the new court of Y.M.C.A.-Th", which indicates that he had plans for an extension of the historic court. The reconstruction works will start in the coming years and will be completed in 1958.

### 2.4.2. Taliadoros, Petalidis and Matthaiou at the Helsinki Olympic Games

In the 1952-1953 championship season PAOK presents a stronger team, which becomes obvious in the following years and the winning of the National championship in 1959. However, PAOK will have to wait for the title, as it occupies the 2nd place at that season, behind Y.M.C.A.-Th. Noteworthy is the fact that two players of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Takis Taliadoros and Anestis Petalidis as well as Faidon Matthaiou, who already played for Aris, were members of the Greek National team at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.
In the meantime basketball has a broad acceptance in secondary education. The games of the school championships offer strong emotions. "I will not forget a final game I played for the 4th High School opposite to the students of the 5th High School. The game took place at the basketball court of Y.M.C.A.-Th and the crowd had filled the stadium two hours earlier," Lakis Tsavas, another great personality of Greek Basketball, narrates. L. Tsavas begins his career as a basketball player in Y.M.C.A.-Th in the mid-1950s and in the following years he is present in several successes of Greek Basketball, first as a player and then as a coach.



### 2.4.3. Borislav Stankovic at the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th

In 1952-1953 season, Y.M.C.A.-Th will not compete in the National championship, as SEGAS is unable to cover the travel expenses of the teams of Thessaloniki. Y.M.C.A.-Th organizes international friendly games to avoid being inactive. That same year, it plays against the Yugoslav team Beogradski, that came to Greece to play in Athens against Olympiakos and Panellinios. Y.M.C.A.-Th hosts the Serbian team on 25/3/1953 and wins easily by 56-38; T. Taliadoros emerges as the top scorer of the game with 22 points. Among the players of Beogradski team the name Borislav Stankovic, who later will be President of FIBA for several years, appears.
Later, in the same year (1953), Serbs decide to invite Y.M.C.A.-Th in Belgrade. In Belgrade the Greek team faces Beogradski, Mixed team of Zagreb and the National Team of Yugoslavia. The team of Y.M.C.A.-Th is composed by the following: K. Nikolaidis, K. and T. Taliadoros, D. Fourountzopoulos, I. and G. Matsoukas, S. Tazedakis. V. Tsigaridas, G. Tzivras and A. Petalidis with M. Tsikinas being as always the coach.
The sporting competitions against Serbian teams continue in 1954 and Y.M.C.A.-Th hosts the strong team of Partizan in Thessaloniki on 27/3/1954. The newspaper "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" has a long reportage on this particular game: "... fans are advised to get their tickets early in advance as there is a lot of interest and they are expected to be sold out".
Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, amidst a crowd of fans on the stands, will beat Partizan by 63-52, with Taliadoros scoring 21 points and Tsigaridas 17.
In the archives of Y.M.C.A.-Th are also recorded the conquest of the "Katrantzos Tournament" in June 1953 as well as the 1st place of the U18 Team in the championship.
In the 1953-1954 season, the team of Y.M.C.A.-Th coached by M. Tsikinas with the players: Taliadoros, Petalidis, Tsigaridas, Matsoukas, Fourountzopoulos, Papaharisis, Papaioannou, Dedes, Gougoulis, Valaouris, Rokkos and Danos, will celebrate its 9th consecutive title.
At the National Championship Y.M.C.A.-Th will play against: Panellinios, Panathinaicos, E.A Patras, Diagoras Rodos, Olympiakos, PAOK, Tritonas and A.E Chalkida. Y.M.C.A.-Th wins Panathinaicos by 56-48, yet it will be defeated by Olympiacos (52-51) and Panellinios and will eventually end up in 4th place.
In October 1954, Y.M.C.A.-Th will win again the "Katrantzos Tournament" by winning Aris in the final with a score of 31-28. In the same month it will win the "OXI Cup" tournament.
In November 1954, Takis Taliadoros, at the age of 29, quits its career as a basketball player. A few years later, in 1961, he will not refuse providing the assistance that he was asked for, in order to support the effort of his beloved Y.M.C.A.-Th, which at that time was facing serious problems in its performance.

### 2.4.4. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki plays basketball in Kalamaria

Through Y.M.C.A.-Th, in the mid-1950s, Kalamaria [(settlement about 8km east of Thessaloniki, where many refugees after the Asia Minor Catastrophe were located (translator's not)] starts playing basketball. A building plot is granted to Y.M.C.A.-Th in the center of Kalamaria, which has a strong refugee and mainly Pontiac character, for the creation of a Y.M.C.A. branch to develop the cultural, educational, sport and social activities of Y.M.C.A.-Th. M. Tsikinas proposed the installation of baskets. Y.M.C.A.-Th immediate installed them and hundreds of young people came at the sports field of Y.M.C.A.-Th Kalamaria. In May 1954 the inauguration of the Y.M.C.A.-Th branch in Kalamaria is celebrated in the presence of the Mayor of Thessaloniki P. Petrakakis, the Mayor of Kalamaria St. Karatzas, the Chairman of Y.M.C.A.-Th E. Valayannis, the President of Y.M.C.A.-Th Kalamaria Branch D. Zannas, the Director of Y.M.C.A.-Th G. Molyvdas and the members of the Council Board of Y.M.C.A.-T (K. Sakkas and Chr. Christofilopoulos). "It was Mimis Tsikinas who took the initiative to install baskets in Y.M.C.A.-Th Kalamaria Branch in 1954. It was then that the youth of Kalamaria began to play basketball more systematically and so the foundations were laid which lead to the formation of the team Apollon Kalamarias. Apollon's first coach was also a former athlete of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Anestis Petalidis", Panagiotis Vafiadis, who had been a member of both Y.M.C.A.-Th Kalamaria Branch and Apollon, says.
In 1954, as in the next year, following a Council Board decision, the basketball team of Y.M.C.A.-Th launches tours in various cities of Makedonia with the aim of developing basketball, by organizing friendly games in cities like Kavala, Drama, Veria and elsewhere. This action confirms the fact that Y.M.C.A.-Th remains committed to its principles and its role as the "mother" of basketball in Greece.

## 2.4.5. The trip to Paris, the international friendly games and the important leaves

1955 is marked by the great success of Y.M.C.A.-Th winning the 2nd place in Paris (it lost in the final to Finland by 53-40) in a tournament held with the participation of teams from all Y.M.C.A.s of Europe. This tournament is part of the celebrations for hundred (100) years of Y.M.C.A. in Paris (1855-1955).
The players of the team of Y.M.C.A.-Th participated in French tournament are: A. Petalidis, P. Dedes, A. Papaharisis, D. Fourountzopoulos, D. Rokkos, E. Tsigaridas, Sp. Papaharisis, team captain A. Zaroukas. "We could have won the first place, but we couldn't withstand the huge bodies of the Finns. That trip to Paris was, however, a great experience for all of us," Vangelis Tsigaridas will confess years later.
In the 1955-1956 basketball season Y.M.C.A.-Th wins its 11th consecutive title. In the championship following teams participate: Aris, Anatolia, Armeniki, Aetos, VAO, Iraklis, Meliteas and PAOK. Y.M.C.A.-Th played with the following players: Petalidis, Matsoukas, Tsigaridas, Fourountzopoulos, Rokkos, Papaharisis, Dedes, Kyriakis, Tzanandreas, E. Gougoulis, At. Gougoulis, Papadakis, Gousidis and Iliadis.
In 1956, SEGAS cancels the final phase of the National Championship (as it happened in the 1952-1953 season), due to ongoing financial problems and thus there no champion is emerged.
In the Thessaloniki Championship of the season 1956-1957 following teams participate: Y.M.C.A.-Th, Aris, PAOK, Iraklis, Anatolia, Aetos and VAO. The team of M. Tsikinas celebrates the first place, the 12th in a row.
In 1957, during Easter holidays, a Thessaloniki Cup is organized for the first time and Y.M.C.A.-Th wins Aris at the final game by 68-57. The U18 Y.M.C.A.-Th's team includes a name that will play a great role in Greek Basketball in the coming years. It is Giorgos Trontzos, who takes his first steps in basketball at the historic outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th. His height of 2,17m inspired awe. In the same year, upon invitation of Y.M.C.A.-Th, the Belgian team Racing Royal arrives in Thessaloniki and wins Y.M.C.A.-Th by 64-61.
In August 1957, the Hungarian team Honved and the Czech team Spartak arrive in Thessaloniki. Both teams proved to be of extremely high level. Honved wins Y.M.C.A.-Th by 91-57 and Aris by 87-70, while Spartak wins Y.M.C.A.-Th by 91-53 and Aris by 94-53. Daily press presents the view of Spartak's coach: "Y.M.C.A.-Th plays old-school basketball, Aris plays more modern basketball." His view is not too far from reality, as there is a real need to renew the roster of Y.M.C.A.-Th. A change that will inevitably take place in the coming years, since a number of key players leave. That year, however, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the "G. Mantopoulos Cup" in a tournament organized by Iraklis.
In September 1957 Y.M.C.A.-Th organizes the "Lewis Riess Cup", a tournament dedicated to the memory of the person with huge contribution to Greek basketball and sports in general.
In the 1957-1958 season, Aris "breaks" the 12-year sovereignty of Y.M.C.A.-Th, finishes undefeated in the Thessaloniki Championship with 12 wins and goes to championship finals. However, it misses a great chance of winning the National championship as it finishes 2nd behind AEK: "We played by far the best basketball, it was such a pity we lost that championship. Sometimes luck is needed and we did not have it at that time" says Stergios Gousios, member of Aris team, its captain and later President of Aris Veterans' Club for many years. "Please note that at a young age I played football at Y.M.C.A.-Th. I tried to play basketball in Aris following the encouragement of Anestis Petalidis and Petros Petrakis," says Asterios Gousios, who had been staff member at the Camp Pelion. In this National Championship (1957-58), Y.M.C.A.-Th finishes 5th, with four wins and two defeats.
The beginning of the next season finds the basketball team of Y.M.C.A.-Th in turmoil, because the players Fourountzopoulos, Rokkos, Dedes and Petalidis decide to leave. The latter had been seriously injured during a game in 1957 and after ten-years he puts an end as a player of the Y.M.C.A.-Th.
It is a period of intense internal processes in Y.M.C.A.-Th, which, by decision of its Council Board in October 15, 1958, declares that, it will remain solid in its goals; the cultivating of basketball, the principle of fair play and the emergence of athletes. It decides to continue operating the basketball division on amateur basis, it does not desire to start trading its players and makes it clear that, it will not institute wages for basketball players – a practice that gradually began in the teams of Athens.
Lakis (Apostolos) Tsavas starts systematically playing basketball at that time and later he becomes a key player of the Men's team. "I started my career as a player at Y.M.C.A.-Th in 1957. No one forced me to go, I went by myself although I lived relatively far, at the so-called at the time Lemonadika, at Antigonidon Street. They said I was good, so AEK got its gun sights set for me a few years later," he recalls.
One more important personality in Greek Basketball was Theodoros Rodopoulos, who joins the Children's Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th and he will become a very good player and later a great coach. "I started from football and it was said I was good. Do you know how they called me back then? Raymond Copa, afterthe top French player. Yes, I had a nickname in football," Rodopoulos confesses today.



## 2.4.6. Thessaloniki acquires a modernized basketball court

In September 1958, the newspaper "Athlitiki Drasis" publishes a special feature on the completion of works at the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th. The main title of the article is: "Thessaloniki acquires a synchronized basketball court similar to those abroad". The long article presents details regarding its modernization and the increase of its capacity to 3,000 viewers. Originally the court had an earthen floor with wooden boards and baskets.
At the beginning it (the court) was placed on the west end of the open space of the building plot of Y.M.C.A.-Th, in front of the low-rise buildings – small houses that served as its offices, until the Mansion was built. Later it was moved to the southwest corner of the open space, behind the space where the building of the Society of Macedonian Studies was to be built, at Daglis Street and there it became the legendary outdoor basketball court of Y.M.C.A.-Th.
The interesting newspaper article reveals also details on the scheduled tournament for the inauguration of the new court (with the participation of Aris, PAOK, Panathinaicos and Mixed team of Vienna). The games took place in four-days, from 14/9 to 18/9/1958, and Vienna won the first place.
However, the departure of key players causes problems to the team. M. Tsikinas gives opportunities to young basketball players and advances them to the first team.
At the National Championship of 1958, hosted in July at the Panathenaic Stadium (Athens), Y.M.C.A.-Th suffers 6 defeats in 6 games and finishes 7th. In the 1958 finals the players of Y.M.C.A.-Th are the following: Matsoukas, Tsigaridas, Kyriakis, Dedes, Trontzos, Rokkos, Iliadis, Gougoulis, Papaharisis and Antypas. In the same year, 1958, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the Thessaloniki U16 Championship.
"I met Y.M.C.A.-Th initially through its Camp Pelion. There, in the early 1950s, Tzimopoulos, Head of Physical Education Department, saw me and invited me to start training for the basketball team," says Yiannis Iliadis, an athlete at Y.M.C.A.-Th at that time, who would also be Chairman of the Association in the next years. "Tsikinas sorted me, Limpos and Gougoulis for the U18 team and promoted us to the Men's team. We were a great team, I was lucky enough to play basketball with the legends of the time, Matsoukas, Tsigaridas and for half a season with Takis Taliadoros. I was also a teammate of Giorgos Trontzos, who left (from Greece) as a very average player and returned from America as a Titan. I never left Y.M.C.A.-Th. I stopped playing because of serious backaches and from 1974 until 2010, when my Presidency ended, I actively participated in the Council Board. I had the honor to collaborate with important personalities of Y.M.C.A.-Th, such as its former Chairmans, Zannas and Kafatos …" Y. Iliadis says.

### 2.4.7. Korac at the outdoor field of Y.M.C.A.-Th against Aris

On November 19, 1958, Thessaloniki hosts a friendly game between Beogradski and Aris. Among the players of the Serbian team, there is Radivoj Korac, the great Serbian athlete, whose name after his death was given by FIBA to the prestigious club competition. Aris in the late 1950s steals fans' hearts; it plays amazing basketball by combining speed and power. The team is led by two important personalities, who grew up and were nurtured on the principles of Y.M.C.A.-Th: Anestis Petalidis (coach) and Takis Nikolaidis (technical director).
Y.M.C.A.-Th fails to qualify for the 1959 National Championship, hosted once again on its outdoor court. PAOK, Aris, Iraklis, Olympiacos, AEK, Sporting and Ethikos Athinon participate in it. PAOK wins Aris at the final game and wins the first national championship in its history. Among the best players of this exceptional team of PAOK are: Dimitris Dapontes and Orestis Aggelidis, who came from Y.M.C.A.-Th (as the case with Petalidis and T. Nikolaidis in Aris was). "I started playing after the war at Y.M.C.A.-Th. I learned a lot from Mimis Tsikinas. I was playing in the B' team and after a couple of years we moved to PAOK along with other guys," Orestis Aggelidis narrated.
We see that Anestis Petalidis and Orestis Aggelidis, both grown up in the "greenhouse" of Y.M.C.A.-Th, evolved into two great personalities of Aris and PAOK respectively and are regarded as the "patriarchs" of basketball for those teams! The role of the Y.M.C.A.-Th in the development and empowerment of basketball teams in Thessaloniki, was indeed crucial.





October 1954. Snapshot: game in the "OXI Cup"
(Vaggelis Gougoulis's Archive)



1950s. Takis Taliadoros at the stands of the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki during a break from training
(Takis Tagliadoros's Family Archive)




1951. Commemorative photo after the end of a friendly game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Hapoel (Ev.Tsigaridas's Archive)





May 1953. The basketball team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki in Yugoslavia for friendly games (Giorgos Matsoukas's Archive)



1954. Mixed team of the best players of Thessaloniki in Belgrade (Ev. Tsigaridas's Archive)






March 1955. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - Aetos at the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



August 1955. 100 YEARS Y.M.C.A., Paris. Silver medal for Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki that lost to Finland in the semifinals by 53-40
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





1956. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – Partizan game (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




1957. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – Aris game
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





1957. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team at the Pan-Hellenic Championship. From left: G. Matsoukas, T. Rokos, V. Tsigaridas, P. Dedes, T. Fourountzopoulos (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



Award ceremony of the Thessaloniki Cup (21.4.1957 – 5.5.1957) to the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1957. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team is photographed after winning the Thessaloniki Cup on the wooden stands of the tennis court, next to the basketball court. Back row from left: Tsimopoulos V. (Head of the P.E.), Fourountzopoulos D., Kyriakis, Sp., Rokkos D., Tsanandreas L. and Tsikinas M. (coach). Front row from left: Kalfas S. (standing), Lymbos I., Gougoulis E., Gougoulis At., Petalidis A., Dedes P. and Matsoukas G. (seated) (George Matsoukas's Archive)

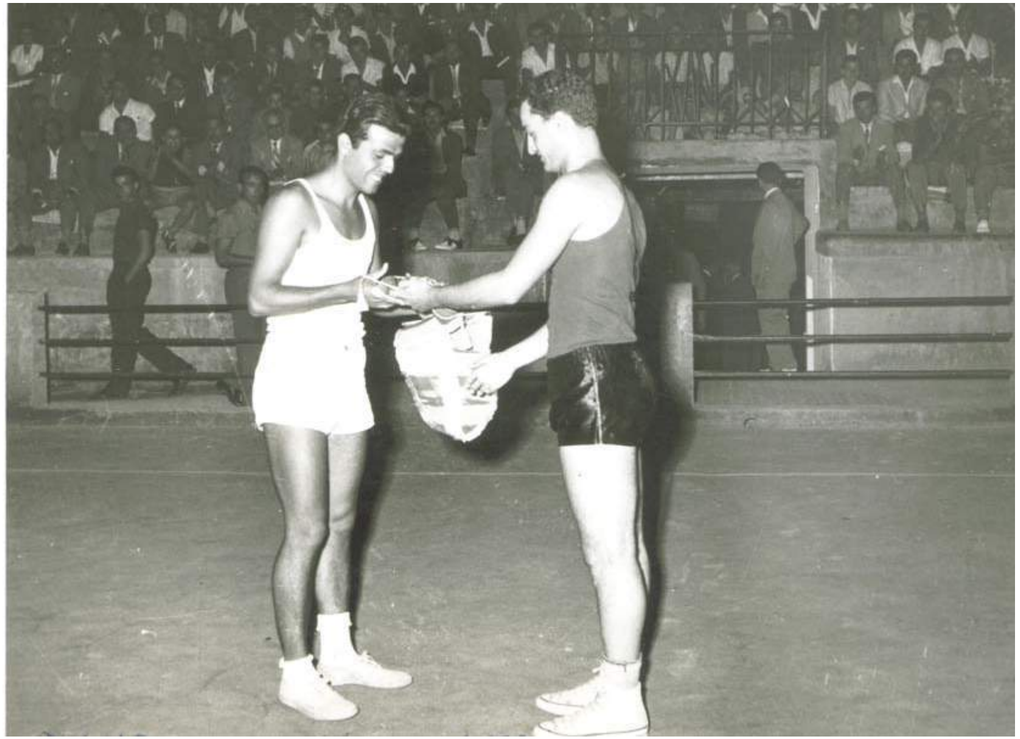


1957.The teams of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (top) and Anatolia (bottom), on the outdoor court of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki.
Top row from left: Kinigopoulos Agis, Limpos Yiannis, Polychroniadis Dionisis, Gousidis Dimitris, Tzanandreas Lakis, Gougoulis Attalos, Iliadis Yiannis, Mavroskoufis Symeon.
Bottom row from left: Varelzidis Aristos, Takis, Papadimas Yiannis, Paschalis Nikos, Parisis Dimitris (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





18.9.1958. International Basketball Tournament “on the Completion of the first level of the stands” of the Basketball Court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki.
From left to right the players of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki: V. Tsigaridas, G. Trontzos, L. Tzanandreas, Th. Papacharisis, Sp. Kyriakis, Y. Iliadis, P. Dedes, At. Gougoulis, G. Stergiou, D. Vamvoukos, S. Kalpidis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1958. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - Olympiakos.
V. Tsigaridas and E. Filippou (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1958. Snapshot: game Aris - Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




Commemorative Medal for the participation in the Basketball Tournament of Y.M.C.A. Europe, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Y.M.C.A. in Paris, 1855-1955
(Donation of D. Fourountzopoulos, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)

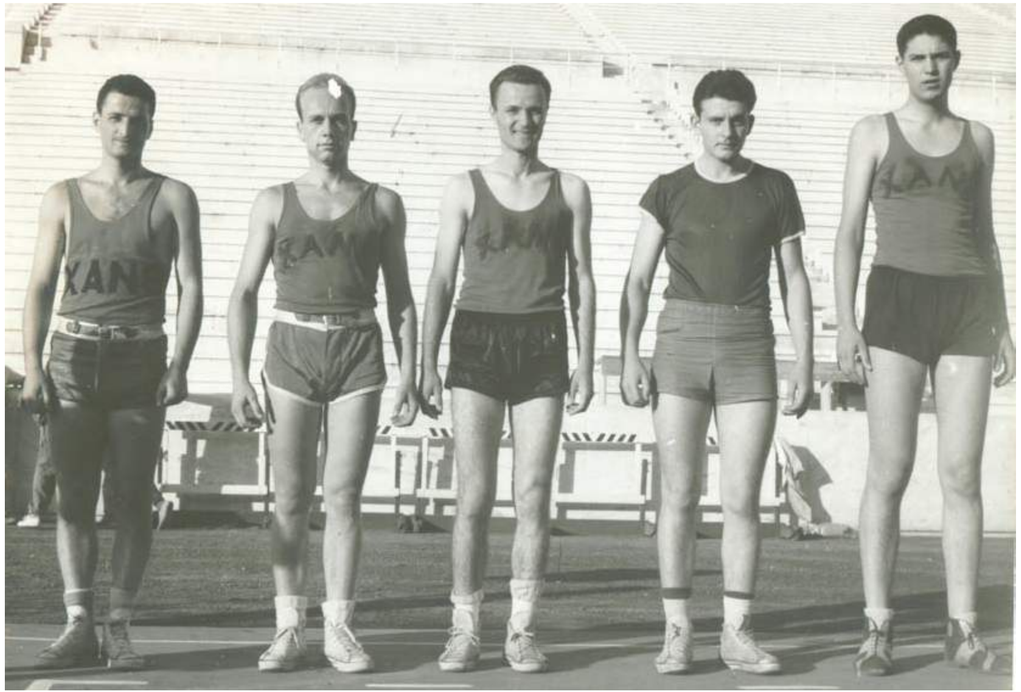


July 1958, “Kalpaktsoglou Tournament” in memory of PAOK Honorable President Pantelis Kalpaktsoglou at the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki stadium. Theodoros Kalpaktsoglou awards the trophy to the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team captain, Giorgos Matsoukas.
From left: G. Trontzos, P. Dedes, E. Tsigaridas, T. Papacharisis and Christoforou (Team captain of Sporting) (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





1958. Snapshot: game held in Panathenaic (Kallimarmaro) Stadium (Athens), Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki -Aris (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



Greek Championship. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team in Panathenaic (Kallimarmaro) Stadium (Athens), from left: Tsigaridas, Matsoukas, Papaharisis, Rokos and Trontzos (Ev. Tsigaridas's Archive)





1956. Outdoor activities at the Y.M.C.A. Kalamaria playing field. In the background the building of Y.M.C.A. Kalamaria (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1954. The inauguration of Y.M.C.A. Kalamaria in the presence of representatives of the International Committee and other authorities.

