

Halina Zdebska-Biziewska (1960-2018), an invaluable professor and Olympic activist

Magdalena Żmuda-Pałka, Ph.D.

University of Physical Education in Kraków, Poland

Summary:

Halina Zdebska-Biziewska was a person connected with sport and involved in popularising physical culture. Her activity, energy and diligence inspired others. In her life, she was guided by the “Fair Play” rule. She was a valued professor and researcher. H. Zdebska-Biziewska showed that the essence of sport is not only its pragmatic side, but also the axiology associated with it, because the philosophical theory of values allows to perceive sport as a source and transmission of many values. H. Zdebska-Biziewska, as an open, friendly and respected person, was a valuable figure in the development of Polish Olympism and the Kraków UPE (the University of Physical Education in Kraków). This publication aims to present the profile of professor Halina Zdebska-Biziewska, who was not only a valued researcher, but also acted socially to promote physical culture in the country and abroad.

Keywords: Zdebska-Biziewska, Zdebska, professor, activist, Olympism, POC, UPE Kraków, AWF Kraków, Fair Play

Pedagogical activity of Professor Halina Zdebska-Biziewska

Professor Halina Zdebska-Biziewska was a person connected with sport, involved in popularising physical culture. In her private life, she was a loving mother and wife. She was an active person and her diligence inspired others. Valued among students, possessing broad, interdisciplinary knowledge, she showed how many respected values can be noticed in sport. Friendly, sociable, full of optimism and elegant, she was a role model for others, and her entire life was based on the “Fair Play” rule.

H. Zdebska-Biziewska was born on May 21, 1960 in Ryglice, in the Tarnow powiat. Associated with Kraków from an early age, where she graduated from elementary school and Maria Dąbrowska 11th Secondary School. From early on, she showed interest in sport and repeatedly represented herschool at local and provincial competitions. She started regular volleyball training at the *Korona Sports Club* in Kraków during secondary school. She started her studies at the University of Physical Education in Krakow (UPE) in 1978 in the field of training with a specialisation in volleyball. From that time, UPE almost became a “second home” for H. Zdebska-Biziewska. As a model student, she represented the Academic Sports Association of the Kraków UPE (University of Physical Education archives, 2018).

In 1983, Halina Zdebska-Biziewska graduated obtaining a Master’s degree in sport and 2nd degree trainer in volleyball. In October of the same year, she was employed as an assistant trainer at the Volleyball Department of the University of Physical Education in Kraków.

During that same period, she completed a teaching internship at Primary School No. 5 in Kraków, conducting physical education classes for sports classes with a volleyball profile. At the same time, H. Zdebska-Biziewska worked as a coach of the junior group of the University Sports Association at the University of Physical Education in Kraków (Akademicki Związek Sportowy Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Krakowie, AZS AWF Kraków), while she herself did not stop practicing sport. In 1984, already as an assistant, H. Zdebska-Biziewska carried out didactic classes in the subject of volleyball regarding the fields: teacher, coach and physical rehabilitation. At the same time, as an active young person, she started postgraduate studies at the Ideology and Pedagogy College organised by UPE Kraków. From the beginning of her professional work, she also conducted classes at postgraduate training courses organised in cooperation with the Polish Volleyball Federation. In addition to didactic work, during her studies, she also coordinated the work of the examination commission as a secretary of the Faculty Recruitment Commission and she was the supervisor of the groups of candidates for studies. She also supervised student internships.

In 1998-2005, she conducted the National Methodology and Training Workshop for Teachers of Physical Education and Sport Colleges. She also prepared documentation and managed a grant from the Ministry of National Education and Sport regarding the implementation of Postgraduate studies in Physical Education for graduates of the University of Physical Education, which took place since 1999. It should be emphasised that this was the first such type of support from the Ministry for the Kraków UPE. Then, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was the

head of the Postgraduate Studies for Teachers with Pedagogical Preparation. She was also a lecturer and conducted practical classes at courses for sports instructors and instructors of physical recreation. Since 2002, she was a lecturer of postgraduate studies organised by the Institute of Public Affairs at the Jagiellonian University organised jointly with the Polish Olympic Committee (POC) on the management of sports organisations. She worked as an expert at the Management Training Centre of the College of Education in Sopot (Sportowetempo.pl, 2018). And in 2006-2008, she was also a lecturer at the School of Banking in Chorzów, where she taught philosophy of Olympism and contemporary problems of global sport and conducted diploma seminars. H. Zdebska-Biziewska promoted numerous Master's theses, which were often distinguished, such as the work of Magdalena Górowska entitled *Polish table tennis in the 1988-2004 Olympic Games* awarded in the cyclical POC competition for the best diploma thesis on the subject of Olympic Games. H. Zdebska-Biziewska was also a reviewer of four doctoral dissertations and two postdoctoral dissertations (nauka-polska.pl, 2018). In 2009, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was awarded a postdoctoral degree in physical education culture. She was a member of the Board of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, as well as the member of the Senate of the Kraków UPE (UPE archives). The professor was also a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 6th Department – Medical Sciences; Rehabilitation Committee, Physical Culture and Social Integration (nauka-polska.pl, 2018). She was also the editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Studies in Sport Humanities*.

