

PERFORMANCE AND EXCELLENCE STRATEGY

R E P O R T

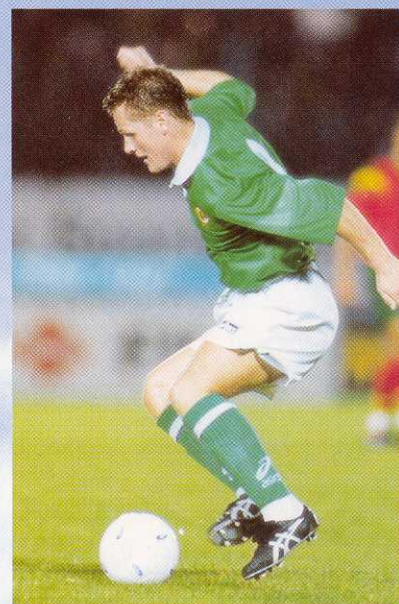


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1 FOREWORD



Jim McKeever

This report, dealing with the development of Performance and Excellence in sport, has been prepared by a Working Party set up by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland.

Our sportsmen and sportswomen have, over the years, earned a distinguished reputation for the achievement of excellence. The recommendations in this document are concerned to create an environment for sport which will continue and indeed extend these achievements in the very different social and sporting climate of an emergent twenty-first century.

In Northern Ireland the prescribed Physical Education curriculum in schools and the current strategies for promoting extra-curricular and post-school sport are laying a solid basis for widespread participation. What we address in this document is the recommendation in the European Sports Charter that 'everyone with the interest and ability should have the opportunity to improve their standard of performance in sport and reach levels of personal achievement and publicly recognised levels of excellence'.

The development of sporting talent is of great benefit to the individual person but also greatly contributes to the vitality of the particular sports and to the community.

What is envisaged is development of the talents of our young people by carefully planned support, fully respecting their own long-term interests and within the spirit of fair play which includes not only keeping rules but the concepts of friendships, respect for others and always playing in the right spirit.

The document is addressed mainly to Governing Bodies, who have primary responsibility for the development of sport but also to other agencies which, together with Governing Bodies, form a network of influences affecting sport. The degree to which all influences can be harmoniously co-ordinated will be vital for future excellence.

I wish to express my gratitude to the members of the Working Party for the generous contribution of their time and their expertise. Particularly I am grateful to the vice-chairman Ian Corry for his continual good advice and to the chairpersons of the six sub-groups for overseeing a crucial stage of the deliberations. I wish also to acknowledge the support of the Performance and Excellence unit under Con O'Callaghan and especially the work of Stephen Martin who accepted the major share of responsibility for preparing the report. I hope with some confidence that all of us will feel rewarded by the implementation of the recommendations and the effect on sport in the decades ahead.

Finally I wish most sincerely to commend this report to Governing Bodies of Sport and to the supporting agencies – District Councils, Education Bodies, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and commercial organisations interested in sport – and hope it will be accepted as a brief to ensure the overall excellence of our competitive sport.

Jim McKeever

Jim McKeever

Chairman of Performance and Excellence Working Party

2 WORKING PARTY MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRMAN

Mr Jim McKeever

*Former Head of Faculty, St Mary's College,
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Sports Council for Northern Ireland Member*

VICE CHAIRMAN

Dr Ian Corry

*International Swimmer Commonwealth Games 1974–78
Senior Registrar in orthopaedic surgery.
Leading contributor in developing Sports Medicine in the
Province. Sports Council for Northern Ireland member.*

MEMBERS

Mr Stephen Hilditch

*Headmaster of a mixed secondary school,
International Rugby referee.
Vice Chairman, Sports Council for Northern Ireland.*

Mrs Jackie McWilliams

*School Teacher, member GB Hockey Team which won
Bronze Medal in 1992 Barcelona Olympics.
Sports Council for Northern Ireland member.*

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr Brian Morrison

Head of Leisure Services, Belfast City Council.

Mr Iain Kennedy

*Manager of Enniskillen Leisure Centre.
World Rowing Championship Coxless Pairs.*

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

Mr Ray Gilbert

*South Eastern Education & Library Board Creative and
Expressive Studies Adviser*

SPORTS SCIENCE

Dr Colin Boreham

*Commonwealth and Olympic Games Representative.
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Education Centre*

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*Senior Lecturer, University of Ulster, BASES accredited
Sports Psychologist.*

NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL OF PHYSICAL RECREATION

Mr George Glasgow

*Former Director, Sports Council for Northern Ireland.
Former National Coach for Hockey and Basketball
and an International Canoeist*

SPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs June Davis

*International Swimmer, Sports Council for
Northern Ireland member.
Coach to GB Swim Team Paralympic Games.*

COACH / DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Mr Brian Hall

*National Athletics Coach.
Previous National Coach Norway for 5–6 yrs.*

GOVERNING BODIES

Mr Philip Anderson

*Former International Hockey Player and Coach.
Now Director Public Service Training Council.*

Mr Michael McKeever

*Technical Director of the English Volleyball Association
and Secretary of the British Volleyball Federation
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Mr Alan Strong

*Senior Lecturer University of Ulster.
Director of Coaching Table Tennis.*

Mr Tony Byrne

*Salto Gymnastics Centre, NIAGA Regional Coach,
N.I. Commonwealth Games Coach 1986 – 94.*

Mr Nigel Best

Senior Teacher. Successful Bangor Soccer Team Manager.

MEDIA

Mr Terry Smyth

Head of Sport, BBC Northern Ireland.

SPORTS COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND STAFF

Mr Con O'Callaghan

*Head of SCNI Performance Excellence Unit and former
Coach to the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games
Swimming Team.*

Mr Stephen Martin, MBE

*Gold and Bronze Medallist at the 1984 and 1988 Olympic
Games and Vice Captain of the GB Hockey Team in 1992
Barcelona Olympics.*

3 GENERAL BACKGROUND

World-wide a thousand million men and women, from all age groups and all nationalities, engage in some form of sporting activity, be it:-

- competitive games and sports
- outdoor pursuits
- aesthetic movement or
- exercise activities

In Northern Ireland the 1990 – 91 Continuous Household Survey showed that 57% of the adult population, took part regularly in some form of sport or physical recreation – an increase of 13% over the 1986 figures. Indications are that 6,000 affiliated clubs, 250,000 registered members and 3,500 coaches comprise organised sport in the province.

For the vast majority sport is for fun and enjoyment. For the committed and dedicated participants, sport is a pursuit of publicly acknowledged excellence; to run faster; to jump higher; to throw further than their fellow competitors; to breach the present frontiers of human performance; to be the best.

However, these top level sports people do not just “emerge”. There needs to be an infrastructure within sport to aid progress from the pupil to the participant, the participant to the performer and the performer to the perfectionist. This athletic excellence flows in part from a broad participatory base.

PERFORMANCE AND EXCELLENCE

Performance and Excellence are not concerned with the few, but with any sports person who desires to improve. They are integral parts of a sports development continuum.

The four elements of the sports development continuum may be described as follows:-

- Foundation:** – young people acquiring basic movement skills to provide a foundation for future participation in the sports of their choice
- Participation:** – the pursuit of activity for reasons of enjoyment, fitness, social contact, or sport for its own sake
- Performance:** – participation motivated by the desire to get better
- Excellence:** – performers with the interest and ability to achieve publicly measured levels of performance

In this continuum, performance and excellence brings together parents, teachers, club leaders, governing body coaches, sport scientists, medical personnel and management consultants from a range of key agencies: Voluntary, Statutory, Professional, Educational and Commercial.



THE ROLE OF THE SPORTS COUNCIL

Many of the support services to facilitate progression to Performance / Excellence are already in existence in the Province – schools of sport, coach education, facilities, competitive opportunities and scientific and medical back-up – but are by no means widespread. What is needed is an overall strategy which co-ordinates the various strands into a comprehensive programme for the development of high level performance.

The winning of titles and medals depends on efforts of individuals whose drive, determination and dedication are underpinned by progressive and resolute Governing Body action.

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland seeks to mobilise the various agencies involved in sport and physical recreation into an orchestrated drive towards excellence and perhaps international success.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy is aimed at all agencies involved in the development of sport, and in particular Governing Bodies, District Councils, Education and Library Boards, the Universities, Voluntary Organisations, Professional Bodies and Industry and Commerce.

