

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DG EDUCATION & CULTURE**

**EDUCATION OF YOUNG  
SPORTSPERSONS (LOT 1)  
FINAL REPORT**



**A  
Report  
by**

**PMP in partnership with the  
Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy  
Loughborough University**

**August 2004**

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Glossary of terms .....	iii
Preface .....	iv
Executive summary .....	v
Section 1 Aims and approach of the project .....	1
The context .....	1
The brief .....	1
The research team .....	1
The approach adopted .....	3
The structure of the report .....	4
Section 2 Compulsory education and sport .....	5
No measures .....	6
Positive measures .....	6
Specialist schools .....	7
Examples of specialist schools – general sport orientation .....	7
Examples of specialist schools – elite performer orientation .....	14
Flexibility/adaptability .....	18
Summary .....	22
Section 3 Post-compulsory education and sport .....	24
General sport orientation .....	25
Elite performer orientation .....	25
Academies .....	33
Summary .....	36
Section 4 Professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport .....	37
Professional sports .....	38
Sports academies .....	38
Sports training within compulsory school age .....	38
Sports training during post-compulsory school age .....	39
Provision within Member States .....	39
Summary .....	48

Section 5	Higher education and sport .....	50
	No specific measures .....	51
	Positive measures .....	51
	Sports scholarships .....	56
	Services .....	60
	Flexibility within the general university framework .....	62
	Exclusive provision .....	66
	Summary .....	66
Section 6	Vocational support and lifestyle management .....	68
	No specific lifestyle management support .....	69
	Lifestyle management advice and/or support given .....	70
	Examples of policies or programmes .....	80
	Incentives to return to education .....	82
	Employment opportunities .....	82
	Summary .....	87
Section 7	Sport in education policy – the role of government .....	89
	Sports policy in Europe .....	89
	The European Union and sport .....	89
	The role of Member States in sport in education .....	90
Direct state regulation .....		94
	Compulsory schooling .....	94
	Post-compulsory schooling .....	98
	Professional academies .....	101
	Universities .....	102
	Lifestyle support .....	103
Semi-regulation .....		103
	Post-compulsory .....	103
	Professional academies .....	104
	Universities .....	105
	Lifestyle support .....	106
Non or minimal regulation .....		108
	Post-compulsory schooling .....	108
	Professional academies .....	109
	Universities .....	109
	Lifestyle support .....	109
	Provision for education in élite sports systems .....	112

Section 8	Comparative research – balancing education and sport .....	116
	Introduction .....	116
	Contrasting approaches to sports development .....	117
	State regulation or mixed economy .....	118
	Balance between education and sport .....	119
	Specialist sports institutions .....	133
	Achieving the right balance .....	140
Section 9	Comparative research – support for student-athletes .....	141
	Introduction .....	141
	Flexibility .....	142
	Flexibility in education .....	142
	Flexibility in training/sport .....	154
	Flexibility in employment .....	155
	The importance of flexibility .....	156
	Entourage .....	158
	Sport stakeholders .....	160
	Education stakeholders .....	161
	Personal stakeholders .....	162
	Mentors and mediators .....	163
	The role of agents .....	164
	Managing the entourage .....	164
	Athlete Support .....	165
	Support in the education system .....	165
	Support in the sport system .....	169
	Personal support systems .....	175
	Support from employers .....	177
	Supporting elite athletes .....	177
	Career transition and exit .....	179
	Transition during sport .....	179
	Transition from sport .....	181
	Retirement and career exit .....	182
	The transition to life after sport .....	185

Section 10	Conclusions and recommendations .....	186
	Sport and youth .....	186
	Sport in education .....	187
	Supporting élite sportspersons beyond their sporting career .....	187
	Compulsory educational programmes for young sportspersons .....	188
	Post compulsory education for young sportspersons .....	189
	Child protection issues .....	190
	Sports ethics and athletes' rights .....	190
	Career development and lifestyle management .....	191
	Sports employment issues .....	191
	Need for legislation, guidance, specialist training and relevant support structures .....	193
	Recommendations .....	194

## **APPENDICES (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)**

Appendix A	-	Bibliography
Appendix B	-	Stage 1 research template
Appendix C	-	Summary of situation in individual countries
Appendix D	-	Conference report

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following colleagues and partners across Europe who have provided invaluable support for the project:

Michael Aquilina	University of Malta
Dr. Corrado Beccarini	Scuola dello Sport, CONI, Rome
Dr. Ann Bourke	University College, Dublin
Dr. Maarten van Bottenburg	WJH Mulier Instituut, The Netherlands
Professor Manuel Brito	Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Portugal
Dr. Vilma Cingiene	Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education
Dr. Rolf Carlson	Stockholm University College of Physical Education
Prof Gyongyi Szabo Foldesi	Hungarian University of Physical Education
Mag. Dr. Martina Gerhartl	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Austria
Michael Groll	German Sport University, Cologne
Dr. Tomas Gursky	The Private Practice, Top-Fit, Bratislava, Slovakia
Lic. Nathan Kahan	Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
Dr. Adam Karwacki	Jozef Pilsudski Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw
Jari Kanerva	Finnish Society for Research in Sport and Physical Education
Dr. Claude Legrand	Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique, Paris
Maria Jesus Monteagudo	Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao
Denis Musso	Institut National du Sport et de l'Education Physique, Paris
Dr. Rimantas Pacenka	Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education
Dr. Dimitra Papdimitrou	University of Patras
Dr. Karen Petry	German Sport University, Cologne
Professor Gertrud Pfister	University of Copenhagen
Olga Piperidou	National Olympic Committee of Cyprus
Tomas Roztocil	University of Hradec Králové
Bas Rijnen	W.J.H. Mulier Instituut, The Netherlands
Ole Skjerk	University of Copenhagen
Tomas Roztocil	University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
Brigita Stloukalova	University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic
Prof. Dr. Walter Tokarski	Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln
Dr. Mateus Tusak	University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

---

Prof. Paul Wylleman	Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
Dr. Janis Zidens	Latvian Academy of Sport Education
Dr. Jolanta Zysko	Jozef Pilsudski Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw

We would also like to thank our UK expert advisors group for their useful comments on the study

Jerry Bingham	Head of Strategy, Ethics and Research, UK Sport
Mike Collins	ISLP, Loughborough University
Richard Parker	Performance Lifestyle National Co-ordinator, UK Sport
Nick Rowe	Head of Research and Strategy, Sport England Research Unit
John Stevens	(then) Chief Executive, Sports Coach UK

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Glossary of terms**

BOA	British Olympic Association
BPA	British Paralympic Association
EC	European Commission
EIS	English Institute of Sport
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FE	Further education
<i>Gymnasium</i>	Secondary school
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
IF	International Federation
INSEP	Institut National du Sport et l'Education Physique
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ISLP	Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LOOT	National Consultation for Education and Elite Sport
NGB	National Governing Body
NOC	National Olympic Committee
PE	Physical education
Sportspersons/athletes	Used interchangeably to refer to all athletes and people involved in sporting activity
TASS	Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme
<i>Topsportschools</i>	Specialist sports schools
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
YST	Youth Sport Trust

## **PREFACE**

## **Preface**

This report is one of a number research and policy projects that represent the product of a partnership between PMP and the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy (ISLP) at Loughborough University. The current study reported here is one of two, commissioned by the European Commission Sports Unit from PMP with the ISLP in December 2003 (the second report relating to *Sport and Multiculturalism*).

While PMP has taken responsibility as the primary authors of this report and the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy taken the lead in terms of authorship of the *Sport and Multiculturalism* project, research was jointly undertaken and reviewed across researchers drawn from both organisations and the reports represent the views of both teams.

At PMP and ISLP we have also been heavily dependent upon our research partners in the 25 Member States for the provision of information regarding the situation in each Member State. We are very grateful to our research partners for their commitment to this research. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and quality of the data provided. Of course responsibility for the interpretation of these data lies with the ISLP/PMP research team.

The two projects were required, as part of the Commission's brief, to stage a conference at the mid-point of the project. The conference on *The Education of Young Sportspersons* was staged at UK Sport, London, to coincide with the first meeting of the European Forum for Lifestyle Management. This proved to be an excellent venue and collaboration, and we would like to place on record our sincere appreciation for the organisational efforts, hospitality and efficiency of Richard Parker, Jerry Bingham and their colleagues at UK Sport, which contributed considerably to what we hope was a stimulating event.

### **PMP Consultants**

Andy Preece

Maureen Taylor

Charlotte Calvey

Helen Delany

Maria Bertelli

Gillian Leake

### **Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy Loughborough University**

Professor Ian Henry

Dr. Mahfoud Amara

Dawn Aquilina

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### Executive summary

#### ***Aims and approach of the project***

PMP, in partnership with the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy (ISLP), Loughborough University, was appointed by the European Commission in December 2003 to carry out two studies on education and sport. Both of the studies were commissioned by the Sport Unit of DG Culture and Education and are part of the broad initiative of the European Year of Education through Sport 2004. This report is a study on the education of young sportspersons. We have focused our research on the educational and vocational support for élite athletes provided by the Member States of Europe and the role of sport in education.

The brief for the project describes the focus as:

*The situation in Europe as regards the education of young sportsmen and sportswomen and their return to education and/or employment once their sporting careers have ended.*

The team of researchers from the ISLP/PMP team has been supported by a group of expert advisors, drawn from organisations in the UK working in the area of sport and the education of young sportspersons. In undertaking this study we have carried out secondary research across all 25 European Union Member States to provide a comprehensive picture of the current situation in Europe. In addition, the UK, France, Germany and Poland have been selected for supportive primary research. The aim of the study is to identify best practice and to provide an evidence base for policy recommendations.

For the qualitative research, the study concentrated on seven sports: football, rugby, athletics, swimming, tennis, gymnastics and winter sports. The rationale for selection was that these sports represent a range of team and individual sports and professional and semi-professional sports employment, and they illustrate variations in the age of specialisation and gender representation, together with a variety of Olympic, winter and professional sports.

The research comprised three stages. Stages 1 and 2 involved our research partners in gathering research data on the situation in each Member State of the EU. Stage 1 gathered basic information about sport in education and athlete support. Stage 2 research involved more detailed work on specific policy initiatives/programmes and quantitative and qualitative evaluations of particular schemes or case studies. Stage 3 primary research covered each of the five key research questions that formed the basis of the stage 1 research. The methodology consisted primarily of qualitative in-depth interviews with relevant organisations and personnel in four comparative Member States - the UK, France, Germany and Poland.

#### ***Sport provision during compulsory schooling***

Section 2 of the report addresses the question of how the sporting and educational needs of young sportspersons are dealt with in the compulsory schooling system. The research revealed that all Member States have Physical Education (PE) as part of their national curriculum for compulsory education. The main issue revealed in the research and in the conference debates was the need to encourage young sportspersons to achieve a proper balance between education and sport development.

Over 90% of Member States reported positive measures in general education curriculum delivery to support the education of young sportspersons in compulsory education. Specialist sport schools are to be found in around 70% of Member States and other provision reported included special sports classes and élite sports boarding schools and sports orientated schools.

### ***Post-compulsory education and sport***

Section 3 of the report addresses the question of what is the nature of sport education and sport provision for young élite athletes in such institutions as specialist sports colleges and national sport academies. All Member States promote young athletes within the context of post-compulsory education, although the systems vary between Member States. Some have specialised secondary schools that cater for young élite athletes and offer flexible study arrangements, specialised coaching and training facilities. Additional educational support for élite athletes included personal mentors, tutor support and individual study plans.

Around 60% of Member States have arrangements for their specialist sports schools to be linked to further education colleges, even if the sports school does not have academy status. Similarly, some further education institutions run specific programmes for élite athletes, in recognition of their requirements to combine training and education.

In addition, some Member States offered boarding or half boarding education for élite athletes. Most Member States offered élite educational and sporting provision on a regional basis in situations where demand and cost effectiveness made this possible.

Around 30% of Member States have sports academies within their post-compulsory schooling system and relevant sports federations were involved in all such academies. Usually these academies are linked to further education colleges and courses typically cover coaching, sports science and other sport-related subjects as well as wider curriculum choices.

### ***Professional and semi-professional sport***

Section 4 of the report addresses the question of how the educational needs of young élite athletes are met by their employers and/or serviced by their agents in the professional sporting system. Education provision for élite sportspersons in professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport varies greatly between Member States. A number of Member States have specific regulations or policies in place, either through the NGB or the Ministry of Sport, regarding education of young sportspersons who are employed in a professional capacity. Such policies encourage the development of élite sport, as well as giving consideration to social responsibility.

Approximately 60% of the Member States have specialised professional academies for élite sportspersons. These academies are typically sport specific, the most common of which are football and rugby, and enable programmes to be tailored for both the athletes' educational and sporting needs. In some Member States there is a greater weighting towards sporting performance at these sports academies and a high level of flexibility within the curriculum to allow for this.

This contrasts with other Member States, where the emphasis is more on educational development. In the context of evidence that a very high percentage of student-athletes at academies will not secure professional contracts, there is increasing concern that for many young sportspersons their main priority is sport rather than education.

In some Member States, there is legislation or regulation in place to ensure that academies run by commercial sports organisations adhere to guidelines and statutory educational requirements.

### ***Higher education and sport***

Section 5 of the report addresses the issue of the role of universities and higher education (HE) institutes in balancing athletic performance and the education of élite athletes. There is greater flexibility to combine a sporting and academic career at this stage of education but the challenge of achieving a suitable balance between education and sports development is still significant for young elite sportspersons.

The research has indicated that all but two of the Member States (Italy and Malta) have developed specific measures to support élite athletes at university. Over 90% of Member States, therefore, provide positive measures of support. Many universities have specific policies or programmes in place to facilitate entry requirements for élite sportspersons. Usually, athletes must meet specific criteria to qualify for facilitated entry requirements, which vary between Member States, but they typically centre on a top three placing in the Olympic Games, World Championships and European Championships. A number of Member States have an incentive scheme, where 'bonus' points, based on sporting performance, may contribute towards entry requirements.

Over 50% of Member States offer sports scholarships to students to support them financially throughout university and enable them to combine higher education with their sporting ambitions. The source of the funding for the scholarships varies between Member States and the financial sums involved also vary considerably.

Most Member States have developed support services to support student-athletes at university. These include individual tutor support and monitoring, personalised study programmes, distance learning and e-learning programmes, unrestricted transferring between departments or campuses, unlimited student status, flexible timetabling and permission for absence at training camps/competitions. Johan Cruyff University in the Netherlands is the only example of a university that is tailored specifically for élite athletes. It specialises in business administration that prepares élite athletes for a post-athletic career in the sports industry. This university now also operates through partnership arrangements in Portugal and Spain.

In general, research responses highlighted that a high level of flexibility is required to support élite athletes during higher education to enable them to combine training and education successfully and the majority of Member States offer positive measures to support student-athletes at this level, although the nature of such support varies between countries.

### ***Vocational support and lifestyle management support***

Section 6 of the report examines the nature of vocational advice and lifestyle management support for elite athletes. Sporting careers are relatively short, even for those who become successful athletes, and many young people who have aspirations to achieve excellence in sport are not able to pursue a sporting career and have therefore to find alternative employment.

Over 70% of Member States now have policies or programmes in place to support athletes during their career and help them to prepare for, and secure, employment after their sporting careers have ended. Examples of such policies or programmes include advice and support, careers counselling, employment opportunities, financial loans and incentives to return to education.

Some of the Member States, such as the UK, offer a wide spectrum of advice and support on lifestyle, careers and education, as well as job opportunities, whereas other Member States offer limited or no elements of support. Member States have different positions as to policies towards, and legal/moral responsibility, for supporting elite athletes. A more co-ordinated approach between the Member States, initiated through the recent European Forum on Lifestyle Management, will increase awareness that consideration does need to be given to the end of an athlete's career. The research has indicated that this needs to include lifestyle support and vocational guidance, in addition to addressing external psycho-social pressures, in order to facilitate elite athletes' career development.

### ***Achieving a balance between education and sport***

Sections 8 and 9 report on the comparative research carried out in the UK, France, Germany and Poland to illuminate the issues raised in stages 1 and 2 and at the project conference. Section 8 focuses on the particular challenge of balance between education and sport faced by young sportspersons. The nature of this balance is an issue that varies depending on both the individual and the sport.

Several findings have emerged from the research. These were that elite athletes struggle to achieve a balance between sporting, academic and personal life due to the training and competition demands placed upon them. The physical demands of elite sport can be very punishing and have a significant effect on an athlete's ability to achieve a balance. Sport is very rarely the aspect of an athlete's life that is compromised in order to achieve a balance. The aspects compromised by elite athletes in pursuit of sporting success are usually education and social activities, although the level of compromise will vary depending upon the sport and the individual.

To assist the athlete in achieving this balance, support and flexibility are required from both their education and sporting environment. Balance is important, and not just between education and sport but also in terms of establishing a balanced lifestyle, ensuring success in both sport and education. Our research indicated that a number of factors were important in supporting young student-athletes to achieve an appropriate balance. Flexibility in a student-athlete's education programme and specialist lifestyle support is of paramount importance. A balanced lifestyle including some interaction with non-sport students and support from coaches and teachers to enable a balance to be negotiated and agreed were also important factors.

An understanding by all members of a student-athlete's entourage of the complex requirements of elite sportspersons was seen as a key factor, and proximity of suitable training facilities near to appropriate educational facilities at all levels of education helps time management. We also confirmed the need for a 'family atmosphere' in boarding facilities and keeping the numbers of boarders low, together with accommodating student-athletes together with other student-athletes was also identified as supportive.

### ***Athlete support***

Section 9 focuses on several key issues in respect of athlete support. Firstly, flexibility is addressed. Flexibility in educational structures and delivery, sport and employment is seen as key to ensuring student-athletes have the opportunity to achieve a balanced lifestyle. Various forms of athlete support are then identified, within education and sport systems, personal support systems and support from employers. Athletes are surrounded by competing interests within an entourage, with various stakeholders representing education-based, sport-based and family/friends based influences. Finally, career transition issues are examined.

Our research confirmed that it is rarely possible to combine education and sport successfully without some level of flexibility in educational programmes. Our findings were that a greater understanding of the demands an elite athlete faces (and therefore understanding of why an elite athlete needs flexibility) is required within the education sector. Whilst it is easier to offer increased levels of flexibility and support within specialist sports schools and colleges, it is equally important for non-specialist sports schools to offer flexibility to student-athletes. Personalised learning and e-learning are seen as key methods of facilitating flexibility for elite athletes in the future. The report also notes that flexibility should also come through the sport. Coaches and/or the NGB should be aware of the educational demands the athlete is under and the importance of achieving a balanced lifestyle.

In respect of the athlete's entourage, coaches are usually the most important element although parents are a significant influence and, for very young athletes in particular, there will often be a high mutual dependency. Conflicts between sport stakeholders and education stakeholders often occur where there are competing demands on a student-athlete's time or they are required to represent stakeholders in their sport, especially if the athlete has received a scholarship. Our research confirmed the importance of lifestyle management advice in helping athletes achieve an appropriate balance in their lifestyle.

Career transitions are extremely demanding and place enormous pressure upon athletes. Elite athletes experience various transitions within employment, education and sport. The most demanding transition periods occur at 16-19 years when decisions relating both to education and retirement are likely to be made and our findings demonstrate that a key element in dealing successfully with these transition periods is for the athlete to be well prepared and well advised. There are support systems in place across all four comparative Member States to ease the transition between sport and employment.

### ***Conclusions and prospective outcomes***

The final section of the report summarises the key issues to have emerged from the study and reports conclusions and policy recommendations. We recommend that the Sport Unit may wish to highlight, for the benefit of Member States, a number of areas where discrepancies exist between them. These are apparent in a number of areas, including the range of provision for sport in education and, in particular, variable provision in respect of athletes' ability to benefit from flexibility in educational structures and delivery mechanisms; the variation in provision of lifestyle management support programmes for elite athletes, and the need for sports organisations involved in coach education to introduce child protection training as part of coach accreditation courses.

We recommend that relevant aspects of education and sport would benefit from Europe-wide monitoring. In this context, we recommend that the Commission establishes a European Observatory to monitor the content and balance of athlete education across Europe, reporting on best practice.

Developing this theme of identifying best practice, we further recommend that the Commission develops a code of conduct which identifies athlete's rights in respect of flexibility in education systems and other relevant areas of support.

Additional recommendations are that the Commission:

- supports the development of e-learning systems for delivery of a European Baccalauréate programme with a sports science and management base and a degree programme in sports science and management
- supports the development of structured programmes and qualification-based courses for elite athletes that have Europe-wide accreditation and recognition
- encourages European sports federations to develop a specific qualification in safe coaching of children
- supports the embryonic network of the European Forum for Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes.

In respect of further research and academic collaboration, we recommend that consideration be given to commissioning a number of further studies:

- the development of a code of practice on flexibility in educational arrangements for student-athletes, to be recommended to Member States for adoption by government, National Governing Bodies and sports federations
- a study on best practice in lifestyle management support for elite athletes, reinforcing the developing network of the European Forum for Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes
- a study on educational rights for elite young sportspersons, to explore how a legally enforceable right to education might be implemented in the case of elite athletes

- a longitudinal study of the process of career selection by former élite athletes within a range of different sports with different elements of maturity (for example gymnastics and tennis) considering the same sports across different countries to provide a range of exemplars.

## **SECTION 1**

### **AIMS AND APPROACH OF THE PROJECT**

### Section 1 Aims and approach of the project

#### ***The context***

- 1.1 The management of programmes of education of young sportsmen and sportswomen, and in particular the need to ensure a proper balance between sports training and general education as a means of protecting children and young people, have been recognised as important issues by governments and by sporting organisations for many years. In addition, there is now an increasing understanding of the challenges faced by young sportspersons whose sporting careers have come to an end and who are therefore returning to education and/or employment. The need for specialist lifestyle management support and vocational advice for élite athletes is now widely acknowledged and professional intervention and support is becoming more available.
- 1.2 Successful sporting careers end at an early stage of the normal working lifespan and the majority of young sportspersons who aspire to a professional or semi-professional career are unsuccessful. The psychological impact of ending a sports career can be enormous. Many sportspersons feel anger, bitterness and rejection; others find the lack of a clear future direction deeply unsettling. Feelings of isolation and anxiety about the future are common.
- 1.3 Within this context, the characteristics of the education of young sportspersons and the systems of élite sport development can be examined to reveal the support available for young sportspersons both during their education and sports career and after their sports careers have ended.

#### ***The brief***

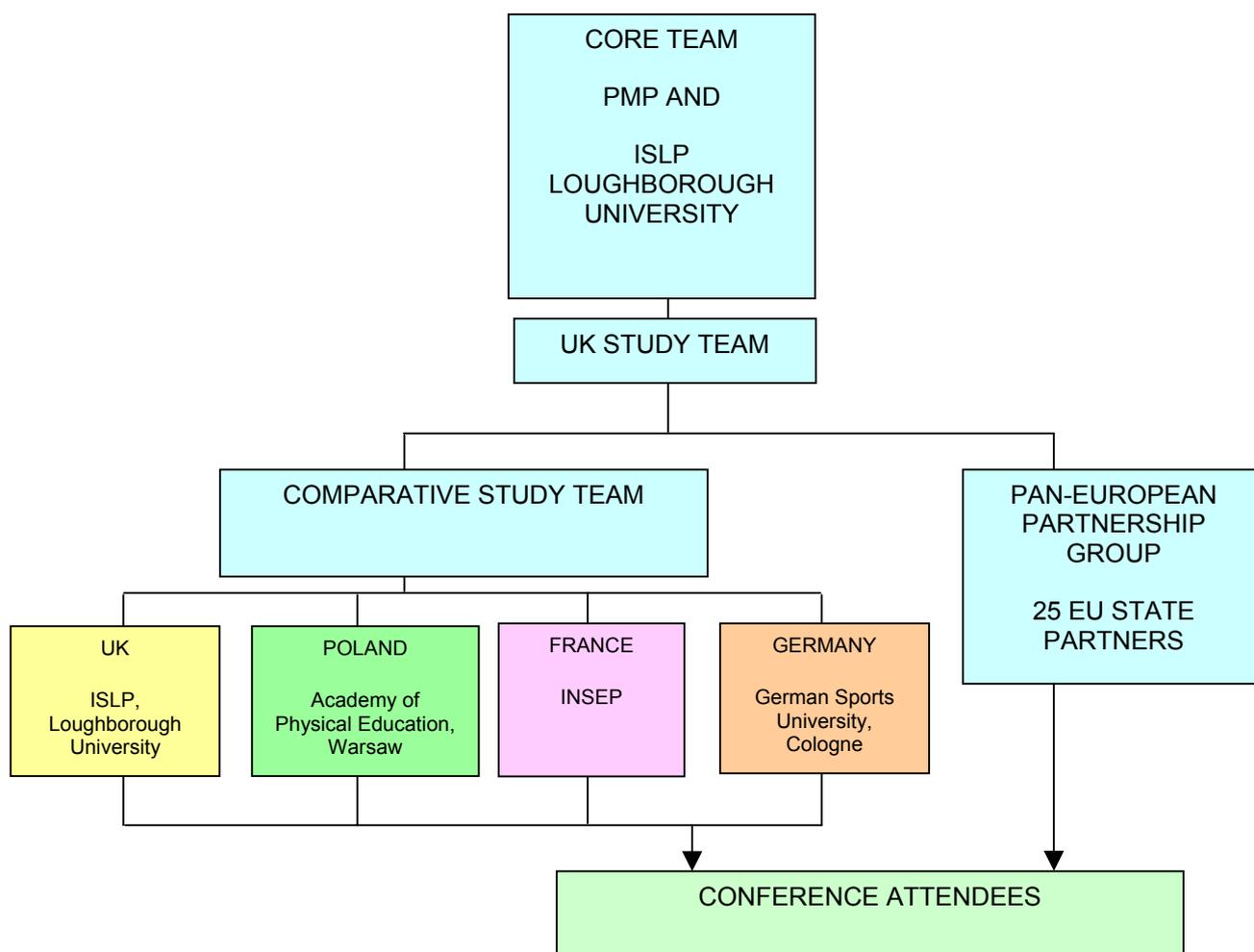
- 1.4 To this end, the Sport Unit of the European Commission (EC) under the auspices of DG Education and Culture, commissioned a study from PMP in partnership with the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy (ISLP) at Loughborough University, to address:  
  

*The situation in Europe as regards the education of young sportsmen and sportswomen and their return to education and/or employment once their sporting careers have ended.*
- 1.5 The study was commissioned to extend over an eight month period, 1 January to 31 August 2004, with three key outputs, an interim report (to be provided by 30 May 2004), a final report (by 31 August 2004) and a conference to be held at the mid-point of the period of contract (28/29 April 2004).

#### ***The research team***

- 1.6 PMP, in partnership with the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, Loughborough University, was appointed to carry out two of the EC's studies on education and sport, namely on 'The Education of Young Sportspersons' (reported here) and on 'Sport and Multiculturalism'. The PMP and ISLP team has worked jointly on both projects.
- 1.7 A Project Team was established, see Figure 1.1 overleaf, which incorporated a Core Team from PMP and ISLP and research partners in each of the 25 Member States of the European Union (EU). As the core teams for both studies had several consultants and expert advisers in common, the studies were addressed jointly. This has resulted in a methodology that has enabled positive cross-fertilisation.

**Figure 1.1 The Project Team**



1.8 Throughout the research process we have regularly consulted with members of the United Kingdom (UK) Study Team, our group of expert advisors, on both a collective and individual basis, to discuss key findings and recommendations.

Expert advisers for the study were:

- Jerry Bingham – Head of Strategy, Ethics and Research, UK Sport
- Mike Collins – ISLP, Loughborough University
- Richard Parker – Performance Lifestyle National Co-ordinator, UK Sport
- Nick Rowe – Head of Research and Strategy, Sport England Research Unit
- John Stevens – (then) Chief Executive, SportsCoach UK.

### ***The approach adopted***

- 1.9 Project research has involved a Pan-European Partnership Group, which covers all 25 European Union Member States. This has sought to develop a comprehensive picture of the current situation regarding the education of elite young sportspersons in Europe. In addition, the UK, France, Germany and Poland were selected for additional primary research. The overall aim of the study is to identify the range of policy approaches adopted, to consider best practice, and to provide an evidence base for policy recommendations.
- 1.10 We have focused our research on the educational and vocational support for elite or near elite athletes provided by the Member States of Europe and the role of sport in education. We have defined elite young sportspersons as those representing their nation in a given sport. 'Young sportspersons' refers to those in both compulsory and post-compulsory schooling, ranging from primary schools to universities.
- 1.11 The research comprised three stages. Stage 1 involved 25 Member State partners in an initial data gathering exercise on the situation in each Member State of the EU. A number of key questions framed the mapping exercise and data gathering task of stage 1. These were:
- how are the sporting and educational needs of young sportspersons dealt with in the compulsory schooling system?
  - what is the nature of sport education and sport provision for young elite athletes in such institutions as specialist sports colleges, national sport academies etc.
  - how are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers and/or serviced by their agents in the professional sporting system?
  - what are the roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of elite athletes?
  - what is the nature of vocational advice and lifestyle management support for elite athletes?
- 1.12 In order to ensure flexibility of response for research teams and comparability of research responses, a template was developed and issued to research partners for recording baseline information about key areas of relevant policy and practice. This template is reproduced as Appendix B.
- 1.13 Stage 2 comprised a second round of more in depth data gathering of selected schemes and initiatives in the 25 Member States with a particular focus on evaluation. A summary of responses to stages 1 and 2 on an individual country basis is provided in Appendix C.
- 1.14 Stage 3 comprised qualitative research in the form of structured interviews and discussions with selected stakeholders in the four comparative states of the UK, France, Germany and Poland.

- 1.15 An international conference was held at the end of April 2004, the mid point of the study, with an aim of reviewing research findings to date and discussing the key issues to be explored in the final four months of work. Conference delegates included representatives from the 25 Member States of the EU together with academics and practitioners in the field of elite athlete education. A summary of the conference and its findings is provided as Appendix D.

### ***The structure of the report***

- 1.16 The report presented here relates solely to the project on the education of young sportspersons. A separate and independent report on the project relating to sports and multicultural dialogue has also been produced.
- 1.17 The structure of the report is as follows. Sections 2-5 summarise our findings from the research, grouped according to the stage of education or sport development reached. Thus Section 2 addresses compulsory schooling; Section 3: post-compulsory education; Section 4: professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport and Section 5: higher education. These categories, however, are not mutually exclusive and there are certain areas of overlap.
- 1.18 Overlaps are to be found, for example, in secondary schooling where there are examples of specialist provision covering both compulsory and post-compulsory schooling in many Member States (and which therefore are included both in Sections 2 and 3). Another area of overlap is in the provision of sports academies, which are referred to both in compulsory and post-compulsory education, where they are part of the education system, and in professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport, where they are part of professional sports institutions. Academies are therefore referred to in Sections 3 and 4.
- 1.19 There is a need to distinguish between physical education (PE) and sport. PE offers all young people the opportunity to participate in physical activity and can be a useful introduction to participation in sport. In considering the education of young elite sportspersons, however, physical education is less important than other aspects of education, such as curriculum flexibility. Indeed many young sportspersons, once they reach elite level, do not participate in PE in school as it is superfluous to their training requirements. We have addressed PE in this study, however, because Member State's commitment to PE is an indicator of the extent to which sport and physical competencies are valued in a society.
- 1.20 Section 6 examines vocational support and lifestyle management. Section 7 provides an analysis of government intervention in sport. Sections 8 and 9 report on the findings of the comparative research and the final section provides conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.21 Four appendices are attached. Appendix A provides document references from the report and bibliographical sources. Appendix B provides the template employed as a research instrument in collecting data from the 25 Member States. Appendix C provides a detailed summary of the responses received from research partners. Appendix D provides a summary of the findings from the conference held at the mid-point of the study.

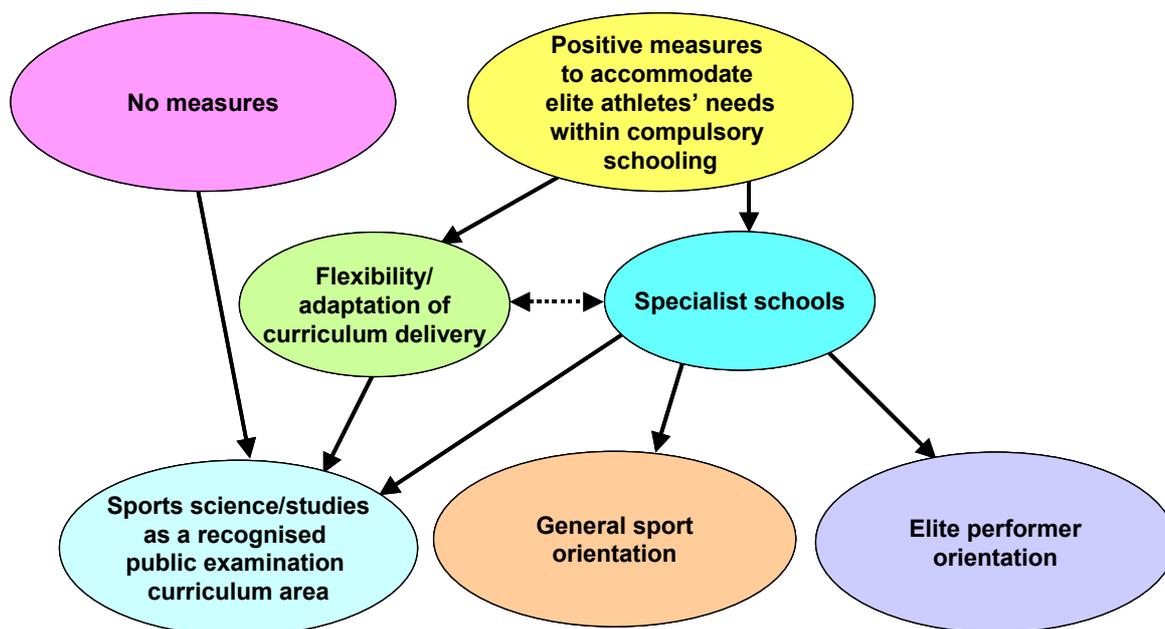
## **SECTION 2**

### **COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SPORT**

**Section 2 Compulsory education and sport**

- 2.1 To be successful in sport, young sportspersons may feel under pressure to dedicate significant amounts of their time and energy to training and competition, often at the expense of education. This section looks at the methods in place in each of the Member States to support young sportspersons to achieve sporting success and fulfil their academic potential during their compulsory schooling.
- 2.2 All Member States have statutory education programmes for schools that children and young people must follow. These typically identify the nature and content of formal education at certain ages and levels. The national curriculum for each Member State sets out the requirements to be taught in each subject for each school age group and PE is usually an important element, often compulsory in primary school teaching. As with all gifted children, those individuals who have displayed a talent for sport are still required by law to complete their education according to the requirements of the national curriculum. However, there are specialist institutions, programmes and methods of flexibility and support in place to help young sportspersons balance their education and sport.
- 2.3 Figure 2.1 below summarises the situation across Europe with regard to general sport provision during compulsory schooling as indicated by the research.

**Figure 2.1 General sport provision during compulsory schooling**



2.4 As illustrated in Figure 2.1, the way in which young sportspersons are supported during compulsory schooling varies between Member States but can be roughly categorised as follows:

- **no measures:** PE is a core subject within the curriculum, however, there is no flexibility within the curriculum, or specialist schools for élite athletes, to support pursuit of a sporting career
- **positive measures:** there are specific adaptations and provision within compulsory schooling to facilitate combining education with a sporting career for élite athletes. This, for example may be through:
  - **specialist schools:** specialist schools exist that facilitate both educational and sporting development
  - **flexibility within the general framework and adaptation of curriculum delivery:** there is flexibility, and specific adaptations within the general curriculum to allow the pursuit of a sporting career.

**No measures**

2.5 Using the categorisation as defined above, Table 2.1 lists which Member States have no measures in place to support young sportspersons during their compulsory schooling as identified during our research.

**Table 2.1 No measures**

No measures	Ireland, Malta
-------------	----------------

**IRELAND**

2.6 In Ireland there are no provisions within the curriculum to cater for gifted young sportspersons apart from the statutory PE lessons. There is however, a system of sport classes (team sports) between 4pm and 6pm each day available in secondary schools and, in addition to the basic programme, there is a Buntus Programme offered to develop children’s motor skills independent of particular sports.

**MALTA**

2.7 The same is true of Malta, where, as with all other states in the EU, PE is a statutory requirement within the compulsory school age curriculum. However, there are no concessions or alternative educational arrangements to facilitate the combination of a sporting career and education for young sportspersons. The only opportunity for gifted young sportspersons to pursue sports within the general framework is at the age of 13, where PE is offered as an option at GCSE level.

**Positive measures**

2.8 Most Member States have either specialist school provision or some degree of flexibility in place, in either the education system or in education delivery, to support élite athletes to combine education and their sports training. Examples in specific countries of the different types of provision, degrees of flexibility and ways in which the curriculum has been adapted to accommodate athletes’ needs are given in the following section.

**Specialist schools**

- 2.9 The majority of Member States support the development of their young athletes during compulsory education through the provision of alternative educational institutions, namely specialist sports schools. These schools typically have high quality training facilities and coaching support, as well as specialist education support and flexibility that will help young athletes to combine their sport and compulsory education.
- 2.10 As indicated in Table 2.2, around 70% of Member States have specialist sports schools. These specialist schools cover the compulsory schooling years, and many continue through to further education (as detailed in Section 3). The specialist sports schools may have either a general sport orientation or an élite performer orientation.

**Table 2.2 Specialist schools**

Specialist schools	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK
General sport orientation	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, UK
élite performer orientation	Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK

**Examples of specialist schools – general sport orientation**

- 2.11 A number of Member States have specialist schools that are not just for élite sportspersons but do nevertheless focus on sport. Details are provided below of the countries that have such institutions.

**AUSTRIA**

- 2.12 In Austria there are three options for combining secondary school education with sports. These are:
- secondary schools which have a general focus on sport, and offer specialised classes in certain sports in cooperation with the sports federation, for example football
  - secondary schools for young athletes who specialise in different sports. These schools, which are termed *Leistungszentren*, are exclusively for élite athletes and are detailed within Figure 2.4
  - schools which focus on specific winter sports (*Schi-Gymnasium; Schi-Handelsschule*). Again, these schools are for élite athletes and further details are provided in Figure 2.4.

### BELGIUM

- 2.13 Education is compulsory in Belgium between the ages of six and 18. In primary education (up to age 12) students have two 50-minute PE lessons per week. In secondary education students typically have two to three lessons and for technical secondary education two to four lessons per week. There is variation for sports optional programmes, which can have four to 11 lessons per week.
- 2.14 Gifted sports persons (and other students) can opt out of compulsory schooling as long as they receive education at home or by another organisation. This allows flexibility for the athletes, but can be costly in terms of providing tutors. The education that these student-athletes obtain must adhere to the final attainment levels of the compulsory education system.
- 2.15 In the Flemish community, eight *Topsportschools* were established in 1998. This is a standard secondary school that organises one or two subjects of study specifically developed for talented young athletes. These subjects of study offer a study programme combining 20 hours of education in general secondary education and 24 hours of education in technical secondary education (or 12 hours less than the normal curriculum) with 12 hours of sport-specific training (including two hours of PE). The sport-specific training is organised within or nearby the school by the sports federation. There is also the possibility for legal absence from school from 20 up to 130 days. Further details are provided in Figure 2.2 overleaf.

**Figure 2.2    *Topsportschools*, Belgium**

In 1988 the eight *Topsportschools* that were introduced in the Flemish community initially catered for 201 student-athletes from 12 sports federations. During the 2003/04 school year, 449 student-athletes from 17 sports federations attended the eight *Topsportschools*. The 17 sports federations are badminton, basketball, cycling, golf, gymnastics, horse riding, judo, handball, skiing, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, sailing, soccer, swimming, track and field and volleyball.

Evaluation of the first two years of the project has led to recommendations on preparation of elite athletes for the 2016 Olympic Games, as well as the implementation of two *Topsportschools* (tennis and basketball) within the French-speaking community.

The drop out rates for athletes in the *Topsportschools* has ranged from 8.7% to 23.2%.

The programme for young sportspersons in the *Topsportschools* includes both a general and a sport-specific element. The general part of the educational programme reflects similar final attainment levels as those for PE for the general population of pupils: the development of motor competence, the development of a safe and healthy style of living and participation in competitions, the development of a positive self-image and the development of relationship skills. In view of their level of training and competitions, these final attainment levels have been made more specific. The content of the sport-specific training programme is determined by the governing sports federations and specifies physical, technical, tactical (and sometimes mental) capabilities and knowledge.

As *Topsportschools* were initiated through a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sports, the content and balance of the education of the student-athletes is determined and monitored by the Ministry of Education. The relevant sports federation however determines the content of the sport-specific part of the educational programme for student-athletes. The involvement of the Ministries ensures the correct balance and attainment levels are met.

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

- 2.16 Mandatory school attendance is between the age of six to 15. There are no opportunities to opt out of the statutory school programme but a project to intensify sport classes in co-operation with sport federations is currently running. In 1999, approximately 15,000 children were accepted for these sport classes in 15 different sports and by September 2003, there were 242 primary and secondary schools providing these classes. These sport schools and federations are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

**DENMARK**

- 2.17 Compulsory education in Denmark lasts for nine years and all children must be attending school by age seven. There are specialist sports schools (*efter-skoler*) that are not exclusively for gifted young sportspersons, but schools that give opportunities for every young person to focus on a specific interest.

- 2.18 Although all children must adhere to the statutory educational programme, the 127 *etter-skoler* offer sport as an optional subject. At the most élite -oriented *etter-skole* in the field of sport, *Oure Idrætsefterskole*, the pupils are given seven and a half lessons of sports training every week as part of the teaching. In addition to this, the pupils train in local élite clubs, particularly in soccer and handball, and they spend time on sports tours and tournaments locally and abroad. The content of the education in sport is specialised tactical and technical training in the sport the pupil has chosen.
- 2.19 The following sports are offered at *Oure Idrætsefterskole*: soccer, handball, dance and ballet, horse riding, golf, sailing, surfing, tennis, alpine skiing, basketball, badminton and adventure sports.

### ESTONIA

- 2.20 Compulsory schooling in Estonia is from seven to 17. PE is a core subject within the compulsory school system and sports activity in the form of PE is two to three lessons per week in both primary and secondary schools. Currently there are 20 sports schools and there is a general trend of moving more gifted children to sports clubs and to finance their training.
- 2.21 In addition, general schools direct pupils with sports skills and talent into special classes (there were 66 sports classes with 1,650 pupils in 1988). In the sports classes, training is organised in the same manner as in the Sports Boarding School, except that the opportunities for systematic training are greater at the boarding school. The school course in the Sports Boarding School lasts a year longer than in an ordinary secondary school, demonstrating a degree of flexibility in course length.

#### **Figure 2.3 Audentes sports school, Tallinn, Estonia**

Audentes is a sports school for gifted children with boarding facilities. It has numerous excellent facilities, including indoor athletics. There is a linked wintersports sports school in Otepaa, South Estonia. Audentes has 800 pupils and a comprehensive and modern sports medicine centre. The sports medicine centre is also open to non-school clients.

The sports school is attached to the Audentes private university, which has six faculties, though not one for physical education. However, 2,200 undergraduates there follow sports training courses.

There is a general trend of moving more gifted children to clubs and to finance their training. The Estonian government as well as the Estonian Olympic Committee has made supporting top level sport its priority. It has a well-organised system that is oriented towards the Olympic Games and World Championships, which is already producing results. Governmental scholarships along with Governmental Awards are given to élite athletes.

### FINLAND

2.22 Compulsory schooling in Finland is between the age of seven to 16. Every pupil in compulsory education receives the same education, but schools may focus on different ways of giving this due to flexible time allocation. There are two compulsory PE lessons per week. In special classes students can choose six weekly lessons in PE. Although all students must follow the statutory educational programme, opportunities to specialise in sport training exist during forms 7-9 (14-16 years). A young athlete can apply for a place in a:

- sports-oriented upper secondary school (12 in total)
- sports-oriented vocational upper secondary school (ten in total)
- general or vocational upper secondary school which specialises in sports.

### FRANCE

2.23 Compulsory schooling in France is between the ages of six and 16, and PE and sport is compulsory in primary and secondary schools. The system of high-level sport in France ensures that there are structures and access routes in place, which create conditions for high-level athletes that are favourable to both their academic and sports progress.

2.24 Athletes that are in secondary education benefit from this system and are eligible to receive dispensations on their school report cards. Their weekly timetable is adapted so that they are able to fit both sport and education into their schedule and it is even possible for regional education authorities to allocate an extra two hours to their day so that this can be catered for. Occasionally an extra academic year can also be allocated, depending on the degree of athletic training required.

2.25 Decree Number 2002-1010 of 18<sup>th</sup> July 2002 states that access routes to high-level sport must include structures which allow high-level and promising athletes to reach the highest level in their sports discipline and to benefit from training that will prepare them for a professional career. These structures primarily involve two groups *Pôles Espoirs* and *Pôles France*. They are discussed in further detail in Section 3.

### GERMANY

2.26 Full-time education is compulsory between the ages of six to 15 or 16. Part-time education is compulsory until the age of 18 for those who are not in full-time education. To give talented young athletes the opportunity to develop their sporting career alongside their academic career during compulsory schooling a number of links between schools and institutions/organisations of high performance sports are in place. Different types of partnerships between high performance sport and educational institutions include:

- schools specialising in sport (*Sportbetonte Schulen*)
- partner schools of high performance sport (*Partnerschulen des Leistungssports*)
- élite sport schools (*Eliteschulen des Sports*).

2.27 In these integrated systems, the whole range of educational, supervisory and supporting measures are used to give young athletes the opportunity to reach high performance sport and to fulfil all educational duties.

### **HUNGARY**

2.28 Education is compulsory for all children aged six to 16 living in Hungary. PE is a statutory requirement in all primary, secondary and trade schools.

2.29 Gifted young athletes of compulsory school age have the option not to attend school every day, but to be a private student, and many of them take advantage of this opportunity. As private students they are obliged to take end-term exams, and the requirements are the same for them as for the regular students. Notwithstanding, they also have the opportunity to apply for an individual schedule, permitting them to complete the statutory educational programme one to two years later than the regular students.

2.30 Gifted young sportspersons have the opportunity to attend either schools that:

- specialise in sports, for example Csanadi Arpad Primary and Secondary School, which is currently accommodating at least 450 of Hungary's gifted young sportspersons, or
- special classes for gifted young athletes.

2.31 These schools offer specialist sports programmes in addition to mainstream educational programmes.

2.32 The Heracles Talents Care programme (an initiative by the National Institute for Sports Talents Care under the auspices of the Ministry of Children, Youth and Sport) co-ordinates with 40 schools and covers over 19 sports. It can influence the students' school timetable to accommodate their coaching programme.

2.33 The National Institute for Young Sports Talents' Care has made recent plans for renewing the network of sports schools. This plan involves the establishment of a vocational secondary school for sports where the students (mostly gifted young sportspersons) can gain a qualification in a sports related field at the same time as they obtain a GCE.

### **LATVIA**

2.34 Compulsory school in Latvia is between the ages of six to 16 years. During the earlier period of compulsory schooling young sportspersons can only train after their lessons at school are over, at either sports schools or sports clubs. However, pupils have the opportunity to enrol at a Sport Gymnasium in grade nine (aged 15) where there will be provision for both academic and sporting commitments within the school's curriculum.

### **LITHUANIA**

2.35 Compulsory education in Lithuania is from five until 16 years of age. There are opportunities for talented young sportspersons to enrol at sports boarding schools, which are state funded and are run in such a way as to optimise the best results in sports. The NOC provides grants to talented individuals.

## **SECTION 2 – COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SPORT**

---

- 2.36 There are 98 public Sports Education Establishments (SEEs) and three private sport schools. The total number of pupils enrolled in SEEs in Lithuania is 47,600.
- 2.37 1,376 young sportspersons are enrolled in Kaisiadorys SEE. In this SEE several different sports are offered such as basketball, football, swimming and athletics.
- 2.38 The Republic of Lithuania's Law on Education states that education is a right for all school age children. No special provision for young sportspersons is provided until they reach secondary education.

### **POLAND**

- 2.39 Compulsory schooling in Poland is between the ages of six and 16. Schools for gifted young sports people have been present in the Polish sports system since 1969, when the first experimental post primary schools were created within an expanded PE programme. Currently the main aim of championship sport schools is to provide sports training combined with delivering the general school curriculum (primary, middle and high school). Such a solution allows the students to carry out their sports training (11 disciplines) parallel to their school tuition. In 2003 the Ministry of National Education and Sport (MENiS) financed the sports training of 1,883 student-athletes across 26 disciplines. There are 32 public sports champion schools (SMS), eight non-public sports champion schools (NSMS) and eight centres for youth sports training (OSSM) run by Polish sports associations.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 2.40 In the UK, education is compulsory from age five to 16. Opportunities to pursue a career in sports parallel to an academic career during school hours exist at specialist schools, which focus on PE and sport. At Key Stage 4 the schools have integrated time for examination courses with core PE so that all pupils can follow either a GCSE short or full course or an alternative accredited course. Those with a sixth form have increased opportunities for pupils to study for an A-Level in sport studies or a GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism. The primary function of these specialist sports colleges is not to support elite athletes, however, many do provide flexibility and support within education as well as high quality sport provision for elite sport development.
- 2.41 Specialist Sports Colleges are part of the specialist schools programme run by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). These are secondary schools with additional funds to focus on the PE and sport curriculum area. As of January 2004, there are 260 designated Sports Colleges, with a Government target of at least 400 by the end of 2005.
- 2.42 The mission statement reads:
- “Sports Colleges will raise standards of achievement in PE and sport for all their students across the ability range. They will be regional focus points for excellence in PE and community sport, extending links between families of schools, sports bodies and communities, sharing resources and developing and spreading good practice, helping to provide a structure through which young people can progress to careers in sport and PE. Sports Colleges will increase participation in PE and sport for pre and post 16 year olds and develop the potential of talented performers”.*

- 2.43 In at least a third of specialist schools/colleges, talented performers have personal learning mentors with responsibility for monitoring and refining their personal development plans, including rate of academic progress. An increasing number of sports colleges are developing more refined 'élite performers' programmes, which ensure that talented pupils receive specialist coaching, and achieve high standards.
- 2.44 In the majority of Sports Colleges, PE has benefited from additional time with most securing 10% or more of the weekly timetable. The time enabled schools to offer a broader and more balanced PE and sports curriculum beyond the national curriculum minimum requirement.
- 2.45 An evaluation report on specialist schools states that many had made significant changes to their curriculum for PE. For example, 50% had moved towards single-sex teaching groups.
- 2.46 Since their introduction in 1997, Sports Colleges have been playing a crucial part in raising both sporting and academic standards. According to the Youth Sport Trust, 64% of all Sports Colleges (100 schools) have either maintained or shown an improvement in academic performance over the last two years (Youth Sport Trust, unpublished research February 2004).

### ***Examples of specialist schools – élite performer orientation***

- 2.47 In some of the Member States there are specialist sports schools that cater exclusively for élite athletes. Details are provided below.

#### **AUSTRIA**

- 2.48 *Leistungszentren* are specialist sports schools that exist in the (vocational) intermediate and academic secondary level (*Handelsschule* and *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*). The case study in Figure 2.4 overleaf provides further details of how these schools support the development of élite athletes.

### Figure 2.4 Leistungszentren, Austria

*Leistungszentren* are specialist sports schools for élite athletes. They were founded in 1985 as pilot schools. *Leistungszentren* are characterised by the prolonged duration of schooling by one school year, and by a decreased curriculum content and increased flexibility towards attendance and exams.

The collaboration between the school and the special training centre *Sportausbildungszentrum* is another of its characteristics. There is, however, a difference between the management and practical application of the programmes in the special training centres at the various *Leistungszentren*. The (former) Federal special training centre *Bundes-Sportleistungszentrum* is the basis for the educational models, which are supported by the regional sports organisations. The finances of the educational and the sports training element of the school programme are separate. The school administration covers the costs of the school's educational programme.

All *Leistungszentren* (with the exception of Vienna 16) are called *Talentschmieden* (talent sources). Talent identification and development is an important objective of the *Leistungszentren*.

The government and federal provinces fund the schools'. The National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and sports associations do not provide any financial support. The *Leistungszentren* offer 41 sports in both the academic and vocational intermediate schools. The largest number of sports offered in one school is at Klagenfurt where 20 sports are offered. In 2002/03 a total of 1,203 students attended the *Leistungszentren*. 887 (69%) of these were at the academic schools, of which 64% were male and 36% female. 316 students attended the vocational schools, of which 89% were male and only 11% female.

A significant range of services is offered to the athletes at the *Leistungszentren* from guidance on planning of training and nutritional/dietary counselling through to psychological support and career planning. The special programmes for athletes to opt out of statutory educational programmes give students the possibility to combine their sport career with their education and their occupational preparation.

### DENMARK

- 2.49 Some pupils have the option to go to sports boarding schools. At the moment there are 24 *Idræts-efterskoler* (sports boarding schools) for those in the eighth to tenth grade in Denmark.

### FRANCE

- 2.50 There are currently 6,636 athletes within the high level sporting scheme in France in compulsory education. 190 of these students are at INSEP (National Institute for Sport and Physical Education) participating in all sports (except rowing, boxing, French boxing, canoeing and modern pentathlon). The balance of education and sport at INSEP is 24 hours education and 20 hours of training per week (with additional training and competitions).
- 2.51 INSEP is one of a network of training centres for providing élite student-athletes with high quality training facilities and education. Further details on INSEP are provided in Section 3.

### GERMANY

- 2.52 The German Sports Federation has established a total of 38 Elite Schools of Sport. These schools provide high-level training with education for élite student-athletes during both compulsory and post-compulsory schooling. Further information is provided in Section 3.

### HUNGARY

- 2.53 Specialist education for young sportspersons is provided by both *sports schools* and schools that specialise in sport. At present, there is a single sports school providing specialist education, including organising courses for future referees and umpires in a dozen sports. Schools that specialise in sports offer independent study programmes in sports management, sports instruction and coaching. They also offer programmes in sports history, Olympic history, sports journalism, sports management and sports instruction that are additional to the mainstream educational programme.

### ITALY

- 2.54 Within the secondary education sector, there are ten sports oriented schools where students who are active in high-level sports can combine study with training. These schools are under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. They enable the athlete to have a more flexible timetable. The schools offer study plans that acknowledge the athlete's sporting commitments, and arrange tutoring services, especially during revision periods or when athletes spend a long period of time away from school training or competing, and distance learning.

### SLOVAKIA

- 2.55 Compulsory education in Slovakia is from ages six to 15. Opportunities to pursue a sporting career during compulsory schooling exist primarily at private schools, gymnasiums and sport academies. Ten to 18 year-old young athletes are offered the possibility to combine their secondary school education and élite level training in seven regional sport gymnasiums. There are currently six national and three private sport gymnasiums. The educational period is eight years with graduation in four subjects. PE at the sport gymnasium is substituted by regular sport training. The education process enables students to combine training and study as formal education begins at 11am and ends at 4pm. It is therefore possible to arrange two daily training sessions before and after formal education. Further details of sport provision within compulsory schooling in Slovakia are provided in Figure 2.5 overleaf.

### Figure 2.5 Sport gymnasiums in Slovakia

*Sport Gymnasium* (Bratislava) is a public institution, however there is insufficient funding to cover all student expenses, so parents contribute approximately €500 per year towards training camps and equipment.

There are 76 (16%) students-athletes, who are members of Slovak junior teams (from a total of 476 students in 2003/04). The following 22 sports are catered for: alpine skiing, archery, athletics, dancing, fencing, football, handball, ice hockey, judo, karate, pentathlon, rowing, shooting, sport gymnastics, squash, swimming, table-tennis, tennis, triathlon, volleyball, water polo and wrestling.

The student-athletes study in small classes so that there is more contact time with the teacher. Athletes have a study program tailored to their individual sport programmes, which also offers individual consultations and exams. Young athletes have a maximum of 24 hours in the lower stage and 26 hours in the higher stage of study per week. In the lower stage (classes 1-4) they follow normal primary school education. In the higher stage (classes 5-8) some subjects are substituted with sport training. Students can therefore concentrate on training and their competition programme (including 20-26 hours of training weekly - the number varies from sport to sport). Every training group/class attends two training camps, one in the summer and a second in the winter.

There is no direct route into higher education. Students can make a choice of any higher school or university in Slovakia or abroad. However, they can choose to study an optional subject called Basics of Sport Preparation (BSP) and graduate as a trainer of third certificated level. This qualification enables them to work in, for example, a gym.

The educational period is eight years with graduation in four subjects: Slovakian, a foreign language (English or German) or maths, an optional subject (eg BSP) and another optional subject. Before graduation, students can take university entrance exams on a private basis. This form of preparation has become very popular.

Approximately 50-60% of students are successful in entering university or a higher school. Most of them (about 70%) enter the Faculty of Physical Exercise and Sports.

### SWEDEN

- 2.56 Compulsory schooling in Sweden is between the ages of seven and 16. Opportunities to develop a sporting career within the schooling system exist at secondary and upper secondary levels. There is a system of sport schools or sport academies at secondary and upper secondary levels. These schools, however, must follow the legislative requirements of compulsory education with reference to basic educational standards and goals.

### THE NETHERLANDS

- 2.57 Compulsory schooling in the Netherlands is between the ages of five and 16 years. Opportunities for gifted young sportspersons exist through some adaptations to the general educational programme where students can get exemption for specific courses. There are also specialist LOOT schools.

- 2.58 In order to improve the combination of education and training for young élite athletes the LOOT Foundation was established in June 1991 (LOOT stands for National Consultation for Education and Elite Sport). With permission of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, young élite athletes can study at LOOT schools and adapt their educational programmes to their élite sport programmes and vice versa. This is possible at all educational levels. Currently there are 20 LOOT schools nationwide accommodating approximately 2,500 students.
- 2.59 Besides the LOOT schools there are other initiatives to support talented athletes. There are talent centres for talented athletes between the ages of eight and 22. They try to make arrangements on training times with schools on all educational levels at primary, secondary, and post-compulsory education.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 2.60 As detailed within paragraph 2.41, although the primary function of a Specialist Sports College is not strictly to support élite athletes, these institutions do provide a high level of both sporting and educational support for young sportspersons. The Gifted & Talented programme has been developed as part of the Government’s wider strategy to improve gifted and talented education. It aims to improve the range and quality of teaching, coaching and learning for talented sports people in order to raise their aspirations and improve their performance, motivation and self-esteem. It will also encourage more talented young sports people to join junior sports clubs and develop and strengthen the relationship between schools and National Governing Bodies in supporting talented young people. Up to 10% of pupils in primary and secondary schools will be supported through the programme.

***Flexibility/adaptability***

- 2.61 As detailed above, the specialist sports schools all provide, to varying degrees, flexibility for élite athletes either within the education system or through education delivery. A number of Member States, as listed in Table 2.3, that do not have specialist sports schools, have introduced flexibility into their education delivery or adaptation of the curriculum to support young sportspersons within the compulsory school system. Specific examples are detailed below.

**Table 2.3 Flexibility/adaptability**

Flexibility	Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain
-------------	---

**CYPRUS**

- 2.62 In Cyprus, statutory educational programmes are compulsory until the age of 15 and provide no opportunities to pursue sport outside PE lessons within the general school framework. However, permission is given for students to participate in international competitions, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture:
- when the athlete participates in games with the national team for delegations under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture there is no penalty (ie no absence is noted)
  - when the athlete participates in international games or tournaments with his/her club absence is justifiable

## SECTION 2 – COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SPORT

- if the athlete participates in international competition abroad during the exams period, then the Ministry of Education and Culture can provide an examiner within the delegation so as the student can be examined on the same date and time with his/her fellow students
- there is a remuneration scheme for young talented athletes who achieve excellent results in international competitions when participating under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

### GREECE

- 2.63 In Greece compulsory schooling is between the ages of six and 15. In the Greek educational system talented young sportspersons are identified during the primary school period and offered the chance to attend *Classes of Sport Facilitation (CSFs)* from as early as lower secondary school (12-14 years).
- 2.64 These classes are fully integrated within the normal schooling system. Young persons attend exactly the same statutory educational programme with two exceptions:
- they are provided with the opportunity to train three times per week (7.30am until 10.00am) at their selected sport, and
  - they are required to stay one hour later at the school (three times a week) to make up for the morning training.
- 2.65 These CSFs are perceived to offer the following advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	Disadvantages
The opportunity to train and improve on a favoured sport	Difficulties to combine training with academic performance
Access to the city's sporting facilities of the highest quality	Classes are not available in all sports or regions of the country
Specialised coaching	There is some concern about the average level of the Classes' academic performance compared to that of a typical school (which seems to be lower, although no statistics are available to support this)
Transportation back and forth to school	
Opportunity to combine training and school attendance, thus more free time	

- 2.66 According to data provided by the Ministry of Education, Division of Physical Education, in the schooling system there are 114 CSFs currently operating and in addition there are 16 SCSFs (Special Classes for Sport Facilitation in upper secondary school (15-18 years) which accommodate the needs of approximately 9,500 young sportspersons.

## SECTION 2 – COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SPORT

- 2.67 In addition to the above classes, the Greek government recently introduced a new set of regulations for young athletes with recognised talent. This is the legislative Framework for Justification of School Non-Attendance (No 3169/2003 FEK 141A, 10/06/2003). These regulations take into account the fact that talented athletes, in parallel with their compulsory education, have to take part in training camps and compete in different international events.
- 2.68 According to these measures, talented athletes are categorised into three groups (A to C), which are entitled to different opportunities for justifying school non-attendance (which is strictly attributed to participation in national team training camps and international competitions).
- 2.69 These three groups are as follows:

Group A	Young athletes in training for the Olympic Games or World competitions, can justify a 50% non-attendance from the normal school programme (provided that the federation of the sport concerned documents a required need)
Group B	Young athletes selected to train for European and International competitions can justify up to 33% non-attendance from the normal programme
Group C	Young athletes selected to train for Mediterranean and Balkan competitions, as well as national championships, can justify up to 20% of their lost taught hours.

- 2.70 It is important to note that the primary and secondary education is compulsory, and pupils who have failed to attend more than 8% of the annual taught hours (approximately 800 hours), are not able to progress to the next grade regardless of their academic or sporting performance.
- 2.71 This legal framework also provides accommodating regulations for extreme cases of talented athletes who failed to attend significant parts of their normal educational programme. These athletes are entitled to special teaching support for as many hours as required to fill out the lost part of their normal education. Attendance of extra teaching support is compulsory in order for the young athletes to progress to the next level given that they pass the relevant tests.

### LUXEMBOURG

- 2.72 During the period of compulsory education, gifted young sportspersons can request a reduction of school hours. The law Grand-Ducal of 10 December 1998 allows athletes to follow a reduced school programme in respect of them attending training camps and competitions, as well as training extra hours. Generally, the hours of 'non-core' subjects of study will be dropped. Furthermore, it allows gifted athletes to split one study year over two school years. Exam dates can also be rescheduled. Gifted athletes can enjoy these facilities from their first year in secondary school onwards in specific schools (*école partenaire*) under the guidance of the school director. The reduction of the school programme will help the elite athletes to meet their sporting and academic demands. Further details are provided in Figure 2.6.

### Figure 2.6 Flexibility with compulsory education in Luxembourg

One particular secondary school organises sporting classes (*classes sportives*), which group 140 12-16 year old pupils who are given three extra hours of PE/sport (totalling six hours per week). Classes group gifted athletes from different sports that are selected by the sports federations. The sports federations provide training during the six hours per week. These pupils can also enjoy the facilities provided to gifted athletes under the law Grand-Ducal of 10 December 1998.

### PORTUGAL

- 2.73 Compulsory education in Portugal is from ages six to 16. Opportunities for gifted young sportspersons to pursue a sporting career during compulsory schooling exist through various adaptations to the statutory educational programme. Such adaptations require Portuguese schools to provide a personal learning mentor to talented performers with the responsibility to monitor and refine their personal development plans, including academic progress, and to have flexible exam dates that do not coincide with sporting commitments. A comprehensive list of such adaptations is outlined within the Elite Athletes Programme in Decreto-Lei n.º 125/95.
- 2.74 The Sports Institute has a role in co-ordinating the flexible arrangements, such as school registration, schedule and frequency of lessons, absences, alteration of dates of test of evaluation, school transfers, accompanying teachers, compensation lessons and academic scholarships.

### SLOVENIA

- 2.75 In Slovenia compulsory schooling lasts for nine years. There are no alternative options for the education of young athletes apart from the mandatory curriculum, although different degrees of adaptation exist as part of the government's 'Regulations on adaptation of school obligations'. These include adaptations in grading, on which subjects are examinable and additional tutoring for the pupil.
- 2.76 The content of specialist sports educational and coaching programmes during high school education is the same for athletes as for any other student, with the exception that sports classes attempt to enhance the co-ordination of the dual education and sport demands that are placed on student-athletes. Such schools have co-ordinators who help to adjust these demands and are responsible for the communication between teachers and coaches.

### SPAIN

- 2.77 Compulsory schooling in Spain is between the ages of six to 16. As far as the models of school sport are concerned, there is not an agreed and unitary model for the whole state. The major tendency is towards a model of school sport that allows the balanced development of different sport itineraries, which the future users will be able to choose from. For the purpose of this research study, itinerary C is highly relevant since "its aim is the detection, selection and promotion of young sportsmen who thanks to their attitudes and aptitudes can fulfil the necessary requirements to be considered young sport hopes".

### Summary

- 2.78 In summary, we can note that all Member States have PE as part of their national curriculum for compulsory education. This recognises the value placed on PE in respect of not only promoting healthy lifestyles but also creating an environment where the values of sport in respect of teamwork, leadership and fair play can be transmitted within the broader educational context. There is also increasing evidence of the value of sport in raising educational achievement levels.
- 2.79 The main issue revealed in the research and in the conference debates was the need to encourage young sportspersons to achieve an adequate balance between education and sport development. Various key actors are involved in this process, including teachers, trainers, coaches and parents. They all must bear responsibility for promoting a healthy balanced lifestyle, especially for very young athletes for whom they have a duty of care.
- 2.80 Recognition of the need to support young athletes in their sports development is highlighted by our research findings. Over 90% of Member States offer some degree of support to young elite athletes, mainly through the provision of specialised institutions or flexibility within education delivery.
- 2.81 Within compulsory schooling, 60% of Member States have specialist sport schools. Whilst there is considerable diversity in this provision, as highlighted at the conference, these specialist sport schools usually provide for both general and elite sportspersons.
- 2.82 General provision typically includes special sports classes (for example, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Slovenia), whereas elite provision covers:
- sports boarding schools (for example, Germany, Lithuania, Poland)
  - sports orientated schools (for example, Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK).
- 2.83 These specialist sports schools offer varying degrees of support and flexibility to assist young athletes in achieving a balance between academics and sport.
- 2.84 Those Member States that do not have specialist educational provision, instead offer flexibility within the education system. These included:
- special classes/adapted timetable (Greece)
  - legislation regarding permission of absence (Cyprus)
  - flexible arrangements – grading adaptations and extra classes (Slovenia); extension of the academic year and a reduced school programme (Luxembourg).
- 2.85 The debate at the conference covered a number of these issues including whether it is better to combine education and sport, and the benefits of setting up sport schools, or specialist schools, rather than sport classes included in normal schools. The general view was that this depends not only on the philosophy of the system but also on very practical aspects like the critical mass of athletes needed to manage specialist provision successfully.

## **SECTION 2 – COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SPORT**

---

- 2.86 Conference delegates also noted that sport classes within general education can be a motivation factor both for the other pupils and the school's dynamism.
- 2.87 Conference delegates agreed that a relevant degree of flexibility is needed to support young sportspersons during their compulsory education in order that they are encouraged to achieve a proper balance between education and sport development. It is the difficulty of defining and implementing this 'proper balance' that is the real challenge. Given conference delegates also agreed that quality control and effective monitoring and assessment procedures seemed to be an area of weakness in the different Member States, a process for defining what is an appropriate balance between education and sport development at certain ages and a system of implementation with standards and monitoring procedures would seem to be desirable.
- 2.88 Appendix D contains a full report on the conference.

