

## **JEWELRY IN SPORTS**

Shipai M. K., student

Bobrov N. D., student

Scientific supervisor – Lichevskaya S. P., senior lecturer

English language department №1

Belarusian National University of Technology

Minsk, Republic of Belarus

Jewelry plays an important role in sport, namely in the awarding of prizes. Rings are used in many sports to recognize outstanding achievements and victories. Various sports have a tradition of awarding championship rings to players, teams and coaches. Examples include the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB, MLS and WNBA. Originally, athletes were rewarded with other memorabilia such as lapel pins, engraved pocket watches or watch fobs.

The concept of the championship ring was born out of a desire to create a tangible reminder of the victory for each player. And it was the management of the New York Giants, in partnership with the Dieges & Clust jewelry company, who made this innovation possible after winning the 1922 MLB World Series. The world then saw the rings in the NBA, where they were awarded to the Philadelphia Warriors team that won the first NBA Finals in 1947. And in 1967 to the Green Bay Packers of the NFL, who had won the Super Bowl since 1967. In the NHL, Stanley Cup rings were first awarded in 1893, when the hockey club Montreal won the Stanley Cup. However, this was an isolated incident and the practice was not adopted in hockey until much later. In 2025, championship rings have become an integral part of every team's triumph in the NBA, NFL, NHL, MLB, etc. Their presentation is the culmination of the season, the opening of a new one, the crowning of victory and the immortalization of the names of champions in the history of sport [1].

Let's take a look at the history of changing designs and innovations in rings, using a league like the NBA as an example.

The Philadelphia Warriors' 1922 championship ring has not survived because at the time it was considered a trinket, not an award.

The earliest ring to survive is a replica of the Minneapolis Lakers' 1949 championship ring. The ring is decorated with intricate deep carv-

ings showing the team name and the year of the championship and weighs about 70 grams. Its base is made of yellow or white gold and precious stones such as sapphires and diamonds, which symbolize the team's colours.

In 2019, the Toronto Raptors beat the Philadelphia 76ers in the final seconds to claim the most expensive ring in NBA history. It's worth around \$100,000. The ring is unique in that it is made of yellow gold and weighs approximately 130 grams. The ring is adorned with more than 650 diamonds, totaling 14 carats. At the center of the ring is a massive 1.25 carat diamond. Its brilliance is accentuated by 16 genuine rubies symbolizing the team's play-off victories. The design pays homage to the city of Toronto. The top of the ring features a panoramic view of Toronto, including the Scotiabank Arena, set with diamonds. A total of 74 diamonds around the ring symbolize the team's historic season wins. Inside the ring is a maple leaf set with bright rubies, symbolizing Canada, and six round diamonds, symbolizing the Sixers, Toronto's affectionate nickname [2].

One of the most famous rings in the NBA is the 2000 Team Leakers ring. Given by Lakers player Kobe Bryant to his father Joe Bryant, the ring was originally put up for sale by his parents in 2013 and then sold for \$173,000. After Kobe Bryant's death in 2025, the owner who bought the ring in 2013 put it back on the auction block where it became the most expensive NBA ring ever sold at Goldin Auctions for a record \$927,000.

The ring was made of gold and set with 40 diamonds, including five larger round diamonds on each side. On the front of the ring, the inscription "LAKERS" is clearly visible in purple enamel, surrounded by the relief inscription "WORLD CHAMPIONS". One side of the ring features the NBA league logo with "BRAYANT" at the top and his jersey number "8" at the bottom.

There are also banners showing the Lakers' regular season record (67 wins and 15 losses) and their playoff record (15-8). On the back is a basketball ring with a diamond symbolizing a basketball, the year of issue "2000" and the phrase "BLING BLING" [3].

It should be noted, that the record for most championship rings in the NBA belongs to legendary basketball player Bill Russell. He had 11 championship rings with the Boston Celtics from 1957 to 1969 [4].

