



1. FANOURIOS BYZANTIOS & PANTELIS KALPAKTSOGLOU

These two persons should not be distinguished. They were the pioneers who conceived the idea of the establishment of a new team in Thessaloniki; but instead, in this team, the leading men would be the refugees from Konstantinoupoli.

In AEK, which pre - existed, there were major disputes and this resulted into the creation of two lines; one of them supported the Byzantium and consequently Kalpaktsoglou, and their primary goal was to embody the refugees from Constantinoupoli with all the inhabitants of Thessaloniki. As a result, these supporters left and thus the foundations for the birth of

Panthealonikios Athlitikos Omilos Konstantinoupolitwn
PAOK

were created.

2. KONSTANTINOS KOEMTSOPOULOS

This brilliant man was amongst the people who had the idea of founding our team. He was one of the 34 foundation members of PAOK that signed the memorandum of association. Additionally, he was mentioned to have had the idea of the first emblem of PAOK which was the four – leaf clover with the petal. The four leaves were of green colour and in every each one of them there was the engraving of one of the letters of the word PAOK. It is said that he was inspired by the pack of cigarettes that he used to smoke at that time.

3. TRIANTAFYLLOS TRIANTAFYLLIDIS

The first ever president in the history of PAOK; he was actually a journalist. He was one of the men who had the idea and consequently signed the first act of our team's establishment. He was also present to the committee which wrote and composed the first memorandum of association.

He was elected president of PAOK in April 5.

On April 10th the administration of PAOK submitted to the court of first instance the legal papers for the approval of the signed memorandum. The approval was a fact with the number 822 verdict in the 20 April of 1926.

4. NIKOLAOS ZOUMPOULIDIS

One of the founders of our great team;

He was the last to die amongst all 34 members who established PAOK. The old veterans of PAOK paid him one last honorary visit before he dies, at his home in Constantinoupoli.

His greatest, and probably his final, desire to come to Thessaloniki and watch PAOK at his home stadium at Toumba.

5. KONSTANTINOS ANDREADIS

The first trainer of PAOK;

He was also a player but additionally the captain of our team. Kostaras (as his nickname was) remained the trainer of our team until 1931. Of course, it goes without saying, that he was the first real leader of PAOK. He was a midfielder and some of his teammates were Ventourellis, Chalepian, Ksidis, Christidis, Georgiadis, V. Andreadis, Pagkalos, Pantermalis and Vlachos.

6. MIXALIS VENTOURELLIS

For this man there was a line in the first hymn of our team which was written in 1927...

'We are not afraid of Aris nor Iraklis because we have Ventourellis and he is showing good taste.'

He is regarded to have played in the first ever game between PAOK and aris while in his youth he was playing for aris young teams. PAOK had won with 2-1 with one more goal from Tsolakidis. Tsolakidis had also scored in the first ever game between PAOK and iraklis 1-0.

7. MALAKSOPOULOS (BIZOU)

The first few years were really difficult and PAOK needed some reinforcements. PERA CLUB sends Malaksopoulos, which was then known as Bizou; a man who proved to be the first star of PAOK.

It has to be noted that in his first ever training with PAOK people would have to pay a ticket in order to see him. A newspaper of that time describes what happened in that training with the signature of A. Orogas: 'It was then when we saw a lot of people. Total madness! Two of the fans took out their trousers and waved them as if they were a flag! A young priest threw his robe. The fans of aris and iraklis were really bothered by the illustrious appearance of Bizou and the fanatic supporters of PAOK'.

8. Antonis Metaxas

He was one of the unsung heroes of the great history of PAOK. In 12th December of 1930 the foundation stone of the stadium in the location of Sintrivani was put. The construction of the stadium rose to become a matter of honor for the PAOK fans who were voluntarily working there. Some of them were working even with bare hands and under unfavorable conditions. Metaxas was sun stroked working there.

In the inauguration of the new stadium PAOK won aris with 2-1 but aris lodged an objection for irregular stadium. The president of the Greek Football Association, Athanasios Mermigkas, checked the stadium and subsequently discarded their objection.

An expression which stems from this stadium is 'The ball to the graves'. This expression was used when the team was winning, and while the game was close to the end, and prompted the PAOK players to kick the ball to the graves that were close to the stadium.

9. Raymond Etien

He was the first player in the history of PAOK that signed a professional contract with the team in 5th September of 1928. This was actually the first professional contract in Greece! He was the first foreign player for PAOK and he was of French-Hebrew origin and had come from Constantinoupoli and Pera Club. His contract was signed by the former president of PAOK Konstantinos Meletiou and his fee was 4.000 drachmas per month. He debuted in a game against Thermaikos which PAOK won with 6-1 and he scored two goals with penalty kicks. He played in PAOK until 1934 and in 44 matches in the Greek championship he scored 38 goals.