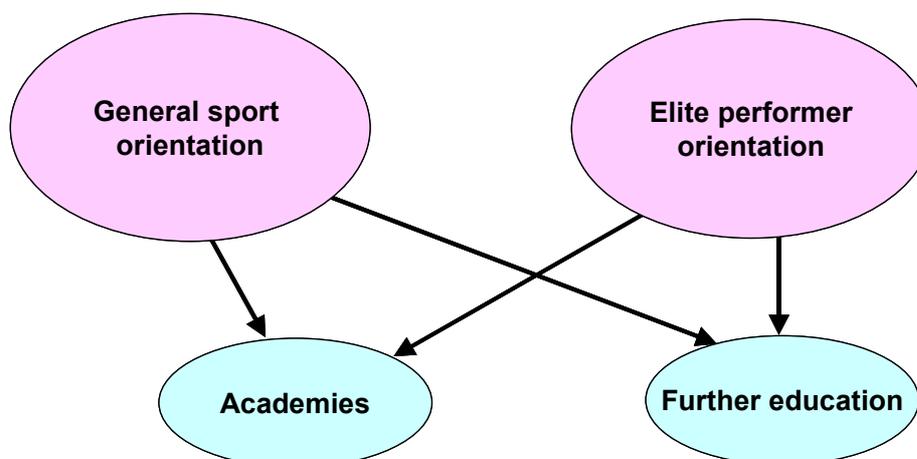
## **SECTION 3**

### **POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND SPORT**

## Section 3 Post-compulsory education and sport

- 3.1 In respect of support for young sportspersons during further education, there is less state control and more opportunity for choice. Depending on which sport is followed, there are differing career development and performance paths that place varying importance on skill development outside the chosen sporting pathway. Research has indicated the various options that are available for young sportspersons to balance their educational studies and sporting career.
- 3.2 Post-compulsory education is the period after compulsory schooling, which in the majority of Member States is post-16 education. The period of post-compulsory education between the ages of 16 to 18 is often referred to as further education (FE), whereas higher education (HE) generally applies to students of 18 years and over attending university (this is discussed in further in Section 5).
- 3.3 This section looks specifically at the education and sporting provision for young elite sportspersons during post-compulsory school age (examples have been given in Section 2 of provision for elite young sportspersons during compulsory schooling).
- 3.4 Figure 3.1, summarises the situation across Europe in respect of specialist sport provision for young elite athletes.

**Figure 3.1 Sport education and sport provision in post-compulsory education**

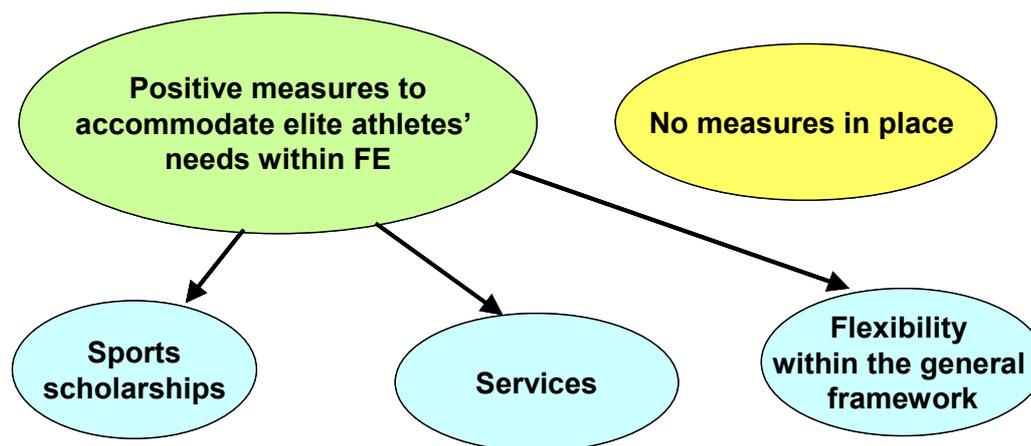


- 3.5 As illustrated above, there are various ways in which young sportspeople are supported during post-compulsory schooling. These differ between Member States but can be broadly classified as follows:
- general sport orientation: institutions which provide a broad range of sport options but which make **no specialist provision** for elite athletes
  - elite performer orientation: institutions primarily focused on providing for elite performers in particular sports, for example, **sports colleges**
  - sports academies: specialist provision for elite athletes through **sports academies**, run by the NGB or education sector as opposed to a professional club

- further education: **specialist programmes** or educational provision in place for elite athletes during further education.

3.6 A key element to each of the above types of provision for elite athletes is the level of flexibility that is offered. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, there are a number of different ways in which flexibility is offered in post-compulsory schooling. Specific examples of flexibility in post-compulsory education are detailed in the text below.

**Figure 3.2 Flexibility and support for elite athletes within post-compulsory schooling**



**General sport orientation**

3.7 Most Member States have institutions that provide a broad range of educational and sport options at FE level, for example, coaching, management, physiology and psychology. Those countries that have provided details of such institutions in our research are identified in Table 3.1 below. The research indicated that for the majority of Member States, general sport provision within FE is a continuation of general sport provision within compulsory schooling (as detailed in Section 2). As the subject of this research is on the education of elite young sportspersons, examples of general sport provision in FE are provided only within Appendix C and the focus of this section is on post-compulsory education institutions with an elite performer orientation.

**Table 3.1 General sport orientation**

General sport orientation	Greece, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia
---------------------------	--

**Elite performer orientation**

3.8 As described above for general sport orientation provision, the majority of Member States with provision for elite athletes during compulsory education (as detailed in Section 2) have a continuation of this provision at the post-compulsory age. Table 3.2 overleaf indicates which Member States cater for elite young athletes at this stage in their education, and specific examples of the type of provision available for elite young performers are detailed below. Educational provision for elite athletes is typically through sports academies or FE colleges. Positive measures offered by these specialist institutions, such as scholarships, support services and flexibility of education delivery are also highlighted within the text.

**Table 3.2 Elite performer orientation**

Elite performer orientation	Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK
-----------------------------	--

**AUSTRIA**

3.9 As detailed in Section 2 paragraph 2.12 and Figure 2.4, in Austria there are two options for the combining of secondary school education with elite sports, these are:

- schools which focus on specific winter sports (*Schi-Gymnasium; Schi-Handelsschule*)
- secondary schools for young athletes to specialise in different sports (*Leistungszentren*).

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

3.10 In the Czech Republic, there are specific opportunities to pursue post-compulsory education that is adapted with a sports focus. Specific details are provided in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3 Education provision for elite athletes in post-compulsory schooling in the Czech Republic**

Grammar schools that focus on sports cater for student-athletes who fall within the 15-19 years age bracket. In September 2003, there were 13 such grammar schools in operation. There are selection criteria that students have to meet to secure a place. In sport grammar schools, students must fulfil the same study requirements as in common grammar schools. The educational demands in these schools are the same as in any other school.

Students do not have any concessions and study at these is considered much harder because students have to go through four or five hours of sport preparation per day. However, individual study plans make it possible for those students who are away on training or competition to choose the optimal schedule of exams and tests at their respective school.

**DENMARK**

3.11 Young sportspersons up to the age of 18 or 19 must be part of a formal education process at a *gymnasium* (high school), *teknisk gymnasium* (higher technical examination course) or a *handels gymnasium* (higher commercial examination course), alternatively they must be involved in regulated vocational education when they are part of the *Team Danmark* programme. At these institutions, the students are monitored by the local study counsellor.

- 3.12 Sport Gymnasiums have been established with the help of *Team Danmark* (an independent semi-public organisation established by the Ministry of Culture) and they offer élite athletes (aged 15-19) who are studying at these institutions the benefit of completing their programme in four years instead of the norm (three years). The athletes also have special concessions concerning leave and absence from school. The four-year period reduces the daily burden of schoolwork and gives the sportsperson time to train and participate in tournaments, which gives the young athletes more time to combine sport and education.
- 3.13 In total, there are currently approximately 1,500 *Team Danmark* students. The *Team Danmark* rules for the *gymnasium* also apply for the *teknisk gymnasium* and the *handels gymnasium*.

### ESTONIA

- 3.14 In Estonia, student-athletes can continue attend a specialist sports school beyond compulsory schooling years. At the Sports Boarding School in Tallinn, for example, an extra year is added to complete the curriculum. There are also vocational secondary schools for school leavers, some of which specialise in sport.

### FINLAND

- 3.15 There are specialist colleges in Finland to accommodate élite athletes. The strength of the Finnish system is in its flexibility and the fact that it is based on a modular system without a rigid year structure. However other arrangements include:
- development of courses: some colleges have further developed their teaching options. For example, the Oulu College of Commerce has designed specialised studies for those students in the Sports Academy who wish to learn through practice as a counterbalance to theoretical studies
  - special accommodation: the Northern Ostro-Bothnia Vocational School guarantees accommodation for athletes enrolling at the City of Oulu. The sports academy provides accommodation for all students. The accommodation is within a short distance from the training facilities for ease of access.
  - time management: those in the institutes responsible for orienting the students will assist the student in developing a personal study programme that will allow the athlete to participate in training on at least three weekday mornings in addition to normal training.

### FRANCE

- 3.16 As detailed in Section 2, a system of training centres or *pôles* was created in France in 1995 to provide élite athletes with high quality training facilities and education. The network of training centres provides athletes with excellent training conditions. These training centres are INSEP, CREPS (Regional Centres for Education and Sport) as well as selected schools, territorial centres (the Velodrome in Hyères, the Nautical Centre in La Rochelle) or federal centres (the national football centre in Clairefontaine and national rugby centre in Marcoussis).

### **GERMANY**

- 3.17 The concept of Elite Sports Schools offers special facilities designed to promote high performance sports. The German Sports Federation has set up a list of criteria, which have to be fulfilled in order to get the élite sport school label. A total of 38 Elite Schools of Sport now offer today's youth the opportunity of pursuing a career in international competitive sport, combined with a normal course of school studies. They are often on a full or half-boarding basis and are currently accommodating around 11,000 talented athletes. In special cases the German Sports Aid Foundation provides financial assistance to students at these schools.

### **HUNGARY**

- 3.18 As detailed within Section 2 (paragraph 2.30), there are specialist schools within Hungary exclusively for élite athletes. For example, Csanadi Arpad School has 450 of Hungary's gifted young sportspersons.
- 3.19 These specialist schools offer tailored sports programmes in addition to mainstream educational programmes:
- options in sports pedagogy, sports psychology, sports anatomy, physiology, theory of recreation, sports administration
  - certificates granted by secondary schools are approved on a ministerial level and accepted by the sports federations
  - enabling young sportspersons to be employed as sports instructors or assistant coaches.

### **ITALY**

- 3.20 The relationship between education and sport has only recently been developed. Through the co-operation of many organisations (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Winter Sport Federation FISI, CONI and UNCEM) a Ski College has been established and runs a programme called 'Champions in Life'. This has been established for two years and a number of institutions in the north of Italy now run the programme. The curriculum includes elements of health related issues such as nutrition, anti-doping awareness, anatomy, physiology, sport psychology, IT skills and a foreign language. These skills are aimed at enabling the athletes to find work either at mountain resorts or within the winter sport industry.

### **LATVIA**

- 3.21 Institutions like Murjani Sport Gymnasium make it possible for student-athletes to combine their academic and sporting life successfully. Specialising in eight different sports, this gymnasium gives the opportunity for athletes to further their career especially through its link with the Latvian Academy of Sport Education.
- 3.22 The school has an additional ten training sessions a week to the usual compulsory education. There are individual tutorials for students that have missed lesson time due to competitions. There is the option of postponing the examinations if there is a clash with sport events. Sporting attainment is measured through competition performance and evaluation through tests and discussions. Further details are provided in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4 Post-compulsory elite sport provision in Latvia**

**Riga Secondary School Nr. 90** is specialised in the respect that it has one specialised sport class group in grades 10-12. The number of pupils in this class differs from year to year (16 to 30 pupils). The pupils generally specialise in basketball, but swimming and skiing is also offered.

There are no flexible arrangements for these pupils, but if a student gets top results and an important competition falls during exams, the sport federation and the Ministry of Education can postpone the examination. The student-athletes complete the same compulsory education with an additional three sports classes per week and six hours of additional practice, taking place after normal study hours or between study classes.

The school has an agreement with the Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE) where the student-athletes can enter LASE in the state budget group without taking entrance examinations (if they have passed the centralised examinations when finishing school). Usually one or two student-athletes enter LASE each year.

**LITHUANIA**

- 3.23 Sport gymnasiums give students the opportunity to further not only their academic but also their sporting careers. After completion of general education, the state provides opportunities for young talented sportspersons to continue in education. Sport centres and their regional divisions (Olympic sports centres, sport gymnasiums) fulfil this function. Further details of the Olympic Sports Centre are provided in Figure 3.5.

**Figure 3.5 The role of the Olympic Sports Centres in Lithuania**

The functions of the **Olympic Sports Centre** are to train Olympic athletes, organise and administer educational training, as well as sport training schedules, discuss and approve plans prepared by the coaches and, together with sport federations and coaches, to select preliminary games. The Centre also arranges educational training camps in Lithuania and abroad, travel costs and transport, medical services, sport science support, improvement of coaching qualifications, salaries and social insurance.

The Lithuanian Olympic Sport Centre (LOSC) employs medical staff and secures medical services for the sportspersons, cooperates with testing laboratories of higher education establishments and at their premises carries out extended and urgent clinical examinations of the athletes following approved examination programmes. LOSC may provide medical services for the athletes in other health institutions supervised by the Health Ministry or other private health centres.

The LOSC also provides an educational service for the athletes. About 140 Olympic athletes are doing sport at LOSC. According to the type of sport chosen, LOSC organises ten training session a week (plus games on weekends). Education is provided following the programmes of pre-school, elementary, general, secondary or corresponding special education (one to three classes take place in the morning followed by training, then four to six classes in the afternoon with training afterwards).

### POLAND

- 3.24 Both public and non-public sport champions' high schools give the opportunity for students in Poland to specialise in a wide range of sports. The goal of such schools is to educate and bring up young people through carrying out the educational program of general high schools while preparing the students for the highest levels of sport.
- 3.25 This type of schooling has made it possible to combine the educational and training process effectively. Training trips and schedules no longer present problems because the teachers are at the students' disposal. Students spend about 48 hours per week at their school, where 20 of those are devoted to training.

### SPAIN

- 3.26 Within the context of secondary education in Spain, the trend is to incorporate secondary schools into High Performance Centres, to adapt timetables to allow for training sessions and make greater use of tutoring. High Performance Centres (CARD) are sports facilities owned by the state or by an Autonomous Community which aim to provide athletes with the best conditions for training.

### SWEDEN

- 3.27 15 to 18 year-old elite young athletes are offered the possibility to combine their secondary education with elite level training in 61 different *topsportschools*. They also have the opportunity to have this combination at regional and local sports schools.

### THE NETHERLANDS

- 3.28 As detailed within Section 2, young elite athletes can study in LOOT schools and adapt their educational programmes to their elite sport programmes and vice versa. LOOT schools take into consideration the sporting goals of the student by offering the following concessions/level of flexibility:
- flexible timetable that enable the students to both train and compete
  - exemption from specific courses
  - delay or decrease in the amount of homework
  - facilities for making up arrears caused by absence because of training and competition
  - a separate room to study
  - possibility of delay or adaptation of the method used for tests and internal examinations
  - possibility of doing their exam year in two years (only for the world class athletes)
  - guidance of a study and sport co-ordinator.

- 3.29 The current legislation does not have any restrictions on making educational arrangements between elite athletes and higher education institutions. This is a case between institution and student. Therefore it depends on the institutions as to what extent they want to make adaptations to their regulations and educational programmes. Fortunately, a large number of schools are willing to adapt in order to make it possible for elite athletes to study. A small number of institutions even have special elite sport classes such as the Johan Cruyff College.
- 3.30 The Johan Cruyff College is an intermediate vocational education for management and communication for potential elite athletes only. It offers the possibility to adapt the timetable with reference to the training schedule. Furthermore it enables elite athletes to follow e-learning programmes during foreign training camps.

### UNITED KINGDOM

- 3.31 As described in Section 2, paragraph 2.41, Specialist Sports Colleges provide support and educational provision for elite athletes during post-compulsory schooling. There are also FE colleges that cater for athletes aged 16 and above. These colleges run a wide range of sports related courses that provide a high level of flexibility for student-athletes.
- 3.32 An increasing number of these colleges are developing more refined 'elite performers' programmes, which ensure that talented pupils receive specialist coaching, and achieve very high standards but are also able to continue their education. Examples of such programmes include:
- Programme of Academic and Sporting Excellence (PASE)
  - the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship framework for Sporting Excellence (MASE)
  - the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) (as detailed in Section 5).
- 3.33 The **PASE** scheme encourages 16-19 year olds to achieve a nationally recognisable academic qualification whilst training in a sport. The programme is a working partnership between an FE College and a local sports organisation. The FE College uses its resources and facilities to support a local sports club to run a youth training programme for their students.
- 3.34 This relationship helps build on the foundations of the Government's school sport strategy in two ways: by sustaining participation and supporting talent development for young people beyond school, and maximising the contribution of their facilities and human capital to sport in schools and the wider community.
- 3.35 Key objectives of the PASE programme include to:
- offer a realistic opportunity to achieve sporting potential
  - raise local sporting standards
  - offer a range of academic qualifications and career progression
  - provide routes at a level suited to individual abilities
  - provide an opportunity to gain qualification coach status.

3.36 Details regarding the MASE scheme are presented in Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.6 The Advanced Modern Apprenticeship framework for Sporting Excellence, UK**

The Advanced Modern Apprenticeship framework for Sporting Excellence (MASE) was launched in July 2004 by SkillsActive, in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Framework is predicted to have a major impact on the development of young athletes across a range of competitive sports. It has been designed to meet the needs of young people “who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence in their sport and are seeking to perform at the highest level as their main career goal”.

The framework provides a structured national training and development route, across all sports, for talented young athletes. It has been designed so that it is generic and fully capable of meeting the needs of all major sports and related employers.

Four categories of involvement have been identified:

- full time contracted apprentices at professional clubs
- full time elite athletes receiving support from the lottery world class programme
- talented young people in the ‘academy environment’ not yet offered full time terms
- participants of the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS).

In total the market is considered to be around 10,000 young athletes. The LSC provides approximately £9,500 per individual on the Framework.

The Framework contains a new N/SVQ (Achieving Excellence in Sports Performance Level 3 NVQ/SVQ), which is fully reflective of the broad range of competencies required in professional sport. Four of the eight mandatory units directly measure the athlete’s ability to apply themselves to professional development in the technical, tactical, physical and psychological aspects of the chosen sport. The remaining four directly address wider issues, such as lifestyle, communication, working with others, career management and health and safety.

An apprentice will be funded up to a total of 780 Guided Learning Hours. This provides sufficient Guided Learning Hours for the young person potentially to complete an AS Level as well as several sports related qualifications with the opportunity for rounded career development in a sports related occupation, such as coaching or fitness instruction. A young person with more academic aspirations could complete two AS Levels or at least one A2 Level within the Guided Learning Hours available.

In addition to the above, the Sector Skills Council are also introducing young apprenticeships for 14 to 16 year olds, as well as apprenticeships for adults (i.e. over 25s).

**Academies**

- 3.37 Aside from specialist sports schools for those in post-compulsory age education there are also seven Member States who have specialist sport academies for élite young athletes to focus both on their training and their educational development. It is important to distinguish between specialist provision offered by educational institutions and those offered by professional sports institutions. Institutions covered in this section are upper secondary school classes, upper secondary academies, sports colleges, performance/training centres and gymnasia. Sports academies that are run by professional clubs and sports institutions are addressed in Section 4.

**Table 3.3 Academies**

Academies	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, UK
-----------	---

**BELGIUM**

- 3.38 Promising young Flemish athletes can attend one of eight sports academies at secondary school level. Specialisation in a given sport at these academies is determined by an agreement between the sports federation, the academy concerned and the Flemish Minister for Education. So far 17 sports federations have signed such agreements. In the 2002/03 academic year, a total of 454 students were enrolled in sports academies.
- 3.39 In order to be eligible for admission to a sports academy, a student must be awarded sporting excellence status by an independent selection board. Admission requirements are different for each sporting discipline. Selection is based on objective criteria and expert technical and medical assessment.
- 3.40 Students follow either a 'sports science' (ASO) course or a 'sporting excellence' (TSO) course. They have a 32-hour weekly curriculum, with 20 hours for lesson and 12 hours for coaching in individual sports.

**DENMARK**

- 3.41 In Denmark, there are academies run by the education system that provide specialist provision for élite athletes. These academies educate the student-athletes in the formal compulsory education, but in addition have the facilities to provide comprehensive training to their students in their chosen sport. One example of an educational academy is detailed overleaf in the case study in Figure 3.7.

### Figure 3.7 *Holstebro Sportscollege, Denmark*

*Holstebro Sportscollege* is an institution providing education and training facilities to young sportsmen and sportswomen of 15 years and over. The students can specialise in football, handball and badminton. The college teaching is connected to public educational institutions, which offer free teaching as part of the approved school system. This means that the teaching and the facilities connected to the teaching is paid for by public funds.

The college provides accommodation and the students have to pay €425 a month to stay. This fee covers housing, food and access to the training facilities. In addition to this, the students have to pay an “entrance fee” of €400 when they are accepted as students at the college. Students who do not stay at the college pay the entrance fee – €400 plus €400 more which covers their access to the training facilities. The sports college offers no grants – all students must pay the fees.

Training facilities within the college include a pool, fitness room and outside there is a football pitch and beach volleyball court.

The sports college is linked to *Holstebro Handelsskole* – “Business School “-and *Holstebro Tekniske Skole* – “Technical School”. These are two public educational institutions which offer education at secondary, gymnasium level. *Holstebro Handelsskole* also offers a 10th grade course for younger students.

The sports college offers the students training in the élite sports clubs. Some of the college students have been offered professional sports contracts with the élite clubs.

After finishing their studies at the *Holstebro Handelsskole* or *Holstebro Tekniske Skole* the students can apply for further education at higher educational institutions or they can be apprentices in different kind of trades.

## FINLAND

- 3.42 There are highly specialised academies tailored for both the educational and sporting needs of student-athletes. For example, OSUA Sport Academy, which is the only institution of its kind in Finland. It is specially tailored for the athlete, in that student-athletes can continue their professional training while studying for a career. This arrangement offers various forms of assistance both with regard to professional training and education.

## FRANCE

- 3.43 The Ministry for Sport has set up a national scheme to facilitate access to high-level sport. The objective of such a scheme is to provide flexibility and support that will enable élite athletes to combine sport and education thanks to various adaptations. The Ministry for Youth, the Ministry for National Education and Research (MJENR) is in charge of education.
- 3.44 As detailed in paragraph 3.16, there is a system of training centres or *Pôles*. An example of one of these training centres is INSEP.

- 3.45 INSEP provides academic support through tutor monitoring, distance learning (e-learning), individual educational follow-up. All compulsory secondary schooling is organised locally. In terms of sporting needs, INSEP provides medical follow up, socio-professional follow up (job seeking, image management), library, social and leisure services etc. The advantage of a mixed multi-sport training centre is that there is a wide range of educational training. The disadvantage is the diversity in age, sport and educational abilities that all generates different student requirements. INSEP is linked to local secondary schools and other higher education institutions (eg University of Lyon).

### POLAND

- 3.46 There is a Kazimierz Górski Sport Champions School in Poland. The goal of this school, which operates under the name General High School of the Polish Football Association, is to educate and bring up young people through carrying out the educational programme of general high schools and preparation for highest-level football.
- 3.47 In addition, the non public Sports Champions School in Warsaw has been providing training in top level sport for gifted young female basketball players since 1997. The training is carried out in a three year cycle. Over 50% of graduates are former Polish junior and cadet representatives.

### SLOVAKIA

- 3.48 Three sports academies have been established recently with a focus on football (Venglos Academy), hockey and sport in general (the Gaudeamus and the Mercury Gymnasium). These form part of the education system. A case study on the Venglos Football Academy is provided as Figure 3.8 below.

#### **Figure 3.8 Venglos Football Academy, Slovakia**

The Venglos Football Academy (VFA) was established in 1999 for talented youth in football. The Academy caters for 147 registered football players and is also involved in the preparation of approximately 80 pupils aged nine years. Academy members have their education sponsored by the government and by individual donors. Parents pay only a membership fee and costs for a training camp, which is approximately €250 per year, and a basic sport equipment package (€80).

The Academy combines elementary school and gymnasium education. VFA members go through the standard education process. Two hours of PE per week are substituted with football training. The system is adopted from experience in England (with advisers from FC Liverpool). It offers 10 years' football preparation during compulsory and post-compulsory education. Young footballers study at the *Gymnasium Pankuchova* from age 10 or 14 (following an eight or four year study programme). The highest quality players train in the morning, four times a week, in addition to their school duties. In the afternoon, they train with their teams and also play a league match once a week.

Students graduate in six subjects or follow the Basics of Sport Preparation course, which enables them to work as a sport teacher or football coach. VFA cooperates with a vocational school to make a transition to a working career smoother. The main goal of VFA, however, is to educate/train footballers to be able join the professional football circuit. Two to three players a year succeed.

### SWEDEN

- 3.49 At the upper secondary level sport academies are organised on a national, regional and local level. Sport education in respective sports is mixed with statutory education. 36 out of 67 sport federations have their own academies at upper secondary level. There are approximately 1,323 athletes over the three-year period.
- 3.50 It is a common occurrence, particularly when it comes to the snowboard sport academy or alpine sport academy, that the students are competing during their time at the academy. Therefore, each student has a personal mentor with whom the studies are planned and conducted on an individual basis depending on performance levels.

### UNITED KINGDOM

- 3.51 A number of FE Colleges in the UK run sports academies in a range of sports, such as basketball, athletics and swimming. These Colleges offer sport specific training and coaching combined with suitable academic courses. Some FE colleges have boarding facilities for student-athletes.

### *Summary*

- 3.52 As with compulsory schooling, the majority of Member States have systems for promoting the education of young athletes within the context of their sport development within post-compulsory education. The systems, however, vary from one country to the next.
- 3.53 A number of Member States have specialised secondary schools, which cater for young élite athletes and offer flexible study arrangements (for example, a reduced curriculum or an extra year to complete secondary school) and specialised coaching and training facilities. Additional educational support for élite athletes included personal mentors, tutor support and individual study plans.
- 3.54 Some Member States offer boarding or half boarding education for élite athletes. Whilst boarding education was seen as desirable by some Member States, it was not judged to be necessary by others. Most Member States offer élite educational and sporting provision on a regional basis, but the availability of specialist local provision for élite athletes was determined by the number of athletes requiring such provision.
- 3.55 Around 50% of Member States have sports academies as part of the post-compulsory schooling system. Relevant sports federations were involved in all such academies. Usually these academies are linked to further education colleges and courses typically cover coaching, sports science and other sport-related subjects as well as wider curriculum choices.
- 3.56 More than 50% of Member States have arrangements for their specialist sports schools to be linked to further education colleges, even if the sports school does not have academy status. Similarly, some further education institutions run specific programmes for élite athletes, in recognition of their requirement to combine training and education.

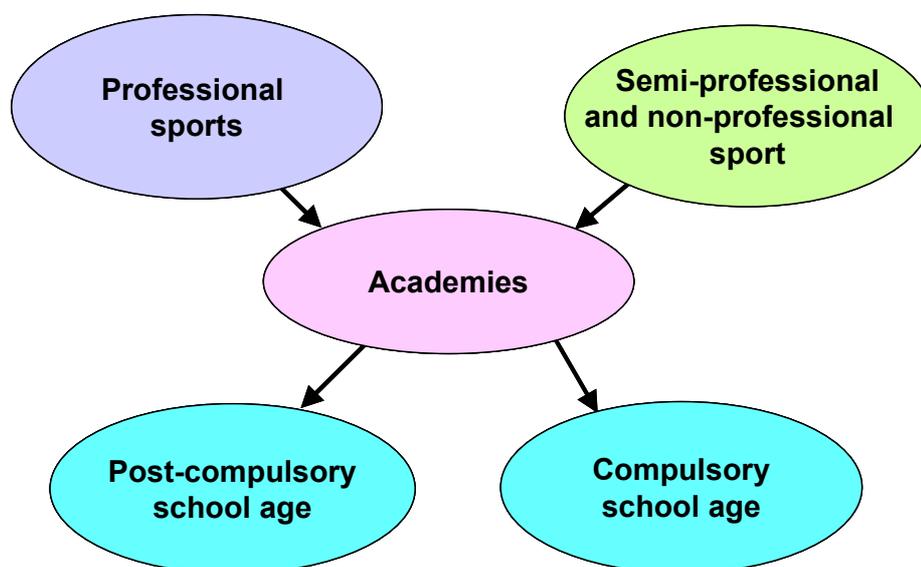
## **SECTION 4**

### **PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL SPORT**

## **Section 4 Professional and semi-professional sport**

- 4.1 Depending on which sport is followed, there are differing career development and performance paths that place varying importance on skill development outside the chosen sporting pathway. Some gifted young sportspersons will have the opportunity to attend, on a full or part-time basis, specialist academies for sports training and development. The significance of these academies varies between different Member States but all face the problem of balancing sport-specific training with the demands of more broadly based education. Academies run by commercial sports organisations, football and rugby clubs for example, will face particular pressures to satisfy commercial demands and also adhere to guidelines and statutory obligations regarding educational requirements and child protection measures. In some Member States, sports federations are responsible for academies.
- 4.2 Discussion at the conference revealed concern that for many young sportspersons based in academies and training centres, educational activities often take second place behind sport. This is despite evidence that the majority of these young athletes will fail to secure permanent professional employment in sport, a situation that is now being exacerbated by greater mobility in the wider European labour market.
- 4.3 Figure 4.1 below summarises the situation across Europe as indicated by the research.

**Figure 4.1 Education in professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport**



4.4 As illustrated in Figure 4.1 above, the way in which education is addressed in professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport varies between Member States but can be categorised as follows:

- professional sports: many countries have **professional sports employment** in which educational programmes are available
- semi-professional and non-professional sports: all the Member States of Europe have **semi-professional and non-professional sports activity** in which young sportspersons are responsible for making their own decisions about pursuing educational objectives
- specialist **sports academies** are provided in some countries
- some academies offer places to young sportspersons who are still within compulsory school age
- some academies offer places to young sportspersons who are post-compulsory school age.

***Professional sports***

4.5 Using the categorisation as defined above, Table 4.1 below indicates which Member States have identified specific regulations or policies regarding the education of young sportspersons who are employed in a professional capacity or who are preparing for a professional sporting career. Professional and club-based sports academies cover both compulsory and post-compulsory education.

**Table 4.1 Education in professional sports**

Professional sport	Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK
--------------------	--

***Sports academies***

4.6 Table 4.2 indicates the Member States, which have sports academies run by sports clubs and/or sports federations. As with professional academies, these cover both compulsory and post-compulsory education.

**Table 4.2 Sports academies**

Sports academies	Finland, France, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK
------------------	--

***Sports training within compulsory school age***

4.7 The main concerns for sportspersons during compulsory school age are:

- academic development
- sport development
- personal development.

4.8 Balancing these competing demands will require careful planning and time management. Some Member States have recognised that young sportspersons may benefit from specialist support and guidance in these areas. Examples are given in the text below.

### ***Sports training during post-compulsory school age***

4.9 The main concerns for sportspersons beyond compulsory school age are:

- sport development
- education development
- apprenticeship/vocational experience
- employment external to sport.

4.10 Perhaps even more than during compulsory schooling, balancing these competing demands requires careful planning and time management once sportspersons are beyond compulsory school age. There will be opportunities for young players in some sports to potentially secure substantial income from professional contracts and many sportspersons will find the evidence that only few succeed in finding employment in professional sport hard to acknowledge.

4.11 There are some useful examples from Member States who have recognised that young sportspersons may benefit from specialist support and guidance in these areas.

4.12 The various academies and support structures that are available in each Member State are detailed below.

### ***Provision within Member States***

#### **BELGIUM**

4.13 In Flanders, the first league basketball club collaborates with a local secondary school within a talent support and guidance project. In Brussels, the first league soccer club has developed a soccer school in co-operation with a local secondary school. In both these situations, the school permits the players of the clubs to leave at different times for training camps and competitions. The clubs provide the accommodation, travel and training and tutors who assist the players in preparing homework and exams.

#### **DENMARK**

4.14 The activities of *Team Danmark*, a semi-public body, are laid down by statute in the *Eliteidrætsloven* – the Law of Elite Sport. Amongst other things, it stipulates that the development of Danish élite sport should be done in a way that is socially responsible. This is described as giving support in matters of education, employment and social security to the élite sports people.

## SECTION 4 – PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL SPORT

---

- 4.15 For sportspersons beyond secondary education, *Team Danmark* has evolved procedures ensuring that every single élite sports person in co-operation with consultants from *Team Danmark* makes a plan three years ahead that covers education, work and sporting development. This plan is renewed every year when the sports federations send applications to *Team Danmark* for support. Applications from the sports federations must produce information about the status of the athletes.
- 4.16 During the last few years, *Team Danmark* has evolved a new structure in the support system. This new structure requires the sports federations to create an educational policy for their élite athletes if they want to be rated as an “élite federation” in the terms of *Team Danmark*.
- 4.17 From August 2004, FC Midtjylland (an élite soccer club, playing in the top division in Denmark) will run a soccer academy. The club has found boarding and housing for the students at the nearby *højskole* (folk high school), and it will help the students find a place in the local schools or *gymnasium* (high school) or other educational institutions. The formal education is still the same but they offer the most gifted young sportspeople (at the moment only in soccer and only for boys) housing, board, and football training at the highest level.
- 4.18 In the agreement between *Spillerforeningen* (The Soccer Players Union) and *Divisionsforeningen* (The Professional Soccer Clubs Union) it is stated: “When a contract is signed for a player below the age of 18 years a plan must be made for the player’s future education and career. This plan must be revised at least once a year”.

### FINLAND

- 4.19 Finland has highly specialised academies tailored for both the athletes’ educational and sporting needs. The aim is “that a combination of studies and sport can always succeed at all levels from comprehensive school to university”. Figure 4.2 gives an example of one such academy, the Oulu Regional Academy of Sport.

#### **Figure 4.2 Oulu Regional Academy of Sport, Finland**

The youngest pupils at the academy are 13. The main sports are ice hockey, volleyball, football, athletics and swimming. Other sports are skating, orienteering, badminton and snowboarding. The advantages of a mixed sport academy are that there are a large number of trainers and mixed groups of students.

The student chooses times for morning training that best suit their programme. Teachers give instruction between 8am to 10am and after afternoon classes. This system ensures that an athlete always has an instructor to train with. There is a sports medicine, clinical testing and monitoring service and tests are agreed with student and instructor. These are then undertaken and analysed to identify optimum training. An athlete’s proneness to injury can also be analysed. In addition, blood tests can be undertaken for a small charge. There is a muscle therapy room (at additional charge), swimming pool massage equipment and a water massage apparatus.

The length of study depends on the student. The average duration is four to seven years. The Academy is funded by the municipality and only students living away from home can get grants from the state.

- 4.20 In professional sports, both ice hockey and football bind their athletes by contracts. If an athlete is between 12-18, the parents must sign the contract. The club/organisation is not legally responsible for providing education for their newly signed athletes, but in many cases the clubs assist in providing education.

### FRANCE

- 4.21 Decree No. 2002-1010 of 18th July 2002 states that access routes to high-level sport include structures which allow high-level and promising athletes to reach the highest level in their sports discipline and to benefit from training which will prepare them for a professional sports career. These structures primarily involve two groups – one for promising talented athletes and one for established professionals (*Poles Espoirs* and *Pôles France*). These are organised as a network within each sports discipline and are intended to provide training to athletes and to act as resource centres offering athletes a range of support services, notably careers and medical support.
- 4.22 The groups must meet specific requirements in order to guarantee optimum conditions for training and support in other aspects of life. These requirements are drawn up according to the proposal of a National Technical Director, in coordination with the individual sports federation, and contain stipulations, which have been decided by the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Youth, the Minister for National Education and Research and the Minister for Agriculture.
- 4.23 This decree also introduces guarantees which are indispensable as far as the protection of underage athletes are concerned and sets 12 as the lower age limit for registration in a sports group (*Pôle*). Approval for training centres and professional clubs is issued or withdrawn according to specific terms set out in a decree from 15th May 2001 which implements Article 15-4 of Law No 84-610 of 16th July 1984. A training centre can only receive approval after certain specific information has been verified.
- 4.24 As well as this approval which is issued by the Minister for Sport, the Article 15-4 (of Law No 84-610 of 16th July 1984) allows an agreement, to be approved by the Ministry for Sport, between the individual young athlete and the sports association or society which the training centre or club comes under. The lower age limit for an athlete to sign such an agreement is 14.
- 4.25 In terms of rugby, there are 20 rugby academies accredited by the Minister of Sport. Each academy has an average of 20 young players. The age of these players ranges from 16 to 23, but most of them are between 18 and 20. Only 12% of the players are likely to get a professional contract. Most of the trainees attend a secondary school or university. Further details are provided in Figure 4.3 overleaf.

### **Figure 4.3 French Rugby Academies**

The 20 rugby academies in France each academy have an average of 19 players registered under a training agreement, a total of 376 throughout the country. There are also 87 players on an under 23 contract and 47 players on professional contracts

In the academic year 2002/03, 70% of all academy players graduated from their course or proceeded to the next educational level. A further 27% of players failed to make this transition. Educational achievement is higher for those players at PRO D2 level than in the top 16.

When questioned regarding combining their studies with sport, 90% of the academy players stated that school training was their priority.

- 4.26 There are also 35 football academies in France. These are called training centres and are all obliged to provide sporting and academic provision. The youngest age that a student can join the academy is 15. The academies are financed by the football clubs, although some have links with local schools who may provide the educational component of the academy. The academy students must follow the same education programme as all secondary school children (25 hours education plus training between 12-18 hours per week). The academy provides three main services to the athlete - sport training, medical follow-up and education. The athletes have the opportunity to take A-levels and complete their education. The academy has to adhere to the French Sport Law and the French Football Federation.

### **GERMANY**

- 4.27 In professional football it is mandatory for all clubs in the top two flights (36 clubs in total) to have a soccer academy, which also provides education for their athletes. The co-operation between school and club ensures the best possible way for an athlete to combine school education and football training. A combined system of school and training possibilities helps to co-ordinate school and sports demands effectively, thus making maximum use of performance resources.

### **GREECE**

- 4.28 Athletes can sign contracts with professional clubs that have limited liability company status. Athletes must be over 18 to sign the contract. The club is not obliged or licensed to provide education for their athletes.

### **IRELAND**

- 4.29 The current sports academies (for example football, rugby, tennis) in Ireland do not provide education for their athletes at present. However, Tennis Ireland is striving to devise a strategy whereby formal education is combined with the sporting programme. Details are provided in Figure 4.4 overleaf.

### **Figure 4.4 Tennis Ireland's National Training Programme**

The programme is run by Tennis Ireland (NGB) and is seeking the co-operation of local primary and post primary schools to help provide its participants with a flexible education programme. The programme targets talented youngsters and there are currently 12 participants aged between 11 and 14 completing 21 hours training per week. Some training is at regional and other at national level. The programme is funded by Tennis Ireland, regional councils and parents. Candidates are usually identified via clubs rather than schools

Tennis Ireland received €455,858 funding from the Irish Sports Council for 2004. Part of this funding is to develop youngsters on the Academy Development Programme. Other funding is for coaching, travel grants and tournament costs for women players (resulting in the team qualifying for the International Ladies Team Tournament).

- 4.30 Soccer academies exist in Ireland but are not as well developed as those in the United Kingdom. Various levels of coaching are offered to youngsters by the Eircom League clubs but these clubs do not employ Education and Welfare Officers. In fact, little attention is given by soccer personnel within Irish clubs to encourage young players to advance their formal education. The Football Association of Ireland Career Guidance Officer tries to maintain close contact with Education and Welfare Officers attached to English clubs. He also advises and encourages Irish youngsters to heed their advice with respect to pursuing education while at the particular club.
- 4.31 Rugby players may be contracted to the Irish Rugby Football Union (for national duty), or to one of the Provinces (Ulster, Munster, Leinster or Connaught) to participate in international (European) or local competitions. The majority of the players attached to clubs are not professional but may be employed on a full time contract. There is differing opinion on the age restrictions for signing contracts. The IRFU states that players must be 16 or over, but club representatives suggest there is no age requirement. Although there is no legal responsibility for the club to provide education, many rugby players are encouraged to continue their education.

### **ITALY**

- 4.32 There is no structured way on how clubs should develop football academies. The National Federation are currently looking at the French case to adopt best practice but so far no model has been proposed. Until the age of 14, young footballers cannot move away from their region. However most academies cater for players aged 15 onwards. All academies must have links with schools and footballers must be 16 before they can sign a professional contract with a club.
- 4.33 There is a collective agreement that is used both in football and in basketball that both the player and the club must adhere to. Article 9 of this agreement guarantees the player that the club will promote, support and take into consideration any academic commitments or vocational qualification courses that the player wants to undertake.

### LATVIA

- 4.34 Professional sports such as football, basketball, volleyball, handball, ice hockey and athletics all use contracts to bind athletes to clubs. Athletes under the age of 18 must have parental consent. There are no legal obligations for the clubs to safeguard an athlete's career.

### POLAND

- 4.35 In the Polish system, some sports federations have schools, which combine the education and training components of elite athletes. An example of how this works within football in Poland is provided in Figure 4.5 below.

#### **Figure 4.5 Polish Football Association (PFA) General High School**

The school functions as a non-public Sports Championship School. Currently the school has classes at primary, middle and high school level. The optimal number of students per class is 22-24. This number of boys per class guarantees the best conditions for both education and training.

Because the school does not participate in the MENiS programme it does not receive any funds from the Ministry for the training and education of young people. The school's main sources of financing are parents, sponsors and their own entrepreneurial activity (leasing out school facilities for various events)

The school has an agreement with the Marek Kochalski Medical Clinic in Lodz. According to this agreement students are provided with sport medical tests. The clinic also provides the students with massages, physiotherapy and psychotherapy.

Individual work with the student is a very important element of the educational process. Players travelling to competitions are provided with lessons and upon their return complete the material which they missed during their absence.

The School Principal is responsible for the programme's adherence with Ministry guidelines. The school curator supervises the carrying out of the school educational programme. The school provides the students with conditions enabling them to learn and train at a high level of sports performance. Students who are not able to cope with the burden have the possibility of continuing their education at evening school (lower educational requirements).

### PORTUGAL

- 4.36 There is one Football League club in Portugal that runs an academy. The *Sporting Clube de Portugal* brings together the best young players to give them top quality coaching, development, education and medical care and accommodation. It is the only example of a specialist academy of its kind in Portugal. The academy works with many partners including specialist sports clubs and local primary and secondary schools to extend the opportunities for out-of-hours learning for both their own pupils and young people in the local community.
- 4.37 The other professional sports in Portugal are basketball and handball. Athletes must be 16 or over before signing a contract. The clubs are formally legally responsible for providing education for the young athletes.

### SPAIN

- 4.38 There are several football schools for the different teams in Spain, La Masía, School of Barcelona Football Club; the Sports School of Real Madrid, the Oscense Football School of Zaragoza Football Club and the Lezama Sports School of the Athletic Football Club. Specific details on La Masía are provided in Figure 4.6 below.

#### **Figure 4.6 La Masía, School of Football of Barcelona Football Club**

Since its creation in 1979, La Masía has become one of the most prestigious and famous academies for football players in Spain. The School is made up of 100 athletes, 60 out of which are residential (in boarding school) while the remaining 40 are at La Masía during the day only.

Most of the student-athletes attend two private schools, with which an agreement has been established. La Masía is in charge of the management and monitoring of their education, who except for specific cases, can enter at the age of 12, 13 or 14. Their support is based on compulsory education, particularly the period of compulsory secondary education (up to 16 years) and two years of upper secondary education (up to 18 years). In La Masía there is an academic co-ordinator who has a close dialogue and co-ordination with the teaching staff in both educational institutions. Each student is monitored and personal academic support is offered to those students who may require it.

When students miss academic lessons on account of events such as championships and tournaments, they are made up for through agreement with the educational institutions. These centres are not exclusive for football players but they also coincide with other young athletes from different sports who are linked to other private academies. The afternoons are spent on training.

During the last three years, only 8% of the residents have been forced to repeat a course (a lower percentage than the ratio among students who are not athletes). 80% of the members of La Masía go to secondary school. Those who do not have a high academic level or simply do not want to continue their officially approved academic education are invited to continue in the unofficial educational system. For example, La Masía has an agreement with Johan Cruyff Academy by means of which the sportspeople from La Masía can enter this school.

The youngest students are 13/14 years old and the oldest 19 years old. The 260 boys who have been in this centre were detected by the talent scouts that the club has worldwide. At present, it has 60 places. The boys who stay in La Masía do not pay for their board and lodging. They are not paid for being players either. The Catalanian 'blue and red' organisation covers the expenses and the studies are covered by scholarships. It should be noted that the sale of promising players to other clubs is very lucrative and, therefore, the football school not only provides training and education for the players but also a profit for the club as well.

### SWEDEN

- 4.39 As detailed in Section 3 paragraph 3.49, 36 out of 67 sport federations have their own academies at the upper secondary level. Swedish sports academies are for elite performers only. Sporting performance is the focus and the curriculum is flexible to allow for this. At the Ski Academy, for example, 50% of the timetable is for the core subjects of Swedish, English and Maths and the remaining make up of the timetable is flexible. Success rates of sports academies in Sweden are good. Sweden has produced a number of World Cup winners in snowboard all of whom have graduated from, or are currently studying at, the snowboard academy. Details of the Swedish sports academies are given in Figure 4.7 below.

#### **Figure 4.7 Swedish Academies**

The academies are supported jointly between the Swedish School Board and the Swedish Sport Confederation and the local communities. All national academies are part of a regular high school. Funding from the authorities covers coaching, instructors, education, vehicles and salaries of teachers concerned.

At **national academy level** it is very important for the schools to be flexible. Students usually work out a personal study scheme with teachers. There is assistance with housing for athletes (usually an agreement is made with local housing companies to reserve accommodation).

The ratio between hours of education to sport is 70% to 30% i.e. approximately one third of hours are dedicated to training and related activities. The scheduled time allocation varies between sports. For ski sports, more time is devoted during winter months.

Many students are involved in camps during their time at the academy, particularly in the Snowboard and Alpine Ski Academies. Therefore, each student has a personal mentor with whom the studies are planned and conducted on an individual basis, depending on performance levels.

- 4.40 Representatives of the Swedish Sport Confederation, such as sport clubs, very often take a moral responsibility on an individual basis with student-athletes, in particular with sportspersons at younger ages. No legal responsibility is taken unless certain paragraphs in this matter have been included in personal contracts with the athletes.
- 4.41 If a young ice-hockey player gets drafted to a major league club in Sweden at the age of 16 after compulsory school, the club will undertake responsibilities for employment training or educational training. There is likely to be an ice-hockey school academy nearby co-operating with the club in question. Recently, a number of Swedish ice-hockey players in National Hockey League (NHL) in North America have originated from a certain community in northern Sweden. The Swedish Ice-Hockey Federation co-operates with the community council in question in various ways. Both bodies have undertaken a responsibility to develop a national ice-hockey academy financed by community tax funds and by funding from the federation.
- 4.42 Joint efforts like this are becoming more and more common and both parties can contribute to secure the development of the athlete from a sportive as well as from social and vocational standpoints. Athletes on this level, or even slightly lower, often get involved in the organisation of their clubs after the career is over.

### **THE NETHERLANDS**

- 4.43 The Netherlands has academies that are provided for élite athletes and combines both the training and education of student-athletes. One of these academies is the Randstad Elite Sport Academy. This academy is a higher education sports academy with an academic focus but all entrants must be élite athletes. Further detail is provided in Section 5.
- 4.44 All professional sports bind their athletes to clubs by contracts. There is no legal responsibility for the club to provide education for newly signed athletes. However, there is limited legislation to safeguard an athlete's educational interests. All children must attend school between five and 16 years. After this a student can continue into further education or attend school two days per week whilst combining this with work.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 4.45 It is mandatory for all English football clubs in the Premier League, consisting of 20 teams, to have an academy and the Football Association (FA) funds 18 places per club. 19 Football League clubs also run academies. These academies bring together the best young players to give them top quality coaching, development, education and medical care.
- 4.46 The Rugby Football Union (RFU) fund 12 Premiership England Rugby Academies, plus two England Regional Rugby Academies. The aim of the academy is to provide gifted players with the opportunity for them to fulfil their rugby potential. Players are provided with high quality coaching and support services to achieve this goal. The RFU also encourages all players within the academy to continue within education. Further details of a Premiership England Rugby Academy is provided in Figure 4.8 overleaf.

**Figure 4.8 Leicester Tigers England Rugby Academy**

The Leicester Tigers Rugby Academy has developed an apprenticeship programme for young professional rugby players which attempts to balance the sportsperson's education with rugby, personal and social skills. Young sportsmen between the ages of 16 and 20 who demonstrate they have the ability to become a professional player and are willing to make the necessary commitment can be offered a rugby apprenticeship. This is awarded in two specific ways:

- rugby bursary
- bursary/development agreement.

In both cases a financial award is presented for a minimum period of one year, but in most cases for two years, starting on 1st July of each year. The apprenticeship is split into two specific age categories, 16-18 and 18-20. The players will follow the Tigers' development cycle, which includes:

- academic or vocational programme
- rugby skills
- body management
- personal and social skills.

Leicester Tigers have been building strong links and solid relationships with a number of colleges and universities that are prepared to work with them to ensure that this apprenticeship will be successful. Boys at 16 will have the opportunity to take either qualifications at advanced GCSE, GNVQ or BTEC level.

At 18 years those boys who have potential to pursue a degree course will be encouraged to select one of the appropriate universities within the region. For those players who do not choose to go to university then alternate education is available with a range of qualifications that should meet all players' capabilities. For some this may also include formal training with a local company providing work experience.

**Summary**

- 4.47 Education provision for elite sportspeople in professional, semi-professional and non-professional sport varies greatly between Member States.
- 4.48 A number of Member States have specific regulations or policies in place, either through the NGB or the Ministry of Sport, regarding education of young sportspeople who are employed in a professional capacity. Such policies encourage development of elite sport, as well as giving consideration to social responsibility.
- 4.49 Approximately 60% of the Member States have specialised academies for elite sportspeople. These academies are typically sport-specific (the most common are football and rugby) and enable programmes to be tailored for both the athletes' educational and sporting needs.

## **SECTION 4 – PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL SPORT**

---

- 4.50 In some Member States, such as Sweden, there is a greater weighting towards sporting performance at these sports academies and a high level of flexibility within the curriculum to allow for this (as much as 50% of the curriculum is related to sporting performance). This is in contrast to other Member States, for example, The Netherlands and rugby academies in France, where there is greater emphasis on education.
- 4.51 In some Member States, there is legislation in place to ensure that academies run by commercial sports organisations adhere to guidelines and statutory educational requirements. For example, football academies in England are mandatory for the 20 clubs within the Premier League. However in other Member States there is no such legislation/requirement in place by the NGB.
- 4.52 There is increasing concern that for many young sportspersons based in academies and training centres, the main priority is sporting achievement with education a distant second. Statistics, such as only 12% of young French academy rugby players and less than 10% of young English academy footballers secure professional contracts, highlight the need for a balance between education and training to be maintained.

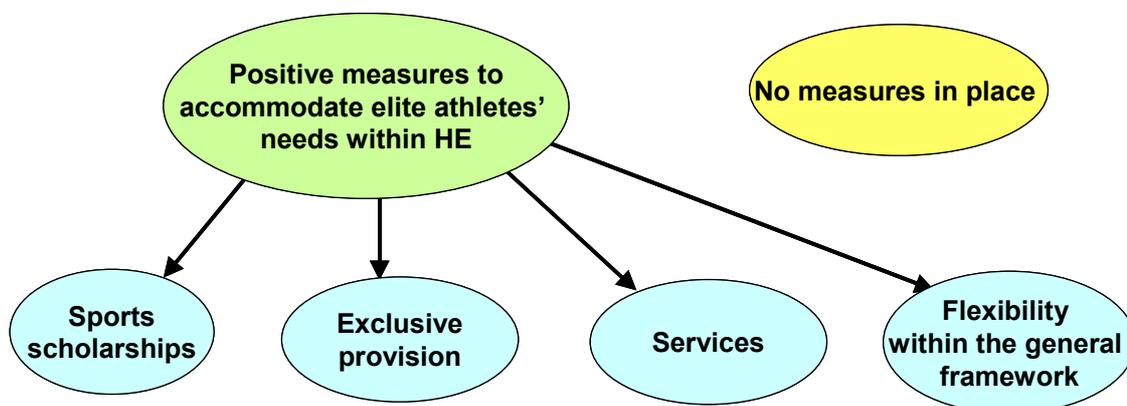
## **SECTION 5**

### **HIGHER EDUCATION AND SPORT**

## Section 5 Higher education and sport

- 5.1 Many young sportspersons continue both their sport development and education at university. The challenge of balancing academic and sports development, together with managing personal development, continues into higher education (HE). Some universities in Member States adjust entry requirements and offer flexible arrangements and support systems for study to student-athletes. Opportunities are increasing for sports scholarships in Europe, which until recently were more common in the United States. Whilst scholarships enable student-athletes to both train and study, they sometimes bring with them certain obligations in respect of representing the college or university in sport.
- 5.2 Figure 5.1 below summarises the situation across Europe as indicated by our research.

**Figure 5.1 Higher education and sport**



- 5.3 As illustrated above, university provision and scholarship systems for young sportspersons varies between countries and can be categorised as follows:
- **no measures:** sport science may be a subject within the university's programme, however, there are no special measures in place to support pursuit of a sporting career
  - **positive measures to accommodate elite athletes' needs:** there are specific adaptations within the university's programme to allow the pursuit of a sporting career. For example, **sports scholarships** may be offered, various support **services** may be provided, **flexibility** may be available and **exclusive provision** may be offered.

**No specific measures**

- 5.4 In respect of universities, Table 5.1 below indicates which Member States have not developed any specific measures to support student-athletes at university.

**Table 5.1 No specific measures**

No specific measures	Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta
----------------------	-----------------------------------

**Positive measures**

- 5.5 Table 5.2 below indicates which Member States have developed positive measures to support student-athletes entering and studying at university. These positive measures may be in the form of legislation, sports scholarships, flexibility within the education system and delivery, support services or exclusive provision. Scholarships and other financial support are detailed in paragraph 5.30 below. Other examples of positive measures within Member States are provided below.

**Table 5.2 Positive measures**

Positive measures	Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK
-------------------	---

**Examples of policies or programmes****BELGIUM**

- 5.6 In 1998, a law protecting athletes' rights, *Topsportconvenant* for HE, was initiated by the Ministry of Sport of the Flemish Community in co-operation with the three independent educational networks, the Belgian Olympic and Inter-federal Committee (BOIC) and the sports administration body (Blosso) of the Flemish community.

**CYPRUS**

- 5.7 The Ministry of Education and Culture within the framework of its determined policy for the development of sports in Cyprus, has developed an incentive scheme for young sportspersons by granting them 'bonus points' if they wish to continue their studies in the Universities of Greece, in the Department of PE and Sports Science. Hence, this opportunity is restricted to a specific educational category and if the athlete chooses to follow something else in his/her post-school career, they will have no advantage from this scheme.

### CZECH REPUBLIC

- 5.8 There are no special adaptations to the university programmes for élite athletes in the Czech Republic. However, there is some financial aid available. Student-athletes studying at universities may gain scholarships on account of representation of their sport or special sport achievement. However, due to the economic situation in the Czech Republic, the amount of money that these athletes are granted is not sufficient to fully ensure that they can combine their academic and sporting commitments successfully. Hence, athletes tend to secure money from other sources, such as through personal sponsors or contributions from sport associations.

### DENMARK

- 5.9 Danish universities have a system for facilitating entry requirements. In the *Institut for Idræt* (Institute of Exercise and Sport Sciences) at the University of Copenhagen it was decided in 2000 that experience gained from involvement in élite sport would be accepted as a relevant qualification in applications for admission through *kvote 2*. In *kvote 2* a small number of study places (usually about 10% of the total number) are given to students having a *studentereksamen* (final examination) of the *gymnasium* with an average of grades that is not good enough for direct admission. Students can add to their qualifications by proving that they have been involved in activities relevant for the content of the study they want to enter, and in the case of being a student at the Institute of Exercise and Sports Sciences, élite sport is considered a relevant activity.

### ESTONIA

- 5.10 Two universities in Estonia offer specialist education to élite athletes – the University of Tartu and Tallinn Pedagogical University. Student-athletes are allowed extensions to complete their courses and follow an individual curriculum. Support is available in the form of government scholarships and awards.

### FINLAND

- 5.11 In recent years several universities and polytechnics have started their own programmes to cater for the needs of athletes who are combining education with sport. In HE there are two polytechnics that run special degree programmes for athletes. Admission is based partly on sporting merit and partly on grades and an entrance exam. Support is also available to students in the form of grants and scholarships and flexible programmes.

### FRANCE

- 5.12 Provisions concerning the admission of high-level athletes to Institutions of HE are outlined in Circular No 1455 of 6th October 1987. This circular invites University Deans, School Directors and Regional Directors of Education to undertake all necessary efforts to accommodate high-level athletes who wish to combine sports activities and studies.

### GERMANY

- 5.13 45 German universities have Co-operation Agreements with Olympic Support Centres, German University Sports Federations and/or National Sports Federations in order to accommodate students who wish to pursue a professional sports career while in full-time third-level education. These universities offer reduced entry criteria for athletes and special efforts are made to promote athletes within the university system.

### GREECE

- 5.14 Greek universities have systems for facilitating registration and entry requirements. Athletes who have achieved distinguished sporting performance can be excluded from entrance examinations and register directly:
- to any university department of their choice (with no limits on the number of the athletes admitted to each department)
  - to the training schools for police officers, fire officers and marine port policy corporations (up to ten admissions per year per school)
  - to one of the five Departments of PE and Sport Sciences (up to 30% of the total admission number of the department). Here it is important to note that the sport performance criteria for entry in these departments are significantly widened to include national champions and sporting distinctions for youth and earlier ages (Deputy Ministry of Sport, Law 2725/1999).

### HUNGARY

- 5.15 Hungary has a system for facilitating entry requirements to university as outlined in Figure 5.2 below.

#### **Figure 5.2 HE and sport in Hungary**

In 2002, the Hungarian Olympic Committee (HOC) launched the **Olympians' Course of Life Programme**. In the framework of this programme the HOC entered into agreement with 20 colleges/universities.

Outlined below are the services and concessions that are offered to Hungarian Olympic athletes on this scheme.

**Incentive scheme:** in accordance with the Ministerial Decree on the General Regulations of Admission at Colleges/Universities, winners and those placed second or third in World and European championships (Olympic sports only) can be awarded a maximum of five 'bonus points'. For winners or those placed second or third in national championships (Olympic sports only) three 'bonus points' may be given.

**Facilitating entry requirements:** in accordance with a governmental decree, winners and those placed second and third in Olympic Games competitions have the right to be admitted to any colleges/universities without entrance examination.

The Programme also offers flexibility within HE, such as through timetabling and examination dates, as well as scholarships. Details are provided within the relevant headings of this section.

### **IRELAND**

- 5.16 Irish universities also facilitate entry requirements for student-athletes. In the Waterford Institute of Technology, for example, there are places reserved for individuals who are competent in particular sports and they are guaranteed places on the Recreation and Leisure course. These places are usually offered on the basis of one per sport such as cycling, equestrian sport, swimming and athletics. These students may not meet the point requirements for this course, but they must meet the minimum entry requirements to the college. They are guaranteed a place on the course, but no financial assistance.
- 5.17 Ireland also has examples of special arrangements for student-athletes. At University College Dublin, talented athletes are advised to register for the Diploma in Sports Management should they fail to meet academic entry requirements for other programmes. The diploma in sports management is a two-year part time programme that aims to provide a foundation in the necessary skills for a sports related career.

### **ITALY**

- 5.18 There are provisions for the promotion of athletes who study at Institutes of Sports Science. Other athletes who study at university are supported through the University Sports Centres, which receive public grants. However there are no grants available specifically for athletes to study at university. There is, however, a degree of flexibility awarded to athletes studying at university, in the form of timetabling and exam dates.

### **LATVIA**

- 5.19 Concessions for elite athletes who want to further their academic career are decided by the particular HE institution they wish to attend. For example, some institutions have facilitated entry requirements. The Latvian Academy of Sport Education admits the participants of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> placed athletes of the World and European championships in Olympic sports, as well as the 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> placed athletes of the World and European junior championships, the graduates of Murjani Sport Gymnasium and Riga Secondary School Nr.90, without the entrance exams.
- 5.20 Some universities also support top athletes by allowing them to study longer within the same study year. In addition, many courses offer distance-learning.

### **LITHUANIA**

- 5.21 On applying to the Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education, extra points are given to talented sportspersons if they are placed in the top three in the Olympic, World or European, Senior, Youth or Junior Championships, or if they achieve a top three placing in the Lithuanian Senior Championships, they are junior champions, or they possess a Lithuanian Physical Education Badge.

### **POLAND**

- 5.22 Poland has a system for facilitating entry requirements to university for student-athletes. The MENiS directive from 20 December 2002 amended the directive on qualifications, degrees and professional titles in PE and the specific paths of acquiring them, (Dz. U. Nr 8, pos.93). It gives the Minister of Education and Sport the possibility to grant a student-athlete, who has achieved outstanding results for Polish sport, access to university without the requirement of having to take the matura exam, at the request of the relevant Polish sport association.

- 5.23 There is also a system to offer bonus points. If a university candidate already has some certified qualifications in the area of physical culture, for example a sports instructor qualification, this fact is recognised by a bonus point. The six PE academies in Poland (plus two external branches) have very similar acceptance criteria. Some universities also reward sportspersons with bonus points during the enrolment process.

### **PORTUGAL**

- 5.24 According to Portuguese Law, Decreto-Lei n.º 125/95, elite athletes have special status when they access universities (except military and police institutions). A certain quota is decided each year. Between 1992/93 to 1999/00, 1,366 entered universities as beneficiaries of special status. The special status includes flexibility in timetabling and exam schedules.

### **SLOVAKIA**

- 5.25 Support for student-athletes is limited because compulsory attendance restricts the training and tournament participation of sportsmen/women. However, some universities have changed from a fixed subject structure to a more flexible system where students can choose to some extent what they want to study (via a credit system). It is believed that this system will provide more freedom for students-athletes than they had in past. However many elite athletes (and even teachers) are still clarifying their duties and options in the new system.

### **SPAIN**

- 5.26 In Spain, universities are compelled by law (Royal Decree 1467/1997, 19 Sept.) to reserve 3% of the total places provided by university centres to high performance athletes that comply with the corresponding academic requirements. The centres that teach the Degree in Physical Activity and Sport Studies as well as the National Institutes of PE are compelled by law to reserve an additional number (equivalent to 5%) of the places provided for high performance athletes. These are exempt from the carrying out of physical tests that may be established as a requirement to have access to the Degree in Physical Activity and Sport Studies.
- 5.27 In the same Royal Decree, it is also established that the Sports Council can sign agreements with the Autonomous Communities, non-state universities and private educational institutions so that high performance athletes can enjoy special conditions relative to their access and permanence there, respecting in any case, the general academic requirements which are necessary for access.

### **SWEDEN**

- 5.28 Elite athletes who continue into HE have flexibility in their studies, scholarships and other methods of support to help combine elite sport and HE. A number of universities in Sweden have designed programmes and courses which make it possible to combine studies with international athletic participation.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 5.29 In the UK, there are a variety of measures in place to assist elite student-athletes in combining their education and sporting career. Provision at some universities includes scholarships, support and advice, distance learning and flexible scheduling.

**Sports scholarships**

- 5.30 Table 5.3 below indicates which Member States have sports scholarships and other financial awards to support student-athletes at university.

**Table 5.3 Sports scholarships**

Sports scholarships and/or financial support	Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands, UK
--	--

**Examples of policies or programmes**

**BELGIUM**

- 5.31 The Belgian law permits the award to student-athletes, who are ranked on the Olympic lists, of a contract (worth 70% of a full-time professional contract) which allows them to combine élite sport and studies in HE professionally. Also included is a scholarship of €20,000 enabling these student-athletes to pay for specific aspects related to the combination of élite sport and study (for example, registration) as well as specific support (for example, a sport psychologist). During the first year (2003/04), five student-athletes were awarded a contract, four in HE outside of university and one university student (at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel*).
- 5.32 A second initiative established as part of the law will begin in the 2004/05 academic year. This will include young Olympic athletes (ie those selected for the Belgian Youth Olympic team) who register at a university or at an academic institution of HE outside of university. While they will not receive a contract, they will receive financial support allowing them to combine HE and élite sport. It is expected that approximately 20-30 young Olympic athletes may be eligible for support.

**CYPRUS**

- 5.33 There are a number of different scholarship schemes and financial assistance that can be accessed by élite student-athletes. Specific examples are provided in Figure 5.3 overleaf.

**Figure 5.3 Scholarships for HE student-athletes in Cyprus**

A number of colleges in Cyprus, such as Intercollege and Cyprus College offer the following discounts on tuition fees to athletes:

- 60% discount for athletes that are members of Cyprus National Teams
- 40% discount for athletes who participated in International Competitions.

A limited number of scholarships, offering financial support to talented and top level athletes, are provided by the Cyprus Olympic Committee through the Programmes of Olympic Solidarity. 80% of Cypriot athletes following a post-school education, study and train abroad with foreign coaches, most of them in Greece and these scholarships support such training.

The Cyprus Sport Organisation offers a remuneration scheme for talented athletes that are of a suitable level and wish to enter into a university. The Cyprus Sport Organisation aims to financially support a limited number of athletes who have achieved excellent results so that they can continue their post-school studies. Under this scheme, an athlete can benefit from a scholarship of £1,000 to £1,500 Cyprus pounds per year.

**ESTONIA**

5.34 Government scholarships and awards are given to élite athletes.

**FINLAND**

5.35 The Ministry of Education finances a foundation, which provides study grants to both those who are active in sports and to those who are ending their sports careers. Grants are awarded to students at vocational upper secondary schools, at polytechnics and the universities. The amount of the grant is €1,600 for athletes in third-level education and €1,300 for athletes in upper secondary education. The grant is awarded a maximum of three times to the same individual.

5.36 The Finnish Ministry of Education also awards grants for athletes proposed by the Olympic Committee and the Paralympic Committee who have the potential to win a medal in the Olympic or Paralympic Games, or in the World Championships. The total amount of sport grants for the year 2004 is €558,000.

5.37 Grants are allocated in both summer and winter Olympic sports as well as in non-Olympic and Paralympic sports. The criteria for the different grants are outlined below:

- a grant of €12,000 is awarded if the athlete has reached 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> place in the individual competition of the season's main event (Olympic Games, World Championships, or World Cup overall competition)
- a grant of €6,000 is awarded if the athlete finishes in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> place in the individual competition of the events specified above
- a young athlete's grant of €6,000 is awarded if the athlete reaches 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> place in the corresponding competitions.

## **SECTION 5 – HIGHER EDUCATION AND SPORT**

---

- 5.38 In 2004, these criteria have been applied flexibly to some athletes who are preparing for the Athens Olympic Games, in special cases where the athlete's earlier achievements are exceptionally strong. In the case of new Olympic sports, sports that have fewer participants, Paralympic sports, and non-Olympic sports, tighter criteria are applied. This is due to a higher level of competition in the Olympic sports.
- 5.39 An income limit of €100,000 based on the amount of the athlete's taxable income, was set for the grants of 2004. When this limit is exceeded, the athlete is not eligible for a grant. In this way a fair distribution of the grants to athletes who need them most can be guaranteed.
- 5.40 An athlete who is awarded a grant must sign a training contract with the relevant Sports Federation and the Finnish Olympic Committee, in which the athlete agrees to follow the existing anti-doping rules as well as other directions, including a personal studies programme.

### **GREECE**

- 5.41 The scholarship programme in Greece contains two parts. The first, involves the awarding of annual scholarships for students of any educational level, up to the university, while the second part supports athletes for graduate studies at Greek Universities or abroad, for sport related disciplines (Deputy Ministry of Sport, Law 2725/1999).

### **HUNGARY**

- 5.42 Hungary has a system of exemption/reduction in tuition fees at universities for student-athletes. Partner colleges/universities in the Olympian Course of Life Programme, launched in 2002, bind them by contract to exempt between one and three gifted young sportsmen/sportswomen recommended by the Hungarian Olympic Committee from paying for tuition and to reduce a few other young sportspersons' tuition fees.

