

« Sports heritage in European museums »

Warsaw, Poland, July 2nd 2021

ICMAH Webinar

Round Table

Sports museums have a particular typology which does not represented in the International Council of Museums (ICOM). ICMAH, being aware of this lack, initiated in 2017 this working group. The intense participation and interest brought to our webinars, encourages us to continue organizing events, to initiate more collaborations, activities and especially a sustainable network on sports museums

This webinar will deal with European museums, whether they are club museums, present some aspects of sport such as Olympism, curate collections related to sports within less specific, more diversified establishments or deal with societal issues linked to the history of sports. More generally, all of them, are exceptionally lively units that react to contemporary social needs which is the subject of today's webinar.

Participants :

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- **Michal Puzskarski**, from the Museum of sports and Tourism of Warsaw (mpuzskarski@muzeumsportu.waw.pl)
- **Szabo Lajos**, from the Hungarian Olympic and Sports museums (gulyasszabolajos@gmail.com)
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FOREWORD

We continue our exchange today with the various sports museums, whatever they may be.

This time, the webinar will deal with European museums, whether they are club museums such as *the World Rugby Museum* or whether they present some aspects of sport such as *Olympism in The Hungarian Olympic and Sports Museum*.

Other museums, as we shall see this afternoon, preserve collections relating to sport within less specific, more diversified establishments, such as the collections of *the Department of Physical Education and Sport History of the National Museum in Prague*.

Others deal more broadly with societal issues, such as *the Museum of Sports and Tourism in Warsaw*, a permanent exhibition that looks at the history of sport, showing in particular how politics and wars have affected the Polish sporting spirit.

In any case, all of them, are generally exceptionally lively units that react to contemporary social needs. And this, is what we will see, with *the Olympic Museum in Slovakia*, with which, we will conclude our exchanges this afternoon.

Marie Grasse
Workshop coordinator

AVANT-PROPOS

Nous poursuivons notre échange aujourd'hui avec les différents musées du sport, quels qu'ils soient.

Cette fois-ci, le webinaire traitera des musées européens, qu'il s'agisse de musées de clubs tels que le *World Rugby Museum*, ou qu'ils présentent certains aspects du sport comme l'olympisme au *Hungarian Olympic and Sports Museum*.

D'autres musées, comme nous le verrons cet après-midi, préservent des collections liées au sport au sein d'établissements moins spécifiques et plus diversifiés, tels que les collections du *Département d'histoire de l'éducation physique et du sport du Musée national de Prague*.

D'autres abordent de manière plus large des questions sociétales, comme le *Musée des Sports et du Tourisme de Varsovie*, une exposition permanente qui examine l'histoire du sport, montrant notamment comment la politique et les guerres ont influencé l'esprit sportif polonais. Dans tous les cas, ils sont généralement des entités exceptionnellement dynamiques qui réagissent aux besoins sociaux contemporains. C'est ce que nous verrons avec le *Musée olympique en Slovaquie*.

Marie Grasse
Workshop coordinator

Report on

SPORTS HERITAGE IN EUROPEAN MUSEUMS

July 2nd, 2021, Warsaw

- **Phil McGowan**, "Sports Stadia museums - challenges and opportunities"

The World Rugby Museum, based inside Twickenham Stadium, opened in 1982. At first, there was the RFU Museum in the South Stand of the Twickenham stadium, then it was renamed the Museums of Rugby and reopened in the East Stand, and finally it was renamed World Rugby Museum in 2008 and rebuilt in 2018 in the South stand.

The museum curates a collection of 40 000 objects amongst which the oldest international football jersey and trophy. With an average of 30 000 visitors a year, the museum also offers guided tours of the Twickenham Stadium.



Sky view of the Twickenham Stadium

Why have a museum in a stadium?

The proximity with the stadium enhances the duty of care to the collections and consists of a strategic advantage for collecting new items during local tournaments or international contests.

Having a museum in a stadium also answers to commercial imperatives by benefiting from direct and indirect revenues. The location adds value for the visitors that can both experience history through the museum collections and visit the stadium for further immersion.

What are the benefits to the museum?

The site allows the museum to offer tours with guides, which offers an alternative to rugby fans that might not be particularly fond of museums. The museum and the tour are complementary offers that allow to connect with different type of visitors.