Scientific activity of Halina Zdebska-Biziewska

In the second half of the 80s, H. Zdebska-Biziewska started her scientific activity, and her research mainly focused on issues related to the evaluation of programme implementation and the effectiveness of selected team game techniques. She participated numerous times as a listener, but also as a referent, at conferences organised by the Kraków UPE.

“The radical turn of the research direction – as H. Zdebska-Biziewska admitted herself – was knowledge gained from participation in the seminar on the history of sport, conducted at the Kraków UPE held by professor Kazimierz Toporowicz. Interest in the humanities of physical culture was also affected by first encounters with the Polish Olympic Academy in Rozalin in 1986” (UPE archives). These events caused H. Zdebska-Biziewska to begin her research work in the direction of interpretation of sport based on the humanities. In 1995, she defended her doctoral thesis under the supervision of professor Józef Lipiec entitled: *Sports hero. Study of individual case of Bronisław Czech (1908-1944)*. Reviewers professor Zbigniew Krawczyk and professor Kazimierz

Toporowicz admitted that the work was highly original and innovative in nature (UPE archives). In 1996, the doctoral dissertation by H. Zdebska-Biziewska was published, and the POC decided to distinguish this publication with the prestigious *Bronze Olympic Laurel* award in the category of scientific and popular science works. Let us add that the book entitled *Sports hero. Study of individual case of Bronisław Czech (1908-1944)* was resumed in the following year and in 2007, on the anniversary of Bronisław Czech's 100th birthday (Zdebska, 2007). After obtaining a doctoral degree, H. Zdebska-Biziewska worked as an adjunct at the Department of Theory and Methodology of Volleyball (UPE archives).

Despite her interest in the Olympic idea, in 1998, H. Zdebska-Biziewska published a textbook entitled *Volleyball: a training program for children and youth* in cooperation with J. Uzarowicz, the content of which is still a programme implemented at the School of Sport Championship of the Polish Volleyball Federation (Uzarowicz, Zdebska, 1998).

H. Zdebska-Biziewska published numerous works in the field of sports biographies concerning the Olympians: B. Grocholskiej-Kurkowiak, J. Ustupski, M. Woyny-Orlewicz, S. Marusarz, and the culmination of research in this area was the publication of another book in 2000 entitled *Ski masters*, showing a collective portrait of Polish skiers and Olympians. In 2001, the book entitled *Matysz: Thank God*, was published, in which H. Zdebska-Biziewska is the author of the biographical part (Stanowski, Zdebska, 2001). She is also the author of the *Epilogue* for the volume of poetry by Józefa Ślusarczyk-Latos *A flight over the abyss* from 2004 (Ślusarczyk-Latos, 2004).

In 2007, H. Zdebska-Biziewska co-authored the book entitled *Volleyball. Defense of the field in the tactical perspective. Textbook for instructors and trainers* (Kasza, Zdebska, 2007).

The habilitation monograph, which H. Zdebska-Biziewska undertook to write, was pioneer in nature. It was an attempt to supplement the theory of games with the humanities. The study required interdisciplinary preparation in the field of philosophy, sociology, sport psychology, social psychology and cultural anthropology. The knowledge of sport practice was also crucial. The publication in 2008 entitled *The essence and values of team sports games* required the theoretical explanation of the peculiarities of team sports games from the author, based on the in-depth axiological interpretation “presenting the game in the world of values and as a world of values in itself” – as the author herself emphasised (UPE archives; Zdebska, 2008).

In 2014, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was a co-author of a book published under the patronage of the Fair Play Club of POC entitled *Fair Play* (Hądzelek, Rejf, Zdebska-Biziewska, Żukowski, 2014). Also available in English and electronic version, it was very well received by the international scientific community (Fair Play Club, 2018).

H. Zdebska-Biziewska also undertook journalistic activity, promoting the values of sport and Olymp-

ism. Long-term cooperation with the editors of *Narty, Sportowy Styl, Tempo, Dziennik Polski, Akademicki Przegląd Sportowy, Magazyn Olimpijski* was the manifestation of these activities. In 1994-2005, more than 200 texts were published in these journals.

