

# Development of Sports Medicine in East Germany from 1945 to 1990

## Entwicklung der Sportmedizin im Osten Deutschlands 1945 bis 1990

### Post-war years to 1949

The post-war years were characterized by regained awareness and existential hardship in all of Germany, including the part occupied by the Soviets, which left little room or opportunity for athletic activities. About 60 percent of the sports facilities were destroyed or being used for other purposes (emergency and refugee quarters, agrarian uses) and thus not available.

The sports movement in the East was given impetus with the founding of the "Deutschen Sportausschuss" (DS) on 1st October 1948. This directed the entire sports operations in the Soviet Occupation Zone (SBZ). This was preceded by an edict issued by the Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) "Guidelines for the creation of a uniform sports movement", maintained by the FDJ and the League of Unions (FDGB). The centralization was oriented to the Soviet system and did not permit any other form of organization of sports and sports-medical activities. Its declared objective was the inclusion of broad levels of the population, especially the youth, in regular sports activities. Immediately thereafter, State Sport Committees and County Sports Committees were formed throughout all states in the SBZ, which organized and coordinated sports events in each territory. Starting on 1st July 1946, sports-medical curricula were set up by various facilities of physical education for sport students and trainers. In the same year, the "Institut für körperliche Erziehung und Schulhygiene" (Director: H. Riedel) recommenced instruction and studies at the University of Leipzig.

The former Friedrich-Wilhelms-University, located in the Soviet sector of Berlin, began teaching in 1946 as the University of Berlin (renamed Humboldt University of Berlin in 1949) with initially seven faculties. Teachers at the Charité were the first to include sports-medical teaching as "Sport Biology".

### Sports Medicine in the DDR (1949 to 1990)

At the end of 1949, there were sport groups with more than 500,000 members in the newly-formed German Democratic Republic (DDR). More than 800 large company sports groups (BSG) had been founded. Sports-medical development was not initially able to keep up with this rapid centralization. It was not until 1950 with the increasing need for sports-medical management that there was a rapid increase in sports-medical activities. The "Jugendgesetz" passed in February 1950 by the Volkskammer of the DDR defined measures to promote sports. Among others, these were the creation of a sport medal, the reconstruction or construction of sports facilities, improved production of sports implements and sports equipment, reduced travel tickets for sports activities and the founding of a college in Leipzig "...for physical culture for the training of teachers in physical education, for sports teachers and trainers and for the promotion of scientific work in sports..." In the same year, there was already a department (later Main Department) of sports medicine in the Ministry of Health. The Minister of Health issued a decree on

12th September 1950 on the physical examination for acquisition of a sport medal. This created the requirement that doctors with sports-medical engagement made themselves available for sport-medical examinations as a paid "additional activity" (Z-job). On the initiative of the Ministry of Health, the "First Meeting of Sports Physicians in the Peoples' Republic of Germany" was held on 5th May 1951 in Leipzig. More than 120 participants, including renowned sports doctors and college deans (including M. Bürger, H. Grimm, A. Mommsen, H.-H. Schnelle, R. Schröder, B. Schwarz, A. Böhmig, H. Burger, R. Dietrich, J. Nöcker) held discussions following the introductory speech by K. Tittle on "The Tasks of a Democratic Sports-Physician Organization". Prompt founding of a "Sportärztlichen Vereinigung" was suggested as a result of the discussions.

### Sports-Medical Institutes and Facilities in East Germany

Starting in 1950, sports-medical departments were formed at the Institutes for Physical Education or Sports-Sciences sections of the Universities in Halle/Saale 1953 (W. Jacobi), Greifswald (A. Drews), Rostock (H.-H. Schnelle), Jena 1967 (J. Scheibe), East Berlin after 1969 (D. Schmidt). They were under the Ministry of Universities and Technical Academies. The Teachers Colleges in Postdam (G. Badtke, Magdeburg (W. Geibel) and Zwickau (K. Koinzer) with a "Wissenschaftsbereich Sportmedizin" and teachers of sport studies belonged to the Ministry of Public Education. As early as 1950, the decades-old demand that "every doctor [be] a sports doctor" was reaffirmed by Arno Arnold, who considered sports medicine mandatory as a required and examination subject in the study of medicine. Optional lectures in sports medicine or sport-related topics as part of other subjects were offered and utilized at the six Medical University Faculties in the DDR (Rostock, Greifswald, Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, and Jena) and the three Medical Academies (Erfurt, Dresden and Magdeburg)



Deutsche Hochschule für Körperkultur Leipzig im Oktober 1965.

starting in the late 1950s. Sports medicine found a fixed spot in the obligatory curriculum for medical studies only after the interdisciplinary teaching complex (IDK) was introduced in the final semester of medical studies at the end of the 1980s.