It concerns itself with the opportunities and constraints that influence an individual and how these can be modified. It also draws on the experiences of Governing Bodies and other key partners to co-ordinate the creation of an appropriate environment to facilitate the emergence of high levels of individual and team performances.

In the words of Forbes Carlisle, Australian swimming coach, the strategy should –

“Aim not to create a champion but create a situation in which champions become inevitable”.

During the discussions of the working group it became clear that many resources in the Province currently deployed in the pursuit of performance and excellence might be more effectively and efficiently used. Whilst much more could certainly be achieved by injecting additional resources nevertheless improved co-ordination of effort would improve the opportunities already available.

Provision for performance and excellence should be open to all who strive for success. This emphasis on equality of opportunity should allow all athletes, be they main stream, disabled or socially disadvantaged, the opportunity to perform to their optimum.



4 TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND NURTURING

This section considers the process by which sporting talent is identified and developed.

It concludes that schools and Governing Bodies have a major role to play in enhancing the effectiveness of existing procedures.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **Schools** to continue to identify talented performers and direct them to sports clubs which have suitable structures in place to develop performance.
- (ii) **Governing Bodies** to have talent identification and development programmes in place together with squad training staffed by trained coaches at both regional and national level.
- (iii) **District Councils** to consider schools of sport within their District for the development of elite performers and coaches in co-operation with the Governing Bodies of Sport.
- (iv) **SCNI** to form a consultative group to pursue the concept of primary school sportsamps for identifying and nurturing young children with talent in a sports environment.

"In Sweden talented youngsters either move to a town with a specialist Sports School; or if there are excellent facilities for their sport in their own town, study programmes are adjusted to allow training etc.

... this is paid for by the state.

... there are currently 72 sports schools for 30 sports with 1,800 talented juniors attending them.

... In higher education special tutors manage individuals' sporting and educational commitments.

... National squad athletes receive £1,750 per annum while at University."

BOA ATHLETES REPORT 1993

BACKGROUND

The establishment of a talent identification and development programme enables aspiring young performers to have a vision of their possible future goals. Talent identification is traditionally carried out by parents, teachers and coaches on a purely

subjective basis. In some sports objective measures are also used to assess a pre-determined standard such as in timed events. A more complete picture of an individual's potential can be obtained over a period of time involving the assessment of physical, psychological and technical capabilities.

In addition, achievement of the highest standards requires a total commitment from the performer.

Governing Body programmes should incorporate systems to identify and nurture talent and should identify the roles, responsibilities and contributions of partner organisations. These talent identification schemes and development programmes should channel children through from school age to senior international level.

Schools offer an ideal platform from which many talented individuals can develop but cannot fulfil all the needs of talent identification and development. Local clubs who have qualified coaches should assist schoolteachers in guiding and monitoring talented pupils.

Children should be directed into local clubs which have the expertise and facilities to cater for them.

IDENTIFYING TALENT

The initial identification process is likely to take place at primary school, junior club and lower secondary school. This involves parents, teachers and coaches. What is recognisable at this stage is general athletic ability which will be the spring-board for future sports-specific Excellence. A small percentage of talented performers will emerge later. The identification system employed must be sufficiently flexible to include these late developers. Primary schools are encouraged to appoint a PE co-ordinator whose role should include the recognition and promotion of athletic talent.

In schools, governing body award schemes may be used to support teaching lessons and the identification of talent in a variety of sports, for example in Athletics the Ten Step Award Scheme, in Gymnastics the BAGA Awards Scheme.

Physical Education specialists and other teachers involved in sport should have increased in-service training support available to them from the

Education Boards. Increased knowledge of various sports will help teachers identify talented individuals for referral to coaching courses. A possible way forward would be to establish annual mini sports camps at a local level where quality coaching in a range of sports would be available for selected primary school pupils.

NURTURING TALENT

Key elements in this nurturing process are

- performer selection,
- frequency and quality of training opportunities,
- availability of quality coaches,
- access to appropriate facilities
- Sports Science and Sports Medicine support.

Governing Bodies who operate through a club system should have clearly identified and publicised performance ladders incorporated in their sports development plan to bring young people through from school to national levels.

PERFORMANCE / EXCELLENCE LADDER OF OPPORTUNITIES

Elite National Squads
Senior Development Squads (eg. Olympic Youth Camp)
Provincial Development Squads U16 / U18 / U21
Regional Sports Development Squads (eg. Sport Step) 14 – 16 year olds
Champion Coaching / Governing Body District Schemes 1st – 3rd Form
Multi Sport Camps (P7 Pupils) – local

Regional squads, Schools of Sport and Centres of Excellence play a major part in developing opportunities for performers to excel. These can be more effectively established by networking with Sports Council and Local Authorities. Sports Science / Medicine support services should be introduced at appropriate levels and each squad should have access to quality coaching and training facilities.

The Education system should make provision for talented individuals to develop, for example schools should encourage and select performers to attend development courses.

In addition to providing bursaries Universities should make provision for extended degree courses.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Governing Body Talent Identification and Development Scheme.

Ulster Branch, Irish Amateur Hockey Union.

Through a network of teachers and coaches, Hockey encourages a profile of top performers from age group level through to senior performance.

These records, which are kept on file, cover results for Fitness Testing Analysis to enable coaches or performers to be aware of the desired physical and physiological capabilities of Hockey players at particular stages of development.

Each squad has access to high level coaching and high level training facilities. Coaching apprenticeship schemes are in operation at all levels.

Regional U11, Regional U13, Regional U14 squads (Sport Step Scheme), at regional facilities (Antrim Forum, Newry Hockey Club, Mossley Hockey Club, Olympia Leisure Centre, Lisnagarvey Hockey Club).

Interprovincial squads U16, interprovincial squads U18, interprovincial squads U21 at regional facilities (as above).

Ulster development squad and senior interprovincial team at Lisnagarvey Hockey Club (being developed as a Centre of Excellence for Hockey).

2. Champion Coaching Scheme

Champion Coaching promotes quality coaching for performance motivated children through partnerships between District Councils, Governing Bodies and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland.

Through the Champion Coaching Scheme three Borough Councils, Ballymoney, Lisburn and Newry offer more than 300 youngsters, aged 11

– 14 years, improvement opportunities in the sports of Badminton, Association Football, Hockey, Netball, Swimming and Table Tennis. Each youngster receives coaching 2 hours per week for ten weeks, twice a year.

The scheme provides a large arena for the development of sports coaches utilising a wide range of education and training resources.

3. Regional Schools of Sport.

The Sport Step Scheme or Regional Schools of Sport provide opportunities for talented individuals to practice under qualified coaches. The regional centres within this scheme are designed to assist Governing Bodies of Sport develop co-ordinated systems for identifying and nurturing performers and talented coaches on a regional basis. In total 17 sports are involved.

The Northern Ireland Schools Netball Association has established five regional squads so that talented players can focus on specific training to achieve a place in the Northern Ireland under 16 squad.

Area trials based upon school nominations are held in each of the 5 Education and Library Boards, and from these the best 16 – 20 (U13 – U15) female players are selected.

The staff coaches concentrate on skill development and fitness training together with nutritional advice.

4. Schools of Sporting Excellence

The Dale Farm / Sports Council sponsored Olympic Youth Camp programme embraces sports specific sessions and educational workshops in areas of general sports preparation, for example injury prevention, mental training, fitness testing, strength training, time management, doping control procedures and advice on sports nutrition. A local but high level coaching team is recruited. Eleven Olympic sports in 1993 benefited from inclusion in the four day residential Olympic Youth Camp. They were Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Cycling, Gymnastics, Hockey (M) & (W), Judo, Fencing, Swimming, Wrestling and Weightlifting. The administration and organisation procedures of the residential base reflected the nature of an Olympic village.

(v) Centre of Excellence

There are currently two SCNI designated Centres of Excellence within Northern Ireland, the Athletics Centre of Excellence at the Antrim Stadium and the Swimming Centre of Excellence at the Grove Leisure Centre.

They provide specialist training and opportunities for those performers who have potential to be selected for the national squad. They also provide Sport Science support services, have an attached Sports Injury Clinic or access to a nearby clinic and have adequate numbers of coaches of the required standard to coach elite performers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

- develop appropriate award schemes to support “extra-curricular activity” assisting the talent identification process – establish school / club links to assist teachers in after school coaching and exit routes into club sport.
- have talent identification and development programmes in place together with squad training opportunities staffed by trained coaches at both regional and national level.
- seek provision of appropriate Sports Science Support Services for high level performers.
- maintain profiles of top performers from age group through to senior level to record information on fitness and skill development.
- consider developmental squads at, in particular, 18 years to senior level so that talented performers who do not make senior squad initially are encouraged to further develop their skill and fitness for their particular sport.
- develop, in association with Sports Council and District Councils, a Centre of Excellence for their particular sport.

