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Dissertation abstract

Behavioral patterns of stakeholders in the marketing management of speedway clubs (exemplified with Speedway Ekstraliga)

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In the 21st century, sports clubs competing in professional leagues are taking on the business form of a free-market enterprise engaged in multifaceted activities. Sports have long since been subjected to processes of professionalization and commercialization, which has transformed the carefree and pure competition of athletes into a competition of clubs and organizations to achieve success, which is not only related to the number of medals or trophies won, but more to obtaining the best possible economic result.

Today, sports clubs are institutions, often large enterprises with global reach, which not only compete in the sports arena, but also serve as important players in the business market. Managing such organizations requires a comprehensive strategy that takes into account both sports and business aspects. Noteworthy, clubs also operate in a dynamic environment, where competition is fierce, the sports result is quite often a random outcome, and the expectations of stakeholders such as fans, sponsors, and the media are high.

Although speedway appears to be a rather simple sport in its principles, it is at the same time a fascinating sport that attracts a wide range of supporters in our country. Not only through the struggle of the daredevils, who often elbow each other even at speeds exceeding 120 km/h, but primarily because of the marketing potential. The litmus test of marketing potential is the sport's position in the world motorcycle federation FIM, which considers speedway one of the most important disciplines in the palette of motorsports under its jurisdiction.

The unique status of the sport in our country is reflected in the Speedway Ekstraliga, which is the strongest and best-paid speedway league in the world. It is on Polish tracks that riders from all over the world can earn astronomical salaries for speedway (unattainable in any other country) and be admired by huge crowds of fans. Undoubtedly, thanks to its stakeholders, e.g. through media coverage, as well as the commitment of significant resources by sponsors, speedway sport has undergone an incredible transformation, which has not only changed the form of the clubs' operations, but also affected the stadium infrastructure or the development of youth training programs.

Speedway Ekstraliga clubs, which are the subject of analysis in this dissertation, have transformed their activities in recent years into a business generating multimillion-dollar revenues. Sports shows organized by Poland's top speedway clubs are a full-fledged product,

riders become commodities and "faces" of advertising for products and services, and thanks to television broadcasts, almost all available advertising space in speedway arenas is commercialized to promote companies or brands.

Speedway sport is a sports discipline, which cannot boast such a rich output of analysis, articles or theoretical studies, including in economic terms, as, for example, soccer or volleyball. Analyzing the national, as well as international scientific literature, one cannot help but notice that there are still significant research opportunities with regard to the processes taking place in so-called black sports. The author, who from 2005 was an activist and then a full-time employee of a speedway club and manager of Speedway Ekstraliga players, has attempted to analyze the activities of clubs in the context of their relations with stakeholders.

This dissertation is theoretical and empirical in nature, as the empirical research was preceded by an in-depth literature study. As noted earlier, the lack of a body of literature and scholarly work on speedway (one of the most popular sports in Poland) was the impetus for defining the research gap and undertaking our own empirical research.

The author of the dissertation puts forward the thesis that the behavioral patterns of Speedway Ekstraliga stakeholders and the relations between them play an important role in the marketing management of speedway clubs, and, on the other hand, the marketing activities of these clubs influence the formation of these patterns. In addition, the author tries to prove that the club's relations with stakeholders should be defined based on their individual character, shaped by the specific characteristics of the environment in which a speedway club operates. Following the research path, the author also tries to find the key factors influencing the relations of external stakeholders with the club, as well as anomalies when relations with one of the defined stakeholder groups are dominant over others.

On this basis, the author formulated four main research questions:

- Q1 - What types of stakeholder behavior patterns exist?
- Q2 - What are the characteristics of the behavior patterns of different stakeholder groups?
- Q3 - What information about the stakeholders of speedway clubs and their behavior patterns is used in the marketing management of speedway clubs?

- Q4 - What are the models of marketing management of speedway clubs?

The dissertation is divided into five sections. The first chapter is a literature review of the current state of knowledge on how the sports market works, the basic concepts of the theory of sports club stakeholders and the conditions related to marketing management of sports entities.

