

SPORT AND SCHOLARSHIPS AT SCOTLAND'S UNIVERSITY FOR SPORTING EXCELLENCE

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INTRODUCTION

This is an account of the growth and development of a scholarship scheme at one university, located in a wider context of expansion of sport in higher education. In itself the scheme is not profoundly significant but its importance lies in the impact it has had on elite student sport in Universities across Britain. It led the way until the Government was prepared to fund a national scholarships scheme. It provided a model for development based on partnerships with national governing bodies of sport. It is a genuine success story for a small Scottish university.

From 1975 to 1995 growth was limited to the efforts of a small number of universities who operated with very restricted budgets. 1970s and 1980s there were only loose links between student sport and world class performance. The governments led by John Major and Tony Blair transformed physical education and sport in Britain (Houlihan & White 2002, Green & Houlihan 2006). They provided the leadership, and the National Lottery, which generated an extra £300 million per annum for sport, supplied the funding. Traditionally, elite athletes had emerged from the top amateur clubs but from about 1995 high performance sport has been increasingly associated with higher education. Sixty-eight per cent of the British team at the Beijing Olympics were either current or former university students. A recent report linked the growth of sports scholarships to the Government's decision to locate the regional hubs of the UK Institute of Sport in all four parts of the UK at higher education campuses, along an investment of £150 million (Collins 2004). In Scotland, four of the six Area Institutes of Sport are based at universities and the headquarters of the Scottish Institute of Sport is located on the Stirling campus. Ten of the thirteen Scottish universities are now offering scholarships (Taylor 2003). Universities are locked into the fabric of Scottish sport.

Scottish universities have built up partnerships with national governing bodies of sport leading to joint bids for funding from the National Lottery. Edinburgh hosts the National Hockey Academy at Peffermill, the National Squash Academy is located at Heriot Watt, and the National Centres for Swimming and Tennis are situated on the Stirling campus, all part-funded by the Lottery. Aberdeen University has attracted Lottery support for a 50 metre swimming pool. The headquarters for the Commonwealth Games Council, Scottish Gymnastics, Scottish Swimming and Scottish Triathlon are all housed at Stirling. Lucrative partnerships have been established with professional football clubs. Heriot Watt formed a partnership arrangement with Heart of Midlothian Football Club leading to the development of a large indoor football centre in the university campus. Falkirk Football Club chose to locate its Football Academy in purpose-built facilities at Stirling.

Higher education institutions across the UK have embraced the mushrooming demand for sport related courses. In 1995 there were 102 main degree courses in sports studies catering for 6000 students. Only eight years later this had increased to 1510 degrees in sport, 1190 degrees in sports sciences, and 439 degrees in sport studies (Collins 2004). In 2003 there were over 13,000 acceptances onto these courses in that year alone. All thirteen Scottish universities offer sport-related degree courses for undergraduates, and seven at postgraduate. The most common sport-based courses are sports science (85%), sports studies (38%), sports coaching (15%) (Taylor 2003). Perhaps surprisingly, the majority of elite student athletes attending Scottish Universities chose their university for non-sporting reasons (Tunnicliffe

2006), Only 26% of the 299 elite student athletes were pursuing a sport-related course of study.

In a foreword to the UK Government's sports policy statement, Sport; Raising the Game, (DNH 1995). John Major claimed that it contained the most important set of proposals ever published for the encouragement and promotion of sport. A working group the chairmanship of Sir Roger Bannister was appointed to look at ways of encouraging best practice in sports scholarships. Responses to a questionnaire were received from 101 institutions showing that thirty-five were operating scholarships, of whom only seven had been doing so for more than seven years (DNH 1996) It was essentially a small-scale development, covering about 200 students out of a student population of 1.5 million. The main barrier to growth lay in the absence of a reliable source of funding. The government ignored Bannister's proposal that the Sports Councils for the four Home countries should provide Lottery funds each year for sports scholarships. The UK Sports Council was about to introduce a World Class programme of funding for elite athletes and it was deemed inappropriate to have a bwin-track approach. It would take a further ten years before government funding was provided for sports scholarships in universities. Meantime there was a slow but steady growth in the number of universities offering scholarships.

