

PERFORMANCE SPORTS SUMMIT
Stirling Management Centre - 23 August 2007
Summary Document

The Performance Sport Summit was called to fulfil the new Government's manifesto commitment 'to convene a meeting with stakeholders to discuss Scottish representation on the 'International Sporting Stage' and consider the feasibility of a Scottish Olympic team'.

The following two main topic areas were discussed:

What are the potential opportunities, benefits and challenges of competing independently on the international sporting stage? supplemented by questions relating to the feasibility of a Scottish Olympic team.

How do we increase the number of quality Scots competing on the international stage? to be explored in the context of a review of the current performance landscape in Scotland and the UK.

Stakeholders were given two short presentations and following each were divided into workshop groups where the two key themes, along with other relevant and related topics were discussed. These summary notes were compiled from each of the workshops highlighting the common points of issue or agreement across the groups and any other significant points from any individual group.

Topic 1: What are the potential opportunities, benefits and challenges of competing independently on the international sporting stage?

A number of clear opportunities and benefits were identified, these were supported and endorsed by sports already competing at world level in their own right, there was a broad consensus on the following benefits:

- Raising Scotland's profile on the international sporting stage.
- Increasing the influence of Scottish Governing Bodies within International Governing Bodies.
- Each sport having control of its own destiny.
- The potential to produce more Scottish sporting heroes and role models.
- To motivate and inspire young athletes to compete for Scotland at the highest level.
- To motivate and inspire more people to take part in sport and physical activity.
- Potential opportunities to secure more investment into Scottish sport.

A number of challenges were also identified, and again there was a broad consensus on the following:

- The inability for many Scottish Governing Bodies to gain independent recognition by International Governing Bodies unless it is an independently recognised country.
- The overall strength and depth of Scottish athletes in many sports:
 - The potential length of time required to improve to the required standard.
- The potential that some Scottish team sports and some individual sports, would not qualify or would be knocked out in the first rounds of world level competition:
 - This may result in a negative public/media profile and potentially create a negative impact on national pride.
- The lack of quality coaches in Scottish sport at all levels.
- The lack of quality facilities at a local, regional and national level.
- The lack of expertise and capacity in many Scottish Governing Bodies to manage and develop their sport.

The following three supplementary questions were also asked to each of the workshop groups to gauge the level of support for:

Pursuing more independent recognition on the international sporting stage

- Generally there was support for pursuing more independent recognition on the international sporting stage; however this would need to be explored further on a sport by sport basis. It is likely this would require a medium to long time frame to implement for many sports:
 - There would be a need to increase support to many Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport to enable them to build relationships with their international representative bodies.
 - There would also be a need to increase the number and quality of coaches, facilities, and boost investment to support higher training and competition costs.

Scotland pursuing independent recognition for the 2012 Olympic Games

- Most felt that timescale for independent recognition by the International Olympic Committee for 2012 was unlikely although agreed that an Independent Scotland would automatically become a member.

The aspiration for independent Olympic recognition for Scotland

- The overall impression was that this was a sporting ambition but also a political aspiration and would be a natural consequence of Scotland becoming a fully independent country:
 - It was felt this should become part of the wider ‘National Conversation’ on Scotland’s constitutional future.
- It was widely agreed that a long term plan would need to be developed and implemented, to ensure Scotland was able to benefit and maximise from future independent Olympic status.

Topic 2: How do we increase the number of quality Scots competing on the international stage?

There was clear and majority support for the following:

- The need to increase the amount and the quality of PE and sport in school at all stages to ensure an improvement in:
 - Children's general physical literacy.
 - Children's general health and fitness.
- We need to invest more in our Governing Bodies of Sport.
- Governing Bodies should be allowed to lead their sport as they know the issues in their sport.
- Each sport must have a clear performance development pathway, many do not:
 - We must raise performance standards at all levels of the pathway.
- Support structure should be put in place to support athletes at all levels national, regional and local:
 - We need to improve and be clear and consistent on who has eligibility and access to and support from the Institute Network, Regional Academies and Schools of Sport.
- More clarity is required on the roles and responsibilities of organisations and agencies:
 - eg. The Scottish Institute of Sport and the Scottish Institute of Sport Foundation.
- Sport must maximise its current investment to ensure value for money.
- Sport needs additional investment, but should seek it from both the public and private sector.
- We must increase the number of quality coaches and full time coaches in Scotland at all levels.
- We must provide more support to enable our most promising and best athletes to be full time.
- Improve the linkages between the Institute Network and sports governing bodies to Higher and Further Education establishments.