The Mayor of Thessaloniki P. Petrakakis, the Mayor of Kalamaria, St. Karatzas, the President of the Board of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, E. Valayiannis, the President of Y.M.C.A. Kalamaria, D. Zannas, the General Director of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, G. Molyvdas and the members of the Board of Directors of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, K. Sakkas and Chr. Christofilopoulos, can be seen (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

## 2.5. “1960-1970” Y.M.C.A.-Th maintains the “myth” of being a basketball power

### 2.5.1. The new “harvest” of the restless M.Tsikinas

In the beginning of the 1960s, Y.M.C.A.-Th finds itself weakened, with Mimis Tsikinas striving to create a new team using the young fresh blood. A new generation of players emerges recording great success in the youth’s championships.
In 1960, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the U16 championship with the following players: Zoiros, Skipitaris, Zacharof, Stefanou, Galatsopoulos, Vafiadis, Stavridis, Siafaras, Kontogiorgis, Andrianopoulos and Govedaros. M. Tsikinas realizes that he has raw gold in his hands and all is needed at that time is patience and hard work.
Indicative of Tsikinas’s influence on young children at that time are the reports of Theodoros Rodopoulos and Lakis Tsavas: “To me, in my eyes, Tsikinas incorporated the whole Y.M.C.A.-Th. He was the one behind everything, he was organizing everything. I owe him a lot, he distinguished me, he encouraged me to coaching,offered me a scholarship to study in America. Basketball owes him a lot, because he applied pioneering things, as he was one of the few who had the opportunity in the 1950s to travel to America, to see and learn. At a young age, we got acquainted with some things like “figure 8” or “give-and-go”. He read a lot, he kept updated, he was sent books from America, many of which I then had the honor of getting from him,” Theodoros Rodopoulos admits, adding: “He had still a lot to give as a coach, but then he was absorbed on the organizational part, taking over the directorship of Y.M.C.A.-Th. He was a special figure, strong personality, I remember him at the Camp Pelion, where he also gave his soul, to deal with everything, he was a lifeguard trainer, he did all sports, he was also a referee of various sports, a sports teacher. I hold Mimis in very high esteem, so in recent years I always used to say at the General Assemblies (of Y.M.C.A.-Th) and insisted that his name should be given to the new indoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th, as it eventually occurred. “
Lakis Tsavas also speaks with great respect for Tsikinas: “I met him when I was in the Children’s Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Tsikinas was the assistant director and coach of all basketball teams. From the Children Department, I, Rodopoulos, Ilias Zoiros, Galatsopoulos and others were promoted to the U18 team. He was a great connoisseur of basketball, he had studied sports psychology and what he stood out for was his skillfulness in imparting knowledge. It wasn’t boring for him to train even the last player of the dozen. Anyone who has not lived with him at the Y.M.C.A.-Th Camp Pelion cannot perceive what kind of man he was. Most of all, he was a great educator. He was personally interested in each of us, in our problems. Many mornings we visited him in his office and we talked about issues that were of our concern. At noon, I remember, he used to drink his coffee and all the afternoons he was met on the pitch. He was respected in sports circles of Thessaloniki and beyond. His opinion counted a lot.”
In the 1960-1961 season, PAOK won the Thessaloniki Championship and Y.M.C.A.-Th finished in the 5th place. The U18 team conquered the Thessaloniki Championships with: Zoiros, Stavridis, Galatsopoulos, Govedaros, Georgiadis, Stephanou, Andrianopoulos, Ganzos, Vafiadis, Siafaras, Kontogiorgis, Zacharof, Kandiliaris, Manolakoglou and Konstantinidis.
In the early 1960s, Thessaloniki citizens were impressed by the superspectacle, given in a unique exhibition game by the legendary team of the time: the “Harlem Globetrotters”, which made the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th be overcrowded. The Harlems, a group founded in 1928 in the district of Harlem in New York, consisted of mainly colored basketball players, included Greece for the first time on their world tour and a Greek Y.M.C.A. couldn’t help being one of its stops.
In 1961, the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th hosts the “OXI” tournament games for the anniversary of the October 28th with the presence of the legendary 113 Battle Wings, National Team of Armed Forces, National U21 Team, Mixed team of Athens and Mixed team of Thessaloniki. Mourouzis, Kontovounisios, Christeas and all the big basketball stars march on the court. Mixed team of Thessaloniki wins the tournament with L. Tsavas being its top player. The federal coach Phedon Matthaiou invites him to the National Team, where Missas Pantazopoulos, then coach of AEK at the time, distinguishes him from other players and proposes his transfer to the administration of the “Association” (AEK). Tsavas would soon open his wings to fly to other states.



### 2.5.2. Basketball builds its myth in Thessaloniki

Meanwhile, Thessaloniki of the 1960s seems to be completely surrendered to the charm of the “orange goddess” of basketball.
In November 1961, the photographic lens of the time captures a fascinating picture: the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th, overfilled with people, men, women, children, watching the Thessaloniki derby between Aris and PAOK: “I found this photo in my archive. We’re in 1961, the games between Aris-PAOK are magnetizing, I should state that two years earlier, in 1959, the two teams played in the final for the National Championship,” the veteran basketball player of Aris Asterios Gousios explains and continues: “You could not even hear a pin drop. PAOK and Aris fans sit together, sometimes disagreeing, but rarely getting out of the ordinary. Inside the pitch you can see only two police officers. The spectators on the stands are well-dressed, the men in their blazers and there are also several women. Most games were then held on Sunday morning. Many people came to the stadium directly after the church and waited for the game to begin. I also participated in the game depicted on the photo. We had a great team back then. My teammates were Kostantaras, Tsitouras, Bousvaros, Tsavdaroglou and others. Aris in that game had won the Thessaloniki Championship by 42-37. George Tsobanakis, a veteran basketball player of Aetos and later of PAOK, being a teenager at the time, watched Aris competitions on the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th. “People were coming in well-dressed. Football was popular, yet basketball had its own audience, especially in the derby PAOK-Aris you could hardly find a seat!”
In 1962 the U18 team of Y.M.C.A.-Th won the championship once again. At that time the Men’s team lost some players such as Papacharisis (moved to PAOK), Dedes (moved to Panathinaicos) and Trontzos and Tsavas (moved to AEK). “Back then there was a law that allowed you to change team as long as you had moved to another city. AEK showed great interest in getting me, so I made the decision to leave Y.M.C.A.-Th. It was a peaceful divorce and both sides knew that our roads would meet again in the future,” L. Tsavas says.
Before leaving Y.M.C.A.-Th, L. Tsavas will play for half a season as a teammate with T. Taliadoros, who in 1961 briefly returned to action (played in a Thessaloniki championship round): “Mimis Tsikinas had come to my house and said to me ‘Takis you have to play in some games, we need your experience, your presence ‘. I told him, ‘Well, I don’t even know where I put my shoes, I have my job, I am not for that now.’ He finally convinced me. You could hardly say no to Tsikinas” Takis Taliadoros has said about his “come back” so as to help his beloved Y.M.C.A.-Th. “Of course we were teammates. Even then in his last basketball years, he was something very extraordinary. He was playing under the boards, he was airy, he had a very good technique, was a rational player and had excellent contact with the basket” L. Tsavas describes.
In 1962 Y.M.C.A.-Th participates in the processes for the establishment of championship for the A’ National League with two rounds and two matches at home and away. A year later, in 1963, the A’ National League basketball championship is a fact.

### 2.5.3. Anatolia almost wins a title with Tsigaridas as a coach

In 1962, while Y.M.C.A.-Th is in retreat, another team in Thessaloniki impresses through its game. This is “Anatolia” team consisted of: Parisis brothers, Alexiadis, Fintanidis, Karidis, Papadimas, Dogramatzian brothers, Manousis, Gesios, Bountovinos, Ikonomidis, Paschalis and others, reaching so close to conquer the national championship. The “driver’s” position of “Anatolia” is held by another major figure of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Vaggelis Tsigaridas, a member of the model team of the Y.M.C.A.-Th in the 1950s. “In 1962, coached by Vaggelis Tsigaridas, we lost the Greek championship in the rematch, as four teams were even in the same rank. We lost it to Panathinaicos. In 1964, Anatolia became the only team to win AEK in Nea Philadelphia [where AEK’s stadium was located (translator’s note)]. AEK of Trontzos, Zoupas and Amerikanos,” Vyron Alexiadis recalls, nostalgically speaking of the old Thessaloniki: “In the 1960s we had three basketball hangouts. All the three of themat Tsimiski street:the pastry shops “Petalouda”, “Ekali” and “Kefir”. We, of Anatolia, used to frequent at Kefir. Our opponents were Aris, Y.M.C.A.-Th, PAOK, Aetos and at the evening we were all together becoming a company. Basketball was into the life of the people of Thessaloniki. I wish you could see how the stands in Y.M.C.A.-Th were overfilled with people. But this city also had great personalities, my friend Phaidon Matthaiou, Takis Taliadoros, Anestis Petalidis, who was our coach. We played with wind, with rain…

For many years we were in the top rank, yet there was no trace of pay. A bottle of orange juice, a free pair of sneakers from "Alisida" factory and that was it." Besides being a player, V. Alexiadis was a coach of Anatolia and Y.M.C.A.-Th in the late 1970s.

### 2.5.4. Basketball enters the indoor halls

In the same year, 1962, a large construction site is erected, at the north of the area where the Thessaloniki International Fair was being held. It is the first large indoor court in the city, the Alexandreio Melathron, which is erected upon the announcement of the Karamanlis government in 1959.
The inauguration of Alexandreio Melathron of Thessaloniki or otherwise called the "Palais des Sports" with a capacity of 5,200 seats takes place in June 1966 with the presence of King Constantine. A new era is starting for Greek basketball, which is gradually being moved from outdoor courts to the new indoor halls.
In 1964 Y.M.C.A.-Th appears in the 1st National League Championship with players who a few years before were excelling at U16 and U18 leagues: P. Stefanou, Th. Rodopoulos, Al. Tryfonidis, T. Petras, I. Zoiros, S. Galatsopoulos and K. Stavridis. The team scores 5 wins and 13 defeats, finishing 8th and surpassing Anatolia and Olympiacos, the latter being relegated that year. The most important win of the season for Y.M.C.A.-Th is the one against Panathinaicosby 89-80. It will also score victories over Panallinios by 84-76 and Tritonas by 75-62.
Panayiotis Stefanou with 363 points in 18 games is the first scorer of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Born in 1945 Stefanou was a charismatic scorer and a "pillar" of the team in the 1960s. It is no coincidence that he was selected from the National U21 Team and the National Team of Armed Forces while being a singled-out member of the Mixed team of Thessaloniki. He has always been a restless spirit with artistic concerns, a lover of painting and more generally of arts and culture. In 1971, he made the decision to permanently settle in the US, where he would follow his career path.
In 1963, Trontzos returned from America, where he had moved on to Gonzaga University upon a scholarship and he would play in several games of the 1963-1964 season, assisting Y.M.C.A.-Th to remain (8th) in the big league. Next year, Trontzos would be met at AEK along with Tsavas.
In the 1964-1965 season, Y.M.C.A.-Th with Rodopoulos, Zoiros, Petras, Stavridis, Stefanou, Tryfonidis, Galatsopoulos, Yatagantzidis, Georgiadis, Mimikakis, Konstantinidis, marks great volatility in its performance, achieving only three wins and coming 10th, resulting in its being relegated. After the end of the season, Theodoros Rodopoulos moves to Aris.
However, not only leaves but also additions take place at that time. Apart from Alexandros Trifonidis, born in 1944, a trained powerful forward player coming from the team of Navarchos Votsis, many guys who had sprang from Y.M.C.A.-Th had already started to play a leading role. These are:the aforementioned P. Stefanou, Ioannis Yatagantzidis, an amazing defensive player, extremely active, courageous and very effective near the basket and Ilias Zoiros, a tall athlete, with very good technical characteristics and a good shot, while in the coming years Dionysis Ananiadis, Michalis Giannouzakos, Lee Avramidis and Zafiris Ginis etc will follow.
"My own generation grew up in a time when the institution of neighborhood was very strong. Y.M.C.A.-Th was my neighborhood," Dionysis Ananiadis explains, whose parental home was literally across the street from the Y.M.C.A.-Th premises, and continues, "At Y.M.C.A.-Th there was an orgasm of activities, you could not find anywhere else any kids' clubs with so many alternatives. There you could join one of the kids' clubs where you had the opportunity to get acquainted with table tennis, play football, billiards ... There was movie screenings, performances with Karagiozis, things you didn't find very easily at that time. On Sundays, a lot of sports activities were taking place, basketball, volleyball, football ... I even learned to play baseball in Y.M.C.A.-Th. The good ones were set apart, and then the process of issuing anathlets's card began. So, this is how my own story begins with the basketball of Y.M.C.A.-Th."
Michalis Giannouzakos narrates his own story, recording a great course in the field of Greek basketball. "My friends from the 2nd High School in 1964 brought me to Y.M.C.A.-Th. Two years later, in 1966, I was invited to the National U18 team. I had no great talent. My brother, let's say, Kostas was a different case, he played mainly out of his talent. After some time he gave up and went to Italy to study pharmacy. I believe he could make a great career. I did what I did through hard working. I started, I remember, playing as a replacement for Zoiros and Gavriilidis and gradually I began to find my place and improve."
From 1965 the teams started pushing for the creation of a basketball federation and disengagement from SEGAS, and finally in 1966 the Hellenic Federation of Sports (abbreviated in Greek as E.O.A.Π.) was initially created, which housed both basketball and volleyball and shortly after it would become the today's Hellenic Basketball Federation (abbreviated in Greek as E.O.K.). Y.M.C.A.-Th has been a founding member of the Federation.

### 2.5.5. The 1967 military coup shifts the championship to the summer

The Coup of April 21, 1967 causes a short halt on all tournaments, so the final game of the 1966-1967 season takes place on July 26, 1967, with Y.M.C.A.-Th beating PAOK by 57-53. Mimis Tsikinas was the coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th and Orestis Angelidis of PAOK. The following points were scored for the Y.M.C.A.-Thessaloniki: Stefanou 20, Giatagantzidis 9, M. Giannouzakos 16, K. Giannouzakos 2, Zacharov 8, Gavriilidis 2 and for PAOK: Ikonomou 26, Bousios 5, Andreadis 8, Paraskevas 4, Gesios 6.
In this season Y.M.C.A.-Th will record 7 victories and 15 defeats and will finish 9th, remaining in the big league, while Panathinaicos emerges as the champion.
The following year, at the age of 16, a guy is promoted to the Men's team, coming from Y.M.C.A.-Th and standing out for his basketball intelligence and effectiveness. This is Dionysis Ananiadis, who in the coming years will become the team's captain, linking his name to major successes of the Y.M.C.A.-Th and serving it from a variety of positions of responsibility. "With Y.M.C.A.-Th I played in a total of five U16 championships. I started participated in official competitions very early on and before moving to the U18 team, I was already in theMen's team. Of the five U16 championships we won the four, we lost only one to the very good team of Aetos," D. Ananiadis says.
And while the process of setting up a reputable Men's team is underway, the Y.M.C.A.-Th's youth academies mark constant successes.
In 1968 M. Tsikinas asks Th. Rodopoulos to assume the technical leadership of Y.M.C.A.-Th. "I was 24-25 years old, still a player of the National team. I made the decision to stop playing in Aris because of some circumstances. Tsikinas found me and made the proposal to me. I remember saying to Tsikinas: 'Mr. Mimis, it is a big burden, don't you think I am too young to take on the Men's team?" He replied "value does not wait for age." This is the year that the basketball of Y.M.C.A.-Th is entering a new era.
Th. Rodopoulos had already been coaching, having worked with Olympos, Saranta Ekklisies, exhibiting significant successes with players including Markopoulos, Lortos, Roumbos, Skarmoutsos and others.

### 2.5.6. Y.M.C.A. is present in the first big success of the Greek basketball with AEK

In 1968 Greek Basketball was raving over the constant successes of AEK, the first Greek team to celebrate a European title.
Among the athletes of AEK, who were glorified on the evening of April 4, 1968 at the Panathenaic Stadium on the triumph over Slavia Prague and the conquering of the European Cup Winners' Cup, there are three members of Y.M.C.A.s: Giorgos Amerikanos, coming from Y.M.C.A. Nikaia (Piraeus) and of course Lakis Tsavas and Giorgos Trontzos, from Y.M.C.A.-Th. "Y.M.C.A. Nikaia was a powerful sports cell in the area. We are talking about a team that was extremely competitive, having a long tradition in basketball and with many years of presence in the A' National, in which Giorgos Amerikanos, who was a great scorer, made his first steps," L. Tsavas recalls.
Giorgos Amerikanos was born in 1942 in Nikaia, Piraeus. He joined at a young age Y.M.C.A. Nikaia, where he quickly stood out for his performance. At the age of 16 he had already received proposals from Panathinaicos and AEK. He passed away at the age of 71 in 2013 and Y.M.C.A. Nikaia will name its stadium "Giorgos Amerikanos" to his honor.
L. Tsavas will receive 30,000 drachmas from AEK and 25,000 drachmas from the General Secretariat of Sports (abbreviated in Greek as Γ.Γ.Α) as a prize for winning the European Cup. But what he mostly enjoyed was another gift: a trip to the Olympic Games in Mexico. "I lived perhaps the nicest days of my life," he says as he seized every moment of this unique experience.

A year later, L. Tsavas expresses his desire to return to Thessaloniki. "I was out of action for a year because of the existing legislation. Both Aris and PAOK wanted me. Tzikas brothers, Ninos and Michalis, played an important role in my transfer. Indeed, Y.M.C.A.-Th had to sign an agreement demanded by AEK, that it would not give me to Aris and PAOK in the coming years. So, I came back," Lakis Tsavas narrates. In the coming years, he and Dionysis Ananiadis will probably become the best twin guards in Greece.
In 1968, Makis Pyritidis starts his coaching career at Y.M.C.A.-Th upon the encouragement of Th. Rodopoulos. Born on February 18, 1950, he will work for a total of 12 years at three different time periods in Y.M.C.A.-Th in youth Academies and in the Men's team.
In the meantime with Th. Rodopoulos as a "driver", the youth Academies continue their successes. In the 1969-1970 season the U18 team wins in Athens the National Championship with: Noltsis, Nanos, Avramidis, Vougias, Makris, Ananiadis, Stratis, Tsikinas, Karagiorgis, Ginis and Vamvakoudis.

### 2.5.7. "For an orange juice and a pair of sneakers…"

"To me, Y.M.C.A.-Th implied teamwork, innocence, dreams, hopes, nostalgia and companionship. I played basketball from 1966 to 1974 in all teams, until I left for graduate studies at the age of 23. I was fortunate to have important people and personalities for coaches such as Theodoros Rodopoulos and Lakis Tsavas. Y.M.C.A.-Th was the only team that operated in a purely amateurish basis, there were no fees, no bonuses or contracts. They paid you an orange juice and a pair of cheap sneakers, yet we were happy, we were playing for each other, I have pictures of that time in my mind that I will always carry with me. People say I was a good player and that I could have played professionally, but it was my personal decision to absent myself from competitions at an early stage because of my studies," says Spiros Vougias, a player of Y.M.C.A.-Th, who would pursue an academic career (Transportation Planner - Professor at the Polytechnic School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) and would be engaged in politics.
"They were all talented guys and they proved it and then they went on to rightly move to the Men's team. There was an excellent program running at Y.M.C.A.-Th under the supervision of Tsikinas, who had distinguished Rodopoulos's formidable orderly manner. The coach Rodopoulos was not just the coach of the Men's team, he supervised everything in the basketball division, dealing with the pre-junior, U16, U18 teams. Me, Stefanou, Pyritidis, I remember, spent endless hours on the courts, went all over Thessaloniki and Northern Greece. We participated in tournaments in Kavala, Komotini, Alexandroupolis," Georgis Bousvaros, a member of the coaching team of Y.M.C.A.-Th, who has linked his name to Y.M.C.A.-Th, as he was also a staff member of Camp Pelion for many years, while its contribution to the operation of the Basketball Museum of Y.M.C.A.-Th was significant, recalls.
An important breakthrough of the coaches of Y.M.C.A.-Th was Lee Avramidis. "I saw Lee Avramidis some-time in Agia Triada, I was impressed by his body shape, I asked him if he had been involved in any sport and he told me he had been playing water polo for Iraklis. His mother was American, his father was Greek. I told him that if he worked, he would make a career, as he did. He played in National teams and attracted the interest of several clubs that requested him as a transfer. He then returned to America to practice medicine (he became a pediatrician) and has been living there up to this day," M. Pyritidis narrates.
Indicative of the work being held at Y.M.C.A.-Th is the organization in April 1969 of the first basketball coaches clinic in Thessaloniki, initiated by M. Tsikinas and Th. Rodopoulos, with the presence of 55 coaches and athletes from all over Northern Greece.
1969 is also the year that Y.M.C.A.-Th participates for the first time in the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s, an institution that had started in 1953 and was held every two years. From June 13 to June 15 1969 Y.M.C.A.-Th participates in the Championship, organized in Switzerland with the participation of Y.M.C.A.s from England, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Finland and Portugal, with Y.M.C.A Finland conquering the trophy.
The Men's team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki in 1969 emerges as the champion of Thessaloniki and returns to the A' National League. This is the year that a new upward course for the basketball of the Y.M.C.A.-Th begins. Soon it will be able to claim the first place and represent Greece in international competitions.
From the 1969-1970 season the team (Tryfonidis, M. Giannouzakos, Ananiadis, Tsavas, Stefanou, Giatagantzidis, K. Giannouzakos, Ach. Zoiros, Avramidis, Gkinis, Vougias) has gone through transformation. It wins the 6th place with 12 victories. This is also the year in which the star of Michalis Giannouzakos rises in the A' National League.
It is now plausible that… the best are to come…



1960s. Outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. Training of young athletes by M. Tsikinas and A. Petalidis (A. Petalidis's Archive)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki U16 basketball team, champion of Thessaloniki in 1960, at the outdoor court, with the first wooden basket backboards in the background. Standing from left: Ar. Siafaras, V. Kontogiorgis, K. Vafeiadis, Il. Ziros, S. Galatsopoulos, K. Stavridis, P. Andrianopoulos, M. Tsikinas (coach). Seated from left: V. Georgiadis, Gantzos, K. Govedaros, P. Stefanou, Skipitaris, T. Sakharov (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





Standing from left: Yiannis Michailidis (Head of Physical Education Department), Yiannis Iliadis, Theodoros Rodopoulos, Mimis Tsikinas (coach), Christos Konstantinopoulos, Ilias Zoiros, Panagiotis Stefanou, Kirikos Stavridis. Seated from left: Stavros Konstantinidis, Takis Petras and Soulis Galatsopoulos. Athletes' awarding for their participation in the 1st Pan-Hellenic Basketball Championship, 1963-1964. (Soulis Galatsopoulos's Archive).

