

CHAPTER 2

China

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Introduction

On 30 December 2000 the *China Sports Daily*, the official Chinese sports newspaper, proudly claimed that between 1949 and 2000 Chinese athletes won 1,408 world championships and set 1,042 new world records. Of these, 1,378 world championships were won and 865 new world records were set since 1978 when China began its economic reformation. In addition, between 1984 and 2000, Chinese athletes won 227 Olympic medals (84 gold, 79 silver and 64 bronze) (*China Sports Daily*, 30 December 2000).

At the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens 407 Chinese athletes competed in 203 events and won 32 gold, 17 silver and 14 bronze medals. With these 63 medals in total, China came third in the medal rankings after the United States and Russia. With 32 gold medals, China beat the Russians and came second to the United States. Furthermore, 6 new world records were established by Chinese athletes and on 21 occasions new Olympic records were set. Following the success in Athens, senior Chinese sports officials claimed triumphantly that China, together with the United States and Russia, has become one of the three superpowers in the summer Olympics (Yuan, 2004; Hong et al., 2005).

The triumph of Chinese sport is deeply rooted in China's elite sport system. It is called 'Juguo tizhi' in Chinese and translates as the 'whole country support for the elite sport system'. This system channelled all resources for sport in the country into elite sport and effectively produced hundreds of thousands of young elite athletes in a short time in pursuit of ideological superiority and national status. Its main characteristics are centralised management and administration and guaranteed financial and human resources from the whole country to ensure maximum support (Hao, 2004).

The origin and development of the Chinese elite sport system

The establishment of China's elite sport system began in the 1950s, developed in the 1960s and 1970s and matured with its own character in the 1980s. A close examination of the development of elite sport in China clearly demonstrates that elite sport helps to exploit the implementation of political ideology and is, therefore, vulnerable to political exploitation.

The beginning (1952–1960)

When the Communists defeated the Nationalists and established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949,

sport became a vehicle for expressing Chinese national representation and identity. China's experience at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952 stimulated the government's determination to utilise sport as a valuable weapon to help restore the nation's position in international politics. In November 1952, the State Physical Education and Sport Commission (Guojia tiyu yundong weiyuanhui, hereafter the Sports Ministry) was formally established. It is a governmental ministry with the same status as other ministries such as Education, Finance and Commerce, all directly under the leadership of the State Council.

In 1956 the Sports Ministry issued 'The Competitive Sports System of the PRC', which formally laid the foundations for a competitive sports system in China: 43 sports were officially recognised as competitive sports; rules and regulations were defined; professional teams were set up at provisional and national levels and they would compete with each other at regional and national championships; the National Games would take place every 4 years to promote elite sport and to unite the nation through this event. At the same time the Sports Ministry issued 'The Regulations of the Youth Spare-Time Sports Schools' in 1956. The Soviet Union's spare-time sports school model (*yeyu tixiao*) was adapted to train and foster talented athletes from a very young age. By September 1958 there were 16,000 spare-time sports schools with 777,000 students throughout the country (Wu, 1999, p. 102).

This elite sport system was further developed during the Great Leap Forward (GLF) from 1957 to 1961. From 1957, the goal of the GLF was to accelerate economic development and social progress in order to overtake Great Britain economically within 7 years and the United States within 15 years. Its slogan was 'Go all out, aim high and achieve greater, faster, better and more economic results'. In response to the Party's call, the Sports Ministry initiated the Sports GLF campaign, also in 1957. Its ambition was to catch up with the world's most competitive sports countries in 10 years. It was planned that by 1967, China's athletes in basketball, volleyball, football, table-tennis, athletics, gymnastics, weight-lifting, swimming, shooting and skating were to be among the very best in the world. China would produce 15,000 professional full-time athletes.

At the same time, in order to meet the needs of a healthy labour force, mass sport was also promoted throughout the country. The Soviet model, 'Preparation for labour and defence' (*Laoweizhi*) was adapted. Two hundred million men and women were expected to pass the fitness grade of *Laoweizhi*. One million, seven hundred and twenty thousand sports teams would be

formed among 40 million urban workers, and 3 million sports teams among peasants by 1967. It was expected that Chinese sport would develop under the 'two legs walking system': elite and mass sports developing simultaneously (Wu, 1999, pp. 102–106). However, the failure of the GLF and the onset of the Great Famine in 1960 resulted in a change of direction.

Consolidation (1961–1966)

In 1960, the Party changed its slogan to 'Readjustment, consolidation, filling out and raising standards' and, in 1961, the Sports Ministry changed its policy to produce elite sports stars (The Policy Research Centre of the Sports Ministry, 1982, pp. 60, 72). The government determined to use the best of its limited resources to provide special and intensive training for potential athletes in a particular sport so that they could compete on the international sporting stage. Consequently, in physical education institutes, whose major responsibility was to train physical education teachers and instructors for mass sports, reduced in number from 29 in 1959 to 20 in 1960. In contrast, professional sports teams increased from 3 in 1951 to more than 50 by 1961. The Sports Ministry also issued the 'Regulations for Outstanding Athletes and Teams' in 1963 to improve the system. Under the instruction of the Ministry a search for talented young athletes took place in every province (The Policy Research Centre of the Sports Ministry, 1982, p. 102). Meanwhile 10 key sports were selected from the previous 43. They were: athletics, badminton, gymnastics, swimming, football, basketball, table-tennis, shooting, weightlifting and skiing (The Policy Research Centre of the Sports Ministry, 1982, p. 103). The Party concentrated resources on a few elite athletes in order to achieve success on the international sporting stage. It was a key turning point in the Chinese sport ideology and system, changing from 'two legs' to 'one leg' – the elite one.

Development (1971–1979)

The elite sport system came under attack during the Cultural Revolution. For Chairman Mao and his followers, the function of the Cultural Revolution was to prevent China changing its colour from red (communism) to black (capitalism and revisionism). By doing so, the Chinese would transform the ideology, politics, education, culture, literature, media, drama, films and sport – the so-called superstructure realm which had been dominated by the revisionists and capitalists for the past

18 years since 1949 – and embrace Mao Zedong Thought (CCP, 1966). Sport was no exception. It was the place where, ‘for 18 years the black line had dominated’ (The ‘May 12 Military Order’, 1968). It should be changed to the red line. However, without criticism and destruction of the black line, the red one could not be established.

A revolution was required. ‘A revolution’, Mao stated in his famous Little Red Book, ‘is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another’ (*The Quotations from Mao Zedong*, 1968, pp. 11–12). Thus, as Johnson described: ‘The Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s smashed across China like a violent sandstorm. Its targets were “revisionist” officials who were accused of weakening the philosophies of Mao’ (Johnson, 1973, p. 93). In May 1966, the violent political storm, accompanied by intense ideological confrontation, started in the Sports Ministry in Beijing, and then throughout every provincial and local sports commission. This confrontation ultimately concerned the relationship between elite and mass sport. Was sport for a few elite athletes or for the masses? Was sport for medals or for the health of people and defence of the country? The former was regarded as bourgeois ideology and the latter as communist idealism.

He Long, the Minister, was formally accused: ‘For the past 10 years he has paid attention not to mass physical education, but to forming professional teams and highly developed activities’. In 1962 he openly advocated that ‘The National Physical Education Committee only pay attention to athletic teams and the provincial and municipal levels take care of mass physical education and national defence physical education’ (The crime of anti-party and revisionist He Long, 1967, p. 4). He Long was criticised and jailed, and died in prison in 1975. Rong Gaotang, a vice-minister, was labelled a traitor and ‘a running dog’ of He Long and was also imprisoned. Other heads of departments were criticised and beaten by the Red Guards and revolutionary rebels. One thousand cadres were regarded as untrustworthy and sent to a May Seventh Cadre School in Tun Liu, Shanxi province, an isolated place at the foot of Taihang mountain, to do physical labour.

The training system broke down, sports schools closed, sports competitions vanished, and Chinese teams stopped touring abroad. The table-tennis team that had won 15 medals at the 1965 World Championships disappeared and did not attend the

1967 and 1969 Championships. Provincial and local teams were disbanded. Coaches and athletes were sent to the countryside and factories to do physical labour (Rong, 1984, pp. 262–263). For example, 47 provincial football teams were disbanded, and 1,124 football players and 115 coaches had to find jobs in factories and shops (Guan, 1996, p. 194). Most national teams disbanded except those for table-tennis, gymnastics and athletics. Outstanding athletes were criticised as promising sons and daughters of the bourgeois, and their coaches were criticised, and even beaten up. Less privileged athletes and coaches were encouraged to participate in criticism meetings and to beat the privileged – a sign of revolutionary commitment (Interview, Bi Shiming, Head of the Sports History Commission of the Sports Ministry, 1996).

The situation changed due to the urgent need to establish better Sino-American relations in 1971. At the 31st World Table-Tennis Championships in Japan between 25 January and 3 February 1971 the Chinese used its 'Ping-Pong diplomacy' to open up the political door to the United States and the West. In February 1971, after the World Table-Tennis Championships, China invited table-tennis teams from the United States and five other western countries to visit China and Premier Zhou Enlai received them at the People's Hall on 14 April 1971. He warmly welcomed the American athletes: 'You have opened a new chapter in the relations of the American and Chinese people' (quoted in Qian, 1987, p. 49). The political signal was clear and overt and well received by the US government.

On 11 July 1971 Henry Kissinger, President Richard Nixon's national security adviser, travelled to China to meet with China's Premier Zhou. On 15 July the public announcement of a presidential visit was made on radio and television by Nixon himself in California. On 25 October, Communist China renewed its seat in the United Nations (Nixon, 1978; Kissinger, 1979). On 21 February 1972 President Nixon and Chairman Mao met in Beijing and 7 days later, a 'joint communiqué' was issued in Shanghai. This document marked a major policy shift for both countries. The *People's Daily* proudly announced that China had now come back to the international family (*People's Daily*, 26 February 1972). Richard Nixon commented that the agreement of 1972 had built a bridge across 16,000 miles and 22 years of hostility, and it had changed the world (Nixon, 1978). Sport had played a significant role in bringing the two nations together.

'Ping-Pong diplomacy' not only changed the status of the nation but also the direction of elite sport in China. After the victory of the 'Ping-Pong diplomacy', elite sport became

increasingly important, since it could help to effectively break down national barriers and to establish and promote international contacts between different political systems. While the whole country was still in chaos *only* the Sports Ministry was restored. In February 1972 the cadres of the Sports Ministry were liberated from the countryside and returned to Beijing (Wang, 1993, pp. 13–14). In May, the Sports Ministry held a work conference to promote athletic training programmes and restore the training system of sports schools (Guan, 1996, p. 195). In 1973 the Sports Ministry held a national work conference to promote elite sport nationwide (The Policy Research Centre of the Sports Ministry, 1982, p. 112). By the end of 1974, 1,459 sports schools re-opened, and provincial and national teams were restored and began their training for national and international competitions.

Sports competitions took place at regional, provincial and national levels. At the national level, a Five Sports Competition (basketball, volleyball, football, table-tennis, badminton) took place in 1972. The First National Student Sports Meeting took place in 1973 and more than 20,000 athletes took part, and 70 athletes broke 40 national records. The 3rd Sports Meeting of the People's Liberation Army, and the 3rd National Games took place in 1975 and three world records were broken (Guan, 1996, p. 195). At the international level, China renewed its seat on the Asian Olympic Sports Committee in November 1973 and sent a delegation with 269 athletes to attend the 7th Asian Games in 1974 in Iran (Bai and Gu, 1990, pp. 2–3).

From 1971 to 1976 China attended 54 international competitions (People's Sports Press, 1983). China also hosted the Asian and African Table-Tennis Invitational Tournament in 1971, the Asian Table-Tennis Championships in 1972, the Asian, African and Latin American Table-Tennis Invitational Tournament in 1973, the Beijing International Swimming and Diving Invitational Tournament in 1975, the Beijing International Women's Basketball Invitational Tournament and the Shanghai International Table-Tennis Invitational Tournament in 1976 (Cao, 1991, p. 86). 'Sports crazy' became one of the distinguishing characteristics of China during the 1970s (Zhang, 1991, p. 3; Hong, 1999). While there is a great danger in over-emphasising the role of elite sport in the Cultural Revolution it had proved extremely valuable for diplomacy. Elite sport enabled the Communists to make approaches to Western enemies through a medium benefitting from its non-political image. It was also used to strengthen relations between allies, helping China to reproduce and transform its image in order to establish its position as a leader of the Third World.

The Olympic strategy (1980–2006)

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, China initiated a profound economic reformation and made great efforts to integrate with the world economy. The national ambition was to catch up with the Western capitalist world through modernisation. Chinese sport played an important part in stimulating the nation's enthusiasm and motivating people towards modernity (Tong, 1989, p. 114). In 1979, China renewed its membership of the IOC and subsequently other international sports organisations. Many international competitions were now open to the Chinese. Attending the Olympics and other international competitions and performing well became a symbolic means of catching up with and even beating Western powers. The success of Chinese athletes at the 1979 World Volleyball Championships, the 1982 Asia Games and, in particular, the 1984 Olympic Games, raised hopes of the government and the people that China would become a great country again in the near future.

In 1980, Wang Meng, the Sports Minister, stated at the National Sports Conference that forging a relationship between sport and the socialist economy was crucial to the development of Chinese elite sport. On the one hand, China was still a poor country and was restricted in the amount of money it could invest in sport. On the other hand, elite sport was an effective way to boost China's new image on the international stage. Therefore, the solution was to bring elite sport into the existing planned economy and administrative system, which could assist in the distribution of the limited resources of the whole nation to medal-winning sports (Wang, 1980, p. 1). The international success of Chinese athletes would, in return, bring pride and hope to the nation, which were badly needed in the new era of transformation (Rong, 1984).

Following China's participation in the 1984 Olympic Games, the Society of Strategic Research for the Development of Physical Education and Sport (*Tiyu fazhan zhanlue yanjiu hui*) produced the 'Olympic strategy' (*Aoyun zhanlue*) for the Sports Ministry in 1985. This strategy clearly stated that 'elite sport is the priority'. It aimed to use the nation's limited sports resources to develop elite sport to ensure that China would become a leading sports power by the end of the twentieth century. The strategy was the blueprint for Chinese sport in the 1980s and 1990s while the target was primarily the Olympics. Wu Shaozu, the Minister of Sport from 1990 to 2000, claimed that 'The highest aim of Chinese sport is success in the Olympic Games. We must concentrate our resources on it. To raise the

flag at the Olympics is our major responsibility' (Wu, 1993, p. 402). To achieve this goal the government must channel the best of limited resources to potential gold medallists in order to provide special and intensive training. Chinese athletes benefited from both the 'whole country support elite for the sport system' and the 'Olympic strategy' and achieved very satisfactory results.

In 1984, China re-emerged onto the Olympic stage after an absence of 32 years, won 15 gold medals and was placed fourth in the Olympic medals table. Although success in Los Angeles was partly attributed to the absence of the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Germany, it nevertheless excited many in China, from government officials to ordinary citizens. 'Develop elite sport and make China a superpower in the world' became both a slogan and a dream for the Chinese people.

However, for the Chinese, the 1988 Seoul Olympics was very disappointing. When the two sporting superpowers, the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Germany, returned to the Olympics, China's gold medal tally shrank to five and the country slipped painfully from fourth to eleventh in the gold medal table. In 1992, China fought back at the Barcelona Olympics. Although the Soviet Union had split into several countries, it still competed as a unit under the name of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Germany had re-united and was even more powerful than before. However, China won 16 gold medals and returned to fourth in the gold medal count. The Atlanta Olympics in 1996 did not please the Chinese, for they again won 16 gold medals and remained fourth on the gold medal table. No progress was not acceptable.

Four years later China achieved 'a historical breakthrough' at the 27th Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, increasing its gold medal count to 28 and was placed third overall. However, some sports officials argued that this result was not a reliable measure of an improvement of Chinese sporting strength, since five of the gold medals came from the newly added events: synchronised diving and women's weightlifting. In 2004, Chinese athletes achieved notable success in Athens: of 32 gold medals, 4 were won in traditional western 'fortress' areas: track and field, swimming, rowing and canoeing. CNN commented: 'In the six Olympic Games they have competed in, China has moved up the medal tally in world record time' (China takes the Olympic limelight, 2004). China is now second in the table and intends to head the medal table at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (Hong et al., 2005) – see Table 2.1.

In addition, China won 2 gold, 12 silver and 8 bronze medals at the winter Olympic Games between 1992 and 2002. Between

Table 2.1 China's participation in the summer Olympics 1984–2004

Games	Year	Host city	Gold medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total medals	Gold medal ranking
23	1984	Los Angeles	15	8	9	22	4
24	1988	Seoul	5	11	12	28	7
25	1992	Barcelona	16	22	16	54	4
26	1996	Atlanta	16	22	12	50	4
27	2000	Sydney	28	16	15	59	3
28	2004	Athens	32	17	14	63	2

Table 2.2 China's participation in the summer Asian Games 1978–2002

Games	Year	Host city	Gold medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total medals	Gold medal ranking
7	1974	Tehran	33	46	27	106	3
8	1978	Bangkok	51	54	46	178	2
9	1982	New Delhi	61	51	41	151	1
10	1986	Seoul	94	82	46	222	1
11	1990	Beijing	183	107	51	336	1
12	1994	Hiroshima	137	92	62	276	1
13	1998	Bangkok	129	78	67	274	1
14	2002	Pusan	150	84	74	308	1

1974 and 2002, China participated in the Asian Games eight times and won 1,951 medals. In short, China is firmly established as the sports superpower in Asia – see Table 2.2.

