

# GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SZCZECIN IN THE GROUP OF TRAINERS WHO STAND AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE POLISH REPRESENTATION OF THE 32ND OLYMPICS OR THE 16TH TOKYO PARALYMPICS 2020

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**Abstract** Club coaches, national team coaches, as well as Olympic or Paralympic team coaches are those trainers who use their knowledge, professionalism and experience to lead their trainees to achieve sports results that satisfy athletes as well as coaches and authorities of Polish associations of various sports disciplines practiced by the athletes. A good trainer is the most important person in the coaching team, as they supervise the whole participation of their Olympians or Paralympians. Among the graduates of the Szczecin University's Physical Education, there are many trainers of various sports disciplines. They are club coaches, national team coaches and they also hold coaching functions at the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. The aim of this paper is to: present the university (student) characteristics of the analyzed coaches and a physiotherapist who stand among the potential candidates to be appointed for the coaching and medical staff of their trainees (including the football team) who will fight for qualification standards guaranteeing them participation in the 32nd Summer Olympics or 16th Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020; showing the current coaching activity of the trainers and a physiotherapist in question; presenting the criteria and eligibility rules which the athletes of the coaches and the physiotherapist need to obtain to take part in the Tokyo Olympic or Paralympic competition. The research material consists of six graduates of the University of Szczecin, who majored in Physical Education, and who currently work primarily in the coaching team (Tomasz Kaźmierczak, Jacek Kostrzeba, Tomasz Lewandowski, Grzegorz Musztafaga, Miłosz Stępiński) and the medical/therapeutic team (Beata Buryta). All of the analyzed graduates of the University of Szczecin are among the trainers and physiotherapists who are candidates for the Polish national team for the 32nd Olympic Games or the 16th Paralympics Games Tokyo 2020. Tomasz Kaźmierczak – he will definitely be present for the fourth time at the Summer Games Tokyo 2020 as a coach for disabled rowers (previous participations in 2008, 2012, and 2016). The trainees of the coaches in question (except for the football team) can be included into the Polish team participating in the Summer Games Tokyo 2020 and at least compete in finals during the Olympic or Paralympic competition.

**Key words** graduates, trainers, coaches, games: Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, University of Szczecin, Faculty of Physical Culture and Health Promotion

## Introduction

Each athlete hopes to be drafted for the national team and represent their country at competitions of various international ranks. Only few – the very best athletes – meet the qualification standards that guarantee a spot in the Polish national team that participates in the Summer Olympic or Paralympic Games. Every participant of this biggest sporting event held every fourth year strives to achieve the best possible result to secure a place in the finals and win the coveted medal.

Club coaches, national team coaches, as well as Olympic or Paralympic team coaches are those trainers who use their knowledge, professionalism and experience to lead their trainees to achieve sports results that satisfy athletes as well as coaches and authorities of Polish associations of various sports disciplines practiced by the athletes. A good trainer is the most important person in the coaching team, as they supervise the whole participation of their Olympians or Paralympians.

It must be emphasized that the Polish national team for the Summer Olympic or Paralympic Games includes not only the athletes, but also (-Iwaniszewska, 2012):

- the team management (e.g. President of the Polish Olympic Committee – President of the Polish Olympic Team, President of the Polish Paralympic Committee),
- Olympic mission (e.g. Head of Mission, press attaché),
- medical mission (e.g. Head of Mission, doctors, physiotherapy coordinator, psychologist coordinator),
- team guests (e.g. Minister of Sport and Tourism).

The national team also includes coaches: club trainers, national team trainers, as well as trainers of particular sports association. For example, rowing is one of Olympic disciplines with many athletes taking part in a number of competitions. For this reason, the Polish Association of Rowing Societies appoints several trainers, doctors and physiotherapists ([www.olimpijski.pl](http://www.olimpijski.pl)).