The result of extensive research in humanities undertaken by H. Zdebska-Biziewska constituted numerous publications and participation in national and international conferences (Salesian Sports Organisation of the Polish and POC conferences in Warsaw; conferences organised by the International Sports Game Scientific Association in Warsaw, Biała Podlaska, Kraków; the 9th International Sport Science Conference – Management of High Performance Athlete Training, Wilno, Lithuania, Health and Body Values in the Eyes of the Higher School of Business in Nowy Sącz, the 12th International Scientific Conference of Sport Kinetics in Kraków in 2011, and the 13th and 14th International Congress of Physical Education and Sport in Komotonia in Greece. It should be emphasised that H. Zdebska-Biziewska delivered a speech entitled *The Strive for Athletic Excellence: A Central Element of Olympic Education* at the prestigious 13th International Session for Directors of National Olympic Academies *Olympic Values. The Value of Excellence as an Educational Tool*, attended by representatives from 73 countries, which was a distinction for activities among the Polish Olympic environment (President of the Fair Play Club in Olympia, 2015; Archives UPE, 2018).

Social activity of Halina Zdebska-Biziewska for the promotion of physical culture

Scientific activity was closely related to the professional work of H. Zdebska-Biziewska. However, the hardships of undertaking additional social activities, mainly to promote physical culture and Olympism, show how noble she was. Her first award for merits among the sports environment was received shortly after graduation in 1984, when H. Zdebska-Biziewska was honoured the Silver Badge of AZS UPE. In 1988, on the other hand, she was awarded the Golden Badge of the Kraków Regional Volleyball Association (UPE archives).

In 1995-1999, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was a member of the Board of the AZS UPE Kraków (UPE archives).

In the meantime, in 1996 H. Zdebska-Biziewska became a member of the Culture and Education Committee of the POC and belonged to the Youth Association of the Polish Olympic Academy. She undertook cooperation with the International Olympic Academy, the world's largest research centre on Olympism, located in Olympia, Greece. In the same year, H. Zdebska-Biziewska represented the POC and the Polish Olympic Academy during the congress for young people from around the world. She also became a member of the Consulting Team for the *Winter Olympic Games*

2006 Cultural and Educational Programme, operating at the Office of the Olympic Strategy in Kraków (UPE archives).

In 1999-2002, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was the secretary of the Lesser Poland Olympic Council of the POC in Kraków. She also organised many cultural activities related to the Olympic idea, such as the exhibition *Polish Olympic Book* or the poster competition related to the organisation of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney (UPE archives).

Since 2002, the professor was a member of the International Scientific Society of Sports Games. She also cooperated with Wisła Kraków in the organisation of cultural undertakings, related to running artistic contests, honouring the 95th anniversary and the 100th anniversaries.

In 2002, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was honoured the title *Friend of Sport*, for her contribution to the Kraków environment as an effective supporter of physical culture in Kraków. In 2005, she was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit by the President of the Republic of Poland. And in 2009, H. Zdebska-Biziewska received the Medal of the 90th Anniversary of POC.

In 2013, she became the chairman of the Polish Fair Play Club of the Olympic Committee. On November 22, 2014, during the organised General Assembly of the International Committee of Pierre de Coubertin (CIPC), H. Zdebska-Biziewska also became a member of the Committee and the Board of CIPC. As the POC members emphasise: "This choice, which is a great distinction for the Polish Olympic movement, is an expression of appreciation for the Polish achievements in the promotion of Olympism" (Professor Zdebska-Biziewska in the CIPC authorities, 2014). In 2014, H. Zdebska-Biziewska received the Medal of the 30th Anniversary of the Polish Olympic Academy (Archives UPE, 2018).

In the 2014/2015 academic year, she initiated the establishment of the Olympism Lab at the Institute of Humanities at the Kraków UPE, which to this day, carries out the assumptions of H. Zdebska-Biziewska and contributes to the dissemination of the Olympic idea. According to the decision of the UPE Senate in Kraków, the Olympism Workshop was named after professor Halina Zdebska-Biziewska following her death.

H. Zdebska-Biziewska repeatedly represented the POC in the international arena. In 2014, as a representative of POC, she participated in the 20th European Congress in Riga. She was also present at the Vatican on May 14-15, 2015, where the International Study Seminar – *Church & Sport Section Coaches: Educating People* was held, attended by the representatives of scientific environments, associations and Catholic sports organisations from around the world (Vatican on Sport, 2015).

In 2016, at the 22nd General Assembly of the European Fair Play Movement (EFPM) in Vienna, H. Zdebska-Biziewska was elected as part of the authorities of EFPM (The Polish woman in international sports organizations, 2016).

H. Zdebska-Biziewska died after a short illness on March 17, 2018. In her private life, she loved classical music, theatre, literature and, of course, sport. She was an extremely warm and cordial person. She rests at the Rakowicki Cemetery in Kraków. Those who knew her will always remember her openness and nobility.

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