When China achieved extraordinary success at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, the term, 'whole country support for the elite sport system' (Juguo tizhi) began to appear regularly in official statements to explain how Chinese sport had achieved so much in such a short time. When Jiang Zemin, the General Secretary of the Party, claimed in 2000 that 'The success of American sport depends on its economic power; the success of Russian sport depends on its rich resource and experience of training elite athletes; the success of Chinese sport depends on

“Juguo tizhi” – “whole country support for the elite sport system” (Li, 2000), the concept was for the first time approved at the highest political level. Yuan Weimin, the Sports Minister from 1990 to 2004, officially defined the term at the All State Sports Ministers’ Conference in 2001. He stated that the meaning of ‘Juguo tizhi’ was that central and local governments should use their power to channel adequate financial and human resources throughout the country to support elite sport in order to win glory for the nation (Yuan, 2001, p. 364).

The characteristics of the ‘whole country support for the elite sport system’ (Juguo tizgi)

The distinguishing characteristics of ‘Juguo tizhi’ include: an embodiment of China’s political ideology, as discussed earlier; its administrative and management system is centralised; and it functions only for improving the level of elite sport success through a specialised and selective training system.

The administrative system for sport

One of the significant features of the Chinese elite sport system is its centralised administrative and management structure. The national governmental body, the State Physical Education and Sports Commission (the Sports Ministry) is responsible for the formulation and implementation of sports policy and administration of national sports programmes. It liaises closely with other government ministries including Education and National Defence. Between 1953 and 1954 sports commissions were established at provincial and local county levels to implement the national sports policy and programmes. By the mid-1950s a centralised system of sports administration was in place and has dominated Chinese sport ever since.

Figure 2.1 clearly shows that the Chinese Sports Ministry operated directly under the leadership of the central government. The model of the Chinese sports administrative system reflected the wider social system in China: both the Party and state administrations were organised in a vast hierarchy with power flowing down from the top. Since the 1980s, the Chinese economy has been through a process of change from a planned to a market economy. At the same time, the sports system has been transformed from a centralised system to a multi-level and multi-channel system. In the mid-1990s the Sports Ministry changed its name from the State Physical Education and Sports Commission (Guojia tiyu yundong weiyuanhui) to China

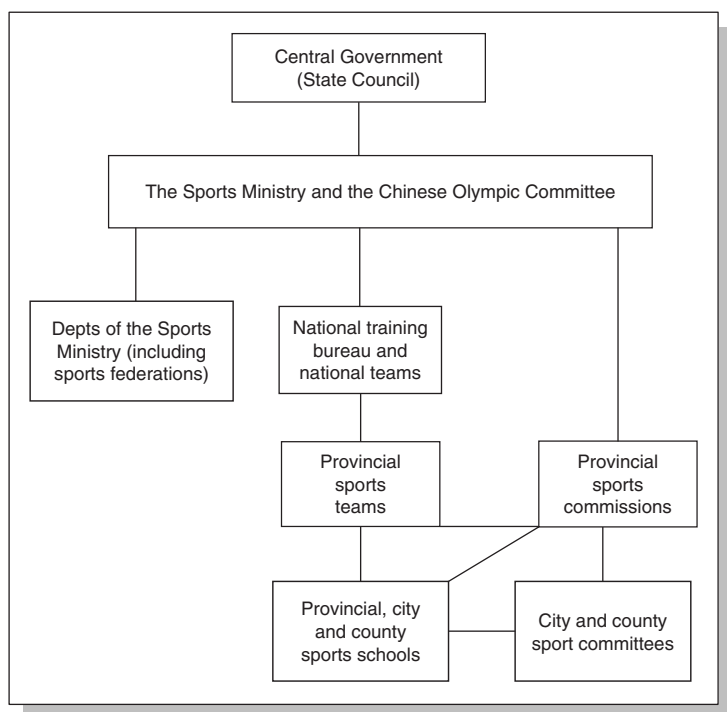


Figure 2.1 The administrative structure of Chinese sport 1952–1996

General Administration of Sport (Guojia tiyu zhongju). Twenty sports management centres were established to manage its training and commercial interests. The change in title and structure was both symbolic and pragmatic. The Sports Ministry's aim was for Chinese sport to now stand more on its own feet and rely less on government support (Hong et al., 2005).

Figure 2.2 illustrates changes in the administrative of Chinese sport since 1997. With regard to the 20 sports management centres, it is evident that except for football, basketball and table-tennis they are far from self-supporting. The centres remain largely dependent on money from central government for survival. With the approach of the Beijing Olympic Games, central government can do nothing but increase its financial support for the 'success' of the Games. Therefore, the reform of the sports management system is in reality old wine in a new bottle. The traditional centralised system remains and still plays an important role in the Chinese elite sport system (Hong et al., 2005).

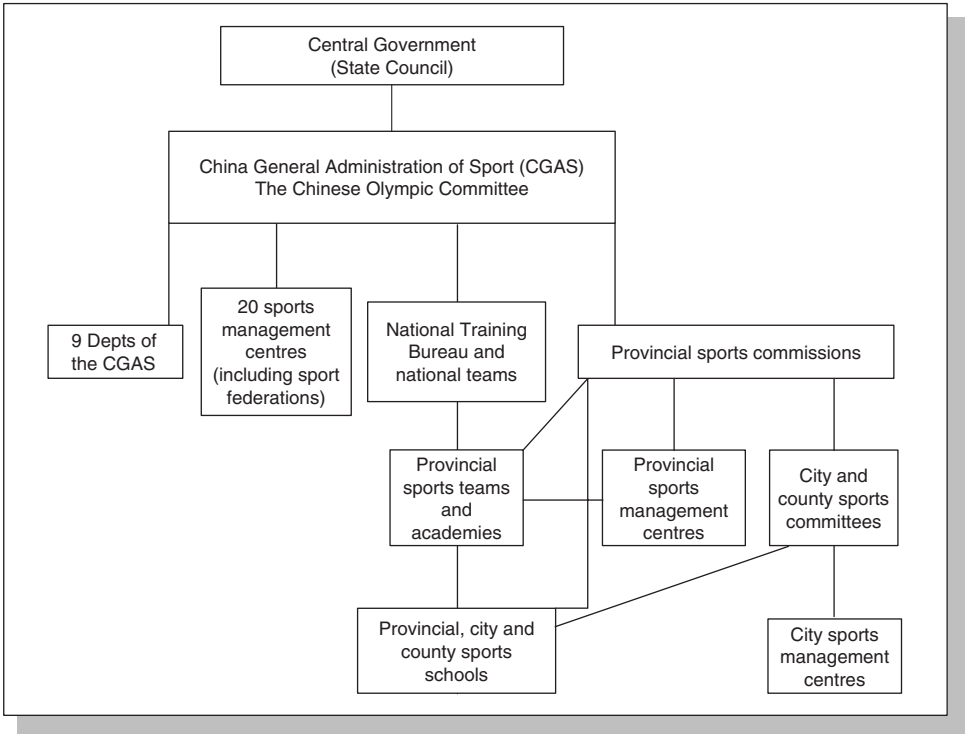


Figure 2.2 The administrative structure of Chinese sport 1997–2006

Elite athlete development

Resources

As discussed, in the 1980s the ‘Olympic strategy’ stressed that all available resources for sport in China should be concentrated on elite sport. Consequently, in terms of funding, elite sport consumed 80 per cent of the state’s sports budget. Table 2.3 clearly shows that Chinese sport still largely depends on governmental funding.

In addition, throughout the 1980s and 1990s there was special funding for Olympic preparation. For example, to secure medal success at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics there was a specific fund of 65 million yuan (US\$13 million) for Olympic-related activities (Zhang, 1996, p. 14). In general, elite sports teams were major beneficiaries of the government budget. Table 2.4 illustrates the investment from central and local governments to elite sports teams from 1991 to 1997. Incidentally, the figures do not include

Table 2.3 Chinese sports budget 1981–1996 (unit: 10,000 yuan)

Governmental funding				Commercial investment		
Year	Central government	Local government	In total	Sponsorship	Commercial profits	In total
1981–1985	305,32	226,112	256,644	0	0	0
1986–1990	56,625	543,166	599,791	0	0	0
1991	13,184	153,392	166,576	0	0	0
1992	14,100	172,400	186,500	0	0	0
1993	18,600	190,800	209,400	2,192.2	76,260.5	78,452.7
1994	15,309	187,045.6	202,354.6	4,185.5	67,394.6	71,580.1
1995	22,567.6	216,235.6	238,806.4	3,664.9	77,820.5	81,435.4
1996	20,945	263,229.2	284,174.2	4,737.3	99,789.3	104,526.6

Source: 'Sports Statistics' provided by the Planning and Finance Department of the Sports Ministry. (In the 1990s, US\$ 1 was equivalent to about 5 yuan.)

Table 2.4 Budget for elite sports teams 1991–1997 (unit: 10,000 yuan)

Year	Central and local government funding for elite sports teams	Proportion of sports funds (%)
1991	40,000	22
1992	44,000	24
1993	56,000	25
1994	60,000	30
1995	80,000	32
1996	100,000	34
1997	120,000	30

Source: 'The Research on the Developing Trend of Elite Sport Towards 2010' (Zhan, 2001, p. 12). (In the 1990s, US\$ 1 was equivalent to about 5 yuan.)

the budget spent on training facilities and equipment, the cost of national and international competitions and other activities related to elite sport (The Planning and Finance Department, 1994, p. 44).

Selection and training

China has one of the most effective systems in the world for systematically selecting and producing sporting talent from a very young age. As discussed, this system was officially created in 1963 when the Sports Ministry issued the 'Regulations for Outstanding Athletes and Teams'. On the instructions of the Ministry, the selection of talented young athletes took place in every province (The Policy Research Centre of the Sports Ministry, 1982, p. 102). Over the years it has developed into a well-organised and tightly structured three-level pyramid: primary, intermediate and high level. The sports schools at county, city and provincial levels formed the base of the pyramid – see Figure 2.3. After several years of training about 12 per cent of talented athletes from sports schools were selected to go on to provincial teams and become full-time athletes. From there, outstanding athletes progress to the top: the national squads and Olympic teams. The system remains in place today.

In terms of selection procedures, when boys and girls between the ages of 6–9 years old are identified as having some talent in particular sports, they are sent to local sports schools throughout the country. They are trained 3 hours per day and 4–5 times per week. After a period of hard training the promising ones are promoted to semi-professional training: 4–5 hours

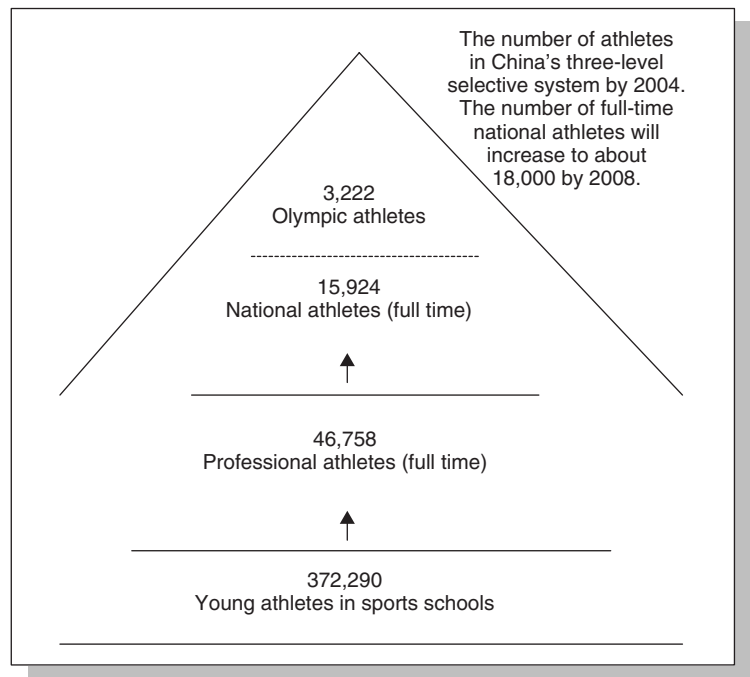


Figure 2.3 Pyramid of the selective system (Source: Department of Training of the China General Administration of Sport (the Sports Ministry))

training per day and 5–6 days per week. Before the 1990s, the sports schools, which are part of the local sports commission, provided coaching and training facilities and met all costs of training and competition. In addition, the young athletes were provided with a free meal once a day. After 1990, the cost has been borne partially by parents.

After this ‘semi-professional’ training, young people with potential are selected for the provincial sports academies or training centres. Young athletes live on campus and train 4–6 hours per day and 5–6 days per week. Their aim is to reach the second stage and become full-time professionals in provincial teams and eventually to reach the third stage to become members of the national squads and Olympic teams. The selection system is brutal and is the core of the ‘whole country support for the elite sport system’. In 2004 there were nearly 400,000 young boys and girls training at more than 3,000 sports schools throughout China (Dai, 2004). Yet just 5 per cent reach the top and 95 per cent of these young athletes leave their sports schools with no formal primary and secondary education qualifications – only broken dreams.

Athletes in provincial and national teams are full-time professionals and they receive ‘wages’ from provincial and national governmental bodies. Their average monthly income is 2,000–4,000 RMB (Chinese currency). World champions and Olympic medallists receive additional income from rewards provided by national and provincial governments, and also benefit from sponsorships and advertising. For example, Liu Xiang, the Olympic gold medallist, following victory at the 2004 Athens Games, received rewards of more than 1 million RMB from these sources. However, these full-time athletes receive their pensions only from their provincial sports bodies. Therefore, local governments, especially the local sports commissions, have suffered, and will continue to suffer, from the ‘Olympic drainage’, a unique system within the elite sport system, as discussed below.

Provincial and local sports teams and commissions have responsibility for nurturing *and* training elite athletes for the national teams and rewarding them when they win medals. Therefore, when the Olympic Games or international competitions are over athletes return to their home teams, and their provincial sports commissions have to reward the winners with huge amounts of money. For those who are not lucky enough to win medals, the local sports authority has a responsibility to look after them and to pay them wages and pensions. Therefore, local sport authorities are constantly short of money for sport, for they have already spent most of their budget on training and have nothing left to pay the rewards, wages, pensions and

other costs. For example, in Liaoning Province, where athletes won more medals than any other province, the local sports commission is facing a huge financial burden due to the large amounts of money it has to pay to current Olympic and world champions, and the wages and pensions for those ex-Olympic gold medallists and ex-world champions. 'Able to produce gold medallists but unable to reward and feed them' (duo de qi jinpai, yang bu qi guanjun) is the harsh reality facing local sports governing bodies (Reporter of South China Sport Weekly, 2004; Hong et al., 2005).

Competition opportunities

In order to produce elite sport 'stars' from a young age, local and provincial competitions are held on a regular basis. In general, individual sports have their national championships once every year to provide athletes with experience and to select talented young athletes for the provincial and national teams. There are regional and provincial sports meetings every 2 years and the National Games every 4 years. From the 1980s, in order to train athletes for the Olympic Games, the National Games were re-scheduled to non-Olympic years. Most of the competitive sports events in the National Games are Olympic events. In 1993 the Sports Ministry officially stated that the National Games must directly link to the Olympic Games. In short, the National Games are the training ground for the Olympics. Therefore, when the 8th National Games took place in Shanghai in 1997, the 9th Games in Guangzhou in 2001 and the 10th Games in Jiangsu province in 2005, Chinese athletes competed in all the Olympic sports except Wusu (Martial Arts). The slogans are 'Let the national competitions serve the Olympics' (bian quanyun wei aoyun), and 'Training the athletes in Chinese competitions and preparing them to fight for China at international games' (guonei lianbing, yizhiduiwai). Further more, Chinese athletes regularly participate in international sports competitions. All costs of participation in international competitions are met by the Sports Ministry. The International Relations Department in the Sport Ministry is responsible for facilitating and organising all international competitions.

Coaching and sports science research

Coaches in China, from county to national level, are employed on a full-time basis. To become a coach at a local sports school one has to obtain a higher diploma or bachelor degree in physical

education and sports studies, and also pass coaching certificate tests. In 1994 there were 5,926 full-time coaches with bachelor degrees working in sports schools and elite sports teams at provincial and national levels (The Planning and Finance Department, 1994, p. 3).

In terms of training methods, the regime of the People's Army, that is, 'hard, disciplined, intensive training and practice according to real battle', was adopted in 1963. In 1964, however, a new training method was introduced. It included 'three non-afraids': non-afraid of hardship, difficulty and injury; and 'five toughnesses': toughness of spirit, body, skill, training and competition (Hong, 2003, pp. 227–228). This new approach became a legendary Chinese sport method and continues to influence China's training system in the twenty-first century. For example, Wang Junxia, holder of world records from 1,500 to 10,000 metres and recipient of the prestigious Jesse Owens Trophy in 1994, ran 170 kilometres in 4 days in her training sessions. She is not alone. Almost all the girls in her team were trained, and are still trained, under the same methods and routines. Nevertheless, since the late 1980s the emphasis has moved towards advanced scientific training methods including coaching techniques, sports science, sports psychology, sports medicine, state-of-the-art facilities and equipment.

There are 36 sports research centres at provincial level including 29 provinces and the 7 major cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Xi'an, Chengdu and Chongqing. The National Institute of Sports Science is located in Beijing under the direct leadership of the Sports Ministry. All the sports researchers who work in these research centres are employed as full-time researchers and are required to link their research directly to training athletes to win medals. In addition, there are 9 sports universities and more than 60 sports faculties and departments in Chinese universities. Academics and researchers at universities also contribute directly and indirectly to training gold medallists in the areas of coaching techniques, sports psychology, sports medicine, sports physiology and biomechanics and sports sociology.

Training facilities

All the sports schools have their own training facilities, including gymnasiums, football pitch, basketball court, table-tennis court and swimming pool. Historically, they are part of the investment of the local sports commissions. Although the public can share these facilities, the training of young athletes is the priority. At

the provincial level, each province provides its sports teams with a training camp, which is normally situated in the provincial capital city and close to the sports research centre. In addition, each provincial team develops its own individual training base outside the capital city of the province. At national level, there are several national training centres in Beijing for different sports such as gymnastics, diving, swimming, synchronised swimming, modern pentathlon, fencing, weightlifting and athletics. In addition, each national team has its own training camp outside Beijing. These training camps have first-class training facilities which are jointly sponsored by local governments and the Sports Ministry, for example:

Haigen camp in Yunnan province: swimming, women's football

Hongta camp in Yunnan province: women's long distance running (It is believed that athletes will benefit from the high-altitude environment in Yunnan province.)