Among the graduates of the Szczecin University, Faculty of Physical Education, there are many trainers of various sports disciplines (Buryta, Stefanik, 2010; Eider, 2005; Florkiewicz, Fogtman, 2004; Iwińska, Iwiński, Wesolowska, 2014; Kotarska, 2006; Krupecki, 2006; Stefanik, 2006, 2014). They are club coaches, national team coaches and they also hold coaching functions at the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. So far, the greatest coaching achievements may be attributed to dr Krzysztof Krupecki, a graduate of the Faculty of Physical Education of the Pedagogical University in Szczecin (in 1976), who "... in 1990–2012 was a coach of Marek Kolbowicz, 5-time Olympian (Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012), gold medalist of the Beijing Olympic Games, four-time world champion (Gifu 2005, Eton 2006, Munich 2007, Poznań 2009) and European champion (Montemor-o-Velho 2010)..." (Eider, Eider, 2017, p. 76). Krupecki, as a trainer/coordinator of disabled rowers, led them to scored rank at the Paralympic Games, as well as to winning many medals at the world championships held on the rowing ergometer. Details of the coaching achievements of Krzysztof Krupecki are presented in other studies (Eider, 2005; Eider, Eider, 2017).

Among the current employees of the Faculty of Physical Culture and Health Promotion of the University of Szczecin (WKFiPZ US) and graduates of the university's Institute of Physical Culture are club coaches, national team coaches, and a physiotherapist, who are among the candidates for the Polish team for the 32nd Olympic Games or the 16th Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

The purpose of this paper is:

1. To present the university (student) characteristics of the analyzed coaches and physiotherapists who stand among the potential candidates to appoint to be appointed for the coaching and medical staff of their trainees (including the football team) who fight for qualification standards guaranteeing them participation in the 32nd Summer Olympics or 16th Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.
2. To show the current coaching activity of the trainers and physiotherapist in question.
3. To present the criteria and eligibility rules which the athletes of the coaches and the physiotherapist need to obtain to take part in the Tokyo Olympic or Paralympic competition.
4. To continue research in the field of broadly defined Olympism and Paralympism, including the participation of graduates of the University of Szczecin's Physical Education in the Summer Olympic or Paralympic Games.

## Materials and methods

The research material consists of six graduates of the University of Szczecin, who majored in Physical Education, and who currently work primarily in the coaching team (Tomasz Kaźmierczak, Jacek Kostrzeba, Tomasz Lewandowski, Grzegorz Musztafaga, Miłosz Stępiński) and the medical/therapeutic team (Beata Buryta) (Table 1). Except for Jacek Kostrzeba, all of them are graduates of the Institute of Physical Culture of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University of Szczecin (IKF WNP US), which was transformed into the Faculty of Physical Culture and Health Promotion in 2011 (Eider, 2017). Trainer Jacek Kostrzeba is a graduate of the Institute of Physical Culture of the University of Szczecin, which operated as a faculty until 1992 (from October 1, 1992 it was included into structures of the WNP). It must be noted that dr Miłosz Stępiński i mgr Beata Buryta are researchers and teachers employed by Faculty of Physical Culture and Health Promotion at the University of Szczecin (Dokumentacja, 2019). Master's theses of the discussed trainers are closely related to the sports discipline they train, as well as to physiotherapy (Beata Buryta) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Research material – coaching team, medical team (training supervisors), as of 31 May 2019

First name and surname	Age	Sports discipline	A graduate of which university unit	Year of graduation	Subject of the defended Master's thesis
Tomasz Kaźmierczak	42	Rowing (disabled)	IKF WNP US	2002	Dynamics of rowers' performance indicators in the annual training cycle
Jacek Kostrzeba	53	Athletics	IKF US	1990	Athletes' maximum oxygen consumption depending on age and sport preparation in medium distance competitions
Tomasz Lewandowski	38	Athletics	IKF WNP US	2005	Optimization of physical loads in boys aged 16–17 in middle-distance running
Grzegorz Musztafaga	46	Swimming (disabled)	IKF WNP US	2004	An attempt to use the Cooper test to assess physical performance of junior competitive swimmers
Miłosz Stępiński	44	Football	IKF WNP US	1999	The impact of initial training on the development of motor skills and the effectiveness of football technique teaching in boys aged 11–13
Beata Buryta	44	Rowing (disabled)	IKF WNP US	2000	Comparison of motor skills of children with posture defects and mental retardation against healthy children in the Polczyn Zdrój spa

Source: Dokumentacja (2019).