The second chapter is devoted to presenting a historical outline and the importance of stakeholders in shaping the operations of Speedway Ekstraliga. It compares the changing relationships of speedway clubs with stakeholders over the years. In the following part, the factors that determined the creation of a fully professional speedway league were discussed, and the entity managing them and its current structure were characterized.

The empirical part presents the results of our own research, derived from two types of research: qualitative (chapter three), in the form of individual in-depth interviews, and quantitative (chapter four), i.e. survey research using a survey questionnaire. The qualitative research included eight representatives - two from each of the four defined stakeholder groups, namely fans, sponsors, media and local government units. On the other hand, survey research, thanks to the help provided by clubs, speedway riders, representatives of leading sports editors in Poland or the intercession of the Mayor of Leszno, was carried out on a group of 300 fans, 100 sponsors, 100 media representatives and 10 representatives of local government units.

Chapter five was devoted to the evaluation of four defined management models of Speedway Ekstraliga speedway clubs in gaining sporting and business advantages. The clubs were pointed out as enterprises that implement the defined management models, their characteristics were presented, their products and the correlation of the sports and economic result were discussed. The final section presents a summary and conclusions on the potential directions of development of Speedway Ekstraliga.

The sports market can be defined as a subsystem of the broader market, created by buyers (final and institutional), whose needs related to the use of sports are satisfied by entities offering sports products, having the form of services, material goods, information, places or other people . The sports market is also an integral part of the Polish economy, whose annual value is estimated at about 47 billion zlotys, which is about 2.1% of GDP .

The first publications on the consideration of the professional sports market come from the United States and date back to the 1950s. Simon Rottenberg's article published in 1956 in the pages of the renowned *Journal of Political Economy* is considered a precursor publication. Rottenberg conducted an analysis of the market of baseball players at the time, but his conclusions allowed defining professional sports in economic terms.¹ Z. Waskowski in his considerations points out other elements that distinguish the sports market from traditional markets:

1. sports is an activity based on physical activity, which makes it an intangible product from a marketing perspective, subjectively evaluated by consumers who actually purchase the experience.

2) Sport triggers intense emotions in consumers, strengthening social ties, especially since it is mostly consumed in public. Moreover, it is a universal medium, covering various aspects of life - geographical, demographic, cultural, economic, religious, political, etc.

3 The outcome in sports competitions is unpredictable, and the competition itself is unique. Therefore, managers in sports organizations cannot guarantee specific final results, as well as the level of competition. This has important consequences in the process of ensuring the quality of services provided.

4 Sports organizations often cooperate and compete with each other at the same time. Cooperation is inherent in the creation of organizational structures (e.g., sports associations), which are necessary for competition between teams. This, in turn, is due to the nature of sports, based largely on competition to win over the opponent.

5 Sports organizations are much more exposed to public scrutiny than typical commercial enterprises. Many consumers in the sports market consider themselves experts in the field. They show great interest in the activities of the sports club they support and want to actively participate in its life. Their opinions, views and comments are readily expressed publicly, often through social media, so their influence can be very significant on managers' decisions and clubs' marketing strategies.²

¹ S. Rottenberg, *The baseball players' labor market*, „*Journal of Political Economy*” 1956, Vol. 64, no. 3, pp. 242-258.

² Z. Wańkowski, *Wykorzystanie teorii interesariuszy w procesie kształtowania strategii marketingowej organizacji sportowych*, „*Zeszyty Naukowe SGGW, Polityki Europejskie, Finanse i Marketing*” 2015, vol. 13 (62), p. 164.