### **IRELAND**

- 5.43 Sports scholarships for third level students (aged 17 and over) are now available for talented athletes at most universities and colleges in Ireland. University College Dublin has the largest scholarship programme which was introduced in 1979 for young soccer players. Since then, it has been extended to embrace many other sports, such as athletics, basketball, boxing, golf, rowing, table-tennis and martial arts. It has now been replicated in many other Irish institutions. Students who receive such awards must agree to represent the college in their sport and satisfy academic entry requirements. Offers for college places are centralised via the Central Applications Office matching demand and supply for places, and drawing on students' academic results attained in the Leaving Certificate (terminal exam of the education system) examination.
- 5.44 Individual NGBs may offer scholarships. For example, the Gaelic Athletic Association offers bursaries valued around €630 per annum to third level students via its Provincial Councils - Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Connaught.

### POLAND

- 5.45 Policy on sports scholarships is set out in the Minister of Education's Directive of 4 January 2001 which outlines the rules of awarding, withholding and withdrawing sports scholarships as well as the value of sports scholarships for national and Olympic team members. These apply to sports scholarships awarded to national and Olympic team members, including the Paralympic team, financed from the national budget.
- 5.46 A sports scholarship may be received by a national team member if:
- they have been called to represent the national team
  - they are placed first, second or third in World or European championships at senior level, directly preceding the awarding of the scholarship, in which:
    - a) at least eight competitors participated
    - b) at least six teams or crews participated
  - they have followed the World or European championship preparation programme, prepared by the corresponding Polish sports association, in order to participate in the abovementioned competitions.

### PORTUGAL

- 5.47 In Portugal, there is a competition for the *Estatuto de Alta Competição* (statute for top competition). This scheme gives the opportunity for elite athletes to win scholarships to further their education.

### SLOVAKIA

- 5.48 Sport scholarships as well as study-scholarships have been abolished. Social scholarships are maintained only from other sources (Department of Labour). There remain a few possibilities for elite student-athletes who fulfil certain performance criteria to obtain financial support. A contribution from the Slovak Association of University Sports is up to €50 per month. However, substantial long-term financial support is offered for *TOP-TEAM* members – elite athletes who have qualified or are close to qualification for the Olympic Games. They receive this from the NOC or National Sport Centre.

### SLOVENIA

- 5.49 80 scholarships per year are awarded to top-level athletes.

### THE NETHERLANDS

- 5.50 The NOC and Netherlands Sport Foundation have established a study guarantee fund for A-status elite athletes that do not have a scholarship, B-status elite athletes also have access to it. In the Netherlands, each student is entitled to receive a study grant for four years. A-status elite athletes receive a maximum grant of €3,267 for four extra years and B-status elite athletes receive a maximum grant of €1,633 for two extra years.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 5.51 The majority of universities in the UK offer scholarships to élite athletes. For example, the University of Stirling in Scotland has offered sport scholarships for over 20 years. 150 students have been awarded in total over £500,000 to help them to gain a degree and achieve to the highest levels of sport. 45 scholarships have been awarded in 2002/03.
- 5.52 In addition, the government launched the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) in April 2004, a new initiative to deliver sports scholarships and bursaries to talented athletes aged 16-25. The DCMS are investing £3 million per annum in the scheme over an initial three-year period.
- 5.53 TASS is designed to enable hundreds of young talented athletes to reach their sporting potential. Its aim is to help young athletes maintain the right balance between academic life, training and competing. Strategically, it will be a coherent support system, driven through partnership working between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Further Education Colleges (FECs), National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other sports organisations.
- 5.54 Key objectives of the scheme are to:
- raise the quality of sports service provision for talented performers in HEIs
  - encourage partnership working among HEIs and NGBs
  - contribute, along with other talent development and performance sport support measures, to a reduction in the 70% drop out rate amongst the most talented 17-21 year old sportspeople in England
  - promote equity, by helping more talented young sportspeople from under-represented groups to fulfil their potential
  - help up to 1,500 talented sportspeople per year achieve their potential
  - support NGB talent development plans.

### **Services**

- 5.55 The majority of HE institutions offer specialist support services. These services provided to student-athletes can take many forms, including:
- coaching
  - accommodation
  - career counselling
  - medical support
  - tutor monitoring
  - nutrition
  - general infrastructure.

- 5.56 Table 5.4 below gives examples of the Member States who have specifically developed these kinds of services to support student-athletes at university. However, many of the programmes already referred to above will also include these services.

**Table 5.4 Services**

Services	Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, UK
----------	---

**Examples of policies or programmes**

**DENMARK**

- 5.57 Denmark supports young sportspersons through distance learning systems. *Team Danmark* offers elite sportspeople laptops so they can study via distance learning. Individual support and financial assistance is also available to young sportspersons. Educational institutions can apply to *Team Danmark* for financing supplementary teaching for sportspersons and the institution can also apply to *Team Danmark* for payment for extra study guidance and to finance additional study benefits.

**FINLAND**

- 5.58 Finland has an employment support programme to help athletes find work after graduation. The Oulu Provincial Government has made a three-year grant to the Oulu Region Academy of Sport to help to improve flexibility in studies for top-ranking athletes and the efficiency of their placement in the labour market. The funding, which totals approximately €300,000, has been made possible from grants by the European Social Fund (ESF), the Ministry of Education, the City of Oulu, and the Oulu and District Municipalities' Vocational Education Council.
- 5.59 A tutor system has been set up to help athletes plan their studies. All student-athletes arrange their training and studies according to a personalised co-ordinated schedule. Guidance material has been provided for them in print, on video and on the internet.

**FRANCE**

- 5.60 National Technical Directors of Sports Federations can help high-level athletes through personalised assistance, which is allocated to each Sports Federation at an annual meeting to decide objectives. Directors of Sports Federations can also have financial support for education from regional services provided by the Ministry of Sport.

**GERMANY**

- 5.61 Personal tutors and study counselling is offered to athletes at German universities.

**HUNGARY**

- 5.62 In Hungary, a system of tutor monitoring is in place to support the student-athletes' education and give assistance in their studies, as well as to assist their time management and activity co-ordination.

5.63 Auxiliary material is also provided. Young sportspersons are given textbooks, handbooks, manuals, special literature and other auxiliary educational material with the aim of promoting their studying during various absences, for example, when they are staying in training camps.

**SPAIN**

5.64 Special arrangements provided at Spanish universities include measures such as individual tutor monitoring and limited places in residence.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

5.65 The UK has a comprehensive support system for student-athletes. For example the TASS programme which is aimed at reducing the drop out rates of athletes within education, by providing a range of support services to assist the balance of education and sport. More information on the TASS scheme can be found in paragraph 5.52.

***Flexibility within the general university framework***

5.66 Various examples of flexibility in specific arrangements for student-athletes exist, including flexibility in:

- entry requirements
- timetabling
- permission for absence due to training camps/competitions
- distance learning
- transferring between campuses
- student status.

5.67 Table 5.5 below indicates which Member States have developed flexible arrangements to support student-athletes at university. Many of the programmes already referred to above also include such measures.

**Table 5.5 Flexibility within the general university framework**

Flexibility within the general university framework	Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK
---	---

**Examples of policies or programmes**

**BELGIUM**

5.68 At present, those student-athletes at university can request to spread the work of one academic year over an extended time period (two, three or four years longer). This request has to be made to the institution upon registration. Some flexibility may be offered to student-athletes in regard to exam timetables.

### DENMARK

- 5.69 Time-tabling flexibility is allowed in Denmark. Since 2000, the Ministry of Education has, according to *Team Danmark* and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, “established the flexibility necessary” for élite sports people at HE institutions. This flexibility can be seen in the fields of attendance at courses, delivery of written or oral assignments and terms of examinations.

### ESTONIA

- 5.70 In Estonia, élite student-athletes at university can extend their studies for an additional two years. Student-athletes also benefit from an individual study plan.

### FINLAND

- 5.71 For many years, the University of Oulu has co-operated with the Oulu Regional Academy of Sport in helping its student-athletes co-ordinate between their training and studies. All institutes connected with the Academy of Sport are involved in a project launched in May 2002, aiming to develop flexible study arrangements for the élite athletes and to help them find work after graduation. The project is supported by the ESF and will last until 2005. The University of Oulu has also received funding from the Ministry of Education for similar purposes.
- 5.72 The Oulu Regional Academy of Sport has developed a number of flexible educational opportunities for athletes. As the only sports academy in Finland, the Oulu Region Academy of Sport makes it possible for a student to study the subject s/he desires whilst at the same time receiving professional instruction in the sport of their choice. The Oulu schools assist the athlete by buying Pro- and Team-services for their students from the Academy.
- 5.73 The athlete has an official status at the Academy, and this facilitates the organisation of flexible instruction. In every educational establishment, the athlete has a liaison person of her/his own. It is their task to help the athlete accommodate his/her studies and sports activities, and help develop the internal arrangements of the educational establishment in order to better suit the needs of the athlete. Along with their instructors these liaison officers also participate in meetings at the Sports Academy, the purpose of which is to increase collaboration. At these meetings, the student-athletes’ success in studies and sports is measured.
- 5.74 The personal study programme is flexible so that the athlete can participate in international competitions and training camps while doing his/her studies. For example, a swimmer in the Sports Academy participated in a university exam in real time while at a training camp abroad. The ultimate aim is to ensure that the athletes from the Sports Academy become successfully employed after their studies without compromising the quality of their academic achievements. This guarantees high level expertise in their chosen profession.

### **FRANCE**

- 5.75 Flexibility in respect of student-athletes is encouraged in France within the university system. Decisions concerning third-level education are the responsibility of the Ministry of Youth, National Education and Research. Provisions concerning the admission of high-level athletes to Institutions of HE are outlined in Circular No 1455 of 6<sup>th</sup> October 1987. This circular invites University Deans, School Directors and Regional Directors of Education to undertake all necessary efforts to accommodate high level athletes who wish to combine sports activities and studies.
- 5.76 As the management of universities is decentralised, some University Deans may, under certain conditions, make special arrangements for high-level athletes. These arrangements usually amount to extending the duration of courses, allowing reduced attendance and postponing exams. For example, each year the Ministry of Health awards exemption to 20 high-level athletes from entrance exams to the first year of courses at Institutes for Physiotherapy and Chiropractic.

### **GERMANY**

- 5.77 Special arrangements in German universities include flexibility in timetables, examination scheduling, excursions and practical courses. Athletes can also extend the duration of their courses to cover more than the normal number of semesters permitted.

### **GREECE**

- 5.78 Greece has a system of unrestricted transferring for students who are also members of national teams. These student-athletes are entitled to unrestricted transferring between the same departments of different universities, located in different cities, in order to facilitate sporting engagements.
- 5.79 Student-athletes also enjoy unlimited student status. Currently students in Greek universities can reserve their student status for an unlimited length of time and irrespective of their academic achievements. Contrary to what happens in other countries, it is not uncommon for a student to take up to eight or ten years, as a registered candidate for a bachelor's degree. This is particularly important for elite athletes who can choose to set aside their studies as long as needed in order to train intensively and take part in competitions. When their sporting career is over they can return to their universities to complete their degrees.
- 5.80 Informal contacts with a number of elite athletes have indicated that in many cases there is wide recognition of elite athletes works as a valid passport for claiming individualistic treatment from their professors in different universities. A second chance for exams, the option to submit an assignment or the opportunity to attend labs with an alternative group, or the option for a transfer to another university can be some of the arrangements which can be made for an elite athlete who can prove that they have been absent, or they need to be absent, for training or competitions.

### **HUNGARY**

- 5.81 Hungary allows student-athletes flexibility in dates for entrance examinations and admission interviews. Time-tabling flexibility is also allowed. Special dispensation is granted concerning the student-athletes' absence, their study timetable and examination timetable. These favours apply only to young sportspersons who are beneficiaries of the agreement between the Hungarian Olympic Committee and colleges/universities. These student-athletes have the opportunity to pursue their studies according to individual study and examination timetables.

### **LITHUANIA**

- 5.82 Lithuania has some special arrangements for athletes at university. For example, a course may be extended, athletes may claim for exemption and they may have academic breaks due to sports activities.

### **SPAIN**

- 5.83 Flexible arrangements in Spanish universities include flexible timetables and schedules for exam sitting. There is also the possibility to have specific programmes that ensure their studies are compatible with their sport training. All of these are part of the flexible package that athletes have at their disposal.

### **SWEDEN**

- 5.84 University programmes and courses in Sweden are partly organised as distance learning education where the student-athlete has the responsibility to manage their own programme of study. Specially designed programmes are also available. The education programme is designed to fit the athletes' schedule. In most cases this is a minor problem. Problems do, however, occur when athletes take part in World Cup circuits with long intervals abroad.

### **THE NETHERLANDS**

- 5.85 In the Netherlands, it depends on the institutions to what extent they make adaptations to their regulations and educational programmes. A large number of schools are willing to adapt in order to make it possible for élite athletes to study. A small number of institutions have special élite sport classes.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 5.86 In the UK, athletes receive special concessions in terms of examinations, in both dates and location. If they are abroad, the athlete has to sit the examination at the same time as when it is being held in the UK because of security of the exam itself. Performance Lifestyle agents have a list of designated venues overseas that can be used for examinations.
- 5.87 Distance-learning programmes are also available. Athletes who train outside of the UK have been lent laptop computers to enable them to continue with their study when out of the country. On a separate occasion, an athlete from Iceland, who trained full-time in Scotland wanted to continue their education at a college in Iceland. Through negotiation with the tutors at the college, the athlete continued to study by email, post, and fax. Examination papers were faxed to the institute on the day of the examination so that the student could take part.

**Exclusive provision**

- 5.88 Table 5.6 below indicates which Member States have developed exclusive provision to support student-athletes at university. The Netherlands is the only Member State to report such provision.

**Table 5.6 Exclusive provision**

Exclusive provision	The Netherlands
---------------------	-----------------

**Examples of policies or programmes**

**THE NETHERLANDS**

- 5.89 The Netherlands is the only Member State reporting a university tailored specifically for elite athletes. The Johan Cruyff University (JCU) is a HE institution for business administration that prepares elite athletes for a post-athlete career in the sports industry. JCU offers a tailor-made education in which study is tuned to the sport programme. Programmes are for elite athletes only. JCU is now also operating in Portugal and Spain. Another HE establishment for elite athletes is the Randstad Elite Academy, details of which are given in Figure 5.4 below.

**Figure 5.4 Randstad Elite Sport Academy, The Netherlands**

The Randstad Elite Sport Academy is a HE sports academy. There is no minimum age entry, but students must have completed secondary education.

The academy has academic focus but all entrants must be elite athletes. Classes are on two mornings a week in a central location. There is flexibility in examination dates to accommodate students. The academic programme is restricted to a diploma in commercial economics.

Funding is from the HE system and the Randstad (a commercial human resources organisation). There are no scholarships or grants available.

**Summary**

- 5.90 There is greater flexibility to combine a sporting and academic career at the HE stage of education. However, there still needs to be a suitable balance between education and sports development.
- 5.91 Most Member States have reported specific measures to support elite athletes at university.
- 5.92 Many universities across the Member States have specific policies or programmes in place to facilitate entry requirements for elite sportspersons. Either the Ministry of Sport or the Ministry of Education, depending on the Member State, has put these policies in place. Athletes must meet specific criteria to qualify for facilitated entry requirements, which vary between Member States, but typically centre on a top three placing in the Olympic Games, World Championships and European Championships. A number of Member States have an incentive scheme, where 'bonus' points, based on sporting performance, may contribute towards entry requirements.

- 5.93 Over 50% of Member States offer sports scholarships to students to support them financially throughout university and enable them to combine HE with their sporting ambitions. The source of the funding for the scholarships varies between Member States and may come from the NGB, the NOC or the Government (through the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Sport). The sum of the scholarships varies greatly between Member States. For example, the British government will award £6 million to universities and colleges in England and Wales over the next three years (2004/07) to support talented student-athletes, whereas in Finland the total amount for sports grants in 2004 is €558,000.
- 5.94 The majority of Member States have developed services of some kind to support student-athletes at university. There are a range of services offered, such as individual tutor support and monitoring, personalised study programmes, distance learning and e-learning programmes, unrestricted transferring between departments or campuses, unlimited student status, flexible timetabling, permission for absence at training camps/competitions. All these methods are designed to fit the athletes schedule and ensure all is done to accommodate high level athletes who wish to combine sports activities and studies.
- 5.95 Only the Netherlands has a university that is tailored specifically for élite athletes. The Johan Cruyff University specialises in business administration that prepares élite athletes for a post-athletic career in the sports industry. This university now also operates through partnership arrangements in Portugal and Spain.
- 5.96 Research and conference discussions have both highlighted that a high level of flexibility is required to support élite athletes during HE. This enables élite athletes effectively to combine training and education and therefore provides the best possible chance for student-athletes to realise not only their sporting ambitions, but also to increase their post-career options through continuation of their education.

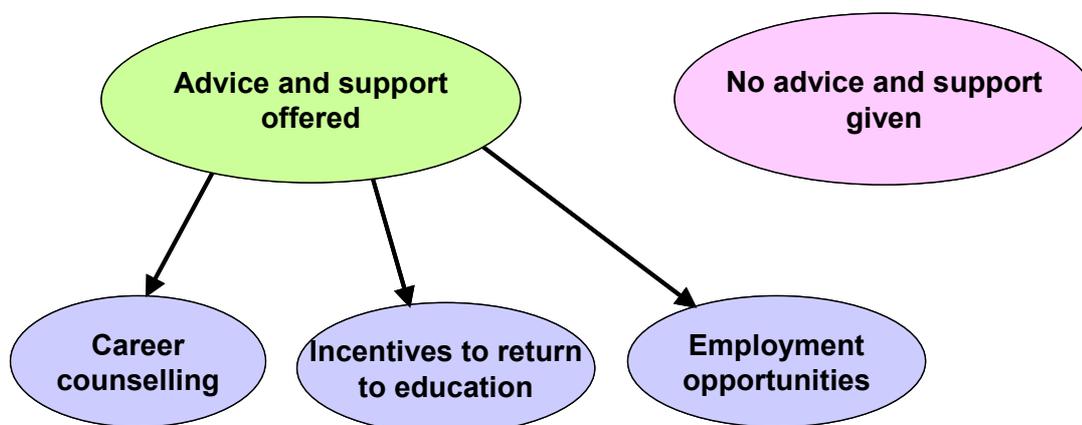
## **SECTION 6**

# **VOCATIONAL SUPPORT AND LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT**

## **Section 6 Vocational support and lifestyle management**

- 6.1 For many young sportspersons, their identity is defined almost wholly by sport. When their sporting careers have ended, the psychological impact can be enormous. Many sportspersons do not retire willingly and, for some, retirement is forced through injury or managerial decisions, leaving feelings of anger, bitterness and rejection. Others find the lack of clear direction deeply unsettling and feel isolated and frightened about the future.
- 6.2 There is considerable evidence in the research and conference discussions of how few young sportspersons in specialised training programmes and sports academies are actually able to achieve their goal of professional sports employment. With increasing competition in European labour markets, affecting not just the sports sector but all areas of the European economy, the challenge facing young sportspersons in finding appropriate employment within or outside of the sports sector is likely to increase.
- 6.3 In recognition of the need for sports professionals, semi-professionals and amateur sportspersons to plan for re-entry into the mainstream labour market and secure alternative employment after their sporting careers have ended, a number of targeted programmes of lifestyle management have been developed in many countries around the world. The UK's Athlete Career Education (ACE) programme, which ran from 1999 to 2004, for example, was modelled on a successful scheme developed in Australia. It has now been replaced with the Performance Lifestyle programme.
- 6.4 The recent European Forum on Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes, which shared a session with the conference, was welcomed as an opportunity for European Lifestyle Managers to share common experiences. These programmes share a recognition of the responsibility of governments and sporting organisations to support sportsmen and sportswomen to achieve a successful transition to alternative employment and to leading fulfilled personal lives once their sporting careers are over.
- 6.5 Figure 6.1 below summarises the situation across Europe as indicated by the research.

**Figure 6.1 Vocational advice and lifestyle management support**



6.6 As illustrated above, the ways in which young sportspersons receive vocational advice and lifestyle management support varies between Member States but can be categorised as follows:

- no advice and support given: there is **no specific programme** of advice and support for élite athletes to help them reintegrate into the wider labour market and community after their sporting career is over
- advice and support is offered: systems are in place to provide young sportspersons with **appropriate vocational advice** and/or **lifestyle management support**
- such vocational advice may involve **career counselling**
- other support may include **incentives to return to education** or there may be various **employment opportunities** provided to former athletes
- lifestyle management is a concept that encompasses all of these areas of vocational advice and support in developing life and social skills.

***No specific lifestyle management support***

6.7 Using the categorisation as defined above, Table 6.1 below indicates which Member States provide no specific advice and support for young sportspersons.

**Table 6.1 No specific lifestyle management support**

No specific programmes of advice and/or support	Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia
---	---

**Latest policy position**

**HUNGARY**

6.8 Under the previous socialist regime, top athletes were supposed to receive support from their sports clubs and/or sports federations to enter the mainstream labour market successfully once their sporting career came to an end. This social support system collapsed after the disintegration of the socialistic sport model. Since the late 1980s, élite athletes' retirement, which used to be considered a public matter, has become a personal affair. At present, there are no organisations that take responsibility for supporting sportspersons in finding proper employment or returning to education once their sporting careers are over.

6.9 The Hungarian Olympic Committee is however, trying to find a way to support sportsmen and sportswomen at the completion of their sporting career. In the framework of the Olympians' Course of Life Programme, it is planned that, in partnership with the Club of the Olympic Champions, former Olympians would mentor gifted young sportspersons. In addition, the NOC would enter into agreement with a head-hunter firm in order to promote the graduate élite athletes' (Olympians) successful entrance into the mainstream labour market. The realisation of these plans has not started yet.

### **LUXEMBOURG**

- 6.10 Due to the limited number of élite athletes, no specific initiatives have been developed with regard to securing employment or returning to education/training after their sporting careers.

### **MALTA**

- 6.11 There is currently no support provided for élite athletes when they retire from their sport. It is the responsibility of the athlete to prepare for this transition.

### **SLOVAKIA**

- 6.12 Since the Velvet revolution in 1989, no programs for élite sport have been adopted because a stable social and political structure is still absent. Old structures and programs for sports have been discarded and new ones yet to be created. As a result, sport career transition remains unplanned in Slovakia. There is no agency or institution supporting top-level athletes after finishing their sporting careers. The NOC registers all Olympic top-ranked athletes and manages their public relations.

### **SLOVENIA**

- 6.13 There are no organisations that help former athletes secure a job after their sporting career has ended, although some athletic organisations or clubs do try and assist their athletes.

### **Informal advice/support from sports federations**

### **LATVIA**

- 6.14 There are no organisations that offer support to athletes upon retirement. The sport federation has the closest links with athletes, and it usually is able to offer employment or advice for the athlete's further employment. Many active athletes become good coaches. The first step in their further education therefore is the acquiring of the coach qualification in C-level coach courses. In Latvia there is no official advisory office giving advice to athletes.

### **LITHUANIA**

- 6.15 The Department of Physical Education and Sport approved a social assistance programme on how to support single and disabled former athletes of the Republic of Lithuania as well as sport staff. However, there is no structured system in Lithuania rendering assistance for retired athletes.

### ***Lifestyle management advice and/or support given***

- 6.16 Table 6.2 overleaf indicates which Member States provide specific programmes of advice and/or support for young sportspersons.

**Table 6.2 Specific lifestyle management support**

Advice and/or support given	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK
-----------------------------	--

**Examples of policies or programmes**

**AUSTRIA**

- 6.17 The Chancellery of Sport have established a new programme, called After Sport Programme in co-operation with the *Sporthilfe-Organisation*, the Federal Sport Organisation, the Chamber of Commerce and a commercial partner, *Heller Consult*. It is a post-career training programme and helps athletes to become integrated in the occupational job field after their career. The organisation is also providing help and support for athletes during their athletic career. The only limitation is that the programme is only for athletes of the national team and for athletes funded by the organisation. There is a need to develop programmes for athletes that are not covered by the *Sporthilfe-Organisation*.

**BELGIUM**

- 6.18 In Belgium, lifestyle support is primarily financial. In the Flemish community, the Government funds 15 top athletes so that they can train full time as athletes and not have to work during their training/competitions. The Flemish sports administration body also funds athletes via the Bloso Sporting Excellence Project. The élite athletes are paid to compete and train. In 2003, 33 athletes benefited from this project.
- 6.19 Top athletes can work for the Flemish government and public institutions and receive 90 days paid leave per annum, so that they can compete and train.

**CYPRUS**

- 6.20 Cyprus Sport Organisation is responsible body implementing policies regarding support to sportspersons, including employment or remuneration issues. Details regarding employment opportunities for top-level athletes in Cyprus are provided in paragraph 6.60.

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

- 6.21 The only organisation that provides some support for retiring athletes is the Czech Olympic Committee through its Olympians Club and Olympic Academy.

**DENMARK**

- 6.22 *Team Danmark* offers career guidance to élite sportspersons who have been part of *Team Danmark*. This can be done during, or at the end of, the active top-level sports career. The individual sports person must apply for this guidance and there are no fixed rules or procedures in this field. Further details on the type of support offered to élite athletes by *Team Danmark* are provided in Figure 6.2 overleaf.

### **Figure 6.2 Lifestyle and vocational support provided by *Team Danmark***

With the help of *Team Danmark* (an independent semi-public organisation established by the Ministry of Culture), elite athletes who are studying at sport *gymnasiums* (high schools) have the benefit of completing their programme in four years instead of the norm (three years) and have special concessions concerning leave and absence from school. The four-year period reduces the daily burden of schoolwork and gives the athlete time to train and participate in tournaments.

In total, there are currently around 1,500 *Team Danmark* students. The *Team Danmark* rules for the *gymnasium* also apply for the *teknisk gymnasium* (higher technical examination course) and the *handels gymnasium* (higher commercial examination course).

*Team Danmark* also offers elite athletes studying at higher education institutions laptops so that they can be involved in their studies through distance-learning. Other assistance is provided in the form of financial assistance.

Educational institutions have the possibility to apply to *Team Danmark* for financing supplementary teaching for sports people and the institution can apply to *Team Danmark* for extra study guidance. Finally *Team Danmark* can pay extra periods of economical study benefits. *Team Danmark* co-operates with some of their main sponsors which offer job opportunities to elite sports people during or at the end of the sports career.

As part of the Budget for 2004, in the future professional sportspeople will be able to make savings during their active career and then after the career, a favourable tax code will allow them to spend the money on an education programme or to establish their own firm. This is organised by the individual sports person, and every sportsperson is allowed to save an amount of 1.5 million D. kr., which can be released with a maximum of 300,000 D. kr. every year for five years.

- 6.23 The Union for Professional Soccer Players, (*Spillerforeningen*) offers career guidance for the members as does the Union for Professional Team Handball Players (*Håndboldspillerforeningen*). These unions act like trade unions.

### **ESTONIA**

- 6.24 The NOC provides financial awards to the winners of international competitions. Furthermore, champions are also entitled to a life-long pension.

### **FINLAND**

- 6.25 The NOC is financed by the Ministry of Education to employ a study and career counsellor whose role is to implement a development programme aimed at supporting the education of and offering lifestyle support to Finnish elite athletes.
- 6.26 Individual sports federations; such as the Finnish Ice Hockey Federation and Finnish Hockey Players Association also now employ a study counsellor to provide support.
- 6.27 Details regarding education and employment opportunities are detailed within paragraph 6.63 and 6.52 respectively.

### FRANCE

- 6.28 National Technical Directors of Sports Federations can help high-level athletes through personalised assistance, which is allocated to each sport federation at meetings held to decide on annual objectives. Directors of sport federations can also access financial support for education from regional services provided by the Ministry of Sport. A high-level athlete who has ended their professional career can, upon request and after the examination of a proposal by the National Technical Director, be added to the national list of high-level athletes in the category of “redeployment” which means that they can maintain the benefits enjoyed by a high-level athlete for an additional two years.
- 6.29 **Loans for high-level athletes** of up to €24,000 are available from the French government to high-level athletes who wish to develop their own business. These loans are paid back over four years at an interest rate of 1%. An agreement is drawn up between the Ministry of Sport and the athlete's sports federation. Loan applications are addressed to the National Technical Director of the athlete's sports federation and should include a cover letter, detailed description of the business and a three-year budget forecast.
- 6.30 **Social security cover**, diseases and accidents are important risks in the lives of high-level athletes whose careers are often limited to a few years. When they are pupils or students, the majority of athletes (55% according to a 2001 survey) still benefit from their parents' social security cover, and 40% are affiliated to the students' scheme. 14% do not benefit from a complementary insurance scheme. When they have a professional activity, nearly 80% of athletes depend on the social security scheme for salaried employees and 2% are covered by a universal scheme.
- 6.31 France has no pension scheme catering specifically for high-level athletes. It is therefore in the interest of all high-level athletes to find a job at the earliest possible stage of their career, either as regular salaried employees or self-employed workers, in a sector other than sport so that they can benefit from pension contributions that would allow for a 'normal' retirement. In this context, the contribution of the Ministry of Sport is to facilitate the combination of full-time employment with sports commitments. A professional athlete can acquire either the status of a salaried employee (of a club, a team etc) or the status of a self-employed worker (for example, tennis player, golfer etc) and therefore benefit from a pension scheme through his or her professional status.

### GERMANY

- 6.32 The German Sports Aid Foundation has begun an initiative to promote the career prospects of current top athletes. The career counsellors based at the 20 Olympic Support Centres are the contacts for the athletes. They offer support in co-ordinating education or a professional career with sport, through sports career planning, management of the social environment, counselling, educational advice, financial support and military/community service apprenticeships.
- 6.33 As detailed in paragraph 6.66, top athletes currently receive help from the German Sports Aid Foundation. Olympic Support Centres also host careers advice seminars and offer career advice to all athletes as part of their scheme.

### GREECE

- 6.34 The state agency, General Secretariat for Sport (GSS) assumes the responsibility for supporting elite athletes during and after their sporting career. The GSS assist athletes in securing employment on retirement, as well as offering educational incentives. Details are provided in Figure 6.9 and paragraph 6.54 respectively.
- 6.35 The General Secretariat for Sport (GSS) regularly announces a very attractive **programme of monetary incentives** for those athletes who manage to reach top performance in the Olympic games and at World and European championships.

### IRELAND

- 6.36 In Ireland, a number of programmes are offered across a range of sports. Examples are provided in the case study in Figure 6.3 below.

#### Figure 6.3 Athlete support programmes in Ireland

The **National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC)** in conjunction with certain governing bodies offers an Assimilation Scheme, which facilitates experienced athletes and coaches to be accredited to level 2 or higher with the National Coaching Development Programme (NCDP). This process runs on a sport specific basis with criteria for assimilation being agreed between the sports governing body and the NCTC. Retired athletes with international experience have utilized this scheme with a view to gaining employment with sports clubs

**University College Dublin (UCD)** has a well-developed soccer infrastructure with its senior soccer team playing in the National Eircom League (Division 1). The Career Guidance Officer of the FAI maintains a link with key individuals at the University, for example, the Soccer Development Officer and the Director of the Centre of Sport Studies (CSS). The latter can provide details on whether possible course offerings are suitable or available for young players returning to Ireland. Currently, the most relevant offer at the college is the Diploma of Sport Management, which is offered on a part time basis.

**Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FAS)** in conjunction with the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM) provide a Leisure Facility Instructor Traineeship Programme. It is designed to meet the needs of individuals who wish to develop skills, gain qualifications and employment in the leisure industry.

Since 2002 the FAS have funded a **Sports Teic Programme** designed to get people employment in the sports and leisure sector. It is on offer at various centres in Kerry and Mayo. One such programme offered in Dublin has primarily a soccer focus and the mandatory modules include communications, computer technology, exercise and fitness and Health Matters. Other courses that focused on developing soccer-coaching skills. The requisites for Level 2 coaching badges contributed to the course offerings within this programme. Courses in first aid, the laws of the game, the FAI code of ethics and drugs awareness were included.

The programme co-ordinator decided on programme and course content in co-operation with the accreditation body – Further Education, Training and Awards Council (FETAC). Student assessment was undertaken employing FETAC criteria. This course was of 48 weeks duration and 18 students participated. A large proportion of course participants have since gained employment in the sports sector, while two were recruited by football (soccer) clubs.

The **International Carding Scheme** was introduced in 1998 to provide a range of support to assist Ireland's most talented sportspersons realise their potential to perform successfully at the highest international level. Players and athletes qualify for support by meeting standards set in consultation with the National Governing Bodies. Any athlete who meets the criteria is automatically included in the scheme. In addition to providing financial support for those players/athletes who need assistance to meet necessary international competition and training expenses, not otherwise covered by the National Governing Body, the Carding Scheme provides non-financial support (co-ordinated and administered by the National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC) in Limerick).

The Non-Financial Support Services include (a) sports science and (b) sports medical support. Access to sports science and sports medical support is available in the following areas – sports biomechanics, sports nutrition, sports physiology, sports psychology and sports medicine. Other services available to athletes in the scheme include specialist medical services, educational workshops, access to training facilities, athlete services directory and athlete diary. Carded athletes are entitled to two weeks residential training at the National Coaching and Training Centre which is located in Limerick.

The FAI Careers Guidance Officer strives to place youngsters who left Ireland to play soccer with clubs abroad, but who are unemployed and have returned to Ireland, in suitable positions either in football and/or an education programme. A pilot programme was offered two years ago (REAP) at Dublin City University with a view to facilitating the return to education of young Irish soccer players but due to lack of demand, this programme has now been put on hold.

## **ITALY**

- 6.37 Italy provides an insurance and welfare policy for élite athletes. This programme, which is detailed in Figure 6.4 below, is run by the public body SPORTASS.

### **Figure 6.4 Lifestyle support in Italy**

The Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) introduced the **Provident Fund for Athlete Insurance** in 1934. SPORTASS is responsible for providing insurance cover and welfare payments for sports injuries. SPORTASS provides professional athletes with social security coverage ie it offers a pension in addition to regular compulsory insurance. Since 1996, CONI has contributed the equivalent of double the total prize money received by an Olympic medallist to SPORTASS to go towards that athlete's individual pension fund. All athletes who are members of the "Olympic Club" can make voluntary contributions to a pension fund. Those members who have been with the Club for a minimum of eight years may draw their pensions from the age of 45. An athlete must be appointed to the "Olympic Club" by CONI's National Council on the recommendation of the Olympic Training Office and in agreement with the relevant sports federations.

## **POLAND**

- 6.38 Talented sports people may receive assistance from the central government body responsible for sport, the Minister of Education and Sport. Usually however, this responsibility is transferred to their home clubs and Polish sports associations.

## **SECTION 6 – VOCATIONAL SUPPORT AND LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT**

---

6.39 According to article 28a of the Physical Culture Act from 18 January 1996 (Dz. U. Nr 25, pos. 113) "Polish representatives at a summer and winter Olympic Games who:

- won at least one Olympic medal
- are at least 35 years old and do not practice sport competitively
- have Polish citizenship
- have permanent residence in Poland
- have not been convicted of an intentional crime

are entitled to a financial gratification from the national budget equivalent to the average monthly salary from the previous calendar year". The grant is awarded by the Minister of Education and Sport.

### **PORTUGAL**

6.40 There is little provision for athlete support provided by the state in Portugal, but the Professional Football Players Union provides its own support and advice to retired, or retiring, footballers, as detailed in Figure 6.5 overleaf.

**Figure 6.5 Support offered by the Professional Football Players Union**

**The Professional Football Players Union** (*Sindicato dos Jogadores Profissionais de Futebol - SJPF*) provides programmes for securing employment, and/or to assist athletes to return to education/ training after their sporting careers are over.

The *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional* provides financial support to the SJPF. The scheme is based on career guidance (for ex-players or athletes nearing the end of their career) and qualifications (for young players during their sporting career). The courses are free of charge and the athletes have accommodation, food and transportation.

The SJPF also run the 'Stages for Unemployed Professional Football Players' scheme where players can get fitness training, work on skills and play in matches, which may lead to club contracts.

The SJPF offers support in the provision of:

- one-to-one expert advice
- guidance to help identify the athlete's goals and ambitions
- job searching techniques
- CV advice
- negotiating flexibility with working arrangements.

The SJPF also provides education/training programs in the following subjects, aimed at supporting the players after their sporting careers are over:

- information and communication technology
- sport management
- management skills.

**SPAIN**

- 6.41 The duration of positive measures by the Sports Council for top-class sportspersons can be extended to two years after the loss of their status as an elite athlete, except in the case of athletes who have obtained an Olympic medal, in which case the period is extended to four years.
- 6.42 Athletes in the private sector, who have suffered from health-related problems, illness or operations and are consequently unable to work, are offered financial assistance. Those athletes who are in difficult socio-economic circumstances will also be offered assistance through the Association of Spanish Olympic Athletes (ADO).
- 6.43 Details regarding employment opportunities in both the public and private sector are detailed within paragraph 6.73.

### **SWEDEN**

- 6.44 No organisation has legal responsibilities in this sense unless certain references in this matter have been included in personal contracts with the athletes. Representatives for the Swedish Sport Confederation, such as sport clubs do, however, very often take a moral responsibility on an individual basis, in particular at younger ages.
- 6.45 As referred to in Section 5, major league clubs will undertake responsibilities for labour market training or educational training in various ways.

### **THE NETHERLANDS**

- 6.46 In the 1999 policy memorandum '*Chances for elite sport*', the national government stresses that the responsibility for the period after the elite sports career lies primarily with the athletes themselves. However, the national government tries to support them in the period after their career, especially by information and financing relevant programmes.
- 6.47 The individual consultants of NOC\*NSF support A-status elite athletes and guide them during their sports career and up to two years after ending their sports career. Furthermore, NOC\*NSF organises in co-operation with the Athletes Commission a symposium for elite athletes in which they inform them about the period after their active sports career. The Athletes Commission consists of A and B-status athletes and former elite athletes from different sports.
- 6.48 After ending their sports career, the elite athlete has to focus on a vocational career. In practice, this transition appears to be difficult. Their education and diplomas are often dated, most elite athletes are relatively old to start a first job, and ex-athletes need some time to de-train. This transition takes time and costs money. Not all elite athletes are able to save money during their active sports career. A transitional payment and pension scheme would be beneficial for athletes during this period. A transitional payment and pension scheme is applied to soccer players and cyclists. During their active sports careers, they contribute part of their income to these funds. Afterwards they receive a monthly income. These funds are only available for soccer players and cyclists who earn more than a fixed minimum amount of salary. There are plans to start a transitional payment and pension scheme for elite athletes in other disciplines in the near future.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 6.49 The UK offers lifestyle management and vocational support through the Performance Lifestyle programme, details of which are provided in Figure 6.6 overleaf. Details of the Olympic and Paralympic Employment Network (OPEN) are given in Figure 6.7 on the following page.

**Figure 6.6 The Performance Lifestyle programme, England**

UK Sport launched the Performance Lifestyle programme in 2004. It covers the following three main areas, outlined below:

Lifestyle support

- time management
- budgeting and finance
- dealing with the media
- sponsorship and promotion activities
- negotiation/conflict management.

Careers and Employment Advice

- a job to supplement income and fit around training demands
- work placements to give a taste of possible careers options
- planning for a second career after sport.

Education Guidance

- part time or professional courses
- gaining flexibility in an existing study programme
- making the right educational choices to fit into sporting demands.

**Figure 6.7 Olympic and Paralympic Employment Network**

The British Olympic Association (BOA) run the OPEN Programme (Olympic and Paralympic Employment Network) a network which matches athletes with companies who can offer a meaningful career path and provide flexible working arrangements. Major companies involved with the scheme are:

- REMPLOY – working in collaboration with paralympic athletes
- Blue Arrow – working in collaboration with the OPEN programme
- DBM (Drake Beam Morin), a consultancy firm working in collaboration with UK Sport, offers advice on how to manage changing circumstances in careers. Their expertise helps those athletes who are looking to gain employment and develop careers outside their sport. EIS UK’s team of Athlete Advisers will refer athletes to the local DBM office (14 in UK, 200 worldwide) where they will be offered one-to-one career counselling, opportunities for training and to attend career related workshops.

Similar lifestyle management schemes also operate in Wales and Scotland.

6.50 A number of NGBs within England also employ their own specialist support staff to support the players with their academic studies. In addition, these Education and Welfare Officers may also provide more general lifestyle support. More detailed information on education and welfare officers can be found in Section 9 on athlete support.

***Incentives to return to education***

6.51 Table 6.3 below indicates which Member States provide specific incentives to young sportspersons to return to education.

**Table 6.3 Incentives to return to education**

Incentives to return to education	Finland, Germany, Greece, UK
-----------------------------------	------------------------------

**Examples of policies or programmes**

**FINLAND**

6.52 The Ministry of Education finances a foundation, which provides grants for retired professionals to study at university to both those who are active in sports and to those who are ending their sports careers. Grants are awarded to students at vocational upper secondary schools, at polytechnics and the universities. The amount of the grant is €1,600 for athletes in third-level education and €1,300 for athletes in upper secondary education. The grant is awarded a maximum of three times to the same individual.

### **GERMANY**

- 6.53 Grants for retired professionals to study at university are available through the German Sports Aid Foundation (*Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe*), which offers bursaries to professional athletes who are enrolled in a university programme and decide to retire from a competitive sports career. These temporary bursaries are designed to allow such athletes to complete their university studies and are awarded for up to three years. This programme is requested by a maximum of three to five athletes each year.

### **GREECE**

- 6.54 In Greece, when the athlete's sporting career is over, there is always an opportunity for them to return to education at any level: upper secondary, vocational or university. If they have not completed upper secondary school, athletes can register at any school of their choice. If they have not completed their university degree, athletes can go back to the university and attend courses regularly, and if they have completed upper secondary school but not registered for a university degree, they can choose from the opportunities available for vocational training or apply at the Greek Open University (distance learning).
- 6.55 The General Secretariat for Sport (GSS) has also initiated an extensive programme, which provides valuable educational incentives to athletes who manage to achieve distinguished sporting performance. This programme contains a provision for entry to higher education without national examinations and financial support based on sporting performance.
- 6.56 However, these provisions are restricted only for athletes (Group A) who have achieved at least once the following ranking positions in major competitions:
- Olympic Games (ranking 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>)
  - World Championships (ranking 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>)
  - achievement of equalising of existing world record in recognised sport
  - European championships (ranking 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>)
  - achievement of equalising of existing European records in a recognised sport.
- 6.57 Educational-related benefits are also available to athletes (Group B) with lesser sporting performance than Group A athletes. These are the athletes who have achieved distinguished results in Mediterranean, Balkan, National competitions and good World and European standing (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> ranking position). These athletes are entitled to register without national examinations at one of the five Departments of Physical Education and Sport Science (public university departments) or add some extra points on their National Examination Marks for entering in any other department of their choice.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 6.58 Financial support is offered by UK Sport to World Class Performance Athletes. There is an education award of a maximum of £1,000 per year for those who want to further their education (post-graduate level only) or enrol in 'A-Level' or vocational courses. This is available up to three months after an athlete has come off a programme. Performance Lifestyle services are available up to a year post elite sport.

**Employment opportunities**

- 6.59 Table 6.4 below indicates which Member States offer advice and support in respect of employment opportunities to young sportspersons.

**Table 6.4 Employment opportunities**

Employment opportunities	Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, The Netherlands, UK
--------------------------	--

**Examples of policies or programmes****CYPRUS**

- 6.60 Until the end of 2002, the Cyprus Sport Organisation had a scheme that provided employment to top level athletes. However, in 2003, due to the increasing number of top level athletes with excellent results, the Cyprus Sport Organisation changed this scheme into a scheme of incentives. Under this scheme, athletes who meet set performance criteria are not guaranteed employment but they are supported financially in respect to their success.
- 6.61 Currently, no official policy formulation exists for securing employment of the athletes after their sporting career is over. However, large-scale organisations such as banks or semi-governmental organisations have social policies and unofficially give priority to the employment of top level athletes. As an example the Bank *SPE Strovolou* own a Handball Club and employs the best of its players.

**DENMARK**

- 6.62 *Team Danmark* co-operates with some of their main sponsors which offer job opportunities for élite sportspeople during or at the end of the sports career.

**FINLAND**

- 6.63 To help athletes find work after graduation, the Oulu Provincial Government has given a three-year grant to OUSA to help to improve flexibility in studies for top-ranking athletes and the efficiency of their placement in the labour market. The funding, which totals approximately €300,000, has been made possible from grants by the ESF, the Ministry of Education, the City of Oulu, and the Oulu and District Municipalities' Vocational Education Council.

**FRANCE**

- 6.64 In France, employment opportunities are offered to élite athletes in either the public or the private sector. Further information is provided in Figure 6.8 overleaf.

**Figure 6.8 Employment opportunities for elite athletes in France**

**Public sector occupations**

The Ministry of Sport allows high-level athletes to participate in a recruitment competition, reserved exclusively for high-level athletes, to work as Category A civil servants. These athletes must undergo 18 months of preparation for competitions. This takes place at INSEP and is administered by individual sports federations. Once they have been accepted to work in the civil service, athletes who still train professionally can benefit from flexible work schedules in order to maintain training and competition commitments. Financial assistance towards preparation for civil service competitions is available to high-level athletes through the “personalised assistance” allocated to sports federations.

French law stipulates that high-level sports people who work in the public sector be granted flexibility in their work schedules in order to accommodate training and competition (specifically Article 31 Paragraph 1 of the Law of 16th July 1984 - revised).

Within the context of the modernisation of the army, the Ministry of Defence allocates 80 positions to the Ministry of Sport, which are distributed among the Army, Marines, Air force and the Military Police. Ten positions are also provided in civil personnel.

The Ministry of the Interior, Domestic Security and Local Government allocates 60 full-time positions within the National Police to high-level athletes. The Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Budgetary Affairs allocates 30 positions within the Customs Service to high-level athletes. 29 of these 30 places are reserved specifically for members of the French Ski Federation.

In 2003, the Ministry of Youth, National Education and Research employed 75 athletes as temporary secondary school teachers in sports academies specialising in their sports. Of these, six were able to work part-time and 11 worked with the Union for School Sports (UNSS). The Ministry of Sport provides 23 positions as sports teachers at INSEP. Regional and local authorities, especially those that deal with sport, are an attractive source of employment for high-level athletes. There are currently 70 athletes working in local and regional authorities, mainly in districts, where their schedules are adapted to suit their sports activities.

**Private sector occupations**

According to French law, high-level athletes can be employed in private and public companies. Article 32 of the Law of 16th July 1984 states that the Minister for Sport can draw up agreements with companies in order to facilitate employment for active professional athletes, which would be compatible with training and competition.

In 2001, nearly 400 high level athletes benefited from an agreement of professional integration allowing them to take part in the competitions without any wage loss. The Ministry for Sport has created professional integration agreements. These agreements are signed by the Minister for Sports, the high-level athlete and the company concerned. 40% of high-level athletes benefit from adjustments of schedules. Some are entitled to authorisations for absence to train or take part in competitions. These authorisations of absence can involve wage losses (18% of the cases, which is approximately 200 athletes concerned according to the survey carried out in 2001).

The general principle behind these agreements is that the athlete is paid as a full-time employee for part-time work. In exchange the Ministry of Sport compensates the company with a set fee. On 6th June 2001 the Ministry for Budgetary Affairs and the Ministry for Sport launched a joined initiative that offers tax incentives to those companies who enter into agreements to employ high-level athletes.

For positions with government ministries and with regional and local authorities, quotas are set and cannot be exceeded. However, the number of positions available within businesses (public and private) is only limited by the budget of the Ministry of Sport.

### **GERMANY**

- 6.65 The German government has employment opportunities for top athletes in a number of areas of the public sector. The military has 704 positions; the federal border police have 38 positions for summer sports athletes and 75 for winter sports athletes and the customs service has 40 positions. These positions are for current rather than retired professional athletes. Employment is for a limited duration depending on international competition results. The customs service offers athletes the opportunity to develop a long-term career once they have retired from sport.
- 6.66 The German Sports Aid Foundation has also begun an initiative in the private sector to promote the career prospects of current top athletes by helping them to find traineeships or employment. A national pool of companies (22 in 2002) offers traineeships and employment, which is compatible with full-time competitive sport.
- 6.67 The German Sports Aid Foundation aims to help athletes to find employment in small or medium-sized companies. The foundation provides financial compensation for loss of earnings to companies, which employ athletes. Careers advice seminars are organised and career advisers are employed at Olympic Support Centres.

### **GREECE**

- 6.68 According to the current legislation, the General Secretariat for Sport (GSS) assumes the responsibility for supporting sportspersons in securing employment during their sporting career or after this is over. This responsibility is confined only to those athletes who have achieved distinguished sporting performance, which is defined by the existing legislative framework. Further details are provided in Figure 6.9 overleaf.

**Figure 6.9 Employment Programme, Greece**

The Employment Programme for top athletes has been in place since 2002, and operates under supervision of GSS. There is no predetermined budget for the programme. Depending on sporting achievement and other qualifications, athletes are entitled to tenure employment in positions within the public sector irrespective of the cost. Athletes reaching superior sporting performance are entitled to apply for a tenure position. These athletes are also encouraged to continue competing at an elite level and, therefore there are no specific working hours to help facilitate this.

The programme guarantees employment to certain elite athletes:

- Olympic Games and World Championship participants with 1st-8th ranking
- European Championship participants with 1st-6th ranking and athletes equalising or breaking World or European records.

Athletes are offered a choice of position (they indicate up to five choices in their application). The athlete must be qualified for the position. This programme is open to athletes who have competed at high levels in the past and not just to recent elite athletes. Currently the GSS has processed and placed 294 applicants for the programme.

The General Secretariat for Sport (GSS) has also initiated an extensive programme, which provides valuable employment incentives to athletes who manage to achieve distinguished sporting performance. This programme, which is available to only Group A athletes, contains three parts:

- provision of tenured employment at the public sector and special job arrangements to be able to continue training
- entry to the higher education without national examinations
- financial support based on sporting performance.

In relation to the first provision (tenured employment), the distinguished athletes are entitled to request and obtain a tenure tract position in open employment positions of the public sector. The athletes' employment to this position is exempted from the regular recruitment procedures followed by the Minister of Interior and depends only on the athlete to prove that he/she has the basic qualifications described by the same Ministry. The same programme offers active athletes the opportunity for special job arrangements (shorter working schedules or long paid leaves) in order to be able to train and take part in competitions. Most of the Greek high performance athletes have benefited by this measures.

Furthermore, associated with the above provisions are also some employment and educational related benefits, which are targeted to another group of athletes (Group B) with lesser sporting performance. These are the athletes who have achieved distinguished results in Mediterranean, Balkan, National competitions and good world and European standing (7th and 8th ranking position). These athletes are entitled to employment by the Ministry of Defence as reserve officers with five-year service.

### ITALY

- 6.69 There are public competitions for entry into the following government services: the army, the airforce, the military police, the customs service, the fire brigade, the prison service, the State forest service and the marines. It is a tradition of the Italian armed forces and other similar state structures to have their own sports groups. These groups are usually interested in accepting a certain number of athletes. Athletes within the sports groups take part in military championships.
- 6.70 *Italia Lavoro* - the 'Sport to Job' programme provides training courses and e-learning subjects such as sponsoring, sports marketing and facilities management to aid former athletes enter back into the job market. The project has targeted four regions; Sicily, Lombardia, Piemonte and Tuscany, aiming at reaching 400 athletes. There are also plans to extend this to the Lazio region.
- 6.71 In Italy, in 2001, Adecco helped 176 former athletes to start a new career (a success rate of 98%). Since 2001 the Italian Olympic Committee and the Adecco foundation have operated a programme for retired athletes known as the Master Programme 2000. This programme involves negotiations with companies, introducing athletes. At the moment there are more than 300 former athletes who are employed in private companies as part of the Master 2000 Programme. More details of the programme are given in Figure 6.10 below.

#### **Figure 6.10 Career placement support by Adecco**

The Adecco Foundation, part of the international commercial HR Adecco Group, co-operates with NOCs and various sports associations to provide direct support to enable former athletes to either re-enter the workforce or in many cases make their first move into a conventional career. Outplacement services and access to training and advice have all proven effective. For many the first step is temporary or part-time work and 40% of the former athletes placed by Adecco obtain a permanent employment contract.

### SLOVAKIA

- 6.72 The Slovakian Defence Department and Home Office both offer job opportunities for élite sportspersons both during and post professional sporting careers.

### SPAIN

- 6.73 The Royal Decree 1467/1997 establishes measures in relation to the incorporation of top-class sportsmen to the labour market. According to this Decree, public administrations and companies have to regard the condition of being a 'top-class sportsperson' as a merit to be assessed in selection tests for posts related to sport activity, or in those processes involving competitive examinations in which the consideration of specific merits is considered.
- 6.74 The Sports Council can also sign agreements with public and private companies in order to facilitate the conditions to make the development of top athlete's sport career compatible with their job. The saving mechanisms and specific welfare services for this group have also been promoted allowing for the capitalisation of economic income.

- 6.75 The Adecco Foundation, as described in Figure 6.10 above, also works in Spain to provide support to élite athletes.

### **THE NETHERLANDS**

- 6.76 In the Netherlands, career counselling is offered by Randstad. This is a commercial organisation, working in partnership with sports federations, which specialises in career coaching. They support élite athletes (A and B status) in finding a good balance between élite sport and social career. Randstad provides the following facilities:

- career coaching
- education and courses aimed at future work
- a choice of profession test
- mediation for a full-time or part-time job or internships.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

- 6.77 The UK, employment opportunities are offered through the OPEN programme, which provides both suitable employment and work placement opportunities for athletes. Further details of the OPEN programme have been provided in Figure 6.7 above.

#### ***Summary***

- 6.78 A sports career is relatively short in comparison to other professions and it is becoming increasingly evident that athletes need to prepare for life after sport.
- 6.79 Over 70% of Member States now have policies or programmes in place to support athletes during their career and help them to prepare and secure employment after their sporting careers have ended. Examples of such policies or programmes include advice and support, careers counselling, employment opportunities through Adecco or major sponsors, financial loans and incentives to return to education (such as scholarships or facilitated entry requirements to university).
- 6.80 The purpose of the recent European Forum on Lifestyle Management was to share best practice and examples of policies and programmes that are currently in place to support élite athletes. Some Member States, such as the UK, offer a wide spectrum of advice and support on lifestyle management, careers and education, as well as job opportunities, whereas other Member States offer limited or no elements of support.
- 6.81 Member States have different positions with regard to policies and legal/moral responsibility to support élite athletes. This varies from the perception in the Netherlands that responsibility for the period after an élite sports career lies primarily with the élite athletes themselves, to Government legislation in Poland that élite athletes who have performed well at specific events and met the outlined criteria should receive financial support from the national budget equivalent to a monthly salary. Some Member States provide guarantees of employment or preferential recruitment based on sporting performance.

- 6.82 A more co-ordinated approach between the Member States, initiated through the European Forum, will increase awareness that consideration does need to be given to the end of an athlete's career. It will also encourage the sharing of current best practice methods of providing lifestyle support, addressing external psycho-social pressures and thereby facilitating elite athletes' career development. Such support would help athletes across all Member States achieve their sporting and career ambitions.

## **SECTION 7**

### **SUPPORT IN EDUCATION POLICY - THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT**

## **Section 7 Sport in education policy – the role of government**

### ***Sports policy in Europe***

- 7.1 European governments of all political philosophies have traditionally incorporated sports policy into their broader remit to influence the educational, social and cultural life of the nation. In addition, governmental activity in the areas of economic policy, specifically in terms of trade and economic regeneration, has involved European nation states in various levels of intervention in the sport sector.
- 7.2 The evolution of the European Union (EU) has also impacted upon the nature of intervention in, and regulation of, sports policy in Europe. From its beginnings in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome, the European Economic Community has evolved beyond an institution with the goal of creating a single economic market into a European Union with a competence to intervene in national policies in many areas of social life, including leisure and culture.
- 7.3 Whilst there have been some important instances of EC intervention in sport prior to 2004, notably in the areas of acceptance of qualifications and movement of professional sportspersons within the EU; it has only been with the new Constitution approved by the European Council in June 2004 that a competence in sport has been added to Article 182 of the Constitutional Treaty.

### ***The European Union and sport***

- 7.4 There are several justifications for the EU to be involved in sport policy. The role of sport in helping to construct a European cultural identity had been recognised explicitly by the 1980s. This is, however, not unproblematic as sport has also been used as a powerful tool to promote national and local identities. Another justification for EU involvement is the use of sport as a tool of diplomacy for cementing international relations. On a practical level, the EU has sought to influence the governance of sports organisations and to protect young sportspersons and volunteers. It has also sought to promote protected access to free-to-air broadcasting for certain sporting events as well as the free movement of sports professionals and cross-national acceptance of comparable coaching qualifications.
- 7.5 The growing role of the EU in sports policy, and specifically the new competence, provides considerable opportunities to influence the adoption of best practice in sport across all the nations of Europe. The new competence focuses on sport's 'social and educational function'. In particular the Treaty states that Union action shall be aimed at 'developing the European dimension in sport' and 'encouraging the development of distance education' (Article III –182). Several of this study's recommendations fall within these new areas of competence.

### *The role of Member States in sport in education*

- 7.6 From the analysis of research material on policy and practice in respect of sport in education from Member States, it is possible to construct a simple classification of approaches to state regulation of sport in education. This framework is presented as a tool for analysis, and the categories are presented as ideal-types rather than the more complex situation that the research reveals. However, it is possible to argue that Government policy in respect of sport in education in European nation states falls into three main types:
- direct state regulation of curriculum delivery across all types of school or their equivalent, including elite sport schools
  - semi-regulation – the state permits certain establishments to ‘opt out’ or vary educational requirements, for example, by variations in the core curriculum
  - non or minimal regulation – no requirement is placed on educational outcomes from such education providers as elite sport schools.
- 7.7 Direct state regulation of sport in the education sector is characterised by governments **defining and requiring** a desired outcome. This approach is usually accompanied by a strong institutional structure and strategic plan for sport, with a Government Ministry for Sport or relevant Federal or regional bodies in states with a regional structure. It often includes such measures as state funded centres of excellence and/or the provision of strategically based facilities, together with national programmes of athlete development.
- 7.8 Semi-regulation of sport in the education sector is characterised by governments **facilitating** a desired outcome and is usually accompanied by a more devolved policy development and decision-making structure for sport. In addition, there is often significant activity by non-governmental organisations or quasi non-governmental organisations, together with an active commercial sports sector providing facilities and services, including sports education and training centres. Regulation of the sector is less rigid than in the first category, with negotiation between stakeholders preferred as a method of policy development.
- 7.9 Non or minimal regulation of sport in the education sector is characterised by a **free market approach**, with little regulation beyond basic health and safety, child protection and qualification verification measures.
- 7.10 Table 7.1 overleaf provides an overview of the nature of regulation of sport in the education sector in Europe. The matrix analysis summarises the various policy positions in the five study focus areas of sport in compulsory education, post-compulsory education, professional academies, universities and lifestyle management and provides some relevant examples.

**Table 7.1 (a) Government regulation of sport in the education sector**

	<b>Compulsory schooling</b>	<b>Post-compulsory schooling</b>	<b>Professional academies</b>	<b>Universities</b>	<b>Lifestyle support</b>
<p><b>Direct state regulation</b></p> <p>Curriculum delivery is regulated across all types of school and educational establishments (or their equivalent) including elite sport schools.</p> <p>Legal requirements regulate the actions of universities and structure lifestyle support programmes.</p>	<p>All Member States are in this category.</p> <p>In <b>Poland</b>, for example, compulsory schooling is between the ages of six to 16 years. Schools for gifted young athletes have been present since 1969. These schools provide sports training combined with general school. PE is a part of compulsory statutory education throughout compulsory schooling.</p>	<p>Most Member States are in this category.</p> <p>In <b>Finland</b>, for example, post-compulsory schooling is for students aged 16 and over and is provided in upper secondary schools, polytechnics and specialist colleges. The state directly intervenes by allowing bonus points and merit schemes to be available to athletes wanting to enter these institutions. There is also flexibility in course requirements.</p>	<p>It is mandatory in <b>Germany</b> for all premier league football clubs to establish an academy that provides training and education. The educational component is usually provided in partnership with local schools.</p>	<p>All universities in <b>Spain</b> are subject to a law that requires them to reserve 3% of their total places for elite athletes.</p> <p>In <b>Portugal</b>, elite athletes have special legal status when they seek access to universities (except military and police institutions). A certain quota is decided each year by government.</p>	<p>In <b>France</b>, athletes can take part in a recruitment competition, reserved exclusively for high-level athletes, that provides employment in Category A civil service positions. The state also provides loans for retired athletes wanting to set up their own businesses.</p>

**Table 7.1 (b) Government regulation of sport in the education sector**

	<b>Compulsory schooling</b>	<b>Post-compulsory schooling</b>	<b>Professional academies</b>	<b>Universities</b>	<b>Lifestyle support</b>
<p><b>Semi-regulation</b></p> <p>The state permits certain establishments to vary educational requirements and facilitates outcomes through regulations issued by quasi non-governmental bodies or non-governmental bodies e.g. sports federations</p>		<p>In <b>Denmark</b>, elite athletes who are studying at <i>Sport Gymnasiums</i> (high schools) complete their education in four years instead of the usual three. Student-athletes are supported by <i>Team Danmark</i> and they have special absence concessions.</p>	<p>In the <b>UK</b>, the football national governing body requires all football clubs within the premier league to have an academy. All children within compulsory school age must complete their education.</p>	<p>In <b>Cyprus</b>, the Ministry of Education runs an incentive scheme for athletes where they can receive bonus points for entry into university. Scholarships are also awarded through the NOC.</p>	<p>In <b>Austria</b>, There is a jointly funded After Sport programme, which is a partnership between government departments, sport federations and the commercial sector. The scheme is called <i>Sporthilfe</i> and provides support and re-entry of the athlete into the labour force.</p>

**Table 7.1 (c) Government regulation of sport in the education sector**

	<b>Compulsory schooling</b>	<b>Post-compulsory schooling</b>	<b>Professional academies</b>	<b>Universities</b>	<b>Lifestyle support</b>
<p><b>Non- or minimal regulation</b></p> <p>No requirement is placed by the state on educational outcomes from education providers such as elite sport schools except regarding the completion of compulsory schooling.</p>		<p><b>Malta</b> has minimal governmental regulation of sport in post-compulsory schooling. It is a small state with limited resources.</p>	<p>The only regulation on academies in <b>Greece</b>, is that all members under 15 must complete compulsory education.</p>	<p>In <b>Luxembourg</b>, due to the limited numbers of athletes, no specialised provision exists. Élite athletes generally choose to study abroad.</p>	<p><b>Slovenia</b> is typical. There are no organisations that help former athletes secure a job after their sporting career is ended. Athletes have to use their own connections, established during their careers. Sometimes athletic associations or sporting clubs try to help these athletes with finding jobs, but there are no regulations.</p>

### **Direct state regulation**

- 7.11 This category is characterised by government regulating the provision of sport in education.

#### ***Compulsory schooling***

- 7.12 All countries fall into this category because government regulation of compulsory schooling involves physical education (PE) being a core/statutory subject. Even in specialist sports schools, and also in schools with a sports focus, the compulsory educational curriculum is followed. Member States also have regulations concerning child protection, compulsory school age ranges and qualifications. In some countries, justified absences can be arranged for athletes attending competitions.

#### **AUSTRIA**

- 7.13 In Austria, the state defines the ages of compulsory schooling and PE is a core subject. There are also opportunities for athletes to attend specialist sport schools. These schools can have a general or specific sport focus, where the school offers additional sports classes in sports in co-operation with sports federations or solely focuses on one sport, such as ski schools. There are also sports schools for elite athletes that incorporate specialised training programmes twice a day.

#### **BELGIUM**

- 7.14 Compulsory schooling in Belgium requires the inclusion of PE as a core subject. There is also the option to increase sport classes from two to three classes per week to 4-11 classes per week on specialised sports programmes in secondary schools. Belgium also has eight *Topsportschools* that are specialised sport schools for elite athletes allowing them to combine education with their chosen sport.

#### **CYPRUS**

- 7.15 Compulsory schooling in Cyprus includes PE as a core subject. There are no specialist sports schools in Cyprus, but an athlete can get justified absence from school and have flexible arrangements with regard to examinations.

#### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

- 7.16 The Czech Republic includes PE in its core curriculum, and some schools provide additional specialist sport classes in co-operation with sport federations. These sport classes and the sports federations are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

**DENMARK**

- 7.17 PE is a core subject in compulsory schooling in Denmark. There are also schools which have a specific sport focus, called Sport Gymnasiums. These have an educational and sport component.

**ESTONIA**

- 7.18 School is compulsory in Estonia from the ages of seven to 17 years and PE is a core curriculum subject. There are 20 specialist sports schools that provide training for gifted children and in addition sports classes are available for talented young sportspersons. The school course in a sports boarding school takes one year more than in an ordinary secondary school to allow for sports training.

**FINLAND**

- 7.19 In compulsory schooling in Finland, PE is a core component. There are also schools that are sports orientated and have flexible time allocations to incorporate the sporting component. Some schools provide up to 6 sports lessons per week.

**FRANCE**

- 7.20 Compulsory education in France includes PE as a statutory subject. Schools can provide flexible arrangements to accommodate additional sporting activity. There is also the provision of specialist sport schools, such as INSEP and academies for sport.

**GERMANY**

- 7.21 In Germany, the state regulates compulsory education. PE is a core subject in the national curriculum and is statutory for all students up to 15/16 years. Germany provides specialist sport schools for students wishing to take part in more sport. These elite sport schools have flexible daily schedules that allows students to train twice a day, three times a week. These schools must provide the same educational programme as all other compulsory schools.

**GREECE**

- 7.22 Compulsory schooling in Greece is until age 15. There are no specialist sports schools but sport facilitation classes are offered between the ages of 12 and 14 in the lower secondary school.

**HUNGARY**

- 7.23 Compulsory schooling in Hungary is for students up to the age of 16 and includes PE as a core subject. Hungary has schools that specialise in sports and others run classes for gifted young athletes. The system also provides flexible arrangements for athletes.

**IRELAND**

- 7.24 In Ireland, children are obliged to be educated between the ages of six and 16 years. PE lessons are statutory and there is also a system of sport classes (team sports) between 4pm and 6pm each day available in secondary schools. There are no specialised sports schools.

**ITALY**

- 7.25 In Italy, compulsory schooling includes PE as a statutory subject. There are also 10 sports orientated schools that provide training and education and offer flexibility and distance learning. The sports schools are under the direct control of the Ministry of Education.

**LATVIA**

- 7.26 Compulsory schooling in Latvia is up until the age of 16. PE is a core subject, but there is no opportunity to specialise in sport until aged 15.

**LITHUANIA**

- 7.27 Compulsory education in the Republic of Lithuania is from five till 16 years of age. There are opportunities for talented young sportspersons to enrol at sports boarding schools, which are state funded and are run in such a way to optimise the best results in sports. The National Olympic Committee awards grants to talented sportspersons.

**LUXEMBOURG**

- 7.28 Education in Luxembourg is compulsory between the ages of five and 15 years. PE is a core subject and is provided to students in both primary and secondary education. Some schools have flexible arrangements that increase the amount of sports/PE classes in secondary level education.

**MALTA**

- 7.29 Malta does not have any special sports schools, but PE is a compulsory school subject.

**POLAND**

- 7.30 Compulsory schooling in Poland is between the ages of six to 16 years. Schools for gifted young sports people have been present in the Polish sports system since 1969. These schools provide sports training combined with the general school curriculum. PE is a part of compulsory statutory education throughout compulsory schooling.

**PORTUGAL**

- 7.31 PE is a statutory requirement in compulsory education in Portugal. There are also flexible arrangements, such as the scheduling and attendance of classes. One school has links with the Basketball Federation and aims to adapt its school programme to fit in with the training. However, there are no specialist sports schools.

**SLOVAKIA**

- 7.32 Compulsory education in Slovakia is from ages six to 15. There are currently six national and three private sport gymnasiums. The educational period is eight years with graduation in four subjects. Physical education at a sport gymnasium is substituted by regular sport training. The education process enables students to combine training and study.

**SLOVENIA**

- 7.33 Compulsory schooling in the Republic of Slovenia is until the age of 15. PE is a statutory subject in the national curriculum. There are, though, special sport classes in some schools and flexible arrangements. These include adaptations in grading (when and how students can get their grades adapted), which subjects are examinable and the provision of additional learning for the pupil.

**SPAIN**

- 7.34 Compulsory schooling in Spain is between the ages of six to 16. PE is a core subject, but as far as the models of school sport are concerned, there is not an agreed and unitary model for the whole State. The major tendency is towards a model of school sport that allows the balanced development of different sport itineraries which the future users will be able to choose from.

**SWEDEN**

- 7.35 Compulsory schooling in Sweden is between the ages of seven and 16. There is a system of sport schools, *Topsportschools* or sport academies at secondary and upper secondary levels and all schools must follow compulsory education that includes PE.