Haikou camp in Hainan province: sailing

Sanya camp in Hainan province: beach volleyball

Zhongshan camp in Guangzhou: table-tennis

Shengzhen camp in Guangdong province: judo, cycling

Guangzhou camp: shooting, softball, baseball, handball, hockey and boxing

Fuzhou camp in Fujian province: athletics (high jump)

Xinzhuan camp in Shanghai: athletics (hurdles)

In general, the national teams spend more than 8 months in their training camps outside Beijing. It is believed that these isolated training bases with first-class training facilities minimise distractions and improve athletic performance. The *People's Daily* reported on 19 January 2007 that during the winter, and when the Chinese New Year (18 February) approaches, Chinese Olympic teams continue their training in the camps outside Beijing (*People's Daily*, 19 January 2007). In summary, through the Olympic medal-oriented policy, the centralised sports administrative and management system, and the selection and training system, the entire Chinese elite sport system is focused on producing a handful of exceptional athletes to win gold medals at the Olympic Games.

Elite sport system critique

Although the elite sport system has been supported by the might of the state, critical voices emerged as early as the late

1980s. In 1988 Zhao Yu's two controversial reports, *Dreaming to be a Superpower* (Qiangguomeng) and *The Defeat in Seoul* (Bingbai Hancheng), revealed the dark side of China's approach to elite sport and criticised the 'whole country support for the elite sport system' (Zhao, 1988a). In 1989, at the height of the pro-democracy movement (the Tiananmen Square Event), there was an intense debate as to whether millions should be spent on the pursuit of Olympic medals or on improving people's physical exercise and health at grassroots level. The debate continued when China bid for the Olympic Games in 1993. Books and articles were published and conferences were held. In 1998 an essay entitled 'The Olympic Movement in China: Ideals, realities and ambitions' was published in the *International Journal of the History of Sport*. It reviewed the development of the Olympic Movement in China from the 1910s to the 1990s and analysed the problems of the Chinese Olympic Movement within which the elite sport system played a major part (Hong, 1998).

Research conducted in 2002 by Deng Yaping, a former table-tennis world champion and Olympic gold medallist, provided an insightful case study. Deng Yaping argued that the elite sport system had a negative impact on those children who began, from a very young age, to play table-tennis and who aimed to become professional players in the future. They spent their first 15 years doing nothing but playing table-tennis and they dreamed of becoming world champions. However, there were nearly 1,000 full-time table-tennis players in China but just 20 could be selected for the national team. The majority had to retire at the age of 25. Deng argued that, because of their lack of a formal education, suitable jobs were difficult to find outside the world of table-tennis. Disillusionment and depression were at least two of the negative outcomes for the many who did not make it to the very highest level (Deng, 2002, pp. 110–111).

In September 2003, the *Xinhua News Agency* reported on the unemployment and poor living conditions of the majority of retired professional athletes in China. Critically, it pointed out that these 'tragedies' were caused by the 'Olympic strategy' implemented by the government at all levels in Chinese society. The elite sport system had not only damaged athletes' bodies but also reduced their opportunities for formal schooling (Tragedy under the pyramid, 2003). In August 2004, a report published in *Looking East Weekly* pointed out that the elite sport system had gravely alienated Chinese sportsmen and women. Its over-consumption of resources had serious adverse effects on mass sport and the 'National Fitness Programme' (Where will the lame Chinese elite sport go?, 2004). In addition, increasingly

critics emerged on the Internet where people could express their opinions even more freely.

During the 1990s, the government, under pressure because of rising demands for grassroots sports participation, began to advocate that the 'Olympic strategy' and the 'National Fitness Programme', which was initiated in 1995, should advance simultaneously. However, China's bids, in 1993 and 2001, to host the Olympic Games ensured that elite sport remained the priority. Moreover, the success of the bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games stimulated a new set of Olympic-related objectives. As Jiang Zemin, the General Secretary of the Party between 1989 and 2003, stated: 'The success of the bid will advance China's domestic stability and economic prosperity. The Olympics in China has the objectives of raising national morale and strengthening the unity of Chinese people both in the mainland and overseas' (*People's Daily*, 22 August 2002).

The strategy of winning Olympic medals in 2008

The well-developed 'whole country support for the elite sport system' matches China's Olympic medal ambitions. In July 2002 the Party and the Central Government issued a document titled, 'Strengthening and progressing sport in the new era' (Zhonggongzhongyang guowuyuan guanyu jinyibu jiaoqiang he gaijin xinshiqi tiyu dongzuo de yijian). It emphasised that hosting the 2008 Olympic Games is the priority not only for Beijing but for the whole country. China must grasp this opportunity to display itself to the world and to make Beijing 2008 the best Olympic Games ever. The Sports Ministry immediately drew up two important internal documents: 'The outline strategy for winning Olympic medals 2001–2010' (Aoyun zhengguang gangyao 2001–2010) and 'The strategic plan for winning Olympic medals in 2008' (2008 Aoyun zhengguang jihua). These two documents constitute an action plan to ensure China's successful hosting of the 2008 Olympics. The following actions are some of the key outputs from the two plans.

Selection of Olympic sports

In 2004 China participated in 26 summer Olympic sports and 203 events at the Athens Olympics. Eighteen key events were targeted for medals and these received most of the support in the elite sport system. In order to win more medals in 2008, China is preparing to participate in all the Olympic sports,

including 28 sports and 300 events. Strengths and weaknesses have been carefully analysed and the Olympic sports have been divided into four categories:

- 1 'Traditional Olympic sports', in which China is virtually guaranteed to win gold medals, such as table-tennis, badminton and diving. There are 17 gold medals in these three sports and China won 13 in 2000. The aim is to maintain the country's dominant position in these sports.
- 2 'Capable Olympic sports', in which China has the ability to win some gold medals, such as gymnastics, weightlifting, shooting and judo. The aim is to win more gold medals in these sports.
- 3 'Potential Olympic sports', in which China has the potential to win more medals, such as athletics, swimming and water sports. There are 119 gold medals in these sports. China won just 2 gold medals in athletics and 1 in swimming in 2004. These are the sports targeted for more gold medals as China aims to outperform the United States in 2008.
- 4 'Weak Olympic sports', in which China lags behind, such as boxing, equestrianism, men's soccer, men's volleyball and baseball. These are the sports in which Chinese athletes need to work harder than ever to reach the qualifying standard and ultimately to win medals (The outline strategy for winning Olympic medals 2001–2010 and The strategic plan for winning Olympic medals in 2008; Yang, 2002).

Training of Olympic athletes

In order to train more athletes for the 2008 Olympic Games, the size of the national teams is expanding. National teams consist of experienced team managers, head coaches, and coaches who are appointed by the Sports Ministry and sports management centres, and elite athletes who are selected from the provincial sports teams throughout China. According to Chinese sports custom, when it prepares for international competitions there are two teams for each event: the national team and the resource team. However, for the Beijing 2008 Games, in order to ensure success, 'The strategic plan for winning Olympic medals in 2008' requires an expansion of the number of teams. Therefore, some key events have three teams: the national team, the youth team and the resource team. All elite athletes in China whose age allows them to perform at the 2008 Games are selected and allocated to different teams according to their present ability and future potential.

Each national team is to be given specific targets for the number of medals expected; no team effort is being spared to ensure success but managers, coaches and athletes are working under enormous pressure. One head coach of a national team reveals that he feels that it is like having a sword hanging over his head every day. National teams and youth teams train in their national training centres. The resource teams train in provincial sports commission training centres and at those universities which have superior training facilities. In 2002, China had 1,316 full-time Olympic athletes in national teams. In 2004, an additional 706 athletes joined national teams and 1,200 joined youth teams. In total, by the end of 2004 there were 3,222 full-time elite athletes training for the 2008 Olympic Games, plus others training in resource teams (The outline strategy for winning Olympic medals 2001–2010 and The strategic plan for winning Olympic medals in 2008'; Yang, 2002).

Increasing Olympic resources

The strategy for the 2008 Olympic Games provides for the government to increase financial support – in particular, for those sports in which Chinese athletes have the potential to win gold medals. Wu Shouzhang, Vice President of the Chinese Olympic Committee, argues that 'Our aim is to get more gold medals at the Olympics and everything we do is for this goal' (The cost of gold medals, 2004). Liu Fuming, Deputy Head of the Department of Finance of the Sports Ministry, confirmed that the Ministry received a budget from the central government of 16 billion yuan (ca. US\$1.95 billion) in 2000. From 2001, the first year of implementation of the 'The outline strategy for winning Olympic medals 2001–2010', central government increased the budget. Liu Fuming has made this quite clear: 'from 2001 we received more than 16 billion yuan from the central government and the figure is increasing every year as 2008 approaches' ('The cost of gold medals', 2004).

The finance department in the Sports Ministry stated that between 2001 and 2004 the central government is augmenting its budget by 1 billion yuan (ca. US\$122 million) each year, and between 2005 and 2008 the figure will be 2 billion yuan (ca. US\$244 million) each year exclusively for the 2008 Olympic Games. Therefore, in 2008 the Sports Ministry will receive 27 billion yuan (ca. US\$3.29 billion) in total. This does not include additional targeted funding for particular programmes related to Olympic preparation. Liu Fuming confirmed that the total figure would reach more than 40 billion yuan (ca. US\$ 4.88 billion)

in 2008 ('The cost of gold medals', 2004). It was estimated that 90 per cent of the funds are, and will be, used to pay the wages of athletes and coaches, improve existing training centres, build even more advanced training centres and provide state-of-the-art equipment. Needless to say, the best coaches in China are selected to train Olympic athletes and others are brought in from abroad and the best qualified sports scientists work closely with the national, youth and resource teams to improve athletes' athletic ability.

Preparation for Olympic competition

In order to provide athletes with maximum experience of competition and to prepare them physically and mentally for the 2008 Olympics, national competitions have been restructured. Apart from the National Games, the 5th City Games in China in 2004 added 10 more Olympic sports to its traditional 16 sports and concentration was on the events in which China expects to win in 2008. Rules and regulations mirrored those of the Olympic Games and the other national championships now follow this model. The slogans are 'Let the national competitions serve the Olympics' (bian quanyun wei aoyun) and 'Training the athletes in Chinese competitions and preparing them to fight for China at international games' (guonei lianbing, yizhiduiwai). In addition, young athletes who have the potential to win gold medals in 2008 were sent to international competitions including the Asian Games, the East Asian Games and the 'Universiade' (The World Student Games) in 2006 to prepare them for the Beijing Olympics. China has increasingly exploited its 'whole country support for the elite sport system' to systematically produce more Olympic athletes in order to maintain and hopefully advance its position in the gold medal table in 2008 (Hong et al., 2005).

Conclusion

China's determination to be placed at the top of the Olympic medals table in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games has resulted in the further strengthening of its elite sport system. There are debates about whether the elite sport system will be dismantled after the 2008 Games. However, China's unique system, which has played such an important role in the country's political life in the form of gold medal ambition, will continue to play a key role in China's ambitions to be one of the global economic and political superpowers in the twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER 5

Germany

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Introduction

Social relevance and acceptance of top level sport

The social importance of sport is becoming increasingly evident in different sectors such as public health, leisure and competitive sports. Reflecting the increasing social importance of sport the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund, DOSB) launched, in 2006, an initiative with the aim of incorporating sport into the German Basic Law as a government objective.¹ The social and political significance of sport is indicated not only by the extent of media interest in competitive sport, but also by the capacity of sports events to regularly attract record attendances. The significance of competitive sportsmen and women as role models and the potential that competitive sport offers as a tool to represent a country internationally are explicitly recognised by the Federal Government and also by the Lander (states)² which both offer extensive financial support to promote what has become a quite elaborate and sophisticated competitive sport system.

However, establishing and maintaining the general conditions necessary for an effective competitive sport system is not unproblematic. Creating social conditions that support 'top level' sport³ calls for political management and intervention which is evident, but only to some extent, in Germany. Neither party political sports programmes nor the government institutions responsible for sport indicate that top level sport has been granted a particular priority which, in part, reflects the deeply embedded principle of the autonomy of sport which is embodied in the differentiated structures that exist for the self-administration of sport. In general, Germany is less interventionist in sport, including elite sport, compared to many other countries.

Development and structure of the German (top level) sports system

In this section the most important milestones in the development of Germany's top level sports system will be outlined. The most important principles of the organisational structures will be derived from the historical perspective discussed below. The features of the state's responsibility for top level sport are then discussed followed by an outline of the support principles governing top level sport.

Historical roots and milestones in elite sport development

Historically, three phases can be identified since World War II, each of which has made a significant contribution to top level sport in Germany in its own way. First, the complete reorganisation of the sports system after World War II; second, the ideological battle between sports systems during the division of Germany; and last, but by no means least, the integration of the sports system developed by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into the sports system of the Federal Republic of Germany following reunification.

New courses of action were needed to be taken after sport had been subjected, and had succumbed, to totalitarian political indoctrination and exploitation under the National Socialists between 1933 and 1945. When Directive 23 of the Allied Control Council entered into force on 17 December 1945, all fascist organisations and all branches of the Nazi sports system right down to club level were disbanded and any activities by sports organisations were banned. The German sports system was subsequently reorganised from scratch between 1945 and 1950 (Grupe, 1990, p. 18; Nitsch, 1990, pp. 21ff). In the course of this reorganisation, against the backdrop of the previous experience of the misuse of sport by a totalitarian state, the key principles governing support for sport including top level sport were developed and remain deeply enshrined in the federal German sports system to the present day. These are, specifically, the autonomy of sport, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of cooperation between sports and the state based on the spirit of partnership. Furthermore, the distinct federal organisational structure of sport also originates from this phase of reorganisation.

In the years when Germany was divided, top level sport was mainly characterised by ideological principles and resulted in two very different elite sport systems. The GDR's (East German) sports system was marked, in particular, by party ideology and top level sport offered a means of expressing an alleged socialist superiority over the capitalist enemy. As such, the system used by the GDR was characterised by a strict and clear decision-making and competency hierarchy. The GDR's top level sports system was organised along very strict lines. Schools and sports clubs were used in a targeted way to identify talented children and young people. These talented youngsters were further monitored at training centres, were trained at children's and young people's sports academies and were then promoted into top level squads. This meant that the party and the state were able to influence the children's and young people's academies via the central sports

federation, the German Gymnastics and Sports Federation of the GDR. Scientific institutions such as the Research Institute for Physical Culture and Sport, the Institute for Research and Development of Sports Equipment, the German University of Physical Culture and Sport and the Sports Medical Service were also under the influence of the party and the state (Büch, 2002a, p. 10).

In the Federal Republic (West Germany), efforts were made to avoid the imposition of ideologically derived guidelines for sport. Nonetheless, in the West, the state also developed a major interest in national representation through top level sporting performances, particularly in the form of Olympic medals. Consequently, during this period, nationwide structures for supporting top level sport were also created at considerable expense in the Federal Republic. Even now, the training centre, squad and coach systems constitute key pillars of the top level sports system in Germany (see below). During this period, both systems aspired to join the ranks of the most successful sporting nations in the world and both rose to the challenge.

With reunification, the German top level sports system faced the challenge of integrating the GDR's centralist and totalitarian system into the top level sports system of the Federal Republic, which was characterised by great openness and by the fact that it took federal structures into account. Some extraordinarily successful structures of the GDR's top level sports system had to be eliminated as part of this process for political, economic or ethical reasons, only to be reintroduced later in a changed or similar form. In relation to the role Germany plays in international sports competition, the aspiration for success that developed during the previous phase has been maintained. This also manifests itself in the publicly stated requirement that Germany be one of the top three nations at the Olympics (DSB, 2003, p. 3). Objectives are much more rigidly and accurately defined in the all-German top level sports system than in the former federal German sports system. Medal guidelines have become customary in a large number of sports federations and the weighting of Olympic successes according to their representative value in society appears to have increased, particularly over the past 10 years.

In addition to these historic events such as reunification, which have affected the whole of society, individual Olympic Games naturally represent important milestones in the development of top level sport in Germany. However, not all Games are considered of equal consequence. Of especial significance are the Games that were rated as failures measured against their highly ambitious targets. Here too, it is possible to identify three phases or periods. The first phase included the Olympic Games of 1964 and 1968 and the successful bid for

the Olympics in 1972, and was identified by Emrich (1996) as being the trigger for much more systematic support for top level sport in the Federal Republic of Germany. A large number of structural changes and trends occurred during this phase especially between the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s. They included the establishment of the first federal training centres, the introduction of the coach system with federal coaches working full time, the introduction of central training courses by the sports federations and the establishment of the German Sports Aid Foundation (*Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe*, DSH) in 1969. To these can be added the establishment of the Federal Performance Committee to coordinate the development of top level sport, also in 1969, and the founding of the Federal Institute of Sports Science in 1970 and of the Coaches' Academy as the central venue for initial and advanced training for top level coaches in 1974 (Emrich, 1996, p. 61ff). Figure 5.1 illustrates the establishment of new structures within the German top level sports system since World War II.

The second phase was set against the background of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. In the context of the absence of Eastern European countries owing to their boycott of the Games, the 59 medals won in Los Angeles were nonetheless interpreted as a failure and as a warning sign of a loss of competitiveness. Immediately afterwards, with an eye on the successful sports clubs in the GDR, the model of Olympic training centres, which had been judged a success up to now, was developed for the Federal Republic. The Olympic training centres were intended to facilitate 'holistic coaching close to the athletes homes' for top level sportsmen and women (cf. Emrich, 1996, p. 66ff).

