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## IULIU BODOLA, REMARKABLE PRSONALITIY FROM FOOTBALL IN ROMANIA AND HUNGARY

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### Abstract

*The Aim.* During the two World Wars, a series of valuable football players played in the teams of Oradea. The author's purpose is to present, within the cycle of paper works dedicated to representative football players from the football of Oradea in that period, Iuliu Bodola, an iconic player for Romanian and Hungarian football.

*Objectives.* This paper work refers to Iuliu Bodola's evolution and results in the teams from Romania's Championship (Braşovia Braşov, IAR Braşov, Athletic Club Oradea, Venus Bucharest and Ferarul Cluj), his contribution in Romania's representative team (48 matches and 30 goals scored), his contribution as a player in Hungary's national championship (Nagyváradí Atlétikai Club and M T K Budapest) and in Hungary's representative team (13 matches played and four goal scored). The paper work also refers to Iuliu Bodola's work as a coach (MTK Budapest, MÁV Szolnok, Haladás Szombathely, VSK Pécs, Bányász Komló, SE Gyula, V T K Diósgyőr, B T C Salgótarján and Bányász Ormosbánya).

*Methods Of Research.* Documentation was accomplished by studying certain materials regarding the history of football in Romania, by researching certain paper works and articles referring to football in Bihor County, by consulting certain iconographic materials and documents from personal archives, by having conversations with collectors and people who have information concerning the evolution of local football during 1930-1948.

*Conclusions.* Between 1930 and 1948, Iuliu Bodola played 329 matches in Romania's and Hungary's championships, scoring 182 goals, being one of the representative players of that time. He was one of the players who played both in Romania's and Hungary's championships. According to the number of selections, of scored goals and his evolution, he was one of the representative football players, both in Romania and in Hungary. He was coach for 9 teams of different value levels, without having remarkable results.

*Key Words:* Iuliu Bodola, football, Oradea, Romania, Hungary.

### Introduction

During the period between the two world wars, Oradea, together with Arad, Bucharest, Cluj, Resita and Timisoara, was one of the cities with the most advanced football in Romania. After the teams from Oradea had obtained remarkable results during the 20's, even in the final stages of the Romanian championship and had promoted a series of valuable players in the national team (Francisc Rónnay, Ştefan Ströck, Iosif Bartha, Nicolae Hönigsberg, Adalbert Ströck, Geza Nagy-Csomag, Ladislau Csilag and Ferecz Szekely), football in Oradea went through a decaying period (Angelescu, Cristea, 2009).

At the beginning of the 30's, as measures to strengthen football in Oradea, the promotion of young players from Oradea occurred, but also, some valuable players were transferred from teams from the country. Amongst the players transferred to Oradea during that period was Iuliu Bodola.

### Essay content

Within the cycle of paper works concerning

valuable football players from Oradea during the two world wars, the authors have established as their purpose to present Iuliu Bodola's activity, one of the most representative football players who performed during that period. The work presents interest for those who study the history of football in Oradea, especially regarding the players from the interwar period.

The paper elaboration has been based on scientific documentation achieved by studying the specialty literature regarding the history of football in Romania, by the research of paper works regarding the evolution of football in Bihor county, by consulting articles from the local media, iconographic materials and documents from personal archives. The documentation has also been accomplished by discussions with collectors and people who have information about the evolution of football in Oradea during the studied period.

### *Player in the Romanian Championship*

Iuliu Bodola was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, 1912 in Brasov (Ionescu, Tudoran, 1984).

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He learned to play football together with the children in his neighbourhood. His special qualities for football had been noticeable since he was a little child. In 1925 h was included in the children's team of Coltea Brasov Football Club where he started to train in an organized manner.

In the Romanian championship he played for Braşovia Braşov (1928 – 1930), Athletic Club Oradea (1930 – 1937), Venus Bucharest (1937 - 1940) and Ferarul Cluj (1945).

Between 1928 and 1930, he was part of the Braşovia team where he played with Varhegy, Vedel, Rupp, Szilagy, Erös, Toth, Trisch II, Nachary, Salangy, Geller, Agoston, Erdö, Cotty, Berkessy, Ciakme, Naghi, Kelemen, Goldstein, Bölöni I, Niculescu, Kovacs, Vogl, Naghi II (Ionescu, 2002).