**THE NETHERLANDS**

- 7.36 Compulsory schooling in the Netherlands is between the ages of five to 16 years. PE is a core subject within the national curriculum. There are specialist sports schools, *Topsportschools* that combine education and sport training.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 7.37 In the UK, education is compulsory from age five to 16. PE is a core subject of the national curriculum. There are also specialist sports schools which provide the facilities to combine education and training.

***Post-compulsory schooling***

- 7.38 Direct state intervention in post-compulsory schooling involves the provision of specialist sports schools, or schools with a sports focus available to students beyond the age of compulsory schooling, for example in colleges.

**AUSTRIA**

- 7.39 The sports schools (both academic and vocational) in the Austrian system incorporate the post-compulsory school age students, and so the same regulations apply as with the compulsory schooling. However, there is more choice and flexibility available to students.

**BELGIUM**

- 7.40 Education in Belgium is compulsory until the age of 18, and so the same regulations as compulsory education apply to those in the 16-18 age range.

**CYPRUS**

- 7.41 Some athletes can receive scholarships to colleges in Cyprus. A 60% discount on tuition fees is offered to those athletes that are members of national teams and 40% to those who have competed in international competitions.

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

- 7.42 Post-compulsory schooling is between the ages 15-19 and is provided by grammar schools. Some grammar schools have a sports focus. These schools follow the same programme as other grammar schools, but have an additional four-five hours of sports training per day.

**FINLAND**

- 7.43 Post-compulsory schooling in Finland is for students aged 16 and over and is provided in upper secondary schools, polytechnics and specialist colleges. The state directly intervenes by allowing bonus points and merit schemes to be available to athletes wanting to enter these institutions. There is also flexibility in course requirements.

**FRANCE**

- 7.44 Post-compulsory education in France is for students aged 16 and over. The provision for post-compulsory schooling is generally provided through an extension of the compulsory school provision. For example, students may continue their studies at their specialist sport school, even though they are only statutory obliged to do so until 16. Because the post-compulsory students are still attending school, they are governed by the state regulations.

**GERMANY**

- 7.45 Post-compulsory schooling in Germany is from the age of 16 and over. The specialist élite sport schools which provide compulsory schooling also provide post-compulsory education as they extend to age 19. The German Sports Aid Foundation provides some of the students with financial assistance to attend these schools. As the compulsory schools provide extended education, there is direct state regulation of compulsory schooling.

**GREECE**

- 7.46 Upper secondary schools are for students between the ages of 15-18. The sports facilitation classes are also offered in the upper secondary schools, the majority of students taking up football, athletics, basketball and volleyball classes.

**HUNGARY**

- 7.47 Compulsory schooling in Hungary finishes at 16, however, the majority of students stay on and complete up to an additional three years of education. PE classes are still provided up until the age of 19.

**IRELAND**

- 7.48 Post-compulsory education in Ireland is governed by state regulations, the same as the compulsory schools.

**ITALY**

- 7.49 A ski college has recently been established in Italy, which resulted from a partnership between the Ministry of Education and sport federations. This ski college incorporates both training and an education/vocational programme. The college aims to educate its athletes so they can find work at ski resorts and within the winter sport segment.

**LATVIA**

- 7.50 Post-compulsory education in Latvia is from 16 years upwards. At 15, students can attend a Sport Gymnasium, a post-compulsory school with a sport focus. At these schools there are flexible arrangements in reference to postponing exams.

**LITHUANIA**

- 7.51 Sport gymnasiums give students the opportunity to further both their academic and sporting careers. After completion of general education, the state provides opportunity for young talented sportspersons to pursue higher education. Sport centres and their regional divisions (such as Olympic sports centres, sport gymnasium) fulfil this function.

**LUXEMBOURG**

- 7.52 Post-school education is only provided in the format of two or three years of higher education outside of university (Baccalauréat) in a small number of subjects of study. Post-compulsory education is under the control of the state.

**POLAND**

- 7.53 The sports schools in Poland extend beyond the age of compulsory schooling, and so are regulated by the same controls as in compulsory education.

**PORTUGAL**

- 7.54 There are no secondary education institutions that specialise in sports. However, some military institutions with secondary education (Colégio Militar, Instituto Militar dos Pupilos do Exército and Instituto de Odivelas) have a special and reinforced curriculum on sports subjects.
- 7.55 The Portuguese school system provides, in some secondary education institutions, a professional course on sport. This is for students that want to obtain a professional degree level qualification for working as sport monitors in municipalities, sport clubs, sport academies and fitness academies.

**SLOVAKIA**

- 7.56 Although compulsory education finishes at 15 in Slovakia, the sports gymnasiums also cater for students above this age and, therefore, are regulated by the same rules as the compulsory schooling.

**SLOVENIA**

- 7.57 Schools in Slovenia extend beyond the age of compulsory schooling, and so compulsory schooling is regulated by the same systems as the compulsory schools.

**SPAIN**

- 7.58 Compulsory schooling is from six to 16 years of age. Post-compulsory schooling is regulated by the government. The trend in sport in education is to incorporate secondary schools into High Performance Centres, to adapt timetables to allow for training sessions and to make greater use of tutoring.

**SWEDEN**

- 7.59 15 to 18 year-old élite young athletes are offered the option of combining their secondary education with élite level training in 61 different *topsportsschools*. The possibility also exists to have this combination at regional and local sports schools. School sports academies are supported jointly between the Swedish School Board and the Swedish Sport Confederation and the communities. All national academies are part of a regular high school. Funding from the authorities covers coaching, instructors, education, vehicles and salaries of teachers.

**THE NETHERLANDS**

- 7.60 Compulsory schooling is between five to 16 years. The Netherlands has two colleges specifically for élite athletes: Johan Cruyff College, providing intermediate vocational education for management and communication for potential élite athletes and the Randstad Élite Sport Academy, a higher education sports academy.
- 7.61 There is no minimum age entry, but students must have completed secondary education. The academy has academic focus but all entrants must be élite athletes. Funding is from the higher education system and Randstad.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 7.62 Education is compulsory between the ages of five and 16 years. Schools in the UK often provide opportunities to study for post-compulsory education. There are also colleges that cater for 16-18 year olds. Some schools/colleges have specialist sports academies for the students, which combines further education and sport. These institutions are all regulated by the state.

***Professional academies***

- 7.63 Professional academies that are run and managed by the state are considered to be provision with direct state intervention.

**DENMARK**

- 7.64 An élite soccer club in Denmark provides an academy for talented young footballers. However, the state directly regulates academy players' education as it requires all members to attend regular compulsory schools. In this sense, the only real difference from a student-athlete attending school and playing/training with a club is that the academy provides boarding accommodation that allows the members to live away from home.

**FINLAND**

- 7.65 Professional academies in Finland are controlled by the state which requires all members to complete compulsory schooling if they are of compulsory school age.

**FRANCE**

- 7.66 Professional academies in France are regulated in that they must provide education (either in-house, or in co-operation with local schools) to their members that are under 16.

**GERMANY**

- 7.67 It is mandatory in Germany for all premier league football clubs to establish an academy that provides training and education for its members. The education component is usually provided in partnership with local schools.

***Universities***

- 7.68 Direct state regulation in universities is illustrated by the provision of a specialised sport university run and funded by the state, or by special arrangements for student-athletes as a result of state decree.

**LATVIA**

- 7.69 The Latvian Academy of Sport Education admits athletes with certain rankings in the Olympic Games without an examination. It also admits the graduates from the Sport Gymnasiums without examination.

**LITHUANIA**

- 7.70 Athletes applying to the Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education receive extra points if they were placed first to third in the Olympics, World's and Europe Adult, Youth or Junior Championships, first to third placed winners in Lithuanian Adult Championships or they are junior champions, or those possessing a Lithuanian Physical Education Badge. There are also reduced entry requirements at other universities.

**PORTUGAL**

- 7.71 According to law, elite athletes have special status when they seek access to universities (except military and police institutions). A certain quota is decided each year. Between 1992/93 to 1999/2000 1,366 entered universities as beneficiaries of special status.

**SPAIN**

- 7.72 Spain has the Johan Cruyff Academy and the Institute of Physical Education of Catalonia (INEFC). All universities in Spain are regulated by Spanish law, that enforces them to reserve 3% of the total places to elite athletes. Other flexible arrangements are decided by the universities, on an individual basis.

***Lifestyle support***

- 7.73 Lifestyle support with direct state intervention is where the government directly employs athletes or employs and funds people to address lifestyle support issues.

**FRANCE**

- 7.74 In France, lifestyle support is regulated by the state in that athletes can take part in a recruitment competition restricted to high-level athletes that provides employment in Category A civil service positions. The state also provides loans for retired athletes wanting to set up their own businesses.

**GREECE**

- 7.75 Lifestyle support for athletes in Greece is generally considered to be the responsibility of the athlete. However, the state provides an education programme and guarantees employment for athletes who have reached certain levels within their sport.

**ITALY**

- 7.76 The state provides pensions for athletes and insurance. There are also restricted entry competitions for the employment of athletes into government services, such as the military, police, fire brigade, the prison service, customs and the air force.

**Semi-regulation**

- 7.77 This category is characterised by the state enabling action and facilitating outcomes by supporting quasi non-governmental organisation bodies or the voluntary sector to deliver programmes and manage facilities.

***Post-compulsory schooling***

- 7.78 Semi-regulation in post-compulsory schooling may involve the joint funding of educational provision, the provision of scholarships through NGBs or semi-regulation of sports colleges or further education sports academies for those students over the age of compulsory schooling.

**DENMARK**

- 7.79 In Denmark, post-compulsory education is after the age of 15/16. *Højskoler* or folk high schools provide facilities for post-compulsory education. Some of these high schools focus on elite sportspersons aged 18-25 and at the *Højskole* almost all the lessons will be related to sports. Another provision for post-compulsory students is provided within the Sport Gymnasiums (already referred to in the compulsory education section above). This part of the schooling falls in the semi-regulation category as the service is provided in partnership with *Team Danmark*, which is a semi-public organisation.

**ESTONIA**

- 7.80 The Estonian government and NOC both provide scholarships for élite athletes and post-compulsory education is provided in vocational secondary schools and specialist sports schools or colleges. The Audentes boarding sports school in Tallin is affiliated to Audentes private university.

***Professional academies***

- 7.81 Sports academies falling into the semi-regulation category are funded jointly by the state and the commercial sector (for example clubs). There may be certain requirements that academies have to meet, which are regulated by the state. Athletes attending the academies may receive funding, scholarships or bursaries through NGBs, or directly from the government.

**BELGIUM**

- 7.82 There are few professional academies in Belgium, but those that do exist are partnerships between an NGB and local schools. *Tennis & Study* is a tennis academy that was set up by the Belgian Tennis Association (VTV) and a local school.

**IRELAND**

- 7.83 Tennis Ireland, an academy providing both education and training for young tennis players, is a joint venture. It receives funding from the Irish Sports Council and the education elements of the scheme are generally provided by local schools and, therefore, regulated by the government. The Republic of Ireland also has rugby academies, soccer and Gaelic football academies.

**ITALY**

- 7.84 The academies in Italy are only state regulated so far as all members must complete compulsory education, and that no formal contract can be signed by an athlete until they are 16 years of age.

**SLOVAKIA**

- 7.85 Three sports academies have been established recently with a focus on football, hockey and sport in general. The Venglos Football Academy (VFA) has training and educational segments. The educational element of the academy is sponsored by the government and individual donators. VFA members go through the 'normal' compulsory education process.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 7.86 All football clubs within the premier league are required to have an academy by the national governing body, the Professional Football Association. However, all children within the compulsory school age must complete their education.

**Universities**

- 7.87 Semi-regulation in universities concerns the funding of programmes and schemes through arms length bodies or NGBs. There may be special entry requirements or bonus points awarded to athletes prescribed by government, or scholarships and bursaries funded indirectly by the government through NGBs or other semi-public organisations.

**BELGIUM**

- 7.88 There is some flexibility in the university programmes and entry requirements in higher education institutions in Belgium. However, these are not state regulated but decided by the institutions themselves. Scholarships of 70% of tuition fees are offered to encourage student-athletes to pursue their education.

**CYPRUS**

- 7.89 The Ministry of Education runs an incentive scheme for athletes where they can receive bonus points for entry into university. Scholarships are also awarded through the NOC.

**DENMARK**

- 7.90 The state controls and regulates the flexible arrangements that universities have to offer their student athletes.

**ESTONIA**

- 7.91 There are three higher educational institutions in Estonia providing specialist education to young élite sportspersons. Two public universities in Estonia provide specialist education for young sportspersons and they allow student-athletes an additional two years of study to complete courses. One private university is affiliated to a sports boarding school. The Estonian government provides sports scholarships and the NOC offers financial awards.

**FINLAND**

- 7.92 The state offers scholarships and grants to both current and retired athletes in polytechnics, upper secondary level schools and universities.

**FRANCE**

- 7.93 Universities in France are de-centralised, however, the state make certain recommendations to the higher education institutions regarding flexible arrangements for élite student athletes, including entry requirements.

**GERMANY**

- 7.94 Flexible arrangements in universities are usually decided by the institution and not by the state. However, several universities have links with Olympic Support Centres and Sports Federations. These partnerships help to accommodate elite athletes who are pursuing a sporting career alongside their studies.

**GREECE**

- 7.95 Athletes wanting to attend university in Greece can be excluded from entrance exams and enter the department of their choice. There is no limit on the number of athletes entering each department.

**HUNGARY**

- 7.96 Universities are generally independent in the special arrangements they offer to athletes. Some have partnerships with the Olympian Course of Life Programme that contractually binds the university to provide one to three athletes with free tuition and to reduce the fees of others.
- 7.97 However, there is also a law that states that those athletes placed first, second and third in Olympic Games should have admittance to any university and course without an examination.

**IRELAND**

- 7.98 Although most of the flexible arrangements and financial benefits for student-athletes at universities are decided by the institution itself, some funding is available from NGBs, and therefore indirectly funded by the government. For example, the Gaelic Athletic Association offers bursaries to some athletes.

**POLAND**

- 7.99 Flexible arrangements are controlled by the individual institutions, but the Ministry of Education regulates the provision of scholarships to athletes. Funding is available to the members of national teams and to those with certain rankings.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 7.100 Universities in the UK define their own flexibility criteria. However, athletes receive support at universities through the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, which is funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

***Lifestyle support***

- 7.101 Semi-regulation of athlete lifestyle support may be indicated by state support for programmes run and co-funded by NGBs or other semi-public organisations, such as National Olympic Committees. There may also be scholarships or pensions provided by the state, but not the direct employment of athletes into the governmental structure.

**AUSTRIA**

- 7.102 There is a jointly funded athlete support scheme running in Austria which is a partnership between government departments, sport federations and the commercial sector. The scheme is called *Sporthilfe* and concerns support and re-entry of the athlete into the labour force.

**DENMARK**

- 7.103 *Team Danmark* provides athlete support. There is also a scheme run by the government that allows athletes to save during their career and then offers favourable tax regulations regarding educational programmes or to set up their own companies.

**ESTONIA**

- 7.104 A number of élite athletes receive scholarships to continue their studies during and after their sports career. The athletes sign a contractual agreement made between respective sports federations and the NOC.

**FINLAND**

- 7.105 Lifestyle support in Finland is indirectly funded by the state (and other organisations, for example ESF) through the Oulu University Sports Academy, which provides support and assistance to the athlete in finding careers within the labour market. The NOC also provides career counselling and development programmes.

**GERMANY**

- 7.106 The German Sports Aid Foundation provides lifestyle support for athletes by aiding them in finding employment or apprenticeships and by giving workshops on lifestyle issues. It also provides compensation for companies if an athlete takes time off for sporting events.

**IRELAND**

- 7.107 There is limited athlete support that concentrates on the re-integration of athletes into the work force or back into education after their sporting career has finished. However, there are some schemes that do provide lifestyle support. The FAI run a programme for those athletes returning to Ireland after leaving to gain contracts overseas, which endeavours to help them secure contracts with clubs in Ireland.

**LATVIA**

- 7.108 There is little government provision of lifestyle support in Latvia, however, some athletes have been awarded pensions after retirement.

**LITHUANIA**

- 7.109 There is legislation in Lithuania that states that athletes and coaches working on a contract basis are entitled to social insurance pensions. The Department of Physical Education and Sport supplies first and second degree pensions to athletes, coaches, sport staff and teachers.

**POLAND**

- 7.110 State pensions are offered to retired athletes who have won at least one Olympic medal, are over 35 and are not practicing competitive sport, have Polish citizenship, have permanent residence in Poland and have not been convicted of an intentional crime. Some other athletes may receive assistance from the state but this is the responsibility of the sport federations.

**PORTUGAL**

- 7.111 There is a lifestyle support scheme run by the Professional Football Players Union that is supported financially by the professional institute. The scheme is based on career guidance (for ex-players or athletes nearing the end of their career) and gaining qualification (for young players during their sporting career). The courses are free of charge and athletes are provided with accommodation, food and transportation.

**SPAIN**

- 7.112 The Spanish government does not directly employ retired athletes to re-integrate them back into the labour force, but there is a law that states all public administrations and companies have to regard being a top class sports person as a merit in selection tests and assessments. The NOC also runs a programme in partnership with Adecco that offers support to retired athletes by finding them employment.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

- 7.113 Support in the UK for athletes is provided through a programme called Performance Lifestyle. This scheme is indirectly funded by the government, through a semi-public agency called UK Sport.

**Non or minimal regulation**

- 7.114 In this category, state regulation in the sector is limited to basic requirements in such areas as child protection and health and safety.

***Post-compulsory schooling***

- 7.115 Regulation in respect of basic responsibilities only is carried out in the following countries.

**MALTA**

7.116 There is very little governmental regulation of sport in post-compulsory schooling in Malta. It is a small state with limited resources.

***Professional academies***

7.117 Regulation in respect of basic responsibilities only.

**GREECE**

7.118 The only regulation on academies in Greece, is that all members under 15 must complete compulsory education.

**LITHUANIA**

7.119 Although the law clearly states what contract provisions should be (including compulsory schooling of under-aged sportspersons), clubs do not take responsibility for providing education for sportspersons.

**LUXEMBOURG**

7.120 As there are no professional academies in Luxembourg, the government has no regulations in force.

**PORTUGAL**

7.121 There is one Football League club that runs an academy, which provides top quality coaching, development, education and medical care, and accommodation. It is the only example of a specialist academy of its sort running in Portugal. The members are required to attend compulsory schooling.

**SPAIN**

7.122 There are several academies in Spain offering specific training for talented young athletes. These academies are provided by the clubs and not the state. The only state regulation is that all members must complete compulsory schooling, even if attending the academy. This is usually provided in conjunction with local schools.

***Universities***

7.123 Regulation in respect of basic responsibilities only.

**AUSTRIA**

7.124 There are no special arrangements or programmes available to athletes within the Austrian higher education system. Any flexibility or funding is at the discretion of the institution or through private/commercial sources.

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

- 7.125 Although the Ministry of Education is charged with the educational content of the universities, there are very limited opportunities for athletes to obtain flexible arrangements to assist their studies. Very limited scholarships are available, but it was noted that funds for these are severely restricted and sponsorship is usually sought through the commercial sector.

**HUNGARY**

- 7.126 There are plans to establish athlete support programmes, however, at present no state provision exists for lifestyle support.

**LUXEMBOURG**

- 7.127 No specific initiatives have been developed for gifted sportspersons at universities. Generally, gifted athletes will attend university abroad. Any arrangements will be at the discretion of the institution and not through government regulation.

**MALTA**

- 7.128 There is very little direct state intervention into the university system in Malta.

**SLOVAKIA**

- 7.129 There is limited flexibility for athletes in universities in Slovakia. Any special arrangements are decided by the university. The state does, however, legislate that the tuition should be free (for all students).

**SLOVENIA**

- 7.130 Scholarships are awarded to some athletes attending universities.

**SWEDEN**

- 7.131 Universities in Sweden have flexible arrangements for athletes, but the university itself decides these.

**THE NETHERLANDS**

- 7.132 Universities in the Netherlands may have flexible arrangements, but the university itself regulates these. There is a specialised university, the Johan Cruyff University (JCU) that is only for elite athletes. It is a university for business administration that prepares elite athletes for a post-athlete career in the sports industry. JCU offers a tailor-made education in which study is focused on a sport programme.

***Lifestyle support***

- 7.133 Limited government involvement is indicated by no organisation having responsibility for regulating or facilitating outcomes.

**BELGIUM**

- 7.134 There is no governmental provision for athlete support. There is, however, very limited commercial support and non-compulsory workshops are run in *Topsportschools*.

**CYPRUS**

- 7.135 There are no formal governmental arrangements in place regarding the support of athletes in Cyprus. However, some organisations may give priority to athletes applying for employment.

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

- 7.136 There is very limited support offered by the NOC for athletes.

**LUXEMBOURG**

- 7.137 Due to the limited number of élite athletes, no specific initiatives have been developed with regard to securing employment or returning to education/training after their sporting careers.

**MALTA**

- 7.138 There is no lifestyle support currently offered by the state.

**SLOVAKIA**

- 7.139 Sport-career transition is still unplanned in Slovakia. There is no agency or institution supporting top-level athletes after finishing their sporting careers. The NOC only registers all Olympic top-ranked athletes and manages their public relations.

**SLOVENIA**

- 7.140 There are no organisations that help former athletes secure a job after their sporting career is ended. Athletes have to use their own connections, established during their careers. Sometimes athletic associations or sporting clubs try to help these athletes with finding jobs, but there are no regulations.

**SWEDEN**

- 7.141 No organisation has legal responsibility to provide support for élite athletes during their career transition from professional sport into the labour market or education. Representatives for the Swedish Sport Confederation such as sport clubs do, however, sometimes take responsibility on an individual basis, in particular for younger athletes.

**THE NETHERLANDS**

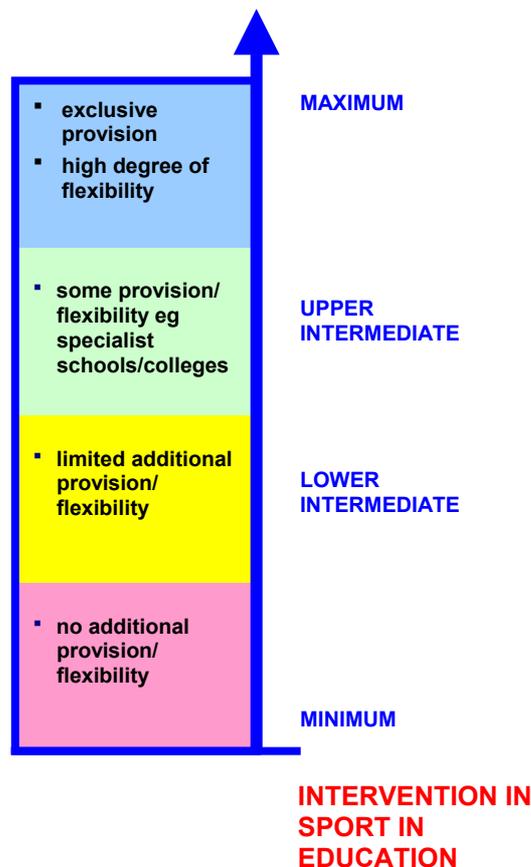
7.142 In its policy memorandum 'Chances for élite sport' of 1999, the national government stresses that the responsibility for the period after the élite sports career lies primarily with élite athletes themselves.

**Provision for education in élite sports systems**

7.143 A further analysis is proposed in Figure 7.1. An axis of intervention in sport in education measures the amount of support and flexibility within the education system in respect of sport development. Positions along the axis are measured in four stages from low to high intervention, with the intermediate positions being split into lower and higher intermediate.

7.144 Member States are positioned along the axis in accordance with research findings. This is elaborated in Table 7.2 overleaf where the text explains these positions. In some Member States, intervention differs significantly between post-compulsory education and university provision for student-athletes and this is noted.

**Figure 7.1 Intervention in sport in education**



**Table 7.2 Member State intervention in sport in education**

Degree of intervention	Member States
<p><b>Maximum intervention</b></p>	<p><b>Austria</b> has schools for élite athletes and special training centres, funded by the government, and allows flexibility in completing educational programmes</p> <p><b>Belgium</b> has a law protecting athletes' rights, various programmes of financial support are available, and a high degree of flexibility is offered to student-athletes</p> <p><b>Denmark</b> has specialised élite level academies and exhibits close collaboration between <i>Team Danmark</i> and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation</p> <p><b>Finland</b> has specialised élite level academies where the educational programme is modular and this enables a high level of flexibility in education and sport specialisation</p> <p><b>France</b> has a highly specialised élite athlete training system regulated by the state that gives a high priority to education</p> <p><b>Germany</b> has élite sports schools, Olympic Support Centres and Élite Sport Universities</p> <p><b>Poland</b> has sports champion schools and various measures of financial support and flexible educational arrangements co-ordinated by the state</p> <p><b>The Netherlands</b> has exclusive university provision for élite athletes at Johan Cruyff University and further education at Johan Cruyff College.</p>

**SECTION 7 – SPORT IN EDUCATION POLICY: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

Degree of intervention	Member States
Upper intermediate	<p><b>Estonia</b> exhibits a strong partnership between government and non-governmental structures in sport. There are specialist sports schools and HE institutions provide support for élite athletes. Athletes receive government and NOC financial support</p> <p><b>Finland</b> is exploring different ways of combining sport and education, and is involved in a project funded by the ESF and other partners to facilitate and improve flexible measures</p> <p><b>Greece</b> has no specialised sports schools, but there is a shared willingness by education establishments to help their élite athletes, although the degree of flexibility varies across the country and there is a need for more standardisation</p> <p><b>Lithuania</b> has special provision for élite student-athletes including publicly funded sports boarding schools and flexible arrangements in higher education</p> <p><b>Luxembourg</b> has a law which states that athletes can follow a reduced school programme in respect of attending training, camps and competitions</p> <p><b>Spain</b> has legislation that ensures flexibility for élite athletes pursuing higher education</p> <p><b>Sweden</b> has highly developed academies within the education sector and there is increased commitment by universities to facilitate the academic experience of élite athletes</p> <p><b>UK</b> is now developing a higher degree of intervention within a government strategy of investment in sport but specialist school sport colleges are relatively new (and do not serve élite athletes exclusively). Professional academies are well developed and there is some educational flexibility.</p>

**SECTION 7 – SPORT IN EDUCATION POLICY: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT**

Degree of intervention	Member States
<p><b>Lower intermediate</b></p>	<p><b>Cyprus</b> is a small state, which relies heavily on help from Greece to develop their élite athletes</p> <p><b>Czech Republic</b> has sports grammar schools and scholarships but limited flexibility</p> <p><b>Hungary</b> has élite development systems in place but changes in the economy have resulted in a substantial reduction in funding for sports which constrains initiatives</p> <p><b>Ireland</b> has a lack of resources, funds and facilities, which limits the extent to how much they support their élite athletes</p> <p><b>Italy</b> has only recently started to explore the relationship between sport and education but there are ten sports schools with flexible timetables, increased tutoring during pressure points and some distance learning courses are available</p> <p><b>Latvia</b> provides support to student-athletes at the secondary school level and above. There is some flexibility but no scholarships</p> <p><b>Portugal</b> has a legal document to ensure flexibility but has no specialised schools for élite athletes</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b> has special sport classes at the secondary level, scholarships at university level and some educational flexibility but no support for élite athletes after the end of their careers.</p>
<p><b>Minimum intervention</b></p>	<p><b>Malta</b> has minimal intervention. It is a small state with limited resources and has no élite sports system.</p>

## **SECTION 8**

# **COMPARATIVE RESEARCH - BALANCING EDUCATION AND SPORT**

## **Section 8 Comparative research – balancing education and sport**

### ***Introduction***

- 8.1 This section reports on the comparative research that has been carried out in the UK, France, Germany and Poland. In order to examine further the issues raised in stages 1 and 2, which gathered information on the education of elite athletes across the 25 Member States of Europe, qualitative research was undertaken in four selected Member States. This examined differences between the experience of the education of young sportspersons in the four selected Member States.
- 8.2 The methodology consisted primarily of qualitative in-depth interviews with selected stakeholders including elite athletes and relevant organisations in the four comparative states.
- 8.3 This primary research has addressed issues in each of the five research areas that have formed the basis of research in stages 1 and 2:
- sport in compulsory schooling
  - sport in post compulsory education, including academies provided by educational institutions/sports colleges
  - education and sport in professional sports academies
  - education and sport in universities
  - lifestyle management, career transition issues and post retirement career support.
- 8.4 The research study has focused principally on seven sports. The rationale for selection is that these sports represent a range of team and individual sports in addition to professional and semi-professional sports employment, and they also illustrate variations in the age of specialisation and gender representation, together with a variety of Olympic, winter and professional sports. Sports highlighted in the research are:
- football
  - rugby
  - athletics
  - swimming
  - tennis
  - gymnastics
  - winter sports.

### ***Contrasting approaches to sports development***

- 8.5 The four Member States selected for comparative research provide a useful comparison and contrast in respect of sports policy and practice. Poland is a new Member State and is still experiencing a process of transformation in the post-socialist era. Education and sport structures remain from the pre 1989 period, although there is an increasing role for the private and non-profit sector in sport. Schools for gifted young sports people have been present in the Polish sports system since 1969, when the first experimental post-primary schools were created with an expanded PE programme, along with the primary schools established in the years 1971/72. In the 1973/74 school year the first sports profiled schools were created. Also in 1974, the system for educating young sports people was created. In 1977, the first sports champion schools were founded, which had over 18 hours of PE per week.
- 8.6 In 2002, Poland had 67 sports champion schools, in addition to 40 sports primary schools, 48 sports middle schools and 11 sports high schools. There is concern, however, about participation levels. The Ministry of Education and Sport has recently developed a strategy for Polish sport, which is particularly focused on addressing the current low level of youth involvement in organised elite sport. There are six universities in Poland specialising in sports related courses including PE teaching, coaching, physiotherapy and sports management.
- 8.7 Both France and Germany have highly developed systems to support elite athlete development, including regionally based specialist elite sports schools and training centres. Both countries exhibit a relatively high degree of regulation and control over sport development. In France this is through the Ministry of Sport and in Germany it is through the Federal Government.
- 8.8 France established INSEP, a national sports training institution in Paris, in 1945. INSEP also provides education at the compulsory, post-compulsory and FE/HE education levels. The French state has taken a leading role in sports development and the Ministry of Youth, Sport and the Voluntary Sector is responsible for the national strategy to promote access to high-level sport. Sport occupies a fundamental place in French society and the principles and values of sport play a leading role in life in France.
- 8.9 A network of regional training centres for education and sport designated *Poles* was created in 1995. *Pôles Espoir* (Points of Hope) have been set up across France in all Olympic sports to assist in the training and follow up of elite athletes. Talented young sportspersons are registered with the *Pôles Espoir* at the recommendation of the national technical directors in their sport. *Pôles France* are centres for sportspersons who have already made the French national team. These training centres are INSEP, CREPS (Regional Centres for Education and Sport) and other territorial centres (the Velodrome in Hyères, the Nautical Centre in La Rochelle) or Federal Centres (the national football centre in Clairefontaine and national rugby centre in Marcoussis).
- 8.10 In Germany, sport is also an important element of national identity. To give talented young athletes the opportunity to develop their sporting career alongside their academic career during compulsory schooling, several links between schools and institutions/organisations of high performance sports are in place.

- 8.11 Different types of partnerships between high performance sport and educational institutions include:
- schools specialising in sport (*Sportbetonte Schulen*)
  - partner schools of high performance sport (*Partnerschulen des Leistungssports*)
  - élite sport schools (*Éliteschulen des Sports*).
- 8.12 In these integrated systems the whole range of educational, supervisory and supporting measures are used, in order to give the young athletes opportunities to reach high performance in sports and to fulfil all educational requirements. These integrated systems consist typically of the training centres (Olympic, Federal or Regional) and of the schools. There are 20 Olympic training centres in Germany and 48 élite sports universities, together with 38 élite sport schools.
- 8.13 The national German Sports Federation takes the leading role in defining criteria for élite sport education and Federal Länder are responsible for delivering sports policy within an overall national framework. Specialist sports schools, therefore, are the responsibility of the Länder. The German Sports University and National Coaching Institute is in Cologne.
- 8.14 The UK has many historic sports structures and has evolved a highly developed voluntary sports sector working with arm's length government agencies to finance and administrate sports policy and development. However, it is recognised that the UK has lagged behind in élite sports development. The English Institute of Sport (EIS) was created in 2001 in order to deliver a coherent regional strategy for sport development in England through the establishment of nine multi-sport high performance centres and to co-ordinate support for élite athletes. A recent government initiative jointly promoted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is creating 400 specialist sports colleges within the state school system and providing funding for talented young athletes. Several further and higher education institutes have sports academies.

***State regulation or mixed economy***

- 8.15 The UK, France, Germany and Poland have contrasting approaches to sports and education policy and variations in sports infrastructure. These impact upon the choices available to young sportspersons and affect their ability to achieve the full potential in both sports and education.

- 8.16 France and Germany both exhibit a high degree of state regulation. In France, educational facilities are the responsibility of the Chief Education Officers under the Ministry for National Education. There is a highly developed system of national and regional high performance sports training centres with associated education and boarding facilities, co-ordinated centrally by the Minister for Sports. In the case studies from France, we noted that professional football academies were subsidised by the city and urban community in which they are located, with remaining academy costs financed by the club. This illustrates how local government supports sports development. The city of Lille, for example, provides an annual subsidy of €1.2 million. Sports clubs are also able to invest in sport development. Large skiing clubs like Courchevel or Val d'Isère, were described as being able to provide coaching and training themselves and they would often prefer to keep their skiers rather than see them attend the skiing *Pôle Espoir*. However, they do not provide an academic education.
- 8.17 In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. The diversity of the German school system is due to the country's federal structure, and the sovereignty of its 16 *Länder* (states) in matters of culture and education is a core element of it, although they share some responsibility for education with the Federal government. Federal *Länder* deliver sports policy within an overall national framework and specialist sports schools, linked to educational establishments and offering boarding facilities, are the responsibility of the *Länder*.
- 8.18 In the UK, since devolution to a Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, education and sports policy is the responsibility of respective Ministers for Education and for Sport. Local education authorities have an important role in monitoring education delivery at the local level and central government is increasingly taking an interventionist, arm's length perspective. There is a deliberate policy of encouraging educational diversity with the encouragement of more independence for schools and a commitment to a mixed economy of provision. There is also a commitment to support reform in respect of 'greater personalisation and choice' in the education system (Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, DfES, 2004).
- 8.19 In Poland, organisation of the public sector in sport is a matter for central level regulation by the Ministry of National Education and Sports. Regional and local government also has a role in implementing these policies. Since 1994, however, there are both public and non-public sport champion high schools giving the opportunity for students in Poland to specialise in a wide range of sports. This illustrates more of a mixed economy of provision than a system of state regulation and control.

### ***Balance between education and sport***

- 8.20 In carrying out this qualitative research, a number of themes have emerged. These are addressed both in this section and in Section 9. This section deals with the critical issue of balance between education and sports development and the challenges facing student-athletes in dealing with the competing demands of their complex lifestyle. Issues of balance arise not only between education and sport, but also between sport and a young sportsperson's personal and social life.

## **SECTION 8 – COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: BALANCING EDUCATION AND SPORT**

- 8.21 Young athletes want to experience elite level sport for several reasons: because of their passion for sport, for self-fulfilment, respect of others, well-being, health, competition, to surpass themselves and to travel. To achieve success in elite level sport requires a very high level of commitment and sacrifice.
- 8.22 The extent of the demands and pressure is immense and the challenge for any elite athlete is achieving a balance between these demands. For those athletes who wish to combine their sporting career with study, the demands placed upon them are even higher.
- 8.23 The Education Adviser at the EIS provides an interesting perspective on the issue of balance for elite athletes:

*“It’s difficult to balance sport, social and academic needs. Some think you can keep all three going but it’s not possible. You need to make choices on a week by week basis depending on immediate goals, and prioritise as appropriate. Sport predominantly is the main priority; these athletes live and breathe sport. You only get one chance in sport but it’s important to keep sport in perspective and realise sport doesn’t have to be first at all costs”.*

- 8.24 The Athlete Support Manager at the EIS, when asked about elite athletes who want to balance their sporting career with study on the EIS website ([www.eis2win.co.uk](http://www.eis2win.co.uk)) is quoted as saying the problems faced were:

*“time management, balancing the demands of a new lifestyle and self sufficiency”*

- 8.25 This survey detailed in the case study below highlights the difficulties in achieving an appropriate balance between sport and education.

### **Figure 8.1 Balance between education and sport in the UK – survey of athletes’ experiences of sport, education and employment**

A research project was undertaken by UK Sport to investigate athlete lifestyles, that is, their balance between sport, education, work and leisure. A total of 570 elite athletes were surveyed, the key findings are outlined below:

- 49% of athletes in education suggested that they had problems balancing sport (training/competing) with their education commitments
- 55% of the athletes had problems balancing sport with work
- 18% had no previous work experience
- 42% had an NVQ level 4 (degree level or equivalent)

**Source:** Athletes’ Lifestyles and ACE UK, A survey of athletes’ experiences of sport, education and work, and the role of the ACE UK programme (UK Sport, 2001).

8.26 Our research has identified a number of critical issues in achieving a balance between sport and education for elite athletes across Europe. The following sections cover:

- the key issues in trying to achieve a balance
- the need for balance between sport and education
- intervention levels across Europe to assist student-athletes in achieving this balance.

***What are the key issues for elite athletes across Europe in achieving a balance between sport and education?***

**Education is compromised**

8.27 UK elite athletes interviewed during stage 3 readily acknowledged that they had compromised their education in order to pursue their sport, and made deliberate choices to prioritise one or the other. One international swimmer interviewed in our study stated that she would “rather compromise education than swimming”.

8.28 The view that compromising education is perhaps inevitable is supported by the LTA Education Advisor who felt that:

*“You can’t physically get players on court without sacrificing their education to some degree”.*

8.29 One way that athletes compromise their education is through their choice of college or university. Several athletes whom we interviewed had been influenced by the sports facilities and many also admitted academic results were lower than they would have been had they not been involved in sport. Examples from our research are:

- a UK Olympic swimmer who chose which university to attend on the basis of where her club coach was based
- a UK international athlete, recognising the demands her sport placed on her, stated that the “hardest thing is knowing I could have done better in my GCSEs (school examinations) if I’d applied myself”
- an England international footballer said that her education has suffered and stated that she had been “happy to pass” her education as football was what she excelled in.

8.30 A recurring theme from our research was that one of the most demanding periods of combining sport with education is during examinations when it is difficult for athletes to devote the time necessary to study. Combining heavy training schedules with additional study time for revision is extremely demanding and achieving a balance between sport and education is particularly hard at this critical time.

8.31 For this reason, many athletes choose a course of study that makes it possible to continue high-level sport as well as their education, for example studies that are coursework based such as BTEC in the UK or *Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie* in France.

## **SECTION 8 – COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: BALANCING EDUCATION AND SPORT**

- 8.32 Our research also identified the amount of time athletes spend travelling to training as having a significant effect on their education. Many athletes would attend training straight from school and arrive home late at night, not only leaving them physically exhausted, but also making it difficult for them to find any quality study time.
- 8.33 One promising athlete spoke of completing her coursework in the back of her parent's car on the way home from training. Another athlete said that "track involves a lot of travelling so you miss school because of all the competitions".
- 8.34 These demands make achieving a balance difficult and for many athletes it is their education rather than their sport that suffers. Of the seven elite athletes included in our UK research, one had given up sport to ensure his education was not compromised. None, however, said they regretted the choices they had made. The nature of the compromise that athletes make is summed up well by one UK track and field athlete:

*"Education is never going to go away. You're never too old to learn but it's not the same for sport. You can't be an athlete for ever".*

- 8.35 The comments of a German football agent representing five players still at school present a similar view:

*"The main problem and crucial point here is usually school. Parents usually want him to finish school whereas the player only thinks about playing football".*

- 8.36 The case study in Figure 8.2 below illustrates how athletes will compromise their education in pursuit of success.

### **Figure 8.2 Balance between education and sport in the UK – English Premier League football academy**

The Academy has been established to develop talented young players aged 9-16 years within a secure club organisation, and guarantee coaching and education standards. Of those players that attend the Academy, a few will progress to first team football, others will establish themselves as professional players elsewhere and most will stop playing completely.

Players aged 15-16 years at the Academy are encouraged to reduce their attendance at school to only three days a week, providing an additional two days for football training. The suggestion that this arrangement will increase the likelihood of achieving a professional contract encourages the player to compromise their education in pursuit of their sporting career.

This arrangement needs the consent of the school and permission from the parents. It means the player must reduce the number of GCSE level subjects which they follow, which in turn reduces the likelihood that they will achieve five passes at Grades A-C (the accepted minimum educational achievement to enter FE).

- 8.37 The balance and level of compromise required will vary across individuals and sports. For example, in certain sports, including swimming and gymnastics, serious training starts at a young age and maintaining educational progress whilst reaching an élite level in sport is a particular challenge.
- 8.38 There are clearly contrasts in attitudes towards education between professional and non-professional sport. Governing bodies of non-professional sports in the UK commented that they encourage players to prioritise education, as the most important decision they will make in respect of their long term careers relates to college/university choice. Wherever possible, however, special arrangements are made to support educational requirements.
- 8.39 There may be cultural differences in respect of the priority given to education in professional academies. In French professional rugby academies, for example, a high proportion of players pass their examinations and perceive their education as a priority. In France there are 20 rugby academies accredited by the Minister of Sports. In the academic year 2002/03, 70% of all academy players graduated from their educational course or proceeded to the next educational level. Educational achievement is higher for those players at the lower (PRO D2) level than in the top 16. When questioned in a survey regarding combining their studies with sport, 90% of the academy players stated that school training was their priority (conference presentation by Olivier Nier, Université Claude Bernard, Lyon 1).

#### **Social pressures**

- 8.40 For young athletes, the difficult choices are in balancing not only education and sports training but in trying to have something resembling a ‘normal’ social life. It is widely acknowledged that élite athletes experience a reduced social life. Most who achieve élite status, however, see the sacrifice as worthwhile.
- 8.41 One UK swimmer summed this up as:
- “You miss going out with friends but that’s nothing to the experience and feeling you get when you walk out for your country”.*
- 8.42 However, our research also revealed the need for athletes to develop social skills outside sports. The Sport Scholarship Co-ordinator in an FE college in the UK commented that athletes needed to aim at a balanced lifestyle. She noted that a limited circle of friends was a problem if an athlete gets injured and cannot continue training:
- “We put student-athletes together in their accommodation and educational groups, because this works well, but this means that they have no or few friends outside sport. The problem comes if they get injured”.*
- 8.43 A member of staff dealing with high level athletes at INSEP confirmed this. They commented that,
- “INSEP makes it possible for a young athlete to combine sport with studies. However, a certain weariness can appear – same residence, same schedules for studies and training, the same type of catering, the same people”.*
- 8.44 The case study in Figure 8.3 overleaf illustrates the effect that competing in élite sport has on the social life of an athlete.

**Figure 8.3 Balance between education and sport in the UK – the social life of an élite athlete**

*“Obviously you want your social life...there would be some times when you would go out at night and stay out a couple of extra hours and get back in the pool at five in the morning...it was just lucky that I was with swimmers because all my social life was with them. We were just known as the swimmers that would not go out during the week. We would only go out at the weekend”.*

When asked about the balance she had maintained between sports training and her university education she said that university had probably helped her to achieve her full sports potential. *“If I had not had the Uni experience, I would probably not have gone to another Olympics”.*

- 8.45 Although many of the athletes interviewed accepted that their social life had to be sacrificed in order to achieve success, they agreed that it is important to maintain a life outside of sports. Having friends away from sport was viewed as beneficial and helped them to achieve a more balanced lifestyle.

**Physical demands**

- 8.46 The physical demands placed on élite athletes are severe. A common perception is that their level of fitness means athletes are more alert and energised, and are therefore able to address education with vigour. One UK track and field athlete who studied for a university degree whilst competing at élite level commented:

*“The training routine was useful for me. My mind’s active through training so then I’m ready for study”.*

- 8.47 However, the effect of physical training on an athlete’s life varies significantly between sports, as much as between individuals. Another UK athlete, in an endurance sport with a daily training requirement (rowing) said:

*“Coping with the amount of training and the emotional commitment is very tiring. You have nothing left; never having a break meant I was totally exhausted”.*

- 8.48 This student-athlete decided to leave sport in his third year at university in order to improve his chances of obtaining a good degree. On stopping the intensive training, his study grades improved and he graduated with a first class honours degree. He is now considering whether to take up the sport again having achieved his educational objective.

- 8.49 Two UK swimmers confirmed the effect of heavy training schedules. One said she regularly used to fall asleep in her school class, and another commented:

*“I know that when I was a full time swimmer, I did not have any time to do anything... I would just sleep, and sleep would become more important than anything else”.*

- 8.50 This illustrates the effects of physical training on an athlete’s life (and how it can differ for individuals). The physical pressures under which student-athletes work are supported by the Principal of a Specialist Sports College in the UK who commented:

*“Some training schedules leave students dead on the floor. They can be very punishing, so we need to keep an eye on that”.*

- 8.51 The case study in Figure 8.4 below demonstrates the level of physical training expected from student-athletes and the demands this places upon them.

**Figure 8.4 Balance between education and sport in the UK – training demands of an Olympic swimmer**

At the age of eight this UK Olympic swimmer was training five times a week and by the time she was 15 years old she was completing 18 hours of training a week. She acknowledged that *“something’s got to suffer”* and that was her education.

At university, she was training 32 hours a week plus full-time education of 20 hours a week. When asked about the effects of this intensity of training on her education the response was *“you really have to want to get an education but it’s amazing how much you don’t want an education if you’re exhausted”*.

***Why is achieving a balance important?***

- 8.52 Our research confirmed that in order to achieve success as an élite athlete sacrifices are made, and that this is in education and/or social life. The need to achieve a balance within the competing demands of a student-athlete’s life is crucial for their long-term development, both as an athlete and a person. The following paragraphs demonstrate the importance of achieving a balance between sport and education.

**Preparation for life after sport**

- 8.53 There is a very high level of dropout and failure in élite sport, crushing many young athletes’ sporting dreams. The proportion of professional sports academy students who progress on to professional employment in sport is very low.
- 8.54 At UK academies (football, rugby, golf and tennis), figures range from 2-10%. This means that 90-98% of academy players will need to find alternative employment. The situation in France and Germany is similar and is worst in football where very small percentages of even less than 2% of academy players have been retained by their clubs. The growing international transfer market for football players will only exacerbate this situation.
- 8.55 The case study in Figure 8.5 overleaf highlights the level of transfer from French football academies to professional sport.

**Figure 8.5 Balance between education and sport in France – retention levels in sports academies in France**

During 2001/03, French League 1 clubs have signed an average of 1.7 of their academy players on a professional contract per year. The figure is even lower for the League 2 clubs, where the average is 1.2 players per year. For comparison, the average is 2.9 for English clubs and 3.5 for Dutch football clubs.

In France, for the season 2002/03, of the 40 professional football clubs from Leagues 1 and 2, 35% have not signed any players from their own academy. Only eight have signed more than three employment contracts and 18 have signed only one contract.

For the season 2003/04, 309 young players are at the end of their training convention for League 1 and 176 for League 2. Currently, only 59 young players have signed their first employment contract with their club (34 in League 1 and 25 in League 2).

- 8.56 The figures above demonstrate the very high proportion of academy players who do not succeed to the élite level. These athletes need the skills and experience to make a successful transition into non-sporting life. The transition will be facilitated by ensuring athletes have a balanced approach to their sporting career, including a commitment to educational and personal development.
- 8.57 Within the UK, the advanced Modern Apprenticeship framework for Sporting Excellence (MASE) is currently being developed to offer education options that are suitable for football. Further details can be found in Figure 3.6 and in Figure 9.17.
- 8.58 Many academies try to combat the high level of dropout by stressing the importance of education and encouraging players to gain appropriate qualifications. The case study in Figure 8.6 overleaf illustrates how a rugby academy attempts to do this.

**Figure 8.6 Balance between education and sport in the UK – Leicester Tigers England Rugby Academy**

The academy structure is underpinned by the apprenticeship scheme, which exposes every player to a programme of rugby development and body management, balanced against education. The apprenticeship scheme provides a complete player pathway from their entry into the academy through to their ultimate goal-joining the senior squad.

Tigers state that the “aim of the academy is to provide gifted players with the opportunity for them to fulfil their rugby potential. The programme also identifies the importance for a balance between the player’s rugby development and his education”.

Only 10% of academy players move up to the first squad each year, which is why the club encourage and advise players to pursue an academic career to accompany their rugby career. Educational support is offered to the players in a number of ways:

- Education and Welfare Officer, to provide education and career guidance
- partnerships with local schools (state and independent) and FE/HE institutions to ensure range of course options to suit all academic abilities
- the 3 hour per day training programme is in the afternoon so as to not conflict with the school timetable
- academy members play from September to November, and then from February to April thus ensuring that they have rest and an off-season.
- the RFU dictates that the maximum number of games for academy players per season is between 27-32. A players match schedule is arranged between the school, the Club and regional or national coach (if applicable) to ensure that the maximum is not exceeded.

The examples of support and flexibility listed above ensure that the player does achieve a balance between sport and education. This is in line with the view of the RFU that although they expect athletes to “put rugby first”, they also stress the importance of continuing in school “it is vital that you pursue your education as well as your development as a rugby player” ([www.rfu.com](http://www.rfu.com)).

## **SECTION 8 – COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: BALANCING EDUCATION AND SPORT**

---

8.59 Many athletes, however, do not give consideration to their long term future and therefore do not give education a high priority. Parents and Education and Welfare Officers have a difficult task trying to persuade them to continue with their studies.

8.60 Athletes may also be forced into leaving their sport due to injury or de-selection. A UK World gymnast highlights the importance of a balanced lifestyle in case this does happen:

*“My parents have always encouraged me to take my education and studies seriously...anything can happen in sport, injuries can end careers unexpectedly, so it’s important to have something to fall back on”.*

8.61 The effect of forced retirement is investigated in Section 9.

8.62 The high level of dropout identified in élite sport highlights the importance of achieving a balanced lifestyle. To ensure athletes have a successful long term future, within or outside of sport, a suitable balance between sport, education and personal development is essential.

### **Benefits to educational performance**

8.63 There is growing evidence in the UK that taking part in active PE and sport is beneficial for school students. Not only do educational levels rise, but there are also improvements in other areas such as behaviour and self-confidence (Loughborough University, unpublished). The Youth Sport Trust has also confirmed this in their research, which is discussed Figure 8.7 overleaf. One of the schools in our stage 3 research provided further evidence in support of this effect.

8.64 The British Government’s PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy was announced in October 2002. It provides additional resources to those secondary schools that adopt this area of specialism. By September 2005, there will be 400 Specialist Sports Colleges. The annual analysis provided by the Technology Colleges Trust provides substantial evidence that specialist schools are performing at a significantly higher level than other comprehensives despite their student intakes being similar:

*“Specialist schools, as a whole, provide substantial additional levels of GCSE outcome when compared to schools that are not specialist”. In particular, “there are clear signs that specialist schools have been considerably successful in moving schools away from poor performance towards higher levels of GCSE outcome; and that the longer schools have been specialist, the greater is their contribution to this process”. (Jesson at al, 2004).*

8.65 The Principal of a Specialist Sports College in the UK confirms this:

*“Sport is a whole school issue, not just an élite one. I believe in education through sport. The benefits are in keeping young people motivated and active, and it benefits all our students, not just the élite strand”.*

- 8.66 The Head of PE at Brookfield High School, another Specialist Sports College in the UK commented,

*“The behaviour at the school has improved dramatically, kids are a lot more proud of their actual school and surroundings and of each other’s achievements. I think this is through their leadership skills, because they have to deal with other people and take everyone on as an individual. We have a boy in year 8 who has only recently got onto [Premiership football club’s] books. He actually used to be in my form last year and was very disruptive and getting a bad reputation. Basically in the last two months since he’s been doing sports and PE he’s been a different lad because he knows that they won’t keep him on if his behaviour is poor - which is as it should be - and he’s just one example. I could think of probably four or five lads in that situation”.*

**Figure 8.7 Balance between education and sport – benefits to educational performance in the UK**

At Brookfield High School, the number of pupils achieving five GCSEs, grades A-C, has improved by 10% since achieving sports college status.

**Source:** Youth Sports Trust unpublished data (2004).

**Holistic approach to athlete development**

- 8.67 Many interviewees confirmed that ensuring a balanced approach to an athlete’s development is important for their life during and after sport. A sports psychologist who has worked with a professional football academy in the UK said that the academy believed in “developing the person as well as the player”. He added:

*“Most clubs focus on the player as a sportsperson and often there is resistance to achieving a proper balance in personal/educational development and training from managers and coaches who always want to put sport first”.*

- 8.68 He saw this view as misguided as he sees balance to be critical to an individual’s development. His maxim is that “a good player is a happy player first and foremost” which he defined as “being able to develop more aspects of their personality, skills and attributes”.

- 8.69 In summary, our research has highlighted the importance of achieving a balanced lifestyle. Ensuring appropriate development of the athlete in their sport, education and personal lives, will:

- prepare the athlete for life after sport
- assist with educational performance
- encourage a holistic approach to the athlete’s development.

### ***What is being done to address the issues of achieving a balance between education and sport?***

- 8.70 Achieving a balanced lifestyle is extremely difficult. Across Europe, our research has revealed that various methods are being used to provide the support and flexibility that will enable elite athletes to achieve an adequate balance. Many of the programmes being used to support athletes throughout France, Germany, Poland and the UK are already detailed in Section 6.

#### **Adjustments to educational programmes**

- 8.71 Performance lifestyle advisers in England noted in interviews that, for those sportspersons who have high levels of demand for training and competition at an early age, a decision is sometimes taken to reduce the number of examination subjects studied in school. This would apply to swimming, diving and gymnastics in particular. Flexible arrangements for studying and assessment are important in helping to achieve an appropriate balance and are discussed further in Section 9 below.
- 8.72 Other adjustments to achieve an appropriate balance, reported in interviews with athletes and their advisers, included selection of a less demanding course of academic study, selection of a college or university on the basis of the sports training facilities offered rather than the course, choosing a part time rather than full time course and taking a gap year to focus on sport before university.

#### **Learning contracts and agreements**

- 8.73 In the UK, learning contracts with student-athletes have been adopted in several sports academies and are required by some NGBs. Certain academies enforce this vigorously, even though they regard sport as their focus. One UK FE College reported that they were very strict on non-attendance at lectures or missed coursework deadlines and the student's sport was immediately stopped if this happened without prior agreement:

*“There is a formal agreement between the student and college on entry into the Academy. The College takes the moral high ground and says they must put education first and if you don't fulfil the educational requirements you will be kicked out”.*

- 8.74 The RFU in England is introducing a Scholarship Agreement, based on the model of the Australian Institute of Sport. This is a legal document, requiring players in approved academies to follow educational programmes in addition to their training commitments.
- 8.75 The 20 French Rugby Football Academies approved by the Ministry of Sport already operate a training agreement that covers a commitment to education and in 2003/04, 379 players in total were bound by such an agreement. These may be for 1-3 years and their success rate is very high, with over 80% of players moving to a higher class and approximately 70% being granted a diploma at level A or professional level.
- 8.76 The Charter of the French Football Federation (1972) regulates football training in France. It sets out terms of the contractual arrangements for young player, including their education. Further details are provided in Figure 8.8 overleaf.

**Figure 8.8 Balance between education and sport – French Football Federation Charter for contracts**

When they enter the football academy, young players, sign a special employment contract for young people (training convention as *apprenti* or training convention as *aspirant*). The contract determines the duration, the level and the terms of the training. From age 15 years, the young player is required to study at secondary school or the University. At the age of 18, the young student-players sign an employment contract as *stagiaire*. When the contract is signed the young player becomes an employee of the club (if the club agrees). A football academy includes, on average, 30 young players under employment contracts as *stagiaire* and between 30 and 50 young football players under training conventions.

**Scholarship schemes**

- 8.77 In England, the Junior Athlete Education Programme (JAE) was established by the DfES in 2003 to support young athletes achieve a balanced lifestyle. Figure 8.9 below gives further details of the scheme.

**Figure 8.9 Balance between education and sport – Junior Athlete Education programme in the UK**

The programme is based on the idea of creating a *Team You* around young athletes to support and ensure a balanced approach to their development. A key element is the provision of teachers trained as mentors, designed to maximise the athletes training opportunities within a balanced lifestyle, helping them to balance priorities and make rational decisions.

A Specialist Sports College interviewed for our stage 3 research is actively using the JAE programme for their gifted and talented pupils. The work of the mentors at the school includes lifestyle management courses, helping the athlete organise and identify potential hotspots throughout the year. The mentor will liaise and negotiate with the athlete's academic tutors regarding assignment and coursework deadlines to ensure that there are no clashes or conflicting pressures. This is particularly important in Year 10 and Year 11 (ages 15 and 16 respectively) with the pressure of GCSE examinations.

A key aspect of achieving a balance is the communication with the athletes' parents. They are invited to the workshops as well, so the mentors know about home life issues and parents understand the training schedule. It is viewed as a three-way process between the athlete, the parent and the school.

- 8.78 The DCMS and DfES announced the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) in May 2004 as an initiative to halt the drop out rate from athletes unable to maintain the balance between sports and education and other life pressures. The scheme awards scholarships to talented athletes who wish to progress with a formal academic programme whilst maintaining an involvement in performance sport. Further details of the scheme can be found in Section 5. The focus of the TASS scheme is to help elite athletes achieve a more sensible balance between academic life or employment with training and competing.
- 8.79 Academy staff whom we interviewed saw this as very beneficial in helping student-athletes achieve a more appropriate balance. For some student-athletes, it would mean they could give up part-time jobs and focus more on their sport and education. For others, they would be incentivised to continue with both academic work and performance sport.

### **National Centres of Excellence**

- 8.80 As outlined in the introduction to this section, the four Member States involved in our stage 3 research have adopted contrasting approaches to sports development. France has a national centre for elite athletes and further details are provided in the case study below.
- 8.81 In France there are currently 6,636 elite level athletes in compulsory education. 190 of these students are at INSEP, the national training base for elite athletes in France, which provides accommodation facilities and has arrangements with local schools and colleges for education. The advantage of a mixed multi-sport training centre is that there is a wide range of educational options available. The disadvantage is the diversity in age, sport and educational abilities all generates different student requirements. INSEP is linked to local secondary schools and other higher education institutions (such as the University of Lyon). The case study in Figure 8.10 overleaf illustrates how staff at INSEP focus on a student-athletes' 'double project' of sport and education and aim to help them achieve a balance between the two.

**Figure 8.10 Balance between education and sport – INSEP, France**

The balance of education and sport at INSEP is 24 hours education and 20 hours of training per week (with additional training and competitions).

To support the student-athlete, INSEP provides:

- tutor monitoring, distance learning (e-learning), and individual educational support
- medical support
- socio-professional support (job seeking, image management)
- library, social and leisure services.

Flexibility is offered through careful scheduling, so that long and tiring journeys can be avoided, or extending the duration of course, depending on the sport and the duration of the sporting career.

***Specialist sports institutions***

- 8.82 Specialist Sports Colleges play an important role in helping athletes to achieve a balance during education through providing comprehensive athlete support. The case studies below illustrate practically how these sporting institutions help athletes to achieve a balanced lifestyle.

**FRANCE**

- 8.83 Our research included interviews at a football academy and specialist sports institutions. The two case studies described in Figures 8.11 and 8.12, overleaf and on the following page, focus on the issue of balance between sport development and education.

**Figure 8.11 Balance between education and sport – Lille Olympique Sporting Club Football Academy (LOSC), France**

How an academy player combines school and football is up to the individual, everything depends on the player's degree of motivation. The academy does everything possible to ensure that the young players (up to the age of 18) can pursue both football and their education. The academy recognises that it has to achieve a balance in the lives of the young players between their education, their football and helping them to grow up and develop as individuals. The comment was:

*“We do this by maintaining a family atmosphere and keeping the number of boarders low”.*

Academy players study at secondary school (from the age of 15 to 18) and some go on to further education, usually at the Sports Science Department at Lille University. Classes are not held at the academy, to ensure that the academy players experience a normal education. However, student-athletes do follow an adapted timetable: classes start in the morning and finish at either 12.30 or 15.30, depending on the level of study.

The players' education is the responsibility of their school or university teachers. Tutors are also employed by the academy to provide extra help with written and oral communication and foreign languages. The level of family support varies; some families are very involved while others are totally absent. Some parents attend school parents' evenings and their child's sporting and behavioural assessments.

- 8.84 The case study of the *Pôle Espoir* in Barcelonnette in Figure 8.12 overleaf illustrates further how a balance between education and sports development is achieved in France.

**Figure 8.12 Balance between education and sport – *Pôle Espoir* skiing training centre, France**

The skiing *Pôle Espoir* in Barcelonnette is made up of a group of seven *minimes* (both boys and girls aged 14) and a group of 6 *cadets* (girls aged 15 and 16).

Training camps are organised for the *minimes* over the summer (25 days in July and August) and during the October half term. The skiers return to their clubs for the winter season. The *minimes* participate in national competitions and in the French *minime* championship. For the *cadets*, training camps are organised on the glaciers from June to 15<sup>th</sup> November (35 to 40 days in total). The *cadets* participate in events in the French FIS circuit, more rarely in the European Cup circuit and exceptionally in the World Cup circuit.

Admission criteria for the skiing *Pôle Espoir* relate to both sporting and educational results and the normal educational programme is followed. The young skiers study at the local upper secondary school in Barcelonnette. The summer school enables young skiers to pass their Baccalauréate and continue with their studies in the normal way once their skiing career is over.

**Germany**

- 8.85 Our research included interviews with staff at two sports boarding schools in Germany, which also confirmed the key issue of balance and the importance of responding flexibly to individual requirements. The case studies produced as Figures 8.13 and 8.14 overleaf and on the following page describe their experiences.

**Figure 8.13 Balance between education and sport – part-time sports boarding school, Bergisch-Gladbach, Germany**

The part-time boarding school provides places for 24 young student-athletes between 10 and 18 years old. 10 are following gymnastics. When asked about daily problems in the co-ordination between school and sport, the Co-ordinator said there were few:

*“All the gymnasts practice in the mornings (on several days). Transportation is offered to take the students to the practising buildings in the mornings and after school. Lunch is the next to the gymnasium. Every day after lunch two or three teachers of the school are ready for the gymnasts to look after homework in the mornings and who catch up on missed subject matters (due to competition and courses). There is a very close contact to all teachers as I am also a teacher at this school”.*

*“In order to guarantee an optimal school education (parallel to the sports education) I can also appoint teachers individually for certain subjects. It is thus possible that the gymnast who is currently preparing for the Olympics is being taught three subjects privately. With the beginning of the next school year this will also be possible for those gymnasts preparing for 2008. Class outings, exam appointments etc. are adapted to the requirements of individual gymnasts”.*

**Figure 8.14 Balance between education and sport – boarding school connected to an Olympic centre, Bochum, Germany**

The main aim of the school was described as creating a cooperative sports and school environment to support the work of developing young talents and top sportspersons during their school age together with partner schools. A clear objective was to achieve school leaving qualifications for all athletes at the school: A-levels, B-levels, and completion of compulsory basic secondary schooling.

Asked about cooperation between school and boarding school, the head relied that, "it is all a matter of co-ordination". The three school co-ordinators visit the partner schools in order to discuss problems and the head has daily telephone contact with the heads of the schools. Further to that there are meetings with everybody involved every ten days.

Questioned about the most significant problems her students experience, she noted that:

*"The younger ones are homesick; in the beginning it is also a problem that they have changed schools, but after 4-6 weeks they are fine. The older ones have the normal puberty problems, the first girl friend/boy friend, lovesickness etc. Sometimes also sports problems. If performance decreases we also know about this and then we have to say, you better focus on a good school education, the probability to reach good results at world championships is too low".*

**Poland**

- 8.86 In Poland it is a requirement that student-athletes follow the same educational programme as students in other schools. All organisational solutions put in place for the education of young talented sportspersons of compulsory school age must function within the educational system. Special sports schools must adhere to the obligatory curriculum guidelines for the given level of education, as outlined by the Ministry of National Education and Sport.
- 8.87 The case studies overleaf compare the public sports champion school in Olsztyn with the non-public sports championship schools for basketball in Warsaw and Kozenice. All have high achievement rates for educational performance, including evidence of a very high proportion of student-athletes continuing on to university level.
- 8.88 Specifically on the subject of balance, the principals of the two basketball sports champion schools commented on the value of co-location of sports, educational and boarding facilities. Their comments are presented overleaf.

*“The organisation of educational and sports activities depends on the training and competition schedule. The balance is possible thanks to the school’s location, as the dormitory, school and training facilities are all in one place. One of the schools is located on the premises of the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw, the other is in the Municipal Sports and Recreational Center in Koźienice. The players live, learn, and practice in one place, saving valuable time. Furthermore, constant teacher and trainer supervision helps balance education and training provision”.*

**Figure 8.15 Balance between education and sport – Marian Grzegorz Bublewicz Sports Champions School, Olsztyn, Poland**

Each school accepts 20 students into every first class. Apart from carrying out the obligatory educational programme relevant to its level, the schools carry out a sports training programme in three disciplines:

- girls' gymnastics
- kayaking
- WTF taekwondo.

The training programmes are regulated by Polish sports associations and the Ministry of National Education and Sport. The school employs teaching and training staff. The sports training process is carried out within the Ministry of National Education and Sport’s ‘Training and competition of young talented sportspersons’ programme. The school receives financing from the Ministry through the sports associations, depending on the students’ sports achievements. The school does not have its own boarding facilities but cooperates with a nearby facility. The school has one floor of the dormitory building at its disposal, which is occupied by students who are not from Olsztyn.

For the 2004/05 year the school has programmed 397 hours of education (164 for primary school, 110 for middle school and 123 for high school). The overall number of sports training hours for the entire complex is 294. The number of sports training hours depends on the number of students and training groups. In general, the number of sports and educational hours has not changed significantly in the last few years.

The weekly activity plan is prepared in such a way as to allow students to participate in two practice sessions daily, without interrupting their educational programme. The two practise sessions per day are organised into: morning training, school lessons and then another training session. Two training sessions per day are provided to students who have achieved a high level of sports performance.

The school has been co-operating with the Olsztyn University, which accepts graduates of the sports champion school without examination. All students plan to enroll at university and about 90% continue their education after graduating from the sports champion school.

**Figure 8.16 Balance between education and sport – Sports Champions School in Warsaw (girls’ basketball) and in Kozenice (boys’ basketball)**

The central programme for young talented sportspersons has been operating since 1994. It was then that the first legal regulations appeared making it possible to open non-public sports championship schools which specialised in a single sports discipline and which function in collaboration with Polish sports associations. The Kozenice school opened in 1996, while the Warsaw school in 1997. The main goal is preparing competitors for junior and senior national team membership.

The schools are managed by the Polish Basketball Association, and are partly answerable to the Sports Development Strategy Department of the Ministry of National Education and Sport, due to their involvement in the ‘Training and Competition for Athletically Gifted Young People’ programme. The schools receive funding for their activity directly from the Polish Basketball Association; part of these funds are the Association’s own but the majority comes from the Ministry through the talented youth programme.

Young people are recruited to the school by the Polish Basketball Association, working in co-operation with the best girls’ and boys’ basketball clubs. The schools must adhere to the educational programme requirements outlined by the Ministry and the sporting requirements outlined by the Polish Basketball Association - training sessions twice a day, in total 20 hours/week, board, sports clothing etc.

The schools’ biggest problems are of a financial nature; the school’s functioning is very expensive. Education in very small classes (four or five students per class), sports training at modern facilities (twice a day), board, travel to games, training camps, medical care, sports equipment etc., all carries with it very high costs.

The Warsaw school is proud of its sports achievements, but also its high educational level. The average score for the school is 4.5 (on a scale to 6). For the past six years one of the school’s students has received the Prime Minister’s Scholarship for excellent academic results. Similarly the students from Kozenice have very good results (average 4.14).