Finally, missing the target set prior to the Games in Sydney and Athens can be identified as the third phase in Germany's recent Olympic history. Senior officials both at state level and in the federations interpret the results from these two Games as evidence of fundamental change in the international top level sports system in the form of increasing competitiveness on the part of other nations which have significantly increased their spending on the development of top level sport. The merger of the National Olympic Committee for Germany (NOC) and the German Sports Confederation (DSB), which was completed in May 2006, can be seen as a reaction to the poor results achieved in Sydney and Athens, even though there were a number of other reasons for the merger as well. With a view to other sporting nations, stronger centralisation of top level sports organisation was called for following the two Games and was also partially achieved with the establishment of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB).

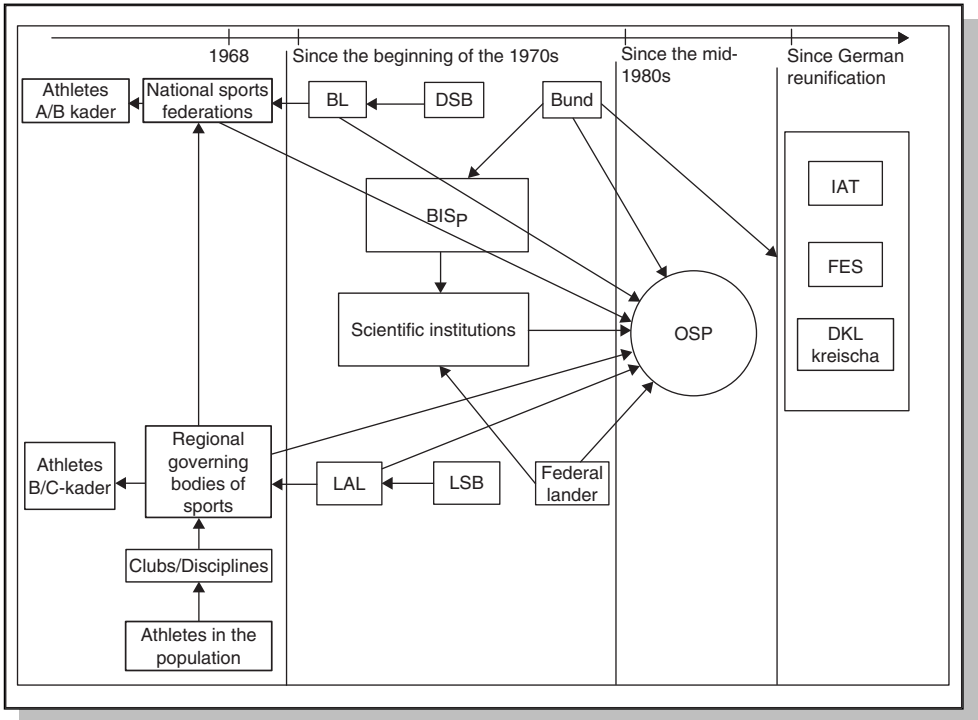


Figure 5.1 The development of the West German sports system after the World War II: BL, Bundesausschuss Leistungssport (Federal Top Level Sports Committee); DKL, Anti-Doping Laboratory Kreischa (Doping Control-Laboratory Kreischa); DSB, Deutscher Sportbund (German Sports Confederation); Bund, Federal Government; BISp, Bundesinstitut für Sportwissenschaft (Federal Institute of Sports Science); FES, Institut für Forschung und Entwicklung von Sportgeräten (Institute for Research & Development of Sports Equipment); IAT, Institut für Angewandte Trainingswissenschaft (Institute of Applied Training Science); LAL, Landesausschuss für Leistungssport (Regional Top Level Sports Committee) (Source: Büch (2002b, p. 137))

Furthermore, a number of milestones can be identified within the different disciplines in elite sport development. In the disciplines chosen for this chapter, hockey and swimming, for instance, they involve innovative changes to the rules or extending key officers' authority to make decisions and to act in relation to top level sport. It is not possible, however, to make generalisations at the level of individual sports in relation to the top level sports system in the Federal Republic.

Principles and structures of top level sports development

The organisation of sport in Germany is oriented to the previously mentioned principles of the autonomy of sport, subsidiarity and cooperation based on the spirit of partnership.

These principles, like the federal structure of the state and administration, are the result of historical learning processes that extend beyond sport. They are firmly embedded in the political thinking of the German people and are therefore extremely resistant to all types of reform endeavours. It is important to know this if one wishes to understand where the limits to the reform or restructuring of the German top level sports system lie. The organisational structures of the sports system are also shaped, to a large extent, by the federal structure that is characteristic of the Federal Republic and which is a feature of both public sports administration and the structures of autonomous civic or self-administered sport.

Reduced to their core elements, these general organisational structures of sport can be described as follows: beyond the local, regional and national level, it is possible to make a distinction between a pillar of public administration of sport and a two-tier pillar of autonomous or self-administered sport. In the public administration of sport, both the Federal Government (through the Ministry of the Interior) and the 16 federal regions (for instance, via their Ministries of Culture or the Interior) have joint responsibility for sport in their area. There are consequently no independent specialist ministries of sports. However, at local government level sport issues would be the responsibility of specialist sports offices. Owing to the country's federal structure and the associated distribution of competencies, these public structures do not constitute a hierarchically integrated, top-to-bottom system, as in other countries. Rather, the individual ministries operate largely independently within the framework of their competencies, although at the regional level they coordinate their activities as part of the Conference of Ministers of Sports of the regions. The situation is different with regard to the self-administered autonomous sport sector where approximately 88,000 sports clubs form the basis of an integrated sports system. As has already been indicated, the clubs are organised both at the level of specific disciplines (into governing bodies) and at the level of multiple sports (into sports confederations). Integration at all levels is via voluntary membership, in other words, from the bottom up. Since the merger of the DSB and the NOC in May 2006, the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) has represented the interests of its member organisations as the sole umbrella body.

The structures of elite sport development are embedded in this framework. The DOSB's Performance Division and the equivalent structures at regional level (Regional Performance Committee/LA-L) play a guiding and coordinating role in elite sport development. The Performance Sports Division is

responsible for managing and coordinating top level sport within the DOSB. It launches initiatives for the development of strategic plans and makes declarations of principle regarding performance sport for young athletes and top level sport. Currently, the main strategy papers in this area are the National Top Level Sports Concept, the Support Concept 2012 and the Concept of Top Level Sport for Young Athletes 2012. However, these strategy papers have not yet been combined into a single, comprehensive development plan. At the regional level the criteria for promoting talent are laid down by the Regional Committees for Performance Sport (LA-L).

The main bodies involved in the top level sports system are the clubs and the sports federations. The clubs form the basis of top level sport. They admit children and young people, introduce them to sport and spot talent. In particular, however, the clubs act as a social system which creates security for the athletes and in which their daily sporting activities are embedded. This inclusive role is extremely important in a system which is otherwise unconditionally focused on selection. This occasionally causes problems when, despite a lack of infrastructure and support options at their local club, talented athletes are not redirected to better equipped clubs or training centres.

As each discipline in Germany can only be represented nationally by a single sports federation, the latter have a representative and organisational monopoly for their discipline. At present, there are 33 Olympic and 27 non-Olympic national sports federations. The federations organise the German championships and also nominate and send national teams to world and European championships. In addition, they are responsible for preparing athletes and teams for these major events and also establish squads of talented young athletes and top level athletes for this purpose. All the federations have their own more or less differentiated development concepts for top level sport. In addition to these specialised development plans and concepts, elite sport development in Germany is characterised by a comprehensive support system which is based on three interlocking subsystems or pillars: the squad system, the training centre system and the coaching system. The combined system of top level sport and science and the combined system of schools, universities and other establishments of higher education, the Federal Armed Forces and the Federal Police, all work across the three pillars.

The squad system plays a key role in this regard and constitutes the formal basis for the various sub-aspects of support for top level sport. As in many other countries, athletes in the

German top level sports system are classified according to a hierarchical model in which a distinction is made between different squads (A, B, C, C/D and D). The criteria for allocation to a particular category are the athlete's age as well as his/her performance and performance potential. The support provided is not confined to the purely financial aspect. In the training of young athletes, it is focused, in particular, on providing the required age-related support for a successful sporting career, based on performance development. The squad system constitutes the organisational framework for this support and is linked to the different development levels on the way to reaching the top of the international ladder (DSB, 1997, p. 18).

The talent support groups are the first level in the selection of talent at schools and clubs. The next group up is the so-called D squad, which comprises talented young athletes. The youngest competitive athletes in the top level sports system are organised in this squad. It relates to the regional structure of the top level sports system and comprises the largest number of athletes. Via two further squad levels, the best athletes reach the respective A squads. Based on their performances and their potential, the A squad athletes compete at world level in their sport or discipline. In order to be named in the top level squad, athletes need to achieve success at international competitions and meet performance standards that are in line with world standards. Special squad levels, the so-called Olympic squads or world championship squads of the individual sports federations, are organised via this squad level and they relate to upcoming major events.

The training centre system aims to make available to all athletes nation-wide performance-oriented training groups, qualified coaches and suitable coaching and training facilities for performance-oriented training. With the exception of the 20 multi-sports Olympic training centres, this involves sport-specific training centres at municipal, regional or national level, which are recognised by the national sports federations. This training centre system is complemented by the schools with a sports focus and the elite sports schools which cooperate with the sports federations' training centres.

In order to ensure that the quality of coaching and training is consistent throughout the country and across all performance levels, initial and advanced training for coaches in all the sports federations is structured in a four-tier coaching system, the uppermost tier being the training course at the DOSB's Coaches' Academy in Cologne leading to the qualification of state-certified 'qualified coach'. Both voluntary and full-time coaches work at the training centres. In addition, regional and

national coaches employed on a full-time basis normally coordinate the training process at regional and national level and also coach the relevant selections and supervise training courses run by the federations.

State responsibility and competency in respect of top level sport

Under Article 30 of the Basic Law, the 16 federal regions are generally responsible for subsidising sport in the Federal Republic of Germany. The main focus in this regard is on the area of subsidies for school sport, university sport, sport for all and leisure sport within and outside the federations, and on the construction of sports facilities. Responsibility for top level sport, however, lies with the Federal Government, with the Federal Ministry of the Interior operating as the specialised department. The latter plays the leading role in the area of state support for top level sport. It also coordinates the activities of the other federal ministries that have specific responsibilities in the area of top level sport, such as supporting top level sport in the Federal Armed Forces. As in other countries, the state's primary interest in top level sport lies in its potential for enhancing the country's international reputation. This is shown, in particular, by the fact that the more prestigious Olympic sports are given priority over all other sports in terms of state support for top level sport (BMI, 2005, p. 10).

Adhering to the principle of the autonomy of sport, the state interprets its role as that of a sponsor who merely creates the framework that enables autonomous sport and its athletes to perform at the highest international level. For this reason, the government does not become involved in dealing with issues through its own programmes or initiatives, but rather by participating in the different bodies involved in the self-administration of sport. The Federal Government is represented, in particular, on the commissions and committees that have high-level competencies in the area of top level sport. Representatives of the Federal Government are present, *inter alia*, on the boards, commissions and committees of the DOSB, the national sports federations, the German Sports Aid Foundation and on the boards of trustees of the federal training centres. However, even if the state overtly orients its role in the area of elite sport development according to the principles of the autonomy of sport and subsidiarity, it has used federal funds as a covert control instrument. It recently demonstrated this by clearly rejecting the demand made by organised sport for blanket financing and allocation of funds by the DOSB.

To sum up, we can say that the relationship between the DOSB and the Ministry of the Interior is characterised by the following features:

- 1 The Federal Ministry of the Interior provides the financial subsidies and lays down the support principles. The focus of support is on the Olympic sports and the allocation of funds is based on the performance principle. The 4-year Olympic cycle is critical in this regard.
- 2 The DOSB tries to influence the support principles by developing strategy papers and sees itself as the sole policy adviser in respect of top level sport.
- 3 However, the actual capacity of the DOSB to determine elite sport policy is, in practice, moderated by its relationship with the Federal Government.
- 4 The Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) refuses to transfer sole responsibility for implementing support for top level sport to the DOSB primarily due to an unwillingness to surrender control.

State financing of sport • • •

Top level sport in Germany is characterised by a complex mixed financing system. Probably the most important contribution results from payments that athletes make themselves together with their families. This applies, in particular, to top level sport for children and young people. In quite a few disciplines, however, this applies to all the classes of top level sport. The second most important contribution results from citizens' tax contributions. The taxes paid by the population are invested directly or indirectly in sports funding at municipal, regional and national level. As such, the contribution made by the population at municipal level is particularly high, as it ensures the construction and maintenance of sports facilities. The population also makes another important contribution. This one is, however, a voluntary contribution made by participating in toto and lotto (national or regional lottery) competitions or by being willing to participate in games of chance.

Almost all budgets of public authorities in Germany – from municipalities and counties to the federal regions and the Federal Government – contain expenditure for high-level sport. Financing by the state is characterised by a complex division of labour. The Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) finances, in particular, projects involving top level sport and top level sports measures initiated by the national sports federations in

the form of competitions, training courses and instruction. The individual sports federations receive support from the Federal Ministry of the Interior based on their sporting success and on the national and international importance of the sport represented by the federation. The support they receive is thus performance-related; in other words, it is based on a particular sport's record of success. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of the Interior partially finances (operating and maintenance costs) the federal training centres and Olympic training centres, pays the full-time managerial staff and the federal and voluntary coaches and subsidises the sports medicine and performance diagnostic facilities provided to top level athletes.

In 2005, a total of €133 million was allocated to sports funding in the federal budget. Of this, €0.4 million was earmarked for the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) and €0.7 million for 'international sports projects'. Approximately €10.65 million was listed in the 2005 appropriation for the launch events and the security arrangements at the 2006 World Cup. The figure shown in respect of financial subsidies for key measures in sport was almost unchanged in comparison with previous years at €71.4 million. An allocation of €3 million was made to the special support programme entitled 'Golden Plan East'.⁴ In addition, allocations for top level sport can be found in the budgets of the Federal Ministry of Defence and of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (cf. BMI, 2004, o.S.).

With regard to Germany, it should also be taken into account that because of the country's strong federal structure, the federal regions also make a significant (financial) contribution towards sports funding. It amounted to approximately €668 million in 2002, with the municipalities covering the remainder (approximately €3.1 billion (UK billion)) (cf. Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, 2004, o.S.). At regional level each government has a department that has overall responsibility for top level sport. The competent regional ministry controls and is responsible for all budgets relating to top level sport in the D/C squad.

Sport is a major beneficiary of the revenue that the state receives from games of chance. Most of the net proceeds from all state betting and lotteries flow into a betting fund which is earmarked for the provision of subsidies to the areas of sport (44 per cent), the arts and culture (25 per cent), heritage conservation (20 per cent) and selected social areas (11 per cent). A special arrangement applies in respect of the game of chance called 'GlücksSpirale' (Lucky Spiral). The surplus generated by the GlücksSpirale goes in equal shares of 25 per cent, respectively, to the Federal Association for Voluntary Welfare Work,

the German Olympic Sports Confederation, the German Foundation for Monument Preservation and to conservation and environmental protection (cf. Staatliche Lotterie, 2002, o.S.). In 2001, sport in Germany received grants from the GlücksSpirale amounting to approximately €30 million (of which 40 per cent was allocated to the Land (state) sports confederations, 30 per cent to the DSB, 25 per cent to German Sports Aid, 5 per cent to the NOC). Further funds are provided for sport at regional level; these funds come from the revenue generated by all state betting and lotteries, with all the 16 German regions having their own state lottery boards.

Dimensions of elite sport development in Germany

In Germany, the following are regarded as major dimensions for assessing the support structures of top level sport:

- 1 The state of development of the national strategy for sport and for the development and promotion of young athletes.
- 2 The quality of talent spotting and talent support programmes.
- 3 The quality of coaching qualification programmes.
- 4 The state of development of the coaching and competition system.
- 5 The sports science support in the area of coaching, including the sports medical support system.
- 6 The scope of public and private sector support programmes for top level sport. A prominent status is ascribed to the concept for the development and promotion of young athletes (Krug et al., o.J.).

These dimensions essentially match those identified by Green and Houlihan (2005, p. 170). The first dimension, the quality of the national strategy, is reflected across all the other dimensions and the coaching qualification system is considered as part of the sports science support. Hence, the key features of elite sport development in Germany can be described along the dimensions of sports facility infrastructure, talent spotting and support, support for full-time athletes and the importance of sports and training science.

The description in respect of all the dimensions refers first of all to multi-sports structures and concepts before dealing with specific features in selected sports in greater detail, where applicable. As such, the selected sports (hockey, swimming, athletics) represent a good cross-section of the German elite sport environment. The sports examined⁵ also boast a differentiated elite

Table 5.1 Top level German performances in the sports of athletics, swimming and hockey

	German athletics federation	German swimming federation	German hockey federation
Number of members	906,541	607,421	67,695
Sydney Olympic Games (2000)	2 × Gold 1 × Silver 2 × Bronze 3rd in the national ranking	3 × Bronze 14th in the national ranking	Women: 7th Men: 5th
Athens Olympic Games (2004)	2 × Silver 13th in the national ranking	1 × Silver 4 × Bronze 13th in the national ranking	Women: Gold Men: Bronze
World championships	<i>Helsinki 2005</i> 1 × Gold 1 × Silver 3 × Bronze 7th in the national ranking	<i>Montreal 2005</i> 1 × Gold 3 × Silver 2 × Bronze 7th in the national ranking	<i>Madrid 2006</i> Women: 8th <i>Mönchengladbach 2006</i> Men: world champions
European championships	<i>Göteborg 2006</i> 4 × Gold 4 × Silver 2 × Bronze 2nd in the national ranking	<i>Budapest 2006</i> 6 × Gold 4 × Silver 2 × Bronze 2nd in the national ranking	<i>Dublin 2005</i> Women: Silver <i>Leipzig 2005</i> Men: Bronze

sports structure, are included in the canon of the Olympic sports⁶ and are among the top 10 sports federations in Germany. Table 5.1 illustrates the sporting successes achieved in the three sports between 2000 and 2006.

