

Experiences from the frontline of management for world class performance – working in the UK sport research & innovation team

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UK Sport's Research & Innovation Team supports the top athletes and coaches in the British elite sport system, answering specific performance questions they are confronted with in their daily training or during competition (<http://www.uksport.gov.uk/pages/research-innovation>). Developing an effective elite sport focused research programme - basically from scratch and during the pressured built-up period Home Olympics bring with them - required the Research & Innovation Team to achieve a very steep learning curve. Having shared this journey for more than five years, the author will provide an overview of his experiences as well as some reflections in light of his own research background (Boehlke 2007, Boehlke and Robinson 2009).

In his presentation, the author will start by offering a brief overview of the current set-up of the UK Sport Research &

Innovation Programme as well as the specific ways of working the Research & Innovation Team developed over the years. This will then lead to a reflection of some key factors underpinning the set-up of this programme as well as the Team's ways of working: some of these factors are of a structural nature (e.g. available resource situation); others are more procedure-focused (e.g. effective project management processes); but the author will also highlight that some factors influencing the success of their work are actually more of a tacit nature (e.g. successful management of relationships).

Based on these reflections, and in light of the second target of the workshop (i.e. identifying future research agendas), the author will conclude his contribution with a discussion of potential future research approaches.

Disclaimer: The presented views and opinions are those of the author and might not reflect those of UK Sport.

References:

- Boehlke, N. (2007), "New insights in the nature of best practice in elite sport system management – exemplified with the organisation of coach education". *New Studies in Athletics*, 21(1): 49-59.
- Boehlke, N. and Robinson, L. (2009) "Benchmarking of elite sport systems", *Management Decision*, Vol. 47 Iss: 1, pp.67 – 84.