According to Sznajder³, both classical concepts of sports business and modern conditions allow us to understand the specific features of this market, among which are:

- diversification of sports organizations - supply-side players in the sports market show considerable diversity not only in terms of structure, but also in terms of the scale of operations. This includes sports clubs, federations, as well as other sports-related institutions, which can operate at different levels, from local to international;

- the heterogeneous goals of sports organizations, which are often more different than those of companies in other industries. These can range from sports goals, such as winning titles or succeeding on the international stage, to business goals, such as increasing revenue or attracting new sponsors;

- dual dualism, meaning that sports organizations operate in both the sports market (individual consumers) and the advertising and sponsorship market (with institutional buyers). Clubs use B2C and B2B business models, selling products in both the primary (stadiums) and secondary (media) markets;

- Mutual competition and interdependence - professional sports clubs compete with each other for sports success, but at the same time are dependent on each other, creating common brands, such as Speedway Ekstraliga. Competition and mutual cooperation are inherent in their activities;

- immediate response-Decisions made by club management under the influence of current sports results are immediately commented on by both fans and the media. The world of sports is often an object of intense public and media interest, which forces a quick response to events;

- differentiated product offerings - sports organizations work for consumers, such as sports fans, and institutional buyers, such as companies marketing through sports or television stations;

- the strong attachment and loyalty of sports fans to the club, which often results in real influence on the club's activities;

- regulation of the sports market, which means that clubs must comply with both general laws and special regulations governing the sports industry.

³ A. Sznajder, *Charakterystyka rynku sportu profesjonalnego*, „Gospodarka Narodowa” 2007, nr 10, p. 48-49.

Sports clubs build a network of relationships, choosing entities with which cooperation is necessary for them to achieve their goal of organizing a sporting event at the highest level⁴. As P. Kuźbik notes, the sports market in the 21st century has also become a platform on which a huge amount of information is generated, transmitted and stored, as well as the creation of complex relationships between participants in this market⁵.

Professional sports clubs, such as Speedway Ekstraliga clubs, consisting of employees working together to achieve a common goal, are relatively isolated systems that have their own boundaries and environment. Defining the boundaries of a system makes it possible to describe its interior by identifying its components and the links between them, and furthermore to separate the system from its environment.

As noted by Z. Pawlak and A. Smoleń⁶, it is commonly expressed in system sciences that the surroundings of a system are everything that does not belong to the system, but remains in noticeable relations with it. Taking into account the type of objects that constitute the specific environment of sports organizations, two segments should be distinguished:

- the closer environment (called the micro-environment), which includes other organizations with which the organization has a significant relationship, such as sports associations, professional league management companies, fans, sponsors, the media, the broader public administration, and competitors, that is, other sports clubs operating in the same sport or in a similar geographic area;

- further environment (called macro environment) includes conditions of general nature, in particular, phenomena and processes occurring outside the organization, but having a significant impact on it. They are formed by demographic, economic, cultural, international, political, legal, social or technical conditions.

In determining the mutual influences between the participants in the sports market, it is worth using the existing scientific knowledge of stakeholder theory or relationship marketing. Stakeholder theory, the foundations of which were developed in the 1970s by R.E. Freeman⁷, directly relates to the issue of strategic management of enterprises. Its most important premise

⁴ Z. Waśkowski, O. Kijewska-Ratajczak, *Relacje z interesariuszami na rynku wydarzeń sportowych*, Poznań 2023, p.120.

⁵ P. Kuźbik, *Sport jako platforma komunikacyjna w społeczeństwie informacyjnym*, „Ekonomiczne Problemy Usług” 2016, nr 123, p. 92.

⁶ Z. Pawlak, A. Smoleń, *Strategie zawodowych klubów sportowych w Polsce*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 147-149.

⁷ R.E. Freeman, *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*, Pitman Publishing, Boston 1984, p.48.

is the recognition that in the environment of each enterprise there are many entities that have an interest (hence the name stakeholders) in how and with what effect it operates. These stakeholders interact with the enterprise, as well as with each other, and can have a real impact on what decisions are made in the enterprise.⁸

Marketing management of a sports club should be seen as the creation and monitoring of: planning and implementation of ideas, pricing and promotion of products and services, aimed at leading to the satisfaction of the expectations and needs of target groups of customers and institutions. P. Matecki⁹ distinguishes three levels of processes that are the foundation of marketing management of a sports club.