### German University for Physical Education (Deutsche Hochschule für Körperkultur, DHfK)

The Deutsche Hochschule für Körperkultur (DHfK), founded on 5th October 1950, had a Sports Medicine Department right from the first (Director: K. Tittel). It was responsible for the sports-medical teaching of sport students and the monitoring of student health. The first sport-physicians training courses were offered in a boarding school setting already in the following year. The Institute for Sports Medicine of the DHfK was founded in 1961. During creation of the later faculties, the "Faculty for Natural Sciences and Sports Medicine" was founded (Dean: K. Tittel). As early as 1956, there was a research position which worked on training physiological and sports-medical questions. Later, there was a generous expansion of the University and the Institute for Sports Medicine. The "Rehabilitation Centrum Kreischa" (near Dresden) became associated with the Institute in 1962 under the direction of S. Israel. It became the "Central Institute for Sports Medical Services" in 1968 (Director until 1988 S.E. Strauzenberg). In Leipzig, as well as in Kreischa, there were courses and advanced seminars in sports medical areas with participants from at home and abroad. In addition, there was intensive research work on issues with sports-medical foci.

Eight branches of the BHfK were formed for training of the high-performance athletes in the territories (Rostock, Berlin, Cottbus, Leipzig, Erfurt, Karl-Marx-Stadt, Dresden, Magdeburg). In addition, starting in 1976, these conducted consultation centers in performance centers (among them in Neubrandenburg, Frankfurt/Oder, Oberhof). Sports Medicine was taught there primarily by teachers of the local SMD, doctors with sports-medical qualification in out- and in-patient health services and university facilities.

### Research Institute for Physical Education and Sports (FKS)

The FKS was founded in April 1969 to effectively meet the high-performance sports goals of the DDR. It was a combination of the research facility and the major part of the Institute for Sports Medicine of the German University for Physical Education in Leipzig. The FKS was the only institution for high-performance sports research in the DDR and employed more than 600 people until it was dissolved in 1990. Up to the Olympic Games in 1972, research was concentrated on boxing, speed skating, weight lifting, light athletics, wrestling, rowing, bob racing, swimming, ski jumping, cross-country skiing, gymnastics and volleyball. Work at the FKS was shaped by interdisciplinary research groups. As a result of this effective practical work, for example, sport-type-specific ergometers were introduced by 1974 in all types of sports. Among these were, for example, the current channel in swimming in 1971 and the tiltable treadmill for cross-country skiing in 1974. About 20 physicians worked in high-performance sports research at the FKS in various projects for different sport types. Starting in the mid-1970s, the Sports Medicine group worked relatively independently in performance diagnostics, load management, management by type of sports and rehabilitation. The number of sports doctors working at the FKS (specialists for Sports Medicine and Assistants in continued education) increased by 1990 to about 40. Only physicians worked in

the Endocrinology Department (doping research), directed by a Biologist. The Reunification Contract (Article 39) set forth continuation of the FKS in a suitable legal form. After a transition regulation (the so-called waiting loop), 124 colleagues of various types of sports, including four doctors, were employed at the "Institut für Angewandte Trainingswissenschaft" (IAT), founded on 16th April 1992 in Leipzig.

The increased need for appropriate treatment of injured athletes in high-performance sports led to closer cooperation with specialized facilities of in-hospital health services. Starting in 1963, these were an accident surgical Department in Berlin-Pankow under the direction of K. Franke and the Orthopedics specialist D. Jungmichel at the Waldkrankenhaus Bad Dübren. A special traumatological department (J. Weger and H. Brenke) at the Zentralinstitut des Sportmedizinischen Dienstes Kreischa undertook the functional later treatment and athletic rehabilitation of injured and ill athletes.

### Rebeginning of organized Sports Medicine

Important to the development of organized Sports Medicine in the DDR was the Conference of Sports Physicians, held with international participants from 13th to 15th December 1953 in Leipzig. The Chairman was M. Bürger, Leipzig. Apart from the 23 DDR-speakers from various specialties, there were 17 well-known speakers from West Germany (among them W. Boldt, H.W. Knipping, H. Venrath, Cologne; A. Koch, Münster; H. Reindell, Freiburg). 15 sports physicians from "friendly socialist countries" were also present. After this conference – at the suggestion of the representative of the Ministry of Health, R. Müller (moved to West Germany in 1955) – plans were begun for a "Working Society Sports Medicine". 41 doctors registered as future members. There was no talk of a possible connection with the existing Deutschen Sportärztebund in West Germany.

