

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES OF ACADEMIC SPORT IN RZESZOW PROVINCE IN THE YEARS 1955–1989

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Abstract:

The following article is devoted to a presentation of organisational structures of academic sport in Rzeszow Province in the years 1955–1989. The final censorship of the article does not require the substantiation, but the initial one is connected with the creation of Teacher Training College in Rzeszow, being a counterpart for school of higher vocational education. Regular physical education classes in full-time students' society in Rzeszow are dated 1955. One of the pillars of physical culture in academia, including Rzeszow and Rzeszow Province, is academic sport. Provided that physical education in organised forms was and partly still is an obligatory didactic subject included in academic curriculum and syllabus, the choice of practising sports is entirely left to particular students.

INTRODUCTION

The Academic Sports Association (AZS) is a sports organization functioning in Poland, gathering students and workers of academic institutions. The main aims of AZS is the development of physical culture, the promotion of healthy lifestyle the upbringing of the youth in atmosphere of sport and physical activity.

AZS was established in 1908 in Krakow, initiated by Walery Goetel¹. The gathering of academic youth, that took place on 15th May 1909 in Collegium Novum of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (UJ), decided to form the Academic Sports Association, which was approved by Austria-Hungary authorities. Waclaw Majewski, a medical student of the Jagiellonian University, became the first chairperson. The Academic Sports Association after WWI became the nationwide organisation operating generally at all universities. In 1949 its name was changed to Academic Sports Grouping, but in 1957 the initial name has been restored².



Photo 1. Walery Goetel podczas badań geologicznych w Tatrach; Source: www.agh.edu.pl

¹ Walery Goetel (1889-1972): geologist, professor of AGH University of Science and Technology, a member of the Polish Academy of Science.

² http://z-ne.pl/t,haslo,24,akademicki_zwiazek_sportowy.html

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF ACADEMIC SPORTS IN RZESZOW PROVINCE

In the history of AZS³ in Rzeszow two essential periods can be distinguished. The initial period of activity is connected with the creation of the first academic institution in city's and province's history - the Engineering College. However, the organizational basis of academic sports life were formed two years earlier (in 1961) by Stanisława Kot M.A. in the then Teacher Training College. Therefore, the beginning of AZS activity in Rzeszow in academic environment should be dated on 14th May 1963, when on the first general meeting the club was founded with Kazimierz Ocoś - many-year-long vice-chancellor and a professor of present Rzeszow University of Technology - as its first chairman⁴. It should be mentioned that Teacher Training College was a part of the educational system, not of higher education.

The second period of AZS activity in Rzeszow is the period of creating the College of Education and founding the collegiate club AZS WSP. In this way at the beginning of 1966 three collegiate clubs already existed in Rzeszow: in Teacher Training College, Engineering College as well as in the College of Education, which led consequently to establishing the Community Board of AZS in Rzeszow.

The first AZS in Rzeszow was created in 1963 in the Engineering College and the Teacher Training College. Two years later the club in the College of Education was established as well as the Community Board. As a result of the Teacher Training College closure and establishing the subsidiary of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, a club in this university was created in 1969⁵.

Tab. 1. The number of activists and trainers of AZS

Year	Activists	Trainers	Instructors
1967*	15	2	4
1968	16	3	5
1969	19	3	6
1970	29	3	8

Source: *40 lat Klubu Uczelnianego AZS Politechniki Rzeszowskiej 1963–2003*, Rzeszow 2003.

*No data for the years 1963–1966.

Tab. 2. Sport sections of AZS

No.	Name of section	1967*	1968	1969	1970
1	Basketball F	47	48	42	46
2	Basketball M	34	39	27	18
3	Volleyball F	-	31	20	24
4	Volleyball M	26	27	18	14
5	Handball F	-	-	15	-
6	Handball M	23	28	18	-
7	Swimming	50	45	49	33
8	Table tennis	10	-	-	-
Total:		192	208	189	150

Source: the same as tab. 1.

*No data for the years 1963–1966.

The Board consisted of: Kazimierz Ocoś (later vice-chancellor of Rzeszow University of Technology) – the chairman as well as Roman Biliński, Augustyn Cwanek, Stanisław Grzesik, Jerzy Januszewski, Maria Ordyna, Tomasz Pisuliński, Adam Sadecki, Zdzisław

³ The University Club AZS has been and is the basic organisational unit of the Academic Sports Association as a registered association, operating on the basis of an act of 1989 - the Law on Associations.