Sports facilities for top level sport

The basis for coaching competitive sportsmen and women in Germany is the coaching and training facilities that are available in the relevant club. However, as the clubs are not able to provide all the structures that ensure high-quality development from a potential sporting talent into a top level sportsman or woman, coaching facilities at local level are augmented by coaching provided at regional and national levels. Therefore, a distinction can be made between *decentralised* and *centralised*

coaching. From a certain performance level upwards, athletes are integrated into coaching and training squads and consequently they participate in regional, national and international training camps. Besides the training camps, coaching courses are also important, where talented athletes receive further higher-level instructions from specialist elite coaches, particularly in the area of technique.

Through the system of decentralisation in the German top level sports system, athletes have different coaches who need to coordinate with one another: in some cases, a local coach, the federation's coach or the national coach is available to assist the athletes. This means, therefore – particularly in swimming, for instance – that athletes mostly train at their home clubs and that only a few athletes make use of coaching available through the training centre system.

Overall, the provision of sports facilities in Germany is rated as good by international standards⁷ (cf. DSB, 2002). There are adequate coaching facilities in swimming, even if indoor swimming pools are continually being closed down as a result of the restructuring of public swimming pools. This makes it clear that the commercialisation of leisure sport and Sport for All is having an indirect impact on top level sport: not only are training areas being lost but top level sport will also lose talented young athletes in the long term. However, the lack of swimming time for school sport is far more serious than in top level sport: 20 per cent of schools have no in-the-water time at all and, consequently, no swimming sports as part of school curricula. The situation with regard to sports facilities in hockey is slightly different: most hockey clubs have their own pitches which they own themselves.⁸ In this regard, the top clubs point to a lack of training facilities, which could be solved by building a second pitch. The investment required for building pitches is mostly borne by the clubs themselves and is, for instance, financed via sponsorship funds.

Besides the decentralised training facilities at the clubs, squad athletes can also use the training centres: as such, the regional training centres are the foundation, the Olympic training centres form the umbrella and in between are the federal training centres. These training facilities run by the national sports federations enable both club training and high-quality training for the federal squad and, in some cases, also for the squads of young athletes. The sportsmen and women train several times a week in homogeneous training groups using facilities available locally or in the surrounding area. The development and provision of federal training centres began as early as the 1960s. The principles governing the planning, construction, use, maintenance and

administration of the federal training centres are laid down by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). The federal training centres are sports facilities that are recognised by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and approved by the DOSB and the sports federations, where training and training courses as well as advanced training courses for coaches are held. Although, it is mainly top level sportsmen and women who train in these centres, depending on capacity available at the centres, top level sportsmen and women at regional level and club and school athletes can also gain access. Depending on the discipline, the federal training centres have all the sports facilities that are required for the relevant training. Normally, accommodation and catering facilities are also available. The centres are designed either as combined training centres for several disciplines or for a single discipline. Currently, there are five federal training centres in Germany: Kienbaum (summer sports); Duisburg (canoeing); Hennef (boxing and wrestling); Warendorf (equestrian); and Wiesbaden (shooting) (cf. DOSB, 2007, o.S.).

The concept of Olympic training centres was approved by the then German Sports Confederation in 1985 as part of the 'Guidelines for top level sport'. The structure of the individual Olympic training centres varies and is determined by the following criteria:

- requirements of the sports or disciplines coached;
- physical size (centralised, decentralised coaching facilities);
- sports science facilities, equipment and staff;
- number of athletes coached;
- sponsorship.

There are a total of 20 of these service facilities for the national sports federations of Olympic sports in Germany. However, the individual sports pursue different centralisation approaches: for the winter sports, the 2 Olympic training centres in Bavaria and Thuringia are the central facilities, while there are 12 Olympic training centres for the sport of athletics, 8 training centres for swimming and 4 for hockey. The track records of the different sports vary greatly; however, centralised training of top level athletes appears to work very well as most of the Olympic winter sports have proven over the past few years.

The Olympic training centres are financed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, which shoulders the lion's share of the cost as part of its support for top level sport, the respective federal Land (state), the respective regional sports confederation and the relevant municipality. In addition, financial support is provided by sponsors and by marketing activities (cf. DSB, 2000,

p. 64f). Some Olympic training centres have so-called *houses for athletes* comprising a school/boarding school, residential group and educational supervision and represent the most comprehensive support for young athletes. The aim is to create these houses for athletes at all the Olympic training centres (BMI, 2002, p. 15).

Talent spotting and talent support

The influence that talent spotting and talent support have on the success of top level sports systems is undisputed. A look at the demographic trends also makes it clear that in Germany, as in other Western European countries, a decline in potential talent attributable to demographics has set in, which makes it all the more important to improve the efficiency of talent spotting and talent retention.

Representatives of the public sports administration, the federations and the sports science community have up to now regarded talent support, and talent spotting even more, as a relative weakness in the German sports system compared with other areas of support for top level sport. In this regard, a key point is, among other things, the fact that the federal nature of the German sports system in the area of talent spotting and talent support comes into play even more strongly than in other areas of elite sport development. Support for young athletes, including the relevant D squad structure, falls within the scope of the competent ministries, sports confederations and national sports federations at regional level. As a result, the approaches used for talent spotting and support for young athletes in some cases vary significantly according to the federal Land (state) and the specific sport. In this regard, the German Sports Confederation's concept of top level sport for young athletes is merely a framework concept which sets out "the range of common features" in the area of support for young athletes (cf. DSB, 2006, p. 5). Given the large number of institutions involved, however, with independent competences in the planning and strategy area, a major coordinating effort is required. Emrich and Güllich (2005) illustrate the problem in an analysis of the policy for top level sport for young athletes when they identified 405 necessary coordination procedures in 49 areas of support for young athletes.

Talent spotting • • •

The organisation of talent spotting in Germany varies according to regions and specific sports. There is no uniform nationwide or

even multi-sports talent spotting system. While it was possible to adopt approaches and structures used in the GDR system in the area of talent support or sports science support for top level sport, it was neither appropriate nor possible to adopt the uniform talent spotting and selection system, 'Einheitlichen Sichtung und Auswahl für die Trainingszentren und Trainingsstützpunkte des DTSB der DDR (ESA)',⁹ which had proven its worth in the GDR. The aim of ESA was to have PE teachers record the physical features and current capability of all pupils in classes 1 and 3. This was followed in a multi-stage process by verification of system-compliant behaviour and by psychological and discipline-specific tests and finally the pupil would be admitted to the children's and youth sports academy system. This recruitment system contributed in no small measure to the GDR's sporting success; however, it was impossible to integrate it into the Federal Republic's top level sports system following reunification not least because the system was cost-inefficient owing to the high staff costs, but also because it was incompatible with a social and sports system that was distinguished by multiple opportunities for the use of time by children as well as by personal freedom in terms of choices. Only in a totalitarian sports system like the GDR's, talented children could be tied to top level sport regardless of their personal preferences or individual socio-economic circumstances.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the search for talent therefore continues to be based on school and club sport. As such, proving one's worth in competition is considered the key criterion in practice-oriented talent spotting as it most closely corresponds to the complexity of the relevant sport's requirement profile and to the required ability on the part of young athletes. For this reason, searching for talent via the standardised and traditional system of competition operated by the clubs and federations is the most widespread method. Specific talent spotting measures and talent spotting courses implemented by the sports federations are other common recruitment methods.

In addition, the reason why cooperation between schools and clubs plays such an important role in terms of the effectiveness of the talent search and talent support system is that the stages of top level sport for young athletes mainly occur during the latter's school years and that the institution of school includes almost all children. However, the institutionalisation of cooperation programmes between schools and sports clubs did not occur in the Federal Republic of Germany until recently. In the 1980s, only two large regions had state-wide cooperation programmes. Since the mid-1990s, however, the other regions have followed suit and introduced similar initiatives. The programmes are generally in

the area of after school sport and, for instance, take the form of training groups and action days. As a rule, these programmes are sport-specific and regionally oriented and they frequently rely on the personal commitment of volunteers.

The representatives of the sports federations see deficiencies in, among other things, the training provided to PE teachers and the tension within the school sport curriculum between core sports and competitive and performance-oriented sports on the one hand and new content (e.g., newly fashionable sports) and new objectives (e.g., health) on the other.

Both at clubs and in school sport, the search for talent is mostly based on visual inspection. In other words, it depends on the experienced eye of a coach or teacher to determine whether, in a group of children or young people playing sport, those young people who are particularly well suited to a specific sport are identified. This process depends on the coach or teacher possessing the relevant expertise. However, this expertise is not always sufficiently evident, particularly among PE teachers and voluntary youth coaches at clubs. The federations therefore have explicitly stated that the development of objective and valid testing procedures with sound, discipline-specific predictor features is high on their sports science research wish list. Even the two school sports competitions, *Federal Youth Games* and *Youth trains for the Olympics*, which are held on a nationwide basis in different sports, do not meet this requirement. They are fairly unsuitable for talent spotting as both competitions are focused more on broad participation in sport than on the systematic selection of talent. Overhauling or expanding *Youth trains for the Olympics* should improve matters in this regard.

If the talent spotting strategies in the sports of swimming, athletics and hockey are compared, it becomes clear that the German Hockey Federation relies very strongly on a central talent spotting system with four talent spotting tournaments. Consequently, it is assumed that 90 per cent of future internationals have already passed through the talent spotting system between the ages of 10 and 12. By contrast, talent spotting in swimming and athletics is carried out on a decentralised basis via different programmes and competitions organised by the regional federations.

Talent support • • •

Talent spotting is followed by targeted talent support. It is an important prerequisite for subsequently achieving the highest international performance level. In this regard, sport and

discipline-specific requirements need to be reconciled with requirements outside sport. The overall system of talent support consists of several subsystems which aim to make it possible for young and adult top level sportsmen and women to pursue a dual career within and outside of top level sport. Training stages, squad membership and competitive and support systems need to be coordinated in a targeted way as part of talent support. The model of long-term training and performance development (see Figure 5.2) is used here for orientation purposes (DSB, 2006, p. 10).

Institutionalised coaching and support begins at an early stage when young athletes are accepted into the D/DC squads organised by the national sports federations. According to a survey of squad athletes conducted by Emrich and Güllich (2005), this occurs on average at the age of 14½ years. Being nominated to join a squad is linked to a comprehensive package of support and coaching.

From an analytical point of view, in line with the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier, 1998, 1999), at the level of secondary beliefs, different ideas on the effectiveness of various

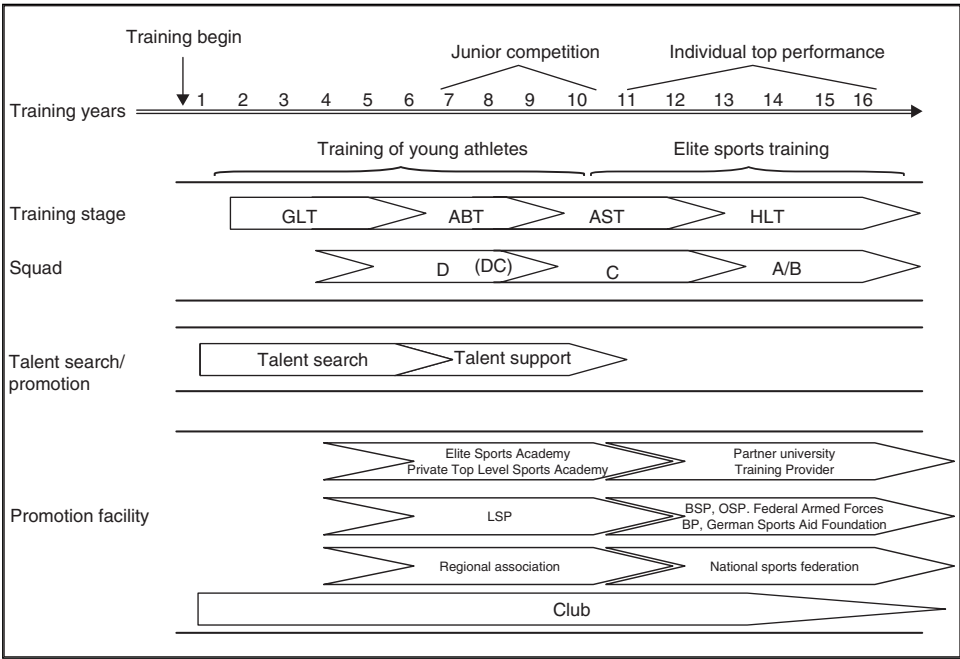


Figure 5.2 Model of training and performance: GLT, Basic training; ABT, Advanced training; AST, Subsequent training; HLT, Elite sport training; LSP, Regional training centre; BSP, Federal training centre; OSP, Olympic training centre; BP, Federal police

talent support measures in top level sport can be identified. According to Emrich and Güllich (2005, p. 74), the majority of participants have a framework of unquestioned assumptions, which they describe as follows:

It is assumed that successful sportsmen and women train in a sport early on for lengthy periods in a continuous training process, receiving ongoing support from the sports support system, and that performances or successes achieved at an early age are a valid predictor of long-term success in top level sport.

In conjunction with the existing structures (see below), this belief system contributes to a scenario where early specialisation and early successes are, in some cases, given precedence over long-term career development, particularly because squad membership, the extension of coaches' contracts and also the level of budgetary appropriations for the federations are generally decided on the basis of current capabilities. Besides a change in beliefs, there is, therefore, also a need to create structures that reward long-term training strategies and successes, and investment in basic training and the willingness to facilitate the transfer of talent to other sports. The Performance Division (BL) endeavours to play a controlling role in this area by issuing planning specifications.

Support for full-time athletes

The squad system which has already been described constitutes the formal basis for selecting sportsmen and women for targeted support. Athletes receive financial and non-material support during the course of their sporting career based on being members of the relevant squad.¹⁰ This reward system is performance-based and the payments vary considerably in the individual sports. If one looks at the institutions that are involved in the payments, it is noticeable that the state does not provide *any* financial rewards to athletes. The state is merely involved in facilitating sporting performances. The performances are, however, rewarded by private individuals, institutions, commercial companies and sponsors and also via the sports federations themselves and the German Sports Aid Foundation (*Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe*, DSH).

Based on the acknowledgement that increased internal and external demands made a special, comprehensive style of support indispensable, the 'German Olympic Society' and the then 'German Sports Confederation' in 1967 established the DSH. The DSH exclusively and directly serves the charitable objective of

supporting sportsmen and women who are preparing for, are producing or have produced, top level sporting performances, by way of compensation in material and non-material ways. Those athletes in receipt of support are not only aided in their endeavours to develop and maintain their sporting capabilities, but also receive social support to enable them to develop their abilities in their initial and advanced vocational training. The prerequisite for being accepted into a support programme is first of all membership of a federal A, B or C squad organised by the national sports federations which are supported by the German Sports Aid Foundation. Since its establishment in 1967, the Foundation has supported a total of 38,000 athletes to the tune of almost €350 million. The Foundation also rewards the international successes of Olympic disciplines at world and European championships as well as at Olympic Games. In addition, there are separate arrangements for team sports, the junior division and non-Olympic sports (cf. Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe, 2006, p. 4f).

A large number of federations have developed their own reward systems for their national teams, which involve a payout to athletes at the end of a season based on participation and performance. In addition, it is standard practice to pay appearance fees and winner's bonuses at competitions, particularly in sports such as athletics or swimming. Reward systems, which are sometimes applied in a highly non-transparent manner in the different disciplines, enable many athletes to make a substantial part of their living through their involvement in sport. Even at intermediate level, this creates a semi-professional system for a certain length of time. However, non-transparent reward systems can hardly be described as an appropriate foundation for an efficient high-level sports system. The risk in the reward system that is applied in German top level sport lies in the fact that it is possible to earn enough money even with mediocre performances, as there is no incentive and no need to make the effort to achieve better and greater performances.

The system of dual development • • •

One of the principles of support for top level sport in Germany is the dual development of sportsmen and women; in other words, they receive support not only in the area of sport but also in regard to their schooling and their career. This principle applies to all age groups and to all sports. In the debate on support for athletes, the entitlement to a dual career is a constant and major area of conflict as it places an enormous time burden on sportsmen and women. The call for a second career track

alongside the sporting career stems from the aim underlying the German top level sports system of humane top level sport which has the athlete at its centre.

Essentially, there are a variety of support options for children and young people who are involved in top level sport. In addition to supportive systems of competition, there are, in particular, supportive training schemes that make it possible to help children and young people systematically improve their performance. At the same time, there are support measures (e.g., timetable arrangement, homework supervision) aimed at linking the double burden between school and the club, school and top level sport, studies and top level sport or vocational training and top level sport.

Where problems with talent support do arise, they relate to the fluctuation aspect and the fact that children's and young people's interests inevitably change. Moreover, talent support measures are only geared to a limited extent to meeting the needs of children and young people whose performance stagnates or declines in the short or medium term. The risk here is that they may drop out, and in the existing talent support structures it is a major risk. The transition from junior level to top level sport, in particular, points the way forward in an athlete's life: when facing such decisions, athletes should receive advice from the career advisors who work at the Olympic training centres.

Extremely successful talent support is provided at the so-called elite sports schools. The elite sports schools programme has its origin in the former sports schools for children and young people in the GDR. Since 1997, the Savings Banks Finance Group has provided a total of approximately €3 million as financial support to the programme. There are approximately 40 elite sports schools nationwide. Approximately 11,200 talented athletes are coached at these schools and their coaching is managed by approximately 480 full-time coaches – including 75 national coaches. In the regional distribution of schools, it becomes clear that the northern part of Germany has rather a backlog of demand in comparison with schools in the eastern part of Germany. However, cooperation between the school supervisory authority and the sports organisations urgently needs to be improved and the special status of pupils who are involved in top level sport needs to be regulated by law by the relevant Land (state) ministries of education.

