

In a Peak Fitness Condition?



TEAM DANMARK



| The Danish Elite Sports Model and the Role of Team Denmark |

| Evaluation results, challenges and the future way ahead |

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Key Findings

- 1 Under the given circumstances, Team Danmark must be considered fit
- 2 However, Denmark is losing ground in the international sporting arms race
- 3 Due to the international development, Team Danmark is forced to improve its peak fitness condition to keep the pace

International findings

Table 1.1 Factors contributing to elite success

Factors	Oakley and Green	Digel	UK Sport (SPLISS Consortium)	Green and Houlihan
Contextual	An excellence culture Appropriate funding	Support, especially financial, of the state Economic success and business sponsorship A media supported positive sports culture	Financial support Participation in sport Scientific research	Support for 'full-time' athletes
Processual	Clear understanding of the role of different agencies Simplicity of administration Effective system for monitoring athlete progress Talent identification and targeting of resources Comprehensive planning system for each sport Lifestyle support	Talent development through the education system Talent development through the armed forces	Talent identification and development system Athletic and post-career support Integrated approach to policy development Coaching provision and coach development	
Specific	Well-structured competitive programmes Well-developed specific facilities	Sports science support services	International competition Training facilities	A hierarchy of competition opportunities centred on preparation for international events Elite facility development The provision of coaching, sports science and sports medicine support services

Sources: Digel (2002a, b); Green and Houlihan (2005); Oakley and Green (2001); and UK Sport (2006).

Funding

Simplicity of administration and clear understanding of the role of different agencies

Talent development –identification

Competition opportunities

Elite Facilities

Sports science and sports medicine support services

Administration and the role of different agencies

Simplicity of administration?

Although Team Danmark is fit for future challenges, the institution needs to put more energy into elite sport development - not paper work and administration

The role of different agencies:

“There is no consensus or preference regarding the necessity or otherwise for centralization or a high level of government intervention in elite sport policies. Its is more important to have a good communication system and clear task description” (quote: the SPLISS-project).

A clearer understanding of responsibilities needs to be developed



Talent development

- Especially small countries – such as Denmark - need to pay attention to talent development
- The development of a more performance orientated approach (medals in return for financial support) has a negative side effect:
- As the federations are putting their focus on the ‘money-giving-athletes’ to secure their future funding, it becomes difficult to uphold the necessary flow of talents
- This is a significant threat to the Danish level of competition



Competition Opportunities & Facilities

Training facilities are an important success factor enabling athletes to train in a high quality environment. Facility provision also provides a link between participation and excellence (The SPLISS-project)

The Danish elite sport facilities need more attention. However, the resources provided to Team Danmark are insufficient to sharpen this attention.

This brings about the classic problem, namely the tension between mass participation and elite access to facilities.



Sports Science and Sports Medicine Services

- Sports Science and Sports Medicine Support concern the systematic gathering and dissemination of scientific information in a wide range of areas
- Showing the presence of a high level of sports medicine support and a firm research support program, the evaluation finds the Danish elite sports model suited for the future
- The field of sports psychology, though, seems to be lacking in the work of Team Denmark
- A more structured and pro-active use of the information already gathered by Team Denmark from the federations could help create a more fruitful and strategic approach to elite sport development in Denmark



Perspectives

Sufficient funding?

"(...) the reality is that international sport is a global issue not a national issue. Consequently, the rules of the game are dictated by what rival nations are doing, not on the basis of what an individual nation is doing now compared with what it did in the past. The key question facing all nations taking a strategic approach to elite sport is 'to what extent do we wish to be part of this game?'" (UK Sport 2006: 16).

In case the Danish politicians aim for a larger medal portfolio, then the current funding is insufficient.

No matter the ambitions, the goals for Danish international sporting success need to be set taking into account the international development, the size of population, the GDP as well as the resources allocated for (international) elite sport.



Summing up

- Denmark is loosing ground in the international sporting arms race
- Due to increasing international competition, the prize of medals are getting higher and higher
- This raises a question of funding
- The answer is a matter of political priorities
- Further political discussions must be pursued to clear this matter



Thank you!



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