



ILZE GUDRO, ALĪDA ZIGMUNDE

# Olympians of Riga Technical University in 110 Years 1912–2022





The scientific monograph has been published in commemoration of the 160th Anniversary of RTU. It is dedicated to engineering students – Olympians, who studied at the engineering faculties of different universities that were historically successive to the predecessor of RTU – Riga Polytechnicum. Although schools and faculties changed their names and affiliation under different powers and political systems, their origin can be traced back to the oldest technical university in the Baltics – Riga Polytechnicum.

ILZE GUDRO  
ALĪDA ZIGMUNDE

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The monograph presents materials on the students, graduates and academic personnel of Riga Polytechnicum established in 1862, later called Riga Polytechnic Institute, and its successor Riga Technical University, as well as the engineering faculties of the University of Latvia, who participated in the Olympic Games. The monograph discusses their sports activities and their relationships with the Latvian Olympic Committee. The study is dedicated to the athletes who participated in the Olympic Games from 1912 to 2022.

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The scientific monograph is based on documents from the Latvian State Historical Archive of the National Archives of Latvia, the RPI / RTU Archive, the documents of the archive of the Latvian Olympic Committee, materials from the RTU Sports Centre (till 2017 – Sports Club), Latvian Sports Museum, RTU Research Centre for Engineering History, RTU History Museum and library collections, supplemented by materials from the Olympians' private archives and interviews with them.

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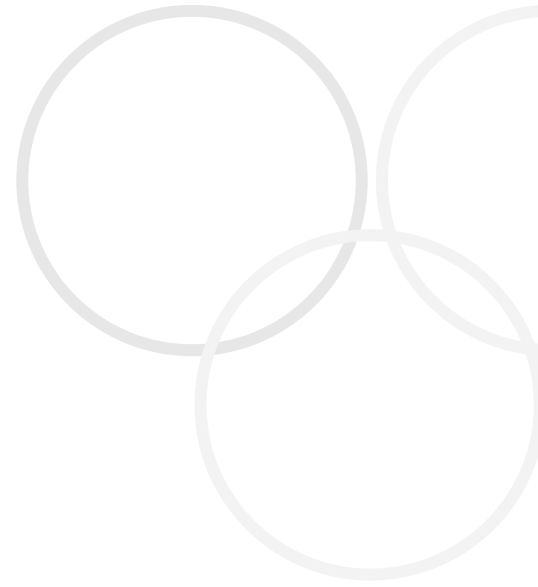
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## INTRODUCTION



**Figure 1.** 1912 Olympics bronze medal (obverse).

The scientific monograph is a revised, supplemented, and clarified edition of the scientific monograph «Olympians of Riga Technical University in 100 Years. 1912–2012» published in 2013. It is dedicated to the 160th anniversary of Riga Technical University (RTU) and 110 years since Latvia and RTU had won their own Olympic medal.

The study provides a brief overview of the beginnings of sports in higher education in the second half of the 19th century and its development in the 20th and 21st centuries. The volume also presents biographies of students-Olympians, as well as information on the engineers who contributed to the Olympic and Paralympic Movement and who provided physical training for the Olympians and participated in the development of the resource base for sports. A number of athletes have joined the team of RTU Olympians since 2013, when the first scientific monograph was published, their sporting achievements are also presented in this supplemented edition.

People began to play sports in ancient times – Ancient Greece hosted the Ancient Olympic Games, which were held from 776 BCE to 393 CE. The history of the modern Olympic Games dates back to the end of the 19th century. The first modern Games of the Olympiad (the Olympic Games are organized in two rounds: the Olympic Winter Games (held since 1924) and the Games of the Olympiad in which athletes compete in athletic disciplines other than winter sports [1]). The first modern Games of the Olympiad was held in the spring of 1896 in Athens, Greece, it gathered 241 athletes from 14 countries from all over the world, but there were no participants from Russia [2]. At that time, *Vidzeme* and *Kurzeme* were the governorates of the Russian Empire, and sports was very popular in these regions. For the first time the athletes from the present territory of Latvia participated in the competition for Olympic medals in 1912.

Individual athletes could not participate in the Games of the Olympiad, and those contestants who competed outside sports societies had to join these societies. In anticipation of the Games of the Olympiad, the Russian Olympic Committee was established in March 1911 and the Baltic Olympic Committee was founded on 18 December, 1911. Athletes were selected before the Games of the Olympiad, and in some athletic disciplines, Olympians were selected here in the Baltics, mainly in Riga [3; p. 37].

For the first time, athletes from the present-day Latvia participated in the Games of the Olympiad and won the first Olympic medal in 1912. Students of Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) were among them, so this year marks 110 years since Latvia and also RTU has its own Olympic medal. It was obtained by Harald Blau (1885–1944), a «polytechnician» and a student of RPI Department of Architecture.

1912 was the year when the first higher education institution in the territory of Latvia and the first polytechnical higher education institution in the Baltics and Russia – RPI, established in 1862 as Riga Polytechnicum (RP; the official name of the university was Riga Polytechnic School (*Polytechnische Schule zu Riga*; 14 October 1862–18 May 1896); later – Riga Polytechnic Institute; 18 May 1896–3 August 1919) – celebrated its 50th anniversary, and achievements of students-athletes at the Games of the Olympiad were a good gift for the university. In contrast to other previously established specialized technical higher education institutions, RP was the first full-profile technical higher education institution – it represented various branches of engineering sciences [4].



**Figure 2.** Steamboat of the Russian-American line «Birma» in Liepāja (1912).

Although RPI was officially closed on 3 August 1919 (during academic year 1918/1919, it operated under different names – Baltic Technical University (*Baltische Technische Hochschule*; 1 October 1918–3 January 1919), Latvian Higher School (LHS; 8 February 1919–22 May 1919), Riga Technical Higher School (RTHS; 5 June 1919–6 July 1919). Eventually, the Latvian Higher School was established on its basis in 1919, which in 1923 was renamed the University of Latvia (UL), and thus the training of engineers continued.

This scientific monograph also presents information on those engineering students who studied at the technical faculties of the UL (during World War II (29 January 1942–15 October 1944) – University of Riga (UR; *Universität zu Riga*); during the Soviet era (study year of 1940/1941; 15 October 1944–19 March 1990) – State University of Latvia (SUL), in 1958 it was named after *Pēteris Stučka*, in 1967 it was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, which was reflected in the name of the university) until the summer of 1958, when RPI was restored. In 1990, the name of the institute was changed to RTU. The engineering and sports traditions of the oldest university in Latvia have still been maintained. Olympians have been studying at now 160-year-old RTU, and athletes-Olympians have also been part of its history for 110 years.

The Paralympic Games have taken place since the second half of the 20th century. They are also organized in two rounds: the Paralympic Games have taken place since 1960 and Paralympic Winter Games have been held from 1976 [5]. Latvia has participated in these games since 1992, when two track-and-field athletes from our country – *Aldis Šūpulnieks* and *Armands Ližbovskis* – competed in Barcelona, Spain [6]. RTU has also been represented in these games – a graduate of our university (*Bc. 2011; Mg. 2021*) *Polina Rožkova* competed in wheelchair fencing in 2016 and in wheelchair curling in 2022.

The scientific monograph is based on the documents from the Latvian State Historical Archive of the National Archives of Latvia, the RPI / RTU Archive, the documents of the archive of the Latvian Olympic Committee, materials of the RTU Sports Centre (till 2017 – RTU Sports Club), Latvian Sports Museum, RTU Research Centre for Engineering History, RTU History Museum and library collections, supplemented by Olympians' private materials and memories.

The biographies of Olympians and Paralympians are published in the alphabetical order sorted by surname of the athletes. The amount of information on each athlete is not the same, because their paths in life and sports have also been different. In historical perspective, it is important to recognize not only the winners of the medals, but all students-Olympians, so the authors have reflected on all participants of these prestigious competitions who have studied engineering in Latvia. RTU is proud of the achievements of every Olympian and Paralympian, since many people do sports, but only a few take part in the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Contemporaries, education system, sports policies, and the political situation are important factors that have contributed to and sometimes hindered the growth and success of our Olympians. The events of both World War I and World War II changed the lives of not only the entire country but also of each individual athlete, because Olympic Games were not held during the war. During the Soviet era, compulsory sports classes at universities not only promoted the sportiness of future engineers



**Figure 3.** 1912 Olympics bronze medal (reverse).



**Figure 4.** Russian Olympic delegation at the Steamboat «Birma» in Stockholm (1912).

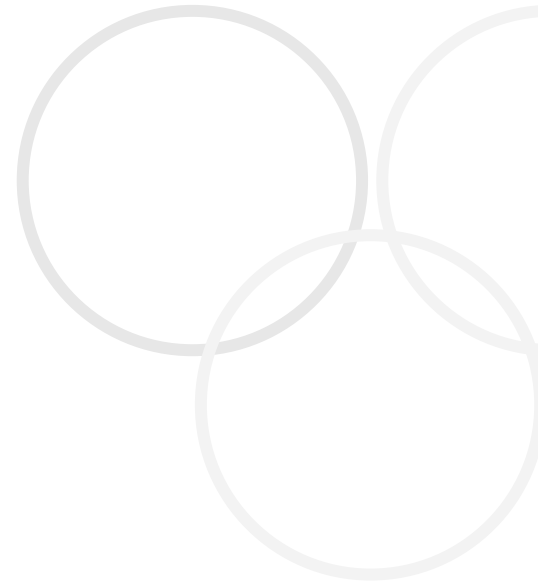


and other professionals and increased their chances to be included in the National Olympic Team, but also promoted greater interest in sports. The administration and academic staff of RTU have always supported athletes, giving them the opportunity to study according to an individual plan.

Historical events and the study process are partly reflected in the documents stored in the personal files of the university students, which have been collected over a long period of time; some of these documents are presented in this monograph.

The *curriculum vitae* of the Olympians is supplemented by facts obtained in interviews with athletes by one of the authors of the monograph – *Ilze Gudro*.

Let them tell their story of the events and achievements of the past times and motivate future university students to go in for sports and compete for Olympic and Paralympic medals!



## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE STUDY SUBJECT «SPORT» IN LATVIA

In the territory of present-day Latvia, sports were introduced as a subject in schools in the first half of the 19th century (the first was *Bērzaine* Gymnasium, founded in 1825), and at the beginning it was gymnastics. Beginning in 1826, students went to the gym every afternoon. The ideas of gymnastics came from Prussia, where the «father of German gymnastics» – Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852) highlighted the need for gymnastics to prepare young people in the fight against the French and to create a united and free state. F. L. Jahn has also written more than one book that is still kept in Latvian libraries, and his ideas appeared in the Baltics with literature and press publications.



**Figure 5.** Building of *Bērzaine* Gymnasium (c. 1900–1905).



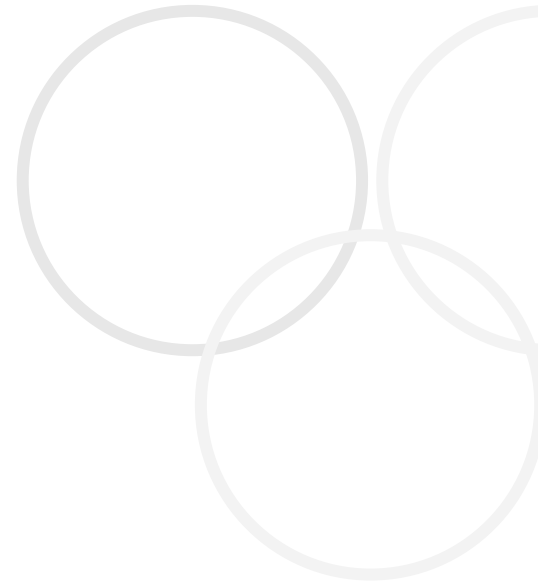
**Figure 6.** F. L. Jahn (postcard, 1930s).

The F. L. Jahn's intention was to educate young people in the spirit of patriotism and to train them physically. Albert Woldemar Hollander (1796–1868), the Principal of *Bērzaine* Gymnasium, a student and acquaintance of the patriotically-minded F. L. Jahn, was the first who introduced training in gymnastics in *Vidzeme* at his private school in the 1820s–1830s.

In the second half of the 19th century, gymnastics became popular and it soon started to get practiced in *Jelgava* and other cities of *Kurzeme* and *Vidzeme*, including Riga. Graduates of *Bērzaine* Gymnasium, Riga City Gymnasium and other educational institutions later studied and worked at Riga Polytechnicum (RP; 1862–1896) and Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI; 1896–1919), further promoting the ideas of F. L. Jahn [7]. Gymnastics as an optional subject was introduced not only in schools, but also in the RP Preparatory School. The founders of RP, the members of RP Council, and academic staff were mostly either Baltic-Germans or came from German-speaking countries – now Germany, Austria, and Switzerland – and were supporters of F. L. Jahn's ideas. It should be mentioned that the brother of the first RP Director (1862–1875) Professor Ernst Nauck (1819–1875), August Nauck (1822–1892) worked for a few years in a gymnasium in Berlin in the middle of the 19th century, where «the father of German gymnastics» F. L. Jahn had worked, perhaps that is how F. L. Jahn's ideas entered RP / RPI [8; p. 134].



**Figure 7.** A. Hollander with his wife Scharlotte (mid-19th century).



SPORTS AT RIGA POLYTECHNICUM /  
RIGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
1862–1919



**Figure 8.** B. Straß (first half of the 19th century).



**Figure 9.** Signature of B. Straß (1870).



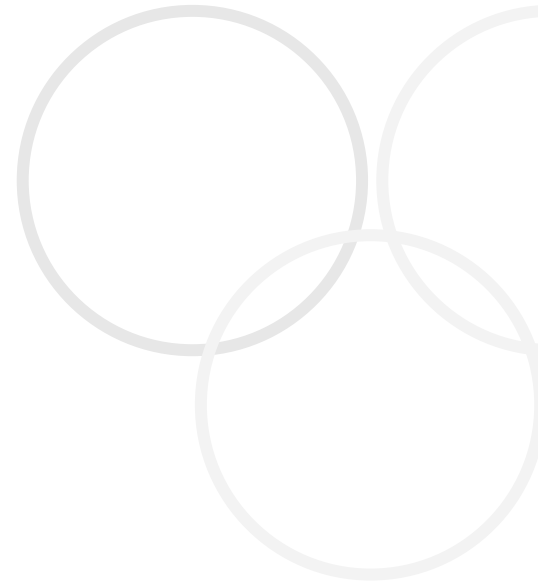
**Figure 10.** Fragment of the program of the RP Preparatory School (1879/1880).

Gymnastics was taught at the Preparatory School of Riga Polytechnicum (RP), which existed from 1862 to 1892, starting from 1870. In academic year 1870/1871, gymnastics classes were held for three hours, and starting with the second half of the 1870s, for two hours per week. The program of gymnastics classes covered both queuing and other exercises similar to those executed by army teams, gymnastics with various equipment, and other gymnastics activities [9]. During gymnastics classes, young people were trained to observe discipline and order, taught to be aware of their body, to work in groups in a coordinated way, which was very important in the age of development of manufacturing and other related industries, as people worked in teams at the factories and on the construction of railways, bridges, and buildings. Training of the next cohorts of students for the military service was not given priority at that time because the students of higher school were not drafted into the army. Foreign nationals, for example, Prussian citizens, were an exception, since they went into the military service. In Russia, the recruitment law was repealed in 1874, introducing the compulsory military service. In this respect, RP was equated with Category I educational institution, its students were not drafted into the army until the age of 27 [10; p. 46, 187]. In 1880, the RP Preparatory School was granted the rights of Category II educational institution, but the right for suspension of military service for the duration of studies remained. The number of students increased, for example, in academic year 1915/1916, during World War I, but soon many were drafted into the army, and the number of students decreased in the following years [10; p. 79].

The first two teachers of gymnastics at the RP Preparatory School – Bernhard Straß (1839–1884) and August Engels (1850–1929) – were born and educated in Germany in the spirit of F. L. Jahn's ideas.

B. Straß worked as a gymnastics teacher in several schools in Riga, in his spare time he wrote poetry and participated in various gymnastics festivals in Germany [11]. He also wrote articles on gymnastics for newspapers in *Vidzeme* and Germany. Unfortunately, a serious illness in 1881 interrupted his successful work at RP in 1870. A successor to B. Straß, A. Engels, started working at RP in 1882 and taught gymnastics to the next generation of students until 1890. A. Engels also worked as a gymnastics teacher in several schools in Riga and trained future gymnastics teachers. Pedagogue A. Engels resigned from RP because he did not speak Russian. At that time schools were Russified in *Vidzeme* and *Kurzeme*, so teaching staff had to know Russian. In this period, the program of gymnastics classes also changed – military gymnastics was introduced. From 1890 to 1892, the military gymnast Yevgeny Yelagin (*Евгений Елагин*; ?-?) worked as an RP gymnastics teacher. After his work in Riga, he moved to live and work in St. Petersburg [12]. It is known that at the end of the 19th century there was a shortage of gymnastics teachers and with the closure of the RP Preparatory School gymnastics classes were not held any more. Russification also affected RP, which was reorganized into Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in 1896, a state university with Russian as the language of instruction. RPI existed in this capacity until 1919, but gymnastics or any other sport was not included in its curriculum.





MEMBERSHIP OF RIGA POLYTECHNICUM /  
RIGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC STAFF  
IN VARIOUS SPORTS' ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETIES  
1862–1919



Figure 11. Fragment of the regulations of RPI Student Gymnastics Society (1913).



Figure 12. Title page of A. von Antropoff's report (1910).

Students and academic staff participated in the work of various organizations. «The Fencing Society» (German: *Fechtbodenverein*) began operating at Riga Polytechnicum (RP) in 1863, in 1865 it was transformed into the German Student Corporation «*Fraternitas Baltica*» [13]. Later, other student corporations were established – German «*Concordia Rigensis*» (1869) and «*Rubonia*» (1875), Polish «*Arconia*» (1878), Russian «*Fraternitas Arctica*» (1880), Latvian «*Selonija*» (1880), Polish «*Veletia*» (1883), Estonian «*Vironia*» (1900) and Latvian «*Talavija*» (1900). As it is known, fencing was popular among student corporations, it was considered a prestigious sport both in the upper circles of society and in the academic environment of that time. Andreas von Antropoff (1878–1956), a graduate (1904) of the Department of Chemistry of Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and an Assistant Professor (1908–1914) at RPI, worked for the German Student Corporation «*Fraternitas Baltica*». A. von Antropoff had become acquainted with sports life in England, where the IV Games of the Olympiad were held in 1908. In 1910, he published a report inviting the Rigans to engage in water sports, especially rowing [14]. Given that the Baltic provinces were not represented in the IV Games of the Olympiad in 1908 at all (whereas, for instance, Helsinki sent 54 students-athletes), A. von Antropovff invited the entire society, first of all student corporations, to think more about sports and engage in sports.

Two years later, in 1912, five students and one RPI graduate took part in the Games of the Olympiad for the first time: a student of the Department of Architecture *Haralds Blaus* (1885–1944); a student of the Department of Engineering Boris von Pertel (1888–1955); RPI graduate Paul Lieth (1884–1950); students of a chemist A. von Antropoff – Harald Hahne (1892–1940) and Lev Sitin (*Левъ Сытинъ*; 1891–1973); and Herbert von Kuhlberg (1893–1915), who entered the Department of Commerce in 1913.

Student sports organizations were established in the early 20th century. RPI Students' Gymnastics Society was the first organization of this kind, its statutes were registered on 17 December 1908 [15]. The Academic Society of Rowing and Sailing registered its statutes on 25 September 1912, and Coteries of Sports and Chess Game Fans – on 22 March 1913. In the same year, the Athletes' Union was founded in Riga, which also comprised the RPI Sports Coterie [16]. *Aleksanders Kannenbergs* (1895–1939), a student of the Department of Chemistry, was one of the founders of the Coterie of Chess Game Fans. Together with his fellow student, later famous chemist Academician *Arvids Kalniņš* (1894–1981), he founded the Riga Academic Chess Society [17]. *A. Kalniņš* also co-authored a voluminous book dedicated to the history of the game of chess, which was published in 1940 [18].

There was a long tradition of playing chess at RP / RPI. The first RP Director Professor Ernst Nauck (1819–1875), played chess in his spare time and was one of the best chess players in the 1870s [18; p. 6]. Piers Bohl (1865–1921), Professor of mathematics at RPI, who developed remarkable theoretical analyses, considering, for example, the Royal gambit and the Spanish postcard, was also a strong chess player [18; p. 8]. The game of chess was very popular among students. The RTU Rector's Cup in Chess is still organized today.

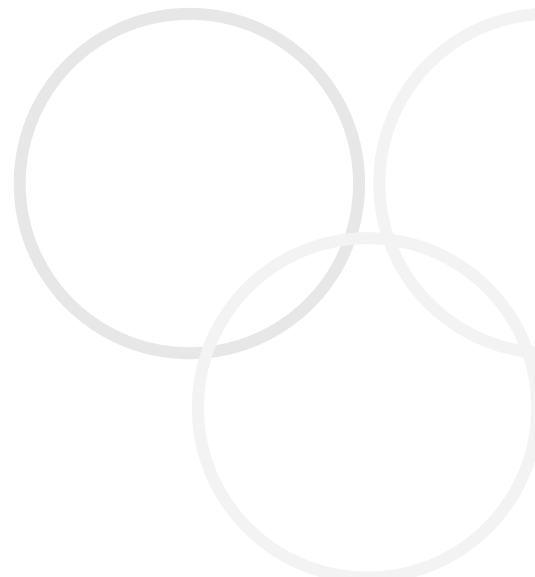
RP and RPI students and academic staff practiced various athletic disciplines also outside the university and were members of various sports societies. Riga Gymnastics Society (*Rigaer Turnverein*) started operating in the same year as RP – in 1862, bringing together students, professors, assistant professors, and assistants.

Academic staff of RP and RPI actively participated in the work of Riga Gymnastics Society – chemist Heinrich Trey (1851–1917), geologist and mineralogist Karl Bruno Doss (1861–1919), mathematician and naturalist Karl Reinhold Kupffer (1872–1935), gymnastics teachers of the RP Preparatory School Bernhard Straß (1839–1884) and August Engels (1850–1929), student Gottfried Paul Ostwald (1855–1918), brother of the Nobel Prize Laureate, Professor Wilhelm Ostwald (1853–1932), student Gustav Ruthenberg (1858–1914) and others [19]. During the Interwar period, membership lists of Riga Gymnastics Society included RPI graduates, professors of the University of Latvia (UL), chemists *Mārtiņš Prīmanis* (1878–1950) and Waldemar Fischer (1881–1939), Assistant *Pauls Nukke* (1890–1938) and many other former «polytechnicians» [20].

Hermann von Westermann (1842–1918), a teacher of mathematics at RP / RPI, Wolfgang Wachsmuth (1876–1964), RPI graduate, and others, actively worked in Riga Rowing Club founded in 1872. Karl Joseph Lovis (1839–1911), a member of RP / RPI academic staff, students and RP / RPI graduates, and several members of the Council were actively involved in the work of Riga Rifle Society founded in 1859 [21]. The names of RP /RPI students and graduates can be also found in the membership lists of the 1st Riga Cycling Society – Adolf Agthe (1850–1906) and his sons, and Wilhelm Bockslaff (1858–1945), an architect who designed about 30 residential and public buildings in Latvia, as well as several factories. Gustav Taube (1870–1965), a member of the academic staff at both RPI and the UL, and others also were prominent cycling enthusiast [22].

In the first half of the 20th century, Edgar Jacoby (1881–1964), an RPI graduate and teacher, was an active member of Riga Yacht Club, just as *Jonas Šimoliūnas* (1878–1965) – RPI graduate (1909), later faculty member at the University of Lithuania (Kaunas), who was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Yacht Club in 1919 [23].

Sports activities at the oldest technical university in the Baltics were interrupted in the summer of 1915, during World War I, when RPI was evacuated to Moscow. This was followed by the official closure of RPI on 3 August 1919 and inclusion of its technical faculties in the UL, where they operated until the restoration of RPI in 1958. The training of engineers continued at the UL faculties of Architecture, Engineering (Construction Engineering), Mechanics, Chemistry, Agriculture, and at the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law.

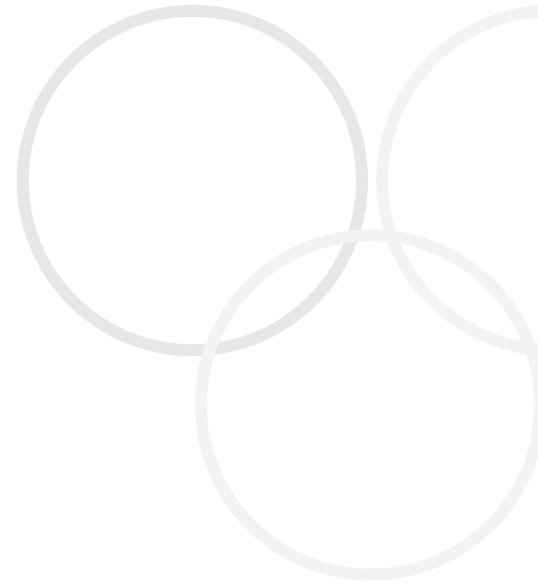


**Figure 13.** Game Committee of Riga Chess Society. From left (standing): *Roberts Bētiņš* (1875–1961), *Kārlis Bētiņš* (1867–1943), August Lieth (1872–1947); sitting: Professor Piers Bohl and Paul Theodor Kerkovius (1868–1940) (early 20th century).



**Figure 14.** The logo of Riga Gymnastics Society (1912).





SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
AT THE ENGINEERING FACULTIES  
OF THE LATVIAN HIGHER SCHOOL /  
UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA /  
UNIVERSITY OF RIGA /  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA  
1919–1958

The Academic Sports Society of the University of Latvia (UL) was founded in 1922, Students Chess Society of the UL has been operating since 1923, and the first Baltic student sports event known as *SELL* (the abbreviation consists of the first letters of the names of four member states: *Suomi* (Finland), *Eesti* (Estonia), *Latvija* (Latvia), *Lietuva* (Lithuania)) took place in Tartu in 1923. *SELL* games took place alternately in all Baltic countries. In 1929, the Society «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*») was established. The UL students played football, chess, tennis, volleyball, gymnastics, went in for swimming, skiing, and participated in the Latvian, European, and world competitions, including the Games of the Olympiad and the Olympic Winter Games.

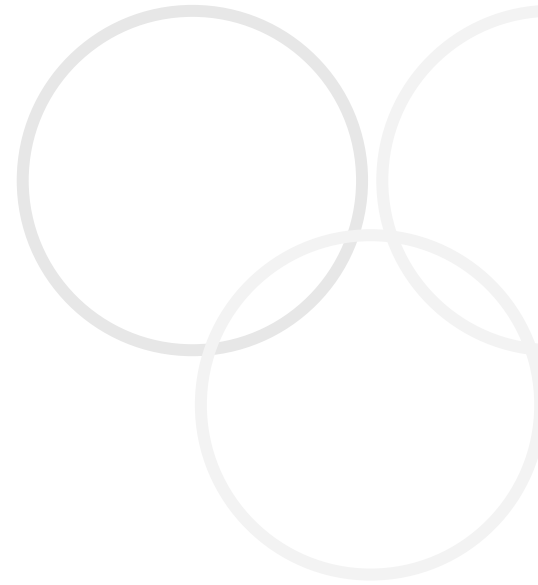
Physical education was introduced as a compulsory subject for the 1st-year students at the UL in October 1938, and the first compulsory lesson at the Latvian Conservatory Gymnasium leased by the UL was solemnly opened by *Alfrēds Vītols* (1878–1945), Vice-Rector for Student Affairs. The first athletic discipline in Latvian universities – gymnastics – was not forgotten either and «on 25 October 1938, Gymnastics classes started at 10.00. All students had to buy their own exercise suit in «*US*» sportsmen colours – light blue canvas with darker blue border. The curriculum included voluntary gymnastics and sports for male students – gymnastics, gymnastics with tools, basketball, volleyball, athletics, football, fencing; for female students – gymnastics, gymnastics with tools, volleyball, basketball and athletics [24].»

In 1945, the Department of War and Physical Education was established at the State University of Latvia (SUL), from 1946 it operated as the Department of Physical Education and Sports. Students were mainly involved in athletics and gymnastics; physical education was still compulsory, initially during the first two years of studies. In the following years, sports activities were related to the regulatory requirements of the initiative «*Gatavs darbam un PSRS aizsardzībai*» (*GDA*; Ready for Work and Defence of the USSR (RWD)). Sports officials and faculty sought to ensure that everyone met the RWD normative standards at Level I, II, or III. Based on the results obtained, a gold, silver, or bronze RWD badge was obtained.

The normative standards covered a number of athletic disciplines and set out requirements and standards that must be met. The compliance to the normative standards of RWD had to be attested in general and vocational technical schools, secondary and higher education institutions, as well as in the physical culture teams of sports societies, in the teams of individual companies, and elsewhere.



**Figure 15.** RWD badges in different years (second half of the 20th century).



SPORTS AT THE RENEWED  
RIGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE /  
RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY  
1958–2022



**Figure 16.** A. Mālmeisters with the Chicago Tribune Cup (1930s).



**Figure 17.** A. Veiss in athletics competitions (mid-20th century).



**Figure 18.** E. Lavendelis with Mrs. Dagnija Dirba in the finals of the Latvian Bridge Tour in Riga at the hotel «Monika» with prizes for the won 3rd place. (2018).



**Figure 19.** I. Knēts while playing chess (1993).

In 1958, Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) was restored, separating the engineering faculties from the State University of Latvia (SUL). RPI established the Department of Physical Education and Sports (1958–1999; 1999–2017 – the Department of Sports; 1993–2017 – the Department was part of Institute of Humanities of Riga Technical University (RTU); since 2017 the Department became part of RTU Sports Centre), which started working in academic year 1958/1959. Many sports specialists of Riga Pedagogical Institute, which was closed in 1958, started to work there. In the first years after the restoration of RPI, compulsory physical education was only available to the 1st and 2nd-year students, and later it was gradually introduced in the 3rd and 4th year of studies. This arrangement was unique to RPI, and it was not practiced at any other university in the then Soviet Union. Later, many higher education institutions introduced physical education classes in the 3rd and 4th year of studies following the example of RPI [25]. Only the students of the day department in their last study year did not participate in these classes, since they were developing their diploma papers. The Department of Physical Education and Sports organized the learning process so that each student could choose the most suitable and enjoyable athletic discipline. The so-called preparatory groups were set up for the young people who were less physically prepared, as well as for those who had certain health problems. Students who had sports classes in one of the kinds of sports were part of more advanced groups with higher requirements. Already in 1958/1959, compulsory physical activities were organized in six athletic disciplines, and their number increased in the following years. For example, in the autumn of 1962, 27 sports sections operated at the institute [26]. The academic staff of the Department led compulsory physical classes and worked with the RPI varsity teams, as well as trained sports judges. Some graduates received the title of a Public Sports Instructor.

After the restoration of RPI in 1958, the issue of sports facilities became extremely topical. Initially, the SUL sports halls at 117 *Lāčplēša* Street and 29 *Raiņa* Boulevard were used, whereas the *VEF* swimming pool, the gym of the Latvian Academy of Arts, and other premises were rented. In the 1960s and 1970s, Sports and Recreation Base «*Roniši*» in *Tukums* District (at present – Engure Region), Winter Sports Base «*Braki*» in *Ērgļi*, and a Boat Station in *Lielupe* were established [27]. It was the dream of the RPI Rector (1963–1985) *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985) to build a swimming pool and a sports complex in accordance with the Olympic standards, but this dream could not be realized during his lifetime due to the lack of funds [28]. The swimming pool, which was built gradually and for a long time, was opened on 1 July 1989.

The rectors of the renewed RPI supported sports and were actively involved in various sports activities. RPI Rector (1961–1963) *Aleksandrs Mālmeisters* (1911–1996) played basketball. Rector *A. Veiss* was a passionate hunter and was engaged in athletics and skiing in his youth. Professor *A. Veiss* started training at the age of 18 and during his studies, immediately after World War II, and became the first ski coach and a team leader of the newly established sports society «*Daugava*». *A. Veiss* came 2nd in the 400-meter race four times (1937, 1938, 1940, 1942) in the Latvian and LSSR championships held from 1937 to 1947, whereas in 1939, he came 1st and in 1947 he was 3rd. He won 1st place in the 400-meter hurdles in 1942, 1945, 1946, and 1947. His result in the 400-meter hurdles in 1947 was 1:00.1 [29].

RPI / RTU Rector (1985–1999) *Egons Lavendelis* played bridge; Rector (1999–2011)



*Ivars Knēts* (1938–2019) practiced athletics and after the restoration of RPI in 1958 became the Head of the Athletics, Tourism and Swimming Sector of the newly established RPI Sports Club [25; p. 604], in free time he played chess; RTU Rector (since 2011) *Leonīds Ribickis* enjoyed shooting sports and badminton.

In addition to the Department of Physical Education and Sports, RPI/RTU Sports Club (1958–2017; since 2017 – part of the RTU Sports Centre) played an important role in the training of athletes and organization of sports life, involving academic staff in physical activities together with the students. The task of the Sports Club was to ensure the development of sports among RPI/RTU students, master students, PhD students, academic staff, employees, and other members of RTU Sports Club, enabling them to achieve high sports results and participate in the competitions of various scale, defending the colours of both their university and the state.

Every year, several masters of sports were trained; university teams and students individually participated in many competitions both here in Latvia and in other republics of the USSR, sometimes abroad, mainly in the socialist countries. In 1965, *Vera Molčanova* (1918–2005), the Head of the Department (1959–1978), was awarded the title of Meritorious Physical Culture and Sports Worker of the LSSR. In 1968, *Harijs Čebrikovs* became a Meritorious Handball Coach of the LSSR, he headed the Department from 1978 to 1994.

The number, names, and activities of the sports sections have changed over time. We now use only the past tense to talk about archery, which was a popular discipline in the 1960s and 1970s. Information on this kind of sport can be found in RTU History Museum, the Latvian Sports Museum, and some other repositories storing the documentaries of that time. In the 1980s, RPI ceased to operate rowing, fencing, and cycling sections, and such disciplines as aerobics, badminton, floorball, frisbee, and others were introduced later.

In 1990, when the name of the university was changed – RPI was renamed Riga Technical University – there was no sign of any changes in the sports life of the university, but in the following years due to reduced funding it was necessary to make a decision that sports was compulsory only for the 1st and 2nd-year students. The number of teachers and coaches decreased. The first years of the 21st century gave hope that more funding could be allocated for sports and its development at RTU, but the financial crisis of 2008 in the world and in Latvia led to adjustments in the study process. Thus, sports became mandatory only for the 1st-year Bachelor students. However, in the following years it has still been possible to preserve the historical tradition that RTU is the university with a «focus on sports». Sport has been preserved as a study subject, although with the collapse of the USSR, most universities gave up organizing compulsory sport activities for the students [30; p. 606].

The Department of Physical Education and Sports changed its name in 1999 to become the Department of Sports. In 2014, along with the establishment of the Faculty of E-learning Technologies and Humanities, which united RTU Institute of Humanities, RTU Institute of Applied Linguistics and RTU Distance Education Study Centre, the Department became part of the Institute of Humanities. In the spring of 2017, the Department was merged with RTU Sports Club, and RTU Sports Centre was established on their basis (Head of the Department, Associate Professor *Egons Lavendelis*) [31, 32].



**Figure 20.** *L. Ribickis* in the shooting range (2005).



**Figure 21.** *V. Molčanova* (1960s).



**Figure 22.** *E. Lavendelis Jr.* (2017).

From 1 September 2017, in order to improve the quality of sports activities, the compulsory study course «Sport» was replaced by a wide range of sports activities, reserving the possibility for the students to choose sport as an elective subject or extracurricular activity [31]. Along with these changes, students have become customers of sports lessons and pay for the desired lessons with either university allocated or personal funds. Until 31 August 2017, in cooperation with the Department of Information Technology, an electronic payment system for sports activities was established to provide virtual money to full-time 1st-year students of undergraduate study programs. Such an account is available to all students, thus enabling them to take part in sports activities by depositing an appropriate amount of money into this account [31]. Using virtual money, students can apply for the following sports: aerobics, therapeutic exercises, athletic gymnastics, badminton, basketball, boxing, bridge, judo, floorball, football, ping-pong, interval training, cheerleading sports, kendo, rock climbing, Nordic walking, self-defence, swimming, chess, skiing, kettlebell lifting, futsal, total body workout, gym, water aerobics athletics, volleyball, Zumba [33]. Students can also choose an elective course «Sport» in a specific athletic discipline, obtaining 2 credit points. Sport lessons within the elective study course are offered in specific kinds of sports, which are determined by the RTU Sports Centre: aerobics (functional training), athletic gymnastics, therapeutic exercises, badminton, basketball, boxing, bridge, wrestling, floorball, football, ping-pong, cheerleading sports / acrobatics, self-defence (special course), self-defence (theoretical course), swimming, chess, tennis, athletics, volleyball, varsity team [34, 35].

The most important sports events for the students are as follows:

- RTU Rector's Cup, which is organized in the format of separate competitions by sports discipline throughout the academic year, in recent years, part of the competition is organized as night tournaments;
- 1st-year students Sport's Day and closing of the Rector's Cup at RTU Conference and Sports Centre «*Ronīši*»;
- Sport's Day for the foreign students;
- rowing regatta of RTU and UL students and academic staff, Coast Match in basketball, etc. [36].

In order to support the athletes studying engineering, RTU Senate approved the Regulations «On Allocation of Riga Technical University Budget Seats to Athletes» at its meeting on 23 March 2015 [37], determining the procedure for submitting and evaluating applications of the candidates (athletes) and allocating budget-funded study seats. RTU financially supports the best Latvian athletes in their studies at RTU Bachelor's, Master's and first level higher professional education programs (except for the students of the Faculty of Architecture). Candidates are evaluated by a committee approved by the RTU Rector. A candidate for a budget-funded study seat should be a member of a specific sport team for at least five years or be a candidate to the Latvian National Team, or a participant of the Latvian National Team in the individual sport discipline [38]. In academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, 20 seats were awarded, in the following years – 15. During academic year 2019/2020, the Paralympic wheelchair curler and wheelchair fencing athlete *Poļina Rožkova*, who had already obtained a Bachelor's degree at RTU, also had the opportunity to pursue a Master's degree on the state budget funds, undertaking a study program on sustainable urban and regional



**Figure 23.** Construction of the RPI swimming pool (1979).



**Figure 24.** RPI swimming pool in *Ķīpsala* (1992).

development. In 2016, *P. Rožkova* participated in the Paralympic Games (wheelchair fencing) in Rio de Janeiro, in 2022 – in the Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing (wheelchair curling). She is one of the few athletes to have participated in both the Paralympic and Paralympic Winter Games. *P. Rožkova* is the Captain of the Latvian Wheelchair National Team and the winner of the «*Trīs Zvaigžņu balvas 2020*» (Three Star Awards 2020) in the nomination «*Paralimpiskā sportiste*» (Paralympic Female Athlete) [39].

On 19 December 2016, RTU Senate made a decision [40] that sports classes from the study year 2017/2018 must be organized using only sports infrastructure of RTU. At present, the following sport bases and premises owned and operated by RTU are located in Riga:

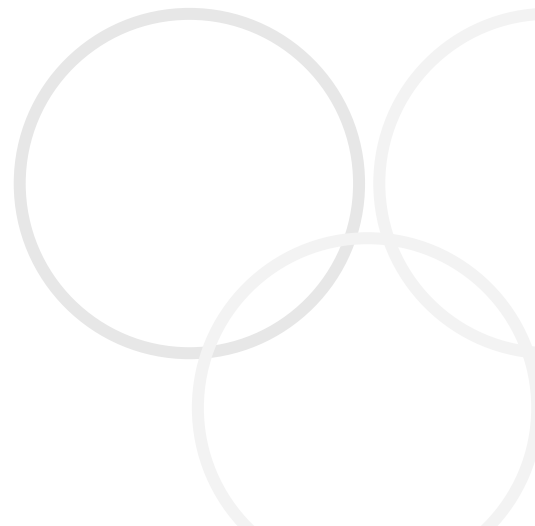
- RTU Stadium – 56a *Daugavgrīvas* Street (two football fields);
- basketball, volleyball and wrestling halls – 1 *Meža* Street, Building 1;
- self-defence, gym and table tennis (ping-pong) halls – 1a *Meža* Street;
- swimming pool, boxing, aerobics, and rock climbing halls – 5 *Ķīpsalas* Street;
- sports field on the balcony of the International Exhibition Hall – 8 *Ķīpsalas* Street;
- RTU Chess Club – 1 *Meža* Street;
- tennis courts – 3 *Kronvalda* Boulevard.

RTU Conference and Sports Centre «*Roniši*» in *Klāpalkneciems*, *Engure* Region can also be used to organize sports events.

The most important competitions internationally are the annual World Universiade and *SELL* games, in which the best RTU athletes traditionally compete. Members of RTU teams and individual athletes compete every year in the Latvian championships of various levels, from amateur leagues to the top leagues of the national and international championships.

Training of RTU varsity teams is also organized using RTU sports infrastructure to the degree possible.

In 2022, not only the students but also RTU employees have the opportunity to engage in sports – they can do sports individually and at various events as part of sports teams. RTU Conference and Sports Centre «*Roniši*» hosts annual traditional and non-traditional sports days [36].



**Figure 25.** Sports' field at RTU Conference and Sports Centre «*Roniši*» (2018).



**Figure 26.** Renovated gym in the complex at *Meža* Street (2021).

## RTU varsity teams / teams in academic year 2021/2022

### Women's varsity teams / teams

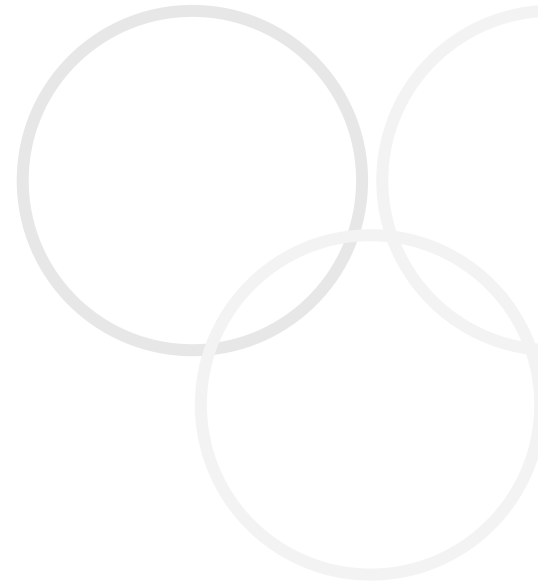
- RTU women's basketball team. In the current season, competes in *Olybet Women's League*. Coach *Intars Jansons*.
  - RTU women's volleyball team. Renovated in 2016, plays in the *Enthusiasts Volleyball League* and the *Latvian Universiade*. Coach *Svetlana Cepurite*.
- 

### Men's varsity teams / teams

- RTU basketball team. In the current season, competes in *Ramirent National Basketball League (NBL2)*. Coach *Dainis Bertāns*.
  - RTU / Rockets floorball varsity team. In the current season, competes in *Riga Open Floorball Championship (ROFC)*, *Men's 1st League*, *Elvi Floorball League*. Coach *Imants Lastovskis*.
  - RTU men's football varsity team. In the season 2020, started to compete in the *Riga Football Championship*. Coach *Andis Kronis*.
  - RTU *Robežsardze / Jūrmala* (volleyball). In the season 2020/2021, competes in the *Baltic League*. Coach *Raimonds Vilde*.
  - RTU men's volleyball team. In the current season, competes in the *National Volleyball League*. Coach *Maksims Žuks*.
- 

### Mixed varsity teams / teams

- RTU cheerleading team. Coach *Katrīna Kūma*.
- RTU self-defence varsity team. Coach *Toms Jansons*.
- RTU powerlifting varsity team. Coach *Jānis Kalnenieks*.
- RTU chess varsity team. Coach *Signe Kacēna*.
- RTU track and field varsity team. Coach *Viktors Bonders*.



CONTRIBUTION OF  
RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY SCIENTISTS  
TO SPORTS



**Figure 27.** A. Dārziņš on Sigulda Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Track, testing the prototypes of the gloves developed by K. Dimitre (2015).



**Figure 28.** M. Rubenis at the sled with RTU logo at RTU Design Factory (2019).

Riga Technical University (RTU) provides support to the Latvian sports, also using the latest scientific achievements. One of the first research projects realized in cooperation with the Latvian Luge Federation was the Bachelor's paper «Equipment for Luge Athletes Force Impulse Detection in the Start Wrench» defended in 2015 by *Katrina Dimitre* (at present – *Kūma*), a student of the joint study program «Medical Engineering and Physics» implemented by RTU and Riga Stradins University (RSU) [41]. The Bachelor's paper was developed under the supervision of Professor *Aleksejs Kataševs* from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Transport and Aeronautics (FMETA). The main goal of this work was to develop a method that detects luge athlete's hand movement force impulse at the start of the track. During the development of the work, the prototypes of special gloves were created from the smart textile incorporating sensors, which was invented at RTU. The gloves were tested on the Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Track in *Sigulda* by FMETA student and luger *Artūrs Dārziņš* [42]. Further research in cooperation with the Latvian Luge Federation was dedicated to the development and technical improvement of sports sleds and special equipment. 3D laser scanning and modelling was performed to improve the aerodynamics and mechanical properties of the sleds, adapting the sleds to the individual height of each athlete.

In 2018, RTU established RTU Sports Technology Research Laboratory, which became part of FMETA [43]. It was initially headed by *Kristens Raševskis* (at present – a Senior Expert of the Innovative Product Development Department of the Science and Innovation Centre). The aim of the laboratory is to ensure systematic cooperation with the athletes in the development and improvement of sports technologies and equipment available to them.

Getting ready for the start in the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in Pyongyang, the Latvian Luge Team improved their sport equipment at RTU Design Factory. Individual «penguins» were custom-designed for each athlete – sleeves with sharp needles, which, attached to the fingertips of the gloves, help athletes to push the sled harder from the start line. Improvements have also been made to the sled mechanics – connecting elements, screw fastenings, and other elements necessary for improvement of the speed and handling of the sleds on the track [44].

On 3 October 2018, RTU and the Latvian Academy of Sports Education (LASE) signed an agreement on cooperation and student exchange in the Conference Hall of «Elektrum» Olympic Sports Centre. The agreement provides for cooperation between RTU and LASE in the field of sports science. Within this framework, RTU offers scientific capacity and laboratory facilities to the Latvian athletes in order to study, for example, the slipperiness efficiency of sled runners, while LASE is responsible for analysis of the biomechanical movements of the athletes. The cooperation agreement between the universities was signed by the LASE Rector, Professor *Jānis Židens*, and the RTU Rector, Academician *Leonīds Ribickis*.

In 2019, separate parts were also printed using 3D printers at RTU Design Factory. These parts were installed in the sleds and act as vibration damping elements. A luger *Mārtiņš Rubenis*, winner of the Olympic medal, now the Coach and Mechanic of the Latvian National Team, noted, «This helps the athletes to ensure stability on the track, as well as makes the sleds easier to control during the ride and, consequently, increases their driving precision.» Together with *Kaspars Kalniņš*, a leading researcher

at the Institute of Materials and Structures of the RTU Faculty of Civil Engineering, ultrasonic tests were performed to optimize the interaction of construction materials in the sleds. RTU has also tested various materials that may be more suitable for the sled joints. On 28 December 2019, RTU logo was displayed on the sled led by *M. Rubenis* in the Latvian Cup in luge sports in *Sigulda* [45].

Under the leadership of *Dr. sc. ing. Inga Dāboliņa* in cooperation with the researchers of RTU Institute of Design Technology, the research that involved application of *VitusSmart XXL*® (Human Solutions Group GmbH) 3D scanning device for the human body with the data processing system *AnthroScan* was started at the Anthropometry Laboratory of RTU Faculty of Materials Science and Applied Chemistry [46]. Anthropometric profiles of the Latvian lugers were studied and body surface distribution systems and methods for potential use in the individualization of the cut-outs of the overalls were tested.

Several studies were also conducted in FMETA laboratories to test the slipperiness of the sled runners. A special testing device was built for the experiment. The idea was suggested by Professor *Jānis Rudzītis* (1938–2018), the Head (2003–2018) of the Institute of Mechanical Engineering, in the academic year 2014/2015 in connection with the ERDF project on the development of various nanostructured coatings. The Professor proposed using his research for the needs of luge sport to analyse sled runners. A Researcher of the Institute of Mechanics and Mechanical Engineering *Jānis Lungevičs* has continued the work of *J. Rudzītis*, focusing his research on the skeleton in cooperation with the leading Latvian sled-builder *Dainis Dukurs*. On 15 February 2022, in his interview to the newspaper «*Latvijas Avīze*» *D. Dukurs* commented on the successful cooperation with RTU and opined that this cooperation brought a lot of new knowledge, «*Jānis Lungevičs* and *Ernests Jansons* are superior to us in their research area, their attitude towards the common cause is positive, they pursued the aim, they wanted to understand, to find out, they worked on the trestle measuring friction. We would not have had the time or skills and knowledge to do that ourselves. I respect these men; I consider them part of our team and I would like to thank them for their contribution. I think that their findings allow us to be more competitive. The information provided by them was useful, we used it in the construction of sledge hubs. They have very good measuring devices, many have not even known that such devices are available in Latvia [47].»

The Leading Researcher *Kārlis Agris Gross* is a long-term leader of this research team. Researchers *Ernests Jansons*, *Mārtiņš Irbe*, *Liene Plūduma*, and Research Assistants *Ieva Staņecka*, *Ilze Jerāne*, *Klāvs Stiprais*, and *Dāvis Petrovics* also work in the team together with *J. Lungevičs*. *J. Lungevičs* is currently running RTU *Mitutoyo* Metrology Laboratory, which has been collaborating with the Austrian company «*V-Research GmbH*» for four years in testing slipperiness of the sleds [48].



**Figure 29.** RTU Anthropometry Laboratory. From left: lugers – *Juris Sīcs* and *Andris Sīcs*, Head of the laboratory *I. Dāboliņa*, Researcher *Eva Lapkovska*, skeleton sliders – *Tomass Dukurs* and *Martins Dukurs* (2019).



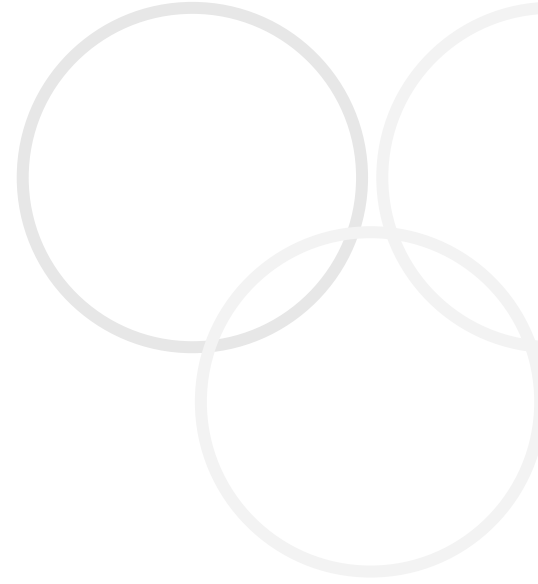
↑ **Figure 30.** *J. Lungevičs* performing experiments with a skeleton on the *Sigulda* start training platform (2016).



→ **Figure 31.** *J. Lungevičs* performs measurements of the skeleton runner hardness on the *Sigulda* start training platform. In the background – *Jānis Rudzītis* (2016).







THE FIRST ATHLETES AND FUTURE ENGINEERS FROM LATVIA  
AT THE V GAMES OF THE OLYMPIAD  
IN STOCKHOLM IN 1912



**Figure 32.** Russian Olympic Team at the opening parade of the V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm (1912).

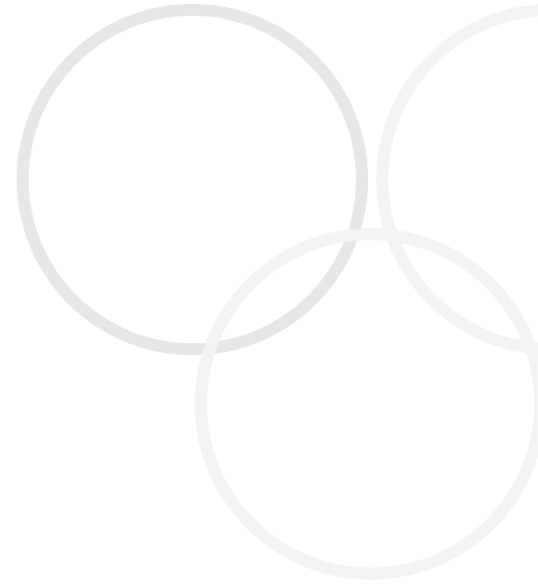
From 1912 to 2022, since the time when the first athletes from Latvia participated in the Games of the Olympiad, 32 Games of the Olympiad and 24 Olympic Winter Games took place. The authors of the monograph have discovered that 35 athletes from the current territory of Latvia participated in the V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1912 as members of the Russian Team, rather than 33, as it was believed earlier [3; p. 38]. Previously, Tartu-born Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) student Paul Lieth (1883–1950) [3; p. 304–316], a cyclist from Riga *Ansis Pole* (?-?), a cyclist Jeannot Eulenberg (?-?), and a Moscow-born cyclist Fyodor Borisov (*Фёдор Борисов*; 1892-?), who lived in Riga at that time, were not included in the list of athletes. Other sources state that the total number of people who sailed from Riga to Stockholm was around 40 [49]. This figure was calculated including journalists and persons who were not athletes into the total count. Until now, only two RPI students-Olympians of 1912 have been mentioned in the history of Latvian sports – Harald Blau (1885–1944) and Harald Hahne (1892–1940), because two other athletes – Boris von Pertel (1888–1955) and Lev Sitin (*Левъ Сытинъ*; 1891–1973) – came from other Russian provinces and lived in Riga only during their studies; Herbert von Kuhlberg (1893–1915) entered RPI the year after the Games of the Olympiad in 1913. In the course of the research, while clarifying the number of RPI students who participated in the V Games of the Olympiad in 1912, it was discovered that six RPI students took part in these games.

### Participants in the V Games of the Olympiad in 1912

1	Alfred Alsleben (1891–1930)	Athletics (Decathlon, men), 11th place
2	<i>Andrejs Apsītis</i> (1888–1945)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), 60th place; (road race, team, men; 320 km), withdrew
3	Jeannot Eulenberg (?-?)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), DNS
4	Herbert Baumann (1889-?)	Athletics (running, men; 200 m), 55th place
5	Harald Blau (1885–1944)	Shooting (trap, men), 3rd place; (running target, single shot, men), 20th place; (running target, single shot, team, men), 5th place
6	<i>Valters Bodnieks</i> (1885-?)	Shooting (trap, men), 36th place
7	Fyodor Borisov ( <i>Фёдор Борисов</i> ; 1892-?)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), DNS; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
8	Friedrich Bosch (1887–1950)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
9	<i>Jēkabs Bukse</i> (1879–1942)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew

10	<i>Nikolajs Fārnavsts</i> (1885–?)	Wrestling (heavyweight, Greco-Roman, men), withdrew
11	Harald Hahne (1892–1940)	Athletics (running, men; 200 m Flat), 5th place
12	<i>Arnolds Indriksons</i> (1893–1941)	Athletics (running, men; 1500 m), 30th place
13	<i>Andrejs Kapmalis</i> (also <i>Kapmals</i> ; 1889–1994)	Athletics (marathon, men; 40.2 km), withdrew
14	August Koepke (1886–1950)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
15	Karl Koepke (1890–?)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
16	<i>Andrejs Krūkliņš</i> (1891–?)	Athletics (running, men; 1500 m), 43rd place (marathon; 40.2 km), withdrew after 10 km
17	Herbert von Kuhlberg (1893–1915)	Swimming (first round, men; 100 m freestyle), 4th place
18	Leopold Loewenstein (1893–?)	Athletics (running, men; 100 m), 55th place; (4 × 100 m relay, men), DNS
19	Paul Lieth (1883–1950)	Shooting (trap, men), 52nd place; (running target, single shot, men), 34th place
20	<i>Jānis Līvens</i> (1884–?)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
21	<i>Aleksandrs Miezītis</i> (1890–1946)	Wrestling (featherweight, Greco-Roman, men), withdrew
22	<i>Arvīds Ozols-Bernē</i> (1888–?)	Athletics (shot put, men), 21st place; (discus throw, men), DNS
23	Boris von Pertel (1888–1955)	Shooting (trap, men), 55th place
24	<i>Ansis Pols</i> (also <i>Polis</i> ; ?–?)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), DNS
25	<i>Jānis Polis</i> (1892–1953)	Wrestling (middleweight Greco-Roman, men), withdrew
26	<i>Jānis Prātnieks</i> (1887–?)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
27	<i>Nikolajs Rasso</i> (1890–?)	Athletics (marathon, men; 40.2 km), withdrew after 10 km
28	<i>Edgars Rihters</i> (1887–1931)	Cycling-road (road race, individual, men; 315.385 km), withdrew; (road race, team, men; 315.385 km), withdrew
29	<i>Alfrēds Ruks</i> (1890–1941)	Athletics (running, men; 1500 m), 31st place
30	Lev Sitin ( <i>Лев Сытин</i> ; 1891–1973)	Shooting (trap, men), 23rd place

31	<i>Nikolajs Švedrēvics</i> (1891–1937)	Athletics (javelin throw, men), 20th place
32	<i>Aleksandrs Upmāls</i> (1891–?)	Athletics (marathon, men; 40.2 km), withdrew after 10 km
33	<i>Ēriks Vanags</i> (1892–?)	Athletics (discus throw, men), 39th place; (shot put, men), 20th place
34	<i>Dāvids Veiss</i> (1879–1961)	Shooting (military rifle, any position, men; 600 m), 51st place; (military rifle, three positions, men; 300 m), 60th place; (free rifle, three positions, men; 300 m), 77th place; (military rifle, team, men; 200 m, 400 m, 500 m and 600 m), 9th place
35	<i>Rūdolfs Vītols</i> (1892–1942)	Athletics (running, men; 1500 m), 33rd place



## ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Male and female athletes from Latvia have participated in 22 Games of the Olympiad and in 17 Olympic Winter Games. Engineering students have not participated in all Olympic Games, and their names can be found among participants of 19 Games of the Olympiad and 11 Olympic Winter Games.

