

## **This is how a rugby competition was named after an Orthodox Saint**



**Each of us knows, in our daily interactions, different locations or institutions that bear the names of Saints. In Bucharest there are St Catherine Street, St Andrew Park, St Panteleimon Hospital (etc.), and across Romania there are various places named after great people who were included in the synaxaria because of their righteous life or martyrdom.**

Less common are cases in which sports competitions are named after saints. However, a personality from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who had a remarkable cultural and religious contribution, being a bridge between two nations, came to lend his name to a rugby cup: Metropolitan Anthimos the Iberian.

The reason why the name of Saint Anthimos was chosen for this cup was explained by the Romanian Rugby Federation (FRR).

“Given that we are two Orthodox peoples for whom the faith is an important pillar in the making, Anthimos the Iberian best represents the connection between the two countries, which he helped just as much,” FRR told the Basilica News Agency.

## **Anthimos the Iberian Cup**

Since 2002, Romanians and Georgians have been competing in the Anthimos the Iberian Cup every year, the advantage being, so far, on the side of the Georgian players who have won twelve matches.

“Anthimos the Iberian Cup is at stake in the direct matches that Romania and Georgia play in the Rugby Europe Championship competition. The cup (...) is won by the winning team, which keeps it for a year and is obliged to put it into play in the next direct match.”

The cup is part of a series of competitions played between certain countries, which is related to the history of matches and sports rivalries.

“Romania and Georgia are the strongest countries in the second echelon, the meetings between Stejari and Lelos, as the players of the two teams are called, always leave room for very strong, physical matches, the sports rivalry being a very big one, the two teams competing for supremacy in Tier 2 (second echelon),” FRF explained.

Precisely to celebrate this rivalry and the beauty of sport, the beauty of rugby that promotes values such as respect, discipline, integrity, fair play, came the idea of this trophy for the two teams to play.

## **The Trophy**

The trophy was made of bronze by a famous Georgian sculptor, former rugby player, Guia Japaridze. The expenses were fully covered by the Georgian supporters. The trophy was presented to the public on April 5, 2002, in Tbilisi, during a ceremony attended by representatives of the rugby teams of Georgia and Romania.

“The name of Anthimos the Iberian is inscribed on the trophy and the name of the winning team is added every year,” FRR officials said.

At this moment, Romanian rugby does not have a patron saint, but it is an idea that can be taken into consideration in the future, the Federation announced.

## **Saint Anthimos the Iberian**

The hierarch was born in Georgia (1650), but he remained in the memory of the

Romanian people through the activity carried out on the territory of our country. He was abbot of Snagov Monastery, Bishop of Vâlcea and Metropolitan of Wallachia.

He stood out both ecclesiastically and in the cultural sphere, being a typographer, engraver, theologian and author of the famous Didache (collection of sermons on the great holidays of the year).

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Thanks to his fruitful printing activity, our Church has been endowed with the main worship books in the Romanian language.

– Patriarch Daniel

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At the insistence of the Ottomans, he was exiled in 1716. He died as a martyr for Christ, being killed by the soldiers who accompanied him into exile.

The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church included Metropolitan Anthimos among the choirs of saints in 1992. His feast day is celebrated on September 27.

The Romanian Patriarchate dedicated the year 2016 to the Holy Hieromartyr Anthimos the Iberian.

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Photography courtesy of FRR

[Source](#)