The analyzed research material was obtained primarily from the archival documentation of WKFiPZ US, written and oral reports by the analyzed trainers and the physiotherapist, from author's (co-author's) reviews of the author of this publication and [www.wikipedia.pl](http://www.wikipedia.pl), [www.olimpijski.pl](http://www.olimpijski.pl), [www.paralympic.org.pl](http://www.paralympic.org.pl), [www.pzla.pl](http://www.pzla.pl).

The collection of materials for this study was completed on May 31, 2019. The author is aware of the fact that this study may not include other graduates of Szczecin University Physical Education faculty, who may perform various functions in coaching, medical and other teams, and are among the candidates for the Summer Olympic or Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. It may solely be caused by incomplete knowledge of the author of this article.

## Results

The discussed group includes trainers with qualifications in four sport disciplines: athletics, football, swimming, and rowing (Table 2). The highest coaching class is held by: Tomasz Lewandowski – Masters Class, and dr Miłosz Stępiński – UEFA PRO. Among the analyzed trainers, three of them – Jacek Kostrzeba, Tomasz Lewandowski and Miłosz Stępiński – are trainers of Olympic disciplines (athletics, men's and women's football). The other two trainers – Tomasz Kaźmierczak and Grzegorz Musztafaga – work with disabled athletes in Paralympic disciplines (rowing, sports swimming). All the trainers listed in Table 2 were or are coaches of: the national team, the Olympic/Paralympic Polish team in their sports disciplines (competitions) (Kaźmierczak, 2019a; Krupecki, 2019; Kostrzeba, 2019; Musztafaga, 2019; Stępiński, 2019a).

Tomasz Kaźmierczak was the main coach of the Polish national team of disabled rowers at the Summer Games in Beijing 2008, London 2012, and Rio de Janeiro 2016 (Table 3). Rowing has been a Paralympic discipline since 2008, and it is practiced in Poland, e.g. at the Klub Sportowy Inwalidów START in Szczecin. Kaźmierczak's trainees have also won many medals at the World and European Championships on a rowing ergometer (Kaźmierczak, 2019a).

Tomasz Lewandowski is the second trainer in terms of participation in the Summer Games so far (Table 3). He is the older brother and trainer of Marcin Lewandowski – a titled athlete in the 800 m and 1,500 m run (Lewandowski, 2019a, 2019b; Przegląd, 2016). He participated in 30th and 31st Olympic Games in London 2012 and Rio de Janeiro 2016. He coached endurance run athletes, including Marcin Lewandowski. It should be noted that Tomasz Lewandowski did not participate in the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, but was preparing his brother Marcin for the Olympic start in the 800 m race (Lewandowski, 2019b).

**Table 2.** Trainers' characteristics

First and last name	Sports discipline	Currently held coaching class	Year of obtaining that coaching class	Current sports club	National team coach; representation coach
Tomasz Kaźmierczak	Rowing	second	2010	KSI "Start" Szczecin	National team coach; Paralympic team
Jacek Kostrzeba	Athletics	second	2002	UKS Barnim Goleniów	National team in cross-country running; Olympic representation in cross-country running
Tomasz Lewandowski	Athletics	Master	2013	–	National team: youth, juniors, seniors; Olympic team in endurance runs
Grzegorz Musztafaga	Swimming	second	2004	KSI "Start" Szczecin	–
Miłosz Stępiński	Football	First, UEFA A, UEFA PRO	2008, 2012, 2018	–	U19 team coach; Polish women A team coach;

Source: Kaźmierczak (2019a, 2019b); Kostrzeba (2019); Lewandowski (2019a, 2019b); Musztafaga (2019); Stępiński (2019a, 2019b).