The authors of the monograph have identified 65 Olympians and one Paralympian who studied engineering sciences. 29 Olympians and one Paralympian graduated from the university – 24 from Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) / Riga Technical University (RTU) and six from the engineering faculties of the University of Latvia (UL). 15 Olympians studied at the UL, 19 studied at RPI / RTU and two are still studying at RTU. Nine out of 66 Olympians – engineering students – won ten medals: one gold medal (1980, *Pāvels Seļivanovs*); six silver medals – (1960, *Cēzars Ozers*; 1972, *Juris Silovs* (1950–2018); 1976, *Pāvels Seļivanovs*; 1980, *Juris Bērziņš* (1954–2004); 1980, *Artūrs Garonskis*; 1988, *Raimonds Vilde*) and three bronze medals (1912, Harald Blau (1885–1944); 1976, *Juris Silovs* (1950–2018); 1984, *Zintis Ekmanis*). Most students – 51 – participated in the Olympic Games once, nine – two, and four athletes participated three times – *Raimonds Bergmanis*, *Ēriks Rags*, *Boriss Timofejevs* and *Ilonda Lūse*, and only *Zintis Ekmanis* participated in the Olympic Games four times. Paralympian *Poļina Rožkova* has participated in both Paralympic and Winter Paralympic Games.

#### RPI / RTU students and graduates – winners of olympic medals

Year	City	GO / WOG	Medal	Name, Surname	Connection to RPI	Sport
1912	Stockholm	GO	bronze	Harald Blau	Graduate, 1913	Shooting
1960	Rome	GO	silver	<i>Cēzars Ozers</i>	Studied at RPI, RPI lecturer	Basketball
1972	Munich	GO	silver	<i>Juris Silovs</i>	Studied at RPI	Athletics
1976	Montreal	GO	bronze			
1976	Montreal	GO	silver	<i>Pāvels Seļivanovs</i>	Graduate, 1983	Volleyball
1980	Moscow	GO	gold			
1980	Moscow	GO	silver	<i>Juris Bērziņš</i>	Graduate, 1978	Rowing
1980	Moscow	GO	silver	<i>Artūrs Garonskis</i>	Graduate, 1988	Rowing
1984	Sarajevo	WOG	bronze	<i>Zintis Ekmanis</i>	Graduate, 1980	Bobsleigh
1988	Seoul	GO	silver	<i>Raimonds Vilde</i>	Studied at RPI	Volleyball

Not only the students of the Faculties of Architecture, Engineering and Mechanics, but also the students of the Department of the National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the UL are included in the list of the Olympians belonging to RPI / RTU. They are *Rūdolfs Bārda* (1903–1991), *Edgars Gruzītis* (1912–1950), *Alfrēds Hermanovskis* (1915–1981), *Rūdolfs Jurciņš* (1909–1947), *Mirdza Martinsone-Bērziņa-Turķe* (1916–1983), *Adelfijs Petrovskis* (1912–1974), *Paulis Sokolovs* (1902–1971). The list is also supplemented with the student of the Department of Mathematics of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences *Zinons Popovs* (1906–1944) and students of the Faculty of Agriculture *Pauls Kaņeps* (1911–2006) and *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995). The Department of Agriculture existed in Riga Polytechnicum (RP) since 1863, in 1919, the Department was also included in the newly established Latvian Higher School. On the basis of this faculty, a new university was established in 1939 – *Jelgava* Academy of Agriculture, now Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.

#### Engineers and engineering students – participants of the Games of the Olympiad

Year	Games of the Olympiad	Participants	Participants from Latvia	Engineers-Olympians	Connection with the university
1912	V Games of the Olympiad 5 May–22 July Stockholm, Sweden	2407	35	Harald Blau (1885–1944)	Graduate of RPI DA (1913)
				Harald Hahne (1892–1940)	Graduate of RPI DC (1918)
				Herbert von Kuhlberg (1893–1915)	Studied at RPI DT (1913–1914)
				Paul Lieth (1884–1950)	Graduate of RPI DE (1912)
				Boris von Pertel (1888–1955)	Studied at RPI DM (1907–1911), DE (1911–1916)
				Lev Sitin (1891–1973)	Studied at RPI DC (1910–1911), DA (1911–1912)
1916	VI Games of the Olympiad were not held because of World War I.				
1920	VII Games of the Olympiad 14 August–12 September Antwerp, Belgium	2626	–	–	
1924	VIII Games of the Olympiad 4 May–27 July Paris, France	3089	41	<i>Rūdolfs Bārda</i> (1903–1991)	Studied at UL FNEL (1923–1932)
				<i>Paulis Sokolovs</i> (1902–1971)	Studied at UL FNEL (1923–1929)
1928	IX Games of the Olympiad 17 May–12 August Amsterdam, Netherlands	2883	14	Kurt Classen (1895–1973)	Studied at RPI DM (1911–1918), UL FM (1922)
				<i>Zinons Popovs</i> (1906–1944)	Studied at UL FMNS (1924–1927), FE (1927–1928), FNEL (1932)

1932	X Games of the Olympiad 30 July–14 August Los Angeles, USA	1332	2	-	
1936	XI Games of the Olympiad 1–16 August Berlin, Germany	3963	28		<i>Alfrēds Hermanovskis</i> (1915–1981) Studied at UL FNEL (1933–1934), FE (1934–1944)
					<i>Rūdolfs Jurciņš</i> (1909–1947) Studied at UL / UR / SUL FNEL (1930–1943; 1945–1946)
					<i>Kārlis Kļava</i> (1907–1943) Studied at UL FM (1938–1941)
					<i>Jānis Tiltiņš</i> (1909–1974) Graduate of UR FM (1944)
1940	XII Games of the Olympiad were not held because of World War II.				
1944	XIII Games of the Olympiad were not held because of World War II.				
1948	XIV Games of the Olympiad 29 July–15 August London, United Kingdom	4104	-	-	
1952	XV Games of the Olympiad 19 July–3 August Helsinki, Finland	4955	4	-	
1956	XVI Games of the Olympiad 22 November–8 December Melbourne, Australia	3314	5	-	
1960	XVII Games of the Olympiad 25 August–11 September Rome, Italy	5338	6		<i>Cēzars Ozers</i> (1937) Studied at RPI FCE (1963–1967)
1964	XVIII Games of the Olympiad 10–24 October Tokyo, Japan	5151	15		<i>Dzintars Lācis</i> (1940–1992) Studied at RPI FCE (1963–1965)
					<i>Renāte Lāce</i> (1943–1967) Studied at RPI FC (1961–1967)
					<i>Vitolds Barkāns</i> (1944) Studied at RPI FEE (1962–1963), FEEcon (1969)
1968	XIX Games of the Olympiad 12–27 October Mexico City, Mexico	5516	11		<i>Dzintars Lācis</i> (1940–1992) See 1964
					<i>Guntis Niedra</i> (1943–2005) Studied at RPI FCE (1962–1963), FEE (1963), RGTEF (1967–1968), FCE (1968–1970)
					<i>Elmārs Rubīns</i> (1944–2007) Studied at RPI FEEcon (1963–1968)
1972	XX Games of the Olympiad 26 August–11 September Munich, Federal Republic of Germany	7134	4		<i>Biruta Hercova-Hercberga-Ķemere</i> (1944–2022) Graduate of RPI FACT (1969)
					<i>Juris Silovs</i> (1950–2018) Studied at RPI FCE (1968–1970)
					<i>Jānis Vilsons</i> (1944–2018) Graduate of RPI FEE (1967)



1976	XXI Games of the Olympiad 17 July–1 August Montreal, Canada	6084	9	<i>Pāvels Seļivanovs</i> (1952)	Graduate of RPI FRAC (1983)
				<i>Juris Silovs</i> (1950–2018)	See 1972
1980	XXII Games of the Olympiad 19 July–3 August Moscow, USSR	5179	13	<i>Juris Bērziņš</i> (1954–2004)	Graduate of RPI FRAC (1978)
				<i>Artūrs Garonskis</i> (1957)	Graduate of RPI FEE (1988)
				<i>Pāvels Seļivanovs</i> (1952)	See 1976
1984	XXIII Games of the Olympiad 28 July–12 August Los Angeles, USA	6829	–	–	–
1988	XXIV Games of the Olympiad 17 September–2 October Seoul, South Korea	8391	6	<i>Raimonds Vilde</i> (1962)	Studied at RPI FEEcon (1980–1986)
				<i>Raimonds Bergmanis</i> (1966)	Graduate of RTU FCT (1991)
1992	XXV Games of the Olympiad 25 July–9 August Barcelona, Spain	9356	34	<i>Boriss Timofejevs</i> (1957)	Graduate of RPI RGTEF (1981)
				<i>Arnolds Ūdris</i> (1968)	Studied at RPI / RTU FIEA (1986–1987; 1989–1991)
				<i>Raimonds Bergmanis</i> (1966)	See 1992
1996	XXVI Games of the Olympiad 19 July–4 August Atlanta, USA	10320	47	<i>Andris Reinholds</i> (1971)	Graduate of RTU FCE (Bc. 1994)
				<i>Boriss Timofejevs</i> (1957)	See 1992
				<i>Dainis Zilītis</i> (1969)	Graduate of RTU FMME (Bc. 1993), RTU FEEcon (Bc. 2008)
				<i>Raimonds Bergmanis</i> (1966)	See 1992
2000	XXVII Games of the Olympiad 15 September–1 October Sidney, Australia	10651	45	<i>Irina Latve-Sļesarenoka</i> (1981)	Graduate of RTU FEE (Bc. 2004; Mg. 2006), studied at a PhD program until 2009
				<i>Andris Reinholds</i> (1971)	See 1996
				<i>Ēriks Rags</i> (1975)	Graduate of RTU FCE (Bc. 2011)
				<i>Boriss Timofejevs</i> (1957)	See 1992

2004	XXVIII Games of the Olympiad 13–29 August Athens, Greece	10625	32	<i>Igors Kostins</i> (1981)	Studied at RTU FCE (2000–2001)
				<i>Ēriks Rags</i> (1975)	See 2000
2008	XXIX Games of the Olympiad 8–24 August Beijing, China	10942	50	<i>Miķelis Ežmalis</i> (1990)	Studied at RTU FCSIT (2010–2011), FEEM (2011–2018)
				<i>Ēriks Rags</i> (1975)	See 2000
				<i>Krists Straume</i> (1986)	Graduate of RTU FEEcon (Bc. 2011)
2012	XXX Games of the Olympiad 27 July–12 August London, United Kingdom	10768	45	<i>Konstantins Ovčiņņikovs</i> (1983)	Graduate of RTU <i>Liepāja</i> Affiliate (Bc. 2005)
				<i>Agnese Pastare</i> (1988)	Studied at RTU FTME (2007–2013)
				<i>Krists Straume</i> (1986)	See 2008
2016	XXXI Games of the Olympiad 5–21 August Rio De Janeiro, Brazil	11238	33	<i>Ketija Birzule</i> (1998)	Graduate of RTU FMETA (Bc. 2021), currently is studying in RTU FMETA master's program
				<i>Aļona Fokina</i> (1991)	Graduate of RTU FEEM (Bc. 2013, Mg. 2015)
				<i>Agnese Pastare</i> (1988)	See 2012
2020	XXXII Games of the Olympiad (23 July–8 August 2021) Tokyo, Japan	11656	33	<i>Daniils Bobrovs</i> (1998)	Graduate of RTU FMETA (Bc. 2019), currently is studying in RTU FMETA master's program

#### Engineers and engineering students – participants of the Olympic Winter Games

Year	Olympic Winter Games	Participants	Participants from Latvia	Engineers-Olympians	Connection with the university
1924	I Olympic Winter Games 25 January–5 February Chamonix, France	258	2	–	
1928	II Olympic Winter Games 11–19 February Saint Moritz, Switzerland	464	1	–	
1932	III Olympic Winter Games 4–13 February Lake Placid, USA	252	–	–	

				<i>Jānis Valentīns Andriksons</i> (1912–1967)	Graduate of UR FE (1942)
				<i>Alfons Bērziņš</i> (1916–1987)	Studied at UR FE (1942)
				<i>Roberts Bluķis</i> (1913–1998)	Graduate of UR FE (1942)
				<i>Edgars Gruzītis</i> (1912–1950)	Studied at UL FNEL (1929–1941)
				<i>Askolds Fēlikss Hermanovskis</i> (1912–1967)	Studied at UL FA (1931–1936)
				<i>Pauls Kaņeps</i> (1911–2006)	Graduate of UL FE (1939)
1936	IV Olympic Winter Games 6–16 February Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany	668	27	<i>Edgars Pēteris Klāvs</i> (1913–1983)	Studied at UL / UR FE (1934–1944)
				<i>Roberts Lapainis</i> (1913–1947)	Studied at UL FA (1932–1938)
				<i>Augusts Ozols</i> (1908–1980)	Studied at UL FE (1931–1941)
				<i>Arvīds Mārtiņš Pētersons</i> (1913–1985)	Graduate of UR FM (1944)
				<i>Adelfijs Petrovskis</i> (1912–1974)	Studied at UL FNEL (1932–1939)
				<i>Mirdza Martinsone-Bērziņa-Turķe</i> (1916–1983)	Studied at UL FNEL (1934–1935), UR FMed (1943)
				<i>Leonīds Jānis Vedējs</i> (1908–1995)	Graduate of UL FAg (1934)
1940	Olympic Winter Games were not held because of World War II.				
1944	Olympic Winter Games were not held because of World War II.				
1948	V Olympic Winter Games 30 January–8 February Saint Moritz, Switzerland	669	–	–	–
1952	VI Olympic Winter Games 14–25 February Oslo, Norway	694	–	–	–
1956	VII Olympic Winter Games 26 January–5 February Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy	821	–	–	–
1960	VIII Olympic Winter Games 18–28 February California, USA	665	–	–	–
1964	IX Olympic Winter Games 29 January–9 February Innsbruck, Austria	1091	–	–	–

1968	X Olympic Winter Games 6–18 February Grenoble, France	1158	1	–	
1972	XI Olympic Winter Games 3–13 February Sapporo, Japan	1006	–	–	
1976	XII Olympic Winter Games 4–15 February Innsbruck, Austria	1123	5	<i>Rolands Ūpatnieks</i> (1932–1994)	Graduate of RPI FMME (1965)
1980	XIII Olympic Winter Games 13–24 February Lake Placid, USA	1072	6	–	
1984	XIV Olympic Winter Games 8–19 February Sarajevo, Yugoslavia	1274	11	<i>Zintis Ekmanis</i> (1958) <i>Māris Poikāns</i> (1962)	Graduate of RPI FEEcon (1980) Studied at RPI / RTU FMME (1981–1983; 1986–1991)
1988	XV Olympic Winter Games 13–28 February Calgary, Canada	1423	10	<i>Zintis Ekmanis</i> (1958) <i>Māris Poikāns</i> (1962) <i>Aivars Trops</i> (1963)	See 1984 See 1984 Graduate of RPI FMME (1988)
1992	XVI Olympic Winter Games 8–23 February Albertville, France	1801	23	<i>Boriss Artemjevs</i> (1965) <i>Zintis Ekmanis</i> (1958)	Studied at RPI FEE (1982–1983; 1985–1987) See 1984
1994	XVII Olympic Winter Games 12–27 February Lillehammer, Norway	1739	27	<i>Boriss Artemjevs</i> (1965) <i>Zintis Ekmanis</i> (1958) <i>Ilonda Lūse</i> (1972)	See 1992 See 1984 Studied at RTU FCT (1990–1995)
1998	XVIII Olympic Winter Games 7–22 February Nagano, Japan	2305 2177	29	<i>Ilonda Lūse</i> (1972)	See 1994
2002	XIX Olympic Winter Games 8–24 February Salt Lake City, USA	2399	48	<i>Intars Dīcmanis</i> (1979) <i>Ilonda Lūse</i> (1972) <i>Jānis Silarājs</i> (1976)	Graduate of RTU FEEM ( <i>Bc.</i> 2014) See 1994 Graduate of RTU FPPEE ( <i>Bc.</i> 2001)
2006	XX Olympic Winter Games 10–26 February Turin, Italy	2629	57	<i>Intars Dīcmanis</i> (1979)	See 2002

2010	XXI Olympic Winter Games 12–28 February Vancouver, Canada	2626	58	–	
2014	XXII Olympic Winter Games 7–23 February Sochi, Russia	2873	58	–	
2018	XXIII Olympic Winter Games 9–25 February Pyeongchang, South Korea	2922	34	<i>Artūrs Dārziņš</i> (1993)	Studied at RTU FMETA (2015–2018)
2022	XXIV Olympic Winter Games 4–20 February Beijing, China	2871	57	<i>Liene Bondare</i> (1996) <i>Artūrs Dārziņš</i> (1993)	Graduate of RTU FEEM (Mg. 2021) See 2018

#### Engineers and engineering students – participants of the Paralympic and Paralympic Winter Games

Year	Paralympic / Paralympic Winter Games	Participants	Participants from Latvia	Engineers-Olympians	Connection with the university
2016	XV Paralympic Games 7–18 September Rio De Janeiro, Brazil	4342	11	<i>Poļina Rožkova</i> (1985)	Graduate of RTU FEEM (Bc. 2011; Mg. 2021)
2022	XIII Paralympic Winter Games 4–13 March Beijing, China	564	8		

#### Abbreviations used in the tables

DA – Department of Architecture; DC – Department of Chemistry; DE – Department of Engineering; DM – Department of Mechanics; DT – Department of Trade (Commerce); FA – Faculty of Architecture; FACT – Faculty of Automation and Computer Technology; FAg – Faculty of Agriculture; FE – Faculty of Engineering; FEE – Faculty of Electroenergetics; FEEcon – Faculty of Engineering Economics; FEEM – Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management; FC – Faculty of Chemistry; FCE – Faculty of Civil Engineering; FCSIT – Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology; FCT – Faculty of Chemical Technology; FIEA – Faculty of Instrument Engineering and Automation; FM – Faculty of Mechanics; FMed – Faculty of Medicine; FMETA – Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Transport and Aeronautics; FMME – Faculty of Mechanics and Machine Engineering; FMNS – Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences; FNEL – Faculty of National Economics and Law; PPEE – Faculty of Power and Electrical Engineering; FRAC – Faculty of Radio Engineering and Communications; FTME – Faculty of Transport and Mechanical Engineering; RGTEF – Riga General Technical Evenings Faculty.



**Figure 33.** *R. Bergmanis* carrying the national flag at the XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona (1992).



**Figure 34.** *Z. Ekmanis* with the Latvian flag at the opening ceremony of the XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer (1994).



**Figure 35.** *P. Rožkova* (first from right) with the Latvian flag at the XIII Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing (2022).

In 1936, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Latvia to Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, who resided in Berlin, *Hugo Celmiņš* (1877–1941) [50], a graduate (1903) of the RPI Department of Agriculture, welcomed and took care of the Latvian delegation at the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany. *H. Celmiņš* was awarded the 1st Class Honour Badge of the Games of the Olympiad [51].

Several Olympians from our university carried the national flag of Latvia at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. *L. J. Vedējs* carried the Latvian flag at the IX Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in 1936, *R. Bergmanis* – at the XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, Spain, in 1992, *Z. Ekmanis* – at the XVII Olympics Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994, *P. Rožkova* – at the XIII Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing, China, in 2022.

An RTU student athlete *Ingūns Svikliņš* ran for participation in the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, USA, in 1996, but he was not included in the Latvian Team. He is sometimes considered an Olympian. The achievements of athlete *I. Svikliņš* in sports are remarkable – he has been the Latvian Champion in athletics in the stadium and indoors (individually and relay) 27 times [52].

*Aļona Ribakova*, a student at RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management (Swimming, 100 m Breaststroke), and *Konstantīns Blohins* (1988–2012), a student at the Faculty of Electronics and Telecommunications (Swimming, 100 m Breaststroke) were included in the list of candidates for the Games of the Olympiad in London, United Kingdom, in 2012. Both swimmers had met the normative criteria of the Olympic Games, but were not included in the Latvian Delegation to the Games of the Olympiad. *A. Ribakova* participated in the next Games of the Olympiad in 2016. In the same year, RTU graduate *Polīna Rožkova* participated in the XV Paralympic Games. She is the only engineer-Olympian to have competed in both Paralympic and Winter Paralympic Games.

Students of RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management, bobsledder *Dāvis Kaufmanis* and skeleton racer *Dārta Estere Zunte*, and a student of RTU Faculty of Civil Engineering bobsledder *Lauris Kaufmanis*, were members of the Latvian Olympic Team for participation in the XXIV Olympic Winter Games.

Training and participation in the competitions of various levels often prevent students-athletes from meeting the deadlines for tests and exams, as well as from graduating the university on time, so some athletes studied according to an individual plan. Some athletes were not able to complete their studies. Some of the former students of RTU chose an occupation in sports rather than in engineering, and continued their studies at the Latvian Academy of Sports Education (Latvian Institute of Physical Education (1921–1926), Institute of Physical Education (1926–1940), Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture (1946–1992)), still others changed their place of residence for various reasons and their studies were postponed indefinitely. Some former engineering students have not graduated, some are currently studying.

Referees from Latvia have also participated in the Olympic Games. *Andris Vītols* (1936–2018), a graduate (1964) of the Faculty of Instrument Engineering and Automation and a lecturer at RPI, Senior Mechanic and Engineer (1961–1978) of the Laboratory of Scientific Research Problems of Dynamics of Machines and Mechanics, participated in the handball championship trial since the early 1960s both in Latvia and abroad [53]. *A. Vītols* was a member of the LSSR Handball Federation, an international class

referee in handball. He participated in the judging of handball competitions at the XXI Games of the Olympiad in Montreal, Canada. He was entrusted to judge five games, which, according to sports experts, is quite many [54; p. 74]. In 1980, A. *Vītols* went to the XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, USSR. Unfortunately, he did not perform the duties of a judge at the XXIII Games of the Olympiad in Los Angeles, USA, in 1984, because the USSR did not take part in these games, instead holding alternative friendly games «Friendship – 84». A. *Vītols* is one of the most famous handball referees of all time. He was invited to referee the highest quality tournaments in the world. Together with a handball coach *Jānis Kuzulis*, he refereed six world championships, four European Cup finals, world team matches, and many USSR championships [54; p. 73.]. At the end of his life, A. *Vītols* worked for the Latvian Olympic Social Fund. Not only a «man with a whistle» A. *Vītols*, but also another RPI graduate (1959), a lecturer at the RPI Department of Physical Education and Sports (1962–2000) and the Head (1978–1994) of the Department, a handball coach *Harijs Čebrikovs* took part in the XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow in 1980. He was awarded the Badge of Honour for active work in the organization of the games.

A speed skater *Alfons Bērziņš* (1916–1987) was the first coach of the USSR Meritorious Sports Master *Lāsma Kauniste* (b. *Avotiņa*). *Helmuts Balderis-Sildedzis*, winner of the silver medal at the XIII Olympic Winter Games in 1980, was once trained by a hockey player *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983). A bobsledder *Zintis Ekmanis* trained bobsledders *Gatis Gūts*, *Otomārs Rihters*, *Sandis Prūsis* and many others. A volleyball player *Raimonds Vilde* trained Greek and Latvian volleyball clubs, as well as the Latvian Men's Volleyball National Team. A handball player *Jānis Vilsons* (1944–2018) trained the Latvian National Team coaches *Valdis Labanovskis* and *Uģis Vikštrēms*.

Apart from a personal trainer, each Olympian works with a number of different specialists involved in training, who take care of the technical equipment and provide training opportunities. Winter sports can be specifically mentioned in this respect – bobsleigh, luge and skeleton. A graduate (1965) of Faculty of Instrument Engineering and Automation *Valdis Tiliķis* (1934–2008) and a graduate (1980) of the Faculty of Mechanics and Machine Engineering, sledge builder, a person who promoted skeleton as an athletic discipline and helped develop its infrastructure in Latvia *Dainis Dukurs* helped to train a range of high-rank athletes. *D. Dukurs* coached such Olympians as bobsledders *Ivars Bērziņš* and *Rodžers Lodziņš*. He trains world-class skeleton racers *Martins Dukurs* and *Tomass Dukurs*. *D. Dukurs* has won the title of the best coach of the year in Latvia three times (2010, 2011, 2013). *V. Tiliķis* has trained lugers – champions of the XIII Olympic Winter Games *Vera Zozuļa* and bronze medallist *Ingrīda Amantova*, participants of the XII and XIII Olympic Winter Games *Dainis Bremze*, *Aigars Kriķis* (1954–1999) and *Valdis Ķuzis*. Both engineers used their knowledge and skills acquired in the course of engineering studies not only in giving advice in training, but also in the construction of tracks, constructing luge, bobsleigh and skeleton sledges. Already during his studies, on 14 November 1964, Assistant Professor *Olafs Kepe* (1930–2006) and a Senior Lecturer *Iļja Merkulovs* (1916–1990) recommended *V. Tiliķis* to work as an engineering designer [55]. For a couple of decades, *V. Tiliķis* worked at Riga Experimental Mechanization Equipment Factory and designed non-standard equipment and racing sledges. Only later did constructor *V. Tiliķis* become a coach. He was awarded the title of the Meritorious Coach of the



**Figure 36.** H. Čebrikovs (end of the 20th century).



**Figure 37.** R. Upatnieks with his son-in-law Ivars Ādmiņš (first from left) participates in the construction of a bobsleigh at «VEF» Factory (1980s).



**Figure 38.** Latvian lugers at the XII Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck (1976). From left: D. Bremze, A. Kriķis, Coach V. Tiliķis, R. Upatnieks, and V. Ķuzis.



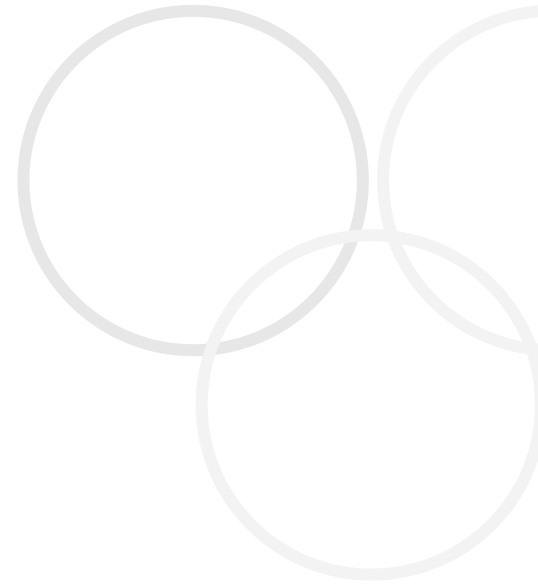
**Figure 39.** J. Lungevičs performs measurements of the skeleton runner hardness on the Sigulda start training platform. In the background – Dainis Dukurs (2016).

USSR for his achievements in training high-ranking athletes [56]. *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994), an Olympian and RPI graduate, was also the coach to many bobsledders and lugers. He was one of the first who suggested producing bobsleighs in Latvia.



**Figure 40.** Luge sport representatives after returning from the World Cup in 1978. From left: Coach *V. Tiliks*; world champions – *V. Zozuļa*, *A. Kriķis* and *D. Bremze*; *V. Kuzis*.





RIGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE /  
RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY  
ENGINEERS AND ACADEMIC STAFF  
GOING TO THE TOP IN SPORTS  
1958–2022

Many people dream of becoming Olympians, but only a few succeed in doing so. Many athletes studied at RPI / RTU, and their achievements are no less important than participation in the Olympic Games. For example, the USSR Sports Master (1980), the USSR International Class Sports Master (1966), RPI graduate (1970) *Skaidrīte Smildziņa-Budovska* was a member of the LSSR and USSR national teams, three times World Basketball Champion as a member of the USSR National Team (1959, 1964, 1967), won the title of the USSR Champion 12 times (1960–1970, 1972) and five times the title of the European Champion (1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968). In 1968, the then RPI student *S. Smildziņa-Budovska* was awarded the title of the Meritorious Sports Master of the USSR. An engineer and female athlete *S. Smildziņa-Budovska* was awarded the Order of the Three Stars of the 4th Class in 1998 for her merits in sports [57].

*Valdis Valters*, a basketball player, one of the initiators of the establishment of the Latvian Basketball League, a Meritorious Sports Master of the USSR and a RPI graduate (1988), is known not only in Latvia. He participated in the Olympic qualifying tournament in 1992 as a member of the Latvian National Team, became the World Champion (1982), and nine times Latvian Champion in basketball (1974, 1979, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1992, 1993, 1996). In 2017, *V. Valters* was admitted to the Hall of Fame of FIBA (*Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur*).

A volleyball player, teacher (1965–1988) of the RPI Department of Physical Culture and Sports *Skaidrīte Plismane* was a famous athlete in her time. In 1960, she won the gold medal at the World Championships in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. Volleyball was included in the program of the Olympic Games in 1964 [58].

The year 1998 was significant in the development of the current study. It was the year when the Department of Physical Education and Sports, as well as the Sports Club, celebrated its 40th anniversary [59]. *Rihards Jasūns* (1945–2008), the Chairman of the Board of RTU Sports Club was one of the organizers of this event. He encouraged *Alīda Zigmunde*, the then Head of the RTU History Museum, to identify all Olympians of the university, to consult with the historian *Aija Erta*. At that time, she worked in the Latvian Olympic Committee and helped the author with her valuable advice and helped establish contacts with the Olympians. It soon became clear that information about education of the Olympians was incomplete. Some of them studied at other universities or were on academic leave and did not always scrupulously record all the data in their sportsmen questionnaires. Some started studying later and there was no complete information about studies Olympians undertook. By contacting RTU Personnel Unit, archives, and the Olympians, it was possible to find out when, at which faculties the most famous athletes of the university have studied and what qualification they obtained after graduation. In the following years, the education of the participants of the next Olympic Games was clarified, and the number of the recognized RTU Olympians increased.

RTU is proud of its sporty students. At the end of 1998, with the support of RTU Sports Club, a photo exhibition about athletic disciplines represented in 40 years (1958–1998) was organized. At the end of 2002, at the initiative of *Brigita Krieva*, an RPI graduate, a Practical Assistant Professor at the RTU Department of Sports, then a lecturer, a reunion of RPI / RTU graduates-athletes was held [60]. In 2006, a photo gallery of RTU student-Olympians was opened in the lobby of the second floor of the administrative building of RTU at *1Kaļķu* Street. At that time, not all Olympians were identified.



**Figure 41.** Picture of *R. Jasūns* (2006).



**Figure 42.** Opening of the RTU Student-Olympian photo gallery at *1Kaļķu* Street (2006). From right: *Rihards Jasūns* (1945–2008), *Raimonds Bergmanis*, *Ivars Knēts* (1938–2019), *Viktors Bonders*, *Elmārs Beķeris* (1940–2020), *Alīda Zigmunde*, *Juris Briedis* (1936–2016), *Jānis Muižnieks*, *Liene Aleksandra Aboliņa* (m. *Batare*; 1981–2021), *Konstantins Didenko*, *Jānis Petkevičs*, *Miķelis Ragainis*.



**BIOGRAPHIES OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS,  
GRADUATES AND ACADEMIC STAFF –  
PARTICIPANTS OF THE OLYMPIC  
AND PARALYMPIC GAMES**



## JĀNIS VALENTĪNS ANDRIKSONS (1912–1967)

Speed Skater, Hockey Player and Engineer

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Speed Skating

16th place, 500 m, Men

23rd place, 1500 m, Men

30th place, 5000 m, Men

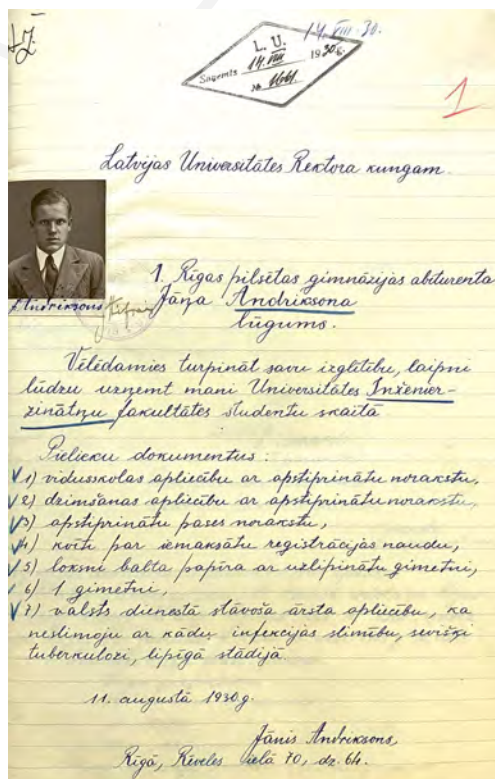
*Jānis Valentīns Andriksone* (also known as *Jānis Andriksone*) was born on 31 March 1912 in *Vecpiebalga* Parish, Latvia, and spent his childhood with his parents as a refugee in Russia. The family, like many others, returned to Latvia after the end of World War I and the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. *J. V. Andriksone* lived in Riga and in 1930 graduated from the Riga City 1st Gymnasium [61; p. 5].

In 1930, he entered the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Latvia (UL), graduating it in 1942. During his studies, he joined the Latvian Student Corporation «*Selonija*» [61]. He worked for the Railway Administration in the 1930s. During the Soviet rule in 1940, the athlete had been expelled from the Latvian State University for not attending lectures in Marxism-Leninism [61; p. 16].

*J. V. Andriksone* represented the society «*Universitātes sports*» («University Sport»; «US») and won the Latvian Speed Skating Championship for the first time in 1933. He dethroned *Alberts Rumba* (1892–1962), a long-time Champion of the I and II Olympic Winter Games, a leader in the Latvian speed skating championships since 1924. *J. V. Andriksone* won the title of the Latvian Champion in Speed Skating also in 1934 [62].

*J. V. Andriksone* took part in the World Championships in 1934 and in the IV World Student Olympiad in Saint Moritz, Switzerland in February 1935, which was organized by the Congress of the International Students' Federation. He won 1st place in 500 m (46.0), 1000 m (1:32.0) and 5000 m (9:18.6), as well as split 2nd/3rd place at a distance of 1500 m [63]. As an athlete representing the «US», he competed in the IV Olympic Winter Games in February 1936 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, finishing 16th in the 500 m (45.9 s) race and 23rd in the 1500 m (2:28.9) race, and gained 30th place at a distance of 5000 m (9:15.0) [64]. The Coach Robert Kurt Leonhard Witthoff (1892–1983), a general physical fitness coach for winter sports (1934–1940) employed by the Latvian Winter Sports Union, played an important role in ensuring success of the athlete [65]. He also competed in various speed skating competitions in Latvia after the Olympic Games. During World War II in 1939, *J. V. Andriksone* participated in the World Student Olympiad in Norway.

*J. V. Andriksone* also played hockey. In the first half of the 1930s, he played for the «US» Hockey Team, trying his skills both as a goalkeeper and as a field player. Four future Olympians (*R. Lapainis*, *J. V. Andriksone*, *R. Bluķis*, *L. J. Vedējs*) of the Olympic Winter Games of 1936 played in the Lightning Tournament in the United States in the season



**Figure 44.** *J. V. Andriksone's* application to the Rector of the UL *Augusts Tentelis* (1876–1942) on his admission to the university (1930).

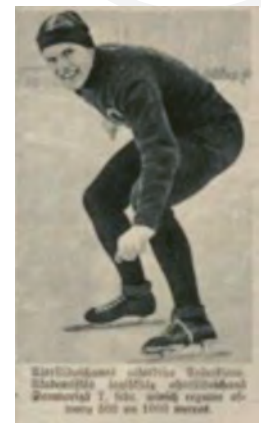
of 1933/1934. The Team consisted of the goalkeeper *Roberts Lapainis* (1913–1947); field players *J. V. Andriksone*, *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Roberts Bluķis* (1913–1998), *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995), *Reinholds Beķeris* (1907–1940), *Andrejs Jessens* (1908–1965), *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983), *Jānis Kļaviņš* (1912–1941), *Augusts Ozols* (1908–1980), *Kārlis Pakalns* (1907–?), *Valentin Wolfram* (1910–1975), and in one game *Ēriks Pētersons* (1909–1987), who was the player of Riga Football Club [66]. As a member of the Latvian National Hockey Team, *J. V. Andriksone* also competed at the academic championships in Bardonecchia, Italy, in 1933. During World War II, he returned to the hockey field as a player of the «*Daugavieši*» Hockey Team, including the tournament in early 1944. He also represented «*Daugavieši*» in the speed skating races that took place in Riga during the war [62].

After World War II, *J. V. Andriksone* lived in Germany, later, in 1946, emigrated to Canada and worked as an engineer at a mine in Noranda [67]. In his free time, he was a keen painter [68]. *J. V. Andriksone*'s life ended in Noranda, Quebec, Canada, on 22 September 1967.

*Olģerts Krodērs* (1921–2012), director, actor, teacher, and publicist, wrote about *J. V. Andriksone* in the journal «*Māksla*» in 1992, «Undoubtedly, *Jānis Andriksone*, the European Champion in speed skating (maybe also the World Champion, I do not remember so well), was a special person – a man who consistently achieved his goals: he wanted to be original and become famous, at least on the Latvian scale. Destiny had not endowed him with an excellent social status, wealth or any special talent. Thus, he had to forge his own fortune. *Jānis* started with skating, which he did well. After a long period of hard training, he really became a student champion and his photographs and articles about him appeared in the press. But that was just the beginning. Although being popular as a champion was not enough for *Jānis Andriksone*, he wanted to be noticed as an individual, so he used his sporting success only as a launchpad to draw attention to himself. Slowly abandoning speed skating, he began to build his own image so that it would always be impressive, unique, and rather extravagant. The main aim he wanted to achieve it to make people always talk about him. Being in humble circumstances, *Jānis* made his own clothes by himself in accordance with the latest international fashion trends. It took a lot of time and patience to keep up with the latest fashions, but the former champion was first to pick up any innovation in clothing, at least half a year before the others, and gradually he became the king of youth fashion in Latvia. From time to time, *Andriksone* changed his walking style, he carefully thought through and worked out every move before showing his new gait to the general public. The new steps were tested by friends and acquaintances – once *Jānis* pulled me into the street side and showed all kinds of gait for half an hour. «Will this be good? May be this way? Or that way?...» [69].»



**Figure 45.** Photo of *J. V. Andriksone* on the cover of the journal «*Starts*» (1935).



**Figure 46.** *J. V. Andriksone* in Saint Moritz (1935).



**Figure 47.** From left: winner of the World Academic Speed Skating Championships *J. V. Andriksone*, master *A. Rumba*, and a gymnasium student *A. Bērziņš* in Riga (1935).



## BORISS ARTEMJEVS (1965)

Bobsledder, Athlete and Entrepreneur

XVI Olympic Winter Games in Albertville, 1992

Bobsleigh

16th place, Four, Men

XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, 1994

Bobsleigh

13th place, Four, Men



Figure 49. *B. Artemjevs'* RPI examination sheet (1982).



Figure 50. Latvian 4-man team – *Z. Ekmanis, A. Intlers, B. Artemjevs* and *O. Rihters* at the start at the XVI Olympic Winter Games (1992).

*Boriss Artemjevs* was born on 19 January 1965 in Riga and studied at Riga Secondary School No. 48. He entered RPI immediately after secondary school in 1982 at the age of 17, because during the Soviet era, pupils in the secondary schools with Russian as the language of instruction studied only for 10 years. *B. Artemjevs* was already engaged in sports during secondary school and was included in the Athletics Team of the USSR National Youth Team.

On 29 July 1982, *B. Artemjevs* applied to the Day Department of RPI Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, majoring in Industrial and Civil Engineering. Already on 14 August, *B. Artemjevs* submitted another application stating that he wished to study at the Riga Evening General Technical Faculty. Two weeks later, on 1 September, the next application followed – he wished to enrol in the 1st-course of the Day Department of the Faculty of Electroenergetics (FEE). *B. Artemjevs* tried to study according to an individual plan, but competitions and absenteeism prevented him from passing all examinations on time [70].

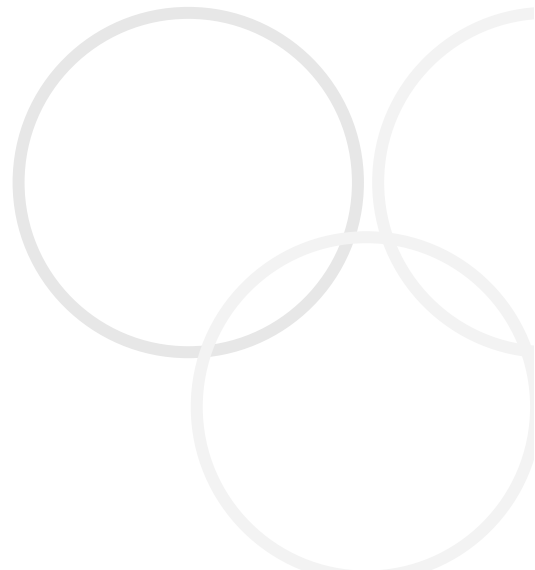
On 30 June 1983, *B. Artemjevs* applied to the Dean of the FEE with a request to be allowed to terminate his studies due to conscription to the Soviet army [70]. The athlete resumed his studies on 14 October 1985, after returning from the service in the Soviet army, but in two years much of what had once been taught had been forgotten. Student *B. Artemjevs* acknowledged in January 1986 that it was difficult to resume his studies, but academic staff of the FEE were responsive and encouraged him to try to continue his studies. At the same time, it must be admitted that sports demanded the most from him, because, unlike others, *B. Artemjevs* trained in both athletics and bobsledding and was included in both Latvian Bobsleigh and Athletics Teams. He represented his university – RPI – as a member of the Athletics Team. Before that there were many trainings and competitions, and he had to interrupt studies again in the spring of 1987, because sport was in the main priority for *B. Artemjevs* at that time. Eventually, he did not manage to finish his studies. In 1988, *B. Artemjevs* became the LSSR Champion in athletics in the 4 x 100 m relay (43.1 s) (squad: *Āris Āboliņš, Arvis Jansons, Jurijs Zvoskovs*) [71].

*B. Artemjevs* engaged in bobsleigh in the 1980s [72]. First, he started riding with *Arvis Jansons*, then – with *Uldis Veliks, Sandis Prūsis, Zintis Ekmanis, Oļafs Klaviņš*, and *Jānis Ķipurs*. Bobsledders called *B. Artemjevs* «Mister Universe» [73].

In the following years, *B. Artemjevs* intensively exercised in bobsleigh and participated in the competitions more than once with *Z. Ekmanis*, who demonstrated good results at the Olympic Games and had already finished his studies at RPI. At the World Championship of 1989, he won 2nd place in 4-man competition with *Z. Ekmanis*, *Otomārs Rihters* and *Juris Tone*. At the Latvian Championship of 1991, he won 1st place in 4-man competition with *Z. Ekmanis*, *O. Rihters* and *Guntis Osis*.

*B. Artemjevs* won 3rd place in the World Cup in Winterberg, Germany, in 1992 and participated in the Olympic Games twice – in 1992 and 1994. At the XVI Olympic Winter Games in 1992, *B. Artemjevs* won 16th place in the 4-man competition with *Z. Ekmanis*, *O. Rihters* and *Aldis Intlers* (1965–1994) (3:56.72) and was the pusher in the crew piloted by *Z. Ekmanis* [74; p. 68]. At the XVII Olympic Winter Games in 1994, *B. Artemjevs* took 13th place in the 4-man competition with *Z. Ekmanis*, *A. Intlers* and *Didzis Skuška* (3:29.81; pusher) [75; p. 76, 79].

Having finished an active career in sports, *B. Artemjevs* became an entrepreneur.



**Figure 51.** From left: *O. Rihters*, *A. Intlers* and *B. Artemjevs* at the La Plagne track at the XVI Olympic Winter Games in Albertville (1992).



**Figure 52.** From left: *J. Tone*, *O. Rihters*, *D. Skuška*, *B. Artemjevs* during the XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer (1994).



## VITOLDS BARKĀNS (1944)

Rower, Coach and Pedagogue

XX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico, 1968

Rowing

7th/11th place, Coxless Fours, Men (M4-)

*Vitolds Barkāns* was born on 8 May 1944 in Riga. In 1951, he began his studies at Riga Secondary School No. 38, and later at Riga Secondary School No. 3, which he completed in 1962 and entered RPI Faculty of Electroenergetics (FEE). From 1962 to 1963, he was assigned for study internship at the thermal power plant Riga TPP. In 1962, *V. Barkāns* worked as a laboratory assistant at his faculty for one year. In 1963, during the 2nd-year of his studies, he was exmatriculated for academic failure [77]. From 1963 to 1966, he served in the Soviet Army at the Central Navy Water Sports Club in Moscow.

*V. Barkāns* was actively involved in rowing since 1960. This was also the reason why it was difficult for him to combine training with sports. In 1962, the Council of the Union of Sports Societies and Organizations of the LSSR asked the Head of the Department of Thermal Power Engineering of RPI FEE *Artūrs Ziņģītis* (1901–1973) to exempt *V. Barkāns* from studies to let him participate in the USSR Academic Rowing Youth Team competition.

*V. Barkāns* repeatedly applied for studies at RPI in 1969, this time at the Day Department of Construction Economics and Organization of the Faculty of Engineering Economics, where he was enrolled in the 2nd-course. However, he did not study here either, and in the same year *V. Barkāns* left the university on his own will, starting his studies at the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture (LSIPC) [77]. *V. Barkāns* graduated from LSIPC in 1973. In 1979, he graduated from Leningrad Scientific Research Institute of Physical Culture (*Ленинградский научно-исследовательский институт физической культуры*) with a postgraduate degree.

The unfinished studies did not prevent *V. Barkāns* from returning to RPI, this time as a lecturer. In 1979, he was employed as a Senior Laboratory Assistant and a Lecturer at the Department of Physical Education and Sports [78], and in 1980, he was elected a Senior Lecturer. In 1981, he left RPI to become a lecturer at LSIPC.

From 1966 to 1968, *V. Barkāns* was a sports instructor at the Sports Society «Dinamo» in Riga. From 1968 to 1969, he was a sports instructor at the Sports Committee of the LSSR Council of Ministers. In parallel with his studies and work at LSIPC from 1972 to 1976, he worked as a rowing Coach at the Sports Society «Daugava». In 1974, he received an Honorary Diploma from the Central Council of Trade Unions of the LSSR for coaching high-class athletes.

In 1965, he fulfilled the requirements of the USSR standard for the sports master and in 1967 – for the international sports master. He was a two-time USSR Champion in Coxless Fours (M4-; 1967, 1968), winner of the IV USSR People's Spartakiad in Coxless



Figure 54. *V. Barkāns*' RPI student ID (1962).

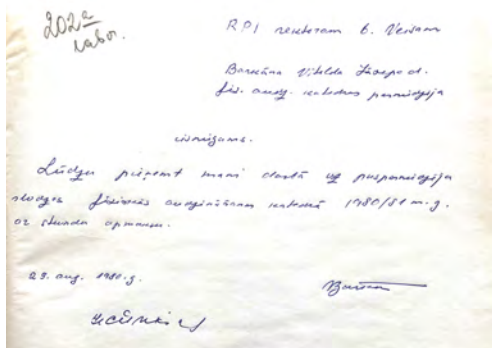


Figure 55. *V. Barkāns*' application to the Rector of RPI *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985) asking to re-employ him at the Department of Physical Education and Sports (1980).



Fours (M4-) in 1967, won the USSR Cup in Men's Eight (M8+) in 1970. He was the LSSR Rowing Champion seven times [79]. In 1967, he received an Honorary Diploma from the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the LSSR for high achievements in sports.

*V. Barkāns* was a candidate for the USSR National Team at the XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico City in 1968. Before the Games of the Olympiad, the Coxless Fours, which included RPI students *Elmārs Rubīns* (1944–2007), *Guntis Niedra* (1943–2005) and *Andris Prieditis*, won all competitions, including the prestigious Lucerne Regatta (unofficial world championship) in Switzerland. There was no doubt that for the first time the Latvian rowers would participate in the Games of the Olympiad. *V. Barkāns* recalled, «The nature played a bad joke. Pavel Ilyinsky (Павел Ильинский) replaced *A. Prieditis*, who got ill, by the decision of the Head Coach of the USSR National Team. In the pre-race in the Olympic regatta, we were in 3rd place and had to fight in a race to success. We rowed the hull of the half-boat in front of everyone, but about 100 m to the finish I felt that the boat was not in the way, because P. Ilyinsky, who was rowing on my side, had lost consciousness. The games in Mexico City took place at an altitude of 2200 m, and 0.6 s separated us from the chance to participate in the finals. I also regained senses with an oxygen mask on my face in the medical centre at the paddling channel. Thus, the Olympic expectations of Coach *Rolands Sproģis* (1936–2001) decayed [80].»

*V. Barkāns* was one of the initiators of the renewal of Riga Rowing Club, as well as was its President from 1992 to 1998, and the President of the Latvian Olympic Club from 1993 to 1999.

From 1993, *V. Barkāns* participated in the competition of senior rowing masters. In 1994, in the 21st FISA *Master's Regatta* in Groningen, the Netherlands, together with *G. Niedra*, *E. Rubīns* and *V. Priediens*, he won 1st place in the Coxed Fours. In the World Masters Games in Australia, along with *E. Rubīns*, rowing together with foreign athletes, he won 2nd place in the Coxed Fours in the competition of 36 teams [81]. In 1998, together with *G. Niedra*, *E. Rubīns*, *V. Priediens* he won 1st place in the Mixed Eight (MIX8+) at the World Masters Games in Portland, USA.

After finishing his career of a professional athlete and coach, for many years until his retirement *V. Barkāns* worked as an organizer of sports activities at Riga *Pārdaugava* Vocational Secondary School.

He is married to an athlete *Ingrīda Barkāne* (b. *Verbele*), who also competed in the XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico in 1968 [82]. They have two sons – *Ģirts* and *Ingus*.



**Figure 56.** IV USSR People's Spartakiad Champions in Coxless Fours. From right: *V. Barkāns*, *E. Rubīns*, *A. Prieditis*, *G. Niedra* (1967).



**Figure 57.** *V. Barkāns* and *E. Rubīns* in the Olympic Village at the Mexico Emblem of the Games of the Olympiad (1968).



**Figure 58.** *G. Niedra*, *V. Barkāns*, *I. Verbele-Barkāne*, *E. Rubīns* at the XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico City (1968).



## RŪDOLFS BĀRDA (1903–1991)

Football Player, Basketball Player and Football Referee

VIII Games of the Olympiad in Paris, 1924

Football

11th place, Men

*Rūdolfs Bārda* was born in the family of the merchant *Ernests Bārda* (1866–?) and his wife *Marija Elizabete Bārda* (b. Hazenfuss; 1869–1939) on 20 February 1903 in Riga. He studied at *V. Olavs* Commercial School and the Riga City 1st Secondary School, then – at the Vocational Department of the Riga City 4th Secondary School, which he graduated in 1922.

*R. Bārda* is one of the most notable Latvian football players in the 1920s. He started playing football as a Member of the Latvian National Youth Union (LNYU; founded in 1920). He later played in a team of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and was the most successful member of the Riga Football Club (RFC), becoming a three-time Latvian Champion (1924–1926) and a player of the Latvian National Team [83].

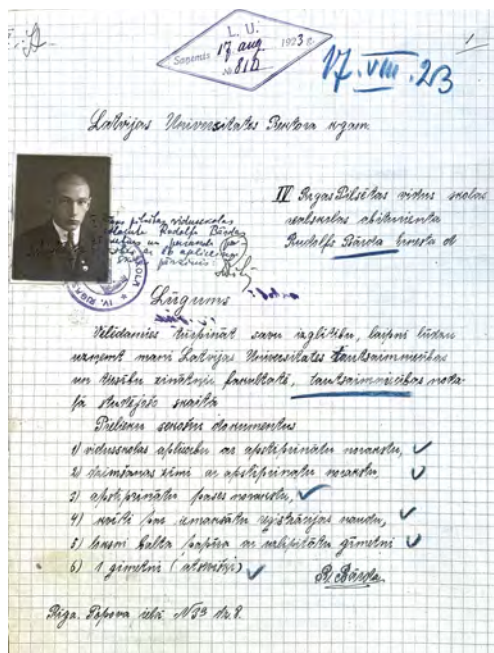
In 1923, *R. Bārda* entered the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL), where he studied intermittently until 15 January 1932 [84]. During his studies, he joined the UL Student Corporation «*Patria*».

*Rūdolfs'* brothers *Edvīns Bārda* (1900–1947), *Arvīds Bārda* (1901–1941) and *Oskars Bārda* (1904–1958) also enjoyed playing football, and they took part in the work of RFC.

*Rūdolfs'* brother *A. Bārda* entered the UL Faculty of Mechanics in 1921 but did not commence his studies [85]. The brothers were actively engaged in sports and in 1924 took part (except for *O. Bārda*) in the VIII Games of the Olympiad in Paris, France. Although the Latvian Olympic Committee did not support the travelling of the footballers to Paris due to the lack of funds, the Latvian Football Association (LFA) hoped to find the necessary finances. Some of the money to cover participation expenses of the football players was obtained in the last days before the Games of the Olympiad. The city of Riga allocated LVL 1000 only on 19 May, and already on 22 May football players had to leave to Paris [3; p. 61, 62].

The Latvian Olympic Football Team consisted mainly of players from Riga Football Team (goalkeepers: *Ādolfs Grebele* (1902–1943), *Arvīds Jurgens* (1905–1955); defenders: *Kārlis Ašmanis* (1898–1962), *Aleksandrs Roge* (1896–1945), *Kurts Plade* (1898–1945), *Pēteris Kreicbergs* (1898–1979); midfielders: *Kārlis Bone* (Team Captain; 1899–1941), *Paulis Sokolovs* (1902–1971), *Česlavs Stancīks* (1896–1940), *Voldemārs Viņķis* (1903–1954); strikers: *A. Bārda*, *E. Bārda*, *R. Bārda*, *Alfrēds Plade* (1905–1944), *Vladimīrs Plade* (1900–1961), *Arkādijs Pavlovs* (1903–1960) [86]).

On 27 May 1924, the Latvian Football Team had to play with the French Olympic



**Figure 60.** *R. Bārda's* application to the Rector of the UL *Jānis Ruberts* (1874–1934) on his admission to the university (1923).

Football Team. Unfortunately, the Latvian Football Team lost with the score 0 : 7 [87]. Latvian football players participated in only one game at the Games of the Olympiad. The official opening of the Games of the Olympiad took place on 5 July, but unfortunately, Latvian football players did not experience it, because they had to go home after the defeat. The Latvian Team did not have much experience, although football was a very popular sport in Latvia at that time. Later, the football players took part in various games, but as a team they did not have a chance to compete in the Games of the Olympiad for the second time.

Football player *R. Bārda* played seven games for the Latvian National Football Team. In 1926, he also started his career as a football referee. *R. Bārda* was awarded the Great Badge of LFA. *R. Bārda* also played basketball and showed good results – he played two games for the Latvian Basketball Team (1926–1927) [83].

After a long break, *R. Bārda* resumed with football in 1934, when he joined the 5th Riga Defence Regiment Sports Club (DRSC), where he was a Member of the Board and a Member of the Sports Club holding Certificate No. 1 [83].

Not much information about his future is available – the family had lived in various places in Riga. In the 1930s, he worked as a customs expert, then as a cashier. In 1937, he married *Klāra Lūcija Fišere* (b. *Birite*; 1908–2001). *R. Bārda* died in Riga on 24 January 1991.



**Figure 61.** Latvian National Football Team with accompanists before going to the VIII Games of the Olympiad in Paris (1924).



**Figure 62.** Latvian National Football Team at the VIII Games of the Olympiad in Paris (1924). In the first row from the left: *E. Bārda*, *A. Jurgens*, *P. Sokolovs*, *A. Bārda*; second row: *Č. Stančiks*, Coach *Juris Rēdlihs* (1890–1971), doctor *Emilis Elsbergs* (1893–1936), *K. Bone*, *V. Plade*, *R. Bārda*, *K. Ašmanis*, *A. Pavlovs*, *A. Roge*.



**Figure 63.** From left: brothers *Edvins*, *Arvids*, *Rūdolfs* and *Oskars Bārda* (1920s).



## RAIMONDS BERGMANIS (1966)

Weightlifter, Public and Political Worker

XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, 1992

Weightlifting

14th place, Super-Heavyweight, Men

XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, 1996

Weightlifting

9th place, Super-Heavyweight, Men

XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, 2000

Weightlifting

23rd place, Super-Heavyweight, Men



Figure 65. R. Bergmanis' RPI student ID (1984).

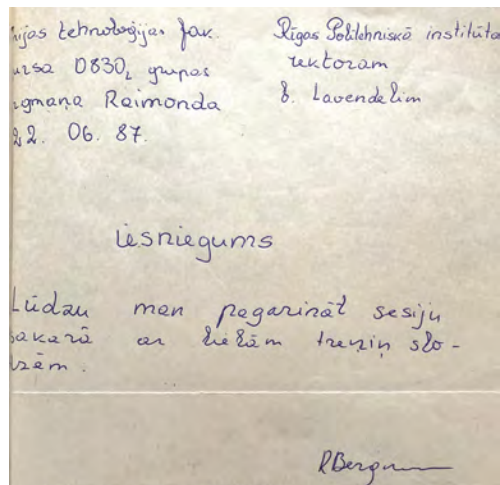


Figure 66. R. Bergmanis' application to the Rector of RPI Egons Lavendelis with a request to extend the examination session due to heavy training load (1987).

Raimonds Bergmanis was born on 25 July 1966 in Pļaviņas, Latvia. In 1984, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 49, where he studied in a chemistry class, and began studying at RPI Faculty of Chemistry. A few months later, R. Bergmanis was drafted to the compulsory military service and was unable to write an application for an academic leave. This was done on 6 December 1984 by the group's curator, Assistant Professor Rūta Švinka [88]. Two years later, in October 1986, R. Bergmanis demobilized from the Soviet army and resumed his studies. Student R. Bergmanis actively engaged in sports and was a Member of RPI Team in weightlifting, so he had to miss the classes, ask to extend the examination session, but later the athlete managed to settle all outstanding academic commitments and graduated from RTU in 1991, obtaining the qualification of a chemist-technologist. During his studies, great changes took place – he entered the university, the name of which over time was supplemented by Soviet-era «awards» and whose official title was «Riga Polytechnic Institute Named after Arvīds Pelše and Awarded with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour» but on 29 January 1990, RPI Scientific Council voted to change this name [89], and thus RPI became RTU. On 19 March by decision No. 69, the Council of Ministers of the LSSR also adopted the change of the traditional RPI name [90]. In 1991, R. Bergmanis received a diploma of the Republic of Latvia. The faculty had also changed the name – R. Bergmanis joined and continued his studies after the army at the Faculty of Chemistry, which was renamed the Faculty of Chemical Technology on 10 November 1986 [3; p. 618, 626].

