

**SPORTS, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AT GINÁSIO DO  
TARUMÃ, CURITIBA (1960S–1970S)<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT:** The Professor Almir Nelson de Almeida Sports Center, the Tarumã Gymnasium, opened in 1965 in Curitiba (PR), and promoted different physical, educational and social practices. This location was also the headquarters of the Paraná School of Physical Education and Sports until the 1970s. The study investigates the sports, educational and social activities developed at the Tarumã Gymnasium between the 1960s and 1970s. To this end, this documentary research uses historical sources such as newspapers, documents and legislation. The analysis showed that the Tarumã Gymnasium was a multifunctional space and played an important role in professional training in Physical Education.

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### **ATIVIDADES ESPORTIVAS, EDUCACIONAIS E SOCIAIS NO GINÁSIO DO TARUMÃ, EM CURITIBA (DÉCADAS DE 1960 E 1970)**

**RESUMO:** O Ginásio de Desportos Professor Almir Nelson de Almeida, o Ginásio do Tarumã, inaugurado em 1965 em Curitiba (PR), promoveu distintas práticas corporais, educacionais e sociais. Este local, também foi sede da Escola de Educação Física e Desportos do Paraná até a década de 1970. O estudo investiga as atividades esportivas, educacionais e sociais desenvolvidas no Ginásio do Tarumã entre as décadas de 1960 e 1970. Para tanto, esta pesquisa documental utiliza fontes históricas como jornais, documentos e legislação. A análise evidenciou que o Ginásio do Tarumã foi um espaço multifuncional e teve papel relevante na formação profissional em Educação Física.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Escola de Educação Física. Formação profissional. História do Esporte.

### **Introduction**

The Tarumã Gymnasium, located in Curitiba, the capital of Paraná, became one of the city's symbols during the celebrations of the first centenary of the state's political emancipation, which took place in 1953. The previous year, the Legislative Assembly of the State of Paraná (ALEP) enacted Law No. 1,039 on November 10, 1952, which created an autonomous entity with its own legal personality and assets, called the "Commission for the Commemoration of the Centenary of Paraná". At the time, in 1950, Paraná was governed by Moysés Wille Lupion de Tróia, who was succeeded by Ney Aminthas de Barros Braga, who remained at the head of the state's Executive Branch until 1965 (Toledo; Futata; Filipini, 2023).

The "Commission for the Commemoration of the Centenary of Paraná" became responsible for organizing the structure that encompassed the construction of the Tarumã Gymnasium. The sports complex was built in the Tarumã neighborhood, hence the choice of name, a place that concentrated several sports facilities such as Jockey Club of Paraná, the Palestra Itália stadium and the Hípica Paranaense (Leoni, 2020).

These spaces were envisioned as milestones in the process of consolidating the state's regional identity, reflecting the struggles and achievements of a local elite that sought greater political and economic autonomy for Paraná.

Soon after the construction of the basic structure, the Tarumã Gymnasium had its construction halted, and the project was left to its own devices. In the early 1960s, work on the gymnasium slowly resumed. And, around 1963, the promotion of sports activities at the Tarumã Gymnasium was reported in newspapers, highlighting its cultural, educational, and sporting impact on Curitiba in the following years.

Given this information, the study aims to investigate the sports, educational, and social activities developed at the Tarumã Gymnasium between the 1960s and 1970s.

## **Methodology**

The historical research is conducted using a qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out by consulting specific historical sources, such as newspapers and magazines from the period, available in digital and physical archives. Barros (2021) highlights the importance of newspapers as historical sources, offering a solid methodology for the analysis of news, editorials, and sports columns published in Curitiba during the period of construction and use of this space. In addition, institutional documents from the School of Physical Education and Sports of Paraná (EEFDP) were used, such as minutes and reports from the Department of Physical Education, which are available in the university archives. Scientific articles addressing the topic of both gymnasiums and the EEFDP were also used.

Following the theoretical framework of Catroga (2016) and Cerri (2001), a careful screening of sources and authors was carried out to ensure the relevance and authenticity of the information. To gather the sources, a detailed investigation was carried out into the social and political representations associated with the Tarumã Gymnasium. The categories of analysis were defined based on the research objectives and include themes such as the emancipation policy of Paraná, its architecture and its role in the development of Physical Education and its historical-social concept.