The events that are held at the stadium will bring people to discover the museum site and encourage to return for a visit. The events rise the visibility of the museum, while corporate hospitality leaving visitors with the will to share about their experience and encourage other people to visit the museum.

What are the negatives?

the location can be great for rugby fans, it doesn't attract a broader range of visitors and tourists. As most stadiums, Twickenham stadium is far out from the city and is located at 20 kilometers East from London; even though public transportation facilitates the access, it reduces the number of potential visitors. In the same way, during Match Days, transportation might be saturated and the access to the museum restricted for security reasons depending, which also leads the hours of operations of the museum to fluctuate. The stadium event are prioritized over the museum's operations, which can lead the museum to close or adjust their activities such as reducing the number of guided tours of the stadium.

What do stadium museums have in common with other museums?

The duty of care, study, preserve and display of a common heritage is at the center of the museum's missions, like they are for other museums. The Covid security rules for museums and museum visitors also do apply to our museum.



- **Jan Lomicek**, "Colletions of the Department of Physical Education and Sport History of the National Museum in Prague"

Department of Physical Education and Sport History of National Museum in Prague administrates the oldest continuously extended collection of exhibits and materials mapping the history of sport, physical education and Olympism in the Czech Republic. Unlike in the past it faces a number of difficulties which limit the documentation of this area of study. The crucial issue which is in many ways limiting is the long-term absence of permanent exhibition, which would enable

systematic and methodical communication with the general public as well as sport experts in the Czech Republic and abroad. Many museums mapping sport, PE and Olympic history in foreign countries became the integral part of national cultural heritage. Unfortunately the situation concerning the renewal of the permanent display of Czech sport and Olympic history remains almost after twenty years the same and systematic presentation of this historic collection of National Museum is thus doubtful. The paper sums up the history of contemporary museal collection administrated by Department of Physical Education and Sport History of National Museum.

- **Michał Puzkarski**, "The history of Polish Sport and Olympism – permanent exhibition of the Sports and Tourism Museum in Warsaw"

The Museum of Sports and Tourism in Warsaw was established in 1952 and it is one of the oldest institutions of this type in Europe. The new place in Olympic Center was opened in 2004, and it was designed by Bogdan Kulczyński. The whole composition is unique combination of modern art, olympic symbolism and transparency.

The collection of the Museum of Sports and Tourist consists of over 45,000 exhibits related mainly to Polish sport. These are sports trophies, such as medals, badges, plaques and cups, sports and tourism badges, coins, flags, banners, pennants and emblems, sportswear and sports equipment, traveling equipment, sports and tourism posters, works of art (sculptures, paintings, drawings, textiles) dedicated to subjects related to sports, as well as stamp and numismatic collections. The Museum has a large collection of photographs (about 50,000), books (16,500 volumes), periodicals (2,700) and archival documents, as well as audio and video records.

The Museum has organized over 250 temporary exhibitions presented on place and in other institutions in the country and abroad. It also organizes fairs for collectors of sports mementoes (4 times a year) and the Wanda Rutkiewicz Review of Climbing Films (in May). The Museum has many unique exhibits, for example, the tip of a javelin from Olympia from the VIII - VII century BC, the first Polish Olympic medal (a silver medal in cycling from the Games in Paris in 1924), an Olympic torch (Berlin 1936), the skis of Wojciech Fortuna with which he won a golden medal in ski jumps during the XI Winter Olympics (Sapporo 1972), a stone from Mount Everest brought by Wanda Rutkiewicz (1978), and the kayak of Pope John Paul II (in which he traveled many water trials in the 1950s and 1960s).

The permanent exhibition entitled The History of Polish Sports and the Olympic Movement presents the history of sports from the times of Ancient

Greece to the present. It shows 37 disciplines, and the profiles of excellent sportsmen. The permanent exposition of the Museum is divided into sections in chronological order, presenting the history of Polish sport and Olympism. We begin our journey through the history of sport by presenting the heritage of ancient Olympia. We present the oldest exhibit in the collection of the Museum, a bronze javelin from the turn of the VIII – VII century BC. Very valuable exhibits are Greek and Roman statues of athletes – "Kyniskos" – statue by Poliklet from the V century BC made of bronze and statues of athletes, Roman copy of the Greek original, II century BC made of marble. At the exhibition we present disciplines played in the ancient Olympics and sports equipment – aryballos, strigle, halters and discs. This part of the exposition is closed by a copy of the Myron Discus thrower statue from the V century BC. The passage to the beginning of the history of the modern Olympic Games open replicas of 2 statues of Herm.