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

- expand the present Champion Coaching scheme in association with District Councils, Education Boards and Governing Bodies of Sport.
- form a consultative group to pursue the concept of primary school sportscamps for identifying and nurturing young children in a sports environment.

- expand the regional Sport Step Scheme which provides an infrastructure for identifying and developing talented performers and aspiring coaches.
- develop the Olympic Youth Camp which provides elite performers with sports specific and general preparation knowledge for international competition.
- investigate the introduction and maintenance of a database accessible to the public, of coaching opportunities to young people

Schools

- continue to identify talented performers and direct them to sports clubs who have suitable structures in place to develop performance.

- refer talented performers to mini camps or coaching schemes organised by Education Boards, District Councils or Governing Bodies.

Voluntary Clubs

- provide coaching expertise and assistance to local school teachers.
- ensure that talented young members are identified and referred to the most appropriate level in the Governing Body Performance Ladder.

District Councils

- organise Schools of Sport within their district for the development of elite performers and coaches in co-operation with governing bodies of sport.



5 COACH EDUCATION

This section considers the importance of having a clear strategy for the identification, training and deployment of coaches at the performance and excellence level.

It concludes that Governing Bodies require a strong well educated and effectively operated coaching force in order to meet the demands of high level performers.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **Governing Bodies** to review the present coaching structure and identify potential elite performers who could work as coaches in the Performance / Excellence area, offering fast track training and an apprenticeship system for initial coaching.
- (ii) **The Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching (NIIC)** to encourage Governing Bodies to integrate NIIC material into Governing Body Coaching Awards, in particular, modules which include Sports Science principles.
- (iii) **Education / District Councils** when employing sports coaches consult Governing Body Registers of qualified coaches.

"In Germany Coaching receives an annual state investment of DM30m (£12m). Britain invests £1.4 million as a direct grant from the Sports Council to the National Coaching Foundation".

BOA ATHLETES REPORT 1993

"We need to use the experience of established competitors in coaching and preparing sports people especially for major games."

TRACK & FIELD

BACKGROUND

For Coaching to develop in a systematic way major agencies such as Governing Bodies of Sport, the Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching (NIIC), the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and District Councils need to work together. For a Coach / Performer relationship to be successful there has to

be a common blend of ingredients such as aims, respect, commitment and communication. Many governing bodies have well developed coaching structures but may focus mainly on technical input.

At performance level the coach will be working with people who have a commitment to improving all aspects of performance therefore the coach will need a good understanding of technique, tactics, psychological and physiological preparation for their sport. At Excellence level the coach becomes more of a facilitator. This necessitates a specialist training programme to meet the demands from the performer, ie: delivery of a performer-centred approach to Coaching using the experience of the performer and drawing on specialist support services.

DEVELOPING A COACHING STRUCTURE

Governing Bodies, **through a coaching committee**, are best placed to determine the present position and future needs of coaching within their sport.

In Northern Ireland sports coaches vary from the enthusiastic volunteer to the full-time paid Coaching Director / Coach Development Officer. The delivery of most coaching services is through voluntary work at clubs and at representative level.

Whilst it is recognised that the qualifications and status of the coach are improving there is a need to have an accepted policy for **identifying, training and deploying coaches**. A high proportion of a current Governing Body budget is spent on administration and competition programmes with less emphasis on coach education which is important in securing future coaches and performers.

Coach Education programmes can be supported through a Development Plan submitted to the SCNI. Finance can also be accessed through schemes such as the Ulster Sports and Recreation Trust (USRT) and the Sports Aid Foundation (SAF) for the development of top coaches. Some District Councils assist financially the training needs of top coaches within their district.

To manage an effective coaching structure the Governing Body Coaching Committee must **identify** potential coaches, offer them suitable **training** and ensure their **deployment** at appropriate levels.



IDENTIFICATION

To coach at Performance and Excellence level it would be advantageous to have extensive practical experience, at the highest level. To increase recruitment of top level coaches Governing Bodies may wish to develop a fast-tracking scheme which would enable carefully chosen elite performers to enter the coaching system at an appropriate level.

If sufficient, effective high level coaches and officials are to be available the sport must be proactive in identifying and recruiting likely candidates.

TRAINING

Once identified each coach requires a training programme which involves sports specific and general coaching knowledge and in particular Sports Science support material.

The Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching (NIIC), designated a National Coaching Centre by the National Coaching Foundation, provides a wide programme of core education modules for the development of Sports Coaching. Governing Bodies are encouraged to use Level 1 to Level 3 courses to underpin coaching award structures. These cover, in a progressive and structured way, the general knowledge required by a coach and are accompanied by specially prepared material. The imminent introduction of National Council for Vocational Qualifications should improve the quality and ethical control of coaching at all levels, raising the status of coaching for the benefit of all performers.

It is important to have a register of qualified and active coaches together with recertification procedures in place.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

COACHING COMMITTEE

- Review the current position
- Advise on future needs
- Establish Policy for Identification / Training / Deployment of Coaches

DEPLOYMENT

Once identified and trained, Governing Bodies should guide coaches to appropriate coaching positions.

When asked to take up coaching positions Coaches should have an opportunity to discuss their brief, be given an appropriate time period and resources to carry out their task, and allowed an opportunity to review progress.

Opportunities should exist to develop coaches at the correct pace as opposed to quickly moving into a top post and "learning on the job". An apprentice scheme at either regional, interprovincial or national level would assist the coaches development.

The forging of partnerships with Education Authorities and facility providers may be instrumental in utilising qualified coaches for extra-curricular activities at a performance level. The development of Coaching as a recognised profession, as in other countries is having a beneficial influence on sports coaching in Northern Ireland and should be considered by Governing Bodies as a way of improving the overall standard.

IDENTIFICATION

- At an appropriate Level of Award – Establish a Recruitment Policy
- Develop a Fastracking Scheme

TRAINING

- Include NCF Core Education Modules
- Include Sports Specific Modules
- Include an Accreditation/ Revalidation system of Coaches
- Include Ethical/Quality Control

DEPLOYMENT

- Consider Geographic Distribution
- Establish a Coaching Register
- Provide Apprenticeship Schemes
- Awards to be NVQ assessed
- Promote Coach of the Year Awards



In some countries all coaches who have helped an athlete along the way from initial interest in sport to becoming a champion are honoured in recognition of their contribution. This is worthy of consideration to encourage the coaching of performers at all levels of their development. Coach of the Year Awards provide incentives for good coaching and should be continued in order to highlight the importance of good coaching practice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

- establish a Coaching Committee to review present numbers of high level coaches, their geographic distribution and their deployment.
- devise a strategy for coach development with clear policies for recruitment, training and deployment.
- identify potential elite coaches/elite performers who could work in the Performance / Excellence area.
- initiate a fast-tracking system to allow elite performers to enter the coaching system at an appropriate level.
- encourage a performer-centred approach to coaching in order that more elite performers may be attracted into coaching.
- investigate the provision of apprenticeship schemes at regional, national and international

level for potential elite coaches.

- integrate National Coaching Foundation material into coaching awards, in particular modules which include Sports Science principles.
- establish a model for discussing the terms of reference and specific time period for representative coaching appointments.
- write coaching qualifications in National Vocational Qualification competency terms and establish assessor training in order to meet NVQ requirements.

Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching

- publicise the benefits of the NIIC / NASC membership to coaches in order that they may benefit from, for example reduced rates at education courses, liability insurance cover and regular editions of coaching newsletters.
- continue to organise regional Coach of the Year Awards organised and advocate the extension of the awards to Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Sports Advisory Councils.
- discuss and review on a regular basis coach education development issues raised in this document.

Education / District Councils

- consult Governing Body Registers of qualified coaches when employing sports coaches.



6 SPORTS SCIENCE

This section considers the provision of Sports Science support services for high level performers and coaches in Northern Ireland.