The study also incorporated the methodological analysis of the use of newspapers as sources, as discussed by Barros (2021). The newspapers and documents analyzed cover the period from the end of the 19th century – the time of Paraná's political emancipation – until the mid-20th century, when the location was already established as a sports and educational center. The sources include news reports on sporting, social, and academic events. Special attention was given to contextualizing the news reports and identifying political biases in the narratives surrounding the gymnasium and its place within the educational, social, and sporting landscape of Curitiba. This analysis allowed for a broader understanding of the prevailing discourses and power struggles that shaped this history.

### **The Early Years of Tarumã High School**

The earliest records of the history of the creation of the Tarumã Gymnasium were found in the Public Archives of Paraná. In the document entitled “Láudo (sic) das Obras da Exposição Internacional do Café e Feira de Curitiba”, dated 1954, there is a citation in the expense report of the celebrations of the first centenary of the political emancipation of Paraná, which includes the construction of the gymnasium: “the completion of this (sic) Gymnasium (sic) is an economic imperative” (Estado do



Paraná, 1954, p. 31). This socio-political event represented a set of actions that would be implemented in a specific area of the Tarumã neighborhood starting in 1953, in celebration of the first centenary of Paraná's political emancipation.

Years later, Law No. 3,890, of February 3, 1959, authorized the Executive Branch to open a special credit of Cr\$ 500,000.00 (five hundred thousand cruzeiros) to the Secretariat of Transportation and Public Works (SVOP), intended to compensate Esso Standard of Brazil Inc., the former concessionaire of the Umuarama Gas Station, in Tarumã, which was demolished to make way for the International Coffee Exhibition. The plans for organizing the International Coffee Exhibition and Fair of Curitiba began in 1952 and culminated in the event in 1953. Approximately three years later, the government regained interest in completing the construction before the sporting events and the installation of the Paraná School of Physical Education and Sports (EEFDP).

The newspaper *Diário do Paraná*, in its August 20, 1960 edition, published an article by Leo Kriger entitled "The Tarumã Gymnasium is Being Completed (sic): Vitória do Esporte Amador". The journalist highlighted the objectives of completing the EEFDP, which were to train Physical Education teachers, as well as to serve as a calling card for both education and sports. Furthermore, it provides other information: seating capacity for 6,000 to 8,000 people, 5 equipped changing rooms, accommodations for 240 athletes who can receive 60 meals at once. He mentioned that there would be long jump pits and tracks for 100-meter training.

Four years later, the article "Curitiba still doesn't have its gymnasium; mayor promises and doesn't deliver: state with ill will," published in the *Correio do Paraná* newspaper on March 15, 1960, criticizes the slow pace of construction on the Tarumã Gymnasium. The text suggests that the project is expected to be completed in four

years. At the time, Curitiba was administered by Mayor Iberê de Matos and had approximately 400,000 inhabitants; even so, it did not have a covered venue for amateur sports. Meanwhile, the community of Paraná awaited the completion of the project; however, the true purpose of its use was still a matter that divided opinions.

On November 11, 1961, the newspaper *Diário do Paraná* reported the inauguration of the EEFDPP swimming pool, scheduled for the 13th of the same month. The article “Inauguration of the EEFDPP swimming pool” reported that “in addition to the opening ceremony, there will be demonstrations of aquatic sports, men's and women's gymnastics, fencing, etc.” (p. 1). As a way to solidify this sporting process, on November 22, 1961, activities related to the EEFDPP were already underway, including registrations for holiday activities at the swimming pool. According to the article “Children will learn to swim during the holidays: state has three pools for classes”, “the intensive swimming course at the School of Physical Education and Sports of Paraná will begin soon and registrations can be made daily from 8 to 9 am and, on Mondays and Wednesdays also from 2 to 3 pm at the Tarumã gymnasium (*Diário do Paraná*, 1961, p. 1).

According to the March 14, 1963 edition of the *Diário do Paraná* newspaper, engineer Jefferson Weigert Wanderley, director of the Department of Buildings and Special Works of the Secretariat of Roads and Public Works (SVOP), informed the article “Tarumã needs thirty million to be usable in May” that the completion of the works, scheduled for May of that year, still depended on some interventions. Among the needs, the installation of a fiber cement roof stood out, with a total investment of 100 million cruzeiros for the completion of the construction.

