

## APPEARANCE AND DYNAMICS OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED BY THE SENIOR AND JUNIOR WATER POLO FEMALE TEAMS CS CRIȘUL ORADEA BETWEEN THE YEARS 2011 - 2019 NATIONALLY

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**Abstract:** The development of swimming as a sport constitutes one of the factors which favored the emergence of water polo around the year 1870, as one of the oldest games in existence. England is considered to be the country of origin for water polo. Polo entered our country relatively late in comparison to other countries in Central Europe or with the West of our continent, towards the end of the third decade. The first attempts to practice the game of polo in Oradea were influenced by natural conditions and the climatic particularities of this geographical area. The first female water polo official game in Romania, took place in 2007, in Cluj-Napoca between the Politehnica Cluj team and CS Oradea. In the national championship at the senior level, the CS Crișul Oradea team occupied the first place on the podium for 3 consecutive years, between 2011-2014. In the years 2015-2016 it obtained the second place and in the last years it ranked last. The results obtained by the junior women's polo team CS Crișul Oradea are meritorious, having climbed between the years 2012-2019 on the podium at all editions of the National Championship with a rich track record: a gold medal, four silver medals and two bronze medals. In the Romanian Cup, the CS Crișul Oradea team performed at a high level, ranking on the podium between 2012-2016.

**Key words:** sport' s history, water polo, wemen, Oradea, senior, junior

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## INTRODUCTION

### **The emergence of water polo internationally**

The development of swimming as a sport constitutes one of the factors which favored the emergence of water polo around the year 1870, as one of the oldest games in existence. England is considered to be the country of origin for water polo (Vasiliu, 1998).

The British are thus considered to be the 'fathers' of polo. 'Water polo' as we term it is one of the oldest sports and the first we encounter in the modern Olympics program. The father of water polo is William Wilson, born in London in 1844 from Scottish parents. As a member of the *London Swimming Club*, he remarked in time that the swimmers' 'swimming exhibitions' were monotonous and a bore. In need for entertainment, he one day brought a football, threw it in the water and each swimmer began swimming towards the ball to catch it and pass it to another. It was something altogether different for them and the game began to gain popularity quickly. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1870, during a reunion of the *London Swimming Club*, a committee assembled for the establishment of a set of rules for the game, but almost four years had passed until the first one gained a rudimentary shape. The first water polo game took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1876 at the Bournemouth Premier Rowing Club, where the field was located between two dam walls.

Twelve years later – in the year 1888- England organizes the first water polo championship, starting off with only four teams due to the distances between cities and transport difficulties. The first champion of the game was *Midlands Club Burton*, and from 1894 until 1901 supremacy was held by the *Manchester Osborne Club*, which would represent Great Britain in the 1900 Olympics which took place in Paris.

Water polo quickly crosses the island's border reaching Europe as well as the USA, where John Robinson organizes the first team, *Boston Athletic Association*, in 1888. The first country to have played polo on the old continent was Belgium, in 1888, followed by Germany and Austria (from 1894 on), France (from 1897 on), Italy (from 1900 on), Hungary (which would establish a school of polo in the following century which debuted in 1889) and Sweden (from 1906 on).

The olympic debut of water polo took place at the Paris edition of 1900, where Great Britain, Belgium and France alligned. The final between Great Britain and Belgium ended in a 7:2 score for the British. The British poloists lead in the other Olympics editions as well, scoring a decisive victory in 1908 in London, in 1912 in Stockholm and in 1920 in Anvers, respectively (Vasiliu, 1998). Female polo entered the Olympics in the year 2000.

### **The history of water polo in Romania**

Polo entered our country relatively late in comparison to other countries in Central Europe or with the West of our continent, towards the end of the third decade. Beginning as a form of entertainment for the swimmers after training or contests. They would set up two goalposts in the water, take out a leather ball similar to the ones used by footballers and the teams would be constituted on the spot. The Romanian Swimming Federation was established on the 21<sup>st</sup> of december 1930. Until 1931, there cannot be the case for an organized activity.