Visitors can see a bust of Baron Pierre de Coubertin made of bronze by one of the most famous Polish sculptors - Dariusz Kowalski. In the background we see a photograph of the Olympic stadium in Athens from 1896, where the first modern Olympic Games were held. They were attended by 311 athletes who competed in nine disciplines. Unfortunately, Poland was unable to participate in these Games because it was under partition. The difficult political situation between the XVII and early XX centuries required Polish the struggle for independence, which resulted in numerous uprisings.

After the First World War, we regained independence, but we had to defend it during the war with Bolshevik Russia in 1920. The war was won, but Poland lost some of its territory from the period before the partition. For many years, this difficult situation has defined our relations with Russia. Because of this difficult situation, we were not able to take part in Olympic Games until 1924 in Paris. However, this does not mean that there was no sport in Poland. One of the most well-deserved sports organizations of the turn of the century period was the Society of Sports Gymnastic Falcon. It was officially created in 1867 in Lviv (which at the time was a Polish city) along the lines of the Czech Falcon. Poland as a state did not officially exist at that time, and our territories were incorporated into neighboring countries. Lviv was located in the Austrian partition. The Falcon Society promoted gymnastics and later other sports: fencing, cycling, rowing, equestrian, wrestling. But it wasn't just a sporting company. It carried out cultural and educational activities and its headquarters (nests) were active centers of Polish culture under partitions. Their task was to promote patriotic ideas and physical education to prepare Poles for the struggle for independence. At the permanent exhibition we present the costume of a member of the Falcon Society, banners, badges, photographs and medals. We also present the stories of other sports organizations created during this period,

such as the Warsaw Rowing Society (1878), the Warsaw Society of Cyclists (1886) and many others. Their members were outstanding Polish artists and writers, such as Bolesław Prus and Henryk Sienkiewicz.

In 1919, after the establishment of the Polish Olympic Committee in Krakow and the conclusion of peace with Russia in 1921, the Polish national team won Olympic medals at the 1924 Paris Olympics for the first time ever. We present the Adam Królikiewicz, who won an Olympic bronze medal in equestrian competition and cyclists: Franciszek Szymczyk, Jan Łazarski, Tomasz Stankiewicz, Józef Lange who won a silver medal in the team cycling race.

The next part of the exhibition introduces us to the history of the interwar period. We present sports equipment and the most outstanding athletes. We see the evolution of the history of bicycles, skis, sleds and bobsleighs. An exhibition presenting weightlifting and wrestling occupies an important place. We see Stanisław Cyganiewicz, Władysław Pytlasiński and many others. We show the evolution of the weight lifting and recall athletes from later days such as Waldemar Baszanowski – two time Olympic gold medalist, or Zygmunt Smalcerz – also olympic champion.

Undoubtedly, a special place for the exhibition deserves for Halina Konopacka, who was the first to win Olympic gold for Poland in 1928 at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam in the discus throw competition. Janusz Kusociński, who became the first Polish man to win an Olympic gold medal at the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, is also an important figure. He was also a unique figure during World War II. During the occupation of Polish by Germany, he was active in the resistance. He was shot in a mass execution in 1940 in a forest near Warsaw.

One of the sports in which Poland was very successful in the interwar period was equestrian. We present saddles, costumes and prizes. An interesting feature are press reports from newspapers, as well as street posters encouraging participation in sports betting.

The period of World War II and the Nazi occupation of Poland was a severe time. Many athletes died in the defense war in 1939. Others were send to prisoner of war camps or concentration camps, while others emigrated to France and United Kingdom to continue the fight for Poland in the service of the RAF or Charles de Gaulle's Free French Army. Many Polish athletes – officers of the Polish army - were murdered in Katyń by the Russians. Many died in the Warsaw uprising of 1944.

Despite this difficult situation, the Olympic Spirit will survive against all obstacles. Polish athletes in German camps organized a secret Olympic Games in prison camps, to bring back the memory of canceled Tokyo and London games. The museum has a unique collection of memorabilia from these events.

