

Elite Sport in Hong Kong – An Overview

Purpose

To brief Members on the current situation of elite sports development in Hong Kong.

Background

2. In recent years, Hong Kong's athletes have achieved with increasing success in the international sports arena. With the comprehensive support in the key areas of coaching, technical services, financial assistance, training venues and facilities provided by Hong Kong Sports Development Board (HKSDB), National Sports Associations (NSAs) and Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Hong Kong athletes have continued to perform well in recent years.

3. Following the winning of the first ever gold medal by our top windsurfer, Ms Lee Lai-shan, in the 1996 Olympic Games, there have been a number of outstanding achievements by our athletes. Their achievements in recent years are summarized below:-

Events	No. of medals	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1998 Bangkok Asian Games		5	6	6	17
2000 Sydney Paralympic Games		8	3	7	18
2001 Osaka East Asian Games		3	1	3	7
2001 Guangzhou National Games		2	2	1	5
2002 Busan Asian Games		4	6	11	21
2002 International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championships		2	2	1	5
8 th Far East and South Pacific Games 2002		41	25	26	92
2003 National Intercity Game		2	0	1	3

4. All these outstanding achievements are largely a result of efforts of the athletes themselves and the support given to them collectively by HKSDB,

NSAs and LCSD.

5. To sustain and enhance our competitiveness in the national and international sporting arena, there is a need to collaborate closely with other sectors of the community, such as education, health care, social welfare and business and the districts, and to enlist them as partners in the sports development, in particular, development of elite sport. The aim is to nurture a cadre of high performance athletes who can win in major national and international sports events, and become role models for our youth, as well as enhance Hong Kong's standing in the sporting arena.

Delivery Agents and Funding for Elite Sports Development

6. The government devote considerable resources to sport services each year. Public funds are primarily allocated to four major stakeholders, namely, the Hong Kong Sports Development Board, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, National Sports Associations and the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) for the development and promotion of sports in Hong Kong.

(a) Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI)

7. For 2004-05, the Government has allocated a subvention of \$90.93 million to the HKSDDB for elite sports training and to maintain a support framework, based at the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI), for elite athletes.

8. Apart from annual government subvention, the operations of HKSDDB was also financed by the income generated from the HKSDDB Trust Fund, which was set up in April 1993 with the donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club in support of elite sports training and development in Hong Kong.

9. The elite training programme in HKSI is the centerpiece of the elite sport training network in Hong Kong, which comprised of 13 "Elite Sports" (formerly named as "Focus Sports" before 2002), namely athletics, badminton, cycling, fencing, rowing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis, tenpin bowling, triathlon, windsurfing and wushu. The selection of Elite Sport NSAs is based on a "point-system" which was designed to measure the performance of individual NSA. The NSAs which have the best performance would be identified as Elite Sports in the HKSI and consequently the elite athletes of these NSAs could enjoy comprehensive support from the HKSI.

(b) Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

10. With effect from 1 April 2004, a Sports Funding Office was set up

in LCSD to take up the responsibility from HKSDB to provide subvention amounting to \$116.9 million to 57 NSAs which are responsible for the sports development in Hong Kong. The LCSD also works closely with the NSAs to launch various initiatives for promotion and development of sport. Some of the new initiatives aim at bridging the gap between elementary level sports training programmes and the youth squad training of the NSAs. The Schools Sports Programmes, Community Sports Clubs Projects and Youth Athletes Training Scheme are examples of the successful schemes under the purview of the LCSD.

(c) National Sports Associations (NSAs)

11. The NSAs also play an important role in the development of elite sports, as they are professional and expert in their own sport. The government has been granting subvention to NSAs to support training of their National Squad and Youth Squad, promotion and development programmes as well as administrative expenses. The employment of full-time / part-time coaches helps in planning programmes for the development of sport generally, and to put in place talent identification and “feeder” systems aimed at strengthening the available pool of elite athletes. Apart from the 13 elite sports, some of the NSAs proved to be very successful to develop their sport by winning a number of medals in international sports competitions e.g. snooker, bodybuilding, karatedo.

