

# A Brief History of the Sokol Sport Movement

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The year 1620 was a great milestone in Bohemian history. In this fateful year, the rebellion of the Bohemian patriots was crushed in the battle of White Mountain by the Hapsburgs. The Czech people bore the oppressive yoke of the Austrian conqueror for the next three centuries. The foreign domination triggered a nationalist-intellectual response that resulted in the revitalization of Czech language, history, and education. Nineteenth century scholars, such as Dobrovsky, Palacky and others rediscovered the vast cultural heritage of the Czech people. One of the foremost patriots of the time was Dr. Miroslav Tyrs, who organized a gymnastic organization called Sokol (Falcon). The first Sokol sport club was established by Tyrs and his friend Jindrich Fuegner in Prague in 1862. The founders adopted Jahn's System of Gymnastics as a base, although they modified it to conform to their own ideas.

In the following decades, the Sokol movement not only expanded over the Slav world, but also crossed the ocean and became established in the United State where presently 250,000 men, women, and children belong to the Sokol USA. Miroslav Tyrs not only became a hero in his own time, but his memory is still alive in the hearts of his followers, the Sokol.

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