Besides the elite sports schools, there are also the 'top level sport partner schools': these sports-friendly schools are mostly located in the vicinity of regional training centres or Olympic training centres and give athletes a special status in day-to-day school life, which allows them to train, attend competitions and

fulfil school requirements. The so-called top level sport partner universities pursue a very similar approach: budding academics often face a very difficult balancing act between pursuing a sporting career and gaining professional qualifications.¹¹ How well students cope with their studies, however, depends on what sport they are involved in and hockey is a particularly positive example in this regard because a very large number of top athletes successfully complete a course of study.

In addition, support structures still vary from region to region: in Baden-Württemberg, for instance, the federal Land and the company OBI established the foundation 'Squad Support Perspective Baden-Württemberg' in 2000. The scheme ensures that approximately 60 top level sportsmen and women in Baden-Württemberg receive targeted support while they are preparing and qualifying for the Olympic Games (Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg, 2001, p. 14f). Initiatives of this type launched by the business community and sponsors are becoming increasingly important as regards the provision of support to top level athletes. The establishment of collaboration between the sports federations and partners in the business community varies from sport to sport and depends mainly on the initiative of those in charge. The state would like to see these funding collaborations expanded but finds that there are too few partners in the business community willing to become involved in providing financial support to sport.

It is also a German tradition that the relevant military system plays a major role in the development of top level sport in Germany. This applies not only to the German Reich, the Weimar Republic and the period of National Socialism, but also to the Federal Republic of Germany since the establishment of the Federal Armed Forces in 1956 and to the GDR with its People's Army. In the late 1960s, the establishment of the so-called sports support companies began in Germany. Approximately 740 sports soldiers are supported there under high-quality training and competitive conditions. Following basic training, athletes are transferred to these sports support groups which have been set up near Olympic training centres and training centres run by German sports organisations. This enables athletes to use up to 70 per cent of their duty hours for training and competitions. The athletes generally train at the training centres run by the sports federations or at their clubs (Bundesministerium für Verteidigung, o.D., p. 6).

In addition, since 1978, the Federal Border Police (BGS) has supported top level sportsmen and women in different winter sports and set up a training centre at the Federal Border Police Sports Academy in Bad Endorf for this purpose. In 1999, as part

of a top level sports support project, the support was expanded to include different summer sports, although the sportsmen and women are coached mainly at the Cottbus/Frankfurt (Oder) Olympic training centre. The focus is on both vocational training as a law enforcement officer in the Federal Border Police and the provision of support to young, highly talented athletes. During periods of vocational training, the athletes have adequate training facilities at their disposal. Sportsmen and women who have completed their police training can devote the whole year to top level sport (cf. Bundesgrenzschutz, 1998, p. 12). Olympic winter sports athletes are the main beneficiaries of this arrangement: '80 per cent of the Turin Olympic team was employed in the Federal Armed Forces, the Federal Police and Customs. That indicates where one of the key success factors lies' (Schwank, 2006).

Incorporating sports and training science

In the competitive battle between the two German sports systems between 1964 and 1989, a great deal of sports science research was carried out in both East and West Germany. In both systems, training science and sports medical research contributed significantly to overall success. When the GDR's sports system collapsed following the peaceful revolution of 1989, although the type and scope of scientific services provided for top level sport changed, the great importance of sports science research and the know-how acquired in both systems remained. It was also possible to retain some of the structures of the GDR's sports system, albeit in an adapted form. The former Research Institute for Physical Culture and Sport, which once had over 600 employees, was spun off into the Institute for Applied Coaching Science and the Institute for Research and Further Development of Sports Equipment, both of which play a key role in scientific monitoring.

This combined system of science and top level sport is based on four pillars: basic research; application-oriented research; practice-oriented research; and coach training. Specific tasks can be allocated to the structures of these four pillars, although some overlapping and competency-related disputes have occurred.

The least clearly defined task area is that of basic research. The approximately 60 sports science institutes at universities and the German Sport University Cologne implement a large number of basic research and application-oriented research projects in cooperation with the Olympic training centres and the sports federations. They are financed from different sources but funds appropriated by the Federal Institute of Sports

Science for research into top level sport represent a key resource in this context.

Application-oriented research into top level sport in Germany is closely linked to the Institute for Applied Training Science in Leipzig (IAT) and the Institute for Research and Further Development of Sports Equipment in Berlin (FES). The IAT has approximately 90 staff and offers, among other things, direct scientific assistance to the federations in developing training concepts, in discipline-specific training and competition research and in evaluating the results in the form of world ranking analyses. Furthermore, the IAT conducts research in the area of aptitude and talent diagnostics and into the development and adaptation of specific measurement technologies and evaluation and management software. For example, the German Hockey Federation is one of the most innovative federations in German sport, also in terms of using scientific monitoring. In the area of game analysis and video observation, in conjunction with the IAT, among others, hardware and software solutions as well as equipment for sports facilities have been developed which represent the current gold standard internationally. Besides the IAT, the Olympic training centres also play an important role in the area of application-oriented research. They assist the federations, coaches and athletes primarily in the area of performance diagnostics and training management.

The FES in Berlin is responsible for dealing with engineering problems in top level sport. Practice-oriented research in disciplines that rely on materials, implementation in the form of equipment and measurement engineering prototypes and the testing and adjustment of such equipment in training and competitions involving national teams form the basic idea behind the institute. The aim is to optimise the 'athlete-equipment' system. All in all, the FES cooperates with around 15 German federations in developing, optimising and building new sports equipment (e.g., boats, bicycle frames, skates) and in researching new materials (BMI, 2002, p. 59).

The Federal Institute of Sports Science (BISp) has overall responsibility for managing and coordinating all research for the benefit of top level sport and for awarding research contracts. The overriding task and key goal of the Federal Institute's work is to ensure that top level sport is always humane. The BISp performs consulting and support tasks, including, among other things, supporting applied sports science research, ensuring that doping analyses are carried out, supporting research into sports facilities, developing concepts for the construction of sports facilities and running a central federal documentation and information office. Approximately €6.28 million every year is allocated to

the Federal Institute from federal funds for this purpose (BMI, 2002, p. 51f). In addition, universities can support sports science research for the benefit of top level sport on the basis of an application and appraisal system, particularly for research activities in the field of sports medicine, training science and biomechanics.

In order to ensure that there is a sustainable transfer of know-how into practical training, the sophisticated system of coaches' training can be mentioned as the fourth pillar. The DOSB's Coaches' Academy serves as a central initial and advanced training centre for top coaches in Germany. The task of the Academy is to further enhance coaches' technical expertise, taking into account the very latest sports science findings in relation to sports performance factors. As such, admission to a course of study depends not just on educational requirements but also, primarily, on having the preceding coaching licences and, in particular, on the specific endorsement of the relevant national sports federation. The diploma obtained at the Coaches' Academy builds on the C, B and A licences issued by the national sports federations and is thus the highest coaching licence in Germany.

The German Hockey Federation distinguishes itself by a tightly woven control system to guarantee a comprehensive transfer of current knowledge and coaching concepts between coaches of different age groups as well as federation or club coaches. Special club coaches, for instance, participate in coaching sessions of the federation and also work as co-coaches in select teams of the federation.

Despite this infrastructure, which as a whole is well developed, and the proven efficiency of the combined scientific system, criticism has also been voiced. In 2004, in its 'Augsburg Theses', the Spokespersons' Committee of the Coaching Science Section of the German Society of Sports Science, for instance, criticised the scientific support provided to top level sport in Germany (cf. Lames, 2004). Collectively, the theses imply, first of all, that top level sport in Germany is dependent on stronger scientific support in order to maintain its competitiveness, attesting that other nations have something of a head start. Second, they state that scientific support needs to be provided in a balanced ratio of basic research and applied research, involving all scientific institutions. And the third and final point is that scientific support requires competent management and coordination at the highest level. In concrete terms, this position paper calls for improved financial resources, more stringent coordination of top level sports research and more active involvement on the part of the national sports federations as the purchasers of the research results.

All three selected sports cooperate closely with the scientific support system. Projects supported by the Federal Institute for Sports Science are generally implemented in cooperation with different university institutes and Olympic training centres. Worthy of mention in this regard is the initiative launched by the German Swimming Federation, which, from 2007 onwards, will be formulating its knowledge requirements and advertising the individual projects in the universities and other institutions of higher education. This approach meets the requirements of the Augsburg Theses and could also serve as an example to other federations of a model approach for improving scientific monitoring in top level sport.

Conclusions

The German system of top level sport is characterised by the strong autonomy of sport and by the federal structure which is a feature of the political system in Germany as a whole. As a result of these two factors, the structures of top level sport are very heterogeneous and, consequently, a uniform picture emerges only to a very limited extent. Expressed in positive terms, the system provides openness to individual solutions that differ from discipline to discipline. This openness is both an advantage and a disadvantage of the German top level sports system as, on the one hand, there are well-developed substructures, while on the other hand, however, these substructures are not connected and have a tendency to take on a life of their own. The existence of these many different competencies and areas of responsibility calls for an enormous amount of coordination and young talented athletes are often lost in this complex system. Traditional control mechanisms via hierarchically integrated and centrally controlled structures do not work in German top level sport. In this area, the Performance Division is looking for new control mechanisms (e.g., incentive structures, model-based learning).

Yet in regard to deep core and policy beliefs, hardly any differences can be identified between governmental and non-governmental players. All the players acknowledge the principles governing the organisation of sport and declare their support for humane top level sport and the principle of the dual career. Yet, this is not just lip service, but real conviction! The essential congruence of the policy beliefs of different players is also manifested by the fact that in Germany no fundamental changes occur in sports policy when there is a change of government. At the level of secondary beliefs, some distinctions can be made in

relation to the following questions: when should systematic training and systematic support begin? and to what extent can and should the organisation of top level sport be centralised?

Overall, it is certainly important when examining the German system of top level sport that during the existence of the former GDR, the system was characterised for many years by the competitive battle between the two German systems. If relevant differences are found, they will more than likely be between players with 'socialisation' in the former eastern and western systems. However, as the last generation of eastern athletes and coaches has now left (or has been requested to leave) the system, the two systems have become strongly aligned. Nonetheless, there are still considerable differences in mentality between East and West regarding the acceptance and importance of top level sport in society. For instance, elite schools and schools that focus on sport are much more readily accepted in the eastern part of Germany.

It becomes clear that the Performance Division (BL) and the federations, clubs and coaches (particularly at regional level) pursue different inherent interests. As a rule the federations and coaches at local and regional level benefit from early successes and are no longer involved in these athletes' success when they are adults or indeed in any success they may have if they switch to a different discipline. This is where solutions need to be found that reward cooperative behaviour and the long-term development of athletes. Objectives for the future are to strengthen the grassroots level (i.e., the clubs), for instance, via the possibility of direct support by the business community and to reduce bureaucracy and increase transparency in relation to competencies and the distribution of tasks.

Notes

- 1 The Basic Law defines a number of so-called national objectives, such as the principle of a social state, equal rights for women and men and achieving a united Europe. 'The national objective of sport should be incorporated into a new paragraph 2 of Article 20a of the Basic Law together with the national objective of culture. The wording could be as follows: 'the state shall protect and promote culture and sport' (DOSB Positionspapier, 2006, p. 2). However, whether sport does actually become a national objective depends primarily on the stance of the German Bundestag and the 16 federal regions which are involved in the decision-making process under the principle of Germany's federal structure.
- 2 Germany is divided into 16 federal regions called 'Länder'.

- 3 'Top level' sport is the terminology used for elite or high-performance sport in some European countries.
- 4 The 'Golden Plan East' is a special support programme that grants subsidies from federal funds for the construction of sports facilities aimed at delivering Sport for All in the federal regions of former East Germany and in the former eastern part of Berlin.
- 5 It was possible, based on a guideline interview with a representative of each sport (employee in the relevant sports federation, coach and/or official), to verify the information in regard to quality.
- 6 'The rapid commercialisation occurring in sports that attract major media interest is not reaching many Olympic sports and, as a consequence, the state remains the main sponsor of Olympic sport' (BMI, 2002, p. 8).
- 7 In 2002, the Federal Government reduced its capital expenditure on building projects to approximately €18 million. In 1998, financial subsidies had amounted to €34 million. By contrast, capital expenditure requirements amounted to €132 million in 2002 (cf. Deutscher Bundestag, 2002).
- 8 Field hockey is now played almost exclusively on astroturf pitches by the top clubs in Germany. The game is faster, more precise, more varied and, consequently, also more attractive to spectators.
- 9 Uniform talent spotting and selection for training centres and training bases.
- 10 Honouring athletes in a non-material way has a long-standing tradition and is in some cases still important today. An example is the Silver Laurel Leaf, which is presented by the Federal President, or other honours that may be awarded to athletes at municipal, regional and national level. Reward systems of a non-material nature also include sportsmen's elections, fair play awards and the like.
- 11 Academics constituted the second largest group in the 2004 Olympic team after Federal Armed Forces personnel (cf. Gernandt, 2006).

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CHAPTER 9

New Zealand

Shane Collins

Introduction

New Zealand consists of two main islands and a number of smaller coastal islands. Given the land area of 268,000 square kilometres and a population of 4,098,300 (Statistics New Zealand, 2007), New Zealand's geography is defined by large areas of open land which are sparsely populated. Despite its relatively small population, New Zealand prides itself on its performance on the international sporting stage. The early influence of England and its sporting traditions and activities are still evident today in the popular sports of rugby and cricket; however, New Zealand's elite athletes now participate on the world stage across a wide range of winter and summer sports.

Despite New Zealand's strong sporting history, government intervention in sport has been sporadic. Although early debates regarding state involvement in sporting matters centred upon whether government should indeed be involved at all, towards the latter part of the twentieth century this debate was accompanied by a new tension, the role of government in supporting and resourcing elite and/or recreational sport. This chapter explores the relatively recent changes to the (elite) sport policy landscape, the growing salience of sport to the New Zealand government and the increasingly targeted prioritisation of Olympic sport as an area of elite sport policy. Consistent with the findings of Green and Houlihan (2005) the four dimensions of specialist elite level facilities, support for full-time athletes, development of sports science and coaching support, and the existence of a domestic competition structure designed to support elite athlete success have all, to varying degrees, been identified as areas for attention and investment. Along with these four dimensions, the development of an effective talent identification system has also been emphasised as a key variable for the success of elite sport. The chapter provides an overview of the changing emphasis on and in elite sport policy in New Zealand, highlighting the impact of recreational sport, changing political and socio-economic values, and the increased recognition of elite sport's ability to contribute to achieving stated national government goals. Research for this chapter was based upon a review of academic, government and national sport organisation (NSO) documents and a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with senior staff in NSOs and the government sport agency SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand).

Current structure of the elite sport system

Responsibility for the development of sport policy in New Zealand resides with the crown entity SPARC. Established

under the Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act (2002), and located under the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, SPARC has responsibility for developing and balancing the areas of elite sport, recreational sport and physical recreation. Under the initial structure of SPARC, each of the three areas operated as a distinct group: (a) the New Zealand Academy of Sport (high performance); (b) Sport Development and (c) Physical Recreation. However, in an effort to meet the sector's changing needs and to better integrate the areas of high performance and participation, all three areas now operate under the Sector Development Division. The other business areas within SPARC include organisational development, corporate services, marketing and communications, and research, policy and planning. More significantly, SPARC allocates funding to NSOs, Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs), local government and strategic partners with regard to delivering particular outcomes relating to elite and recreational sport. Within SPARC, the High Performance Unit (HPU) is the group primarily responsible for the development and delivery of elite sport policy.

The HPU works directly with NSOs to improve high performance plans and programmes and directs its elite sport investment through its NSOs and its high performance services network, the New Zealand Academy of Sport. Established in 2000, and funded directly by SPARC, the New Zealand Academy of Sport network delivers services to athletes in the areas of coaching, sport science, sports medicine, athlete career education and training facilities. The network also delivers coaching support, coach education and coach professional development. Initially a three region network, north (top half of North Island), central (bottom half of North Island) and southern (South Island), this was refined to a North Island and South Island model in 2007. Each academy has a variety of partners who assist in delivering the support services required by the NSOs, elite athletes and coaches.

Funding for SPARC is received from two key sources, Vote Funding (allocated direct from the Crown) and New Zealand Lotteries Commission, with additional funding received from other government departments, although this is frequently allocated to specific programmes. Funding is distributed by SPARC according to established priorities and allocated to organisations/agencies within the sport sector that are able to assist SPARC in achieving its organisational goals. The rapid increase in funding of SPARC and the subsequent allocation of resources to NSOs and other sporting bodies have resulted in SPARC attaining an influential position in the elite sport sector due to its increasing level and control of resources. Nevertheless, SPARC is

reliant upon other organisations to achieve its outcomes and has moved away from being a provider of programmes to being a strategic partner providing funding, information and other support services to its partners (SPARC, 2002a, p. 9). Key groups which assist SPARC in achieving and developing elite sport policy include National Sports Organisations (NSOs), the New Zealand Academy of Sport network, New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) and Drug Free Sport New Zealand (DFSNZ), while local government plays a key role through the provision of sport facilities and, together with RSTs, the development of recreational sport in the community.

The NSOs are responsible for the development of their sport both in respect of increasing participation levels and developing elite performance. Funding is provided direct to NSOs from SPARC for the purpose of achieving both increased participation levels and improved elite performance, with the achievement of key priorities and targets a key aspect. The New Zealand Academy of Sport network works closely with NSOs in the areas outlined earlier to assist in improving elite level performance. Since 2001–2002, funding for NSOs has increased significantly (see Table 9.1), with funding targeted specifically at high performance within NSOs increasing from NZ\$7,123,440 in 2001–2002 to NZ\$11,491,300 in 2004–2005 (SPARC, 2002b; 2005a).