It concludes that Governing Bodies should increase coach awareness of Sports Science principles and deliver appropriate programmes of support for high level performers.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **Governing Bodies** to determine the Sports Science needs of their sport
- (ii) **SCNI** to continue funding the local Sports Science support programme
- (iii) **Universities and relevant Professional bodies** to encourage members to become British Association of Sport and Exercise Science (BASES) accredited, particularly in Sports Psychology and Biomechanics

"At each of Germany's 22 Olympic training camps 3,900 top athletes have full time support in areas of Coaching, Sports Medicine and Science."

BOA ATHLETES REPORT 1993

BACKGROUND

Sports Science support is a key element of performer development. A range of services are available in Northern Ireland within the following disciplines:

- Biomechanics** – the science underlying the efficiency of technique
- Physiology** – the science underlying training adaptations
- Psychology** – the science underlying the acquisition and performance of skill
- Nutrition** – the science underlying the links between diet and performance

A combination of factors contribute to the under-use of Sports Science –

- (i) Under Investment
 - by Sports Council for Northern Ireland
 - by Governing Bodies of sport

- by Great Britain Sports Science Support Programme (funding available for Northern Ireland is limited)

- (ii) Limited access to Sports Scientists
- (iii) Lack of awareness by many Governing Bodies, performers, and coaches of the benefits of Sports Science.

It is therefore important to provide a cost effective tiered system of sport science support together with an education programme for Governing Body coaches and performers.

INVESTMENT

Control of Sports Science Accreditation in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is administered by the British Association of Sport and Exercise Science (BASES). Sports Science support in Northern Ireland is dependent on funding from Sports Council for Northern Ireland/Governing Body/ commercial and academic research grants.

At present Northern Ireland has been unsuccessful in accessing Great Britain Sports Science support funding and therefore Sport and Sports Scientists are disadvantaged.

ACCESS

BASES accredited Sports Scientists together with graduate and under graduate students deliver a Sports Science service at two accredited Human Performance Laboratories at Queens University Belfast, and at University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

Governing Body coaches carry out fitness assessments through the use of Field Testing equipment. In general Field Testing is appropriate at a Performance level and laboratory testing should be reserved for elite performers or to solve specific research problems.

FIELD TESTING

Increasingly at an early age sportsmen and women are becoming aware of the need to prepare adequately to meet the physical demands of their sport. The Sports Council Field Testing Kit is the coaches

link between physical fitness and sporting performance. The equipment is relatively inexpensive and can be used by the coach to determine the physical state of the performer. Results can be used to plan training programmes. Fitness testing kits are available free of charge from the Sports Council and are composed of:

- (1) Video and instructional material
- (2) 20 m shuttle test (bleep test)
- (3) Measuring tape
- (4) Sprint Timer
- (5) Skin Fold Calliper
- (6) Scales
- (7) Heart Rate Monitor
- (8) Jump Meter
- (9) Grip Dynamometer
- (10) Flexibility Box

To assist coaches, education material and Sports Science courses are available through the Northern Ireland Institute of Coaching.

AWARENESS

Scientific monitoring of progress is of great value to the development of Excellence. Laboratory testing and field testing have the following benefits for the performer:

- (1) Repeated regularly they monitor training progress
- (2) They identify strengths and weaknesses and allow a modification in training to enhance performance
- (3) They are valuable motivational and educational tools
- (4) If an injury or illness occurs, results from the tests can be compared to previous test data to gauge rehabilitation

Governing Bodies of Sport need to identify and increase coach awareness of Sports Science principles within their sport. This can be achieved by appointing a co-ordinator from a Coaching Committee, who should have regular contact with sports scientists, monitoring the views of the performers and coaches and teasing out the most suitable Sports Science provision for representative squads. Structures should also be in place to disseminate information through the coaching network.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. GOVERNING BODIES OF SPORT SUPPORT SERVICES

Ulster Branch,
Irish Amateur Swimming Association

SQUADS: Elite Age Group to
NI Commonwealth Games Squad

VENUES: Centre of Excellence,
Grove Leisure Centre and QUB-PEC
Human Performance Laboratory

SUPPORT: Physiological, Psychological
and Medical support delivered by a team
of Sports Scientists, Doctors and Coaches

PHYSIOLOGICAL SUPPORT:

- The production of fitness training programmes, provision of dietary advice and monitoring of swimmers' fitness through laboratory and field testing
- The education of swimmers and coaches on how fitness can be attained and maintained

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT:

- The education of elite swimmers and coaches concerning mental preparation for performance
- The acquisition of psychological skills by elite squads

MEDICAL SUPPORT:

- Health assessment and monitoring during preparation for elite competition including simple laboratory investigations such as blood tests
- Medical and physiotherapy advice whenever illness and injury occur
- Drug Advice to avoid contravening Doping Control Regulations

2. COACH EDUCATION IN SPORTS SCIENCE/MEDICINE

NCF/NIIC LEVEL 2 PROGRAMME

Nutrition and Sports Performance
Developing Endurance
Developing Strength and Speed
Developing Flexibility
Analysing Performance

Prevention and Treatment of Injury
Mental Preparation for Performance
Motivating your Athlete
Understanding and Improving Skill
Delivering and Improving the Goods
Coaching Children

NCF/NIIC LEVEL 3 ADVANCED WORKSHOPS

A Question of Style
Communication Skills
Children in Competitive Sport
Mental Training
Working with Teams
Sports Mechanics
Training for Peak Performance
Sports Medicine for Coaches

NCF LEVEL 4

Professional Qualification – the Diploma in Professional Studies (Sports Coaching) for senior experienced coaches

3. FIELD TESTING SCHOOLS FITNESS TESTING PROJECT

6 key sports, Netball, Rugby, Soccer, Hockey, Gaelic Football and Hurling

2 schools per sport 2 tests per school between October 1993 and February 1994

- Funded by Sports Council for Northern Ireland and administered by the University of Ulster at Jordanstown by a project director and under-graduate students
- Following testing sessions results together with advice on improved training methods are given to each performer/coach.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

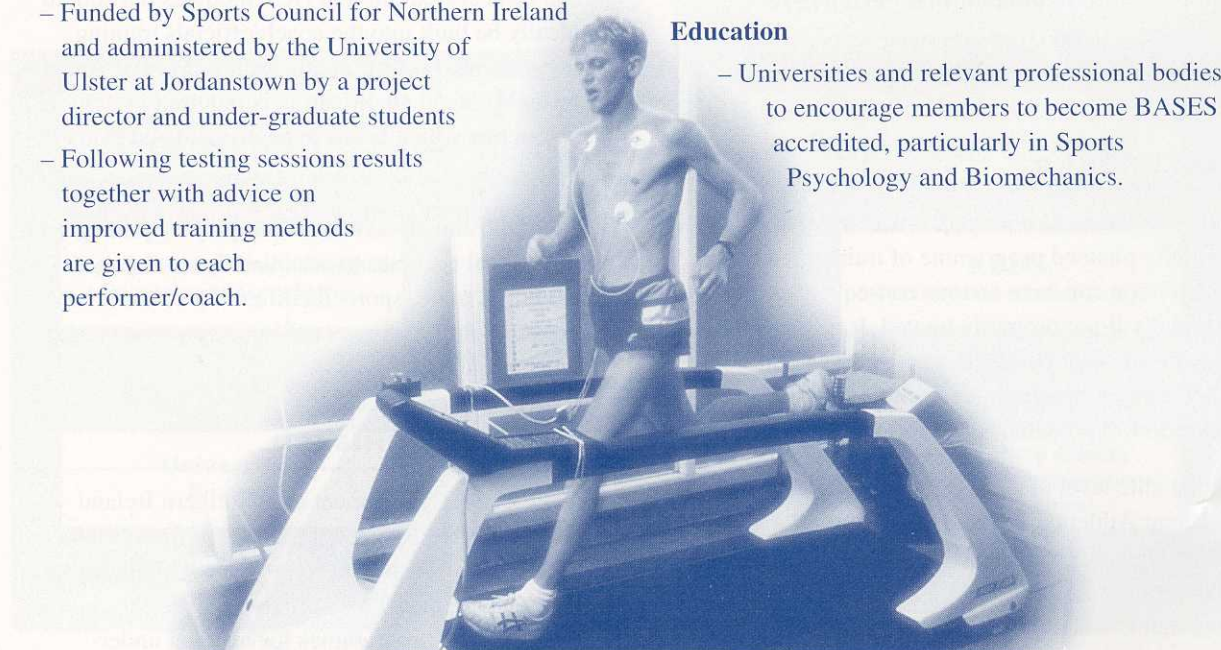
- determine the Sports Science needs of their sport
- increase coach awareness of Sports Science principles through NIIC courses
- develop the use of field testing with representative squads, utilising equipment available from Sports Council for Northern Ireland
- plan for Sports Science Support in either their elite performance budget or through Centre of Excellence budgets
- disseminate information, gained by involvement in Sports Science support programmes, through their coaching network
- identify personnel who can form a productive working relationship with Sports Scientists

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

- maintain a Register of accredited Sports Scientists
- provide funding for the local Sports Science support programme
- investigate funding 2 full-time research posts in Sports Science
- investigate the appointment of a Northern Ireland representative on the Great Britain Sports Science Support Programme Consultative Panel

Education

- Universities and relevant professional bodies to encourage members to become BASES accredited, particularly in Sports Psychology and Biomechanics.