Level I - main processes:

- directly generate added value,
- These include marketing, sales activities, design of new products, services and distribution,
- the customer in the B2C (sponsor) or B2B (fan) market perceives them most easily and through them assesses the quality and efficiency of the entire enterprise,
- They can be:
 - o organizing and implementing training,
 - o conducting marketing activities,
 - o distribution of tickets and passes,
 - o commercialization of advertising space.

Level II - auxiliary processes:

- indirectly generate added value,

⁸ E. Rudawska, Interesariusze w marketingu relacji na rynku usług sportowych, „Ekonomiczne Problemy Usług” 2011, nr 79, s. 157-158.

⁹ P. Matecki, Strategia rozwoju organizacji sportowej – opracowanie, wdrożenie, kontrola [w:] Marketing sportowy. Nowoczesne aspekty zarządzania sportem, pod red. P. Godlewskiego, P. Mateckiego, Poznań 2019, s. 225-229.

- they include infrastructure management, warehousing activities, quality control, logistics before and during the event, staff recruitment and evaluation, financial and accounting services,

- the customer does not directly perceive their quality, so these processes have less impact on shaping the external image of the organization,

- They can be:

- o maintenance and upkeep of facilities,

- o recruitment,

- o facility security,

- o accounting services.

Level III - management processes:

- have a strategic impact on how value is generated (mission, goals, strategy, market position),

- regulate main and auxiliary processes,

- their main task is to define the mission, strategy and principles of the entire organization,

- among them, it is worth noting:

- o creation of the club's vision and mission,

- o strategic management,

- o resource management .

Ekstraliga Żużlowa Ltd. is a business entity operating in the form of a commercial law company, which was established by notarial deed on June 21, 2006 to conduct competitions in the form of a professional league. Representatives of the Polish Motor Association and eight clubs: BTŻ Polonia Bydgoszcz, CKM Włókniarz Częstochowa, KS Toruń, KS Unia Leszno, RKM Rybnik, Unia Tarnów ŻSSA, WTS Wrocław and ZKS Stal Rzeszów, which in 2006 competed in the highest class of speedway competition, put their signatures to the above-mentioned document.

It is worth emphasizing that the new entity did not initially take over all the rights resulting from running speedway competitions, because the Polish Motor Association was still responsible for, for example, granting licenses to clubs entitling them to take part in the competition. The original agreement covered the running of the competition in the years 2007–2009, and also gave the company many new responsibilities, such as searching for a title sponsor for the competition, selling advertising packages and negotiating contracts with television broadcasters. However, the company could operate on two levels - sports and business. The league commissioner was responsible for the former, and the president or other persons designated by him were responsible for the latter.

Ekstraliga Żużlowa sp. z o. o. next, taking over full rights from PZM, it had to prepare, for example, a body competent to resolve disputes between clubs or regarding violations of competition regulations. It was for this purpose that the Adjudicating Commission of the League was established, composed mostly of people with appropriate legal knowledge. It is also worth mentioning Andrzej Polkowski, a former activist of Polonia Bydgoszcz and the Polish Motor Association, who certainly brings experience in running a club or organizing sports events to its deliberations.

Decisions (such as the introduction of KSM or the expansion of the league to 10 teams) made among the partners of the Speedway Ekstraliga were not unanimous. Moreover, clubs often disagreed with the decisions of the League Commissioner or even the League Adjudicating Committee, especially when it came to imposing penalties for infringements. This meant that the clubs, as a kind of revenge, were able to torpedo resolutions and reduce the effectiveness of the company's operations. Given this situation, the position of president of the company's Management Board was offered to Wojciech Stępniewski, president of the speedway club from Toruń, and the current president, Ryszard Kowalski, was entrusted with the position of vice-president. It was believed that Stępniewski, having extensive experience

in running the club and good contacts with other club presidents, would create a new platform for cooperation. The new president also had a huge advantage in the form of his young age, enormous energy and incredible effectiveness in acquiring sponsors.