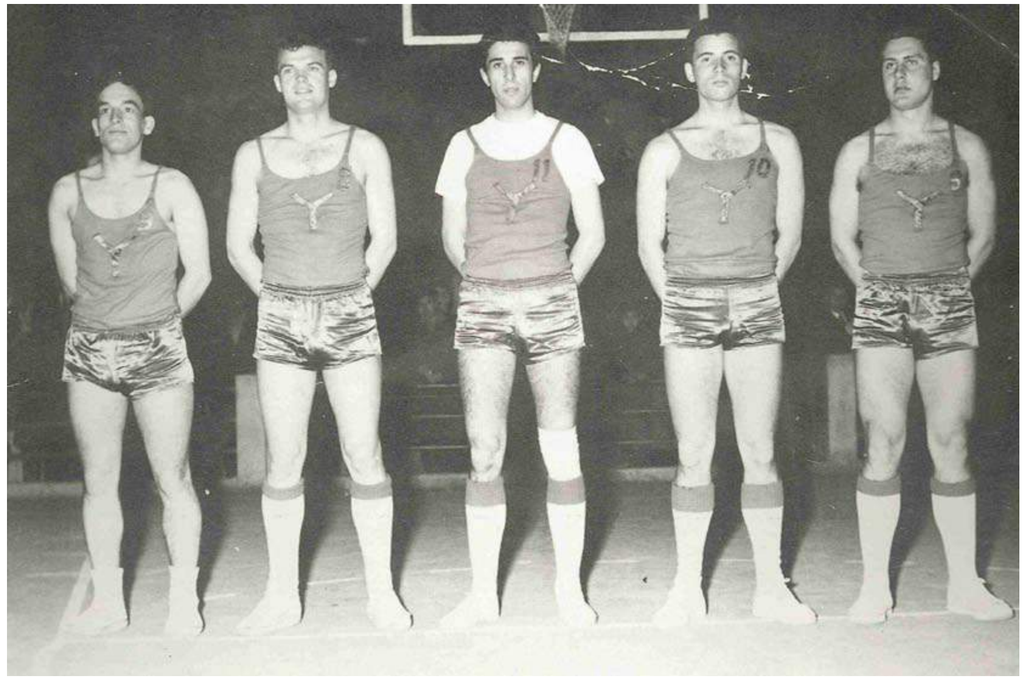


1961. Amazing photographic snapshot of Aris-PAOK game at the old outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. (Asterios Gousios's Archive)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki U18 team at the outdoor court during the 1963-1964 basketball season. Standing from right: L. Kandliaris, G. Voikos, Pan. Adrianopoulos, G. Schinas, K. Manolakoglou, V. Kontogiorgis, Th. Rodopoulos. Seated from right: G. Kantzos, N. Dougias, Lymbos, S. Eleftheriadis, V. Georgiadis, T. Zaharof (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





1964, 1st National League Championship. The five members of the team: Th. Rodopoulos, Al. Tryfonidis, T. Petras, Il. Ziros, K. Stavridis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1966. U16 Teams, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - Nestor, at the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki outdoor court wet after the rain
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





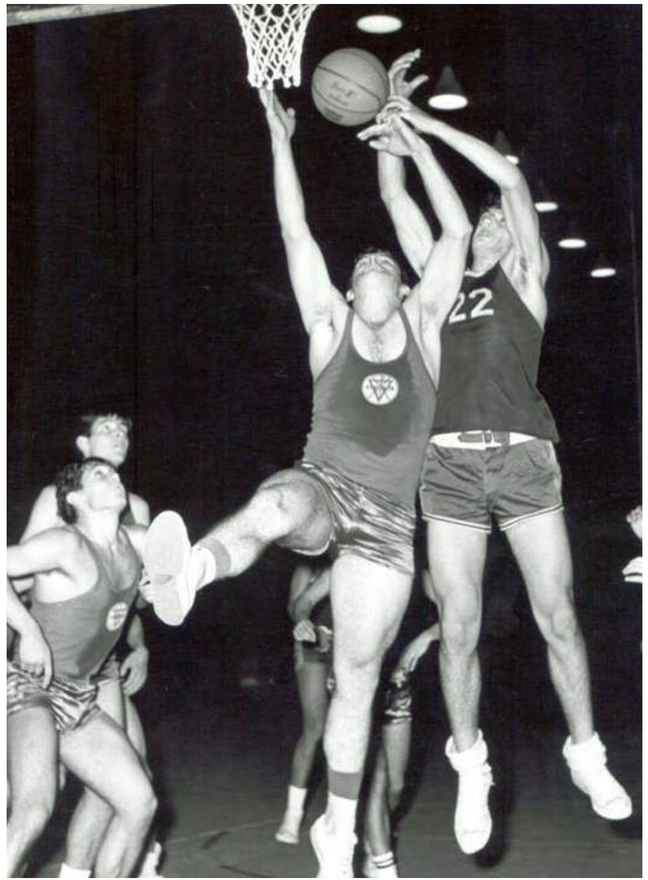

1966. U16 teams, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - Aetos (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki U16 team, Champion of Thessaloniki 1966 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)




The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki U16 team, 1967 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1967-1968. Snapshot: Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – Sporting (Athens) game
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





1967-1968. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - Panellinios (Athens) in the "Indian's Tomb", as called the indoor court of Panathinaikos (Athens)
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki U16 Basketball Team in 1968 participated in demonstration games in various cities of Northern Greece. Standing from left: M. Pyritidis (coach), A. Abatzis, Z. Stanopoulos, A. Taliadoros, S. Vamvakoudis, P. Nousios, G. Bousvaros (coach). Seated from left: D. Makris, G. Nanos, A. Spanos, A. Karagiorgis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





The Greek U16 Champion Team, 1969. Standing from left: G. Makris, D. Ananiadis, Sp. Vougias, Lee Avramidis, E. Karagiorgis, Efstr. Vamvakoudis, Th. Noltsis. Seated from left: K. Tsikinas, Zaf. Ginis, L. Mylopoulos, Al. Grigoriadis, Sp. Stratis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team in Alexandreio Melathron (Palais de Sport of Thessaloniki) in 1969, after winning the National Championship Qualifying Games. Standing from left: Th. Rodopoulos (coach), M. Giannouzakos, Al. Tryfonidis, Sp. Vougias, Z. Koundouros, C. Xenos, K. Giannouzakos. Seated from left: S. Galatsopoulos, Z. Ginis, P. Stefanou, D. Ananiadis, G. Yiatagantzidis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



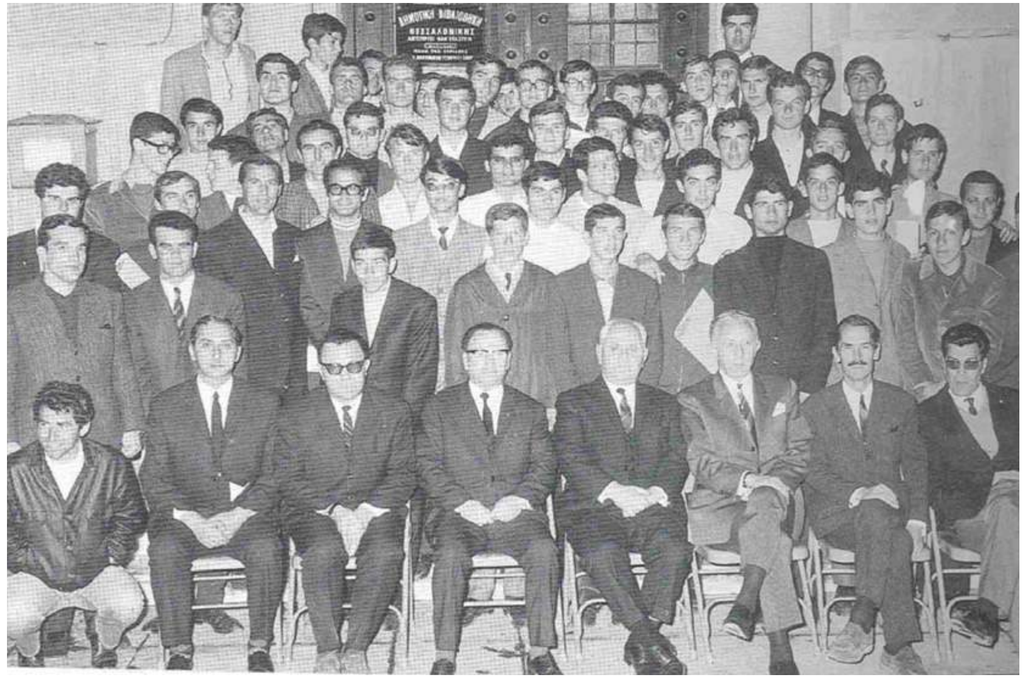


1969. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki U18 team. Top row from left: D. Ananiadis, Th. Noltsis, L. Avramidis, G. Nanos, Sp. Vougias, G. Bousvaros (coach), lower row from left: K. tsikinas, Z. Ginis, L. Mylopoulos, Str. Vamvakoudis, Sp. Stratis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

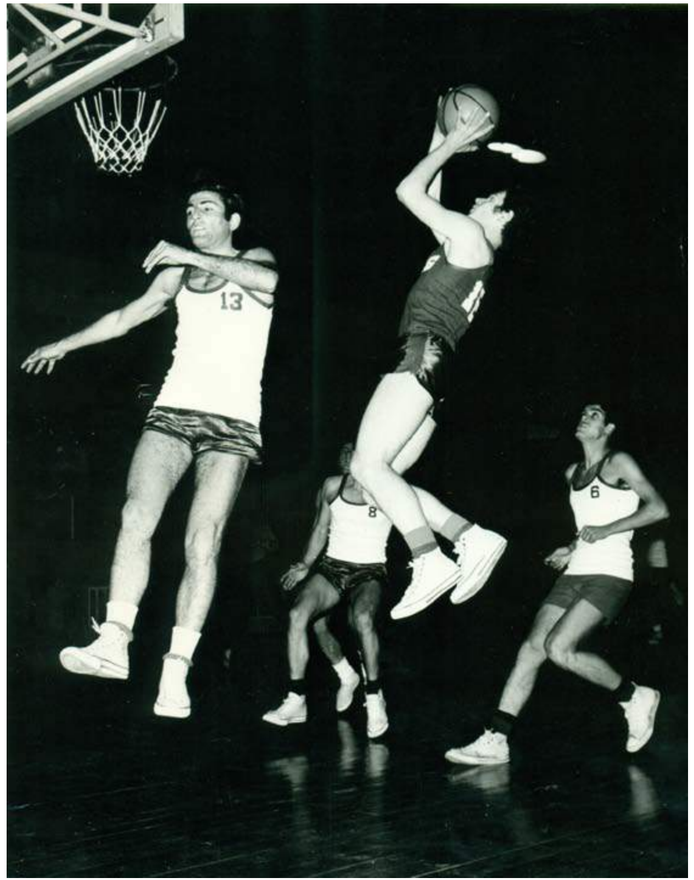



Derby game in Thessaloniki between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Olympiakos, a game hosted at Alexandreio Melathron (Palais de Sport of Thessaloniki) (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





On April 15-19, 1969, upon the initiative and responsibility of Mimis Tsikinas and Theodoros Rodopoulos, a basketball clinic was held for the first time in Greece with the participation of dozens of coaches and athletes from teams from Northern Greece. Standing on the left are the coaches Rodopoulos (2nd row) and Bousvaros (3rd row). Seated in the first row are Georgiadis, Papacharisis, Adamichos, Iatridis (President), Doukas, Tsikinas, Kapilou (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive).



National Championship for U18. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – Niki Volou in December 1970. S. Stratis “flies” to the opponent’s basket! (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



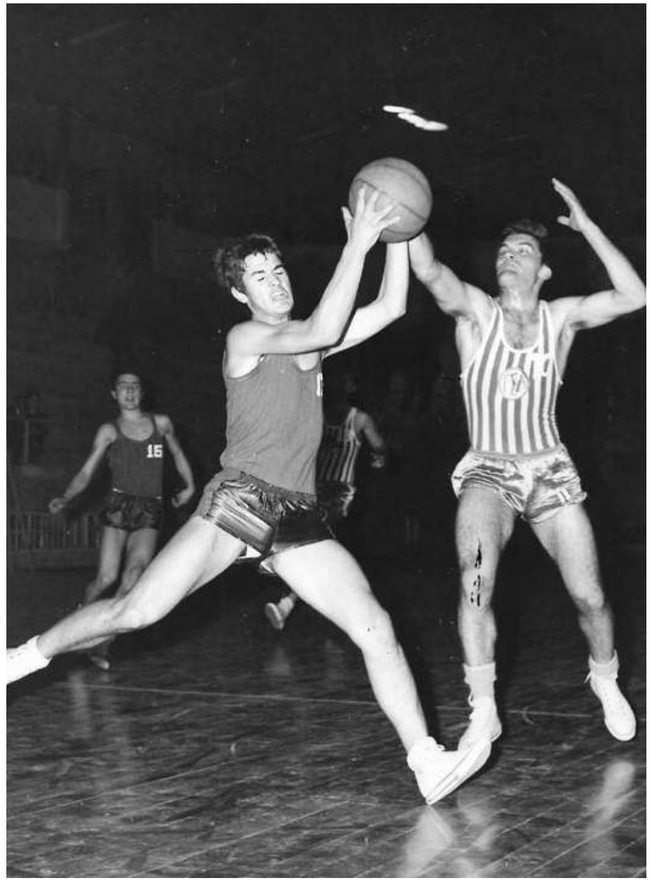


Standing from left: D. Tsikinas (Director), A. Tryfonidis, S. Vougias, K. Giannouzakos, M. Giannouzakos, A. Zoiros, Lee Avramidis.
Seated from left: I. Giatagatzidis, P. Stefanou, K. Tsikinas, A. Tsavas, Z. Ginis, D. Ananiadis, Th. Rodopoulos.
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




The basketball players of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki: M. Giannouzakos, D. Ananiadis and Lee Avdramidis, posing with the badge of the Greek National Team on the chest (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)






1969. Snapshot of a Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball U18 team game. Kostis Tsikinas tries to steal the ball from his opponent (Kostis Tsikinas's Archive)

## 2.6.“1970-1980” The course to the top: The Y.M.C.A.-Th’s “amateur students” earn the respect of Greek Basketball

### 2.6.1. Y.M.C.A.-Th makes an impression and creates its own fans

In April 1970, Basketball is separated from other sports and an independent federation of basketball is established, entitled the “HELLENIC BASKETBALL FEDERATION” (abbreviated in Greek E.O.K) based in Athens. The Federation is approved by the No. 48/1970 judgment of the Court of First Instance of Athens and is registered in the Register of Associated Unions under the No. 11.366/10-04-1970 Decision.

At the same time, at the beginning of the decade, begins the entry of expatriates (Christoforou, Kefalos and later Macheras, Yatzoglou, Diakoulas, Kastrinakis etc) into the Greek Championship, the presence of whom gradually changes the profile of Greek Basketball. Several times teams call on AHEPANS, the organization of Greek-American expatriates, for friendly games in order to track prospective transfer targets.

The 1970-1971 season finds Thessaloniki to have 6 teams in the league, as apart from PAOK, Aris, Iraklis and the Y.M.C.A.-Th, Aetos and Apollon Kalamaria are also added.

In 1970, Theodoros Rodopoulos follows the footsteps of his “teacher”, Mimis Tsikinas, as he departs for America to pursue a scholarship at Springfield College, where he attends Coaches’s Psychology, Teenagers’ Development and Basketball Coaching courses.

“I attended, inter alia, Claire Bee’s camp, a great basketball teacher, a great figure of college championship,” T. Rodopoulos says.

“The 1970-71 basketball season was quite strange for the Y.M.C.A.-Th. Our regular trainer Theodoros Rodopoulos was absent, as he was in the USA with a one-year athletic scholarship from the Y.M.C.A.-Th to attain a round education in coaching. Lakis Tsavas was both coach and key player in the team, while Georgis Bousvaros acted as a coach in several games. That year, the trainings were enjoyable and relaxing. I still remember the headlines and ratings of the Athenian newspapers for the group of amateur students from Thessaloniki who teaches the right basketball!” Dionisis Ananiadis will write after several years. Indeed, it’s a strange year, with the Y.M.C.A.-Th offering some great basketball spectacles, being unbelievably competitive in all games and constituting the pleasant surprise of the championship. It is characteristic that it wins (twice) Olympiakos and AEK in Athens but also Aris. As for “studies”, Vougias and Nanos are already students at the Polytechnic School, Ananiadis and Avramidis in Medicine, Yatagantzidis in the Department of Agriculture, Stratis in the Department of Chemistry, Yiannouzakos and Vamvakoudis in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science.

Y.M.C.A.-Th is encountered with an intense experience in Athens. It is March of 1971, when, within a 24-hour period (it was the time when double games were held in Athens for the teams of Thessaloniki to avoid constant travel), it managed to celebrate victories against Olympiakos and AEK. The games take place at the Panathenaic Stadium and the successes cause a great impression throughout Greece.

In the first game against Olympiakos, Y.M.C.A.-Th wins by 70-72, with Dionysis Ananiadis (28 points) being its top scorer.

Being over-excited, Y.M.C.A.-Th surpasses the obstacle of AEK, forcing the entire sports press to bow to its gaming virtues. Michalis Giannouzakos emerges as a top scorer in the victory over AEK by shooting 22 points.

In that season (1970-71), Y.M.C.A.-Th recorded 14 wins and 12 defeats and finished 7th. Michalis Giannouzakos emerges as the top scorer by shooting averagely 19.1 points in 25 championship games.

Amyntas and Panionios are relegated. Two teams of Thessaloniki, Aetos and Apollon Kalamaria, play barrage games for their stay, yet some incidents occur between them, so it is decided to be both relegated.

In the same season, Y.M.C.A.-Th conquers the National U16 and U18 championships. Lakis Tsavas, Giorgis Bousvaros and Makis Pyritidis are the coaches of the youth Academies at that time.

“In relation to other teams, Y.M.C.A.-Th had a different plan of organization and a playing style. It was more like a college team, with pressing defenses and speed in the offense. In junior leagues we had a lot of successes. With those born in 1956, we won the U16 championship with the following guys: Tsantilas, Stanopoulos, Sinodis, Michailidis, Theochoridis, Abatzis and others. The particular group that started its run from the pre-junior’s team went undefeated for 150 games,” Makis Pyritidis recalls.



### 2.6.2. The first place in the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s and … “Bogas”

In September 1971 Y.M.C.A.-Th on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its founding, undertakes the organization of the Pan-European Basketball Championship of the Y.M.C.A.s. On September 8, 1971 the curtain of the event rises, being held in the historic outdoor court with the participation of the Y.M.C.A.s of Sweden, England, Germany, Finland and Switzerland. Y.M.C.A.-Th “breaks” the Finnish dominancy and is declared champion with: Tsavas, Giannouzakos, Yatagantzidis, Ananiadis, Avramidis, Tryfonidis, Zoiros, Vougias, Vamvakoudis, Gkinis, Bogatsiotis and Nanos.

Kostas Bogatsiotis does not play for Y.M.C.A.-Th, yet he does boost the team several times in the Pan-European Championships of the Y.M.C.A.s. He narrates: “I was born in 1948 in Thessaloniki, nurtured with the ideals of Y.M.C.A.-Th, I played in the youth Academies, but eventually I signed a contract with Iraklis team. This did not prevent me from maintaining relationships with Y.M.C.A.-Th; in fact I gave it a boost several times during the tournaments of Y.M.C.A.’s of Europe. Of course I had been a camper and a staff member in Camp Pelion. Y.M.C.A.-Th stays forever in my heart, the human relationships I have built with its people will accompany me in all my life.” “Bogas”, as being affectionately nicknamed by his friends, played with great success in Iraklis from 1964 to 1977. Next station in his career is AEK, where he plays until 1980 and then collaborates with Apollon Patras and Papagou. He works as a coach in Daphni, AEK, Proteas, Pagrati, Amyntas, Panionios, Marousi and Olympiakos. Also, he coached for many years the National Teams of Women, Young Men and Men. He is currently a retired professor of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science and he is a member of the Volunteer’s Committee of Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum.

### 2.6.3. The “wonder” team

At the beginning of the 1970s, in addition to its successes, Y.M.C.A.-Th creates its own loyal audience. The basketball it played is beautiful, it includes plenty of novelties and many fans are fascinated by the fact that a group of amateur and young players, most of whom are students, gazes at the high-league beasts. In October 1971, Theodoros Rodopoulos returns from America and so we are at the beginning of an unprecedented season, which would normally have ended with winning a championship. But that didn’t happen because of ... external factors. Rodopoulos arrives in Thessaloniki bringing ideas, techniques and methodology, which no other coach at that time held. In terms of defense, he transforms Y.M.C.A.-Th in an effective opponent-neutralizing machine. “We had great records as a team, some of which have not been broken: we received in average 49.1 points, we have received just 33 points in a game against Marousi, 31 in a game against Niki Volos and 25 against VAO” is told by Theodoros Rodopoulos. “We must have been one of the first, probably the first team, to apply the screen. We were planning the back door pass, we were playing the stack. These were unprecedented things for that time,” Georgis Bousvaros adds.

In terms of offense, Y.M.C.A.-Th capitalizes on the magnitude and talent of Michalis Giannouzakos and Lee Avramidis, while it further promotes Dionysis Ananiadis’s executing ability and has Lakis Tsavas as an experienced organizer.

The season 1971-1972 does not start well for Y.M.C.A.-Th, as it is initially defeated by AEK, Pagrati and Iraklis, yet the continuation hides unpleasant surprises for its rivals. Victories against Aris (65-64) and PAOK (64-51) will follow. It then wins comfortably over Olympiakos in Thessaloniki (70-47) and Panathinaicos (77-59). Its appearances are now starting to stir the interest of sporty Greece, while the comments of the Pan-Hellenic press are glorious, characterizing the team of Theodoros Rodopoulos as a “surprise team”, “dream team” and “wonder team”.

### 2.6.4. "It was a blatant act of sabotage"

The first round ends with Y.M.C.A.-Th counting 10 consecutive victories, being one point behind Panathinaicos, AEK and Olympiacos and carrying the label of the odds-on favorite to win the league based on its performance.
By the end of the first round, however, the Hellenic Basketball Federation takes everyone by surprise and announces that the second round will start two months later, due to National Team's obligations!
Y.M.C.A.-Th strongly protests, as it is a common secret that, Panathinaicos and Olympiakos face problems and this interruption will give them the opportunity to reconstitute. "What happened was a kind of sabotage, blatant injustice. They stopped the championship for two months. These things do not happen. Giatzoglou was punished, Koronaios was absent in America and Kefalos was injured. Suddenly they take the decision to interrupt, so that the National Team will play friendly games. We protested strongly, but it was not taken account. And while the championship was to start again in April, they transferred it in June," Theodoros Rodopoulos says.
This stoppage will really change the balance in second round. However, Y.M.C.A.-Th, upon the re-start of the championship, wins AEK (69-59). It further improves its rankings, but its 71-70 defeat by Iraklis will prove to be decisive in its attempt of winning the championship. Y.M.C.A.-Th continues in the second round with victories against Aris, PAOK and Marousi in Athens. Two more unfortunate results will follow in Athens, which will unequivocally condemn the dreams of Y.M.C.A.-Th winning the title. The first is the game against Olympiakos (53-49), with its President Nikos Goulandris reporting the next day in the newspaper "FOS": "We defeated the toughest opponent in the toughest game of the championship. The total team of Y.M.C.A.-Th is dangerous and its results have not been accidental." The next day is followed by another defeat in the Sporting in-door stadium by Panathinaicos (69-60).
Y.M.C.A.-Th will record 19 victories (7 defeats) that year and will finish 3rd, but it will gain the respect and recognition of all sporty Greece. The 3rd place, after all, lends Y.M.C.A.-Th a prize and more specifically its participation in the first Korac Cup. "We worked very hard, personally, I didn't have any fixed working time, I was 12-14 hours on the court. I remember, I never saw the shops on Tsimiski str. with lights on when I came back home, as most of the shops were closed. I had to be there, we had a lot of guys who were students, had university commitments and had to work out maybe different hours. There was no such a close-knit team as the team of the 1969-1974 period. I'm still very proud of that set of guys. There was teamwork, discipline, respect," Theodoros Rodopoulos, the architect of that team, explains.
In the 1970-1971 season, Michalis Giannouzakos is the team's top scorer and the first player in the club's history to achieve 514 points in a single season in the A' National League! In total, 18 players are competing in this season: M. Giannouzakos, Ananiadis, Stratis, Avramidis, Gkinis, Tsavas, Giatagantzidis, Vamvakoudis, Tryfonidis, Stephanou, Vougias, Zoiros, Stanopoulos, Taliadoros, Vogiatzoglou, Tsikinas, Mylopoulos, Noltsis and K. Giannouzakos.
Indicative of the amazing human resources of Y.M.C.A.-Th is the fact that many of its players are members of the National Men's, U21, U18 etc teams. That year, two players out of the five composing the Men's team, Dionysis Ananiadis and Michalis Giannouzakos, were included in the team composed by federal coach of Greece Richard Dukeshire for friendly games in Boston, USA. There, among others, Greek National Team plays against Springfield College. The presence of two worthy members of Y.M.C.A.-Th at Springfield College has its own distinct symbology, with Ananiadis and Giannouzakos two key players of the National Team being photographed at the College where basketball was invented, as active players of the Greek Y.M.C.A.