Even today, there are specialists in Romania who claim that at the first European Polo Championship organized in 1926 in Budapest, a selected team of our country was also present. The press of the time wrote in 1928 about a first official game, which pitted the teams of the cities of Oradea and Cluj against each other and which ended in a draw: 3:3. A year later, in Cluj, the first match between two club teams took place: Universitatea - M.S.E. Mr. Mures; score: 8:6. And in 1930, M.S.E. Mr. Mureș - the Bucharest team of T.C.R.; score: 12:1 (6-0). Bucharest, Oradea, Cluj, Tg. Mureș and Timișoara - these were the cities where the first polo teams appeared, made up mostly of swimmers. In 1932, the University of Cluj - M.S.E. Mr. Mures, score: 4:1. A Sports Almanac from 1933 mentions the holding of the National Swimming Championships (swimming,

polo and jumping) at the Kiseleff swimming pool (named after the road) in Bucharest, on the 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of September. In polo, the winner was awarded a trophy called the Romanian Cup.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1930, F.R. was established, comprising of sections of swimming, polo and diving. M. SAVU. was appointed president. In 1931, the 'Swimming and Polo Regulations' were published, the 'National Medical Commission' was established. The first medical records for athletes appear, national swimming, polo and diving championships are held, as well as cross-country races on the Danube: Brăila - Galati (21 km). The 25<sup>th</sup> of July, 1922, the second edition of the Danube swimming race, the route being Măcin - Ghecet (13 km). In 1923, the first international swimming and polo championship was held at Tg. Mureș, equipped with a regular swimming pool.

### **The Emergence of Water Polo in Oradea**

The first attempts to practice the game of polo in Oradea were influenced by natural conditions and the climatic particularities of this geographical area. Due to the milder climate, the existence of thermal waters in the immediate vicinity of the city as well as the fact that the city is furrowed by the waters of the Crișul Repede, the perfect conditions were provided for practicing swimming and then playing polo. The thermal waters of Băile Felix and Băile Episcopiei were known from ancient times and were used both for therapeutic purposes and for healing practices. With the establishment of a modern pool in 1888 in the bed of Crișul Repede, next to Döry Island, the conditions for practicing water spots were improved (Goina and Maroti, 2012).

However, even after the establishment of the Oradea Sports Association, the Athletic Club and the Stăruința Workers' Sports Association, which had swimming sections with good results, polo was still practiced sporadically, as a form of entertainment by some swimmers, without benefiting from a rigorous organization or special support from the leaders of the sport at that time (Török, 1937).

Little evidence related to Oradean polo before the First World War has been revealed. From the media of the time we learn that in the summer of 1912 polo training was held and that during the swimming competition organized by the Oradea Athletic Club, on August 15, 1912, a polo match was also contested between the Clubul Athletic and Clubul Sportiv, won by the former with a score of 11:0 (\*\*\*) a NAC uszó versenze (CAO swimming competition), In: Nagyvárad, August 16, XLIII-ik évfolyam, 181-ik szám, 1912).

Gradually, the increase in the number of young people who practiced the game of polo, led to the increase in the number of teams that were active within the sports units in the locality, causing their management to concern themselves with the establishment of junior teams, which would contribute to the promotion of this sports discipline among young people, in the school environment, to ensure the training of players who will carry on the tradition of this sports game (Maroti et. al, 2014).

From the first documented attestation of the practice of polo in Oradea, almost fifteen years passed until the first team of juniors in this discipline was officially established. In the second half of the 1920s, in Oradea, there were several polo teams, Stăruința, Athletic Club, Asociația Sportivă, Ințelegera, Maccabi (Maroti et. al, 2014).

The first junior polo team was established in 1926, within the section of the Oradea Sports Association. Less than a year after this event, the local media reported on the first polo game in which the junior team of the Oradea Sports Association participated. In 1928, on June 30, the first game of a junior polo team was recorded, in which the young players from Oradea competed with a similar formation from another city, the Cluj Athletic Club (Maroti et. al, 2014).

The war years, as in the case of other sports, caused an interruption in Oradea's activity. After the cessation of hostilities, efforts were made to restore the pools and places specially arranged for swimming and polo.

After the Second World War, with all the enthusiasm that reigned among sports lovers in the city and the popularity of the game of polo among Oradean youth and students, organizational problems, financial difficulties, lack of interest and insufficient support from the local sports leaders, determined that Oradea was not counted among the cities whose teams participated in the first editions of the Republican Junior Championship (Demjen, 1996).

The desire to work with young people, the skill he showed and the prestige enjoyed by coach Sonnenwirth Miklos, were factors that led to the creation of a group of juniors within the Voința Oradea Sports Collective.

A turning point for Oradean polo was the construction in 1957-1958 of the covered pool, at that time a beautiful architectural achievement of Oradean specialists. This success can be attributed especially to the two soulful people of Oradea swimming, Pécsi Ladiszlau and Boné Ludovic. The great achievements of the jumpers, swimmers and polo players from Crișul are related to this period (Vasiliu, 1998).