**Table 3.** Participation of trainers and a physiotherapist in the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games – sports achievements of their trainees

First and last name	Discipline of trainees	Beijing 2008			London 2012			Rio de Janeiro 2016		
		name of trainee(s)	rank	sport competition	name of trainee(s)	rank	sport competition	name of trainee(s)	rank	sport competition
Tomasz Kaźmierczak	Rowing (disabled)	Jolanta Pawlak, Piotr Majka	6th	TA2x	Jolanta Pawlak, Piotr Majka	10th	TAMix2x	Jolanta Majka	6th	TAMix2x
Jacek Kostrzeba	Athletics	Martyna Snopek	10th	ASW1x	Martyna Snopek	9th	ASW1x	Michał Gadowski	27th	3,000-meter steeplechase
Tomasz Lewandowski	Athletics	-	-	-	Marcin Lewandowski	9th	800 m	Marcin Lewandowski	6th	800 m
Grzegorz Musztafaga	Swimming (disabled)	-	-	-	Paulina Woźniak	6th	100 m butterfly stroke	-	-	-
Mikołaj Stępiński	Football, men, women	-	-	-	-	3rd	100 m breaststroke	-	-	-
Beata Buryła	Rowing (disabled)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Jolanta Majka Michał Gadowski	6th	TAMix2x

Source: Kaźmierczak (2019a, 2019b); Lewandowski (2019a); Maniak-Waniszevska (2012); Musztafaga (2019); Stępiński (2019b); Woźniak (2019b); www.wikipedia.pl.

The 31st Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro 2016 were also attended by Jacek Kostrzeba, who was the coach of the Polish national team of cross-country runners. One of them was Krystian Zalewski from UKS Barnim Goleniów, who took the 27th place in the 3,000-meter steeplechase ([www.olimpijski.pl](http://www.olimpijski.pl); Kostrzeba, 2019).

Among the remaining coaches, only Grzegorz Musztafaga participated in the Summer Games London 2012 (Table 3). His trainee, swimmer from the KSI "Start" Szczecin, Paulina Woźniak won a bronze medal in the 100 m breaststroke competition. As a club coach, Grzegorz Musztafaga prepared Paulina Woźniak for the Paralympic competitions in Beijing 2008 and Rio de Janeiro 2016. In Beijing, she won a silver medal, also in the 100 m breaststroke competition (Musztafaga, 2019; Woźniak, 2019a).

One of the discussed coaches, Miłosz Stępiński, has not participated in any Summer Olympic Games as a coach. He has played various training roles, such as a coach of the Polish U19–U21 national teams. From December 2018, he has worked as an analyst coach in the staff of the U21 men's Polish national team. He will participate in the U21 European Championships, which will take place in June 16–30, 2019 in Italy and San Marino. These championships serve also as qualifications (for teams ranked 1–4) for the Olympic Games in Tokyo. It should be particularly noted that since 2016 Miłosz Stępiński has also been the first coach of the Polish A women's national team (Stępiński, 2019a).

Beata Buryta has been cooperating since 2010 "...with disabled athletes from KSI "Start" Szczecin as a physiotherapist and masseuse" (Eider, Eider, 2017, p. 68). She worked in this capacity with disabled rowers at the 15th Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro 2016 (Buryta, 2019).

## Discussion

A good trainer is one who has significant professional achievements. Their trainees get appointed to the national team, Olympic or Paralympic team. They win medals at Olympic Games, World Championships, European Championships, national championships, etc. A good trainer constantly improves their coaching qualifications through e.g. participation in various domestic and international workshops. A good coach actively participates in specialist conferences and scientific symposia. S/he gets acquainted with professional literature on modern teaching methods in their discipline/sports competition. A good coach uses the knowledge and advice of scientists involved in research, including motor, physiological, and biochemical studies. Their trainees undergo specific tests in scientific and research institutions. The obtained results – measurements, parameters, quantities, etc. – are analyzed and used to modify the training and starting process of the trained athletes.