### 2.6.5. A rare record for Thessaloniki

In July 1972 in Thessaloniki, an unprecedented event is recorded at Guinness records. A player from Iraklis, Aristidis Moumoglou, will score 145 points in a game between the 'blue-white shirts' (Iraklis) and VAO. "Pan-Hellenic enthusiasm for the achievement of the basketball player of Iraklis, Ar. Moumoglou, who scored 145 points in his team's game against VAO. This record not only surpasses the previous one held by Tsantalis from Panellinios with 71 points (in the Panellinios-Panionios game), but it breaks any other world record," the newspaper "MAKEDONIA" will write the day after the big breakthrough in 1972.
"I made my debut at the age of 16 in the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th in a game between Iraklis and Aris in 1960. I grew up in the same neighborhood as Tsavas, Fridas, Parisis brothers, there in the area of the 4th High School. As a young kid, I was watching all the games in the outdoor court at Y.M.C.A.-Th.", Aristidis (Aristos) Moumoglou, the beloved basketball player of Thessaloniki recalls.

### 2.6.6. Professionalism and the attitude of Y.M.C.A.-Th

The more the performances of Y.M.C.A.-Th impress people in a panhellenic scale, the more pressure is exercised by other teams and agents towards the players of Y.M.C.A.-Th with a view to acquiring them. The matter emerges many times to the Committee of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A-Th. The question also concerns the Council Boards of that period. "What should be the position of Y.M.C.A.-Th in a changing environment of sport, in a (basketball) championship that tends to become 100% professional?" After a long round of discussions, the decision made is that, Y.M.C.A.-Th should remain amateurish, faithful to its statutory Principles, not being involved into a payroll process for athletes, insisting that the Department of Physical Education is a means of educating young people and not a trading field, as it was exactly advocated in the early years of its founding.
However, taking into account the new circumstances of that time, it is suggested that players should be motivated by granting athletic scholarships to students, as well as covering travel expenses for trainings and competitions.
In the 1972-1973 season Y.M.C.A.-Th remains extremely competitive and ends the season with 15 wins and 11 defeats, securing its participation in the Korac Cup. The most important victories of the season are those against AEK, Olympiakos and PAOK.
Michalis Giannouzakos, with 581 points, marks another season-record, followed by Dionysis Ananiadis, who will also mark a career-record by exceeding the 400 points. Y.M.C.A.-Th will win the 4th place. That season is also the last for Lakis Tsavas, who will then pursue a coaching career.
The 1973-1974 season will be held with the participation of 12 teams as the Hellenic Basketball Federation decides not to substitute the positions of the teams (Esperos and Niki Volou) that had been relegated. Y.M.C.A.-Th will come 5th with 12 wins and 10 defeats. During the season, it will beat Aris (63-54), but also Olympiacos (73-62), while achieving two of its biggest victories in the A' National League against Apollon Kalamarias by 105-61 in the first round and 84-45 in the second.
The players that Rodopoulos uses that year are: M. Giannouzakos, Ananiadis, Avramidis, Vamvakoudis, Stratis, Gkinis, Nanos, Stanopoulos, Vogiatzoglou, K. Giannouzakos, Tryfonidis, Vougias.
Spyros Stratis is playing in the positions "2" and "3" and serves as a key player in the Y.M.C.A.-Th team for many years. The services of Stratos Vamvakoudis, who will also successfully assume the technical leadership of Y.M.C.A.-Th in the coming years, are also valuable. Born in 1954, Giorgos Nanos, is also an important player at the position "4" for Rodopoulos, as is Zafiris Gkinis: stubborn in defense, fast and tough as a player, he grew up a stone's throw from the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th and he offered a lot. Last but not least the exceptionally talented Kostas Giannouzakos.

### 2.6.7. End of an era

It will be a difficult summer for Y.M.C.A.-Th since both Michalis Giannouzakos and Theodoros Rodopoulos decide to leave the team. "I had asked to leave three years earlier, as there were many teams contesting me. Once, Iraklis had shown great interest, then AEK and Olympiakos. Finally, after negotiations, Y.M.C.A.-Th gave me to AEK. From the transfer I received 700.000 drachmas, while Y.M.C.A.-Th instead of receiving money, accepted a donation for the building of small houses for the campers at the Camp of Y.M.C.A.-Th in Chalkidiki.", Michalis Giannouzakos says, regarding his transfer. In the 1974-1975 season, Nikos Vogiatzis (a former player of VAO and Iraklis) becomes the first coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th in the post-Rodopoulos era. Despite its problems, the team secures its stay in the league relatively comfortably and finishes 8th with 8 wins and 14 defeats. Dionysis Ananiadis emerges as the top scorer of that season, with an average of 18.7 points per game. The team also includes: Vamvakoudis, Stratis, Avramidis, K. Giannouzakos, Nanos, Gkinis, Tsikinas, Michaelidis, Stanopoulos, Vogiatzoglou, Zournatzis, Kilias.

The following year, 1975-1976, Y.M.C.A.-Th is evidently weakened. It "fights" in almost all games, yet it cannot avoid the inevitable and thus it is being relegated. After the 3rd game Nikos Vogiatzis withdraws from his position as a coach. He is replaced by Lakis Tsavas for a while and then by Alekos Tryfonidis. The team finished 12th with 5 wins and 17 defeats. Among those five wins, there is one against Panathinaicos in the last game with a score of 80-73. Top scorer of Y.M.C.A.-Th with 18.7 points per game is Dionysis Ananiadis, who takes the 5th place among the top scorers of the championship. The team also includes: Avramidis, Vamvakoudis, K. Giannouzakos, Nanos, Stratis, Gkinis, Tsikinas, Michaelidis, Stanopoulos, Vogiatzoglou, Zournatzis, Kilias.

Ionikos Nikaias also appears in the Championship of the A' National League in 1975-1976 season with Kostas Anastasatos as its coach. A sixteen-year-old talented lad makes tremendous impression. This kid is gradually becoming a pole of attraction for all basketball fans. He is Panayiotis Giannakis, who after 9 years will go to Thessaloniki to make history with Aris.

In the 1976-1977 season Y.M.C.A.-Th will play in the B' National League. In the meantime, the Basketball Clubs Association of Thessaloniki (abbreviated in Greek Ε.ΚΑ.Σ.Θ.) is founded in 1976, the first local Association to be established in Greece, with Y.M.C.A.-Th being a founding member.

In the same season Y.M.C.A.-Th wins one more U16 Championship. "With the team with players born in 1961 we won the U16 Championship. It was a brave title with a kamikaze-team and kids who relied on their very hard work, like Paximadas, Arvanitakis, Tsaggaridis, Gagalis, Karaviotis and others," their coach Makis Pyritidis recalls.

In September 1976 Y.M.C.A.-Th travels to Finland for the 13th Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s. The Greek team wins Switzerland and Germany and loses to Sweden and Finland, thus taking the third place.

In 1977-1978 season Y.M.C.A.-Th will return to the big league, yet with the prevailing conditions, there is no room for a team that insists on working on amateur standards. The leave of Dionysis Ananiadis, who enrolled in Aris, is one more major blow. "By the beginning of the 1970's, the first proposals had already started coming. After the leave of Giannouzakos and Rodopoulos, players gradually began to leave one after another. When the team dropped to B' National League, they told me 'Noni, stay to help us return to A' League,' promising to let me go afterwards. That is how it came about, my release occurred in the 1977-78 season, the year I was doing my military service and so I didn't play in any team. There has been strong interest from Aris, but also from PAOK. In fact, I had a conversation with the late President of PAOK team, Giorgos Pantelakis. There has been also interest from Athens. But in 1977 I had already been married and I had reasons to prefer being in Thessaloniki," D. Ananiadis narrates.

The 1977-1978 season was to be the last in which Y.M.C.A.-Th played in the big league (it finished 11th). Its last game in the A' National League was that of May 20, 1978 with Panathinaicos, to which it lost by 90-74. Lakis Tsavas is the last coach of the team in the A' National League with the following players: Stratis, Stanopoulos, Nanos, Vamvakoudis, Tsikinas, Gkinis, Zournatzis, Paximadas, Kilias, Iordanidis, Paraschou and Kinigopulos.

The "wave" of leaves continues with Vamvakoudis also moving to Aris, Gkinis and Stratis to PAOK, Kostas Giannouzakos to Ethnikos Kozani and Lee Avramidis leaving for America for postgraduate studies.

Y.M.C.A.-Th is aware that it leaves behind the big league and, most likely, irreversibly, as pure professionalism seems to be put forward. Therefore, Y.M.C.A.-Th will consciously focus on the productive process and on attracting young people towards sport and basketball, abandoning the "glitter" of the big league.

At the same time, the star of another city-team with a very long tradition in the sport rises. Aris wins the Greek Championship with Yiannis Ioannidis as a coach, having in its ranks a worthy member of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Dionysis Ananiadis, whose contribution to winning that title is significant. Both on the pitch (3rd scorer of Aris) and off the pitch, he launches into the locker rooms of Aris the mentality of another ... basketball school (that of Y.M.C.A.-Th) with the central idea being that of "teamwork".

A few months later, in September 1979, Thessaloniki newspapers wrote about a Greek-American player acquired by Aris, Nikos Galis, whose arrival would change the course of Greek Basketball.

In 1979, Vyron Alexiadis becomes the coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th in the B' National League. Its players now are: Paraschou, Kilias, Zournatzis, Nanos, Tsagaridis, Iordanidis, Stanopoulos brothers, Hasopoulos, Kinigopoulos and Nikolaidis. For a second consecutive year Y.M.C.A.-Th will be relegated and return to the local championship.

The decade closes somewhat ingloriously with regard to the performance of the Men's team in the high "tiers" of the National leagues. On the contrary, the diverse actions of Y.M.C.A.-Th will be strengthened.



Snapshot: Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – Aris game held in 1972
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1970-71. The historic outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and in the background the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki mansion (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

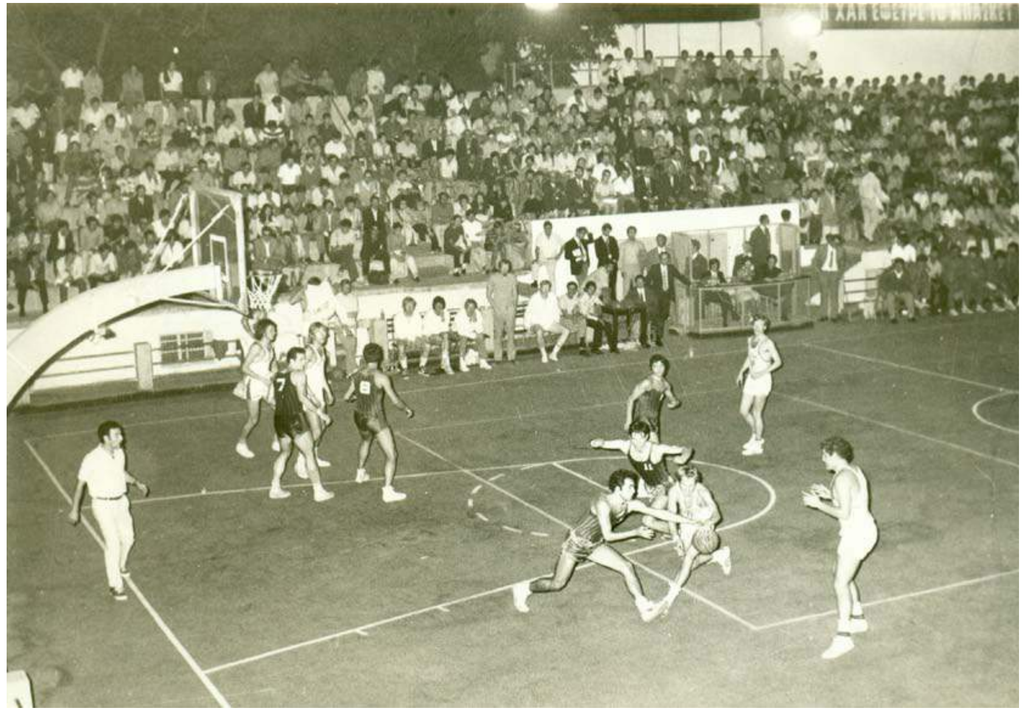



8-11.9.1971. Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s of Europe. Snapshot from the game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Y.M.C.A. Sweden. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki's players in court are Z. Gkinis, M. Giannouzakos, L. Avramidis, D. Ananiadis and K. Bogatsiotis. Seated on the bench: G. Bousvaros, L. Tsavas, M. Pyritidis, A. Tryfonidis, Ach. Zoiros, Sp. Stratis, K. Tsikinas, Sp. Vougias, Str. Vamvakoudis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





8-11.9.1971. A snapshot of a basketball game at the Pan-European Basketball Championship of Y.M.C.A.s. Dionyssis Ananiadis is shooting (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)

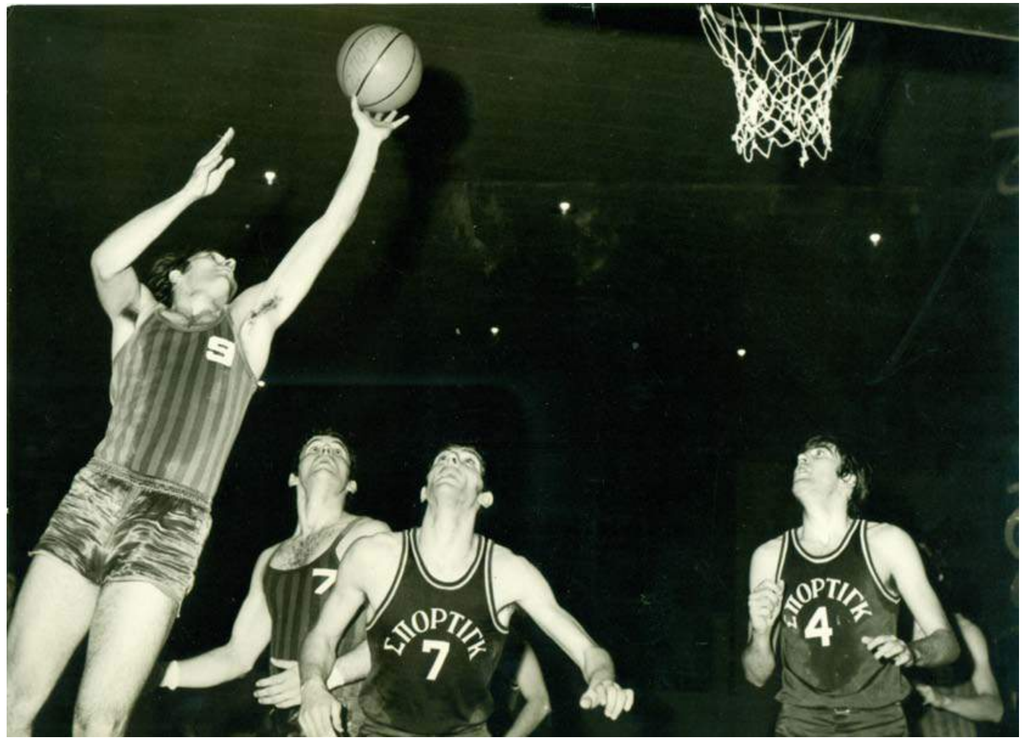


September 1971. A snapshot of a game of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki during the Pan-European Basketball Championship of Y.M.C.A.s on the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





The team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki at the 1971-72 Pan-Hellenic Championship. From left to right: G. Giatagantzidis, D. Ananiadis, Lee Avramidis, M. Giannouzakos, L. Tsavas. (Dionysis Ananiadis's Archive)




1971-1972. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – Sporting (Athens), 1st National League, Athens (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team 1971-1972. Pictured from left to right: L. Tsavas, Sp. Vougias, M. Giannouzakos, Lee Avramidis, Al. Tryfonidis, Str. Vamvakoudis, D. Ananiadis, Sp. Stratis, Z. Stanopoulos, G. Yiatagantzidis, L. Mylopoulos (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



17/3/1971. Alexandreio Melathron (Palais de Sport of Thessaloniki), Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – AEK (Athens). Sp. Stratis in the foreground (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





A snapshot of a basketball game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - Iraklis, 1971-1972. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The basketball team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki at the 1971-1972 Pan-Hellenic Championship. Standing from left: Th. Noltsis, N. Voyatzoglou, Str. Vamvakoudis, M. Giannouzakos, Sp. Vougias, Lee Avramidis and Th. Rodopoulos (coach). Seated from left: G. Yiatagatzidis, Sp. Stratis, L. Mylopoulos, Z. Gkinis, L. Tsavas, K. Tsikinas, D. Ananiadis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki – VAO (Thessaloniki), 2nd Round, 1st National League, 1971-1972 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



21.3.1971. AEK (Athnes) - Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, 76-79, Panathenaic (Kallimarmaro) Stadium (Athens)
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



D. Ananiadis and M. Giannouzakos, both athletes of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and members of the Greek Basketball National Team at Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, posing in front of Naismith portrait (Dionysis Ananiadis's Archive)



AEK (Athens) - Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, 1975, Sporting (Athens) stadium. The at that time "opponent" M. Giannouzakos (AEK) helps the injured and former teammate Lee Avramidis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki) together with D. Ananiadis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



In-house tournament of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki juniors, basketball season 1977-78 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



Coach Mimis Tsikinas has just handed a … hatch (for his performance in defense) to Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball player Dionysios Ananiadis.
On the right is the coach Thodoris Rodopoulos (Th. Rodopoulos's Archive)



Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team that participated in the Pan-Hellenic Championship of 1972-73. On the left: Tsavas, Vougias, Giannouzakos, Avramidis, Tryfonidis, Vamvakoudis, Ananiadis, Stratis, Stanopoulos, Giatagantzidis, Mylopoulos (Dionysis Ananiadis's Archive)

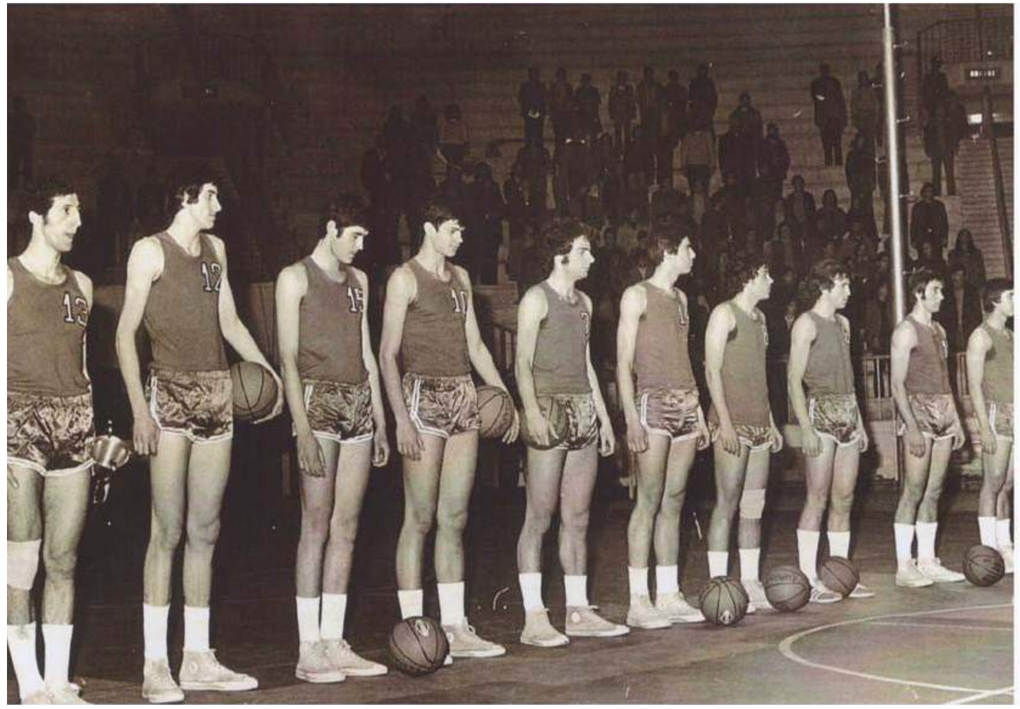


Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team at the Pan-European Basketball Championship of the Y.M.C.A.s, 1972-1973
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




Glyfada Stadium, Athens. Basketball season 1972-1973. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team is liven up just before the game begins.
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





1974-1975. Mixed team of the best players of Thessaloniki. From left: Politis, Papargyriou, Zois, Karatzoulidis, Avramidis, Pilafidis, Kitsoukalis, Tzelebis, Kaikas, Sakellariou (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)

# Ἡ ὁμάς - θαῦμα τῆς ΧΑΝΘ ἐθριάμβευσε στήν Ἀθήνα ἐπί τοῦ Σπόρτιγκ μέ 71-58

## Ο ΠΑΟΚ ΚΟΝΙΟΡΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΕ ΤΟΝ ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟ 101-56

Μέσα στήν Ἀθήνα, τό Σπόρτιγκ ὑπέστη ὁλοσχερῆ συντριβή ἀπό τό ὁμοιόπιο συγκρότημα τῆς ΧΑΝΘ μέ 71—58. Ἔτσι καί οἱ δυο ὁμάδες ἐξῆ τήν ἀτιμίαν ἔχουν ἀπό 3 ἥττες, τό Σπόρτιγκ δέ ἐμείωσε ἀκόμη περισσότερο τίς ἐλπίδες του γιά μιά πρωτιμοῦχο θέση.

Τό ἀποτέλεσμα εἶναι ἐκατό τοῖς ἑκατό δίκαιο. Ἡ λαμπρά ΧΑΝΘ, ὁμοιόμορφο συγκρότημα τοῦ Θεόδωρου Ροδόπουλου, ἔπαιξε σπουδαία καί καθήλωσε τόν ἀντίπαλό της, ὁ ὁποῖος ἦταν πολύ δύσκολο νά ἀντιδράσῃ ὑπερτερῶντας στό ἀγωνιζόμενο ταλέντο τοῦ ἐπαίζαν οἱ φιλοξενοῦντες.

Μόνο μιά φορά προηγήθηκε τό Σπόρτιγκ στό σκόρ. Ἦταν στά 6' πού τό ταμπλό ἔδειχνε 8—7. Σ' ὅλη τήν ὑπόλοιπη διάρκεια τοῦ ἀγῶνος ἡ ΧΑΝΘ δρισκόταν πάντα μπροστά καί μέ αἰσθητή διαφορά. Στό 10' προηγεῖτο μέ 17—12, στό 15' μέ 31—19 καί στό 20' μέ 41—29. Μέ τήν μεγαλύτερη διαφορά, τά ἕκτά λεπτά, προηγήθηκε ἡ ΧΑΝΘ στό 25' (49—33), ἐνῶ στό 30' τό σκόρ ἦταν 51—40. Μιά λανθασμένη τακτική ὅμως, πού ἀκολούθησε στήν συνέχεια ἀπό τήν ΧΑΝΘ, ἔδωσε τά διαλείμματα στό Σπόρτιγκ νά πλησιάσῃ κάπως (37 : 51—37). Συγκεκριμένα οἱ Θεσσαλονικεῖς, ἀντί νά συνεχίζουν τήν καλή των παίξιμο, κουτσούναν τήν κάθε τους ἐπίθεση στά 25—30 δευτερόλεπτα κι' ἔτσι ἡ τελική τους προσπάθεια γινόταν πάντα βεβιασμένη καί ἀποτέλεσμα. Ὅμως στά τελευταῖα τρία λεπτά ὁ ρυθμός ἀλλαξε καί πάλι καί ἡ ΧΑΝΘ ἔπιασε τήν νίκη εὔκολα μέ 71—58.