⁴ The Board of Academic Sports Association. *Akademicki Przegląd Sportowy*, nr 1, Warszawa 2008, s. 1.

⁵ The Board of Academic Sports Association. *Sprawozdanie z działalności w latach 1969–1972*, Warsaw 1972, p. 47.

Teleszyński, Bolesław Tokarski, Wojciech Zimek and others. The activity in this period was connected with execution of tasks concerning popularization of sport among academic youth, organizing Spartakiads and contests widely available for the whole academic environment⁶.

Tab. 3. Number of organized sport events

No.	Organizer	1967*	1968	1969	1970
1	Collegiate Clubs	112	173	345	427
2	Environment	50	22	51	64
Total:		162	195	396	491

Source: the same as tab. 1.

*No data for the years 1963–1966.

By analysing the data provided in tables 1–3 it can be concluded that especially the first period of the Collegiate Club of AZS in Rzeszow University of Technology's activity (1967–1970) was characterised by high dynamics in almost all fields.

Initially, club and environmental structures of AZS in the whole Poland, including Rzeszow, operated on the basis of Minister of Higher Education's decree of 17th March 1960 concerning student organizations, being an administrative act to the then Act of Higher Education of 1958. The statutes of the Association were approved by the mentioned minister. He also made collegiate clubs of AZS incorporated and supervised the Association. This formula was in force in 1970s as well, which was reminded to province governors by the director of Social-Administrative Department of Interior Ministry in the letter dated on 8th January 1976⁷.

After the introduction of martial law (1981-1989), AZS in Rzeszow, like in the rest of Poland, operated on the basis of anti-democratic, arbitrary law of associations, introduced as far as 1932 and was encompassed by discretionary registration in administrative procedure done by state authorities. Superior supervision over its activity was held by the Interior Ministry.

When the organisational structures of AZS in Rzeszow were created, its statutes of 1965 were in force. According to these statutes three levels of organisational structure of AZS can be distinguished: the highest (main authorities of AZS), the middle (community authorities) and the lowest one (authorities of sports clubs - collegiate, intercollegiate, specialised). All AZS authorities are social, elected from members of AZS during a general meeting or delegates' conference.

The highest authority of AZS was National AZS Delegates Convention, called every two years. It could be called on extraordinary basis if 1/3 of AZS clubs, supervising authorities or the Main Board of AZS required that. In the National Convention delegates from all students' environments took part. National Delegates Convention decided on the most important issues concerning the activity of the Academic Sports Association, in particular it defined general politics of students' sports movement, passed the statutes or their amendments, elected AZS authorities, that is the Board, Main Audit Comitee and Main Arbitration by Fellow Members.

The Main Board was in charge in the period between national delegates conventions. It consisted of a chairperson, two vice-chairpersons, a secretary, a treasurer and seventeen members and chairpersons of the community boards and collegiate sports clubs from single-collegiate environments. The Main Board decided on every important issue concerning the

⁶ 40 lat Klubu Uczelnianego AZS Politechniki Rzeszowskiej 1963–2003, Rzeszow 2003.

⁷ Journal of Laws No. 17, item 98. APR. Compilation of files of Province Office in Rzeszow No. 1258. Associations of physical culture and tourism 1976, sign. 1262, k. 2–3.

everyday activity of the Association, for instance: it approved annual budget, sports events schedule, investment plans. One of important competences of the Main Board was to assess the unanimity of the Association activity with resolutions made by delegates convention of AZS as well as statutes. The Main Board met quarterly. It appointed social commissions that had opinionative tasks. The Commission consisted of a chairperson, a secretary, two vice-chairpersons, a treasurer, four members (altogether: 9 members). Its competence included, among others, managing the funds and possessions of AZS, approval of work plans and balances of particular environments, watching over as well as controlling the work of environmental boards and clubs of AZS, suspension, changing and repealing (to further consideration) community boards' and club boards' resolutions (if they are unanimous with the basic rules of AZS activity), suspending members and whole boards of AZS in lower levels.

A Community Board of AZS was created in the multi-college environment. In case of the only one college in the environment, club of this college had powers of a Community Board. A Community Board consisted of a chairperson, two vice-chairpersons, a secretary, 5–10 members and chairpersons of all AZS sports clubs in a given environment. The term of a Community Board lasted two years. The basic task of a Community Board was to lead the activity of AZS and organising sports life of academic youth in the environment. Community Board's tasks of utmost importance included: representing AZS outside, organising various forms of sport life in the environment, caring, controlling and coordinating the work of sport clubs, managing the possessing of AZS, etc. Among others, a Community Board (not the Committee) had the right to suspense, change or repeal for further consideration the decisions of Club Boards. Meetings of Community Board should have taken place once every two months. The Committee of AZS Community Board was an executive organ and was elected from its members.