10. Rudolph Ganser

He was the first foreign trainer of PAOK. He was from Germany and signed in PAOK in 1931. From the moment he took on the team he tried to refresh it with new players. What was characteristic of him was the way he walked (like a duck), a thing that all the PAOK fans were imitating not only in the stadium but also in the city! In his first game PAOK won Meliteas for a cup match with 3-0 while in his second game, also for the Greek cup, PAOK won Iraklis with 3-2. The defeat from aek and the bad progress of PAOK in the Greek championship resulted in getting him fired pretty soon.

11. Nikos Pagkalos

He started his career in 1930 as a football player under the instructions of the trainer Andreadis. In 1933 he gets seriously injured in a match against Megas Aleksandros. From that time and on he becomes the trainer of the second team with which he wins the Greek championship after winning panathinaikos with 4-3 in the first day while drawing 2-2 the next one. Later on Pagkalos he became the trainer of the first team of PAOK during the seasons 1949-1950, 1952-53, 1954-55. He was named as 'The teacher' or 'the fox' and he is mainly responsible for the great team of PAOK in the 1953-56 seasons. He became again the trainer of the first team during the years 1966-68.

12. Petros Levantis

He was the president of PAOK after the joining with aek. PAOK and aek were two big rival teams that finally joined together on 20th March of 1929. Everyone agreed and so the resulting official colors of the club were black and white and the new emblem would be the double headed eagle that brings together all the memories of the heritage of Byzantium and Constantinoupolis. It has to be noted that the difference in emblems between PAOK and aek is that in PAOK's double headed eagle the wings are closed as an expression of mourning towards the violent expatriation of the Greeks from the so called 'Lost Fatherlands'. Finally, it has to be noted that Levantis was the president that envisaged a privately owned stadium.

13. Nikos Sotiriadis

He was the first great goalkeeper of PAOK since the period of 1933-34, when he became well known. He was amongst the stars that led PAOK to win his first Championship of Thessaloniki in 1937. More specifically, in 14th March of 1937 PAOK wins 3-1 aris (for aris a draw would have been enough to win the title) and so the double headed eagle of the north wins the championship. Sotiriadis becomes the first international player of PAOK as he plays with Greek national team against Palestine in 1938. Sotiriadis was deadly wounded in 28/1/1941 when as a surgeant of the Greek army he and his comrades tried to occupy an Italian pillbox in Kleisoura during the Second World War.

14. Nikiforos Tsarpanas

Someone could state that he was the history of PAOK incarnated. He was the teams' attendant for many years. He was the man who kept in his house the jumpers of the players during the occupation of Greece by the Germans. He started working in the decade of the 30s, he was one of the leading people who redeployed the team after the Second World War from 1945 and onwards and finally he lived to celebrate the titles of the great PAOK team in the 70s. Tsarpanas managed to do everything in time. When the Basketball team of PAOK became Greek Champions he had already prepared 11 laurel wreaths but because there were 12 players he rushed into a floristry and bought one more! One thing that everybody will remember from him was that he had the habit of breaking jugs for good luck. He was born in 1909 and died in 1987.

15. Lampis Kouiroukidis

He was one of the greatest strikers of the history of Greek Football. He was born in Drama in 1931 and in 1952 was scouted by Pagkalos and thus was brought to PAOK just before he signed to Panathinaikos. His first official match and goal was in 18th October 1953 against Marathonas, a game that ended 6-0. He was the captain of the team for many years and moreover he had a lot of participations in the Greek national squad. His career was rather soon finished when he was injured in 1960; a career of 160 games and 91 goals. Together with Nestoridis they were characterized as the best postwar scorers.

16. Giorgos Charalambidis

He was the longest-lived president of PAOK. He took on PAOK in 1949 and stayed there until 1963. He was born in Pontos and it has to be noted that he additionally played in the second team of PAOK when he was younger. He had a leading role in the construction of Toumba since he participated in the Committee for the erection of Toumba Stadium that already pre-existed. During his incumbency as president of PAOK, a lot of funds were gathered for the construction of the new stadium and additionally PAOK won his first important titles in Football and Basketball.