Ἡ ὁμάς τῆς Ἀδελφότητος στήν πρώτη της ἐμφάνιση στήν πρωτεύουσα, θετικῶς ἀρκετά παῖς θεατῆς τοῦ ἀγῶνος, γιά τήν ἐφετεινή της μεγάλη ἰσχύ καί μέ τήν ἀπόδοσή της ἀδικολόγητοι ἔπαρσις τῶν δυο πρόσφατων θριάμβους της ἐπί τοῦ Ὀλυμπιακοῦ καί τοῦ Παναθηναϊκοῦ. Καλογυμνασμένη ὅμως, μέ γαῆγορο ρυθμό ἀναπτύξεως παιγνιδιοῦ καί ἀνταλλαγῆς ἐπάνω σέ ταμπλέ συνστημάτων ὑπέταξε κατά τρόπον δίκαιο τό Σπόρτιγκ. Οἱ παῖκτοι της ἀσκίνητοι καί πανταχοῦ παρόντες, ὅπου βρισκόταν ἡ μπάλλα, δέν ἄφηναν περιθώρια δράσεως στούς ἀντιπάλους. Καλοί ἐκτελεσταί τῆς ἐπάλξεως μέ ἐξαιρετική ἀποφυγή περιοχῆς καταστιπτοί καί μέ σίγουρες μεταβάσεις, προσπάθησαν νά ἀποφύγουν τά λάθη.

Τό Σπόρτιγκ βρέθηκε σέ ἄσχημη ἡμέρα. Διέθετε μιά καλή ὁμάδα, πού εἶχαν ἐξυπνοπαλήσει οἱ τῆς ΧΑΝΘ καί χωρίς ἀνταγωνισμόν ἐπιβλαβῆ ὑπέκυψε φυσιολογικά μπροστά στόν ἀνώτερο ἀντίπαλό της.

Κουφαῖος τῆς νικητρίας ἦταν ὁ Γιαννούλακος. Ἔβαλε τίς βάσεις τῆς νίκης στό α' ἡμίχρονο καί στό 6' ἀποτελείωσε τόν ἀγῶνα. Μέ πολύ καλή εὐστοχία ἀπό μέση ἀπόστασι καί φουρώτας στενά καί ἀποτελεσματικά τόν Σταμέλο στήν ἄμυνα, ὑπῆρξε ὁ Ἀριστος διαμαντίας ὁ Ἀναγνώστης, ὁ ὁποῖος στά ἀμέρος ἔπαιξε πολύ καλύτερα ἀπ' ὅ,τι στά 6'. Ὁ δεξτερᾶνος Τσάβας γιά μιά ἀκόμη φορά ἔδειξε ποσο ὠφέλιμος παραμένει. Συντονιστής θαυμάσιος, διοργάνωνε τήν καλή ἐπίθεση μέ σιγουριά. Ὁ Ἀβραμίδης εἶχε μιά ἀξιοπρεπῆ προσφορά στήν ἄμυνα κερδίζοντας ἀρκετά ριμπάουντ. Πολύ καλός ἦταν ὁ Γιαταγατζίδης καί μέ ἀκριδεῖς μεταβιβάσεις ὁ Γκίνης. Τέλος ὁ ἀριστερόχειρ Στρατῆς Ἰκανοποίησε ἀπόλυτα καί ἔδειξε ὅτι πολύ συντόμως θά γίνῃ βασική μονάδα.

Ἀπό τό Σπόρτιγκ, ὁ Σταμέλος δοῦλεψε φοβερή πίεσι ἀπό τόν προσωπικό του ἀντίπαλο Γιαννούλακο. Μάλιστα σκοράρησε γιά πρώτη φορά στό 15'. Στό 6' ἡμίχρονο ἔπαιξε πολύ καλά. Ὁ Διαμαντόπουλος, πού ἀπεχώρησε στά 30' μέ 5 φάουλ, εἶχε μιά κάπως καλύτερη ἐπίδοσι ἀπό τούς ὑπολοίπους. Πάντως ἦταν μακρυά ἀπό τόν καλό του ἑαυτό. Δίγη ἦταν ἡ δοῦλεια τοῦ Παντελῆ κι' αὐτή στό α' ἡμίχρονο. Ἀπεβλήθη στά 29' μέ 5 φάουλ. Καλός ἦταν ὁ Μπαρλάς, ἐνῶ ὁ Βασιλόπουλος ἀκόμη δέν ἔχει ἀποκτήσει φιλία μέ τό καλάθι. Καμμία ἡ ποσοφορά τῶν ἀναπληκτικῶν Γαρυπῆ καί Κόσιονδα.

Οἱ διαιτηταί Ταλλιαδοῦας καί Χατζηνικολάκης ἐπέτυχαν στό ἔργο τους, ἀσχέτως ἄν συνήντησαν κάποιες δυσκολίες ἀπό τούς Σπορτιγκέτας καί τήν ἔδρα.

ΧΑΝΘ: Γιαννούλακος 24, Ἀναγνώστης 17, Τσάβας 6, Γιαταγατζίδης 10, Ἀβραμίδης 6, Γκίνης 2, Στρατῆς 6.

ΣΠΟΡΤΙΓΚ: Σταμέλος 19, Διαμαντόπουλος 19, Παντελῆς 7, Βασιλόπουλος 4, Μπαρλάς 9, Γαρυπῆς, Κόσιονδας.

Μπαλάνος, χωρίς διάλογο. Ὅλοι οἱ παῖκτες τοῦ ΠΑΟΚ ἦταν δραστήριοι καί ἀποτελεσματικοί, ἐνῶ οἱ τοῦ Πανελληνίου ἔπαιζαν ἄτσαλα καί ἀτσαλα. Μόνο ὁ Τσάντελης ξεχώρισε.

Τό ἔργο τῶν διαιτητῶν Γιαννακάκου — Σταυρίδη ἦταν πανεμορφο.

ΠΑΟΚ: Μιχόπουλος 26, Μπαῦσιος 19, Τσομπανάκος 19, Μπαΐζας 13, Κανακάκης 12, Μιλετιάδης 2, Μήτας 2, Μάνιας 2, Παρασκευάς Πετρογιάννης, Βασιλάκης, Λαζαρίδης.

ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟΣ: Βλαβιάνης 6, Λέκας 6, Τσιντσιλής 31, Ἀνδρεόπουλος 4, Λιβανός 9, Χατζῆς, Μελλιάδας.

Φ. ΓΚΟΛΦΙΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ

Press reports of the time are referring to the great successes of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki





1.2.72

# Χ.Α.Ν.Θ.: Η ΟΜΑΣ ΕΚΠΛΗΞΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΑΘΛΗΜΑΤΟΣ

**ΕΡΑΣΙΤΕΧΝΕΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΝΟΟΤΡΟΠΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΙΕΣ ΣΤΑ ΣΚΟΡ: Αὐτή εἶναι ἡ κατπληκτική ὁμάδα τῆς Χ.Α.Ν. Θεσσαλονίκης, ἡ ὁποία κερδίζει στό ἐθνικό πρωτάθλημα τόν ἕνα ἰσχυρό ἀντίπαλο ὕστερα ἀπό τόν ἄλλο. Πρῶτος δεξιά (ἐκ τῶν ὀρθίων) διακρίνεται ὁ κώουτς τῆς ΧΑΝΘ, ὁ Θεόδωρος Ροδόπουλος, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐπέστρεψε ἀπό τήν Ἀμερική μέ πλουσιμένες τίς γνώσεις του γύρω ἀπό τήν δύσκολη δουλειά του. Ὁ Θεόδωρος Ροδόπουλος ἔχει ἐξαιρετική συμμετοχή στήν ἐφετινή σπουδαιοτάτη ἐμφάνιση τῆς ΧΑΝΘ στό πρωτάθλημα, σ' αὐτό τό πρωτάθλημα πού μέ τά «ἀπρόβλεπτα» ἀποτελέσματά του ἔχει κατατῆ τρομερά ἐνδιαφέρον κι' ἐντελῶς ἀβέβαιο ὡς πρός τήν ἔλη ἐξέλιξί του. Ἀνωτέρω, μαζί μέ τόν Ροδόπουλο, διακρίνονται οἱ λεβέντες τῆς ΧΑΝΘ, αὐτοί οἱ παῖκται μέ τήν ἐρασιτεχνική νοοτροπία καί τά ἐπαγγελματικά σκέρ στούς ἀγῶνες τους. Ἡ ΧΑΝΘ ἀποτελεῖ, ἀναμφισβήτητα, τό σύγχρονο παράδειγμα πρός μίμησι στό ἑλληνικό μπάσκετ**

Press reports of the time are referring to the great successes of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki

## 2.7. “1980-2000” A new era

### 2.7.1. New challenges. Y.M.C.A.-Th remains faithful to the values of athleticism

In 1980 Y.M.C.A.-Th competes in the A’ local league (abbreviated in Greek E.KA.S.TH.) coached by Giorgos Tsitskaris and players: Nikolaidis, Iordanidis, Tsikinas, Stratinakis, Dalesis, Paraschou, Stoikos, Siouggaris, Paximadas, Vakaros and Gagalis. In spite of its good performance in the Thessaloniki championship, Y.M.C.A.-Th does not achieve to climb (to the National League). It finishes 2nd in the Thessaloniki Local League (E.KA.Σ.Θ.).
“It was a weird time, because Y.M.C.A.-Th had to compromise with the new conditions. For us who had experienced great moments in the 1960s and 1970s, it was clearly even harder,” tells Kostis Tsikinas, son of the great “teacher” of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Born in 1953, he played for many years in the U16, U18 and Men’s teams of the Y.M.C.A.-Th. In 1971 he went to study in Patras, he played for the team of Apollon (Patras) and he returned to his beloved Y.M.C.A.-Th in 1977. He also played for Armeniki, Goumenisa, Ermis Lagkadas and for many years he was involved in coaching.
In 1980, the Men’s team will travel to Dortmund, Germany to compete in the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s (June 11-15) in which it won the 3rdplace.
For the next two years, Y.M.C.A.-Th will maintain its competitive level (with Tsikinas, Stratinakis, Iordanidis, Nikolaidis, Paraschos, Stoikos, Frantzis, Kazakos, Vakaros) and will play a leading role in the A’ League of Thessaloniki, yet it will not manage to climb (to the National League).
In 1984, Makis Pyritidis takes over the Men’s team once again with Nikos Hasopoulos as his assistant coach. The latter works at Y.M.C.A.-Th from 1983 to 1986 and is also in charge for the U16 team. “That year I brought to the Men’s team from Edessa Vassilis Lypiridis, who played for us for a season and moved to Aris the following season. We built slowly a rather good team: in fact in the 1985-1986 season, we just missed our climb to A2 National League - which had just been established - by the teams of Komotini and PAOD. I am just as proud, however, of the fact that, in 1985 we initiated in Y.M.C.A.-Th the basketball camps that have been very successful,” M. Pyritidis narrates for that time.

### 2.7.2. Sotiris Nikolaidis leaves football and begins with basketball

In 1985, a kid starts training with the Pre-junior team of Y.M.C.A.-Th; in the coming years he would make a career playing in A1 National League, he would play at the highest basketball level, he would win European titles and he would participate in Greek National team. He is Sotiris Nikolaidis. “I was playing football as a kid. My friends and I went all over the center of Thessaloniki, at Navarinou Square, at Ag. Sophia Square, at Gounari street, to find an open space. One day Mr. Fotis from Aris team found us. ‘Do you want to come for training?’ he said. The kids of my generation should remember Mr. Fotis, finding children from the neighborhoods of Thessaloniki and inviting them to play in a team. So, I found myself playing football in Aris. The following year, through my mother, I met coach Rodopoulos at the shophe ran at Ippodromiou Street. He tells me: Do you want to come to the camp?’ I refused; ‘I play football’, I told him. Nevertheless, he gave me as a present, I remember, a Converse basketball uniform. Aftera few months the coaches of Y.M.C.A.-Th Makis Pyritidis and Dimitris Bakas find me playing football in its sport grounds. They also asked me to try basketball. Well, I thought, I had my basketball uniform, so let’s try it. That’s how I got stuck. In fact, at the beginning I did both, I played football and basketball. When on a Saturday two friendly games were set on the same time, I had to choose: I chose basketball. Two years later, in 1987, we, the Y.M.C.A.-Th pre-junior team won at the stadium of MENT the Thessaloniki championship,” Sotiris Nikolaidis, born in 1974 in Thessaloniki (his home was at Romanou Street, very close to Y.M.C.A.-Th) narrates.

### 2.7.3. The big lead in 1988

In 1986 the leagues are being restructured and thus two new leagues emerge: A2 and C΄ National Leagues.



In 1987 all Greeks celebrate the conquest of European Championship by the Greek National Team.
In the 1987-88 season, M. Pyritidis remains as the Men’s team coach with Vaggelis Frydas assistant coach and players: Stathis Bakas, Makis Ballas, Paris Verginis, Michalis Paklatzis, Thanasis Xafenias, Sotiris Papalamprou, Dimitris Plastiras, Dimitris Fragkos, Akis Gavras, Dimitris Doutsis, Giannis Tsouatzis, Filippos Mouzas and Andreas Garefis. “I am longing for those years. In our minds Y.M.C.A.-Th was the best team in Greece; that’s how we worked,” explains Vaggelis Frydas, who will work as a coach in the basketball Academies from 1985 to 1989 as well as for one season (1995-96) later.
In 1988 Y.M.C.A.-Th celebrates a great success: “It was a special season because we won the 1st place in the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s, that took place in Thessaloniki. It was not easy, we were the outsider in the final game against the Swedes, since they had four players playing in Sweden’s National team and one American-Swede,” the at the time coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th M. Pyrtdidis explains. The event takes place on May 13-15 in Alexandreio Melathron (Palais des Sports of Thessaloniki) and the players of Y.M.C.A.-Th are: Dimitris Liatsis, Michalis Metaxas, Margaritis Dalesis, Kostas Papadopoulos, Stefanos Nikolaidis, Loukas Nasagkas, Thodoros Karanikas, Thanasis Paraschou, Yiannis Reisis, Thodoros Seremetakis, Christos Alamatidis and Vaggelis Mpasioudis.
In the championship, however, the team is not successful and is relegated from C’ National League to A’ Local League. At this point the career of Makis Pyritidis in Y.M.C.A.-Th ends and he nostalgically narrates: “At some point I counted all the teams I worked for, they are around 60. I don’t think any other coach has reached that number. In total I won 29 titles in various age categories. I feel proud of what I have achieved. I worked as a coach in several clubs, in Thessaloniki or elsewhere, but what Y.M.C.A.-Th has, is something special and that’s why it has a special place in my heart ...”
Towards the end of the 1980s the Club of Old Athletes and Friends of Basketball is established in Y.M.C.A.-Th by former players of the team. It convenes regularly, it organizes three major events (ballroom dances), each constituting a social event for the city of Thessaloniki. Its aim is to financially help the team, while its members become team managers. There is a general effort to consolidate and reunite the team, a movement that brings results.
In 1989 the veteran basketball player of Y.M.C.A.-Th, Stratos Vamvakoudis, assumes the team’s technical leadership and a rise of both Men’s as well as U18 teams begins.
The Men’s team in that season is promoted from A΄ Local League to C’ National League with the following players: Karanikas, Alamatidis, Reisis, Vachtsevanos, Papadopoulos, Chloridis, Pantelis, Kazakos, Nikolaidis, Nasagas and Metaxas; so the decade ends with optimism for the future. Str. Vamvakoudis will remain at the technical staff of Y.M.C.A.-Th until 1993 and his presence in general will benefit the basketball section.
In 1990 Y.M.C.A.-Th participates again in the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s, which is being held in the city of Essen, Germany, and along with its organizers and Y.M.C.A.-Th, also Switzerland, Poland, Finland, Sweden and Latvia participate. The Y.M.C.A.-Th reached the semi-finals, losing eventually to Sweden by 69-78 and finishing 4th.

### 2.7.4. 1991 and Y.M.C.A.-Th celebrates the 100 years of the invention of Basketball

In 1991, FIBA celebrates the 100th anniversary of the historic moment when James Naismith invented Basketball. In Greece, the main celebration of the Golden Jubilee takes place in Athens with a major National team tournament at the Peace and Friendship Stadium (abbreviated in Greek Σ.Ε.Φ.).
However, the Hellenic Basketball Federation assigns also to Y.M.C.A.-Th a part of the celebrations organization, recognizing the important role it played in the introduction and spread of basketball in Greece. FIBA had the idea of a ball relay (similar to the Olympic torch relay held at the Olympics from country to country) at various locations around the world. The delegation of Y.M.C.A.-Th would travel by bus to the borders, in order to receive the ball from the Bulgarian delegation; a small ceremony and an exchange of memorabilia would follow. On the same day, from the Greek-Bulgarian border the ball arrives at the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A.-Th, where a demonstration game of young players followed by speeches and prize awarding would take place. During these events, Simeon Mavroskoufis, a few months be-

fore he passed away (1991), gives a historic speech at the small theater of the central Y.M.C.A.-Th building, making reference to the 100 years of Basketball, the progress of the sport, its evolution and of course to the important role of Y.M.C.A.-Th in spreading the sport in Greece.
Meanwhile, 1990-91 basketball season finds Y.M.C.A.-Th in C΄ National League. 1991-1992 season the team plays outstanding, relying on young players, many of whom come from the U18 team, such as: Nikolaidis, Reisis, Pelekanos and later Zioutas. That season Y.M.C.A.-Th wins the championship and promotes to B΄ National League with the following players: Alamatidis, Vachtsevanos, Nasagkas, Nikolaidis, Papamavroudis, Papadopoulos, Pelekanos, Reisis, Sidiropoulos, Tryfonidis, Chloridis, Stratos Vamvakoudisas as a coach and Alekos Tryfonidis, former player of the team, as team manager.
The same season the U18 team of Y.M.C.A.-Th qualifies to the final of the "Final 4" of the local championship (E.KA.Σ.Θ.), where it plays against Aris, to which it loses after a spectacular game.

### 2.7.5. "The goodbye" of Sotiris Nikolaidis

During the 1990-1991 season several teams express their interest in Sotiris Nikolaidis. "I had a proposal from Aris, yet I didn't accept. For 1992-1993 season I signed a contract with Iraklis, I remember being interviewed on ERT3 (Hellenic Broadcasting Cooperation), as well as in "Sport tou Vorra" (sport newspaper of Thessaloniki), but again my transfer at the very last moment failed. The Statute of Y.M.C.A.-Th did not allow players' trading. In the 1993-1994 season I played for one year for Philippos Thessaloniki. In 1994-1995, upon encouragement of Dimitris Xouridas, coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th Men's team, I returned to Y.M.C.A.-Th and in 1995 PAOK asks for my transfer. So, after about a decade, during which I played in all teams, from Pre-junior to Men's, and also in Pan-European Championships of Y.M.C.A.s, I leave the team at the age of 21," Sotiris Nikolaidis narrates. In the coming years he will make a remarkable career, winning titles with PAOK and Marousi, while also playing for Iraklis, AEK and Rethymno. Some years later, Nikolaidis will return to close his career as an athlete in Y.M.C.A.-Th and a few years later again as a coach.
When Sotiris Nikolaidis (from 1991 onwards) started receiving proposals, one young boy begins playing at the Basketball Academies of Y.M.C.A.-Th. This is the nine-year old Nikos Zisis!



### 2.7.6. A title in Strasbourg

In 1992 the team of Y.M.C.A.-Th travels to Strasbourg, where the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s was held, between May 22-24 with the participation of: Germany, Estonia, Sweden, France and Finland. Y.M.C.A.-Th is an extremely close-knit team, wins France at the semifinal and qualifies for the final against Sweden; Y.M.C.A.-Th wins by achieving almost 100 points (97-85), thus winning the title for 3rd time.
The players of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki in this Championship are: Stelios Alexandris, Stavros Vachtsevanos, Polyvios Dermitzoglou, Theodoros Karanikas, Vaggelis Mpasioudis, Loukas Nasagkas, Sotiris Nikolaidis, Akis Papamavroudis, Vaggelis Pelekanos, Yiannis Reisis, Kostas Sidiropoulos, Giorgos Chloridis and Stratos Vamvakoudis as a coach.
In 1992-93 season, Y.M.C.A.-Th cannot handle with the strong competition of the B΄ National League and is relegated to C΄ National League.

### 2.7.7. Y.M.C.A.-Th establishes the Junior Tournament of Thessaloniki

In 1993 Y.M.C.A.-Th organizes for the first time a Junior Basketball Tournament, which in the coming years will be enriched, developed, will become an institution and later an amazing championship under the auspices of Basketball Clubs Association of Thessaloniki (abbreviated in Greek E.KA.Σ.Θ.).
As such, Y.M.C.A.-Th fills a gap that existed for children aged 13-14, as there was no competition in-between the Pre-Junior (Mini) and the U16 team. "It was a great effort made upon the care and responsibility of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Each year the interest increased by the teams that witnessed and recognized its excellent organizational characteristics. We were no longer talking about an event or a tournament, it was a real championship," states D. Ananiadis, who at the time was Chairman of the organizing committee, while the soul of the championship was Thanasis Noltsis, a former player of the team who would offer his valuable services to Y.M.C.A.-Th.
At those junior tournaments, Thessaloniki begins to discuss the talent of Nikos Zisis, a young kid playing for Y.M.C.A.-Th who was distinguishing.
From 1993 to 1999 Y.M.C.A.-Th plays in C΄ National League.
In 1993-1994 season the coach of the Men's team is Anestis Meletiadis and his associates are: Vasilis Grammatikopoulos (U18), Yiannis Zampelakis (U16) Dimitris Nikolaidis (Junior) and Kostas Vlostos (Pre-Junior). The following season (1994-1995) Takis Xouridas replaces him and Dimitris Tsolakis is assistant coach. The Men's team players are: Alexandris, Bousios, Kazakos, Verginis, Karanikas, Bakas, Zioutas, Alamisis, Alexiadis, Nikolaidis.

### 2.7.8. Games in Finland and Sweden

In 1996-1997 season, Stratos Koukoulekidis takes over as a coach of Men's team, while Dionysis Ananiadis is team's manager. Its players are: A. Bousios, D. Peratinos, St. Alexandris, N. Kazakos, I. Nikolaidis, Sp. Stratis, F. Karageorgiou, G. Markoudis, D. Zioutas, G. Alamisis and St. Mpakas.
In 1996 Y.M.C.A.-Th travels to Lahti, Finland for the Pan-European Championship of Y.M.C.A.s (May 10-12). Y.M.C.A.-Th loses to Finland in the final and emerges 2nd.
In 1998-1999 season, Nikos Dimitriou takes over the Men's team and Paschalis Leris is his assistant. In May 1998, Y.M.C.A.-Th goes to Borlange, Sweden, for the Pan-European Championship of the Y.M.C.A.s and takes the 3rd place. Y.M.C.A.-Th plays with players from the Men's team and 11 players from the U16 team. Its coaches are Paschalis Leris and Kostas Belloulis and its players: Alexandris, Paraskevaidis, Mpousios, Georgiadis, Efraimidis, Mpakas, Hatzivasdekis, Alexiadis, Rigas and Papamichail.

### 2.7.9 The rise and evolution of Nikos Zisis

Nikos Zisis comes in 1990 at the age of 7 to the Basketball Academies of Y.M.C.A.-Th. His first coach is Dimitris Nikolaidis (Nikol), son of the former captain of Y.M.C.A.-Th team, Takis Nikolaidis. Zisis stands out relatively quickly and although born in 1983, his coach, Kostas Beloulis, puts him in playing and training with children one to two years older. "He was the second playmaker of the Junior team of Y.M.C.A.-Th in those tournaments, substitute to Aggelos Aggelakis. This kid had a special feature: you couldn't tell he was impressive, his game was very simple and meaningful, he exhibited a kind of apathy, he was cold blooded," states Manolis Andreadakis, a friend of Nikos Zisis and staff member of the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th. "I used him for the first time in a Junior championship game against Asvestohori, two years before reaching the appropriate age. He stood out immediately. His great asset was his maturity, his mind was ahead of his age, this is what we call "grew up early", Kostas Beloulis narrates.