In Britain there is no equivalent of the vast revenue budgets of American universities which can attract in excess of 100,000 paying spectators at each of their football games. However, in 2005 the UK Sports Minister, Tessa Jowell announced the creation of the Talented Athlete Scholarships Scheme (TASS) to fund scholarships in England and Wales. It is a partnership between colleges and universities and governing bodies of sport. The network includes 84 institutions spread over nine regions. Each year an average of 1000 student athletes aged between 16 and 28 from 47 sports receive £3,500 worth of sport-related support. There is a separate TASS 2012 programme to fast track athletes with world class potential who each receive £10,000 worth of support per annum. Currently there are 100 athletes on this programme. TASS also provides funding of about £1000 for each member of the British team for the World Student Games. In 2009 the Scottish Funding Council agreed to allocate £1 million over two years to fund scholarships in Scotland. A new Winning Students programme similar in principle to TASS but on a much smaller scale is in process of being introduced in Scotland.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Stirling followed the lead of Bath University in offering sports scholarships tailored to the needs of students who aimed to achieve world standards while simultaneously studying for a degree. In 1980 a proposal to introduce scholarships was taken through the appropriate university committees. There was some resistance *en route* from academic staff of whom had already opposed proposals in 1969, 1971, 1974 and 1979 for academic development in physical education and sport. There was a concern that as a new university Stirling's reputation would suffer if 'lightweight' courses were offered. However the scholarships scheme was approved in principle in summer 1980. Matters then took a completely unpredictable turn. On 4th August 1980 the author was wakened at midnight by a reporter to comment on an item to appear next day in The Scotsman newspaper to the effect that the University had offered a sports scholarship to 16-year old Linsey MacDonald on her return from the 1980 Olympics. I knew nothing about it but I was able to take advantage of the opportunity to draw attention to the potential benefits of the scheme- It emerged that the President of the Students

Association, Jack McConnell, a future First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, had persuaded the President of the Sports Union to make the offer. Although the offer was not taken up it received massive beneficial publicity in the press, radio, and television and the whole process of introducing scholarships accelerated rapidly.

The University sought advice from the Scottish Office and the Scottish Sports Council about funding for scholarships. They both confirmed that government funds could not be used. Nevertheless the University decided that a small scale scheme could be introduced using existing resources. As a new university Stirling owed a debt of gratitude to the local community which had campaigned and raised funds for it. Sports facilities were opened to the local community on an unprecedented scale, generating funds for re-investment in improvements to facilities. It was agreed that a proportion of this income should be allocated for scholarships and the first scholarships should be awarded in 1981. This was a remarkably courageous decision by the University given that the whole of higher education was in a state of turmoil as the Thatcher government reversed the central philosophy of the Robbins Report. In 1981 the government announced cuts in funding for universities in a White Paper on public expenditure. The University Grants Committee applied these selectively to universities, ranging up to 35% of recurrent grants and averaging out at 1.3% across the sector (Scott 1984) It was not an ideal time to launch a new initiative.

Four sports were chosen on grounds of popularity in Scotland, the number of young people playing these sports and their growth potential. This led to the selection of badminton, golf, swimming and tennis. The University's strategy was to build strong partnerships with national governing bodies.