The Committee of Community Board consisted of a chairperson, two vice-chairpersons, a secretary, a treasurer and from 2 to 4 members. It operated on behalf of the Community Board, executing its decisions.

In the Academic Sports Association existed the Main Audit Committee⁸ (chosen by the National AZS Delegates Convention) and community audit committees (chosen by community AZS delegates conference).

An Community Audit Committee consisted of 5–9 members. Its activity included all sports clubs of AZS (collegiate, intercollegiate and specialist). A Community Audit Committee presented the results of a control to the Community Board as well as on reporting-electing meeting of a given club.

Moreover, there existed Main Arbitration by Fellow Members, which included 3–5 members elected by the National AZS Delegates Convention and community arbitration by fellow members (3–5 members) that were chosen by community AZS delegates conferences. The arbitration investigated the disagreements between members of AZS^{9*}.

⁸ Main Audit Committee (GKR) consisted of eleven members and three deputies. The basic competence of GKR was the right to conduct controls in all instances of AZS as well as suspending whole community audit committees or their particular members in case of concluding anomalies in member's actions. GKR submitted the results of a control with the conclusions to the Main Board of AZS, which would make appropriate decisions on their basis.

⁹ Akademicki Przegląd Sportowy, Warszawa 1965, pp. 7–29.

* The regulations of collegiate AZS sports club of 1965 indicate that higher instance of AZS, college authorities and state authorities could seriously interfere in the activity of basic structures of AZS, including the right to annul the resolutions and to suspend statutory authorities of the Association. The regulations are the reflection of the then atmosphere of dislike, mistrust and suspicion of the authorities towards the academic environment in Poland.

POLITICAL CONTROL OVER ACADEMIC SPORT IN RZESZOW PROVINCE IN THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC PERIOD UNTIL 1989

In this place fundamental issue should be recalled. All legally operating in People's Republic of Poland social organizations, including the sports and teenage ones, together with AZS, were under the political control of the Polish United Workers' Party's (PUWP) instance and organizations as well as under pressure from the security organ.

In Rzeszow (on PUWP Central Committee's level) the matter of physical culture in colleges was dealt by PUWP Central Committee's secretaries of education, propaganda, organization and social issues. Specifically, in the most extended version of "nomenklatura" posts of 1973 we read that the posts concern also chairpersons of sports associations (including collegiate clubs of particular colleges) as well as the chairperson of AZS Community Board in Rzeszow. This register of posts, although more general, existed also in 1980s, with the last one created in 1989, even though at that time, during 10th Plenary Meeting of PUWP Central Committee in the middle of January 1989, shortly before the Polish Round Table talks, it was decided to narrow the nomenklatura system to strategic posts in the country. A conclusion can be drawn that for party authorities all posts in Rzeszow, even the second-rate ones, were of "strategic" character¹⁰.

The Community Board of AZS in Rzeszow submitted the first report for PUWP Central Committee of the period between 14th May 1963 (the date of the first general meeting of the Collegiate Club of AZS in the Engineering College) and 15th February 1967. At the beginning of 1967 in the academic environment of Rzeszow 510 members of AZS and 10 sections of professional sport were noted (in 1967 the section of athletics was created). Academic sportsmen complained about the lack of interest in their activity from local press, especially from "Nowiny Rzeszowskie" (the official organ of PUWP Central Committee). Also district sports associations did not show signs of interest in AZS work. On the other hand, following organizations were helpful: the Urban Physical Culture and Sport Committee in Rzeszow as well as military sports clubs "Bieszczady" and "Walter". In the first period of academic sport activity in Rzeszow, the structures of AZS practically had almost no full-time workers. Academic society of Rzeszow at that time took part in the Spartakiad of millennium, winning the National Badge of Physical Fitness¹¹.

Organizational state of Rzeszow AZS improved in 1971, although at the beginning of 1970s it still had too little impact on students in Rzeszow at large. Four collegiate clubs operated (with 32 sport sections), where 162 students exercised. Despite this statistics, it was stated that *academic sport, after a few years of development, began to generally retreat*. There were plans that the Physical Culture and Sport Committee in Rzeszow would collectively with the Main Board of AZS secure the financial help for the Community Board of AZS as well as formulate prospective plan of professional sport development in academic environment of Rzeszow. Critical remarks of the state of academic environment's physical activity in Rzeszow repeated in 1973. It was lamented that instead of supporting popular events like Spartakiads, AZS focused on narrow feat, duplicating the tasks of collegiate studies of physical education¹².