In the white-green T-shirt of the Athletic Club Oradea, having Czinczér, David, Mikó, Stettner, Sternberg, Kádár, Stemberg, Weichelt, Glanczmann, Moskó, Kovács I, Ronnay, Kocsis, Chendrean, Bartha, Chiroiu, Krausz, Juhász, Szarkadi, Sikó, Halatay, Borgea, Kovács II, Szániszlo I, Orza, Spielmann, Pop, Vărzan as team mates, he played in eighty-nine matches and scored fifty-two goals. Thus, he had contributed greatly to the results obtained by the team in the national championship: 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 1932-1933 edition, 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 1933-1934 edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 1934-1935 edition, 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 1935-1936 edition (figure 1) and 6<sup>th</sup> place in the 1936-1937 edition (Angelescu, Cristea, 2009).



**Figure 1.** 1936. Athletic Club Oradea Team (Source: Nicolae Kovács Album)

He was part of the Athletic Club Oradea team which participated in 1932 to the tournament in France and Switzerland. Out of the 12 matches, The Athletic Club Oradea won six (Racing Paris 2 – 1, Montreuil 5 – 3, Olympique Lille 5 – 2, Tours 10 – 1, OGC Nice 7 – 1, Espagnole Bordeaux 4 – 1), two were finished in a draw (FC Zürich 1 – 1, FC Lugano 2 – 2) and lost four matches (Rennes 0 – 1, Olympique Marseille 1 – 2, Montpellier 2 – 3, Geni Representative 2 – 3), obtaining a goal average of 41-21. Iuliu Bodola was amongst the remarkable players of the team (Heller, 1981).

He was amongst the best players in the tournament from France and North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Libya), in 1933. Out of the 25 matches, The Athletic Club Oradea won 21 and finished four in a

draw, obtaining a goal average of 100 - 23 (Török, 1937).

In the 1932-1933 edition of Romania's League, he was a member of the selected team of the Northern League, winning the competition final: Northern League – Western League 3 – 2 (2 – 2; 2 – 2; 1 – 1).

In 1937, answering to Janossy Bela's insistences, he transferred to Venus Bucharest. The transfer fee was 700 000 lei out of which the club took 450 000 and Bodola 250 000. His monthly salary was of 15 000 lei (Arena Sporturilor, 1937).

He performed there for three seasons, played in 61 matches and scored 7 goals. During that period Venus Bucharest, having as players David, Iordăchescu, Albu, Sfera, Negrescu, Ionescu – Crum,

Bărbulescu, Beffa, Demetrovici, Juhász, Eisenbeisser, Gain, Lupaș, Bodola, Ene, Cârciog, Humis, Iordache, Orza, Ploeșteanu and Vâlcov, became Romania's champion in the 1938-1939 and 1939-1940 editions, it won Romania's Cup in 1940 (Angelescu, Cristea, 2009).

As a player of Venus Bucharest team during the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1937 and 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1939, he participated in 5 games played within Central European Cup.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, for a short period of time, he played for a team from Cluj, Ferarul, where he played only in three matches and scored three times.

After analyzing the period while Bodola played in the Romanian championship, we notice that he performed in 153 matches and scored 102 goals, being one of the remarkable players from that period.



**Figure 2.** Pardubice in 1934 before the match against Czechoslovakia 2-2, in Central European Cup  
 (Source: Nicolae Kovács Album)

**Component representative football team of Romania**

His qualities, his value proven in competitions led to his selection in Romania's representative team at an early age, at 19. He made his debut in the national team on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 1931, in the Romania-Bulgaria match played at Bucharest within the Balkan Cup.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1931 and the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1939, Iuliu Bodola played 48 matches in the

national team – two matches at the final tournaments of the world championship in Italy, 1934 (figure 3) and France, 1938 (Chirilă, 1983); one match within the 1934 world championship preliminaries, 60 matches in the Balkan Cup, 6 matches in Central European Cup (figure 2), one match in King Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup>'s Cup, 5 matches in Eduard Benes Cup and 17 friendly matches.

**Table 1.** Number of matches played by Iuliu Bodola in Romania's representative team (2)

Final tournament	Preliminaries	Balkan	Central	King Charles's	Eduard	Friendly
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WC	WC	Cup	European Cup	Cup	Denes Cup	matches
2	1	16	6	1	5	17

With the 30 goals scored, Iuliu Bodola had been for over 5 decades the goal getter of the national team. Now he is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> place among the national team's goal getters after Hagi (35 goals) and Mutu (35 goals).

As acknowledgement of his value and prestige among his team mates, he wore four times Romania's captain's band (May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Romania-Yugoslavia match, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Romania-Latvia, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Romania-England and June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Romania-Italy).