The technological component of a 1947 or 1949 ring is not much different from the usual trinkets sold today. But, the same can't be said for the Boston Celtics 2024 championship ring. The 2024 NBA Championship ring created for the Boston Celtics is a true work of art. It features 18 emerald-cut diamonds to symbolize the team's 18 championship titles, as well as 30 diamonds to represent the 30 seasons spent at TD Garden Arena. It is also engraved with 80 diamonds in the word "Champions", symbolizing the total number of wins in a season. Inside the ring is a piece of the famous TD Garden floor, engraved with the final game score and player numbers.

The Boston Celtics ring is the first ever to feature an NFC chip embedded inside the ring. This chip is located inside the ring, in the area where a piece of the arena floor is located. When the wearer of the ring brings a smartphone to this area, the NFC chip is activated, triggering an exclusive video. There are videos that tell the story behind the creation of the ring, including the design and manufacturing process. This innovation was developed in collaboration with Jason of Beverly Hills, a company that specializes in creating unique jewelry [5].

The process of creating a championship ring involves several stages:

1. The process of creating championship rings begins with the development of a unique design. Sketches are made and approved before moving on to the next stage.

2. Only the highest quality materials are used to create the ring. They are chosen for their purity, cut and luster.

3. Once the design is approved, an accurate 3D model of the ring is created. This allows each element of the ring to be visualized in detail and any necessary adjustments to be made before production begins.

4. The 3D model is used to create a wax mould, which is then used to cast the metal. Molten metal is poured into the mould, which is then cooled and the ring blank is removed.

5. The blank is then hand finished, grinding, polishing and removing unnecessary parts to give the ring its perfect shape.

6. During the inlay stage, the ring is decorated with precious stones. Each stone is set by hand into pre-prepared settings to ensure maximum setting and brilliance. Different inlay techniques are used to emphasize the design and make the ring unique.

7. The inside or outside of the ring is then engraved using laser technology or by hand. This can be the player's name, number, date of victory, etc. The finished ring undergoes a thorough quality control process.

8. All details are checked: stone setting, engraving quality, polishing and overall appearance. Only after approval is the ring released to the team and players [6].

By analyzing the history of championship rings, from early examples like the 1949 Minneapolis Lakers ring to modern masterpieces like the 2024 Boston Celtics ring, we can trace how their design and manufacturing techniques have changed. Initially, rings were simple and functional, with minimal use of precious materials, but over time they evolved into elaborate pieces of jewelry packed with symbolism and innovation. Modern rings, such as the 2019 Toronto Raptors ring or the 2024 Boston Celtics ring, showcase not only luxury and attention to detail, but also the integration of advanced technologies, such as NFC chips, which add interactivity and uniqueness.

## References

1. The Rich Tradition of Championship Sports Rings: A Journey Through History / Khin Corner. – URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/> (date of access: 12.02.2025).

2. One of the most monumental championship rings in sports history / Baron Rings / – URL: <https://baronrings.com/the-concept-behind-the-toronto-raptors-championship-ring/> (date of access: 14.02.2025).

3. Kobe Bryant's 2000 NBA Championship Ring Is Being Auctioned / Ishaan Bhattacharya / – URL: <https://fadeawayworld.net/kobe-bryant-2000-nba-championship-ring-auctioned> (date of access: 13.02.2025)

4. Bill Russell / Bethlehem Shoals / – URL: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bill-Russell> (date of access: 17.02.2025).

5. The Hidden Meanings Inside the *Boston Celtics*' New 15-Carat Championship Ring / Grant Mobley / – URL: <https://www.naturaldiamonds.com/culture-and-style/boston-celtics-2024-championship-ring/> (date of access: 10.02.2025).

6. The Making of 2024 Boston Celtics NBA Championship Ring / Jason of BH/ – URL: <https://youtu.be/xtsS1eXMfAU?si=yH58gR-DsfzczIxW> (date of access: 19.02.2025).