### 2.7.10. Rumors said that "he was not quick-feet"

"There were rumors that Nikos was not fast, was not quick-feet, but year after year he shut up people's mouth through his deeds. In the final game of the U16 championship against Aris in 1998-99 season, he scored 51 points and 26 of them in the second half. In the end we lost because of a bad choice and came out second. I remember at the end of the game Zisis was crying in a corner of Alexandreio Melathron (Palais des Sports of Thessaloniki) and we were trying to comfort him. In this game, both Sakota and Aca Nikolic were present. I still have a video tape of the game in my archive," concludes the coach Beloulis, who worked at Y.M.C.A.-Th from 1996 to 2001 and then went to the Academies of Aris, PAOK and Mantoulidis.
Zisis shortly after is admitted to the Greek National teams. "He had a strong personality, he stood out for that, he could be imposed on his teammates. These elements led me to the decision to recommend Mantoulidis School to include him in its educational program, since he was also a good student. Of course I took him in the National Team as well," states Nikos Kerameas, coach of the Greek National U16 Team and also Manager of the Mantoulidis school basketball program at that time. Soon, several clubs would like to have Zisis in their team. His talent could't fit in Thessaloniki!
Zisis made his debut with the Greek U16 National team on July 17, 1998 at the Brest Tournament in France. "In the European Championship in 1999 held in Slovenia, with Zisis we took the 2nd place, as we lost in the final to Serbia. Nikos was great. I remember being at an

airport on our way back from Slovenia, probably in Switzerland, and my phone rang. It was Dusan Ivkovic who worked with AEK at the time. He asks: 'Nikos, who is the guy who scored 25 points in a half time against the Serbian team?' I replied: 'Coach, that's Nikos Zisis, he plays for Y.M.C.A.-Th, he's a great player and a great character.' After a short while I was informed that AEK's delegation had already gone to Thessaloniki," tells Nikos Kerameas.

### 2.7.11. Ivkovic is calling on Zisis

Zisis carries out impressive performances with Y.M.C.A.-Th at the U16 "Final 4" of Basketball Clubs Association of Thessaloniki (abbreviated in Greek E.KA.Σ.Θ.)
At the end of the 1990s, Dusan Sakota, the coach of Iraklis, hosts the National Team of Serbia, which trains in Thessaloniki. Technical advisor of the National team of Serbia is Dusan Ivkovic. He comes with Sakota in a game Y.M.C.A.-Th plays (in the final phase of U16 Championship) in Alexandreio Melathron (Palais des Sports of Thessaloniki) in order to watch in person the player that Nikos Kerameas had told him. Duda (Dusan Ivkovic) didn't have to see much. He leaves in half-time and, it is said that, he contacts Yiannis Granitsas, a partner of AEK B.C. shareholder: Yiannis Filippou. "There is this kid in Thessaloniki, his name is Nikos Zisis. I want to get him." AEK acts immediately, with the debate starting from 15 million to finally closing to 50 million drachmas. Zisis is still at the 5th class of the High School – therefore the deal would be activated the following year, after he graduated.
Zisis today is one of the greatest athletes who emerged through the production process of Y.M.C.A.-Th. "I grew up here, I took my first basketball steps here, I learned basketball and the behavioral rules towards my teammates and coaches. Here I celebrated my first successes and I cried with my first failures," Nikos Zisis says on the occasion of his last visit in the Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum of which he is an Ambassador abroad.
Some years after Zisis's leave from Thessaloniki, his coach, Nikos Dimitriou, will follow him to AEK. N. Dimitriou passed away at the age of just 53 (in 2016) struck by cancer. He has been a coach in the U16, U18 and Men's team of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Under his coaching the U18 team of Y.M.C.A.-Th wins after many years the championship in the 1999-2000 season. His players were: Tomas, Zisis, Katsantonis, Mpouintas, Paralikakis, Aggelakis, Georgiadis, Kamaroudis, Kigmetoglou, Yianniris, Moulas, Tselempis, Tsimoragkas, Loupas, Panagiotidis, Fotiadis, Sirpis, Neofytou and Charismiadis. Coaches are: N. Dimitriou, K. Beloulis, G. Poulios and K. Bachtalias.
At the Pan-Hellenic Championship, which was held in Lamia in August, Y.M.C.A.-Th is ranked 4th, which was pretty much expected after Nikos Zisis's leave, who has already been transferred to AEK.



The captain of the team D. Liatsis (1985) (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





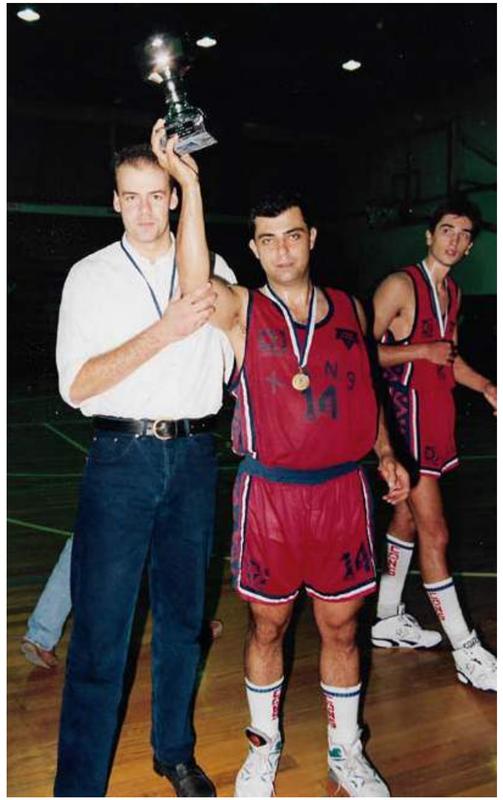
Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team in the basketball season 1984-1985 played in the First League of Thessaloniki. Standing from left: K. Papadopoulos, P. Leris, V. Basioudis, M. Piritidis (coach) V. Lipiridis, St. Kilias, Th. Paraschou. Seated from left: M. Balidis, Ch. Kazakos, M. Metaxas, D. Liatsis, L. Nasagas, Al. Matsoukas, Y. Dedes, D. Bakas. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)



1986. Award ceremony for the climb of the basketball team to the 2nd National League. The coach Makis Piritidis is being awarded by the President of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Physical Education Department, M. Karanikola (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




1990. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team in Essen, Germany, for the Pan-European Basketball Championship of the Y.M.C.A.s (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team Champion of the 3rd National League, 1991-1992. Vagelis Bassioudis and Loukas Nasagas raising the championship cup (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team Champion of the 3rd National League, 1991-1992. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki player Sotiris Nikolaidis is being awarded by Th. Baharoglou (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team, 1991-1992. Str. Vamvakoudis (coach), Al. Tryfonidis (chief),Alamatidis, Vahtsevanos, Demirtzoglou, Zioutas, Karanikas, Basioudis, Nasagas, Nikolaidis, Papamavroudis, Papadopoulos, Pelekanos, Reisis, Sidiropoulos, Tryfonidis, Chloridis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)






1991. 1991. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki junior Basketball Team in the outdoor court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki, during the FIBA celebrations for “Hundred years of basketball, 1891-1991” (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)









1991. Dionysis Ananiadis representative of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki with the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki junior Basketball Team at the Greek-Bulgarian borders, during the FIBA celebrations for “Hundred years of basketball, 1891-1991”, in which Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki participated with the support of the Hellenic Basketball Federation (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The historic speech of Simeon Mavroskoufis in 1991 during the celebrations for “Hundred years of basketball, 1891-1991” (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)




1992. The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team at the Pan-European Basketball Championship in Strasbourg, France.
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 1995-1996
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 1996-1997
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 1994-1995 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





April, 1995. The closing ceremony of the 4th junior Basketball Tournament, at the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki outdoor court
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




1996 Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki team in Lahti, Finland, for the Pan-European Basketball Championship of the YM.C.A.s
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 1997-1998 with the coach N. Dimitriou, assistant coach P. Leris and players Bousios, Nikolaou, Paraskevaidis, Alexandris, Efraimidis, Bakas, Zioutas, Alexiadis, Papamichael and Rigas
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 1999-2000, back row from left: N. Dimitriou (coach), Zisis, Kamaroudis, Neofytou, Georgiadis, Marlidis, Chatzivasdekis, K. Beloulis (assistant coach), front row from left: Katsantonis, Tselempis, Alamisis, Aggelakis, Paralikakis, Sxoinas (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)






1996. Snapshot of the game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Aris (Thessaloniki), during the 8th junior Basketball Tournament, at the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki outdoor court (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)

## 2.8. “2000-to the present”

From 2000 to 2006 Y.M.C.A.-Th competes in the local League (E.KA.Σ.Θ.). The U16 and U18 teams continue to be the pride of the Association, as they have continuous participation in the Final 4 of the Youth Championships and they achieve distinctions over time.
But the first team faces problems. The 2002-2003 season is actually bad and the Men’s team is relegated to B΄ local League (E.KA.Σ.Θ.).
At this point a serious reconstruction effort begins. The return of Michalis Giannouzakos, a glorious figure of the past, gives the team new impetus. The players of 2003-2004 season are: Kigmetoglou, Papaioannou, Neofytou, Melidis, Panagiotidis, Tselempis, Loupas, Fotiadis, Tzimoragkas, Karayiannis, Syrpis and Chatzivasdekis. Dionysis Ananiadis is the team manager and the members of the technical team, apart from Giannouzakos, are: Xanthopoulos, Arvanitidis and Kirikopoulos.
In 2005, Takis Xouridas, who is going to stay in the team for the following years, takes over the reins. With him Y.M.C.A.-Th returns to C΄ National League, while also winning the Cup of Basketball Clubs Association of Thessaloniki (E.KA.Σ.Θ.)
2006 is a historic year for Y.M.C.A.-Th as the operation of the new indoor Sports Center begins at the place where the team’s historic outdoor court was located. Y.M.C.A.-Th gives its first official game at its new home with Takis Xouridas as a coach against Eleftheroupoli’s team (C΄ National League).

### 2.8.1. John Korfas and the rise with Petros Gaitatzis

In 2010-2011 season Y.M.C.A.-Th is relegated for one season to A΄ local league to come back the following year. For these two years, an important figure of PAOK, the Greek-American John Korfas is the team’s coach, while Dimitris Karamichalis (for a five-year period at Y.M.C.A.-Th) and Kostas Azas undertake the Pre-junior and U16 teams.
In 2012 Petros Gkaitatzis assumes coaching of Men’s team, after being a coach in all youth teams. During the period from 2006 to 2013 some of the players are: Neofytou, Fotiadis, Tzimoragkas, Sourvatzis, Melidis, Seretis, Sahpatzidis, Abatzas, Agrafiotis, Petridis, Zografos, Moschou, Tasioudis etc.
2012-2013 is a dreamy season for Y.M.C.A.-Th which is promoted after 21 years to B’ National league, after winning in a barrage game.
Manager of the Basketball division of Y.M.C.A.-Th in these years is Nikos Vamvakoudis, former basketball coach, member of the Council Board of Y.M.C.A.-Th at the time and vice president of Basketball Clubs Association of Thessaloniki (E.KA.Σ.Θ.) nowadays. He is succeeded by Stefanos Aslanidis.

### 2.8.2. The return of Michalis Giannouzakos

Michalis Giannouzakos’s second time return to the Basketball Academies (with Tasos Velentzas being the team manager) assists Y.M.C.A.-Th to be further rebuilt and in the coming years this effort will be rewarded.
Achilleas Kardomatis is the coach of the U18 team in the 2015-2016 season, leading the team to the final four of the local championship (E.KA.Σ.Θ.) with the following players: Fylachtos, Dimitrakopoulos, Papapaschalis, Ioannidis, Velentzas, Konstantaras, P. Ermidis, Agrafiotis, Anagnostopoulos, Koutsokostas, D. Ermidis and Stavropoulos.
In 2015, Dimitris Kyriakou assumes the technical and organizational Directorship of Basketball of Y.M.C.A.-Th. He has innovative ideas and establishes a tournament for basketball skills for very yourng children. Nikos Ampatzas assumes the position of Team Manager and the Men’s team, coached by Andreas Karapiperidis, is promoted again to B’ National league following a barrage game.
In 2016, Nikos Seretis, a former basketball player of Y.M.C.A.-Th, assumes the position of the Head of Basketball Academies, while Sotiris Nikolaidis returns to Y.M.C.A.-Th as the coach of the Men’s team and Nikos Douvis assumes the position of the Team’s Manager. The latter has played for the team of Iraklis for many years and later becomes its coach. However, he maintains strong links with Y.M.C.A.-Th since the beginning of the 1970s, initially as a camper at Camp Pelion, and later as a staff member in Y.M.C.A.-Th’s camps for many years.
In 2016-2017 season, the U18 team qualifies again for the final 4 of the local Championship (E.KA.Σ.Θ.) coached by Sakis Papavasileiou, his assistant Nikos Seretis and with the following players: Kampitsis, Papazoudis, Fylachtos, Nousios, Konstantaras, Ermidis, Velentzas, Makoulis, Doukas, Koutsokostas, Fragkos, Chatzivourkoglou and Sossidis.
The U16 team, coached by Nikos Seretis, qualifies for the “Final 6” of the championship with the following players: Grivas, Sossidis, Ntouptsoglou, Mpardopoulos, Giannakakis, Savvidis, Vanis, Ioannidis, Christoglou, Papastogianidis, Makoulis and Chatzivourkoglou. The Men’s team, however, fails and because of one defeat is relegated to C’ National league.
In 2017 and for two years Panagiotis Kapazoglou is the team’s manager and he pushes Y.M.C.A.-Th to set higher goals. In 2017-2018 season, the Men’s team with the following players: Papazoudis, Zountsas, Filoxenidis, Akepsimaidis, Eleftheriadis, Ziakas, Thomaidis, Georgakis, Petrovic, Koutsokostas, Zampakis, Kostikas, Makoulis, Chatzivourkoglou, Vlagoyia and Doukas, coach Giorgos Zafeiroudis, assistant coaches Alexis Panagiotopoulos and Tasos Tziomalos returns to B’ National league.
First coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th U18 team is Alexis Panagiotopoulos and players are: Papazoudis, Sossidis, Nousios, Makoulis, Savvidis, Zountsas, Ntuptsoglou, Doukas, Kostikas, Petalas and Chatzivourkoglou.

### 2.8.3. The arrival of Nikos Kerameas

In 2018-2019 season Y.M.C.A.-Th announces its collaboration with Nikos Kerameas. N. Kerameas has marked a remarkable career as a federal coach, Manager of the Mantoulidis school basketball program for 21 years and subsequently Manager of the youth Academies of Olympiakos. Nevertheless he is not unknown to the family of Y.M.C.A.-Th. “In 1969 I registered at the Y.M.C.A.-Th as a member of the basketball youth Academies. So I followed the family tradition, as all of my cousins were Y.M.C.A.-Th athletes, campers and members. I was also a camper, at Camp Pelion ... I have strong relationships to Y.M.C.A.-Th’s values, which I am currently trying to pass on to my children, who are also campers of Y.M.C.A.-Th,” Nikos Kerameas says.
Giorgos Zafeiroudis remains in Men’s team for a second year, while also coaching the U18 team. Theodoros Asteriadis, coach of Greek U16 National team, is the coach of the Y.M.C.A.-Th U16 team.
Both the U18 team with the following players: Sossidis, Filoxenidis, Vazoukis, Nalmpantis, Zountsas, Ntouptsoglou, Karageorgiou, Perris, Grivas, Makoulis, Zoidis, Tsamis and Chatzivourkoglou and the U16 team with: Chalvatzakis, Tourapidis, Filoxenidis, Karagiannis, Roumeliotis, Ladenis, Chavales, Lytras, Margaritopoulos, Konstantinou, Tsiouras, Goutzamanis and Matidis, participate in the “Final 4” of the local championships (E.KA.Σ.Θ.). The Men’s team also marks a very good season and takes the 6th place in the demanding championship of B΄ National league.
The same year the creation of a Women’s team is announced. Its coach is Vasilis Charalampidis and the team competes in the championship of A’ local league (E.KA.Σ.Θ.).
In 2019-20 basketball season, as suggested by Y.M.C.A.-Th team’s Manager, Nikos Kerameas, the coaching staff of Y.M.C.A.-Th is: Iosif Nikolaidis (Men’s and U18 Coach), Ioanna Kapousouzi (Men’s and U18 Assistant Coach), Sotiris Kokkinopoulos (U16 and Junior’s Coach), Vasilis Charalampidis (Women’s team coach and Head of fitness training of all teams), while Nikos Seretis continues as the Organizing Officer of the teams and Head of the Academies.

### 2.8.4. A modern Basketball School in the center of Thessaloniki

All the Y.M.C.A.-Th provisions to its athletes, make this Association something special: two indoor courts, an outdoor running truck, an indoor heated swimming pool and a strengthening room. Y.M.C.A.-Th provides to its athletes full medical and radiodiagnostic coverage, physiotherapies, rehabilitation services and a coaching team consisted of qualified coaches and trainers. Before each season’s start, an athletic preparation program is organized at Y.M.C.A.-Th camp at Chalkidiki. Finally, masterclasses by special scientists are given to parents on specific topics such psychology and nutrition of the child-athlete.
Y.M.C.A.-Th is proud that it still exclusively cultivates amateur sport. It offers to its athletes coming from outside Thessaloniki the option of accommodation in dormitories in its premises, daily food and scholarships in accredited private educational institutions. Only in special cases, when Y.M.C.A.-Th finds out that an athlete is in a real financial difficulty, assists by providing financial support for the improvement of his nutrition and his transportation costs, so that he would be consequent to his responsibilities in trainings and games.

These last years Y.M.C.A.-Th is playing leading roles in all youth Championships organized by Basketball Clubs Association of Thessaloniki (Ε.ΚΑ.Σ.Θ.) and its U16 and U18 teams are present in every final phase of the Championships (final 4 and final 6). These teams have always been among the best and most competitive in Thessaloniki and Y.M.C.A.-Th has always shown its greatest interest in these teams.

As a result a number of its athletes participate and distinguish in Mixed teams of local championships and in National Teams by participating in European Championships (U16 and U18).

Y.M.C.A.-Th is actually a modern Basketball School, with a unified sports philosophy for all age groups. At the heart of this effort is and has always been the development and the proper learning of Basketball. Its priority is to implant to its athletes ideals and values such as team spirit, solidarity, respect to the opponent, compliance with regulations, in order to form complete athletes, sports fans and integrated personalities.





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2000-2001 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2001-2002. Top row from left: Panagiotidis (coach), Tselempis, Kigmetoglou, Neofytou, Bouintas, Chatzivasdekis, Xanthopoulos (coach). Bottom row from left: Sxoinas, Spanos, Aggelakis, Fotiadis, Tsakalikidis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2002-2003. Top row from left: Xanthopoulos (coach), Spanos, Syrpis, Kigmetoglou, Bouintas, Neofytou, Chatzivasdekis, Panagiotidis, Gianniris, Panagiotidis (coach), Pappas (chief). Bottom row from left: Charisimiadis, Tsakalakidis, Loupas, Tzimoragkas, Sxoinas, Fotiadis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



2002. The last game of veteran basketball players, before the demolition of the outdoor basketball court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. Snapshot with Kostis Tsikinas and Vyron Alexiadis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





Veteran basketball players' game before the demolition of the outdoor basketball court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



Commemorative photo of veteran basketball players, before the demolition of the outdoor basketball court of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum))





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2003-2004. Top row from left: Giannouzakos (coach), Kirikopoulos, Kigmetoglou, Papaioannou, Bouintas, Neofytou, Melidis, Chatzivasdekis, Panafiotidis, Xanthopoulos (coach). Bottom row from left: Panagiotidis, Tselempis, Loupas, Fotiadis, Tzimoragkas, Karagiannis, Syrpis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)

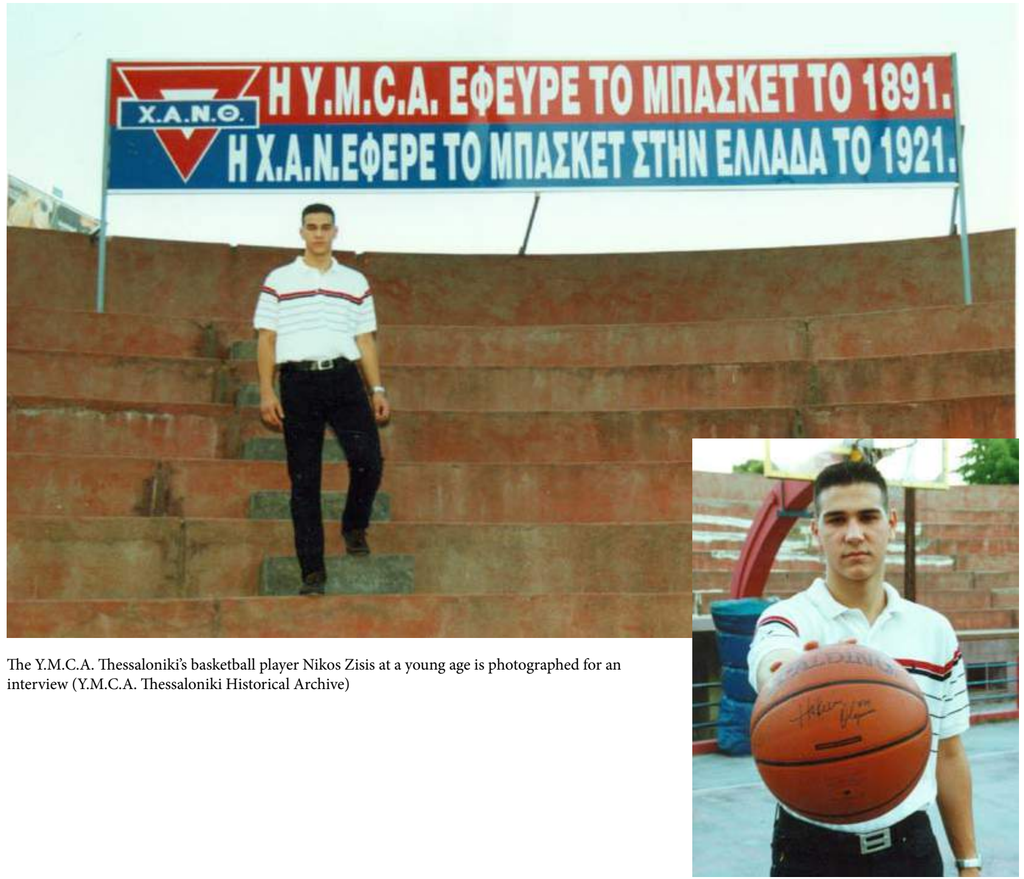



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2005-2006. Top row from left: Loupas, Syrpis, Kigmetoglou, Chatzigiakoumis, Neofytou, Melidis, Chatzivasdekis, Tselempis. Bottom row from left: Panagiotidis, Karapitis, Matenidis, Fotiadis, Tzimoragkas, Koutsovoulos
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)





The U18 team celebrates the conquest of Thessaloniki's championship in 2000 (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)




The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki's basketball player Nikos Zisis at a young age is photographed for an interview (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)






The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2016-2017. Top row from left: Papavasileiou, Nikolaidis, Ziakas, Georgakis, Levkaditis, Melidis, Fylaktos, Eleftheriadis, D. Ermeidis, Kaitatzidis, Douvis. Bottom row from left: Papaxhristou, Ampatzas, Papazoudis, Iordanoglou, P. Ermeidis, Stamatelos, Vlahos (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2017-2018. Top row from left: Vlagkogias, Pantazis, Tziomalos, Ziakas, Petrovic, Doukas, Kostikas, Koutsokostas, Thomaidis, Georgakis, Papavasileiou. Bottom row from left: Filoxenidis, Zampakis, Akepsemaidis, Papazoudis, Makoulis, Zountsias, Eleftheriadis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)





The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Team, 2018-2019. Top row from left: Filoxenidis, Thomaidis, V. Papadopoulos, Tsamis, Karageorgiou, Vlagkogias, Ntinos, Petrovic, Georgakis. Bottom row from left: Deligiorgis, Zafeiroudis, Chondropoulos, Peris, Balaskas (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)




Press Conference on the presentation of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Program for basketball season 2019-20. From left to right the President of the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Dimitris Mitsopoulos, the Director of the Physical Education Department Dimitris Karaiskos, the Chief Coach of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Nikos Kerameus, the Chairman of the Committee of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum Dionysis Ananiadis and the Chief of the Basketball Academies of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Nikos Seretis (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)





Athletes and coaches of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball after the press conference on the presentation of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Program (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



ΧΑΝΘ – ΜΑΕΣ ΠΙΛΣ

ΑΠΟΨΕ ΣΤΟ ΠΑΛΑΙ

στόν πρώτο διεθνή άγώνα

γιά τό κύπελλο Κόρατς

Η ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ ενδιαφέρει στήν χορεία των μεγάλων του ελληνικού μπάσκετ μέ τόν άποφασιστικό πρώτο διεθνή άγώνα της ΧΑΝΘ στό κύπελλο Κόρατς. Είναι κάτι που ή Θεσσαλονίκη τά περιμένει χρόνια καί που συνέχεια άφού ή ΧΑΝΘ κάνει στ' άλήθεια ότι θά διακριθεί στό κύπελλο αύτό πού διοργανώνεται φέτος γιά πρώτη φορά καί στό φινάλε ώς γνωστόν συμμετέχουν οί τρισπλήτριες άθλοι των εύρωπαϊκών πρωταθλημάτων.