The years of affirmation on a national level began with the appearance of the provisions of the Physical Education and Sports Law, adopted in 1967(\*\*\*, 1967). The coaches from Oradea, with the support of the national sections in the locality, in collaboration with the learning units, carried out a selection in the schools in the locality, with a view to establishing some polo groups that would form the basis of a future team. The results obtained during this period at the regional stages and the final tournaments were signs that the youth polo in Oradea was on the right track.

The hard work carried out by the coaches, especially those from the Crișul Sports Club, Rujinschi Nicolae and Levai Pal, was confirmed in the years 1973 and 1978 when the team of this sports structure became the national champion in junior large (Maroti et. al, 2014).

In this context, in the mid-80s, the potential of Oradean polo, the professionalism of the coaches, the talent and the performance capacity of the players bore fruit. In 1985, for the first time, the supreme title went to the Crișul team. The year 1986 meant a new national champion title (Maroti et. al, 2014).

In 1995 and 1997 under the leadership of coach Orbán Zoltán, the junior team won one more national champion title. Orbán Zoltán, after being a national champion with the junior team in 1978 and as a junior coach, conquered the ultimate heights and wrote history by winning three consecutive national champion titles with the senior team, a junior national champion title and a *Romanian Cup* (Maroti et. al, 2014).

Oradea polo had the chance to benefit from generations of talented players, skilled coaches and special material conditions in the last twenty years. These players asserted themselves, on the one hand, thanks to their talent and work, but also to the first coaches: Băjenaru Eugen, Cosma Marcel, Orbán Zoltán, Cîmpianu Ciprian, Goina Cosmin (Maroti et. al, 2014).

The first match in which two women's teams met took place in 1906 in the city of Harlem, Holland. In 1921, the first women's team was established in Denmark. It wasn't until more than 50 years later that an Ann Arbor swim club coach was able to revive women's polo in the early 1960s. Since 1985, it has been recognized worldwide as an official sport at the EC in Oslo, when a tournament for women's teams was organized for the first time. The participating teams were Holland, Hungary, U.S.S.R., Germany, France, Italy. Women's water polo became an Olympic sport at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games where six teams participated (Vasiliu, 1998).

The first polo match in Romania took place in 2007 in Cluj-Napoca between the Politehnica Cluj team and CS Oradea. At that time there were 3 women's polo teams in Romania<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.swim.ro/184/polo-feminin-in-romania>

## METHODOLOGY

As part of the documentation process, we studied encyclopedic works, monographs of Romanian polo, articles from local and central newspapers, documents prepared by the Oradean polo management forum, as well as from the Oradean clubs with polo sections. To complete our information, we consulted a rich iconographic material, discussions with players, coaches, leaders and other people who have knowledge or possess documentary materials on the subject of inquiry.

After many years of waiting and preparation, in the competitive year 2011/2012, the first National Women's Polo Championship was organized in the senior category. Three teams from Romania participated, fighting for a performance that will make history. This performance was, winning the first national champion title, in women's polo (\*\*\*) Women's polo tournament premiered in Oradea. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2011.02.24,6; Women's polo tournament premiered in Oradea. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2011.06.04, p.7, Year XVI).

In the competitive year 2012/2013, the competitions for the coveted title of National Champion resumed. The first tournament took place in Bucharest, on April 26-28. Crișul Oradea once again faced its great rival Törpi Tg Mureș, defeating it in the end. The formation from the capital was defeated by the girls from Crișul Oradea and by Törpi Tg Mureș. Oradea hosted the second championship tournament where the two great rivals clashed again after facing the team from Bucharest. The match between the two contenders for the title was a spectacular match with many goals, in which the team prepared by coach Orbán Zoltán prevailed with a difference of 6 goals, score 20-14 (quarters: 4-4, 7-2, 4 -3, 5-5) thanks to an excellent second quarter. (\*\*\*) The girls fought exemplarily. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2012.07.26, p.11, Year XVII, No. 5651(152); Crișul won the women's polo cup. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2012.09.24, p.11, Year XVII, No. 5692(193);\*\*\* *Visceral hatred of referees against teams from Oradea. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2012.09.25, p.11, Year XVII, No. 5693(194)).*

The competitive year 2014/2015 was a turning point in the world of women's polo in the country. CSS 1 Steaua Bucharest, the eternal bronze medalist, managed to transfer several basic players from Crișul Oradea, such as Xenia Bonca, Alexandra Dorog (\*\*\*)Crișul dominated the polo tournaments in Oradea. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2014.02.11, p.11, Year XIX, No. 6040(28);\*\*\* Another title for the girls from Crișul Oradea, in Jurnalul Bihorean, 2014.07.30, p.11, Year XXII, No. 6158(145)).