In the post-war period, Poland was most successful in boxing and athletics. Irena Szewińska , a Polish Olympic multi-medalist, deserves a special place.

An important exhibit presented in the Museum is the kayak of Pope John Paul II, in which, as a priest Karol Wojtyła, he traveled Polish lakes and rivers. The type "pelican" kayak is made of wooden frame, covered with tarpaulin.

The heart of the Museum is the Olympic wall of glory of Polish sport. We present on it badges commemorating the names of all Polish Olympic medalists. This is where the most important events take place before and after the Olympic Games – the vows of athletes, their welcome to Poland, congratulations from the President, members of the government and parliament. The medal hall is often also a television studio, where we report on the most important sporting events in which the Polish national team participates. Opposite the wall with medals, there is a showcase presenting original Olympic medals donated by athletes, or donated by their families.

An important point of exhibition is a section presenting the achievements of Polish mountaineers. This place is all the more important because the Museum has been organizing for 28 years a Review of Mountaineering Films by Wanda Rutkiewicz – a famous Polish mountaineer.

In the area of present sport, we present the names of the most outstanding Polish athletes, their sports equipment, souvenirs and trophies. We can see the collection of speedway motorcycles, motorboat, bows, fencing equipment, air guns, go-karts and much more. There is also very important section for Paralympic Sport.

An exhibition of Olympic art and prizes from international competitions also occupies an important place. The exhibition closes with a presentation of a collection of 12 original Olympic torches. The oldest is the torch from the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

The museum conducts guided tours and museum lessons for schools. Topics vary widely, including social sciences, sport, art and history.

- **Szabo Lajos**, "The Hungarian Olympic and Sports Museum – Past, Present and Future"

The roots of this institution go back to the 1880's which saw the beginning of collecting activity and the first exhibitions. The current museum was founded in 1963 as a state-run national museum. For 15 years, operations were carried out from the home of Alfréd Hajós, the first Hungarian Olympic Champion.

Over time, the collection swell to around 800.000 entries, including a contemporary arts collection, but without a proper building, we do not have a permanent exhibition. We currently have 8 museologists working on various

exhibitions, of which we hold around 6-8 per year in Budapest and various other domestic and overseas venues.

During the last two decades, our offices and warehouses had to relocate six times. Currently, a new main building is being planned, to finally become the permanent home of the Museum.

We are working on the digitalization of the collection. We regularly use digital and audiovisual content in our exhibitions.

We take active part in the education of sports history, primarily at the University of Physical Education. Together with the Hungarian Olympic Academy, we provide various materials to be used in primary and secondary schools as well.

- **Zdenka Lentenayova**, "The process of musealization of sport museum's objects"

Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee – Slovak Olympic and Sports Museum

If we define the culture as „the historically and transmitted systems of symbols and meanings through which human communities make sense of their experiences“ then games and sports have an unique position among those activities by which the humanity arrives at the self-knowledge in the process of its evolution.

In 1987, Juan Antonio Samaranch, who, at the time, was the President of the International Olympic Committee, declared:

“Each country of the world ought to have its own sports museum, as a means to protect part of its history.”

I will certainly not stray too far from the truth if I claim that sports and the Olympism almost rapidly entered into the spotlight of museum practice, particularly after 1993, when the Olympic Museum in the Swiss City of Lausanne first opened its doors. It was the unique for the presentation of both forms and affinity for other types and expressions of human activity. Nature of the Olympic Museum that has widened the potential opportunities At the same time has reinforced the position of those specialized organisations already focused on the presentation of sports and the Olympic movement. In the early 21st century, there were already dozens of facilities that specialized in the presentation and documentation of sports and the Olympic movement, ranging from the local and regional to the national, from the general to the highly specialized (e. g. FIS – the official global register of ski museums).

All of them, but especially the sports or the Olympic museums, are generally exceptionally lively units that react to the contemporary social need. They

represent institutions which dedicate a significant part of their exhibitions of their collections to the current on-going sports events or directly respond to the important successes of both individuals and teams. Through the complex forms through which they present their collections, they manage to enter into the public awareness, and the above-mentioned activities are also the museums' tool for the presentation and promotion of the other fields in which they are active. In most of them, especially when we speak of museums, there is the possibility to form an interesting space for the operation and development of scientific-methodical and other professional activities as a supplementary but important part of the responsibilities of professional museum workers.