Even before its official inauguration, the Paraná School Games, organized by the Department of Physical Education and Sports of the Secretariat of Education and Culture, took place on July 2, 1963. There was a perception that Tarumã was a neighborhood very far from the city center, and to facilitate the athletes' transportation there, buses were made available departing from the University Student Residence, located in the central region of Curitiba: “Note: I – Transportation will be provided for the athletes competing at the Tarumã Gymnasium, departing at 1:30 PM from the University Student Residence” (Diário do Paraná, July 2, 1963, p. 5). Also, in 1963, the newspaper Diário do Paraná mentioned events such as volleyball and basketball games, as can be read in the August 2nd edition: “8 pm – Volleyball and basketball games, at the Tarumã Gymnasium”. These events marked Curitiba's entry into the sporting scene, establishing it as a sporting hub in Brazil.

### **Early Years of the School of Physical Education and Sports and its Relationship with the Tarumã Gymnasium**

In the 1950s, Brazil was experiencing a period of strengthening sports activities as a tool for modernization and the construction of national identity. During Getúlio Vargas's government, sport was institutionalized with the creation of bodies such as the National Sports Council (CND) in 1941, which played a central role in regulating and promoting sporting activities. The CND was responsible for coordinating competitions, overseeing the establishment of sports entities, and setting rules that linked amateur and professional practices to the government (Brazil, 1941). According to Starepravo and Marchi Júnior (2012), during the decades from 1940 to 1970, the CND structured and managed national sport, in addition to overseeing sporting activities developed in the country.

According to Meily Assbu Linhales (1996), state intervention in the sports sector is the result of an ideological and political process by the Vargas government, which undermined the conflicts of interest of clubs and sports entities in order to prioritize state interests over sports. Sport has become a key mechanism for disciplining the physical condition of Brazilian citizens, contributing to the betterment of the people and the dignity of the nation, fostering harmony, and overcoming contradictions and conflicts.

The 1950s and 1960s were marked by the continuation of Vargas's thinking on the importance of sport and by a growing recognition, mainly by subsequent governments, that the state needed to play a more active role in creating a national policy for sport and physical education. This resulted in the integration of these areas into the country's social and economic development policies, aligning sport with broader objectives of international projection and social control (Alves; Pieranti, 2004).

Dilson José de Quadros Martins (2004, p. 44) corroborates the findings in Fernando Marinho Mezzadri's doctoral thesis, stating that in the 1950s there was a rebalancing of power between the government (public) and sports clubs (private), and the State began to concentrate control of the state's sports structure. This shift in focus was reinforced between 1950 and 1970 due to the military regime. During this period, the clubs' connection with the State was established through the State Secretariat of Culture and Sport, via the Sports Coordination Office, and the Paraná Educational Foundation.

Sports training activities were scattered across the city's clubs. There was a need to establish a headquarters with the necessary structural and personnel resources to

organize and train an EEFD. Marcelo Bianchini Fávaro (2008, p. 65) describes, in general terms, its creation:

The creation of the National School of Physical Education and Sports (ENEFD) served as a major driving force for the creation of new courses throughout the country, such as the School of Physical Education and Sports of the State of Paraná, which was created in 1939, through the private initiative of Professor Francisco Albizu<sup>8</sup>, regulated by the State Government in April 1940 and on January 16, 1945, obtained recognition from the Federal Government, by decree no. 17,592 (Fávaro, 2008, p. 65).

