



Basketball on a Rocking Court

Team sport improves working environment on board.

TEXT: Sirpa Sutinen Photos: Sirpa Sutinen and Timo Väänänen



– **IT'S NICE** to get together with friends outside of work. Social life on board can be limited even during off-hours. You get to know your colleagues better when you play in a team together. A person's playing style tells you a lot about them: if they get angry on the playing field, how they deal with disappointment, and what makes them laugh, explains **Damian Gawlowski**.

The talk is about basketball, and Gawlowski, who is Polish, is working as first mate on Godby Shipping's MS Baltica.

He confesses that he last played basketball in high school, before taking up the sport again on board the ship.

– And I wasn't good at it. But I have one advantage when it comes to play-

ing here on board: I'm taller than most of the people I play with, he says with a smile.

Regulars on the playing field

MS Baltica, which sails from the northern ports of Finland to Antwerpen and flies the Finnish flag, has a multinational crew, as is usual these

Match days fall on weekends when MS Baltica is at sea.

days. The crew consists of both EU nationals and Filipinos. Of the 19 crew members, 7 to 8 are Finnish, depending on work shifts.

Filipino crew members are sure to participate in the multinational crew's basketball practices. Gawlowski and the Finnish chief mate **Jussi Österman** are regular players, too.

However, a few simultaneously occurring conditions are needed for a basketball match to happen: free time, reasonably good weather, and enough space on the middle deck. Match days fall on weekends when the ship is at sea. There is naturally no time for playing on port days. The court on the middle deck is half outdoors.

The basket, too, is the Filipino crew's handiwork, welding and painting included. The idea of regular basketball matches came from a Filipino mate a few years ago.



Basketball as a national sport

– At home, basketball is played weekly with friends and neighbours, says the ship's Filipino cook **Samuel Igao**, pointing out that playing in a team is especially fun.

Able seaman **Rolando Calderon** explains that basketball is an important sport in the Philippines. He plays basketball on holidays at home on a weekly basis and argues that the game could be called the national sport of the Philippines.

– Basketball requires speed and dynamism. You have to run and jump. A couple of hours' play is good exercise.

Calderon is such a skilled player that we have nicknamed him Spider - even outside the court, says Jussi Österman.

Playing around with the rules

The small teams who play on the unsteady court on the ship's deck have developed their own rules to the

Basketball requires speed and dynamism. You have to run and jump.

game. Eight players are required for a match, and both teams play into the same basket.

– It's not a beautiful game, but playing is a lot of fun in itself. Jokes fly and there are high-fives aplenty. It's really the best entertainment on offer on board, says Österman.

He too admits that basketball is not quite his sport.

– Last time I played was when I was still in school. All sports are good for exercise, though. Skipper **Timo Väänänen** stands in on the bridge during the matches, Österman says with thanks.



Damien Gawlowski esitteli uutta kuntosalia

Uusi kuntosali ahkerassa käytössä

VUOSI SITTEN MARRASKUUSSA MS Baltican yliperämiehenä aloittanut Jussi Österman arvostaa varustamon tarjoamia mahdollisuuksia miehistön kunnon ylläpitämiseen työvuorojen mittaan laivalla. Vuosi sitten Suomen lipun alle siirtyneen MS Baltican omistaja, ahvenanmaalaisvarustamo Godby Shipping panostaa miehistön hyvinvointiin ja liikuntamahdollisuuksiin.

Viime kesänä laiva sai uuden kuntosalin. Entisestä neuvottelutilasta lohkaistiin puolet kuntolaitteille.

– Saatiin kuusi uutta laitetta, käsipainoja ja muuta tilpehööriä. Ennen nosteltiin sakkelpainoja ahtaassa hytissä. Nyt kuntosalilla on käynyt heitäkin, jotka eivät ennen ole kuntosalilla käyneet, kertoo Österman.

Ahkeralle liikkujalle kuntosali laivalla antaa harjoitteluun jatkuvuuden.

– Jos treenaa maissa eikä laivalla ole mahdollisuutta treenata, on vaikea taas aloittaa uudestaan, kun pääsee vapaalle. Onhan se aika ylellistä, että salille on matkaa viitisen metriä. Maissa matka kuntosalille lasketaan kilometreissä. Sitä paitsi on kiva treenata yhdessä muiden kanssa.

Österman oli mukana Mepan kuntoprojektissa viime vuonna.

– Viisi kuukautta ja 20 kiloa, kertoo hän tyytyväisenä.

Ensimmäinen perämies Damian Gawlowski on hänkin innokas kuntosali käyttäjä. Hän kertoo käyvänsä salilla mahdollisimman usein.

– Uusi kuntosali motivoi monia kuntoilemaan entistä enemmän. ✦