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HASTOR

# Newsletter

May, 2026

# Five Medals for Denijal Begović at the “Aminess Meeting Korkyra 2026”

Denijal Begović, a scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation and a member of USR “EkoSport,” achieved outstanding success at the international swimming competition “9th Aminess Meeting Korkyra 2026,” held on April 25 and 26 in Korčula.

In exceptionally strong competition, Denijal won as many as five medals. His impressive performance was crowned with two gold medals in the 50- and 100-meter backstroke events, while he won bronze medals in the 100- and 200-meter freestyle events, as well as the 100-meter butterfly event. These remarkable results are a confirmation of his dedication, discipline, and successful balancing of school and sports commitments. A particularly significant aspect of his performance was the improvement of his personal best times, which confirms his continuous athletic progress.

As he says, swimming is an important part of his life and a sport that has taught him discipline, perseverance, and responsibility.

*Sport requires a lot of sacrifice, but it teaches you how to become stronger and better, not only as an athlete but also as a person. The most important thing is to believe in yourself, be persistent, and not give up after obstacles or poorer results. Behind every success there is a lot of work, effort, and support from family, coaches, and people who believe in you, Denijal emphasizes.*

Denijal’s success represents a strong motivation for further work and development, as well as an inspiration to other young athletes that effort and perseverance always pay off. Important support on this journey is provided by the Hastor Foundation, which, through investing in education and the development of young talents, continues to be a strong pillar of support for young people in achieving their goals and success. Denijal points out that the scholarship represents additional motivation and security for the continuation of his development.

*Although I have only recently become a scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation, I can already feel how much it means to have the support of people who recognize the effort, work, and commitment of young people. The scholarship gives me additional motivation to continue working on myself, both in sports and in education. I am especially pleased about the opportunity to volunteer and meet other young people who share similar values and a desire for progress, said Denijal.*

**Prepared by: Lamija Sejdžić**



# Borislav Đekić – A Young Karate Athlete Achieving Success

This month, we would also like to introduce the story of fourteen-year-old Borislav Đekić from Nevesinje, an excellent eighth-grade student at “Risto Proroković” Primary School. Borislav is a long-time scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation, a dedicated Red Cross volunteer, and a successful karate athlete who achieves remarkable results through his effort, hard work, and commitment. He has been training karate for seven years at the “Velež” Karate Club, and even a one-year break due to health problems did not diminish his love for the sport.

*Karate represents much more than ordinary training for me – it is a place where I feel accepted, safe, and happy. Training has helped me develop concentration, responsibility, and perseverance, but also gain new friendships and valuable experiences, says Borislav, emphasizing the importance of his coaches, who have been a great source of support and motivation throughout the years.*

Borislav already has numerous competitions, medals, and memories behind him. This year, he achieved significant results – at the regional competition in Bileća, he won first place, while at the Championship of Republica Srpska he secured second place in his category. A medal won in Goražde is particularly meaningful to him, where he competed in a higher category, which represented a major challenge and confirmed that effort and hard work bring results.

As someone who has been a scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation for six years, which he considers a great source of support and a place where he has gained extensive knowledge and valuable experience through various activities, Borislav particularly highlights the importance of the mentors, who have always been ready to help, explain every topic, and motivate scholarship recipients to work on themselves and their education.

*The Hastor Foundation has shown me how important support, knowledge, and togetherness are for young people, says Borislav, who developed self-confidence and communication*

*skills through the Foundation, while the experiences he gained further motivated him to be an exemplary student and an active member of his community. For this very reason, he often recommends to his peers that they apply for the scholarship and take advantage of the opportunity for personal development.*

Although young, Borislav demonstrates through his example how important education, sports, and humanity are for the proper development of young people:

*I would tell young people to believe in themselves, work hard, and take advantage of every opportunity to learn and improve. With hard work, perseverance, and the right people around you, everything is possible to achieve.*



# Interview of the Month: Ajna Zlotrg – National Runner-Up in Table Tennis

In the world of top-level sports, we often hear about sacrifice, but we rarely have the opportunity to meet someone who balances demanding academic obligations and podium finishes with such ease and a smile. In this month's interview, we take you into the world of speed, incredible reflexes, and steel discipline. We spoke with Ajna Zlotrg, a student who recently won an excellent second and third place at the national table tennis championship. For our newsletter, Ajna reveals how she inherited her love for this sport from her family, how she finds focus in key moments of a match, and why she believes that table tennis teaches us the most important life lessons.



## 1. When did you start playing table tennis and what attracted you most to this sport?

I have been involved in this sport for many years. I started training in 2013 as an eight-year-old. Almost all members of my family were involved in table tennis at some point in their lives, some more intensively and others recreationally, but the fact is that it was a sport everyone loved. Because of that, I developed an interest in table tennis myself. In addition, this is a very fast and dynamic sport that requires concentration and focus, develops reflexes, and trains not only the body but also the mind.

## 2. How do you manage to balance academic obligations with training sessions and competitions?

I have no problem when it comes to balancing table tennis with academic obligations. Honestly, I no longer even remember what my routine looked like without training sessions and competitions. I am used to having a full day and, in addition to university obligations, having training sessions, while weekends are mostly reserved for competitions. It has become my everyday life. I believe that with good organization and discipline, everything can be achieved.

## 3. Was there a particular moment during competition that you will remember especially?

Winning the national junior championship in 2024 is definitely a moment that I will always remember. I played the final match against a good friend of mine, the score was 2:2 in sets, and the deciding set was very exciting and uncertain. I will never forget the feeling of happiness and relief after winning the decisive point. It was a mentally very difficult match, but in the end, I managed to come out of that battle as the winner.