In 1974, probably as a result of increased influence on academic environment by increasing the number of compulsory physical education hours, a number of Rzeszow AZS members rose to 2051 (in four collegiate clubs). It was calculated that AZS united at that time about 1/3 of full-time students in the city. In popular sport events participated, if the official

¹⁰APR. KW PZPR, sign. 13 071, k. 121; sign. 13 072, *passim*.

¹¹APR. KW PZPR. Propaganda and Education Department. Reports of sport and tourist organizations' activity 1966–1967, sign. 11 158, k. 228–233.

¹² APR. KW PZPR. Propaganda and Education Department. Materials concerning physical culture, sport and tourism 1971–1974, sign. 11 156, k. 34–35, 59, 109.

statistics are credible, 3 thousands of students. The collegiate clubs of AZS would prefer universal sport, while community authorities of the Association - competitive sports¹³.

General collapse of sports activity in Rzeszow took place in autumn 1981 against general socio-economic situation of the country. It was stated then that regression of the Association of Physical Culture Promotion and AZS occurred, what is more, recreated Polish Students' Association denied the need of students' sport activity. Predecessor of Polish Students' Association, Socialist Polish Students' Association, transformed at the height of revindication demands of 1980/81, in practice was supposed to indoctrinate and supervise AZS on the behalf of PUWP, *however this agreement was not executed in practice*. In the then "deficit economy" the following was noted: *There is no chance of buying tracksuits. Complete tragedy with sneakers*. However, in comparison with the period before crisis, the Community Board of AZS in Rzeszow, housed in rooms of Rzeszow University of Technology, employed four full-time workers (incumbent vice-president, a head accountant, a manager of the office as well as basketball coach and female basketball of AZS was then in second national league, similarly the table tennis section). Moreover, 10 people were employed part-time (8 coaches, a cashier and a cleaner)¹⁴.

In the light of query in archive resources of National Archives in Rzeszow, in compilation of the Province Committee of PUWP we learn some interesting information about range and forms of political custody over academic sports movement. The Province Committee of PUWP was interested in AZS activity with various intensity. Initially, according to the Youth Committee of PUWP Central Committee's guidelines of 1967, AZS was treated marginally, paying incomparably more attention to (also in higher education's sports activity) organizations such as Socialist Youth Association, Rural Youth Association and Polish Students' Association. Nonetheless, at the beginning of 1968 a control in Rzeszow AZS was planned, in the light of so-called educational work in sport. Yet, there are no minutes concerning the control preserved¹⁵.

From preserved acts we learn that on 9th September 1968, that is a half year after March events, the Province Board of Socialist Youth Association sent a lengthy letter to the Province Committee of PUWP. From the letter it follows that this "extension" of PUWP wanted to have political control over the whole sports activity in Rzeszow Province, including AZS. Towards the end of 1960s Polish Students' Association as well, perceived as social-livelihood organization, a "trade union" of students, together with AZS began to organize sport-recreational events for students, also referee's courses in athletics, volleyball and basketball, mainly for the College of Education's students¹⁶.

In 1976, for instance, it was griped that *Socialist Polish Students' Association as well as AZS inadequately care about mass sport development*. There were complaints about too little interest of collegiate authorities in students' physical culture. However, non-resident faculty of Agricultural University in Rzeszow was given as an positive example¹⁷.

In the same year (1976) province instance of PUWP in Rzeszow concluded that academic physical culture did not achieve greater successes because of insufficient sport base. In that time Province Committee of PUWP was unambiguous for integration of School Sports

¹³ APR. KW PZPR, sign. 11 392, k. 4, 8–9.

¹⁴ APR. KW PZPR. Political-organizational Department. Physical culture and tourism development committee. Minutes of 1981–1982 sessions, sign. 10 786, c. 1–2, 36–37, 41 (minute of 20th October 1981 committee's session).

¹⁵ KW PZPR. Propaganda and Education Department. Materials of sport and tourism meeting 1966, 1968–1969, 1971–1974, sign. 10 944, k. 3.

¹⁶ APR. KW PZPR. Organizational Department. Information about popularization of sport and tourism 1967–1968, sign. 9828, k. 24–27, 32, 34, 37, 65.

¹⁷ APR. KW PZPR. Idea-Educational Work Department. Information concerning higher education 1975–1978, sign. 11 394, k. 42.

