



TRANSFORMING THE UK HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT SYSTEM

A GUIDE TO UK SPORT FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC SUCCESS

Overview

- UK Sport is the Government agency responsible for maximising British success in the Olympic and Paralympic Games through investing in, and supporting, our most talented athletes. It was established in 1997 following the introduction of the National Lottery – and specifically a change in Lottery legislation in 1996 to allow investment in people as well as facilities. This latter change enabled a systematic programme of investment to be put in place around our best sportsmen and women.
- The result has been to transform the nation's Olympic and Paralympic fortunes. Great Britain moved from being Olympic also-rans at the Atlanta Games in 1996 to a Top 10 nation in Sydney and Athens. Those results are now the foundations of a move to build a high performance system in this country that is world leading in terms of athlete support, coaching, facilities, training and preparation and delivers lasting success on the international stage.
- The next stage of the transformation begins on 1 April 2006, with UK Sport taking on responsibility in the UK and England for the performance pathway - the period of an athlete's career that takes them from talent identification through to the podium. The transfer of the World Class Potential programme in England, together with responsibility for the direction of the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, TASS 2012 Scholarships and the English Institute of Sport, integrates the funding and management of high performance sport and provides for the first time a one-stop-shop for Governing Bodies and athletes. UK Sport can now have meaningful impact on decisions across the pathway and ensure that resources are targeted where they are most required.
- Alongside this change there is the catalyst of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London in 2012. This brings the opportunity not just to ensure success at the Games themselves, but to provide a sporting legacy that will ensure the long term health and success of sport in this country.

Delivering the Vision: The UK Sport 'No Compromise' Investment Strategy

- In putting together its investment strategy for first Beijing 2008 and then London 2012, UK Sport has developed a 'no compromise' approach to funding and support.
- 'No Compromise' is about being honest about the mission. UK Sport's prime responsibility is to support the winning of medals at the world's biggest multi-sport competitions. With that aim, no element of the training and preparation of our medal hopes can be compromised if they are to succeed – a fact borne out in Athens where four of Team GB's gold medals were won by a combined margin of less than half a second.
- The 'no compromise' strategy was developed as a result of the lessons learned from the Sydney and in particular Athens Olympiads. Winning medals is incredibly tough and we have to be ruthless about our podium potential in every event, studying every aspect – medals available, athletes, coaches, current performance, future potential, talent selection, cost and above all the opposition – and invest accordingly.
- Other nations are surrounding their best hopes with all the support they need. To do this ourselves we have to recognise that we must reinforce the best, support those developing and provoke change in the under-performing. The result is UK Sport's 'no compromise' investment strategy, which targets resources solely at those athletes capable of delivering medal-winning performances. Individual sports are allocated funding based on a combination of past performance and future potential.

The Current System of Funding and Support

- Prior to the changes on 1 April 2006, there are currently two main tiers of support covering the UK's current and immediate next generation of performers, with a range of support beyond that at the talent identification level:
 - The World Class **Performance** Programme operated by UK Sport. This supports the Olympic and Paralympic athletes likely to comprise Team GB in Beijing – it is essentially the 'finishing school' for our top performers.
 - World Class **Potential**. Below the UK Sport programme, Sport England and the sports councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland operate 'potential' level programmes that support athletes making their way up the world rankings in their respective disciplines.
 - **Talent identification**. At this level there are a mixture of programmes designed to identify and support future generations of athletes, such as World Class Start and the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) within England.
- UK Sport currently allocates around £25m a year to the top 320 summer Olympic athletes across 18 sports and 135 Paralympic athletes. This money is focused on supporting the campaigns of athletes that are likely to comprise Team GB in Beijing. Funding is made available in two ways:

- The **'Programme Award'**: Sports governing bodies receive a Programme Award in respect of a specified number of athletes. The number is based on UK Sport's assessment of the sport's performance at the last Games and the potential that exists within the 'up and coming' athletes. The Programme Award is determined by the number of athletes identified, with the knowledge that athletes with podium potential require a comprehensive support package worth an average of £45,000 if they are to realise their potential.
- The **'Athlete Personal Award'** (APA). All athletes are entitled to apply for a personal subsistence award. This APA is paid directly to the athlete and contributes to ordinary living costs and personal sporting costs. The level of award received is determined by a number of criteria and maximum awards will ultimately be dependant upon the athlete's age, performance category and other issues, such as whether or not they have children. This award – which on average is worth around £11,000 - is also subject to means testing.

The System Transformed after 1 April 2006

- From 1 April 2006, UK Sport assumes full responsibility for all Olympic and Paralympic performance-related support in England, from the identification of talent right the way through to performing at the top level. It will also provide expert high performance consultancy to non-Olympic sports in England, to help improve performance and drive success in the future. Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland athletes will continue to be funded by their home countries until they reach World Class Performance standard; however the streamlining of the system presented by the transfer of responsibility to UK Sport makes it possible for those athletes to join UK-wide pathway programmes at an earlier stage.
- In taking on this new responsibility, and remaining focused on a 'no compromise' approach, UK Sport has redefined the terms under which funding and support will be provided. It will operate a **World Class Performance Pathway** at three key levels:
- **World Class Podium**

This Programme will support sports with realistic medal capabilities at the next Olympic/Paralympic Games (i.e. a maximum of four years away from the podium). At this level, an assessment of realistic medal projections determines the required investment per sport using the models introduced post-Athens for Olympic and Paralympic sports. Athlete places will be distributed to a sport based on a combination of the sport's:

- results at the last Games
- competitive track record
- projected medal capability in the future
- demonstrated ability to constantly produce athletes through the pathway.

Support is provided through a performance programme with the governing body and an athlete personal award

- **World Class Development (*)**

This Programme is designed to support the stage of the pathway immediately beneath the Podium. It will comprise of sports that have demonstrated that they have realistic medal winning capabilities for 2012. For sports already funded by the Podium Programme their continued success will only be possible if there is investment in the next wave of talented athletes coming through the system. Olympic athletes at this level are typically six years away from the podium, whereas this timeframe may be considerably shortened for Paralympic athletes.

Other sports not yet funded at Podium Programme level but where there is performance evidence that they have the potential to medal in the next Olympic/Paralympic cycle are eligible for consideration for funding at World Class Development level. In the period to the home Games in 2012, additionally and exceptionally, World Class Development will also embrace those sports with realistic capabilities to be competitive in 2012 but where medal achievement is unlikely.

- **World Class Talent (*)**

This Programme is designed to support the identification and confirmation of athletes who have the potential to progress through the World Class pathway with the help of targeted investment. Funding provided through the programme will allow sports to identify the athletes with all the right attributes to ensure they can go on to compete effectively on the world stage. In addition, this programme will look to raise the level of sophistication by which sports approach the identification of new athletes and examine ways in which talent, where appropriate, can be transferred across sports. Olympic athletes will be a maximum of 8 years away from the podium, but again could be much less for Paralympic athletes.

(*Current Paralympic 'Fast Track' funding straddles both Development and Talent programmes. This may change as additional resources become available for the 2012 campaign, with the likelihood that it will increasingly be embedded within the World Class Talent programme.)