A visit to the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews led to the clarification of the Rules of Amateur Status governing golf scholarships. The Scottish Amateur Swimming Association, whose administrative offices by then were located within the university campus, were equally enthusiastic. The Scottish Badminton Union and the Scottish Lawn Tennis Association were also supportive,

Golf

Golf was chosen as the premier sport for investment and development. By good fortune the first male golfer recruited by the University in 1981 won the Scottish Amateur Championship and played for Britain in the Walker Cup in his first year at the university. Colin Dalgleish had returned disillusioned from a golf scholarship at Ohio State University and throughout his subsequent illustrious career as an amateur golfer he consistently praised the combination of academic studies and golf at Stirling. Two female students awarded scholarships each won the Scottish Ladies Amateur title and played for Britain in the Curtis Cup. The base line for measuring the performance of the golf club was Scottish and British universities competitions. By 1989 the University had achieved total domination of student golf in Britain, winning all individual and team Scottish and British championships, and also an inaugural European championship.

The Secretary of the R&A, Michael (later Sir Michael) Bonnallak, saw in the Stirling scheme an opportunity to stem the flow of young British golfers to American universities. As a first step the R&A awarded a scholarship to Stirling in 1987, with a promise that the number would increase annually over the next four years up to a steady state of eight scholarships per annum. Each scholarship was worth £5000 per annum and the one was awarded to Catriona Lambert

(now Matthew) who subsequently became a world Cia: professional player. Her achievements and those of other golf scholars led the R&A to nominate Stirling as the British representative R&A to nominate Stirling as the British representative at a world intercollegiate tournament in Japan in three successive years from 1989.

On the basis of its successful performance at world level, Stirling was able to award R&A scholarships to two top Swedish women golfers at a time when the normal practice would have been for them to enrol at American universities. Maria Hjorth went on to a successful career on the lucrative women's Tour in America. She was a student at Stirling at the same time as Gordon Sherry who won the British Amateur Championship and played in the Walker Cup. Later, in 2006 Ritchie Ramsay would win the US Amateur title while still a student at Stirling, and in 2008 Gavin Dear would be a member of the 3-man British team that won the World Amateur title. Bonnallak foresaw that Stirling would become ever more dominant through the award of R&A scholarships and so he invited other British universities to apply for funding. This provided an incentive for institutions which were considering the introduction of scholarships. The R&A support for student golf grew to become the largest sponsorship of any sport in British universities, amounting to over £450,000 in 2007. Stirling received a grant from the R&A to attach a gov academy to its existing par-three golf course on campus. A beneficial outcome is that the R&A believe they have helped to stem the tide of young British golfers enrolling at American universities.

A survey of scholarships in Scottish universities revealed the impact of the R&A's intervention (SUPEA 2001) Nine universities took part in the survey and six of them started with golf scholarships funded by the R&A. St' Andrews had only ever awarded golf scholarships and ali 110 had been funded by the R&A. Golf accounted for 550 (42%) of the 1,299 awards made by Scottish universities between 1981 and 2001. However, in the years following the introduction of R&A scholarships the dominance of golf increased, The survey showed that between 1988 and 2001 golf accounted for 66% of the total awards made. Four times as many golf scholarships had been awarded as the next sport of athletics. Stirling's dominance had been reduced as more universities were able to attract talented young golfers. The performance standard in Scottish and British universities had improved measured by the golf handicaps of entrants to championships. Stirling could reasonably claim that it had attracted investment from a wealthy governing body which provided benefits not only to the University but also to other institutions, a trend that continues today.

Tennis

Between 1981 and 1989 the number of scholarships awarded by Stirling in tennis was second only to golf but the student tennis players had to compete with other sports for time in the sports hall. In 1988 Stirling saw an opportunity to acquire a facility designed and used exclusively by tennis players. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) launched an Indoor Tennis Initiative (ITI) that year, with the aim of increasing opportunities to play the game all year round. It consisted of building 4 court indoor centres to a standard design and making them available to the public on a pay-and-play basis. A statistic widely used at that time was that there were more indoor courts in Paris than in the whole of Britain. The University agreed to make a bid for a centre on condition that the capital costs should be met from external sources. The Scottish LTA and the Scottish Sports Council were attracted by the University's proposal that the new facility could be designated as a Scottish national tennis centre. With 50% funding from the Gannochy Trust and the balance of the £1 million budget met by the LTA

and the Scottish Sports Council, the 4-court National Tennis Centre was opened in 1989. The national coach for the Scottish LTA, Teny Mabbit, was based at the Centre and he coached the University team.