Association (SZS) and AZS, proposing the creation of school-academic environmental sports club. In that time in Rzeszow existed the co-ordination council of SZS-AZS¹⁸.

It appears that after the introduction of martial law, in connection with the then proclaimed politics of so-called normalization, political control over sports organization strengthened, including AZS in all Rzeszow colleges. In June 1982 the analysis of Association's activity was about to be carried out. The control took place on 30th June 1982. The then chairman of the Community Board of AZS in Rzeszow Jan Gruszecki provided information. His predecessor in 1981–1982, Leszek Wójtowicz, was then a full-time officer of Province Committee of PUWP in Rzeszow. Sport Committee of PUWP Province Committee held another conference concerning academic sport on 2nd September 1982 which slogan was "Raising by sport", meeting with representatives of the Community Board of AZS. Editorial staff of "Nowiny" was ordered to start a regular column about academic sport in Rzeszow¹⁹.

In connection with militarization of many areas of social life, the creation of shooting section by Community Board of AZS in Rzeszow was proposed. Simultaneously, AZS was still treated marginally. In the sport committee of PUWP Province Committee in Rzeszow there was no permanent representative of AZS in 1980s. At the same time, the period directly after the introduction of martial law was the period of the biggest, the most meticulous custody over the issues of academic sport in Rzeszow²⁰.

In relation to AZS there were no restrictions to matters of general nature. In April 1967 party meeting concerning the development of basketball in the city took place in Rzeszow. Specifically, the basketball section of the oldest Rzeszow club "Resovia" was the subject of the meeting. It was proposed that student basketball players would not have to, according to the then ministerial regulations, represent exclusively AZS colours. There were voices that this issue should be solved amicably by business contacts between the authorities of "Resovia" and AZS²¹.

Tab. 4. Organizational state of AZS Rzeszów on 30th August 1982

Name of sport section	Number of members
basketball F	19
basketball M	37
table tennis F and M	30
handball F	14
handball M	87
volleyball F	30
volleyball M	80

Source: APR. KW PZPR, sign. 10 786, k. 62.

Explanation: F – Female

M - Male

From table 4 it can be concluded that in "crisis" 1982 in sports sections of Rzeszow AZS 297 students actively did sports, with following sections being the most popular: handball as quick "contact" game as well as volleyball. Males showed much more interest in sport than female students. The sections were led by 10 coaches (one full-time and 9 part-time).

CONCLUSION

¹⁸ APR. KW PZPR, sign. 11 392, k. 43–44.

¹⁹ APR. KW PZPR. Political-organizational Department. Physical culture and tourism development committee. Minutes of 1981–1982 meetings, sign. 10 786, k. 30–31, 38.

²⁰ APR. KW PZPR. Political-organizational Department. Physical culture, sport and tourism development committee 1982–1983, sign. 10 787, k. 2, 3, 16.

²¹ APR. KW PZPR. Propaganda and Education Department. Materials concerning physical culture, sport and tourism 1964–1970, sign. 11 155, k. 59–61.

An important element of general physical culture of students, done basically in entirely voluntary way, aiming at competition or fulfilling one's health needs is sport.

Sport is understood at various levels, from popular, cheap and widely available forms of recreation like running, tennis or swimming, to major feats, quite often on professional basis. It is known that since 1909 the organiser of sports life on Polish ground has been AZS. Academic sports movement reached Poland relatively late, not until 1963. This delay was undoubtedly connected with the fact that until 1955 (the creation of earlier mentioned Teacher Training College) Rzeszow had not been present on collegiate map of Poland. Relatively quickly there were generated not only collegiate structures of Association, but also community and extramural structures (in 1965). In the period of People's Republic of Poland, despite mentioned trials of political pressure, AZS was for student environment the only quite apolitical organization, attracting even students indifferent to sport and recreation issues on the regular basis.

Until 1989 AZS was the only organization of academic sport, not only in Rzeszow, but on a country scale. It was noted that in 1973–1980 Socialist Polish Students' Association took part in organization of recreational events in academic environment, considering itself (undoubtedly inspired by political factors) the organization covering all aspects of students' life. Until 1973 and after 1981 Polish Students' Association practically did not deal with this field, reducing its interest to social-livelihood and cultural spheres of students' life. Until 1989 sport and recreation of higher education workers were taken care by instances of Polish Teachers' Union. Whereas "Solidarność" with its collegiate institutional committees, both in 1980–1981 and after 1989, took care more of general issues than recreational ones.