R. Bergmanis first practiced swimming and basketball [91], but later turned to another sport – weightlifting. R. Bergmanis' father Oļģerts Bergmanis (1931–2016) was a weightlifter and weightlifting coach. He not only sparked his son's interest in this sport, but later became R. Bergmanis' coach. Already in the second half of the 1980s, R. Bergmanis participated in many competitions, however, he became an Olympian only after graduating from university. He trained in weightlifting at the «RRR» Sports Club. R. Bergmanis was the flagbearer of the Latvian Olympic delegation at the XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, Spain, in 1992. These were the first Olympic Games for

the Latvian athlete after the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia. Weightlifter *R. Bergmanis* ranked 14th in the weightlifting competition over 110 kg in the Games of the Olympiad, lifting 362.5 kg in two events [92].

At the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, USA, in 1996, *R. Bergmanis* won 9th place in the weight category over 108 kg, lifting 402.5 kg in two events. At the XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, Australia, in 2000, the athlete had to settle at 23rd place in the weight category over 105 kg (no result) because he had to leave the fight due to an injury [93]. *R. Bergmanis'* achievements and participation in three Games of the Olympiads show that at the end of the 20th century he was one of the strongest weightlifters in Latvia. He was an eleven-time LSSR Champion and Latvia and has broken Latvia's weightlifting records 21 times, and was once a USSR Junior Champion in the super heavy category. In 1997, *R. Bergmanis* won the title of European Vice-Champion in the super heavyweight category.

Sports activities influenced further professional activity – the graduate engineer studied at the Latvian Academy of Sports Education. In 2003, he obtained the qualification of a heavy athletics coach [94] and started working as a coach.

Latvian strongman *R. Bergmanis* served in the National Armed Forces of the Republic of Latvia, was an officer in the Saeima and the President Security Service and in the Recruitment Centre of the National Armed Forces.

RTU graduate *R. Bergmanis* often participated in RTU events at the beginning of the 21st century. On 10 February 2006, on the opening day of the XX Olympic Winter Games, he participated in the opening of the RTU Olympic Photo Gallery in the lobby of the second floor of the then university administration building at 1 *Kaļķu* Street [95], dedicated to the 150th anniversary of RTU. Together with academic staff and students of RTU, he was also present at Riga City Festival on 18 August 2012.

*R. Bergmanis* also participated in the «World's Strongest Man» competition. In 2002, he won 3rd place and was in the top six several times. He repeatedly participated in the competition «Arnold Strongman Classic» organized by the American actor, businessman, philanthropist, bodybuilder, politician Arnold Schwarzenegger and twice won 3rd place (2003, 2004). He finished his active sports career in 2007. *R. Bergmanis* managed the Latvian Strongman Championship competition, as well as commented the airings of the Championship on television. He also worked in the Latvian Weightlifting Federation. *R. Bergmanis* also participated in the weighing of turtles in Riga National Zoo in order to attract attention to the preservation of this species. For several years, he was the Director of television shows («Happy Family» and «Royal Anecdote Tournament»).

*R. Bergmanis* is the President of the Latvian Olympians Club (2011–2015, since 2019), he also was a member of the Board (2015–2019) and one of the Vice-Presidents of the Latvian Olympic Committee (2013–2020). In 2014, *R. Bergmanis* was elected to the 12th, in 2018 – to the 13th Saeima, he was the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia (2015–2019) [96]. *R. Bergmanis* is a Member of the Senate of the Latvian Olympic Academy and in March 2021, he was elected President of the Latvian Shooting Federation.

*R. Bergmanis'* work is highly appreciated – on 14 April 2014, he was awarded the highest state award – the Cross of Recognition.

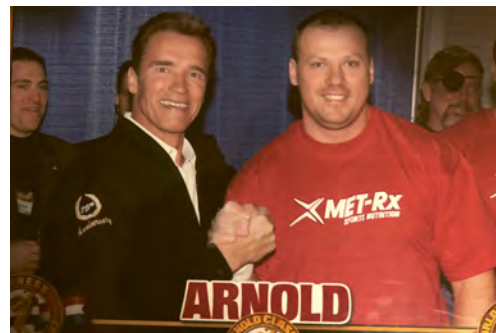
*R. Bergmanis* is married, he has a daughter and two sons.



**Figure 67.** *R. Bergmanis* at the European Championship in Croatia (1997).



**Figure 68.** *R. Bergmanis* at the XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney (2000).



**Figure 69.** *R. Bergmanis* and Arnold Schwarzenegger (2003).



## ALFONS BĒRZIŅŠ (1916–1987)

Speed Skater and Coach

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Speed Skating

14th place, 500 m, Men

18th place, 1500 m, Men

18th place, 5000 m, Men

19th place, 10 000 m, Men

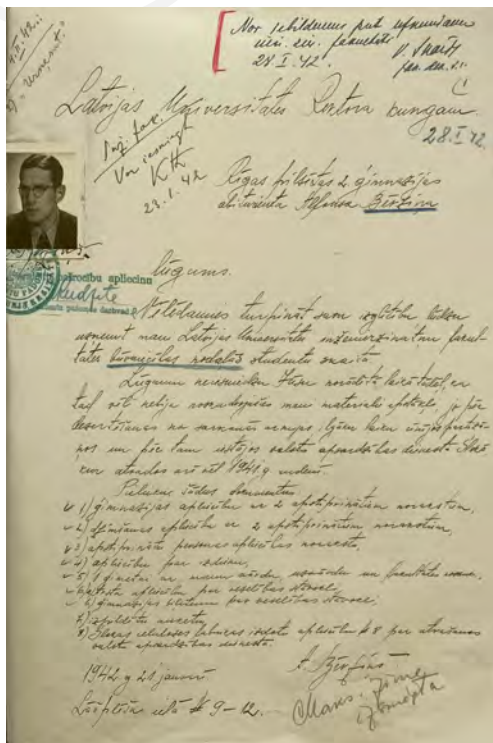
*Alfons* (also *Alfons Elmārs*) *Bērziņš* was born on 7 November 1916 in Riga [97]. In 1938, he graduated from the Riga City 2nd Gymnasium, completing the course of a Vocational Gymnasium.

A. *Bērziņš* practiced skating since early childhood. He bought his first iron skates at the age of seven on the pocket money he saved [98]. Since then, the young man exercised his passion for speed skating, he wanted to resemble his idols – skaters *Jānis Valentīns Andriķons* (1912–1967) and *Alberts Rumba* (1892–1962) [99]. A. *Bērziņš* started skating near his place of residence in *Grīziņkalns*, Riga. His first skating rinks were located on *Artilērijas* Street and in the vicinity of St. Paul's Church in Riga [98]. A. *Bērziņš* told in an interview to the newspaper «*Jaunākās Ziņas*» in 1940, «Sometimes the streets were sprinkled with sand, then the sparks simply disappeared. At first, I did not even know there were skating rinks. Once my friends took me there. I could not imagine that it was so slippery on the ice [98].»

A turning point in the athlete's life occurred when he for the first time tried to skate with the Norwegian or special speed skates [100], which he received in the first half of the 1930s from *J. V. Andriķons*, one of the best Latvian speed skaters of the 1930s. In the beginning, A. *Bērziņš* did not succeed with the Norwegian skates either, he even considered an idea to forgo skating entirely, but *J. V. Andriķons* did not allow him to do so [101].

In 1933, A. *Bērziņš* won 1st place in the overall rating of all distances in the Latvian Speed Skating Championship in the Junior Class. In 1934, he won 2nd place in the overall rating of the Latvian Speed Skating Championship. In the 1930s, he wrote for the journal «*Skolu Dzīve*» about his experience in the competitions.

As a pupil, at the age of 19, A. *Bērziņš* went to the IV Olympic Winter Games in Berlin, Germany, in 1936 together with *J. V. Andriķons*. Three speed skaters from Latvia took part in these games (*J. V. Andriķons*, A. *Bērziņš*, *Arvids Lejnīeks* (1913–?). *J. V. Andriķons*, a student at the University of Latvia (UL), and A. *Bērziņš* since 1932 represented the Sports Society «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»), and for some time the two even had a common Coach – *Robert Kurt Leonhard Witthoff* (1892–1983). Speed skater A. *Bērziņš* competed in 500 m (14th place; 45.7), 1500 m (18th place; 2:25.8), 5000 m (18th place; 8:53.4) and 10 000 m (19th place; 18:22.5) races at the IV Olympic Winter Games in February of 1936 [64]. He was ranked among the top 10 speed skaters in the world in 1938 [102].



**Figure 71.** A. *Bērziņš*'s application to the Rector of the UR *Mārtiņš Primānis* (1878–1950) on his admission to the university (1942).

In the 1930s, together with the outstanding athletes – a cyclist *Jānis Krastiņš* (1917–1992) and a football player *Roberts Pakalns* (1911–1986) – he received a nickname of one of the «devil boys».

After the Olympic Games, *A. Bērziņš* continued going in for sports and participating in competitions. In 1937, he won 9th place in the World Championships in Oslo, Norway. In Oslo, *A. Bērziņš* met with the Honorary Consul General of Latvia in Norway *Artūrs Vanags* (1882–1970), who had studied at RPI Department of Chemistry and in conversations with the Latvian athlete, he emphasized that Norway had everything one needed to train and become a world champion. Speed skater *A. Bērziņš* went to Norway in 1938 and trained together with the most famous Norwegian athletes, gaining invaluable experience [98]. In January 1938, he also took part in the European Speed Skating Championships in Oslo.

*A. Bērziņš* reached the top of his sports career at the European Speed Skating Championship in 1939, which took place from 4 to 5 February in Riga, in the skating rink of the Army Sports Club. In the overall rating, *A. Bērziņš* won 1st place in two distances – 3000 m and 5000 m – and became the European Champion. He also won 2nd place in the 500 m race and split 3rd/4th place in 1500 m skating.

Continuing the season on 18 and 19 February in Helsinki, Finland, *A. Bērziņš* won 2nd place in the overall ranking of the World Championship, becoming the World Vice-Champion, demonstrating the best performance at the distance of 10 000 m, where he won 1st place [103]. *A. Bērziņš* also achieved good results in the World and European Championships from 1936 to 1940. He was six times Master of Latvia (1935–1940) and the LSSR Champion (1941). By 1939, he had broken Latvia's speed skating records 27 times – 15 in Latvia and 12 abroad [104]. *A. Bērziņš* carefully recorded his results, documenting his sports performance.

Assessing his sporting success, the Latvian Commission of Sports Employees headed by RPI graduate *Teodors Spāde* (1891–1970) recognized *A. Bērziņš* as the best athlete of Latvia in 1938, while in 1939, the commission selected two – a speed skater *A. Bērziņš* and a race walker *Jānis Daliņš* (1904–1978) [105].

From May 1939 to June 1941, the athlete was drafted into compulsory military service. In the season 1940/1941, *A. Bērziņš* became the LSSR Champion and competed in various cities of the Soviet Union. He won 2nd place in the 1941 USSR Championship. He participated in speed skating competitions in Latvia during the Nazi German Occupation in 1941/1942 and 1942/1943. In 1942, he also became the Latvian Speed Skating Champion; in 1943, he won in so-called Riga Championship [97]. *A. Bērziņš* ended his active sports life during World War II in the 1940s [106]. In 1942, he entered the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Riga (UR) but did not have time to study. During World War II, he was drafted into the Red Army, which he deserted, and then into the Latvian Legion [107]. Until the capitulation of Germany in May 1945, *A. Bērziņš* fought on the *Kurzeme* Front [101]. At the beginning of 1940s, the road across the *Daugava* River in Riga was named after *A. Bērziņš*, which the Administration of Riga called *Alfons Bērziņš Alley* [108].

It should be noted that his first wife, *Mirdza Martinsone* (1916–1983; after 1951 – *Turķe*), a UL student who studied economics for a short time from 1934 to 1935, also took part in Alpine skiing at the IV Olympic Winter Games in 1936. Later, she continued studies at the UR Department of Dentistry.



Figure 72. *A. Bērziņš*' UR student ID (1942).



Figure 73. *A. Bērziņš* (1935).

The years of World War II were not easy for the *Bērziņš* family, because in these difficult circumstances they had to take care of their son born in 1942, but the head of the family could not be with him because he was drafted into the army.

During the Soviet era, on 28 August 1945, *A. Bērziņš* was arrested for desertion from the Red Army [109] and until 1955 was held in various prisons in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic [103].

Returning to his homeland after serving his sentence, *A. Bērziņš*' daily life was for a short period related to sports – for one year he worked as a speed skating coach, coaching *Ārija Gulīte* (later *Marksa-Ebele*). Later *A. Bērziņš* was the first Coach of the Meritorious USSR Sports Master *Lāsma Avotiņa* (later – *Kauniste*) [110]. In the 1950s–1960s, he participated in the old masters speed skating competition, was a judge of the LSSR speed skating competitions [111]. In 1955, *A. Bērziņš* started working at the Sports Society «*Daugava*» as a speed skating coach [112].

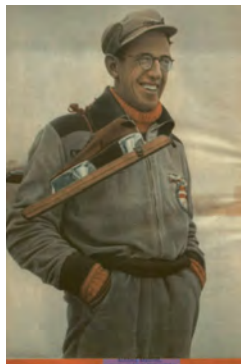
As an undesirable person for the Soviet sports officials, *A. Bērziņš* was soon forced to leave his job as a coach. Later he worked as a janitor, married his second wife *Olīta Bērziņa* (1925–2019), and raised his sons *Ingvars* and *Indulis* (in 1987, graduated from RPI Faculty of Civil Engineering [113]). With the help of the Sports Committee, *A. Bērziņš* was given a plot of land in *Teika*, *Vasku* Street, Riga [114, 115]. There he bred silver foxes, later helped his neighbours build private houses, and laid the foundations for his own house. Over time, he set up a carpentry workshop in the basement and made furniture to order. *Indulis*, the son of *A. Bērziņš*, once told the newspaper «*Sports*», ««The traitor of the homeland» for most of his life was a janitor or electrician, he was not entrusted with higher positions. A person can achieve everything, said my father, all you need is an iron will and health [116].»

*A. Bērziņš*' life ended in his native Riga on 16 December 1987, he was buried in the Riga 2nd Forest Cemetery.

On 11 September 1998, *A. Bērziņš* was justified (after his death) in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Latvia «*Par rehabilitāciju*» (On the Rehabilitation of Unlawfully Repressed Persons) of 3 August 1990, which confirms the innocence and the status of a politically repressed person of the Latvian athlete.



**Figure 74.** *A. Bērziņš* at the 40th European Championships in Riga. Cover of the journal «*Atpūta*» (1939).



**Figure 75.** Photo of *A. Bērziņš* on the cover of the journal «*Atpūta*» (1940).



**Figure 76.** *A. Bērziņš* in custody (1945).



# JURIS BĒRZIŅŠ (1954–2004)

Rowing Coxswain and Engineer

XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, 1980

Rowing

2nd place, Coxed Fours, Men (M4+)



*Juris Bērziņš* was born on 8 March 1954 in Riga. In 1972, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 50 with an in-depth specialization in the English language. On 1 September, he started studying at RPI Faculty of Radio Engineering and Communications, majoring in radio engineering. *J. Bērziņš* was a member of the LSSR Youth National Team in rowing. In August 1972, he participated in the USSR Junior Championships in Kyiv, Ukraine, so he had to ask the RPI Admission Commission to allow him to take the entrance exam in Latvian individually – faster than other applicants.

During his studies, he often had to ask for an exemption from compulsory lecture attendance and study independently in the time free from sports activities. Records in *J. Bērziņš*' student personal file show that in the first year he was exempt from studies from 15 March to 7 April and from 16 to 30 April in 1973, from 16 March to 8 April, from 14 to 17 June, from 2 September to 30 September in 1974, from 1 to 21 January in 1975, and that he usually passed his exams according to an individual schedule.

In September 1977, it was decided that due to the heavy training load, *J. Bērziņš* would repeat the 5th-year of his studies, this time majoring in automatic multi-channel communication. Student *J. Bērziņš* demonstrated good knowledge of the curriculum, the highest grades in 1/3 of the exams he passed according to the assessment system that was in place at that time were excellent (5) [117]. He graduated from RPI in 1978 and, as a full-time graduate, was required to serve for three years in a designated job. *J. Bērziņš* was assigned to work as an engineer at the Engineering Factory «VEF» and was able to continue training. Already during his studies, he ran for participation in the XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, USSR, in 1980.

In 1979, *J. Bērziņš* won the title of the XII USSR People's Spartakiad Champion and the USSR Champion, as well as 2nd place in the World Championship in Coxed Fours (M4+). At the XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow in 1980, he won 2nd place (silver medal) in Coxed Fours (M4+) as a member of the USSR National Team. In this rowing discipline, all rowers represented Riga «Dinamo» Club – *Žoržs Tikmers, Dzintars Krišjānis* (1958–2014), *Dimants Krišjānis*, RPI student *Artūrs Garonskis*. The Olympic Team was coached by *Rolands Sproģis* (1936–2001) [118]. *J. Bērziņš* demonstrated good results in the world championships, steering the boats of the USSR National Team: 3rd place in Coxed Fours (M4+; 1981) and in Men's Eight (M8+; 1982, 1983). *J. Bērziņš* always used his engineering background to prepare the boats for successful starts. After sports career, he worked as a stonemason in *Saulkrasti*. He was married and had two children – *Pēteris* and *Dace*. *J. Bērziņš*' life ended on 3 April 2004. He was buried in *Iķšķīle City Cemetery*.



Figure 78. *J. Bērziņš*' RPI student ID (1972).



Figure 79. Silver medal winners of the XXII Games of the Olympiad. From left: *D. Krišjānis*, *Dz. Krišjānis*, (in the foreground) *J. Bērziņš*, first from right – *A. Garonskis* at Airport in Riga (1968).



Figure 80. Winners of the USSR People's Spartakiad in Moscow (1979). From left: *Ž. Tikmers*, *Dz. Krišjānis*, *D. Krišjānis*, *A. Garonskis*, *J. Bērziņš*.



## KETIJA BIRZULE (1998)

Sailor and Drift Driver

XXXI Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, 2016

Sailing

24th place, Windsurfer, Women (Neil Pryde RS:X)



**Figure 82.** *K. Birzule's* RTU Bachelor's diploma (2021).



**Figure 83.** *K. Birzule* and the President of the Latvian Olympic Committee (2004–2020) *Aldonis Vrublevskis* at the World Youth Olympic Games in China (2014).



**Figure 84.** *K. Birzule* at the Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro. *K. Birzule* is in the foreground, her father *M. Birzulis* is standing, and a Russian athlete Maxim Oberemko (*Максим Оберемко*) – sitting (2016).

*Ketija Birzule* was born on 30 October 1998 in Riga in the *Birzuli* family of *Māris* and *Loreta* (b. *Fjodorova*). She graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 49. In 2021, she obtained a professional Bachelor's degree in aviation transport at RTU Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Transport and Aeronautics (FMETA).

*K. Birzule's* biggest inspiration in sports is her father *M. Birzulis*, who is also engaged in sailing and who has coached the young athlete. This kind of sports has been popular in the *Ketija's* family – her grandmother *Dace Cine* also went in for sailing [119]. *K. Birzule* started sailing (windsurfing) at the age of nine, at the age of 13 she started participating in international competitions [120].

In 2013, *K. Birzule* won the Latvian Youth Olympiad. In 2014, she participated and got 12th place in the World Youth Olympic Games in China [121]. In 2015, she became the Baltic Cup Champion in the RS:X class. She demonstrated high results in the Latvian and Baltic women's championships in 2015, won international competitions in Poland and Lithuania in 2014, and won the international competition «Riga Cup» in 2016 [122]. In June 2016, *K. Birzule* was included in the Latvian Olympic Team to compete in the Games of the Olympiad in 2016 [123].

At the age of 17, she participated in the Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, in 2016. At that time, she was the youngest member of the Latvian delegation, representing Latvia in sailing. Latvia had not participated in this discipline in the Games of the Olympiad for 12 years. *K. Birzule* finished 24th from 26 participants.

Currently, *K. Birzule's* main hobby is motorsport (drifting). She is actively involved in this sport and also participates in competitions. She tried to drift for the first time at the beginning of 2020. *K. Birzule* drives in the team «*BnD Performance*», which also deals with construction of her sports car. In the seasons of 2020 and 2021, *K. Birzule* was the only woman in Latvia competing in this motorsport discipline. At the end of the 2020 season, she got her first points on the ride. In the 5th stage of the 2021 season, she took 24th place out of 52 riders on the *Biķernieki* Track, as well as won her first tandem. *K. Birzule* believes that the acquired knowledge of an engineer definitely helps her succeed in motorsport.

The young athlete also enjoys snowboarding and repairing cars. Together with her life partner *Dāvis Dreimanis*, she is raising a daughter. In addition to her studies, she worked in various fields, from the work of a waitress in a cafe to a bicycle tour guide. *K. Birzule* continues her Master studies in the study program «*Aviation Transport*» at RTU FMETA [124].

# HARALDS BLAUS (1885–1944)

The First Latvian Athlete – Architect, Who Won an Olympic Medal

V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, 1912

Shooting

3rd place, Clay Pigeon Shooting (Trap), Men

20th place, Running Deer Shooting (Running Target, Single Shot), Men

5th place, Running Deer Shooting, Team (Running Target, Single Shot), Men



*Haralds Blaus* (Harald Blau) was born on 5 February 1885 in *Mēdzūla*, *Liezēre* Parish, Latvia, and was baptized as Harald Karl Adolf Blau in the German Congregation of the *Liezēre* Evangelical Lutheran Church [125].

His father, a graduate (1883) of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Dorpat (*Universität zu Dorpat*), was *Kārlis Blaus* (1853–1906), a doctor and writer. After obtaining a doctor's diploma in 1883, *Kārlis Blaus* arrived in *Liezēre*, *Cēsis* District (at present – *Madona* District), Latvia to become the first doctor in the region. In order to improve medical care in the village, the doctor built a small hospital in *Liezēre*, one of the first hospitals in the countryside of Latvia of that time. It was opened on 27 December 1896 [126].

*K. Blaus* had been educated at the then well-known *Bērzaïne* Gymnasium, founded in 1825, which was the first educational institution in *Vidzeme* organizing gymnastics classes. The ideas of the «father of German gymnastics», Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778–1852), were highly respected in this institution. Although there is no information about H. Blau father's close connection with sports, it can be said that he both as a father and as a graduate doctor was able to appreciate the role of sport in the upbringing and development of young people. H. Blau had a sister Katharina Blau (?-?). *K. Blau's* wife and H. Blau's mother, *Maria Reusner* (?–1897), died when Harald was 12 years old. His father *K. Blau* remarried *Lilly von Seck* (1862–1944) in 1901 [127], but unfortunately he passed away in March 1906. At that time, H. Blau was still studying at Dorpat (*Realschule zu Dorpat* Vocational School). After graduating it in 1906, he entered the Department of Architecture of Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI). H. Blau is referred to both as a Latvian [128] and as a Baltic-German, since his mother was Baltic-German.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were not many Latvians who could afford to study, because they had to pay for their studies. It was not possible to find out where H. Blau got the money to cover his tuition fees, but he graduated from RPI in 1913 after seven years of study. At the beginning of the 20th century, the duration of studies at RPI Department of Architecture was five years [10; p. 67], but many studied intermittently, and only a fraction of students graduated it at the scheduled time. Often students helped other students learn math, physics, chemistry, and other subjects, earning some money. Young people also took the opportunity to work in various companies, factories, and schools. It is believed that H. Blau earned a little



Figure 86. H. Blau's passport (1928).



Figure 87. Copy of H. Blau's RPI diploma (1913).

himself, his support was also provided by relatives, probably by his father's brother *Augusts Blauss* (1863–1920), who worked as a doctor in *Ventspils*, Latvia, and was also the Mayor (1901–1904) of the city.

H. Blau was older than the other students. At that time, it was possible to start studying at the age of 16, but H. Blau entered RPI only at the age of 21. During his studies in Riga in 1910, H. Blau became interested in shooting and participated in shooting competitions [129]. He joined the *Āgenskalns* Rifle Society (*Hagensberger Schuetzengesellschaft zu Riga*). He had become acquainted with the daily life of a hunter as a child, but at that time, he preferred to play tennis. H. Blau took part in the V Games of the Olympiad in the summer of 1912 as a student, after being selected as the best among 50 candidates in the qualifying tournament before Olympics in St. Petersburg, Russia. At the Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, Sweden, H. Blau participated in the Clay pigeon shooting – it was called Shotgun Shooting at that time. He hit 93 out of 100 pigeons and won a bronze medal, becoming the first Olympian from Latvia to win an Olympic medal. Gold medal winner James Graham (1870–1950) from America shot 96 clay pigeons, silver medal winner Alfred Goedel-Bronikoven (1882–?) from Germany – 94. Student H. Blau's performance should be considered remarkable because at that time he participated in the Games of the Olympiad almost without training [17].

H. Blau participated in the clay pigeon shooting competition with good results until the second half of the 1930s. In 1932, the first National Competition in Clay Pigeon Shooting was held. It took place at the Shooting Range of Riga Police Officers, at the 8th kilometre of the *Jelgava* highway, Latvia. The range was arranged in a peat bog drained using canals, and the shooting stands were installed. The clay pigeons (brand «*Speciāl*») were produced by a local company of *Fedotovskis*, at 22 *K. Barona* Street in Riga [130]. On 5 July 1936, at the shooting stand of the Society «*Vārnas kāja*» at the *Liči*, he set a new Latvian record in shooting clay pigeons, shooting 93 pigeons out of 100 [131]. On 12 July 1936, in the Latvian–Lithuanian shooting competition in clay pigeon shooting, engineer H. Blau set another Latvian record, obtaining 99 points out of 100.

The athlete did not only participate in the clay pigeon shooting competitions. In 1912, at the Games of the Olympiad, the athlete also competed in the Running Deer shooting, winning 20th place. The Russian Team won 5th place in the team shooting competition [132]. After the Games of the Olympiad of 1912, H. Blau continued to play active sports for many years, his name can be found in the lists of various competitions for more than 30 years.

In 1927, H. Blau was a three-time Latvian Sports Master: in clay pigeon shooting; shooting with a small-calibre rifle at both stationary and moving target. He was a nine-time Latvian Champion in shooting (1926, 1928, 1930–1935, 1938), but did not qualify for the next Games of the Olympiad. On 14 July 1936, the Latvian Union of Shooting Organizations asked the Ministry of the Interior to issue H. Blau a free foreign passport for participation in the European and World Championships in clay pigeon shooting [133]. It is possible that he attended the Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany, in August 1936, this time as a spectator.

From a young age, H. Blau also turned to figure skating, where he achieved his first success in the competitions organized by the German Sports Society «*Kaiserwald*» as



**Figure 88.** 1926 Latvian Master of Figure Skating H. Blau in Riga, on the skating rink of Sports Society «*Union*».



**Figure 89.** The cover of the book «Building Construction for Vocational Schools and Technical Schools» (1932).



**Figure 90.** The cover of the book «The Art of Shooting with a Shotgun: A Handbook for Hunting and Sport Shooting» (1935).

early as 1907, winning 3rd place [134]. In January 1912, he was awarded the title of the Baltic Provinces Sports Master. In January 1926, the first figure skating competition in the Republic of Latvia took place, and architect H. Blau won this tournament. In general, H. Blau was a three-time Latvian Master of Figure Skating (1926, 1928, 1929) [135]. In 1928, he took part in the Slovakia Championship and won 4th place. He devoted part of his free time to tennis. The athlete's career was connected with various sports societies and organizations, including *Āgenskalns* Rifle Society, the Baltic Proper Hunting and Shooting Society (later the Latvian Proper Hunting and Shooting Society), the Latvian Hunters' Society (board member), and the 1st Riga Cycling Society (H. Blau also headed the Tennis Section and participated in the Sports Committee), the Latvian Winter Sports Union, the Latvian Figure Skating Club [136]. H. Blau was active in the Cynology Section of the Latvian Hunters Society, which he had cherished and established in 1926 [134]. He was also a former athlete of the Latvian Defence Organization [137].

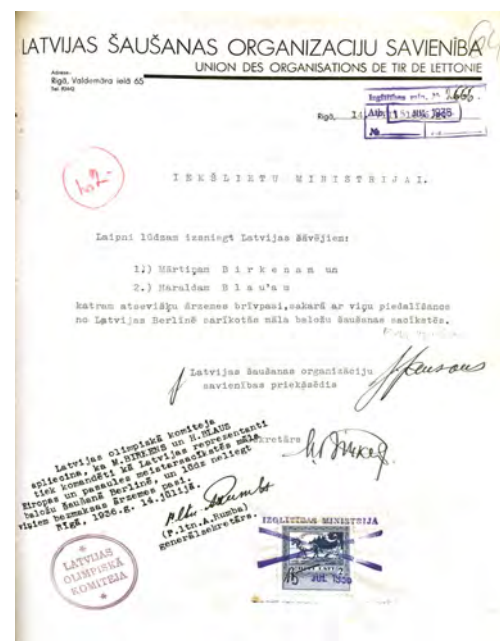
After graduating from RPI, H. Blau worked as an architect at the Department of Housing Supply of the Russian Main Troops in St. Petersburg. From 1915 to 1917, he worked as a senior engineer in Finland. In 1917, he returned to *Vidzeme* and worked in *Gaujiena, Valka* District [138]. On 15 May 1919, he started working for the Latvian Railway Administration in *Valmiera* and *Vecgulbene*; already in October, he started working as an engineer in the Road and Building Board of *Cēsis, Valmiera* and *Valka* Counties. In 1920, H. Blau was appointed Assistant to the Head of the Division of Construction Inspection of the Road and Building Administration. From October 1920 to July 1923, H. Blau worked as an architect for the insurance company «*Rossia*», but as it was liquidated, he had to accept the position of the Head of Repairs at the Riga Regional Court. His term was quite short – from June to November 1923. In July 1923, architect H. Blau joined the insurance and transport joint-stock company «*Latvija*» as an inspector and assessor, where he worked until August 1930. In addition to the mentioned work, in 1927 H. Blau also started working as a construction teacher at Riga State Technical School.

He also authored the textbook «*Būvmācība arodskolām un tehnikumiem*» (1932; Building Construction for Vocational Schools and Technical Schools) [139]. This book was republished in 1939 [140]. In 1935, another book by H. Blau «*Šaušanas māksla ar skrošu bisi: rokas grāmata medību un sporta šaušanai*» (The Art of Shooting with a Shotgun: A Handbook for Hunting and Sport Shooting) was published [141]. H. Blau lived at 16a *Antonijas* Street in Riga in the 1920s [142], and in the 1930s he lived with his family at 14 *Baložu* Street, in a building built (1910–1911) under the project of Wilhelm Roman Roessler (1879–1949), an architect and RPI graduate (1904) [143, 144].

In 1938, teacher H. Blau stopped teaching and working as an architect. In 1939, the Blau family checked out of their last residence at 14 *Baložu* Street. H. Blau moved to his wife's native house in the vicinity of *Valmiera*, Latvia, to the former *Kauguri* Manor – the house «*Ķigūļi*» surrounded by the estate of about 100 hectares. A sports dog kennel was established here as early as the 1930s [145]. H. Blau's main occupation at the end of his life was hunting and breeding dogs, which H. Blau had been passionate about for many years. He participated in the first Latvian hunting sports equipment and dog exhibition in *Ķeizardārzs* in Riga, on 6–8 October 1923 [146]. The President of Latvia



**Figure 91.** Winners of the IV Latvian General Sports Festival (Latvian Olympiad) shooting with a small-calibre rifle at a distance of 25 m on a moving target at the shooting stand of the Latvian Proper Hunting and Shooting Society in *Majori* (1927). From left: *Rūdolfš Klinsons* (1889–1941; 1st place), *Pauls Rasiņš* (1893–1971; 2nd place), and *Harald Blau* (1885–1944; 3rd place).



**Figure 92.** Request of the Latvian Union of Shooting Organizations of 14 July 1936 to the Ministry of the Interior to issue a free foreign passport to H. Blau for participation in the European and World Championships in clay pigeon shooting.



**Figure 93.** Member of the Latvian Hunters' Society H. Blau in *Livberze* (1920s).



**Figure 94.** 14 Baložu Street (early 20th century).



**Figure 95.** Memorial plaque dedicated to H. Blau on the facade of the building at 14 Baložu Street in Riga (2021).

*Jānis Čakste* (1859–1927) and the ministers also visited the exhibition. Among more than 170 dogs, 3rd prize was awarded to H. Blau's badger hunter – the dachshund *Fips*, his English setter *Džims* won 2nd class prize – a silver case donated by the brewery «*Kymmēl*» [147]. In 1926, H. Blau participated in the establishment of the Cynology Section of the Latvian Hunters Society, working with more than 30 bird dogs. He sold most of them to foreigners. With his dogs, H. Blau participated in competitions in Latvia and abroad, as well as judged dog competitions [148].

The first Latvian Olympian H. Blau together with his wife Elza (b. *Grīnberga*; 1894–?) raised the children Harald (1927–2010?) and Rita (b. *Basozki*; 1928–2008) [88] in the Latvian environment and spirit. Both children also practiced figure skating and participated in the junior championship.

During World War II, H. Blau went to Germany with his family. An architect, athlete, hunter, dog breeder, head of sports societies and sections had been suffering from tuberculosis for several years and passed away on 4 August 1944 in the German city of Augsburg [150, 129; p. 37]. Other sources incorrectly state that he died in June 1945 [151]. His stepmother L. Blau also passed away in Germany. H. Blau's family moved to the United States, where his son, who lived in New York in the second half of the 20th century, was one of the most excellent Latvian tennis players on the entire North American continent [136]. In 1948, his daughter Rita met Mike Basozki (1929–2009), an American soldier in Augsburg, Germany, with whom she later moved to Tacoma, USA. The family had two children: a son, Steve Basozki, and a daughter, Joyce Wennberg [152].

In 1933, celebrating the 15th anniversary of Latvia's independence, H. Blau, as one of the 106 Latvian athletes, was awarded a special Badge of Honour by the Association of Sports Organizations. It is interesting that H. Blau received this Badge of Honour «as a multiple Master of Figure Skating» [153, 154].

Former H. Blau competitor in figure skating, Latvian lawyer and public figure, professor of sociology at the University of Maryland (USA) *Pēteris Lejiņš* (1909–2002) described H. Blau as a real gentleman both inside and outside the sports field. «He was modest and tolerant, unpretentious and showing no signs of arrogance. One thing can be said about him that the genuinely enjoyed any athletic discipline he had started, working very hard to advance himself and always be in the state of the highest sporting readiness. [129; p. 42].»

# ROBERTS BLUĶIS (1913–1998)

Hockey Player, Basketball Player and Engineer

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Hockey

13th/15th place, Men



*Roberts Bluķis* was born on 4 April 1913 in Riga in the family of the farmer *Jēkabs Bluķis* (1870–1945) and his wife *Maija Bluķe* (b. *Reiziņa*; 1879–1968) [154]. He studied at City Elementary School No. 23 (1921–1928) in Riga and at the Department of Electrical Engineering of the Riga State Technical School (1928–1932) majoring in the low-current appliances.

From 1932 to 1933, he did the compulsory military service at the Headquarters of the *Vidzeme* Division, was a deputy officer [156]. After military service, in 1934, he entered the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Latvia (UL). He did not finish his studies in the planned four and a half years, because he spent a lot of time participating in various sports competitions and regular trainings.

Along with his studies, *R. Bluķis* had been working in various technical and engineering-related positions since 1937 – at the Department of Highways and Roads, at the Department of Maritime Affairs, then in the Latvian Railway Administration (1942–1944) [155]. He studied for six years and in 1942 obtained a degree in civil engineering [157].

*R. Bluķis* competed with sprinter *Artūrs Zigfrīds Kravinskis* (1918–?), betting which one of them would graduate sooner, but both received an engineering diploma at the same time. *A. Z. Kravinskis* set another record – he studied only for four years [158]. Athlete and engineer *R. Bluķis* considered sports to be the best assistant in his studies. In the autumn of 1942, he became a student of the Department of Mathematics at the renamed UL, which was called the University of Riga (*Universität zu Riga*; 1942–1944) during World War II [159]. He did not manage to receive a university diploma for the second time. *R. Bluķis* was a philistine of the Student Corporation «*Talavija*».

*R. Bluķis* was one of the longest-running members of the Latvian National Hockey Team. His athletic career began with bandy (ball hockey), which was soon replaced by ice hockey. Already at the age of 16, he was included in the Latvian National Team and competed in the first national competition with Lithuania in Riga on 27 February 1929. At that time, the Latvian Team defeated Lithuania with a result of 3 : 0 [160].

*R. Bluķis* was praised for skating mastery, speed, fighting spirit, masterfully executed breakthroughs, passes, and efficiency [161].

From 1932 to 1940, except 1933 (for one season during compulsory military service, he was a member of the Army Sports Club (ASC)), he was a member of the Hockey Team «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*»), and his position on the field was a striker. He also represented the «*US*» during World War II: from 1942 (Champion of Nazi-occupied Latvia in 1942) until 1944, but then went into exile. He



**Figure 97.** Fragment of *R. Bluķis'* application to the Rector of the UL *Jūlijs Auškāps* (1884–1942) on his admission to the university (1934).

was a two-times Latvian Champion (1937, 1940) [155]. In the late 1930s, he managed «US» hockey training. In 1941, he became the LSSR Champion in hockey as a member of Riga «Dinamo» Team. *R. Bluķis* was also a referee of hockey games.

He also competed in the Latvian Student Hockey Team. As a member of that Team, he participated in the academic winter championship in St. Moritz, Switzerland, in 1935, played away in Klosters-Serneus, Switzerland, and won the first place in the *SELL* (*Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva*) student hockey tournament in Riga [162].

*R. Bluķis* participated in the IV Olympic Winter Games in 1936 as a hockey player, but the Latvian National Team did not win any awards. 24 participants were registered for the Olympic Winter Games, including 13 hockey players [163; p. 269].

Training for the Games began in 1934, and in 1935, candidates were selected. However, it later turned out that this list was not complete, as some candidates had stopped playing hockey. In addition, in the season of 1935/1936, hockey players who were not included in the list still participated in the National Team training season [163; p. 260, 264].

It cost LVL 3700 to equip and train athletes and another LVL 500 were necessary to pay salary to the Coach Robert Kurt Leonhard Witthoff (1892–1983) for five months [163; p. 260]. It was planned that later the National Team would be trained by a Canadian Coach Bobby Bell (1904–1940), but he resigned and the Team was coached by *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955) [163; p. 268].

The list of the participants of the Olympic Hockey Team was not known until January 1936, it had to be announced by 15 January. The squad was as follows: goalkeepers *Herberts Kuške* (1913–1994) and *Roberts Lapainis* (1913–1947); defenders *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *Augusts Ozols* (1908–1980) and *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995); strikers *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Jānis Bebris* (1917–1969), *R. Bluķis*, *Harijs Fogels* (1906–?), *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983), *Kārlis Paegle* (1911–1997), *Arvids Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985), *Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* (1912–1972) and *Jānis Rozītis* (1913–1942) [163; p. 275].

On January 24, at the meeting of the Latvian Olympic Committee, it was decided to exclude two hockey players – *H. Fogels* and *E. P. Klāvs* – from the National Team due to the lack of funds. Thus, the main team consisted of goalkeepers *H. Kuške* and *R. Lapainis*; defenders *A. Jurgens*, *L. J. Vedējs*; the 1st of attacker line – *R. Bluķis*, *A. M. Pētersons*, *Ā. Petrovskis*; the 2nd line – *A. Auziņš*, *J. Bebris*, *K. Paegle*. In addition, the reserve defender *A. Ozols* and the striker *J. Rozītis* were chosen. *E. P. Klāvs* [163; p. 289] was also added to the 12 selected hockey players. *H. Fogels* and *Roberts Pakalns* (1911–1986) also accompanied the Team unofficially.

In Garmisch-Pantenkirchen, Germany, 15 teams competed in four subgroups. On 7 February, in the first game with the Canadian Olympic Hockey Team, the Latvians lost 0 : 11. On 8 February, they lost 2 : 9 to Poland's Olympic Hockey Team, and on 9 February they lost 1 : 7 to the Austrian Olympic Hockey Team. As a result, the Latvian National Hockey Team ranked in 13th/15th place.

*R. Bluķis* was a versatile athlete and played not only hockey but also basketball, football, volleyball, handball (as a member of «Starts» Team he became a Latvian Master) and bandy (represented by the «Vanderera» and «US» teams; during the war – «Rīgas Dinamo») [155].

While studying at Riga State Technical School, *R. Bluķis* trained with the three time Latvian Master in figure skating and shooting champion Harald Blau (1885–1944) [155].



Figure 98. *R. Bluķis'* SUL student ID (1940).



*R. Bluķis* went to world championships, twice became the winner of the World Student Basketball Games as a member of the Latvian National Team (1935, 1937), was a three-time Latvian Master in basketball in the Latvian National Flag Association (LNFA) and «US» teams (1933, 1936, 1937) [3; p. 327].

Together with the Latvian Student Basketball Team, he twice won the golden awards at the academic summer championships – in Budapest, Hungary (1935) and Paris, France (1937). In the same championships, he also competed in the Latvian Student Football Team, where he won the 3rd (1937) and the 4th place (1935). In the late 1930s, he was the Head of the «US» Football Section and coached «US» football players. After the war, he played football for the Latvian teams in West Germany [164].

In 1943, he received the Ice Sports Prize of the Latvian Association of Sports and Physical Culture for «32 completed national hockey competitions» [165].

*R. Bluķis* was drafted into the German military service, in 1944 he went into exile to Germany. He first settled in Gothenburg (now Gdynia, Poland) and later lived in Luebeck until the end of World War II.

After World War II, *R. Bluķis* played hockey in West-Germany in the «All Star» unit of the United States of America (USA) Army; in the «HC Augsburg» team for three seasons (1946/1947–1948/1949), and worked as an engineer.

In 1947, he competed as a member of the Latvian Team in the tournament in Garmisch-Partenkirchen [166].

After the war, he lived in Murnau am Staffelsee, Bavaria, from 1945 – in the Sillenbuch Camp in Stuttgart, where he worked as a self-employed engineer.

In 1949 he moved to the USA, settled in North Dakota, and lived in England and Kendo, where he first dealt with animal husbandry and dairy farming (1949–1950). After emigrating to the USA in 1949/1950, he played hockey in Kendo (North Dakota) team «Cando Odnacs», which played in the USA and Canada. *R. Bluķis* also played a lot of sports in the USA, having inspired his teammates. He was remarkable among other athletes for his fighting spirit.

From 1950 to 1951, the engineer worked in private bureaus in North Dakota and Minnesota; from 1951 to 1953, he worked as a civil engineer in the USA Army Civilian Corps, designing the Garrison Dam (North Dakota). In the first half of the 1950s, he moved from North Dakota to Kansas.

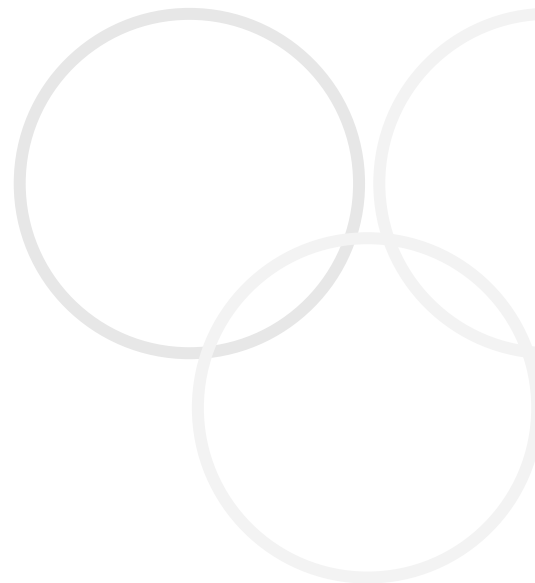
From 1953 to 1955, he worked as a project engineer and construction manager at «Fred R. Combs Construction Co», Minneapolis, Minnesota.

From 1955 to 1966, he was the Chief Engineer at «Burns and McDonnell Engineering», Kansas, Missouri, and was engaged in the design of various structures [167]. Along building his career in the first half of the 1960s, he also studied at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA, where he obtained a Master's degree in Civil Engineering and Soil Mechanics (1964).

From 1966 to 1982, he worked for the USA Army Civilian Service in the Corps of Engineers as a geotechnical engineer, designing dams, roads, tunnels, shafts and other facilities in San Mateo, Northern California.

From 1982 to 1987, he worked for the USA Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, overseeing projects and conducting safety inspections of hydropower projects. He retired in 1987.

*R. Bluķis* was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the



**Figure 99.** «US» strikers A. Petrovskis and R. Bluķis (1930s).



**Figure 100.** «US» Team players in Riga. From left: R. Bluķis, L. J. Vedējs, E. P. Klāvs, A. Auziņš ((1940s).

International Society for Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering (ISSMFE; at present – International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE)) [164]. He was a Board Member of *Daugavas Vanagi* Association of Northern California [155].

In 1935, he married *Daina Kaņepāja* (1914–1990). There were two children in the family – *Astrīda Ruta Bluķe Onata* (b. 1940) and *Ivars Romāns Bluķis* (b. 1942) [168]. *R. Bluķis* passed away in the USA on 14 April 1998.



**Figure 101.** *R. Bluķis* in Germany (1948).

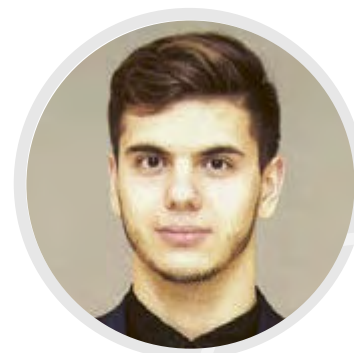
# DANIILS BOBROVS (1997)

## Swimmer and Engineer

XXXII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, 2020

Swimming

31st place, 200 m Breaststroke, Men



*Daniils Bobrovs* was born on 8 October 1997 in Riga to the family of *Mihails* and *Olga Bobrovs*. After graduating from Riga Secondary School No. 75, he entered RTU Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Transport and Aeronautics (FMETA) in 2016 [169]. In 2019, he obtained a Bachelor's degree. *D. Bobrovs* is currently pursuing his Master's degree at the FMETA.

He started swimming at the age of six. The choice of sport was initially associated with health problems [170], swimming helped the young athlete, and he switched from a health group to a sports group.

In the European Games in 2015, *D. Bobrovs* won 7th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke (2:14.29) and improved his previous Latvian record in the semi-finals.

In the World Championship of 2015, *D. Bobrovs* finished in 31st place in the men's 200 m breaststroke qualification, and in 26th place in the men's 4 x 100 m medley relay (with *Jānis Šaltans*, *Nikolajs Maskalenko* and *Uvis Kalniņš*).

In the European Championship in 2016, he was 42nd in the men's 100 m breaststroke qualification and 25th in the men's 200 m breaststroke qualification.

At the FINA (*Fédération Internationale de Natation*) World Swimming Championships in 2016, *D. Bobrovs* finished in 50th place in the men's 100 m breaststroke, 25th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, and 55th place in the men's 50 m breaststroke.

At the World Championship in 2017, *D. Bobrovs* finished in 50th place in the men's 100 m breaststroke; 18th place in the men's 4 x 100 m freestyle relay (in this heat, together with teammates *U. Kalniņš*, *N. Maskalenko* and *Ģirts Feldbergs* he broke the Latvian record – 3:24.40); 15th place in the men's 4 x 100 m medley relay; 30th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke; and 21st place men's 4 x 100 m medley relay [170, 171].

At the European Short Course Swimming Championship in 2017, in the 25 m pool, *D. Bobrovs* ranked 47th in the men's 50 m breaststroke, 24th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, and 41st place in the men's 100 m breaststroke.

In 2017, at the Latvian Swimming Championship in Riga, the athlete improved the national record in the men's 100 m breaststroke (1:02.34, and broke his own record in the men's 200 m breaststroke (2:13.37)) and together with the members of BJSS «*Rīdzene*»/«*Ziepniekkalns*» Team *Filips Čepjolkins*, *Emīls Pone* and *Ģ. Feldbergs*, he improved a 34-year-old Latvian record in the 4 x 200 m freestyle relay (7:51.61) [171].

In the European Championship in 2018, *D. Bobrovs* ranked in the following places: 43rd place in the men's 100 m breaststroke, 29th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, 16th place in the men's 4 x 100 m medley relay, 45th place in the men's 50 m breaststroke, and 15th place in the men's 4 x 100 m freestyle relay [171].



**Figure 103.** *D. Bobrovs* at the Men's 200 m Breaststroke competition at the XXXII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo (2021).



**Figure 104.** *D. Bobrovs* at the training camp in Rēzekne, Latvia (2020).

At the FINA World Swimming Championships in 2018, he reached the following positions: 38th place in the men's 200 m medley relay, 19th place in the men's 4 x 50 m freestyle mixed relay, 35th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, and 21st place in the men's 4 x 50 m medley relay [171].

At the World Championship in 2019, the following results were demonstrated: 55th place in the men's 100 m breaststroke, 42nd place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, 20th place in the men's 4 x 100 m freestyle mixed relay [171, 172].

In the European Championship in 2021, *D. Bobrovs* landed in the following positions: 57th place in the men's 100 m breaststroke, 37th place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, 26th place in the men's 4 x 100 m mixed relay, and 52nd place in the men's 50 m breaststroke [171].

*D. Bobrovs* participated in the XXXII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan, which took place from 23 July to 8 August 2021 due to the *Covid* pandemic, and was in 31st place in the men's 200 m breaststroke competition with 40 participants.

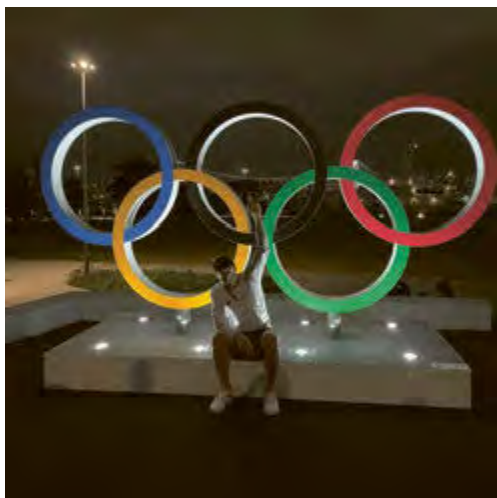
Participation in the Games of the Olympiad had always been the athlete's dream, as he revealed in an interview with *sportacentrs.com* «...I can say that the dream has come true. I am proud of that. Now I am thinking about the next Olympics, because one is never enough. I can say that this was my biggest competition in life. Until now, it was the World Championship in Kazan in 2015 [173].»

In the European Short Course Swimming Championship in 2021, in the 25 m pool, *D. Bobrovs* finished in 33rd place in the men's 100 m breaststroke, 21st place in the men's 200 m breaststroke, 32nd place in the men's 50 m breaststroke, and 17th place in the men's 4 x 50 m medley relay [171].

Along with doing professional sports, *D. Bobrovs* works as a design engineer.



**Figure 105.** *D. Bobrovs* at the XXXII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo (2021).



**Figure 106.** *D. Bobrovs* at the XXXII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo (2021).

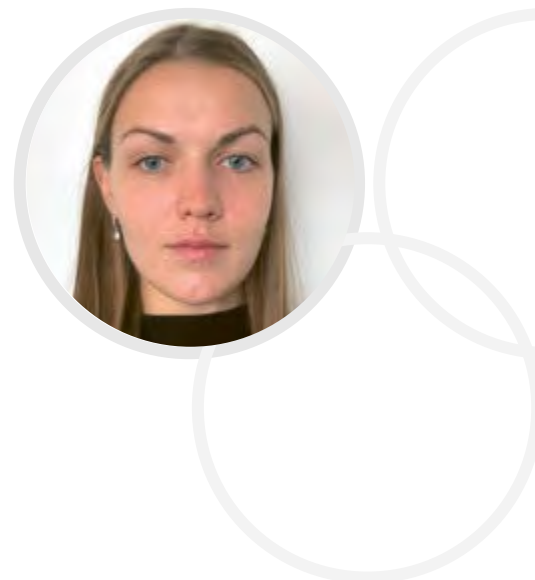
# LIENE BONDARE (1996)

## Alpine Skier

XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, 2022

Alpine Skiing

DNF, Slalom, Women



*Liene Bondare* was born on 21 February 1996 in Riga. In 2015, she graduated from the Riga State 2nd Gymnasium. In 2018, she obtained a Bachelor's degree at the University of Applied Sciences RISEBA. In 2019, *L. Bondare* entered RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management (FEEM). In 2021, she graduated from RTU FEEM professional Master study program [174].

*L. Bondare* chose alpine skiing because when she was a child, her parents took her to slope try it. She liked this kind of sport for its speed, adrenaline and heart-turning feelings, and enjoyed training in the fresh air and was inspired by success. She trained in the Sports Club «*Favorīts*», Sports Club «*Apex*», and since 2011 she trained with the Latvian National Team, whereas since 2022 she has been part of «*N57*», coached by *Dinārs Drošs*.

In the third round of the Latvian Cup in 2009, *L. Bondare* won 1st place (Young Women; Giant Slalom). In the Latvian Championship of 2010 she won 2nd place in SuperG (Young Women), 2nd place in Giant Slalom (Young Women), 2nd place in Giant Slalom (Junior), 3rd place in Giant Slalom (Elite), 2nd place in Slalom (Young Women), finishing 2nd in Group A in the overall standing. In the 2010 Latvian Cup, the athlete won 1st place (Young Women; Slalom) [175], in 2011, she won the Latvian Winter Youth Olympics [176].

*L. Bondare* took part in the World Championship for Adults for the first time in 2013 in Schladming, Austria, landing in 66th place in Giant Slalom. *L. Bondare* also competed in the World Championship in Beaver Creek, USA, in 2015, taking 74th place in Giant Slalom. In January 2017, *L. Bondare* won the FIS (*Fédération internationale de ski*) competition in Finland, reaching a score below 30 FIS points (25.61 points) for the first time. At the 2017 Junior World Championships in Ore, USA, *L. Bondare* took 29th position in Slalom. In the same year, she participated in the World Championship in St. Moritz, Switzerland, where she won 7th place in the qualifying competition. In November 2017, she for the first time competed in the World Cup in Levi, Finland, but did not qualify for the finals, and won the Baltic Cup in the overall standing.

In 2019, *L. Bondare* participated in the Winter Universiade in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, where she achieved her best result in the combination, taking 24th place.

*L. Bondare* participated in the World Championship in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, in 2021, only in Slalom, but did not finish the second race.

In 2022, *L. Bondare* participated in the Latvian Championship in Italy, Pozza Di Fassa, where she won 1st place in both Giant Slalom and Classic Slalom and won the title of the Latvian Champion [177].



**Figure 108.** Copy of *L. Bondare's* RTU Master's diploma (2021).



**Figure 109.** *L. Bondare* in the second stage of the Baltic Cup (2017).



**Figure 110.** *L. Bondare* at the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing (2022).

In January 2022, it was confirmed that *L. Bondare* had acquired the right to participate in the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, China. In the Slalom competition, *L. Bondare* took 48th position after the first race. In the second race, due to the mistakes of the opponents, she had the opportunity to take 43rd place, but the mistake in the middle of the track prevented her from finishing [178, 179].

*L. Bondare* has climbed the podium in the Latvian Winter Olympics in Alpine Skiing several times, has been the winner in several stages of the Baltic Cup, as well as won the overall rating in 2017. The athlete has represented Latvia in five world championships (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021) and has risen 30 times on the *FIS* podium.

*L. Bondare* enjoys running, as well as doing extreme sports – wakeboarding and wakesurfing. Young athlete is passionate about entrepreneurship and her dream is to establish a business to support young athletes [177].



**Figure 111.** *L. Bondare* at the Latvian Championship in Italy (2022).



**Figure 112.** *L. Bondare* at the training camp in Switzerland (2021).

# ARTŪRS DĀRZNIĒKS (1993)

## Luger

XXIII Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang, 2018

Luge

24th place, Singles, Men

XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, 2022

Luge

18th place, Singles, Men



*Artūrs Dārznieks* was born on 20 April 1993 in *Jēkabpils* City, Latvia, into the family of *Andis Kāposts* and *Ingūna Dārzniece*. In 2010, he graduated from the 9th grade of *Sigulda* Town City Secondary School; in 2013, he finished *Murjāņi* Sports Gymnasium. In 2015, he entered RTU, choosing a college study program «Engineering Design» at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Transport and Aeronautics (FMETA), where he studied according to an individual plan until 2016. He exmatriculated from RTU voluntarily in 2018 [180].

*A. Dārznieks* got involved in luge in 2005. He chose this sport by accident – in the evenings he together with his friends walked around the bobsleigh, luge and skeleton track in *Sigulda*, Latvia, until a coach noticed them and encouraged them to apply for training [181]. *A. Dārznieks* made his first run in winter boots, moreover, the contents of the pockets of his overalls spilled out, and the run ended with a fall [181]. The first coach of *A. Dārznieks* was *Ingrīda Amantova*. At the beginning of his career, he also participated in Men's Doubles.

*A. Dārznieks* has participated in the World Cup since 2011. He competed in the luge competitions in the Junior World Championship, gaining 26th place (2011; Singles, Men), 7th place (2012; Team Relay); 17th place (2012; Singles, Men); 15th place (2013; Singles, Men). In the overall rating of the 2011/2012 season of the World Cup for Juniors, he got 29th place in the Singles, in the 2012/2013 season – 14th place [182].

*A. Dārznieks* ranked in the following positions in luge in the European Junior Championship: 12th place (2012; Singles, Men); 8th place (2013; Team Relay); 10th place (2013; Singles, Men) [182].

For the first time he qualified for the main competition in January 2014 on the Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Track in Altenberg, Germany. The first medal in the World Cup was won on 29 November 2015 on Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Track in Igls, Austria, where *A. Dārznieks* finished 2nd in the Team Relay.

In 2015, while studying at RTU FMETA, the athlete participated in the development of the practical part of the Bachelor Paper «Equipment for Luge Athletes Force Impulse Detection in the Start Wrench» by *Katrina Dimitre* (at present – *Kūma*), a student of the joint study program «Medical Engineering and Physics» implemented by RTU and Riga Stradins University. Experiments were conducted on *Sigulda* Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Track. The gloves with special sensors developed within the framework



**Figure 114.** *A. Dārznieks* at the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang (2018).



**Figure 115.** *A. Dārznieks* in Team Relay at the World Championship stage in *Sigulda* (2021).

of the paper were intended for training during summer and autumn, and *A. Dārziņš* managed to improve his starting stroke with their help [183].

*A. Dārziņš* got 21st place in the European Championship in 2014 (Individual competitions). In the overall ranking of the World Cup in the season 2013/2014, he landed in 45th place (Singles, Men), in the 2015 World Cup – in 15th place (Singles, Men), in the U-23 group – in 4th place (Singles, Men). In the overall World Cup ranking for the season 2014/2015, the athlete ranked 28th (Singles, Men) [182].