In 1992 Ian Thomson explained to Richard Lewis, Director of National Training at the LTA, how the R&A had spread its support for scholarships across a growing number of universities, and suggested a similar scheme for tennis. Lewis appointed Thomson as the part-time LTA consultant for higher education and encouraged him to flesh out the proposal. The scheme that emerged aimed to set up a consortium of eight universities, each of which would be encouraged to: build indoor and outdoor courts; appoint a performance coach for at least 15 hours a week for 40 weeks each year; offer up to eight scholarships; participate in a super-8 league. Within two years four universities were approved, two from England (Bath and Loughborough), one from Scotland (Stirling), and the University of Wales Institute at Cardiff. Lewis allocated £50,000 per annum for the scholarship scheme in the four designated universities, each of which by September 1996 had opened a £1 million 4-court indoor tennis centre grant-aided by the LTA.

The new scheme replaced a random system based on individual student choice which had resulted in talented players being spread haphazardly across the sector. With the support of 'the LTA, recruitment of quality tennis players to the funded institutions increased, as did competition between the four universities. This venture went further than the R&A scheme by tying facilities, coaching, support services, competition and players' contracts into a scholarships package. It also attempted to define the contribution of scholarships to the production of world class players. The success of the scholarships scheme was that it was included as a significant element of the LTA development strategy 1996-2001. It was the first example of a comprehensive approach to sports scholarships by a governing body and universities.

Andy and Jamie Murray made extensive use of the indoor facilities at Stirling during their formative years. The staff at Dunblane High School arranged the time table to permit the boys to have to the centre during the day, several days a week, Judy Murray spearheaded the SLT junior development programme but she made the decision that her sons had sufficient talent to make the grade as professional tennis players and forsook the route of tennis scholarships at a university.

Swimming

Swimming was the third most popular sport in the scholarships scheme at Stirling. In 1974 the University negotiated a contract with the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (SASA) to provide access to its new swimming pool and halls of residence for national teams, and to rent offices and services on campus for the Association's headquarters. The national coach would be based at Stirling and the University would undertake research studies in high performance swimming. The University had started employing graduate assistants in sports development, who were contracted to conduct research. Some of the swimmers enrolled as students and when the scholarships programme was introduced in 1981 the University started to look for sources of funding for swimming scholarships. The difference between the wealthy governing bodies for golf and tennis, and the modestly-funded SASA was soon apparent. The Scottish Sports Council the view that it was grant-aiding the SASA and it was prevented by the terms of its Royal Charter from also funding university sports scholarships. The University had to depend

off support from external agencies such as the Macleod Foundation, a Trust based in Scotland which funded six scholarships in various sports each year.

In a relatively short space of time the-University had established a reputation for sporting excellence that went well beyond the boundaries of Scotland. The key ingredients were strong, determined leadership, innovative approaches to sports development and commitment to working in partnership with other agencies. Using a small number of sports Stirling was challenging to be recognised as one of the leading sports universities in Britain. This had been achieved without any reductions in academic entry or progress standards. Strong partnerships had been established with national governing bodies of sport. A small-scale programme of applied research had been implemented.

Academic developments

Alongside these developments, the resistance within the university to academic provision for sport was diminishing. From 1986, a unit entitled School, Sport and Society was taught by Physical Recreation staff operating within the MEd programme in the Faculty of Education. Then in response to a draft University Academic Plan 1993/4 to 2002/3, they were invited to submit proposals for undergraduate courses that might be developed within this Plan. It was assumed that these would focus on Sports Management, but the staff opted for Sports Studies. They were guided by Professor Michael Jackson, Senior Deputy Principal, to develop degree courses combined with other subjects in the Faculty of Management such as Business Studies, Economics, Management and Marketing. These combined degree courses have subsequently proved to be enormously popular. A detailed proposal, with costings and predicted student numbers, was considered by Academic Council in December 1993. The seven units were approved, and starting in 1994 applications for places increased rapidly and student numbers reached 140 in session 1996-67.