(d) Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC)

12. SF&OC is the confederation of 73 member associations, mainly NSAs and is the representative body of Hong Kong SAR in sending teams to participate in major games such as Olympic Games, Asian Games and East Asian Games, etc. It also organizes an annual Festival of Sports, sports management education courses and some other sport events for the promotion and development of sports in Hong Kong.

Other sources of funding support to elite sports/athletes

13. In addition, there are a number of funding programmes to support the development of elite sports and athletes. They are:

(i) Arts and Sport Development Fund (ASDF)

To provide grants to support elite athletes in preparing of major sports events. In 2001/02, \$9.5 million was allocated for preparation for 2002 Busan Asian Games and in 2003/04, \$7.3 million was allocated for preparation for 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

(ii) Sports Aid for Disabled Fund (SADF)

To provide financial assistance to disabled athletes with demonstrated performance and potential to achieve or maintain success in the international sports arena. In 2002/03, \$1.2 million was awarded to 38 elite disabled athletes from the SADF.

(iii) Sports Aid Foundation Fund (SAFF)

To provide financial assistance to athletes with demonstrated performance and potential to achieve or maintain success in the international sports arena. In 2002/03, \$8.3 million was awarded to 119 elite athletes, 40 junior athletes and 13 athletes from team only sports.

(iv) Hong Kong Athletes Fund (HKAF)

To provide grants for educational and other academic training to individual athletes to allow them to pursue excellence in their chosen sport and to provide them with the opportunity to develop alternative careers upon retirement from competitive sport. In 2002/03, \$0.61 million was approved to cover the tuition fees of 7 athletes up to the 2005/06 academic year.

(v) Individual Athletes Support Scheme

To support individual athletes of the sport which do not fall within Elite Sports Category, and secondary disciplines of Elite Sports. The Scheme assists athletes who have reached elite standard but not from the Elite Sports programme. In 2002/03, \$1.23 million was granted to 13 athletes.

(vi) Commercial Sponsorship

Apart from government subvention, HKSDB and NSAs also seek financial support from the commercial sector in sports development. In 2003-04, HKSDB have secured commercial sponsorships of \$5 million, of which a large proportion went to sports promotion programmes, i.e. McDonald for HK Youth Football Programme (\$1.8 million), Bank of China for HK Badminton Promotion Scheme (\$0.9 million) and Hong Kong Bank for HK Bank Foundation Coach Education Programme (\$1.5 million).

(vii) Athlete Incentive Awards Scheme

The scheme was established to provide cash rewards for medallists at the 1994 Asian Games. In May 2001, Hong Kong athletes won three gold, one silver and three bronze medals in medal sports at the East Asian Games and a total of \$0.12 million was allocated to 13 medallists under the 2001 East Asian Games Athlete Incentive Awards Scheme. For the 9th National Games held in November 2001, a total of \$1.11 million was presented to the 9 medallists by HKSDB and Hang Seng Bank jointly on a dollar-to-dollar basis under the Hang Seng Athlete Incentive Awards Scheme.

Support to Athletes through the HKSI network

14. The HKSI has developed a comprehensive Elite Training Programme for the athletes under their Sports Scholarship Scheme (SSS). The SSS consists of the following components to support their scholarship athletes:

(i) General and Financial Support

- Meals and Accommodation
- Accident, Travel and Medical Insurance
- Monthly Stipends: based on the qualified athletes' actual needs as recommended by the respective Head Coaches of the HKSI
- Sports Aid Foundation Fund / Sports Aid for the Disabled Fund Applications: Currently, the scholarship athletes are classified into various categories according to their achievements and levels. Under the two Funds, they would be given annual grants as recommended by the HKSI. Details of grants approved for 2004/05 are tabled below for information.