The NZOC assists SPARC and the NSOs in the preparation and selection of athletes for the Olympic and Commonwealth Games. An autonomous organisation, the NZOC operates independently from SPARC, despite the level of funding received from SPARC steadily increasing from NZ\$100,000 in 2002–2003 to NZ\$500,000 in 2005–2006 (SPARC, 2003a, 2006a). DFSNZ is the independent Crown Entity responsible for the testing for banned drugs in New Zealand sport. Drug testing is a key activity (644 conducted in 1994–1995, 1,602 in 2005–2006), which has grown considerably due to the increasing significance placed upon ensuring New Zealand sports comply with the World Anti Doping Code (New Zealand Sports Drug Agency, 2005). Moreover, there is a dual and equally important emphasis placed on providing education to athletes with regard to drug taking. The education of athletes is an area of increasing focus which has recently been raised due to infractions that have occurred within New Zealand sport, most noticeably in respect of recreational cannabis use (DFSNZ, 2006).

Increasing government intervention

As Watson (1993) noted, for much of the twentieth century government involvement in the sport sector fluctuated between

sporadic and non-existent (quoted in Collins and Downey, 2000). Early government involvement in sport in New Zealand was characterised by the desire to control undesirable leisure activities such as gambling and prostitution. However, it was concern for the low level of fitness amongst young New Zealanders, and the implications for defence that was a key driver for the establishment of the Physical Welfare and Recreation Act in 1937 (Hindson et al., 1994). More significantly, this legislation provided a structure that enabled state involvement in sport, as it provided a mechanism for central government to grant sport facilities money to local government and allowed local government to spend money on these facilities (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001). Despite the hosting of the 1950 Empire Games (now known as the Commonwealth Games) in Auckland, public sector involvement remained focused upon using sport as a tool to address urban social problems throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

The 1970s were characterised by growing pressure for government to become involved in both recreational and elite sport. Most noticeably, pressure was growing for the government to become more involved in elite sport due to mounting recognition that New Zealand needed to keep pace with sporting developments in other countries, particularly in respect of Olympic Sports, if New Zealand wished to remain competitive (Stothart, 2000). However, prior to the 1972 General Election, a clear divide became evident between the two major political parties with regard to the extent and level of government involvement in sport. Whereas the Labour Party supported the idea of a new sports agency, the National Party made it clear that the national government should not become involved as this would be detrimental to sport itself (Stothart, 2000). In 1973, under a Labour government the Ministry of Recreation and Sport and the Council for Recreation and Sport were established under the auspices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Although there were a number of criticisms regarding the inherent problems of a bifurcated structure, more significantly both the Council and Ministry signalled to sports organisations the need to professionalise and become more efficient if they were to receive funding. Through the provision of direct funding, the Ministry was able to exert pressure on NSOs to adopt more effective management techniques and processes; for NSOs unable to provide evidence of increased efficiency, grants were either delayed or withdrawn (Stothart, 2000).

It was during this period that an underlying tension between elite sport and mass participation began to emerge as the Ministry and Council faced criticism for an over, emphasis on

recreation and mass participation rather than (or at the expense of) elite or competitive sport, and the perception that the needs of sports organisations were not being met (Stothart, 2000). This signalled the first overt signs of competing coalitions of interest within the New Zealand sport sector. While the government agencies invested in mass participation and recreation, an equivalent structure or emphasis was not established for elite sport. In 1978, the New Zealand Sports Foundation (NZSF) was established by a group of businessmen who believed that elite sport was not being given the emphasis it deserved (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001). A private organisation, the NZSF linked elite sporting success with the enhancement of 'national pride, unity, morale, and confidence in New Zealand, both economically and socially' (Collins and Stuart, 1994, p. 49). Despite being a private entity, the NZSF was funded directly by government with an expectation that these funds would be matched by the corporate sector.

Despite the government providing limited funding to elite sport, interest remained evident with the instigation of the government-initiated enquiry, *Sport on the Move* in 1985. This report highlighted the continuing dual approach of the government towards sport, with the development of elite and recreational sport being the focus of the report. Among the range of issues identified were a crisis in sports funding, inherent structural problems and a misleading impression that sport received adequate resources, in part due to its international success. Unsurprisingly, in addressing elite sport, the *Sport on the Move* report argued for increased funding if New Zealand was to succeed on the international stage. Among the challenges facing New Zealand were a small participation base, geographic isolation and a lack of support for athletes. To overcome these obstacles, the 1985 report identified the need to develop effective coaching along with effective talent identification, higher levels of support to athletes, and better application and use of science and technology (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985). The *Sport on the Move* report provided the blueprint for the establishment of the Hillary Commission in 1987, which was to have the key purpose of promoting a more active lifestyle for all New Zealanders.

During this period, external events impacted upon the development of not only NSOs, but also the developing area of elite sport policy. It was during the 1980s that New Zealand underwent sweeping economic reforms. The revolutionary changes, based upon free market reform, were considered more radical than anywhere else in the world (Quiggan, 1998). As part of the extensive economic changes, there was a systematic programme

of commercialisation within the public sector. This period of rapid economic, political and social change impacted directly upon sport, acting as a catalyst for sports organisations to become more professional as well as increasing the commercialism of sport (Collins and Downey, 2000). The impact of these reforms was also reflected in the *Sport on the Move* report. Calls for higher levels of support for elite sport in the *Sport on the Move* enquiry reinforced the need for 'very hard-headed, cost effective, non-egalitarian policies' (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985, p. 128).

A reluctance for government or community funds to be invested in elite sport was however still evident during the 1980s for, despite a call for increased support of elite sport, this was tempered by a recognition that funding of a small number of international athletes from community and government sources was 'hard to justify in a democratic society – to do so challenges the principles of social equity' (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985, p. 130). Significantly, the 1985 report recommended the establishment of Lotto with the intention of providing funding to sport and recreation along with other activities and programmes. Lotto was to provide guaranteed future funding of 20 per cent of the lottery commission profits to sport, and for the first time a regular stream of revenue was secured (Collins and Stuart, 1994; Stothart, 2000). Yet there remained an apparent reluctance on the part of the national government to invest in sport. Although funding to the Hillary Commission increased between 1987 and 1992, perhaps of more interest was the change in the funding sources, with government funding decreasing – from 79 per cent of the Hillary Commission revenue in 1987 to 4 per cent in 1992 (Collins and Stuart, 1994). In contrast, funding from the Lotteries Board increased steadily, and became the major source of funding for the Hillary Commission.

Despite hosting the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland, by the mid-1990s concern was growing regarding the level of support and funding of high performance sport in New Zealand prompting a government-initiated review of high performance sport, the *Winning Way Review* in 1996. At the same time, the awarding of the 2000 Olympic Games to Sydney placed additional pressure on the government to maximise the opportunity of having an Olympic Games so close to New Zealand. Again, despite recommendations for a one-stop shop to deliver high performance sport support and funding, the outcomes of the review were less than hoped for. Importantly, it did manage to increase government funding for elite sport, with increased resources provided for the development of elite level sport in the build-up to the 2000 Olympics Games in the

hope of winning more medals. But again there was no long-term or ongoing commitment to provide support for elite sport (Collins and Downey, 2000).

Although previous enquiries had failed to bring about considerable government involvement or investment in (elite) sport, the report of the *Sport, Fitness and Leisure Ministerial Taskforce* in 2001 (also known as the Graham Report) was conducted during a period when both sporting organisations and the government were ready to accept change. The Graham Report had a major impact upon the structure and development of elite sport policy in New Zealand. Not only did the Graham Report act as catalyst for the establishment of a new government entity, but it also signalled the growing recognition of the benefits of sport (elite and recreational) to the New Zealand government. The report was instigated 3 months before the 2000 Olympic Games as a result of a Labour Party promise to provide leadership to the sports sector (Sam, 2004). New Zealand's performance at the 2000 Olympic Games was disappointing, with just four medals won, making it the country's poorest performance since the 1976 Montreal Olympics. As a result, there was significant criticism of elite sport from both the public and politicians. As Cumming (2000) noted, criticism was also directed at the NZSF funding policy which was considered short sighted as well as risky in its approach to targeting and funding likely winners (quoted in Knight, 2005). Recognition that problems identified in the 1985 Sport Development Inquiry had still not been addressed and acknowledgement that the sport sector had been largely ignored by successive governments created an environment where it was accepted that there was a need for change (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001, p. 9). The 2001 *Ministerial Taskforce on Sport, Fitness and Leisure*, which commenced in June, therefore developed its findings in the midst of considerable public interest.

The business of elite sport

The invitation for government to become more involved in sport signalled a significant shift in thinking from the previous 30 years. The establishment of the crown entity, SPARC in 2002 marked a significant change in the sport policy landscape of New Zealand. Key reasons for the creation of a single government agency included sector fragmentation, which resulted in a lack of integration, poor coordination and leadership, insufficient direction and resourcing from government, and an identified need to change the organisation of the sector and delivery system at both national and regional levels (SPARC, 2002a).

The new quasi-government agency had a clear purpose to drive a 'clear and cohesive' vision for the sport sector and to take responsibility for providing leadership to the sector (SPARC, 2002a). While a large number of the recommendations of the Ministerial Taskforce were adopted, most notably the recommendation that the new agency should achieve excellence in sport, high performance was not included as a function of SPARC under the Sport and Recreation Act (2002). Despite this, SPARC took a leading role in clearly identifying elite sport as a key area of focus. SPARC identified three objectives around which its services, policies and investments would be targeted:

- 1 Being the most active nation.
- 2 Having athletes and teams winning consistently in events that matter to New Zealanders.
- 3 Having the most effective sport and physical recreation systems (SPARC, 2002a).

Achievement of national government outcomes was a clear motivator for increased investment, particularly in relation to elite sport, as stated by the Minister of Sport and Fitness, 'building national identity is a key goal for this government. Elite sport and participation in international competition gives us a sense of who we are as New Zealanders, not only this, it lets the rest of the world see who we are' (quoted in Anon, 2001, p. 19).

This was to be a period of rapid change. From the outset, SPARC established an environment where accountability, performance targets, governance issues, annual and strategic planning, and return on investment were all to become essential in an effort to achieve SPARC's goals. As stated in the initial strategic plan, SPARC would make funding decisions based on the 'likelihood of achieving a return on investment' and will fund and support NSOs that 'demonstrated they can assist us in achieving our mission' (SPARC, 2002a, p. 10). The increasing emphasis on return on investment was not exclusive to elite sport however and was also to be applied to the area of recreational sport participation. Most noticeably, in 2006 sport development funding to Athletics, New Zealand was withdrawn due to its inability to impact upon participation levels in the sport.

Alongside the introduction of business concepts/processes, an increasing prioritisation of Olympic sports became evident as part of elite sport development. Clear targets were set to achieve the mission of having athletes and teams winning consistently in 'events that matter' to New Zealand. Funding was prioritised and sports were separated into four categories: recognition,

development, participation and performance. Seven sports were identified as priority sports: cricket, equestrian, golf, netball, rowing, rugby and yachting, with athletics, cycling and swimming named as 'revitalisation sports'. The goal was to ensure that these 10 sports would be on a sustainable footing by 2006 so that SPARC could then focus on another group of sports. For the revitalisation sports, a concerted effort was required to explore how these sports could be rejuvenated and re-established on a sustainable basis. What became evident was that funding of sport was now to 'be focused on ensuring that in exchange for funding, sports and physical recreation bodies deliver performance – both in participation and results' (SPARC, 2002a, p. 10). This signalled a significant change for New Zealand sports organisations as no longer were sports organisations 'entitled to support'; they were now required to show what the 'investment' would return to SPARC.

The rationale for the selection of the initial seven priority sports was based on four criteria: levels of participation; links to industries and infrastructure; an ability to be world leading and achieve recognition for New Zealand; and the ability to stop New Zealanders in the street when we are doing well (SPARC, 2002a). For those sports that had greater financial independence, such as rugby and cricket, the partnership with SPARC was to be built around developing opportunities for juniors, talent identification and athlete career education.

A 4 year funding plan clearly sets out the expectations of SPARC in respect of return on its investment in sporting organisations. Investment in NSOs was at times accompanied by an expectation that governance and administration concerns would be addressed in an effort to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Resources were developed to assist NSOs in achieving more effective governance, such as SPARC's *Nine Steps to Effective Governance, Building High Performance Organisations*. The importance of a strong governance structure and system was clearly considered a crucial component of an effective NSO as indicated with regard to funding arrangements; SPARC would commit funding for more than 1 year where an 'organisation can demonstrate they have a sound structure and good governance system' (SPARC, 2002a, p. 9). For revitalisation sports, funding from SPARC also required governance issues to be addressed. As one senior NSO official stated:

The big boost that we got, and possibly what aided the vote [to change the governance structure], is that SPARC declared us a revitalisation sport ... and they gave us some money, quite a lot of money; half a million a year for three years if we restructured ... Yes, they were pretty

clear on what it had to be ... we'll give you some money if you can get this thing through.

(Interview, 23 October 2006)

Key performance targets included not only the development of a strong governance structure, but also the achievement of publicly stated medal targets at the 2004 Athens Olympics, Paralympics and 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games. A target of 3 to 8 medals was set for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games and 18 to 24 medals at the 2004 Paralympics. At the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games, a target of 40 or more medals was identified as the goal for the New Zealand Team (SPARC, 2003b). The setting of these targets increased public pressure for New Zealand's elite athletes to perform along with greater public examination of reasons for failing to achieve the stated targets. Despite what was considered a successful 2004 Olympic Games for New Zealand athletes, a total of five medals, the inevitable review of the Athens Olympics resulted in increased calls for NSOs to continue improving their management systems and achieve targets set by SPARC.

As part of the post-Athens review, it was recommended that where NSOs 'cannot show the ability to manage and operate their high performance programmes effectively, the NZAS (New Zealand Academy of Sport) will provide the necessary short-term support in order to protect its investment, most likely through the prescriptive involvement of an NZAS Performance Director' (SPARC, 2005b, p. 10). This move signalled the growing preparedness of SPARC to become more closely or directly involved in the management of elite sport in NSOs; if NSOs were unable to demonstrate effective elite sport systems, more direct forms of intervention were now to be considered.

In the wake of a disappointing 2006 Commonwealth Games, SPARC was criticised and questions were asked as to why New Zealand did not achieve the medal targets set. The media and public asked questions regarding where and how funding had been allocated. In the resulting review of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, a lack of depth among New Zealand sports, along with too many part-time athletes, combined with coaching deficiencies, were highlighted as the primary areas of concern. The theme of government intervention into NSOs that were unable to demonstrate effectiveness continued as 'SPARC would protect its investment in at-risk high performance programmes by assuming a role in management of the at-risk programme or withdrawing its investment support' (SPARC, 2006c, p. 11).

Learning and adapting policies and programmes from other sporting systems was also recognised as a method through

which New Zealand could improve its elite sport system. As part of the review of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, the gap between New Zealand and other nations (Australia and United Kingdom among others) was identified as widening with regard to the establishment and performance of their respective elite sport systems. Attempting to compete against countries with larger resources and population bases highlighted the need for New Zealand to learn from other elite sport systems, SPARC identified the need to be smart, innovative and adapt quickly (SPARC, 2006c). The establishment of reciprocal arrangements with other international high performance training institutes has also been identified as an area of focus by SPARC. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with France in 2006 to exchange practices and processes around high performance sport indicates not only a desire to improve performance, but also a recognition of the need to work with and learn from other elite sport systems.

Not only did the establishment of SPARC signal a growing recognition of the importance of elite sport to the government, but more significantly this was now demonstrated by the willingness to significantly increase crown funding for SPARC. However, support for elite sport continues to be balanced alongside recreational sport and physical recreation. From a relatively modest contribution of NZ\$2.7 million in 2001–2002, government funding increased to over NZ\$55 million in 2006. Resourcing of all three key areas has risen steadily since 2002 with elite sport funding increasing from NZ\$22 million in 2003–2004 to over NZ\$33 million in 2006–2007 (see Table 9.1). Increased investment by the crown into the sport sector (via SPARC) looks set to continue with the incumbent Labour government, in its 2005 election manifesto, committing to increased funding to sport and recreation of NZ\$59.76 million in the 2008–2009 financial year (New Zealand Labour Party, 2005).

Significantly, the increased funding from government has had a flow-on effect to a number of other organisations in the sports sector. Funding to NSOs has increased significantly, from NZ\$13,358,624 in 2001–2002 to NZ\$32,552,342 in 2005–2006 (Table 9.2). This has also impacted upon the resources allocated for high performance in NSOs, with targeted high performance funding increasing from NZ\$7,123,440 in 2001–2002 to NZ\$11,491,300 in 2004–2005. Since 2003–2004, SPARC's funding to NSOs has increased significantly and has been accompanied by increased funding to the Academies, RSTs and Local Government. This rapid increase in, and control of, funding by SPARC has drawn attention to the ability of NSOs, in particular, to retain autonomy without compromising their (often) major

Table 9.1 SPARC actual total funding (NZ\$)

Financial year	Total (m)	Crown funding (Vote funding – sport and recreation) ¹	Winning in events that matter to New Zealanders (m)	Being the most active nation (m)	Having the most effective sport and recreation systems (m)
2001–2002	35.6	2,724	N/A	N/A	N/A
2002–2003	42.2	9,761	N/A	N/A	N/A
2003–2004	53.8	24,916	22.0	19.8	12.0
2004–2005	72.2	36,790	25.3	32.4	14.47
2005–2006	84.3	44,245	31.1	35.9	17.26
2006–2007 ²	87.3	51,088	33.2	37.9	18.2

Here m denotes million.

¹ Does not include funding from other government agencies.

² Figures for 2006–2007 are forecast figures from Statement of Intent 2006–2009.

Adapted from SPARC Annual Reports (2001–2002, 2002–2003, 2003–2004, 2004–2005, 2005–2006).