ΠΡΟΠΟΝΗΘΗΚΑΝ ΟΙ ΘΕΛΟΥΝ ΧΘΕΣ

ΕΘΕΑΣΑΝ χθες καί συγκινήθηκαν μέ την παρουσία τους καί στο προπονητήριο τους στό Παλαί τής Σταύρ. Νιάρχος οί παίκτες τής ΧΑΝΘ Βελισσαρόπουλος καί Μάκης Πάλλ.

Οι δύο κορυφαίοι μπασκετμπολίστες τής «Μάκης Πάλλ», Αμερικανοί τήν καταγωγή, θά συμπληρώσουν τήν άπαραίτητη σύμπραξη τά αύριανά τους τής Θεσσαλονίκης.

Newspaper report on the European game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Maes Pils (Belgium)

## 3. Y.M.C.A.TH IN THE EUROPEAN COURT

The extraordinary coarse of Y.M.C.A.-Th in the beggining of the 1970s, was rewarded by its participation in the European Basketball Championships. Y.M.C.A.-Th has competed three times in the Korac Cup. The achievement is colossal, bearing in mind that, it was a team that was still running on amateur basis, without having the affordability of players transfers and making the most of players coming out from its youth Academies.

## 3.1. First (1st ) European participation

In the 1972-73 seasonY.M.C.A.-Th was among the teams that participated for the first time in the new Korac's cup. Thodoros Rodopoulos's team played agaist the Belgian Maes Pils and Lokomotiva Zagreb (later Cimbona) in the qualifying phase.
FIRST ROUND A΄ Qualifying Group
9 January 1973
Y.M.C.A.-TH- Racing Maes Pils 73-76 (41-41)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (ThodorosRodopoulos): M. Giannouzakos 32, Ananiadis 11, Avramidis 12, Gkinis 2, Stratis 2, Vougias 8, Tryfonidis 6, Vamvakoudis, Giatagatzidis.
16 January 1973
Racing Maes Pils -Y.M.C.A.-Th 96-71 (48-29)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (ThodorosRodopoulos): Giannouzakos 32, Stratis 17, Ananiadis 9, Avramidis 4, Gkinis 2, Vogiatzoglou 3
23 January 1973
Lokomotiva (Cibona), Zagreb-Y.M.C.A.-Th 81-61 (42-33)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (ThodorosRodopoulos): M. Giannouzakos 24, Stratis 11, Ananiadis 13, Avramidis 8, Gkinis 1, Vamvakoudis 4, Tryfonidis.
30 January 1973
Y.M.C.A.-TH- Lokomotiva (Cibona), Zagreb 68-73 (28-35)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (ThodorosRodopoulos): M. Giannouzakos 19, Tryfonidis 6, Ananiadis 21, Avramidis 14, Stratis 6, Giatagatzidis, Vamvakoudis 2, Vougias, K. Giannouzakos.

## 3.2. Second (2nd) European participation

In the 1973-74season Y.M.C.A.-Th participated for the second time in the Cup. In the first round, it leaves out the Austrian team ABC of Vienna, which did not compete and in the second round it lost twice to the strong team of Partizan, Belgrade.
27 November 1973
Y.M.C.A.-Th-Partizan, Belgrade 77-79 (34-39)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (ThodorosRodopoulos): Giannouzakakos 34, Ananiadis 16, Avramidis 7, Gkinis 4, Vamvakoudis 3, Stratis 2, Vogiatzoglou 10, Tryfonidis, Stanopoulos 1.
4 December 1973
Partizan, Belgrade - Y.M.C.A.-Th 88-63 (34-26)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (ThodorosRodopoulos): M. Giannouzakakos 28, Avramidis 14, Vamvakoudis 8, Gkinis 5, Vogiatzis 2, Stanopoulos 2, Nanos 2, Stratis 2.

## 3.3. The last European "dance"

In the 1974-75 season, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki came very close to being qualified against the German team Wolfenbüttel, which it defeated in Thessaloniki, but it did not make it in Germany, as the difference of 4 points in the first game provednot being enough.
5 November 1974
Y.M.C.A.-Th-Wolfenbüttel 73-69 (32-33)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (Nikos Vogiatzis): Ananiadis 20, Stratis 16, Vogiatzoglou 14, Nanos 8, K. Giannouzakos 6, Gkinis 2, Vamvakoudis 7, Mylopoulos, Stanopoulos 5, Kilias.
12 November 1974
Wolfenbüttel-Y.M.C.A.-Th 91-80 (47-43)
Y.M.C.A.-Th (Nikos Vogiatzis): Ananiadis 24, Vamvakoudis 14, Vogiatzoglou 11, K. Giannouzakos 11, Stratis 11, Nanos 5, Mylopoulos.

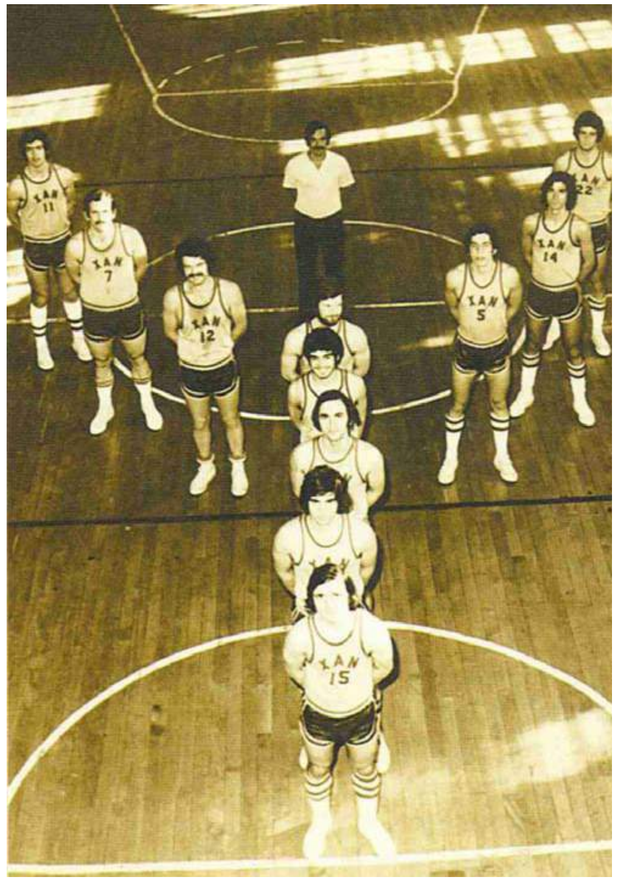


Snapshots of the game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Lokomotiv Zagreb in 1973 for the Korac Cup
(Sp. Strati's Archive)



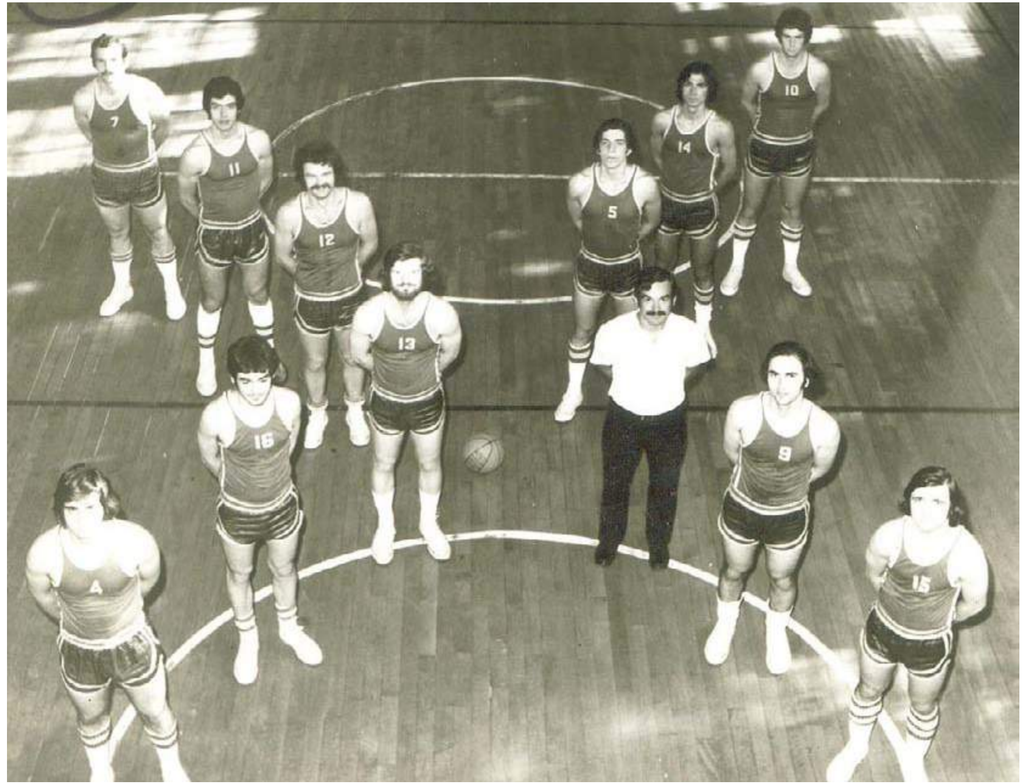


Snapshots of the game between Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki and Lokomotiv Zagreb in 1973 for the Korac Cup
(Y.M.C.A Thessaloniki Basketball Museum)



1973. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team formatting a Y (first letter of the English acronym Y.M.C.A.). N. Vogiatzoglou (11), M. Giannouzakos (7), Al. Tryfonidis (12), Sp. Stratis (13), Ak. Taliadoros (16), D. Ananiadis (9), Z. Stanopoulos (4), Z. Ginis (15), Th. Rodopoulos (coach), L. Avramidis (22), G. Nanos (14), Str. Vamvakoudis (5) (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)





1973. Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team formatting an X (first letter of the Greek acronym for Y.M.C.A.): M. Giannouzakos (7), N. Vogiatzoglou (11), Al. Tryfonidis (12), Sp. Stratis (13), Ak. Taliadoros (16), Z. Stanopoulos (4), L. Avramidis (10), G. Nanos (14), Str. Vamvakoudis (5), Th. Rodopoulos (coach), D. Ananiadis (9) and Z. Ginis (15) (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Historical Archive)

# BRIEF RESUMES OF Y.M.C.A.-THESSALONIKI ATHLETES AND MEMBERS WHO MADE HISTORY IN GREEK BASKETBALL

## 4.1. The pioneers

### 4.1.1. Lewis Riess (1887-1946)



Lewis Riess is considered one of the first basketball "missionaries" in Europe. He was born in Philadelphia, USA, on October 19, 1887. He studied at Swarthmore and Springfield Colleges. He was a student of James Naismith, from whom he learned the secrets of basketball. He followedthe development of basketball with great interest until he passed away, but he also loved and played baseball and American soccer. He was a coach of the Hampton-Sidney basketball and soccer teams and later he undertook the coaching of Virginia Tech team in baseball. He returned to Y.M.C.A. and worked at Springfield College as a professor. He arrived in Greece in 1924 as the Director of Physical Education of Y.M.C.A.s of Greece based in Thessaloniki. He is the man who actually initiated sports in Thessaloniki and also motivated many children to be involved in sport. The relationship he developed with the Director of Physical Education at the Ministry of Education, Ioannis Chrysafis, was a catalyst for introducing basketball at schools and Physical Education Program at the Armed Forces. He was also the one who taught the basketball rules and fought for the creation of basketball teams in Thessaloniki. He suggested the provision of scholarships to staff members of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki for their further education, while being the "teacher" of Symeon Mavroskoufis. L. Riess returned to the US in 1934 and passed away in January 4, 1946 in Antwerp. Y.M.C.A.-Th dedicated to his memory the Basketball Museum that was inaugurated in 2013.



### 4.1.2. Symeon Mavroskoufis (1909-1991)



Symeon Mavroskoufis was an important pillar on which Thessaloniki's pre-war sport was based. He was born on April 29, 1909 in Cappadocia, Asia Minor. In 1911 his family moved to Constantinople (Istanbul) as his father had been appointed as a teacher at the Greek school of Halki. During the summer holidays of 1922, he followed his uncle on a business trip to Thessaloniki, where he settled permanently. He studied at the 1stHigh School of Thessaloniki. He had an aptitude for foreign languages and from a young age he spoke excellent French and English. He entered the Faculty of Philosophy, which he did not finish, as sport had already begun to attract his attention and interest, to which he began devoting more and more time. He joined Y.M.C.A.-Th almost from its beginning and L. Riess distinguished him by appointing him as his immediate partner. From 1930 to 1933 S. Mavroskoufis got a scholarship from Y.M.C.A.-Th to study Physical Education and Pedagogy at the Jan Jacques Rousseau Institute of the University of Geneva in a program co-organized with the College of Y.M.C.A. in Springfield.

On June 18, 1932, together with GiorgosAbatzioglou, former player of Iraklis, he signed the founding act of FIBA. He was the Head of the Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A.-Th and he was particularly interested in basketball, which he described as the "chess of sport activities." Along with AntonisSkylogiannis they were the first Greek international referees.

In 1940 he founded the first private gym in Thessaloniki, above the "Dionysia" movie-theater, which for many years was a reference point for athletic society of Thessaloniki. He passed away on July 20, 1991 in London. After his death on February 4, 2000, Simeon Mavroskoufis was nominated as a candidate for the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. In his memory every year, the Thessaloniki Basketball Referees Association organizes a Basketball Tournament, named after him ("Mavroskoufeia"). Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki lent his name to the fitness center-gym of its Sport Center.

## 4.2. Great personalities of the "golden" team of the 1950s

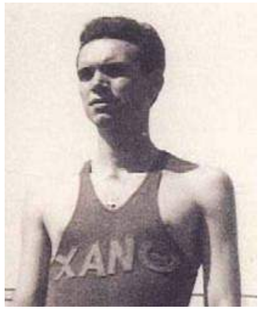
### 4.2.1.MimisTsikinas (1917-1992)



Mimis Tsikinas is considered to be the "light bearer" of Thessaloniki's basketball and the worthy continuer of the work left by SymeonMavroskoufis. He was born on November 24, 1917 in Thessaloniki, originating from Chios (from his father's side) and Smyrna (from his mother's side). He attended the 1stHigh School of Thessaloniki and entered Law School, from which he graduated. However, he never practiced law as the Second World War and German occupation changed his plans. He went to Cairo, Egypt, to offer his services to the Greek units and the Allied army. He served as a Petty Officer in the 2ndBrigade.

He got acquainted with Y.M.C.A.-Th through his participation in Camp Pelion and he loved all sports, especially basketball, track and field and table tennis. Since the early years of his studies, he was distinguished for his outstanding sports performance. Returning from the Middle East, he played in the Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team and in the Mixedteam of Thessaloniki, having as teammates Phaidon-Matthaiou, TakisTaliadoros, Giorgos Iconomou, MichalisTzikas and TakisNikolaidis. In 1948 he was hired as a staff member of Y.M.C.A.-Th and he was assigned with the technical leadership of the basketball team. In 1951 he traveled upon a scholarship of Y.M.C.A.-Th to Springfield College, USA to study pedagogy and coaching (with Everett Dean as a teacher). At Easter 1952 he returned to Thessaloniki as a staff member and coach of the Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team, applying the most modern coaching methods. From 1955 to 1963 he was a coach of the Mixedbasketball team of Thessaloniki and also an international referee. At Y.M.C.A.-Th he served as a Head of the Physical Education Department, Director of the Young Men and Men Department and as a General Director until 1982. Later he served as a President of the Thessaloniki Sailing Club. He passed away on July 26, 1992. To his honor, Y.M.C.A.-Th gave his name to its new Sports Center.

### 4.2.2.Takis Taliadoros (1925-2011)



Takis Taliadoros has been a modern "prophet" of basketball, as he was ahead of his time. He has been recognized as the ball "magician" and is rightly considered one of the most important personalities in Greek Basketball. He was born on 1 February 1925 in Thessaloniki. Even before World War II he had shown his talent, but after WWII he unfolded the virtues of a complete player that he could not be compared with anyone in Thessaloniki. He was a pioneer, having first applied the reverse dribble, and was one of the first throughout Europe to apply the jump-shot! Under the guidance of MimisTsikinas he accomplished wonders, established Y.M.C.A.-Th as a great and recognizable basketball power in Thessaloniki and he has been the only member of Greek National team from Thessaloniki for many years. He participated in the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, in the 1951 European Championship in Paris and in the 1949 European Championship in Cairo. He played in the National Team 31 times from 1947 to 1952 and scored a total of 145 points. He was selected twice for playing in the Mixed team of Europe while his faithful adherence to his beloved Y.M.C.A.-Th has been remarkable, since he never left it despite receiving many proposals from other teams from Greece and abroad. Only after the end of his career as a player did he coach PAOK for a short time. Like all athletes of his time, T. Taliadoros had distinguished himself in many sports (apartfrom basketball), such as rowing, swimming, volleyball, long jump and table tennis. He was alsoVice President of the Hellenic Basketball Federation. He passed away on May 25, 2011 leaving a huge and priceless asset to Y.M.C.A.-Th and to Greek Basketball. In 2013, Y.M.C.A.-Th gave his name to the historic indoor gym of its premises.



### 4.2.3. AnestisPetalidis (1929-2012)



He was the "steam engine" of the golden team of Y.M.C.A.-Th that swept the titles during the decade 1947-1957. Anestis-Petalidis was one of M. Tsikina's beloved players, yet the one who first invited him to join the team was MichalisTzikas. A. Petalidis was born in 1929 in Simferopol, Crimea and came from a Pontiac refugee family. At a young age he used to play football, he was a swimmer and a water polo player of Aris along with MenelaosHatzigeorgiou, while also being engaged in rowing. He had been playing basketball since his adolescence. From the very first time of his presence in Y.M.C.A.-Th he was singled out by M. Tzikas and was promoted to theU18 team, in which he made his debut in 1947. From the very first games he showed his talent and at the same time he joined the Men's team. In 1948 he was already a member of the firstfive of the team. He was a leading figure, distinguished for his basketball acumen, had a great pass and was excellent in defense and he was perfect for "special missions". In 1952 he was invited to Greek National Team, with which he also participated in the Helsinki Olympics, and in the same year he assumed the technical leadership of Aris. In 1954 along with Mavroskoufis, Tsikinas, Klagkas and Fourountzopoulos created the first Basketball Referees Association in Thessaloniki. He served as a coach of Aris from 1952 to 1973. He was given the nickname of the basketball "Patriarch" of Aris and is considered one of the key contributors to the creation of the great basketball empire of Aris in the 1980s. He passed away in Thessaloniki, on September 7, 2012.

### 4.2.4.Takis Fourountzopoulos (1930-2017)



TakisFourountzopoulos was born in 1930 in Stavros, Halkidiki. He played basketball for the first time at Y.M.C.A.-Th at the age of 14 upon the encouragement of A. Tzikas. He made his debut in the Men's team in 1947 in a game against Aris at Thessaloniki Championship. He remained in Y.M.C.A.-Th team until 1957, when he and AnestisPetalidis moved to Aris, in which he played for a year and a half. At the end of his career as a player he was involved in coaching and mainly in arbitration. In 1977 he was appointed as an international referee and he last refereed in 1981 in a game between Olympiacos and Apollon Patras. TakisFourountzopoulos passed away on June 15, 2017.

### 4.2.5.Giorgos Matsoukas (1930 -2017)



Giorgos Matsoukas was born in Thessaloniki in 1930 and joined Y.M.C.A.-Th at a very young age, before World War II broke out. As a boy he was at the Sea Brigade "White Tower". He competed at the position of playmaker and was one of the main players of the big team, created and led by M. Tsikinas, with T. Taliadoros, A. Petalidis, V. Tsigaridas, T. Fourountzopoulos as his teammates. He retired from his sporting career in 1960 to pursue his professional career as a Notary. He passed away on December 13, 2017.

### 4.2.6.Vaggelis Tsigaridas (1931)



Vaggelis Tsigaridas was born on October 18, 1931 in Thessaloniki. He was a key member of Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team until 1960, with the exception of the 1954-55 season, when he played in AEK while serving his military service in Athens. Along with basketball he was involved in swimming, diving, track and field, football and volleyball. After retiring from his career as a player, he went into coaching and worked with Anatolia, Armeniki, VAO, Iraklis and Aetos of Thessaloniki. He served basketball also as a referee, and later on as a member of the Council Board of the Hellenic Basketball Federation as well as a supervisor of games.



### 4.2.7. Pantelis Dedes (1936-2015)



Pantelis Dedes was born in Thessaloniki on March 16, 1936. He played for Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball team until 1959 and in 1960 he moved to Panathinaikos, winning the championship in the 1960-1961 season. He studied Law at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and was an excellent expert in Sports Law. He was an integral man and a basketball lover. He has given great battles for the implementation of laws and regulations. He served as a Vice President of the Hellenic Basketball Federation for a decade, representing the Hellenic Federation in international conferences and committees of FIBA. After his leave from the Hellenic Basketball Federation, he took advantage of his extensive legal experience in sport and has dedicated himself to providing legal advice to athletes, coaches and clubs in all sports. In 1995 he was the first Greek to be appointed as an Arbitrator at the International Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne upon a proposal by the at the time FIBA Secretary General, BorislavStankovic, a position he held until he passed away. He has been a member of the Council Board of Y.M.C.A.-Th for many years. He passed away on July 4, 2015.

