

**Boxing section in Company Sport's Club
„Stal” Stalowa Wola in 1939-1977**

Summary

The interwar period was a time of particularly intensive development in many areas of social, cultural, artistic and sports life. In early development of Stalowa Wola, a city which was built according to the most modern urban concepts, devoid of the typical "old town" (buildings from the past epochs), sports facilities have not been forgotten. Architect Bronisław Rudziński marked the place to build a sports field in his architectural development plan, which was located on the street leading to the main gate of Zakłady Południowe. The pitch with its utility pavilion was put into use in 1939 and it was also the central office of the "Stalowa Wola" Sports Club, which was established in the autumn of 1938. The Sports Club provided the possibility of fair entertainment in leisure time. Although there were black clouds over Poland, people just wanted to live normally, work, play, and attend football matches. Except for the football and tennis sections, a boxing section was established in 1939 by one of the employees of the "Zakłady Południowe" – Bernard Śmiałek. This former boxer from Silesia laid the foundation of the future achievements in Stalowa Wola boxing.

The huge development of the city, Zakłady Południowe and local sport was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. The Nazi occupation prevented the club from legally operating, and practicing sports in organized forms was treated almost like a crime. It was even punished by death penalty. Young boys, who belonged to sports sections before the war, changed stoppers and boxing gloves to rifles.

The success of Stalowa Wola boxing was born on the wave of euphoria, which had appeared after the European Championships in Warsaw in 1953. Feliks Stamm's "Polish boxing school" raised this discipline to the heights of the sports hierarchy of Polish sport. In Tokyo, at the Olympic Games in 1964, Józef Grudzień, Jerzy Kulej and Marian Kasprzyk in less than 45 minutes won three Olympic gold medals for Poland! Millions of countrymen listened to the radio report. All of these great masters often failed fighting in Stalowa Wola ring with the boys from "Stal". Such names as Lucjan Trela, Stanisław Szado, Henryk Serwan, Kazimierz Gawlas, Roman Gotfryd and many others, which readers will find on the pages of this publication, have been at the top of the national ring for the next several years. Many of them were very successful in the youth and senior national sports representation of Poland, they won masterful sashes and the titles of national

champions. For a decade the Stalowa Wola ring was called "enchanted" or was called "impregnable fortress".

The boxers from Stalowa Wola achieved a lot, and the overall balance of their achievements is impressive and it is still a distinguishing feature of Stalowa Wola. For twelve seasons, they represented the colors of Stalowa Wola in the first league. The club's players were many times representatives of the national team, they were participants of the European Youth Championships in Miskolc and European Championships five times (Moscow, Rome, Madrid, Belgrade, Katowice) and the Olympic Games in Mexico (1968). As a team, they won the title of vice-champion of Poland twice. They won international boxing tournaments such as: "Black Diamonds", "Gryf Szczeciński", "Golden Boat". Individually, as boxers of ZKS "Stal" Stalowa Wola at the Polish championship, they won: 13 bronze medals, 5 silver and 7 gold. Today, few people know that Lucjan Trela is the record holder in the number of starts in the Polish Championships. Boxing in Stalowa Wola was very popular and attracted crowds of fans. Boxing connected generations, integrated, stimulated passion for sports among young people, built a bond between the city and society.

The way of financing sport in Polish fork appeared to be a very important aspect as well. Huta Stalowa Wola, as one of the largest industrial centers in Poland, associated with heavy and defense industry, called by the residents "mother-breadwinner", employing over 21,000 workers in the greatest boom. employees, were extremely related to the development of sport in the city that financially subsidizes the activities of ZKS "Stal" Stalowa Wola. The analyzed archival sources concerning the submitted financial statements on the activities of ZKS "Stal" Stalowa Wola for 1960-1961, 1966-1968, 1975-1977 show that Huta Stalowa Wola subsidized ZKS "Stal" Stalowa Wola at the level of approx. 55% of the overall budget. If the subsidies have been added up by the HSW Works Council, the total amount of subsidies granted for the functioning of the club would oscillate around 60%. Despite the fact that in the People's Republic of Poland there was an organizational model of sport management similar to the Soviet model, where one can use the thesis about the existence of the "state amateur" system, on the example of the achieved international and Olympic successes, sport in Poland enjoyed great popularity and it determined a high level of training.

Stalowa Wola, 15th June, 2022