

Scottish Sports Association

Working Group on Scottish Sport Call for Evidence

A submission on behalf of the Governing Bodies of sport in Scotland



Working Group on Scottish Sport

Call for Evidence

Submission from the Scottish Sports Association

The Scottish Sports Association (SSA) thanks the Working Group on Scottish Sport for the opportunity to make a submission to this call for evidence.

The SSA has compiled this response following consultation, as usual, with our member Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs). The SSA is responding to this consultation on behalf of our members, but wishes to stress that this response in no way indicates the SSA's (or our members') support, or otherwise, for independence and is specifically in response to the questions asked in the call for evidence and the practical implications which may result from these.

The SSA is the independent and collective voice for Scottish Governing Bodies of sport. We represent their interests and currently have 52 full members and 21 associate members. The governing bodies of sport are responsible for the governance, development and delivery of their individual sports and provide a formal structure for the over 900,000 individuals in Scotland who are members of one of Scotland's 13,000 sports clubs. Most of these organisations are run on a not-for-profit basis and are managed by volunteers. They provide coaching, competition and youth participation development opportunities for their local communities and most of the 195,000 people who volunteer in sport do so within the club structure.

1. What action would you consider necessary to ensure that an independent Scotland can be successful in future Olympics and Paralympics in its own right?

The first aspect of this requiring consideration is as to a definition for success in this context, along with recognition that this may be relevant in relation to short term and long term planning. It is important to note that a number of Scottish sports are already successful at international level.

At a practical level, Scotland would require to apply for membership to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and to have these memberships accepted. Associated with this would be the need for a number of SGBs to apply for direct affiliation to their specific International Federation (IF); while some SGBs operate in this way currently, a number of SGBs would need to apply for this status. IFs co-ordinate qualification (through tournaments or rankings) for international tournaments (including the Olympics/Paralympics) and, as such, membership to IFs is a key timeline impacting on the potential for Scottish teams to qualify for a range of tournaments and is a factor to be considered. For many SGBs, affiliation to their IF will be a new and additional cost and will bring with it additional capacity and resource challenges for SGBs to attend IF meetings. UK Sport currently resources SGBs through International Influencing Strategy plans to enable governing bodies to support the governance costs of governing bodies fully participating in IF requirements; replacement funding would need to be identified to support both SGBs with existing IF memberships as well as SGBs which would need to apply for direct IF membership.

It will be important to be able to reassure Scotland's elite athletes who currently receive support through UK Sport, or other GB structures, that there will be no reduction in the service that they would receive

through investment in Scottish performance sport shadowing a GB programme, recognising that it may take time to replicate the quality of the current UK system in some respects. For some sports it will take further time to develop the size and quality of squad necessary for world class training and competition. Additional investment will also be required into further support staffing, including packages which will further be attractive to world class support staff. Recognition that transitional periods will be required for athletes competing for Team GB in the 2016 Olympics and Paralympics who want to compete for Scotland in the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics and beyond will be necessary; the period of transition from 2016 to 2020 will need to be considered on a sport by sport basis and the challenge as to the period of transition for Winter Olympic and Paralympic sports will be further accelerated towards the 2018 Games.

An additional challenge which may be encountered is the mitigation of the risk of current Scottish athletes potentially being required to decide whether they wish to be Scottish athletes or whether, through residency (or other avenues), they decide to become English/Team GB athletes (involving both short and long term implications for the athlete). For some sports alterations may be required to IF eligibility procedures, which will vary on a sport by sport basis. Any potential uncertainty for athletes in relation to the service they may receive in the future could impact on both potential performance and team spirit and is an area of further risk.

For some sports an additional requirement would be the integration of Paralympic sports into SGB programmes as, for some sports, this is currently undertaken specifically at UK level.

In achieving this ambition, it is necessary to consider the opportunities and contribution from across Scotland and from across a range of agendas and partners, ie that success in this area will require cross-departmental and cross-agency working. An example of this would be the significant contribution that partners in education make and could further contribute through enhanced development and identification of additional talented individuals through the provision of quality Physical Education (PE) and school sport structures.

The total increase in investment required to be successful to meet the requirements of all the aspects noted above should not be underestimated and is an over-riding factor in relation to all aspects of this call for evidence. The detail of this significant cost implication is potentially something the Working Group may wish to consider as it is understood that the required level of detail may not currently exist in this regard across Scottish sport. This might mean, in common with other small nations, the prioritisation of investment in sports might occur, to the detriment of the current breadth and diversity of Scottish sport and a potential impact on participation rates and the economy.

Some SGBs receive significant and direct financial support through their British/UK governing body, in some cases contributing up to 50% of the SGB's annual turnover. For these SGBs such considerable additional financial risk would have to be mitigated.

Consideration needs to be given to anti-doping services and how the requirements of the World Anti-Doping Agency would be met, including the establishment of a National Anti-Doping Organisation.