## 4. What brings you the most joy in table tennis – victories, the atmosphere at competitions, or something else?

I have always been the type of person who enjoys the atmosphere the most. My best friends and my dearest memories are connected to table tennis, and that is why I love this sport so much. Of course, victories are also a very important factor, and I always strive for them, but even when defeat or disappointment comes, I enjoy the companionship and sporting atmosphere that this sport brings.



### **5. What advice would you give to young people who want to start training in table tennis or become more seriously involved in sports?**

I would like to encourage young people to train in table tennis because I believe this sport deserves much more attention than it currently receives. It is a sport that develops not only physical but also mental abilities, because it requires constant focus, concentration, and thinking, especially if you practice it at a more professional level. But even recreationally, table tennis is an excellent option for physical activity and can be very interesting. In general, every sport is an opportunity to build yourself as a person, develop discipline, and get to know yourself – how you react after defeat, how you deal with anger and happiness, how persistent and determined you are. My advice to young people would be to try to persevere in training even when it becomes difficult, because it is precisely through that process that we build ourselves the most.

### **6. If you could single out one thing that sport has taught you, what would it be?**

Among the most important things that sport has taught me are work, order, and discipline – that a great deal of effort and time is needed to achieve what you want. But perhaps it has also taught me something that people would not expect as an answer. Through table tennis, I realized how true the saying is that hope dies last. Countless times I have experienced, and also seen in others, that people do not give up even when a situation seems almost impossible. Of course, one should always fight until the end, but there are moments when the chances of victory are almost non-existent, when the opponent is much better, or when you are losing by a large margin. Nevertheless, until the very last point there is always that hope that a comeback can happen. Perhaps that is a somewhat unusual thing for me to single out, but I consider it one of the most beautiful lessons that sport has given me.

**Prepared by: Adina Jusufspahić**

# FRAGMENTS OF VOLUNTEERING STORIES

During May 2026, the scholarship recipients of the Hastor Foundation carried out a number of important volunteering activities across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through humanitarian, educational, health-related, cultural, and community projects, they showed that young people can carry positive change in their local communities. Each activity was an opportunity to gain new knowledge, develop life skills, and strengthen the values on which the Hastor Foundation is based – education, humanity, solidarity, responsibility, and active citizenship.

In Fojnica, an activity was carried out, under the guidance of mentor Adis Akšamović, and in cooperation with the Red Cross of Fojnica. The scholarship holders learned the basics of first aid and, through practical exercises, learned how to react properly in emergency situations. Special focus was placed on helping injured people, stopping bleeding, immobilizing injuries, and responding in cases of unconsciousness. This activity contributed to the development of humanity, responsibility, and young people's readiness to help others when help is needed the most.



In Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, mentors Amna Halilović and Hatidža Omeragić organized an educational visit to cultural and historical sites. The scholarship holders visited the Clock Tower and the Partisan Memorial Cemetery, where they had the opportunity to learn about the rich history of their area. Through discussions about cultural heritage, anti-fascist tradition, and the importance of preserving national monuments, they developed awareness of the importance of protecting cultural heritage and the active role of young people in its preservation. The activity ended with an interactive quiz and a discussion about the city's tourism potential.



In Sarajevo, the Hastor Foundation scholarship recipients, led by mentors Amel Asani, Amar Imamović, and Nejra Čatić, carried out a project called "Stop Peer Violence." Through workshops, educational content, group discussions, and creative activities, students learned about different forms of peer violence, its consequences, and ways to prevent it. Posters, educational leaflets, and messages of support were created to promote the values of tolerance, friendship, and non-violent communication. This activity showed how much young people can contribute to creating a safer and healthier environment for their peers.

In Perin Han near Zenica, under the mentorship of scholarship recipient Sumeja Stabančić, an activity called “Prevention Saves Lives” was carried out. The focus of the activity was on elderly people, who were provided with basic preventive health services. Through measuring blood pressure, blood sugar levels, body temperature, and oxygen saturation, support was provided to elderly citizens, and attention was drawn to the importance of regular health check-ups. This activity had a special humanitarian value because it helped participants develop empathy, a sense of responsibility, and care for older members of the community.

In the settlement of Lišnja near Prnjavor, mentors Nevena Božić and Nedeljka Dragojević organized a visit to the Vučijak Stud Farm. This activity combined education, socializing, and spending time in nature. Students had the opportunity to learn about horses, their care, and the importance of animal protection. Watching horse training and spending time in a natural environment contributed to the development of empathy, responsibility, and awareness of the importance of preserving the natural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Banovići, an educational visit to the Museum of Mining and Railways was organized under the mentorship of Belmin Pleščić, Emina Hašarić, and Amel Selimović. The scholarship holders learned about the history of mining, the development of railway transport, and the importance of mines for the development of the local community. Special attention was given to introducing students to volunteer work actions and the construction of the Brčko-Banovići railway, which further emphasized the importance of collective work, solidarity, and social development throughout history.



All of these activities represent only a part of the valuable work and effort that our scholarship recipients invest for the common good, confirming that educated, responsible, and socially engaged young people are one of the most important forces for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through volunteering, they showed that real change begins with the individual and that significant results can be achieved through joint effort in the fields of education, humanitarian work, preservation of cultural heritage, health promotion, and community development.

Through its mentoring and scholarship program, the Hastor Foundation continuously invests in the development of young people, giving them the opportunity to become leaders of positive change through education and volunteering. The activities carried out during this month are proof that the Hastor Foundation scholarship recipients invest not only in their own education but also in the development of their local communities, promoting the values of solidarity, humanity, knowledge, and social responsibility that leave a long-term positive impact on society.

**Prepared by: Ajna Šido**

**Translated by: Amila Bajrić and Maida Avdić**

We invite you to join our mission and contribute to fulfilling the dreams of promising students and young people who need our help!



## Support us.

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