In the 2017 European Championship, *A. Dārziņš* won 10th place (Singles, Men), 3rd place (Team Relay), in the 2017 World Championship – 20th place (Singles, Men). He ranked 20th (Singles, Men) and 2nd (Team Relay; together with *Elīza Cauce* and *Andris* and *Juris* Šici) in the overall World Cup ranking in the season of 2016/2017. In the overall World Cup ranking for the season 2017/2018, he finished in 22nd position (Singles, Men) and 4th position (Team Relay). In the 49th FIL (*Fédération Internationale de Luge de Course*) European Championship in *Sigulda* in 2018, he won 9th place (Singles, Men) [183].

*A. Dārziņš* competed as a member of the Latvian Team at the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in 2018 in Pyeong Chang, Korea, and got 24th place (Singles, Men). His was coached by *Kaspars Dumpis*.

In 2019, *A. Dārziņš* got 12th place in the 50th FIL European Championship in Oberhof, Germany. In the 2019 World Championship, he got 21st place. In the overall ranking of the World Cup of the season 2018/2019, he ranked 28th. In 2020, in FIL World Championship in Sochi, Russia, he obtained 18th place. In 2020, he ranked 18th at the 51st FIL European Championships in Lillehammer, Norway. In the overall World Cup ranking in the season of 2019/2020, he ranked 23rd. In the stage of the World Cup held in *Sigulda* in 2020, he won 6th place in the BMW Sprint Cup. In 2021, the athlete won 4th place (Singles, Men) and 2nd place (Team Relay) at the 52nd FIL European Championship in *Sigulda*. In 2021, in the 50th FIL World Championship in Koenigssee, Germany, he got 23rd place in Singles, Men, 7th in the Sprint Cup, and 3rd in Team Relay. In the IX World Cup in St. Moritz, Switzerland, he won 4th place in the season of 2020/2021 [183].

In November 2021, in the first stage of the World Cup on the Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Track in Yanqing, China, *A. Dārziņš* won 11th place (Singles, Men). On 7 January 2022, the athlete won 1st place (Singles, Men) at the Nations Cup in *Sigulda*. The stage in *Sigulda* was the final qualification competition that determined the luge athletes who would represent the Latvian National Team at the Olympic Winter Games in Beijing [182]. At the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing, *A. Dārziņš* won 18th place (Singles, Men). He was coached by *Kristaps Mauriņš* and *Daniels Fogelis*. Luge sport for *A. Dārziņš* is «freedom, speed, tension and overload on the track curves. The only thing you see is ice and your own feet», as *A. Dārziņš* said in an interview to *lsm.lv* [181].

In 2021, he obtained the qualification of a luge sports coach at the Latvian Academy of Sports and Education. *A. Dārziņš* is married, he and his spouse raise a daughter. He enjoys outdoor activities, cycling, cross-country skiing, and watching good movies [183].

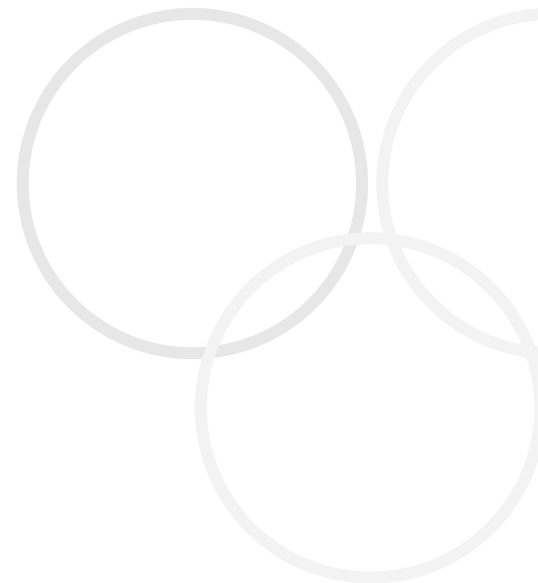
As *A. Dārziņš* admitted in an interview with *I. Gudro* on 28 February 2022, «It is always more difficult to combine studies with sport than studying full-time, but



**Figure 116.** *A. Dārziņš* with his wife and daughter (2019).



nothing is impossible. Considering that I am a luge athlete and for me winter is the season of active sports, I get to miss a lot of on-site classes and then spend a lot of time in spring and autumn at the tutorials, trying to catch up. I would like to express my gratitude to *Anita Geriņa-Ancāne*, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Industrial Design, for her patience and understanding. Everything could always be resolved and negotiated. The academic staff are generally very professional and friendly and have never spared a consultation or advice. During my studies, in spring, there were days when I did not want to leave practical classes, while there was still ice on *Sigulda* Track and the equipment was tested. The lectures were really interesting and I learned a lot of new things [183].»



**Figure 117.** A. Dārznieks at the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing (2022).



**Figure 118.** A. Dārznieks at the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in Beijing (2022).



## INTARS DĪCMANIS (1979)

Bobsledder and Entrepreneur

XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, 2002

Bobsleigh

13th/14th place, Two, Men

12th place, Four, Men

XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin, 2006

Bobsleigh

20th place, Two, Men

21st place, Four Men

*Intars Dīcmanis* was born on 22 September 1979 in *Sigulda*, Latvia. In 1998, he graduated from *Murjāņi* Sports Gymnasium and entered RTU Faculty of Civil Engineering, choosing the study program «Transport Engineering». The *Sigulda* Bobsleigh and Luge Track was opened in his hometown in 1986, so it is clear why he got interested in bobsleigh. The athlete had to combine studies and sports, so his studies lasted for a long time. The turning point was season 1999/2000 of Apollo Winter Games held in *Sigulda*, when bobsledder *Ruslans Suharevs* (*I. Dīcmanis*' classmate from *Murjāņi* Sports Gymnasium) invited *I. Dīcmanis* to push his sleigh. The young man did well. He was noticed by a bobsleigh Coach *Rihards Kotāns* (1956–2010), who invited *I. Dīcmanis* to *Preiļi* Sports Camp. *I. Dīcmanis* went to the camp wearing a suit, coming directly from his RTU exams [184]. It was the year when *I. Dīcmanis* realized he wanted to do sports professionally, and his goal was to take part in the Olympic Games in 2002.

*I. Dīcmanis* had to choose between sports and studies, and he preferred sports. In 2001, *I. Dīcmanis* won 9th place in the World Junior Championships in two-man bobsleigh together with *Jānis Miņins* [185]. In 2002, he participated in the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, where he got 13th/14th place in the two-man competition together with *Gatis Gūts* (3:12.68) and 12th place in the four-man competition together with *G. Gūts*, *Māris Rozentāls* and *Gunārs Bumbulis* (3:09.44), lagging behind the German Olympic champions by only 1.93 s [186; p. 74]. The coaches of the athlete were *Sandis Prūsis* and *Ivars Čākurs*.

Bobsledder *I. Dīcmanis* was a pusher of bobsleigh sledges, and at the beginning of the century and the new millennium he participated in several other international competitions, gaining noteworthy results – in 2003, the bobsledder got 13th place in the European Championship in both two-man competition together with *G. Gūts* and in the four-man competitions together with *G. Gūts*, *M. Rozentāls* and *G. Bumbulis*, as well as won the title of the Latvian Champion in the two-man competitions together with the pilot *Jānis Ozols* [187]. In the same year, in the bobsleigh competition in Lake Placid, USA, he reached the highest place in his career – 5th place in the two-man competition together with *G. Gūts* [188]. Prolonged training and competitions



Figure 120. Copy of *I. Dīcmanis*' RTU Bachelor's diploma(2014).



Figure 121. *I. Dīcmanis* and *G. Gūts* at the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City (2002).

hindered studying, and in 2005 *I. Dīcmanis* had to apply for an academic leave [189]. Intense training and good results helped *I. Dīcmanis* win the right to participate in the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin, Italy, in 2006, where he obtained 20th place in the two-man competition together with *G. Gūts* (3:47.51) and 21st place in the four-man competition in the team including *Mihails Arhipovs*, *Māris Bogdanovs* and *Reinis Rozītis* (2:49.01) [190; p. 42, 123, 124]. The athlete was coached by *Jānis Skrastiņš*.

In 2008, *I. Dīcmanis* finished his career as a professional athlete. In 2009, *I. Dīcmanis* re-entered RTU, choosing the study program «Entrepreneurship and Management» of the Evening Department of the Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management. In 2014, *I. Dīcmanis* received an RTU diploma, having obtained a Bachelor's degree in management.

*I. Dīcmanis* is married and has two children. Currently, *I. Dīcmanis* is the Head of the branch of the Swedish company «Mitek Industries AB» – «Mitek Baltic» [191], a Member of the Board of the Latvian Wood Construction Cluster. In his free time, he plays hockey (he has played in the amateur league «PTA zaķi» and in the Independent Amateur Hockey League (*Neatkarīgā amatieru hokeja līga; NAHL*), he also does track and field athletics.



**Figure 122.** *G. Gūts* with pusher *I. Dīcmanis* at the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City (2002).



**Figure 123.** From right: *G. Gūts*, pushers – *I. Dīcmanis*, *M. Rozentāls* and *G. Bumbulis* at the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City (2002).



**Figure 124.** *M. Arhipovs* with his crew – *M. Bogdanovs*, *I. Dīcmanis* and *R. Rozītis* at the XX Olympic Winter Olympic Games in Turin (2006).



## ZINTIS EKMANIS (1958)

Bobsledder, Coach, Engineer and Entrepreneur

XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, 1984

Bobsleigh

3rd place, Two, Men

12th place, Four, Men

XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, 1988

Bobsleigh

9th place, Two, Men

XVI Olympic Winter Games in Albertville, 1992

Bobsleigh

16th place, Two, Men

16th place, Four, Men

XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, 1994

Bobsleigh

10th place, Two, Men

13th place, Four, Men



Figure 126. Z. Ekmanis' RPI academic record book (1975).



Figure 127. Request of Z. Ekmanis to the Dean of RPI Faculty of Engineering Economics Juris Lūsis (1928–2006) to prolong the examination session bearing the Dean's inscription (1979).

Zintis Ekmanis was born on 17 May 1958 in Pabaži Municipality, Riga District, Latvia. After graduating from Saulkrasti Secondary School in 1975, he entered RPI Faculty of Engineering Economics and immediately joined the RPI Athletics Team.

Z. Ekmanis did athletics already during his school years and continued doing it during his studies at the Sports Society «Daugava». Before studying, he played in the light music orchestra of the collective farm «Pabaži», danced in a folk-dance ensemble and sang in school choirs. At the end of his first year of study, he had accumulated academic arrears, so he had to ask for prolongation of the examination session, because competitions, trainings, and sometimes health problems did not allow him to pass all the exams on time. This situation persisted also in the following years of study, and after the 3rd year, Z. Ekmanis was warned that the testing period would be extended until 20 September 1978, and if he would fail to pass exams and credit tests, he would be expelled from RPI. Zintis passed all credit tests and exams in the extension period of the examination session and continued his studies. On 4 December 1979, the 5th-year student Z. Ekmanis repeatedly asked for permission to take tests outside the testing period. There is an inscription on his application – «Please start taking things seriously [192]!» He did take things seriously, but training sessions, competitions and training camps took a lot of time, thus he had to master the missed curriculum later individually. In contrast to other high-rank athletes, he graduated on time in five years, although requests to prolong examination sessions followed one another. Z. Ekmanis' name is also inscribed in the history of RPI / RTU sports – he is included, for example, in the RPI list of the best track and field athletes of 1980, because he had achieved

noteworthy results in Triple Jump and High Jump [193]. After graduating from PRI in 1980 [192], he was assigned to work at the Production Association «Radiotehnika», but since he was summoned to the Soviet army, the planned works and competitions had to be cancelled.

Z. Ekmanis' interest in sports did not disappear, and he reached his greatest success in sports only after graduating from RPI. He competed in the World Championships as a member of the USSR Bobsleigh Team: in 1982 (7th place, four-man, together with Jānis Ķipurs, Aivars Šnepsts, Vladimirs Aleksandrovš; pusher), in 1985 (3rd place, two-man, together with Nikolajs Žirovs), in 1986 (11th place, two-man, together with Otomārs Rihters; 15th place, four-man, together with Juris Tone, Aivars Trops, O. Rihters), in 1990 (4th place, two-man, together with J. Tone), in 1993 – 8th place as a member of the Latvian National Team in the two-man competition together with Aldis Intlers (1965–1994) and 17th place in the four-man competition together with A. Intlers, Boriss Artemjevs, Didzis Skuška. He became a two-time USSR Champion in the two-man bobsleigh together with J. Tone (1987, 1990), Latvian Champion in the two-man competition together with A. Intlers (1992), European Champion (1985; two-man, together with V. Aleksandrovš) and Vice-Champion (1990; two-man, together with J. Tone). Z. Ekmanis won 3rd place in the European Championship in 1984 in the two-man competition together with V. Aleksandrovš and 3rd place in the World Championship in 1985 in the two-man competition together with N. Žirovs, as well as 3rd place in the stage of the World Cup in Winterberg, Germany, in 1991 in the four-man competition together with A. Intlers, B. Artemjevs and D. Skuška (it was the first international victory for Latvia after the restoration of its independence), 3rd place in the two-man competition together with V. Aleksandrovš in the stage of the World Cup in Altenberg, Germany, in 1993 [194].

Z. Ekmanis participated in the European Championships as a member of the USSR National Team: 12th place in the four-man competition together with Imants Muižnieks, A. Šnepsts and V. Aleksandrovš (1982); 12th place in the two-man competition together with V. Aleksandrovš and 14th place in the four-man competition together with V. Aleksandrovš, Rihards Kotāns (1956–2010) and J. Skrastiņš (1983); 3rd place in the two-man competition together with V. Aleksandrovš and 11th place in the four-man competition together with J. Skrastiņš, R. Kotāns and V. Aleksandrovš (1984); 13th place in the four-man competition (1987); and 7th place in the four-man competition together with S. Prūsis, V. Ļubovickis and J. Tone (1990). In 1993, as a member of the Latvian National Team, Z. Ekmanis got 5th place in the European Championship in the two-man competition together with A. Intlers [194].

Z. Ekmanis is the Latvian Champion in the indoor Triple Jump (1980; 15.59 m). During his career as a track and field athlete, he represented sports societies «Daugava» and Army Sports Club.

Bobsledder and engineer Z. Ekmanis is the only RPI / RTU student who participated in the Olympic Games four times – in 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1994.

In 1984, at the XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, Z. Ekmanis won an Olympic bronze medal in the two-man bobsleigh competition together with V. Aleksandrovš (3:26.16) and took 12th place in the four-man competition together with J. Skrastiņš, R. Kotāns and V. Aleksandrovš (3:25.20) [195].

In 1988, at the XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, Canada, he got 9th place in the



**Figure 128.** The first start of the Latvian bobsledders in the stage of the World Cup with their national flag in 1991 in Calgary. From left: team «Latvija-1» – Z. Ekmanis, A. Intlers, S. Prūsis, Andris Plūksna and the Head Coach of the Latvian National team J. Skrastiņš.



**Figure 129.** XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo. From left: J. Skrastiņš, H. Švanks, Z. Ekmanis and the «Bronze Rocket» – the bobsled in which the first Olympic medal was won (1984).



**Figure 130.** Z. Ekmanis at the solemn ceremony of the «Special Award of the Latvian Olympic Committee» (2014).

two-man competition together with *A. Trops* (3:56.2), then an RPI student. At the XVI Olympic Winter Games in 1992, the crews he led got 16th place in both the two-man competition (together with *A. Intlers*) (4:06.33) and the four-man competition (together with *A. Intlers*, *B. Artemjevs* (former RPI student) and *O. Rihlers*) (3:56.72) [74; p. 66].

At the XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994, he got 10th place in the two-man competition together with *A. Intlers* (3:32.83) and 13th place in the four-man competition together with *B. Artemjevs*, *A. Intlers* and *D. Skuška* (3:29.81) [75; p. 28].

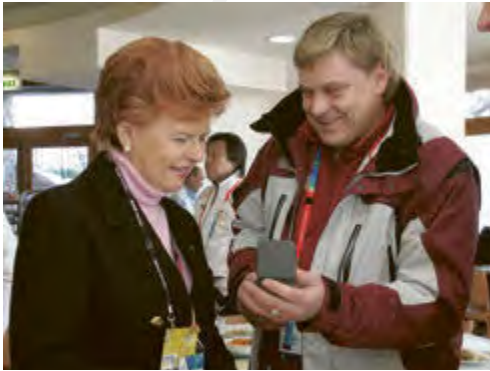
*Z. Ekmanis* always took the role of the pilot. At his fourth Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, *Z. Ekmanis* was the flag bearer of the Latvian Olympic delegation.

His coaches were *Aleksandrs Pētersons* (1926–2006), *Ilmārs Lapiņš* (1936–2016), *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994), and *Jānis Skrastiņš*.

*Z. Ekmanis* has trained bobsledders *Gatis Gūts*, *Otomārs Rihlers*, *Sandis Prūsis* and others. He was entrusted with the position of the Senior Coach of the National Team. Athlete *Z. Ekmanis* is a pioneer of this discipline in Latvia and believes that bobsleigh is a Latvian kind of sports [196]. In 2014, he was awarded the Latvian Year Award in Sports in the category «Special Award of the Latvian Olympic Committee».

*Z. Ekmanis* was an individual member of the Latvian Olympic Committee (LOC) from 1992 to 1996, as well as represented the Latvian Bobsleigh Federation in this organization (1996, 2000, 2003, 2004) [197; p. 21.] and the Latvian Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (2008, 2012, 2016, 2020), he has been working in the LOC Audit Commission since 2020. From 1994 to 1997, he was the Coach of the Latvian Bobsleigh Team, he was the Vice-President of the Latvian Bobsleigh Federation (1994–2014), as well as a Member of the Board. Since 2014, *Z. Ekmanis* has been the Secretary General of the Latvian Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation.

*Z. Ekmanis* is married. He has two daughters and four grandchildren.



**Figure 131.** The President (1999–2007) of the Republic of Latvia *Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga* and *Z. Ekmanis* at the XX Olympic Winter Games in Turin (2006).



**Figure 132.** From left: *Z. Ekmanis*, his daughter *Elina*, wife *Daina*, daughter *Elza*, and son-in-law *Jānis* (2014).

# MIĶELIS EŽMALIS (1990)

## Sprint Canoeer

XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing, 2008

Canoe Sprint

14th/15th place, Canadian Singles (C-1), 500 m, Men

20th/21st place, Canadian Singles (C-1), 1000 m, Men

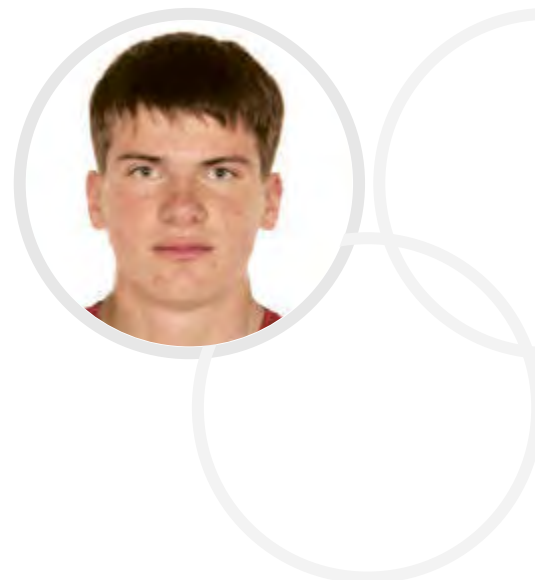
*Miķelis Ežmalis* was born on 12 August 1990 in *Limbaži*, Latvia. He studied at *Murjāņi* Sports Gymnasium, 3rd Riga Gymnasium and in 2010 graduated from Riga Evening Gymnasium [198].

In 2010, *M. Ežmalis* entered RTU Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, where he studied information technology. In 2011, the young man decided to leave the university, but in the same year, he re-entered RTU. This time he chose the Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management (FEEM), having entered the study program «Customs and Tax Administration». He liked his studies and wanted to finish them. *M. Ežmalis* planned to participate in the Games of the Olympiad in London, United Kingdom in 2012, but this chance was missed.

The Latvian Olympic Unit (LOU) asked *Aivars Vilnis Krastiņš*, the Head of the International Business and Customs Institute (IBCI) of RTU FEEM, to allow *M. Ežmalis* to study according to an individual schedule in connection with his participation in the European Olympic Games in 2015. *M. Ežmalis* was expelled from the university in 2018.

*M. Ežmalis* got engaged in sports at an early age. At first, he wanted to become a basketball player and trained at *Rīdzene* Children and Youth Sports School, but due to his height, this sport was not really suitable for him. The Sports School also had a rowing section, and training took place in the pool during the winter. *M. Ežmalis* liked canoe sprint immediately, already after the first training session. Further, he intensively trained on the *Daugava* River near *Lucavsala* in Riga.

Prior to participating in the XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing, China, in 2008, he participated in several European and World Junior Championships. *M. Ežmalis* finished in the following places in the European Junior Championship: 6th place (C-2, 1000 m) and 6th place (C-2, 500 m) in 2006; 4th place (C-1, 500 m) and 5th place (C-1, 1000 m) in 2007; as well as 3rd place (C-1, 500 m) and 4th place (C-1, 1000 m) in 2008. He won 4th place (C-1, 500 m) and 7th place (C-1, 1000 m) in the World Junior Championships in 2007. In 2008, the young athlete got 9th place (C-1, 500 m) in the European Championship. *M. Ežmalis* was only 17 years old when he went to the XXIX Games of the Olympiad, and he was the youngest athlete in the Latvian delegation. Going to these games, his dream was to meet a famous actor Jackie Chan [199]. *M. Ežmalis* competed in 500 m and 1000 m canoe sprint races. In the 500 m race, he finished in 14th/15th place, in the 1000 m race, he ranked 20th/21st. His coaches were *Aigars Aglenieks* and *Aleksandrs Tīmoševičs*.



**Figure 134.** LOU request to the Head of IBCI of RTU FEEM *A. V. Krastiņš* to allow *M. Ežmalis* to study according to the individual study schedule (2015).

*M. Ežmalis* got 14th place (C-1, 500 m) and 23rd place (C-1, 1000 m) in the World Championship in 2009, 16th place (C-1, 200 m) and 25th place (C-1, 1000 m) in the World Championship in 2010. He also took part in the European Championships in 2010, where he finished in 13th place in the 1000 m race and 15th place in the 200 m Canadian singles race. He also participated in the competitions in 2015.

*M. Ežmalis* had a peculiar style of dressing during the competitions – when boarding the boat, he wore wool socks, moreover, each sock came from a different pair. The athlete started to wear socks from different pairs because he believed it was his good omen – once he could not find a pairing sock before a successful competition and had to wear two from different pairs [200].

In 2006, *M. Ežmalis* and two other athletes won the annual award of the Australian Latvian Sports Authority (ALSA), which has been presented since 1995. His Coach *A. Aglenieks* also received the award [201].



**Figure 135.** *M. Ežmalis* at the XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing (2008).



# AĻONA FOKINA (B. RIBAKOVA; 1991)

Swimmer and Coach

XXXI Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, 2016

Swimming

27th place, R1, 200 m Breaststroke, Women



*Aļona Fokina* (b. *Ribakova*) was born on 7 February 1991 in the family of *Aleksejs* and *Alla Ribakov* in Riga. Her father comes from Estonia, her mother – from Latvia; both parents are masters in sea multisport. *Aļona's* younger sister is also a swimmer. *A. Fokina* started doing sports already in the 1st grade, while studying in Estonia and attending swimming lessons. Her first coach in Estonia was her father's friend, a swimming Coach *Andrejs Divisenko*. After moving to Latvia, *A. Fokina* started learning in the 2nd grade (completing two grades in one year) at Secondary School No. 72, where swimming lessons are compulsory for all children and it is also possible to apply for swimming training [202].

*Germans Jakubovskis* became *A. Fokina's* first and also the only coach in Latvia. She purposefully started training at the age of 14 after participating in the European Youth Olympic Festival, where she took part in the semi-final swim. At the beginning of her swimming career, her training session looked like this: a race to *Zakusala*, a round swimming trip across the *Daugava* River in Riga, and a race back to school. The usual training schedule after school was training in the gym and training in the pool. During intensive training periods, there was additional pre-school training. Physical fitness training also took place at the weekends [203].

In 2009, *A. Fokina* graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 72 and entered RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management (FEEM), choosing the study program «Management of International Economic Relations». After graduating in 2013, she received a Bachelor's degree.

In the same year, *A. Fokina* continued her studies at the Master's study program «Entrepreneurship and Management» and in 2015 she obtained a Master's degree.

*A. Fokina* set her first record at the age of 18 in a 400 m complex swim, competing in a 25 m pool.

*A. Fokina* has won the Latvian Championship several times; she has also gained several victories in the Baltic Championships. She has participated in several European and World Championships, as well as World Universiades. *A. Fokina* still holds several Latvian records, including 100 m and 200 m breaststroke in the 25 m pool (1:10.83 and 2:26.43) and 200 m breaststroke in the 50 m pool (2:30.82), she was once the best in the country in the 100 m, 200 m, 400 m complex swimming and 200 m, 400 m, 800 m and 1500 m freestyle.

The athlete had fulfilled the regulations of the 2012 Games of the Olympiad, but was not included in the Latvian delegation, which went to the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, United Kingdom.



Figure 137. Copy of *A. Fokina's* (then *Ribakova*) RTU Master's diploma (2015).



Figure 138. *A. Fokina* (then – *Ribakova*) at the graduation ceremony (2015).



**Figure 139.** A. Fokina (then – Ribakova) during the training session (2012).



**Figure 140.** A. Fokina (then – Ribakova) in Rio de Janeiro (2016).



**Figure 141.** A. Fokina (then – Ribakova) in Rio de Janeiro (2016).

A. Fokina qualified for the start of the 2016 Games of the Olympiad. Combining sports with studies and work is not easy. To stay in a good athletic shape, it is necessary to do three workouts a day: two in the pool and one in the gym. It is also necessary to take some rest between the training sessions, but our athletes are forced to do paid work. A. Fokina did not have an opportunity to dedicate all her time and effort to sports alone, except for the periods when she trained in the sport camps. Prior to the 2016 Games of the Olympiad, the Olympian was studying at a Master study program and working part-time at the same time. At the Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, A. Fokina got 27th place in the 200 m breaststroke (R1; 2:30.82) and at the same time improved her personal record in the 200 m breaststroke by 0.7 seconds [204, 205].

In the Latvian Swimming Championship in the 25 m pool in women competition, A. Fokina was awarded the Traveling Cup of *Lilija Pētersone* (1923–1998), the first USSR Sports Master, for her victory in the 200 m breaststroke. By 2016, A. Fokina had won this Traveling Cup seven times, reaching the result previously demonstrated by *Margarita Kalmikova*, a Latvian swimmer–Olympian (1996, 2000). A. Fokina had already decided to finish her sports career, but in 2017, she returned to the competition to win this Traveling Cup for the eighth time. And *Aļona* did it [206].

The swimmer did not train for almost two months after the Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro. A. Fokina gradually resumed training once a week, on Saturdays. She lacked not only swimming as such, but also the smell and atmosphere of the swimming pool that makes her feel at home [206].

After finishing her career, she worked for some time as an assistant coach in synchronous swimming.

In 2017, A. Fokina participated in the Latvian Winter Swimming Championships in *Jelgava*, Latvia, in 2019 – in the winter swimming relay competition.

From 2013 to 2015, she worked part-time at the company «*Belam-Rīga*». From 2016 to 2021, she worked full time in the security company «*Global Intellectual Security*». A. Fokina mostly trains in the pool of the club «*Delfins*» of Riga Secondary School No. 72; from time to time – also in *Kīpsala* Swimming Pool and Rimi Olympic Centre in Riga.

In an interview to *Sportland Magazine* in 2017, A. Fokina said, «There was a time during my Master studies when I left home at 6 in the morning and returned only at around 23.30, and I did not have a car – I travelled all day from training to work and to the university with a huge backpack. But everything can be done if one wishes so. It was easy to train during studies because both study premises and the pool were in the same building [206].»

A. Fokina had almost no free time, but she enjoyed spending her holidays with friends; she is a very outgoing person.

The athlete is currently on parental leave – on 26 March 2021, she gave birth to a daughter.

# ARTŪRS GARONSKIS (1957)

Rower, Engineer and Pedagogue

XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, 1980

Rowing

2nd place, Coxed Fours, Men (M4+)



*Artūrs Garonksis* was born on 25 May 1957 in Riga. In 1975, he graduated from *Leons Paegle* Riga 1st Secondary School.

From 1974, *A. Garonksis* was a member of the USSR Youth Team, and at the beginning of August 1975 he participated in the Youth (U-18) World Championship in Montreal, Canada, where he became the Champion (Men's Coxed Pair; M2+) together with *Guntars Miķelsons* and co-driver *Romualds Rukuts*. In the same year, *A. Garonksis* entered RPI, but due to the need to participate in the competition, he passed his entrance examinations later than other applicants (after 15 August). In the academic year 1975/1976, he commenced his studies at the Faculty of Automation and Computer Engineering. Due to high achievements in sports, in the autumn of 1975 he was appointed to the position of Sports Instructor of the LSSR Sports Committee, where he worked until the autumn of 1982.

In 1976, *A. Garonksis* joined the men's eight trained by *Rolands Sproģis* (1936–2001). Very serious training began in the preparation for the 1976 season, and studies remained in the background. Due to his successful starts in the 1976 season, *A. Garonksis* was included in the USSR National Team as a candidate for the XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, USSR, in 1980, so the athlete had to suspend his studies.

In 1977, *A. Garonksis* won 2nd place in the USSR Championship and 4th place in the World Championship (Coxed Fours, Men (M4+)), starting with *Žoržs Tikmers*, *Dzintars Krišjānis* (1958–2014), *Andris Stīģis* and RPI student *Juris Bērziņš* (1954–2004).

RPI Administration and the faculty, as well as the Department of Physical Education and Sports, supported the efforts of the student *A. Garonksis* to study, despite his long absence due to numerous competitions, and exceptionally allowed him to retake his 3rd year in academic year 1979/1980 [207].

*A. Garonksis* had to train for the XXII Games of the Olympiad in 1980, so there was no time to study seriously. In 1979, he competed in the coxed fours (M4+; all rowers represented Riga «Dinamo» Club: *Ž. Tikmers*, *Dimants Krišjānis*, *Dz. Krišjānis*, *A. Garonksis*, coxswain *J. Bērziņš*), winning 1st place in the USSR Spartakiad and 1st place in Lucerne Regatta, and 2nd place in the World Championship. In the same year, *A. Garonksis* became the USSR Champion.

The final selection for the XXII Games the Olympiad in Moscow, USSR, took place in May 1980 at the USSR Championship. *A. Garonksis* won 2nd place in the Games of the Olympiad in coxed fours with a coxswain (*Ž. Tikmers*, *A. Garonksis*, *Dz. Krišjānis*, *D. Krišjānis*, coxswain *J. Bērziņš*). The Team was coached by *R. Sproģis*.



Figure 143. *A. Garonksis*' RPI student ID (1982).

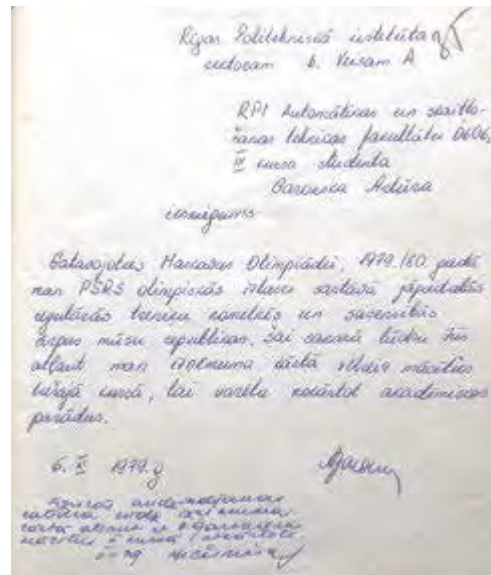


Figure 144. *A. Garonksis*' application to the Rector of RPI *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985) to be allowed to retake the 3rd-study year (1979).

In the autumn of 1980, *A. Garonskis* was drafted into the army, he served in the USSR Border Guard, where he took the course of a young soldier and continued participating in the training of the USSR Rowing Team. In the winter of 1982, *A. Garonskis* continued training in the USSR National Team with his teammates, but before the main starts of the season, he had to terminate his career of a professional athlete due to health problems. He also had to leave the job of a sports instructor. *A. Garonskis* started working as a patrol service inspector of the State Auto Inspectorate and started considering the opportunity to resume studies. He entered RPI Riga General Technical Extramural Faculty. After the 3rd-year, the students of the part-time and evening departments were enrolled in the faculties [25; p. 563], and *A. Garonskis* continued his part-time studies at the Faculty of Electroenergetics. In June 1988, *A. Garonskis* received an RPI diploma and was awarded the qualification of an electrical engineer. *A. Garonskis*' RPI academic record book shows that his performance in most exams and tests was assessed as «good» (4) and «excellent» (5) according to the five-grade system.

*A. Garonskis* participated in the establishment and management of the first Sports Club of that time (Rowing Club «*Rīgas Dinamo*»). From 1989 to 1992, he worked as a Sports Inspector at «*Dinamo*» Sports Society. From 1993, he started working at the Latvian Police Academy (LPA), teaching study courses related to road safety. There, *A. Garonskis* began his Master studies and in 2000 obtained an academic Master degree in law. *A. Garonskis* was elected as an Assistant Professor at the LPA, was the Head of the Department of Police Law and Special Tactics, as well as the Vice-Rector for Studies of the LPA. In 2009, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia made a decision to liquidate the LPA, and *A. Garonskis* retired. For about a year he continued working with students who had been transferred from the LPA to the University of Latvia [208].

In the last 10 years, *A. Garonskis* has been focusing on those areas of life for which he previously had no spare time due to heavy sports load: he is engaged in charity, participates in the events of the Latvian Olympic Committee, travels a lot in Europe and focuses on healthy lifestyle issues.

*A. Garonskis* has a son *Rolands* and two grandsons *Gusts* and *Matīss*.



**Figure 145.** Winner of a silver medal in academic rowing (Coxed Fours, Men) at the XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow (1980). From left: *A. Garonskis*, *D. Krišjānis*, *J. Bērziņš*, *Ž. Tikmers*, and *Dz. Krišjānis*.



**Figure 146.** *A. Garonskis* at the event dedicated to the Centenary of the Republic of Latvia (2018).

# EDGARS GRUZĪTIS (1912–1950)

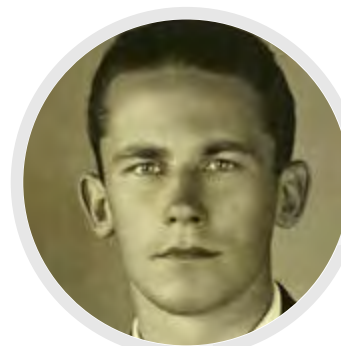
Skier and Poet

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Skiing

13th place, 4 x 10 km Relay, Cross-Country, Men

42th place, Nordic Combined, Men



*Edgars Gruzītis* was born on 14 March 1912 in Chisinau, Bessarabia, Russia (at present – Moldova) in the family of *Roberts Alfrēds Gruzītis* (1881–1972) and *Eda Gruzīte* (b. *Avotiņa*; 1883–1928). He was baptized in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chisinau in 1917 [209; p. 3]. *E. Gruzītis* had a sister *Mirdza Gruzīte* (1918–1998).

In 1929, *E. Gruzītis* graduated from *V. Olavs* Commercial School and entered the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL) [209; p. 1]. He studied intermittently until 1941 [209].

*E. Gruzītis* was engaged in sports and represented his *Alma Mater* Sports Society «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»). In 1931, he improved the Latvian record in the 5 + 10 + 15 km relay at the Latvian Championship, skiing five kilometres. In the international skiing competition at the Riga Racecourse, *E. Gruzītis* defeated the Finnish students *Eino Puukko* (?-?) and *Väinö Sares* (?-?) in the 10 km skiing race, showing the best result. It is interesting to note that both Finnish athletes trained Latvian skiers before the Olympic Winter Games in 1936 [210]. *E. Gruzītis* won in various skiing distances several times, as well as showed good results in relay races. For example, in 1931 he set the Latvian records in the 4 x 1500 m relay race – on 27 September (17:49.7) and 4 October (17:46.6) [211].

*E. Gruzītis* was one of the enthusiasts of the construction of a springboard in *Šmerlis* in 1932, in Riga [210]. The construction of the springboard was not an easy task to complete in winter – the frozen ground had to be dug and broken with shovels and poles. *E. Gruzītis*' father – a forester from *Dreiliņi* (Latvia) – gave a cart to tow logs to facilitate construction.

In 1934, *E. Gruzītis* was drafted into the military service, where he served until 15 April 1935. He was the Deputy Officer of the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment [209; p. 9]. Student *E. Gruzītis* was the first Latvian Champion in the Nordic combined – he won the competitions in 1935 and 1936. The athlete participated in the Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, and was the only athlete from Latvia to compete in ski jumping. *E. Gruzītis* drew the first start number, and taking into account that the German Chancellor, the Head of Government and the state Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) had arrived at the competition and he probably needed to be shown to a special place, *E. Gruzītis* had to wait for a long time and freeze until he could start. He later said that he was worried that he would be overthrown and would bring shame to the Latvians. While waiting, he even recited a prayer [212, 213]. *E. Gruzītis* competed in street boots because his ski boots were stolen on his way to



**Figure 148.** *E. Gruzītis*' application to the the rector of the UL *Augusts Tentelis* (1876–1942) on his admission to the university (1929).

the Olympic Winter Games [3; p. 74]. *E. Gruzītis* also competed in the 4 x 10 km relay at the Olympic Winter Games, skiing together with *Herberts Dāboliņš* (1908–?), *Pauls Kaņeps* (1911–2006) and *Alberts Riekstiņš* (1907–2004) gaining 13th place.

*E. Gruzītis* was a versatile personality – he not only played sports but also sang in the choir of the UL, played the piano, worked in the scouts organization and worked in the Academic Student Organization «*Valdemārija*» [211]. He also wrote poems, published his works under the pseudonym *Edgars Slēpīte* in the magazines, wrote several columns for the Latvian newspapers, and was the editor of the journal «*Ugunskrusts*».

His collection of poems «*Greizie rati*» was published in 1940.

On 7 August 1937, he married *Vilma Celmiņa* (1907–1950) [214]. The family had a daughter *Helga* [2015].

*E. Gruzītis* passed away in *Tukums* in 1950, and was buried in the Riga 1st Forest Cemetery, in the resting place of the *Gruzīts* family.



**Figure 149.** *E. Gruzītis'* UL lecture book (1929).



**Figure 150.** The cover and the first poem of the collection of poems «*Greizie rati*» by *E. Gruzītis* (1940).

# HARALD HAHNE (1892–1940)

Athlete and Chemist

V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, 1912

Athletics

5th place, 200 m Flat, Men



Harald Hahne (also Harald Adolf Hahne) was born on 20 June 1892 in *Jelgava*, Latvia. In 1911, after graduating from *Jelgava* Vocational School, he began his studies at RPI Department of Chemistry [216].

H. Hahne was of German descent and studied at RPI for a few years with his name-brother Harald Blau (1885–1944). After one study year, H. Hahne participated in the Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, Sweden, together with H. Blau. He won 5th place in the first round of the 200 m Flat at the Games of the Olympiad in 1912 [3; p. 92]. The sprinter represented the Sports Society «*Union*». During World War I, RPI was evacuated to Moscow and worked there until 1918. Thus, H. Hahne continued his studies at the evacuated RPI and graduated from it in 1918. During his studies, he participated not only in the RPI Sports Coterie, where he performed the duties of a librarian, but also in the RPI Student Musical Society – during academic year 1912/1913, he was its Vice-President and conducted a balalaika orchestra [217]. It is known that after graduating from RPI he worked in Moscow (1918–1920) in the Central Chemistry Laboratory of the Head Department of the State Plants of the General Chemical Industry supervised by the Supreme Economic Council of Russia. He then returned to Latvia and worked at the Alexander Gustav Ruhtenberg (1826–1905) tobacco factory in Riga [218]. By the way, the Ruhtenberg family was also involved in sports. For example, Gustav Ruhtenberg (1858–1914), son of A. G. Ruhtenberg, the Manager of the Company, a graduate (1883) of RPI Department of Agriculture, participated in the Riga Gymnastics' Society [19; p. 42]. H. Hahne, specialized in the fermentation industry. In November 1934, he obtained a patent for his invention allowing to produce concentrated acetic acid for 15 years [219].

In the 1930s, H. Hahne went to Germany several times to improve his professional knowledge. The incomplete documentary evidence on the life of H. Hahne suggests that he also obtained a PhD in Germany in the 1920s or early 1930s. In 1936, he paid 400 Reichsmark to attend the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany, from 13 to 16 August [220]. H. Hahne's son, Heinrich Victor Hahne (1924–1991), was born in 1924; however, in 1936, the marriage of the athlete and engineer H. Hahne finished with a divorce. H. Hahne was not destined to raise his son until he reached adulthood, because a talented chemist, who at the end of his life worked at the company «*Arnala dēli*» in Riga, passed away on 18 December 1940 [221, 222].

It is known that H. Hahne's son lived in the United States in the second half of the 20th century and that Hahne's family line is continued by his child.



Figure 152. Copy of H. Hahne's RPI diploma (1918).



Figure 153. Patent No. 1978 for H. Hahne's invention «*Paņēmiens etiķskābes koncentrēšanai*» (Method for Concentration of the Acetic Acid) (1934).



## ALFRĒDS HERMANOVSKIS (1915–1981)

Basketball, Football, Volleyball and Bandy Player

XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, 1936

Basketball

15th/18th, Men

*Alfrēds* (also *Alfreds*) *Hermanovskis* was born on 30 November 1915 in Kharkov, Russia (at present – Ukraine).

In 1933, he graduated from Riga City 4th Gymnasium entered the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL). In 1934, he moved to the Faculty of Engineering and studied there until 1944, but did not complete his studies [223]. *A. Hermanovskis* was a philister of the UL Student Corporation «*Fraternitas Metropolitana*» [224].

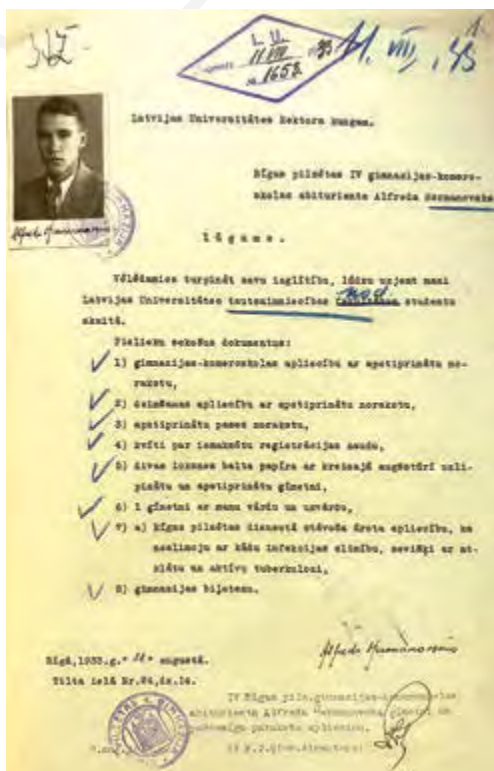
*A. Hermanovskis* achieved the greatest success in basketball, where he was summoned into the National Team seven times, including the 1936 Games of the Olympiad in Berlin and the 3rd European Championship in Kaunas, Lithuania, where the Latvian Team took 2nd place.

*A. Hermanovskis* was included in the Latvian delegation to the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany, in the summer of 1936 [224], he was a substitute player and did not enter to the field (squad – p. 98). While watching the Games of the Olympiad, *A. Hermanovskis* wrote a description of what he had experienced and the history of the Olympic Games, and submitted it to the UL Student Corporation «*Fraternitas Metropolitana*» as a report making him eligible for admission to this organization [224].

He was a member of the Latvian Student Volleyball Team in Monaco in 1939, where he together with *Kārlis Šleicers* (1908–1988), *Voldemārs Elmūts* (1910–1966), *Uldis Ģērmanis* (1915–1997), *Arvīds Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985) and *Indulis Laukēvics* (1919–1941) won the title of World Master [225].

*A. Hermanovskis* also played football, representing his *Alma Mater*. In handball [225], he became a Latvian Champion in 1939, playing in the sports club unit of the 5th Riga Guard Regiment. *A. Hermanovskis* also played table tennis, tennis, bandy, hockey and skied. For many years, he represented the Society «*Latvju jaunatne*», after its closure in 1939 he played in the «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*») Team.

After World War II, *A. Hermanovskis* arrived in a refugee camp in Luebeck, Germany, in the English occupation zone. The Latvian sports «citadel» was situated in Luebeck at that time, where the athlete demonstrated excellent results in basketball and volleyball as a member of «*Rīga*» Team. He also was the member of the Latvian National Team at the Baltic Sports Festival in Augsburg in 1947. He also played for «*All Stars de Riga*» Basketball Team led by *Valdemārs Baumanis* (1905–1992), which did not lose a single game in 10 games on their tour across France [226]. The team also included *Kārlis Ārens* (1917–1997), *Arvīds Pēteris Berkolds* (1921–2010), *Laimonis*



**Figure 155.** *A. Hermanovskis'* application to the Rector of the UL *Jūlijs Auskāps* (1884–1942) on his admission to the university (1933).



*Bērziņš* (?-?), *Andrejs Bičevskis* (1922-?), *Filips Hartmanis* (1924-2009), *Alfons Justs* (1912-1991), *Alfrēds Miežītis* (1922-1996), *Imants Štāls* (?-1949) and *Jānis Zebeliņš* (?-?). In Luebeck, *A. Hermanovskis* also worked in the secretariat of the Latvian Sports and Physical Education Council [227].

*A. Hermanovskis* moved to Australia from Germany. During his first years in exile, he lived in Perth, where he continued to play sports. *A. Hermanovskis* spent the next years of his life in Melbourne and in the 1950s, he was actively participated in the sports activities of the sports group «*Rīga*» and did administrative work. In 1946, the Management of the Latvian Sports in Exile awarded *A. Hermanovskis* the Great Badge of Latvian Sports in Exile [225].

He published several articles on the game of volleyball and handball in various newspapers.

In 1942, *A. Hermanovskis* married *Aina Krūze* (?-?), a volleyball player and physical education instructor. In 1947, he married *Anta Slazda* (?-?) [228] in Luebeck [229].

*A. Hermanovskis* had a son, *Goars Kristaps Hermanovskis*, who was a successful rally driver in Australia [230], he also played football.

*A. Hermanovskis* died in Melbourne, Australia, on 1 October 1981.



**Figure 156.** Players of the Latvian National Basketball Team *Maksis Kazāks* (1912-1983) and *A. Hermanovskis* during the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin (1936).



**Figure 157.** Latvian National Team – 2nd place winner of the III European Basketball Championship with the prize in Kaunas (1939). In the first row from the left: *Vitolds Kārklīšs* (1921-2005), *M. Kazāks*, *K. Ārens*, *Aleksandrs Vanags* (1919-1986), *A. Hermanovskis*, *Voldemārs Šmits* (1918-1975). In the second row: *Alfrēds Auziņš* (1910-1997), *Jānis Graudiņš* (1913-1990), *Alfrēds Krauklis* (1911-1991), Coach *V. Baumanis*, *Visvaldis Melderis* (1915-1944), *A. Justs*, *Teodors Grinbergs* (1916-1998), *I. Laukēvics*, Chairman of the Latvian Basketball Union *Eduards Lapiņš* (1902-1941). In the third row: representative of the Latvian Basketball Union *Aleksandrs Celms* (1911-1987), *Juris Solovjovs-Silarājs* (1917-2007), masseuse *Harijs Bērziņš* (1908-1981), *Kārlis Sātiņš* (1913-2005), and *Arnolds Jūrmala* (1915-1997).



## ASKOLDS FĒLIKSS HERMANOVSKIS (1912–1967)

Skier and Painter

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Alpine skiing

54th place, Downhill 3800 m, Men

DQ, Slalom, Men



**Figure 159.** A. F. Hermanovskis' application to the Rector of the UL Jūlijs Auskāps (1884–1942) on his admission to the university (1935).

Askolds Fēlikss Hermanovskis was born on 19 September 1912 in Riga into the family of Teodors Hermanovskis (1883–1964), an architect, RPI graduate, Minister of Transport and Labour of the Interim Government of Latvia (1918–1920). A. F. Hermanovskis was the eldest of four sons.

After graduating from Riga City 1st Gymnasium, A. F. Hermanovskis studied architecture at the University of Latvia (UL), but did not receive a diploma [231; p. 47].

A. F. Hermanovskis was one of the first in Latvia to start alpine skiing. As an alpine skier, he participated in the IV Olympic Winter Games, where he was disqualified in the second discipline – in slalom. He trained at the UL sports society «Universitātes sports» («University Sport»). Alpine skiing was included in the 1936 Olympic Winter Games for the first time.

A. F. Hermanovskis' later life is connected with the United States of America (USA). He arrived to the USA thanks to a rich American who had bought a pleasure yacht «Frenchman» in England, but could not find the people to deliver the yacht to New York, USA. The then athlete and student A. F. Hermanovskis applied for the job. In 1940, he went to Plymouth, England, to continue his journey to the USA together with his teammates Miķelis Plēsums (1906–1978) and Edvards Aleksandrs Ozoliņš (1902–1974). It took nine weeks to reach the shores of Bermuda, which A. F. Hermanovskis fell in love with. When the yacht was delivered to New York, A. F. Hermanovskis rushed back to the Bermuda Islands, where he became passionate about painting in a new technique – scratchboard. «The scratchboard is a thick cardboard covered with a thin layer of plaster covered with a black drafting ink. An artist draws with a stylus, the technique is similar to wood carving [232].» A. F. Hermanovskis spent 12 years in Bermuda, winning many trophies in sailing competitions and gaining recognition as an artist [233]. He organized exhibitions of his art works. He also painted in other techniques – oil, tempera, watercolour, chalk, pastels, mascara, charcoal, pencil, carvings, etc.

A. F. Hermanovskis annually travelled from the Bermuda Islands to California, New York, and Canada. He considered New York an interesting city and for romantic reasons, it became his next residence. In the USA, A. F. Hermanovskis had a painting studio in Edgewater, New Jersey. In New York, he also turned to writing and wrote several short stories [232].

For a while, *A. F. Hermanovskis* also went in for skiing. In Canada, he was called the «flying cat» [232] because he impressed other athletes with his skiing art and recklessness. *A. F. Hermanovskis* surprised the Americans by breaking their record in crossing North America, having covered 1650 km with an 11-cylinder Cadillac in a day (the previous American achievement was 1300 km in one day) [232].

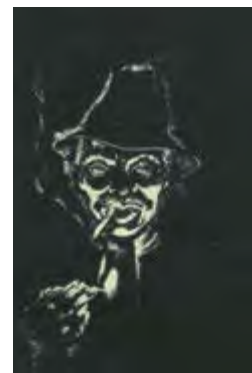
His life ended in New York on 18 August 1967 [234]. After the death of *A. F. Hermanovskis*, his art works were exhibited for many years, some of them can still be found at USA art auctions.

From 1976 to 1979, the newspaper «*Londonas Avīze*» published the novel «*Pieci Hermanovski*» by *Olģerts Liepiņš* (1906–1983) about the engineer and statesman *Teodors Hermanovskis* and his four sons – artists *Askolds Fēlikss*, *Gunārs*, *Egils* and architect *Vidvars* [235].

*Askolds Fēlikss*' brother *Egils Hermanovskis* (1918–1992) also turned to sports. In the 1930s, he, similar to his brother, was involved in alpine skiing and participated in the Latvian Championship in this sport, winning the title of Latvian Champion in slalom. *E. Hermanovskis* studied architecture at the UL, but due to the events of World War II, he stopped studying [236] and graduated later in Stuttgart, Germany. *E. Hermanovskis* is known not only as an architect, but also as an artist, having received many awards. If a compatriot asked *A. F. Hermanovskis* what he was doing in America, the answer was «I promote Latvia!» Being a true Latvian, although he looked like coming from the South, he was sometimes called the «Southern Northman». *A. F. Hermanovskis* always and everywhere emphasized his nationality and told a lot about his homeland to the public [232].



**Figure 160.**  
*A. F. Hermanovskis*  
(early 20th century).



**Figure 161.** Self-portrait of  
*A. F. Hermanovskis*  
(early 20th century).



**Figure 162.**  
*A. F. Hermanovskis* (1960s).

# RŪDOLFS JURCIŅŠ (1909–1947)

Basketball Player and Coach

XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, 1936

Basketball

15th/18th place, Men



Figure 164. R. Jurciņš' UL lecture book (1930).



Figure 165. R. Jurciņš' application to the Rector of the UL Augusts Tentelis (1876–1942) on his admission to the university (1930).

*Rūdolfs Jurciņš* was born on 19 June 1909 in Riga, and his parents gave him three names – *Rūdolfs Eduards Voldemārs*, but later only the first name remained in his documents.

In 1928, he graduated from Riga City 1st Secondary School. In 1930, he entered the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL), where he studied intermittently until the autumn of 1945, although he was exmatriculated only on 20 February 1946 [237]. During his studies, he joined the Student Corporation «*Beveronija*».

*R. Jurciņš* became interested in basketball already in the secondary school under the influence of gymnastics teacher *Jēkabs Bernsons* (1887–1968). During his studies, *R. Jurciņš* joined the Sports Society «*Universitātes sports*» («University Sport»; «US») and was included in the Latvian Basketball Team – «*Sapņu komanda 1935*» (The Dream Team 1935). The following players also played in this team: *Jānis Lidmanis* (ASC; 1910–1986), *Aleksejs Anufrijevs* («*Starts*»; 1912–1945), *Eduards Andersons* («US»; 1914–1985), *Mārtiņš Grundmanis* (ASC; 1913–1945), *Džems Johans Raudziņš* («US»; 1910–1979), *Herberts Gubiņš* («Gongs»; 1914–1980), *Andrejs Krisons* («US»; 1909–1945), *Visvaldis Melderis* (ASC; 1915–1944) and *Edgars Rūja* («US»; 1915–1942). The coach of the team was *Valdemārs Baumanis* (1905–1992). In 1935, the Team won the European Championship, and its players, including *R. Jurciņš*, became European champions.

In 1936, while participating in the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany, the European champions did not fare so well. *J. Lidmanis* did not play in the Team, the Team also refused working with their coach, so *Rihards Dekšenieks* (1899–1981), an athletics specialist, replaced *V. Baumanis*. In addition, Latvians had experience of playing with the European rather than world basketball teams, and Latvians did not have a training hall that complied with the rules of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA). Team Captain *R. Jurciņš* was worried about this, anticipating that Latvian basketball players would not be able to solve tactical tasks [3; p. 77]. As a result, the Team that was considered one of the favourites in Europe finished only in 15th/18th place. In three games [92; p. 40], the centre striker *R. Jurciņš* scored 30 points. Eleven basketball players went to the Games of the Olympiad, but only seven took part in the official games: *E. Andersons*, *R. Jurciņš*, *Dž. J. Raudziņš*, *Voldemārs Elmūts* (1910–1966) (all – «US»), *M. Grundmanis*, *V. Melderis* (both ASC) and *Maksis Kazāks* («*Latvju Jaunatne*»; 1912–1983). *E. Rūja*, *Jānis Tiltiņš* (1909–1974) (both «US»), *A. Anufrijevs* («*Starts*») and *Alfrēds Hermanovskis* («*Latvju Jaunatne*»; 1915–1981) remained in the reserve.

At that time, it was impossible to imagine the National Basketball Team without *R. Jurciņš*, he was known to almost every Latvian. He was tall (1.85 m) and was famous for his high jumps, vigorous fight at the basket, and determination in the throw-ins. *R. Jurciņš* continued playing basketball after the Games of the Olympiad until the end of World War II, when he played 23 games for the Latvian Basketball Team. *R. Jurciņš* won the title of the Latvian Champion six times, representing both the Latvian Basketball Union (LBU) and the Basketball Team of the Sports Society «US» [238].

In his autobiography on 8 August 1945, he wrote that he had worked in accounting for 10 years and had been a sports coach for seven years [239]. For some time, he also worked for the Railway Board. In 1945, his side job was basketball coaching at the «*Daugava*» Sports Society of the Central Trade Union Council of the LSSR. He and his wife *Veronika Jurciņa* (1917–2011) raised a daughter *Rudīte* and two sons – *Uldis* and *Egils* (1946–1984), so *R. Jurciņš* had to think both about graduating the university and earning subsistence.

In 1942, an unplanned event occurred in *R. Jurciņš*' life – while defending a Latvian girl in *Tērbatas* Street, Riga, he was shot by a German [240], who was not punished, but *R. Jurciņš* had to be treated in hospital for some time.

After World War II, on 6 October 1945, *R. Jurciņš* resumed his studies at the State University of Latvia. However, the Soviet authorities became interested in *R. Jurciņš*' past. He was arrested on 18 October 1945 for «illegal possession of weapons» and deported to Siberia, where he passed away on 22 May 1947, or in 1948 according to other information.

*R. Jurciņš* will remain in the history of world sports together with the Latvian Basketball Team and its Coach *V. Baumanis*. A film directed by *Aigars Grauba* «*Sapņu komanda 1935*» (The Dream Team 1935; 2012) was dedicated to their sports life and achievements.

*R. Jurciņš*' contribution to sports is also reflected in the book «*Sapņu komanda 1935. Laika stāsti*» (The Dream Team 1935. Time Stories; 2012) by *Ilze Zveja*, *Aigars Grauba* and *Andrejs Ēķis*.



**Figure 166.** Players of the Latvian National Basketball Team *R. Jurciņš* and *M. Grundmanis* during the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin (1936).



**Figure 167.** Latvian National Team in Geneva (1935). From left: *M. Grundmanis*, *Dž. Raudziņš*, *A. Anufrijevs*, *R. Jurciņš*, *V. Melderis*, *J. Lidmanis*, *H. Gubiņš*, *E. Andersons*, and *V. Baumanis*.



**Figure 168.** Welcoming the European Champion Team at the Riga station (1935). In the foreground – *J. Lidmanis*. In the first row from the left: first – *R. Dekšenieks*, second – *E. Andersons*, third – *M. Grundmanis*, fourth – *V. Melderis*, fifth – *A. Anufrijevs*. In the second row: first – *Dž. Raudziņš*, second – *R. Jurciņš* with the Cup, third – *V. Baumanis*.