In 1995 the University began to wrestle with the problem of identifying an appropriate structure to incorporate the various elements of sport at the University. There was a need for a mechanism whereby strategic plans could be developed and considered for each of the four constituent parts of sport provision — facility management, sports services, sports scholarships, and academic courses. These plans would have to be incorporated into the strategic plans for the University as a whole. Each of the areas had strengths; in terms of facility management, Stirling had the highest income from sport per student in the UK; its sports services included the largest programme of community sports classes in a Scottish university; the sports scholarships scheme was: comparable in number and quality to any other in the country; the academic programme had the potential to be attractive in its own right.

Two models were considered for an appropriate organisational structure. One was an integrated model in which the whole of the activity would be held together under one head and located within the academic area. This raised the question of locating a service activity in an academic environment. This was the structure at Loughborough University in the mid 1990s, and Professor Jackson and the University Secretary visited Loughborough to observe it at first hand. It was seen to have advantages in optimising efficiency and effectiveness in the allocation and utilisation of resources. The other approach was to keep the four parts separate. Thus, the academic activity would be based in a separate

academic department while the service activities and sports scholarships remained in the Administration. The arguments in favour of this model were that it would give a clear focus for different kinds of activity. On the other hand it could lead to fragmentation, different cultures and competing priorities. It would not make the best use of available staffing and facilities. On balance the integrated model was adopted.

The Integrated Model

The proposals submitted by Professor Jackson, which were approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in spring 1997, set out aims for an integrated Department of Sports Studies. One aim was that Stirling should provide a standard and range of sporting and recreation facilities for students and staff which could not be bettered by any other institution in the UK. Another was to develop academic activity that met the same teaching and research standards as those demanded of other departments in the University and which could challenge the best in teaching and research in that subject area in the UK. Finally the University should aim to be in the first rank of UK universities for sporting excellence.

The Sports Studies units had all been taught by Physical Recreation staff in addition to their normal duties. Moreover, they had limited experience of faculty administration, regulation of courses and budgets, and the powers of professors and heads of departments, in other words the politics of academic development. Consequently Professor Jackson argued for pump-priming funds for a Chair, and Grant Jarvie was appointed as the first Professor in Sports Studies in 1997. The Department of Sports Studies was established formally in 1999 in the Faculty of Management with Professor Jarvie as Head of Department. The new Department was unique in Scotland in containing academic courses, sports scholarships and a sports development service under one Head. Jarvie took on the task of building a department in a non-traditional area with enormous energy. Within five years there were three Professors, one senior lecturer and four lecturers, and Stirling achieved the best RAE results in Sports Studies of any of the Scottish universities in 2001. Professor Jarvie is now a Deputy Principal of the University, Sports Studies has benefited greatly from having a powerful voice at senior management level.

The Research Assessment Exercise (Scottish Funding Council 2008) placed Stirling •first in Scotland and fifth in Britain in Sports Studies, which is remarkable progress in a space of only ten years (Table 1). It was the only subject at Stirling listed in the top five in Britain and this high placing has enhanced its internationally excellent reputation.

The Department currently offers a single Honours course in Sports Studies; a single Honours course in Sport and Exercise Science; and Combined Honours courses along with fifteen other subjects. Starting in 2004, the University introduced a B.Sc. course in Sports Studies, Professional Education, and Physical Education which offers an alternative to the long established B.Ed. degree in Physical Education at Edinburgh University as a pathway into teaching. In total there are 500 students undertaking these various courses, Since 1999 only 4% of the sports scholars have failed to graduate due either to study termination or failing to meet academic grades. The spread of grades for scholars is similar to those of the normal student population (Table 2) Only a small number of scholars have taken advantage of the opportunity to extend their courses. The University made statutory provision in 2003 for an academic flexibility policy that defines the types and amounts of flexibility aild the procedures that must be followed. It is the only Scottish university to have done so.