Table 9.2 Allocation of SPARC investment funds (NZ\$ million)

	National sports organisations	Academies (north, central and south)	Regional Sports Trusts	Local government
2001–2002	13,358,624	3,647,328	6,592,760	N/A
2002–2003	15,634,406	3,925,068	7,077,053	N/A
2003–2004	18,740,318	4,624,744	8,123,750	925,058
2004–2005	22,334,055	4,271,395	11,538,301	1,975,704
2005–2006	32,552,342	5,251,718	12,760,334	2,743,983

Adapted from SPARC Annual Reports (2003–2004, 2004–2005, 2005–2006).

source of income. The increase in funding, accompanied by the introduction of a target driven environment, has led NSOs to adopt a strong business focus on elite sport development, at times almost to the detriment of other areas within their sport (such as recreational sport). As a senior NSO official stated: 'I try to run it as a business and the business being to produce

some high performance product, we weren't running the business just so everyone was having a good time' (Interview, 27 October 2006).

SPARC's recently developed High Performance Strategy articulates the direction and focus of New Zealand elite sport from 2006 to 2012. Evident is the further prioritisation of specific sports and a continued emphasis on targeted and accountable funding. The growing importance of the Olympic Games, and to a lesser extent the Commonwealth Games, was reinforced with the acknowledgement that SPARC would target a large proportion of its high performance investment at sports with the ability to deliver multiple Olympic and Commonwealth medals (SPARC, 2006c, p. 1). Nine high performance sports (athletics, cycling, rowing, sailing, swimming, triathlon, cricket, netball and rugby) were identified as priority sports. Interestingly, none of the same criteria that were used in 2002 to identify the priority sports were used 4 years later, with the new criteria clearly focused upon high performance and the ability to win medals on the world stage. The nine sports were selected based upon the NSOs: importance to New Zealand; results at the most recent pinnacle event; results progress towards world best performance, anticipated medal winning performance at the next pinnacle event; depth of talent and the number of medals available at their pinnacle event (Olympic sports); and their ability to impact the performance of their world-class athletes and teams (SPARC, 2006b, p. 7). Cricket, netball and rugby were selected due to their importance to New Zealand and their potential to win in events that matter to New Zealand, but will only receive investment support if they can demonstrate a genuine need for that support.

Of the six other sports, all are Olympic sports, a change from the seven priority sports identified in 2002, of which only equestrian, rowing and yachting were Olympic Sports. These nine sports will receive up to 70 per cent of SPARC's high performance budget. Up to 5 per cent of SPARC's high performance investment will be targeted at athletes in the top 16 of Olympic events and in the top eight in non-Olympic global events. The remainder of SPARC's high performance investment (up to 25 per cent) will be 'contested' among other sports that have the ability to compete creditably in events that matter to New Zealand. Alongside an increased prioritisation on Olympic sports New Zealand's elite sport policy now focuses on sports where multiple medals are on offer, a departure from providing for as many elite athletes as possible, to an emphasis on ensuring depth rather than breadth across a range of sports in an effort to achieve elite sporting success.

While the emergence of a coordinated and focused approach to elite sport development is a relatively recent phenomenon in New Zealand, there has been a consistent view about what sporting variables or dimensions are most beneficial in helping to achieve elite sporting success. Green and Houlihan (2005) suggest that facility development, the emergence of 'full-time' competitors, coaching, and sports science and medicine, and competition opportunities are four key dimensions important in determining the character and adequacy of an elite sport system. Although all four dimensions have in some respect been identified as important for the New Zealand elite system, this has to be tempered by an acknowledgement that there has been a varying degree of importance and focus placed on them in the New Zealand context. Coaching, and sports science and medicine combined and the emergence of full-time athletes are two areas which have been consistently identified as important in New Zealand's elite sport system in order for the country to increase the likelihood of success on the international sporting stage. Given the relatively recent development of a coordinated and targeted elite sport policy environment through the establishment of SPARC, it is perhaps unsurprising that the evidence of change and development amongst the four dimensions is still emerging. Along with these four dimensions, talent identification has also been consistently highlighted, frequently alongside improved coaching systems and standards, as an area critical to the successful development of elite sport in New Zealand (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001).

Important dimensions of elite sport development

Talent identification

Recognition of the need for an effective talent identification system resulted in the establishment of the Talent Identification Taskforce, which concluded that the area of talent identification was under-resourced, ad hoc and based on a belief of 'hope' rather than on any systematic approach (Talent Identification Taskforce, 2003, p. 9). A key recommendation therefore was the need to establish a systematic and holistic long-term development process within which an ongoing identification strategy was embedded. The adoption of a more long-term view was explicitly stated when the Taskforce identified that the fruits of such a strategy would not be realised until 2016. Further recognition of the role and importance of talent identification is evident in SPARC's 2006–2009 Statement of Intent, where the implementation of a talent development framework was

identified as a key action in achieving the goal of having athletes and teams winning in events that matter to New Zealand. Although recognising that all children have the right to develop physical literacy, a clear focus of the talent identification system is to build and develop the pool of potential elite athletes. The Taskforce reinforced the need to increase the pool of potential athletes as, 'with more athletes being identified and developed, New Zealand will increase its competitiveness on the world stage' (Talent Identification Taskforce, 2003, p. 23). As a way of assessing whether this goal is being achieved, the number of NSOs with long-term talent development strategies will be measured as a guide to its success (SPARC, 2006d). Although the decision as to whether a particular sport has a talent identification plan remains with the NSO, in order to continue to receive high performance funding from SPARC, NSOs are required to show evidence of a clear talent identification plan. As noted in the review of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, 'SPARC investment should target high performance plans of national sports organisations only if they have a robust talent development framework in place to ensure we are developing more athletes of world class potential' (SPARC, 2006c, p. 8).

Coaching, sports science and medicine

Consistent with other countries such as Australia and Canada (see Green and Houlihan, 2005), coaching has been identified as a critical ingredient in the development and success of elite sport in New Zealand (Sports Development Inquiry Committee, 1985; Ministerial Taskforce, 2001; SPARC, 2006c). Coaching was highlighted in the Graham Report as 'a key priority in advancing sport participation and elite level excellence' (2001, p. 75). A number of areas in coaching were identified as needing urgent attention including: inconsistent standards; a lack of a clearly defined career pathway; variable development and education of coaches; poor access to quality research advice and a lack of structured networking resource information and career structures (Ministerial Taskforce, 2001). The New Zealand Coaching Strategy (2004) continued the dual emphasis of SPARC on both elite and recreational sport by addressing both areas.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the strategy noted that coaching must be a significant point of difference when compared to the rest of the world if New Zealand is to compete on the international stage. The recent High Performance Strategy identified coach development as a key strategy in assisting SPARC to achieve their goal of having athletes and teams winning consistently in

events that matter to New Zealanders. A number of programmes such as the Carded Coach Programme, Prime Minister's Coaching Scholarship Programme and Coach Performance Enhancement Grants have all been developed to both enhance and reward elite coaching, and has resulted in increased investment over the past 5 years. In trying to improve coaching, the New Zealand Coaching Strategy (2004) identified the following for attention: (a) improving the quality and quantity of time available for coaches to focus upon coaching activities, (b) the need for increased recognition and status of coaches and (c) improvement of the quality of coach education process is critical to developing a world-class coaching environment. Recognition of the need to attract overseas coaches to develop New Zealand coaches and address areas where sport-specific expertise is lacking is also clearly identified as a strategy to address immediate weaknesses in the New Zealand system. As a senior NSO official explained:

in terms of getting the coach development right, if there are real gaps or weaknesses in terms of coaching we will try and address that and if that means bringing in someone from overseas and making sure there is succession planning, and bring a Kiwi in underneath, we will.

(Interview, 24 October 2006)

Coaching is also seen as a critical area for NSOs in attempts to improve their elite athlete performance and as a way of retaining talented and elite athletes in New Zealand. Moreover, the need to learn from overseas and 'buy in skills' is recognised as a valuable method of enhancing New Zealand coaches and, in turn, elite athletes:

Good coaching is a huge emphasis of our organisation and we run a national coaching school every year with 110 coaches in a live-in type of situation where we have overseas experts, and I mean the best overseas experts ... it's definitely a key strategy of ours to make sure coaching is improving. Athletes are only as good as the coaching they are getting.

(Interview, senior NSO official, 24 October 2006)

Yet, despite this, not all NSOs have been able to implement effective coaching strategies or systems. For some sports, the development of coaching has proven problematic, often due to insufficient resources, despite an acknowledgement that it is a core activity if they are to succeed on the international sporting stage:

Coaching has always been talked about and given lip service and we are still trying to sort the coaching programme out. We haven't got

coaching sorted. I mean the coaching budget is NZ\$50k per year and that is to employ someone as a coaching programmes manager. What could you do with that?

(Interview, senior NSO official, 27 October 2006)

Alongside coaching, the value of sport science to the elite sport system has been identified by SPARC as an area that requires further investment and development. The early establishment of the New Zealand Academy of Sport in 2000 indicated early recognition of the importance and value placed upon sports science. As noted earlier, investment in the Academies has increased from NZ\$3,647,328 in 2001–2002 to NZ\$5,251,718 in 2005–2006. However, the establishment of the first Performance Analysis Unit as recently as 2006 indicates that sport science is still a developing area for elite sport in New Zealand. Recognition remains of the need for continual improvement and as acknowledged by a senior SPARC official there is a need for the services to be ‘world class and not just services’. Part of the problem appears to be due to a lack of experience in knowing what it takes to produce world-class athletes:

We recognise that there is a real lack of capability in a lot of those service provision areas [sports science] and we need to encourage the local providers to step up a level ... I think that is part of our biggest challenge over the next two or three years to accelerate the development of all those critical people that make up the key support roles.

(Interview, senior SPARC official, 27 October 2006)

Competition opportunities and emergence of full-time athletes

New Zealand’s geographic isolation and conflicting seasons with the northern hemisphere has led to a pragmatic realisation that New Zealand sporting competitions need to dovetail into more significant (often northern hemisphere) competition schedules if its elite athletes are to attend national competitions that do not conflict with larger international events. For some sports, this is more of an issue than for others especially where the sport is predominantly based in the northern hemisphere. Yet despite identification of this problem, the move to alter national calendars has at times been slow. For athletics, the dominance of northern hemisphere competitions at the elite level is clearly evident:

We are the flea on the tail of the dog down here. Athletics is totally Eurocentric as that’s where the population and investors and sponsors come from so we have to fit around everything. So the northern and

southern split and our summer season causes problems [but] we work around it. So that's totally what our competitions are about.

(Interview, senior NSO official, 27 October 2006)

For some NSOs, rearranging the local competition calendar is driven by the need to have top New Zealand athletes visible and competing on the national scene. The participation of New Zealand's elite athletes at national and local competitions is seen to not only raise the level of local competition, but also expose the 'up and coming' athletes to what is required to become an elite athlete:

We have totally restructured our national calendar [and it was] a great decision. So everything is driven off the international calendar. If you cannot get your elite athletes to the national competition it devalues the national competition.

(Interview, senior NSO official, 25 October 2006)

The achievement of success on the international sporting stage has increasingly been associated with the need for full-time athletes. In reviewing New Zealand's performance at the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, the variation in performance levels between full-time and part-time athletes was raised. As part of this SPARC recognised that New Zealand athletes are unlikely to be successful at future international events unless they are able to prepare full-time for such events (SPARC, 2006c). Without full-time athletes, success at the elite level is increasingly difficult. As discussed by a senior SPARC official, 'when you put money into elite [sport] it's for results. You have to go after results [and] you need to effectively take on the world, have athletes train full-time [and] you have to zero your resources in' (Interview, 25 October 2006).

The increased investment in sport has had a direct impact upon athletes' ability to train and compete on the international stage on a full-time basis. The introduction of Performance Enhancements Grants (PEGs) of NZ\$5 million per year is directed at athletes in the top 16 in Olympic sports and the top 8 in non-Olympic global sports, with the aim of providing financial support for elite athletes to enable them to dedicate more time to training and competition. Other programmes such as the Prime Minister's Athlete Scholarship Awards also assist talented and elite athletes (as determined by the NSOs' performance standards) to train while achieving tertiary or vocational goals. This has enabled elite athletes outside the professional codes of rugby union, cricket and rugby league to progress towards full-time status and to earn a living from competing at

an elite level. For swimming, this was particularly evident, as a senior NSO official acknowledged:

The financial environment for them [athletes] is now the best it has ever been ... they can actually earn a reasonable living. The top ten or fifteen in the Commonwealth Games' team would earn about between NZ\$30,000 and NZ\$40,000 per year, plus they have all their expenses paid to travel around Europe.

(Interview, 24 October 2006)

A significant part of the shift towards more full-time athletes has occurred during the last 4–5 years and has involved a combination of increased investment from SPARC, increased marketability of athletes, enabling additional revenues of funding from the private sector, and NSOs now having the capacity to support their elite athletes through incentive funding.

Facilities

The lack of a clear national plan, and systematic planning and consultation, led to concerns regarding the provision of elite sporting facilities. The provision of sporting facilities for elite athletes has only recently been identified as an area of priority concern for SPARC, especially in the provision of world-class training facilities for key sports. The development of sporting facilities has traditionally remained the responsibility of local government, which has resulted in an ad hoc and unsystematic approach to the type, spread and quality of sport facilities in New Zealand. This has contributed to a situation where facilities have been built without any, or with little, consultation at a national level. The recent construction of New Zealand's only indoor cycling velodrome in Invercargill led to criticism regarding its geographic location, being the 'wrong place, right facility', and the impact of this on its use and accessibility for elite athletes. The lack of a national strategy was highlighted as a potential reason for this. The reliance on local government to provide facilities raises issues regarding divergent priorities between elite and grassroots sport. As discussed by a senior NSO official, recreational sport was more of a priority for local government. The ability of NSOs to have input into or influence on facility development was at times random and dependent upon each local authority:

It depends on the council and how amenable they are for consultation and how much they listen ... in some cases there are facilities built that have probably been mistakes as they have not listened to requirements

whether it's been, you know, cut costs by reducing the size then it hasn't really been a facility that has met our needs. I would not say we are at a stage in directing councils in what they are building but we do have some say.

(Interview, senior NSO official, 24 October 2006)

Although the government has purposefully remained removed from taking responsibility for providing sporting facilities, SPARC recently identified 'facilities' as a vital area for intervention. The High Performance Strategy recognised that New Zealand has a lack of world-class facilities to which athletes have priority access. This renewed interest in New Zealand's elite sporting facilities is signalled by the commitment to conduct an evaluation of high performance facilities, which is to be completed by June 2007. However, the outcome and future action in relation to this audit is unclear. Caution not to create dependency upon national level funding for sporting facilities was expressed by a senior SPARC official: 'we also need to ask ourselves what we are developing here as we should be doing everything we can to make them self-sustaining rather than needing continuous ongoing government funding' (Interview, 16 October 2006).

Two specific concerns have been raised in respect of New Zealand's sporting facilities. First, many are becoming old and require considerable maintenance, due largely to a number of facilities being developed around the same period. Second, there is a considerable spread of facilities and limited resources or funding to continue or support their maintenance. In part, this is characterised by a large number of local or club facilities and an increasing recognition of the need to rationalise facilities. As such, the development of, and priority regarding the type of facilities built has been left predominantly to local government. Major sporting events, however, can receive national government support. The America's Cup, and in more recent times the involvement of government in the development of facilities for the upcoming Rugby World Cup in 2011 are considered on a case-by-case basis for government investment. These types of events are however separated out and considered by a discrete major events group that evaluates the impact of the event on areas such as tourism and economic development rather than as a process for developing recreational or elite sport.

As noted earlier many of these dimensions, although identified as early as 1985, have only recently begun to be addressed within a coordinated elite sport policy framework. The lack of world-class facilities in particular has only recently been addressed at a national level and the potential outcome of this

activity remains unclear. Considerably more emphasis has been placed upon the development of coaching and sport sciences and medicine as demonstrated both through the level of policy activity and the level of resources dedicated to these areas. Increased support for full-time athletes has been identified as critical for New Zealand's elite sporting success and over the past 5 years SPARC has invested increasingly large amounts of funding for this objective. Again, however, there is a recognition that further development is needed in all these areas if New Zealand is to be successful on the international stage. Yet, this has to be tempered against the availability of resources and the need for SPARC to also address other areas of sport including recreational sport and physical recreation.

Conclusion

Over the past 15 years, there has been rapid development and change in New Zealand sport policy. Striving for athletes and teams winning consistently in events that matter to New Zealanders was a key departure from previous government investment in New Zealand sport. A clear 'investment' ethos, as opposed to providing grants, has led to SPARC redirecting, reshaping and refocusing the elite sport policy sector in New Zealand. The establishment of a single crown entity responsible for elite, recreational sport and physical recreation, coupled with a significant increase in crown funding, has resulted in SPARC taking a lead role in coordinating, developing and shaping the direction of elite and recreational sport and physical recreation.

Three major themes have emerged over the past 15 years in respect of elite sport policy. The first theme is the increasingly business-focused environment in which NSOs, and other agencies funded by SPARC, are expected to operate in return for funding. Funding by SPARC is driven by the expectation of a 'return on investment' and the achievement of clearly identified goals and targets. Second is the increasing legitimisation and acceptance of government intervention into elite sport matters should NSOs be unable to perform or achieve the goals identified. Increased government intervention has, however, led to concerns regarding the levels of autonomy NSOs now enjoy regarding the ways in which their respective sports are developed. Increasingly, investment in NSOs is dependent upon certain programmes or processes being in place, without which funding may be withdrawn, or more direct intervention may occur to ensure the success of elite athletes. The third

theme to emerge is the increasing prioritisation of Olympic sports and the narrowing of focus towards sports where multiple medals are on offer. This is demonstrated both through the criteria considered to become a priority sport, and the increased emphasis placed on the Olympic Games as a pinnacle event for New Zealand athletes.

Finally, as a relative newcomer to developing elite (Olympic) athletes, in comparison to countries such as Australia, it is not surprising to see evidence of policy learning from other elite sport systems. Given New Zealand's geographic isolation and relatively small investment in elite sport in comparison to nations such as the United Kingdom and Australia, policy learning and transfer has been based around the need to learn, adapt and be innovative in order to drive elite sport success. In such a target-led environment, the indicators of success for New Zealand's strong recent emphasis on elite success can only be medals and trophies on the international stage, most notably at the Olympic Games.

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