SAFF Recipients for 2004/05: **(Total grant: \$7.725 million)**

Category	Number of athletes	Annual Ceiling Grant (\$)
Elite A	15	\$90,000
Elite B	52	\$70,000
	7 / Team	\$300,000 / Team
Elite C	38	\$30,000
	15 / Team	\$125,000 / Team
Junior A	33	\$30,000
Junior B	18	\$10,000
Total no. of athletes	178	

SADF Recipients for 2004/05:
(Total grant: \$1.415 million):

Category	Number of athletes	Annual Ceiling Grant (\$)
Elite A	16	\$50,000
Elite B	11	\$30,000
Elite C	19	\$15,000
Total no. of athletes	46	

(ii) Technical Support

- Sports Science / Sports Medicine
- Strength and Conditioning

(iii) Academic and Vocational Support

- Education (e.g. Tutorial Lessons, school referrals, Hong Kong Athletes Fund etc.)
- Tuition Fee Subsidy: to provide financial assistance to current HKSDB Scholarship Athletes to cover the tuition fee of post-secondary institutes.
- PCCW Athlete Enhancement Programme (1999-2003): Sponsored by the Pacific Century Cyberworks, it is a four-year programme to promote the importance of personal enhancement in the pursuit of education and career development.
- Career Counseling

(iv) Coaching Support

- Coaching
- Local and Overseas Training
- Overseas Competition

A table summarizing the sources of funding support to elite athletes is shown at **Annex I**.

Training Facilities

(a) Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI)

15. The HKSI continued to provide access to the training facilities for the 13 Elite Sports and other NSAs for preparation for major events. In 2002-03, a total of 89,198 training hours were provided free of charge for Elite Sports and 4,395 training hours for athletes under the Disabled Sports Elite Training Programme. Other NSAs can also make use of the HKSI sports facilities at concessionary rates. (List of sports facilities of the HKSI at **Annex II**).

(b) Sports facilities of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

16. Apart from HKSI, the NSAs also make use of the sports facilities of the LCSD to implement training programmes for their national squads and youth squads as well as holding of local and international sporting events as a means to enhance the competitiveness of their top athletes. At present, the LCSD manages 83 sports centres, 36 swimming pool complexes, 49 grass football pitches, 14 artificial football pitches, 270 tennis courts, 325 squash courts, 24 sports grounds, 35 roller skating rinks, 4 water sports centre, 5 golf driving ranges and 2 public riding schools. These facilities are mainly used by the general public for recreation purposes. With an aim to fully utilizing these sports facilities for training of elite athletes, the LCSD has introduced “**National Squad Training Centre**” (NSTC) Scheme and “**Dedicated Venue**” (DV) Scheme since 2001. Having consulted with relevant NSAs, some dedicated LCSD venues are assigned to specific NSAs as NSTC and DV to facilitate the training of their national squads. It is considered that the facilities of the LCSD are a pool of resources available for NSAs’ training programmes. Under these two Schemes, NSAs are given higher priority in the booking of LCSD venues for their training programmes. (A list of recreation and amenity facilities of the LCSD at **Annex III**).

(c) NSAs’ training bases

17. Currently, there are several NSAs which have their own facilities to conduct training programmes and holding of competitions, they are :-

- Hong Kong China Rowing Association
(Shatin Rowing Centre and Shek Mun Rowing Centre)
- The Hong Kong Dragon Boat Association
(Shing Mun River)

- The Hong Kong Yachting Association
(Sai Kung Little Palm Beach Sailing Centre)
- The Windsurfing Association of Hong Kong
(Stanley Main Beach)
- Hong Kong Softball Association
(Tin Kwong Road, Kowloon)
- Hong Kong Equestrian Federation
(Tuen Mun Public Riding School)

(d) Training in mainland China and overseas

18. If resource permits, HKSI / NSAs will arrange athletes to partner with training institutions in the mainland China and other countries to prepare for the participation of major sports games. Through the support of HKSI resources, the Elite Sports NSAs of the HKSI would have more opportunities to arrange athletes to receive training in other places. Examples are table tennis, tennis, badminton, swimming, wushu to train in mainland China; windsurfing and cycling to train / compete overseas.

The Way Forward

19. Members are invited to take note the current situation of the elite sports development in Hong Kong as presented in this paper. It serves as an overview of local elite sports scene.