For his contribution in winning the 1933 edition of the Balkan Cup on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1933, through High Royal Decree, he was awarded the Cultural Merit for Sport Medal, 2<sup>nd</sup> class (Alexe, 2002).

***Player in Romania's championship and Hungary's representative team***

Iuliu Bodola was amongst the 49 players of teams from Bucharest, Craiova, Ploiești, Petroșani, Reșița and other towns who, in autumn 1940, following the Decree from Vienna, passed the border in order to try to make arrangements with teams from Hungary and Northern Ardeal. Together with Nicolae Kovács from Football Club Ploiești, Augustin Juhász, Rudolf Demetrovici from Venus Bucharest, Francisc Spilmann, from UDR Reșița, he signed with the Athletic Club Oradea (Nagyváradí Athletikai Club), team where he performed between 1940 and 1944. (3) In the 1940-1941 edition, the Athletic Club Oradea team, together with other five teams (Stăruința Oradea, Athletic Club Cluj, Bastya Cluj, Sportiv Club Satu Mare and Sportiv Club Baia Mare), took part in the Northern Ardeal Championship. In the summer of 1941, after the championship reorganization, the Athletic Club Oradea, together with the Athletic Club Cluj, Lampant Football Club, Szegedi Vasutas Sportive Association, MÁVAG Budapest and the Athletic Club Újvidék, was promoted in the first division of Hungary's championship (3).

During 1941 and 1944, the team from Oradea, playing in the first division of Hungary's national championship, achieved remarkable performances: 6<sup>th</sup> place in the 1941-1942 edition (5), 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 1942-1943 edition and 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 1943-1944

edition (Demjén, 1989). With this result, the Athletic Club Oradea, formed of Adolf Vecsei-Weber (30 matches), Toth, Ferenc (Francisc) Mészáros (30 matches), Andor Onodi (29 matches), Iosif Petschowsky (22 matches), Nicolae Simatoc (12 matches), Gusztáv Juhász (26 matches), Rudolf Demetrovics (29 matches), Ioan Stiebinger (20 matches), Gyula Loránt (25 matches), Francisc Spielmann-Sárvári (30 matches), Gyula (Iuliu) Bodola (30 matches), Mátyás Tóth III (30 matches), János (Ioan) Kovács II (12 matches), Antal (Anton) Fernbach-Ferenczi (3 matches), Gheorghe Moniac (2 matches), became the first countryside team which won the title of Hungary's champion (1).

In 1942, Iuliu Bodola was chosen the best player in Hungary's championship.

After a short period of time when he played for Ferarul Cluj, he continued his activity as a player in Hungary. Starting with the 1946 championship, until 1950, he played for Magyar Torna Klub Budapest. In the 83 matches that he played, he scored 35 goals.

In the 176 matches played in Hungary's championship, Iuliu Bodola scored 80 goals, being one of the best scorers.

During December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940 and October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1948, Iuliu Bodola played 13 times in Hungary's national team, scoring four goals. This way, he is one of the few players who performed in the national teams of two countries, Romania and Hungary (2). King Charles II Arena, as it was called in the interwar period stadium that teams were battling games division of Crișana and CAO, incumbent Municipal Stadium in November 2008 bearing the name of Iuliu Bodola.

***Iuliu Bodola as coach.***In 1948, after finishing his competition activity as a player, he started a career as a coach. In his 23 years as a coach, he worked for nine teams, M T K Budapest, M Á V Szolnok, Haladás Szombathely, V S K Pécs, Bányász Komló, S Gyula, V T K Diósgyőr, B T C Salgótarján and Bányász Ormosbánya, which were performing at different competition levels, from children and junior teams to first division teams (4).



**Figure 3.** 1934. Romania's national football team in Sistina training camp  
(Source: Nicolae Kovács album)

Although he led teams into the first division in 115 matches, his performance and results as a coach were not even close to the level of Iuliu Bodola the player. Maybe his health condition was factor as well. In 1952, when he was the coach of Szombathely he was subjected to a difficult surgery for a cerebral tumor removal. In 1956, in the clinic in Pécs, he was operated on two vertebrae of the spine.

#### Conclusions

Between 1930 and 1948, Iuliu Bodola played 329 matches in Romania's and Hungary's championships, scoring 182 goals, being one of the representative players of that period.

He was amongst the players who performed both in Romania's and Hungary's national teams. By the number of selections, of scored goals and performance, he was one the representative football players both in Romania and in Hungary.

He was a coach for nine teams of different levels. Although he led teams into the first division in 115 matches, his performance and results as a coach were not even close to those as a player.

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