7 SPORTS MEDICINE

This section considers the overall development of Sports Medicine in Northern Ireland.

It concludes that the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Association of Sport and Medicine (NIBASM) have an important professional role to play in providing educational training for medical disciplines together with establishing a tiered system of treatment and rehabilitation for performers.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **NIBASM** to agree on minimum standards required for accrediting a Sports Injury Clinic
- (ii) **Governing Bodies** to appoint a pool of medical officers and chartered physiotherapists for national squads
- (iii) **District Councils** to encourage the development of Sports Injury Clinics by providing concessionary rates during early stages of development
- (iv) **Sports Injury Clinics** to apply for accreditation to NIBASM
- (v) **General practitioners** to direct patients to Sports Injury Clinics for treatment and leisure centres for rehabilitation

“Sports Medicine should now start to achieve in Great Britain the status, the significance and importantly, the availability it enjoys in many countries elsewhere”.

Reference: NATIONAL SPORTS MEDICINE INSTITUTE
4-YEAR PLAN – 1992

BACKGROUND

Injury or illness to elite performers involved in a carefully planned programme of training and competition can have serious consequences, especially if not promptly treated. It is important to provide an accurate diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation programme to enable the performer to return to full potential in the shortest possible time.

At the elite level of sport the former British Amateur Athletic Federation Director of Coaching, Frank Dick, has expressed the opinion that at each major games 25% of the UK's medal winning potential is lost through illness or injury.

At present in Northern Ireland the majority of sporting injuries are treated by general practitioners, hospital accident/emergency and physiotherapy departments and by surgeons as part of the general trauma service. A small but increasing amount of organised treatment exists mainly through 12 Sports Injury Clinics and a network of Chartered Physiotherapists.

This service is limited in terms of facilities and of Doctors and Chartered Physiotherapists trained specifically in the treatment of sports injuries. There is also little provision for non injury related Sports Medicine such as nutritional advice, injury prevention, health assessment and effects of over-training.

THE WAY FORWARD

Ultimately a tiered system of treatment and rehabilitation will improve the performers' ability to prepare and compete at the highest level. This will involve multi-agency co-operation coordinated by a central organisation. A referral system for elite performers needs to be established together with an extended network of accredited Sports Injury Clinics.

Governing Body Medical Officers should be able to access advice in specialist areas such as preparing to train and compete overseas. Governing Bodies should have first aid emergency care courses as part of their coach and officials training. These courses can be accessed through NCF modules but should ideally be built into the coach/officials training programme. In some sports such as Martial Arts a formal first aid qualification is required by senior instructors which needs to be re-validated every two years.

District Councils have a role to play by joining with other local agencies to establish Sports Injury Clinics at major sports facilities. This should be linked to staff awareness of injury prevention and rehabilitation.

THE ROLE OF NIBASM

The recent establishment of a Northern Ireland Branch of the British Association of Sport Medicine (NIBASM) will help promote Sports Medicine in Northern Ireland. This initiative will be the vehicle for education programmes for medical under-

graduates, Doctors, Physiotherapists, Coaches and performers and will stimulate interest in the Sports Medicine Diploma currently held by six local Doctors. It could also act as a professional body recommending accreditation standards for Sports Injury Clinics.

The National Sports Medicine Institute with assistance from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts is developing regional sports medicine centres in the UK. It is recommended that Northern Ireland should investigate establishing and resourcing a regional centre.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE (from different settings)

- 1 **Whiteabbey Sports Injury Clinic** based at Whiteabbey Hospital with additional services.
 - (a) on-site casualty department
 - (b) referral to chiropody service
 - (c) access to isokinetic testing
- 2 **The Queens University of Belfast Isaac Agnew Sports Injury Clinic** based at the Physical Education Centre with additional services.
 - (a) medical support
 - (b) human performance laboratory
 - (c) chiropody service
 - (d) isokinetic testing

- 3 **Orchard Leisure Centre Sports Injury Clinic** based at Orchard Leisure Centre with additional services.
 - (a) health and fitness assessment
 - (b) chiropody service

- 4 **The Club Sports Injury Clinic** based at Portadown Rugby Club with additional services
 - (a) club health and fitness suite for assessment and rehabilitation
 - (b) chiropody service
 - (c) medical support

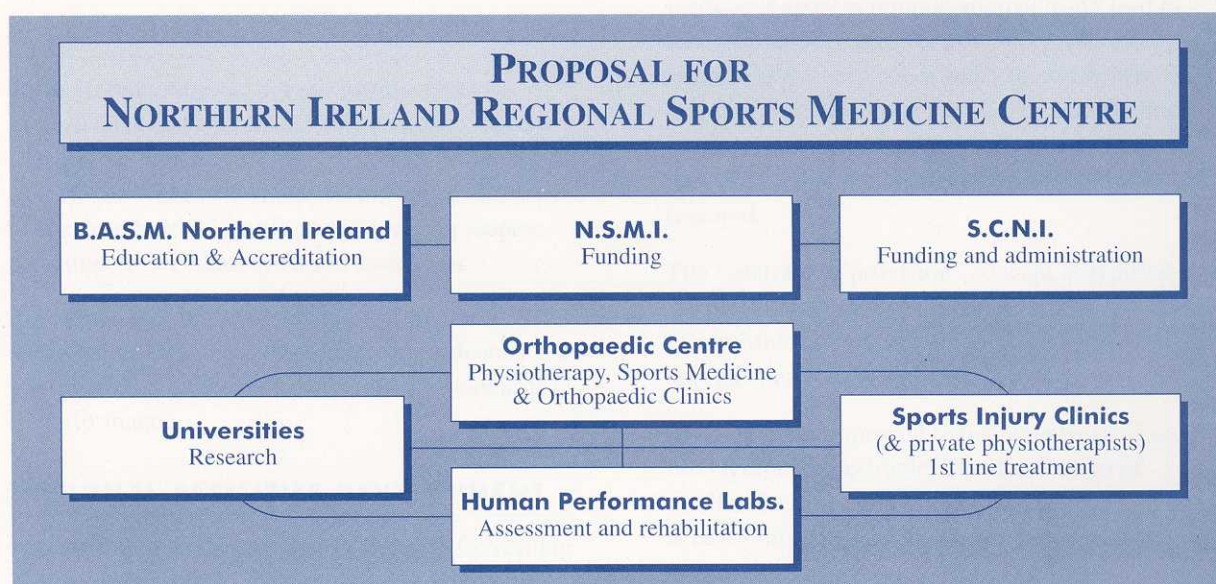
SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

- appoint a pool of medical officers and Chartered Physiotherapists for national squads. They should be encouraged to join NIBASM.

Northern Ireland British Association of Sports and Medicine

- agree on minimum standards required for accrediting a Sports Injury Clinic and advise the Sports Council.
- investigate the possibility of referral for rehabilitation measurement from accredited sports injury clinics to human performance laboratories at the Queens University Belfast and the University of Ulster at Jordanstown.



Reference: Northern Ireland British Association of Sport and Medicine 1994

- encourage the inclusion of Sports Medicine in the undergraduate and post graduate medical curriculum.
- co-ordinate an application for regional Sports Medicine Centre status and present to NSMI (in progress).
- investigate structures which satisfy general sports demand as well as those of elite performers.

Sports Injury Clinics

- apply to NIBASM for accreditation.
- accredited clinics to have the opportunity to apply to the Sports Council for financial assistance for staff training and assistance to enhance the existing service.
- act as first tier treatment for a future Sports Medicine Centre.

General Practitioners

- refer patients to Sports Injury Clinics
- liaise with Sports Injury Clinics to direct patients to human performance laboratories, local health clubs and leisure centres for rehabilitation.