But it is necessary to keep in mind that there are also other forms for the institutional presentation of sports in the world (halls of fame, memorials, private museums etc.), which do not always meet the criteria for the definition of a museum. Sports and the Olympic movement in particular have become a worldwide phenomenon, at all levels, over the last hundred years, and have left an imprint on the way that millions of people on our planet live their lives. At the same time, they remained a peaceful source for the building national identity and pride.

However, unlike the past, they have also become an efficient and profitable marketing tool outside the sports arenas. Recently, they have entered into the spotlight of the community of collectors, with certain artefacts reaching similar sales values as artistic masterpieces in famous auction houses.

And it is this phenomenon that raises questions on the future of the practice of museums in sports. What are the new trends in collection development practices, which represent the fundamental activity of museums? First and foremost, it is necessary to strictly differentiate between the terms "private collection" and "public (museum) collection".

A public collection (museum) collection, despite being significantly affected by social interest and dependent on the financial sources and possibilities of the museum to buy collections, must unconditionally involve certain program fields in its development, which are not or have not been pivotal, but form an undeniable part of the complexity of the view on the development and existence of sports and the Olympic movement.

And so, questions emerge. What should be collected, when, why and how? All of them are closely linked to the theory of valuation and evaluation – the axiology built on the philosophy of an individual and their constant need and will to evaluate not only situations, but also specific things (objects). This type of evaluation seeks to identify a value expressed and secured by a standard. However, valuations are not consistent, they depend on the methodological approach to the evaluation of specific situations or objects. Thus, the valuation

of an Olympic medal differs from the perspective of art, industrial manufacturing, numismatics or inclusion in museums.

If we focus on the process of the inclusion of an object into the collection of a museum, we must understand a vast amount of information. The contemporary modern understanding of museum practice does not recommend the addition of an object to the collection purely to create a historical shelter for these objects, even though the unchanging standards of "aesthetic value, the charm of antiquity, patina and the smell of age cannot be ignored.

Most of the time, in the first phase of the process the object passes through the process of setting the price of acquisition, involve a complex process of valuation. However, an object, which subsequently becomes a part of the museum collection, only acquires its value in the process of its musealization – object gets museum status. Musealization can be defined as the process by which an object is removed or detached from its original context or setting for its exhibition in a museum-like manner and environment. Only there does it acquire a specific value, the role of which is to preserve the object for society as the bearer of a special code (let us call it a sort of DNA) from the perspective of the scientific, historical, cultural or artistic documentation. In this process, we no longer speak of the prize, but of the museological value category.

Of course, another exceptionally important role in this phase is the individual approach, especially of the professional worker (professional team of workers) responsible for placing the object into its conceptual space (musealization) in the museum and it should not be underestimated. based on general criteria and acquired knowledge.

Once the state, documentation and cultural importance of the object, along with how it may be presented have been identified, we may begin to evaluate the object and decide whether it is a regional, national, continental or global testimony of cultural heritage. The added value of the musealization of object', as is more and more required by modern museum visitors, is the processing and presentation of the story behind the object, all the while making use of suitable museum forms and preserving certain elements of the museum conservatism.

We own or manage in collections a range of objects which meet the criteria for global cultural heritage. Thus it is through our mutual agreement and attitude that we can comprehensibly demonstrate that we are contributing to their preservation through their use and presentation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm proud to announce you, that this year on June 23rd (which we celebrate as the Olympic Day worldwide) the Slovak Olympic and Sports Museum opened after 35 years and 241 days from its founding for the first time in the history the permanent exhibition! The exhibition is based on the principles I mentioned earlier.

In a relatively small space (less then 350m²) we have tried to fulfill the main idea with which we prepared the exhibition. To show visitors the result of the

process of musealization of the object through its story. We have combined modern technology with objects without chronological timing. From a selection of more than 28,000 objects and 50,000 photographs we have included in the exhibition more than 100 objects from local (national) significance to world uniques (e.g. Reinhold Messner's gloves from Nanga Parbat, Vera Caslavskaja's the Olympic gold medals from 1964 Tokyo and 1968 Mexico Games and more) This syllabus is enhanced by film projections about personalities and events that are embodied in the exhibited objects.