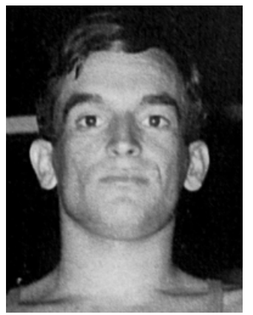
## 4.3. The protagonists of the “wonder” team of the 1970s

### 4.3.1 Lakis Tsavas (1943)



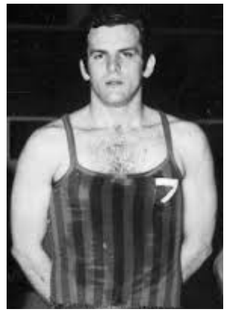
He is one of the most important personalities in Thessaloniki’s basketball, as evidenced by his career. Apostolos (Lakis) Tsavas was born on January 2, 1943 in Thessaloniki. He played for Y.M.C.A.-Th from 1955 to 1962, whereupon he moved to AEK, which had been claiming him since 1960. He played in AEK from 1962 to 1968 and won the 1968 FIBA European Cup Winners’ Cup in the historic final game against Slavia Prague at the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens. During his stay in AEK he celebrated five Greek championships (1963, 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1968) and was also present at the Final Four of the Champions League in 1966. He played with Greek National team 47 times, scoring 151 points in total. He participated, inter alia, in Eurobasket 1967, in the Mediterranean games of 1967 and in the Pre-Olympic Tournament of 1968. In 1969, L. Tsavas returned to Thessaloniki for Y.M.C.A.-Th, for which he played for three more years. During 1970-1971 seasonhe was at the same time both a player and a coach, replacing TheodorosRodopoulos, who was in the USA for re-education purposes. In 1973 he stopped playing basketball as an athlete, yet he continued to be a coach of Armeniki, Y.M.C.A.-Th and PAOK. He had been federal coach for 24 consecutive years (1980-2004), playing an important role in the implementation of the development program of the Hellenic Basketball Federation. As a federal coach he coached all national teams (U16, U18, U19, U21, Men). LakisTsavas is still an active volunteer of Y.M.C.A.-Th, is close to the Basketball Teams and is an ambassador of the Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum.

### 4.3.2. Theodoros Rodopoulos (1944)



He is considered to be the “Dean” of Thessaloniki basketball, the great theorist of the sport. TheodorosRodopoulos was born on June 4, 1944 in Thessaloniki. He was fascinated by basketball which really defined his personality. Under the guidance of MimisTsikinas, he played for Y.M.C.A.-Th from 1955 to 1965. For nearly two years he also played for Aris and abandoned playing at the age of 24. He revealed his interest in coaching from an early age, as he had assumed the technical leadership of Olympos 40 Ekklisies team. In 1968 M. Tsikinas appointed him as the new coach of Y.M.C.A.-Th, which he drove to the road to success by creating an amazing team, standing out for its teamwork and itsthe excellent defense. In 1970, he traveled to US for the first time with a scholarship from Y.M.C.A.-Th and studied in the fields of Coach Psychology and Youth Development at Y.M.C.A. University in Springfield. Th. Rodopoulos remained in the technical leadership of Y.M.C.A.-Th until 1974. From 1973 to 1977 he worked as a federal coach and in 1975, together with Kostas Anastasatos,they led the U16 National Team of Greece to win the silver medal at Eurobasket. He also worked in PAOK, Iraklis, Philippos Thessalonikis and Dimokritos. In 1983 he organized the first basketball camp in Greece (Salonica Basketball Camp) and then he founded the Basketball Academy Asteria in Panorama. Th. Rodopoulos has been a member of the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) for the last 45 years.

### 4.3.3. Michalis Giannouzakos (1949)



MichalisGiannouzakos was born in Kozani on August 19, 1949. He first came in Y.M.C.A.-Th in 1964 and was distinguished for his athleticism, the power with which he played close to the basket, his inclination in scoring and rebounding. In the 1971-1972 basketball season he emerged as the 3rdscorer of Greek Championship playing for Y.M.C.A.-Th behind Aristidis Moumoglou and Takis Maglos. The following year he came as a 2ndscorer behind Kostas Diamantopoulos. In 1974, Giannouzakos moved to Athens for AEK, where he remained until 1980. In 1981 he returned to Thessaloniki for Aris (1981-1982). He played 147 times with Greek National team (he played in the Eurobaskets of 1973, 1975 and 1979), in which he was also a leader and also played 27 times with the U18 National Team. After the end of his career as a player he started coaching Iraklis, Apollon Patras, Olympia Larisas, Kavala and many more. He has been a lecturer at the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science in Athens, Thessaloniki and Komotini and a Director of the Coaching Schools of the General Secretariat of Sports. His two children, Giorgos and Zoi, are both professionally involved in basketball.



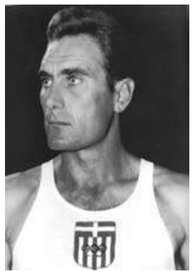
### 4.3.4. Dionysis Ananiadis (1952)



He has been a player, team manager, member and Vice-President of the Council Board, and Coordinator of the Volunteer Committee of the Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum. DionysisAnaniadis has put into practice the Association's moto "lifestyle, for a lifetime", since from the mid-1960s onwards he has been constantly at the forefront, serving from various positions Y.M.C.A.-Th. Born on February 1, 1952 in Thessaloniki, he joined Y.M.C.A.-Th in 1962 and at the age of 16 he was promoted to the Men's team, making history as the youngest player in First Basketball League. The famous cartoonist of that time Giorgos Akokalidis had the idea to depict basketball players who stood out in the big league in the late 1960s, by drawing D. Ananiadis as a … baby in a cradle, holding a baby bottle! Even as a player in the U16 team, D. Ananiadis distinguished as a playmaker for his speed, good handling of the ball and good contact with the basket. He was one of the protagonists of the great Y.M.C.A.-Th team in the early 1970s. He became its leader, emerging as one of the top scorers in the history of the Association and the Greek championship as well. He was a member of both National Men's and the National U18 teams. In 1977 he left Y.M.C.A.-Th and continued his career in Aris, winning the Greek championshipin the 1978-1979 basketball season. In 1982 he retired from his sporting career and devoted himself to medicine, following the dermatologist career.

## 4.4. They started at Y.M.C.A.-Th and shined in Greek basketball

### 4.4.1. Faidon Matthaiou (1924-2011)



Faidon Matthaiou is considered one of the most important personalities in the history of Greek sport. He was a superb sportsman with great distinctions in many different sports, but he loved and served most consistently basketball. He was born on July 12, 1924 in Thessaloniki and from a young age he was involved in many sports such as track and field, swimming, water polo, table tennis, target shooting and fencing.He played basketball, as he himself narrated, for the first time in the sport groundsof Y.M.C.A.-Th.He was also a camper and staff member of the Camp Pelion. As a teenager he won the Panhellenic championship in stone throw, swimming, table tennis and rowing. He played as a goalkeeper for several years in Aris water polo team. He participated in the London Olympics (1948) as a member of the rowing team and in the Helsinki Olympic Games (1952) as a member of the basketball team. He played basketball for Aris, Panathinaikos, Panionios and Sporting, while he was one of the first Greeks to play abroad (Varese). He played 44 times with Greek National team, scoring 529 points. He has worked as a coach for many teams, including Y.M.C.A.Nikaia (Piraeus). He was the creator of the women basketball team of Aris, with which he conquered the 1947 and 1948 championships of Thessaloniki. He led the Men's National Team in a total of 103 games, including three European Championships (1961,1965 and1969). He has coached the Greek Armed Forces team for 25 years and was twice selected to coach the Mixedteam of Europe.

### 4.4.2. Giorgos Trontzos (1942)



He made his first steps in basketball in Y.M.C.A.-Th, yet playing relatively for a short time in it. Giorgos Trontzos was born in Veria on February 16, 1942 and moved with his family to Thessaloniki at the age of six. He began his career in basketball in Y.M.C.A.-Th at the age of 15. His height (reaching 2.17m) was impossible to pass unnoticed and he quickly acquired a scholarship for an American college. He moved to America playing in the NCAA, he was trained by coach Hank Anderson (Gonzaga University) and the move for which he stood out in the following years was his hook shot. G. Trontzos returned to Thessaloniki in the beginning of the 1960s and played for a short period for Y.M.C.A.-Th.He moved to Athens to play for AEK, in which he made history (Greek Championships, Cup Winners' Cup in 1968 etc.) conquering almost everything. At the end of his career he was also involved in coaching (he coached AEK in 1980). On October 15, 2016, prior to the game against Lavrio, AEK withdrew the shirt with the No. 6, which now adorns the roof of the Olympic Athletic Center of Athens (abbreviated OAKA). G. Trontzos has played for 136 times in the National Team of Greece, scoring a total of 1,545 points and participating, inter alia, in Eurobasket of 1965, 1967, 1969 and 1973, in 1965 and 1968 Pre-Olympic Tournaments and in 1967 and 1971 Mediterranean Games.

### 4.4.3. Sotiris Nikolaidis (1974)



Sotiris Nikolaidis was born in Thessaloniki on May 25, 1974. He has been a member of the Pre-junior, Junior, U16, U18 and Men's basketball teams of Y.M.C.A.-Th. In 1991 he won the silver medal at U16 Eurobasket. In 1995 he left Y.M.C.A.-Th for PAOK, competing for five seasons and winning the 1999 Greek Cup. His first game with the Greek National team was in the same year, in a game against Belgium. He moved to Marousi, with which he won the Saporta Cup in 2001. He was the player who sealed the triumph of his team in the Peace and Friendship Stadium (Piraeus) with 2/2 shots, 15 seconds before the end of the game. He has also played for AEK, Iraklis, Rethymno and Apollon Patras. He played also 48 times with U16, U18 and U19National teams. Sotiris Nikolaidis is currently pursuing a coaching career, having collaborated twice (at different times) with Y.M.C.A.-Th.



### 4.4.4. Nikos Zisis (1983)



He is one of the most important personalities of contemporary Greek Basketball. His name has been associated with great successes ofGreek National Team and features one of the most enviable curriculum vitaes for athletes in Europe. Nikos Zisis was born in Thessaloniki on August 16, 1983 and made his first steps in basketball at Y.M.CA.-Th. In the summer of 2000 he moved to Athens for AEK, with which he played until 2005. Since then, Zisis has been competing only in teams abroad, as he played for many teams, such as Benetton Treviso, CSKA Moscow and the German Bamberg. He has won a Euroleague trophy (in 2008 with CSKA Moscow) and dozens of cups and championships (in Greece, Russia, Italy, Germany). He played for Greek National Team 273 times: 189 times with the National Men's (scoring 1,455 points). He has won many medals, two gold (Men's Euro 2005, U19Eurobasket 2002), two silver (Men's Mundobasket 2006, U16 Eurobasket 1999) and two bronze medals (Men's Eurobasket 2009, U18 Eurobasket 2000). On February 24, 2019, on the occasion of the game Germany-Greece in Bamberg, Zisis was awarded by the Hellenic Federation for his contribution to the Greek Basketball. Nikos Zisis is one of the Ambassadors of the Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum.

## 4.5. A personality with a great offer in sports started from the Y.M.C.A.-Th

### 4.5.1. Antonis (Ninos) Tzikas (1921-2013)



Antonis (Ninos) Tzikas was born in Thessaloniki in 1921. He was a versatile athlete but he liked team sports more. From an early age he participated in basketball and volleyball teams of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Later he moved to Iraklis Thessalonikis, a team he also loved and served as both an athlete and a member of the Board. When he later settled in Athens, he founded Iraklis Kifissias. On 30/8/1974 he became a member of the Hellenic Olympic Committee (EOC), which he served in many positions (A and B Vice-President) and from 1993 until 1996 he served as its President. He has been President and member of numerous Committees, Federations, Associations and Clubs. He was the Head of the Greek Mission at the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980. He was a pioneer in the development and spread of Olympic Education, he particularly loved young people and had set a life-long goal of transmitting to children and pupils the Olympic ideals. For his contribution to the Olympic movement he was awarded by the President of the Hellenic Olympic Committee Spyros Kapralos in 2009. From a young age he was a camper and a staff member in Camp Pelion and until the end of his life he spent his summers there. Among other things he was the Vice President of the National Council of Y.M.C.A.s Greece. He passed away at the age of 92 on February 4, 2013 and is rightly considered one of the most important personalities in Greek sport.

# Y.M.C.A.-TH
# BASKETBALL MUSEUM

## 5.1. The heart of basketball beats in Y.M.C.A.-Th

Y.M.C.A.-Th has the only single-themed Basketball Museum in Greece. The Museum is a recognized member of International Council of Museums (ICOM). The Museum was constructed in the framework of the project "Youth Mobilization - Cultural Heritage and Athletic Valorisation: YMC(H)A" and implemented within the Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013 Territorial Cooperation Program. As a project, it constitutes the implementation of the commitment made by Y.M.C.A.-Th as a minimum effort to restore its historical responsibility to pass on to future generations through the Museum's exhibits its important role in promoting basketball, since it was the entrance gate of basketball in Greece in 1919.

## 5.2. The inauguration and the commemorative events

The project was inaugurated on 8/12/2013 in the presence of all basketball associations (representatives of players, coaches, referees, clubs, unions, federations) of Thessaloniki. In a highly emotional-charged atmosphere, five important personalities of the past were honoured: Theodoros Rodopoulos, Dionysis Ananiadis, Lakis Tsavas, Michalis Giannouzakos and Giorgos Trontzos, as being the athletes who have marked the basketball history of Y.M.C.A.-Th. Honors were also rendered to the great team of the 1969-1973 period.

## 5.3. The "Naming" ceremony

The day before, on December 7, 2013, a "Naming" ceremony of the SportVenues of Y.M.C.A.-Th was held. During the event that took place at "Avlaia Theater" (in the historically protected building of Y.M.C.A.-Th), the Chairmen of the Council Boards who contributed in the completion of the project were honored: Vasilios Papadimas, Theodosis Pesmatzoglou, Ioannis Iliadis and Nikolaos Charatsaris. The names given to the Sport Venues of Y.M.C.A.-Th were also announced on the same ceremony: the indoor gym inside the historically protected building bears the name "Takis Taliadoros", the Sport Center bears the name "Y.M.C.A.-Th - Mimis Tsikinas", the gym in the basement of the Sport Center "SymeonMavroskoufis", while the Basketball Museum is dedicated to the memory of Lewis Riess.
On the roof of the central hall of the Sports Center of Y.M.C.A.-Th banners have been also placed bearing the Y.M.C.A.-Th's important personalities: J. Naismith, L. Riess, S. Mavroskoufis, M. Tsikinas, T. Taliadoros, Th. Rodopoulos, L. Tsavas, G. Trontzos, D. Ananiadis, M. Giannouzakos, S. Nikolaidis. N. Zisis.

## 5.4. The Museum's collections

The Museum's collection consists primarily of historical basketball evidence. Its main goal is the research, collection and documentation of basketball-related objects and archives and the highlighting of its history, with reference to Y.M.C.A.-Th that introduced basketball in Greece. As such, the permanent exhibition is made up of personal items of persons that have contributed to the spread and development of the sport, medals and diplomas, cups, components of equipment and items of the old outdoor court, team uniforms, balls and memorabilia from major international events and of course a rich photographic and archival material supporting the Museum's thematic:
- The invention of basketball by James Naismith in 1891 at the College of Y.M.C.A. in Springfield, Massachusetts, USA and Y.M.C.A.'s decisive contribution to the worldwide spread of basketball
- The introduction of basketball by Y.M.C.A. members (1919) and the decisive contribution of Y.M.C.A.-Th in the spread and evolution of the sport
- The history of Y.M.C.A.-Th basketball teams from 1920 to today, with particular emphasis on the 1940s, 1950s and 1970s
- The display of personalities who acted in Y.M.C.A.-Th and promoted it in one of the leading sports and cultural organizations
- The history of the outdoor basketball court of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki
- The emergence of basketball players of international recognition

## 5.4. The educational programmes

Since 2013 hundreds of schools and thousands of pupils have had the opportunity to visit the Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum through special educational programmes implemented by Y.M.C.A.-Th. Personalities, athletes, coaches, associations, clubs and federations from Greece and abroad have been toured in the Museum. Many of those have honored the Museum by donating their personal items that enrich its collections.

The Basketball Museum was established with the aim of highlighting and promoting the role of Y.M.C.A.-Th regarding the evolution and spread of sports education and sports in Greece. However, the history of the Greek professional basketball championships is also hosted in its premises through the exhibition of the sporting material of the Hellenic Basketball Clubs Association (abbreviated in Greek ESAKE), as professional athleticism is the evolution of the amateur sport. The enthusiastic granting of objects to the Museum, since its inception, has resulted in the design and implementation within 2019 of the expansion of the exhibition space with new thematic regarding the comprehensive presentation of the history of the sport in Greece [supported by the relevant European Program PROMO-YMC(H)A, which is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and National Funds of the States participating in the Cooperation Program INTERREG VA GREECE-BULGARIA 2014-2020]. The new sections focus on highlighting the history of Greek National Basketball Team and the work of major basketball bodies in Greece: Hellenic Basketball Federation (abbreviated in Greek E.O.K.), Greek Basketball Coaches Association (abbreviated in Greek Σ.Ε.Π.Κ.), Basketball Referees Association of Thessaloniki (abbreviated in Greek Σ.Δ.Κ.Θ.), Greek Basketball Referees Federation (abbreviated in Greek Ο.Δ.Κ.Ε.) and Hellenic Wheelchair Basketball Federation (abbreviated in Greek ΟΣΕΚΑ), while exhibiting important evidence of the Museum's Collection related to International Basketball.





The 2005 EurobasketBall, year in which Greek National team won the Championship(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)

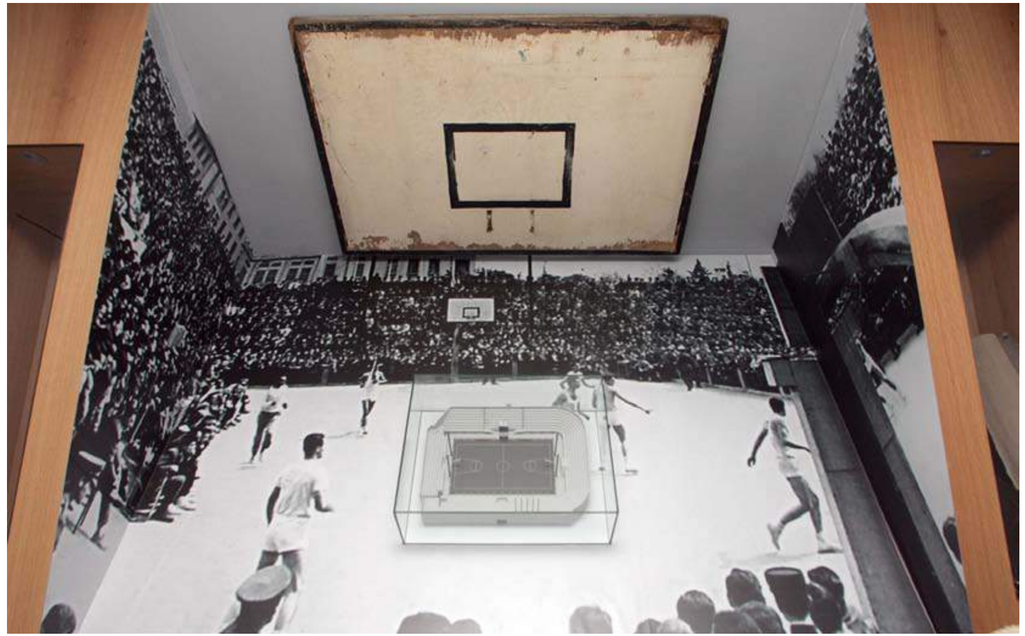


The Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum is locatedon the ground floor of "Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki - MimisTsikinas" Sports Center (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



At the Museumentrance the visitor can read useful information about important personalities of Basketball, who played a significant role in spreading basketball in Greece (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)





At the Y.M.C.A. ThessalonikiBasketball Museum the old wooden basket backboard of the outdoor basketballcourt framed by an amazing snapshot ofa derby game Aris-PAOK is exhibited (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)




Clippings from newspapers referring tothe successes of the basketball team(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)







The old shirt of the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki basketball team as well as personal belongings of super-athlete TakisTagliadoros
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



Display showcases of sports shoes belonging to famous players and rare items of basketball stars (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



Two worldwide basketball legends, Nikos Galis and Panagiotis Giannakis at the Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Basketball Museum in the inauguration of the new wing dedicated to professional basketball Wing (by ESAKE) (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



Snapshot: Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki's event dedicated to the memory of AnestisPetalidis and PantelisDedes. Veteran basketball players D. Petras, A. Tryfonidis, A. Gougoulis and G. Matsoukas, relatives of the honorees and the former President of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Y. Iliadis(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)





Giorgos Matsoukas,TakisFouroutzopoulosand VaggelisTsigaridas, basketball playersof the "golden" team of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki of the 1950s, are being awarded during the 1st year anniversary of the Basketball Museum of Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



Replica of the famous overturned chair turned into a basketby members of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki staff (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)






GiorgosTrontzos, a legendary personality inGreek basketball,startedhis career at Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki,and he was present on the inauguration of the Basketball Museum(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)



The vivid history of Y.M.C.A. Thessalonikibasketball in a photo on the occasion of the inauguration of the Basketball Museum
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)






On December 7, 2013, Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki held a naming-event of its Sports Venues.Honorary awardswere given to the descendants of the four great personalities (Lewis Riess, SymeonMavroskoufis, TakisTaliadoros and MimisTsikinas) as well as to the former Presidents of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki who contributed to the building of the new Sport Venues (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)




Secretary General of FIBA Andreas Zagklis in the event dedicated to the memory of P. Dedes and A. Petalidis on 27/12/2015
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)





Veteran basketball players, representative of Greek basketball organizations, former Director of Physical Education Department of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki surround the President of Hellenic Basketball Federation Georgios Vasilakopoulos during his visit to the Basketball Museum on 6/2/2016
(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)

## 6. 1919-2019: YMCA-Th celebrates 100 years basketball in Greece

2019 marks the 100th anniversary of Basketball in Greece. Y.M.C.A.-Th and Thessaloniki were the entrance gates to the sport in Greece. Therefore, Y.M.C.A.-Th, having primarily the historical responsibility towards the sport that it first cultivated, took the initiative to celebrate this milestone year for Greek basketball. The celebrations were held under the auspices of H.E. the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. ProkopiosPavlopoulos.

At a press conference held on 12/12/2018 in the presence of representatives from the political arena, local government, sportand Basketball fields and Media, YMCA-Th announced a series of actions to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Basketball in Greece.

As part of the celebrations, Pre-junior and U16 basketball tournaments were held; three-point competitions and a coaching seminar were held in collaboration with Greek Basketball Coaches Association (abbreviated in Greek Σ.Ε.Π.Κ.) in the Sport Center Y.M.C.A.-Th- MimisTsikinas on the sidelines of the All Star Game organized by Hellenic Basketball Clubs Association (abbreviated in Greek ΕΣΑΚΕ) and Panhellenic Association of Professional Basketball Players (abbreviated in Greek Π.Σ.Α.Κ.) in Thessaloniki; co-organized with the Municipality of Thessaloniki and other associations 3 on 3 street ball tournaments;games of the tournament "Mavroskoufeia" and a coachesclinic for coaching young athletes at the Sports Center Y.M.C.A.-Th MimisTsikinas were held.

Crowning event was the inaugurations of the new wing of the Y.M.C.A.-Th Basketball Museum by H.E. the President of the Hellenic Republic, on 27 October 2019. Many of the events of the celebration joined as part of the project PROMO - YMC(H)A co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and National Funds of the States participating in the Cooperation Program INTERREG VA GREECE - BULGARIA 2014-2020".






A nice snapshot with all the basketball teams of Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)




During the celebrations Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki honored all the former captainsof the basketball teams (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)






The closing-ceremonyof the JuniorTournament held in “Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki MimisTsikinaSportsCenter”.The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020” Cooperation Programme.(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)




Snapshot of the Press Conference on the activities organized by Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki for the 100th anniversary of the introduction of basketball in Greece(December 2018). Seated from left to right M. Giannouzakos, I. Sossidis, D. Ananiadis, L. Tsavas. Speaker T. Felanis.The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme. (Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)






The American coaches Hal and Scott Wissel in-between DionysisAnaniadisand Dimitris Karaiskosduring the Coaches Clinic. The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme.(Y.M.C.A. Thessaloniki Archive)

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**Testifications:**
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