District Councils

- encourage the development of Sports Injury Clinics by providing concessionary rates during early stages of development.



Sports Council for Northern Ireland

- administrative support to NIBASM Education and Development initiatives.

Regional Sports Medicine Centre

- co-ordinate a NI Sports Medicine service and investigate methods of funding for treatment arising from consultations.

8 FACILITIES

This section focuses on the National Facilities Development Plan aimed at identifying high level training and competition facility needs of sport in Northern Ireland.

It concludes that a strategic approach be adopted in order to co-ordinate budgets of traditional facility providers thus enabling high level performers to benefit from improved facility provision.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **SCNI** – give priority to the provision of National Facilities
- (ii) **District Councils** – to consider provision for excellence noting locations and requirements proposed by Governing Bodies
- (iii) **Governing Bodies** – identify locations and specifications of facilities to cater for Performance / Excellence at District and National level

“In Germany since 1986, 22 Olympic Training Centres have been established. Each is a Centre of Excellence for one or two sports

... at a cost of DM20 (£8m) per annum paid for by central government

... In France 4,000 athletes are permitted free access to training facilities.”

BOA ATHLETES REPORT 1993

BACKGROUND

To assist those striving for the highest level of performance and excellence it is necessary that all organised competitive activities should have access to facilities within Northern Ireland where the home teams or individual sports performers can prepare for competition under optimum conditions.

The absence of international competition and specialist training facilities reduces significantly the opportunities for achieving high quality standards of performance.

NATIONAL FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

In recognition of this the Sports Council, Governing Bodies of Sport, District Councils and Education and Library Boards co-operated in 1993 in the

preparation of a national facilities development report. This was aimed specifically at identifying the high level competition and training facility needs of sport in Northern Ireland.

The importance of a strategic approach in Northern Ireland through co-ordination and partnerships between the potential providers and sport was highlighted. It was further noted that the technical specifications for major venues and equipment as defined by certain governing bodies of sport were more rigorous and demanding than many existing facilities. There is therefore a need to review and initiate their upgrading and refurbishment over a set time period. The shopping list identifies the Governing Bodies' expressed needs for new national sports facilities and upgradings. Quality support services such as the availability of accredited sport injury clinics and sport science laboratories should be considered as part of the infrastructure dedicated to raising standards of performance.

New provision or refurbishment and upgrading of District Council, Education and University provision is continually under review. Sport needs to consider its requirements and to advocate its priorities for consideration and inclusion in District Council Sport and Recreation Strategies and Facility Development Plans. Specialist requirements when considered alongside those of the community at large and of the higher education sector will facilitate a more economic approach and lead to realistic opportunities for provision. Therefore in order to give every opportunity to performers to improve their standards and to facilitate the hosting of major events in Northern Ireland a network of specialist training and competition facilities is required.

The “centralised provision” concept as typified by the proposed Northern Ireland Sports Centre at Upper Malone requires support by a range of specialist national facilities.

In addition an improved regional network of satellite facilities is desirable. The distribution of satellite facilities will greatly increase the accessibility of specialist training to a greater number of performers.

THE SHOPPING LIST

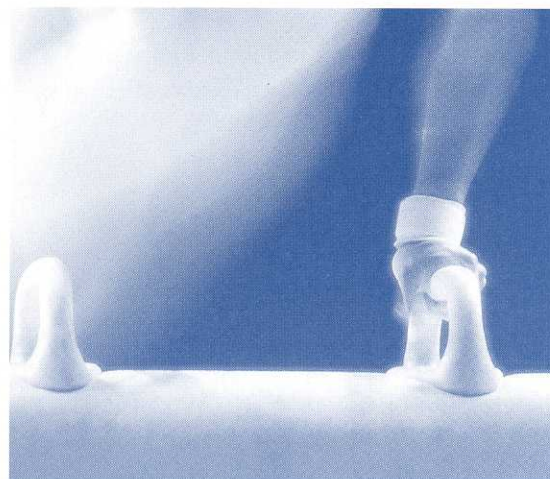
• Northern Ireland Sports Centre (for outdoor sports)	5 – 7 m
• Northern Ireland Indoor Arena (5,000 spectator scale II national)	15 – 20 m
• 50 m Pool	10 – 12 m
• Upgrading of: Casement Park – Hurling Athletic Grounds Armagh – Gaelic Football Ravenhill – Rugby Windsor Park – Assoc. Football Blaris – Hockey Mary Peters Track – Athletics	12 – 18 m
• N I Outdoor Sports Stadium	25 – 50 m
• North West Athletics Track	1 – 2.5 m
• Northern Ireland Indoor Tennis Centre	1 – 2.5 m
• Northern Ireland Outdoor Bowling Centre (2 Rink)	.75 – 1.5 m
• Northern Ireland Canoe Centre	.25 – 1 m
• Northern Ireland Motor Sports Centre	2.5 – 4.6 m
• Northern Ireland Equestrian Centre	2 – 3 m
• Northern Ireland Artificial Ski Slope	.25 – .5 m
• Northern Ireland Water Sports Centre	.75 – 1 m
• Northern Ireland Gliding Centre	.5 – 1 m
• Enhancement of existing Government, Local Authority, voluntary organisations, higher education and private facilities to provide or improve existing international match or sports training venues (including specialist equipment)	5 – 7 m
• Climbing Wall for International Competition	.15 – .25 m

FUNDING

Northern Ireland sport is disadvantaged when compared with Great Britain. No specific budget provision is made by Government for the purpose of providing and/or maintaining national sports facilities in Northern Ireland. Specific sports facility schemes such as the Indoor Tennis initiative do not operate in Northern Ireland. There is also little evidence of the commercial sector making any significant investment in sports facilities. Evidence from other countries suggests that private sector money is increasingly being used to develop sporting facilities.

However the future seems brighter in that the Football Trust, the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, the extension of the Sports Council's remit to include Capital Grant and the advent of the National Lottery all point to an improvement in potential national and specialist sport facility funding.

There is a possibility of UK support for facilities which may be deemed to be of UK importance. The possibility of the Millennium Fund supporting an Indoor Arena in Northern Ireland is also hopeful.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Antrim

- Antrim Borough Council/Sports Council/Northern Ireland Amateur Athletic Federation partnership which is providing a Centre of Excellence at the Antrim Forum

2. Lisburn

- Salto Gymnastics Club: a voluntary sports club initiative providing a Gymnastics Training Centre

3. Irvinestown

- Necarne: Fermanagh District Council/International Fund providing an Indoor and Outdoor Equestrian Centre to international specifications

4. Belfast

- Belfast City Council / SCNI / Ulster Branch Irish Amateur Swimming Association partnership providing a Centre of Excellence for Swimming at the Grove Leisure Centre.

5. Queens University, Belfast – Northern Ireland Sports Centre

Queens University / Northern Ireland Sports Centre Company / District Councils partnership providing a Northern Ireland Sports Centre at Upper Malone for outdoor team sport training.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

- seek to establish by way of their 4 year Development Plan locations and specifications of facilities to cater for performance and excellence at District and National levels

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

- Give priority to the provision of National Facilities.
- adopt and advocate the National Facilities Development Plan for inclusion in the Northern Ireland Facilities Strategy
- seek the funding shortfall from both internal and external sources and from the public and private sectors
- ensure that Northern Ireland is included in any UK Facilities Development Plan and in Millennium Fund proposals

Voluntary Clubs

- consider working closely with District Councils and other public and private agencies to enhance their existing facility provision and provide opportunities to develop talent
- consider owning their facility and running it as a business

District Councils

- consider provision for excellence, noting locations and requirements proposed by Governing Bodies
- take account of the financial constraints on the elite performer
- provide for specialist sports in their district Sport and Recreation Strategies
- consider inter-District partnerships with neighbouring authorities and co-ordination of budgets to address the shortfall of funding for sports facilities

Education

- develop the use of specialist school facilities in order to provide opportunities for young people to enhance their performance.



9 COMPETITION

This section considers the importance of having an incremental competitive structure from modified game through to senior representative level.

It concludes that Governing Body and School Sports Associations should periodically review their competitive structure to allow for a developmental approach to producing quality performers.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **School Sports Associations** to review competitive structure at primary and early secondary level and to give particular attention to the period between the mini and full game
- (ii) **Governing Bodies** to give careful consideration to ensuring that unnecessary competitive demands are not placed on elite performers
- (iii) **District Councils** to consider assisting the main sports in their area to host high level competitions as part of the Councils Strategy for Sport and Recreation

"Competition with others need not be destructive. Effort from one individual or team challenges the opposition and can draw more from both".