The incorporation of ENEFD into the gymnasium, which later became the Physical Education course at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), was a milestone in the training of professionals in this area, by combining theoretical teaching with sports practice. In her writings, Wanderleya Nara Gonçalves Costa (2014) discusses the relevance of sport in the educational and cultural context, highlighting the importance of facilities of this magnitude for the progress of the local community and for the impact on Physical Education. The Museum of the Paranaense School, an institution linked to the State Secretariat of Education, located in Curitiba, has a library with historical records, among which, in research carried out in person, the Regulations of the EEFD (1965b) were found, which recounts the history of this institution:

Article 1 The School of Physical Education and Sports of Paraná, founded on May 5, 1939, in accordance with Federal Decree-Law 1212 of April 17, 1939, authorized by Federal Decree-Law 9890 of July 7, 1942, recognized by Federal Decree-Law 17592 of January 16, 1945, made a state institution by Law 2911 of October 29, 1956, and with a teaching staff created by Law 4,282 of November 5, 1960. It became an institution of higher education under the autonomous regime in accordance with State Law 49,978 of December 5, 1964, and was incorporated into the University of Paraná by approval of the university council in the session of April 28, 1965 (p. 1).

Fávaro's bibliographical productions mention Decree No. 9,817 of the State of Paraná, which formally recognized the School of Physical Education.<sup>8</sup> The Department of Physical Education (DEF) had an academic directory called the Francisco Albizú Academic Directory, in honor of the founder of the School of Physical Education and

Sports of the State of Paraná. The content of the Decree reflected the alignment of the State of Paraná with the federal policies of the time:

The Federal Intervenor<sup>6</sup> of the State of Paraná, considering that the Federal Constitution of November 10, 1937, makes the teaching and practice of Physical Education mandatory in the country's educational establishments; Considering that the State of Paraná does not have a sufficient number of teachers to meet the requirements of the aforementioned decree; Considering that the State Government remains firmly committed to collaborating with the Federal Government in an efficient and decisive manner: Decides: Sole Article: To recognize the School of Physical Education and Sports of Paraná, which will operate without cost to the State, in accordance with the Regulations to be issued by the General Board of Education of the State and approved by the Secretariat of the Interior and Justice; all contrary provisions are hereby revoked (Fávaro, 2008, p. 105).

This recognition was fundamental for the implementation of Physical Education in Paraná, since the state lacked qualified teachers to meet the requirements of federal legislation. Thus, the state decree not only validated the creation of the School of Physical Education, but also established a direct collaboration between the state and federal governments in the effort to promote Physical Education in educational institutions.

According to Martins (2004), the expansion of interconnection networks, with the increased demand for sports practice, linked to the club structure of sports in Paraná, was a decisive factor in the structuring of sports in Paraná. The newspaper Paraná Esportivo, in its article "Physical Education courses open for 1957," dated March 16, 1956, reported the temporary address of the School of Physical Education and Sports, and announced the opening of registrations for the entrance exam for the higher education course in Physical Education and the course in Children's Physical Education, for the year 1957. For "more information," those interested could contact the "School Secretariat – President's Building." Caetano Munhoz da Rocha – 13th floor – Room no.

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<sup>6</sup> The Federal Intervenor of the State of Paraná in 1937 was **Manuel Ribas**.

1309” (Open..., 1957, p.9), a place that, due to its characteristics, could not accommodate the physical activities essential to the course.

Teachers and administrators at EEFDP constantly petitioned the government for the centralization of activities, which were taking place in a scattered manner, into a single space suitable for the development of practices related to Physical Education. As recorded in the 1960 report of the Francisco Mateus Albizu Academic Directory (DAFMA), there were changes in the institution's operation. It is stated that: "Theoretical classes continue to be taught at the Catholic Faculty of Philosophy, and practical classes have been moved to the facilities of the "Duque de Caxias" Physical Culture Society."

This battle was successful in the 1960s, when the government of Paraná decided to offer the Tarumã Gymnasium so that students would have access to a suitable place for theoretical and practical classes. The statement, signed by Sebastião Lima dos Santos, president of the Commission, records the receipt, by the Francisco Manoel Albizu Academic Directory (DAFMA), of the sum of 400 cruzeiros for expenses related to regularizing the donation papers for the Tarumã Gymnasium. In a report from the same year, summarizing the activities related to the administrative period, it states that Governor Moisés Lupion signed his donation to EEFDP.

This movement consolidated it as a point of reference for both educational development and sports practices in Curitiba, demonstrating the central role that this space played in the social and cultural formation of the city (Costa, 2014). However, not everyone was in favor of designating this sports venue as such, as the *Correio do Paraná* newspaper clearly illustrated on August 4, 1960, in an article titled: "Government donated the Tarumã Gymnasium: an unprecedented absurdity."