The year 2014 brought an unexpected turn of events and an almost revolutionary change in the company's shareholding structure. The clubs, which could not reach an agreement on many aspects related to league management, agreed to the Polish Motor Association taking over a majority stake of shares.

The company itself is trying to build the Speedway Ekstraliga brand not only through high sports level, but also through CSR activities and initiatives such as "Speedway Ekstraliga inne" or "Eko PGE Ekstraliga". It is worth emphasizing that the second project is the result of an agreement with the key stakeholder of the competition - Polska Grupa Energetyczna S.A. Thanks to its signing, the company managing the competition, as well as Speedway Ekstraliga clubs, will conduct educational activities aimed at raising ecological awareness among speedway enthusiasts, as well as in the field of CSR, regarding the protection of the natural environment. Additionally, as part of its social media activities, PGE Ekstraliga will use video materials promoting ecological attitudes. The assumptions of cooperation for the coming years are consistent with the business strategy of the PGE Group, one of the pillars of which is environmentally friendly energy, included in the slogan: "PGE We lead in the green change".

With the development of young speedway riders in mind, a new speedway league called Ekstraliga U24 was initiated in the 2022 season, addressed to speedway riders under 24 years of age. The aim of the new competition is to increase opportunities for Polish players and support the development of young talents from abroad through regular starts. All clubs participating in the main league are obliged to participate in this competition, which is part of the "Ekstraliga 3.0" strategy presented in 2021. The U24 Ekstraliga focuses mainly on the training aspect, constituting the central point of the training pyramid. By joining the Ekstraliga 3.0 project, clubs received more funds for training and creating the U24 team, namely increased by PLN 4.5 million compared to 2021, which was the result of signing a new agreement for the sale of television broadcasting rights and extending the agreement with the title sponsor competitions.

Ekstraliga Żużlowa Ltd. in its marketing offer, it offers the possibility of integrating sponsoring activities with promotion mix components. Each partner, including the sponsor,

thanks to cooperation with the entity managing the best speedway league in the world, receives a number of promotional opportunities that are not only limited to classic sponsorship, but also use the Internet and its multi-sided communication and are tailored to its individual needs.

As J.Kończak notes, in the past it was primarily the largest media that shaped the views of fans, and all communication was based on a one-sided message. In the era of universal access to the Internet and the popularity of social media, each Speedway Ekstraliga fan with a mobile device in hand can become a content generator. The media themselves and journalists are also changing, especially the young generation who not only work in the media, but are broadcasters themselves through their own profiles or channels on social networking sites. These changes are also accompanied by new, shortened forms of communication and synthetic language, known for example from the X platform (formerly Tweeter). Therefore, Ekstraliga Żużlowa sp. z o.o. attaches great importance to communication via the Internet and social media, because in this way it can engage various groups of stakeholders: fans, sponsors and journalists.¹⁰

The results of the conducted research, literature studies, as well as face-to-face interviews indicate the need to expand the knowledge of marketing management among speedway clubs not only in Poland. Nowadays, when the condition of world speedway is not the best, the cost of the sport is getting higher and higher, and the number of active riders is decreasing, Poland is becoming by far the most developed speedway country in the world. Speedway Ekstraliga attracts like a magnet the best riders of the globe, clubs invest millions of zlotys each season, and speedway riders are applauded by the largest crowds of fans coming to the stadiums. Bartosz Zmarzlik outclasses other riders in the FIM Speedway Grand Prix series, having won four individual world championship titles, and Polish clubs have the most promising speedway riders on the globe.

As Pawlak and Smoleń note¹¹, in the typical model of strategic management of professional sports clubs in practice, the positional, resource and evolutionary approaches are of particular importance. The transfer of knowledge from theory to practice for these concepts is highly visible and intense. On the other hand, from many professional sports clubs in

¹⁰ J. Kończak, *Komunikacja sponsoringowa w sporcie XXI wieku*, Warszawa 2020, pp. 156-157.

