

## **Interview with Ladislav Bertko**

### **When did you start playing football tennis?**

My first competition was when I was 15. As a 17 year old I started playing league and eventually we had luck and in 1982 we won the Slovakia Championship, which was my first bigger success.

### **Did anyone encourage you to do sports in your childhood?**

My parents weren't the sporty types, so I got into sport in my little town, where I sometimes played football, later football tennis, with my friends. When I started attending highschool in Kosice, I joined DPMK as soon as I could and played there.

### **Have you ever had any serious injuries during your career?**

I think I have sprained my ankles most. Once I even sprained it during a competition, but I finished it nonetheless, even if I was in pain. I don't remember any more serious injuries.

### **Did you travel a lot due to this sport?**

Yes, I visited Brazil, Switzerland, Romania and other countries. I have actually been in Brazil five times.

### **Which of your successes do you value the most?**

I value each and every success, but the most memorable was our win over Czechia in Bukurešť, because no one really expected it to happen.

### **How many World Champion titles do you have?**

I have two titles.

### **Have your career ever interfered with your personal life?**

Of course, a lot of times I didn't have enough time for my family, because I spent it on competitions or training. I even missed my own courting.

**Have you ever been a coach?**

I trained people in Šaca and in 2001, I found my own club, which is in function since. My pupil, who I introduced to this sport is even more successful than I am.

**If you could leave a message to young people who like this sport, what would you tell them?**

I would say that sport connects people. And that is the most important message you could ever give anyone. Because, who knows that I have a lot of medals and World Champion titles? No one will ever get anything out of that. But the people I have met on competitions, or the people I used to train with, even compete against are still in touch with me, and are my good friends.

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