## PAULS KAŅEPS (1911–2006)

Skier and Engineer

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936S

Skiing

50th place, Cross-Country Skiing, 18 km, Men

13th place, 4 x 10 km Relay, Men

DNS, Cross-Country Skiing, 50 km, Men

*Pauls Kaņeps* was born on 14 November 1911 in *Bērziņi* Parish, Latvia. He studied at the six-grade Primary School in *Zilupe*, later – at Riga City 2nd Secondary School and in 1929, he entered the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Latvia (UL). During his studies, *P. Kaņeps* practiced skiing and represented the Sports Society «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*») in different competitions.

He won 3rd place in the 50 km cross-country skiing (4:16:56) competition in the Latvian Championship 1930/1931, and he took the same place in the same competition in 1932/1933 Annual Championship (4:07:45.6) [241]. The second half of the 1930s was especially successful for him – *P. Kaņeps* became a four-time Latvian Master in cross-country skiing in the 18-kilometer race (1935, 1937, 1938, 1939). He also competed in the IV Olympic Winter Games in 1936 and took 50th place in the 18 km cross-country race (1:31:44), while in the 4 x 10 km relay of the Latvian National Team he got 13th place (3:26:08) [64].

Later, representing the Society «*US*», *P. Kaņeps* won several victories in the international student championships in the distance of 18 km [242]. *P. Kaņeps* competed in student competitions in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. In 1938, in the International Competition in Poland, *P. Kaņeps* ranked 3rd among 58 competitors in the 18 km race. In the same year, he won the first place in Krinica, Poland.

In 1938, *P. Kaņeps* won 2nd place in the Baltic Student Race in Zarasai, Lithuania, in 18 km race [243]. He obtained 12th place at the 1939 Student Winter World Championship in Lillehammer, Norway.

Unfortunately, he did not have sufficient funds to continue his education, so he had to quit his studies, and the future engineer worked in both *Zilupe* and *Gulbene* forestry in Latvia. *P. Kaņeps* renewed his studies in 1938, developed a diploma project and in 1939 graduated from the Department of Forestry of the UL Faculty of Agriculture obtaining a degree of engineer forester [244].

In 1939, a special Latvian-Estonian-Lithuanian Student Race took place in *Ērgļi*, Latvia, where *P. Kaņeps* won in the 18 km race and helped to win the 4 x 6 km relay race. In March of the following year, *P. Kaņeps* won 2nd place in the Baltic Student Skiing Competition in *Otepää*, Estonia, and 1st place in the 4 x 6 km relay [243].

*P. Kaņeps* was a member of the UL Student Society «*Ziemeļis*» [243].

During World War II, he worked as an administrator of *Cirava* Forestry School. He emigrated to Bavaria at the end of the war and dealt with forestry as a technical



**Figure 170.** *P. Kaņeps*' application to the Rector of the UL *Augusts Tentelis* (1876–1942) on his admission to the university (1929).

manager. He lived in the United States of America since 1950. For a short time, he worked in the Bahamas for an English firm, and later for 25 years he worked in the Illinois State Department of Roads. He was an active member of the Latvian Congregation, performing the duties of an assistant pastor [243]. He was married and had two children – a daughter *Liene* and a son *Ēriks* [243].

*P. Kaņeps* passed away in Elgin, Illinois, USA, on 9 November 2006.



Figure 171. *P. Kaņeps'* UL student card (1939).



Figure 172. *P. Kaņeps'* request to the Emigration Division of the Ministry of the Interior to issue a foreign passport for a trip to Norway (1939).



## KURTS KLASSENS (K. CLASSEN; 1895–1973)

Sailor

IX Games of the Olympiad in Amsterdam, 1928

Sailing

11th place, 12-foot Dinghy Class (single person)

Baltic-German Kurt Classen was born on 3 September 1893 in Riga, into the family of a merchant Ernst Eberhard Classen (1866–1931) and his wife, Elisabeth Maria Elfriede (b. Haacke; 1866–?) [245]. In 1911, he graduated from Riga School of Commerce of Riga Stock Exchange Society and entered RPI Department of Mechanics, where he studied until 31 August 1918 [246].

K. Classen graduated from Moscow Higher Technical School (1920) and on 10 February 1922, he entered the Faculty of Mechanics of the Latvian Higher School (since 1923 – the University of Latvia; UL) to obtain a university degree. Unfortunately, K. Classen did not manage to defend his diploma paper and on 31 August, he was exmatriculated from the university for non-payment of tuition fees [246].

Although K. Classen was a contemporary of the RPI Olympians of 1912 and studied with them at RPI since 1911, he participated in the Games of the Olympiad only after 16 years – in the IX Games of the Olympiad in 1928, when he was almost 35 years old. 20 countries [247], including Latvia, represented by just one athlete in this discipline, had sent their best sailors to the IX Games of the Olympiad. K. Classen was the first Latvian sailor to participate in the Olympic Games [58; p. 50].

The organizers of the Games of the Olympiad in Amsterdam, Netherlands, introduced a new class in the sailing regatta – the 12-foot Dinghy Class, providing all participants with the same yachts, and for the first time the athletes went to compete without their own equipment (boats, sails), equipment was awarded by lot. K. Classen represented Vidzeme Yacht Club in sailing competitions. After the first four races, competing in two groups of ten, K. Classen won the 7th (2:09:20), 3rd (1:19:38), 5th (49:15) and 8th (1:27:56) place, and in the sum of four races, Latvia was among the 10 finalists who won the right to participate in the finals [129; p. 94]. In the next four races, which took place in two days (two races on each day), K. Classen ranked 8th (1:21:11), 10th (1:25:24), 7th (1:42:39) and 8th (1:38:03) [129; p. 94]. According to official documents of the Games of the Olympiad, K. Classen won the 11th place in the 12-foot Dinghy Class [248].

In Amsterdam, the press of independent Latvia was represented at the Games of the Olympiad for the first time, *Ādolfs Plūms* (1894–1978) represented «*Latvis*» and *Eduards Tūbelis* (1890–1976) – «*Jaunākās Ziņas*». *Ā. Plūms* later wrote a book «*Devītās olimpiskās spēles*» (Ninth Olympic Games), which was the first work of that kind written in Latvian. It is interesting to note that the journalist ranked K. Classen in the 10th place [247], which seems logical, as there were only 10 finalists. In the press of 1978, K. Classen was ranked 7th [249], and in the 1990s – 9th [250].



**Figure 174.** K. Classen's application to the Rector of the Latvian Higher School Ernesta Felsbergs (1866–1928) on his admission to the university (1922).

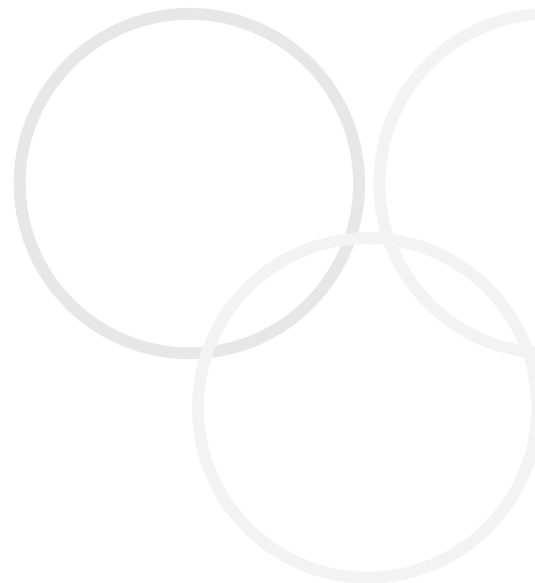


After the Games of the Olympiad, K. Classen continued sailing, but in the 1930s he could no longer stay in the sports elite. He sailed on Lake *Babīte* with self-built dinghies. The sailor owned the yacht «*Tom*» built in 1909 with a length of 5.25 m, a width of 1.25 m, an average draft of 1 m and a sailing area of 11 m<sup>2</sup> [250].

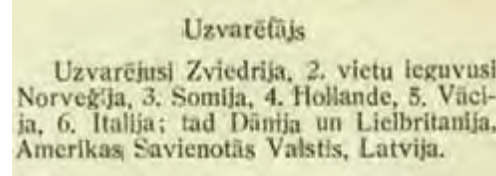
K. Classen was popular in *Vidzeme* Yacht Club, he was also known in the Latvian Association of Sailors, whose last Chairman during the interwar period was *Kārlis Spāde* (1880–1953), the brother of RPI graduate *Teodors Spāde* (1891–1953). It is known that in his free time K. Classen enjoyed working in the kitchen – he loved baking and cooking [250].

In 1939, K. Classen and his family repatriated from Riga to Germany.

K. Classen died in Bad Vilbel, near Frankfurt am Main, in the Federal Republic of Germany, in 1973 [251].



**Figure 175.** Latvian Olympians at the IX Games of the Olympiad in Amsterdam (1928). Third from the left – K. Classen.



**Figure 176.** *Ā. Plums'* summary of the results of the IX Games of the Olympiad in the 12-foot Dinghy Class in Amsterdam (1929).

## EDGARS PĒTERIS KLĀVS (1913–1983)

Hockey Player, Coach and Referee

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Hockey

13th//15th place, Men



*Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* was born on 20 July 1913 in Riga. He studied at Riga City 1st Primary School, later, from 1930 to 1934 – at Riga City 1st Gymnasium. In 1934, *E. P. Klāvs* entered the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Latvia (UL) and studied intermittently until 1944, without obtaining a diploma [252]. During his studies, he joined the Student Corporation «*Lettgallia*».

*E. P. Klāvs* interrupted his studies from 1935 to 1936, when he was doing compulsory military service and served in the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment [252; p. 8].

Student *E. P. Klāvs* played hockey from 1933 to 1940, representing the UL sports society «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*»), in 1937 and 1940 he was the Champion of Latvia. Starting as an athlete, he was a reserve defender, later he was one of the team's leading forwards. From 1935 to 1940, *E. P. Klāvs* participated in three World Championships as part of the Latvian Hockey Team. As a reservist, he went to the 1936 Olympic Hockey Tournament, but did not participate in the games (squad – p. 70).

At the 1938 World Championship, *E. P. Klāvs* was the forward of the first line of the Latvian Team and played all four games of the tournament. In total, he played 26 times for the National Team [253].

In 1935, *E. P. Klāvs* went to Switzerland, he played in the Latvian Student Hockey Team at the Academic Winter Championship in St. Moritz, Switzerland, and played away in Klosters, Switzerland. In that same year, the team won 1st place in the *SELL* (*Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva*) Student Hockey Tournament in Riga [254].

As part of the Latvian National Hockey Team, *E. P. Klāvs* participated in the World Hockey Championship in Switzerland in February 1939, as well as in the competitions in Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Germany. Thanks to the hockey player, sports newspapers obtained information about the competition [255]. Promoting hockey, he published educational materials in the press (for example, in the «*Starts*» monthly edition).

*E. P. Klāvs* worked in the engineering office and the Road Department of Riga City Construction Board during the 1930s; during World War II, he was a firefighter in Riga [252].

In the season of 1940/1941, he played for Riga Team and became the Hockey Champion of the LSSR as a member of the first Team of Riga «*Dinamo*». After that, he was in the first Team of the «*US*» (1941/1942–1943/1944) and won the Latvian Championship (1942). After World War II, in the season of 1945/1946, *E. P. Klāvs* once again became the LSSR Hockey Champion in the first Team of Riga «*Dinamo*». Before



**Figure 178.** *E. P. Klāvs'* application to the Rector of the UL Jūlijs Auškāps (1884–1942) on his admission to the university (1934).

the first Championship of the USSR in 1946, he went to Moscow with a hockey player and hockey Coach *Harijs Vītolīņš* (1915–1984) and *Aleksandrs Rehtšprehers* (1910–1994) to teach Russian hockey players to play Canadian hockey. *E. P. Klāvs* also trained hockey referees and translated the rules of the game of hockey into Russian [256]. He was also a hockey referee and led hockey referee seminars [254, 257].

After that, *E. P. Klāvs* played for Riga «*Dinamo*» (from the 1949/1950 season – «*Daugava*») team in the USSR Hockey Championship (1946/1947–1951/1952). He also played for the LSSR National Team and the Riga Team (1946), and later for the VEF Hockey Team (in the 1950s). At the end of his career of a hockey player in the 1950s and 1960s, he worked as a hockey coach – he was the Head Coach of Riga Hockey Team «*Dinamo*», from 1969 to 1973 – its administrator. *Helmuts Balderis-Sildedzis* is one of his students, he is a Latvian hockey player and coach who won the silver medal at the 1980 Olympic Winter Games [258].

Football also played an important role in the life of *E. P. Klāvs*. He played well in the teams of the Sports Society «*Latvju Jaunatne*» and the «*US*» in the national and international competitions. In the 1940s, he represented the teams of Riga «*Dinamo*» (1941, 1946) and «*Studenti*» (1941). In the history of football, *E. P. Klāvs* is known as one of the most prominent football referees at the USSR tournaments. He judged the USSR Supreme League and international games in the 1950s and 1960s. He was twice named one of the best football referees in the USSR. Using his experience, he led courses for football referees [254].

His friend and teammate *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995) described *E. P. Klāvs* in the 85th issue of the newspaper «*Sports*» in 1990 as follows, «Despite his small height, he was a very talented hockey player and played as a left-defender. With his sophisticated skating, speed, thoughtful passes, and breakthroughs, *Edgars* often hit the opponent's goalkeeper, scoring a valuable goal. The only misfortune of «*Klāviņš*» (diminutive from *Klāvs*) that accompanied him all the time were futile and unnecessary violations during the game, when he illegally tried to knock down his opponent [258].»

*E. P. Klāvs* was married and had a son. His life ended on 28 August 1983. He was buried in the Riga 1st Forest Cemetery.



**Figure 179.** *E. P. Klāvs*' UL student book (1934).



**Figure 180.** Players of the «*US*» Hockey Team *L. J. Vedējs* and *E. P. Klāvs* in Riga (first half of the 1940s).



**Figure 181.** Latvian Hockey Team at the World Championships in Prague (1938). From left: *Ludvigs Putniņš* (1920–1945), *Arvids Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985), *Kārlis Zilpauss* (1918–1944), *Roberts Blukis* (1913–1998), *Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* (1912–1972), *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Roberts Lapainis* (1913–1947), *Kārlis Paegle* (1911–1997), *L. J. Vedējs*, *E. P. Klāvs*.



## KĀRLIS KĻAVA (1907–1943)

Shooter, the First Latvian Athlete – World Master

XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, 1936

Shooting

23rd place, Rapid-Fire Pistol, Men

*Kārlis Kļava* (also *Kļava-Talks*) was born on 9 March 1907 in «*Arnikaīši*», *Zvārde* Parish, *Kuldīga* District, Latvia [259; p. 21]. In 1928, he graduated from the Department of Electrical Engineering of the State *Liepāja* Technical School (SLTS). From 1928 to 1929, *K. Kļava* was doing compulsory military service and served in the 3rd *Jelgava* Infantry Regiment in the rank of a soldier (1928), great soldier (1929), and Corporal (1929). He chose a career of a military man and entered the Latvian Military School, graduating it in 1931 [260]. After that, *K. Kļava* served in the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment, being a Lieutenant (1931) and a Senior Lieutenant (1934). In 1938, he entered the Faculty of Mechanics of the University of Latvia (UL), but did not obtain a diploma and was expelled from studies on 25 February 1941.

*K. Kļava* turned to shooting sports at the Latvian Military School and won an award-winning place in rifle shooting in *Jelgava*, Latvia, in 1929. Later, following the recommendation of General *Rūdolfs Kļinsons* (then – Colonel; 1889–1941), he paid more attention to exercises with an automatic pistol. In the 1930s, *K. Kļava* successfully competed in various shooting disciplines in Latvian army competitions, including the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment shooting competition [261].

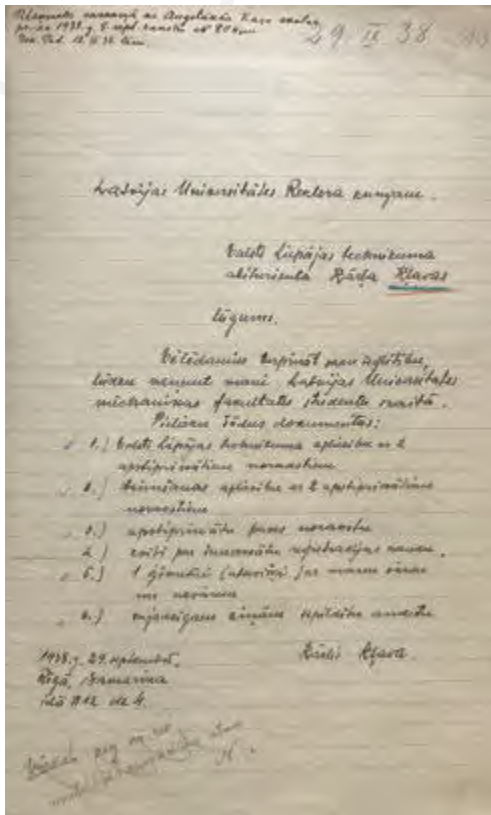
In 1935, *K. Kļava* won the Latvian Olympic Tournament and became the Master or Champion in shooting with an automatic pistol. He also won such a title in 1936 [260], and in 1938, *K. Kļava* became the Champion of Latvia in shooting with a small-calibre rapid-fire pistol for points.

At the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany, in 1936, *K. Kļava* did not make it to the finals due to pistol failure and remained in 23rd place (22 points). In 1937, in Helsinki, Finland, he won the title of World Master in rapid-fire pistol shooting and became the first Latvian athlete to win the title of the World Master. In addition, he competed well in various competitions included in the championship program and also won a shooting with a *Parabellum* pistol (also called duel shooting) outside the official program [262]. *K. Kļava* was awarded with gold medals, seven silver cups and in 1938, he was also awarded the Order of *Viesturs* [260, 263].

In 1939, *K. Kļava* together with the Latvian National Team participated in the World Championship in Lucerne, Switzerland, and won 4th place in the shooting with an automatic pistol in the Olympic targets [261].

In the 1930s, *K. Kļava* succeeded in competing in various Baltic level shooting competitions [261].

On 14 June 1941, the authorities of the USSR arrested and deported *K. Kļava* to Siberia together with other Latvian officers. On the way, *K. Kļava* wrote a note on a cigarette



**Figure 183.** *K. Kļava's* application to the Rector of the UL *Mārtiņš Primāns* (1878–1950) on his admission to the university (1938).

box and on 17 June 1941, threw a note at *Krustpils* Railway Station, Latvia. It is one of the few pieces of written evidence about the fate of the imprisoned Latvian officers [261, 264].

*K. Kļava* did his sentence in Yukhnov, Krasnoyarsk, Norilsk. According to the official data of the USSR authorities, *K. Kļava* died in prison on 24 August 1943, but according to the information provided by the imprisoned contemporaries (although not documented), he died already in 1942 [265, 266].

*K. Kļava's* family is continued by his son *Jānis Kļava* (1940), who emigrated to the United States with his mother *Laima Kļava* (?-?) in the 1940s [260]. In the USA, «*Daugavas Vanagi*» established the Traveling Memorial Award of *K. Kļava* [267]. Latvia wanted to introduce this prize competition from the 1990s [268], but the idea could be realized only in the first decade of the 21st century [269].



Figure 184. *K. Kļava's* UL student book (1938).



Figure 185. Shooter *K. Kļava* (1930s).



Figures 186 and 187. The title of the newspaper «*Sporta Pasaule*» dedicated to the World Master *K. Kļava* (1939) and *K. Kļava* Traveling Cup (2022).

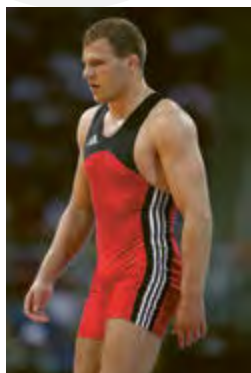
# IGORS KOSTINS (1981)

Wrestler

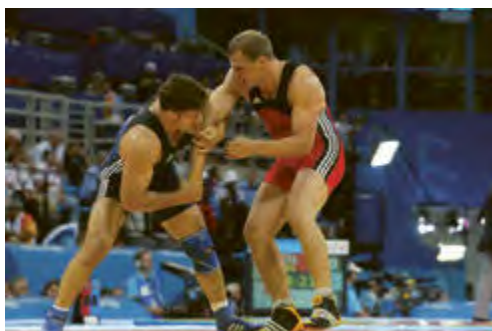
XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens, 2004

Wrestling

17th place, Heavyweight, Greco-Roman, Men



**Figure 189.** *I. Kostins* at the XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens (2004).



**Figure 190.** *I. Kostins* in the fight against the Turkish representative Mehmet Özal at the XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens (2004).

*Igor Kostins* was born on 27 November 1981. In 2000, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 32 and entered RTU Faculty of Civil Engineering. On 7 March 2001, the young man was exmatriculated for academic failure. *I. Kostins* had to choose between sports and studies [270]. He chose sports, having achieved good results. Since 2000, *I. Kostins* has participated in various European and world competitions. He got 13th place in the Greco-Roman Wrestling (up to 85 kg) at World Junior Championship in 2000 and 23rd place in the World Junior Championship in 2001 [271].

He participated in the European Championships, winning the following places: 23rd place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 84 kg) in 2002; 19th place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 96 kg) in 2003; 19th place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 96 kg) in 2007; 21st place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 96 kg) in 2008; 19th place (Free Fight up to 120 kg) in 2011; 13th place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 120 kg) in 2012; 16th place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 130 kg) in 2016 [272].

*I. Kostins* participated in world championships and got the following places in Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 96 kg: 22nd place in 2002, 17th place in 2003, and 23rd place in 2007 [273].

He also took part in the Greco-Roman Olympic qualifying tournament up to 96 kg in 2004 and won 7th and 8th place in 2004; and 13th and 20th place in 2008.

In 2007, he took part in the Nordic Championship (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 96 kg), taking 17th place.

*I. Kostins* participated in the Kristjan Palusalu Memorial (United World Wrestling) in 2011, winning 5th place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 120 kg) and 5th place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 130 kg) in 2014. In 2015, he also took part in the European Games, finishing in 21st place (Greco-Roman Wrestling up to 98 kg).

In March 2004, in the Olympic qualifying tournament in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, *I. Kostins* won 7th place and gained the right to participate in the XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens, Greece, in the Greco-Roman Wrestling tournament up to 96 kg in 2004, where he got 17th place.

In December 2011, the athlete made his debut in the professional MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) competition.

Currently, *I. Kostins* is the Vice-President of the Latvian Wrestling Sports Federation.

# HERBERT VON KUHMBERG (1893–1915)

## Swimmer and Soldier

V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, 1912

Swimming

4th place, R1, 100 m Freestyle, Men

For a long time, there was not much information available about the athlete Herbert von Kuhlberg in Latvia, it can be noted that his life was also quite short – less than 22 years. H. von Kuhlberg was born on 22 November 1893 in Riga [92; p. 106] in the family of Arthur von Kuhlberg (?–1918), a merchant of German descent.

A graduate (1913) of Riga City Gymnasium [274], the 18-year-old H. von Kuhlberg worked for the 1st Baltic Swimming Society [275] and took part in the 100 m Freestyle first-round swimming in the V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, Sweden, and gained 4th place. Olympian H. von Kuhlberg belongs to the RPI/RTU family [8; p. 136], because after the V Games of the Olympiad he joined RPI Department of Commerce (Trade) and the German Student Corporation «*Fraternitas Baltica*» in 1913, but in August 1914 he was drafted into the Russian army [276]. In the first days of September 1915, H. von Kuhlberg was wounded near *Daugavpils*, Latvia, and passed away on 12 September. He is buried in Riga, in the Dome Church section of the Great Cemetery [277].



**Figure 191.** Statement of the Student Corporation «Fraternitas Baltica» on the death of H. von Kuhlberg (1915).



**Figure 192.** Obituary notice from relatives in the newspaper «Рижское Обозрение» for H. von Kuhlberg (1915).

## BIRUTA ĶEMERE (HERCOVA-HERCBERGA; 1944–2022)

Slalom Canoeist and Engineer

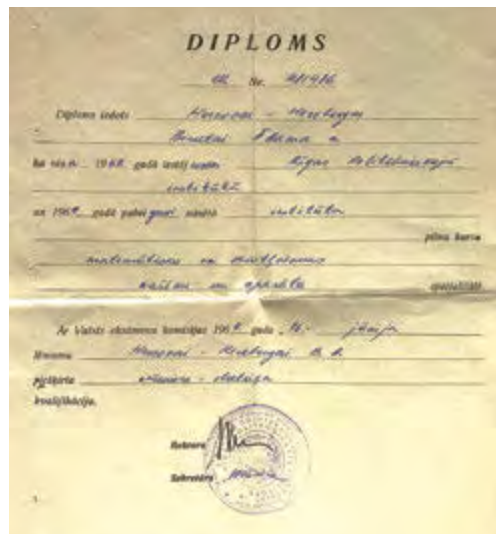
XX Games of the Olympiad in Munich, 1972

Canoe Slalom

19th place, Kayak Singles, Slalom, Women



**Figure 194.** B. Hercova-Hercberga's RPI academic record book (1963).



**Figure 195.** Copy of B. Hercova-Hercberga's RPI diploma (1969).

*Biruta Ķemere* (b. *Romeiko*, m. *Hercova-Hercberga*; m. *Ķemere*, also *Hercova-Hercberga-Ķemere*) was born on 16 November 1944 in *Limbaži* District, Latvia. During her school years, she was involved in athletics, skiing and had even set a secondary school record in the 100 m run. From the first medals she won, until the end of her sports career in 1993 [283], she was called the queen of river rapids [278, 279].

After finishing *Limbaži* Secondary School in 1963, she entered the Evening Department of RPI Faculty of Automation and Computer Technology [280]. In 1969, after graduating from the university, she obtained the qualification of an electrician engineer. The athlete graduated from RPI with the surname *Hercova-Hercberga*, because she got married during her studies. Her first husband was a catamaran designer and avid water tourist. The first water tourism competition in the USSR, which took place on the *Amata* River, was organized by *Jānis Olders* (1935–2019) in 1964. Together with her husband *Kārlis Hercovs-Hercbergs* (1939–1981), *B. Hercova-Hercberga* was also involved in water tourism, starting with good success in the *Amata* Water Tourism competition. Since 1970, both were engaged in canoe slalom and got hardened in the rivers of Latvia – *Amata*, *Loja*, *Aiviekste*. At the same time, *K. Hercovs-Hercbergs* painted watercolours of the white-water rivers where he and his wife sailed [281].

Already during her studies, the athlete worked at the research institute of «VEF» Factory as a design engineer and in the late 1970s, she took part in the development of a unique telephone exchange, which was used at the Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, USSR, in 1980 [282].

In 1969, the Riga District Soviet farm «*Budeskalni*» water tourists of the LSSR Academy of Sciences repaired an old pub and established a Water Sports Club «*Saulkalne*». Water tourists and slalom canoeists of the rural Sports Society «*Vārpa*» took part in it, and from 1970, also *B. Hercova-Hercberga*. In the winter of 1967, the first five kayaks for canoe slalom were built in the building of the Academy of Sciences. In 1969, the kayaks were improved and were used throughout the USSR. In 1969, one of these kayaks was given as a gift to *B. Hercova-Hercberga*.

In 1971, *B. Hercova-Hercberga* and *Māris Laidiņš*, who later became the coach of the athlete, started canoe slalom at the Sports Society «*Darba rezerves*». Their Coach was *Ivans Lazurko* (1918–2013), a USSR Sports Master in sailing (1959). From 1973, *B. Hercova-Hercberga* also started working as a canoe slalom coach in the Sports



Society. In 1971, *B. Ķemere* and *M. Laidiņš* became the unofficial champions of the USSR in the Kayak Singles of Canoe Slalom.

In order to prepare for the Games of the Olympiad, *B. Ķemere* trained with the USSR Sports Master in Sailing (1959) *I. Lazurko*. Many trainings were held outside Latvia: in the rivers of Caucasus, Altai and other rivers [278]. The best place to train was the artificial canal in Augsburg, Federal Republic of Germany, which was built specifically for this athletic discipline and was used for the first time at the XX Games of the Olympiad [283].

At the XX Games of the Olympiad in Munich, Federal Republic of Germany, in 1972, *B. Ķemere* took 19th place in the canoe slalom kayak singles, women. The Traveling Award named after *B. Ķemere* was awarded for the first time in 1975, and it was won by *Inga Valdmane*. The award was made by slalom canoeist, many times Latvian Champion in academic rowing *Jānis Martinsons* [284].

In 1974, *B. Hercova-Herberga* married *Harijs Ķemers* (1943–1999), who later became her coach. Together they were engaged in canoe slalom [285]. *H. Ķemers'* brother *Roberts Ķemers* (1938–2016) was the first slalom canoeist in the LSSR.

In 1983, *B. Ķemere* represented the Sports Society «*Vārpa*» in *Zaķumuiža, Ropaži* Municipality, in the traditional Canoe Slalom competition in *Gauja* River near *Valmiera*, Latvia [286].

She continued to play sports and 20 years after taking part in the Games of the Olympiad, she received a special request from the Organizing Committee of the Games of the Olympiad to open a slalom competition at the XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, Spain [287].

In the history of Latvian sports, *B. Ķemere's* name is inscribed both in connection with her participation in the Olympic Games and her other achievements in sports – 16 times she was the LSSR Champion and 36 times – the USSR Champion [288]. In total, she dedicated more than 20 years to active sports, the total number of medals in the most important competitions is almost three hundred, the total weight of medals is 11.9 kg [289].

In the 1990s, she was the Head of the Canoe Federation and the President of Riga Canoe Club [290]. In 1998, she helped rowers prepare for the XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, Australia [291].

Besides canoe slalom, *B. Ķemere* was fascinated with water tourism, photography, and filming. She really enjoyed dancing and following the latest fashion [278]. The family has a son and two daughters.

*B. Ķemere* passed away on 8 March 2022.



**Figure 196.** *B. Ķemere* at the Augsburg Rowing Slalom Canal at the XX Games of the Olympiad in Munich (1972).



**Figure 197.** Latvian delegation on its way to the opening ceremony of the XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona (1992). In the second row from the left – fourth – *B. Ķemere*. In front of the column – flagbearer, weightlifter *Raimonds Bergmanis*.



## ROBERTS LAPAINIS (1913–1947)

Hockey Player, Coach and Referee

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Hockey

13th/15th place, Men

*Roberts Lapainis* was born on 17 October 1913 in *Secē* Parish, *Jaunjelgava* District, Latvia. In 1928, he entered Riga City 1st Gymnasium graduating it in 1932 [292]. Then he entered the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Latvia (UL), where he studied intermittently until 15 September 1938, but did not complete his studies [293]. Even before he started his studies, the young man seriously considered playing the new sport in Latvia – hockey. While being a Gymnasium pupil, at the age of 18 he joined the Hockey Team of the Sports Society «*Universitātes sports*» («University Sport»; «US») and became the team's goalkeeper. In the 1930s, the goalkeeper's equipment was rather poor, and several layers of sweaters were most often worn to protect the body [294].

*R. Lapainis'* debut in the «US» hockey goal occurred on 3 March 1932 in the game of the Latvian Championship, in which the team's goalkeeper *Konstantīns Otlans* (1907–1942) did not participate. A reserve player *R. Lapainis* was given the opportunity to prove himself, and he continued guarding the team's goal [294].

In the following season, in February 1933, the Latvian National Team went to its first World Championship, but *R. Lapainis* was still a young goalkeeper without international experience, so he was not included in this team. He gradually grew into a legendary goalkeeper, playing in a Student Hockey Team [294].

He proved himself at the goal in February 1934, when the Lithuania hockey teams of Kaunas and Vilnius visited Riga. Both teams played against the «US», and *R. Lapainis* helped the students from Riga to win. In 1934, *R. Lapainis* made his debut also playing for Riga National Team [294].

*R. Lapainis* made his debut in the Latvian National Team on 20 January 1935 at the World Championships in Davos, Switzerland. He played his most productive game on 25 January against the Dutch hockey players. The Latvian Hockey Team won 7 : 0. While standing at the goal of the National Hockey Team, *R. Lapainis* did not miss any puck sent by the opponent. As sports historian *Andris Zelenkovs* concluded in his research, at that time it was the most productive victory for the Latvian Hockey Team [294].

The Student Hockey Championship took place in St. Moritz, Switzerland, after the World Championship, and considering that many members of the Latvian National Team were students, they stayed in Switzerland longer than those who did not study. National student teams from six countries competed in this championship, and thanks to the goalkeeper of the Latvian National Team *R. Lapainis*, the Latvian National Team won three out of the five games – against Italy, France and Czechoslovakia. In



**Figure 199.** *R. Lapainis'* application to the Rector of the UL *Mārtiņš Bīmanis* (1864–1946) on his admission to the university (1932).

addition, the Latvian National Team together with *R. Lapainis* won the *SELL (Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva)* Student Sports Tournament, which took place in Riga, beating Estonian and Lithuanian hockey players [294].

Due to the fact that *R. Lapainis* was in Switzerland and participated in the World Championship and Student Hockey Championship, he had not paid for his studies on time, so he asked the UL Vice-Rector to allow him to pay tuition fees for the spring semester of the study year 1934/1935 with delay.

During his first years of study, *R. Lapainis* worked as a surveyor's assistant. In the summer of 1935, *R. Lapainis* was drafted into compulsory military service in the Latvian Army, where he served until 1936. Studies were suspended until 15 September 1937 [295]. In 1937, *R. Lapainis* worked in the Postal Telegraph [296].

*R. Lapainis* not only worked to earn his living, but was also intensively engaged in sports. As a result, he was included in the Latvian National Hockey Team, which went to its first Olympics Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in 1936 (squad – p. 70) Although the hockey players lost in all three games and gained 13th/15th place, the goalkeeper *R. Lapainis* fought persistently. He defended the goal in two games [294].

In February 1938, *R. Lapainis* played in the Latvian National Hockey Team at the World Championship in Czechoslovakia, but did not play at the 1939 World Championships in Switzerland, because he was injured on the way to the competition [294].

In the season of 1939/1940, the hockey players of the «US» Team, including *R. Lapainis*, won the second title of the Latvian Champion. There were also several international games against Estonian teams [294]. Due to World War II, the planned Olympics Winter Games did not take place in 1940, and *R. Lapainis* was not destined to take part in such a large-scale competition for the second time.

After the establishment of the Soviet power in the autumn of 1940, new clubs were established in place of the liquidated ones. One of them was the USSR «Dinamo» affiliate. Riga «Dinamo» Hockey Team was formed under its auspices, *R. Lapainis* also played in this team. In 1941, it became the first LSSR Champion. Hockey players continued playing during World War II [294].

*R. Lapainis* not only played hockey but also taught young hockey players to do so, also during World War II, including the season of 1943/1944.

*R. Lapainis* was drafted into the Latvian Legion and captured by the Red Army, and was arrested by the USSR authorities. *R. Lapainis* was sent to Nevdubstroy Village in Leningrad Region (at present – Kirovsk City) and was employed in forestry. In 1946, *R. Lapainis* was released, he returned to Riga, but the family had fled [297]. His wife *Irena* moved to West Germany after World War II.

The first USSR Hockey Championship took place in 1946/1947. The Team of Riga «Dinamo», whose goalkeeper was *R. Lapainis* participated in it and Rigans won 4th place.

Being of a modest height, the athlete participated in 22 games out of 36, when the Latvian National Team fought with the teams from other countries [298]. In the 1930s and 1940s, *R. Lapainis* was the most outstanding hockey goalkeeper in Latvia.

He passed away at the age of 33 in September 1947, according to contemporaries, during appendicitis surgery [258].



**Figure 200.** Latvian Hockey Team in Koenigsberg on the way to the world championships in Davos (1935). In the first row from the left: *Kārlis Paegle* (1911–1997), *R. Lapainis*, *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995). In the second row: *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983), *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Arvids Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985), *Andrejs Jessens* (1908–1965), *Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* (1912–1972), *Augusts Ozols* (1908–1980).



**Figure 201.** Latvian-Canadian game at the World Hockey Championship in Davos (1935). Goalkeeper *R. Lapainis*.



## IRINA LATVE-SĻESARENOKA (1981)

Field Athlete and Engineer

XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, 2000

Athletics

6th place, First Round, Heat Four, 800 m, Women

29th place, Overall, 800 m, Women

*Irina Latve-Sļesarenoka* (b. *Latve*) was born on 26 August 1981 in Riga. In 1999, she graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 96 and entered RTU Faculty of Power and Electrical Engineering.

In July 2006, she graduated from RTU with a Master's degree in power and electrical engineering

After that, the young woman continued her studies at the RTU PhD study program «Power and Electrical Engineering» (field – electrical machines and apparatuses). In 2009, she completed developing the theoretical part of her PhD Thesis [299]. While studying for a doctorate, she worked at RTU as a research assistant. She is the only engineering student from Olympians who has studied for a doctorate and has shown interest in a scientific career, and is a co-author of scientific articles [300, 301].

Engineer and athlete *I. Latve-Sļesarenoka*, then *I. Latve*, participated in the XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, Australia, in 2000. In the first round fourth heat in 800 m, she finished in 6th place (2:06.05), finishing 29th overall in women competition with 38 participants [93; p. 123, 163]. Her coach was *Leonīds Strekalovskis* (1939–2021).

The top of her athletic career is the title of the European Junior Champion in the 800 m race in 1999. It is interesting that she showed the same result both then and in the XXVII Games of the Olympiad. *I. Latve-Sļesaronoka* is also a three-time Latvian champion: 800 m in 1999 and 2000, 1500 m in 1999 [3; p. 264, 302]. After the Games of the Olympiad, *Irina* participated in the Universiade in Beijing, China, in 2001, as well as in the *SELL (Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lithuania)* Games in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 2004.

Since 2006, *I. Latve-Sļesaronoka* has been working in the National Armed Forces of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, where she has held various positions [302].

*I. Latve-Sļesaronoka* has obtained a certificate of the fitness coach (athletic gymnastics coach). In her free time, she enjoys reading and spending time outdoors with her family. She is married and has a daughter and a son.



**Figure 203.** *I. Latve-Sļesaronoka's* RTU PhD academic record book for the spring semester of the study year 2008/2009.



**Figure 204.** *I. Latve-Sļesaronoka* at XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney (2000).

# RENĀTE LĀCE (1943–1967)

Field Athlete and Chemist

XVIII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, 1964

Athletics

4th place, 4 x 100 m Relay, Women



*Renāte Lāce* was born during World War II on 18 February 1943 in Riga. In 1961, she graduated with good marks from Riga Secondary School No. 2 and entered the RPI Faculty of Chemistry majoring in chemical technology. *R. Lāce* studied at the Day Department and received a scholarship.

For a short time, *R. Lāce* worked at the state electrotechnical factory «VEF» (1 July–1 November 1961). During her studies, *R. Lāce* underwent internship at the Institute of Organic Synthesis of the Academy of Sciences of the LSSR, and on 1 February 1963, she was awarded the qualification of a Senior Laboratory Assistant [303].

The young woman had to combine her studies at the RPI Faculty of Chemistry with intensive training, participation in competitions of various scale, therefore, starting from 5 February 1962, she was allowed to study according to an individual plan [303]. During the Soviet era, attendance of lectures and practical classes was compulsory in higher education institutions, it was noted in attendance logs of lectures and practical classes created especially for this purpose. At the end of the 1st year, she had to ask permission to take tests and exams later than her group mates. *R. Lāce* repeatedly received gratitude from the university administration for her good achievements in physical culture and sports; but in the study year 1963/1964, it became even more difficult to study, because sport required not only regular training but also more frequent participation in various competitions.

Athlete *R. Lāce* enjoyed sports already during school, and she achieved better and better results in various athletics disciplines. She was very successful in running competitions and is still considered to be the best sprinter of all time in Latvia, whose results in the 100 m run more than 40 years after *R. Lāce*'s starts in Latvia have been repeated or beaten by only a few athletes [58; p. 11].

*R. Lāce*'s sports career began at the age of 15 in 1958 at the Children's Sports School of the Stadium «*Daugava*» in Riga. Her trainer was *Irīna Ozola* (1929–2005), the former best hurdler runner in Latvia [304].

In 1959, at the 12th LSSR Pupils Spartakiad, *R. Lāce*, a pupil of Riga Secondary School No. 2, was the first to receive a ticket to the All-Union Pupils Spartakiad in Moscow, USSR, surprising those present with her good physical fitness and result (100 m, 12.4 s) [305]. At the Spartakiad in Moscow, she also won her first gold medal in the team relay 4 x 100 m (with *Lilita Gērka*, *Aina Tomberga* and *Melīta Jakoba*). *R. Lāce*'s growth in sports was rapid – already in 1960, she set a new youth record for the republic in the 100 m race – 11.8 s. This result was a repeated republican record for adults [306].

In 1960, in her 10th grade, she took part in the All-Union School Youth Spartakiad in



Figure 206. *R. Lāce*'s employment record book (1961).



Figure 207. *R. Lāce* (1960s).

## Pionieru spartakiādē «atrastais» tsbižainais meitēns

**Figure 208.** Fragment from an article about *R. Lāce* in the magazine «Zvaigzne» (A girl with ponytail found at a pioneer spartakiad; 1962).



**Figure 209.** Photo of *R. Lāce* in the journal «Liesma» (1961).



**Figure 210.** Athlete *R. Lāce* in the distance (first half of the 1960s).

Minsk, Belarus SSR, and won the first place in all four disciplines: 100 m (repeating her record of 11.8 s); in the pentathlon, where a new record was reached for young women – 4165 points; long jump – 5.70 m and team relay 4 x 100 m [307].

In the 1960s, *R. Lāce* became a three-time Latvian Champion among adults: 100 m sprint, long jump and 4 x 100 m relay.

In 1960, in the Athletics Competitions within the 1st Riga Sport Games, *R. Lāce* fulfilled the norms of the sports master of the USSR in long jump – 5.84 m [308] and set her personal record. Later she improved her record – 5.88 m, it was a new record for the young women and women of the LSSR. In 1961, at the 7th Spartakiad of All-Union Trade Unions in Moscow, USSR, her long jump result was 6.15 m [309]. In the same year, *R. Lāce*, who had already become a four-time Spartakiad Champion and set two LSSR records, also won the Award of the Central Council (CC) of «*Daugava*» and the newspaper «*Sports*» as the best participant in the championships [310].

In 1962, the team competitions of RPI and Leningrad Institute of Technology took place in Leningrad (at present – St. Petersburg), which were won by Riga students. RPI 1st year student *R. Lāce* won three gold medals: 100 m run (12.1 s), 80 m hurdle run (11.8 s) and long jump (5.75 m) [311].

In 1962, *R. Lāce* received the third title of the Baltic Champion in the competition in Vilnius [312]. In 1963, *R. Lāce* and a javelin thrower *Jānis Lāsis* (1939–2020) were recognized as the best athletes of the year in the Soviet Latvia [313]. *R. Lāce* had earned such an honour also in 1962.

In 1963, *R. Lāce* participated in the World Student Games in Brazil and returned to Riga with two gold and one silver medals [314].

In 1963, *R. Lāce* became a four-time Sports Master. In the CC «*Daugava*» Championships in athletics, she for the first time fulfilled the master's standard in the 100 m race (11.7 s), improving her personal record, but due to the strong wind, it was not confirmed as the new Latvian record during the competition [315]. Her results in the championship: in the 200 m race – 24.2 s, in the long jump – 6.15 m, in the pentathlon – 4500 points.

In 1963, *R. Lāce* (in a team with *Lilita Auziņa*, *Alla Čerepeņņikova* and *Larisa Maksimova*) set a new LSSR record in the 4 x 100 m relay – 46.8 s [316].

In 1963, *R. Lāce* was the first Soviet Latvian woman to become a World Record Holder (4 x 200 m) [317]. That year, for the first time in the People's Spartakiad and the State Championship in Moscow, USSR, the sprinters won a medal – it was won by RPI student *R. Lāce* [318].

In 1964, *R. Lāce* became a four-time Baltic Champion in the traditional Estonian, Lithuanian and Latvian athletics competitions at «*Dinamo*» Stadium in Tallinn: in both sprint distances (100 m – 11.8 s, 200 m – 24.9 s); 4 x 100m women's relay; in the 100 m hurdles, where along with winning gold she set a new National Record – 14.1 s [319].

In 1964, only 52 male athletes from the LSSR Team were able to beat *R. Lāce* in the 100 m running discipline (11.4 s) in the random test competition [320]. This achievement was only 0.2 s behind the World Record. «A clear thing: this is the time when a representative of a small nation is admitted to the USSR Team without hindrance, because she is superior to the «big sisters» who speak Russian [304]», *Andris Staķis*, an athlete historian and RPI graduate, said in an interview to *Ivars Ošiņš* in 2013.

The great results paved the way for *R. Lāce* to the Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan, in 1964. A 21-year-old athlete won 4th place in the 4 x 100 m relay and it was predicted that *R. Lāce* would participate in the next Olympic Games. After the Games of the Olympiad, the athlete planned to study, run cross-country and play basketball [321].

*R. Lāce* and her coach were purposefully training for the Games of the Olympiad in Mexico City in 1968.

From 1965 onwards, all competitions on the USSR scale, as well as training camps for the best athletes, took place in high-altitude conditions similar to the conditions in Mexico City. In 1965, *R. Lāce* won the title of Riga City Champion [322]. In 1965, the Central Sports House (later – Riga Sports Arena) was opened on *Maskavas* Street, and *R. Lāce* was one of the first to try out new treadmill [323].

In 1966, in Budapest, *R. Lāce*, trying to meet the qualification standard (6.10 m) in long jump, set a new Latvian record in the second attempt – 6.21 m [324].

Unfortunately, the athlete did not live to the next Games of the Olympiad, and many plans remained unrealized, because on 3 March 1967, *R. Lāce* passed away [325].

*R. Lāce* was the LSSR Champion 11 times: 100 m running (1960, 1961), long jump (1960, 1961), 4 x 100 m relay (1960, 1961), pentathlon (1961), 50 m indoor running (1966), 300 m indoor running (1966), 55 m indoor hurdle (1966), long jump indoors (1966); 19 times set Latvian records in various disciplines, as a member of the USSR National Team, set the World Record in the 4 x 200 m relay (1:35.1 – 1963), USSR record in 4 x 100 m relay (44.4 s – 1964). She was the first Latvian athlete to jump beyond 6 m [3; p. 302]. *R. Lāce* also held several RPI records: 100 m running (1964 – 11.4 s), 200 m running (1965 – 23.8 s), and long jump (1966 – 6.21 m) [193].

Smiling student of the Faculty of Chemistry *R. Lāce* will also be remembered as the best Latvian athlete according to the reader polls conducted by the newspaper «*Sports*» in 1962 and 1963. In honour of *R. Lāce*'s sporting achievements, the Commemorative Award of *Renāte Lāce* for young people in three athletics disciplines was established in 1970 [326], which was presented until 2010.

After the athlete's death in 1968, the film «*Skrējiens*» (Run) was made in her memory. In 1969, an exhibition was opened at the «*Daugava*» Stadium – *Renāte*'s Memorial Corner – «*Renāte Lāce sportā un ikdienā*» (*Renāte Lāce* in Sports and Everyday Life) [327].

The Latvian National Museum of Art houses a bust of *R. Lāce* (1967; clay, terracotta) created by the sculptor *Arta Dumpe* and a sculpture work «*Finišs*» (1971; bronze) dedicated to the athlete *Renāte Lāce*.



**Figure 211.** *R. Lāce* at the airport in Riga after returning from Brazil (1963).



**Figure 212.** Sculpture of «*Renāte Lāce*» by artist *Arta Dumpe* (1967).



## DZINTARS LĀCIS (1940–1992)

Cyclist and Coach

XVIII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, 1964

Cycling Track

5th/8th place, Team Pursuit, Men

XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico, 1968

Cycling Track

4th place, Team Pursuit, Men

*Dzintars Lācis* was born on 18 May 1940 in *Jelgava*, Latvia, in a working family and studied at the seven-year school in *Tērvete*. When the family moved to Riga, he first studied at Secondary School No. 47, then moved to Riga Secondary School No. 5, which he graduated in 1957.

*Dz. Lācis* developed stamina and physical endurance required for sports in his childhood by walking long way from home to school. He started playing sports while studying at Riga Secondary School No. 5 – he played volleyball and ran in athletics competitions. Like most children, *Dz. Lācis* enjoyed riding a bicycle right near the school – in *Āgenskalns* Pines neighbourhood, where his family lived at that time. One day, together with two classmates, he decided to go to the Sports Society «*Spartaks*» and join a cycling section. Although everyone was accepted, it was announced two weeks later that they might not come any further. *Dz. Lācis* enjoyed training and he did not expect such a turn. He did not want his peers to know about it. Skiers also trained in *Pārdaugava*, Riga, on the left side of the *Daugava* River, and he decided to join them. However, this did not last long either, as the ski section of the sports school was closed down due to warm winters. Ski Coach *Ziedonis Krode* (1933–2016) probably saw great athletic potential of *Dz. Lācis*, so he recommended him to continue cycling under guidance of Coach *Pēteris Strods* (1918–1975) [328]. In cycling, *Dz. Lācis* achieved his first success in 1958 at the Students Spartakiad in the Lenin District of Riga, taking part in the race with a bicycle lent by his godmother. He won the road race, gaining 5th place in Riga City Spartakiad, and 3rd place in the National Competition [328]. At that time, Coach *Daina Janova* played an important role in his advancement in cycling.

In 1959, *Dz. Lācis* started training in the Sports Society «*Dinamo*». The athlete was interested in road racing and multi-day rides, but he achieved the best results on the track. He later began training with the well-known cyclist and Coach *Harijs Japiņš* (1930–2021), and grew into an elite cyclist.

In 1962, *Dz. Lācis* won the annual multi-day cycling tour of the Baltic republics on the Latvian roads – the traditional Star Ride [329].

In the autumn of 1963, *Dz. Lācis* entered RPI Faculty of Civil Engineering. He had to spend a lot of time studying, and for a while it seemed to *Dz. Lācis* that sports would have to be put aside. However, everything turned out differently – in 1964,



Figure 214. *Dz. Lācis'* RPI academic record book (1963).



Figure 215.  
*Dz. Lācis* (1968).



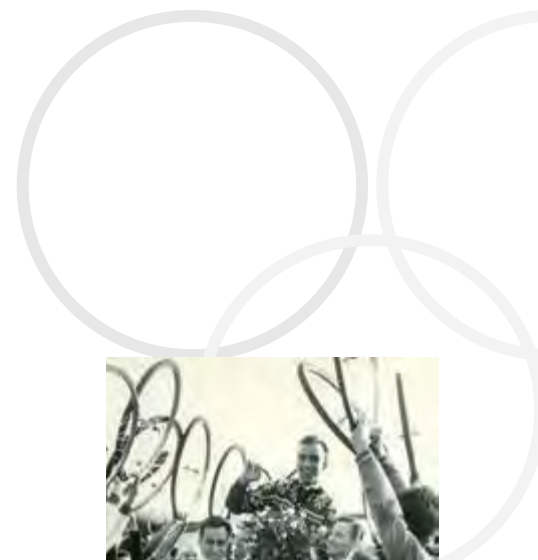
*Dz. Lācis* took an academic leave because he had to train to prepare for the Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan, in October 1964. The list of participants of these games includes two cyclists from Latvia – sprinter *Imants Bodnieks*, who won a silver medal, and team pursuit specialist *Dz. Lācis* who competed in the 4000 m team pursuit competition. *Dz. Lācis* got a split 5th/8th place. He withdrew from the competition in the quarterfinals. Years of compulsory military service in the border guard followed. This prevented the athlete not only from training but also from studying, and in 1965, he was expelled [328].

*Dz. Lācis* became the World Champion in the 4000 m team pursuit in 1967 together with other cyclists of the USSR Team. Victories were also won in other international competitions. Naturally, the promising athlete went to the next Games of the Olympiad in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1968, but the expectations for the medals did not come true – the team leadership made a mistake in choosing the time of acclimatization. As a result, *Dz. Lācis* finished only in 4th place (4:33.39) [3; p. 125].

Evaluating *Dz. Lācis* sporting achievements, it must be admitted that in the 1960s he was one of the best cyclists – not only the World Champion in the 4000 m team pursuit (1967) and 3rd place winner (1966), but also the seven-time USSR Champion [330]: in 4000 m individual race (1967), in the 4000 m team pursuit (1961, 1965, 1968, 1969), in the pairs (1966) and in the group track (1965). *Dz. Lācis* used to tell an interesting story about the USSR Championship in Yerevan, Armenia, in 1965, « In the morning, in 100 laps test race, a wasp landed on my lip. I could not take my hands off the handlebar, so I tried to spit it off, but it bit me in the tongue. Confused, I got into the final race of the evening by a narrow margin. Meanwhile, my tongue and tonsils swelled, I could neither eat nor speak. I intended to drive about ten laps in the interests of the team and then quit. But as I entered, I endured the race to the end. I did not understand why the coaches congratulated me. It appeared that only the tongue was swollen, not the legs. It turned out that without even realizing it, I had become the USSR Champion [328].» *Dz. Lācis* improved the USSR record five times and won the title of the Latvian Champion 22 times [331]. He was the USSR Meritorious Sports Master (1970) [332].

In 1967, a passionate sportsman *Dz. Lācis* got a long-craved bicycle frame – the bicycle frame [328] made by the Dutch company «*Brothers Bostraan*» from the cyclist Leonid Columbet (*Леонид Колумбет*; 1937–1983). *Dz. Lācis* used this frame for his own bicycle. The frames of this company were one of the best in the world at that time, and it was also appreciated by *Dz. Lācis*.

During his studies, *Dz. Lācis* for a short time worked as a plumber in the Trust «*Latsantehmontaž*» of the LSSR Ministry of Construction in Riga Administration [333]. He was a certified film technician and enjoyed photography and filming. However, professional sports did not allow him to practice these hobbies. From 1971 to 1980, he was the Coach of the National Team of «*Dinamo*» Central Council. In 1982, he graduated from the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture (LSIPC). He worked for almost 30 years in the Sports Society «*Dinamo*» [334]. He also worked as an Assistant at the Department of Physical and Military Training of the Latvian Police Academy. He and his wife *Gunta* had two children – a daughter *Liene* and a son *Gundars* [335]. *Dz. Lācis* died in Riga on 7 November 1992. 17 November is often mistakenly mentioned as the date of his death. In honour of the athlete, the «Traveling Cup of



**Figure 216.**  
World Champion  
*Dz. Lācis*  
welcoming in  
Riga. *Dz. Lācis* –  
in centre (1967).



**Figure 217.**  
*Dz. Lācis* (1960s).

*Dzintars Lācis*» was established in the first half of 2000. The first Cup was presented to a cyclist *Tomas Skujiņš* (2013), who won the Cup again in 2015. In 2014, it was presented to the best cyclist – BMX legend *Māris Štrombergs*. In 2016, the Cup was awarded to the road cyclist *Gatis Smukulis*. In 2017, this award was won by a mountain cyclist *Mārtiņš Blūms*, in 2018 – by *T. Skujiņš*, in 2019 – by a road cyclist *Kristis Neilands*, in 2020 – by *T. Skujiņš* and in 2021 – by *M. Blūms*.



**Figure 218.**  
*Dz. Lācis* (1960s).



**Figure 219.** Traveling Cup of  
*Dz. Lācis* (2015).

# PAUL LIETH (1884–1950)

## Shooter and Civil Engineer

V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, 1912

Shooting

52nd place, Clay Pigeon Shooting (Trap), Men

34th place, Running Deer Shooting (Running Target, Single Shot), Men

Paul Lieth (also Paul Arnold Christian Lieth) was a university fellow and acquaintance of Harald Blau (1885–1944) and Harald Hahne (1892–1940). P. Lieth was born on 10 January 1884 in Tartu (Dorpat), Estonia. In 1904, he graduated from the supplementary class of Emperor Peter 1st Vocational School in Riga and from 1904 to 1912, he studied at RPI Department of Engineering. He obtained a diploma in civil engineering [336]. His brother Oskar Lieth (also Oskar Heinrich Leonhard Lieth; 1885–?) also studied (1905–1912) at RPI and received a degree in civil engineering [337]. Both brothers got the same profession in 1912.

P. Lieth is a lesser-known Latvian Olympian. His results at the V Games of the Olympiad in 1912 were not very impressive – he got 52nd place (12 points) in the clay pigeon shooting [129; p. 30] and 34th place in running deer shooting scoring 10 points. Student P. Lieth joined the Sports Society «Union», as well as *Āgenskalns* Rifle Society. He competed successfully in shooting [338], and it was rather logical that he participated in the Games of the Olympiad. P. Lieth was an experienced athlete, but when he started at the Games of the Olympiad, he simply did not succeed, unlike the inexperienced H. Blau.

Like H. Blau, P. Lieth was interested in skating. P. Lieth also took part in the 1905 Speed Skating Competition organized by the Sports Society «Kaiserwald», winning 1st place in the 500 m race [339]. In February 1910, Riga Section of the Sports Society «Union» organized an ice sailing competition on *Kīšezers* Lake, in which P. Lieth won 2nd place [340].

During his studies, P. Lieth also participated in competitions in other sport disciplines. Until the Games of the Olympiad in 1912, he was best known as a gymnast. In 1908, at the All-Russian Championships in St. Petersburg, Russian Empire, in gymnastics, he won the «Grand Gold Medal, Medal of Honour, the Traveling Award of Grand Duke Vladimir Romanov (*Владимир Романов*; 1847–1909) (silver cup, with the coat of arms of the Imperial Family, made of enamel, mounted on a decorated and polished wooden base) and an Honorary Diploma from the Sports Society «Union», which delegated him to the competition [341].

On 7 March 1910, P. Lieth won 2nd place in the competition organized by *Āgenskalns* Rifle Society in clay pigeon shooting. He also gained 1st place in shooting with a rifle at 100 m (5 shots) [342].

At the 2nd All-Russian Olympiad held in Riga in 1914, *Valters Bodnieks* (1885–?) won the competition in clay pigeon shooting; *Lev Sitin* (*Лев Сытин*; 1891–1973) took



Figure 220. Copy of P. Lieth's RPI diploma (1912).

2nd place and P. Lieth remained 3rd [343]. Although P. Lieth showed the second-best result in the running deer shooting (29 points), he still finished in 3rd place [344], because the winners of the two first places had the same number of points.