***Achieving the right balance***

- 8.89 Several findings have emerged from the information gathered in our stage 3 research in relation to achieving a balanced lifestyle:
- élite athletes struggle to achieve a balance between sporting, academic and personal life due to the training and competition demands placed upon them
  - the physical demands of élite sport can be very punishing and have a significant effect on an athlete's ability to achieve a balance
  - sport is very rarely the aspect of an athlete's life that is compromised in order to achieve a balance. The main aspects compromised by élite athletes in pursuit of sporting success are education and social activities
  - the level of compromise will vary depending upon the sport and the individual.
- 8.90 These findings demonstrate that achieving a balanced lifestyle is a key issue for élite athletes. The nature of this balance varies depending on both the individual and the sport.
- 8.91 To assist the athlete in achieving this balance, support and flexibility are required from both their education and sporting environment. Balance is important, not just between education and sport, but also in terms of establishing a balanced lifestyle, ensuring success in both sport and education. Our research indicated that the following factors were important in supporting young student-athletes to achieve an appropriate balance:
- flexibility in a student-athlete's education programme and specialist lifestyle support (discussed further in Section 9 below)
  - a balanced lifestyle including some interaction with non-sport students
  - support from coaches and teachers to enable a balance to be negotiated and agreed
  - an understanding by all members of a student-athlete's entourage of the complex requirements of élite sportspersons
  - proximity of suitable training facilities near to appropriate educational facilities at all levels of education
  - maintaining a 'family atmosphere' in boarding facilities and keeping the numbers of boarders low
  - accommodating student-athletes together with other student-athletes.

**SECTION 9**

**COMPARATIVE RESEARCH -  
SUPPORT FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES**

## **Section 9 Comparative research – support for student-athletes**

### ***Introduction***

- 9.1 Student-athletes are developing as students, athletes and people and they face challenges that are unique to the combination of roles of student and athlete. These challenges include time and concentration demands, social isolation, negative stereotyping and, usually, financial constraints. In addition, their different roles produce conflicting expectations. This section examines a number of relevant issues in relation to these challenges and role conflicts, drawing on the qualitative data generated by our comparative research.
- 9.2 Personal support systems for student-athletes are now more developed and responses to the student-athlete's particular demands and pressures include a number of areas of flexibility in educational systems. In our investigation into the pressures faced by student-athletes at various stages in their career, it has become clear that flexibility is a key issue. Athlete support systems are also important in helping elite athletes cope with issues in their education, sport and lifestyle and they often need to deal with competing demands from those who surround them. Athlete support and entourage issues are therefore also important to address.
- 9.3 Athletes go through several stages of career transition when these pressures and conflicts may become acute. As well as those periods of transferring up to the next level, they may need additional help and support in respect of managing failure and in dealing with the end of a sporting career, whether retirement is voluntary or forced. Managing these career transition issues is a significant factor in an athlete's overall welfare and success.
- 9.4 The nature of the sports infrastructure also plays a large part in supporting elite athletes. The commitment of Member States to sports development is an important factor in the success of their elite athletes. Increasing numbers of athletes are making the decision to base themselves in the country that can best support their sport development, even if this is not their home country.
- 9.5 This section develops the following issues in detail:
- flexibility – in educational structures and delivery, sport and employment
  - athlete support – within the education and sport systems, personal support systems and support from employers
  - entourage issues – education-based, sport-based and family/friends based influences
  - career transition issues – level changes, injury and retirement adjustments, adjusting to changes in funding and employment
  - government policy and sport infrastructure.

### Flexibility

- 9.6 As detailed in the previous section, it is difficult, if not impossible to determine the 'right balance' for the elite athlete. Balance will be unique to each individual depending on priorities, linking to long-term and short-term goals. It is generally acknowledged that to reach an elite level of sport it is not possible to have or do everything in terms of academic, sporting and social demands. One of these aspects will always be compromised.
- 9.7 The importance of flexibility in both education and sport has become increasingly acknowledged as a key factor in ensuring elite young sportspersons have the best chance of achieving a balance that will enable them to meet their career goals. Throughout our research the need for flexibility was a recurring theme and highlighted by athletes in particular as key to successfully combining sport, education and personal development.
- 9.8 Flexibility is necessary in education, in the sport and if applicable, in employment. All key influences and members of the athlete's entourage (the elite athlete themselves, their school or FE College or HE institution, their employers, their NGB and their coach) should be aware of the need for flexibility and be willing to provide it. This will facilitate and increase an elite athlete's chance of sporting success whilst simultaneously preparing them for a life after sport.

#### **Flexibility in education**

- 9.9 The following section details key issues and examples of flexibility across the education spectrum, from compulsory schooling to higher education, and specifically addresses how this flexibility has benefited the elite athlete in terms of allowing them to successfully combine conflicting sporting and educational pressures. As stated by the Gifted & Talented Manager of the Youth Sports Trust in the UK:

*“missing lessons should not be a reason to prevent participation in elite sport; we need to look at other ways of provision and make sure no one is losing out”.*

- 9.10 In education, flexibility exists both within the education system and within the delivery of education.

#### **Education system**

- 9.11 Our research has revealed a number of examples of flexibility within the education system, which are being implemented at all stages of education. These include flexibility within:
- timetabling
  - entry requirements
  - time off/extended deadlines
  - adaptation of the curriculum.
- 9.12 Various examples of these methods of flexibility were provided within our comparative research during discussions with elite athletes and education institutions. Examples are given in the two case studies in Figure 9.1 and 9.2 overleaf.

**Figure 9.1 Flexibility in the UK education system – compulsory education and swimming**

This UK athlete is 22 years old and a member of the UK national swimming team. She was a junior international at 13 years and a senior international at 15 years. This involved a large amount of travel during her compulsory education and her school were aware of her swimming commitments and the demands on her time.

The school allowed her to arrive late twice a week to support her training programme and one of her teachers (an ex-Olympic diver) helped her to negotiate flexibility within her school work, such as coursework extensions.

**Figure 9.2 Flexibility in the UK education system – compulsory education and swimming**

This UK athlete was selected to play for the World All Stars team at 19 years. She has represented the England Women's football team 48 times, making her senior international debut at 16 years old. She currently plays professionally for a team in the English National Premier League

During her compulsory education, she was often absent from school due to training or competition. In her interview she highlighted the excellent support she received from her school:

- *“they would provide me with work to take away with me*
- *they were good in giving me time off when I needed it*
- *teachers would save work for me when I got back*
- *they would give me extra time to complete it if I needed*
- *they would stay behind and help me”.*

On one occasion she was required to undertake an exam whilst away at a competition with the England team under the supervision of the NGB. In addition, whilst at university she had to play in a World Cup qualifier and miss an examination. Initially the Examination Board would only allow her to achieve a maximum of 40%, until the NGB intervened and arranged for her to re-sit the examination.

Flexibility was less available at her university. She said that she found university study “extremely difficult” to combine with her competition and training. Her comment was that the large size of the university made it difficult to provide the flexibility or support she needed to combine her studies and her sport.

- 9.13 The NGB has a role to play in making schools aware of the sporting demands of elite athletes, negotiating and liaising with them. A representative from the UK Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) confirmed, “careful negotiations with schools on flexibility are essential”. Elite swimmers often need to be taken out of school on Fridays to get to competitions, and letters can come from managers of the club/ programme to schools, rather than parents, explaining the circumstances. In most cases, in the ASA’s experience, the schools have been very supportive. This view is backed by the Gifted & Talented Manager at the Youth Sports Trust who believes that “most schools try their best to help young athletes achieve both in sport and in school”.
- 9.14 In the UK, all five FE Colleges with sport academies interviewed in our research described how they provide flexibility through their entry requirements and range of course options. For example, there is no minimum entry requirement to join the Bristol Academy of Sport at Filton College, which means that student-athletes of all academic abilities can join the College, and no one is excluded from the sports academy based on academic performance. In addition, Loughborough College does not consider it necessary to reduce its entry requirements as there are courses on offer across many levels. Increasingly a requirement for flexibility is stated within the joining agreement/contract between the student and sports academy. In terms of timetabling, Burleigh College recognise that “teachers need to be helped to be flexible and overcome any educational problems”. The College produces a dedicated timetable for each elite student athlete.
- 9.15 Our research has highlighted that at different stages of education it is more difficult to provide flexibility. There is generally less opportunity to offer flexible arrangements within compulsory schooling.
- 9.16 In the UK, where course content is more prescriptive and there is a rigid daily timetable (typically from 8.30am until 3.30pm) it is a particular challenge. As a result, traditionally in the UK there has been no co-ordinated flexibility in timetabling for individuals or groups of elite young athletes.
- 9.17 This situation is not faced in Europe where, in some countries, for example Germany, the school day starts and finishes earlier making it easier to satisfy club/training demands. This issue has been recognised by the DfES who confirmed that “UK school timetables can be more flexible” and is actively encouraging flexibility in schools. However, the DfES cannot control or regulate schools as in the past. In the UK, flexibility is decided at the local level and thus differs from school to school. The DfES therefore has to work through influence and example and, as a result, flexibility for elite young athletes is variable and unco-ordinated.
- 9.18 A senior officer at the DfES recognised that a “one size fits all programme of provision by the school does not meet the needs of elite athletes”; and that some headteachers and senior management teams in schools still do not recognise the particular needs of their student-athletes. The Education Advisor at the EIS supports this view. He said, “I think the challenges will be working with educational establishments and getting them to understand the needs of elite athletes. Some of them are excellent ...but others perhaps can do a lot more to make their courses and access opportunities more flexible ([www.eis2win.co.uk](http://www.eis2win.co.uk))”.

- 9.19 There is growing pressure in the UK to respond to this situation and one reason for increased awareness is the network of Specialist Sports Colleges currently being introduced. In order to achieve Specialist Sports College status, UK schools have to agree to offer high levels of flexibility and support to their student-athletes. A Specialist Sports College described their accreditation as, “such a positive influence... the rest of the staff around the school are really accepting of it and if there is trouble everyone is really prepared to work around that”.
- 9.20 An example of flexibility in a Specialist Sports College from our research is the provision of mentors from the Junior Athlete Education (JAE) programme. The mentors identify ‘hotspots’ with the student athlete and liaise/negotiate with academic tutors regarding such flexible measures as time off and deadline extensions, to ensure that there are no clashes and conflicting pressures at key times, for example approaching or during competitions or during examinations.
- 9.21 The case study in Figure 9.3 below describes flexibility within Myerscough College, an FE College in the UK with a specialist golf academy for aspiring professional tour players.

**Figure 9.3 Flexibility in further education – Myerscough College, UK**

Myerscough College is an FE College with a specialist golf academy for aspiring professional players. The College offers various levels of educational courses to minimise the number of students who are excluded based on academic ability, and to offer as much flexibility as possible. The Section Leader for the College highlights the need for this flexibility for elite athletes:

*“We chose the National Diplomas and also the foundation degree to try and promote with the golfers because the assessment strategies are very varied. It is not as much cramming for exams at the end although there are one or two exams within the degree. But also they are spread over the course of the year. The students can manage their time and take things in small chunks rather than the old traditional A’ levels which might put too much pressure especially at the most important time of the year for them”.*

The College has flexible timetabling and offers a second assessment board so that academy members can complete the work in an extended timeframe through the summer. This is usually a successful strategy: “We give them a lot of leeway but they do complete the work eventually”. In addition, students can request leave of absence and additional time for assessments.

At Myerscough, the education programme is arranged around the sport and there is flexibility from both the academic tutors and from the sports coaches. For example, if a player is playing in a tournament abroad, coaches and lecturing staff work out how to manage the situation with the student-athlete. The College aims to follow best practice from countries such as the USA, where academy members are allowed to opt out of a maximum of three degree modules a year, which get accredited as passes because of their elite level in golf.

- 9.22 Similar methods of flexibility in education systems are offered in France, Germany and Poland. As referred to above, the school day in both France and Germany starts and finishes earlier than in the UK, enabling greater opportunities to combine sport and education. The case studies in Figures 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6 overleaf illustrate this.

**Figure 9.4 Flexibility in education – Bergisch-Gladbach School, Germany**

Bergisch-Gladbach is a part-time boarding school in Germany, which specialises in élite sport development/performance in gymnastics, basketball, badminton and swimming.

There are 24 élite young athletes aged 10-18 years at the school, details of which have already been given in Figure 8.13.

The aim of the school is to help these young athletes fulfil the twin demands of school and sport training/competition so that a parallel career in each can be pursued. Training takes place each morning, and after lunch two or three of the teachers are available to tutor and provide academic support to the students, enabling them to catch up on missed subjects. Individual tutors may also be appointed where specialist educational support is required.

**Figure 9.5 Flexibility in education – Jean Moulin Summer School, France**

The Jean Moulin Summer School at Albertville enables pupils to complete their final two years of school over an extended period. The school brings together the best skiers in the country. Every year, around 65 to 70 young people attend the school, which caters for both skiers and biathletes (skiing and shooting). Pupils have three years instead of two to complete the Baccalauréate. The syllabus is split so that they complete part of their lower sixth in the first year. In the second year, they finish their lower sixth and move on to do part of their upper sixth, finally completing their upper sixth in the third year.

Classes are held in the morning from 07.45 to 10.45 and from 10.45 to 12.45. In the afternoon, pupils attend training sessions. The sports training is the responsibility of the French Ski Federation, while the pupils' academic education is the responsibility of the school's teachers. The pupils follow a normal syllabus, but in smaller classes (5 to 10 pupils per class). The pupils must pass their Baccalauréate like every other pupil in France. The exams are not changed to help them to pass. In 2003/04, 28 candidates out of 30 obtained their Baccalauréate. The other two candidates passed at their second attempt.

The school year runs from April to November and the summer holidays last one month out of which the pupils spend two weeks skiing. From November to April, the pupils concentrate on competitions.

With the extension of the syllabus over three years, the school is able to meet the needs of young skiers. Since 1976 the majority of France's best skiers (both male and female) have been former pupils of the Jean Moulin summer school.

**Figure 9.6 Flexibility in education – Marian Grzegorz Bublewicz Sports Champion School, Olsztyn, Poland**

The Marian Grzegorz Bublewicz Sports Championship School is an educational-sports unit consisting of three schools, supervised by Olsztyn City Council. Apart from carrying out the statutory educational curriculum, each school also carries out a sports training programme in three disciplines: girls gymnastics, kayaking and taekwondo. The school is referred to in Figure 8.15.

Each school accepts 20 student-athletes annually into each first year class. In its aim to be as flexible as possible in supporting student-athletes, the school:

- prepares its weekly activity plan to allow students to participate in two practice sessions daily, without interrupting their educational programme; this is organised as follows: morning training, school lessons and then another training session
- has developed links with Olsztyn University, which accepts the school's graduates without examination
- offers limited boarding facilities nearby for élite athletes. This enables those athletes that are not from Olsztyn to access the facilities and specialised coaching.

9.23 The case studies above illustrate how flexibility is incorporated within specialist sports schools. It is also important, however, that flexibility is offered in non-specialist sports schools. As described above, flexibility in compulsory education is predominantly through flexible timetabling and extension of the course duration. In Poland, Germany and France there is legislation in place to ensure that flexibility is provided, whereas in the UK it is less structured and the emphasis is on the individual school.

9.24 In the UK, it is generally accepted that it is easier to offer flexible arrangements in education beyond compulsory schooling due to the reduced course hours. Examples of flexibility at FE Colleges include extension of coursework and assignment deadlines, together with extension of the duration of completion of courses. The introduction of modular programmes has facilitated the extension of courses. In addition, the development of e-learning, with facilities for laptops to be loaned, has enabled learning materials to be electronically accessed and assignments completed on-line.

### **Higher education**

9.25 Our research confirmed that there is increased flexibility within the education system during FE and HE, where curriculum requirements and timetabling is less prescriptive than during compulsory schooling.

9.26 Examples of flexibility in HE from our UK research are:

- a modern pentathlete who took a year out of her degree course to concentrate on preparing and qualifying for this year's Olympic Games, and who will start the course again in September 2004 after the Games
- a sprinter who has just finished her degree over a five-year period (rather than the traditional four) in order to accommodate her training demands
- a member of the UK judo squad who describes the flexibility offered at university: "I prioritised judo and with the co-operation of my university was allowed the flexibility to take more than eight years to get my degree and qualify as a PE teacher".

9.27 Recent experience in UK universities illustrates the difficulties of maintaining an appropriate balance between education and sport. In order to counter this and encourage HE institutions to offer flexibility to elite athletes, the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) outlines eligibility criteria for each of the HE institutions within the TASS regional consortia. These include the need to offer course flexibility to students. In line with this, provision of flexibility is increasingly being written in to university charters. A further reinforcement of the importance and need for flexibility for elite athletes is that it will be a key search component in the new EIS research database. Further details on the database are provided in paragraph 9.128.

9.28 Similar programmes and methods of flexibility are offered in France. INSEP offers increased opportunities for the athlete to combine sport with their studies. The athlete benefits from arranged schedules. All facilities and coaching are on site, so there is no travel time to impact upon sport and education. Flexibility is offered through timetabling and extending duration of study. Further examples of flexibility within education in Germany and Poland are described in the case studies below.

**Figure 9.7 Flexibility in university education – Top Sport scheme, German Sport University, Cologne, Germany**

After the Sydney Olympic Games, it became clear that approximately 30% of the German Olympic squad were university students, and as a result it was recognised that increased support was required for these athletes.

The Federal State of North Rhine Westphalia drew up a Top Sport declaration and the ADH (German University Association) introduced the nationwide initiative 'Partner University Top Sport'. 'Partner University Top Sport' co-operates with local Olympic centres and sport associations.

The German Sports University offers flexibility to all elite athletes. Approximately 850 student-athletes currently studying at the German Sport University in Cologne are on the Top Sport scheme, which helps them to combine sport and education and produce good academic results.

Flexibility is offered in:

- enrolment for courses and seminars
- examination schedules
- potential compensation arrangements for missed courses due to training/competition.

- 9.29 In Poland, there are legal regulations that facilitate universities to help students co-ordinate their sports training, competitions and their studies. Article 147, pt. 3 of the Higher Education Act 12 September 1990 states that:

*“A student may study according to an individual plan and study programme according to principles adopted by the faculty board or any other organisation designated in the universities statute”.*

- 9.30 Thus universities are able to adjust and fit the study plan to the athlete’s individual needs. Apart from the possibility of adjusting the study plan to training and competition, universities can also offer their student-athletes various social benefits, such as sports scholarships and free boarding at dormitories. Further details are provided in the case study in Figure 9.8 below.

**Figure 9.8 Flexibility in university education – Academy of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk, Poland**

At the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw, candidates who submit a document certifying their sporting achievements (in Olympic disciplines) are accepted into the university without examination upon submitting the required documentation of sporting achievement in junior/senior championships and World class events.

Furthermore if a candidate already has some certified qualifications in a sports related profession, this fact is recognised by a point bonus. For the current academic year (2004/05) 59 athletes have met the above criteria and enrolled at the university without examination. In addition, 15 places have been given to athletes who are deemed to be future prospects for high level sports achievements, as nominated by AZS-AWF club officials, Polish Sports Federations and the Polish Olympic Committee.

Among the AZS-AWF athletes who represented Poland at the Sydney Olympic Games, approximately 60% graduated from the Warsaw Academy. 25% of these athletes studied for longer than seven years (over a five year course). This is mainly due to the heavy training schedule. For example, in the build up to the Sydney Olympic Games, track and field athletes spent approximately 260 days at training camps in their final year of preparation. Such a training commitment makes it difficult to study even with the individual study plans provided by the university.

The Higher Education Act and the Physical Culture Act both guarantee athletes the opportunity to compete without stopping their studies. However, these Acts also specify that the rules on which the student-athlete completes his or her studies depend on the school’s or college’s own regulations.

- 9.31 It is a common theme in our stage 3 research that the universities that are linked to high performance centres and those that specialise in sports courses are more progressive in offering flexibility. The Careers Adviser at the Kolin-Bonn-Leverkeusen Olympic Centre in Germany acknowledged that the sport oriented schools and those linked to the 20 Olympic Centres in Germany provide more flexibility for the athlete. In addition, the six universities in Poland that specialise in courses within the sports industry (for example, PE teaching, coaching, sports instruction and physiotherapy) provide the highest levels of flexibility and this offers the best opportunities to combine training and studying.

- 9.32 The importance of providing flexibility within higher education is highlighted by the fact that 56% of the athletes in the 2004 Great Britain Olympic team have been or are currently in HE.

### **Limitations for elite athletes at higher education level**

- 9.33 An elite athlete can also experience reduced flexibility and restricted options within the education system because of their sport. Our research confirmed this in the context of course and university choice. In England, there are nine high performance centres geographically spread around the country. Performance squads for the different sports are based at each of these high performance centres and ideally an elite level sportsperson would choose to study near the respective high performance centre where the majority of performance squad sessions/training take place as well as specialised equipment/facilities being located.
- 9.34 At a number of the sites, for example, Sheffield, Manchester and Loughborough, there are a number of educational options in terms of HE or FE institutions nearby. Elsewhere, there is a more limited choice of educational institutions, which means that athletes have limited options for. As a result student-athletes may be severely restricted in their course options and may need to compromise academic course choice for their sport.
- 9.35 In France, the same applies. Interviews with five elite level athletes highlighted the fact that it is important for them to find an academic course that will complement, and enable them to continue with, their sport. This means that the academic course will not always correspond to their professional ambitions, but instead the course is compromised to allow for an adequate balance and increased chance of sporting success. They also describe the difficulties related to the constraints of competition combined with the constraints of preparation for academic examinations. Each athlete stated that it is necessary to make some adjustments concerning their studies to accommodate their sport.
- 9.36 In the UK, a further limitation for elite student-athletes is that universities have started to timetable lectures and laboratory work on a Wednesday afternoon. Wednesday afternoons have traditionally been seen as sacrosanct for competitive university sports fixtures. The British Universities Sports Association (BUSA) timetables all national competitions and league fixtures on a Wednesday afternoon. This potential clash between education and sport causes problems for elite athletes, as it will mean either missing lectures or a match.
- 9.37 Universities in the UK do give students the opportunity to defer their entry for a year, or occasionally longer. Many athletes will do this and many NGBs will actively encourage such action. For example, the RFU encourages players to take deferred entry, to give themselves a year dedicated to rugby in order to test themselves and see if they have the ability to make it as a professional player.

### Professional academies

- 9.38 Professional academies generally recognise their responsibilities towards young players who are continuing their education. In the UK, for example, NGBs also support the need for flexibility. The Director of Academies at the RFU stated, “flexibility is easier at a FE college because of the modular courses that are offered”. Regardless of a player’s choice of educational institution, the RFU will work with the RFU Academies and with individual schools to ensure players receive flexible educational support. The RFU acknowledge that, “a flexible education programme is critical”. Figure 9.9 below describes this in an English professional rugby academy.

**Figure 9.9 Flexibility within professional academies – Leicester Tigers England Rugby Academy, UK**

Leicester Tigers is an English Premiership rugby club with an academy. The club currently has 30 players in the academy, aged from 16 to 20.

Players go to lectures/school in the morning and train in the afternoon. This is a new arrangement for the 2004/05 season, with training now taking place every day at 3pm. This has been developed primarily to give the academy players increased flexibility. Previously training was in either the morning or the afternoon

In addition, the Club recognise that there is greater potential for flexibility if students study at a local state school/college rather than an independent school. As one academy player stated “the Club recommends two years at Loughborough College because it’s easier to combine because there’s less lectures and increased flexibility”. Further details of the academy are given in Figure 4.8.

- 9.39 An English Premiership football club was also consulted regarding the flexibility that they offer to their young players in the academy. In this case, academy players spend two full days a week at the academy and therefore only attend school for three days a week, following a reduced curriculum (see Figure 8.2). The school and parents have agreed this flexibility so that the players can access more coaching.
- 9.40 By contrast, in France, training is structured around the ‘normal’ school day. At the Lille Olympique Sporting Club football academy (see Figure 8.11) the players are enrolled in the final three years of secondary school and players follow an adapted timetable.

### Education delivery

- 9.41 Flexibility may also be offered in education delivery, for example, through modular course options, rearrangement of examinations, distance learning programmes and e-learning.
- 9.42 Specific examples of flexibility for young athletes can include:
- personalised lessons on the web, enabling student-athletes to access course material whilst out of school
  - individual laptops, enabling homework to be completed on line prior to starting training and emailed back to the school.

- 9.43 The UK Government's *Five-Year Strategy for Children and Learners* (DfES, 2004) focuses on personalised learning and meeting the individual needs of pupils. This builds on a previous White Paper from 2001, *Schools achieving success*, in which the 14-19 years curriculum was the focus (DfES, 2001). However, for schools to provide a personalised learning environment using ICT, major investment is involved. Both money and time are required. The school would, for example, need to prepare the lessons, which requires expertise and staff resources, in addition to providing the laptops. The Principal of Burleigh College, a Specialist Sports College, highlights this point:

*“there is a need to develop and establish e-learning at a much higher level. Personal learning programmes and individual laptops are required. Resources are needed for this, the technology is there already”.*

- 9.44 E-learning is considered to be central providing future flexibility within education delivery for élite athletes. In the UK, Bristol Academy of Sport (Filton College) already uses distance learning successfully. Students who are away on tournaments are supported through distance learning options and laptop rental.
- 9.45 Recognising the value of personalised learning in terms of flexibility for élite athletes, the Youth Sport Trust is working with UK NGBs giving advice on what is possible regarding personalised learning. For example, the YST have been working with British Gymnastics for some time on a strategy to work with schools in maintaining flexibility for their young gymnasts. Educational flexibility in a sport such as gymnastics is particularly pertinent given the young age of peak performance and subsequent retirement (see Section 8).
- 9.46 A practical example of how flexibility in educational delivery has helped an élite athlete was given by a UK swimmer who sat her last university examination in France as she was there on a pre-World Championships training camp. The same athlete was also allowed to miss an oral examination as she was on a pre-Olympic training camp. Further detail of the support she received at school is provided in Figure 9.10 below.

**Figure 9.10 Flexibility in compulsory education – UK swimmer**

This athlete made her junior international debut at 13 years and senior debut at 16 years old. Since then she has competed in Olympic, World and European Championships and in 2001 was World Champion and World Record holder. By the age of 13, she was swimming nine times a week including early morning sessions (05.30 - 07.00).

She attended private school and felt that their support and flexibility were crucial:

*“luckily my school were really supportive, they appreciated everything. I didn't have to do PE lessons if I didn't want to and I missed swimming lessons because they knew that I would be up in the morning and going back at night. If I was going on round trips, they would make sure that I had work to do when I was out there and always had people whom I could contact at school if I couldn't do it”.*

- 9.47 Case studies are provided overleaf of how a UK and Polish college support their élite athletes through flexible study arrangements.

**Figure 9.11 Flexibility in UK further/higher education – Loughborough College**

At this FE/HE college, the majority of the courses are coursework based. The Sports Scholarship Co-ordinator negotiates with academic tutors on such matters as hand in dates, time off for competitions and catching up strategies. There are no formal arrangements for extending the length of courses but the college aims to be as flexible on an individual basis as possible.

Intranet learning opportunities are well developed. All lessons and all handouts are put onto the intranet, which can be accessed from any computer. The college can also provide laptop loans if required. The Sports Scholarship Co-ordinator liaises with student-athletes to ensure that they have all the information they need before they leave for training camps or competitions.

Distance learning materials are produced by the college and are available to student-athletes when absent from the college. For example, the college has written and produced an access course in sport science with 13 modules. Accreditation is through the Open College Network. Currently the college has one élite swimmer who is following this distance-learning course as they cannot commit to full time study at present. It is currently only available to students of 19 years although negotiations are proceeding on getting the age limit reduced to 17 years of age.

**Figure 9.12 Flexibility in Polish higher education – AZF-AWF Warsaw Club**

The Study Regulations of the AWF in Warsaw specifies the cases in which it is possible to obtain permission for individual study organisation. These are as follows: students who are national team members, reserve national team members or university games national team members, without regard to their club affiliation, as well as students who have student-athlete status.

The university has two types of individual study organisation:

*Indywidualny Tok Studiow (ITS)*, which is intended to ensure the proper conditions for studying and perfecting championship level sport skills at the same time. The ITS may be awarded in the first semester, and one years study may be extended to two. The student puts forward a one or two year program for attending classes and passing exams, which is accepted by the Dean.

*Indywidualny Plan I Program Studiow (IPPS)*, which is intended to create the conditions for studying and developing the student's sports interests. The IPPS may be awarded upon completion of the first year of studies.

- 9.48 Flexible education delivery measures in HE are now becoming common practice in university level education and a number of sports science programmes exist. For example, Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK are now running a distance-learning programme in sports science.

### *Flexibility in training/sport*

- 9.49 Flexibility is also important within sport in order to achieve a balance. It is not just education or employment that should be adapted and compromised. Maintaining the balance between education and training can be difficult at critical periods. For example, examinations often follow holiday periods when sporting competitions take place and squad training sessions will often be held over the weekends, increasing the pressure on athletes to finish academic work during the week.
- 9.50 It is important to know what the sport expects of the athlete at different times in their development. In the UK this will be outlined by NGBs within the athlete's Long Term Athlete Development Plan, which highlights the expected demands on the athlete as they progress through their career.
- 9.51 Each sport will have varying training demands at different stages of development. In sports such as swimming and gymnastics, where peak performance (and hence heavy training/competition schedules) occurs at a relatively young age, it is of particular importance to ensure that the athlete is coping and being given flexibility and support by their coach and/or NGB to ensure that they are not pursuing sporting ambitions at the total cost of education. The NGB may offer flexibility to the athlete through, for example, time off for training weekends that clash with examinations.
- 9.52 Other factors that may affect flexibility in education and sport include the sport itself. There are various arguments that there are greater or lesser opportunities for flexibility within a team sport. Some examples from our research are given below.
- 9.53 The English Rugby Football Union for Women have rearranged the international calendar for 2004/05 so that they finish games prior to Easter, rather than run into May as in previous years. The aim of this adjustment is so that there is less pressure on players to compete in international fixtures during the traditional education exam period, and to also shorten the season so that players have more of a rest and off-season.
- 9.54 As described above, Leicester Tigers, (see Figures 8.6 and 9.9) an English Premiership Rugby Club, changed their training programme for the new season primarily to accommodate education requirements. In addition, the Club state that they are willing to be flexible at critical times, in recognition of players' priorities. This level of flexibility is important, as illustrated by an academy player who stated that:
- “during exams I prioritise university, otherwise the Club is the priority during the year”.*
- 9.55 An example of flexibility from coaches is provided by a UK rower who described how he was given time off training for examinations by his coach, as the coach acknowledged that, “your work comes first”. In this example, the athlete felt particularly fortunate with the understanding and level of flexibility shown by his coach, as his university was not particularly supportive.
- 9.56 In contrast, a UK track and field athlete described how there was a complete lack of flexibility from her coach. “My coach at university was very controlling. His training programme was very strict and I allowed him to do it, as I knew I had to change. He did not care about my studying so I had to cut out my social life to maintain my academic progress”.

- 9.57 Access to facilities may limit flexibility. For example, in some sports, such as swimming or gymnastics there will be more restricted pool/ gym training times. This is in comparison to sports such as rugby or athletics, where a high percentage of training, such as weights, can be completed independently in a local gym.
- 9.58 In addition, it was suggested that an increased income through funding or a scholarship could enable the athlete to access better transport, reduce the need to work and provide the means to manage time better. Conversely, however, it may lead to additional time commitments, such as media exposure.

***Flexibility in employment***

- 9.59 The introduction of National Lottery funding in the UK has enabled an increasing number of sportspersons to become full-time athletes. However, a substantial number of élite athletes do still need to earn a steady income through part-time or full-time employment to supplement their funding and support themselves and often their family. For these athletes, flexibility from employers is key to combining their sport and employment and achieving the right balance.
- 9.60 An example is given by a UK swimmer who applied for a job in preparation for her retirement after the Athens Olympic Games. She was offered a full-time position and asked to start immediately. When she explained her Olympic ambitions, they arranged for her to work from 9am until 1pm until the Olympic trials/Games and then full-time afterwards.
- 9.61 In the UK, the BOA have recognised the need for a flexible work schedule by ensuring that all companies/organisations within their OPEN programme offer flexible working. In addition, the BOA recently announced a three-year collaboration with Blue Arrow, a leading UK based recruitment agency as the Official Recruitment Partner for the BOA and OPEN. The deal will see Blue Arrow establishing an in-house team with responsibility for placing athletes and coaches in jobs that give them flexibility to continue with their careers whilst achieving their sporting ambitions. Further information is provided in the case study below and in Figure 6.7.

**Figure 9.13 Flexibility in employment – Olympic and Paralympic Employment Network (OPEN)**

Operated in association with the BOA, UK Sport and the British Paralympic Association, OPEN is a support programme for élite athletes. It assists them to combine a successful career path whilst achieving their ambitions in sport.

The programme provides a link between élite sport and the corporate sector, helping the corporate sector to have a better understanding of sport and the role it plays in many élite athlete's lives. Links have been established with over 125 companies/organisations who have become 'members' of the OPEN programme. Each member (employer) is committed to providing a flexible work schedule and additional leave for national/international competitions.

For those athletes already employed and trying to combine a sporting and professional career the programme can try to negotiate more flexibility to accommodate sporting needs. For example, OPEN has worked with the employer of an international taekwondo athlete to negotiate time off in preparation for the Athens Olympic Games. This has enabled him to train full-time for six months prior to the competition.

### ***The importance of flexibility***

- 9.62 The underlying theme that comes out of our comparative research in each of the four Member States is that flexibility is key to the élite athlete achieving a balance between sport, education, employment and personal development.
- 9.63 Each of the four Member States are, to varying degrees, introducing flexibility within education, sport and employment with the aim to facilitate the combination of education/career and sport. Due to government structure, each of the four comparative states face different issues in terms of implementing programmes and offering flexibility. However, the importance of offering some level of flexibility to support élite athletes has been recognised in all four comparative study countries, as highlighted within the case study examples.
- 9.64 Key issues regarding flexibility are seen as follows:
- it is impossible to successfully combine education and sport without some level of flexibility in educational programmes
  - a greater understanding of the demands an élite athlete faces (and therefore understanding of why an élite athlete needs flexibility) is required within the education sector
  - flexibility commonly occurs within education through flexibility of delivery and/or flexibility of the education system
  - it is easier to offer increased levels of flexibility and support within specialist sports schools and colleges; however, it is equally important for non-specialist sports schools to offer flexibility to athletes
  - the level of flexibility offered is greater in post compulsory education (FE/HE) than it is in compulsory education
  - need to recognise that the demand for flexibility will be different at different times of their career
  - personalised learning and e-learning are seen as key methods of facilitating flexibility for élite athletes in the future
  - an increasing number of institutions are committing to delivering flexibility through government funded programmes
  - government legislation exists in Poland to ensure that élite athletes are offered flexibility in education; this does not apply in any of the other Member States
  - the organisation of the school day is a significant factor in the difference between the levels of flexibility offered in the four countries
  - the level of flexibility both required and provided differs depending on the sport
  - academies are a successful means of increasing the level of flexibility offered to élite athletes and are used in all four countries; academies allow control of the various aspects of the athlete's life and staff are aware of the demands on élite sportspersons

## ***SECTION 9 – COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: SUPPORT FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES***

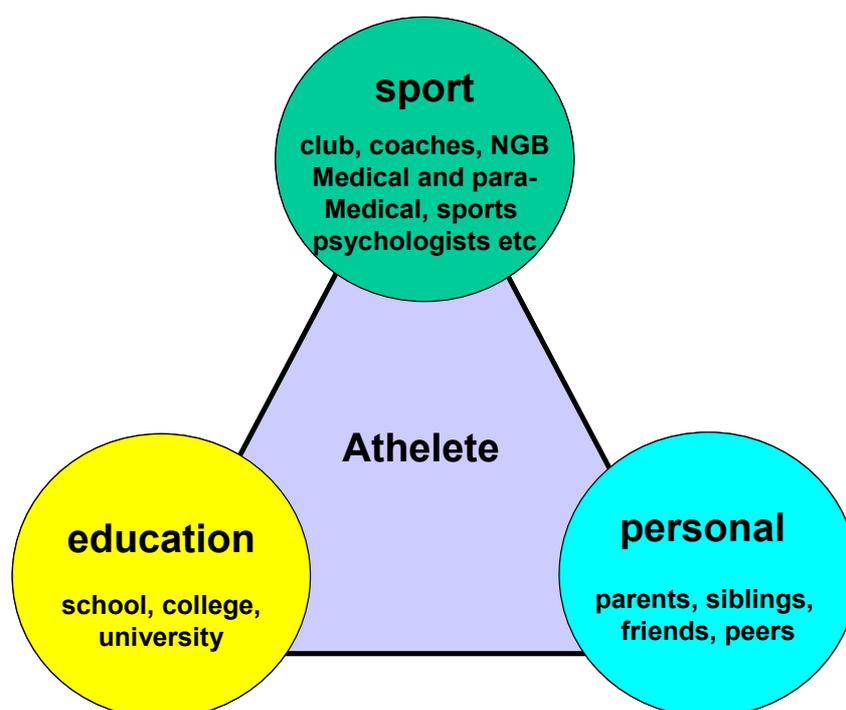
---

- flexibility should also come through the sport, coaches and/or the NGB should be aware of the educational demands the athlete is under and the importance of achieving a balance
- flexibility from employers is also crucial in ensuring working athletes are able to maintain their sport.

## **Entourage**

9.65 Student-athletes are surrounded by an entourage of supporters and stakeholders, all of whom want to influence young sportspersons in ways they feel are best for their development. There are three basic groups of such stakeholders, illustrated in Figure 9.14 below.

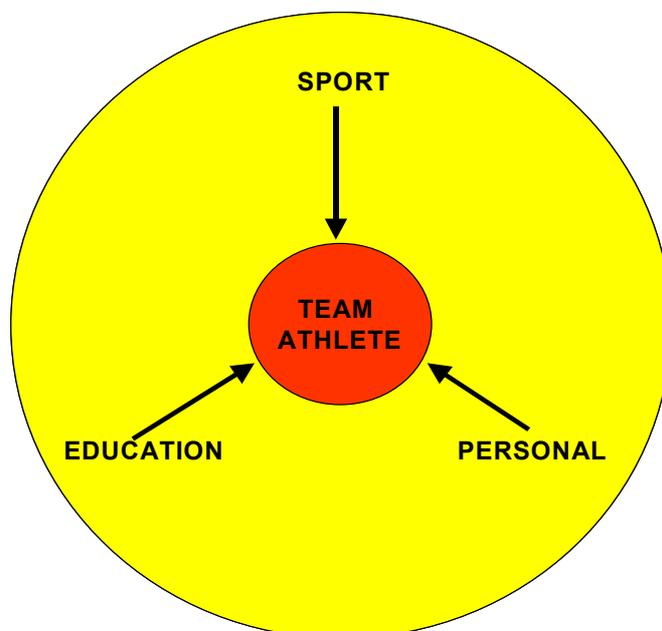
**Figure 9.14 The athlete's entourage**



- **sports stakeholders** often include a team drawn from club, coaches, physiotherapist, psychologist, nutritionists, medical advisers and others. In addition, professional players will usually have an agent
- **personal elements** of the entourage include family, friends and peers. Very young athletes will be dependent upon their parents and parental influence often remains significant throughout an athlete's career
- **education** brings teachers, tutors, mentors and others into the entourage.

- 9.66 These influences, however, are potentially conflicting and student-athletes may suffer role conflicts in respect of how they see themselves. Lifestyle advisers are increasingly supporting athletes in managing these conflicts. Lifestyle support programmes emphasise how important it is for the athlete to manage a *Team Athlete* approach, where the athlete takes responsibility for managing the entourage. Their focus is to support student-athletes in developing skills to manage and control conflicting pressures from their entourage.
- 9.67 This is in recognition that student-athletes face the considerable challenge of managing a complex lifestyle balance on a daily basis. They are developing as students, athletes and people, in a way that any full-time student, any full-time athlete or indeed any person at a similar developmental age might face (Etzel et al, 1996). These challenges include time demands, concentration demands, conflicting expectations from different roles, social isolation, negative stereotyping and financial constraints (Cross, 2004). Figure 9.15 below depicts how these pressures can result in student-athlete role conflict.

**Figure 9.15 Student-athlete role conflict**



- 9.68 The Principal of a Specialist Sports College in the UK summed this up in the following way:

*“these youngsters have a complex lifestyle, balancing out the needs of their coaches and the needs of their own adolescence, their education and the expectations of their parents too”.*

### **Sport stakeholders**

9.69 The coach is the main figure in any athlete's entourage, and is the leading figure in the sports stakeholder group. Some athletes, however, will have more than one coach. College-based academy players, for example, will often have both an academy coach and club coaches. If the athlete is of a national or international standard they may have a national coach as well as a club coach. In addition, athletes often have specialist coaches working on different areas such as strength and conditioning, and endurance. In addition to coaching staff, an athlete will have, depending on their level and sport, a range of other sport stakeholders whose role it is to focus on the athlete's fitness, including medical advisers, psychologists, nutritionists and physiotherapists.

9.70 Comments from French elite athletes also supported the central role of the coach, who was the main person in whom athletes had confidence. They said that coaches guide athletes not only concerning their sporting projects but also concerning their professional integration. Some coaches even replace the parents, in particular at the time of adolescence. One UK swimmer confirmed this, speaking of her coach:

*"He always jokes that he knows me better than my dad and has been there more and probably has seen more of me than my own family".*

9.71 Also within the sports entourage, there may be club managers and staff, and people from the relevant national governing body of sport, national sports federations and organisations. In addition, the player may have an agent. As an athlete becomes more senior, particularly in a professional sport, this area of their entourage becomes larger and more complex and the role of the agent increases. Whilst some academy staff commented unfavourably on the role of agents, seeing their interests as focused on short term gains rather than long term players' welfare, a football players' agent in Germany, representing 25 players from 16-33 years of age, described his role perceptively. Five of his players still attend school.

*"I look after the sports career planning of my football players. This includes the preparation and negotiation of contracts between players and clubs. There certainly are also things that go beyond sports such as insurance matters, or financial advice. Here I help by referring them to respective experts. I do not favour an all round looking after, this will lead to a dependency of the players".*

9.72 Potential conflicts exist even within this one area of the entourage. Different coaches may have different views about the athlete, and other advisers may try and influence the athlete's decisions in different ways.

9.73 Our research revealed cultural differences between coaches resulting in different coaching styles and expectations. One UK elite athlete reported training with a very controlling coach while at university, who had little regard for education and a very rigid and inflexible approach to training. She said:

*"My coach at university was very controlling...I am now with a coach who treats me like an adult".*

- 9.74 A Performance Lifestyle adviser at a UK university also commented on varying cultural expectations and understanding between coaches, and also noted the importance NGBs have in promoting lifestyle management support for athletes:

*“It’s important to have a supportive coach, you only get one chance at sport. Pressure from coaches varies. There’s no trend on age. We often think older/wiser means increased awareness, whereas a younger coach has a lot to prove, often wants sole control of an athlete, controls influences, avoids unwanted distractions. This also varies from sport to sport. Some coaches are from foreign cultures; they do what is best for sport but not socially as they’re from different customs and don’t understand our education system.*

*The general trend in coaching is to embrace the Performance Lifestyle service because NGBs are sold on it. So the pressure comes from high up, and whether coaches agree or not they must engage because otherwise they will be picked up on it by NGBs and monitored as to whether they are giving a balanced approach to coaching”.*

- 9.75 Our research also revealed conflicts between coaches and physiotherapists on whether players should train and compete or not, and several instances of sport-education conflicts.

### **Education stakeholders**

- 9.76 Education stakeholders, whether at school, specialist school/college or university level, know they have to face problems, and resolve potential conflicts, with student-athletes and their coaches.

- 9.77 The Principal of a Specialist Sports College in the UK commented:

*“The coach organises the training schedule and sometimes it’s been a struggle to negotiate a reasonable balance between educational and training time. It’s important to ensure there are strong links to the coach and parents and good liaison between the coach and the school”.*

- 9.78 There are differences in the way schools are able to respond flexibly to the demands of student-athletes, in terms of whether they are specialist sports schools for talented and elite athletes or whether they are normal schools.

- 9.79 There are also differences in response depending on the nature of the school or academy, its funding and its accreditation requirements, in particular whether they are state-run government funded schools/academies or private charitable or commercially operated schools/academies.

- 9.80 In the UK there is growing evidence of the importance of partnerships between the commercial sport sector and education and lifestyle management providers. Brookfield Specialist Sports College in Merseyside, located in a relatively deprived community, has established partnerships with David Lloyd Leisure, a commercial leisure operator, which means college students can use their facilities, and Barclaycard, which provides sponsorship funding. We have already noted the sponsorship of the BOA’s OPEN network by Blue Arrow and VISA (see Figure 9.13 above).

- 9.81 In the UK, some independent schools, which are outside the state sector and charge fees, offer sports scholarships to student-athletes. If these students are club or national players in team sports, or academy members, there may be conflicts about playing for their school in addition to their other playing responsibilities.
- 9.82 A Specialist Sports College PE head in the state sector commented,
- “I know that we have some very good footballers in year 7 and 8 and there are a couple of them who have not been allowed to play for the school because of their commitment elsewhere but at the end of the day that’s their choice and there is no pressure”.*
- 9.83 Where the school is a fee-paying one, and a student-athlete is on a scholarship, however, there is greater pressure to play for the school. “They want their money’s worth” was a comment made by a professional rugby academy manager. This is potentially a serious situation because it can mean a player overplays and exposes him/herself to injury, or competes when injured or when they should be resting.
- 9.84 This additional scholarship pressure illustrates another problem within the sports-education axis of the entourage, which can be summed up as the difference between short-term and long-term goals. It must be acknowledged that if a school has provided a scholarship, and special coaching and infrastructure support, the pressure is bound to be great on a student-athlete to pay this back and deliver sporting success for the school. The National Programme Manager for the UK’s Gifted and Talented programme commented,
- “Most schools try their best to help young athletes achieve both in sport and in school. But there is difficulty in the independent sector where sports scholarships distort the balance. They say, do this for us, rather than for your sport or your Governing Body”.*

**Personal stakeholders**

- 9.85 Parents are a very important part of any young athlete’s career development, both in terms of education and sport. Most parents are ambitious for talented children but not over zealous or ‘pushy’. In those sports where there is a professional structure and significant commercial backing, however, some parents may exert unreasonable pressure on their children, raising concerns in extreme cases about the need for child protection intervention and in general terms of the need for legal rights for young athletes.
- 9.86 It is widely recognised, however, that parents play a key role in supporting young athletes, particularly those who live at home, in respect of taking them to training and competitions and providing financial support. Mostly this is helpful, but lifestyle advisers reported that occasionally the relationship became one of complex dependency, which is both unhealthy and can be a negative influence on an athlete’s development. An example quoted was of a young athlete whose mother was reluctant to allow her daughter to leave home to go to university. She had managed the organisational side of her daughter’s sports development and also managed her daughter’s diet and nutrition, cooking for her and generally managing her life. The mother was concerned that her daughter might ‘throw away her potential’ when no longer at home being looked after.

- 9.87 The role of parents was reiterated during interviews with elite athletes in France who confirmed the support of parents as being very important not only in sport but also in school matters. Parents were said to be ready to make sacrifices when necessary, for example accepting that their children may be training and following their education at a considerable distance from home, when required by their sport.
- 9.88 Many schemes that have been developed to support young sportspersons in dealing with the challenge of balancing complex demands, such as the JAE scheme in the UK, include workshops with parents so that they can fully appreciate the requirements of the student-athlete role and support their children appropriately. The best parents realise that a supportive role is one where they nurture and encourage their children to achieve their full potential as adults, making informed decisions and choices for themselves. Lifestyle advisers are increasingly available to support this process.
- 9.89 Friends and peers are also an important influence. Getting in with the ‘wrong’ people can be very damaging to a sports career and boarding schools, colleges and universities often accommodate student-athletes together so that they can provide peer support. Several athletes whom we interviewed confirmed that this was helpful, although some also said that they valued having friends who were not involved in sport who would offer a different perspective on life. Others commented, however, that friends from outside sport rarely understood the pressures young sportspersons experienced in dealing with the conflicting demands and pressures of their complex lives.
- 9.90 Interviews with French elite athletes confirmed the importance of family and friends. It was also recognised that young athletes would try to organise their free time to see their friends and the belief was that when athletes managed to keep in touch with their friends, “they have the feeling that they fully live their youth”. The support of their friends was seen to be as important as the support of their family.

### ***Mentors and mediators***

- 9.91 Mentoring is becoming increasingly important as it is recognised that student-athletes need advice and support to deal with competing pressures exerted by those within their entourage. Usually, mentors are staff within the sports or education institutions where student-athletes are based. This means they have a bias towards one of these areas of influence and their views may therefore not always be independent. Their professionalism, however, should lead them to recognise that their role requires them to be non-directive and to empower the student-athlete to make decisions for themselves. Mentor training is provided under such government programmes as the UK’s JAE scheme and is focused on understanding the particular demands of the student-athlete lifestyle.
- 9.92 The careers adviser at one of Germany’s Olympic centres, who also acts as manager of the sports boarding school on site, stressed how important co-operation between all elements of the entourage is for student-athletes. He said,

*“Co-operation is as close as possible – the schools in the reach of the Olympic centre which are acknowledged as sport oriented schools make school easier for the athlete because they provide more flexibility. Schoolwise, the young people are being looked after excellently, and I put a main emphasis on a very good co-operation of everybody involved: athlete/student, parents, teachers and coaches. It’s my duty to support this co-operation and to mediate when there are conflicts”.*

### ***The role of agents***

- 9.93 Agents have a representative role towards their athletes but some agents, working with young sportspersons, describe this as also a role of advocacy. A German football agent, when asked what are the biggest problems he had to cope with in respect of young sportspersons, replied that it was agents who raised unrealistic hopes in their players. He then added,

*“Parents, siblings, friends often stir up expectations that are not justified. It is my job then to get the player’s feet back on the ground. As an agent you are a trouble shooter, who is standing right between the parties”.*

### ***Managing the entourage***

- 9.94 All athletes, whatever the cultural and infrastructural context in which they are located, experience a wide variety of demands from a complex entourage. This comparative study has revealed a number of points of similarity in respect of managing competing sports-educational and personal elements in an athlete’s entourage:
- coaches are usually the most important element in the athlete’s entourage
  - parents are a significant influence and, for very young athletes in particular, there will often be a high mutual dependency
  - education stakeholders are often required to be flexible in supporting student-athletes and it is helpful if they can provide such support
  - conflicts between sport stakeholders and education stakeholders often occur where there are competing demands on a student-athlete’s time or they are required to represent stakeholders in their sport, especially if the athlete has received a scholarship
  - conflicts occur within the three stakeholder areas (sport – education – personal) as well as between these areas of influence
  - lifestyle advisers are increasingly being used to support athletes in managing role conflicts
  - the need for the entourage to follow a team athlete ethos
  - the need for the athlete to manage this entourage can be very demanding and detract from their sporting focus.

### **Athlete support**

- 9.95 Academic evidence has highlighted the importance of a strong support structure to an elite athlete (Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000) This has been reinforced through our stage 3 research, where numerous examples have been given of the need for, and value of, different types of support in helping an elite athlete achieve their sporting ambitions.
- 9.96 As described in the previous sections, both flexibility and support from all members of the entourage is key to enabling the elite athlete to achieve a balance between their education, sport and social development.

### ***Support in the education system***

- 9.97 There are different levels and types of support offered through the education system. In our stage 3 research there were numerous examples given of mentor schemes, personal tutors, programmes such as JAE and TASS in the UK, scholarship programmes and vocational guidance/careers advice. Each of these methods of support has been deployed to help the elite athlete develop and reach their maximum potential, whilst at the same time continuing their academic studies.
- 9.98 Our research provided a number of specific examples of support given to elite athletes in education. These included special programmes, specialist staff and flexible approaches to education and sports development. In the UK in particular, a number of initiatives have been developed to address what is seen as a lack of previous investment in sport and in the nurturing of talented young sportspersons.

### **Tutoring and mentoring**

- 9.99 Henley College in the UK describes the 'network of support' that is provided for students, including personal tutorial sessions and course tutors. This gives an opportunity to monitor progress and workload. Vocational guidance is also delivered through these personal tutors. In addition, the College has established a link with the local university and feeds players into university courses.
- 9.100 Academy members at Myerscough College (see Figure 9.3) are able to access a range of support services, including learning advisors, personal tutors and a Chaplain. Sports related support includes psychological support, physiotherapy and technical analysis.
- 9.101 The Sport Scholarship Co-ordinator at Loughborough College is a trained mentor and is therefore skilled at working with sports scholars and elite athletes in general. In addition, the College employs a full-time sport psychologist on the staff. Loughborough University provides workshops on nutrition, time management and other lifestyle management issues run by specialists and Loughborough College students can join these sessions. An incentive to attend is built into the scholarship funding.
- 9.102 The Loughborough College sport scholarship scheme is detailed in Figure 9.16 overleaf.

**Figure 9.16 Athlete support – Loughborough College, UK**

Loughborough College is host to various sports academies, including football, netball and basketball. The college offers a range of courses from one year diploma through to three year degree programmes.

For élite athletes, aged 16 years and above, the college operates a Sports Scholarship Scheme. The scheme offers support to student-athletes who are enrolled on a full time sports science course and are competing at a high standard, including financial, social and educational support across three levels:

- £1,000 scholarship plus help from a specialist tutor who works with the other tutors on work targets and assignment deadlines
- partial scholarships of £500 plus tutor support
- named scholars – ‘entitled’ to be classed as a sports scholar plus access to tutor support and extra workshops.

Additional workshops on nutrition, time management and other lifestyle management issues are organised by Loughborough University and Loughborough College students can access these. An incentive to attend these sessions is built into the scholarship funding, whereby for attending each workshop the student-athlete will receive £50.

The Sports Scholarship Co-ordinator and Course Leader for the National Diploma in Sports Science at the College, an élite athlete herself, recognised the need for such support, and she states:

*“I’ve seen it myself; you go into a normal college, get into college life, your performance goes down and you drop out from sport”.*

Other support staff, crucial to assisting the development process, include a full time sports psychologist and trained mentors who are skilled at working with sports scholars and élite athletes generally.

9.103 In France, young players at Lille Olympique Sporting Club football academy are supported by their school teachers during their education and the academy employs support staff to look after the young players both mentally and physically. For the 60 players at the academy there are six football coaches, three support staff, five drivers plus the administrative staff. The drivers take the young players from their homes to school, from school to training and from training back home. A case study on the academy is presented as Figure 8.11.

**Supplementary education**

9.104 Brookfield Specialist Sports College in the UK puts on masterclass revision sessions before or after school so that élite pupils who cannot make it to an after school club because of training do not miss out. The College also supports athletes in providing them with opportunities outside of education, such as NGB coaching courses. A number of the élite pupils have just completed the FA Coaching Award and Football Organiser Award.

9.105 The Head of PE at the College explains why they do this:

*“We do try and put on a lot of coaching courses so they have something to fall back on in case they get an injury or if they don’t quite make it; they will have still got something – they can still carry on with that sport but not necessarily through the actual playing route”.*

### **Talent identification and support for young athletes**

9.106 Details of the JAE and TASS schemes in the UK were provided in Figure 8.9 and Section 5 respectively, and they are important to note here as examples of a government policy initiative in the area of athlete support. The JAE programme is designed to support gifted and talented young athletes, and includes specialist training resources, mentors and workshops. A Specialist Sports College that delivers the JAE programme described in our research how they are in the process of mentoring regular sessions to give pupils as much support as they can. Since the JAE programme was launched at the College, they have provided lifestyle management courses and diet and nutrition workshops. They have also held a role model workshop where an England footballer spoke about her experiences and how she achieved her ambition.

9.107 A new programme called, ‘Young athlete profiling and tracking’, is being introduced in England and Wales by the DfES, in which a mentor is appointed locally to track the young athlete and support their development. The issue of balance is seen in terms of maintaining the athlete’s educational achievements as well as developing their sporting potential.

9.108 Another example is given by Bristol Academy of Sport in the UK. The Academy is introducing TEAMS (The Élite Athlete Mentoring Scheme). Sports coaching staff will act as the pivot and talk to athletes regarding their tournament schedules and academic work demands, therefore addressing the conflicts between sport and education. The Principal of the College acknowledged that sport is the focus but education is important, saying:

*“we want the athlete to concentrate on sport but we don’t want them to lose their education”.*

### **Support from National Governing Bodies**

9.109 Some governing bodies of sport recognise the importance of young players achieving a good education as well as sports excellence. The English Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) funds the appointment of an academic tutor at each of their partner schools to monitor the academy players. Their role is to liaise with the school and the player to ensure that they are coping with the demands of the academic programme. The English Football Association (FA) is supporting an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship Framework for Sporting Excellence (MASE), a new qualification developed by SkillsActive, the Sector Skills Council for the leisure industry. Further details are provided in Figure 3.6 and in Figure 9.17 overleaf.

**Figure 9.17 Athlete support – Advanced Modern Apprenticeship Framework for Sporting Excellence, UK**

This qualification, launched in July 2004, is expected to have a major impact on the development of young athletes across a range of competitive sports and it has been designed to meet the needs of young people who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence in their sport and who are seeking to perform at the highest level as their main career goal.

The Framework will provide a structured national training and development route, across all sports, for talented young athletes, securing access to public funding. Half of the course elements focus on the assessment of an elite performer's application of the technical, tactical, physical and psychological aspects of their chosen sport. The remaining elements address wider issues such as lifestyle, communication skills and career management. Whilst these are extremely important issues for elite performers, they are also crucial for a successful transfer to their second careers.

**Flexible arrangements**

- 9.110 Many schools have developed flexible arrangements, which several athletes confirmed had been very helpful in their career development. Flexibility issues have already been discussed in this section, but it is worth quoting one UK swimmer who described how she “was really lucky with them [the school] being so supportive”. If she was away for training or competition the school would arrange extended submission times for homework and extra lessons. Later, when on a scholarship programme at university, she benefited from lectures on lifestyle support.
- 9.111 In France, teachers at the Jean Moulin Summer School in Albertville are employed there by choice (the French Ministry of Education can allocate teachers to unpopular schools). They have been specifically recruited because they fit a particular profile and wish to teach classes between April and November. They support young skiers at the summer school across the whole of their education. Further details of the school are given in Figure 9.5.

**Life and social skills**

- 9.112 Colleges and academies also recognise the importance of teaching life and social skills to young sportspersons. One example from an Education and Welfare Officer in a professional football academy in the UK is the teaching of driving skills. Safe driving practice was a key element in the academy's lifestyle education programme. As young professional footballers are tempted to spend their substantial salaries on fast cars, it was felt that they needed advice on how to drive them safely.
- 9.113 The Principal of Burleigh College, a UK Specialist Sports College, reported that student-athletes needed to be taught media skills and also how to live independently. He commented that some boarders coming to the college expected it to be “like a hotel” and students had to be advised about food shopping, washing and general self-management. The College has mentors so there is “someone to take responsibility for helping them to achieve a balance”. There are also individual tutors paid for by NGBs.

- 9.114 A member of staff at the boarding school at an Olympic Centre in Germany, when asked about supporting the athletes' personal development also commented on the need to develop life skills and independent living:

*“Our young competitive sportsmen ....are not spoiled, everybody has to clean their own shoes and also washing up is their job”.*

- 9.115 The head of a professional football academy in Germany also reported on helping one of his players set up a standing order for his rent payments so that he would not fall behind with payments. He was very conscious, though, of the need to develop the confidence and independence in his players, for football reasons as well as personal skill development.

*“When you look too much after private matters, that leads only to dependency. And this by the way is not good for their football performance, after all they are supposed to take responsibility on the pitch too”.*

### **Work experience**

- 9.116 Mysercough College in the UK offers an example of providing players with work experience during their academic course. Approximately 20% of the players at the College's golf academy work on the European Tour as marshals, caddies, in hospitality, or in marketing, thus exposing them to all elements of the Tour and enhancing their CV for a possible career outside of their sport.

### **Support in the sport system**

- 9.117 In Poland, the value of psychological intervention and support for élite athletes is recognised. Marian Grzegorz Bublewicz Sports Champion School in Olystyn, for example, offers a psychological sport training programme. This is predominantly offered to gymnasts and kayak competitors.
- 9.118 There are many examples of lifestyle support provided to élite athletes within the sport system in the four comparative countries. These are often funded from the public, private and non-profit sector. In the UK, for example, schemes include public sector funded provision (Performance Lifestyle, OPEN), commercial provision (Adecco, Life After Sport), and sport organisation provision (Education and Welfare Officers in NGBs and professional academies), together with support provided by coaches and agents.

### **Public sector support**

- 9.119 An example of athlete support in the UK that is funded through the public sector is provided in Figure 9.18 overleaf.

**Figure 9.18 Athlete support – Performance Lifestyle advisers, UK**

The Performance Lifestyle service is offered by EIS to World Class athletes who are nominated by their NGB. The central objective of the programme is to prepare athletes for life after sport and also to enhance their sporting performance during their careers.

Performance Lifestyle Advisors are trained to understand the unique demands an elite athlete faces and the importance for them to achieve a balanced lifestyle. A major part of achieving a balance between sporting pursuits and other essential elements of their life, is promoting good time management skills.

A Performance Lifestyle adviser gave the example of an athlete who is also pursuing higher education, whose sporting and academic calendars are very structured and so they often find it difficult to fit in anything outside those commitments.

*“We will help them to identify where the gaps for other activities are, through successful planning and help them achieve the balance they need. It’s also about creating a stable environment for the athlete. If the environment is stable, athletes are much better prepared to deal with problems, if and when they arise”.*

[www.eis2win.co.uk](http://www.eis2win.co.uk).

9.120 The UK athletes that were interviewed in our stage 3 research described how the service has helped them in many different ways from arranging employment after sport, assistance with preparing a CV, advising on interview techniques and negotiating flexible working arrangements. The EIS offer Performance Lifestyle support for a year after athletes leave the programme.

9.121 A UK swimmer explained how:

*“They [Performance Lifestyle] helped me with my job to start with by negotiating that I would only be there part-time. And they were sort of checking that I was happy in my job and that I was combining everything okay...I think it [Performance Lifestyle] is worthwhile if you use it”.*

9.122 The athlete went on to describe the Performance Lifestyle Advisor as:

*“great, as you could always ask her things, she was always helpful and arranged meetings around training to suit me and everything”.*

9.123 The value of the programme was confirmed by other athletes. A number of examples of how the programme has benefited individuals are given below:

- *“it offers stacks of advice on career options, courses and general help to get the best of what’s already out there. The athlete adviser has made a real effort to fit in with my training and competition schedule, and is now an important part of my support team”*
- *“no one knows what the future will hold. Injuries can mean serious time away from competition, and even end a promising career. It is about confidence in the future after sport”*

- *“the help and support provided by my athlete adviser on the lead-up, during and after the Winter Olympics was excellent. The negotiations with my employer, to ensure I was granted paid leave to train, have proved invaluable for me – and I really appreciate the sound advice given”*
- *“throughout the years I’ve had to deal with a variety of situations including injury, choice of careers, continuing education and between that, having a family. If it wasn’t for my athlete adviser I wouldn’t have the confidence to structure my life around these experiences”*
- *“planning for the future after competition is vital. I want to know that when I finish the Olympics that I am looking forward to something that I’m motivated for”.*

9.124 Performance Lifestyle advisers recognise that the sport programme is the main focus for competing athletes and provide guidance on how to maximise that focus while still fulfilling other important commitments such as career, family, social, financial matters. The approach is to work closely with coaches and support staff as part of an integrated team to minimise potential concerns, conflicts and distractions, all of which can be detrimental to performance and at worse, may end a career prematurely.

9.125 A similar programme of careers advice and lifestyle support is offered in Germany to athletes based at the 20 Olympic Centres around the country. Between one and three advisers are based at each centre. A case study is given in Figure 9.19 overleaf of the advice that is provided at one such centre.

**Figure 9.19 Athlete support – careers advice at the OSP Koln-Bonn-Leverkusen, Germany**

Careers advice and support is offered to 300 athletes at the Olympic Centre Koln-Bonn-Leverkusen in Germany. Areas of advice cover:

**General advice**

- career diagnosis
- grasping the current personal situation
- school career advice
- course guidance and planning
- testing the course choice
- school report.

**Advice as to military service, community service and voluntary social year**

- advice in planning a profession
- finding a profession
- choice and aptitude test
- application strategies
- interview.

**Information about:**

- sport support
- private tuition
- boarding school support
- individual support
- study support
- regional possibilities for support.

**Co-operation with partner institutions**

- optimisation of the athlete's situation
- young talent's professional sport
- part time boarding school
- full time boarding school
- co-operation with partner schools
- sport oriented schools
- elite schools of sport.

9.126 Sports Clubs in Poland support their athletes in different ways. They offer the athletes sporting attire, and, in many cases, accommodation, as well as many kinds of financial reimbursement in the form of sports scholarships. According to the Physical Culture Act 1996 (art. 22 pt.3-4), amateur athletes may receive sports scholarships. Sports scholarships for Olympic as well as Paralympic team members are financed from the central government budget.

- 9.127 The UK TASS scheme (discussed in Section 5) will not only provide financial, sports and flexible education support but it will also offer lifestyle support through PALS (Performance Athlete Lifestyle). PALS will, for example, include lifestyle related workshops, units from Performance Lifestyle on athlete transitions and university admissions advice. The Education Advisor for EIS states, “PALS training should make a big impact”.
- 9.128 Further support from the EIS and TASS will be provided to élite young athletes through the implementation of a web-based directory, which will be used as a resource tool for élite athletes. The directory will offer information on academic and vocational courses in addition to EIS facilities, NGB centres/coaches, education resources and flexibility arrangements. The aim is to facilitate course choice and forward planning. It will be going live in September 2004, and will be piloted by athletes applying for HE places in September 2005. The directory will include details on facilities, coaches and high performance information for individual sports. So far, only ten sports are covered but this will be expanded as the directory is developed. Future proposals also include incorporating information on schools and FE colleges within the directory, building on Sport England’s aim of sport development from ‘playground to podium’.

### **NGB support**

- 9.129 In addition to Performance Lifestyle advice, a number of NGBs in the UK recruit their own specialist support staff. For example, the LTA employs an Education Adviser whose role is to offer support to players on an ‘as needs’ basis. Many tennis players leave school at 16 to play full-time. However, a number will volunteer to continue post-compulsory education. The role of the Education Adviser is to set up such relevant systems as distance learning courses and mobile programmes.
- 9.130 The LTA Education Advisor has also set up a lifestyle support programme for players, which is to be piloted this year. It will involve ten players attending lessons three times per week. Lessons will cover the European Computer Driving Course (which is IT skills related), French and Spanish. The intention is to provide players with skills that they can use on the professional tour and to encourage them to use their off-court time productively, whilst simultaneously enhancing their CV.
- 9.131 A UK woman footballer commented that in her view the FA is now in a much better position to support female players. She believes the Women’s Football National Academy at Loughborough is a positive step and that it will encourage players to stay in England to combine their studies and sport, rather than going to the USA.
- 9.132 Within rugby, the RFU provide a high level of support for players including a mentor, with whom they meet fortnightly and links to the EIS Performance Lifestyle programme. Some individual clubs will have an Education Adviser to give career counselling and there are also regular reviews and update meetings with the Academy Manager. Players also benefit from a health care scheme, physiotherapy, medical and financial support as well as lifestyle support during rehabilitation from injury. These details are outlined within a Scholarship Agreement between the player and RFU.

- 9.133 Leicester Tigers Premiership Rugby Club described how all staff act as mentors to younger players in their academy, although it is specifically the role of the club's Education and Welfare officer. This is the only club within the Premiership to appoint an Education and Welfare Officer. The role of the Officer is to ensure that the education side is properly controlled. Further details of the club's academy are provided in Figures 4.8, 8.6 and 9.9).
- 9.134 By contrast, in England all Premiership football clubs are required by the FA to employ an Education and Welfare Officer. It is their responsibility to ensure the players receive appropriate education and support. Further information is provided in Figure 9.20 below.

**Figure 9.20 Athlete support – Education & Welfare Officers, Football Academies, UK**

Premiership League Football Academies are required by the NGB to appoint a full-time Education and Welfare Officer. These are education professionals who are charged with monitoring the educational provisions for players and developing a relationship with the individual student, his parents and his school.

Clubs and players are encouraged to develop a productive partnership, especially in terms of personal, technical, social and academic development. The Football Association (NGB) has established an Education and Welfare Committee including the professional leagues, PFA (Professional Footballers Association), English Schools' FA, Secondary Heads Association, Head Teachers' Association and Association of Chief Education Officers.

In addition, The Football Association has appointed an Education and Welfare Adviser who, in conjunction with staff from the FA Premier League and Football League, will ensure the development of good practice, particularly in respect of education, welfare and child protection issues.

The Football Association also provides regular in-service training for staff within the academies to ensure the education of young footballers in all spheres in order to equip the young player for the future. The Charter for Quality places the emphasis on academies to enter into a Code of Conduct with young players and their parents where each party acknowledges and agrees to its responsibilities in the partnership.