Reference: 'SPORTING EXCELLENCE', DAVID HEMERY, OLYMPIC HURDLER)

BACKGROUND

In Northern Ireland there is a considerable amount of competition in a variety of sports at all levels. This has the value of assisting those who wish to take part in sport to develop through competitive structures.

Competition provides experience and is a measure of attainment and an assessment of the effect of coaching and support services. It can provide information as to the potential of an individual or team and at representative level is an ideal vehicle for the promotion of a sport, particularly when trying to attract sponsors.

CURRENT COMPETITIVE STRUCTURES

Larger governing bodies have well developed strands of club and school competitions which can contribute to the development of provincial and

national teams from adolescent years through to senior representative level.

The model could be improved by:

- (a) Devising and implementing a modified version of the sport and equipment for use in schools. This would allow for a more incremental development into the adult game providing more emphasis on development than on competition.
- (b) Providing a regional level of competition based on Sports Step Scheme Squads for appropriate sports, for example, for U14 and / or U16 levels – an incentive for performers who may not be in a full interprovincial squad and are unable to access a high level of competition.
- (c) By instituting development squads to bridge the gap between post school years and senior competition, thus enabling performers and coaches to improve their standards by a planned coaching and match programme. This would also provide an ideal platform for prospective senior coaches.

COMPETITION DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Primary	Mini sport	
Secondary	eg. year 8 / 8-aside Soccer/ Hockey, 11-aside Rugby/GAA year 9 / Full game	
Regional	U14 Team	U16 Team
Provincial	U14 Team	U16 Team U18 Team
International	U16 Team	U18 Team
Under 18 / Under 21	Provincial International	
Development	International Matches at home and overseas	
Senior Provincial	Provincial Matches and matches versus overseas teams	
Senior International	Major Home Events International Matches International Tournaments	

Performance and Excellence Working Party 1994

YOUTH / SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

A balanced approach to competition

Changes in the extra curricular programme of many schools have led to a fall in the opportunities for inter-school competition. This has not been as noticeable in Northern Ireland as elsewhere in the UK. There are still many sports such as Athletics, Basketball, Gaelic Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, Hurling, Netball, Rugby and Soccer who have well developed school competitive structures. Governing Bodies of Sport in certain instances have developed youth leagues at a variety of age groups which provide competitive opportunities for performers who cannot access the sport at school level.

In other areas of Governing Body development such as Coach Education, periodic reviews are conducted but this does not appear to happen with competitive structures at school, club and provincial level. The general tendency is to continually add to the number and variety of competitions. For the high level performer the level and amount of competition should be chosen carefully to avoid injuries.

FUNDING

Currently Governing Bodies are encouraged to access high level competition as part of their Development Plan through participation in international events at home or abroad. At present SCNI funding is for a restricted programme and funds are insufficient to meet a policy level of 50% grant aid. Schools, clubs and representative teams should investigate overseas competition as a means to access high level competition at an appropriate and compatible level. At home local authorities should consider giving support to enable elite performers to compete against overseas competitors such as the Milk Youth Cup for Soccer at Coleraine where a partnership exists between the Governing Body, Sports Council and Coleraine District Council.

Every 4 years a selected group of 10 sports compete at the Commonwealth Games. Funding for this is drawn across a range of organisations such as the Sports Council, Governing Bodies, District Councils and commercial sponsors.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

- encourage junior club competitive programmes which complement existing structures
- look at specific competitions and grade them to ensure that the competitors remain motivated and challenged
- periodically review their competitive structures to ensure objectives are being met
- give careful consideration to ensuring that unnecessary competitive demands are not placed on elite performers
- where applicable, actively encourage District Councils to host high level competitions as part of the Council's Strategy for Sport and Recreation.
- establish development squads to provide a bridging gap between top youth sport and senior competition.

Schools Sports Associations

- review competitive structure at primary and early secondary school level and give particular attention to the period between the mini game and full game.
- consider regional schools competition at U14 level as an extension to regional squad coaching.

District Councils

- consider assisting the main sports in their area to host high level competitions as part of the Council's Strategy for Sport and Recreation.

10 FINANCE

This section reviews the current financial support available to Performance / Excellence programmes.

It concludes that the time and commitment required to achieve full potential at international level must be given greater financial support.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

- (i) **Governing Bodies** to lobby through the Northern Ireland Council of Physical Recreation (NICPR) for a substantial increase in funding for sport by Central Government, and a more sympathetic attitude to sport in relation to VAT, Corporation Tax and relief from rates.
- (ii) **Sports Council for Northern Ireland** to continue to highlight the underfunding of sport in Northern Ireland, in particular to encourage more investment in Performance / Excellence initiatives.
- (iii) **District Councils** to formulate, publicise and implement a co-ordinated scheme of support for talented performers and coaches to include among others concessionary use of specialist facilities, access to and loan of special equipment, and the provision of personal development grants to performers and coaches.
- (iv) **Ulster Sports and Recreation Trust** to expand its capital resources and administration of awards to provide significant funding to elite performers

"The harsh reality behind success at international level is that the dedication and talent required to achieve success must be given the financial support to reach full potential"... GB (Hockey) 1993

"In preparation for the 1992 Olympic Games, Spain put in place a training programme to prepare its athletes for the event. Between 1896 and 1988 Spain won 22 Medals at the Olympics – in 1992, 22 medals were won by Spanish athletes across 12 sports".

SPANISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE REPORT

BACKGROUND

Financial support for sport is generated from a variety of sources, for example performers and their parents, governing bodies, central and local

government, charitable institutions, educational establishments and commercial firms.

In most sports casual participation is relatively inexpensive; however, the cost to talented performers and high level coaches is much greater. Indeed for some elite performers lack of finance rather than talent and commitment will be the inhibiting factor which prevents them from achieving their potential.

Whatever the source, adequate finance, or the services and resources which it procures, must be available to underpin training as well as competition costs, to provide specialist equipment and access to facilities and technical support.

Time is often a restraining factor especially when a performer is in full-time employment or education. In these circumstances it would be advantageous to have sympathetic employers, accommodation within the education system, career guidance, and counselling in time management to ease the situation.

FUNDING

Governing Bodies of Sport

Governing Bodies of Sport should take the lead responsibility in generating finance to implement their performance / excellence programme. A high proportion of finance will be obtained from the membership through registration, capitation and affiliation fees and fund-raising. Some Governing Bodies will have the benefit of substantial gate receipts. In addition the governing body development plan is a useful marketing tool when soliciting support from partners such as the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, Local Authorities, Education Boards, Ulster Sports and Recreation Trust, and potential sponsors.

Governing Bodies may devise schemes to spread the expense of performance and excellence programmes through the entire membership for example by imposing a modest international levy on all competition entry fees.

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland, the statutory agency to further sport and physical

recreation within the Province, is often the first agency from which investment is sought. At present the Council devotes approximately 25% of its £2 million budget to governing body development, a considerable amount of which is invested in part-time and full-time governing body professional posts. The Council encourages a broad and balanced approach to development and focuses higher levels of grant aid to particular areas such as coach education, official training and squad preparation. The Council would be the first to acknowledge that it is inadequately resourced to meet the demands placed upon it.

Additional aid can be accessed through specific Council programmes for example the Northern Bank Sport Step Scheme and the Dale Farm Olympic Youth Camp to develop junior performers. The Sport Step Scheme presently involves 17 sports, each of which has a committed investment of £2,250 from the Northern Bank and the Sports Council over a 3-year period. In 1993 the Olympic Youth Camp accommodated 140 performers from 13 Olympic sports. Joint funding of £24,000 was provided by the Sports Council and Dale Farm Dairies.

It is hoped that the advent of the National Lottery will allow some finance to be invested in human resources as well as in capital project schemes.

Local Authorities

Over the last 20 years with Government encouragement and financial support local authorities have provided a wide range of indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities.

Recently a growing number of local authorities and Education and Library Boards have appointed Sports Development Officers. These appointments and the subsequent involvement of the post holders in schemes such as Schools of Sport and Champion Coaching have been widely welcomed by Governing Bodies of Sport and Education Boards. Through co-operative planning with voluntary sports club officials these paid officers are making a meaningful impact on sports development at local level. Some Governing Bodies such as Soccer, Rugby and Gaelic Football have identified the need to employ local sports specific personnel, part-time

or full-time, whose duties would cover a number of District Council areas.