On 14 June, 1909, the sports festival of Riga Section of the Sports Society «Union» took place in Jelgava, Latvia. The aim of this festival was to promote sports and the Olympic Games. Three Russian records were broken at this event – in high jump, javelin throw, and 800 m flat. P. Lieth's brother O. Lieth demonstrated the most surprising result among all gymnasts from Riga – he won the first four places. P. Lieth also took part in this competition. The press was excited about the brothers [345]. O. Lieth achieved good results in several sports – discus throwing, long jump, javelin throw [346]. In 1906, in Karlsruhe, he won the Traveling Academic Prize of the Grand Duke of Hessen, Germany – the Silver Cup in Running [341].

O. Lieth headed the Athletics Section of the Sports Society «Union» (founded in 1907), he also played hockey in the team of this Society [347]. P. Lieth was the Deputy Head of this Society.

It is known that during the years when the brothers studied, their father also lived in Riga and was a candidate for a Deputy of Riga City Council – his candidacy was nominated in the Riga city elections in 1907 [348].

P. Lieth, an Olympian, RPI graduate, married Harald Blau's sister Katharine (also known as Kaethe) [151] at Riga Dome Church in 1914 [349] and repatriated to Germany in the autumn of 1939.

Information about his professional activities during the interwar period and the last years of his life could not be found. It is known that he died in Germany in 1950.



**Figure 221.** Heads of the Athletics Section O. Lieth and P. Lieth. Riga Address Book (1909).



**Figure 222.** The opening parade of the II All-Russian Olympiad at the Riga Hippodrome on 6 July 1914.

## ILONDA LŪSE (1972)

### Speed Skater

XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer 1994

Speed Skating

25th place, 3000 m, Women

XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, 1998

Speed Skating

39th place, 1000, Women

32nd place, 1500, Women

28th place, 3000, Women

XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, 2002

Speed Skating

35th place, 1500 m, Women

30th place, 3000, Women



*Ilonda Lūse*, a former student of RTU, was born on 11 July 1972 in Riga. She studied at Riga *Leons Paegle* Riga Secondary School No. 1, which regained the historical title of Riga 1st Gymnasium in 1990. The school booklet issued on 21 June 1990 stated that *I. Lūse* was engaged in speed skating since 1978 and «in 1984, she was included in the LSSR Team. Since the summer of 1988, when the training in speed skaters stopped in Latvia, *I. Lūse* trained at the Moscow «*Dinamo*» sports school. In 1989, she fulfilled the norms of the USSR sports master candidate [350].»

In the autumn of 1990, *I. Lūse* began studies at RPI Faculty of Chemical Technology, majoring in chemical technology. *I. Lūse's* mother *Austra Lūse* is a graduate of RPI, a chemist, so the young woman's choice of her next profession was based on the idea of a family business in the field of electrochemical coatings of metals, her mother's specialization. During her studies, *I. Lūse* was especially interested in the analytical chemistry. Talking about this time, *I. Lūse* notes, «I just adored the laboratory works with Professor *Putniņš*, and the memories of them are still alive today. I recall the analytical chemistry as something very special and exciting [351].»

However, already while at school, she had to study a lot on her own, according to an individual curriculum, because due to the need to attend many sports training camps she often had to miss the classes. Developed logical thinking, advanced perception abilities and good memory, as well as willpower, allowed *I. Lūse* to enrol in RTU. *I. Lūse's* academic record book shows that in the 1st and 2nd year she passed almost all the exams with the grade «good» and «excellent», but some academic arrears remained – two failed exams and a test in organic chemistry.

During her studies, *I. Lūse* continued to train and participate in the competitions of various scale. Similar to many other athletes, *I. Lūse* studied according to an individual plan. Already in 1992, it was known that she would run for the XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994. While on academic leave (from June 1993 to



Figure 224. *I. Lūse's* RTU academic record book (1990).



Figure 225. *I. Lūse* in the distance of 3000 m at the XIX Olympic Winter games in Salt Lake City (2002).

July 1994), *I. Lūse* left for Norway and took part in the Olympic Winter Games, where she took 25th place in the 3000 m distance (4:47.75) [75; p. 78]. In the autumn of 1994, studies were resumed, but *I. Lūse* had to choose between sports and studies, and at that time she preferred sport. It is possible to combine sports with lectures and practical work in laboratories, but then one had to come to classes and give up competitions and trips outside Riga and the state. *I. Lūse* chose sports, therefore, on 3 July 1995 she was exmatriculated from RTU.

From 1994 to 2002, *I. Lūse* competed in the world and European speed skating championships every year, she demonstrated her best results in the 1999 European Championships: 3000 m – 16th place, in team pursuit – 17th place.

*I. Lūse* holds all Latvian records in women's speed skating: 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, 3000 m, 5000 m, as well as in sprint (500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, 3000 m) and classic team pursuit (500 m, 1500 m, 3000 m, 5000 m). In total, she has improved Latvian records 56 (!) times.

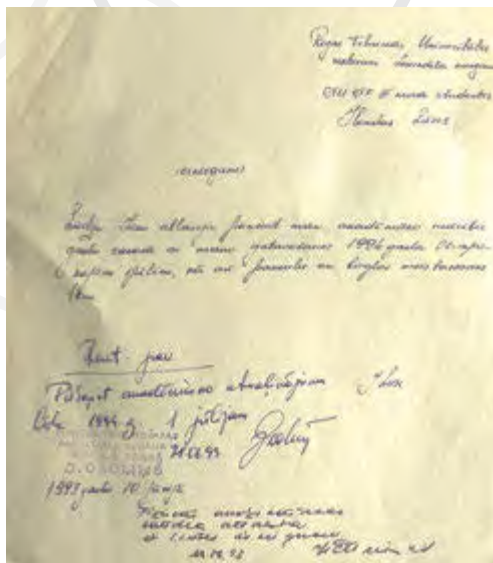
After leaving RTU, speed skater *I. Lūse* continued to train and also participated in the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, in 1998, finishing in 39th place in the 1000 m race (1:24.32), 32nd place in the 1500 m race (2:08.71), and in 28th place at a distance of 3000 m (4:33.77) [352]. In 2002, at the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, USA, *I. Lūse* got 35th place in the 1500 m race (2:04.25) and 30th place in the 3000 m race (4:23.13). Speed skater *I. Lūse* represented Latvia in the three Olympic Winter Games [186; p. 76, 106].

Journalists once called *I. Lūse* «The Last of the Mohicans» of the Latvian speed skating [58; p. 67], because this sport was not developed in our country, so we could not expect high results internationally. However, from time-to-time talented speed skaters appear, and now Latvian speed skaters are demonstrating good results, for example, an Olympian *Haralds Silovs*, who has participated in four Olympic Games.

After active sports career, *I. Lūse* started working at the Latvia Centre of Coaches' Continuing Education as an Assistant Manager, and the Rector of the Latvian Academy of Sports Pedagogy (LASP), Professor *Uldis Grāvītis*, invited her to combine her work with studies. *I. Lūse* chose the program of education and sports work manager and studied part-time. Driven by her interests, she also chose to pursue the qualification of a senior weight training coach. Studying according to an individual plan, she graduated from LASP in 2005, becoming a senior weight training coach, education and sports manager.

While studying at LASP, *I. Lūse* started working in the Latvian Athletics Association and from 2005 to 2007, she was its Secretary-General. Realizing that in-depth knowledge of business is required, *I. Lūse* decided to study entrepreneurship at Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration (RISEBA). In 2007, after graduating from RISEBA and obtaining a Master's degree, *I. Lūse* decided to leave the sports administration and is currently pursuing a professional career in personnel management.

Although *I. Lūse* has finished her career as a professional athlete, the former Olympian enjoys mountain climbing and cycling. *I. Lūse* is also interested in cooking and handicrafts.



**Figure 226.** *I. Lūse's* application to the Rector of RTU *Egons Lavendelis* requesting to allow her to take an academic leave in connection with participation in the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer (1994).



**Figure 227.** *I. Lūse* warming up for the XIX Olympic Winter games in Salt Lake City (2002).



**Figure 228.** *I. Lūse* climbing mountains in Canada (2015).

# GUNTIS NIEDRA (1943–2005)

## Rower and Builder

XX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico, 1968

Rowing

7th/11th place, Coxless Fours, Men (M4–)



*Guntis Niedra* was born on 8 February 1943 in Riga. From 1949, he lived with his family in exile in the Amur Oblast of Russia. They returned to Riga in 1957. In 1962, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 3. According to *Guntis'* description issued by his secondary school, he demonstrated average academic success because of his great passion for rowing. Already while at the secondary school, *G. Niedra* gained 1st adult sports class in rowing. During secondary school, *G. Niedra* was assigned to a production internship in a workshop at RPI Faculty of Mechanics. He qualified as Category I locksmith.

In 1963, *G. Niedra* began his studies at RPI Faculty of Electroenergetics in the field of industrial thermal energy and worked as a facade painter at the Moscow District Repair Construction Trust of the Riga City Housing Administration of the LSSR [353]. In 1963, at the USSR III People's Spartakiad, he won 3rd place in the rowing competition with his partner *Egons Frišs* (RPI graduate; 1970) in a Men's Coxed Pair (M2+). In the same year, *G. Niedra* was drafted into the Soviet Army. From 1963 to 1966, *G. Niedra* served in the Central Navy Water Sports Club in Moscow. In 1965, while serving in the army, he won the title of the USSR Rowing Champion in Men's Eight (M8+) and 2nd place in the European Championship (M8+); and obtained the title of the USSR International Class Sports Master. Three of his teammates were also associated with RPI: a graduate (1973) *Andris Priedītis* and students *Elmārs Rubīns* (1944–2007) and *Vitolds Barkāns*. In 1967, *G. Niedra* became the Champion of the USSR IV People's Spartakiad and the USSR Champion in Coxless Fours, Men (M4–; *G. Niedra, A. Priedītis, E. Rubīns, V. Barkāns*). He was awarded the Honorary Diploma of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the LSSR. Participating in the European Championship in 1967, *G. Niedra* took 3rd place in the consolation race in Coxless Fours, Men [80].

In 1967, *G. Niedra* was admitted to the 1st year of the Riga General Technical Extramural Faculty in the field of heat and gas supply, and ventilation. This year, the Central Council of the Union of Sports Societies and Organizations of the LSSR asked the RPI Rector to allow students *G. Niedra* and *E. Rubīns* to pass examinations and tests according to a free schedule in connection with training getting ready for the Games of the Olympiad Games in Mexico City, Mexico, in 1968. In 1968, the Council asked the administration of the institute to grant academic leave to *G. Niedra* and *E. Rubīns*.

This could be the first Games of the Olympiad in which four RPI students would participate in one rowing team – *V. Barkāns, E. Rubīns, G. Niedra* and *A. Priedītis*. Unfortunately, due to the illness of *A. Priedītis*, an athlete from Leningrad Pavel



Figure 230. *G. Niedra's* RPI student ID (1967).

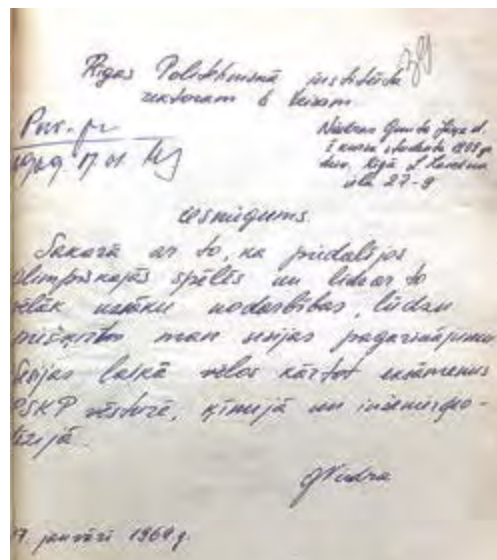


Figure 231. *G. Niedra's* request to the Rector of RPI *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985) to extend the examination session in connection with participation in the Games of the Olympiad (1969).



**Figure 232.** V. Barkāns, E. Rubīns, G. Niedra, and A. Priedītis at training in Lielupe River (1967).



**Figure 233.** V. Barkāns, E. Rubīns, G. Niedra and A. Priedītis after training session in the rowing pool of the Sports Society «Dinamo» in Riga (1967).



**Figure 234.** From left: G. Niedra, A. Priedītis, E. Rubīns and V. Barkāns at the veteran competition in the autumn regatta in Boston (1989).

Ilyinsky (*Павел Ильинский*) participated in the race in his place. In the XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico, the USSR National Team in the Coxless Fours won 7th /11th place [3; p. 125]. Rowing coaches were *Edvīns Lēmanis* (1935–2014) and *Rolands Sproģis* (1936–2001).

In 1968, G. Niedra was admitted to the 1st year of the RPI Faculty of Civil Engineering in the field of water supply and sewerage. Until 1970, he was granted academic leave due to the training load and competitions. However, G. Niedra did not attend classes, so in 1970 he was exmatriculated from RPI.

G. Niedra trained in sports societies «Daugava» (Riga), «Centrālais flotes ūdenssporta klubs» (Central Navy Water Sports Club; Moscow) and «Dinamo» (Riga).

Since the 1990s, G. Niedra had actively participated in the world's veteran rowing competition, winning many victories in Coxed Fours (M4+), Men's Pair (M2-) and Men's Eight (M8+). As V. Priediēns recalled, during these years G. Niedra was described as the best veteran-rower [354].

G. Niedra was married and had two sons – *Atis* and *Gints*. At the end of his career as a professional athlete, he was involved in veteran sports and construction.

G. Niedra passed away on 21 December 2005. He was buried in *Rainis* Cemetery in Riga.



# KONSTANTINS OVČIŅŅIKOVŠ (1983)

Judoka and Coach

XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, 2012

Judo

Judo (81–90 kg), Men, DNQ

*Konstantins Ovčīņņikovs* was born on 10 November 1983 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. He came to Latvia with his father and mother when *K. Ovčīņņikovs* was only six months old. He graduated from *Liepāja* Secondary School No. 12.

Before judo, *K. Ovčīņņikovs* trained in gymnastics, his father encouraged him to do so. However, the athlete was not excited about gymnastics, so in 1991, he decided to try his faith at a judo club [355]. In 2001, *K. Ovčīņņikovs* entered RTU and studied at the General-Technical Faculty of the *Liepāja* Scientific and Technical Complex (until 2020 – *Liepāja* Affiliate of RTU; at present – RTU *Liepāja* Study and Science Centre) [356].

During his studies, *K. Ovčīņņikovs* participated in various competitions and achieved success – in 2001 in Hungary and in 2002 in the Netherlands he won 2nd place in the European U-20 Championship. Even after receiving his engineering diploma, he continued to play sports and, for example, won the Latvian Championship in 2007 and the Latvian II Olympiad in 2008. In April 2012, an engineer and athlete *K. Ovčīņņikovs* won the bronze medal at the European Championship.

The athlete has been ranked in the top three of the World Cup several times, so *K. Ovčīņņikovs* was included in the Latvian delegation of athletes to participate in the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, United Kingdom, in 2012. Unfortunately, judoka *K. Ovčīņņikovs* lost the competition in the first round and withdrew from the tournament. *K. Ovčīņņikovs* had to fight with one of the favourites, Leandro Marques Guilheiro, a Brazilian who had won two bronze medals at the previous Games of the Olympiad [357].

*K. Ovčīņņikovs* continued practicing judo after the Games of the Olympiad. He was among the athletes preparing for the next Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Unfortunately, the competition was too high and the pass to the Olympic Games could not be won.

In 2013, he graduated from the Baltic State Fishing Fleet Academy (*Балтийская государственная академия рыбопромыслового флота*) in Kaliningrad, where he obtained higher education in the field of maritime freight transport. *K. Ovčīņņikovs* works in the world's largest sea container line «*Maersk*» [358].

On 11 October 2016, *Konstantins Ovčīņņikovs* and *Andrejs Rebrovs* founded the sports club «Judo Club «*Mārupe*»» at 4 *Pakalniņu* Street in *Tiraine*, Latvia [359], with the aim to attract children to active lifestyle and to teach them judo. There are three children in *K. Ovčīņņikovs*' family.



**Figure 236.** Copy of *K. Ovčīņņikovs*' RTU first level professional higher education diploma (2003).



**Figure 237.** *K. Ovčīņņikovs* in battle against Brazilian L. M. Guilheiro at the Games of the Olympiad in London (2012).



## CĒZARS OZERS (1937)

Basketball Player and Pedagogue

XVII Games of the Olympiad in Rome, 1960

Basketball

2nd place, Men

*Cēzars Ozers* was born on 11 February 1937 in Riga. He is an Olympian who has both studied and worked as a Lecturer and a Coach (1966–1983) at RPI, thus he has had the longest direct connection with our university [360].

*C. Ozers* graduated from Riga Primary School No. 36, then from Riga Construction Technical School (1955). He studied at Riga Pedagogical Institute and in 1961 obtained a diploma of a physical education teacher at the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture, therefore, while studying at RPI, a small part of the passed examinations was credited and he did not have to take them repeatedly. *C. Ozers* entered RPI Faculty of Civil Engineering in 1963, majoring in Industrial and Civil Engineering, and was enrolled in the 2nd study year. At that time, he had a heavy competition load, and many trainings made it difficult to pass the tests on time. He took the tests and exams individually, but he also accumulated academic arrears. *C. Ozers* was given the opportunity to study again in the 3rd study year, but his long mission to the German Democratic Republic and various other circumstances did not facilitate his studies. After his academic leave, *C. Ozers* decided to discontinue his studies and, on 14 January 1967, applied for exmatriculation from the RPI.

*C. Ozers* started working in the repair workshop of Riga Wagon Factory, working as a foreman (1955–1957). In the 1960s, he worked as an instructor at the Voluntary Trade Union Sports Society «*Daugava*». *C. Ozers* started working as an adjunct lecturer at the RPI Department of Physical Education and Sports in October 1966. In September 1968, he became a Senior Lecturer, and until 1983, it was his main job. On 22 August 1983, *C. Ozers*, a Senior Lecturer at RPI, resigned due to his transfer to Riga Electromechanical Technical School [360]. *C. Ozers* started playing basketball in 1951 while studying at Riga Construction Technical School. In the same year, he became a student of the Basketball Department of the Sports School «*Daugava*» (Coach *Augusts Raubens*; 1910–1979). From 1957, *C. Ozers* played in the master team of «*VEF*» Factory (1958–1968) [361].

From his teenage years, *C. Ozers* spent a lot of time training, sometimes even half a day, and got better and better results in the competitions of various scale. He joined RPI being an Olympic silver medallist. Before the Games of the Olympiad in 1959, *C. Ozers* was a member of the USSR Youth Basketball Team, he won bronze medals at the USSR Championship four times (1959, 1960, 1963, 1966). He played well and was noticed, but not every player was included in the USSR National Team. *C. Ozers* recalled that the Coach of the USSR National Team, basketball player *Yevgeny Alekseev* (*Евгений Алексеев*; 1919–2005), «did his best to make sure his «boys» from



Figure 239. *C. Ozers*' RPI student's personal file (1963).

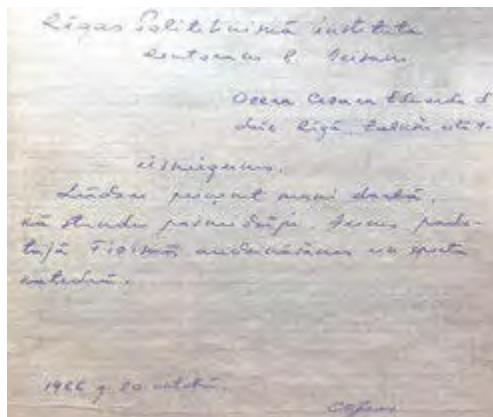


Figure 240. *C. Ozers*' application to the Rector of RPI *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985) requesting to hire him as an adjunct lecturer (1966).

the Central Army Sports Club were selected to go to Rome, and I was transferred to the junior team. But there I was given time to play and I played well. On the decision day, I had such a bad feeling that I would not be selected among the four defenders and would return to Riga with a long face. In the evening *Valdis Muižnieks* came to me and said, «*Cezi*, do you know that you have been selected?» My heart turned, because I did not know anything! My head was spinning [362].»

*C. Ozers* participated in the XVII Games of the Olympiad in Rome, Italy, in 1960, as a member of the USSR National Team and scored 11 points in three games. He could be proud about this result and 2nd place the team won, thus the coach made the right decision including him in the National Team. Team squad: *Valdis Muižnieks* (1935–2013), *Maigonis Valdmanis* (Team Captain; 1933–1999), *Jānis Krūmiņš* (1930–1994), Albert Valtin (*Альберт Вальтин*; 1937–2015), Guram Minashvili (1936–2015), Viktor Zubkov (*Виктор Зубков*; 1937–2016), Vladimir Ugrehelidze (1939–2009), Mikhail Semyonov (*Михаил Семёнов*; 1933–2006), Yuri Korneev (*Юрий Корнеев*; 1937–2002), Aleksandr Petrov (*Александр Петров*; 1939–2001), Gennadi Volnov (*Геннадий Вольнов*; 1939–2008).

*C. Ozers* was the defender of Riga Basketball Team «*VEF*», a player of the main lineup, and the only one of the four Latvian basketball players to represent the LSSR Team «*VEF*» in Rome. *Vilis Čika* and *Arnolds Šmits* wrote about the stately basketball player *C. Ozers* that he «... overall a fast fighter and a good support for matchplay. He did not play in the field in the most important competitions, but he played long enough to qualify for the silver medal [129; p. 279].»

Basketball player *C. Ozers* has also played for the Basketball Team «*Daugava*», and as a member, he became the LSSR Champion (1958). Among the sports successes of *C. Ozers* the 3rd places and medals won in the USSR Championships in 1961 and 1966 can be mentioned. Participating in the USSR People's Spartakiads, he won 3rd (1963) and 5th (1967) place together with the LSSR Basketball Team. He played in 66 games for the LSSR Basketball Team. *C. Ozers* was also training for the next, the XVIII Games of the Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan, in 1964. In spring, he attended the training camp, where 24 athletes trained for the Olympiad. After a month only 20 candidates remained, then – only 16. The was hope that *C. Ozers* might become part of the Olympic Team, but the competition was too high and he was not included in the National Team [363].

*C. Ozers* also participated in senior basketball games in the 1990s. For example, at the World Championships in 1997 in Helsinki, Finland, the Latvian Senior Team defeated the same Brazilian Team they had met in Rome in 1960. *C. Ozers*, *V. Muižnieks*, and *M. Valdmanis* took photos with the Brazilian seniors to commemorate the memory of a 37-year-old past. Finally, the Brazilian Team realized where Latvia is situated [364]. As a sports veteran, he enjoyed traveling with his teammates and visited the United States of America five times. In 1998, basketball player and teacher *C. Ozers* was awarded the Badge of Honour of the Order of the Three Stars. The Olympian and athlete retired in 2003, and for some time worked in construction. It is interesting that he spent 17 years working at RPI, then 17 years working at Riga Electromechanical Technical School where he was a sports teacher and the Deputy Director for Sports. For a long time, *C. Ozers* participated in senior games. He is married and has two daughters – *Regina* and *Vija*, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



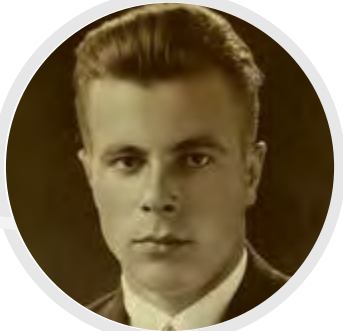
**Figure 241.** Latvian athletes included in the USSR National Team at the XVII Games of the Olympiad in Rome. From left: *J. Krūmiņš*, *C. Ozers*, *M. Valdmanis*, *V. Muižnieks* (1960).



**Figure 242.** «*VEF*» Team. First from left: *C. Ozers* (1961).



**Figure 243.** *C. Ozers* with his granddaughter (2019).



## AUGUSTS OZOLS (1908–1980)

Hockey Player, Football Player and Construction Contractor

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Hockey

13th/15th place, Men



**Figure 245.** A. Ozols' UL student ID (1939).



**Figure 246.** Latvian Hockey Team in ASC and «US» in sports forms (c. 1936). In the first row from the left: *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983), *Herberts Kuške* (1913–1994), *Roberts Lapainis* (1913–1947), *Roberts Pakalns* (1911–1986). In the second row: *Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* (1912–1972), *L. J. Vedējs*, *Kārlis Paegle* (1911–1997), *A. Ozols*, *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Arvids Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985), *Roberts Blukis* (1913–1998), *Jānis Bebris* (1917–1969).

*Augusts* (also *Augusts Voldemārs*) *Ozols* was born on 16 August 1908 in Riga in the family of a construction contractor. He studied at the Department of Electrical Engineering of Riga State Technical School and after graduating it in 1931, he entered the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Latvia (UL). He studied intermittently until 1941, but did not complete his studies [365]. During his studies, A. *Ozols* joined the Student Corporation «*Fraternitas Lettica*». In the first half of the 1930s, A. *Ozols* worked as a telephone technician. From 1935 to 1936, he did the compulsory military service in the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment. In 1941, A. *Ozols* was the construction manager of the 2nd Construction Office of the State Construction Trust. He started his career as an athlete in the position of a football defender [366] in the team of the Latvian Sports Society, later he was a long-term defender of the team of the UL Sports Society «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*»). In the first half of the 1930s, the press recognized him as one of the best «*US*» football players. A. *Ozols* was a member of the Latvian National Football Team, represented the team of employees of the Post and Telegraph Department at «*PT Sports*» in the Official Football Tournament [367, 368].

In parallel with work, studies and football, A. *Ozols* played hockey. He was included in the reserve of the Latvian National Hockey Team at the Olympics Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, in 1936 (squad – p. 70). While in reserve, he commented on the games of the Latvian National Team against the hockey players of Austria, Canada, and Poland [163; p. 302, 307, 308, 311, 313]. The defender of the Latvian National Hockey Team A. *Ozols* participated in the world championships in 1935 and 1938. He did not play in the official games of the National Team. From 1930 to 1939, he played hockey as a member of the team of the UL Sports Society «*US*», most often as a defender together with *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995) [369] who also studied at the UL and participated in the Olympic Winter Games in 1936. A. *Ozols* was a Latvian Master of Hockey (1937), participated in the first competitions of the Latvian Student Team in 1931 and in two World Student Championship tournaments – in 1933 and 1935 [368]. Similar to other students, A. *Ozols* was interested in several sports – he played bandy in the Latvian Championship as part of the «*US*» Team, he also enjoyed playing basketball [370]. At the end of World War II, A. *Ozols* moved to Germany, then to Australia, and later he moved to the United States of America, where he worked as a construction contractor [366].

On 17 August 1980, he died in a car accident together with his wife, Elise Jane Carroll (?–1980) [366].

## AGNESE PASTARE (1988)

Field Athlete

XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, 2012

Athletics

24th place, 20 km Walk, Women

XXXI Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, 2016

Athletics

53rd place, 20 km Walk, Women



*Agnese Pastare* was born on 27 October 1988 in Riga. After graduating from the Riga State 1st Gymnasium in 2007, she entered RTU Faculty of Transport and Mechanical Engineering (FTME; at present – Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Transport and Aeronautics), chose the study program «Medical Engineering and Physics», and studied full-time.

A year later, in September 2008, she dropped out of her studies, but in February 2009 renewed them. In 2009, the then RTU Rector, Academician *Ivars Knēts* (1938–2019), confirmed that RTU would support a young female athlete without charging her tuition fees [371]. On 28 November 2011, a request to the RTU Rector, Academician *Leonīds Ribickis*, to support the participant of the Latvian National Team *A. Pastare* was submitted by the Head Coach of the Latvian Athletics Association Team *Edvīns Krūms*. On 8 December 2011, the Board of Directors of RTU FTME decided to exempt her from paying tuition fees [371]. However, the student did not fulfil her individual plan and on 28 September 2012, she was expelled from the university. *A. Pastare* had a desire to complete her studies, and on 1 October 2012, she resumed her studies. The female athlete had successfully completed the 1st and 2nd year of studies, in the 3rd year she had one and in the 4th year – two outstanding tests. In June 2013, *A. Pastare* stopped studying at RTU without obtaining an engineering diploma. She had big goals in sports that the female athlete did not want to give up.

At the beginning of her sports career, *A. Pastare* was coached by *Zigurds Karola*, later – by the five-time Latvian Champion in Walking *Georgs Gutpeļcs* [372]. She was training in *Ogre*, Latvia, where the family moved when *A. Pastare* was in the 9th grade. The female athlete achieved recognizable results starting from 2004, participating in many competitions of various scale, for example, competing in Latvian-Swedish matches, etc. In the European Junior Championship in 2007, in 10 000 m distance, *A. Pastare* got 8th place with a score of 49:07.36. In 2009, *A. Pastare* took 6th place in the European U-23 Championship, and 6th place in the 2nd League European Championship in Athletics in 2010 in 5000 m race setting a new personal record (17:21.72). *A. Pastare*'s achievements are also evidenced by the fact that from 2008 to 2010 she was a nine-time Latvian Champion – in the 3000 m distance (2008); in the 5000 m distance (2008, 2009); 3000 m walking indoors, 10 km and 20 km walking (2009, 2010).

In July 2011, *A. Pastare* won a silver medal in the 3000 m distance at the Latvian



**Figure 248.** Request of the Head Coach of the Latvian Athletics Association *E. Krūms* to the Rector of RTU Academician *L. Ribickis* to support the participant of the Latvian National Team *A. Pastare* (2011).



**Figure 249.** A. Pastare at the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London (2012).



**Figure 250.** A. Pastare at the XXXI Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro (2016).



**Figure 251.** A. Pastare and Coach G. Gutpelcs at the XXXI Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro (2016).

Championship [373]. The fastest Latvian walker A. Pastare achieved the best result in Latvia in 10 km walking – 46:36.0. In 2011, RTU student A. Pastare represented Latvia at the World Championship, which took place in Daegu, Korea, in a 20 km walk, showing a result of 1:37:48. She ranked 28th [374]. At the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, UK, in 2012, A. Pastare got 24th place in the 20 km distance in the competition among 61 women, presenting a new best result of the season (1:31:54) [118; p. 150]. For the student A. Pastare, it was the biggest competition in which the competition was very strong, but female athlete demonstrated good results [375]. At the World Championships in 2013 in 20 km walking, A. Pastare ranked 23rd. In 2013, A. Pastare showed the second-best result of the season in the world in the 5000 m distance in the Competition of the President of Latvia, which took place in Valmiera, Latvia [376].

A. Pastare also participated in the XXXI Games of the Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, in 2016, gaining 53rd place in the 20 km Walk.

A. Pastare has been the Latvian Champion in Walking 14 times, won the 20 km race three times, and 5000 m race indoors seven times. A. Pastare is the holder of the best result in Latvia in 10 km walking (46:36.0), as well as a record holder in 20 km walking (1:29:55) [377].

In 2013, A. Pastare won the title «Sporta laureāts 2013» (Sports Laureate 2013) in Ogre Region [378].

Currently, A. Pastare is continuing her studies at the Latvian Academy of Sport Education.

# BORIS VON PERTEL (1888–1955)

## Shooter and Social Worker

V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, 1912

Shooting

55th place, Clay Pigeon Shooting (Trap), Men



The life of Boris von Pertel began on 3 May 1888, in St. Petersburg, Russia [379]. He was born in the family of the State Counsellor Vladimir von Pertel (*Владимир фон Пертель*; 1847–1924) and Johanna Luise Pertel (b. Kabermann; 1854–1927). He studied at Tenischeff School of Commerce (*Тенишевское коммерческое училище*) in St. Petersburg and in September 1907 began studying at RPI Department of Mechanics. From September 1911 to 31 August 1916, he studied at the Department of Engineering [380]. The young man stopped studying because he was drafted for the military service. B. von Pertel's study records indicate that he might have been admitted to exams outside the prescribed testing period, even though there are no such records on other his contemporaries [379]. It is possible that such preferences were given to the sons of state counsellors.

During his studies, B. von Pertel was active in sports and was a member of the RPI Student Gymnastics' Society [381], as well as of *Āgenskalns* Rifle Society [382] together with several RPI students. At the V Games of the Olympiad in 1912, like other *Vidzeme* players, he represented Russia. B. von Pertel got 55th place in the clay pigeon shooting competition (11 points) [129; p. 30]. He was an RPI student at the time.

B. von Pertel married Auguste Margarete Leontine Heldt (1895–?) in *Valmiera* on 20 July 1915 [383]. However, World War I broke out and many plans should have been forgone. On 1 May 1917, his son Voldemar was born in Tallinn.

In the 1920s and 1930s, B. von Pertel lived and worked in Estonia, as his mother was born in Paide, a town in the Järva County, where both of B. von Pertel's parents lived and passed away. B. von Pertel lived with his family in his parents' house and ran for office in the 1933 elections to the Paide City Council [384]. In March 1934, B. von Pertel was elected a Member of the Construction Committee of Paide City Council [385]. In 1935, he moved to Tallinn and resigned in Paide, but in 1937, B. von Pertel returned to work in Paide City Council. B. von Pertel worked for the city, but when the Baltic-German emigration from the Baltic States began in 1939–1940, he and his wife decided to go to Germany [386]. B. von Pertel died in Neustadt, in the Federal Land of Hessen, in the Federal Republic of Germany on 27 March 1955.



Figure 253. B. von Pertel's RPI lecture book (1911).



Figure 254. B. von Pertel's certificate of secondary education (1906).

# ADELIJS PETROVSKIS (1912–1974)

Hockey Player and Referee

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Hockey

13th//15th place, Men



*Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* was born on 7 April 1912 in Riga. In 1925, he began studying at Riga City 1st Gymnasium, which he graduated in 1932. In the same year, *A. Petrovskis* entered the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL) [387]. He studied intermittently until 15 September 1939, but did not obtain a diploma [231; p. 278].

After one year of studies, *A. Petrovskis* stopped them, since he was drafted into compulsory military service in the Latvian Army (1933–1934). He was a Private First Class of the 6th Riga Infantry Regiment [387; p. 7]. At the end of World War II, he fought in the Latvian Legion, later he left Latvia and came to Poland. In 1945, he lost his leg stepping on a mine [258].

*A. Petrovskis* trained in hockey at Robert Kurt Leonhard Witthoff (1892–1983) and in winter he went to train on the ice of Lake *Bābelīte* and the *Esplanāde* Square. In the position of a forward, *A. Petrovskis* played in the Latvian Hockey Team from 1932 to 1938, and he played in the first 26 national competitions [388].

In 1936, *A. Petrovskis* participated in the IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, as a member of the Latvian National Hockey Team (squad – p. 70). The team suffered a loss and gained 13th/15th place. He also participated in three World Championships (1933, 1935, 1938) and the European Championship (1932), as well as in the games of the Latvian National Team against other Latvian hockey teams [389].

The talented hockey player *A. Petrovskis* understood the tactics of the game and was known as an athlete who stood out with precise passes. He participated in the national tournaments for eight seasons, five of them as a member of the «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*») team (1930/1931, 1931/1932, 1935/1936–1937/1938), and three – as a member of the Army Sports Club (ASC; 1932/1933–1934/1935). *A. Petrovskis* became the Latvian Hockey Champion three times, as well as the winner of the Latvian Olympic tournament (1935). *A. Petrovskis* was also a hockey referee [389].

While studying, *A. Petrovskis* also participated in the first game of the Latvian Student Hockey National Team (1931), two student championship tournaments – in Bardonecchia, Italy (1933) and St. Moritz, Switzerland (1935), games in Vienna, Austria (1933) and Klosters-Serneus, Switzerland (1933). He wrote special reports for the newspaper «*Sporta Pasaule*» (*Sport's World*) about the 1933 away games of the Latvian National Team in Bardonecchia [389].

At the beginning of the 1930s, *A. Petrovskis* also played bandy in the «*US*» and ASC



**Figure 256.** *A. Petrovskis'* application to the Rector of the UL *Mārtiņš Bīmanis* (1864–1946) on his admission to the university (1932).



teams and was included in the Latvian Student Bandy National Team for the *SELL* (*Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva*) Student Bandy Tournament in Helsinki, Finland (1931). His greatest success in basketball was playing for the ASC Team in 1934, when he won the «*Chicago Tribune*» Traveling Cup [389]. *A. Petrovskis* also played football. *A. Petrovskis* ended his athletic career at the end of the 1930s, when the Latvian Winter Sports Union disqualified him for life for disciplinary violations during the World Championship (out of play). It was a loss for the Latvian hockey and also for *A. Petrovskis*, who was at the zenith of his career at that time [258]. At the end of World War II, he fled Latvia, first to Germany, then to the United States of America. He lived and worked in New York, participated in the activities of the Latvian exile organization «*Daugavas Vanagi*» [389]. *A. Petrovskis* passed away in New York, USA, on 4 June 1974.



**Figure 257.** Latvian National Team hockey players – participants of the World Championship in Davos near the hotel «*Eisenlohr Sport – Hotels*» (1935). From left: *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *Arvids Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985), wife of *R. J. Plūme Irmgarde Plūme* (1907–1965), official representative of the Latvian National Hockey Team *Rūdolfs Ceplītis* (1895–1941), *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995), *A. Petrovskis*, official representative of the LNHT team *Roberts Johanness Plūme* (1897–1956), *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Augusts Ozols* (1908–1980), *Herberts Kuške* (1913–1994), *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983), *Roberts Bluķis* (1913–1998), *Andrejs Jessens* (1908–1965).



**Figure 258.** Latvian Hockey National Team in World Championship in Davos (1935). In the first row from the left: *A. Petrovskis*, *Kārlis Paegle* (1911–1997), *Arvids Mārtiņš Pētersons* (1913–1985), *Roberts Lapainis* (1913–1947), wife of *R. J. Plūme Irmgarde Plūme* (1907–1965), *Andrejs Jessens* (1908–1965), *Aleksejs Auziņš* (1910–1997), *Roberts Bluķis* (1913–1998), *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955). In the second row: third – *Herberts Kuške* (1913–1994), fourth – official representatives of the Latvian National Hockey Team – *Rūdolfs Ceplītis* (1895–1941) and *Roberts Johanness Plūme* (1897–1956), seventh – *Augusts Ozols* (1908–1980), eighth – *Edgars Pēteris Klāvs* (1913–1983); in the foreground – *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995).



## ARVĪDS MĀRTIŅŠ PĒTERSONS (1913–1985)

Hockey Player, Coach, Pedagogue and Engineer

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936  
Hockey  
13th/15th place, Men

*Arvīds Mārtiņš Pētersons* was born on 24 October 1913 in Riga. From 1928 to 1932, he studied at the Department of Mechanics of Riga State Technical School, after graduating he entered the Faculty of Mechanics of the University of Latvia (UL) and in 1944 received a diploma in electrical engineering [390]. In 1950, *A. M. Pētersons* graduated from Leningrad Institute of Physical Culture named after P. Leshaft (*Ленинградский институт физической культуры им. П. Ф. Лесгафта*) [391]. Since his study years, he was a member of the Student Corporation «*Lettgallia*» [392]. During his studies, from 1939 to 1942, he worked in a job related to his chosen area of specialization – at the *Ķegums* Power Plant, performing various assembly works of electric equipment and turbo-generators. In 1940, he was a technician trainee at the LSSR Radiophone (radio broadcasting station); in 1942, he worked for a short time at «*VEF*» Factory [392; p. 20].

*A. M. Pētersons* started playing sports at the age of 14 in the football and hockey teams of the Riga Army Sports Club (ASC). However, he started taking hockey seriously only some years later, in 1929. Together with his team, he participated in the national hockey tournaments. *A. M. Pētersons* spent five seasons (1931/1932–1935/1936) as a member of the ASC Team and became the Latvian Hockey Champion three times (1934–1936), and once he became the winner of the Latvian Olympic Tournament (1935) [393].

In the sports community, *A. M. Pētersons* had a nickname «*Petjka*» [258]. Before season 1936/1937, he switched to the Team «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*») and was not allowed to compete in the national tournaments for one year under the transitional rules effective at that time. During that season, the athlete competed outside the official tournaments. In the interwar period, *A. M. Pētersons* played for the «*US*» Team for four seasons (1936/1937–1939/1940), he also participated in international games, and once became the National Champion (1940) [394].

For several years, from 1933 to 1940, *A. M. Pētersons* was the second most successful hockey player (striker) in the Latvian National Team, playing against both foreign and Latvian teams. He scored eight goals in 31 games [165]. *A. M. Pētersons* was the best goal scorer in international competitions in the 1930s [395]. He was included in the list of candidates to the National Hockey Team in 1932, but *A. M. Pētersons* made his debut only at the World Championships in Prague in 1933. In 1936, *A. M. Pētersons* participated in the IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, as a member of the Latvian Hockey Team (squad – p. 70), which finished in 13th/15th place.



**Figure 260.** *A. M. Pētersons'* application to the Rector of UL *Mārtiņš Bimaniš* (1864–1946) on his admission to the university (1932).

Until season 1939/1940, A. M. Pētersons was a forward, but from that season onwards, he also played in the National Team as a defender [394]. He was both a defender and even a goalkeeper in the 1940s – during the game, when the team's main goalkeeper was ejected from the game.

In 1935, A. M. Pētersons participated in the Student Winter Championship in St. Moritz, Switzerland, as a member of the Latvian National Team, where he won 3rd place, as well as played away in Klosters-Serneus, Switzerland. In the Student Hockey Tournament in Riga, he and his team won 1st place in the *SELL* (*Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva*) games [394]. From 1941/1942 season until 1943/1944 season, he also played in the first «US» Team, and together with this team he became the winner of the Latvian Championship in 1942 [396].

In 1941, A. M. Pētersons played for Riga Hockey Team «Dinamo» and was a player and coach of this team even after World War II. In the season of 1940/1941, A. M. Pētersons became the LSSR Hockey Champion a member the first team of Riga «Dinamo» [394]. One of the highest achievements of A. M. Pētersons during the post-war period was 4th place in the USSR Championship won together with the Hockey Team «Dinamo» in 1947 [396].

In the post-war years, he organized and trained the «US» Hockey Team in Riga, was the Head of the «US» Hockey Section, and the Vice-Chairman of the «US». In the first post-war season of 1945/1946 in the LSSR Hockey Championship, he was the defender of the «US» Team and played in the LSSR National Team, where he was the Captain. He also played in Riga Team (1946). He participated in the first hockey championship (1946/1947) of the USSR as a member of Riga «Dinamo». In season 1947/1948, he was the playing coach of «Daugava» Team (Riga) in the second league of the USSR Hockey Championship. Occasionally, he trained the Team «Daugava», which played in the top league of the USSR (Riga; previously – «Dinamo»; 1949/1950, 1950/1951; part-seasons). A. M. Pētersons conducted trainings for hockey referees, took referees' exams, and trained young hockey players.

Sportsman, coach, pedagogue and engineer A. M. Pētersons also developed various methodological materials for hockey, including the publications in the edition «Fiziskā Kultūra» (Physical Culture), the book «Hokejs» (1951; Hockey), which was supplemented and published under the title «Hokejs ar ripu» (1955; Hockey with a Puck) [391]. In the 1950s, he was the Chairman of the Hockey Section of the LSSR (since 1991 – the Latvian Ice Hockey Federation).

A. M. Pētersons was not only a hockey player, he also played bandy, basketball, volleyball, football, handball, tennis, and table tennis. He was a Latvian Master in basketball (1937) and volleyball (1939) [391].

After World War II, A. M. Pētersons was the Coach of the LSSR National Team in basketball and volleyball. He also trained the USSR Meritorious Sports Champion, World Champion (1960) and World Volleyball Vice Champion (1962) *Skaidrite Plismane*, who worked as a lecturer at the RPI Department of Physical Education and Sport in the 1960s [25; p. 604].

A. M. Pētersons also coached women's and men's volleyball and basketball teams of the State University of Latvia (at present – University of Latvia), later he coached [102] the Team of the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture (LSIPC). He worked as a lecturer at the Department of Sports Games (1946–1975) of LSIPC [396]. The work of



Figure 261. A. M. Pētersons' UL study book (1932).

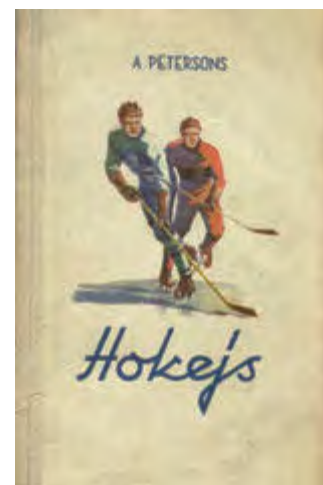


Figure 262. The cover of the book «Hokejs ar ripu» by A. M. Pētersons (1955).

the coach and pedagogue, hockey player *A. M. Pētersons* was highly appreciated – in 1949, he was the first Latvian hockey player to be awarded the title of USSR Sports Master in hockey [393], in 1966 – the title of the LSSR Meritorious Coach [397]. *A. M. Pētersons'* life ended in Riga on 6 July 1985. He was buried in the Riga 1st Forest Cemetery.



**Figure 263.** Latvian National Team hockey players – participants of the World Championship in Davos (1935). From left: *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *A. M. Pētersons*, official representative of the Latvian National Hockey Team *Rūdolfs Ceplītis* (1895–1941), *Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* (1912–1972), *Roberts Blukis* (1913–1998), *Augusts Ozols* (1908–1980), *Herberts Kuške* (1913–1994).



**Figure 264.** Hockey players of the Latvian National Team at the IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (1936). In the first row from the left: unknown, *A. M. Pētersons*, Assistant to the Head of the Latvian Olympic delegation *Aleksandrs Liepiņš* (1900–1974), *Adelfijs* (also *Ādolfs*) *Petrovskis* (1912–1972), *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *Herberts Kuške* (1913–1994). In the second row: *Leonīds Jānis Vedējs* (1908–1995), Head of the Latvian Olympic delegation *Roberts Johannes Plūme* (1897–1956), *Roberts Lapainis* (1913–1947).

# MĀRIS POIKĀNS (1962)

## Bobsledder and Entrepreneur

XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, 1984

Bobsleigh

6th place, Four, Men

XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, 1988

Bobsleigh

5th place, Four, Men



*Maris Poikāns* was born on 11 December 1962 in *Vidriži* Parish, Latvia. He graduated from *Vidriži* Eight-Year School in 1978, and in 1981, after graduating from *Murjāņi* Sports Boarding School, he entered the Day Department of RPI Faculty of Mechanics and Machine Engineering, majoring in automobiles and automobile management. First, he trained in athletics, but in 1980, he turned to bobsleigh.

In 1981, *M. Poikāns* was included in the USSR Bobsleigh Team, which meant not only training in Latvia and abroad, but also starts in various competitions. For example, already in the 1st year of studies – from 5 January to 17 February 1982 – he had to apply for exemption from studies as a member of the USSR Bobsleigh Team in international competitions in Austria, Italy, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany [398].

The studies did not go as smoothly as it was desired, and on 22 November 1983, in an application to the RPI Rector *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985), *M. Poikāns* admitted that he could not continue his studies at the full-time department, so he decided to serve in the Soviet army and then continue his studies at the university. This was probably due to the curriculum of the time and the requirements of the Department of War. All draft-age (male) students were required to complete military training, and one day per week was reserved for military training [25; p. 608], but athletes were not always able to meet this requirement. In the summers, it was mandatory to spend one month in the army units of the Baltic Military District and learn the principles of warfare, but the next Olympians also had to train in the summer. After the XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, in 1984, where the crew piloted by *M. Poikāns* won 6th place (3:23.51) in the bobsleigh competition (four-men; *Jānis Ķipurs*, *Ivars Bērzsups*, *Aivars Šnepsts*) [195; p. 62], *M. Poikāns* had to undergo compulsory service in the Soviet army. After his service in 1986, *M. Poikāns* resumed his studies. He was exempted from military training, but already in 1987, he applied for «an academic leave due to heavy sports load while training in the USSR Bobsleigh Team [398].»

This was followed by the start at the XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, Canada, in 1988, where the four-man crew piloted by *M. Poikāns* (*Olafs Kļaviņš*, *Juris Jaudzems*, *I. Bērzsups*) won 5th place (3:48.35) [64; p. 647]. In the same year, *M. Poikāns* also won the title of the LSSR Champion.

Although *M. Poikāns* did not take part in the Olympic Games afterwards, he enjoyed



**Figure 266.** Request from *Jānis Krivāns*, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Physical Culture and Sports, to the Rector of RPI *Egons Lavendelis* to allow *M. Poikāns* to study according to an individual plan (1985).

bobsleigh, and participated in both European and World Championships, winning prizes. One of his last great achievements was in 1996, when bobsledder *M. Poikāns* became the Latvian Champion in the two-men competition, starting together with *Jānis Elsiņš* [399]. Competitions and intensive trainings were the reason why the studies were not resumed in academic year 1988/1989 either. In 1991, *M. Poikāns* terminated his studies without obtaining a university degree.

*M. Poikāns* is one of the first Latvian bobsledders to promote the development of this sport in Latvia and to develop sledge construction at the «VEF» Experimental Workshop.

*M. Poikāns* is a six-time USSR Champion – in two-men competition (1988) with *Aleksandrs Gorohovs*, two-men competition (1989) with *Gatis Timms* and four-men competition (1986) with *J. Ķipurs*, *I. Bērziņš*, *J. Jaudzems*, four-men competition (1988, 1989, 1990) with *O. Kļaviņš*, *I. Bērziņš*, *J. Jaudzems*. In the season of 1985/1986, in two-men competition with *I. Bērziņš* he won the World Cup (WC) in the overall rating [400]. In the season of 1989/1990, *M. Poikāns* became the winner of the WC in two-men competition with *A. Gorohovs*.

*M. Poikāns* got the following places in the European Championships: 4th place (two-men; 1984) together with *I. Bērziņš*; 6th place (two-men; 1985) with *J. Ķipurs*; 10th place (two-men; 1986) with *I. Bērziņš*; 9th place (two-men; 1987) with *I. Bērziņš*; 6th place (four-men; 1987) with *I. Bērziņš*, *Ā. Āboliņš*, *N. Rožkalns*; 3rd place (two-men; 1990) with *A. Gorohovs*; and 9th place (four-men; 1990).

In the World Championships, he demonstrated the following results: 10th place (four-men; 1983) together with *J. Ķipurs*, *I. Bērziņš*, *A. Šnepsts*; 6th place (two-men; 1985) with *J. Ķipurs*; 7th place (two-men; 1987) with *I. Bērziņš*; 7th place (four-men; 1987) with *I. Bērziņš*, *Ā. Āboliņš*, *N. Rožkalns*; 9th place (two-men; 1990) with *A. Gorohovs*; 12th place (four-men; 1990). In 2005, he participated in bobsleigh competition for the last time.

*M. Poikāns* was coached by *Leons Luste* (athletics), *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994), and *Dainis Dukurs*. He represented sports societies «*Daugava*» and «*Dinamo*».

*M. Poikāns* is married and has two daughters – *Zanda* and *Māra* – and five grandchildren. Currently, *M. Poikāns* runs his business. *M. Poikāns* enjoys hunting [401].



**Figure 267.** *R. Upatnieks*, *M. Poikāns*, *J. Ķipurs* at Riga station before going to the XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo (1984).



**Figure 268.** *Z. Ekmanis*, *M. Poikāns*, Chief of the USSR Bobsleigh Team *R. Upatnieks*, and *I. Bērziņš* (1984).

# ZINONS POPOVS (1906–1944)

Cyclist and Soldier

IX Games of the Olympiad in Amsterdam, 1928

Track Cycling

9th place, Team Pursuit 4000 m, Men

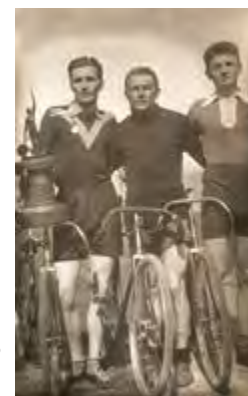
*Zinons* (also *Zenons*) *Popovs* (Зинон, also Зенон, Попов) was born on 28 June 1906 in Riga. He was of Russian descent and studied at Binčs' School in Riga. In 1924, he graduated from the Vocational School Class of the Russian Secondary School in Riga. From 1924 to 1927, *Z. Popovs* studied at the Department of Mathematics of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Latvia (UL), then until 1928 – at the Faculty of Engineering [402]. In 1929, he was drafted for military service. In 1930, he graduated from the Courses of Deputy Officers of the Autotank Regiment [403]. In 1932, *Z. Popovs* renewed his studies at the UL, choosing to study at the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law. As a student, *Z. Popovs* participated at the IX Games of the Olympiad in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1928. He was a member of the Latvian National Team, participating in men's team pursuit 4000 m race. Together with team mates *Roberts Johanness Plūme* (1897–1956) (*Friedrich Ukstiņš* (1895–?) was mentioned in the official statistics of the games), *Roberts Ozols* (1905–2002) and *Ernests Mālers* (1903–1982) he won 9th [92]. *Z. Popovs* worked in the Sports Society «*Unions*» and was a three-time Latvian Champion in road cycling (1927, 1928, 1932).

In the 1930s, he worked as a liquidator for companies [404]. *Z. Popovs* was also a prominent motorcyclist [405]. In 1938, at the Riga Registry Office, he registered a marriage with *Raisa Fatima Havžokova* (b. *Sosijeva*; 1902–?) [406, 407] from Olti Okrug in Russia [408].

The athlete's career was interrupted by World War II. *Z. Popovs* was drafted into the Latvian Legion, suffered serious injuries on the Volkhov Front, and died in 1944 [405]. He was buried in Riga Brethren Cemetery.



**Figure 270.**  
*Z. Popovs'*  
application to  
the Rector of the  
UL *Jānis Ruberts*  
(1874–1934) on his  
admission to the  
university (1924).



**Figure 271.** Winners of  
the cycling competition  
«Crossing and around Riga»  
in the distance of 25 km  
(1920s). First from left:  
*Z. Popovs* with a Traveling Cup  
donated by State President  
*Jānis Čakste* (1859–1927).

## ĒRIKS RAGS (1975)

Javelin Thrower and Engineer

XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, 2000

Athletics

26th place, Javelin Throw, Men

XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens, 2004

Athletics

7th place, Javelin Throw, Men

XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing, 2008

Athletics

13th place, Javelin Throw, Men



Figure 273. Ē. Rags' RTU examination sheet (1993).



Figure 274. Ē. Rags at the XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens (2004).

Ēriks Rags from *Ventspils*, Latvia, was born on 1 June 1975. In 1993, he graduated from *Ventspils Secondary School No. 1*. In 1993, he entered the study program «Heat, Gas and Water Technology» implemented by RTU Faculty of Civil Engineering, graduating it in 2011.

Ē. Rags has been engaged in javelin throwing since the age of 11. His Coach was *Māris Grīva*. Ē. Rags has participated in three Games of the Olympiad. In 2000, he finished 26th (75.75 m) at the XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, Australia [93; p. 141, 162]. In 2004, at the XXVIII Games of the Olympiad in Athens, Greece, Ē. Rags finished in 7th place (83.14 m) [409], and in 2008, he got 13th place (79.33 m) at the XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing, China [410]. He was also nominated for the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, United Kingdom, in 2012. It should be noted that the athlete demonstrated his best result at the Games of the Olympiad in 2004 with an unhealed injury.

On 30 July 2011, the newspaper of his hometown *Ventspils* «*Ventas Balss*» wrote that Ē. Rags won nine titles of the Latvian National Champion; exceeded the grandmaster's 80 m limit in 121 competitions; won the right to compete in the finals of the Grand Prix Diamond League for seven years; was 4th, 9th and 11th in the European Championships; also got high place in the World Championship – 6th place (2005) [411].

These achievements are appreciated not only by the residents of *Ventspils*, the name of the prominent athlete – javelin thrower Ē. Rags is written in the history of the Latvian athletics [411].

Ē. Rags is currently working at a fishery as a technologist. He continues to actively play sports. In his spare time, he is still involved in javelin throwing and is a World Champion among veterans in the 40+ age group [412].

Ē. Rags is married and has a son.



# ANDRIS REINHOLDS (1971)

## Rower and Engineer

XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, 1996

Rowing

9th place, Double Sculls, Men

XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, 2000

Rowing

8th place, Single Sculls, Men, DQ



*Andris Reinholds* was born on 7 June 1971 in Riga into the family of *Andrejs Nikuļcevs* and *Dzidra Reinholde*. He started doing sports as a child – his first hobby was hockey, later he turned to academic rowing.

In 1989, after graduating from Riga Secondary School No. 6, *A. Reinholds* entered the Day Department of RPI Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering and studied industrial and civil engineering. His older sister *Evija Pētersone* studied at RPI Faculty of Chemical Technology, and his parents had also studied engineering. *A. Reinholds'* study time coincided with very significant changes in the life of both the state and universities. The 1989 rules for admission to a higher education institutions envisioned that the combined secondary school graduation and entrance examinations at the university could be taken on an experimental basis. In his essay on «The Solution of Moral Problems Important to me in *O. Vācietis'* Works», he acknowledged that «a person must constantly improve. A person should never consider his or her opinion to be the only absolutely correct one and must be able to listen to the thoughts and judgments of others [413].» At that time, knowledge in secondary schools was assessed based on a five-grade scale, while in higher education – on a 10-grade scale. In the secondary school exam in algebra, *A. Reinholds* obtained the highest grade – 5 and also RPI evaluated him with the highest grade – 10 [413]. During his studies, *A. Reinholds'* knowledge was assessed only with the marks «good» (8) and «excellent» (10), and, for example, during the 3rd year of his studies, all exams were passed only with the highest grade – «excellent»<sup>1</sup>. In 1994, *Andris Reinholds* obtained a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

*A. Reinholds*, similar to, for example, the Olympians *Zintis Ekmanis*, *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994), *Boriss Timofejevs*, first graduated from the university and only then became an Olympian. Civil engineer *A. Reinholds* participated in the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, USA, two years after graduating from RTU in 1996 and together with *Uģis Lasmanis* got 9th place in rowing, 2000 m race (Double Sculls; 6:20.82) [118].

<sup>1</sup> Later, on 24 April 1995, the RTU Senate decided that the rating «excellent» corresponds to only 9 points instead of 10, as it had been a few years before. The highest score of 10 points was hereinafter referred to as «with distinction».



Figure 276. *A. Reinholds'* RPI academic record book (1989).



Figure 277. *A. Reinholds* (right) at the World Cup in Indianapolis (1994).



**Figure 278.** A. Reinholds at the XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney (2000).



**Figure 279.** A. Reinholds in Riga, returning from the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta (1996).



**Figure 280.** A. Reinholds and his wife at the opening of the National Opera Building after reconstruction (1995).

After the Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, A. Reinholds continued his career in the single sculls. He won 7th place at the 1997 World Cup, 9th place in 1998 and 9th place in 1999, qualifying for the next XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, Australia, in 2000. At these games, a rower A. Reinholds was disqualified after doping control. The athlete did not acknowledge the use of doping and tried to appeal to the International Court of Arbitration, but his appeal was dismissed and he was disqualified for life. A. Reinholds was coached in rowing by Ivars Blekte, Zigmunds Čakšs, Gunārs Cekuls (1942–2017), Pēteris Neijs, Andris Konrads.