Continuation of lottery investment (at existing or increased levels) into Scottish sport would also be a priority.

If there is any aspiration that a Scottish team may compete in the 2016 Olympics and Paralympics, significant consideration needs to be given as to the detailed practicalities of this, including as to whether this is in fact possible on a sport by sport basis, as a matter of utmost priority after the referendum; Rule 41, byelaw 2 of the Olympic Charter is of particular relevance *"A competitor who has represented one country in the Olympic Games, in continental or regional games or in world or regional championships recognised by the relevant IF, and who has changed his nationality or acquired a new nationality, may participate in the Olympic Games to represent his new country provided that at least three years have passed since the competitor last represented his former country. This period may be reduced or even*

cancelled, with the agreement of the NOCs and IF concerned, by the IOC Executive Board, which takes into account the circumstances of each case."

2. What would be the optimum arrangements for developing, choosing and managing a Team Scotland which embraced participation in the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games in its own right?

Consideration would need to be given to the arrangements necessary for this change, including if it is possible for the IOC, IPC and Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) selection to be undertaken by one overarching body. It is recognised that there may be potential cost savings if the structure of the necessary National Olympic Committee (NOC)/National Paralympic Committee (NPC) could take under its wing the workings of Commonwealth Games Scotland (CGS), with additional resource, to support this overarching body, although this would need to be discussed with CGS.

A proviso for any such development would be that disability sport is not marginalised and that the opportunity for integration is recognised and embraced.

3. What additional opportunities would an independent Scotland bring for Scottish athletes to compete on the Olympic and Paralympic stage?

Firstly it should be recognised that many sports already have opportunities for Scottish athletes to compete for Scotland on the international stage, and through the Commonwealth Games, albeit through Team GB for the Olympics and Paralympics. Within this context World and European level competitions should not be forgotten.

There is the potential for such additional opportunities to arise. In addition to different competitions being available for some sports, other opportunities may become available through increased selection opportunities, where the number of spaces available for athlete selection per country to a competition/event is restricted regardless of the number of athletes that may have met the competition's required selection standard. It is important to note that such competitive opportunities would also result in additional opportunities for coaches, officials and support staff.

A specific challenge exists for team sports in requiring significant depth in order to increase participation opportunities, rather than decreasing current opportunities for Scottish athletes through GB teams.

Another specific challenge exists for some Winter Olympic and Paralympic sports given that athletes currently need to train overseas due to a lack of facilities in Scotland which would require significant additional resource to replicate the support currently provided through UK Sport.

However, all such additional opportunities would require significant further resource in order to realise these opportunities and for these opportunities to result in success, particularly for team sports and the additional costs associated due to increased number of participants per event. This remains a significant concern to enable the vision of Scottish sporting success at future Olympics, Paralympics and other international events.

4. What steps would be necessary in an independent Scotland to ensure the right level of international and elite competition for Scottish athletes?

Of foremost priority will be the increased and appropriate resourcing of a range of partners, including SGBs, athletes, officials, support staff, **sportscotland** and the **sportscotland** Institute of Sport amongst others, to enable attendance and success at such competitions. Opportunities to compete at such events, to prepare for them, including qualifying for them, will all bring associated additional cost and personnel requirements

for a number of agencies. These will again be increased further for team sports and for some Winter Olympic and Paralympic sports in relation to training and competitions.

The impact of attending qualifiers, and as importantly preparation events in order to be competitive at qualifiers, extends the length of time that athletes, support staff and SGBs need before they may be in a position to be operating at the highest level. The likelihood is, compared to the current situation, the number of athletes, coaches and support staff that would need to be full time is considerably extended bringing with it financial implications.

There may be an additional opportunity, and potentially expectation, for Scotland to host further international events, which may not currently be open to Scotland. This obviously brings increased cost along with increased tourism and income generation opportunities in order to host such events. In order to secure these events, associated governance costs would need to be supported for the attendance and influencing at the required meetings. Replication of UK Sport's current Gold Event Series (international events) investment would be required to support the costs of bidding for and hosting such events. Hosting international events normally requires substantial commercial sponsorship and there must be a question as to whether corporate Scotland is committed to such investment.

For SGBs to attend and compete at, and potentially to host, additional tournaments SGBs may need to further support the development of officials as there may be an increased requirement for SGBs to provide officials for such events.

The practical application of Scottish membership to the IOC, IPC and IFs for recognition will be of paramount importance.

5. How can Scotland continue to build on current investment in facilities and programmes to ensure that it remains a country of sporting excellence at all levels?

Inclusive facilities remain a challenge for elite athlete development for athletes with a disability. In order to mitigate these challenges enhanced physical access and explicit programme access (including for accommodation) for inclusive programming are required to support inclusion access.

An acceptance, understanding and appropriate budgeting of elite facilities being for elite programmes, including priority access for elite programmes and athletes, which are not cost neutral. It is vital that elite programmes and athletes receive prioritised use of elite facilities to maximise the opportunities and benefits presented both for the athlete and for the performance nature of the facility.