With the help of the transferred players, they managed to win the first senior national champion title in the history of the club. The girls from Crișul Oradea lost to the CSS 1 Steaua Bucharest team, the difference in goals being scored by the newly transferred players. The revenge was not expected much from the people of Oradea, at the tournament in the Weekend Coplex, Târgu Mureș between April 18 and 19, after a match won against the Törpi Tg. Mures team, the 'derby' played between Crișul Oradea and CSS 1 Steaua București ended in a draw, the stars not being able to capitalize on the talent of the newly arrived players. The provisional ranking remained unchanged after this tournament (\*\*\*) Crișul is champion in women's polo in Jurnalul Bihorean, 2014.04.8, p.11, Year XXII, No. 6080(68)).

In the competition years 2015-2016, a new team from Bucharest lined up at the start of the competition, the Dinamo Bucharest team, which took the 4th place on the podium of the competition. The Crișul Oradea team presented itself with a new coach in the person of coach Liviu Garofeanu, coach emeritus, a great player and coach of the Oradea team. Unfortunately, he failed to bring back the glory of the team from Oradea, as during the time of coach Orbán Zoltán (figure 1) (\*\*\*) Good developments at the first women's polo tournament, in Jurnalul Bihorean, 2015.02.24, p.11, Year XXIII, No. 6301(37); \*\*\* Successful tournament in Târgu Mureș for female polo players in Jurnalul Bihorean, 2015.04.23, p.11, Year XXII, No. 6342(78)).

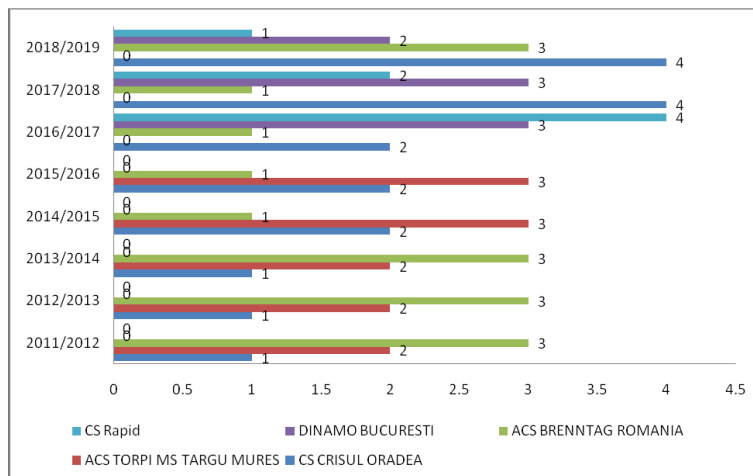
**Table 1.** The results from the Senior National Championships  
from the 2011/2012 season until the 2018/2019 season

Nr. Crt	Year	Team	Place
1.	2011-2012	CS Crisul Oradea	1
		ACS Torpi Ms Targu Mures	2
		ACS Brenntag Romania	3
2.	2012-2013	CS Crisul Oradea	1
		ACSTorpi Ms Targu Mures	2
		ACS Karma Brenntag Romania	3
3.	2013-2014	CS Crisul Oradea	1
		ACS Torpi Ms Targu Mures	2
		ACS Karma Brenntag Romania	3
4.	2014-2015	CSS 1 Steaua București	1
		CS Crisul Oradea	2
		ACS Torpi Ms Targu Mures	3
5.	2015-2016	CSS 1 Steaua București	1
		CS Crisul Oradea	2
		ACS Torpi Ms Targu Mures	3
		CS Rapid	4
6.	2016-2017	CSS 1 Steaua București	1
		CS Crisul Oradea	2
		Dinamo Bucuresti	3
		CS Rapid	4
		ACS Torpi Ms Targu Mures	5
7.	2017-2018	CSS 1 Steaua București	1
		CS Rapid	2
		Dinamo Bucuresti	3
		CS Crisul Oradea	4
8.	2018-2019	CS Rapid	1
		Dinamo Bucuresti	2
		Steaua Bucuresti	3
		CS Crișul Oradea	4

In the 2017/2018 season, Steaua kept its title, but all Bucharest teams climbed the podium, with Crișul Oradea finishing in 4th place. The first stage that was organized in Oradea started with a series of victories for the Bucharest teams, C.S.A. STEAUA Bucharest respectively C.S. RAPID Bucharest, in front of the team from Oradea, Crișul finally managing to win against a single team from Bucharest, C.S. Dinamo Bucharest. In this competitive season, the team from Târgu Mureș, CS Törpi Tg.Mures, did not appear at the start, participating only in the juniors, thus the team from Oradea remained the only team from Transylvania that still competed in the National Championship.

