TOGETHER TO THE POLE

The expedition “Together to the Pole” finally ended successfully. On 24th April at 4.16 p.m. the participants of the expedition - Marek Kaminski - expedition leader FI‘96, Jasiu Mela, Wojtek Moskal and Wojtek Ostrowski – cameraman, managed to reach the North Pole. The distance they had to walk from the Borneo Ice Station to the Pole was 70km. Jasiu became the first disabled person and the youngest who skied on his own to the North Pole.

Preparations

Two years ago Janek had a very serious injury, he suffered an electric shock of 15,000 volts. He lost a leg and an arm. Marek Kaminski FI ‘96 created the whole idea of the expedition to the Pole, while Janek was still in hospital, after the accident. Preparations for the expedition started one year ago.
At the beginning Jasiu worked on his own, he trained at home on a special bicycle, and walked long distances. Jasiu went for training to the Tatra Mountain on a south of Poland, then for another training, this time to the Baltic Sea- on a Polish coast. In March the Pole explorers went for another training in Norwegian Mountains. All the training were possible, because of Janek's prosthesis, which he got from a Scandinavian Orthopaedic Laboratory SOL Polska.

**Expedition**

The Expedition “Together to the Pole” has started on 4\(^{th}\) April. The explorers- Marek Kaminski, Janek Mela, also Wojtek Moskal and Wojtek Ostrowski, flew from Gdansk via Warsaw and Oslo to Siptsbergen.

9-day stay at Spitsbergen was necessary for the participants, especially for Janek to acclimate to polar conditions. During the first two days the weather on Spitzbergen was good. Unfortunately, during the third day it suddenly changed. A strong wind blew 100 km/h, it snowed heavily, and the visibility was very bad. "...It's Spitsbergen and the Pole. Nobody said we would be on a sunny beach, and we would be wearing T-shirts“- said Marek Kaminski.

Marek and Janek knew very well, that it was better to have tough conditions on Spitsbergen, than to be surprised on their way to the Pole. "The harder is here, the easier will be on the Pole“- added Marek Kaminski. 

Bad conditions couldn’t stop the explorers from everyday training- packing the equipment, food and medications, sleeping in a tent, and learning how to drive snow- mobile.

On 14\(^{th}\) April, at noon they departure from Longyearbyen to a “Borneo“ ice station, where on 15\(^{th}\) April they started their way to the Pole. They walked for 10 days. Janek, Marek, Wojtek and Wojtek walked about 7 km everyday. On the 6\(^{th}\) day of the expedition a strong wind started drift the explorers in the direction opposite to the Pole, and the area was exceptionally difficult.

"The area is horrible. It looks like Dante's hell, really terrible, just chaos, ice blocks, battlefield. It was hard to get threw this. The area looks like if there was an earthquake, or other disaster. It is hard to describe, because this sort of things doesn't appear in an ordinary world. Today it was very hard to walk, there was a very strong wind and there was no sun. If the wind still drifts us, our chances of reaching the Pole will decline. But we don't give up. The situation is difficult, because after whole day of walking (we walked one hour longer) we are only 2 km closer to the Pole. We could wake up in a tent in the same place that the day before. After all day of hard walk we won't be closer to the Pole“- said Marek Kaminski.

**Reaching the Pole**

Because of very hard conditions the expedition couldn't reach the Pole as the planned, but one day later, on Saturday 24\(^{th}\) April. During the expedition they walked the distance of more than 70 km. One day before reaching the goal they still weren't sure, weather they would reach the Pole. But on Friday they managed to walk 13 km, and on Saturday the rest of the distance.

After reaching the Pole, the expedition returned to Longyearbyen on Spitsbergen and on 4\(^{th}\) May came back to Poland.

Jasiu become the youngest in the world and first in history disabled, who reached the Pole on his own. Thanks to his persistance he proved that even he could realise the highest dreams and he showed that outwardly impossible goals are achievable.
Activities

We organised an Educational Action program “The school on the North Pole”. During the expedition we were collecting money for artificial limbs for children after disasters in the amount of 200,000USD. About 30 or 50 people in Poland will receive help thanks to this money.
We have tested new solutions in moving of disable people in extreme conditions (artificial limbs, heating artificial limbs by using solar energy). This expedition gives a hope and opens a way into explorations for others and encourages them to follow their dreams.
We are working on a film and a book about the expedition, titled: "White – out. Expedition outside the shadow”. Film and book will be an occasion to share experiences from preparation and expedition with others.
The expedition has been shared on international forum, for example: India, Argentina.