In addition, the Football Association and FA Premier League have also developed detailed policies on child protection and each club will be expected to produce its own policies, procedures and practices in this area.

- 9.135 There is a similar arrangement in France regarding support for players in professional academies. An example of support programmes within French football is given in Figure 9.21 overleaf. The case study details how the football player's trade union UNFP provides a retraining service and organises a summer camp for players coming to the end of their contracts.

**Figure 9.21 Athlete support – UNFP (National Union of Professional Football Players), France**

Retraining affects more than 500 French football players per year. Such retraining concerns not only players at the end of their sport career but starts very early, from the age of 20.

The UNFP's retraining service offers the football player a personal evaluation. After discussion, the service is able to recommend an educational training programme to the football player in accordance with his objectives.

Two summer camps are organised by the UNFP during July. One takes place at the national football academy in Clairefontaine, the other one at Saint Etienne. These camps are open to professional football players who are at the end of an employment contract.

These camps enable a player to look for a new club so that he is able to stay in the professional network. In July 2004, the camp organised at Clairefontaine gathered 30 football players (two players are 30 years old and 28 players are between 22 and 24 years).

In France, the work of guidance and support is carried out by the Department of Élite Sport within the Ministry for Youth and Sport, the sporting federations and those in charge of INSEP and other training centres.

- 9.136 Examples of other programmes that are in place to support élite athletes in the UK includes Sporting Champions, a scheme run by Sport England, which involves élite athletes going into schools to encourage sporting participation. Athletes are paid to undertake these visits, which will not only supplement their funding but also provide experience in presenting or coaching, which will enhance their CV.

**Private sector support**

- 9.137 Lifestyle support is available through commercial companies such as Life After Sport and Adecco, who run a recruitment programme in a number of European countries, including Norway and Spain. Life After Sport is a private company, based in the UK, that has been set up specifically to deal with the problems faced by sports people when their careers are over. They aim to steer those for whom sport has been all consuming towards an equally fulfilling existence thereafter. The idea is to forge links with companies and organisations that want to capitalise on the qualities that drive sports people to the top, transferring them to the business world.

**Personal support systems**

- 9.138 It is equally important to have a strong personal support structure in place from parents, friends, fellow athletes, coach, school/teachers, medical support staff, psychologists and agents. Personal support can be financial, emotional or practical, for example transportation to events and preparation of meals.

- 9.139 A recurring theme through the stage 3 interviews with elite athletes was the importance of those closest to them and strong personal support structures. For example, the majority of athletes interviewed emphasised the importance of their parents in helping them to achieve their sporting ambitions. Many commented that without parental support, both financial and emotional, they would not have succeeded.
- 9.140 The Education Adviser for EIS explains the importance of “getting the schools and the parents to appreciate the pressures that are put on young athletes”.
- 9.141 A Specialist Sports College in the UK highlighted the importance of personal support. Local statistics identify that the majority of the elite athletes in the area come from families where there are two parents present. Many students at the college have only one parent present and they do not always have the time or money to support their children.
- 9.142 A case study is given below in Figure 9.22 of the level of parental support required to help players succeed and develop in tennis.

**Figure 9.22 Support for young tennis players, UK**

*“Junior tennis is played in a shockingly cut throat atmosphere; no child can succeed without extraordinary family backing. At the extreme it involves full-out coaching by parents themselves – or enormous self-sacrifice in money and time spent escorting child prodigies to tournaments” (Sunday Times 27.06.04).*

The LTA pays an estimated £20,000 a year per child for the four hours coaching and training per day for full-time players at the Bath national tennis academy. The players can opt to attend either a local state or independent school. One family that has opted to send their daughter to an independent school, still pay a third of the school's £20,000 plus a year fees, even with the LTA scholarship. They also incur many of the travelling and accommodation expenses in her tournament schedules. The parents estimate that they pay over £10,000 a year towards their daughter's tennis.

- 9.143 A UK track and field athlete talked of how she had a strong support structure, especially her parents who would provide transportation to all events, “which definitely helped”.
- 9.144 A UK swimmer identified her main support as being from her mother and the school. One of her teachers was key to helping to negotiate flexibility and ensuring that fellow teachers knew of her training demands.
- 9.145 Aside from the family there are other key personnel within the athletes entourage. Another UK swimmer describes how her friends encouraged her to continue with her education when at times she wanted to quit and just focus on swimming. She explained how she lives with other swimmers:

*“which helps as they know what is going on, it's important to have supportive friends, who will not put unwanted pressures on you”.*

- 9.146 A UK gymnast has taken a year out from her studies to focus on her preparations for Athens. She has deferred her place at university, which she will take up shortly after Athens, and has been awarded a scholarship. She commented that:

*“My teachers and schools have always been very supportive of my sporting commitments. If I was forced to miss lessons because of competitions or training, they would get work to me to do at home, or spend extra time with me at lunchtimes to make sure I didn’t fall behind”.*

- 9.147 The support provided by a mentor was raised as an issue by a UK rower. He described the influence his school housemaster, a former Olympic rower, had on his personal and sporting development. Mentoring is increasingly recognised to be an important part of athlete support programmes.
- 9.148 The partnership between athlete and coach could arguably be the most important relationship in sport. Throughout the year most athletes spend more time with their coach than their families. We also found examples, however, of a lack of support and understanding from some coaches, which may have a detrimental effect on the athlete.
- 9.149 For those professional sportspersons who have achieved a contract with a club, their agent plays a major role in advising on their sports career planning. An interview with a sports agent to a number of German professional football players describes how his work includes the preparation and negotiation of contracts between players and clubs, as well as things beyond sport such as insurance matters, or financial advice. One of his players recently moved to an overseas club, which meant he had to arrange the very basic organisational requirements, including a contract for a mobile phone, co-ordination between guest parents, education, and arranging a driving licence. This allowed the player to settle in his new club and focus on football.

### ***Support from employers***

- 9.150 Support from employers is also essential to achieve a balance. This support can be through flexibility offered by employers, such as part-time working. Further information can be found in Section 8.

### ***Supporting elite athletes***

- 9.151 The research has revealed the importance of support systems for elite athletes in helping them to achieve their full potential in sport, in education and in their personal life.
- 9.152 Areas of similarity were:
- the significance of flexible educational systems in supporting young athletes
  - the importance of lifestyle management advice in helping athletes achieve an appropriate balance in their lifestyle
  - the value of independent performance lifestyle support at periods of career transition and exit points
  - the importance of education for significant persons in the athlete’s entourage, for example, coaches and parents, so that they can provide support at critical points in the athlete’s career

## ***SECTION 9 – COMPARATIVE RESEARCH: SUPPORT FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES***

---

- the recognition that young academy players need life skills support and advice on successful independent living, in addition to an educational and sport development programme.

9.153 One point of difference was:

- the importance of players' unions in providing support in respect of job search and retraining in France.

### **Career transition and exit**

- 9.154 It is well documented within academic research that career transition in sport can be particularly challenging. A transition has been defined by Schlossberg (1981) as:

*“an event or non-event, which results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behaviour and relationships”* (Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000 p.5).

- 9.155 The career transition literature reveals that emotional, social, financial and occupational factors interact as an individual’s response to a career transition emerges (ibid. p.13). Each athlete in transition deals with these factors in an individual manner, with the reasons for the transition, developmental experiences and coping resources influencing the overall quality of adjustment.
- 9.156 Career transitions in sport have been found to be a function of a variety of involuntary and voluntary reasons. Although it has been suggested that these reasons are influenced by the structure of sport, researchers have demonstrated the common casual factors to be career-threatening injuries, chronological age, de-selection and personal choice (ibid. p.15).
- 9.157 This section looks at how athletes face these career transitions, whether voluntary or involuntary, and the impact career transition has on achieving a balance at critical times. We also examine what programmes are in place to support student-athletes through these difficult periods, specifically with regard to preparing for a post-sporting career.
- 9.158 Elite athletes need to be prepared for these transitions so that it does not impact negatively on their sport.

#### ***Transition during sport***

- 9.159 In terms of transitions during sport, for different athletes these will happen at different times. These can be specific periods where there are increased demands and pressures placed on the athlete, for example, the transition from the junior to senior ranks, and national to international. These transitions will typically require greater commitment to the sport through an increase in training time, and the need to incorporate a new element to training, such as weights. There may also be, if applicable, more time required off school through more overseas travel to competitions, tours and training camps. As a result, therefore, there are increased pressures on the athlete to maintain an adequate balance between sport, education and social development.
- 9.160 A UK swimmer stated that she has “grown up fast” and is “more emotionally controlled” having become an international at 13. On achieving national honours, her training increased from seven 1.5 hour sessions per week to eight to ten 2 hour sessions per week, plus two gym sessions including weight training. In addition, whereas junior international trips would last a week, senior internationals involved a month off school. This illustrates the increased demands that an athlete faces as they progress in their sport.

- 9.161 A UK track and field athlete who earned her first senior international honours at 16 years described how she has had to “mature more quickly because of the older people around you”, and that “college was a different world and not as flexible because there were so many other students at the college, which meant less support. It was a more difficult transition and balance because A-levels are harder and require more time”.
- 9.162 Many of the educational institutions that were interviewed as part of the stage 3 research believe that the fundamental period for sport development is 16-19 years. This is, therefore, a critical period during which athletes face many transitions, and will have to make key decisions regarding their sporting career and education.
- 9.163 Our research revealed that there is an increasing awareness by athletes of the need to have a suitable balance between education and sport as well as an increasing awareness by the sport and the education providers of the need to provide flexible arrangements and support to enable athletes to achieve this balance. The education institutions may also provide post-career support and guidance during this key stage.
- 9.164 The Education Adviser at EIS explains how “making educational choices will be a key thing for athletes”. These educational decisions will be based on issues such as whether to continue beyond compulsory schooling, whether to reduce the number of examinations to concentrate on training, whether to go to university, and if so which course to enrol on and where. Examples of these issues and how the athlete dealt with them are detailed in the paragraph below.
- 9.165 A Performance Lifestyle adviser provided an example of transition between school and university and specific decisions the athlete has to make. He states that it is “important to think long-term as an athlete” and that athletes “have to make tougher decisions than others in their own year because they are thinking around sport without precluding other areas of their life”. In his view, athletes will inevitably be cutting back on their options because of their sport. For example, the High Performance Centre may not be near a university that runs the course that the athlete wants to study or the entry requirements may be too high. As a result the athlete often has to choose whether to prioritise education or sport, and to what degree education should be compromised without restricting future career options.
- 9.166 One UK Premiership Football Academy that was interviewed described how players study only five subjects at GCSE to allow time for more training. With the high drop out rate of young players, particularly in football (only 2% of academy players secure a professional contract according to the PFA), there are reasonable grounds for concern as to whether this would give the player a solid educational platform if they are not part of the 2% who succeed in football. In another sport with many young sportspersons failing to make the grade (tennis), the LTA recommends that players should take at least five subjects at GCSE, preferably six.

9.167 NGBs offer a range of support to athletes, as detailed above. One way in which some NGBs help athletes prepare for transition between junior and senior competition is through investing in the World University Games. NGBs see the World University Games as a stepping-stone and development tool to prepare for major competitions and the senior international programme. Only the Commonwealth Games offer such a multi-sport event. At the World University Games there is no additional media pressure for athletes to cope with. This makes it an ideal opportunity to give athletes the opportunity to focus just on their sport and gain experience at the highest level. In the UK, the ASA and UKA strongly support development of athletes through this route.

### ***Transition from sport***

9.168 All elite athletes need to be prepared for their transition out of sport. A very small percentage of athletes make it through to the peak of their sport and earn enough to make a living out of sport. Recent research highlighted unwillingness among younger athletes, and those who perceive themselves to have a significant amount of time before they retire, to develop concrete plans about their future career prior to retirement (North & Lavallee, 2004). However, the importance of forward planning is being increasingly acknowledged.

9.169 An Athlete Services Manager at UK Sport describes how it is important for younger athletes to look ahead:

*“it’s important for retirement, but it’s also important for any transition in an athlete’s life like moving from school to college or university, a change in living arrangements or selection or de-selection. All of these things – and many more external factors and transitions – can have an impact on training and performance”.*

9.170 Examples from our qualitative research of athletes experiencing and preparing for transitions in sport are given below.

9.171 A UK hockey player, whose focus was on her sport and ambition to make the GB Olympic team, had left university and was doing a flexible part-time job to fit around her training and match schedule. The team failed to qualify for the Olympic Games and as a result players’ Lottery funding was withdrawn. Whereas previously sport had been the top priority and the part-time job was just a way of accessing additional income to supplement the Lottery funding, now the player had to make a decision as to whether she could still afford to maintain hockey as her priority. The need to earn a steady income has meant that the player now has a full-time job in which she has career aspirations. She now faces different pressures in terms of fitting her training and matches around the job.

9.172 Only 2% of UK academy football players go on to sign a professional contract, so it is important to facilitate transition to the next stage. The Footballers’ Education Society has done much to encourage 16 to 19 year old players to gain qualifications, which will benefit them when their playing days are over. The new MASE qualification is an important initiative in this respect.

9.173 Failure and drop out rates at French football academies are particularly high, as indicated in the case study in Figure 8.5, and are significantly worse than football academies in England and the Netherlands.

- 9.174 The aim of TASS in the UK (see Section 5) is to address the drop out rate of talented athletes. Key transition periods have been identified at 16 and 18 years, when many performance athletes struggle to combine sport and education and as a result leave the sport. TASS is designed to help talented athletes who wish to progress with a formal academic programme but maintain an involvement in performance sport.
- 9.175 Staff at Myerscough College described how academy students gain work experience on the European Tour (see paragraph 9.116) and stressed the importance of having 'something to fall back on'. Our research has emphasised the importance of work experience in helping athletes bridge the gap between education and employment. It is particularly important in the UK where Lottery funding has meant athletes can be full-time and will, therefore, on retirement have no work experience or qualifications. Research by North & Lavalley (2004) found that a lack of work experience may be a particular problem for older athletes because there is evidence that employers often value job-related experience and skills over qualifications.
- 9.176 There are an increasing number of methods being introduced to support élite athletes and provide them with the flexibility they need to achieve a balance and prepare for a career outside of sport. In the UK, the Performance Lifestyle programme aims to assist athletes to manage the many transitions, which occur during their sporting career, for example, entry onto and exit from a performance programme, injury/illness, change in location and change in status. This was discussed in the case study in Figure 9.18 above.

### ***Retirement and career exit***

- 9.177 The key and most difficult transition period, and, therefore, the stage at which support is particularly required, is the transition into retirement. This can be either forced (if through injury or de-selection) or voluntary (planned retirement).
- 9.178 Although it is inevitable in élite sport that every competitor will have to terminate their sporting career, some individuals experience particular adjustment difficulties when faced with retirement. Recent research indicated that in the UK in any one year approximately 5-7% of competitive athletes are thinking about retiring from sport in that year. However, 21% who were planning to retire in the next year or two did not have a plan for what they were going to do after they finished competitive sport (North & Lavalley, 2004).
- 9.179 These statistics give cause for concern as emerging research is demonstrating that the psychological impact of ending a sports career can be significant. At the Mayo Clinic in America, sport scientists found that athletes forced in to early retirement through injury are at increased risk of depression and are more likely to commit suicide (Smith et al 1993). Experts have likened the effects of retirement from sport to the grieving process.
- 9.180 As a result of this research, an increased effort has been made to ease the transition at the élite end of the spectrum, In the UK this has been through the Performance Lifestyle programme, as well as the OPEN programme. As the National Co-ordinator for the Performance Lifestyle programme explains:

*“the reason for Performance Lifestyle is because athletes face transitions”.*

- 9.181 The role of Performance Lifestyle Advisers is described below in Figure 9.23. The National Co-ordinator of the Performance Lifestyle scheme explains:

*“the key to the service is that it helps to remove many of the distractions which could have a negative impact on the athlete”.*

**Figure 9.23 Performance Lifestyle advisers, UK**

The Performance Lifestyle programme is run by EIS. Performance Lifestyle support is provided for a year after athletes leave the programme.

Performance Lifestyle Advisers can assist athletes with post-sport career planning irrespective of whether retirement is imminent or some time in the future. The work involves assisting athletes to make the right educational choices, organising relevant work experience and talking through any prospective concerns. An athlete adviser works through a career planning process with an athlete that will hopefully result in finding a job or career that enables them to lead a fulfilling life after sport.

Individual athletes respond differently to any given situation and so challenges can vary considerably. However, some challenges that occur more regularly can be those of self identify and feeling valued once retired. A Performance Lifestyle adviser explains that:

*“it is the athlete’s ability to learn and develop new skills whilst constantly honing their existing ones that can often be the major factor in securing successful future employment”.*

On helping athletes make plans for retirement, he added:

*“If there is any advice that I would ever give is that it is never too early to prepare. Retirement ...can seem a long way off but ultimately it is inevitable whether through choice after a long and successful career or through injury or de-selection. With the employment market being more competitive than ever, an identified dedication to further learning and relevant work experience over a number of years can often mean the difference between an interview or rejection”.*

*“The key to a successful transition between careers is effective planning; sportsmen and women can’t all rely on the BBC having an extra seat for them in the commentary box”.*

- 9.182 Our research has highlighted the need for support and preparation during competitive sport for retirement. Retirement from elite sport implies a transition during which elite athletes face social, professional and bodily changes and adjustments. A case study is given in Figure 9.24 overleaf of a UK swimmer who has recently retired from competition. She describes the adjustment on retiring and the social and physical changes that she experienced.

**Figure 9.24 The process of retirement – former UK swimmer**

A former UK swimmer described her adjustment after retiring having failed to qualify for the Athens Olympic team at the trials.

*“I had two weeks off after the trials and completely let go with everything. I went out all the time – quite excessively, got everything out of my system and then started work full time. I think because I was so disappointed about not making the Olympics, it was good to have something else to think about... I still miss swimming. I find it weird that I now have to go to the gym to keep fit and my body is not how it used to be. I can't eat what I want anymore which is probably the worse bit...as I knew it was coming, it has not been too bad. You feel as if you're actually quite prepared for it”.*

She goes on to describe changing relationships on retiring and how she misses the close relationship with her coach.

*“that is probably one of the hardest things about stopping swimming. I don't see him [the coach] every day now, which is a bit weird...you don't see the same people day in, day out. That's probably the only thing I miss really”.*

- 9.183 In the UK, further support for élite athletes is provided by UK Sport who offer an education and training award of up to £1,000. This is to encourage athletes to make productive use of their free time and prepare for life after sport. In addition, individual NGBs as well as the OPEN programme have been designed to facilitate the transition to retirement.
- 9.184 Similar support programmes exist elsewhere in Europe. For example, in France, INSEP helps élite athletes to find employment at the termination of their sporting career. INSEP liases between the athlete and prospective employers to help secure a suitable position for the athlete. Élite athletes are offered programmes for their personal development, which include interview techniques and writing CVs.
- 9.185 A similar service is available in Poland, as detailed in the case study in Figure 9.25 overleaf.

**Figure 9.25 The Student Graduate Professional Promotion Bureau at the AWF Warsaw**

The main aim of the Bureau is to support students and graduates in looking for employment, which matches their expectations and be in line with their education. For this purpose the Bureau:

- collects job offers sent by employers and searches out direct contacts with employers
- has a database of students and graduates waiting for employment
- organises active job search workshops
- provides free consulting for students and graduates
- provides an information booklet with data on open jobs and professions, which are available to graduates.

The library contains publications that can be used in application documentation. The Bureau is part funded by a grant from the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy.

9.186 In Poland, a further programme is being developed to help facilitate the transition period to a post-sporting career. A former Polish Olympian has launched an initiative, called Team 7, to assist athletes in securing media contracts. Team 7 comprises 32 athletes from seven Olympic disciplines, with an aim of promoting these athletes and trying to secure contracts for them. To date, success has only been achieved with the national Telecom Company, which has purchased the image rights for three of these Olympians for their phone cards. However, Team 7 hopes for further contracts.

***The transition to life after sport***

9.187 Many athletes have successfully transferred to a fulfilling and rewarding life after sport but preparing for it and adapting to it is perhaps the hardest challenge many will face. There are a number of programmes in place to support athletes through this stage of transition. Increasingly they are drawing upon academic research, which is identifying how athletes cope and the value of long term career planning.

9.188 Key issues emerging from these case studies include:

- elite athletes experience various transitions within employment, education and sport
- transition times are extremely demanding and place enormous pressure upon athletes
- the most demanding transition periods occur at 16-19 years when decisions relating both to education and retirement are likely to be made
- a key element in dealing successfully with these transition periods is for the athlete to be well prepared and well advised.

## **SECTION 10**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Section 10 Conclusions and recommendations

- 10.1 The Draft Constitutional Treaty adopted at the European Council of 17/18 June, 2004, establishes sport as a Community competence for the first time. The new competence provides considerable opportunities to influence the adoption of best practice in sport across all the nations of Europe. As Commissioner Reding announced:

*“sport can help to improve education and pave the way for integration”.*

- 10.2 The new competence focuses on sport’s “social and educational function”. In particular, the Treaty states that Union action shall be aimed at “developing the European dimension in sport” and “encouraging the development of distance education” (Article III –182). Several of this study’s recommendations fall within these new areas of competence. In addition, 2004 is the European Year of Education through Sport and the initiative forms an important context for this study.

- 10.3 The Council of Europe has already taken a leading role in sports policy. The European Sports Charter (1992, revised 2001) includes in its aims:

*“to ensure 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/or publicly recognised levels of excellence”* (Article 1).

- 10.4 Article 8 of the European Sports Charter covers methods of supporting top level and professional sport. In the context of this study, two elements of such support are worth noting. They are specifically identified as, “balanced education while in training institutes” and “a smooth integration into society through development of career prospects during and after sporting excellence”.

- 10.5 The study has revealed a range of Member State responses to sport in education, from direct state regulation and control, through semi-regulation and arms-length influence, to minimal intervention by the state.

#### ***Sport and youth***

- 10.6 The social significance of sport for young people has been recognised in many official documents. In the Nice Declaration of December 2000, Member States reaffirmed their interest in sporting practices and activities. The joint declaration by the Council and Member States’ representatives of 5 May 2003 confirmed that the value of sport cuts across different fields of EU policy, and that it contributes socially, culturally, and, in terms of public health, to the well-being of European youth.
- 10.7 Sport can be used as an important instrument to teach fair play, teamwork and a sense of solidarity, and can also contribute to overcoming discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnicity or social background. Sport’s appeal to a collective identity can provide role models for young people and children.
- 10.8 There is also some evidence that sport can contribute to improvements in anti-social behaviour (Policy Action Team 10, 1999). In awarding financial support for new sports facilities in primary and secondary school in England, the New Opportunities Fund included a criterion related to the role of sport in reducing anti-social behaviour (New Opportunities Fund Stage 2 awards 2003/04).

### ***Sport in education***

- 10.9 All Member States have statutory education programmes for schools that children and young people must follow within prescribed compulsory school age ranges. These typically identify the nature and content of formal education at certain ages and levels, and often include elements of broad life-skills education. Individuals will usually make choices relating to qualification or non-qualification based courses, and vocational training may be seen as more appropriate for some people.
- 10.10 We have acknowledged in the study that there is a need to distinguish between physical education (PE) and sport. PE offers all young people the opportunity to participate in physical activity and can be a useful introduction to participation in sport. In considering the education of young elite sportspersons, physical education is less important than other aspects of education, such as curriculum flexibility. Indeed many young sportspersons, once they reach elite level, do not participate in school-based PE as it is superfluous to their training requirements. We have addressed PE in this study, however, because Member States' commitment to PE is an indicator of the extent to which sport and physical competencies are valued in a society.
- 10.11 Physical education is a compulsory element of the curriculum in all Member States although the amount of time prescribed for this varies, from a 'recommendation' (rather than a requirement) of two hours per week in the UK, to an actual average of over four hours per week in Hungary. Those individuals who have displayed a talent for sport are still required by law in all Member States to complete their education according to the requirements of the national curriculum. This may be carried out through private education or within the state system, but with flexible arrangements of various kinds and supplementary schooling to compensate for time lost to training and competition, as in France and Greece.
- 10.12 This study has sought to review the existing education and sporting structures for elite athletes, including commercial structures. It has revealed a wide variety of responses and many different approaches throughout Europe. Evaluation of the success and/or quality of outcomes, however, is a relatively underdeveloped area.

### ***Supporting elite sportspersons beyond their sporting career***

- 10.13 All Member States acknowledge the contribution to national pride that sports success can bring and they encourage and support their elite athletes in achieving excellence. Alongside this, governments are increasingly recognising the importance of ensuring that sportspersons receive a balanced and full education, which will enable them to re-integrate into society when their sporting career is over.
- 10.14 The research has underlined the importance of identifying career transition points, for example from junior to senior athlete, and exit points. Career exit occurs when a sporting career ends voluntarily or involuntarily, for example, through injury or de-selection.
- 10.15 The challenges faced by sportspersons whose sporting careers have come to an end and who are therefore returning to education and/or employment, have now been acknowledged as requiring specialist intervention and support. The recent European Forum on Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes held in London was an indication that sports organisations in European countries recognise the importance of providing such support and are eager to share experiences.

## **SECTION 10 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

- 10.16 Around 70% of Member States already have or are currently developing programmes of athlete lifestyle support.
- 10.17 The psychological impact of ending a sports career can be significant. If retirement is involuntary, there may be anger and resentment to deal with. Even when retirement is voluntary, many athletes find the process stressful and feel anxious about their future.

### ***Compulsory educational programmes for young sportspersons***

- 10.18 The research has revealed interesting distinctions between Member States in the way they approach the education of their young sportspersons. Most Member States provide sports development opportunities combined with education in specialist sports schools and some also make concessions to the needs of sportspersons within the curriculum by flexible arrangements of various kinds.
- 10.19 Even those Member States that have no special measures in place, other than PE as part of the curriculum, mostly seek to offer additional support to athletes in the form of after-school sports classes and permissions for absence. Although some, such as Malta, report no such arrangements.
- 10.20 The benefits of setting up sport schools, or specialist schools, rather than relying on sport classes included in normal schools to train young sportspersons need further evaluation. However, there were examples of the success of such specialist schools reported in the research and at the conference, such as the Swedish snowboarding academy. The general view at the conference was that this decision depends not only on the philosophy of the state system but also on very practical aspects like the critical mass of athletes needed to manage specialist provision successfully.
- 10.21 Based on evidence of the value of sport in raising educational achievement levels (Technology Colleges Trust, Report into Specialist Schools, 2004; research into specialist sports colleges in the UK, unpublished), and in promoting sound social values and supporting programmes of life skills, there would seem to be a strong case for encouraging the expansion of sport as part of national curricula.
- 10.22 The need to encourage young sportspersons to achieve a proper balance between education and sport development was one of the main issues raised in the conference. Our research also revealed evidence of programmes, such as JAE in the UK, developed to address this issue. In a number of Member States, personal learning mentors are provided to talented performers. The key actors involved in this process, including teachers, trainers, coaches and parents, must bear responsibility for promoting a healthy balanced lifestyle, especially for very young athletes for whom they have a duty of care. This relates to discussion of child protection issues below.
- 10.23 There is considerable difficulty, however, in both defining and implementing this 'proper balance'. Conference delegates noted that quality control and effective monitoring procedures in respect of education delivery at specialist sports schools was a potential area for EC policy development. A process for defining what is an appropriate balance between education and sport development at certain ages and a system of implementation with defined standards and monitoring procedures was seen as highly desirable.

### ***Post-compulsory education for young sportspersons***

- 10.24 Our research identified, and discussion at the conference confirmed, that flexible study arrangements were the most useful supportive structure for young sportspersons continuing their education at FE and HE level. There was evidence that many further education colleges in Europe were responding to young sportspersons' requirements. E-learning has emerged as an important component of flexible support systems for student-athletes. However, there may be a role for the Commission in attempting to shape this area of policy by promoting good practice on flexible arrangements for student-athletes in FE and HE. This would achieve the objective of ensuring that variations in systems of athlete support between Member States were highlighted.
- 10.25 Personal support for student-athletes, in the form of mentors, tutors and personal learning support systems, has been identified by many Member States as a successful tool for encouraging athletes to maintain their educational programmes. Some form of personal support is offered in around one-third of Member States. Again, this could be an area that the Commission may wish to promote. Evaluation data are not widely available, although some is due to be published by UK Sport in the near future.
- 10.26 Some Member States commented that incentives could be used to encourage young sportspersons to complete their education. Grants and scholarships could be conditionally available if certain educational targets were met. Some colleges already use incentives of this kind (Loughborough College, UK).
- 10.27 The experience of Johan Cruyff College and University as educational institutions provided exclusively for young sportspersons offers an interesting model. There may well be a case for encouraging such dedicated provision, although the difficulties of maintaining educational standards across even a small range of subject areas in such specialist provision should be recognised.
- 10.28 Another interesting example of good practice is a web-based directory to be launched by the EIS in September 2004. It will offer information on academic and vocational courses including education resources and flexibility arrangements in addition to facilities, coaches and high performance information for individual sports. The directory has been designed as a resource tool for élite athletes and the aim is to facilitate course choice and forward planning. Future proposals include incorporating information on schools and FE colleges within the directory.
- 10.29 In respect of those sportspersons attending commercial sports academies, in some countries, for example France and the UK, young players are protected by formal agreements covering their training and educational requirements. However, the organisational culture and, in particular, the attitude of the manager and coaching staff is seen as of critical importance.
- 10.30 It is hard to envisage policy guidelines having much influence on managers but coaching staff could be influenced by their training programmes including modules on the need for young sportspersons to achieve an appropriate balance between education and sports training if they are to re-integrate successfully into society and the wider labour market. NGBs also have an important role to play in promoting best practice.

- 10.31 The role of sports agents in respect of the messages given to young sportspersons about a balanced lifestyle and continuing education is important and one which is difficult to research. There is a need for more information about the roles played by agents and the degree to which they take responsibility for ensuring their young clients are aiming at a balanced lifestyle and prioritising educational goals as well as sporting achievement.
- 10.32 Comment was also made at the conference that the experience of specialist education in other areas such as music should be drawn upon. Gifted students at music academies and colleges face the same challenge of balancing their training with general education. This is another area of further research.

### ***Child protection issues***

- 10.33 The protection of minors is seen as a European (EC) priority and the education of young sportspersons is an appropriate area for the application of protection measures. Various protection measures are included within EC Directives.
- 10.34 For example, Directive 94/33/EC June 1994 on the protection of young people at work states in Section 1, Article 1, that 'They [the Member States] shall ensure that young people are protected against economic exploitation and against any work likely to harm their safety, health or physical, mental, moral or social development or to jeopardize their education'.
- 10.35 Article 5 of this Directive on 'cultural or similar activities' including sports states that 'Member States shall...lay down working conditions for children...on the condition that the activities...are not such as to be harmful to their attendance at school, their participation in vocational guidance or training programmes by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received'.
- 10.36 The proposed Young Workers Directive, which proposes regulations amending the EU's Working Time Regulations 1998, is also relevant to this issue.
- 10.37 The need to ensure these protection measures are being applied in respect of sport was highlighted in May 2002, when a leading child protection organisation in the UK, the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), led a delegation to Brussels to highlight the issue of child protection in sport and to call for EU-wide action. Issues raised included the need for the EC to take a leading role in ensuring the protection of children in sport.
- 10.38 The EC could have a positive role in this area by encouraging European sports organisations involved in coach education and training to introduce child protection training and by encouraging European sports federations to develop a specific qualification in safe coaching of children.

### ***Sports ethics and athletes' rights***

- 10.39 It can be argued that achieving the right balance of educational and sporting activity in educational programmes, whether managed by educational institutions or sporting organisations, needs to be determined by respecting an appropriate code of sports ethics. Responsible persons, including teachers, coaches and those within sports and sports-related organisations, should follow informed guidelines to ensure their standards are acceptable and their working practice not exploitative of children and young people in their care.

- 10.40 *Fair Play – the Winning Way*, the Council of Europe’s Code of Sports Ethics, was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 September 1992. It is an appendix to the European Sports Charter. The Code details responsibilities for all those directly and indirectly influencing and promoting sports experiences for children and young people including governments, sports and sport-related organisation and individuals including parents, teachers, coaches, referees and officials. It states that the code will only be effective if all individuals are prepared to take on their responsibilities. Whilst the Code of Sports Ethics is considered to be an important basis for the development of protection measures, there is concern that its take-up has been limited and there has been a lack of development of the Code since its production.
- 10.41 With such variation between Member States in their support for young sportspersons, there may be value in exploring the possibility of developing a code of conduct for sports training institutes and educational establishments dealing with young sportspersons which would codify best practice in respect of the delivery of training and the balance to be achieved between education and sport. The code would then need to be adopted by European sports federations and recommended to Member States for implementation by relevant governmental organisations.
- 10.42 A more rigorous approach would be to explore the potential for setting down a basis for defining the legal rights of élite athletes to ensure their access to education and flexibility in delivery are protected. Some Member States, such as Belgium and Spain, already have such relevant legislation.

### ***Career development and lifestyle management***

- 10.43 The research has identified the significance of those people and organisations in the athlete’s entourage who exert an important influence upon young sportspersons (family, coach, school, club, etc) and who can influence, positively and negatively, the achievement of an appropriate balance between education and training at various stages of a sportsperson’s career. Sportspersons often need guidance and support in dealing with role conflicts and competing expectations.
- 10.44 The research has also underlined the importance of the incorporation of lifestyle management in the coaching or education programmes delivered to élite athletes, particularly at periods of career transition. It is seen as valuable that coach education incorporates aspects of lifestyle management so that coaches are encouraged to facilitate holistic development (including vocational and educational preparation) of the athlete rather than simply focusing on athletic prowess.
- 10.45 Programmes of performance lifestyle support also appear to have been very helpful in supporting élite athletes achieve a balanced and successful lifestyle, although detailed evaluative research has yet to be reported. The research has highlighted variations in funding for programmes of athlete vocational and career development support, with some countries favouring public sector and non-profit agency support and others private sector solutions. Around 50% of Member States provide some kind of structured support for élite athletes to help them find employment after their sporting careers have ended, although some programmes are more extensive than others.
- 10.46 In respect of lifestyle management for élite athletes, the private sector plays a key role in some countries. There are several private companies based in individual Member States that provide this support, often employing former athletes.

- 10.47 On an international basis, Adecco, an international HR company, runs an *Athletes Programme* that aims to support professional athletes in their quest to find employment once they reach the end of their sporting careers. So far, more than 700 athletes have benefited from this programme in Spain, Italy, Norway, US, Sweden and Denmark with Adecco claiming over a 95% success rate. Adecco funds this programme, which is at no cost to athletes, through its other HR consultancy work. Other Member States finance and provide lifestyle management support programmes through public organisations.
- 10.48 The experience of SkillsActive, the newly licensed Sector Skills Council for active leisure and learning in the UK, was discussed at the conference and it was felt that this might point the way forward in the development of relevant qualification-based sport development training. SkillsActive has recently developed a new qualification, an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship Framework for Sporting Excellence.

### ***Sports employment issues***

- 10.49 The conference identified an increase in professional mobility in employment in sport in Europe, which is creating greater competition. As competition for places intensifies with more players from new EU states entering professional sport employment, there are likely to be shifting attitudes to education and qualifications. If an athlete's sporting performance is of a sufficient standard, the more marketable a player, the more likely he/she will be to find employment. With increasing emphasis on media performance and the opportunity to earn large amounts from sponsorship, players will benefit from the kind of communication skills and leadership and teamwork qualities that can be nurtured within appropriate education and performance lifestyle programmes.
- 10.50 The furtherance of such collaborative networks as the European Forum for Lifestyle Management is to be encouraged in this respect. In this way, good practice can be shared and international benchmarks established.

### ***Need for legislation, guidance, specialist training and relevant support structures***

- 10.51 One of the features evident in discussions with representatives from the 25 Member State research teams and from the education sector is that flexibility of provision and delivery of materials to athletes, whether based in school or in higher education institutions through, for example, e-learning, distance learning or distributed learning, is both highly desirable but also expensive in terms of research and development costs. Such costs may be particularly inhibiting for small states.
- 10.52 Although development of e-learning opportunities in a wide range of subject areas may be problematic, many elite athletes study in the area of sports science and management. A recommendation that has been generated by this study is the pooling of resources to provide e-learning systems for delivery of a:
- European Baccalauréate programme with a sports science and management base
  - degree programme in sports science and management.

- 10.53 Such a programme would have to be adapted to local circumstances, and local on-line tutorial support and evaluation would have to be provided. However, the development of such programmes would allow student-athletes to spread their work over a longer period to accommodate other pressures, to undertake work in periods which fitted with the demands of competition and training, and to have access to tutorial support which would be provided by tutors with an understanding and empathy for the demands which the athlete is experiencing.
- 10.54 Such an initiative would require co-ordination at a cross-national level involving subject expertise, knowledge of the various sporting fields and their requirements, expertise in the pedagogical and technological elements of e-learning provision and maintenance.
- 10.55 The complexity of the task should not be underestimated but the existence of initiatives such as the Bologna Agreement on Higher Education equivalence and of existing International Baccalauréate programmes means that the structural frameworks for the development of such athlete-centred e-learning programmes will be much more readily available.
- 10.56 More widely, there is a strong case for the value of monitoring the content and balance of athlete education across Europe, in order to identify best practice and ensure the protection of young athletes' rights. Opportunities exist to facilitate best practice in the development of quality assurance in educational terms of provision by professional sporting bodies. UEFA and the International Rugby Board, for example, could prove useful interlocutors or partners at the European level in the establishment of good practice in professional academies, establishing standards in the development of learning contracts for élite athletes, providing incentives for learning (such as funding on the basis of athletes' completion of study goals), establishing a licensing system for academies, and in defining a remit for Education and Welfare Officers in sporting contexts.

### ***Recommendations***

- 10.57 The following recommendations are based on the research and discussion during the conference. There is a shortage of evaluative data, but the study has drawn extensively on current policy and practice across Europe. Our research has produced a comprehensive review of different approaches across the Member States of Europe with evaluative material wherever possible. In addition to our research, the study conference allowed us to draw together a range of international experts in the field and we have also had the benefit of an expert advisers' group who have contributed to the development of the study and its outcomes.
- 10.58 We recognise that a role of the Sport Unit is to encourage Member States to develop national policies that reflect best practice, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. In this context, we recommend that the Sport Unit may wish to highlight, for the benefit of Member States, a number of areas where discrepancies exist between them.
- 10.59 These are apparent in three areas:
- variable provision in respect of athletes' ability to benefit from flexibility in educational structures and delivery mechanisms
  - the variation in provision of lifestyle management support programmes for élite athletes

## **SECTION 10 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

- the need for sports organisations involved in coach education to introduce child protection training as part of coach accreditation courses.
- 10.60 We note the successful operation of the European Observatory of Sports Employment and we recommend that other aspects of sport would benefit from Europe-wide monitoring. In this context, we recommend that the Commission:
- establishes a European Observatory to monitor the content and balance of athlete education across Europe, reporting on best practice.
- 10.61 Developing this theme of identifying best practice, we further recommend that the Commission:
- develops a code of conduct which identifies athlete's rights in respect of flexibility in education systems and other relevant areas of support.
- 10.62 Additional recommendations are that the Commission:
- supports the development of e-learning systems for delivery of a European Baccalauréate programme with a sports science and management base and a degree programme in sports science and management
  - supports the development of structured programmes and qualification-based courses for élite athletes that have Europe-wide accreditation and recognition
  - encourages European sports federations to develop a specific qualification in safe coaching of children
  - supports the embryonic network of the European Forum for Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes.
- 10.63 In respect of further research and academic collaboration, we recommend that consideration be given to commissioning a number of further studies:
- the development of a code of practice on flexibility in educational arrangements for student-athletes, to be recommended to Member States for adoption by government, National Governing Bodies and sports federations
  - a study on best practice in lifestyle management support for élite athletes, reinforcing the developing network of the European Forum for Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes
  - a study on educational rights for élite young sportspersons, to explore how a legally enforceable right to education might be implemented in the case of élite athletes
  - a longitudinal study of the process of career selection by former élite athletes within a range of different sports with different elements of maturity (for example gymnastics and tennis) considering the same sports across different countries to provide a range of exemplars.

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DG EDUCATION & CULTURE**

**EDUCATION OF YOUNG  
SPORTSPERSONS (LOT 1)  
FINAL REPORT - APPENDICES**



**A**

**Report**

**by**

**PMP in partnership with the  
Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy  
Loughborough University**

**August 2004**

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Bibliography

Appendix B - Stage 1 research templates

Appendix C - Summary of situation in individual countries

Appendix D - Conference Report

**APPENDIX A**  
**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## References

- Bale, J. (1991). *The Brawn Drain*: Chicago: University of Illinois Press
- Bourke, A. (2000). The Attractions and Distractions of playing professional football in England - the Irish Perspective.
- Bourke, A. (2002). The Road to Fame and Fortune: Insights on the career paths of young Irish Professional footballers in England. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 4(5), 375 - 390.
- Bourke, A. (2003). The Dream of being a Professional Football Player. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 27(4), 399 – 499
- Conzelmann, N. (2003). Professional Careers of the German Olympic Athletes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38/3(2003)(3), 259-280.
- Council, I. S. Retrieved 2004, from [www.irishsportsCouncil.ie](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie)
- Council for Europe (1992, revised 2003), *European Sports Charter*, Council of Europe.
- Crawford, N. (2002). The Internationalisation of Higher Education due to Sporting Reasons.
- Cross J. (2004) Unpublished PhD thesis, Loughborough University.
- Danish Ministry of Education (2004). *Danish Folk High Schools*, 2004, from <http://hojskolerne.dk/>
- Danish Ministry of Education (2004). *The Danish Educational System*. Retrieved 15th May, 2004, from [www.uvm.dk](http://www.uvm.dk)
- Department for Education and Skills (2001). *Schools achieving success*. London: DfES
- Department for Education and Skills (2004). *The impact of school sport partnerships*. London: DfES.
- Department for Education and Skills (2004), *Five-Year Strategy for Children and Learners*. London.
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2000). *A sporting future for all - the role of further and higher education in delivering the government's plan for sport*. London, DCMS.
- De Knop P., W. P., Van Hoecke J., De Martelaer K. & Bollaert L. (1999). 'A European Approach to the Management of the Combination of Academics and Elite-Level Sport'. In B. S. (Ed.), *School Sport and Competition Perspectives* (Vol. Vol. 1: 49-62): Meyer & Meyer Sport
- European Commission (1994) 94/33/EC 'The Young Workers Directive'
- The Education Act (Malta) - National Minimum Curriculum, Chpt. 327 (1999)

- England, U. S. a. S. (2000). *A survey of Athletes on the World Class Performance Programme*.
- Etzel, E.F., Ferrante, A.P. and Pinkney, J. (1996). *Counselling college student-athletes: issues and intentions* (2nd edition). Fitness Information Technology, Morgantown, W. Va.
- European Parliament Directorate-General for Research. (2003). *Combining sports and education: Support for athletes in the EU Member States* (No. EDUC 114EN).
- Földesi, S. G. (2000.). *Retirement of Top Athletes in a Changing Society. Kalokagathia. 75th Special Anniversary Issue*, p.12-23.
- Földesi, S. G. (2004). *Social Status and Mobility of Hungarian Elite Athletes*. Unpublished manuscript, Hungary.
- Football Association (1997). *Football Education for Young Players, 'A Charter For Quality' Recommendation*.
- Gardiner S., F. A., O'Leary J., James M., Welch R. (1998). *Sports Law*. London: Cavendish Publishing Ltd
- Hurst, B. (2002). *'How the Youngsters are shaping up' - An Investigation into the Talent Identification and Development processes used at one of England's elite rugby academies: The Leicester Tigers*. Unpublished Bachelor of Science, Loughborough University.
- Idrætsefterskole, O. (2004). Retrieved 2004, from [www.oure.dk](http://www.oure.dk)
- Inspectorate, A. L. (2002). *Footballers Further Education and Vocational Training Society - Inspection Report*.
- Ireland, F.A. (2004). *Football for the Future: The FAI Technical Development Plan (Draft)*. Dublin.
- Jesson, D. at al (2004) *Educational outcomes and value added by specialist schools*. Specialist Sports Trust.
- Lavallee, D & Wylleman, P. (2000). *Career Transitions in Sport: International Perspectives*. Fitness Information Technology Inc.
- Lämsä, J. (2004). *Young Athletes Dropout. Report of the 17th Session of the Finnish Olympic Academy*.
- Lehmann, L. (2003). *Sportiskolai rendszer tervezete (Plan to renew the network of 'sport schools')*.
- Lukio, K. (2001). from <http://www.edu.ouka.fi/koulut/kastelli/lukio/>
- Ministry of Education and Culture Dept. of Primary Education. (1996). *Analytical Programmes of Primary Education*. Nicosia, Cyprus
- North, J. & Lavallee, D (2004). *An investigation of potential users of career transition services in the United Kingdom. Psychology of Sport and Exercise* (5), 77-84.

- The Oulu Region Academy of Sport*. 2004, from <http://www.osua.net/english/english.htm>
- Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *A Report into the Social Exclusion Unit*, DCMS
- Rugby Football Union (2004). *England Rugby Academies Briefing Paper*.
- Rukan alppikoulu, J.-P. K. (2003). *Rukan alppikoulu*, 2004, from <http://edu.kuusamo.fi/alppikoulu>
- Sekretariat, E. (1992, 2000). *"Efter-skoler" ( schools after the basic part of primary education)*, 2004, from [www.efterskole.dk](http://www.efterskole.dk)
- Slepicka, P. (1996). *Social and professional adaptation of elite sportspersons - the Olympics*. Prague, Czech Rep
- Smith AM, Stuart MJ, Wiese-Bjornstal DM, Crowson CS. 1993. Competitive Athletes: pre-injury and post-injury, mood states and self-esteem. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 68, p. 939-946.
- Socrates, E. a. C. (Oct 2001). *Summary sheets on Education Systems in Europe*, 2004, from <http://www.eurydice.org/>
- Sporting Clube de Portugal. (2001). *Academia Sporting*, from [http://www.sporting.pt/Info/Academia/Ingles/Academia\\_ING](http://www.sporting.pt/Info/Academia/Ingles/Academia_ING).
- Tapani, I. (2002). *Current Affairs in the Finnish Olympic Committee, Report of the 15th Session of the Finnish Olympic Academy*. Helsinki.
- UK Sport Strategic Planning Unit. (2000). *WCPP Leavers - A survey of hte experiences and opinions of athletes who have left the World Class Performance Programme*. London.
- UK Sport Strategy Ethics and Research Unit. (2001). *Athletes' Lifestyle and ACE UK. A survey of athletes' experiences of sport, education and work, and the role of the ACE UK programme*. London.
- Young, R. D. (2001). *Making the Grade: An Evaluation of English Football Academies*. Unpublished M.Sc, Loughborough University.
- Youth Sport Trust (2004). *Sports College Summary Data – February 2004 Report* (Unpublished research)

**APPENDIX B**

**STAGE 1 RESEARCH TEMPLATES**



## LOT 1 – EDUCATION OF YOUNG SPORTSPERSONS: PROJECT TASKS

This Lot examines how young sportsmen and women are trained in Europe and the methods employed to reintegrate them into the educational system and/or occupational life once their sporting career has come to an end. The project focuses on how participation in elite sports affects young people's life chances – either positively or negatively.

The focus will be on elite or near elite young sportspersons where by 'elite' one understands those representing their nation in a given sport. 'Young sports persons' refers to those in both compulsory and post-compulsory schooling, ranging from primary schools to Universities.

### Principal goals of the study

1. Review the circumstances of young sportspersons in relation to education in the broad sense, in particular the impact of their sports career on opportunities for personal development and participation in socio-educational life.
2. Examine how the educational experience of young sportspersons relates to their opportunities for personal development in occupational life.

### Methodology: three stages of work

#### Stage 1

The pan-European partnership group of 25 Member and Acceding States will:

- 1) Review the existing education/sporting structures, including commercial structures, and examine whether they are currently providing the framework for young sportspersons to develop their non-sporting skills.
- 2) Locate and compare statistics on young sportspersons, their careers and their school syllabus, including:
  - a) age at which their sporting career was started and terminated
  - b) age at which schooling was interrupted
  - c) age at which schooling was resumed.
- 3) Examine how the specialised education of young sportspersons potentially compromises their holistic development.
- 4) Examine how the sporting activities of these young people is limiting or expanding their opportunities for education.
- 5) Identify the type of vocational training, advice and support these young sportspersons are receiving and assess whether it is likely to be of value for their personal development and also in their social and occupational life.
- 6) Identify the type of organisations that are responsible for supporting young sportspersons in securing employment or returning to education/training after their sporting career is over.



## Stage 1

**The first stage (up to 3 days work) will involve the collection of general information and qualitative commentary on the following topics:**

### **1. Existing education/sporting structures in your country**

- 1.1 Provide details of compulsory education and physical education, including information on:
- ages during which education is compulsory
  - statutory programmes of core subjects, compulsory syllabus or national curriculum
  - whether physical education is a statutory requirement and regulations about how many hours are to be allocated to physical education.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

### **2. The relationship between formal education and the development of young sporting talent during compulsory schooling**

- 2.1 Are there opportunities for gifted young sportspersons to 'opt out' of statutory educational programmes?
- What are the costs and benefits of doing so?
  - What is the content of this alternative educational programme?

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 2.2 Give details of other alternative educational arrangements which exist for gifted young athletes such as bursaries for private education.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*



- 2.3 Provide details of organisations that provide specialist education for young sportsmen and sportswomen, including programmes additional to mainstream educational programmes and programmes which are substitutes for school/college attendance – for example soccer academies.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 2.4 What relationships exist between these organisations and providers of statutory educational programmes?

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 2.5 Identify any sporting and/or educational organisations which monitor the content and balance of the general education of young sportspersons and explain the ways in which this is achieved.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 2.6 What standards or criteria are used for deciding and/or evaluating the content and balance of young sportspersons' educational programmes?

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*



- 2.7 What protection measures exist to ensure that minors involved in sports training are not exploited and have sufficient time available for their general education? (Please note that the age of minority in your country might vary from the norm but for example in the UK, 16 years is taken as the age of legal responsibility).

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 2.7 Give details of any regulations and controls that apply to such programmes and indicate which organisation(s) is responsible for implementing these controls.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 2.8 Provide any statistical data available regarding young sportspersons, in particular details of the interruption and resumption of education:
- a) age at which sporting careers were started and terminated, referring to the particular sports followed
  - b) age when schooling was interrupted and/or resumed
  - c) age when gifted young sportspersons moved to alternative educational provision

What are the implications of interrupting and resuming schooling years?

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

### **3. The provision of specialist educational/training programmes and the competencies developed by these programmes**

- 3.1 Describe (in approximately 1,000 words) the content of specialist educational and coaching programmes for young sportspersons and the skills and competencies they aim to develop.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*



3.2 Describe (in around 500 words) the emphasis placed on personal development and life and social skills in specialist educational/training programmes for young sportspersons such as interpersonal skills, time management and leadership roles.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

#### **4. The impact of a young person's sporting career on their opportunities for education**

4.1 Describe (in around 500 words) in what ways the sporting career of young sportspersons impacts positively or negatively upon their opportunities for education in your country. (A positive example would be earning 'bonus points' to for access to specialised courses at University as in the case of Germany, while a negative example would be the restricted academic opportunities for young sportspersons).

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

#### **5. Post-compulsory school education**

5.1 With respect to post-school education, describe (in around 500 words) what controls exist to ensure a balance between sport-related activities and other elements of educational programmes.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*



- 5.2 Describe (in around 500 words) any vocational training and/or career guidance young sportspersons receive.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 5.3 Describe in what ways this vocational training and/or career guidance would be of value for the personal development of young sportspersons in both their social and occupational life.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

## **6. Support offered to young sportspersons entering the mainstream labour market or returning to education/training**

- 6.1 Give details of organisations that are responsible for supporting sportsmen and sportswomen in securing employment or returning to education/training after their sporting careers are over.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*

- 6.2 Give details of the kind of programmes or support that they provide.

*Please type your data and explanation in this expandable box. If you wish to provide data or a diagram that will not fit this box format, please refer to it within the box and provide as an appendix at the end of the document.*



## **Stage 2 –**

For those Member and Acceding States where support for young sportspersons has been identified, a more detailed account of such services, including their aims and any evaluation of their effectiveness will be developed. This research will seek to develop in further detail an analysis of the impact sporting careers have on sportspersons' education and subsequently the effects of their education on their post-athletic careers.

### **This stage will focus specifically on the following 4 major areas:**

1. Specialist provision for elite young sportspersons in the educational system at both compulsory and post-compulsory stages.
2. Specialist provision in relation to preparation for these young sportspersons on entering the mainstream labour market or returning to education and training.
3. Detailed evaluation of post-career training and issues involved.
4. Success rates for entry by former sportspersons into the mainstream labour market or re-entry into education.

## **Stage 3**

Detailed comparative studies in the four states of France, Germany, Poland and the UK will be carried out over a range of sports and athletes in order to highlight the issues currently encountered by young sportspersons in pursuing both their sporting career and their education. Qualitative case studies will be employed to identify the sources of influence that impact directly on the education that these young sportspersons receive and highlight success factors through examples of good practice.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SUMMARY OF SITUATION IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES**

## Summary of responses by country

### ***Introduction***

In order to standardise responses for 25 countries a standard template was issued (see Appendix B) which included some key questions to facilitate the gathering of information. This appendix summarises the Stage 1 and 2 findings.

The countries included in the summary are as follows: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

We are very grateful to our research partners for their support in this research. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and quality of the data.

We have also used the following source:

European Parliament Directorate-General for Research (2003) *Combining sports and education: Support for athletes in the EU Member States* in Education and Culture Series, edited by DG IV Publications.

## AUSTRIA

### 1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career

Schooling in Austria is compulsory for children aged six to fifteen. Physical Education (PE) is a core subject within the compulsory school system. The education system is directly controlled by the federal government.

### 2) Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions

In Austria there are two options for combining secondary school education with sports:

- secondary schools which have a general focus on sport. Some of these offer specialised classes in certain sports (eg football) in cooperation with sports federations
- the second option is secondary schools for young athletes who specialise in different sports. Students can train twice a day with personal coaches and they take five years to complete secondary school instead of the usual four. The students have free time for training and competition and receive special support to help them to catch up with their schoolwork. Examples of these schools are the *Fußballhauptschule* and *Schi-Gymnasium*; *Schi-Handelsschule* which focuses on winter sports.

The specialist schools for elite athletes are different to the normal compulsory schools as they prolong the schooling by one year to take into account the education time missed due to competitions/training. The specialist sports schools are adapted to their sport focus by having additional teaching staff and in some cases, adapted curriculum to accommodate the pressure of training and competing. They also compliment the educational programme by providing special athletic training programmes for the student-athletes. The schools have links with the national governing bodies and sports clubs and associations.

**Leistungszentren**- the schools for elite athletes were founded in 1985 as pilot schools. These schools exist in the (vocational) intermediate and academic secondary level (*Handelsschule*, *Oberstufenrealgymnasium*). This type of school is characterised by the prolonged school duration by one school year, and by a decreased curriculum content and more flexibility towards attendance and exams.

The collaboration between the school and the special training centre - *Sportausbildungszentrum* is another of its characteristics. There is, though, a difference between management and practical application of the programmes in the special training centres at the various *Leistungszentren*. The (former) Federal special training centre *Bundes – Sportleistungszentrum* is the basis for the educational models which are supported by the regional sports organisations, funding, associations etc. The finances of the educational and the sports training portions are separate. The school administration covers the costs of the school's educational programme.

All *Leistungszentren* (with the exception of Vienna 16) are called *Talentschmieden* talent sources), which means that they discover and care for talented athletes.

The *Leistungszentren* are educational institutions which organise high quality training for élite sports athletes, as well as the discovery and preparation of talented athletes. Some of the important objectives are the talent search and talent funding, as well as the continuing education for teachers who work in this field.

The government and federal provinces fund the schools but the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and sports associations do not provide any financial support. The *Leistungszentren* offer 41 sports (in both the academic and vocational intermediate schools) across the board. The largest amount of sports offered in one school is at the Klagenfurt where 20 sports are offered. In 2002/03 a total of 1,203 students participated in the *Leistungszentren*. 887 (69%) of these were at the academic schools, of which 64% were male and 26% female. 316 students attended the vocational schools, of which 89% were male and only 11% female.

There are a significant range of services offered to the athletes at the *Leistungszentren* ranging from planning of training and nutritional/dietary counselling through to psychological support and career planning. The special programmes for athletes to opt out of statutory educational programmes give students the possibility to combine their sport career with their education and their occupational preparation.

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

The Austrian university system does not provide quotas for the admission of athletes or propose any official provisions for the flexibility of athletes studying at university. The main reason for this being that there is open access to third level education in Austria, university professors are prepared to discuss special arrangements with individual athletes.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no information available for this section.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring from professional sport**

A new programme from the Chancellery of Sport in cooperation with the *Sporthilfe- Organisation*, the Federal Sport Organisation, the Chamber of Commerce and a commercial partner *Heller Consult* has been established. The programme is called the After Sport – Programme, and it is a post-career training programme which helps athletes to become integrated in the occupational job field after their career. The organisation is also providing help and support for athletes during their athletic career. The only limitation is that the programme is only for athletes of the national team (A,B,C-Kader) and for athletes who get funds from the organisation. There is a need to develop programmes for athletes that are not covered by the *Sporthilfe – Organisation*.

**Public sector**

A reduced service and an opportunity to do training are offered to all Austrian athletes who do military service. It is also possible that some athletes may be able to continue their service but this is all dependent upon competition results.

**Pension scheme**

It is hoped that within the next few months the Austrian government may have completed current discussions and will have legally defined the status of a professional athlete. Currently there is no pension scheme for athletes but with the development of this legal framework social service benefits should soon be available to them.

## BELGIUM

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Education is compulsory in Belgium between the ages of six-18. In primary education (up to age 12) students have two 50 minute physical education lessons per week. In General Secondary Education it is two to three lessons and for Technical Secondary Education it is two to four lessons per week. There is variation for 'sports optional programmes' which can have between four to 11 lessons per week.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

In the French community, 16 ADEPS (Administration of Physical Education and Sports) centres have been established. These provide activities for primary and secondary schools in the form of camps focusing on sports.

Gifted sports (and other students) can opt out of compulsory schooling – not attend school - as long as they receive education at home or by another organisation. This allows flexibility for the athletes, but can be costly in terms of providing tutors. The education that these student-athletes obtain must adhere to the final attainment levels of the compulsory education system.

In the Flemish community, eight *Topsportschools* were established in 1998. This is a standard secondary school that is allowed to organise one or two subjects of study specifically developed for "talented young athletes", namely (a) *Sciences-Topsport* within the curriculum of general secondary education and (b) *Topsport* within the curriculum of technical secondary education. These subjects of study offer a study programme combining 20 hours of education in general secondary education and 24 hours of education in technical secondary education (or 12 hours less than the normal curriculum) with 12 hours of sport-specific training (including two hours of PE). The sport-specific training is organised within or nearby the school by the sports federation.

There is also the possibility for legal absence from school from 20 up to 130 days. This law also extends to talented athletes not attending a *Topsportschool*, who can be legally absent during a maximum of 40 school days (depending upon the athletic level of the athlete).

In 1998, the 8 *Topsportschools* started with 201 pupil-athletes from 12 sports federations. During the 2003/04 school year, 17 sports federations (badminton, basketball, cycling, golf, gymnastics, horse riding, judo, Olympic handball, ski, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, sailing, soccer, swimming, track and field, volleyball) were involved in bringing together a total number of 449 pupil-athletes.

The first two years of this project was evaluated with regard to (a) its structure, organisation, financing, and quality of guidance, (b) the biomedical and training-related guidance and support, and (c) the pedagogical and study-related guidance and support (Wylleman, 2001). Recommendations of this report were recently up-dated and used as part of the action plan in preparation of élite athletes for the 2016 Olympic Games.

Within the French-speaking community, a similar – albeit less elaborate – initiative was developed which resulted in two *Topsportschools* (tennis and basketball). The drop out rates for athletes in the schools has ranged between 8.7% to 23.2%.

The programme for young sportspersons in the *Topsportschools* consists of a general and a sport-specific part. The general part of the educational programme reflects similar final attainment levels as those for PE of the general population of pupils: the development of motor competence, the development of a safe and healthy style of living and participation in competitions, the development of a positive self-image and the development of relationship skills. Of course, in view of their level of training and competitions, it was advised that these final attainment levels would be made more specific. The content of the sport-specific training is determined by the governing sports federations and specifies physical, technical, tactical (and sometimes mental) capabilities and knowledge.

As the initiative of the *Topsportschools* was initiated through a co-operation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sports, the content and balance of the education of the pupil-athletes is determined and monitored by the Ministry of Education. The content of the sport-specific part of the educational programme of pupil-athletes however is determined by the sports federations involved. The involvement of the ministries ensures the correct balance and attainment levels are met.

### **3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

A law protecting athlete's rights, *Topsportconvenant* for Higher Education, was initiated by the Ministry of Sport of the Flemish Community in co-operation with the three independent educational networks, the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee (BOIC) and the sports administration body (Blos) of the Flemish community. The *Topsportconvenant* has allowed for two initiatives aimed at supporting young sportspersons in higher education.

Firstly, for the academic year 2003/04, the sports governing administration Blos and the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee have decided to award student-athletes, who are ranked on the Olympic lists, a contract (70% of a full-time professional contract) which allows them to combine élite sport and studies in higher education professionally. Included is a scholarship of €20,000 enabling these student-athletes to pay for specific aspects related to the combination of élite sport and study (eg registration) as well as specific support (eg sport psychologist). During the first year, five student-athletes were awarded a contract – four in higher education outside of university and one university student (at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel*).

The second initiative, will begin in the 2004/05 academic year. This will include young Olympic athletes – selected for the Belgian Youth Olympic Team – who register at a university or at an academic institution of higher education outside of university. While they will not receive a contract, they will receive financial support allowing them to combine higher education and élite sport. It is expected that approximately 20-30 young Olympic athletes may be eligible for support.

Those élite athletes who are on a full-time professional contract are able to get into contact with experts (essentially, sport psychologists) on life skill management.

Those student-athletes who combine élite sport and study at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel* are offered the option to participate in the 'Study and Talent Education Programme' (STEP) which was initiated in order to provide élite student-athletes with information on the diverse aspects of living as an élite student-athlete. STEP includes workshops and presentations on time-management, communication skills, financial management, injury prevention and rehabilitation.

At present, those student athletes at university can request to spread the work of one academic year over an extended time period (two, three or four years longer). This request has to be made to the institution upon registration. Some flexibility may be offered to student athletes in regard to exam timetables.

Two years ago, *Randstad Sport* – part of the private part-time employer *Randstad Interim* – initiated, in co-operation with the *Erasmus Hogeschool Brussel* (a non-university higher education institution), the *Randstad Topsport Academie*. Elite athletes who do not go to university, but who want to gain a higher education degree, are able to combine élite sport with 'Communication management'.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

In Flanders, the first league basketball club collaborates with a local secondary school within a talent support and guidance project. In Brussels, the first league soccer club has developed a soccer school in cooperation with a local secondary school. In both these situations, the school permits the players of the clubs to leave at different times for training camps and competitions. The clubs provide the accommodation, travel and training and tutors who assist the players in preparing homework and exams.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

In the Flemish community, 15 top athletes are funded by the government so they can train full time as athletes and not have to work during their training/competitions.

In the Flemish community, the Bloso Sporting Excellence Project, top athletes are paid to compete and train. In 2003, 33 athletes benefited from this project.

Top athletes can work for the Flemish government and public institutions and receive 90 days paid leave per annum, so that they can compete and train.

## CYPRUS

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Statutory educational programmes are compulsory until the age of 15 and provide no opportunities to pursue sport outside PE lessons within the general school framework. However, permission is given for students to participate in international competitions and according to the Ministry of Education and Culture:

- when the athlete participates in games with the National team for delegations under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture there is no penalty (no absence is noted)
- when the athlete participates in international games or tournaments with his/her club absence is justifiable
- if the athlete participates in international competition abroad during the exams period, then the Ministry of Education and Culture can provide an examiner to be included within the delegation so as the student can be examined at the same date and time with his/her fellow students
- finally, there is a remuneration scheme for young talented athletes that are having excellent results in international competitions when participating under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

(Source: Reports from the Ministry of Education and Culture)

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

A number of colleges in Cyprus, such as Intercollege and Cyprus College offer the following scholarships to athletes:

- 60% discount on tuition fees for athletes that are members of Cyprus National Teams
- 40% discount on tuition fees for athletes who participated in International Competitions.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

- **Incentive scheme:** the Ministry of Education and Culture within the framework of its determined policy for the development of sports in Cyprus, has developed an incentive scheme for young sportspersons by granting them with 'Bonus Points' in case they wish to continue their studies in the Universities of Greece, in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science. Hence, this opportunity is restricted in a specific educational category and if the athlete would like to follow something else in his/her post-school career will have no advantage from this scheme.
- **Remuneration scheme:** Cyprus Sport Organisation offers a remuneration scheme of scholarships for talented athletes that accomplished to enter into a University. Having a set of criteria the Cyprus Sport Organisation aims to financially support a limited number of athletes having accomplished excellent results so as to be able to continue their post-school studies. According to this scheme an athlete can benefit an amount of £1,000 to £1,500 Cypriot pounds per year.
- **Scholarships:** A limited number of scholarships for financial support for talented and top level athletes are offered and by the Cyprus Olympic Committee through the Programmes of the Olympic Solidarity.

It is important to note that 80% of Cypriot athletes following a post-school education, study and train abroad with foreign coaches, most of them in Greece.

### 4) **How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Academies in Cyprus are organised either by national federations or various clubs, having no connection with the educational system. Cyprus Sport Organisation which is the highest sport authority in Cyprus is responsible for the supervision and support of the national federations and the clubs.

The Cyprus Sport Organisation introduced a National Scheme (National Scheme to Support Young Athletes) aiming to support the organisation of these academies. The programme is generally considered to be complementary to the existing educational programmes and not a substitute. The purpose of this programme is to introduce a national philosophy and programme within Cyprus through the federations and clubs. It emphasises the educational role of the coach and fair play. A number of seminars to enhance the knowledge and coaching abilities of the persons involved are also organised. Furthermore, the programme offers financial support to the clubs and the coaches.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

The Cyprus Sport Organisation is the body responsible for suggesting and implementing policy formulation regarding support to sportspersons, in respect of employment or remuneration issues.

Until the end of the year 2002, the Cyprus Sport Organisation had a scheme that provided employment of top level athletes. However, due to the increasing number of top-level athletes with excellent results, the Cyprus Sport Organisation changed this scheme and since the beginning of 2003 this has been a scheme which provides incentives. With this scheme athletes with excellent results, according to a set of criteria, are not employed by the organisation but they take a financial prim in respect to their success. Hence, no official policy formulation exists for securing employment of the athletes after their sporting career is over. However, large-scale organisations such as banks or semi-governmental organisations have social policies and unofficially give priority to the employment of top level athletes. As an example, the *SPE Strovolou Bank* owns a handball club and employs the best of its players.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Mandatory school attendance is between the ages of six to 15. There are no opportunities to opt out of the statutory school programme but a project to intensify sport classes in co-operation with sport federations is currently running. In 1999 about 15,000 children were accepted for these sport classes in 15 different sports and by September 2003, there were 242 primary and secondary schools providing these classes. These sport schools and federations are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

The first, the second and the third levels of education have PE as a mandatory subject with two hours a week. Curriculum for primary and grammar schools recommend introducing the third hours of Physical Education at the appropriate conditions

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young élite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Grammar schools which focus on sports cater for student-athletes who fall within the 15-19 age bracket. In September 2003, there were 13 such grammar schools in operation, that have selection criteria that students have to meet in order to secure a place. The students must also fulfil the same study requirements as in standard grammar schools. The demands and regulations on these schools are comparable to any other school, and students do not have any concessions. In fact study at this type of school is much harder because students have four to five hours of sport preparation per day in addition to their education. However, individual study-plans make it possible for those students who are away on training or competition to choose the optimal schedule of exams and tests at their respective school.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

There are no special programmes that are adapted for élite athletes and therefore it is increasingly difficult for them to study anything other than PE or other sport related degrees at university. However, there is some financial aid available:

- **scholarships:** student athletes studying at universities may gain scholarships on account of representation or special sport achievement. However, due to the economic situation in the Czech Republic, the amount of money that these athletes get is still not enough to fully ensure that they can combine their academic and sporting commitments successfully. Hence, athletes tend to secure money from other sources – such as through personal sponsors or contributions from sport associations.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no information available for this section.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

The only organisation that provides some support for retiring athletes is the Czech Olympic Committee through its Olympians Club and Olympic Academy.