A number of local authorities such as Lisburn Borough Council support talented performers and coaches by providing training opportunities at concessionary rates, off-peak use of specialist facilities, access to or loan of specialist equipment and grants to performers and coaches. Other Councils also respond to the needs of top sportsmen / women in their area but have no explicit application procedure. It is recommended that more formal procedures are established and publicised. Sporting success inspires others to take part, invokes civic pride and promotes the value of District Council investment in Performance / Excellence initiatives.



COSPOIR / SAF Sports Bursaries

The chance to win gold medals in international sport is the right of every talented competitor. COSPOIR / Sports Aid Foundation give Irish/British amateur competitors that sporting chance providing that they are sufficiently high in the world rankings of their event and that there is a genuine need for financial assistance to meet the cost of specialised training for Olympic, European and World Championships events.

The Ulster Sports and Recreation Trust

The USRT assists Northern Ireland performers who have potential in their chosen sport to meet out of pocket expenses incurred during training and competition. In 1992 / 93 an average of £175 was awarded to 153 recipients. Among the bursaries which it distributes are sponsored Awards to outstanding individuals in preparation for World or Olympic competition.

University Sports Bursaries

University sports bursaries have a significant role in encouraging elite performers to engage in both academic and sporting careers but at a pace to suit their competitive and training demands. The University of Ulster and Queens University have established Sports Bursaries which seek to encourage elite performers to continue both their tertiary education and sporting career in the Province. This example is worthy of examination and of wider adoption for example by colleges of higher and further education and by industry and commerce who operate management trainee schemes.

Sponsorship

Support for sport in Northern Ireland through sponsorship is an important factor in its promotion and development. It is important to remember however that sponsorship is a commercial transaction which, if arranged correctly, can lead to a partnership offering considerable benefits to both sides.

Governing Bodies, individual sports clubs and teams should be aware that bids to major prospective sponsors in the industrial and commercial sectors require a structured and professional approach if they are to attract investment.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Lisburn Sports Advisory Council International Sports Star Club

This scheme aims to give recognition to all sportspersons from the Borough of Lisburn who have attained international level or are national champions in their chosen sport. Successful applicants are permitted the free use on an individual basis of all recreational facilities owned and managed by Lisburn Borough Council. The scheme is operated through a personalised membership card and a book of 30 vouchers.

2. Londonderry District Sports Council Annual Sports Scholarships

Up to £1,500 is available for administrators, coaches and competitors to pursue their sporting careers. The scheme is publicised on the local radio and in advertisements in the local newspapers.

3. Education and Library Board Grant Aid Scheme

This scheme provides financial assistance to school and college pupils, who live in the North Eastern Board area, to compete in a variety of sporting activities at a high level outside Northern Ireland.

4. The Sports Council / Dale Farm sponsored Olympic Youth Camp

This annual 4-day residential Youth Camp is aimed at competitors with international potential. More than 100 performers are recruited and the programme places particular emphasis on sport specific skills and Sports Science / Sports Medicine services. The Sports Council and Dale Farm Dairies invest £24,000 in the initiative.

5. The Ulster Games

The Ulster Games was launched in 1984 to bring the very best of sport to Northern Ireland to inspire young performers and to help our sports performers, officials and organisers to achieve the highest standards. The Sports Council for Northern Ireland and the current main sponsor, the Dairy Council, invested approximately £70,000 in the eight events in the 1994 programme.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Governing Bodies

- regularly review affiliation, capitation and competition fees, employing where possible a built-in mechanism to ensure that such fees at least keep pace with inflation
- lobby through the Northern Ireland Council of Physical Recreation for a substantial increase in funding for sport by central government, a more sympathetic attitude to sport in relation to legislation, eg VAT, Corporation Tax and relief from rates.
- each year collate a data base of outstanding individuals and teams preparing for major events and pass this information to potential sponsors in Northern Ireland.
- apply to the Foundation for Sport and the Arts for financial assistance towards performance schemes and in particular specialist facilities and equipment
- negotiate with District Councils a scheme to allow identified high quality performers free or concessionary rates for training needs.

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

- continue to highlight the underfunding of sport in Northern Ireland, in particular to encourage more investment in Performance and Excellence initiatives
- investigate the possibility of sponsorship as a

tax deductible item

- lobby Government, in co-operation with the other Sports Councils, to enable National Lottery money to be invested in people as well as in capital projects
- investigate the possibility of more funds from the British Olympic Association, Olympic Council of Ireland and Olympic Solidarity Finance being made available in Northern Ireland
- investigate accessing financial support for sports initiatives from the International Fund for Ireland

District Councils

- review, and where necessary, amend their Sport and Recreation Strategy to ensure that adequate programmes, services and resources are in place to assist those who are pursuing personal and public standards of excellence.
- formulate, publicise and implement a co-ordinated scheme of support for talented performers and coaches, to include concessionary use of specialist facilities, access to and loan of special equipment, and the provision of personal development grants to performers and coaches.
- enter into partnership agreements with SCNI and Governing Bodies to fund Development Officers and Centres of Excellence.

11 PLANNING — Making it happen

“Good Planning is the basis for achieving agreed objectives by any organisation. The planning process is essentially a response to 3 questions Where are we now? Where would we like to be? What steps are required to get there?”

PLANNING GUIDELINES SCNI 1993

Governing Bodies, Education and Library Boards, District Councils, Sports Council and Commercial Companies need to develop greater inter-agency co-operation in order to provide increased opportunities for performers and coaches to excel.

Careful planning and a commitment to produce an incremental change in behaviour towards performance / excellence is required by each co-operating agency.

Whilst the prime responsibility for providing the structure and opportunities for the achievement of performance/excellence rests with the Governing Bodies of Sport, networking with other organisations who share common objectives should enhance opportunities and improve provision for sport at the highest level.

Cooperative planning involves:

- (i) Clarifying objectives for the next 4 – 6 years (year 2000)
- (ii) Identifying the roles of each partner organisation and agreeing respective responsibilities
- (iii) Assessing and optimising levels of support to meet needs
- (iv) Formulating with key personnel a systematic way of achieving objectives
- (v) Periodical review of progress by Governing Bodies

IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

1. Governing Bodies

- Finance the implementation of performance / excellence programmes.
- Identify and nurture Talent
- Educate coaches towards appropriate qualifications
- Train teachers in sports specific coaching
- Review competitive structures at Domestic /

International level

- Establish regional training squads
- Establish Centres of Excellence
- Provide support services for elite squads
- Identify locations and specifications of facilities to cater for Performance / Excellence at District and National level
- Establish a committee to pursue performance / excellence initiatives and network with identified key partners in order to facilitate the promotion of Performance and Excellence
- Develop clear action plans in each of the six key areas – Talent Identification, Coach Education, Sports Science / Medicine, Facilities, Competition, and Finance
- Periodically review each action plan

2. District Councils

- Consider schools of sport within the Borough for the development of high level performers and coaches
- Host introductory courses and development courses for coaches
- Provide development grants to performers and coaches
- Incorporate appropriate specialist sports facilities into their District Sport and Recreation Strategies.
- Host major representative events in co-operation with Governing Bodies
- Co-operate in the establishment of new clubs and the development of existing clubs in their area
- Encourage the development of Sports Injury Clinics by providing concessionary rates during early stages of development
- Part-fund sports development officers and Centres of Excellence

3. Education

- Provide introductory teaching skills and their development through graded competitive structures
- Identify talented performers and direct them to sports clubs and Governing Body coaching courses to develop performance
- Encourage schools to develop the use of

specialist school facilities in order to provide opportunities for young people to enhance their performance

- Through Universities provide research and training opportunities in Sports Science / Medicine as well as specific Sports Science support in the form of laboratory services and field work
- Encourage Sports Science / Medical graduates to pursue postgraduate qualifications in Sports Science and Medicine
- Encourage professional membership of BASES and NIBASM.

4. Commercial organisations

- Financially support performer awards and coach development initiatives
- Financially support preparation and competition in high level sport

5. The Sports Council for Northern Ireland

- Provide advice and financial assistance for Performance / Excellence Planning
- Continue to develop performer / coach initiatives such as Champion Coaching, Sport Step and the Olympic Youth Camp
- Provide financial assistance to Sports Science Support, Coach Education, officials training, squad training and competition programmes
- Advise the direction of capital grants through the National Lottery, Foundation for Sport and the Arts and the Football Trust.