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# Sport beyond Politics and War: The Friendship of Two Athletes Sentenced to Death in World War II

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## Résumé

When Stanislaw Marusarz and László Kovács met in Borsafüred in 1942, both were athletes sentenced to death. Marusarz, a legendary Polish ski jumper, had twice escaped execution as a resistance Tatra courier. Kovács, a young skier and soldier, was caught on the new Romanian-Hungarian border after the Second Vienna Award and chose to side with Hungary, becoming a deserter. Both were hidden by the Hungarian Ski Federation at the under-construction Hungarian Winter Olympic ski center, contributing their expertise to an Olympic dream.

Despite risking their lives for their nations, their values transcended borders. At the 1944 inauguration of Borsa's ski jumping hill - then the largest in Europe - top German and Norwegian athletes were present. Though they knew Marusarz was hunted by the Gestapo, they did not abandon him. The pursuit of excellence, friendship, respect, and fair play prevailed even in extreme circumstances, fostering dialogue between worlds that might otherwise remain irreconcilable.

Although the war prevented the Winter Olympics in Borsă, both remained bound by sport: Marusarz as a world-class ski jumper and Kovács as a sports manager. Their friendship endured for a lifetime.

The story of the Hungarian Winter Olympic ski center, and Marusarz's time in hiding, remained largely unknown. Its reconstruction required extensive archival research, examining hundreds of contemporary publications and family records. Using innovative technologies, a film series was created to document these narratives, linking sports history with Borsa's tourism development, and has been presented at multiple international tourism and sports events.

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**Mots-Clés:** Stanislaw Marusarz, László Kovács, Hungarian Winter Olympic ski center, Borsă, sport friendship

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