Each group was then asked to **‘Review the performance landscape in Scotland and the UK, exploring the roles and issues relating to’** and were given one of the following to discuss:

Scottish Governing Bodies

It was agreed that Scottish governing bodies should:

- Be the lead applicant for all investment for their sport, to be given full responsibility for their sport and then be given the resultant accountability for their sport, this is not felt to be the case by many:
 - To continue to lead on all governance and management matters for their sport.
- Be given ‘real’ ownership of their performance plan, this is improving as sports specific performance groups are being implemented.
- Be responsible for the development of, and maintain an overview of, the full performance pathway, this is still fragmented for some sports.
- Continue to lead on selection, set selection and de-selection processes/standards, this needs to be improved specifically in relation to Scottish Institute of Sport (SIS) and Area Institute of Sport (AIS) selection/support.
- Be responsible for the employment and management of staff, this has historically been different to the view of the SIS:
 - The current consensus would be Performance Directors and Coaches should be employed where they can make the most impact (this will differ from sport to sport) and decisions should be made on a case by case basis.

The Institute Network, The Scottish Institute of Sport (SIS) and 6 Area Institutes of Sport (AISs)

The Institute Network should:

- Continue to provide quality support service delivery to Scottish Governing Body performance plans of eligible sports, to agreed individual athletes, squads and teams.
- Continue to develop their technical lead role for support service development and delivery throughout the support service network, SIS, AIS’s, regional academies, and possibly schools of sport.
- Continue to employ and deploy and have overall management responsibility for all support service staff across the network.
- Be given the responsibility for employment and management of performance coaches. This conflicts with the views of many governing bodies, the current position noted in the Governing body feedback would be the preferred position. *‘Performance Directors and Coaches should be employed where they can make the most impact (this will differ from sport to sport) and decisions should be made on a case by case basis.’*
- Provide more quality personal development opportunities for all technical experts and performance coaches/directors.

- Expand their performance hub environment to all performance staff across Scottish sport to share knowledge, expertise and best practice.
- Further develop in the areas of sports innovation, particularly in science, medicine, technical coaching and analysis.
- Introduce and take the lead on the development of talent identification, talent confirmation and talent transfer initiatives and programmes.

Academies/ Schools of Sport

- Academies and Schools of Sport have different objectives, and both a relatively new concept in Scotland, currently:
 - Academies sit within the regional sporting infrastructure
 - Schools of Sport fit within the local education structure
- Current school of sport models and regional academy pilots should be reviewed; this is taking place.
- Each of the above have a place but they can only be effective if they have a direct relationship to the governing body and their role identified in the SGB performance pathway, which it is felt in many cases they do not:
 - There must be nationally agreed selection process and standards put in place.
- Both must be linked to each other and to the AIS, this is to ensure clear progression can be made, ensuring there are no gaps, conflicting support or duplication of the support being provided.
- Schools of sport must link appropriate sports coaching and support service delivery to wider educational requirements both sporting and non sporting.
- Both must deliver high quality coaching both curricular and extra-curricular.
- Schools of sport must offer flexible timetabling for young athletes to allow linkages to other support structures particularly the AIS.

UK Governing Bodies

- Must continue to ensure clear qualification and selection criteria are available and applied.
 - Ensuring Scots are not disadvantaged due to their location
- UK Governing Bodies should consider providing satellite training centres in Scotland where facilities are available and numbers of Scottish athletes are high.
- All UK Governing Bodies should be federated bodies fully representative of the home country countries, many are not.
- A clear demarcation must be made between English and GB activities and investment for all sports where separate Home Counties do not compete at world level, this is still not the case in many sports.
- There should be separate English Governing bodies for all sports, which there currently is not:
 - This however must not create more bureaucracy and back office costs.

Summary

The Minister summarised by:

Acknowledging that one size does not fit all and agreed there needs to be a sport specific approach developed in relation to performance development and delivery.

Stating that specific and overarching time lines would need to be developed to raise the number and quality of athletes to a level where Scotland could compete more widely an the international stage.

The Scottish Government wants to work with any sport that wishes to pursue increased independent recognition on the international sporting stage.