We are already tired of criticizing our state authorities for their lack of willingness to promote amateur sports, since it is public knowledge that Curitiba, the capital of Paraná, does not have a gymnasium for the practice of healthy sports. [...] the Tarumã Gymnasium was donated to Physical Education for unknown reasons (Correio do Paraná, 1960, p. 12).

When the transfer was announced, many figures in the sports community criticized the donation, as they felt the space could be used for better purposes to benefit sports in Paraná. Approximately three years later, on April 1, 1963, a partnership was established between EEFDPP and the Paraná Basketball Federation for the purpose of holding world championship games in the gymnasium. The first semester report of the EEFDPP of 1964 (p. 3) records the acquisition of new space by the institution: “[...] it operates entirely on its own premises this year, with the completion of the Tarumã Gymnasium. Thus, the school's efficiency improves year after year, both in terms of facilities and materials and teaching staff.

Since then, all of the School's activities have been centralized; however, this achievement has not been without challenges. At the time, there were many management-related problems, such as retaining the teaching staff and obtaining an adequate physical structure. The second semester 1964 report ratifies, in its initial text, the School's continued presence in the Gymnasium, but adds that improvements and adaptations to some of the space's facilities to meet the School's needs should continue.

Starting in 1965, the process for the federalization of EEFDPP began. It is possible to read on page 3 of the report from the first academic period of 1965 that the School was incorporated into UFPR by approval of the University Council, in a session held on April 28th. Furthermore, in that report, on page 223, Professor Sebastião Vicente de Castro comments that holding the graduation ceremony at the Tarumã Gymnasium was being considered, since the construction work was already completed at the time. On May 16, 1972, the second section of the *Diário do Paraná* newspaper



reported that Mayor Jaime Lerner had signed a law donating an area of 34,800 square meters for the construction of its own headquarters.

The minutes of the sessions of the University Council of UFPR held on February 24, 1977, where the creation of the Physical Education course was approved, are recorded in book number 5, pages 34, verso to 36. It includes authorization for the Federal University of Paraná to absorb all the students from EEFD. His presence at the Tarumã Gymnasium was a milestone, consolidated by his commitment to promoting sport and education in Paraná (Meeting..., 1977).

### **Social Activities at the Tarumã Gymnasium**

In the 1950s, both Paraná and Brazil were going through a period of transition and development, reflecting modern trends in the economic, political, and architectural fields (Marshall, 1987). In that state, the context was marked by a series of public works projects that sought to consolidate the modernization of cultural and sporting infrastructure, especially in the capital, Curitiba. Among these works, the construction of spaces such as the BPP (Biblioteca Pública do Paraná), the Teatro Guaíra, and the Ginásio do Tarumã stand out.

Throughout the 1960s, the gymnasium emerged as a venue for sporting events of national and international scope, as well as academic and cultural activities. These events highlighted the fundamental role of sports and educational institutions in building local identity (Catroga, 2016). Its unique architectural feature is highlighted by its arched wooden roof, a distinctive element of its construction.

The construction of sports facilities generally requires detailed logistical planning. These large-scale structures require ample space and improvements to urban infrastructure to support the increased flow of people and vehicles during events.

Therefore, projects of this type generally include investments in public transportation, which favors both mobility and the enhancement and expansion of services in the region. Sporting and cultural events held in the space have made it a unique location in the city's urban landscape. Millan Valdés's (2023) study on the Ibirapuera Gymnasium offers the possibility of an interesting parallel with the Tarumã Gymnasium, by exploring the complexities involved in the creation and use of larger sports arenas in Brazil.

According to Fontana and Bormio (2010), other sports facilities were built in the 1950s. In Bauru, during this period, Ícaro de Castro Mello (1913-1986) worked in Brazilian modern architecture, with a focus on sports architecture. In the 1950s, the architect designed the Esporte Clube Sírio, the Sports Sector of the University of São Paulo (USP), the Ibirapuera Sports Gymnasium and the Paulista University Sports Federation – all located in São Paulo –, the Sorocaba Gymnasium, the Esporte Clube Noroeste de Bauru, the Jockey Club of Uberaba (MG), among others. Already in the 1960s, the following projects stand out: the SESC Gymnasium in Bertioga, the Gymnasium of the Banco do Brasil Athletic Association in Itapecerica da Serra, the Sports Gymnasiums in São Bernardo do Campo and Recife, the Municipal Stadium of Rio Claro, in addition to the clubs planned in Las Peñas and Titicaca, in Peru.