## DENMARK

### 1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career

Compulsory education in Denmark lasts for nine years and all children must attend school by age seven. Although all children must adhere to the statutory educational programme, some pupils have the option to go to sports boarding schools. At present there are 24 *Idræts-Efterskoler* – sports boarding schools for grades 8-10 in Denmark, while another 127 *Efter-skoler* offer sport as an optional subject. At the most élite -oriented *Efter-skole* in the field of sport, *Oure IdrætsEfterskole*, the pupils are given 7½ lessons of sports training every week as part of the teaching. In addition to this, the pupils train in local élite clubs (soccer and team handball) and the students spend time on sports tours and tournaments locally and abroad. The content of the education in sport is specialised tactical and technical training in the sport the pupil has chosen. *Oure IdrætsEfterskole* offers specialisation in soccer, team handball, dance and ballet, horse riding, golf, sailing, surf, tennis, alpine skiing, basketball and badminton.

At *Oure IdrætsEfterskole* there are three types of schools, Firstly, the *Efterskole* which teaches students in 9th and 10th grade (aged 15-17 years) along the public guidelines for primary education. Secondly, there is the Gymnasium which gives a 3 year long education, and finally the Højskole – Folk High School- which is a non-formal school which has students from 17½ years and older. At *Oure* there are about 400 *Efterskole*-students per year. This is a full one-year course. At the *Efterskole* there are about 150 students per year and the total number of students in the three forms of schools is about 750 per year.

The entry requirements for *Efterskole* and gymnasium are the level of prior education eg to be accepted in 9th grade you must have finished 8th grade; to be accepted in 10th grade and gymnasium you must have finished 9th grade. For the *Højskole* you must be 17½ years old to be accepted. None of the schools have specific sporting entry requirements.

All three forms of schools get public support in relation to the number of students they cater for. However, the students also have to pay to stay at the school. Usually a full years stay, which includes teaching, boarding and a week of travelling abroad, will cost around €6,500. The individual student can apply for public support, which will be graduated in relation to the income of the parents of the student (below the age of 18) or the income of the student. An average a student will get about €2,600 in public support.

At the *Efterskole* the students are offered 7½ lessons in sport every week and around 20 lessons in other school subjects. At the Gymnasium the students are offered 12 lessons in sport plus 15-20 lessons in other school subjects and at the Højskole almost all the lessons will be related to sports. This includes psychology, sociology and pedagogics.

2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

*Sport Gymnasiums* (high schools). With the help of *Team Denmark* (an independent semi-public organisation established by the Ministry of Culture) elite athletes who are studying at these institutions have the benefit of completing their programme in four years instead of the normal three years and have special concessions concerning leave and absence from the school. The four-year period reduces the daily burden of school work and gives the sports person time to train and participate in tournaments.

In total, there are currently round 1500 *Team Denmark* students in Denmark. The *Team Denmark* rules for the *Gymnasium* - high school - also apply for the *Teknisk Gymnasium* - higher technical examination course - and the *Handels Gymnasium* - higher commercial examination course.

**Holstebro Sportscollege**- Both male and female students can join the college in 10th grade. At this educational stage they will be approximately 15 years old. The students can specialise in football, handball and badminton. The college teaching is connected to public educational institutions which offer free teaching as part of the public and officially approved school system. This means that the teaching and the facilities connected to the teaching is paid for by public funds

The college provides accommodation and the students have to pay €425 a month to stay. This covers housing, food and access to the training facilities. Besides this the students have to pay an entrance fee of €400 when they are accepted as students at the college. Students who do not stay at the college pay the entrance fee – €400 plus €400 more which covers their free access to the training facilities. The sports college offers no grants – all students must pay the expenses mentioned.

The training facilities connected to the college are rooms for smaller indoor sporting activities – eg. Table tennis, pool and a fitness room and outside there is a soccer pitch and a beach volleyball court.

The sports college is connected to *Holstebor Handelsskole* – Business School -and *Holstebro Tekniske Skole* – Technical School. These are two public educational institutions which offer education at secondary, gymnasium level. *Holstebor Handelsskole* also offers a 10th grade course for younger students. Other partners are the local elite sports clubs.

The sports college offer the students training in the elite sports clubs. Some of the college students have been offered professional sports contracts with the elite clubs.

After finishing their studies at *Holstebor Handelsskole* or *Holstebro Tekniske Skole* the students can apply for further education at higher educational institutions or they can be apprentices in different kind of trades.

3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

- **Facilitating entry requirements:** at the *Institut for Idræt – Institute of Exercise and Sport Sciences* at the *University of Copenhagen* in 2000 it was decided that experience gained from involvement in élite sport would be accepted as a relevant qualification in applications for admission through the *Kvote 2*. In *Kvote 2* a small number of study places- usually about 10% of the total number of study places – is given to students having a *studentereksamen* – the qualification gained on finishing the *gymnasium* - with an average of grades which is not good enough for direct admission. Here the students can add to their qualifications by proving that they have been involved in activities relevant for the content of the study they want to enter. And in the case of being a student at the *Institute of Exercise and Sports Sciences* élite sport is considered a relevant activity.
- **time-tabling flexibility:** flexibility can be found in the fields of attendance at courses, delivery of written or oral assignments and terms of examinations
- **distance learning:** only a few institutions offer long distance learning however, *Team Danmark* offers élite sports people laptops so they can be involved in their studies through distance learning.
- **individual support plus financial assistance:** educational institutions have the possibility to apply to *Team Danmark* for financing supplementary teaching for sports people and the institution can apply *Team Danmark* for extra study guidance. Finally *Team Danmark* can pay extra periods of economical study benefits.

4) **How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

*FC Midtjylland* - an élite soccer club, playing in the Super League (the best division) in Denmark – is going to run a soccer academy beginning August 2004. The club has found boarding and housing for the students at the nearby *højskole* and it will help the students find a place in the local schools or *gymnasium* or other educational institutions. The programme is only special in the sense that it allows the young soccer players to move away from home to live in a place close to the sports club. The formal education is still the same but they offer the most gifted young sportspeople (at the moment only in soccer and only for boys) housing, board, and football training at the highest level.

Other academies of sport which are run by *højskoler* folk high schools. These focus on élite sports persons aged 18-25. The school and the club of the sports person – usually football and team handball - make an agreement about how to pay for the stay at the academy. This will normally cost about 5000 kroner a month. The sports person is given basic coaching and trainer courses at the “*højskole*” – folk high school, and will practise his or her sport at the school and participate in the general courses that is offered at the school. These *højskoler* offer no formal education.

In the agreement between *Spillerforeningen* – The Soccer Players Union and *Divisionsforeningen* – The Professional Soccer Clubs Union it is stated in section 2.6: “When a contract is signed for a player below the age of 18 years there must be made a plan for the players future education and career. This plan must be revised at least once a year.”

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

*Team Denmark* offers elite sports people which have been part of the *Team Denmark* system guidance in working out a plan for their career. This can be done during or at the end of their active sports career. This guidance must be applied for by the individual sports person and there are no fixed rules or procedures in this field.

*Team Denmark* cooperates with some of the main sponsors which offer job opportunities to elite sports people during or at the end of the sports career. Also *Spillerforeningen - The Union for Professional Soccer Players* - offers career guidance for the members and the same is the case for *Håndboldspillerforeningen - The Union for Professional Team Handball Players*. These unions act like trade unions.

As part of the national budget for 2004, it was agreed that professional sportspeople in the future will be allowed to make savings during their active career and then after the career, with favourable tax regulations, spend the money on an education programme or to establish their own business. This is organised by the individual sports person, and every sportsperson is allowed to save an amount of 1,5 mill. D. kr. which can be released with a maximum of 300.000 D. kr. every year for five years.

## **ESTONIA**

### **1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Schooling in Estonia is compulsory for children aged seven to 17. There is nine years basic schooling, after which there are two pathways – three years at secondary school or three years at vocational school. Secondary school leavers can also go on to a vocational secondary school for one or two years, or to a university or a non-university higher education establishment. PE is a core subject within the compulsory school system and sports activity in the form of PE is two to three lessons per week in the primary and secondary schools.

It is the responsibility of schools to allocate 8 PE lessons in the weekly programme of grades 1 to 3, eight lessons for grades 4 to 6 and six lessons for grades 7 to 9. However, implementing special sports programmes in co-operation between educational authorities and municipalities that carry out the main responsibilities of pre-school children care would ensure better results for the pre-school education of Estonian children. Thus, co-operation between local government and clubs should be improved.

The education system is regulated by the government. The Estonian education system offers various options to maximise the opportunities for young sportspersons.

### **2) Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Estonia has experienced a difficult transition from the Soviet era to an autonomous and democratically organised sports sector. It is a small country with a modest budget to invest in sport development. However, despite various changes in government since 1991, there has remained a steady consensus on the role of sport in Estonian society.

The Estonian Sports Charter, adopted in 1994, followed by the Sports Act in 1998, represents a national consensus over sports strategy in Estonia which is considered to be a unique initiative in Europe. In Estonia, both the governmental and non-governmental sides of sports are actively co-operating with each other. In this sense, Estonia presents a positive example for other European countries.

Different Ministries (Ministry of Culture - where the Sports Department is located - Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministries of Health and Internal Affairs) are involved in sports objectives and strategic sport planning. Co-operation in sports issues among those governmental organisations is good at the national level. After the merge of the Estonian Olympic Committee and the Estonian Sports Union in 2001, the Estonian sports movement has certainly become more united (and probably stronger) than ever before.

## **Sports schools**

During the Soviet era, there were around 70 sport schools in Estonia involving around 45,000 children in sports activities. Currently, (2003), there are 20 sports schools and there is a general trend of moving more gifted children to sports clubs and to finance their training.

The main bases for young sportspersons are still the specialist sports schools, which were established during the Soviet period. In total, there were 61 sports schools in Estonia in 1985 with over 30,000 students. To provide good opportunities in combining education and sports, the Tallinn Sports Boarding School, with a skiing branch in Otepää, was established.

In addition, schools directed pupils with sports skills and talent into special classes (there were 66 sports classes with 1,650 pupils in 1988). In the sports classes, training is organised in the same manner as in the Sports Boarding School, except that the opportunities for systematic training are greater. The school course in the Sports Boarding School lasts a year longer than in an ordinary secondary school, demonstrating a degree of flexibility in course length.

The system of the sports schools has been a strong foundation for the rising generation of young sportspersons.

In accordance with the general development of the Estonian sports system, the 'Sport for all' work with young people, which was previously carried out by sports schools, is now organised by numerous sports clubs, which receive financial support from the public sector.

An example of a sports school is the *Audentes Sports School, Tallin, Estonia*. *Audentes* is a model sports school with numerous facilities, including indoor athletics, for gifted children in Estonia. It is linked with a wintersports sports school in Otepää, South Estonia. *Audentes* has 800 pupils and a modern, comprehensive medical centre. The medical centre is also open to non-school clients.

The sports school is attached to the Audentes private university, which has six faculties, although there is not one for physical education. However, 2,200 undergraduates at the university follow sports training courses.

### **3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

There are three educational institutions which provide specialist education for young sportsmen and sportswoman in Estonia:

- University of Tartu
- Tallinn Pedagogical University
- Sportschool Audentes located in Tallinn (with wintersport disciplines in Otepää , South Estonia).

The best athletes of the universities have the opportunity to extend their studies for two years longer than usual. They also benefit from an individual curriculum and special financial support/scholarships for élite athletes.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

The organisation and management of professionally organised sport is a long-term sporting aim of Estonia. There are number of new developments in this area that need support by the Estonian government.

It is thought that there are approximately 300 full time sports professionals and around 1,000 part-time professionals (and 1,250 professional coaches) in the country. Basketball, football, volleyball and ice-hockey clubs employ combinations of professionals and semi-professionals. A new sports law, if passed, would allow some sports companies to be treated financially in the same way as sports clubs.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

In Estonia there are post-sports career opportunities for a number of athletes who receive scholarships in order to continue their studies during and after their sports career. Such athletes are under a contract signed between the respective sports federation and the Estonian Olympic Committee.

Governmental scholarships along with Governmental Awards are given to élite athletes. The Estonian Olympic Committee also has financial awards for the winners of international competitions and Olympic Games. Furthermore, champions are also entitled to a lifelong pension.

Estonia has a relatively well developed system of training sport professionals (teachers, coaches, managers, etc) at Tartu University and Tallinn Pedagogical University. However, they produce insufficient numbers of high qualified staff for sport and the Estonian Olympic Committee has approached other institutions, such as the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the National Chamber of Industry, with a view to the establishment of a national vocational training and qualification system for an appropriate qualification of those who work with people (especially with youngsters) in sports activities eg trainers and coaches. This will provide employment opportunities for élite athletes after their performance careers are over.

## FINLAND

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in Finland is between the ages seven to 16. Although all students must follow the statutory educational programme, opportunities to specialise in sport training exist during forms 7-9 (14-16 years). A young athlete can apply for a place in a:

- sports-oriented upper secondary school – of which there are 12
- sports-oriented vocational upper secondary school – of which there are 10
- general or vocational upper secondary school which specialises in sports.

#### **Specialist School Kastelli Upper School (forms 7-9):**

- the school caters for 75 students per year
- in forms 7-9, there are 30 hours of education per week. Pupils train for about 6-10 hours per week during school time
- 25-30 new athletes enter Kastelli every year
- about 60% go on to higher education institutions after completing their programmes.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Top-level athletes who enter the sport schools in secondary level or schools in higher-level that belong to a network of a Sport Academy have access to counselling, personal tutoring and flexible timetables. In secondary level athletes can also get credits for the training courses. A career councillor will give help in career and study matters.

**Specialist colleges:** the strength of the Finnish system is in its flexibility and the fact that it is based on a modular system without a rigid year structure. However other arrangements include:

- **development of courses:** some colleges have developed their teaching options. For example, the Oulu College of Commerce has designed specialised studies for those students in the Sports Academy who wish to learn through practice as a counterbalance to theoretical studies.

- **special accommodation:** the Northern Ostro-Bothnia Vocational School is able to guarantee special accommodation for athletes coming to the City of Oulu for their studies. Such accommodation is available to all students of the Sports Academy regardless of the type of their Institute. This accommodation is within a short distance from the training facilities with good public transport links.
- **time management:** those in the Institutes responsible for orienting the students will assist the student in composing a personal study programme that will allow the athlete to participate in training on at least three weekday mornings in addition to normal training.

**Ruka Alpine High School** is a part of *Kuusamo* training centre. There are facilities for alpine skiing and freestyle skiing. It was founded in 1995. The curriculum is based on the national system. The first level is forms 7-9 of basic education, after that a combination of studies and training can succeed at all levels from high school up to the university level. *Ruka Alpine High School* is partly financed by local educational institutions, the Finnish Ski Federation and sponsors. One term costs about €1350 for each student. Term fees include training and transportation to the slopes. The students have to pay all costs of competitions in Finland and abroad and also training camps abroad.

### **Sports Academies**

The Academies in Finland are a network which aims to provide young athletes (in each region) with the option of combining sport and education. All major schools within the region are involved with the network via a designated contact responsible for co-ordinating student's training and study programme. Each student also gets an identity card for free use of municipal sports facilities and reduced medical treatment.

**OSUA Sport Academy** – this institution is the only one in Finland of its kind. It is specially tailored for the athlete, in that student-athletes can continue their professional training while studying for a career. This arrangement offers various forms of assistance both with regard to professional training and education.

Training centres also have an important part to play in coordinating sport and education. One good example is the *Makelarinne Senior High school* in Helsinki, which also houses training centres in swimming, badminton and track and field athletics.

### **Oulu Region Academy of Sport**

- the youngest pupils are 13
- main sports are ice hockey, volleyball, football, athletics and swimming. Other sports are skating, orienteering, badminton and snowboarding
- advantages of a mixed sport academy are that there are large scale of trainers, mixed groups

- the academy is namely funded by the municipality. Only students who do not live at home can get grants from the state
- services: the student chooses times for morning training that best suit their programme. Teachers give instruction between 8-10am and after afternoon classes. This system ensures that an athlete always has an instructor with whom to train
- there is a sports medicine clinical testing and monitoring service. Tests are agreed with student and instructor. These are then undertaken and analysed to identify optimum training. An athlete's proneness to injury etc can also be analysed. Additional blood tests can be undertaken for a small charge
- there is a muscle therapy room (at additional charge), swimming pool massage equipment and a water massage apparatus
- there are no special academy programmes, the length of study depends on the student. The average duration is 4-7 years.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

**Grants:** study grants are awarded to students at vocational upper secondary schools, at polytechnics and universities and are granted, by the Ministry of Education, to both those who are active in sports and those who are ending their sports careers. An individual athlete can only be awarded the grant a maximum of three times and the amount awarded is dependent on the stage of education: athletes in third-level education receive €1,600 and those in upper secondary education receive €1,300. The Finnish Ministry of Education also awards grants for athletes proposed by the Olympic Committee and the Paralympic Committee who on the basis of their international performance have potential for winning a medal in the Olympic or Paralympic Games, or in the World Championships. The amount of a tax-free sport grant is €12,000 or €6,000 per year. Grants are allocated in both summer and winter Olympic sports as well as in non-Olympic and Paralympic sports.

**Flexibility:** the personal study programme is flexible so that the athlete can participate in international competitions and training camps while doing his/her studies. For example, a swimmer in the Sports Academy participated in a University exam while staying in a training camp abroad. The ultimate objective of the Edu-service is to ensure that the athletes from the Sports Academy become well employed after their studies without losing quality from their Academic achievements. This is to guarantee high level expertise in the chosen profession.

**Tutor system:** a tutor system has been set up to help athletes plan their studies. All athlete students arrange their training and studies according to a personalised co-ordinated schedule.

**Auxiliary material:** guidance material has been provided for athletes in print, on video and on the Internet.

## University of Oulu

An important factor in the co-ordination between training, competition and studies is a link between trainer/coach, student counsellor and athlete. At Oulu, every athlete has a counsellor who helps to accommodate training and studies, individual needs and interests on a long-term basis. All athletes arrange training and studies according to a personal co-ordinated scheme.

The main difficulties in coordination of studies/training is that athletes skip classes to attend competitions and so they have to stay at university for an increased amount of time to complete the course.

There is no legislation to support the combination of sport and studies. Oulu is the only university that has flexible study options (made possibly through Ministry of Education funding and university funds). The pilot scheme is to assist in the planning of a programme that combines training/competitions with studies and the completion of studies in the shortest time possible. This project is closely linked with the VTA (professions for top athletes) project of the OUSA. In recent years several universities and polytechnics have started their own programmes to cater for the needs of athletes who are combining education with sport. In higher education there are two polytechnics that run special degree programmes for athletes. Admission is based partly on sporting merit and partly on grades and an entrance exam.

### 4) **How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Ice hockey and football both bind their athletes by contracts. If an athlete is between 12-18, the parents must sign the contract. The club/organisation is not legally responsible for providing education for their newly signed athletes, but in many cases the clubs help to provide education. There is only the basic Education Act which regulates compulsory education. Compulsory schooling is nine years and everyone is required to complete this.

### 5) **Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

There are no special provisions available for the employment of athletes in the public sector. Private sector companies are not offered any incentives to employ former professional athletes. However, there is some support available to athletes:

- **grants:** the Ministry of Education finances a foundation which provides study grants to both those who are active in sports and to those who are ending their sports careers. Grants are awarded to students at vocational upper secondary schools, at polytechnics and universities. The amount of the grant is €1,600 for athletes in third-level education and is awarded a maximum of three times to the same individual.

- **employment support programme:** to help athletes find work after graduation, the Oulu Provincial Government has made a three-year grant to OSUA to help to improve flexibility in studies for top-ranking athletes and the efficiency of their placement in the labour market. The funding, which totals approximately €300,000, has been made possible from grants by the European Social Fund (ESF), the Ministry of Education, the City of Oulu, and the Oulu and District Municipalities' Vocational Education Council.

There is a study and career counsellor at the Finnish Olympic Committee who has continued the development programme aimed at supporting the education and life careers of the Finnish elite athletes. The Olympic committee is also financed by the ministry of education to employ a study and carer counsellor to provide assistance to athletes with study and career matters and to coordinate with educational institutions and sports federations. The Olympic Committee of Finland is now building up a system with HR company Adecco to help elite athletes and former elite athletes in finding an employment after ending their elite sports career. The Finnish Ice Hockey Federation and the Finnish Hockey Players association are going to engage a study counsellor this summer (2004).

## FRANCE

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in France is between the ages of six and 16. The access system to high-level sport in France has structures in place which create conditions for high-level athletes that are favourable to both their academic and sports progress. Athletes that are in secondary education benefit from this system and are eligible to receive dispensations on their school report cards. Their weekly timetable is adapted so that they are able to fit both sport and education into their schedule and it is even possible for regional education authorities to allocate an extra two hours to their day so that this can be catered for. Occasionally an extra academic year can also be allocated, depending on the degree of athletic training required.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

The Ministry for Sport has set up a national scheme to make access easier to high-level sport. The objective of such a scheme is to enable the high level athlete to complete a dual sporting and educational project with the aid of various adaptations. The Ministry for Youth and the Ministry for National Education and Research (MJENR) are in charge of education (the choice of policies and the educational programmes and their control).

A system of training centres or *poles* was created in 1995. The network of training centres provides athletes with excellent training conditions. These training centres are at the National Institution for Sport and Physical Education (INSEP), CREPS (Regional Centres for Education and Sport) and other places such as schools, territorial centres (the Velodrome in Hyères, the Nautical Centre in La Rochelle) or Federal Centres (the National Football centre in Clairefontaine and national rugby centre in Marcoussis).

#### **INSEP**

There are currently 6,636 athletes training at high level in France who are still in compulsory education. 190 of these students are at INSEP following all sports (except rowing, boxing, French boxing, canoeing and modern pentathlon). The balance of education and sport at INSEP is 24 hours education and 20 hours of training per week (with additional training and competitions).

INSEP provides: tutor monitoring, distance learning (e-learning) and individual educational follow-up. All compulsory secondary schooling is organised locally. In terms of sporting needs, INSEP provides: medical follow up, socio-professional follow up (job seeking, image management), library, social and leisure services etc. The advantage of a mixed multi-sport training centre is that there is a wide range of educational training. The disadvantage is the diversity in age, sport and educational abilities that all generate different student requirements. INSEP is linked to local secondary schools and other higher education institutions (eg University of Lyon).

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

**Special concessions:** University Deans, School Directors and Regional Directors of Education encourage high level athletes to continue their studies by undertaking all necessary efforts to accommodate their needs. These provisions are outlined in Circular Number 1455 of 6<sup>th</sup> October 1987 which encourages these provisions to be met by the authoritative bodies.

**Facilitating entry-requirements and flexibility:** high-level athletes are sometimes able to extend the duration of their university course and postpone exams. This allows for reduced attendance during the year, so that training can be carried out, but the University Dean must agree to these special arrangements. For example, each year the Ministry of Health awards 20 high level athletes who are exempt from entrance exams to the first year of courses at Institutes for Physiotherapy and Chiropractic.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

**Football academies**

There are 35 football academies called training centres, all obliged to provide sporting and academic provision. The youngest age that a student can join the academy is 15. The academies are financed by the football clubs, although some have links with local schools who may provide the educational component of the academy. The academy students must follow the same education programme as all secondary school children (25 hours education plus training between 12-18 hours per week). The academy provides three main services to the athlete: sport training, medical follow-up and education. The athletes have the opportunity to take A- levels and complete their education. The academy has to adhere to the French Sport Law and the French Football Federation. After each year, a quantitative and qualitative evaluation is carried out by the academy.

In France, the following professional sports bind their athletes by a contract: football (men), rugby (men), hand-ball (men), basket-ball (men and women), volley-ball (men and women), golf (men and women), tennis (men and women), "ice sports" only ice hockey (men), cycling (men), boxing (men), car and motorcycling (mainly men).

In accordance with the French labour law the age limits for someone before signing contracts is normally 18 years old. But sometimes the age is reduced to 16 years old (for specific contracts called 'contract of apprenticeship'). There is no legal obligation for the club to provide education for the newly-signed athlete. The only legislation currently in place to safeguard the athlete's educational interests is included in the French sport law (article 15-4).

5) **Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

**Grants:** these grants enable retired professionals to study at University. The National Technical Directors of Sports Federations can help high-level athletes through 'personalised assistance' which is allocated to each sports federation at meetings held to decide on annual objectives.

Directors of sports federations can also have financial support for education from regional services provided by the Ministry of Sport. A high-level athlete who has ended his or her professional career can, upon request and after the examination of a proposal by the National Technical Director, be added to the national list of high-level athletes in the category of 'redeployment' which means that he or she can maintain the benefits enjoyed by a high-level athlete for an additional two years.

**Loans:** high-level athletes who wish to set up their own businesses are able to apply for a grant from the French government. A maximum of €24,000 is available but this must be paid back over four years at an interest rate of 1%. The Ministry of Sport and the athlete's sports federation draw up an agreement when such loans are required.

**Public sector occupations:** after 18 months of training, high-class athletes are able to work as Category A civil servants by participating in a recruitment competition. The Ministry of Sport holds this competition at INSEP and it is administered by sports federations. 80 positions for athletes are also made available within the forces. The Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Budgetary Affairs allocates 30 places for athletes, 29 of which are reserved for athletes of the French Ski Federation. The Ministry of Sport also reserves 23 teaching positions at INSEP.

**Private sector occupations:** Both public and private companies can, by law, employ high-level athletes. It is possible, under Article 32 of the Law of the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1984, for the Minister of Sports to aid active professional athletes by drawing up employment agreements with companies. These agreements enable professional athletes to continue with their training and competitions whilst working. In 2001, nearly 400 high level athletes benefited from an agreement of professional integration allowing them to take part in the competitions without any loss of wages. 40% of high-level athletes benefit from adjustments of schedules. Some are entitled to authorisation for absence to train or take part in competitions.

It is quite unusual for elite athletes to find work during their sporting career. At INSEP, only 20 athletes do so. The majority of athletes consider their sporting career as a full time job.

## GERMANY

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Full-time education is compulsory between the ages of six to 15 or 16, part-time education is compulsory until the age of 18 for those who are not in full-time education. To give talented young athletes the opportunity to develop their sporting career alongside their academic career during compulsory schooling several links between schools and institutions/organisations of high performance sports are in place. Different types of partnerships between high performance sport and educational institutions include:

- schools specialising in sport (*Sportbetonte Schulen*)
- partner schools of high performance sport (*Partnerschulen des Leistungssports*)
- élite sport schools (*Eliteschulen des Sports*).

In these integrated systems the whole range of educational, supervisory and supporting measures are being used in order to give the young athletes opportunities to reach high performance sports and to fulfil all educational duties. These integrated systems consist typically on the one hand of the training centres (Olympic, Federal or Regional) and on the other hand of the schools.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young élite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

The concept of élite Sports Schools offers special facilities designed to promote high performance sports. The German Sports Federation has set up a list of criteria which have to be fulfilled in order to get the élite sport school status. A total of 38 élite Schools of Sport now offer the opportunity of pursuing a career in international competitive sport, combined with a normal course of school studies. They are often on a full or half-boarding basis and are currently accommodating around 11,000 talented athletes. In special cases the German Sports Aid Foundation provides financial assistance to students at these schools.

The German Sports Confederation (DSB) operates 20 Olympic Support Centres which prepare athletes for the Olympic games, World Championships and European Championships. These centres are funded by the 16 German states and local communities. The centres employ 31 career advisors who assist athletes in combining high level sport with education (or profession).

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

19 year-old athletes who continue into higher education (university, college) can attend one of 48 élite Sports Universities (contract between DSB/university/Sport Federation/University Sport Association). When linked to Olympic support centres athletes benefit from flexible timetabling, flexible examination timetable and substitute performance (discretion & flexibility for attendance at compulsory seminars/lectures).

**Flexibility within the university system:** according to research carried out in September 2003, at the moment there are 45 German universities which have co-operation agreements with Olympic Support Centres, German University Sports Federations and/or National Sports Federations in order to accommodate students who wish to pursue a professional sports career while in full-time third-level education. Currently, 850 national squad members (C, B and A-squads) are enrolled at these universities.

**Facilitating entry requirements:** these universities offer reduced entry criteria for athletes and special efforts are made to promote athletes within the university system.

**Time-tabling flexibility:** these include flexibility in timetables, exam scheduling, excursions and practical courses. Athletes can also extend the duration of their courses – ie more than the normal number of semesters permitted.

**Grants:** The German Sports Aid Foundation offers bursaries to professional athletes who enrolled in a university programme and then retire from competitive sports. These are temporary bursaries awarded for up to three years.

**Tutor monitoring:** students are offered personal tutors and study counselling.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

In professional football it is mandatory for all clubs in the top two flights (*Bundesliga* and *2. Bundesliga* (36 clubs in total) to have a soccer academy which also provides education for their athletes. The cooperation between school and club ensures the best possible way for an athlete to combine school education and football training. A combined system of school and training possibilities helps to coordinate school and sports demands effectively, thus making maximum use of performance resources.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

Top athletes are currently receiving help from the German Sports Aid Foundation to find traineeships or employment. Olympic Support Centres are also hosting careers advice seminars and offer career advice to all athletes as part of their scheme to help young athletes. The career counsellors at the 20 Olympic Support Centres are the contacts for the athletes in Germany. They are of indispensable help in coordinating school/professional career and sports career. Support is given in fields such as sports career planning, management of the social environment, athlete counselling, elite sport schools boarding school support education, university education, financial support and military/community service apprenticeships.

Grants for retired professionals to study at university are available through the German Sports Aid Foundation (*Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe*), which offers bursaries to professional athletes who are enrolled in a university programme and decide to retire from a competitive sports career. These temporary bursaries are designed to allow such athletes to complete their university studies and are awarded for up to three years. This programme is requested by a maximum of three to five athletes each year.

The German Sports Aid Foundation has also begun an initiative in the private sector to promote the career prospects of current top athletes by helping them to find traineeships or employment. A national pool of companies (22 in 2002) offer traineeships and employment which is compatible with full-time competitive sport. The German Sports Aid Foundation aims to help athletes to find employment in small or medium-sized companies. The foundation provides financial compensation for loss of earnings to companies which employ athletes. Careers advice seminars are organised and career advisers are employed at Olympic Support Centres.

Elite athletes (who do not continue into higher education) are given the option to join the military where they have half a day duty. During this time they can train for a profession. Alternatively they can join the custom or border police where the same rules apply.

The German government has employment opportunities for top athletes in a number of areas of the public sector. The military has 704 positions, the federal border police has 38 positions for summer sports athletes and 75 for winter sports athletes and the customs service has 40 positions. These positions are for current rather than retired professional athletes. Employment is for a limited duration depending on international competition results. The customs service offers athletes the opportunity to develop a long-term career once they have retired from sport.

## GREECE

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in Greece is between the ages of six-15. In the Greek educational system talented young sportspersons are identified during the primary school period and offered the chance to attend *Classes of Sport facilitation* from as early as lower secondary school (12-14yrs).

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

In upper secondary school (15-18yrs) they have *Special classes for Sport Facilitation*. The sports with the highest number of registered athletes are soccer, athletics, basketball and volleyball. These classes are fully integrated within the normal schooling system. Young persons attend exactly the same statutory educational programme with two exceptions:

- athletes are given the opportunity to train three times per week (7:30-10:00 am) at the selected sport
- athletes must stay one hour later at the school (three times a week), to make up for the morning training.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Education, Division of Physical Education, in the schooling system, there are 114 CSFs (classes for sport facilitation) currently operating and in addition there are 16 SCSFs (special classes of sport facilitation in upper secondary schools) which accommodate the needs of around 9,500 young sportspersons.

An example of a school with this system is the 5<sup>th</sup> Lower and Upper Secondary School (TAD, ETAD) of Patras. There is on average 22 to 44 students (1 or 2 classes) entering Patras each year. The sports undertaken include Soccer, Athletics, Table Tennis, Water Polo, Cycling and Gymnastics.

There is no authority monitoring the (sometimes lower) performance of the students in the classes. However more than 60% of the students entered one of the five Physical Education Departments or Polytechnics recently upgraded to HE. All students in Greece have to complete compulsory education, however, new legislation 'Justification of School Non-Attendance' means they can justify being absent from school for competitions. Under normal conditions, 28% of the total hours of education are devoted to sport training – this works out at nine hours per week.

This legal framework also provides regulations for extreme cases of talented athletes who failed to attend significant parts of their normal educational programme. These athletes are entitled to Special Teaching Support for as many hours as required to fill out the lost part of their normal education. Attendance of extra teaching support is compulsory in order for the young athletes to progress to the next level, given that they pass the relevant tests. This particular regulation effects both public and private schools, which are obligated to follow the same statutory curriculum.

It is important to note here, that the existing educational system also offers another alternative educational arrangement, which, although is not specially designed for athletes, can be beneficial to them too. This is the Extra Teaching Support programme, which operates in the afternoons within the public schools, and is chosen voluntarily by the pupils in order to fill their educational gaps.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

**Facilitating registration and entry requirements:** athletes who have achieved distinguished sporting performance can be excluded from entrance examinations and register directly:

- to any university department of their choice (with no limits on the number of the athletes admitted to each department)
- to the schools of police officers, fire officers and port policy corps (up to 10 admissions per year per school)
- to one of the five Departments of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (up to 30% of the total admission number of the department). Here it is important to note that the sport performance criteria for entry in this departments are significantly widened to include both national champions and sporting distinctions gained in youth and earlier ages (Deputy Ministry of Sport, Law 2725/1999).

**Unrestricted transferring:** students who are also members of national teams, are entitled to transfer between the same departments of different universities, located in different cities, in order to facilitate sporting engagements. Elite athletes can only transfer once. It is thought that athletes can usually obtain transfers more easily than students of other disciplines.

**Scholarship programmes:** the scholarship programme contains two parts. The first involves the awarding of annual scholarships for students of any educational level up to the university, while the second part supports athletes for graduate studies at Greek Universities or abroad, for sport related disciplines (Deputy Ministry of Sport, Law 2725/1999).

**Unlimited student status:** currently students in the Greek universities can reserve their student status for an unlimited length of time and irrespectively of their academic achievements. It is not uncommon for a student to be a registered candidate for a bachelor degree for 8 or 10 years. This is particularly important for élite athletes who can choose to set aside their studies as long as needed in order to train intensively and take part in competitions. When their sporting career is over they can return to their universities to complete their degrees. However, the prolonged time period can result in the student loosing touch with the academic culture.

**Individualistic treatment:** informal contacts with a number of élite athletes have indicated that in many cases the wide recognition of élite athletes works as a valid passport for claiming individualistic treatments from their professors in different universities. A second chance for exams, the option to submit an assignment, the opportunity to attend laboratories with an alternative group, or the option for a transfer to another university can be some of the arrangements which can be made for élite athlete who can prove that there been away, or they need to be away, for training or competitions.

Some athletes have the right to take up to two months leave per academic year. If this coincides with examinations, the athlete can postpone the exams.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Athletes can sign contracts with clubs which now have Limited Liability Company status and take part in championships. Athletes must be 18 or older to sign contracts.

The clubs are not obliged or licensed to provide education for their athletes. There is no legislation safeguarding an athlete's educational rights.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

According to the current legislation, the General Secretariat for Sport – GSS- (the state agency) assumes the responsibility for supporting sportsmen and sports women in securing employment during or after their sporting career. However, this responsibility is confined only to those athletes who have achieved distinguished sporting performance, which is defined by the existing legislative framework.

If athletes have not completed upper secondary school, they can register at any school of their choice. If they have not completed their university degree, athletes can go back to the university and attend courses. If they have completed upper secondary school but not registered for a university degree, they can chose from the opportunities available for vocational training or apply at the Greek Open University (distance learning).

The Employment Programme for top athletes has been in place since 2002, it operates under supervision of GSS. There is no predetermined budget for the programme. Depending on sporting achievement and other qualifications, athletes are entitled to tenure employment in positions within the public sector irrespective of the cost. Athletes reaching superior sporting performance are entitled to apply for a tenure position. These athletes are also encouraged to continue competing at an élite level and, therefore, there are no specific working hours to help facilitate this.

The programme guarantees employment to certain elite athletes:

- Olympic Games and World Championships participants with 1st-8th ranking
- European Championships participants with 1st-6th ranking and athletes equalising or breaking world or European records.

Athletes are offered a choice of position (they indicate up to five choices in their application). The athlete must be qualified for the position. This programme is open to athletes who have competed at high levels in the past and not just to recent elite athletes. Currently the GSS has processed and placed 294 applicants in the programme.

## HUNGARY

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Education is compulsory for all children aged six to 16 who are living in the Republic of Hungary. Gifted young athletes of compulsory school age have the option not to attend school every day, but to be a private student, and many of them take advantage of this opportunity. As private students they are obliged to take end of term exams, and the requirements are the same for them, as for the regular students. Notwithstanding, they also have the opportunity to apply for individual schedules, and according to it they complete the statutory educational programme one-two years later than the regular students.

Gifted young sportspersons have the opportunity to attend either/or schools that:

- specialise in sports
- run special classes for gifted young athletes.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

There are 20 Olympic schools in Hungary, mostly elementary and secondary schools, but two sports schools also belong to them. In the Olympic schools there are no separate subjects for the various theoretical issues in sport. Instead, some PE classes are devoted to lectures on the sports history, Olympic history, sports media, sports administration etc. There are also study groups which work in close cooperation with the Hungarian Olympic Academy. The Olympic schools have special programmes which focus on the development of the young sportspersons' moral character. Not only gifted young sportspersons attend Olympic schools, but general students as well.

In order to diminish the negative impact of the young sportspersons' sporting career on their opportunities for education (and to improve their chances of finding employment in the mainstream labour market after their retirement from sports), the Hungarian Olympic Committee (HOC) launched a programme, called Olympians' Course of Life Programme, in 2002. In the framework of this programme the HOC entered into agreement with 20 colleges/universities (providing educational programmes not necessarily in sport, but in various areas).

The universities section below lists the services and concessions that are offered to Hungarian Olympic athletes.

3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

**Tuition fees exemption/reduction:** partner colleges/universities in the Olympian Course of Life Programme launched in 2002 bind themselves by contract to exempt one to three gifted young sportsmen/sportswomen recommended by the HOC, from paying tuition fees and to reduce the fees in respect of other young sportspersons' tuition.

**Flexibility in dates:** the rectors/presidents of these institutions have agreed to permit changes to the date of their entrance examination/admission interview if required.

**Facilitating entry requirements:** in accordance with a governmental decree (246/2003. [XII.18.] Ministerial Degree on the General Regulations of Admission Procedure at Colleges/Universities) winners and those placed second and third in Olympic Games competitions have the right to be admitted to any colleges/universities without an entrance examination.

**Incentive scheme:** in accordance with the same ministerial degree, at the admission procedure five bonus points might be given for winners and athletes placed second or third in world and European championships held in any Olympic sports (but only in Olympic sports) and three bonus points might be given for winners and those placed second or third in national championships held in any Olympic sports (again exclusively in Olympic sports).

**Tutor monitoring:** universities arrange for tutors to monitor the student athletes' education and to give assistance in their studies, as well as to coordinate their activities.

**Auxiliary material:** universities provide the young sportspersons with textbooks, handbooks, manuals, special literature and other auxiliary educational material with the aim to promote their studying during their long-lasting absence, eg when they are staying in training camps.

**Time-tabling flexibility:** flexible arrangements are made regarding a student athlete's absence, and their study and examination timetable. These arrangements apply only to young sportspersons who are beneficiary of the agreement between the HOC and colleges/universities. These student athletes have the opportunity to pursue their studies according to individual study and examination timetables.

4) **How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no information available for this section.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

Currently there are no structures or organisations in place to support athletes after they retire from professional sport. However, the HOC does have plans to find a way to support these athletes. In the framework of the Olympians' Course of Life Programme, it is planned that former Olympians would mentor gifted young sportspersons, and the Club of the Olympic Champions would give assistance. The HOC would enter into agreement with a head-hunter firm in order to promote graduate elite Olympic athletes and successfully integrate them into the mainstream labour market. The realisation of these plans has not started yet primarily due to lack of funds.

## IRELAND

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Under the Irish Education Act 2000, children are obliged to be educated between the ages of six and 16 years. Although there is no provision within the curriculum to cater for gifted young sportspersons apart from the statutory PE lessons, there is a system of sport classes (team sports) between 4-6pm each day available in secondary schools. These include coaching training in team sports – rugby, soccer, Gaelic Games, hockey, volleyball, netball, basketball and squash. Individual sports are also catered for – much depends on each school's sporting infrastructure and/or local facilities.

In addition to the basic PE programme, there is a Buntus Programme offered to develop children's motor skills independent of particular sports. The major team sports governing bodies, FAI (Football Association of Ireland) schools and the GAA, (Gaelic Athletic Association) organise inter-school league/cup competitions for children aged between eight and 12 years.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

The current sports academies (eg football, rugby, tennis etc.) in Ireland do not provide education for their athletes but *Tennis Ireland* is striving to devise a strategy whereby formal education is embedded into the programme for the development of young players and are seeking the co-operation of local primary and post primary schools. Tennis Ireland has a National Training Programme that targets talented youngsters. There are currently 12 participants aged between 11 and 14 completing 21 hours training per week. Some training is at regional and other at national level. The programme is funded by Tennis Ireland, regional councils and parents. Candidates are usually identified via clubs rather than schools.

Tennis Ireland received €455,858 funding from the Irish Sports Council for 2004. Part of this funding is to develop youngsters on the Academy Development Programme. Other funding is for coaching, travel grants and tournament costs for women players (resulting in the team qualifying for International Ladies Team Tournament).

Some tennis players leave Ireland after secondary school and pursue higher education in the USA or UK, usually via scholarships.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

Elite student-athletes who are combining formal education and a sporting career generally find that the education system (post primary and third level) is rather restrictive. There is little flexibility afforded to elite sports participants with respect to the completion of courses or programme elements. However, some concessions do exist, including:

- **facilitating entry requirements:** in the Waterford Institute of Technology there are places reserved for individuals who are competent in particular sports and are guaranteed places on the Recreation and Leisure Course. These places are usually offered on the basis of one per sport such as cycling, equestrian, swimming, athletics etc. These students may not meet the points (CAO) requirements for this course, but they must meet the minimum entry requirements to the college – they are guaranteed a place on the course, but receive no financial assistance
- **special arrangements:** at University College Dublin (UCD) talented athletes are advised to register for the Diploma in Sports Management should they fail to meet academic entry requirements for other programmes. The diploma in sports management is a two-year part time programme that aims to provide a foundation in the necessary skills for a sports related career
- **scholarships:** sports scholarships for third level students (aged 17 or over) are now available for talented athletes at most universities and colleges in Ireland, although funding is much smaller than in other countries, eg USA. It can also come in the form of 'benefit in kind' such as free accommodation on campus or sports equipment rather than in financial terms. UCD has the largest scholarship programme which was introduced in 1979 for young soccer players. Since then, it has been extended to embrace many other sports (such as athletics, basketball, boxing, golf, rowing, table-tennis, martial arts etc.). Students who receive such awards must satisfy the academic entry requirements. Sports scholarship students are obliged to commit themselves to being involved with the respective club, agree to represent the college (and college only) in any competition and attend lectures, tutorials and complete their academic work. Scholarships are offered for one year only with subsequent funding depending on academic performance. Some universities have sports trusts that coordinate the scholarships. Funding of these programmes is through businesses, clubs, sponsors and college alumni. Sports scholarship holders have access to modern sports facilities, coaching and medical services. There is often also the opportunity to take part in higher level competitions through University competitions, eg Gaelic Football, Football, Rugby, Hockey
- the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) offers bursaries (valued around €630 per year) to third level students via its Provincial Councils (Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Connaught)
- **reserve places:** some institutions have 'reserve places' for talented athletes. These students do not have to meet the academic entry points for the particular programme (for example: 415 points in the Leaving Certificate Examination to gain entry into a sports science degree programme), it is sufficient that they have the basic matriculation requirements to gain entry to the college (much lower academic requirements). This practice exists for students pursuing courses in the Waterford Institute of Technology and Dublin City University. They are then registered students at the college, can avail of a sports scholarship and represent the college in competition.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Rugby players may be contracted to the IRFU (for national duty), to one of the Provinces (Ulster, Munster, Leinster or Connaught) to participate in international (European) or local competitions. The majority of the players attached to clubs are not professional but may be employed on a full time contract, or be paid per match played, win bonus arrangements etc. There is differing opinion on the age restrictions for signing contracts. The IRFU states 16 or over but club representatives suggest there is no age requirement. There is no legal responsibility for the club to provide education, however, many are encouraged to continue education.

Football- The Eircom League in Ireland is the National League and there are two divisions – Premier and Division 1. Players are contracted to clubs but the terms would vary from a full time (a small number of players) contract to part time contracts. Players must be 16 or over to sign contracts. There is no legal obligation for clubs to provide education and the majority focus only on football development.

Soccer academies exist in Ireland but are not as well developed as those in the United Kingdom. Various levels of coaching are offered to youngsters by the Eircom League clubs but these clubs do not employ Education and Welfare Officers. In fact, little attention is given by soccer personnel within Irish clubs to encourage young players to advance their formal education. The FAI Career Guidance Officer tries to maintain close contact with Education and Welfare Officers attached to English clubs. He also advises and encourages Irish youngsters to heed their advice with respect to pursuing education while at the particular club.

In recent years, American and non-Irish basketball players have been contracted by certain clubs to participate in the Super League. These players will be obliged to get a work permit, hence the necessity for a contract. These players are paid a salary and can arrange a transfer to another club during the season, whereas the licensed players (usually Irish) must stay with the club for the full season. Players must be 16+ to sign a contract. The clubs have no obligation to provide education.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

The **National Coaching and Training Centre** in conjunction with certain governing bodies offers an Assimilation Scheme which facilitates experienced athletes and coaches to be accredited to level 2 or higher with the National Coaching Development Programme (NCDP). This scheme allows participants to draw on their vast experience and contribute on an equal footing with individuals already trained and working within the NCDP. Retired athletes with international experience have utilised this with a view to gaining employment (in a paid or unpaid capacity) with sports clubs.

The **Football Association of Ireland** Careers Guidance Officer strives to place youngsters who left Ireland to play soccer with clubs abroad but who are unemployed and have returned to Ireland, in suitable positions either in football and/or education programme. A pilot programme was offered two years ago (REAP) at Dublin City University with a view to facilitating the return to education of young Irish soccer players but due to lack of demand, this programme has now been put on hold.

The **International Carding Scheme** was introduced in 1998 to provide a range of support to assist Ireland's most talented sports persons realise their potential to perform successfully at the highest international level. Players and athletes qualify for support by meeting standards set in consultation with the NGBs. Any athlete who meets the criteria is automatically included in the scheme. In addition to providing financial support for those players/athletes who need assistance to meet necessary international competition and training expenses, not otherwise covered by the National Governing Body, the Carding Scheme provides non-financial support (co-ordinated and administered by the National Coaching and Training Centre (NCTC) in Limerick).

The Non-Financial Support Services include (a) sports science and (b) sports medical support. Access to sports science and sports medical support is available in the following areas – sports biomechanics, sports nutrition, sports physiology, sports psychology and sports medicine. Other services available to athletes in the scheme include specialist medical services, educational workshops, access to training facilities, athlete services directory and athlete diary. All carded athletes are entitled to two weeks residential training at the National Coaching and Training Centre which is located in Limerick.

## ITALY

### 1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career

The Ministry of Education has direct control over the 10 sports orientated schools within the secondary education sector. These schools enable students who are involved in high-level sports to continue with their studies as well as their training. They enable the athlete to have a more flexible timetable. The schools offer study plans that favour the athletes sporting commitments, tutoring services (especially during revision periods or when athletes spend a long period of time away from school training or competing) and distance learning. Some of these schools are linked to higher education institutions such as universities.

### 2) Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions

The relationship between education and sport has only recently been developed. Through the cooperation of many organisations (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Winter Sport federation FISI, CONI and UNCEM) a **Ski College** has been established and runs a programme called 'Champions in Life'. This has been established for two years and a number of institutions in the North of Italy now run the programme. The curriculum includes elements of health related issues such as nutrition, anti-doping awareness, anatomy, physiology and psychology of sport, IT skills and a foreign language. These skills are aimed at enabling the athletes to find work either at mountain resorts or within the Winter Sport segment.

### 3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete

There are provisions for the promotion of athletes who study at Institutes of Sports Science. Other athletes who study at university are supported through the University Sports Centres which receive public grants. However there are no grants available specifically for athletes to study at university.

**Flexibility within the university system:** officially, special efforts to accommodate athletes studying at university – eg changing exam dates – are only made in some private universities. Frequently, however, an individual student will approach his or her professor directly to discuss changing exam dates, etc. although such arrangements can be difficult.

In the old university system there used to be 15 Institutes of Physical Education, now there are about 30 universities offering sport related courses. However most courses are provided within the Faculty of Medicine. Some of the Universities have links with sport federations but these are not very strong or consistent. On the other hand a number of sport federations give out bursaries to student-athletes to further their education at universities.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Professional sports in Italy are: football, basketball, golf, cycling, boxing and motorcycling.

**Football Academies**

There is no structured way on how clubs should develop football academies. The National federation are currently looking at the French case to adopt best practice but so far no model has been proposed. Until the age of 14, young footballers cannot move away from their region. However most academies cater for players aged 15 onwards. All academies must have links with schools and footballers must be 16 before they can sign a professional contract with a club.

There is a collective agreement that is used both in football and in basketball that both player and club must adhere to. Article 9 of this agreement guarantees the player that the club will promote, support and take into consideration any academic commitments or vocational qualification courses that the player wants to undertake.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring from professional sport**

**Public sector**

The Italian armed forces and other similar state structures have a tradition of having their own support groups into which a certain number of athletes are welcomed and accepted. These athletes take part in military championships. Alternatively, athletes can enter public competitions to gain entry into a variety of other government services including the military police, the fire brigade, the prison service and the marines.

**Private sector**

The *Italia Lavoro* - Sport to Job programme - provides training courses and e-learning subjects such as sponsoring, sports marketing and facilities management to aid former athletes enter back into the job market. The project has targeted four regions; Sicily, Lombardia, Piemonte and Tuscany, aiming at reaching 400 athletes. There are also plans to extend this to the Lazio region.

The Adecco Foundation is another organisation that works, with the NOC, to support athletes re-entering or entering the world of work for the first time. They provide access to training and advice as well as outplacement services all of which have been proven to be very effective. Adecco has a 98% success rate in helping athletes to start a new career.

The Master Programme 2000 was set up in 2001 by the Italian Olympic Committee and the Adecco Foundation. The programme introduces retired athletes to companies and has had success with over 300 former athletes who are now employed in private companies as a result.

## **Pension scheme**

The Italian law has defined athletes, coaches, managers and trainers as sports-related professions. However, in order for the individual to be regarded as a professional the individual must be paid permanent employment.

The Italian government provides professional athletes with support in many areas. In 1934 the Provident Fund for Athlete Insurance was created and there is also a public body called SPORTASS which provides insurance and welfare payments for sports injuries. Social security is also covered by SPORTASS which includes a pension and regular compulsory insurance.

In 1996 a system was established by the Italian Olympic Committee which concluded that twice the total prize money received by an Olympic medallist would be donated to SPORTASS. This money would go towards that athlete's individual pension fund and members of the Olympic Club can contribute extra money to individual pension funds. Only the Italian Olympic Committee's National Council can appoint athletes to the Olympic Club after a proposal by the Olympic Training Office. Pensions can be drawn from the age of 45, providing that an athlete has been a member for a minimum of eight years.

**Source:** European Parliament Directorate-General for Research, 2003. "Combining sports and education: Support for athletes in the EU Member States." in *Education and Culture Series*, edited by DG IV Publications.

## LATVIA

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory school in Latvia is between the ages six to 16 years. During the earlier period of compulsory schooling young sportspersons can only train after their lessons at school at either sports schools or sports clubs. However, pupils have the opportunity to enrol at a Sport Gymnasium in grade 9 (15 years) where there will be provision for both academic and sporting commitments within the school's curriculum.

**Riga Secondary School Nr. 90** is specialised in the respect that it has one specialised sport class group in grades 10-12. The number of pupils in this class differs from year to year (16 to 30 pupils). The pupils generally specialise in basketball, but swimming and skiing are also offered.

There are no flexible arrangements for these pupils, but if a student gets top results and an important competition falls during exams, the sport federation and the Ministry of Education can postpone the examination. The student-athletes complete the same compulsory education with an additional three sports classes per week and six hours of additional practice, taking place after normal study hours or between study classes.

The school has an agreement with the Latvian Academy of Sport Education (LASE) where the student-athletes can enter LASE in the state budget group without taking entrance examinations (if they have passed the centralised examinations when finishing school). Usually one or two student-athletes enter LASE each year.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Institutions like *Murjani Sport Gymnasium* (part of the state education system under authority of the Sports Administration of the Ministry of Education and Science) make it possible for student-athletes to combine their academic and sporting life successfully. Specialising in eight different sports, this gymnasium gives the opportunity for athletes to further their career especially through its link with the Latvian Academy of Sport Education.

Of 204 students, 102 are members of national teams participating in European and World Championships, Olympics and Olympiads. 73 other students are national team candidates or members participating in other competitions.

The school has an additional 10 training sessions a week to the usual compulsory education. There are individual tutorials for students that have missed lesson time due to competitions. There is the option of postponing the examinations if there is a clash with sport events. Sporting attainment is measured through competition performance and evaluation through tests and discussions.

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

Concessions for élite athletes who want to further their academic career are decided by that particular higher education institution. For example by:

- **facilitating entry requirements:** the Latvian Academy of Sport Education admits, without the entrance exams, the participants of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> placed athletes of the world and European championships in the Olympic sports, as well as the 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> placed athletes of the world and European junior championships, the graduates of Murjani Sport Gymnasium and Riga Secondary School Nr.90 sport education classes.
- **special arrangements:** there are also some higher education institutions which support top athletes allowing them to study longer within the same study year. Some study programmes offer distance learning studies.

Student-athletes do not usually have difficulties in completing theoretical studies as these can be studied in various environments and are flexible. However, those partaking in practical studies have more difficulty as the course can only be completed by participating. In this case students can study for eight-10 years to complete their course.

There are no scholarships or grants for higher education. An athlete can be a candidate for a state financed budget group, but there are no special funds.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Football, basketball, volleyball, handball, ice hockey and athletics all use contracts to bind athletes to clubs. Athletes under 18 must have parental signatures. There are no legal obligations for the clubs to safeguard an athlete's education.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

There are currently no organisations that offer support to athletes upon retirement from professional sport. The responsibility to plan for a post-athletic careers usually lies with the athletes themselves and occasionally with the help of their sport federations. However, many of the top athletes are offered a job in the federations or clubs to work as a coach, manager or the official, but it is done very individually.

The Ministry of Education and Science has awarded some top athletes a sports pension after retirement. However, there are no incentives given to retired athletes to return to education.

## LITHUANIA

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory education in the Republic of Lithuania is from five to 16 years of age. There are opportunities for talented young sportspersons to enrol at a sports boarding school, which are state funded and run in such a way to optimise the best results in sports. Grants are provided to talented individuals by the National Olympic Committee.

**Sports Boarding Schools** (Sports Education Establishments – SEEs) are state or local government founded institutions for students which provide education that allows ‘self-expression through sport’. It aims to encourage students through sport activities, looking for talented sportspersons, training and preparing sportspersons for the Olympic Games, World’s and Europe Championships and other international events. The basic difference between these public funded sports schools and other schools is that they focus on sport whereas a comprehensive school is a school with preschool, elementary, general, secondary and corresponding special education programmes. The SEEs have special educational programmes (compliant with compulsory education) that allow for training as well as education on certain aspects of sport such as techniques, recovery times etc.

There are 99 public SEEs and 3 private sport schools. In the SEE of *Kaisiadorys*, several types of sport are offered such as basketball (males and females), football (males and females), swimming (males and females), track and field athletics.

1376 young sportspersons are enrolled in this SEE. The total amount enrolled in SEEs in Lithuania reaches 47600 schoolchildren.

The Republic of Lithuania Law on Education states that education is a right for all school age children. No special provision for young sportspersons is provided until they reach secondary education.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Sport gymnasiums give students the opportunity to further both their academic and sporting careers. After completion of general education, the state provides opportunity for young talented sportspersons to pursue higher education. Sport centres and their regional divisions (eg Olympic sports centres, sport gymnasium) fulfill this function.

The functions of the Olympic Sports Centre is to train Olympic athletes, organise and administer educational training, adjusts time and place for the training, discuss and approve plans prepared by the coaches, monitor their implementation, take care of accounting matters, housing and food of the athletes and together with sport federations and coaches select preliminary games. It also arranges educational training camps in Lithuania and abroad, travel costs and transport, medicines and recovery remedies, medical services, research and analysis of sport science, information and its management, improvement of coaching qualifications, salaries and social insurance.

The Lithuanian Olympic Sport Centre (LOSC) employs medical staff and along with city health centres it secures medical services for the sportspersons, cooperates with testing laboratories of higher education establishments and at their premises carries out extended and urgent clinical examinations of the athletes following approved examination programmes. LOSC may provide medical services for the athletes in other health institutions supervised by the Health Ministry or other private health centres.

The LOSC also provides an educational service for the athletes. About 140 Olympic athletes are doing sport at LOSC (100-120 and 100-150 of talented sportspersons of basic reserve and varied reserve respectively). According to the type of sport chosen, LOSC organises 10 trainings a week (with additional games on weekends). Education is received following the programmes of preschool, elementary, general, secondary or corresponding special education (1-3 classes take place in the morning with training after, 4-6 classes in the afternoon with training after).

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

There are some higher educational institutions in Lithuania- Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education (LAPE), Vilnius Pedagogical University (VPU), Siauliai University (SU)- which take into account the talent of a sportsperson who is entering and award him/her additional points. Gifted young sportspersons can enjoy certain privileges when they enrol at a university. These include:

- **bonus points:** on applying to Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education extra points are given to talented sportspersons if they were 1-3 placed winners and participants in the Olympics, World's and Europe Adult, Youth or Junior Championships, 1-3 placed winners in Lithuanian Adult Championships or they are junior champions, or those possessing Lithuanian Physical Education Badge
- **special arrangements:** a course may be finished within two years, athletes may claim for exemption and they may have academic breaks due to sports activities.

Many higher education institutions in Lithuania do not pay enough attention to the fact that their student-athletes have not had normal studying conditions. However, LAPE has set certain regulations (because it is a specific university). Students and talented athletes in LAPE can study according to individual study plans or individual study programmes (the course takes two years with a maximum duration of studies in 8 years). LAPE does not offer general distance studies system. During the maximal study period (eight years) a student receives chosen university level education (sport coach, physical trainer etc). It is difficult to combine studies and sport, because not all higher education establishments (both university and non-university level schools) bother about flexible study systems.

The NOC supports such talented athletes by way of providing Olympic grants.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

In Lithuania, a professional athlete is a sports person who receives a salary for preparation to and participation in competitions which is paid by the sports organisation the athlete has a contract with. Only athletes over 18 years of age are entitled to make an official labour contract in Lithuania.

Although the law clearly states what contract provisions should be (including learning conditions of an under-aged sports person), clubs do not take responsibility to provide education for sports persons.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

The Department of Physical Education and Sport approved a social assistance programme on how to support single and disabled former athletes of the Republic of Lithuania as well as sport staff. However, there is no solid system (employment, profession, etc) in Lithuania rendering assistance for retired athletes.

The Law on Physical Culture and Sports refers only to a retirement pension for athletes and coaches. Athletes and coaches working on a contract basis are entitled to social insurance pensions. The Department of Physical Education and Sport supplies first and second degree pensions to award athletes, coaches, sport staff and teachers.

Upon retirement, it is often difficult to find a job (especially if an athlete does not have an education or specialty). The NOC takes care of and tackles employment issues of the former sports persons, though, only episodically.

The Law states that persons receiving not lower education than secondary, according to their knowledge and abilities have a right to get higher education in Lithuanian higher education establishments.

## LUXEMBOURG

### 1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career

Education in Luxembourg is compulsory between the ages of five and 15 year (or in principal nine school years). Compulsory education is divided into two stages:

- primary education (six years in total)
- secondary education (seven years in total) - general secondary education and technical secondary education)

In primary education students receive, on average, two to three hours per week and in secondary education it is dependent upon subject of study and may vary between one to three hours per week. PE is considered a core subject in Luxembourg.

During the period of compulsory education, gifted young sportspersons are able to attend school abroad or ask for a reduction of school hours. The law Grand-Ducal of 10 December 1998 allows athletes to partake in a reduced school programme in respect of them attending training camps and competitions, as well as for training extra hours. Generally, the hours of non-core subjects of study will be dropped. Furthermore, it allows gifted athletes to split one study year over two school years. Exam dates can also be rescheduled. Gifted athletes can enjoy these facilities from their first year in secondary school onwards in specific schools (*école partenaire*) under the guidance of the school director. The reduction of the school programme is a function of the athletic needs and of the capacity to study of gifted athletes.

One particular secondary school organises sporting classes (*classes sportives*) which group 140 12-16 year old pupils which are given three extra hours of PE/sport (totalling six hours per week). Classes group gifted athletes from different sports which are selected by the sports federations. The sports federations provide training during the six hours per week. These pupils can also enjoy the facilities provided to gifted athletes under the law Grand-Ducal of 10 December 1998.

Financial support is provided by COSL (Comité Olympique et Sportif Luxembourgeois) for elite athletes, and by the *Centres formations* for other gifted athletes. There are 11 *Centres formations* (one per sports discipline) which provide athletic training and support, as well as educational support (eg support from a tutor).

### 2) Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions

No such institutions exist.

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

Higher education is only provided in the format of two or three years of higher education outside of university (*Bacalauréat*) and four years of university – both in a small number of subjects of study. No specific initiatives have been developed for gifted sportspersons. Generally, gifted athletes will attend university abroad.

**4) How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no provision in Luxembourg.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

Due to the limited number of élite athletes, no specific initiatives have been developed with regard to securing employment or returning to education/training after their sporting careers. Generally, gifted sportspersons with a university diploma will find employment in Luxembourg. Gifted sportspersons without a diploma of higher education can apply to COSL or ENEPS for financial support. The 'Barthel scholarship' may be used to assist former élite athletes to integrate in the job market.

## **MALTA**

**1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

In Malta, education is compulsory from the age of six to 16 years. The only opportunity for gifted young sportspersons to pursue sports within the general framework is at the age of 13, when PE is offered as an option at G.C.S.E level.

**2) Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

There are no such provisions in Malta.

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

Sporting excellence is not acknowledged at university or at any other academic institution. The only concession that is offered came into effect in 2003 when young athletes participating in international competitions were given the opportunity to postpone their university exams. However, it is useful to note that university tuition is free for Maltese citizens.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no information available for this section.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

There is currently no support provided for elite athletes when they retire from their sport. It is the athlete's own responsibility to make plans for this transition.

## POLAND

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in Poland is between the ages of six to 16. Schools for gifted young sports people have been present in the Polish sports system since 1969, when the first experimental post primary schools were created with an expanded PE programme. Currently, championship sport schools' main goal is to provide sports training combined the general school curriculum (primary, middle and high school). Such a solution allows the students to carry out their sports training (11 disciplines) parallel to their school tuition. In 2003 the Ministry of National Education and Sport (MENiS) financed the sports training of 1,883 students- competing in 26 disciplines, grouped in 32 public sports champion schools (SMS), eight non-public sports champion schools (NSMS) and eight centres for youth sports training (OSSM) run by Polish sports associations.

In 2002, there were 99 sports schools functioning in Poland, 40 of which were primary schools. These schools enrolled 30,441 student-athletes. 48 Middle Sports schools were educating 11,878 students-athletes, while 11 High Sports Schools educated and trained 1,208 students. The 67 sports champions schools were attended by 6,754 students-athletes. It is estimated that 1/3 of young sports persons active in high level sport are educated within the framework of the sports school system. In the school system, sports training accompanies the educational process and is often treated as one of the elements of preparing young people for becoming members of the future society. [Sozański H. 2003].

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Both public and non-public sport champions high schools give the opportunity for students in Poland to specialise in a wide range of sports. This type of schooling has made it possible to combine the didactic and training process effectively. Training trips and schedules no longer present problems because the teachers are at the students' disposal. Students spend about 48 hours per week at their school, where 20 of those are devoted to training.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

**Facilitating entry requirements:** the MENiS directive from 20 December 2002, gives the Minister of Education and Sport the possibility to grant a competitor, who achieved outstanding results for Polish sport, access to university without the requirement of having the matura exam.

**Bonus points:** if a candidate already has some certified qualifications in the area of physical culture or sports instructor title, this is recognised by the bonus point scheme. Other physical education academies have very similar acceptance criteria. Some universities also reward sports people with bonus points during the enrolment process.

**Scholarships:** the Minister of Education's directive states certain regulations for the awarding, withholding and withdrawing as well as the value of sports scholarships for national and Olympic team members. The sports scholarships are awarded to national and Olympic team members, including the Para Olympic team, and financed from the national budget. A sports scholarship may be received by a national team member if:

- they have been called up to the national team
- they are placed first, second or third in world or European championships at senior level, directly precluding the awarding of the scholarship, in which:
  - a) at least 8 competitors participated,
  - b) at least 6 teams or crews participated
- athletes are committed to follow through with the World or European championship preparation programme, prepared by the corresponding Polish sports association, and to participate in the abovementioned competitions.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

**Polish Football Association (PFA) General High School**

The school functions as a non-public sports championship school. Currently the school has classes at primary, middle and high school level. The optimal number of students per class is 22-24. This number of boys per class guarantees the best conditions for both education and training.

Because the school does not participate in the MENiS programme it does not receive any funds from the ministry for the training and education of young people. The school's main sources of financing are parents, sponsors and their own entrepreneurial activity (leasing out school facilities for various events).

The school has an agreement with the Marek Kochalski Medical Clinic in Lodz. According to this agreement students are provided with sport medical tests. The clinic also provides the students with massages, physiotherapy and psychotherapy.

Individual work with the student is a very important element of the educational process. Players travelling to competitions are provided with lessons and upon their return complete the material which they missed during their absence.

The School Principal is responsible for the programme's adherence with Ministry guidelines. The school curator supervises the carrying out of the school educational programme. The school provides the students with conditions enabling them to learn and train at a high level of sports performance. Students who are not able to cope with the burden have the possibility of continuing their education at evening school (lower educational requirements).

### **PZKosz Non-public Sports Champions School in Warsaw (girls' basketball)**

The school caters for 22 female student-athletes. The central programme for young talented sportspeople has been operating since 1994. It was then that the first legal regulations appeared making it possible to open non-public sports championship schools which specialised in a single sports discipline and which had links with the Polish sports associations. The Warsaw school opened in 1997.

The main goal is preparing competitors for junior and senior national team membership (12 players each). The school belongs to the Polish Basketball Association, and is partly answerable to the Sports Development Strategy Department of the Ministry of National Education and Sport, due to their involvement in the Training and Competition for Athletically Gifted Young People programme. Young people are recruited to the school by the Polish Basketball Association in cooperation with the best girls basketball clubs.

The school receives funding for their activity directly from the Polish Basketball Association. Part of these funds are directly from the Association but the majority comes from the Ministry through the talented youth programme.

Full educational programme in accordance with Ministry guidelines is received by all students in combination with a high level sports performance programme. The Polish Basketball Association makes plans according to competition schedules. The school must adhere to the educational programme requirements outlined by the Ministry and the sporting requirements outlined by the Polish basketball Association.

The organisation of educational and sports activities depends on the training and competition schedule. The players live, learn, and practice in one place, saving valuable time. Furthermore, constant teacher and trainer supervision helps balance education and training provision.

#### **5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

According to the Physical Culture Act, Polish representatives at summer and winter Olympic Games who:

- won at least one Olympic medal
- are at least 35 years old and do not practice sport competitively
- have Polish citizenship

- have permanent residence in Poland
- have not been convicted of an intentional crime

are entitled to a financial award from the national budget equivalent to the average monthly salary from the previous calendar year. It is awarded by the Minister of Education and Sport.

Outstanding sports people may also receive assistance from the central government body responsible for sport, ie the Minister of Education and Sport but generally time this responsibility is taken up by their home clubs and Polish sports associations.

## PORTUGAL

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory education in Portugal is from ages six to 16. Opportunities for gifted young sportspersons to pursue a sporting career exist during their compulsory schooling years through various adaptations to the statutory educational programme. Such adaptations require Portuguese schools to provide a personal learning mentor to talented performers with the responsibility to monitor and refine their personal development plans, including academic progress, and to have flexible exam dates that do not coincide with sporting commitments. A comprehensive list of such adaptations is included in the Elite Athletes Programme in Decreto-Lei n.º 125/95.