An example of a research unit which serves athletes is the Human Structural and Functional Research Center (CBSFC) at the Faculty of Physical Culture and Health Promotion of the University of Szczecin. It includes four laboratories: biochemistry, physiology, genetics and kinesiology. They are all "...equipped with modern research equipment and devices that help conduct specialized scientific research in the field of physical culture, health and medical sciences" (Eider, 2017, p. 54). Many Szczecin coaches, including the national team of able-bodied and disabled athletes (e.g. Tomasz Lewandowski, Tomasz Kaźmierczak) use CBSFC research equipment and devices. Research and teaching staff of the Center work on e.g. specialized research on athletes trained by the discussed coaches.

All of the analyzed trainers and the physiotherapist are among candidates for the 32nd Olympic Games or the 16th Paralympics Games Tokyo 2020. Their trainees and the football team must obtain certain qualification standards (Table 4) to compete in the largest sporting event, which are the Tokyo Games in 2020. The athletes

listed in Table 4 are bound to reach qualifying standards in their respective disciplines and will become the Polish national team members for the Tokyo Summer Games. The qualification standards are quite challenging, but feasible because the athletes represent a high level of Olympic or Paralympic disciplines.

Men's football team (U21) is in a quite difficult qualifying position. In June, during European Championships 2019, they will compete with the often victorious teams of Spain, Italy and Belgium. Only the semi-finalists are guaranteed to participate in the Tokyo Olympic Games. On June 22, 2019 it will be decided whether Polish football team has obtained qualification standards for the Japanese Games, and trainer Miłosz Stępiński will be on the coaching staff of Czesław Michniewicz – the first U21 trainer (Stępiński, 2019b).

**Table 4.** Qualifying standards for athletes (trainees)

First and last name of the trainer	First and last name of the athlete	Athlete's sports club	Sports discipline	Competition	Qualification standard
Tomasz Kaźmierczak	Jolanta Majka Michał Gadowski	KSI "Start" Szczecin	Rowing (disabled)	TAMix2x (mixed doubles)	World Cup in 2019 – ranks 1–8 Continental qualifications in 2020 – the first two teams
Jacek Kostrzeba	Krystian Zalewski Michał Rozmys	UKS Barnim Goleniów	Athletics	3,000-meter steeplechase 800 m	8:22.00 1:45.20
Tomasz Lewandowski	Marcin Lewandowski	WKS Zawisza Bydgoszcz	Athletics	1,500 m	3:35.00
Grzegorz Musztafaga	Paulina Woźniak	KSI "Start" Szczecin	Swimming (disabled)	100 m breaststroke	High ranking at the world list from certain competitions and a limit of places awarded to Poland by IPC Swimming
Miłosz Stępiński	Polish National Team U21	Polish National Team U21	Men's football	–	European Championship in 2019 – ranks 1–4

Source: Kaźmierczak (2019a, 2019b); Woźniak (2019a, 2019b); Stępiński (2019a); www.pzla.pl.

To become a coach, a member of a coaching or medical staff in the Olympic or Paralympic team (including a role of a coach of a trainee/-s), certain requirements must be met, which are set by the boards of Polish sports associations; they are approved by the Polish Olympic Committee or the Polish Paralympic Committee (www.olimpijski.pl; www.paralympic.org.pl; www.pzla.pl).

## Conclusions

1. All of the analyzed graduates of the University of Szczecin are among the trainers (Tomasz Kaźmierczak, Jacek Kostrzeba, Tomasz Lewandowski, Grzegorz Musztafaga, Miłosz Stępiński) and a physiotherapist (Beata Buryta), who are candidates for the Polish national team for the 32nd Olympic Games or the 16th Paralympics Games Tokyo 2020.

2. Tomasz Kaźmierczak – he will definitely be present for the fourth time at the Summer Games Tokyo 2020 as a coach for disabled rowers (previous participations in 2008, 2012, and 2016).

3. The trainees of the coaches in question (except for the football team) can be included into the Polish team participating in the Summer Games Tokyo 2020 and at least compete in finals during the Olympic or Paralympic competition.

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