The competition years 2018/2019 brought an upheaval at the top of the ranking, the Rapid team took over the leadership of the National Championship, with Tóth Johanna as part of the team, returned from the Hungarian team Eger from the previous year. The results were not expected for the girls from C.S. RAPID Bucharest, after winning the Romanian Cup, also won the

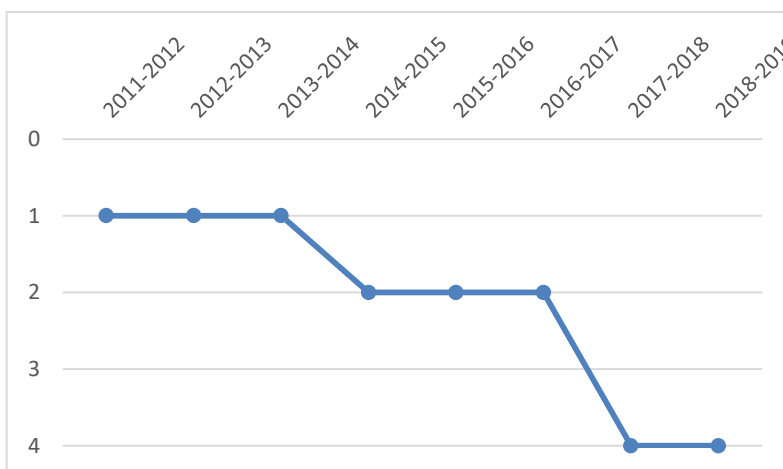
title of National Champion. CS Törpi Tg.Mures through a collaboration with Crişul Oradea, participated in the National Championship.



**Figure 1.** The evolution of senior teams in the National Championship since the 2011/2012 season until the 2018/2019 season

After the first tournament of the season, the team from Oradea failed to reach the podium. In the provisional ranking, the championship is dominated by the three teams from Bucharest. After the first tournament, the provisional ranking was as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> place Rapid, 2<sup>nd</sup> place Dinamo, 3<sup>rd</sup> place Steaua, 4<sup>th</sup> place Crişul Oradea. After the second tournament organized in Oradea, the provisional ranking did not change, with C.S. remaining the leader.

At the third tournament, organized at the Floreasca Basin in the capital C.S. Crişul – Törpi Oradea did not appear again, thus losing all the matches with 5-0 (table 1).



**Figure 2.** The results obtained by the CS Crişul Oradea senior team at the National Championship between 2011-2019

The success enjoyed by the first edition of the junior championship, attracted the organization of the new season of the competitive year 2013/2014 (\*\*\*)In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2013.05.30,p.11, Year XVIII, Nr.5862(103) \*\*\* The first champions. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2013.07.10, p.11, Year XVIII, No. 5891(129)).

In the seniors, Törpi did not manage to beat the Oradians, but in the juniors, they won the cause, winning for the second time the title of National Champion in the juniors. (\*\*\*) Champions for the second time. In Jurnalul Bihorean, 2013.07.16, p.11, Year XVIII, No. 5895(133)). Crișul Oradea had to face another opponent who, over the years, became a strength in women's polo. At this edition of the championship, the CSȘ 1 Bucharest team managed to overcome the Oradia team, climbing to second place in the ranking. The team from the Republic of Moldova did not take part in the competition this season.