It is vital that lessons continue to be learned from the establishment of PPP and PFI contracts regarding community access to school facilities as the potential utilising of these remains compromised in many areas. Lessons are already being, and must continue to be, learned from this to prevent these challenges in the future.

Local authorities must be key players in facility discussions. As well as being fundamental to the development and operation of a highly significant proportion of sports facilities in Scotland, 90% of the Scottish sporting budget is through local authorities – emphasising the importance of their contribution, role and responsibility to sport in Scotland.

The recognised link between international sporting events and benefits to tourism and the local economy needs to be further understood and supported by a replication of UK Sport's Gold Event Series investment.

In order to be a true country of sporting excellence at all levels additional resource and commitment is required to raise standards in PE, school sport, physical literacy for all our young people, including those with a disability, and especially at primary school level.

6. How can Scotland optimise its facilities and resources to balance elite development with growth in participation?

Scotland can optimise its facilities and resources by ensuring that National Performance Centres remain as such and are not utilised for income generation purposes at the expense of elite training and performance. Distinguishing the difference in purpose between identifying and resourcing elite facilities and participation/community facilities is key – recognising that they are different, utilising them differently and not always trying to combine both outcomes within a single facility. It is important to maintain a balance between elite and participation sport – both are priorities and both require increased resources without one objective being at the expense of the other.

In relation to community facilities the opportunity for clubs to have a 'home' generates further potential opportunities for a club to develop community activities and to support member recruitment and retention and thus increasing participation.

This is linked with the requirement for Leisure Trusts to balance opportunities for participation in a diverse range of sports, whilst making this accessible inclusive and affordable, within income generation targets.

7. What opportunities would exist for an independent Scotland to share facilities and resources across the Home Nations?

Where quality facilities (in partnership with world class support services) exist, opportunities exist for worldwide utilisation; ie this is beyond simply an opportunity with Home Nation partners. It was suggested that further opportunities may exist for SGBs to have increased influence over elite facilities for their specific sport. Challenges for elite athlete/programme access to these have been raised above.

Increased accessible accommodation and accessible sports facilities remain priorities in supporting athletes with a disability.

It is recognised that recent investment in Scottish sporting facilities leaves Scotland well positioned in relation to elite sporting facilities for a number of sports, but not all. Consideration would need to be given as to whether Scotland needs to develop certain specialised facilities or have guaranteed access to those of another nation.

If facilities are to be shared by an increased number of countries, concerns could be raised as to increased competition for limited facility and support services access. It will be vital that Scottish athletes and teams do not lose out through such competition.

When considering the sharing of facilities, opportunities for competitive advantage may arise which may have a bearing on the willingness of countries to share facilities and support services with direct competitors; a factor which will vary between sports and between countries.

8. What should be role of the Scottish Government as a funder and promoter of sport?

It is vital for clear roles and responsibilities to be established between the Scottish Government and the National Agency for Sport.

The Scottish Government needs to work in partnership with the National Agency for Sport in providing the strategic direction for sport in Scotland.

Our members feel strongly that the Scottish Government should retain a dedicated Minister for sport.

The Scottish Government should continue to work towards a further elevation in the profile of sport within the Government and related departments at national and local level, including a cross-departmental focus on sport and budgeting for sport. The Scottish Government should support longer-term recognition and resourcing as to the benefits of sport and the contribution of sport to a wide range of prevention agendas as well as advocating for sport and for direct resources from across Government, and related departments and agencies, to be invested in sport; examples include education, health, tourism, justice etc. In addition to this, joined-up-Government should be exemplified, particularly at policy level in ensuring that opportunities for sport are maximised in agendas such as health, planning, environment, justice, tourism etc.

The Scottish Government should continue to fund the National Agency for Sport to directly fund and support key partners (including SGBs and local authorities) in their support and delivery of the strategic direction for sport in Scotland.

The Scottish Government should drive the delivery of agreed national outcomes at local level. Further opportunities for sport, particularly community sport, to engage with and to have input to Community Planning Partnerships should be a priority and is something the Working Group should consider. The Scottish Government should ensure that local authorities (as with all agencies which receive investment of public funds) are accountable; robust guidelines should support local delivery of and accountability for the National Indicator for physical activity, whilst ensuring that sport is recognised as a significant and specific contributor to the physical activity continuum.

9. What opportunities would exist around the nature and status of sports governing bodies in an independent Scotland?

The opportunity would be presented and necessitated for all SGBs to attain direct IF recognition.

New reputational opportunities and challenges would result for some SGBs in establishing a new name on the world stage through IFs.

Some SGBs may have increased opportunities to recruit and retain top performance staff, who may aspire to work at Olympic and Paralympic level.

Each opportunity brings a challenge of increased capacity and resource within SGBs to deal with significantly increased workloads which would require additional investment to support.

Scottish Sports Association

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