### Sports Medical Society in the DDR

During a weekend seminar on 14th/15th November 1954 in Leipzig, an "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Sportmedizin" (AGSM) was finally constituted. A. Arnold (Leipzig) was elected the first Chairman. The superior office for all medical specialist societies in the DDR was the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Klinische Medizin." For the GfSM of the DDR, a special regulation was made which defined subordination to the SKS. Only purely specialist questions had to be clarified with the Ministry of Health or the superior office. All other organizational and management questions (planning, decisions, congress topics, cadre nominations, trips abroad and the delegates, publications) were to be "discussed" with the SKS, that is required authorization. The specialist organ of the society was the journal "Medizin und Sport", which appeared for the first time in March 1961 with publication every month and for a time every two months. Starting in 1969, it became established under the primary editorship of the Sports Medical Service.

### Sports Medical Qualifications

After the first sports-physician qualifications were made in



Das Logo der Gesellschaft für Sportmedizin der DDR.

1950, physicians interested in sports have been qualified since 1956 in a uniform curricular for "State Approbation as Sports Physician." This approbation was granted for five years and could be extended for another five years on submission of proof of participation in continued sports-medical education and sports-medical management work. About 40 physicians per year received this approbation.

For the various areas of activity in special sport-medical management, the title "Facharzt für Sportmedizin" was introduced starting in 1963. Required for acquisition was a four-year (as of 1967 five-year) post-graduate training with final examination before a central specialist Commission. The curriculum included one year each of activity in an internal-medicine, orthopedic-traumatological, physiological and sports-medical facility. In addition, there were courses with sports-methodological and sports-pedagogical instruction at the Deutschen Hochschule für Körperkultur (DHfK).

Practical sports-medical training was undertaken in a facility of the Sports Medical Service, at the DHfK in Leipzig, at the Forschungsinstitut für Körperkultur und Sport (FKS), at the Central Institute of the SMD in Kreischa, and at the sport-medical university institutes. Examination for specialists was the responsibility of the professorship for Sports Medicine at the Akademie für ärztliche Fortbildung der DDR in Berlin-Lichtenberg (The Professor in 1967 was S.E. Strauzenberg, followed by K. Tittel in 1985). Conducting of the examinations was the responsibility of two central examination commissions (for northern and southern DDR). About 700 approbations as "Facharzt für Sportmedizin" were granted up to 1990.

### Sports-Medical Services (SMD)

As early as 1st January 1952, the first Sports-medical Consultation Centers were opened in East Berlin. The start of a uniform sports-medical management system was decreed by the Minis-



Das Leistungsphysiologische Labor von Prof. Kurt Tittel im Forschungsinstitut Leipzig.

ter. The formation of the SMD in 1963 and the introduction of the "Facharzt für Sportmedizin" completed a basic change in the work of sports physicians. What had been a regional responsibility for sports-medical management now became a central state organizational structure, the Sportmedizinischer Dienst. Up to the end of the 1950s, county sports physicians from out-patient and inpatient health services were employed by the hour in addition to their regular duties in practically all counties in the DDR. This duty was initially performed by interested colleagues, usually on a volunteer basis and without pay, later in the so-called "Z (Zusatz - additional)" relationship as a paid sideline. Their tasks were to advise people in the population engaged in sports, realization of the legal conditions for exemption from school sports,

performance of examinations for fitness for sports, and the safety of sports events.

Starting in 1970, clearly-defined responsibilities were assigned to every area of the SMD in the high-performance sports system. The county sports physicians were now responsible especially for the extensive care of young aspiring athletes admitted to the training centers. These young athletes had been selected in a comprehensive selection process (ESA) at each school class level.

Every activity in high-performance sports was kept strictly secret. The work and business ordinances enacted put every co-worker under the obligation of the strictest confidentiality concerning all matters in the SMD.

Having early recognized the importance of athletic success for the international reputation, the leaders of the political party and sports directors spared no expense to maintain and increase the spectacular success of DDF sports on the world stage.

Part of the preparations for the Olympic Games in 1971 in Munich, in certain types of sports, included special or "supportive measures" (so-called "u.M."), as doping was euphemistically called, although the DDR and its sports managers had always officially recognized the Anti-Doping Charta. That doctors in the SMD could be forced to perform measures determined by the Sports Leagues was not the case. But anyone who refused could be certain of being judged unsuitable for employment in high-performance sports. At the end (1990), there were about 1800 people employed in the SMD, of these about 350 specialists for sports medicine. Dissolution of the SMD as the central institution occurred at the end of 1990, decreed by the Federal Ministry of Finance for all of Germany – against the will of far-sighted doctors and well-known university teachers.

*Dieter Schnell, Karl-Hans Arndt und Herbert Löllgen*

### Literature

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