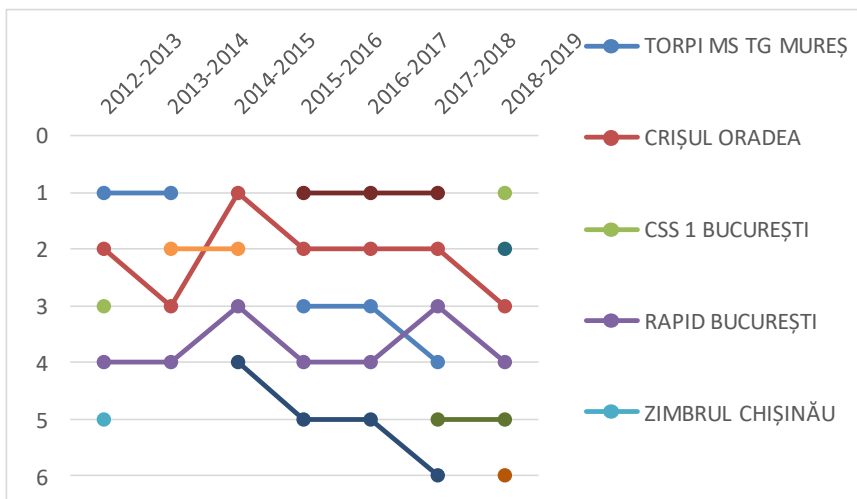


Figure 3. Results from the Junior National Championships from the 2012/2013 season to the 2018/2019 season

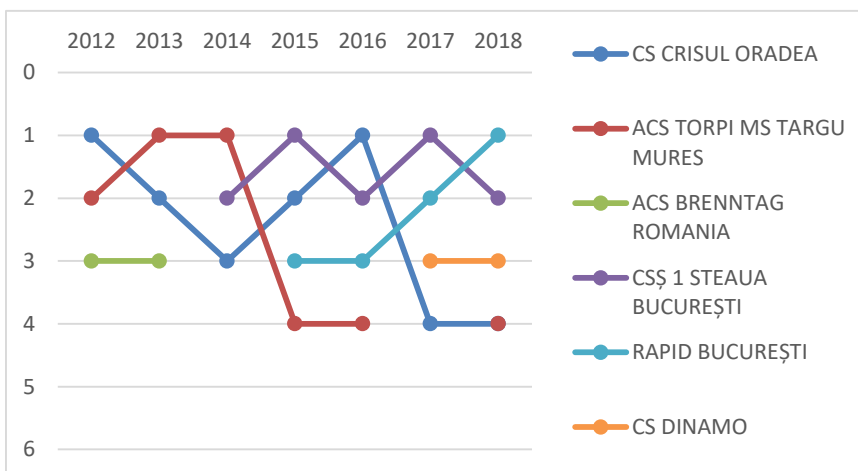


Figure 4. Results obtained at the Romanian Cup



The graph above shows that in the junior championships, since the first season, many more teams have appeared than in the senior championship. In the competition between Crișul Oradea and Torpi Târgu Mureș in the seniors, Crișul came out victorious and only in the 2014/2015 season did they manage to triumph over their eternal rival. The much larger material and human base of the teams in Bucharest favored placing the teams at the top of the hierarchies and maintaining them (figure 3).

The Romanian Cups were organized at the beginning in the fall, and currently their organization extends until December. Crișul Oradea managed to win the first edition of the championship and it was only in the 2016 edition that they managed to regain their title. Due to the results of the Romanian Cup from 2012 to 2018 for the teams from Bucharest - the teams from Oradea and Târgu Mureș joined forces in order to face the teams from the capital more easily (figure 4).

The first international game, an important moment for the Romanian national team, took place on 22.09.2013 in Târgu Mureș, where the Romanian women's national polo team played its first official match against Slovakia. After the first edition of the National Senior Women's Polo Championship started in 2012, the tricolor team was led by coach Orbán Zoltán and Fülöp Tamás Szoly, who defeated the Slovak national team 9-8 in a match held at the Olympic Pool in Târgu Mureș.

## CONCLUSIONS

Between 2011-2015, 3 teams participated in the senior national championship, and between 2016-2019, their number will increase to 4-5.

In the national championship at the senior level, the CS Crișul Oradea team occupied the first place on the podium for 3 consecutive years, between 2011-2014. In the years 2015-2016 it obtained the second place and in the last years it ranked last.

The results obtained by the junior women's polo team CS Crișul Oradea are meritorious, having climbed between the years 2012-2019 on the podium at all editions of the National Championship with a rich track record: a gold medal, four silver medals and two bronze medals.

If we refer to the number of teams present in the national championship, we can conclude that most clubs are from Bucharest, a total of 4 teams, of which the Oradea team remains everpresent.

In the Romanian Cup, the CS Crișul Oradea team performed at a high level, ranking on the podium between 2012-2016. In the last two editions of our study, the team did not capitalize on its potential, thus obtaining the 4<sup>th</sup> place.

The CS Crișul Oradea team had continuity in participation in all editions of the National Junior Championship and the Romanian Cup, as one of the few teams to which this feature can be attributed.

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