Among the peaks of rower's A. Reinholds sporting career are the title of the World Student Vice-Champion in 1994 (Single Sculls), 3rd place in the World Student Championship in Double Sculls in 1992 and successful starts in world championships (1994–1999). He has been the Latvian Champion 12 times: in Single Sculls (1993–1999) and Double Sculls (1993–1995), in the Coxless Fours (1993) and Men's Eight (1998) [3; p. 313].

A. Reinholds is a construction project and construction manager, he has completed several professional development courses. After graduating from RPI in 1994, in parallel with rowing, he worked at the Construction Directorate of the National Opera and participated in the restoration of Opera building.

A. Reinholds is married and has daughters Dace and Zane, and a son Māris [414].

## POĻINA ROŽKOVA (1985)

Wheelchair Curling Player, Wheelchair Fencer and Environmental Accessibility Consultant

XV Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, 2016

Wheelchair Fencing

11th place

XIII Paralympic Winter Games in Beijing, 2022

Wheelchair Curling

9th place



*Poļina Rožkova* was born on 12 October 1985 in Riga into the family of *Aleksandrs* and *Natālija Rožkovi*. In 2001, she received her secondary education at Riga Secondary School No. 21. In 2005, she graduated from Riga State Technical School, obtaining the qualification of an accountant. From 2005 to 2011, she studied at RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics (since 2008 – Engineering Economics and Management) and obtained a *Bc.* degree in management [415]. Returning to her university in 2021, *P. Rožkova* obtained a Master's degree in economics and the qualification of an economist, graduating from RTU study program «Engineering of Regional Development and Urban Economics».

*P. Rožkova* has always been very sporty – she rode a snowboard well and considered learning to be a coach [416]. In 2009, after a fall from a snowboard and a serious spinal injury, *P. Rožkova* had to stop studying at RTU and returned to university in September of 2010. She spent the first three years in rehabilitation centres – the athlete exercised and trained her body every day except Sundays [417]. Despite these difficulties, she managed to obtain the Bachelor's degree, completed the courses in advanced accounting, and found a job. That is when *P. Rožkova* discovered curling, and after a while also fencing.

In 2011, *P. Rožkova* started playing wheelchair curling. It differs from regular curling mainly in that a wheelchair team should comprise four people of both sexes. Apart from *P. Rožkova*, the team includes *Ojārs Briedis*, *Agris Lasmans* and *Sergejs Djačenko* (*Aleksandrs Dimbovskis* was included as an alternative player at the Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing). As *P. Rožkova* explains, «in ordinary curling, athletes with brushes vigorously clean the ice in front of the rolling rock to adjust its course and speed, but in the wheelchair curling, there is no such section. The player throws the rock with the help of a special stick, and then it slides in proud loneliness, left to its own destiny. This means that the throw must be as accurate as possible, as nothing can be corrected while the stone is slipping. The counting of points and the number of rocks is the same as in the ordinary curling [418].»

Since 2017, *P. Rožkova* has been the Captain of the Latvian Wheelchair Curling Team. In 2018, the Wheelchair Curling Team got from Group B to Group A, and in early 2021, the Latvian Wheelchair Curling Team qualified to go to China in 2022 and



Figure 282. Copy of *P. Rožkova's* RTU Bachelor's diploma (2011).



Figure 283. *P. Rožkova* with RTU Master's diploma at the graduation ceremony (2021).



**Figure 284.** From left: Chui Yee Yu, *P. Rožkova* at the XV Paralympic Games (2016).



**Figure 285.** From left: *A. Lasmans*, *P. Rožkova*, *O. Briedis*, *S. Djačenko* in World Cup in Switzerland (2020).



**Figure 286.** *P. Rožkova* – winner of the «Three Star Awards 2020» (2021).

compete in the Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2022. Latvian Wheelchair Curling Team took the 9th place in Wheelchair Curling. During the XIII Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing, *P. Rožkova* and her teammate *Ojārs Briedis* carried the flag of the Latvian delegation.

In 2009, during rehabilitation in Ukraine, *P. Rožkova* got acquainted with wheelchair fencing. She was the first to start this sport in Latvia in 2012. For several years, *P. Rožkova* was serious about wheelchair fencing and even won the opportunity to go to the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, but due to changes in regulations, she fell short of the expected victory and finished in the 11th place. Prior to that, *P. Rožkova* fenced with very good results in Group B, where athletes with serious back injuries take part in the competition, but the organizers of the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro transferred her to Group A, which includes athletes with, for example, an amputated foot. In such a competition, it was very difficult for *P. Rožkova* to hope for a high place. She specialized in fencing with an *épée*, but according to the new rules she also had to learn to fight with the *foil* or a *sabre* [418].

*P. Rožkova* was recognized as the Best Paralympic Female Athlete of Riga in 2014. The solemn award ceremony «Riga Sports Laureate 2014» took place on 12 December at the cultural palace «*Ziemeļblāzma*».

Currently, *P. Rožkova* is the Captain of the Latvian Wheelchair Curling Team and the winner of the «Three Star Awards 2020» in the nomination «Paralympic Female Athlete» [39].

*P. Rožkova* also dedicates much of her effort to the consultations on the environmental accessibility issues, she works on ERDF and ESF projects, draws up reports and information on these issues, provides consultations to the organizational units of various ministries [416].

In the spring of 2021, *P. Rožkova* told in the interview to *Laura Lauziniece*, the editor of LTV programs, that a strong person is a person who does not give up even in times of weakness and always stands up even after several falls. *P. Rožkova* also mentioned that having gone through the ordeal of her life, she found people she can help [417].

# ELMĀRS RUBĪNS (1944–2007)

Rower, Coach and Builder

XX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico, 1968

Rowing

7th/11th place, Coxless Fours, Men (M4–)

*Elmārs Rubīns* was born on 12 December 1944 in *Daugavpils*, Latvia. In 1963, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 2.

*E. Rubīns* entered RPI Faculty of Engineering Economics in 1963, choosing the specialization of Construction Economics and Organization. From 1963 to 1966, he served in the Soviet Army at the Central Navy Water Sports Club in Moscow. After military service, he continued studies at RPI.

On 15 September, 1967, the Council of the Union of Sports Societies and Organizations of the LSSR and the Federation of Rowing Sports requested that *E. Rubīns* was released from studies from 17 September to 18 October in connection with the need to attend a training camp in academic rowing in Bulgaria. In the same year, student *E. Rubīns* attended classes according to an individual plan, because it was difficult to combine competitions and training for the Games of the Olympiad with studies. In 1969, he decided to leave the university.

In 1968, at the XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico City together with the USSR Team – Coxless Fours (M4–) comprising RPI students *Vitolds Barkāns*, *Guntis Niedra* (1943–2005) and *Pavel Ilyinsky* (*Павел Ильинский*, from Leningrad), *E. Rubīns* won a split 7th/11th place (final B race did not take place). The Olympians arrived in Mexico City in the highlands (the games took place more than 2000 m above mean sea level) 40 days before the start of the Games, but the difficult mountain conditions had harsh adverse effect on the team. In the consolation race 100 m before the finish *P. Ilyinsky* lost consciousness, there was a desperate fight for the finals, three boats finished almost simultaneously, but the boat of *E. Rubīns*, *V. Barkāns*, *G. Niedra* and *P. Ilyinsky* finished 0.6 s later and won 3rd place. Another 35 rowers lost consciousness that day due to exhaustion [419]. Initially, *Andris Priedītis*, a graduate (1973) of the RPI Faculty of Construction Engineering, was also included in the Olympic Rowing Team, but due to his health condition, he was unable to participate in the Games of the Olympiad. *E. Rubīns*'s coach was *Rolands Sproģis* (1936–2001).

In 1964, *E. Rubīns* was awarded the title of USSR Sports Master, in 1965 – the title of the International Sports Master. As a member of the USSR National Team, he won 2nd place in Men's Eight (M8+) in the European Championship in 1965 and in World Championship in 1966. He became the USSR Champion in Men's Eight (M8+; 1965, 1966; Coach *Mikhail Plaksin* (*Михаил Плаксин*), Moscow) in 1967, in 1968, he was the Champion in Coxless Fours (M4–). In 1967, he became the Champion of the IV USSR People's Spartakiad (M4–). *E. Rubīns* received an Honorary Diploma from the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the LSSR for this achievement. He was coached by *R. Sproģis*.



Figure 288. *E. Rubīns*' RPI academic record book (1969).



Figure 289. *E. Rubīns* and *V. Barkāns* during the XIX Games of the Olympiad in Mexico City (1968).

*E. Rubīns* represented the following sports associations: «*Daugava*»; «*Centrālais flotes ūdenssporta klubs*» (Central Navy Water Sports Club; Moscow); «*Rīgas Dinamo*».

In order to prepare the athletes for the Games of the Olympiad, in winter the training took place in the gym (basketball, volleyball, weightlifting), as well as in the rowing pool, athletes also trained in skiing and running. In the 1967 training diary, *E. Rubīns* wrote, «This year, the Coxless Fours has already driven more than 2000 kilometres! This is approximately the distance from Riga to Crimea. And these two thousand kilometres are also part of the journey to Mexico City, because *Vitolds Barkāns*, *Elmārs Rubīns*, *Guntis Niedra* and *Andris Priedītis* are candidates for the USSR Olympic Team [420].»

*E. Rubīns* was a very calm, reserved person, but at the competitions he always showed his adventurous nature. However, when he lost the competitions, he often became stubborn [421].

In 1992, Riga Rowers Club was reinstated, its training base was situated in *Lucavsala*. *E. Rubīns* worked as a coach there, took care of equipment and landscaping, having planted the roses that are still growing in the territory of the sport base [422]. From 1993, *E. Rubīns* participated in the competition of senior rowing masters. In 1994, he won 2nd place in the Coxed Fours (in the age group 43–49 years) together with *V. Barkāns* at the World Masters Games in Australia (36 teams), rowing together with foreign partners [81]. In 1998, he won 1st place in the Mixed Eight (MIX8+), starting with his teammates *G. Niedra*, *V. Barkāns*, *V. Priediēns* and others at the World Masters Games in Portland, USA.

After finishing his career in professional sports, *E. Rubīns* was the Coach of the Riga Rowing Club. He was engaged in crafts and construction.

*E. Rubīns* was married and had three sons – *Martins*, *Elmārs* and *Jānis*.

*E. Rubīns* died on 10 September 2007. He was buried in *Jaundubulti* Cemetery, *Jūrmala*.



**Figure 290.** IV USSR People's Spartakiad Champions in Coxless Fours. From left: *G. Niedra*, *A. Priedītis*, *E. Rubīns*, and *V. Barkāns* (1967).



**Figure 291.** FISA Master's Regatta in Groningen. From left: *V. Barkāns*, *G. Niedra*, coxswain *R. Žilinskis*, *V. Priediēns* and *E. Rubīns* (1994).

# PĀVELS SEĻIVANOVS (1952)

Volleyball Player, Engineer, Entrepreneur and Politician

XXI Games of the Olympiad in Montreal, 1976

Volleyball

2nd place, Men

XXII Games of the Olympiad in Moscow, 1980

Volleyball

1st place, Men



*Pāvels Seļivanovs* was born on 23 July 1952 in Riga. After graduating from Riga Secondary School No. 16 in the autumn of 1969, he entered RPI Faculty of Radio Engineering and Communications.

He was already involved in sports at school and continued training in volleyball at the university. During his studies, *P. Seļivanovs* not only trained intensively, but also participated in various competitions and was a member of the LSSR, USSR and RPI Volleyball Team, played in the Volleyball Team «Radiotehnikis» (1970–1987).

Trips to competitions and training camps, which could last for a couple of days or a week or more, hampered his studies and often were the reason why an extension to the examination period was required. In February 1972, 2nd-year student *P. Seļivanovs* applied for an academic leave. The RPI Rector *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985) also received such a request from the Committee of Physical Culture and Sports of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR.

*P. Seļivanovs* continued his studies with longer or shorter breaks and in the study year 1975/1976, was already in his 4th year of studies, but again more time had to be devoted to sports, as the XXI Games of the Olympiad were held in Montreal, Canada, from 17 July to 1 August 1976.

As a member of the USSR Volleyball Team, *P. Seļivanovs* participated in five games in Montreal and together with other volleyball players (*Vladimir Dorokhov* (Владимир Дорохов), *Aleksandr Ermilov* (Александр Ермилов), *Vyacheslav Zaitsev* (Вячеслав Зайцев), *Vladimir Kondra* (Владимир Кондра), *Aleksandr Savin* (Александр Савин), *Oleg Moliboga* (Олег Молибога), *Vladimir Chernyshyov* (Владимир Чернышёв; 1951–2004), *Anatoliy Polishchuk* (Анатолий Полищук; 1950–2016), *Yuri Starunsky* (Юрий Старунский; 1945–2010), *Vladimir Ulanov* (Владимир Уланов; 1951–2000), *Yefim Chulak* (Ефим Чулак) won the silver medal.

The XXII Games of the Olympiad took place in the summer of 1980 in Moscow, USSR, and volleyball player *P. Seļivanovs* also took part in them, having become the gold medal winner. In Moscow, *P. Seļivanovs* also played for the USSR National Team (*V. Zaitsev*, *V. Dorokhov*, *A. Ermilov*, *V. Kondra*, *A. Savin*, *O. Moliboga*, *V. Chernyshyov*, *Viljar Loor* (Вильяр Лоор; 1953–2011), *Valeriy Kryvov* (Валерий Кривов; 1951–1994), *Fedir Lashchanov* (Фёдор Лащёнов), *Yury Panchenko* (Юрий Панченко), participating in six games.

Volleyball player *P. Seļivanovs* received the university diploma obtaining a degree in



Figure 293. *P. Seļivanovs*' RPI academic record book (1969).

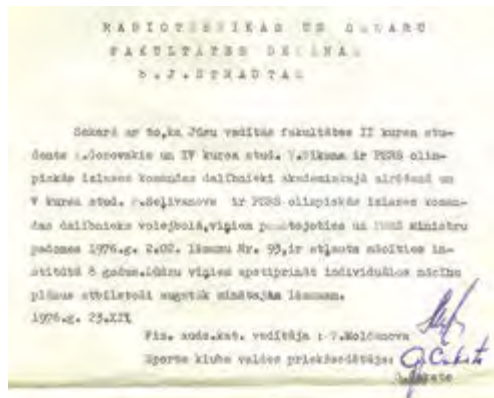


Figure 294. Request from *Vera Molčanova* (1918–2005), Head of the RPI Department of Physical Education and Sports and *Gunārs Čakste* (1927–1993), Chairman of the Board of the Sports Club, to the Dean of the Faculty of Radio Engineering and Communications *Andrejs Strauts* (1941–2017) to allow *P. Seļivanovs* to study eight years (1976).

radio engineering only in December 1983. On 30 June 1984, the Dean of the RPI Faculty of Radio Engineering, the Secretary of the Primary Organization of the Communist Youth and the Chairman of the Trade Committee signed *P. Seļivanovs'* characteristics for submission to the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture, because *P. Seļivanovs* wanted to get a second university degree in addition to his engineering diploma. He also studied at the London Business School.

RPI graduate volleyball player *P. Seļivanovs* has demonstrated significant sporting success – he won the Olympic gold medal (1980) and Olympic silver medal (1976) [58; p. 28], twice he won the title of World Champion (1978, 1982), four times – the title of European Champion (1977, 1978, 1979, 1983); won the World Cup as a member of the USSR National Team (1988); repeatedly won prize places in the USSR People's Spartakiads and as a member of the LSSR Team (1975 – 3rd place; 1979 – 2nd place; 1983 – 1st place) and in the USSR and European Championships. He spent 10 years in the USSR National Team, was the USSR Champion (1984) and six times – the USSR Vice-Champion (1973–1975, 1983, 1986, 1987). *P. Seļivanovs'* sports achievements were recognized with two medals «For Heroism in Labour», from 1975 to 1978 he earned the honour of the most popular male athlete in Latvia. When Latvia regained its independence and people received opportunity to travel and work abroad freely, *P. Seļivanovs* played volleyball and worked as a coach in Belgium from 1987 [423].

In 1997, *P. Seļivanovs* returned to Riga and turned to business. In 2001, he became involved in politics and was a Deputy of Riga City Council (2001–2005).

*P. Seļivanovs* together with the participants of the Latvian Olympic Club participated in the youth project «*Pēdas*» (Footprints), organizing clean-ups, summer camps and other activities [424].

On 26 November 2003, he was elected the Chairman of the Board of the «*Sporta klubs Rīga*» [425], where he worked intermittently until 2015.

He worked as a coordinator of the volleyball program of the Department of Education, Youth, Culture and Sports of Riga City Council, and was the Deputy Director of the Riga Football School and entrepreneur. For a short time in 2021, he trained Latvian Women's National Volleyball Team. Currently he is the Coach of the Women's National Team at the Riga Volleyball School (RVS).

*P. Seļivanovs* is married and has a son.

In 2017, *P. Seļivanovs* was awarded the Order of the Three Stars of the 4th Class.



**Figure 295.** Player of the Riga Volleyball Team «*Radiotehnika*» *P. Seļivanovs* (1970s).



**Figure 296.** *P. Seļivanovs* (No. 6) at the moment of the XXI Games of the Olympiad in Montreal (1976).



**Figure 297.** RVS Coach *P. Seļivanovs* (2021/2022).



# JĀNIS SILARĀJS (1976)

Bobsledder, Athlete and Engineer

XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, 2002

Bobsleigh

7th place, Four, Men



*Jānis Silarājs* was born on 3 May 1976 in Riga. In 1991, he graduated from the 9th grade of Riga Secondary School No. 36 and entered Riga Radio Electronics Engineering Technical School, which was reorganized in 1992 and renamed Riga Technical College. *J. Silarājs* graduated it in 1996, obtaining the qualification of an electrical installation operation engineer.

On 1 September 1996, *J. Silarājs* commenced his studies at the RTU Faculty of Power and Electrical Engineering, although he had to interrupt his studies in the summer of 2000 due to large work load. In June 2001, he graduated from the university, having obtained the diploma of power and electrical engineer [426].

*J. Silarājs* started playing sports at the age of eight. He played basketball at VEF Sports School under supervision of the Coach *Anita Jandāle*, and learned to swim while studying at Riga Secondary School No. 36 [427]. He liked swimming more, so *J. Silarājs* started to do it more seriously under the guidance of coaches *Kristīne Putniņa* and *Jānis Podnieks*. At the age of 10, he trained in athletics with *Maijonis Pūliņš* for three months.

At the age of 16, while studying at Riga Technical College, *Jānis* began to get seriously engaged in javelin throwing at the Coach *Uldis Doniņš*. The young man trained for seven years. During this period he grew up as an athlete, gaining valuable experience and physical stamina for future achievements.

During his studies at RTU, *J. Silarājs* demonstrated high results in athletics and swimming. In 1998, he won the title of the Latvian Champion in the 4 x 100 m relay race. In 1999, he won bronze medals in the Latvian Championships: javelin throwing and swimming 50 m, butterfly stroke.

Due to health problems, *J. Silarājs* abandoned swimming and javelin throwing, but his interest in sports remained. He got interested in one of the winter sports – bobsleigh. During the trainings in javelin throwing, he trained together with bobsledder *Mārcis Rullis*, who helped him get into the newly chosen sport. In 2000, at the age of 24, after three months of training with the Coach *Ivars Čākurs*, *J. Silarājs* already competed in the World Cup in bobsleigh – he was the bobsleigh pusher of the pilot *Gatis Gūts*. The best achievements of the first season were 4th place in the Bobsleigh World Cup (four-men) in Lake Placid, USA, and 10th place (four-men) in the overall standing [428].

After that he participated in the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, USA, in 2002, where he got 7th place (3:09.06) in a bobsleigh competition (four-men) together with *Sandis Prūsis*, *Mārcis Rullis* and *Jānis Ozols* [186; p. 107].

*J. Silarājs* won the first title of the European Champion for independent Latvia in

№.	ĶĒMĒMĀCĪBAS PĀRBAUŠU REZULTĀTI	GRĀDĪBĀ	VAIDĀ	MARKA	ĶĒMĒMĀCĪBAS PĀRBAUŠU REZULTĀTI	GRĀDĪBĀ	VAIDĀ
1.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	5,0	5,0	5			
2.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	4,0	4,0	4			
3.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	3,0	3,0	3			
4.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	2,0	2,0	2			
5.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	1,0	1,0	1			
6.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	0,0	0,0	0			
7.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	0,0	0,0	0			
8.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	0,0	0,0	0			
9.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	0,0	0,0	0			
10.	Elektroniskās iekārtas	0,0	0,0	0			

RTU RĪGAS TEHNISKĀ UNIVERSITĀTE  
SEMESTRA INDIVIDUĀLAIS STUDIJU PLĀNS

Struktūrvienība: 0299  
Sākuma datums: 1989/1999  
Profesionālā studiju plāns

Figure 299. *J. Silarājs'* RTU academic record book for the autumn semester of the academic year 1989/1999.



Figure 300. Bobsledders at the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City. From left: *J. Ozols*, *M. Rullis*, *J. Silarājs*, *S. Prūsis* (2002).

bobsleigh (four-men) competition together with *S. Prūsis*, *M. Rullis* and *J. Ozols* in 2003 [58; p. 61].

The grandfather of bobsledder *J. Silarājs* was a basketball player and a basketball Coach *Juris Solovjovs-Silarājs* (1917–2007), who started his studies at the UL Faculty of Mechanics in 1934, but had to interrupt them.

*J. Silarājs*, who is called a multi-athlete [429], played for many years in the amateur basketball team «*Latvenergo*». He is no longer involved in professional sports, but he still does sports.

*J. Silarājs* is currently working in his profession area at JSC «*Augstsprieguma tīkli*». He is married and has two sons, *Jānis* and *Gustavs*.



**Figure 301.** *S. Prūsis*' crew at the start of the XIX Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City (2002).

# JURIS SILOVS (1950–2018)

## Athlete and Entrepreneur

XX Games of the Olympiad in Munich, 1972

Athletics

2nd place, 4 x 100 m Relay, Men

XXI Games of the Olympiad in Montreal, 1976

Athletics

3rd place, 4 x 100 m Relay, Men

31st place, 100 m, Men



*Juris Silovs* was born on 30 August 1950 in *Krāslava*, Latvia. After graduating from *Krāslava* Secondary School No. 2 in September 1968, he enrolled in the 1st year of the study program in heat and gas supply and ventilation at the Evening Department of RPI Faculty of Civil Engineering. Already in October, he moved to the Day Department choosing Industrial and Civil Engineering.

*J. Silovs'* sports career began in *Krāslava*, a city that had become a real sports centre in the 1960s. At the local sports school, pupils were able to do many sports. Before that, *J. Silovs* trained in *Krāslava* meadows, playing football with the local youth and spending free time there. In 1967, *Vladislavs Skerskāns* a physical education teacher at *Krāslava* Secondary School No. 2 and a Coach at the Children and Youth Sports School, noticed and appreciated his sportiness. *Viktors Bonders*, an athlete [430], RPI / RTU lecturer (since 1980), Head of the Sports Department (2001–2017), athletics coach, and currently a Senior Sports Coach at RTU Sports Centre, also trained in *Krāslava* with this well-known coach in high jumping. Although *J. Silovs* did not have a suitable racetrack to run on and even decent sports shoes at the beginning of his sports career, and he had to run with ordinary tennis slippers. He had great willpower and confidence in his abilities. This motivated him for achievements in sport. In *Krāslava*, the athlete's favourite training place was the 325 m long track in the new park [431]. In 1967, *J. Silovs* became a Sports Master, winning 3rd place in the USSR Youth Competitions, he also won the republic championship in both short sprint distances [432]. In 1968, *Imants Liepiņš* (1930–2001) became his coach [433].

In parallel with his studies at RPI, *J. Silovs* trained in athletics and at the beginning of 1970 in Riga achieved the best result in Europe in an indoors distance of 50 m (5.5 s) [3; p. 316]. In 1970, he also set the RPI record at 100 m (10.3 s) and 200 m (21.4 s) distance [193]. There was little time for training, so in the academic year of 1969/1970, he passed only a few tests in the 3rd semester. The young man realized that it would not be possible to combine engineering studies at RPI with sports, and he was more interested in sports life. In the autumn of 1970, *J. Silovs* moved to the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture (LSIPC) with the permission of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the LSSR [434].

An athlete *J. Silovs* participated in the XX Games of the Olympiad in 1972 and won



Figure 303. *J. Silovs'* RPI student ID (1968).



Figure 304. LSIPC Dean *Mihails Amajņis'* (1920–2007) request to RPI to send a personal student file of *J. Silovs* (1970).

a silver medal in the 4 x 100 m relay (38.50 s). In 1976, he won a bronze medal in the 4 x 100 m relay (38.78 s) at the XXI Games of the Olympiad. *J. Silovs* also participated in the 100 m sprint, but did not go beyond the test race (10.7 s) and gained 31st place. *J. Silovs* became the Champion of the Universiade in 100 m running in 1973. He was awarded the title of the Champion in the 4 x 100 m relay in 1975 and 1977, when he competed in the USSR National Team. He was the LSSR Champion 13 times: 100 m (1968, 1970, 1971, 1979); 200 m (1968, 1970); 4 x 100 m relay (1968, 1978); 50 m indoors (1971, 1973, 1977, 1978) and 100 m indoors (1973). In 1974, he was recognized as the most popular sportsman in Latvia [423; p. 131]. *J. Silovs* improved Latvian records 11 times and was a European record holder in the 60 m distance. *J. Silovs* represented the sports society «*Vārpa*», later – the Army Sports Club (ASC). Due to injuries, *J. Silovs* finished his athletic career in 1978, after that he was engaged in business. In 2006, he ran for the 9th Saeima elections, representing the party «*Dzimtene*», but was not elected. *J. Silovs* was married and had a daughter. *J. Silovs*' life ended on 28 September 2018.



**Figure 305.** *J. Silovs* at the European Cup in Edinburgh (1973).



**Figure 306.** *J. Silovs* at the XXI Games of the Olympiad in Montreal (1976).

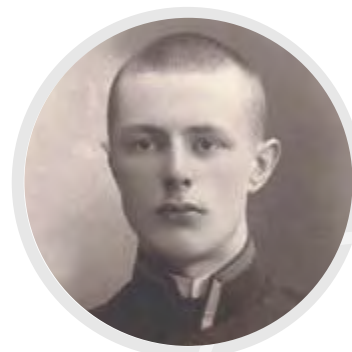
## LEV SITIN (1891–1973)

### Shooter and Photographer

V Games of the Olympiad in Stockholm, 1912

Shooting

23rd place, Clay Pigeon Shooting (Trap), Men



Lev Sutin (*Лев Сутин*, often referred to as *Leons Sūtins* or *Leons Sutiņš* [435]) was born on 3 December 1891 in the family of the landowner-lawyer Maxim Sutin (*Максим Сутин*; 1848–1926) and Zinaida Sverbeyeva (*Зинаида Свербеева*; ?–?) in Vladimir Province, Russia [436]. L. Sutin comes from a family with seven children. After L. Sutin's father went to Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, on business, his mother lived in Riga with the children for some time. At the beginning of the 20th century, L. Sutin's parents moved to Moscow Oblast. The Sutin family life was connected with Vilnius, Lithuania, for a long time, where L. Sutin also graduated from the vocational school in 1910.

On 1 September 1910, L. Sutin entered RPI Department of Chemistry. While studying in Riga, he became involved in the work of *Āgenskalns* Rifle Society [134; p. 16] and trained in shooting together with his fellow students. L. Sutin ranked 23rd (81 points) in the clay pigeon shooting at the V Games of the Olympiad in 1912 [129; p. 30]. He only conditionally can be considered a representative of Latvia at the Games of the Olympiad in 1912, because he lived in Riga only during his studies. During academic year 1911/1912, he continued his studies at the Department of Architecture, but L. Sutin passed only one exam in religious education, receiving the highest grade according to the grading system then in use – 5.

On 24 September 1912, student L. Sutin wrote a resignation to RPI Administration, terminating his studies at RPI [437].

L. Sutin participated in World War I, then worked for many years as a photographer at the State Darwin Museum (*Государственный Дарвиновский музей*) in Moscow, Russia. He is the author of several inventions in the field of photography, including the photographic film development under light [438].

L. Sutin helped the Museum's Director, Alexander Erich Kohts (1880–1964), to photograph the Museum's exhibits. Evidence on the correspondence between these two gentlemen is still preserved in the museum.

For many years he worked together with A. E. Kohts' wife, a zoologist Nadezhda Ladygina-Kohts (*Надежда Ладыгина-Котс*; 1889–1963), helping to design illustrations for N. Ladygina-Kohts' world-famous book *«Дитя шимпанзе и дитя человека»* (1935) (A Chimpanzee Child and a Human Child).

L. Sutin also collaborated with geologists Academician Vladimir Obruchev (*Владимир Обручев*; 1863–1956) and Professor Vera Varsanofieva (*Вера Варсанофьева*; 1890–1976), sculptors Anna Golubkina (*Анна Голубкина*; 1864–1927) and Riga-born Vera Mukhina (*Вера Мухина*; 1889–1953). He designed illustrations for their scientific monographs and art albums.

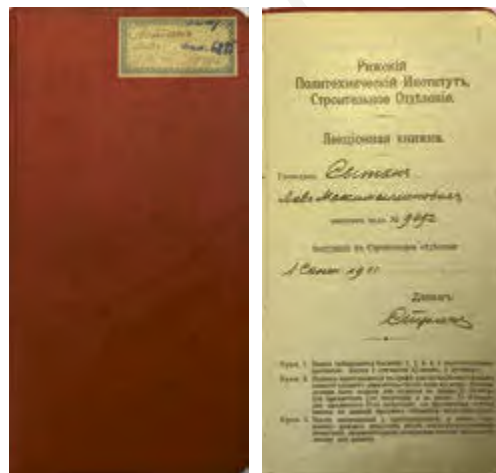


Figure 308. L. Sutin's RPI lecture book (1911).



Figure 309. L. Sutin (c. 1914).

Probably L. Sitin met his future wife Lidiya Matasova (*Лидия Матасова*; 1887–1969), a history teacher, in 1914, when she came to Sitin's family to help L. Sitin's younger sister Vera Sitina (*Вера Сытина*; 1901–1988) to enrol in a gymnasium [438].

L. Sitin and L. Matasova married in 1924 in Moscow. The family had two children, a son Sergei (*Сергей Сытин*; 1925–2001) and a daughter Tatyana (*Татьяна Сытина*; 1926–2006) [438].

L. Sitin died in Moscow in 1973 and was buried in the Novodevichy Cemetery.

One of L. Sitin's sisters, Zinaida Britzke (*Зинаида Брицке*; 1889–1998), married a chemical technologist and metallurgist, a graduate (1903) of the RPI Department of Chemistry and a lecturer (1906–1918) at RPI, later an Academician of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1932) and Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1936–1939) Erhard Britzke (1877–1953).

Every two years, Memorial Readings of L. Sitin's son, historian, local researcher S. Sitin take place in Ulyanovsk [438].



**Figure 310.**  
L. Sitin  
(c. 1912–1914).



**Figure 311.**  
L. Sitin with  
the book of  
N. Ladygina-  
Kohts (c. 1935).

# PAULIS SOKOLOVS (1902–1971)

Football, Basketball and Bandy Player

VIII Games of the Olympiad in Paris, 1924

Football

11th place, Men



*Paulis Sokolovs (Паул Соколов)* was born on 17 July 1902 in Riga [439] to the family of *Nikolajs Sokolovs (Николай Соколов; 1873–1931)* and his wife *Marija Sokolova* (b. *Ābele; 1877–1965*). His father *N. Sokolovs* was one of the founders of Riga Football Club (RFC) and also served on its first board [440].

*P. Sokolovs* graduated from the State Adult Secondary School in 1923 and enrolled for studies at the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL). Unfortunately, in 1929 he dropped out [441].

*P. Sokolovs* started playing football in the team of *Vidzeme Division Sports Club*, playing the first game against English sailors in 1919. He later represented the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and RFC teams. For the first time, he became the winner of the Latvian Olympic Football Tournament in 1921 as a member of YMCA. He won this tournament for the second time in 1923 already as an RFC football player. As a member of the RFC Team, he twice won the title of the Latvian Champion (1924–1925), as well as won Riga Cup in both years. After 1925, he did not play regularly in the first team of RFC. In 1931, he was awarded the Great Badge of the Latvian Football Union. In the 1930s, he played for the team of his Student Corporation «*Patria*» [440].

From 1923 to 1925, *P. Sokolovs* represented our country in the Latvian National Football Team in eight games and participated in the 1924 Games of the Olympiad [442]. He played for the Latvian Olympic Football Team together with his fellow striker *Rūdolfs Bārda* (1903–1991). Team squad – p. 56.

*P. Sokolovs* also played bandy (hockey with a ball; YMCA, RFC), was a Latvian Master of bandy (1924). He was involved in this sport for several years after the end of active career in football, he was the Captain of the RFC Bandy Team. Playing as a member of RFC, he became a Latvian Champion in basketball [440].

*P. Sokolovs'* brothers also studied at the Department of National Economy of the UL Faculty of National Economics and Law – *Augusts Sokolovs* (1906–1990) [443] and *Nikolajs Sokolovs* (1900–1967), who had first entered the Faculty of Mechanics [444]. None of the three brothers received a university degree. *A. Sokolovs* was also a football player and played for the RFC. He was the Master of Latvia in 1926.

From 1 March 1930 to 22 May 1931, *P. Sokolovs* did compulsory military service in the Autotank Regiment, ending his service in the rank of a great soldier. On 5 April 1931, he married *Helēna Mieze* (1904–1948). During the period of independence of Latvia, he worked as a typesetter in a stamp workshop, in 1944 he was the Manager of the *J. Roze* Stamp Factory. Even during the Soviet era and until his death on 20 April 1971, he continued working as a stamp master [445]. He was buried in the Riga 1st Forest Cemetery.



**Figure 313.** *P. Sokolovs'* application to the Rector of the UL *Jānis Ruberts* (1874–1934) on his admission to the university (1923).



**Figure 314.** Riga Football Club Team (1920s). From left: judge *Bertolds Buzarovs* (1894–1940), goalkeeper *Arvids Jurgens* (1905–1955), *Kārlis Ašmanis* (1898–1962), *Edvins Bārda* (1900–1947), *Rūdolfs Bārda* (1903–1991), *Arvids Bārda* (1901–1941), *Markus Osis* (1902–?), *P. Sokolovs*, *Kārlis Bone* (1899–1941), *Harijs Smits* (1901–?), *Aleksandrs Roze* (1896–1945), *Emīls Urbans* (1904–1989).



## KRISTIS STRAUME (1986)

Sprint Canoeer and Coach

XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing, 2008

Canoe Sprint

7th place, K-2, 1000 m, Men

10th place, K-2, 500 m, Men

XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, 2012

Canoe Sprint

11th place, K-2, 200 m, Men



**Figure 316.** Copy of *K. Straume's* RTU Bachelor's diploma (2011).



**Figure 317.** *K. Zaļupe* and *K. Straume* at the XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing (2008).



**Figure 318.** *A. Rumjancevs* and *K. Straume* at the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London (2012).

*Krišts Straume* was born on 13 May 1986 in Riga. In 2005, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 47.

In 2006, he entered RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics (since 2008 – Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management; FEEM), where he studied real estate management [446]. He graduated from FEEM in 2011.

Since the age of eight, *K. Straume* has been training in canoe sprint. He started in the kayak doubles, and one of his biggest successes was winning the 2009 European U-23 Championship, competing together with *Aleksejs Rumjancevs*.

Prior to that, in 2007, he won the honourable 5th place in the World Championship in kayak doubles at the distance of 500 m [58; p. 48]. He participated in kayak doubles with *Kristaps Zaļupe* at the XXIX Games of the Olympiad in Beijing, China in 2008, winning 7th place in the 1000 m race and 10th place in the 500 m race [410; p. 148]. It was one of the best results in an athlete's career. *Aigars Aglenieks* was the coach of *K. Straume*. Sprint canoeer *K. Straume* has also successfully competed in Latvian championships and Latvian Olympiads.

In 2011, *K. Straume* together with *A. Rumjancevs* participated in several competitions: in the third stage of the World Cup, victory was won in canoeing and kayaking at the distance of 200 m; 4th place in the European Championship at the distance of 200 m; 6th place in the World Championship at the distance of 200 m. These results allowed *K. Straume* and his team mate to qualify for the XXX Games of the Olympiad in London, United Kingdom, in 2012. There they won 11th place in the 200 m race [118; p. 121]. Coach *A. Aglenieks* prepared the athletes for these games as well.

After the Games of the Olympiad in London in 2012, from 2014 to 2019, *K. Straume* took coaching courses while working as a coach. *K. Straume* finished active career in canoeing and kayaking. He is currently working as a production manager at the sports equipment manufacturing company «*Prestol Grupa*». He is married and has two children [447].



# JĀNIS TILTIŅŠ (1909–1974)

Basketball Player and Engineer

XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, 1936

Basketball

15th/18th place, Men



*Jānis Tiltiņš* was born on 5 September 1905 in *Dikļi* Parish, Latvia [448]. In 1927, he graduated from Riga City 4th Gymnasium and entered the Faculty of Mechanics of the University of Latvia (UL), graduating it in 1944 and obtaining the degree of electrical engineer [449].

During his studies, he was drafted into compulsory military service and served in the Latvian Army from 1938 to 1940.

*J. Tiltiņš* studied with interruptions, working between studies. In 1931, he was a trainee and commutator in the Main Workshop of the Post and Telegraph Department [448; p. 14]. In 1941, *J. Tiltiņš* worked at «VEF» Factory, determining and inspecting the damage to electric machines, as well as at the laboratory, designing and building measuring equipment [448; p. 16]. In 1942, he worked for the Power Plant Administration and repaired turbochargers for electrical equipment [448; p. 15].

At the beginning of his studies at the university, *J. Tiltiņš* joined the Student Corporation «Tervetia», started playing in the Basketball Team of the Society «Universitātes sports» («University Sport»; «US»), and in 1930, together with his team, won the title of the Basketball Champion for the first time [450].

Representing the «US», he also played for the Latvian National Team and was a member of the basketball team that participated in the Games of the Olympiad in Berlin in 1936. Team squad – p. 98. He demonstrated good results in the Student World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, in 1935 and in Paris, France, in 1937 and won the title of the World Master [451].

«US» basketball players, including *J. Tiltiņš*, became Latvian basketball champions in 1934, 1935, 1936, and 1937.

*J. Tiltiņš* also participated in rowing competitions, he was a long-term rower of the «US» competition boat «Šautra» [451]. At the end of World War II, *J. Tiltiņš* emigrated. In 1947 in Germany, he married a «US» volleyball player *Mirdza Bīlmane* (1919–1999) [452]. In the 1950s, *J. Tiltiņš* and his family moved to Cleveland, USA. There he led the research on spacecraft construction, some of his inventions were patented [453].

Sons of *J. Tiltiņš* were also involved in sports: *Andris* played American football; *Raimonds* went in for swimming, played chess, and participated in basketball competitions [454].

*J. Tiltiņš* passed away in Cleveland, USA, on 25 March 1974.



Figure 320. *J. Tiltiņš*' UL study subject book (1927).



Figure 321. «US» Basketball Team (mid-1930s). From left: Head of the Sports Society «US» *Roberts Johanness Plūme* (1897–1956), *Eduards Andersons* (1914–1985), *Džems Johans Raudziņš* (1910–1979), *J. Tiltiņš*, *Roberts Bluķis* (1913–1998), *Andrejs Krisonis* (1909–1945).



## BORISS TIMOFEJEVS (1957)

Shooter and Coach

XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, 1992

Trap Shooting

11th place, Men's Skeet

XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, 1996

Trap Shooting

6th place, Men's Skeet

XXVII Games of the Olympiad in Sydney, 2000

Shooting

12th place, Men's Skeet



Figure 323. B. Timofejevs' RPI academic record book (1974).

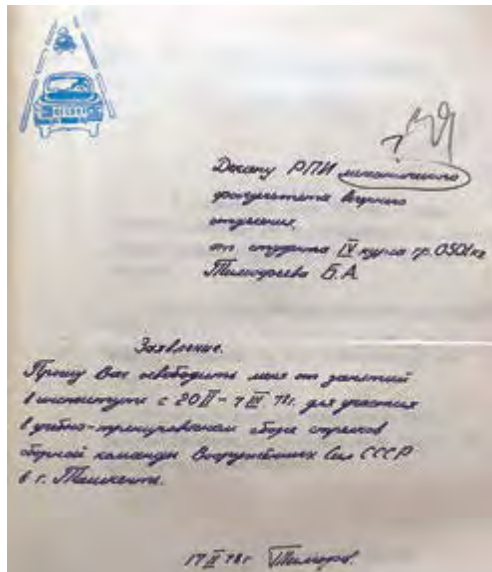


Figure 324. B. Timofejevs' application to the Dean of RPI Riga Evening General Technical Faculty Jānis Rudņevs with a request to exempt him from studies from 20 February to 3 March 1978 due to training in shooting as a member of the USSR Armed Forces Team in Tashkent (1978).

Boriss Timofejevs was born on 4 November 1957 in Riga. In June 1974, he graduated from Riga Secondary School No. 65, and on 18 October, he was enrolled in the 1st year of the study program in mechanical engineering technology, metal cutting machine tools and instruments of Riga Evening General Technical Faculty of RPI Awarded with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour.

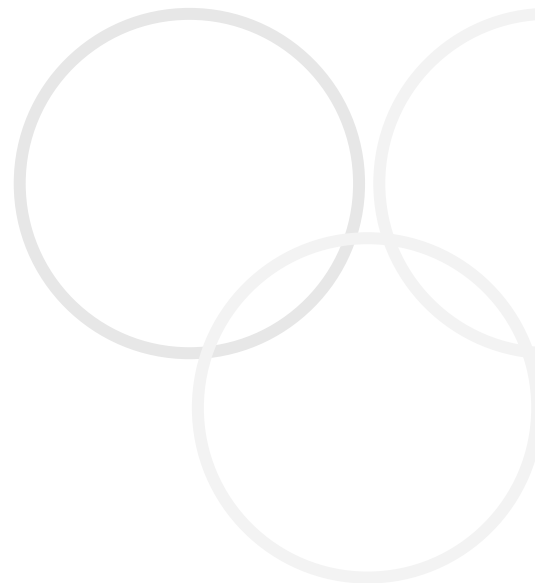
In order to study at the Evening Department, it was necessary to submit a reference from the place of work and a certificate confirming the place of residence. Even before joining RPI, B. Timofejevs qualified for the 1st sports class in trap shooting. He often had to ask for an exemption from studies to take part in the competitions of various scale.

B. Timofejevs was a member of the Armed Forces Shooting Team of the Baltic Military District; since 1977 – member of the USSR Armed Forces Shooting Team. During his studies, B. Timofejevs worked as a locksmith at Riga Locomotive Depot; in 1978, he started working at «VEF» Factory [455]. In August 1977, a student B. Timofejevs switched to part-time studies and in 1981 graduated from RPI, obtaining the qualification of a mechanical engineer.

During his studies, B. Timofejevs became the LSSR Champion in skeet shooting (1974, 1977, 1978), and in total, he won this title eight times (1974, 1977, 1978, 1982–1984, 1989, 1991). After the restoration of the Republic of Latvia, he became a seven-time Latvian Champion (1992, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2003), so it is natural that B. Timofejevs was included in the Latvian Olympic Team and participated in the Games of the Olympiad three times. In 1992, he got 11th place (197 points) in the Men's skeet at the XXV Games of the Olympiad, at the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in the same competition he gained 6th place (145 points), and at the XXVII Games of the Olympiad he finished in 12th place (122 points) [3; p. 318].

B. Timofejevs won the USSR Cup both in the individual and team competitions (1985). He has competed in the World Championships and the European Championships several times. In different periods, B. Timofejevs' coaches were Ivars Gulbis, Alberts Salmiņš (1917–1990), Ivans Terentjevs, and Uldis Leinasaris. He represented such sports societies as «Daugava» and «Vārpa» [456].

In the 1999 World Cup Finals in Kuwait, *B. Timofejevs* scored 147 points and won 1st place in the skeet shooting. The athlete was awarded the Great Crystal Globe. *B. Timofejevs* is an athlete who has represented Latvia in shooting for many years and has been actively involved in sports for more than 30 years. After active sports career, he worked as a coach and instructor in skeet shooting, as well as participated in several competitions, such as the Latvian Olympics in bullet shooting in *Venstpils* in 2008 [457], where he won a convincing victory in skeet shooting. Until 2021, he worked as a Coach at «Riga Shooting Center» [458]. He is currently retired and provides advice to prospective shooters. *B. Timofejevs* is married and has two sons [459].



**Figure 325.** *B. Timofejevs* at the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Sydney (2000).



## AIVARS TROPS (1963)

Bobsledder, Engineer and Entrepreneur

XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary, 1988

Bobsleigh

9th place, Two, Men

*Aivars Trops* was born on 22 January 1963 in Riga. In 1981, he graduated from *Naukšēni* City Vocational Technical High School No. 23, obtaining the profession of a car repair locksmith. In the same year, he entered RPI Faculty of Mechanics and Machine Engineering, majoring in machine engineering technology, metal cutting and tools, and studied according to an individual plan during his studies.

In September 1983, during the 3rd year of his studies, he decided to change his major to automotive and car industry. *A. Trops'* lecturer *Staņislavs Navra* wrote in his application to the Dean of the faculty *Jānis Ozoliņš*, «*A. Trops* is one of the best students in the group, so it is hard to part with him. With a heavy heart I support his intent [460].» In 1986, *A. Trops* passed the state exams, but the viva voce of the diploma paper had to be postponed.

*A. Trops'* sport activities were related to bobsleigh, and one of his coaches – *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994) – is also a RPI graduate (1965). From 1984, *A. Trops* trained at the «*VEF*» Sports Club, later – in the Sports Society «*Daugava*». In 1986, he was included in the USSR Bobsleigh Team, so the diploma paper could not be developed because he had to frequently attend training camps. In addition to training, *A. Trops* started working in 1986 as an Instructor in the State Committee of Physical Culture and Sports of the LSSR. He participated in the European Bobsleigh Championships in 1986 (20th place; four-men), 1987 (13th place; four-men) and 1989 (withdrew; four-men), as well as in the World Championships: in 1987 (15th place; four-men / withdrew; two-men – together with *Zintis Ekmanis*) and in 1989 (two-men) [461]. At the XV Olympic Winter Games in 1988, he won 9th place in the bobsleigh competition (two-men; 3:56.92) together with an RPI graduate (1980), pilot *Z. Ekmanis*. In 1990, he was the LSSR Champion in bobsleigh, competing together with *Sandis Prūsis* [3; p. 346].

The athlete obtained an RPI diploma in the field of automotive and car industry and a qualification of a mechanical engineer in 1988.

Engineer *A. Trops* continued his education – he studied at the Faculty of Economics and Management of the University of Latvia and obtained a Master's degree in social sciences. The acquired knowledge and the personality hardened by sports allowed *A. Trops* to establish and manage a multifunctional sports complex «*Ķeizarmežs*» in Riga, *Mežaparks*. *A. Trops* is engaged in entrepreneurship, developing innovation-related projects.

*Raimonds Trops*, the father of bobsledder *A. Trops*, was also engaged in sports – he was an active downhill skier who won prizes in his age group. He was also connected with our university – from 1964 to 2002, he was a lecturer at the Departments of Geometry and Drawing and Water Supply and Sewerage at RPI / RTU [460].



Figure 327. *A. Trops'* RPI academic record book (1981).

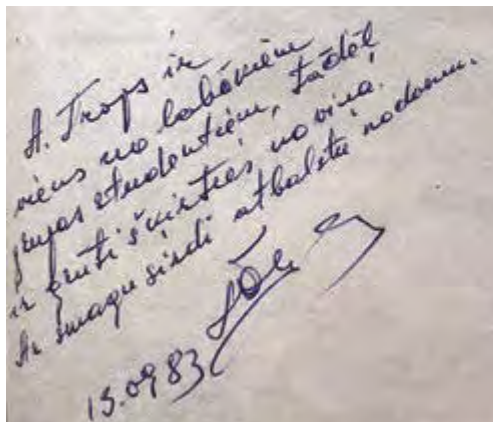


Figure 328. Reference on *A. Trops* by *Staņislavs Navra* (1927–1985), Senior Lecturer at the Department of Instrument Manufacturing (1983).

A. *Trops* is married and has five sons – *Kārlis* (works in the field of insurance), *Pēteris* (works in the field of IT), *Krišjānis Miķelis* (studies at *Ventspils* University of Applied Sciences, 1st prize winner in javelin throwing at the XXXI Latvian Universiade), *Everts* and *Ernests* [462].



**Figure 329.** S. Prūsis and A. Trops at the Latvian Championship (1980s).



**Figure 330.** XV Olympic Winter Games in Calgary. From left: Z. Ekmanis, mechanic J. Akulovs, and A. Trops (1988).



**Figure 331.** From left: A. Trops with Everts, Kārlis, Pēteris with Ernests, Krišjānis Miķelis (2018).

# MIRDZA MARTINSONE-BĒRZIŅA-TURĶE (1916–1983)

Skier and Journalist



IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Alpine skiing

37th place, Downhill, Women

DQ, Slalom, Women

*Mirdza* (also *Mirdza Bianka*) *Martinson* was born on 24 November 1916 in St. Petersburg, Russia [463; p. 3]. From 1923 to 1932, she studied at *M. Millere* Primary School and Gymnasium in Riga [463; p. 4].

*M. Martinsone* was a very versatile athlete – she tried a number of sports, gaining considerable success in several disciplines. Although she was originally involved in skating, her father and brother persuaded her to try skiing. According to newspaper reports from the 1930s, *M. Martinsone* participated in cross-country skiing competitions without exhaustive training. She enjoyed slalom and free skiing – skiing in places with no special tracks, freely choosing the route, and enjoying the beauty of winter. *M. Martinsone* saw femininity and grace in skiing, so she believed that this sport was created for women [464]. In addition, *M. Martinsone* ranked in the list of the first 10 best high jumpers in Latvia and in 1936 played for the «*Universitātes sports*» («*University Sport*»; «*US*») Volleyball Team. The young woman also enjoyed playing tennis and basketball, as well as swimming [465].

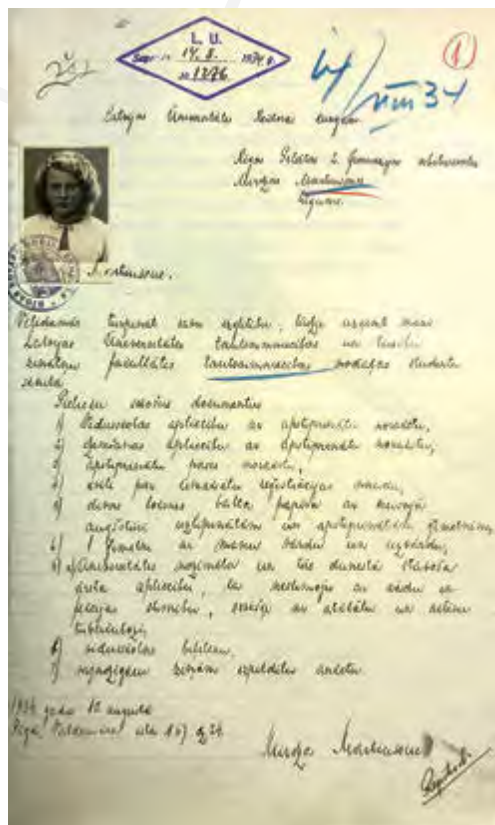
From 1934 to 1935, *M. Martinsone* studied at the Department of National Economy of the Faculty of National Economics and Law of the University of Latvia (UL).

During her studies, *M. Martinsone* trained at the UL Sports Society – «*US*». In 1934, she took part in a speed skating test competition in Riga and was the first woman in Latvia to take part in the 500 m speed skating discipline, showing a good track time (1:4.8) [466, 467]. In 1935, she participated in the Student World Championships in gymnastics, winning 5th place individually and 2nd place in team competitions.

*M. Martinsone* was a three-time Latvian Master of slalom in 1937, 1938 and 1940; and the LSSR Champion in slalom in 1941, two-time Latvian Champion in skiing in the 5 km distance in 1934 and 1935.

In 1935, she took part in the Student World Championship in Budapest, Hungary, and her photograph decorated the cover of the magazine «*Radiolet*» (Hungary) [468]. In the same year, her photo was also featured on the cover of the magazine «*Atpūta*» [469]. In 1936, the French magazine «*La Revue du Ski*» published a photo of *M. Martinsone* with the caption: the young northern skier *Mirdza Martinsone* from Riga, Latvia [470]. In both foreign magazines, the beautiful Latvian sportswoman can be seen wearing a folk costume.

In 1936, *M. Martinsone* participated in the IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-



**Figure 333.** *M. Martinsone's* application to the Rector of the UL Jūlijs Auškāps (1884–1942) on her admission to reenrol in the university (1934).

Partenkirchen, Germany [464], finishing in 37th place in downhill (15:21.6) [471]. Starting in the downhill duel, in the discipline of slalom, she was disqualified.

*M. Martinson* was in a group of holidaymakers / skiers who started the carnival tradition in *Gaižīņkalns* in 1936 [464]. *M. Martinson* had also studied at the Institute of the English Language in Riga and spent the summer of 1937 in Paris, France, where she worked as a language translator in the Latvian pavilion of the World Exhibition [465].

In 1938, during a ski race in Zakopane, Poland, she suffered a serious injury – she broke her leg in four places, the treatment lasted for three months, and only after that, *M. Martinson* resumed her sports activities [472]. In the same year, she won the title «*Mis lido*» (Miss Flying) [473].

In 1939, Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian student competitions took place in *Ērgļi*, Latvia, where *M. Martinson* won the Traveling Award of the Norwegian-Baltic Convergence Society. *M. Martinson* was the only woman to compete in slalom, and she ranked 9th in the overall listing [464].

Since 1936, *M. Martinson* was involved in journalism and was recognized as an agile interviewer. In 1936, during the XI Games of the Olympiad in Berlin, Germany, she was the only foreign journalist to interview Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), the German Chancellor, Head of State and Government. In 1939, she interviewed King Zog I of Albania, who was temporarily in Riga with his queen and son in April, fleeing the occupied Italy. She also interviewed the famous Hungarian actress and singer Martha Eggerth (1912–2013), who performed at the Opera in Riga in June 1939 [474]. In 1939, *M. Martinson* started working in the editorial office of the newspaper «*Brīvā Zeme*».

In 1941, *M. Martinson* became the wife of the Latvian speed skating record holder *Alfons Bērziņš* (1916–1987), and on 3 August 1942, their son *Gundars Bērziņš* was born. Although the years of World War II were a difficult time for the *Bērziņš* family, because in 1942, her husband was drafted into the army and *M. Martinson-Bērziņa* had to take care of their new-born son, she wanted to continue her studies. On 12 October 1943, *M. Martinson-Bērziņa* wrote an application to the Rector of the University of Riga to allow her to resume studies at the university and transfer to the Department of Dentistry of the Faculty of Medicine, mentioning that «my husband, a student of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Latvia *Bērziņš Alfons* is currently fighting in the ranks of the Latvian.. legion. In addition, being a European Champion in speed skating, he has repeatedly defended the colours of the University of Latvia at international events. As an active student, I have also defended the colours of the University of Latvia, winning Latvian, *SELL*, as well as Polish academic master's titles in skiing [463; p. 5].»

In 1944, failing to wait until her husband *A. Bērziņš* returned, *M. Martinson-Bērziņa* went to exile with her mother and a two-year-old son. Her son died in Czechoslovakia. The child's father received permission to go to his son's funeral but was unable to do so, and in 1945, he was imprisoned. After World War II, *M. Martinson-Bērziņa* worked in the American Zone in Germany, assisting refugees. In 1948, she was the only Latvian to officially participate in the V Olympic Winter Games in St. Moritz, Switzerland, as a journalist. Her interviews were published by the *United Press* [475, 474].

From the beginning of the 1950s, the athlete and journalist lived in North America,



**Figure 334.**  
*M. Martinson* on the cover of the magazine «*Radiolet*» (1935).



**Figure 335.**  
*M. Martinson* on the cover of the magazine «*Atpūta*» (1935).

and later in New York, USA, where she worked for the Committee on Freedom of Latvia (1951–1955, 1965–1972). Later, she was the economic manager at the company «Atlantic Film». In 1951, *Mirdza* married the architect *Jānis Turķis* (1914–2002) in New York, the couple had a son *Selgars Turķis*.

She was a philister at the Student Corporation «*Dzintra*».

Writer *Ilze Kalnāre* (1918–1968) used *M. Martinsone-Bērziņa-Turķe* as a prototype in her novel «*Sniega Roze*» (Snow Rose). The novel was published in the magazine «*Atpūta*» [474].

*M. Martinsone-Bērziņa-Turķe* passed away in New York on 20 September 1983.



**Figure 336.** Picture of *M. Martinsone* in the magazine «*La Revue du Ski*» (1936).



**Figure 337.** Skiers *J. Lielmežs* and *M. Martinsone* (1930s).



# ROLANDS UPATNIEKS (1932–1994)

Luger, Coach and Engineer

XII Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck, 1976

Luge

9th place, Doubles, Men

*Rolands Upatnieks (Rolands Albīns Upatnieks in his birth certificate) was born on 13 December 1932 in Riga. In 1951, he graduated from Leons Paegle Riga Secondary School No. 1.*

*R. Upatnieks entered the Evening Department of the Faculty of Mechanics of the State University of Latvia (SUL) immediately after graduating from the secondary school – in 1951. He had to drop out of his studies during the 4th year, in academic year 1954/1955. He was considered disloyal to the Soviet rule. Formally, R. Upatnieks was expelled for academic failure and absenteeism, but in fact, according to a statement issued by the USSR Ministry of the Interior on 30 May 1956, he was in a correctional camp from 9 April 1955 to 30 May 1956 [476].*

*During academic year 1958/1959, R. Upatnieks continued his studies at RPI Faculty of Mechanics. He received his university degree with the qualification of a mechanical engineer on 26 June 1965.*

*R. Upatnieks started playing sports as a teenager and from 1946 to 1952, he was engaged in boxing. R. Upatnieks was really enthusiastic about technology. He worked as a designer, workshop master, head of the department at the «Alfa» Plant, and as a chief engineer at Madona Farm. He started doing water motorsports in 1958 [477] and was a six-time USSR Champion [3; p. 347] in this discipline, he was also a world record holder in the cutter class – he set 17 USSR records, one of them was at the 1973 USSR Championship in Ternopil, Ukraine [478]. Then an RPI graduate R. Upatnieks turned to luge. In 1974, he became the Vice-Champion of the USSR People's Spartakiad (in doubles with Valdis Kuzis), the following year he became the Vice-Champion of the USSR. In 1976, together with V. Kuzis, he competed in the XII Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck, Austria, in the luge competition (doubles) and won 9th place (1:27.557). R. Upatnieks was 43 years old at the time, and he was one of the oldest Olympians in Latvia. Along with sports, at that time he worked as an occupational safety engineer at the state farm «Gauja» [479].*

*Later, the athlete and engineer R. Upatnieks became the Coach of the LSSR Luge Sports Team (1977–1980) and the Head Coach of the USSR Bobsleigh Team (1980–1986). R. Upatnieks developed the first regulations of the USSR bobsleigh competition, making it mandatory to start only with bobsleighs made in the country. Technical creativity in the field of bobsleigh construction flourished in several USSR cities, including Riga. R. Upatnieks addressed the Chairman of the «VEF» Sports Club Jevģenijs Kisiels, fascinating him with the idea of making own bobsleighs. Ivars Braģis, the Technical Director of «VEF», and other employees of the administration*



Figure 339. R. Upatnieks' SUL academic record book (1951).