¹¹ Z. Pawlak, A. Smoleń, *Strategie zawodowych klubów sportowych w Polsce*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 487-488

Poland, one can learn methods and ways of operation that enable survival, as well as development, in the case of relatively low equity or lack of fixed assets.

It seems, therefore, that one of the best ways that should accompany the managers of speedway sports, and especially speedway clubs, should be to think of the sports organization as a system of occurring processes, or its network of relationships with stakeholders. They (fans, sponsors, media, local government units) are the main source of financing for clubs. Therefore, it is necessary to learn the characteristics of their behavior patterns, and then choose the optimal model of club management, which will allow to achieve satisfactory economic and sports results. On the other hand, at the operational level, the dissection of activities into factors, the analysis of the responsibilities of individual organizational units and the choice of the method of communication with the environment should take place, which should have a positive impact on the further functioning of the club.

Schemes can be defined as typical stakeholder group behavior in the speedway sports market. However, we cannot claim that stakeholders are guided by patterns, but certain patterns are revealed in their behavior as typical, repetitive features and manifestations of behavior regarding:

- acquisition of products offered by Speedway Ekstraliga clubs,
- participating directly and indirectly in sports events,
- formulation of expectations regarding cooperation with their favorite club, as well as the entity managing the Speedway Ekstraliga.

On the basis of qualitative, quantitative research, four behavioral patterns of the following stakeholder groups were identified:

- fans,
- sponsors,
- representatives of LGU,
- media representatives.

The main motives for fans' participation in Speedway Ekstraliga matches are the internal need and desire to experience sports emotions and traditions brought from home or

the local environment. Clubs should provide the best conditions for watching matches, such as excellent visibility, proximity to the track and comfortable seating, and use the club's history and traditions in communication.

The decline in direct fan attendance at games (30.1% of respondents attended up to two games in the previous season) calls for an analysis of the reasons and deeper reflection on elements such as pricing policies, TV broadcasts, alternative leisure activities and the effects of pandemonium.

The large share of visiting fans (45% of those surveyed) suggests the need for long-distance tickets, adequate parking and efficient transportation. Fans often go to matches with friends and prefer unnumbered tickets, indicating the need for group tickets and separate parts of the stands without numbering. Additional attractions (animations and contests) attract fans earlier to the stadium, increasing revenue from catering and club souvenir sales. Most fans identify visually with the club), and their activity on social media (90.7% on Facebook) is based on a desire for a sense of community and information sharing. TV broadcasts are watched by 98% of those surveyed, which requires clubs and players to be active, open to interviews and to combine stadium and TV advertising.

Speedway Ekstraliga clubs effectively build long-term relationships with sponsors, offering products that meet their needs and enable effective communication with their target group. This is evidenced by the high percentage of respondents who have worked with the club for at least 10 years. Although the monetary nature of the cooperation is dominant, the openness of clubs to barter or image support should be emphasized, which attracts the interest of smaller sponsors.

The main expectations of sponsors are : to increase sales and to arouse positive associations. In this regard, clubs should create products that activate sponsors' customers to buy more and improve their image, such as by renting VIP boxes with additional services. As many as 67% of surveyed sponsors see clubs and Speedway Ekstraliga matches as an opportunity to gain new business contacts, which makes it necessary for clubs to organize more frequent sponsor integration meetings outside sporting events. Most sponsors combine promotion at the stadium with advertisements in the media. Clubs should integrate sponsorship offers with proposals from media partners, which will increase coverage and enhance interaction in the "sponsorship triangle": club, sponsor, media.

Local government units (LGUs) mostly (90%) do not want to take stakes in clubs, but support participants in the Speedway Ekstraliga by promoting the city, supporting the training of children and young people, and competitions for sports and cultural tasks. Their main goal is to directly support the clubs in achieving the desired sports level (80% of those surveyed) and to provide entertainment for residents. In this regard, clubs should dialogue with LGU through active participation in the deliberations of local sports councils and sports committees of city councils.