The design for the construction of the Esporte Clube Noroeste stadium shares several similarities with the Tarumã Gymnasium, such as its size for a capacity of four thousand spectators, the concrete porticos inclined according to the tangency of the dome's curve, the press boxes and VIP area, the technical support room designed under the slope of the grandstand floor, and the dome designed with plywood arches, a technique used in civil construction in the 1950s. According to Fontana; Bormio (2010,

p. 10), “the combination of the arch shape with the mechanical characteristics of wood to withstand tensile and compressive forces parallel to the fibers resulted in a structural solution capable of spanning large distances with the rational use of wood”.

Millan Valdés (2023), in studying the architecture of the Ibirapuera Gymnasium, offers insights that can also be applied to the Tarumã Gymnasium, highlighting how these large sports constructions influence both urbanism and local sports culture. Another point to consider is the fact that, even before its official opening, it already played an active role in the international sports scene. On May 9, 1963, as described in the newspaper *Diário do Paraná*, the World Basketball Championship took place, where the gymnasium hosted the matches of Group B, which included teams from countries such as Japan, Yugoslavia, Peru, and Costa Rica. This historic event placed Curitiba at the center of sporting attention, with the Yugoslavian team achieving second place, further solidifying the importance of this venue in the history of sport. According to the newspaper *Diário Popular* of January 30, 1965, the gymnasium was inaugurated with the presence of authorities, to commemorate this historic event. Throughout his career, he played a decisive role and hosted community support events that reinforced his relevance in the social landscape of Curitiba.

### **Final Considerations**

The historical analysis of the construction of the Almir Nelson de Almeida Sports Gymnasium, better known as the Tarumã Gymnasium, highlights its importance in the social, cultural, and sporting landscape of Curitiba and Paraná. Inaugurated as part of the centennial celebrations of the state's political emancipation, it became a landmark of regional development, symbolizing the connection between identity,

modernity, and politics in Paraná. As construction progressed, the Tarumã Gymnasium established itself as a benchmark for sports and education in Curitiba.

In the sporting landscape of the 1950s and 1960s, it was integrated into national strategies for promoting sport as a tool for education and social cohesion. This movement reflects not only public policy statements for sports, but also the expansion of the role of state institutions in building spaces dedicated to the physical, educational, and cultural development of the population. With the incorporation of EEFDPA into the Tarumã Gymnasium, it became possible to centralize activities, previously dispersed, in the training of professionals in the field and to strengthen sports and education.

Architecturally, its construction reflected modernist values and the drive for renewal that marked Paraná in the 1950s. Like other nationally significant sports facilities, it transcended its initial function and participated in a process of enhancing urban areas and promoting social integration. This study reaffirms the importance of the Tarumã Gymnasium as a synthesis of the political, cultural, and urban transformations that shaped the city of Curitiba.

Preserving and valuing memory is fundamental to understanding the trajectory of Physical Education and sport in Paraná, as well as highlighting the significance of spaces like this in promoting a differentiated urban development. Sporting and cultural events held in arenas like Tarumã not only boost the local economy, but also reinforce the identity and social cohesion of the community. These multifunctional spaces transcend sports, becoming centers of urban, social, and cultural progress. Its multifaceted history illustrates how planned infrastructure can contribute to strengthening collective memory, shaping new generations, and consolidating a region's identity, aligning the past with the present and projecting the future in an integrated way.

The results obtained will serve as a basis for future research in the field of Physical Education, reinforcing an understanding of the evolution of sports practices in educational institutions. An analysis of the role of the Tarumã Gymnasium in the academic and practical training of Physical Education students provides insights into how sports venues can influence the development of educational and sports policies. This methodology, therefore, combines a historiographical approach with a documentary and critical analysis of sources, constructing a detailed picture of the historical importance of the Tarumã Gymnasium and its social contribution to Physical Education and sport in Paraná.

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