

Gabriella Kotsis



Inducted as a coach

Gabriella Kotsis excelled both on and off the volleyball court for her native Hungary, but it was on the sidelines that she will best be remembered. Kotsis was a pioneering female volleyball coach in Hungary, and was the first female head coach to lead volleyball teams to multiple Olympic Games. She is the only female to lead teams to three Olympics as a head coach.

Kotsis' volleyball career dates back to the 1950s when she played for the national team of Hungary at the 1950 European Championship in Sofia, Bulgaria, and the 1955 European Championship in Bucharest, Romania. She also played in the first women's FIVB World Championship in 1952 in Moscow, leading Hungary to a sixth-place finish.

After her international playing career ended, Kotsis brought the same intensity she had on the court to the sidelines and began a long, successful coaching career. Kotsis' road to success began in 1971, as Hungary finished fifth at the European Championship, and continued as Kotsis made her first Olympic appearance the following year in Munich. Kotsis' squad placed fifth at the 1972 Olympic Games, but she would get another chance for a medal four years later in Montreal.

After a second-place finish at the 1975 European Championship in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, expectations for an Olympic medal in Montreal were high. However, Hungary lost in the bronze-medal match to Korea. Hungary remained a contender over the next four years, finishing third at the 1977 European Championships in Finland and fourth at the 1979 European Championship in France. Hungary put itself again in a position to win an Olympic medal. With several countries boycotting the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, the chances looked even better. But once again, Kotsis' Hungarian team was denied a medal, as it posted a fourth-place finish as Bulgaria rallied back from a 2-1 deficient to win in the Bronze-Medal match.

Kotsis would not get back to the Olympic stage, but she continued to coach the national team with Hungary winning Bronze medals at the 1981 and 1983 European Championships in Bulgaria and East Germany, respectively. Kotsis' last European Championship appearance came in 1985 the team posting a ninth-place finish.