It is worth noting that LGUs provide clubs with varied financial support (from 0.5 million to more than 4 million zlotys) and by partially covering the costs of maintaining facilities. The organization of sporting events of international importance is important to them, which is why they co-finance the cost of the license to organize the FIM Speedway Grand Prix, reaping financial and promotional benefits. TSU also expects to cooperate with clubs and Ekstraliga Żużla sp. z o.o. on strategic investments in sports facilities, with the aim of proper prediction of multimillion-dollar investments well in advance (at least 24 months) and within the framework of the municipality's multi-year financial plan.

The media representatives surveyed need adequate working conditions and infrastructure. Clubs and TSUs should invest in preparing more commentator booths, a covered press sector, and providing high-speed Internet connections at stadiums. Media representatives note favoritism toward selected stakeholder groups, and 44% of respondents expect transparent rules regarding accreditation, access to information and players.

One in four respondents was a representative of a media patron of a Speedway Ekstraliga club, and rated very highly the cooperation with clubs (4.68/5), which brings mutual financial and promotional benefits. The media expect the implementation of modern solutions in Speedway Ekstraliga clubs. Among them, we can mention: a unified portal for accreditation (accreditto), cyclic press conferences and the provision of dedicated information and audio materials. Unfortunately, as many as 66% of respondents do not measure audience reach, listenership or the number of coverage views, making it difficult for clubs to assess the number of indirect fans and the effectiveness of marketing efforts

Speedway Ekstraliga clubs insufficiently analyze and use knowledge of their stakeholders, but those that do (Lublin, Wrocław, Gorzów Wlkp., among others) reap tangible benefits and satisfaction from their customers. As evidence of this can be seen in the statement of an interviewed sponsor from Lublin, who felt valued as a club donor and highly

praised the flexibility but individual contact of local club representatives. Despite the fact that the Lublin activists have one of the smallest and oldest stadiums in Poland, they were able to build an efficient system that takes care of the various needs of their stakeholders. That need of a journalist would be a dedicated entrance to the stadium, or other infrastructural amenities, but even a symbolic bottle of water available at the press office. This makes it clear that the stadium in Lublin was the best-rated place to work for the journalists and photojournalists surveyed.

Certainly a good practice worth replicating is the idea of the Business Stal Club - a partner business club that brings together sponsors of the Gorzow Wielkopolski club. It is there that the opportunity for networking, making real business contacts, or entertainment is realized.

On the basis of the qualitative and quantitative research carried out, statistical data, attendance reports, financial statements of Speedway Ekstraliga clubs, as well as his own experience of speedway sport operations, the author identified the following marketing management models for Speedway Ekstraliga clubs:

- Management model with dominant strategic sponsorship,
- Management model with the use of modern infrastructure and competitions of the FIM Speedway Grand Prix series,
- Management model with dominant participation of LGU,
- Management model based on balanced relations with stakeholders.

Each of the above-mentioned models is conditioned by different characteristics present in the surroundings of a given speedway club, such as the number of residents, the availability of alternative leisure activities, or the characteristics of the local economy. The choice of a speedway club management model depends in particular on :

- the revenue structure of the club,
- the infrastructure owned,
- the way of building relations with the studied stakeholder groups,
- approach to the training process of young speedway riders.

The efficiency of club management also requires the ability to build broader alliances, information exchange and cooperation between clubs. They are the ones who, on the one hand, compete with each other and, on the other, create a product called Speedway Ekstraliga. Increasing the attractiveness of clubs (as integrators of stakeholder needs and expectations), or the brand of the world's best speedway league, can bring previously distant and unrelated stakeholder groups closer together.

Sports clubs that understand the needs and expectations of their stakeholders can better respond to changing market conditions, build strong brands and create lasting relationships with the social and business environment.

It was confirmed, that the behavioral patterns of Speedway Ekstraliga stakeholders and the relationships between them play an important role in the marketing management of speedway clubs, and on the other hand, the marketing activities of these clubs influence the formation of these patterns. On the other hand, the described models of marketing management of Speedway Ekstraliga clubs can be used as inspiration for speedway clubs from lower leagues or foreign leagues.