

# **Developing The Swiss Elite Snowboard System Nationwide To Increase The Success At International Competitions**

**Bosshard, Bruno**

Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen SFISM, Switzerland

E-mail: bruno.bosshard@baspo.admin.ch

## **Aim of the research**

Winning medals at Olympic Games is the highest form of success an Athlete can achieve. It can also trigger new developments for Sports in the respective country. Small countries like Switzerland with a limited talent pool and relatively poor finance funding for elite sport depend on an efficient supporting system for their athletes. Every Swiss franc invested must bring the highest amount of success, regarding the goals defined by the sports federations.

The aim of this research is to identify which factors of the Swiss elite snowboard system need to be developed in order to support Swiss snowboard athletes in the best manor possible.

## **Theoretical background**

In order that athletes receive the best support possible, strategies and structures of decision makers must be optimized for an ideal development of athletes in the respective country. Even though several studies have shown that many countries have similar sport strategies, Sotiriadou and De Bosscher (2013) have written, that a global optimal strategy which guarantees international success is unclear.

To compare sport policies of different countries SPLISS (Sport Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success) was developed by an international consortium of researchers lead by Veerle de Bosscher. Factors influencing sporting success can be classified at three levels: macro-, meso- and micro-level. The purpose of the SPLISS framework is to model the relationship between elite sport policy policies and international success — the focus of research therefore is directed at meso-level factors (De Bosscher, Shibli, Westerbeek, & Bottenburg, 2015).

The SPLISS framework was built as an Input-Throughput-Output system. Financial support is the input to the system. Throughputs are the policy actions that script and deliver the processes that may lead to increasing success in international sport competitions. The actual performance of nations in elite sport competitions is the output measure of the system.

The talent identification for Swiss snowboard athletes takes place in the Clubs, where they receive first level support. The next supporting level are the regional snowboard federations. Top athletes have access to sport schools and one of two national training centers which are combined institutes. Swiss-Ski, the national snowboard federation defines the guidelines for training and support of the athletes. This complex network of partners must be organized efficiently in order to develop elite athletes in a way that they can win at international competitions.

## **Methodology, research design and data analysis**

For this study the SPLISS questionnaire for Athletes was adapted, in cooperation with the relevant entities of Swiss-Ski, to the Swiss elite sport system and to the sport snowboard. The questionnaire was then sent to all Swiss snowboard athletes with a talent card national and higher. 59 (n =59) of the 76 (N = 76) athletes questioned filled out the questionnaire completely.

## **Results, discussion and implications/conclusions**

Based on the findings in this study the main area of development for the Swiss elite snowboard system is that the system must be developed nationwide.

The national training centers and sport schools form a cluster in which athletes, coaches and performance directors from different sports like skiing and snowboarding train and work. Similar sports like freestyle ski and freestyle snowboard should pool their knowledge in order to create added value through synergies. This network of persons should be used to develop specific knowledge upon which new forms of training or training recommendations can be described. Spreading the new knowledge in an adequate form would have an implication on the nationwide development of the Swiss elite snowboard system.

## References

- De Bosscher, V., Shibli, S., Westerbeek, H., & van Bottenburg, M. (2015). *Successful elite sport policies: an international comparison of the Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS 2.0) in 15 nations*. Maidenhead: Meyer & Meyer Sports.
- Sotiriadou, P., & de Bosscher, V. (Eds.). (2013). *Managing high performance sport*. Abingdon: Routledge.