The Sports Institute has a role in coordinating the flexible arrangements, such as school registration, schedule and frequency of lessons, absences, alteration of dates of test of evaluation, school transfers, accompanying teachers, compensation lessons and academic scholarships.

An example of a school accommodating the needs of athletes is *Escola Secundária Sebastião e Silva*. In respect of Basketball, the school tries to organise schedules so that elite athletes are in the same class (15 girls each year). Also teachers are selected for extra pedagogical support (two hours per week). The athletes must undertake the same education as other students. In addition they have 18 hours of training per week.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

There are no secondary education institutions that specialise in sports. However, some military institutions with Secondary Education (*Colégio Militar, Instituto Militar dos Pupilos do Exército and Instituto de Odivelas*) have a special and reinforced curriculum on sports subjects. The Portuguese school system, in some secondary education institutions, provides a professional course on sport. This is for students that want to obtain a professional degree level for working as sport monitors in municipalities, sport clubs, sport academies and fitness academies.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

**Scholarships:** the *Estatuto de Alta Competição* (Statute for top competition) scheme gives the opportunity for elite athletes to win scholarships to further their education.

**Special status:** according to Decreto-Lei n.º 125/95, elite athletes also have special status when they access universities (except military and police institutions). A certain quota is decided each year. Between 1992/1993 to 1999/2000 1,366 entered universities as beneficiaries of special status.

The flexible arrangements for compulsory schooling also apply to higher education.

**Johan Cruyff University (Lisbon) at Universidade Independente** has one sports related course, an MBA in Sciences of Sport. This is organised in co-ordination with foreign institutions. The admission criteria is different to normal procedures where students can only do a masters degree if they have completed a university course. The course has 220 hours of studies primarily on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. The students are divided into four classes, athletes, former athletes, students with a degree and those without.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is one Football League club which runs an academy, *Sporting Clube de Portugal* which brings together the best young players to give them top quality coaching, development, education and medical care, while having the opportunity to live on the premises. It is the only example of a specialist academy of its sort running in Portugal where its directors are working with an increasing range of partners, including specialist sports clubs and local primary and secondary schools to extend the opportunities for out-of-hours learning for both their own pupils and young people in the local community.

The other professional sports in Portugal are basketball and handball. Athletes must be 16 or over before signing a contract. The clubs are formally legally responsible to provide education for the young athletes.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

The Football Professional Players Union (*Sindicato dos Jogadores Profissionais de Futebol - SJPF*) provides programmes for securing employment or for athletes to return to education/ training after their sporting careers are over.

The SJPF is supported financially by the 'Institute of the Job and Professional Formation'. The scheme is based on orientation (for ex-players or athletes nearing the end of their career) and qualification (for young players during their sporting career). The courses are free of charge and the athletes have accommodation, food and transportation.

Another scheme run by the SJPF is the 'Stages for Unemployed Professional Football Players' where players can get fitness, work on skills and play in matches, which may lead to club contracts.

The SJPF offers support in the provision of:

- one-to-one expert advice
- guidance to help identify the athlete's goals and ambitions
- job searching techniques

- CV advice
- negotiating flexibility with working arrangements.

The SJPF also provides education/training programmes in the following subjects, aimed at supporting the players after their sporting careers are over:

- ICT (information and communication technology)
- sport management
- management skills.

## SLOVAKIA

### 1) Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career

Compulsory education in Slovakia is from age six to 15. Opportunities to pursue a sporting career during the compulsory schooling years exist primarily at private schools, gymnasiums and academies for sport. There are currently six national and three private sport gymnasiums. The educational period is eight years with graduation in four subjects. PE at the sport gymnasium is substituted by regular sport training. The education process enables students to combine training and study because formal education begins at 11 a. m. and ends at 4 p.m. Therefore, it is possible to arrange two training units daily before and after formal education.

**Sport classes-** 80 elementary schools in Slovakia have sport classes in 30 sports (the main sports are football, hockey, athletics, basketball, volleyball).

**Sport centres-** 350 elementary schools have sport centres. The difference between them is that sports classes concentrate exclusively on young sportsmen, whereas in sport centres there are only a few talented sportsmen in each class. They have 10 hours of sport training per week (two hours daily).

**Sport Gymnasium (Bratislava)** is a public institution but there is not enough funding to cover all expenses for students. Parents contribute approximately €500 per year for training camps and equipment. There are 76 (16%) student-athletes, who are predominantly members of Slovak junior teams (from a total of 476 students in year 2003/04). The following 22 sports are catered for: alpine skiing, archery, athletics, dancing, fencing, football, handball, ice hockey, judo, karate, pentathlon, rowing, shooting, sport gymnastics, squash, swimming, table-tennis, tennis, triathlon, volleyball, water polo and wrestling.

The student-athletes study in small groups/classes so there is more contact with the teacher. The best athletes can have a study programme tailored to their individual sport schedules which also offer individual consultations and exams. Young athletes have a maximum of 24 hours in the lower stage and 26 hours in the higher stage of study per week. In the lower stage (classes 1-4) they follow normal primary school education. In the higher stage (classes 5-8) some subjects like music, arts, religion/ethics are substituted with sport training. Students can, therefore, concentrate on training and their competition programme (including 20-26 hours of training weekly - the number varies from sport to sport). Every training group/class attends two training camps, one in summer and a second in winter.

There is no direct route into higher education. Students can make a choice of any higher school or university in Slovakia or abroad. However, they can choose to study an optional subject called Basics of Sport Preparation (BSP) and graduate as a trainer of 3rd certificated level. This qualification enables them to work in gyms, etc.

The educational period is eight years with graduation in four subjects: Slovakian, a foreign language (English or German) or maths, optional subject (eg BSP) and another optional subject. Before graduation students can take university entrance exams on a private basis. This form of preparation has become very popular.

Admission to the sport gymnasium from primary schools in year 2003-4 was as follows:

- prima (1st class) = 52 students
- quinta (5th class) = 32 students.

Approximately 50-60 % of students are successful in entering university or a higher school. Most of them (about 70 %) enter the Faculty of Physical Exercise and Sports (FPES).

## **2) Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Three sports academies have been established recently with a focus on football (Venglos Academy), hockey and sport in general (the Gaudeamus and the Mercury Gymnasium). These form part of the education system.

The Venglos Football Academy (VFA) was established in 1999 for talented youth in football. The educational element of the academy is sponsored by the government and individual donators, which makes it possible for students to study with little cost. Parents are obliged to pay only a member fee and costs for a training camp, which is approximately €250 per year and basic sport equipment package (€80). It combines elementary school and gymnasium education. VFA members go through the standard education process. Two hours of PE per week are substituted with football training. There has not yet been any evidence indicating that the combination of education and training has caused any negative effects in consequence of the challenging training load.

Students are obliged to do entrance tests to proceed from primary to secondary school (gymnasium). The academy caters for 147 registered football players who are included in 11 teams with 11 coaches (in year 2003-4). Besides this they cater for the preparation of approximately 80 pupils aged nine in groups A-B-C-D.

The system is adopted from England (tutoring from FC Liverpool). It offers 10 year football preparation during compulsory education aiming at producing professional footballers. The training is provided by experienced football coaches and games are organised at many international tournaments and domestic leagues for different age levels. Since the school year 2002/03, the academy has opened beginner football classes at primary and secondary school.

The highest quality players also train during the morning hours, four times a week, on top of their school duties. In the afternoon, they train with their teams and also play a league match once a week. All the players receive a complete medical examination once a year, plus technical, tactical and kinetic testing twice a year. In school an indoor swimming pool, fitness centre, and two gymnasiums are available. Plans for centre reconstruction are already in the pipeline.

Young footballers can study at the *Gymnasium Pankuchova* from age 10 or 14 (eight or four year study programme). This school has a good reputation amongst other classical gymnasiums in a city.

Students are supposed to graduate in six subjects: Slovakian, maths, two foreign languages and two optional subjects. They can choose and graduate in the Basic of sport preparation (BSP) which enables them to work as a sport teacher or football coach.

The main goal of VFA is to educate/train footballers to be able join the professional football circuit. The managers in VFA assume that players aged 16 can be considered ready for professional football. Every year they consider two to three suitable players for an international career. The most talented players are regularly exchanged within international camps. Less successful players can play in domestic clubs of a first or second division. They are invited for a trial to get a contract.

In terms of study, they can choose between academic or vocational career. VFA cooperates with a vocational school (specialised for waiter, cook, etc.) to make a transition to a working career smoother.

Students can enter VFA anytime during a year. After a six-week period of observation the VFA will decide if a pupil is capable to continue successfully. The main reasons for leaving the VFA are insufficient football talent, insufficient athletic abilities/ fitness, insufficient playing abilities/ tactics, health reasons and breach of discipline. A critical period for leaving is age 11. Usually the worst player in a team or class leaves the academy at the end of a school year willingly because he had been less engaged during a season and therefore lost his motivation. Discipline reasons are judged very strictly (alcohol, cheating, late in training/study etc.) and lead to an exclusion from VFA.

### **3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

18 year-old élite athletes who want to continue in higher education in sport can choose an university which enables them to combine élite sport and higher sport/ exercise education (bachelor in 3 yrs, master in 5 years). Support for studying élite sportspersons is unfortunately limited because compulsory attendance restrains the training process and tournament participation of sportsmen/ women.

However, some universities have changed from a fixed subject structure to a more flexible system where students can choose in some extent what they want to study (a credit system). Teachers believe that this system will provide more freedom for students/athletes as they had in past. However many elite sportsmen (and even teachers) do not yet fully understand their duties and options in the new system.

The most appropriate combination of study and sport preparation for a life-long sport career is offered by the Faculty of Exercise and Sports at Comenius University in the capital Bratislava but there are four other universities which offer a course in training (*Banska Bystrica, Prešov, Nitra, Trnava*).

The university study is free of charge according to law. However, some universities decided to ask their students to pay a donation via private foundations, travelling agencies, etc. Expenditures are around €350-450 per year. Students are not very happy with this request considering the use of the money is unclear and moreover, they are unsatisfied with the quality of study.

The Faculty of Physical Exercise and Sports (FPES) in Comenius University is probably most dedicated to sports aiming to educate and prepare new sport teachers and coaches. Students can choose between bachelor (three years) or masters (five years) and they can prolong their study for a maximum of two years. Elite athletes who achieved the following results are exempt from the entrance tests in FPES:

- 1st- 6th place at the Olympic Games
- 1st- 6th place at the World Championship
- 1st-3rd place at the Europe Championship
- 1st-3rd place World / Europe Junior Championship.

FPES offers distance learning within a bachelor study. A board accepts approximately one to four students per year because entrance levels are high.

Many universities have cancelled the individual study plan (ISP) which allowed elite -athletes to combine their study, training and tournaments. Tutors believe that the new system provides enough freedom, therefore, authorities do not offer any substitution of this programme.

**Sport scholarships** were abolished (as well as a study-scholarship) because the educational system is poor in general. Social scholarships are maintained only from other sources (Department of Labour). There are just a few possibilities for elite -athletes who fulfil a performance level to get a financial support. A contribution from the Slovak Association of University Sports is up to €50 per month. Substantial long-termed financial support is offered for top-team members – elite athletes who have qualified or are close-to-limit for Olympic Games. They receive this from the NOC (or National Sport Centre).

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

Athlete contracts can be signed with a sport federation, a club or with an individual elite -athlete or the parent (eg in skiing). The financial value of a contract varies according to popularity of a particular sport or an athlete (his appearance in media, TV). The main sponsored sports in Slovakia are: ice hockey, football, volleyball, handball, basketball, tennis, athletics and alpine skiing.

The age limit for professionals is 18. This rule can be easily avoided if parents or an organisation is contracted instead of a young sportsman. Some companies are willing to provide loans for a sportsman. Unfortunately financial support is rather short-term, usually up to one year. This can disadvantage especially the young athletes.

The Ministry of Defence and the Home Office perceive their athletes as employees either as officers or civil servants. Therefore athletes are obliged to fulfil their duties including the education and training of talented youth (eg in shooting). Both departments recommend that professionals increase their teaching skills and coaching abilities. They occasionally contribute financially to the appropriate education/courses.

There is no legislation enforcing the club to safeguard the athlete's education. Professional associations of coaches or elite -athletes are still unable to advocate their own rights. It can be considered that contracts between organisations on the one side and elite -athletes/ or coaches on the other, is a weak point of a newly established system, especially in terms of building a sporting career.

**5) Opportunities for, and nature of, educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

After the Velvet revolution in 1989 the process of political and social reforms became very dynamic and unstable. No programmes for elite sport have so far been adopted because a stable social and political structure is still absent. Old structures and programmes for sports have been dismantled and new ones are still to be created.

The Ministry of Education has formerly created Centre of Sport in Academia (CAS) and the National Sport Institute (NSI) for elite -athletes who perform sport and study. This year both institutions joined in a newly established National Sport Centre (NSC) which aims to create appropriate conditions and support for young athletes to combine study and training successfully. Young studying athletes are supported financially because connection between NSC and educational institutions are not yet established yet.

Elite sportspersons including trainers and officials are poorly informed about the latest changes especially in terms of sport careers. There is a strong need to get more precise information about resources and support at all stages (eg uncertainty regarding contracts for professionals, lack of advisory centres etc).

Sport career transition is still unplanned in Slovakia. There is no agency or institution supporting top-level athletes after finishing their sporting careers. The NOC only registers all Olympic top-ranked athletes and manages PR.

## SLOVENIA

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in the Republic of Slovenia lasts for nine years. There are no alternative options for the education of young athletes apart from the mandatory curriculum, but different degrees of adaptation do exist as part of the set of regulations 'Regulations on adaptation of school obligations'. These include adaptations in grading, (when and how students can get their grades adapted), which subjects are examinable and sometimes providing additional learning for the pupil.

- primary (from six to 15 years of age) and secondary (from 15 to 19 years of age) schools offer student-athletes special status (eg additional examination terms, absence from school).
- in gymnasiums, there are special sport classes, which allow student-athletes more absence from the school and additional examination terms. Besides that they have additional PE classes, specialising in general.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

The content of specialist sports educational and coaching programmes during high school education is the same for athletes as for any other student, apart from the fact that sports classes attempt to enhance the coordination of demands that are placed on students both by school and sport. Such schools have coordinators that help adjusting these demands and are responsible for the communication between teachers and coaches.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

**Scholarships (student):** in 2002, 80 scholarships were awarded to top level athletes.

**Scholarships (staff):** in 2002, seven new staff scholarships were awarded to students at the Faculty of Sport.

On the university level, there are differences between different faculties of sport. Some have a system for allocation of student-athlete status, while other faculties adapt (or not) to the needs of individual athletes.

### 4) **How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no information available for this section.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

There are no organisations that help former athletes secure a job after their sporting career has ended. Sometimes athletic associations or sporting clubs try to help their athletes.

## SPAIN

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in Spain is between the ages of six to 16. As far as the models of school sport are concerned, there is not an agreed and unitary model for the whole State. The major tendency is towards a model of school sport that allows the balanced development of different sport itineraries which the users will be able to choose from.

In 2002, The Spanish Sports Council (CSD) decided to join in a single programme called National Programme of Sports Technique with an aim to guarantee the development and implementation of three programmes already established, directed to the detection and promotion of high level sports talents. These programmes aimed to support sportspeople from an early age until their consolidation as high competition sportspeople. The Spanish Sports Council grants aids to different Spanish, autonomous and local sports federations which are responsible for monitoring and assessing schoolchildren with outstanding sports skills and those that are likely to become high level sportspeople. The Spanish federations are in charge of supporting these young sportspeople by applying for financial aid on their behalf and assistance wherever necessary to improve the support development of these athletes.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

Secondary schools are being encouraged by the Spanish government to use High Performance Centres. High Performance Centres (CARD) aim to provide athletes with the highest quality training facilities, providing permanent or temporary residence, and are owned by the State. It is suggested that schools should adapt timetables to allow for training sessions and to make greater use of tutoring.

These centres have a special Educational Unit which is responsible for providing academic support to those athletes who are simultaneously developing their studies and their sports career. The number of hours devoted to education must be adapted to those established by the Ministry of Education and Culture for each educational cycle. The tutors and the possibility of having personal academic support are adapted so they are flexible and meet the requirements of sports training, since the main aim is the sports activity.

**ADO grants:** these provide a salary for elite athletes as a function of their performance on national and international competition. In addition it can be an extra amount depending on the possibilities of medals or performances.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

High performance sportspersons receive the support of the Sports Council by means of the implementation of aid programmes at universities to facilitate their access, permanence and subsequent sport development.

Special concessions include:

**Quotas for the admission of athletes:** universities are compelled by law (Royal Decree 1467/1997, 19 Sept.) to reserve 3% of the total places provided by university centres to high performance sportsmen accredited as such and that comply with the corresponding academic requirements. The centres that teach the Degree in Physical Activity and Sport Studies as well as the National Institutes of Physical Education are compelled by law to reserve an additional number (equivalent to 5 %) of the places provided for high performance sportsmen. These are exempt from the carrying out of physical tests that may be established as a requirement to have access to the Degree in Physical Activity and Sport Studies in any of its cycles.

**Special arrangements:** measures such as individual tutor monitoring, limited places in residences, flexible timetables and schedules for exam sitting etc. are offered to student-athletes. These allow sportsmen to make their studies compatible with their specific plans of sport training are all part of the flexible package that athletes have at their disposal.

**Arrangements with private education institutions:** in the same Royal Decree, it is also established that the Sports Council can sign agreements with the Autonomous Communities, non-state universities and private educational institutions. These agreements ensure that high performance sportsmen can enjoy special conditions relative to their access and permanence there, respecting in any case, the general academic requirements which are necessary for access.

The **University of Oviedo** has a specific programme aimed at university students who are high level sportspeople at the same time. At present, there are approximately 50 élite athletes-students at the university. This university has opted for the Grants Programme for High Level Sportspeople dependent on the Spanish Sports Council, which has been in force since 1997. If the students meet the requirements established by the University of Oviedo, these sportspeople will be granted: registration scholarship, their own scholarships of the University of Oviedo and scholarship for Residence in a Hall of Residence (if necessary).

They also receive an allocation of free election credits applied to the academic programme they are studying. Throughout each academic year, the university offers courses which are recognised as equivalent to free election credits.

All the students involved in this project will have access to the sport facilities at the University of Oviedo so that they can develop the specialised training that high performance requires, in the specific sports area they practise.

In order to combine the sports events and competitions with the academic schedule of those students who take part in this programme, the Sports Service will try to adapt dates for exams and for the different compulsory educational activities to suit the athlete's needs and schedule.

The **Institute of Physical education of Catalonia (INEFC)** programme is mainly based on personal tutorships which are coordinated through a tutor who acts as a middleman between high level athletes and the issues that take place at university. In accordance with the legislation that regulates the provision that universities and other educational institutions have to provide this group (Royal Decree 1467/1997, of 19 September), the INEFC is currently in charge of approximately 24 high level sportspeople (six high level sportspeople are annually incorporated).

Each of them has to perform the school duties involved in their studies except for the fact that their academic requirements are adapted due to issues resulting from their sports career (championships, trainings, etc) provided that proof of these requirements is shown.

In general, it can be said that a high percentage of the élite athletes, about 90%, complete their university studies.

**Johan Cruyff Academy-** in general terms, the philosophy of Johan Cruyff Academy is to make the means and resources available to the athletes so they can combine their sports progress with their academic education. This relies on the application of measures based on flexibility and adaptation, for example, timetable, adaptation of contents and academic resources.

Johan Cruyff Academy has introduced two new training programmes this year. One of them is a Bachelor of Science in Sport Management, which is being carried out in coordination with the *University of La Salle* (Barcelona). The course is multidisciplinary including marketing, finance, public relations, strategic planning and English language. During the third or fourth year, they complete their theoretical education with their participation in training programmes that allow them to be in direct contact with the professional field. The possibility of gaining access to the course contents through the open university allows sportspeople to continue their academic studies even when they have to travel for competitions, tournaments etc.

The only entry requirement in this school is to have passed the upper secondary education courses. Sometimes, there are candidates who have only studied the Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) up to 16 who are encouraged and advised to continue their studies in order to be able to enter this School. There are no restrictions with regard to the different sports areas since they are all available.

The other training Programme is called Sport Management, lasting 14 months and directed at sportspeople who are concluding or have concluded their sports career (between 32 and 45 years, approximately, depending on the sports area). Its objective is to offer new educational alternatives to those sportspeople who, either do not want to return to the conventional educational system or they have a previous academic background that prevents them from entering the labour market.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There are several Football Schools for the different teams in the Spanish State: *La Masía, School of Barcelona Football Club*; the *Sports School of Real Madrid*, the *Oscense Football School of Zaragoza Football Club* and the *Lezama Sports School of the Athletic Football Club*.

**La Masía, School of Football of Barcelona Football Club**

Since its creation in 1979, *La Masía* has become one of the most prestigious and famous academies for football players in Spain. The School is made up of 100 athletes, 60 out of which are residents (in boarding school) while the remaining 40 are at *La Masía* during the day only.

Most of the student-athletes attend two private schools, with which an agreement has been established. *La Masía* is in charge of the management and monitoring of these children's education, who except for specific cases, can enter at the age of 12, 13 or 14. Their support is based on compulsory education, particularly the period of Compulsory Secondary Education (up to 16 years) and two years of Upper Secondary Education (up to 18 years). In *La Masía* there is an academic coordinator who, along with the Headship, has a close dialogue and coordination with the teaching staff in both educational institutions. Each student is monitored and personal academic support is offered to those students who may require it.

When students miss academic lessons on account of events such as championships, and tournaments they are made up for through agreement with the educational institutions. These centres are not exclusive for football players but they also coincide with other young athletes from different sports areas who are also linked to other private academies. The afternoons are spent on training.

During the last three years, only 8% of the residents have been forced to repeat a course (a lower percentage than the ratio among students who are not athletes). This success is regarded as the result of the individual school support each athlete is granted. 80% of the members of *La Masía* go to Secondary School. Those who do not have a high academic level or simply do not want to continue their officially approved academic education are invited to continue in the unofficial educational system. For example, *La Masía* has an agreement with Johan Cruyff Academy by means of which the sportspeople from *La Masía* can enter this School.

The youngest students are 13/14 years old and the oldest 19 years old. The 260 boys who have been in this centre were detected by the talent scouts that the club has worldwide. At present, it has 60 places. The boys who stay in *La Masía* do not pay for their board and lodging. They are not paid for being players either. The Catalonian 'blue and red' body covers the expenses and the studies are covered by scholarships. It should be noted that the sale of promising players to other clubs is very lucrative and, therefore, the football school not only provides training and education for the players but also a profit for the club as well.

#### **5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of élite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

Former élite athletes can ask for assistance in finding employment after ending their élite sports career using the services of Adecco job placement.

The duration of positive measures by the Sports Council for top-class sportspersons can be extended to two years after the loss of their status as top-class sportsmen, except in the case of athletes who have obtained an Olympic medal, in which case, the period is extended to four years.

**Provision within the Public sector:** the Royal Decree 1467/1997 establishes measures in relation to the incorporation of top-class sportsmen to the labour market. According to this Decree, public administrations and companies have to regard the condition of being a top-class sportsman as a merit to be assessed in selection tests for posts related to sport activity, or in those processes involving competitive examinations in which the consideration of specific merits is contemplated.

Since 2000, high level athletes have the possibility of a special pension scheme.

**Provision within the Private sector:** the Sports Council can sign agreements with public and private companies in order to facilitate the conditions to make the development of top athlete's sport career compatible with their job. The saving mechanisms and specific welfare services for this group have also been promoted allowing for the capitalisation of economic income.

Athletes in the private sector, who have suffered from health-related problems, illness or operations and are consequently unable to work, are offered financial assistance. Those athletes who are in difficult socio-economic circumstances will also be offered assistance and the Association of Spanish Olympic Athletes (ADO) will shortly manage this.

The Spanish Olympic Committee as the third provision has also set up a vocational assistance programme available to athletes in the private sector. This involves a joint initiative between the Olympic Committee and the Adecco Job Placement and is designed to help retired professional athletes find employment. The Master and Relief Programmes, run by the Adecco Foundation, offer advice through a Human Resources expert and ensure that all necessary skills are obtained by providing training for the athletes.

Both programmes, the Master and Relief programmes, are financed by the Adecco Foundation. The main difference between the programmes lies in the target group.

The Master Programme results from an agreement signed between the Spanish Olympic Committee (COE) and the Adecco Foundation, and it is geared to ex- Olympic athletes. The Relief Programme results from an agreement between the Adecco Foundation and the Professional Sports Mutual Association.

Each application is directly submitted to companies as an active proposal so that it can be taken into account in selection processes. Both Programmes are based on four main elements:

- the candidate's education
- the individualised advice
- the use and availability of offices in which they can have a large number of resources at their disposal (telephone, computer etc.)
- the search for opportunities within the labour market, of a private nature.

These Programmes are not a source of job vacancies or job centres but they are intended as a global formative and advisory source that helps ex-athletes to complete their labour reintegration process successfully.

## SWEDEN

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in Sweden is for all children between the ages of seven to 16. Opportunities to develop a sporting career within the schooling system exist at secondary and upper secondary levels. There is a system of sport schools or sport academies at secondary and upper secondary levels. Notwithstanding this fact, all such schools must follow national acts of compulsory education with reference to basic educational standards and goals.

In order to attend a **secondary sport school** (grade 7-9) students have to pass grade 6 and be considered talented in the chosen sport. These schools are usually locally or district organized as part of a regular high school.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

15 to 18 year-old elite young athletes are offered the possibility to combine their secondary education with elite level training in 61 different *Topsportschools*. They also have the opportunity to have this combination at regional and local sports schools.

At the **upper secondary level** sport academies are organised on a national, regional and local level. Sport education in respect of sports is mixed with statutory education. 36 out of 67 sport federations have their own academies at upper secondary level (Grade 10-12). There are approximately 1,323 athletes over the 3-year period. All students must have passed grade 9. They must have also passed Swedish, English and mathematics. However, the guidelines for the balance between levels of grades and sporting performance if not specified, but up to the respective schools.

On a **national upper secondary level**, sporting talent criteria is more emphasised than grades, given that the student has already passed the basic subjects. The selection process in a national upper secondary level is given great consideration before accepting a student.

At **national academy level** it is very important for the schools to be flexible. Students usually work out a personal study scheme with teachers. There is assistance with housing for athletes (usually an agreement is made with local housing companies to reserve accommodation). It is recommended to students that in the first year, flats are shared with 2/3 other students.

The academies are supported jointly between the Swedish School Board and the Swedish Sport Confederation and the local communities. All national academies are part of a regular high school. Funding from the authorities covers coaching, instructors, education, vehicles and salaries of teachers concerned.

The ration of hours is 70-30%, approximately one third of hours dedicated to training and related activities. The scheduled time allocation varies between sports. For ski sports, more time is devoted during winter months.

It is a common occurrence, particularly when it comes to the snowboard sport academy or alpine sport academy that the students are competing during their time at the academy. Therefore, each student has a personal mentor with whom the studies are planned and conducted on an individual basis, depending on performance levels.

At present it is difficult for an athlete to enter traditional higher education courses due to time commitments to the sport. In order to encourage simultaneous sport and academic pursuits, the trend is to offer various types of sport related distance courses. However, due to increased professionalism and commercialisation of sport, athletes tend to postpone their studies until after their sporting career has finished.

There is a trend to employ former élite athletes into the labour market, and so some choose not to return to studies after their sporting careers.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the élite athlete**

18 year-old élite athletes and over who continue into higher education (university, college) can have flexibility in their studies, scholarship and other support to combine élite sport and higher education.

A number of universities in Sweden have designed programmes and courses which make it possible to combine studies with international athletic participation.

**Distance-learning:** university programmes and courses are partly organised as distant education where the student-athlete has the responsibility to co-ordinate his studies while he/she is away on training or competition.

**Specially designed programmes:** education programmes designed to fit the athlete's schedule.

New programmes have been introduced at universities taking advantage of former élite athlete's interests as well as labour market requests. Sport management is an example.

### 4) **How are the educational needs of young élite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

There is no information available for this section.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

No organisation has legal responsibilities to provide support for elite athletes during their career transition from professional sport into the labour market or education, unless certain paragraphs in this matter have been included in personal contracts with the athletes. Representatives for the Swedish Sport Confederation such as sport clubs do however very often take a moral responsibility on an individual basis, in particular for athletes at younger ages.

## THE NETHERLANDS

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

Compulsory schooling in the Netherlands is between the ages of five to 16 years. Opportunities for gifted young sportspersons exist through some adaptations to the general educational programme where students can get exemption from specific courses.

In order to improve the combination of education and elite sport for young elite athletes the LOOT-foundation (LOOT stands for National Consultation for Education and Elite Sport) was established in June 1991. With permission of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, young elite athletes can study in LOOT-schools and adapt their educational programmes to their elite sport programmes and vice versa. This is possible on all educational levels. Currently there are 20 LOOT-schools nationwide accommodating around 2,500 students.

LOOT sports are: acrogym, aerobics, American football, athletics, badminton, ballet, baseball, basketball, billiards, boxing, bowling, callisthenics, canoeing, canoe polo, carting, climbing, cricket, cycling, figure-skating, football, golf, gymnastics, handball, hockey, horse riding, ice-hockey, judo, kaatsen (Dutch game), karate, motocross, netball, mountain biking, platform diving, rowing, rugby, sailing, short track, skeeler, skiing, ski jump, speed skating, squash, synchronised swimming, swimming, taekwondo, table tennis, tennis, trampolining, trial, triathlon, twirling, volleyball, wu shu, wakeboarding, water polo, windsurfing and wrestling.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

The current legislation does not have any restrictions on making educational arrangements between elite athlete and higher education institution. This is a case between the institution and student. Therefore it depends on the institutions as to what extent they want to make adaptations to their regulations and educational programmes. Fortunately, a large number of schools are willing to adapt in order to make it possible for elite athletes to study. A small number of institutions have special elite sport classes such as Johan Cruyff College.

The Johan Cruyff College is an intermediate vocational education institution for management and communication for (future) elite athletes only. It offers the possibility to adapt the timetable to the individual training schedule. Furthermore, it enables elite athletes to attend courses via the internet during foreign training courses.

**Randstad Elite Sport Academy** is a higher education sports academy. There is no minimum age entry, but students must have completed secondary education. The academy has academic focus but all entrants must be elite athletes. Classes are on two mornings a week in a central location. There is flexibility in exam dates to accommodate students. The academic programme is restricted to a diploma on commercial economics. Funding is from the higher education system and the Randstad (temporary and contract staffing organisation). There are no scholarships or grants available.

**3) The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

**Universities tailored specifically for elite athletes - Johan Cruyff University (and college):** Johan Cruyff University (JCU) is a higher education institution for business administration that prepares elite athletes for a post-athlete career in the sports industry. JCU offers tailor-made education in which study is tailored to the sport programme. Only elite athletes are allowed to study at JCU.

JCU entrance requirements are a diploma at senior general secondary level and pre-university education and performing at the highest level in their sport (or having the talent to become an elite athlete). JCU has 250 students enrolled in 40 different sports. They do not receive external funding as they are part of regular educational institutions.

Johan Cruyff College (JCC) will open next year (2005) and will have 25 students. JCC entrance requirements are a diploma at the pre-vocational level and performing at highest level in their sport (or having talent to become an elite athlete).

**Study Grants:** there is a study guarantee fund from NOC\*NSF for A-status elite athletes that do not have a stipend and B-status elite athletes can make use of. In the Netherlands, each student is entitled to receive a study grant for four years. Because of their sport, elite athletes often need more time to finish their study. A-status elite athletes can get a maximum grant of €3,267 for four extra years and B-status elite athletes can get a maximum grant of €1,633 for two extra years.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

All professional sports bind their athletes by contracts to clubs. There is no legal responsibility for the club to provide education for newly signed athletes.

There is limited legislation to safeguard an athlete's educational interests. All children must attend school between five to 16 years. After this a student can continue into further education or attend school two days per week whilst combining this with work. Other than this there is no other legislation.

5) **Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

In the policy memorandum 'Chances for elite sport' of 1999, the national government stresses that the responsibility for the period after the elite sports career lies primarily with elite athletes themselves. Nevertheless, the national government tries to support them in the period after their career, especially by information and financing relevant programmes. The individual consultants of NOC\*NSF support A-status elite athletes and guide them during their sports career but also in the first period after ending their sports career (up to two years). Furthermore, NOC\*NSF organises in cooperation with the Athletes Commission periodically a symposium for elite athletes in which they inform them about the period after their active sports career. The Athletes Commission consists of A and B-status athletes and former elite athletes from different kinds of sports.

**Randstad Career Coaching:** Randstad is an organisation specialised in career coaching. They support elite athletes (A and B status) in finding a good balance between elite sport and social career. Randstad provides the following facilities:

- career coaching
- education and courses aimed at future work
- a choice of profession test
- mediation for a full-time or part-time job or internships.

**Transitional payment and pension scheme**

After ending his or her sports career, the elite athlete has to focus on a social career. In practice, this transition appears to be difficult. Their education and diplomas are often dated, most elite athletes are relatively old to start a first job, and ex-athletes need some time to detrain. This transition takes time and costs money. Not all elite athletes are able to save money during their active sports career. A transitional payment and pension scheme would be very helpful for athletes during this period.

A transitional payment and pension scheme is available to soccer players and cyclists. During their active sports careers, they contribute part of their income to these funds. Afterwards they receive a sum of money monthly. These funds are only available for soccer players and cyclists who earn more than fixed minimum amount of salary. There are plans to start a transitional payment and pension scheme for elite athletes other disciplines in the near future too.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### 1) **Opportunities during compulsory schooling years to pursue a sporting career**

In the UK, education is compulsory from age five to 16. Opportunities to pursue a career in sports parallel to an academic career during school hours exist at specialist schools which focus on P.E and Sport. At Key stage 4 there is integrated time for examination courses with core PE so that all pupils can follow either a GCSE short or full course or an alternative accredited course. Those with a sixth form have increased opportunities for pupils to study for an A level in sport studies or a GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism.

### 2) **Nature of sport education and provision tailored for young elite athletes eg specialist colleges, sports academies provided by education institutions**

In at least a third of specialist schools/colleges, talented performers have personal learning mentors with the responsibility for monitoring and refining their personal development plans, including academic progress. An increasing number of sports colleges are developing more refined 'elite performers' programmes which ensure that talented pupils receive specialist coaching and achieve very high standards.

Sports Colleges aim to raise standards of achievement in PE and sport for all their students across the ability range. They will be regional focus points for excellence in PE and community sport, extending links between families of schools, sports bodies and communities, sharing resources and developing and spreading good practice, helping to provide a structure through which young people can progress to careers in sport and PE. Sports Colleges aim to increase participation in PE and sport for pre and post 16 year olds and develop the potential of talented performers.

HE/FE colleges work in collaboration with sport academies. Some colleges have developed a successful sport/education partnership via a college based scholarship system. Both organisations share human and physical resources.

### 3) **The roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of the elite athlete**

**Special concessions in terms of exam dates and location:** an athlete has to sit the exam at the same time as when it is being held in the UK because of security of the exam itself. Performance Lifestyle agents have a list of designated venues overseas that can be used for examinations.

**Distance-learning programmes:** athletes who train outside Scotland have been lent lap-tops to enable them to continue with study when out of the country. On a separate occasion, an athlete from Iceland, who trained full-time in Scotland but who wanted to continue their education at a college in Iceland was able to continue studies through distance learning. Through negotiation with the tutors at the college, the athlete continued to study by email, post, and fax. Exams were faxed to the Institute on the day of the exam, and when the athlete had finished, the papers were faxed back. The athlete successfully completed this year of study.

**Scholarships:** the University of Stirling (Scotland) has offered sport scholarships for over 20 years. 150 students have been awarded over £500,000 to help them gain a degree and achieve to the highest levels of sport. 45 scholarships have been awarded in 2002-2003. Furthermore, the government will award £6 million to universities and colleges south of the border over the next three years (2004-07) to support talented student athletes. In addition, the government launched TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) in April 2004, a new initiative to deliver sports scholarships and bursaries to talented athletes aged 16-25. The DCMS are investing £2 million per annum in the scheme over an initial three-year period.

There are another 24 Universities in the UK, which offer sport scholarships in a variety of sports under different terms and conditions.

**4) How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system eg in professional academies**

It is mandatory for all English football clubs in the Premier League, consisting of 20 teams, to have an academy and the Football Association pays for 18 places per club. 19 Football League clubs also run academies. These academies bring together the best young players to give them top quality coaching, development, education and medical care.

The Rugby Football Union fund 12 Premiership England Rugby Academies, plus two England Regional Rugby Academies. The aim of the academy is to provide gifted players with the opportunity for them to fulfil their rugby potential. Players are provided with high quality coaching and support services to achieve this goal. The RFU also encourages all players within the academy to continue within education.

Some professional academies such as the Rugby Academy in Leicester have developed apprenticeship schemes for their athletes. They developed a programme for the modern day young professional player. This attempts to balance his education with the rugby, personal and social skills he will need. Boys between the ages of 16 and 20 who demonstrate they have the ability to become a professional player and are willing to make the necessary commitment to the club will be offered a 'Rugby Apprenticeship'. This will be awarded in two specific ways:

- rugby bursary
- bursary/development agreement.

**5) Opportunities for and nature of educational and vocational preparation of elite athletes to return to education or integrate themselves in the labour market after retiring**

This type of support is primarily offered in the UK through the Performance Lifestyle programme co-ordinated by the English Institute of Sport (EIS), which falls under UK Sport umbrella. The kind of support focus predominantly on these three areas:

- lifestyle support
- careers and employment advice
- educational guidance.

All elite athletes in England would be nominated by their NGB (sports federation) to be part of either a Start, Potential or Performance Programme depending on age and/or individual performance. Nomination on to one of these programmes provides funding support from the National Lottery for their training and preparation by the NGB. In addition an athlete would receive funding for individual sporting costs and at the performance level an additional award for living costs. Nomination on to one of the programmes would also entitle the athlete to receive services from the English Institute of Sport (EIS) which could include performance lifestyle, medical physiotherapy, science, strength and conditioning.

EIS offers also financial support to World Class Performance Athletes. There is an education award of maximum £1000/year for those who want to further their education (post-graduate level only) or for adults who want to enrol for 'A' level or vocational courses. This is available up to three months after an athlete has come off a programme. EIS services are available up to a year post elite sport.

The British Olympic Association (BOA) collaborates with EIS through its OPEN Programme (Olympic and Paralympic Employment Network) – a network which matches athletes with companies who can offer a meaningful career path and provide flexible working arrangements.

Other organisations which offer their professional services to athletes include:

- REMPLOY – in collaboration with paralympic athletes
- Blue Arrow in collaboration with the O.PEN. programme
- DBM (Drake Beam Morin) in collaboration with EIS – this consultancy firm offers advice on how to manage changing circumstances in careers. Their expertise helps those athletes who are looking to gain employment and develop careers outside their sport. EIS UK's team of Athlete Advisers will refer athletes to the local DBM office (14 in UK, 200 worldwide) where they will be offered one-to-one career counselling, opportunities for training and to attend career related workshops.

**APPENDIX D**  
**CONFERENCE REPORT**

## Programme for Lot 1 Conference 28-29 April 2004

### Day 1

10.0 a.m. arrival at UK Sport offices

10.15-10.30 a.m.

Welcome by Jerry Bingham (UK Sport)

10.30 a.m.-12.00 p.m.

Summary Presentation of stage 1 research findings and introduction of workshop themes  
Maureen Taylor, PMP

12.00-12.30 p.m.

#### **Plenary presentations**

Supporting athletes in their future careers – the experience of two companies:

Peter Bewsey, Life after Sport

Guro Johnsen, The Adecco Group

12.30-12.45 p.m.

European Forum Update

Helen Delany, PMP

1-1.45 p.m.

Lunch – networking with European Forum Delegates

2.00-5.00 p.m.

Common Programme with European Forum

### Day 2

9.00 a.m.

Arrival at UK Sport offices

---

---

9.30 a.m.-11.00 a.m.

#### **Workshop 1**

**How are the sporting and educational needs of young sportspersons dealt with in the compulsory schooling system?**

The aim of this workshop is to address the following key questions:

- what kind of opportunities exist for young sportspersons to focus on specialised sport training during these years alongside mainstream education?
- what kind of support is provided by the ministry of education/ministry of sport to ensure that the needs of young sportspersons are accommodated in educational/sporting terms?
- what quality checks exist to ensure balanced provision between educational and sporting needs?

### **Chair**

Paul Wylleman (Belgium Free University)

### **Speakers**

#### **Prof Karen Petry (DSH, Koln)**

*The German system for facilitating young elite sports persons in the compulsory schooling system.*

This presentation will review the use of:

- flexible study arrangements
- financial assistance
- a 'points system' for advanced standing for elite athletes in access to higher education.

#### **Dr. Dimitra Papadimitrou (University of Patras)**

*A review of the Greek system of support for young elite athletes in the compulsory schooling system.*

This presentation will evaluate aspects of the Greek system specifically in relation to:

- provision of 'sport facilitation' classes
- the role of the Ministry of Education in supporting these programmes
- the development of attitudes towards these classes on the part of stakeholders
- their impact in terms of academic performance.

### **Rapporteur**

Denis Musso (INSEP)

---

---

9.30 a.m.-11.00 a.m.

### **Workshop 2**

**How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers and/or serviced by their agents in the professional sporting system?**

The aim of this workshop is to address the following questions:

- what are the difficulties faced by education officers in promoting educational goals in the context of the sporting body or club employing or sponsoring the elite athlete?
- what support in terms of life and personal skills is offered to assist in dealing with the pressures involved in embarking on a professional career in sport?
- what kind of provision/support/assistance with 'exit strategies' is there for those athletes who fail to progress in the professional sport?
- what quality assurance schemes exist to ensure that clubs and employers are living up to their responsibilities in terms of education of young sports persons?

### **Chair**

Gillian Leake (PMP)

### **Speakers**

#### **Dr. Olivier Nier (Université Claude Bernard, Lyon 1)**

*The development of academies for young professional rugby players in France.*

The aim of this presentation is to review the measures taken to incorporate education and vocational preparation into the system of player development in France.

#### **Gwyn Walters (Education and Welfare Officer, Tottenham Hotspur Football Club)**

*Professional Football academies in the FA Premier League.*

The aim of this presentation is to evaluate the roles of education officers and coaches in the development of young professional footballers in the Academies of the Premiership clubs.

### **Rapporteur**

Michael Groll (Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln)

---

---

11.30 a.m.-1 .00 p.m.

### **Workshop 3**

**What is the nature of sport education and sport provision for young elite athletes in specialist sports colleges, national Sport Academies etc.**

**The aim of this workshop would be to address the following questions:**

- what forms of specialist institution exist?
- how different is this tailored curriculum from the general one in terms of time allocation, choice of subjects, personal and social skill development etc.
- how flexible are these institutions in meeting both the educational and sporting needs of the elite athlete? for example what forms of special concessions/development of courses/accommodation/support systems exist?
- what is the role of the various sporting bodies in supporting these institutions? what kind of support do they provide? (financial/training and development etc) and what is the role of government in terms of support and regulation?
- what policies are there in place to ensure that these institutions do keep a balance when providing for the athlete? is it a moral or legal duty?

### **Chair**

Claude Legrand (INSEP)

### **Speakers**

#### **Madeline Cotson – Headteacher, Bowring Community School, Merseyside (UK)**

*The English Specialist Sports Colleges – their roles and responsibilities in relation to young elite sports performers.*

The aim of this presentation will be to highlight:

- the attraction of specialist sports college status to schools and to parents and pupils
- the role which Specialist Sports Colleges can play in relation to elite sport development.

**Dr. Rolf Carlson (College of Physical Education and Sports Science, University of Stockholm)**

*The Swedish system of sports schools / academies.*

The presentation will consider:

- the relationship to the core curriculum of the programme of education offered
- the educational outputs – profiles and educational performance of athletes attending these institutions
- the example of the Swedish Ski and Snowboarding Federation.

**Rapporteur**

Helen Delany (PMP)

---

---

11.30 a.m.-1 .00 p.m.

**Workshop 4**

**What are the roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of elite athletes?**

The aim of this workshop is to address the following questions:

- in what ways are universities facilitating entry/duration for young elite athletes?
- how flexible are universities in their approach towards young elite athletes? is there legislation in place to facilitate this? · who is responsible to negotiate special arrangements between the athlete and the university for modifications to programmes, examination arrangements etc.?
- is there a system of distance learning, e-learning, distributed learning in place to facilitate athletes' spreading of the demands of their course of study to meet the pressures of training and competition?

**Chair**

Dr Maarten van Bottenburg (Mulier Institute, Netherlands)

**Speakers**

**Dr Anne Bourke (University College Dublin)**

*University sports scholarships and the migration of student athletes.*

This presentation will consider the nature of scholarship systems and their impact on athletes' decisions about the location of their university education.

**Jari Kanerva (The Finnish Society for Research in Sport and Physical Education)**

The Finnish university system and support for athletes.

This presentation will consider issues such as the development of programmes of education, grants, flexibility in delivery, support programmes to find work after graduation.

**Rapporteur**

Prof Manuel Brito (Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, Lisbon, Portugal)

---

---

1.0 - 2.10 p.m.

Lunch

2.15 – 2.45

**Plenary Speakers**

Richard Parker, Performance Lifestyle National Co-ordinator, UK Sport

From ACE to Lifestyle and career management: the changing system of athlete career and education support in the UK and Europe.

Prof. Gyöngyi Földesiné (Semmelweis Egyetem Testnevelési és Sporttudományi Kar)

The education system for elite athletes in Hungary in the post-socialist era.

2.45-3.45

**Final session**

Introduced and chaired by Maureen Taylor, PMP

Summaries by rapporteurs on themes raised in the workshops, responses to workshop questions and implications for work in stages 2 and 3.

## Appendix D

As a requirement of the study an international conference was called to discuss the experience of educational and vocational support for elite athletes in Europe. The conference was held in London on 28-29 April at the offices of UK Sport.

The aims of the conference were to address the similarities and differences between countries in respect of the education and vocational preparation of elite athletes, to report on specific initiatives and to try and identify areas of best practice. The conference was to be structured around the five key themes of the study as set out in section 1. These are:

- how are the sporting and educational needs of young sportspersons dealt with in the compulsory schooling system?
- what is the nature of sport education and sport provision for young elite athletes in such institutions as specialist sports colleges, national Sport Academies etc.
- how are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers and/or serviced by their agents in the professional sporting system?
- what are the roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of elite athletes?
- what is the nature of vocational advice and lifestyle management support for elite athletes?

As the last of these five themes - vocational advice and lifestyle management support for athletes - was to be addressed in another conference hosted by UK Sport (European Forum on Lifestyle Management for Elite Athletes), the decision was taken to link the two conferences so that delegates could benefit from the wider debate and draw from the experience of European Forum colleagues. The two conferences shared a common day with a joint programme on the afternoon of 28 April.

### Conference delegates

Conference delegates included:

- young sportspersons and former sportspersons
- schoolteachers and university teachers
- staff at specialist sports colleges and academies
- specialists in the reintegration of sportspersons
- people occupying positions of responsibility in the sporting community
- researchers/academics.

## **Conference programme**

The conference programme comprised a number of plenary presentations and participatory workshops. The full conference programme and rapporteur reports from the workshops are provided as Appendix D.

The first plenary session of the conference was a presentation of the findings of stage 1 research to date, given by Maureen Taylor of PMP. The paper was given a short contextual introduction by Jacob Kornbeck of the Sport Unit of the EC who explained the location of the studies in the European Year of Education through Sport. The typology of responses under each key study theme was introduced and the analysis of countries presented with numerous examples from member states to illustrate how different countries provided educational and vocational support for athletes.

Additional plenary sessions on the topic of lifestyle support for athletes were presented by Richard Parker, UK Performance Lifestyle National Co-ordinator, and two representatives of private companies providing lifestyle management support for athletes: Guro Johnsen from Adecco, and Peter Bewsey from Life After Sport.

Professor Foldesi of Semmelweis University closed the conference with a presentation on the education system for athletes in Hungary in the post-socialist era. Professor Foldesi described the effects of the collapse of the socialist sports model and opportunities for athlete education during the transitional period of 1990/2000. She then outlined the process of restructuring the system that has taken place since 2000. These included:

- launching talented athletes' care programmes in various sports (soccer, track and field, basket ball, etc. (2000-20002)
- establishment of the National Institute for Young Sports Talents' Care (2002)
- transformation of the Central Sports School (2003)
- "Olympic schools" network (early 2000s)
- Olympians' Course of Life Programme (2002)
- Research Group for Young Sports Talents' Education (2003).

Professor Foldesi also reported some recent developments, including:

- renewing the network of "sports schools"
- extending the Olympians' Course of Life Programme
- preparing and realising a national educational plan for young elite athletes.

## **Workshops**

As a major element of the conference, four workshops addressed four key study themes. Each workshop had two presentations with papers selected to address both theoretical and practical aspects of the issue concerned. Following the papers, a structured discussion enabled delegates to contribute to the debate and share experiences and views.

Workshops were chaired and a rapporteur provided a summary of the discussion to all delegates in a final plenary session.

### **Workshop 1 – sports in compulsory education**

The full title of this workshop was: How are the sporting and educational needs of young sportspersons dealt with in the compulsory schooling system? The aim of this workshop was to address the following key questions:

- what kind of opportunities exist for young sportspersons to focus on specialised sport training during these years alongside mainstream education?
- what kind of support is provided by the ministry of education/ministry of sport to ensure that the needs of young sportspersons are accommodated in educational/sporting terms?
- what quality checks exist to ensure provision is balanced between educational and sporting needs?

Professor Karen Petry and Michael Groll of the German Sport University, Cologne, gave a paper on 'The German system for facilitating young elite sports persons in the compulsory schooling system'. The presentation reviewed the use of:

- flexible study arrangements
- financial assistance
- a 'points system' for advanced standing for elite athletes in access to higher education.

Dr. Dimitra Papadimitrou, University of Patras, then gave a paper on 'A review of the Greek system of support for young elite athletes in the compulsory schooling system. The presentation evaluated aspects of the Greek system specifically in relation to:

- provision of 'sport facilitation' classes
- the role of the Ministry of Education in supporting these programmes
- the development of attitudes towards these classes on the part of stakeholders
- their impact in terms of academic performance.

The debate covered a number of aspects including whether it is better to combine education and sport, the benefits of setting up sport schools or specialist schools, rather than sport classes included in normal schools. Workshop participants agreed that the response depends on the philosophy of the system but also on very practical aspects like the critical mass of athletes needed to successfully manage the situation. Delegates also commented that a sport class can be a motivation factor for both the other pupils and the school's dynamism.

Workshop participants commented on different ways to combine education and sport in their countries. Different initiatives were discussed, for example in Poland (sport classes, sport schools, “championship sport schools”) which are both public or private institutions and very effective; in France (high level sport pools, sections sportives scolaires); in Switzerland (80 sport schools but no organised system of appellation recognition) together with other examples from Malta, Cyprus and Sweden.

In summary, the rapporteur’s report on the debate focused on four main features of the situation:

### **Diversity**

Many opportunities exist for young sportspersons to focus on specialised sport training during the compulsory schooling system but there is a great diversity of situations and provisions. This diversity is explained by the political, cultural, economical specificities within the different countries but also by the particular systems of sport organisation (German Sport Confederation, Commission Nationale du Sport de Haut Niveau en France, etc). The education system, which is mainly part of the State, is also quite diverse when it is decentralized (eg Landers in Germany) and whether it involves the private sector or not. The diversity is also apparent in the comparative provisions and services for the young athletes.

### **System Leadership**

Both the diversity and the plurality of actors and stakeholders reveal leadership issues. These questions were not widely discussed during the workshop but they do exist. Even if a partnership system is followed or needed, it is important to identify and clarify who is in charge of what element of the process.

### **Flexibility**

Every workshop participant delegate was convinced that a relevant degree of flexibility is needed to manage the system successfully. Even if the precisions of the flexibility were not discussed, it seems important to identify what can be flexible and what must be inflexible.

### **Quality control**

Quality control and effective monitoring and assessment procedures seemed to be a weak point in the different countries and workshop participants commented that it is an important challenge to improve the system, in particular, setting up quality labels. Quality is defined as the conformity of a service to requirements, which are objectively expressed through specifications. The satisfaction measurement can be focused on the expectations of the institutional partners or on “the client”, the sportspersons themselves. This process asks again the question of the main goals carried on by the different stakeholders. Why is there a shared agreement to combine education and sport? What are the expected results? Which are the right indicators to measure the effectiveness and the efficiency of the system? What are the guarantees in terms of ethics, wealth, chances of educational achievement?

In conclusion, the workshop participants agreed that it had been a useful beginning of sharing knowledge of the situation in the different EU states. Some delegates wanted to go further and to found an eventual EC policy, possibly including a European observatory for high performance sport.

### **Workshop 2 – specialist sports education and provision**

The full title of this workshop was: What is the nature of sport education and sport provision for young elite athletes in specialist sports colleges, national Sport Academies etc. The aim of this workshop was to address the following key questions:

- what forms of specialist institution exist?
- how different is this tailored curriculum from the general one in terms of time allocation, choice of subjects, personal and social skill development etc.
- how flexible are these institutions in meeting both the educational and sporting needs of the elite athlete? for example, what forms of special concessions/development of courses/accommodation/support systems exist?
- what is the role of the various sporting bodies in supporting these institutions? what kind of support do they provide? (financial/training and development etc) and what is the role of government in terms of support and regulation?
- what policies are there in place to ensure that these institutions do keep a balance when providing for the athlete? is it a moral or legal duty?

Madeline Cotson, Headteacher of Bowring Community School, Merseyside (UK) gave a presentation on the English Specialist Sports Colleges, examining their roles and responsibilities in relation to young elite sports performers. The aim of this presentation was to highlight:

- the attraction of specialist sports college status to schools, parents and pupils
- the role which Specialist Sports Colleges can play in relation to elite sport development.

Madeline outlined how specialist sports colleges in England involved as part of the Government's PE, School Sport and Club links strategy, the aim of which is to have 75% of 5-16 year olds spending a minimum of two hours per week on high quality sport by 2006. These colleges are not elitist and the focus is very much on how sport can be used to improve education, raise academic achievement and improve life chances.

The sports college ethos is designed to:

- motivates, develop a sense of purpose and enhance self esteem
- improve self-confidence, self-control and team work
- develop leadership and responsibility
- contribute to citizenship studies
- impact positively on behaviour, attendance and attitudes – reducing youth crime and social exclusion
- improve physical and mental health and life styles.

Madeline described in detail the benefits of achieving specialist sports college status and gave a good example of one of her pupils who lost interest in academic study at the age of 14 due to various distractions but took a taster session at the school, joined a club and has ended up becoming national Tae Kwon Do champion, aged 16. Her sporting success and academic results improved and her self-confidence/life skills also improved – a classic example of the power of sport.

Dr. Rolf Carlson of the College of Physical Education and Sports Science, University of Stockholm gave a paper on 'The Swedish system of sports schools/academies'. The presentation covered:

- the relationship to the core curriculum of the programme of education offered
- the educational outputs – profiles and educational performance of athletes attending these institutions
- the example of the Swedish Ski and Snowboarding Federation.

Dr Carlson's paper presented the contrasting experience of the Swedish sports academies. There are 36 in the country and they are for elite performers only. Sporting performance is the focus and the curriculum is flexible to allow for this. At the Ski Academy, 50% of the timetable is for the core subjects of Swedish, English and Maths and the remaining make up of the timetable flexible.

The main areas of discussion at the workshop centred on the value of sport in schools and how this should be incorporated within the curriculum. An example was given of the Olympic Education Programme in Greece. One hour per week, in addition to the PE curriculum, is allocated to fair play, history of the Olympics etc, which therefore cuts across the curriculum areas.

A further discussion focused on how difficult it is to engage athletes in educational activities at the academies, particularly when they are on tour. Helping athletes to focus on education means providing flexibility to fit their programme and help them succeed. The workshop participants also all agreed on the importance of sport to the development of life skills.

### **Workshop 3 – support for sportspersons by their employers**

The full title of this workshop was: How are the educational needs of young elite athletes met by their employers in the professional sporting system?

The aim of this workshop was to address the following questions:

- what are the difficulties faced by education officers in promoting educational goals in the context of the sporting body or club employing or sponsoring the elite athlete?
- what support in terms of life and personal skills is offered to assist in dealing with the pressures involved in embarking on a professional career in sport?
- what kind of provision/support/assistance with 'exit strategies' is there for those athletes who fail to progress in the professional sport?
- what quality assurance schemes exist to ensure that clubs and employers are living up to their responsibilities in terms of education of young sports persons?

The first speaker was Dr Olivier Nier from the Université Claude Bernard, Lyon, who presented a paper on the development of academies for young professional rugby players in France. The aim of this presentation was to review the measures taken to incorporate education and vocational preparation into the system of player development in France.

Olivier started his presentation with some information about the professionalisation of rugby in France, evidenced by the growth of TV rights and consequently higher budgets and salaries. In the last six years, there was a 46% rise regarding TV rights. The TV stations now pay 78.2m Euros per season. The average budget of each individual club was 2.13m Euros in 1998 and 3.32m Euros in 2002. The expenses have risen too, for example, the average salary for a player was 2200 Euros per month in 1998 and 3800 Euros per month in 2002. The average number of players playing in each club is 45 and the idea of training is to have two young players on each position.

There are 20 rugby academies accredited by the Minister of Sport. Each academy has an average of 20 young players. The age of these players range from 16 to 23, but most of them are between 18 and 20. Only 12% of the players will get a professional contract, so education has to have priority as almost 90% of these trainees will need to find employment outside of professional sport. Most of the trainees attend a secondary school or university.

The second presentation was by Gwyn Walters, Education and Welfare Officer, Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (Spurs). Gwyn's paper was on professional football academies in the English FA Premier League. The aim of the presentation was to evaluate the roles of education officers and coaches in the development of young professional footballers in the academies of the English Premiership clubs. English Premiership clubs are obliged to have an academy and the FA pays for 18 places per club.

Gwyn outlined some of the main difficulties faced by Education and Welfare Officers when promoting educational goals to football trainees, which included:

- some trainees are demotivated in respect of education by conflicts they have experienced at school
- continuity of academic studies is affected by international/senior team or reserve team call ups
- problem in convincing trainees that very few of them are going to attain professional status
- the relative importance placed on football training and education by head coaches.

Every trainee has to participate in a Core Skills Programme. This programme includes things like financial planning, social skills and safe driving techniques. Gwyn reported that as an average each player of these academies has four car accidents in two years so safe driving techniques are considered very important in respect of life skills. The Spurs football academy has exit strategies for football trainees, for example, there are exit trials for trainees being released or university trials for American scholarships. As the academy's director is a former teacher as well as a former professional footballer (he was a professional footballer for ten years and a teacher for 20) he can speak honestly to the boys about the need to pursue educational studies. This is important as such positive role models have credibility when they speak about the importance of education.

The career outcome of trainees over the last three years at Tottenham Hotspur club was from 38 trainees, 13 are still professional at the club and 9 are still professional at other British clubs. But in general, by the time trainees reach the age of 21, over 85% are out of the professional game. In total, that is 1,600 boys from 92 clubs.

In the discussion following the presentations a number of points were raised. These included concerns about the role of education, the role of the coach and the use of role models. Workshop participants noted that there is a considerable difference between the rugby and the football academies regarding education. In the Premier League academies the education is in-house, and so, directly provided. In the rugby academies the education is facilitated. The academies have to arrange individual arrangements with schools and universities.

Sportspeople in other sports regard the opportunities in football and rugby as a very positive situation. Steve Frew commented that as a Commonwealth Gold medallist in gymnastics, he has to make his own arrangements in respect of balancing his education and sports training activities, especially talks to schools which he arranges on his own.

Delegates noted the difficulties of maintaining a balance between education and training. In respect of the role of the coach, participants felt that it is much easier to convince the players of the importance of education when the coach backs up the Education Officer. Both presenters agreed that it really depends on each individual coach. One may not be interested in the educational programme, whilst another fully supports it.

The attitude of those in charge is also very important. Delegates commented on the importance of the manager's attitude. David O'Leary was quoted as a Premier League football manager who said of football academy players, "They are not paid to study, they are paid to play". A contrasting perspective from Arsene Wenger, manager of Arsenal Premier League football club, was noted. His question about potential academy pupils is quoted as being, "Is he intelligent?"

Workshop participants also commented that the educational versus sporting activity balance is a matter of money as well. It was reported that some players immediately stop taking educational courses when they signed a well paid contract. On the use of role models, both presenters agreed that it is very helpful when older or former players come by and talk to the trainees in order to attract the younger athletes to education.

Other comments were on evidence of increased professional mobility in the sports sector in Europe and the ways in which mobility changes attitudes. Testimonies showed increased numbers of players from other EU countries in UK clubs. This was accompanied by shifting attitudes to education and qualifications in UK clubs, due to the presence of players from other EU countries and changing requirements in relation to qualifications.

Much of the discussion was focused on the role of academies in promoting the development of young sports people, in particular the contrasting fortunes of rugby and football academies. To shift the focus, details of the Tennis Academy in Ireland established three years ago were outlined by Dr Anne Bourke. The Tennis Ireland Academy is located close to Dublin City University and youngsters must participate in coaching and training there each weekend. Aspiring elite tennis players (aged 11+years) from all over the country have been recruited to the academy. While seven hours training is completed during the weekend, the onus is on each individual player to complete the remaining 14 hours either in the region (supported by the regional council of Tennis Ireland) or at home (supported by parents). The main concern at present with this arrangement is mainstream education for the young players. Tennis Ireland is striving to devise a strategy whereby formal education is embedded into the programme for the development of young players and are seeking the co-operation of local primary and post primary schools.

#### **Workshop 4 – the role of universities**

The full title of this workshop was: What are the roles of universities in balancing athletic performance and the education of elite athletes? The aim of this workshop was to address the following questions:

- in what ways are universities facilitating entry/duration for young elite athletes?
- how flexible are universities in their approach towards young elite athletes? is there legislation in place to facilitate this?
- who is responsible to negotiate special arrangements between the athlete and the university for modifications to programmes, examination arrangements etc?
- is there a system of distance learning, e-learning, distributed learning in place to facilitate athletes' spreading of the demands of their course of study to meet the pressures of training and competition?

Dr Anne Bourke, University College, Dublin, presented a paper on university sports scholarships and the migration of student athletes. The presentation considered the nature of scholarship systems and their impact on athletes' decisions about the location of their university education. Dr Bourke, started with an explanation of the origin of sports scholarships, particularly in the USA, and offered a description of the main components of this educational model – tuition, accommodation, books, meals and equipment – in order to give students the opportunity to combine higher education and sport progression.

Evidence clearly shows that this movement currently represents an important traffic of young athletes/students, with over one million student athletes studying outside their home countries. Concerning scholarships, differences can be noted across borders but the essence is the tuition, access to facilities and better coaching. We can also notice that the US universities emphasise sports scholarships also as marketing tools, to attract students from different parts of the world.

Dr Bourke presented a comparison between the US sports scholarships programmes and those in the UK and Ireland, in terms of the package components, entry requirements, and the role of the intermediaries, educational expectations and competition. She then addressed the factors affecting migration among aspiring elite athletes who are sports scholarship holders. “Push” and “pull” factors were identified (entry requirements, prior experience, sporting ambition, the quality of the facilities in the home country, the desire to get a better coaching) and the personal ties (such as relatives and friends).

Dr Bourke also highlighted various factors of significance in respect of the sports scholarship experience in the US. These included the cultural challenge for the sports scholarship holders, accompanied by in many cases a lack of challenge in academic terms. In contrast, the experience in the sports aspects of such scholarships is often quite demanding. More broadly, young student/athletes also can also benefit from travel opportunities and experience of good management.

In discussion, comments were made about the importance of the quality of the academic programmes, the “curriculum vitæ” of the coaches and the location of the universities, which can be relevant for the practice of some particular sports.

Other reflections were also made in relation to the return of the athletes to their home country. Many of those who get a scholarship stay in the host nation, even without having sports success. Perhaps in recognition of this talent drain, many countries outside the US are now developing university sports scholarships programmes.

The situation in Belgium was reported to the workshop by Paul Wylleman of the Belgium Free University.

*"Some 15 years ago, there was a request from a swimmer's father saying "why should my son go to the United States, why is he not able to train in Belgium?" That request initiated the system of combining the elite sports and higher education. Now after 15 years, the government has decided to award the combination of elite sports and higher studies by offering a 70% contract to student/athletes and it stipulates that they also have to finish their higher education with a high degree in the subject of study they have chosen before getting the financial rewards of that professional complex.*

*So actually, they have put student athletes at the same level as the professional athletes, not under 100% contract but a 70% contract and it is supplemented with a bursary of 20,000 euros for training facilities, so after 15 years, we've actually achieved what we wanted – recognition of being a student athlete, almost as a professional. Now we need to avoid going into extremes and have student athletes not studying. But that's why it stipulates very clearly what the academic requirements are”.*

During the discussion, participants made many remarks about the differences between Europe and the US on this matter, considering that this movement is quite strong in the US but less in the European countries, according to our tradition in academic and sports structures. Participants noted several cultural differences between the US and Europe. In the European context, it was felt that in general, the universities give little value to the training of elite athletes. On the contrary, in the US context, the universities play a different and significant role in elite sports career development.

Another area of discussion was whether student/athletes compete for their university or their local teams, and indeed whether scholarships require student/athletes to compete for their colleges. One of the differences noted in discussion between the American college system and the system in the UK was the difference in how the athletes actually compete. If athletes go on a scholarship system to America, a huge amount of emphasis is placed on competing for the college and that competition network is quite large. Whereas, in the UK many of the top athletes who go to university compete for a club or a junior international team, not necessarily for the college.

Jari Kanerva of the Finnish Society for Research in Sport and Physical Education, gave the second presentation entitled 'The Finnish university system and support for athletes'. The presentation considered issues such as the development of programmes of education, grants, flexibility in delivery and support programmes to find work after graduation. Jari presented the university model in Finland, where there are 20 universities, all state-run, with the government providing about 65% of their budget. The annual number of applications is about 68,000 and only 28,000 candidates are admitted.

At the level of higher education, there is no permanent and structured project for combining sport and academic studies. However, since 2002 at the University of Oulu, a programme has existed with the objective of helping students to balance sports training and academic studies, due to the fact that in this city there are several elite athletes. This program is a common project of the University and the Oulu Regional Academy of Sport and is supported by European and national funds.

Time management is an important element of this programme. An initial survey showed that student/athletes spend more time in training than in studying (the average working week is 63 hours), but in the first year, student/athletes spend most of their time studying. A tutor system was implemented to help students plan their studies, with tutors providing advice on balancing training and studies within a personalised co-ordinated schedule and the programme also provides guidance material, such as printed documents, video and internet.

Oulu Region Academy of Sport aims to make it generally possible for a higher education student/athlete in Finland to study the subject s/he desires and also receive appropriate professional instruction in the sport of his/her choice.

Jari noted that some positive impacts of the strategy can be observed, such as:

- universities have no limits in the length of the studies (flexible but demanding programmes)
- the establishment of important links between coach – student counsellor – athlete
- the existence of two polytechnics with special degree programmes for athletes
- the implementation of a tutor system to help the athletes plan their studies;
- the National Olympic Committee is financed by the Ministry of Education to employ a study and career counsellor to provide assistance for athletes in matters over studies and career planning and the coordination between educational institutions and sports federations.

On the other hand some negative impacts were also noted, as:

- it is very difficult to link and coordinate training and studies (for example, during the competition periods)
- time taken to reach graduation is among the highest in Europe (6.5 years).

The Ministry of Education awards grants for athletes, proposed by the NOC and the Paralympic Committee. The grants are tax-free and can go from 6.000 € to 12.000 €/year and can be extended to retired athletes to study at the university. In terms of the vision for the Finnish elite sports program, the purpose is the athletes can succeed in education, family and private life, career development and sports training during and/or after their sports career.

### **Summary**

In summary, the conference identified many common themes as well as significant differences in approaches to the education of young sportspersons. Papers were delivered which highlighted good practice around Europe and discussions in workshops revealed a number of key issues, including the following:

- problems in balancing educational needs with sport development requirements
- whether there should be incentives attached to academy places and sports scholarships to encourage student/athletes to complete their studies
- variations in funding for programmes of athlete support with some countries favouring public sector support and others private sector solutions
- the need to measure the success of student/athlete support programmes and how this might be carried out
- the effects of an increase in professional mobility in employment in sport in Europe

- the impact of shifting attitudes to education and qualifications as competition for places intensifies with more players from new EU states entering professional sport employment.