Figure 340. Copy of R. Upatnieks RPI diploma (1965).



**Figure 341.** R. Upatnieks, (second from left), on the track «Ciruliši» in Murjāni (1970s/1980s).



**Figure 342.** R. Upatnieks with a motorboat at Lielupe river (1970s).



**Figure 343.** R. Upatnieks (second from left) is discussing the construction of a bobsleigh at «VEF» Factory. Fourth – J. Kisiels (1980s).

supported the move, and the engineers and employees who later built bobsleighs liked the idea [480; p. 16–17]. Riding the bobsleighs produced at «VEF» Factory, the Latvian bobsledders achieved success in the competitions of various ranks, and the popularity of bobsleigh grew. Before the XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia (1984), Coach R. Upatnieks predicted that the Latvian bobsledders could win one of the prizes, and he did not make a mistake – in two men competition Zintis Ekmanis (with the pusher Vladimirs Aleksandrovs) won the bronze medal. Engineer and athlete R. Upatnieks planned the course of training, considered improving driving speed and bobsleigh technology, collaborated with the researchers, repaired and constructed luges and bobsleighs, using the knowledge gained at RPI. The staff of the Case Laboratory of the Latvian State Institute of Physical Culture headed by Oļegs Šilovs [480; p. 27] became his reliable allies.

In 1977, thanks to the entrepreneurial talent and initiative of R. Upatnieks, the Luge Department was established at Murjāni Sports Boarding School [481], and in 1978, in less than three months, the 500 m long Murjāni luge track «Ciruliši» with nine curves was built [482]. He also initiated construction of the Sigulda Luge and Bobsleigh Track, and on the day of its opening on 28 December 1986, he checked the quality of the track in a test drive sitting at the wheel of a two-man bobsleigh [483].

In 1984, for the first time in the history of the LSSR, R. Upatnieks was elected a member of the Technical Committee of the *Fédération Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing* (FIBT), at present – the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation [484]. After the XIV Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo in 1984, when for the first time in the Olympic competition in bobsleigh the USSR Team included seven athletes from Latvia and one of them – Z. Ekmanis – won the bronze medal in two-men – engineer R. Upatnieks had to think about equipment. Bobsleighs purchased abroad had several shortcomings, so the issue of building bobsleighs in Latvia had to be addressed.

R. Upatnieks devoted a lot of energy and time to the improvement of the bobsleigh construction, consulted and cooperated not only with the main designers of «VEF» Factory, but also with the chief designers of Jelgava «RAF» Factory in order to build a new outer frame of the bobsleigh [485] and successfully compete in the next competitions. Even before the Olympic Games in Sarajevo, torpedo-type bobsleighs were made and successfully launched in Winterberg, Germany. The Latvian newspaper «Laiks» published in New York, USA, wrote on 7 January 1984 that there was very little space for the bobsledders in that bobsleigh and «that the brake-man was now equipped with a brake consisting of one lever instead of the previous two, the brake was now located between the legs. Centrally in the bobsleigh, the front axle provides contact with ice and, unlike other bobsleighs, the new bob does not lose this contact in the track curves. The appliance created in Latvia drove higher than any other in the curves, but did not overturn [486].» At the time, according to the newspaper, the bobsleighs made in Latvia were praised by Stefan Gaisreiter, a German bobsledder who won the bronze medal at the 1972 Olympic Winter Games, saying it was «the most revolutionary bobsleigh I have ever seen» and «aerodynamically there is nothing better in the world».

J. Kisiels, one of R. Upatnieks' contemporaries, who organized the training of athletes and was responsible for construction of bobsleighs at the «VEF» Sports Club in the

1980s, the President of the Latvian Bobsleigh Federation (1998–2006), described *R. Upatnieks* as a very strong personality «who, obsessed with the idea, fanatically tried to implement it. He was able to inspire people around him, that is why he often get his own way. People of such forging are very successful in their lives, and *Upatnieks* was no exception [487].» *R. Upatnieks* is called the «father of bobsleigh», and due to his zeal, in 1980, bobsleigh began to develop in Latvia at the professional level.

Bobsledder and entrepreneur, former RPI/RTU student *Māris Poikāns*, in an interview to sports journalist and television commentator *Anatolijs Kreipāns* in 2009 said about his former Coach *R. Upatnieks*, «*Upatnieks*' famous expression has also become popular: «a Latvian will not run a hundred meters in ten seconds, but there are many Latvians who can run a hundred meters in 11 seconds with a bag of potatoes on their backs [488].»»

Engineer *R. Upatnieks* trained RPI graduates, bobsledders, Olympians *Aivars Trops* and *Zintis Ekmanis*, as well as student *Māris Poikāns*. A number of other Olympians who practiced bobsleigh and luge sports called *R. Upatnieks* their coach – *Ivars Bērzups*, *Juris Eisaks*, *Juris Jaudzems*, *Olafs Kļaviņš*, *Jānis Ķipurs*, *Rihards Kotāns* (1956–2010), *Guntis Osis*, *Adris Plūksna*, *Otomārs Rihters*, *Astra Rībena-Vītola*, *Jānis Skrastiņš*, *Aivars Šnepsts*, *Juris Tone*, *Einārs Veikša*.

Sportsman *R. Upatnieks* won 13 gold medals. His life ended in a car accident in *Marijampolē*, Lithuania, on 11 May 1994. He was buried in the Riga 1st Forest Cemetery.

*R. Upatnieks*' family is continued by five children – four daughters and a son. His eldest daughter, *Inese Upatniece*, practiced artistic gymnastics as a child, she is a graduate (1978) of RPI Faculty of Engineering Economics. His daughter *Ināra Ādmīne* trained in luge, and for some time her father was her coach. In the 1970's, *I. Ādmīne* achieved good results in sports, for example, in the USSR People's Spartakiad she won the title of the Junior Champion (1978).



**Figure 344.** *R. Upatnieks* at the «Alfa» Plant (1950s).



**Figure 345.** *R. Upatnieks* (first from left) with Olympians *R. Kotāns*, *Z. Ekmanis*, *J. Skrastiņš* and *A. Šnepsts*, returning from the Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo (1984).



**Figure 346.** *Elza* and *Rolands Upatnieks* on the day of their silver wedding with their daughters. From left: *Ināra*, *Inese* and *Inguna* (1978).



## ARNOLDS ŪDRIS (1968)

Cyclist

XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, 1992

Cycling Track

27th/28th place, Points Race, Men

Cycling Road

53rd place, Road Race, Individual, 194 km, Men



Figure 348. A. Ūdris' RPI examination sheet (1986).



Figure 349. Application of the Latvian Cycling Federation with a request to the Rector of RTU Egons Lavendelis to grant an extension of the examination session to A. Ūdris (1990).

Arnolds Ūdris was born on 18 January 1968 in Riga. In 1986, he graduated from *Murjāni* Sports Boarding School, receiving a commendation for his excellent success in algebra. A. Ūdris has always been successful in the exact subjects. Knowledge of mathematics helped the young man during his studies at RPI, which he entered in the summer of 1986.

At the beginning of his studies, he majored in mechanical engineering and complex automation at the Faculty of Instrument Engineering and Automation. A. Ūdris was a two-time Junior Champion in track cycling in 1986, so he had to train intensively and often participate in competitions and sports camps as a member of the LSSR Cycling Team [489].

On 12 November 1986, the Board of the Physical Culture and Sports Committee of the Council of Ministers of the LSSR asked the RPI Rector *Egons Lavendelis* to allow the student A. Ūdris to study according to an individual plan. However, in the summer of 1987, he was drafted into compulsory military service.

In the summer of 1989, A. Ūdris returned from the service and continued his studies, but already on 10 October he wrote the next application – he wanted to continue his studies at Riga General Technical Extramural Faculty majoring in mechanical engineering, because he worked and could not combine full-time studies with sports. In 1990, A. Ūdris passed five exams and six tests, but some of the tests remained unfulfilled. The request of the Executive Director of the Latvian Cycling Federation V. Oļiņš of 19 June 1990 to the RTU Rector indicates the competition, due to which the athlete and student A. Ūdris needed an extension of the examination session.

There were many competitions in the summer of 1990 – from 21 to 28 May, from 31 May to 6 June, from 23 June to 2 July, from 10 July to 28 July. A. Ūdris had to train and work on the days free from competitions. A. Ūdris student's personal file contains a record that on 15 August 1990, it was decided to make him repeat the 1st year of studies [489].

In the next academic year, there was no time for studies either, so on 13 August 1991, A. Ūdris was exmatriculated from RTU. The XXV Games of the Olympiad in Barcelona, Spain, were approaching in 1992, and A. Ūdris was included in the Latvian Olympic Team. In these games he got 27th/28th place in cycling track, as well as 53rd place in the 194 km cycling road (4:35:56) [3; p. 319].

In 1993, A. Ūdris participated in the Affligem «Grand Prix» in Belgium, where he won

the first place in the distance of 123.5 km (3 h 6 min). This was the third victory in a large-scale competition in 1993 [490]. On 19 November 1993, the President of Latvia (1993–1999), *Guntis Ulmanis*, at the *Reiterna* House presented the Badges of Honour of the International Olympic Committee to the Olympians who participated in the Games of the Olympiad in 1992 [491].

After active sports career, *A. Ūdris* currently lives and works outside Latvia.



**Figure 350.** Cyclists after the bronze medal won by *Dainis Ozols* in a 194 km Road Race at the XXV games of the Olympiad in Barcelona (1992). From left: *A. Ūdris*, *D. Ozols*, Coach *Igo Japiņš*, *Arvis Piziks*.



**Figure 351.** Doctor of the Latvian Olympic Team *Kārlis Ullis*, cyclist *A. Ūdris* and javelin thrower *Jānis Lūsis* (1939–2020) at the XXV Games of the Olympiad village in Barcelona (1992).



## LEONĪDS JĀNIS VEDĒJS (1908–1995)

Hockey Player and Agronomist

IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936

Hockey

13th/15th place, Men

*Leonīds Jānis* (in the history of sports – *Leonīds Vedējs*) was born on 12 October 1908 in *Daugavpils*, Latvia. From 1917 to 1918, he lived with his family in Petrograd (at present – St. Petersburg) [492]. From 1922 to 1927, he studied at Riga Russian Secondary School. After graduating from school [493; p. 6.], he entered the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Latvia (UL), graduating it in 1934 with a degree in agronomy [493; p. 7].

*L. J. Vedējs* learned to skate at the age of three. Later, during his school years, he was engaged in skating and playing football [494].

During his studies, *L. J. Vedējs* continued to play sports – as a member of the UL Academic Sports Club (later – «*Universitātes sports*» («University Sport»; «US»)) he played bandy. In 1931, he was included in the Latvian Student Bandy Team and participated in the *SELL (Suomi, Eesti, Latvija, Lietuva)* winter games in Helsinki, Finland. In 1932, the athlete was included in the Riga Team, which played against the Tallinn Team. In the 1930s, the bandy lost its popularity [494], and *L. J. Vedējs* turned to other sports. At the same time, he played football for the 2nd team of Riga Football Club together with *Rūdolfs Slavišens* (1909–1995), who studied economics at the UL, and *Ēriks Pētersons* (1909–1987) [494].

Student *L. J. Vedējs* also played hockey and joined the «US» Hockey Team. He became one of the most prominent hockey players in Latvia, who from 1932 to 1944 participated in all Latvian National Championships [495]. At first, he was a forward, from 1933 – a defender [496]. As a member of the «US», he won the title of the Latvian Hockey Champion twice – in 1937 and 1940.

Hockey player *L. J. Vedējs* also held a record of the interwar period – as a member of the Latvian National Hockey Team, he played in 34 out of 36 games. He also competed in the European (1932) and four (1933, 1935, 1938, 1939) World Championships [497]. As part of «US» Team, he was both a player and a team captain, as well as a coach.

At the IV Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1936, the Latvian National Hockey Team (squad – p. 70) did not win an award, but the opening ceremony of the Games was a special event for the athlete *L. J. Vedējs* – in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, he carried the flag of the Latvian delegation [3; p. 347.]. He was also the Captain of the Latvian National Hockey Team (1935–1936, 1938–1940). Agronomist and hockey player *L. J. Vedējs* was one of the most remarkable hockey defenders in Latvia. He also held a special hockey record – *L. J. Vedējs* participated in international competitions almost 100 times. He was the only athlete who was awarded the «Golden Badge» by the Latvian Winter Sports Union (LWSU) in 1939 [494].



**Figure 353.** *L. J. Vedējs'* application to the Rector of the UL *Mārtiņš Zīle* (1864–1945) on his admission to the university (1927).

In 1938, the Olympian and agronomist *L. J. Vedējs* informed the Latvian public about the games the Latvian National Hockey Team played in Bucharest, Romania, and Prague, Czechoslovakia, writing articles about them in the newspaper «*Brīvā Zeme*» [498, 499].

The work of *L. J. Vedējs* on the reorganization of the farm «*Cukurēni*» in *Jēkabpils* District, *Ābeli* Parish, has been preserved at the Library of the UL. This is probably a diploma paper of student *L. J. Vedējs*.

After graduating from the UL and completing his compulsory military service, *L. J. Vedējs* started working in the Laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture in Riga as the Head of the Bacteriological Department of the Export Port Laboratory. As man with an agricultural education, he specialized in food bacteriology. *L. J. Vedējs*' research in this field has been published in scientific journals on dairy issues [494].

Already in the summer of 1944, *L. J. Vedējs* stopped working in his profession and soon moved to Germany with his family and ended up in the Fischbach Refugee Camp. There he ran a laboratory at a local children's sanatorium, and in 1949 went with his family to the United States of America, where he settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan [494]. In the USA, he began working in a laboratory of some hospital, and a year later, in the city's most modern dairy as the Head of the Bacteriology Laboratory. In his free time, *L. J. Vedējs* taught skating and hockey techniques to young athletes. His son *Dainis*, a student of Michigan State University, played for the university hockey team. His daughter *Jana* represented the same university playing tennis. His grandsons also took part in sports competitions: *Andris* in hockey and tennis, *Nikolajs* in athletics (high jump) and basketball [494, 500].

He retired in 1988 and 46 years later, visited his homeland during the Olympic Week in June 1990. In the following years, the Latvian hockey legend supported hockey in Latvia – sponsored hockey players (women). Together with other old masters at the age of 84, he also tried the ice of Riga Sports Palace [501]. *L. J. Vedējs* also visited his native Latvia in 1992 [502]. He also wrote several articles for the Latvian newspaper «*Laiks*» in America about his impressions of visiting Latvia and about the Latvian hockey players (1989–1992), as well as articles for the Latvian newspapers «*Cīņa*», «*Padomju Jaunatne*» and «*Sports*» (1989–1991).

Sportsman's *L. J. Vedējs* life ended in the USA on 4 February 1995.

*Nikolajs Štūls* (1911–1994), a former football player and a student of the UL Department of Justice, painted the famous hockey player *L. J. Vedējs* at the time of skating with a hockey stick in the costume of the Latvian National Unit in 1955 [502]. In turn, the sculptor, educator and inventor *Miķelis Ģeisauts* (1910–1992) created his bust in marble in the second half of the 1940s [503].

*L. J. Vedējs* is still remembered and honoured. Since 2021, the most valuable player of the exclusion games of the Latvian Hockey Championship has been awarded *L. J. Vedējs* Memorial Award.

In 2009, the son *Edvins Vedējs* (1941–2017), Professor of Chemistry in Latvia and the USA of *L. J. Vedējs* brother *Nikolajs Vedējs* (1912–?), a graduate (1940) of the Faculty of Mechanics of the UL was awarded the title of RTU Honorary Doctor.



**Figure 354.** Player and Captain of the Latvian National Team and the «US» Hockey Team *L. J. Vedējs* in Riga (first half of the 1940s).



**Figure 355.** Old hockey master of Latvia *L. J. Vedējs*, philister of the Student Corporation «*Lettgallia*», in Grand Rapids (1993). A painting on the wall depicting *L. J. Vedējs* in the costume of the Latvian National Team.



## RAIMONDS VILDE (1962)

Volleyball Player and Coach

XXIV Games of the Olympiad in Seoul, 1988

Volleyball

2nd place, Men



Figure 357. R. Vilde's RPI examination sheet (1980).

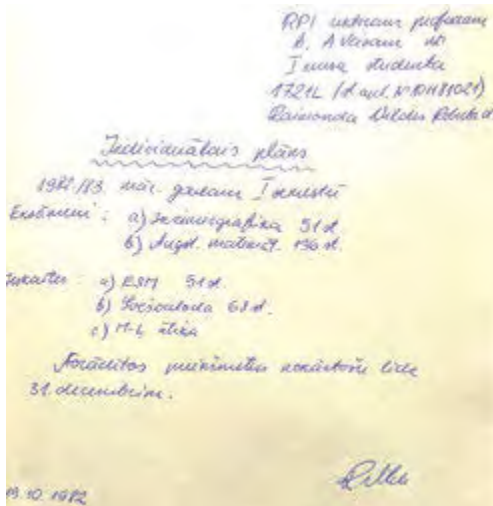


Figure 358. R. Vilde's application to the Rector of RPI Aleksandrs Veiss (1918–1985) requesting to allow him to study according to an individual plan (1982).

*Raimonds Vilde* was born on 19 August 1962 in Riga. He already enjoyed sports in the primary school. He started playing biathlon, but there was no snow for several winters, so the trainings consisted in running. *R. Vilde* won his first prize in sports for his victory in running cross country. *R. Vilde* started playing volleyball in 1976, changing his place of residence.

He studied at *Murjāņi* Sports Boarding School and trained at the Coach *Jānis Labuckis* (1938–2015). As a pupil, *R. Vilde* became the USSR Sports Champion in volleyball, was included in the USSR Junior Team, which became the European Champion (1979), and later also the World Champion (1981). From 1980 to 1991, *R. Vilde* played in the Latvian Masters Team «*Radiotehniks*» [504].

In 1980, *R. Vilde* entered RPI Faculty of Engineering Economics, being a member of the USSR Junior National Team (Coach Genadij Parashin (Геннадий Паршин)) and the LSSR National Team in volleyball. Due to intensive training, competition schedule and prolonged absence, as well as due to injuries and health problems, the young man had to stop studying. After his academic leave, he studied and took tests and exams according to an individual plan.

As a student, *R. Vilde* became the Champion of the USSR Spartakiad (1983), USSR Champion in volleyball (1984), won 3rd place in the USSR Championship (1982). In 1985, he participated in the European Championship, winning 1st place, and in the World Cup, winning 2nd place playing in the USSR National Team. There was little time left to study, *R. Vilde* also had to think about health, so on 21 March 1986, the 2nd year student *R. Vilde* wrote an application to the RPI Rector, Academician *Egons Lavendelis*, asking to expel him from the university.

In the following years, *R. Vilde* became the world (1986) and USSR Vice-Champion (1986, 1987). In 1988, *R. Vilde*, a member of the USSR National Team (Yaroslav Antonov (Ярослав Антонов), Vyacheslav Zaytsev (Вячеслав Зайцев), Evgeni Krasilnikov (Евгений Красильников; 1965–2004), Andrei Kuznetsov (Андрей Кузнецов; 1966–1994), Valery Losev (Валерий Лосев), Yury Panchenko (Юрий Панченко), Igor Runov (Игорь Рунов; 1963–2011), Yuri Sarega (Юрий Сарега; 1965–2005), Oleksandr Sorokalet (Александр Сороколет), Vladimir Shkurikhin (Владимир Шкурихин; 1958–2017), Yuri Cherednik (Юрий Чередник)), played in the XXIV Games of the Olympiad in Seoul, South Korea, and won the Olympic silver medal [58; p. 23].

After that, he continued to compete in the European and USSR Championships, winning high places. Volleyball player *R. Vilde* won the title of the Latvian Champion in



1996–1998. For some time, he was considered as a compatriot by the Greeks as he used to represent the Piraeus Team «*Olympiakos*», which won 2nd place in the European Champions Clubs' Cup and twice won the title of Greek Champion (1991–1995). He played in several Latvian teams, not only in the already mentioned «*Radiotehnikis*» [505], but also in «*Vildoga-Ventspils nafta*» (1995–1998), VSK «*Rīga*» (1999). *R. Vilde* also played outside Latvia – in the Falconara Team «*SiraCucine*» (Italy; 1999) and «*ESS / Pärnu*» (Estonia; 2000).

In 2000, volleyball player *R. Vilde* became the Champion of Estonia. The athlete also was the Vice-President of the Latvian Athletics Federation (2000–2003).

At the end of his athletic career, *R. Vilde* received Level 1 certificate from the *Fédération Internationale de Volleyball* in 2000 and became a coach. He coached Greek and Latvian clubs. At the beginning of the 21st century, the volleyball player had left sports and worked as a project manager for a construction company. In 2005, *R. Vilde* returned to volleyball – he trained the Latvian volleyball championship unit «*Lāse-R/Rīga*» (2005–2013), from 2013 «*RTU Robežsardze/Jūrmala*». He worked as the Head Coach of the Latvian National Men's Volleyball Team (1999–2003; 2005–2017). He was a member of Riga City Council (2008–2009) and the Chair of the Security and Order Committee. He also ran for the next term, but was not elected [425; p. 10.]. In 2013, *R. Vilde* obtained a certificate of Category C sports specialist.

Volleyball player *R. Vilde* has been highly valued – in 1986, he was recognized as the most popular male athlete in Latvia; in 1989, he was awarded the title of Meritorious Sports Master of the USSR; in November 2012, *R. Vilde* was awarded the highest award of the Republic of Latvia – the Order of the Three Stars of the 5th Class for the merits in the development of volleyball in Latvia and contribution to the promotion of the achievements of young athletes.

*R. Vilde* is married, his wife's name is *Irina*, and has two children. His son *Ričmonds* played basketball (was a candidate for the Latvian National Team). His daughter *Evija* also played volleyball (*Murjāņi Sports Gymnasium*). He has three grandchildren [506]. Currently, *R. Vilde* is the Head Coach of the RTU men's volleyball team «*RTU Robežsardze/Jūrmala*» and a Sport Coach at the Health and Sports Centre of the Ministry of the Interior.



**Figure 359.** *R. Vilde* (second row, third from left) at the XXIV Games of the Olympiad in Seoul (1988).



**Figure 360.** *R. Vilde* with the President (2011–2015) of the Republic of Latvia *Andris Bērziņš* at the award ceremony of the Order of the Three Stars (2012).



**Figure 361.** *R. Vilde* and RTU men's volleyball team (2021).

# JĀNIS VILSONS (1944–2018)

Handball Player, Coach and Engineer

XX Games of the Olympiad in Munich, 1972

Handball

5th place, Men



Figure 363. *J. Vilsons'* RPI academic record book (1961).



Figure 364. Copy of *J. Vilsons'* RPI diploma (1967).

*Jānis Vilsons* was born on 10 January 1944 in *Beja, Alūksne* District, Latvia. In 1961, after graduating from *Alūksne* Workers' Youth Secondary School, *J. Vilsons* entered the Day Department of RPI Faculty of Power and Electrical Engineering.

During his studies, he trained in handball at *Harijs Čebrikovs*, a lecturer at the RPI Department of Physical Education and Sports, and participated in many international competitions. *J. Vilsons* was also the goalkeeper of the football team. In the reference to *J. Vilsons* issued by RPI in September 1967, which was then duly discussed at the RPI Primary Organization Committee of the Latvian Communist Party and was necessary for travelling abroad, it was stated that he was a 4th-year student and a handball player in the USSR Team, Captain of the LSSR Handball Team, Sports Master, multiple LSSR and Riga City Champion [507]. Student *J. Vilsons* successfully combined studies and sports, got married, and in December 1967 received a university degree with the qualification of a heat engineer in the manufacturing industry.

In 1968, in Darmstadt, Federal Republic of Germany, *J. Vilsons* and *Andris Gulbis* became World University Champions as part of the USSR Students' Team. At this tournament, the Germans gave *J. Vilsons* the nickname «a man with a lightning reaction» [54; p. 29], while in Latvia he was called «gate man No. 1» [508], who was able to perform miracles.

In 1970, during a competition in Yerevan, Armenia, *J. Vilsons* was named the best goalkeeper of the tournament [509].

*J. Vilsons* became an Olympian after graduating from RPI in 1972. He participated in the XX Games of the Olympiad in Munich, Federal Republic of Germany, as a member of the USSR Handball National Team and became the first Olympian among Latvian handball players. The team won 5th place in the Games of the Olympiad.

Composition of the team: Albert Oganezov (Альберт Оганезов; 1949–2002), Alexander Panov (Александр Панов), Alexander Rezanov (Александр Резанов), Anatoly Shevchenko (Анатолий Шевченко), Ivan Usaty (Иван Усатый), Mykhaylo Ishchenko (Михайло Ищенко), Mikhail Lucenko (Михаил Луценко), Nikolay Semyonov (Николай Семёнов), Valentin Kulev (Валентин Кулев), Valery Gassy (Валерий Гассий; 1949–2004), Vasily Pyin (Василий Ильин; 1949–2015), Vladimir Maksimov (Владимир Максимов), Yuri Klimov (Юрий Климов), Yuri Lagutin (Юрий Лагутин; 1949–1978). The goalkeeper *J. Vilsons* participated in three games.

During the Soviet era, participants in team sports were selected from all over the great country, and they represented the USSR, not individual republics, such as the LSSR. In 1972, *J. Vilsons* represented the team of the Moscow Aviation Institute and was training for the games in Moscow, because it was not easy to get to Moscow for training from Latvia. In 1973, the athlete returned to Latvia. He continued playing handball for the Team «*Celtnieks*» (1974–1978), represented Riga teams «*Daugava*» (1961–1968) and «*Straume*» (1969–1970).

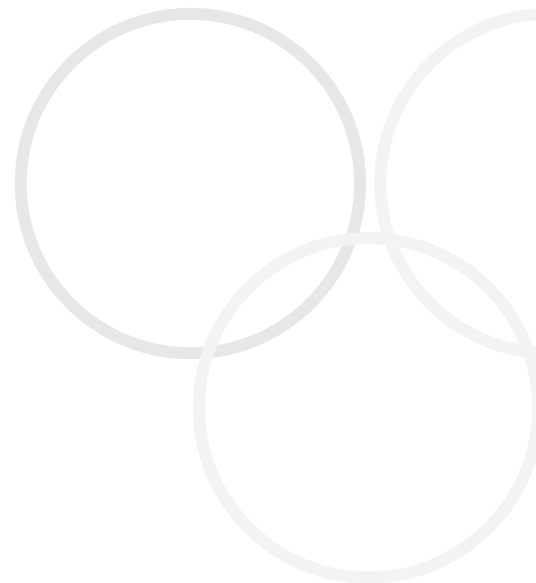
*J. Vilsons* played 44 games for the USSR National Team.

*J. Vilsons* was the first and only Latvian to win the European Handball Federation Champions Cup (1973), and was a two-time USSR Champion.

In addition to his profession and at the end of his athletic career, engineer *J. Vilsons* also performed the duties of a handball coach [3; p. 321] – he trained girls at *Murjāņi* Sports Gymnasium, boys in *Olaine* and boys of the Republic Sports School, who won medals at the USSR Championships. He also trained *Valdis Labanovskis* and *Uģis Vikštrēms* who later became coaches of the Latvian National Team [510].

*J. Vilsons* was also a construction manager and traded in building materials [511].

*J. Vilsons'* life ended on 18 January 2018 at the age of 74.





## DAINIS ZĪLĪTIS (1969)

Weightlifter and Engineer

XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, 1996

Weightlifting

15th place, Light-Heavyweight, Men



Figure 366. *D. Zilītis'* RPI academic record book (1987).



Figure 367. Copy of *D. Zilītis'* RPI diploma (1993).

*Dainis Zilītis* was born on 14 September 1969 in *Saldus*, Latvia. In 1987, he graduated from *Saldus* Secondary School No. 1. Already while at primary school, he was engaged in the work of the Weightlifting Section of *Saldus* Children and Youth Sports School, he also played sports while studying at RPI / RTU.

In the autumn of 1987, *D. Zilītis* entered RPI Faculty of Mechanics and Machine Engineering. In February 1993, he obtained a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, and in June, a qualification of a mechanical engineer in metal stamping technology and machinery [512]. His studies coincided with major changes in the life of the state and the university. The Republic of Latvia was restored and in 1990, the university changed its name – RPI became RTU. Over time, RPI had come to a fairly long official name – Riga Polytechnic Institute named after *Arvīds Pelše* and Awarded with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and in order to get rid of this long Soviet name, the students removed and threw the university's name plaque in the *Daugava* River. *D. Zilītis* was one of the participants of this event.

During his studies, *D. Zilītis* became the Latvian Champion in the weight category up to 75 kg. He achieved significant success in sports after graduating from the university – in 1995, 1996 and 1997 in the weight category up to 83 kg he was the Champion of Latvia. In the European Championships in 1995, he got 13th place; in 1996 – 11th place and in 1997 – 5th place in the clean and jerk exercise.

His first tournament abroad was in Joensuu, Finland, in 1990, where he travelled together with his coach, Assistant Professor of RTU *Alberts Bagojans* and RTU student *Raimonds Bergmanis* [513].

In 1996, in the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta, USA, *D. Zilītis* won 15th place in the weight category up to 83 kg (in total 312.5 kg) [118; p. 257.]. Coaches – *Jānis Andžāns* (RPI graduate), *Oļģerts Bergmanis* (1931–2016).

On 31 August 2005, *D. Zilītis* submitted an application addressed to the RTU Rector with a request to admit him to the Continuing Education Department (CED) of RTU Faculty of Engineering Economics (FEE), as he wanted to study entrepreneurship and management. On 26 June 2008, *D. Zilītis* received the Bachelor of social sciences degree in management.

*D. Zilītis* regularly visited *Saldus* Sports School in his hometown to help organize local and international competitions [514]. In 2004, he participated in the XXVIII Games of the Olympiad Athens, Greece, as a fan [513].

Sportsman and engineer *D. Zilītis* has been the Vice-President of the Latvian Weightlifting Clubs Association. He is currently the Chairman of the Board of «Energy

Stream» Ltd. and «EA Källa AB», a company engaged in the design and construction of utilities in Sweden (heating, ventilation, water, and sewerage).

*D. Zilītis* is married and has four children (three daughters and a son), he also has a grandson. He has lived in Sweden since July 2019, his eldest daughter lives in Riga [513].

In his free time, he supports not only the Latvian hockey but also his son, who is passionate about this game.



**Figure 368.** *D. Zilītis* at the Latvian Championship (late 1990s).



**Figure 369.** *D. Zilītis* at the opening of the XXVI Games of the Olympiad in Atlanta (1996).



**Figure 370.** From left: *D. Zilītis* at the closing ceremony of the XXVI Games of the Olympiad Games in Atlanta together with *R. Bergmanis* (1996).





PARTICIPATION OF RIGA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE /  
RIGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ENGINEERS IN LATVIAN  
AND INTERNATIONAL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS



**Figure 371.** Imprint of the LOC stamp (1936).



**Figure 372.** Conference adopting a resolution on the resumption of the LOC at the Central Sports House «Daugava» in Riga (1988).



**Figure 373.** Opening of the Olympic Week at the *Daugava* Stadium (1990). From left: *Daumants Znatnajs*, *D. Šveica*, *Vilnis Baltiņš*, *Teodors Aldzeris*. At the microphone – *Dainis Ivāns*.

Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) / Riga Technical University (RTU) Olympians, engineers, students, graduates and lecturers also participate in various international and Latvian sports organizations.

The Latvian Olympic Committee (LOC) is one of the organizations that coordinates the Olympic movement in Latvia in cooperation with the Olympic Sports Federations and other sports organizations [515]. It was founded on 23 April 1922 and operated until the summer of 1940. At that time, engineering students were involved not only in the work of the Latvian, but also the Estonian Olympic Committee. Eduard Georg Aule (1878–1947), a graduate (1902) of RPI Department of Commerce, an Estonian banker and politician, was the Treasurer (1923–1940) of the Estonian Olympic Committee.

From 1952 to 1988, athletes from Latvia participated in the Olympic Games as part of the USSR Team. At the beginning of the changes in the Soviet state, on 19 November 1988, the Latvian Provisional Olympic Committee was elected. LOC resumed its activities as a public organization after the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia, and on 18 September 1991, at the session of the International Olympic Committee, the rights of LOC were renewed.

Engineers have been involved in the work of LOC since its inception. For example, a graduate (1914) of RPI Department of Mechanics, later Admiral of the Latvian Navy *Teodors Spāde* (1891–1970) devoted his free time to sports, music and poetry, and was the Editor of the newspapers «*Sports*» and «*Sporta Pasaule*» (1936–1940). *T. Spāde* was one of the first outstanding sailors of Latvia [58; p. 50].

At the LOC renewal conference on 19 November 1988, five candidates were nominated for the position of the President of LOC, including an RPI graduate (1961), lecturer and RTU Rector (1999–2011), Academician *Ivars Knēts* (1938–2019) and an RPI graduate (1965) *Daina Šveica*. Both became members of the Executive Committee of LOC (1988–1992) [30; p. 79]. *D. Šveica* was also the Vice-President of LOC during those years. During his studies, *I. Knēts* was actively involved in sports life and had achieved recognizable results in decathlon [60], was the President of the Latvian Student Sports Federation. A chemical engineer *D. Šveica* repeatedly won the title of the USSR Champion in rowing. In 1963, together with her partner *Maija Kaufmane* she won the first gold medal of the European Championship in the history of the Latvian rowing sport. After that *D. Šveica* won the title of the European Champion in the double sculls three more times (1964, 1965, 1967). *D. Šveica* was accredited to the XXI Games of the Olympiad in Montreal in 1976 as a reservist, but did not compete [3; p. 251]. *D. Šveica* was the Head (1991–1992) of the Physical Culture and Sports Committee of the Republic of Latvia (later the Latvian Sports Department).

From 1988 to 1992, numerous RPI / RTU graduates were individual members of the Latvian Provisional Olympic Committee – *Harijs Čebrikovs* (graduated in 1959), *Gunārs Dukšte* (graduated in 1973), *Vitālijs Gavrilovs* (graduated in 1973), *Dainis Ģeģeris* (graduated in 1973), *Ivars Knēts* (1938–2019; graduated in 1961), *Biruta Ķemere* (1944–2022; graduated in 1969), *Aivars Prūsis* (1938–2002; graduated in 1961), *Aigars Strauss* (graduated in 1986), *Daina Šveica* (graduated in 1965), *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994; graduated in 1965), *Andris Vītols* (1936–2018; graduated in 1969), etc. A chemical engineer *H. Čebrikovs* worked in his profession only for a few years, because his further work was related to sports at RPI / RTU. He was the Head of the Department of Physical Education and Sports (1978–1994) and trained handball



players. In 1968, *H. Čebrikovs* was awarded the title of the Meritorious Handball Coach of the LSSR. Working at the university rich in sports traditions, *H. Čebrikovs* came to the conclusion that «sports, if it is not made a pure means of earning money, is necessary for everyone. It often balances life, sometimes becoming a small model of life and human relationships [102; p. 94].»

In 1992, a new Executive Committee of LOC was elected, and several RPI graduates were elected its members. An RPI graduate *Einars Fogelis* (graduated in 1983) still works there, whereas a basketball player and engineer *Valdis Valters* (graduated in 1988) served on the Executive Committee from 1992 to 1996, when RPI graduates *Māris Gailis* (graduated in 1978), *Aivars Guntis Kreituss* (graduated in 1972) and *Vilis Krištopāns* (graduated in 1980) became its members.

At the next LOC review election session in 2000, other RPI / RTU graduates were elected to replace the previous members, including *Indulis Šķibelis* (graduated in 1973) [197; p. 23].

In the following years, RPI / RTU graduates *Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis* (graduated in 1984), *Atis Sausnītis* (graduated in 1979) [516; p. 11], *Raimonds Bergmanis* (graduated in 1991), *Dainis Dukurs* (graduated in 1980), and other worked in the Executive Committee of LOC.

Since 2012, *E. Fogelis* was the Vice-President of LOC. He was also the Secretary General of LOC (2004–2012), before that he was a member of the Executive Committee of LOC and the Head of the Sports Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia (1994–2004). *E. Fogelis* represented the delegation of the Latvian Olympic Team at the Olympic Games, being the leader of the luge and bobsleigh team, he was also the head of the team delegation several times [347; p. 9]. In the 1980s, he took part in the construction of the *Sigulda* Bobsleigh and Luge Track, where he was able to use the engineering knowledge he acquired at RPI. He was the Chairman of the Board of the Latvian Olympic Unit (a private limited company established in 1994 with the aim to support the training of the best Latvian athletes for the Olympic Games) [517], and was the Vice-President and Secretary General of the International Luge Federation. *E. Fogelis* has been its president since November 2020.

In 2021, *E. Fogelis* was elected to the commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the next venue for the Olympic Winter Games. This is an important event in the history of Latvian sports, as for the first time a representative of Latvia has been elected to IOC commission.

Since 2020, LOC has been led by *Žoržs Tikmers*, the Olympic vice-champion in rowing, who competed in the Games of the Olympiad in 1980 together with RPI graduates *Artūrs Garonskis* (graduated in 1988) and *Juris Bērziņš* (1954–2004; graduated in 1978). *Jānis Kols* is another RPI graduate (1982), who is a member of the Executive Committee of LOC. In 2012, he was nominated for the position of the President of LOC.

The main governing body of the LOC is the General Assembly. The representatives of the Olympic Sports Federations attend the meetings of the Assembly, including such RPI / RTU graduates and academic staff: *H. Čebrikovs* (graduated in 1959; Head of the Department of Physical Education and Sports (1978–1994); Latvian Handball Federation), *A. G. Kreituss* (graduated in 1972; Lecturer at the Faculty of Chemistry of RPI (1972–1978), Latvian Athletics Association), *Indulis Šķibelis* (graduated in 1973;



**Figure 374.** *E. Fogelis* at Latvian School Winter Olympic Festival in Ērgļi (2017).



**Figure 375.** Representatives of the Member States at the XVII Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer during the hoisting of the flag in the Olympic Village (1994). In the foreground – representatives of the Latvian Team. From right: in the first row – lugers *Iluta Gaile*, *Anna Orlova*, *Evija Šulce*; in the second row – Deputy Head of the Latvian delegation *E. Fogelis*, LOC Secretary General *Aldons Vrubļevskis*; in the third row – bobsleigh Coach *Jānis Vanuška*.

Latvian Rowing Federation); academic staff: *Elmārs Beķeris* (1940–2020; RTU Vice-Rector for Studies (2000–2007); USSR Sports Master in archery (1968) [518]; Latvian Archery Federation), *Pēteris Kažemaks* (1937–2015; RTU badminton coach; Latvian Badminton Federation); graduates: *E. Fogelis* (graduated in 1983; Latvian Luge Federation), *M. Gailis* (graduated in 1978; Yachting Union of Latvia), *G. V. Kristovskis* (graduated in 1984; Latvian Athletics Association) [519], *Juris Savickis* (graduated in 1970; Latvian Tennis Union), *A. Strauss* (graduated in 1986; Latvian Swimming Federation), *Zintis Ekmanis* (graduated in 1980; Latvian Bobsleigh Federation [516; p. 25, 197; p 21]; Latvian Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation), *V. Valters* (graduated in 1988; Latvian Basketball Association), *A. Vītols* (1936–2018; graduated in 1969; Latvian Handball Federation), *A. Prūsis* (1938–2002; graduated in 1961; Latvian Athletics Association), and many other.

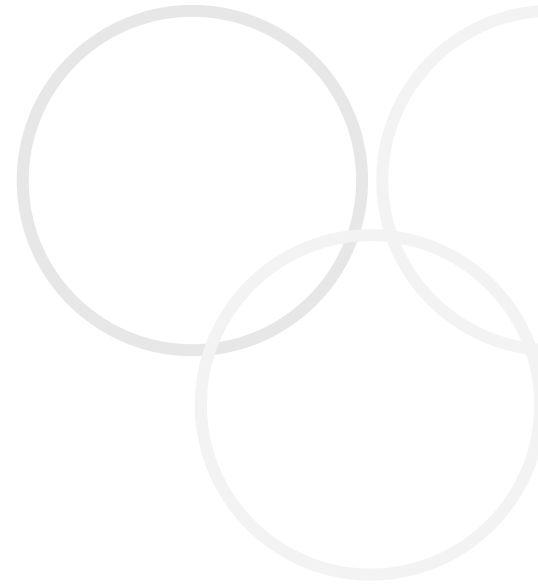
The Latvian Olympic Academy (LOA) works alongside the Latvian Olympic Committee. It is an educational public sports organization that carries out research on the Olympic movement and Olympism. LOA was founded on the initiative of *D. Šveica* in 1989. She was elected its first president (1989–1992) and *I. Knēts* was its Vice-President (1989–1992). RTU graduate (1991) *Raimonds Bergmanis* (in office since 2014) and one of the authors of this scientific monograph – Professor *Alīda Zigmunde* (in office since 2014) are LOA Senators.



**Figure 376.** LOA Review and Election Conference (2018). From left: in the first row – Vice-President *Jānis Zīdens*, Executive Director *Antra Gulbe*, Honorary President *Uldis Grāvis*, Senator *Jānis Melbārdis*, President *Ivans Klementjevs*, Vice-President *Biruta Luika*; in the second row – LOA auditor *Zanna Nazarova*, senators *Irīna Tihomirova*, *A. Zigmunde*, *Agra Brūne*, *Rita Jumiķe*, *Signe Luika*, in the third row – senators *Aleksandrs Astafičevs*, *Ilvīs Ābeļkalns*, *Gatis Ģermanis* and accountant *Biruta Puriņa*.



**Figure 377.** LOA Executive Director *A. Gulbe* and LOA President, Member of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, Olympian *I. Klementjevs* congratulate LOA Senator, RTU Professor *A. Zigmunde* on an important anniversary and present the LOA Memorial Medal for contributing to the research and promotion of Olympic ideas at RTU RCEH Exhibition Hall (2020).



## CONCLUSION



Looking back at the history of the first university in Latvia, it can be concluded that apart from building successful careers in engineering, engineering students have been engaged in almost all Olympic disciplines. The first Olympic medal for 3rd place in clay pigeon shooting was won by an athlete and architect from Latvia – *Haralds Blaus* (1885–1944) 110 years ago, in 1912. That year, four Riga Polytechnic Institute (RPI) students took part in the tournament in clay pigeon shooting at the Games of the Olympiad. Shooting was one of the nine disciplines included in the first relaunched Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896. Shooting is still one of the kinds of sport that the graduates of the technical university are enthusiastic about even 110 years after this significant sports event when the first Latvian athletes participated in the Olympic Games. Three engineering students and three graduates took part in the shooting tournaments. Four of them participated in the Games of the Olympiad in 1912 – graduates *H. Blaus* and *Paul Lieth* (1884–1950) and students *Boris von Pertel* (1888–1955) and *Lev Sitin* (*Лев Сытин*; 1891–1973). *Kārlis Kļava* (1907–1943), a student of the University of Latvia (UL) became an Olympian in 1936. An RPI graduate (1981) *Boriss Timofejevs* participated in three Games of the Olympiad in Men's Skeet (1992, 1996, 2000), winning 6th place in one of them (1996). *Raimonds Bergmanis*, a graduate of RTU (1991), has been the President of the Latvian Shooting Federation since 2021 [520]. Although university students and graduates have not participated in the Olympic Games in shooting, in recent years, both RTU academic staff and students are currently involved in shooting. In addition, shooting is one of the sports included in one of the Olympic sports disciplines – modern pentathlon. In 2014, FEEM graduate (2016) *Olga Mihailova* (b. *Šišlova*) was included in the Latvian Olympic Team as one of the candidates for the Games of the Olympiad in 2016 in the modern pentathlon [521]. Although she did not go to the Games of the Olympiad, the achievements of the athlete and engineer are remarkable – she represented Latvia in several international competitions, including the European Championship in 2014, gaining 29th place in the pentathlon.

One of the most popular Olympic sports at the Games of the Olympiad represented by RPI / RTU / UL students and graduates was water sport (rowing, canoe slalom, canoeing, kayaking, swimming and sailing). 14 athletes participated in this sport – six RPI / RTU graduates, seven RPI / RTU students and one UL student. Six representatives of RPI / RTU (three RPI / RTU graduates, three students) competed in athletics; two students of engineering faculties of the UL – in football; two (one RPI graduate, one student) – in volleyball; four (one UL graduate engineer, two students; one RPI student) – in basketball; one RPI graduate – in handball; three (one student of UL engineering faculty; two RPI / RTU students) – in cycling; two RTU graduates – in weightlifting; one RTU graduate – in judo; one RTU student – in the Greco-Roman wrestling.

Hockey used to be the most popular discipline among engineering students at the Olympic Winter Games. Seven athletes – three graduates and four students of the engineering faculties of the UL participated in this discipline in the interwar period. Six representatives of RPI / RTU (four RPI / RTU graduates and two RPI / RTU students) competed in bobsleigh; two (one UL graduate engineer, one student) – in skiing; three (two students of the engineering faculties of the UL; one RTU graduate) – in Alpine skiing; three (one UL graduate engineer, one student; one RTU student) – in speed skating; two (one RPI graduate, one RTU student) – in luge.


Both the state and educational institutions are proud of the Olympians irrespective of the place they have won, writing their names on the most important pages of their history. Life and experience of the RPI / technical faculties of UL / RTU Olympians make part of the history of the oldest university in Latvia, which is inconceivable without sports and athletes, including Olympians.

For 110 years, from 1912 to 2022, engineering students and graduate engineers participated in 30 Olympic Games and tried their hand at both winter and summer sports, winning one gold, six silver and three bronze medals. RPI / RTU students have competed in all the Games of the Olympiad since 1960, except in 1984, when the USSR boycotted the Games in the USA and athletes from Latvia could not participate in them, as well as in all Olympic Winter Games from 1984 to 2006. During these years, athletes from Latvia have competed in 39 Olympic Games in total – 22 Games of the Olympiad and 17 Olympic Winter Games. Since 2016, RTU students and graduates have also participated in the Paralympic Games. Some of the Olympians-engineers work in their profession and do active sports only in their free time. Some run their own business, others work in sports-related professions. *Aleksandrs Veiss* (1918–1985), the former RPI Rector (1963–1985), used to say that sport is the best elixir of the joy of life [522]. Here it is important to remember what Olympism is – it is the philosophy of life, the way of thinking, the desire for harmony of mind, body and spirit. The ideal of Olympism is a harmonious person in a harmonious society [523], and RTU wants their students, graduates and academic staff to be the persons of this kind.

The authors of this study have identified 65 Olympians and one Paralympian who have studied engineering sciences.

During the study, it was found that three more Olympians – participants in the VIII Games of the Olympiad in Paris, France – had studied engineering for some time. Football player *Kārlis Bone* (1899–1941) began his studies at the Faculty of Chemistry of the Latvian Higher School in 1920, but in 1929, he graduated from the Department of Justice. Athlete *Gvido Jekals* (1904–1969) started studying chemistry at the University of Latvia but graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in 1931. In turn, the athlete *Artūrs Gedvillo* (1904–1983) was given the position of a doctor [3; p. 290], although he studied at the Department of National Economy of the University of Latvia.

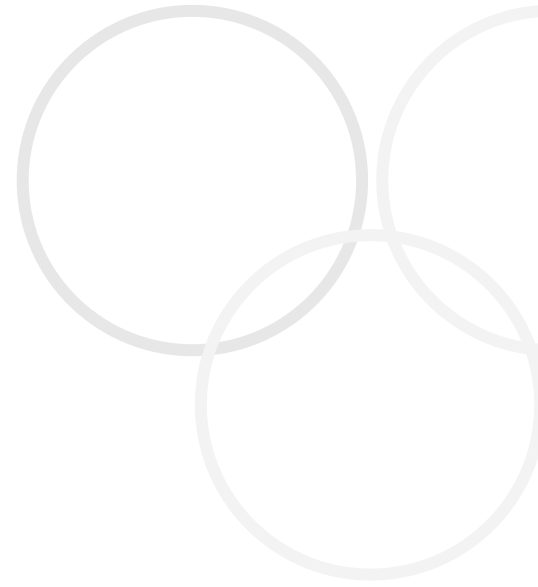
32 Olympians and one Paralympian hold an engineering degree, two of them are pursuing their studies at the next level. While studying engineering, many have acquired and are still gaining knowledge that can be used to improve sports equipment, to build sports fields, competition tracks and technical equipment for athletes. Scientists and students alike conduct research in these areas at RTU institutes and laboratories. Several engineers have become coaches for the athletes, including the Olympians. For example, RPI graduates *Zintis Ekmanis* (graduated in 1980), *Dainis Dukurs* (graduated in 1980), *Valdis Tīliks* (1934–2008; graduated in 1965), *Rolands Upatnieks* (1932–1994; graduated in 1965) trained Olympians in winter sports. One of the Olympic disciplines – bobsleigh – came to Latvia thanks to «the father of bobsleigh» *R. Upatnieks*. Latvian bobsledders, including engineering students and graduates, have been fighting for Olympic medals for almost 40 years. The second Olympic discipline – skeleton – has also developed and become popular thanks to *D. Dukurs*, a graduate of RPI, «the father, founder and coach of the Latvian skeleton [524].»



Among the engineering students there are also those who were both RPI students and lecturers – *Cēzars Ozers*, *Vitolds Barkāns*. Harald Hahne (1892–1940), RPI graduate (1918) turned to inventing. RTU Master (2006) *Irina-Latve Slesarenoka* pursued a PhD and was involved in scientific work. Rarely have any of the Olympic graduates succeeded in completing their studies on time. Bobsledders *Z. Ekmanis* and *Jānis Silarājs* (graduated in 2001), a weightlifter *R. Bergmanis*, a rower *Andris Reinholds* (graduated in 1994), and a sprint canoer *Krists Straume* (graduated in 2011) graduated from RPI / RTU in five years. *Ēriks Rags* (graduated in 2011) was studying and graduated from RTU in the longest time – in 18 years. A volleyball player *Pāvels Seļivanovs* received his RPI diploma after 14 years of study (graduated in 1983). For many different reasons, the duration of studies was quite different – a speed skater *Alfons Bērziņš* (1916–1987) entered the UR in 1942, but the events of World War II interrupted his studies. A basketball player, a UL student *Rūdolfs Jurciņš* (1909–1947) was repressed after 15 years of studies, others studied for several years still hoping to graduate. In academic year 2021/2022, Olympians *Daniils Bobrovs* and *Ketija Birzule* are studying at RTU.

Many former records have been broken, and we are still proud of our swimmers – RTU graduates *Daniils Bobrovs* and *Aļona Fokina*, whose records still remain unbeaten.

Latvian athletes are training for the next starts, including the Olympic Games. RTU students-bobsledders *Dāvis Kaufmanis* and *Lauris Kaufmanis*, a skeleton racer *Dārta Estere Zunte* were also included in the Latvian Olympic Team, having applied for participation in the Olympics Winter Games in 2022, but did not participate in them. Several sports awards have been named after UL/RPI engineering students: *Biruta Ķemere's* Traveling Award was presented in canoe slalom in the 1970s; the Commemorative Award of *Renāte Lāce* for young people in three athletic disciplines was established in 1970 and was presented until 2010. In the 1990s, the «*Daugavas Vanagi*» in the USA wanted to establish *Kārlis Kļava* Traveling Memorial Award in shooting sport, it was started to be presented in Latvia only at the beginning of the 21st century. In the first half of the 2000s, the Traveling Cup of *Dzintars Lācis* in cycling was established. Since 2021, the most valuable player of the exclusion games of the Latvian Hockey Championship has been awarded *L. J. Vedējs* Memorial Award. May the number of RTU Olympians and Olympic medals continue growing in the next 110 years!



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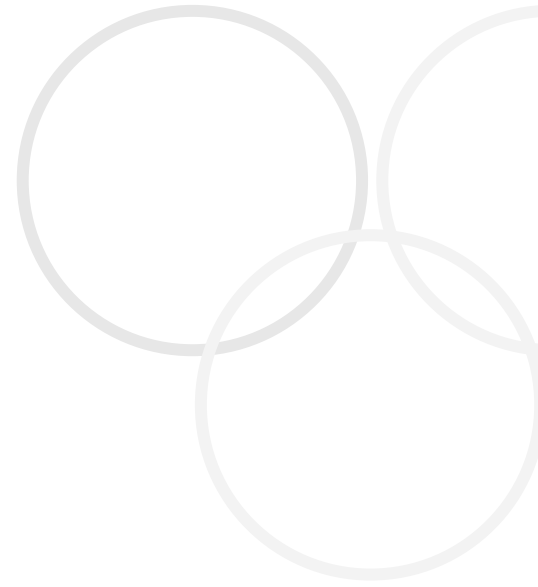


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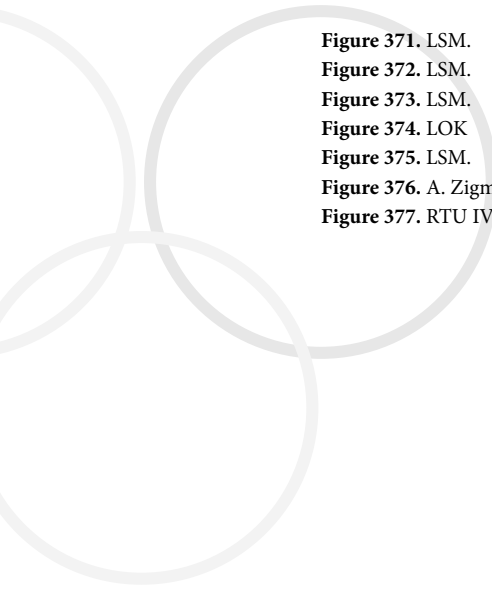
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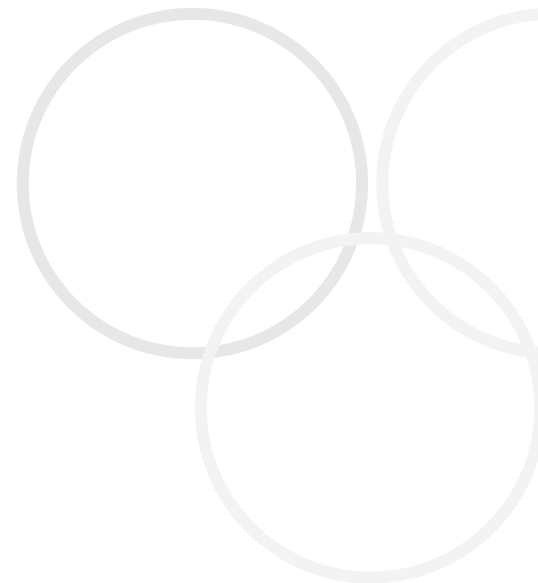
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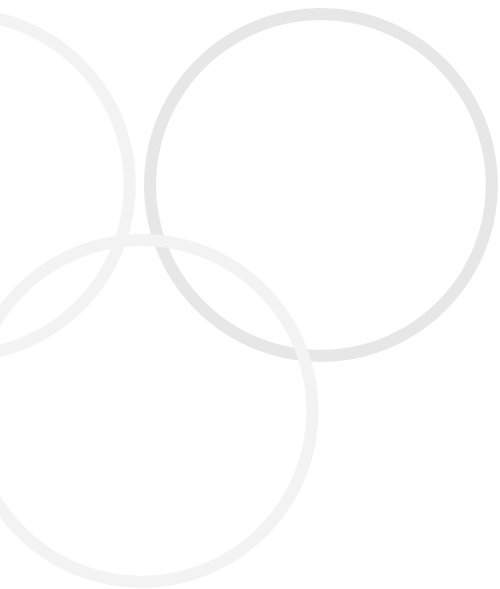


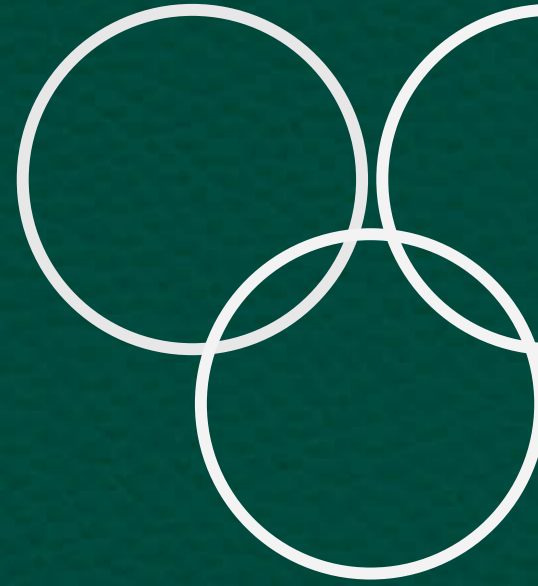
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## Transcripts of abbreviations

CM	Cēsu muzejs Cēsis Museum
LNA	Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs National Archives of Latvia
LNB	Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka National Library of Latvia
LOK	Latvijas Olimpiskā komiteja Latvian Olympic Committee
LSM	Latvijas Sporta muzejs Latvian Sport Museum
LVA	Latvijas Valsts arhīvs Latvian State Archives
LVVA	Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs Latvian State Historical Archives
Personāllieta	Personal File
Privātais arhīvs	Private Archive
RTU arhīvs	RTU Archive
RTU IVPC VM	Rīgas Tehniskā universitātes Inženierzinātņu vēstures pētniecības centra Vēstures muzejs History Museum of Research Centre for Engineering History of Riga Technical University







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# ALĪDA ZIGMUNDE

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