17. Lefteris Papadakis

Papadakis was one of the greatest attacking midfielders of his era. He was one of the leading stars of the PAOK team that won the championships of Thessaloniki in 1948 and 1950 and moreover, the great team of the 50s was based on him. He played in 152 games of the Greek championship from 1945 until 1957 and during these years the thrilling triplet of Papadakis, Kouiroukidis and Gientzis, with Papadakis being the passing player, was written down in history. After the end of his career he remained in PAOK offering his services from a different position. One of the sayings that wrote history was a dialogue between him and an opponent goalkeeper; one of the players of PAOK scored a goal from a distance of 60 m and the goalkeeper shouted 'What are these things that you are doing??' and Papadakis replied to him 'You should have blocked the shot by falling on his feet'

18. Christoforos Gientzis

He was born in 1928 and was brought to PAOK from Edessa. Gientzis was a right attacking midfielder and his main characteristic was that he was a powerful player with real fierce shooting. His career was ended in 1959 having played for 141 games with 47 goals while additionally he was the top scorer in the Greek Championship the season 1953-54. During this golden era, that PAOK won 5 consecutive championships of Thessaloniki from 1953 to 1957, other leading players of PAOK were Progios, Savvidis, Kemanidis, Xasiotis, Petridis, Tsintoglou, Gkolemas, Kalogiannis, Kiourtzis and Xourvouliadis.

19. Leandros Simeonidis

Since 1950 PAOK created the famous youth academies of Willi Sevcik. Willi Sevcik, an

Austrian coach (1950–1952) who had worn the PAOK jersey in 1931–32, established a young talent academy within the club which gave rise to leading names who later left their mark, such as Leandros Symeonidis, Giannelos Margaritis, Giorgos Havanidis, and others. Leandros Simeonidis was born in 1937 and he debuted in the first team of PAOK in 1955. He played in 355 game matches scoring 6 goals and he was named as 'The Black Arrow' of PAOK. Additionally he played 6 times for the national Greek team. He will be always remembered as the player who scored the first goal of PAOK in the First Greek Division of the Greek Championship in the 25th October 1959 against Megas Aleksandros Katerinis.

20. Vasilis Sergiannidis

He was a civil engineer and had a leading role in the increase of the capacity of the Toumba stadium. From 1966 and on, and together with the mechanic Vasilis Zervas, they made the first plans in order to raise the gates of the stadium and as a result Toumba Stadium hosted more than 31.500 fans in a match against olimpiakos in 1967. During the decades of 60s and 70s he was involved in the administration of PAOK, mainly as a general manager, until the time when president Batatoudis gave the majority of the stocks to Goumenos.

21. Giorgos Themelis

One of the political leaders, the Minister of National Defense of Greece, that played a leading role to the construction of the new stadium of PAOK, the thrilling Toumba. The search for a site led to the choice of a piece of land belonging to the National Defense Fund in the Toumba neighborhood of eastern Thessaloniki, which in addition to offering unlimited free space was also an area closely associated with refugees from Asia Minor. A total area of 30,000 x2 was acquired by PAOK for a price of 1.500.000 drachmas, and construction of the new football ground began. The amount of money had to be paid in 20 6-month installments of 75,000 drachmas. The new stadium opened on 6th September 1959 in a friendly game against aek and before the first kick-off, an Air Force plane dropped a ball on a fly-past as a symbolic donation from the armed forces. The first official game for PAOK was against Megas Aleksandros Katerinis and PAOK won with 3-2. Apart from the many PAOK fans that helped building the stadium an important contribution was provided by the former president of PAOK Giorgos Charalambidis, who was also the longest lived president of the team, and the president of the committee for the erection of Toumba Dimitris Dimadis.

22. Giorgos Pantelakis

Pantelakis was one of the most important, if not THE most important, presidents in the history of the double headed eagle of the north. He was born in Thessaloniki from parents who were refugees from Asia Minor and he first became an official of PAOK, mainly involved in the basketball, in 1954. In 1960 he became Secretary General of the club while he succeeded Dimitris Dimadis in 1966 and became President of PAOK. Pantelakis was dominant and totally successful in his duties until 1985 when he quited. Powerful, clever and luminous, he associated his name with the fight of PAOK against the system of the South Establishment of Athens and of course he was the main responsible for the return of Koudas to PAOK. Under his command PAOK became the best team in Greece winning 3 titles but the most important

thing for PAOK was that every fan, neutral or not, in Greece started paying respect to the great team of PAOK during the 70s. Pantelakis was killed in a traffic accident on February 2, 2009, in the age of 79.

23. Les Shannon

Shannon was one of the most skillful and brilliant coaches in the history of PAOK. He was born in Liverpool in the 12th March 1926 and coached PAOK from 1971 to 1974, leading them to win the Greek Cup twice in 1972 and 1974. In 1973, PAOK were runners-up in the Greek championship race and quarter-finalists in the European Cup-Winners' Cup, bowing out to AC Milan. He trained the team for 119 matches having 67 wins 29 draws and 23 defeats. The most important contribution of his to PAOK players was that he succeeded in them getting rid of the inferiority complex against the teams of Athens. Additionally, he managed to establish great players such as Iosifidis, Gounaris and many more.

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