Table 1**Top eight out of thirty nine British universities in the RAE 2008 quality profiles for Sports Studies**

Higher Education Institution	FTE Category A staff submitted staff submitted1*	Percentage of research activity in the submission judged to meet the standard				
		4*	3*	2*	1*	U/C
Loughborough University	41.80	25	35	30	10	0
University of Birmingham	32.80	25	35	30	10	0
Liverpool John Moores University	22.00	25	25	35	15	0
University of Bristol	8.60	20	35	35	10	0
University of Stirling	11.60	15	25	45	15	0
Leeds Metropolitan University	32.90	15	25	35	25	0
University of Bath	11.00	15	20	45	20	0
Brunel University	21.00	15	20	40	25	0

Note: The RAE sub-panel for Sports-Related Studies reviewed all outputs submitted and placed them in the following categories judged in terms of originality, significance and rigour: 4* quality is world leading, 3 is internationally excellent, 2* is recognised internationally, 1* is recognised nationally, while U/C is unclassified.

Table 2**Degree classification for student population 2005-2009.
(% in rows)**

Sample	1 st class	2:1 class honours	2:2 class honours	3 rd class honours	Unclassified
Scholar-athletes	5.6	50	36.1	2.8	5.6
Standard student population	10.6	55.9	32.1	1	

Scottish Institute of Sport

Plans for the development of excellence were outlined by the Conservative Government under John Major (DNH 1995) and endorsed as a key priority in Scotland (Scottish Office 1995). The new Government elected in 1997 under Tony Blair adopted the same principles and established a UK Sports Institute. The Scottish Institute of Sport (SIS) was an integral part of the UK Institute Network. In turn, Sport Scotland decided that there should be six Area Institutes of Sport supporting the SIS. The University collaborated with all the major local authorities and government agencies in Central Scotland, principally Stirling Council, to emerge in spring 2000 as the successful candidate to house the SIS on the University campus in a £1.1 million adaptation of a University building which opened in 2002. It was also agreed that the Central Area Institute of Sport should be accommodated within the University's sports centre. At about the same time Professor Jarvie was involved in negotiations with the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland to transfer their offices from Edinburgh University to Stirling as a first step in building the University's international standing.

OVERVIEW

Undoubtedly the scholarships scheme has been successful. Over a period of twenty five years a total of 328 scholarships have awarded, Roughly one third of the scholars achieved

international selection while they were students, and a growing number were successful at British, Commonwealth, European and Olympic level. Costs have amounted to €2.8 million, and although in the early years they had to be met from external sources, the University now meets about half the annual running costs. The University has been committed to the long game, an enduring investment through good and bad times.

However there would be limited satisfaction if that was the whole story. A more significant outcome is that all of the other Scottish universities operate scholarship schemes and they are making substantial contributions to elite sport. Edinburgh (49), Heriot Watt (38), Glasgow (35) and Aberdeen (23) account for half of the 299 elite student athletes in Scottish universities. Staff meet regularly to collaborate and monitor progress across the sector. It would be inaccurate to say that Stirling has bad everything its own way. In terms of inter-university competition, Edinburgh is by far the most successful of the Scottish universities. In 2007-2008 it came fifth in the British Universities and Colleges Sport league behind Loughborough, Bath, Birmingham and Durham. This is based on points won across 50 sports..

Nevertheless, Stirling is firmly established as one of the top four British sports universities, all of whom operate scholarships schemes linked closely with governing bodies of sport, offer large scale undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, have performed in the RAE, and provide sports facilities of the highest quality. Other Scottish universities perform well in one or more of these four criteria but do not achieve in all of them. In January 2005, with a view to informing the debate about the future of university sport in Scotland, Sport Scotland commissioned a review of university elite sport. The consultants devised a five-tier structure based on universities' alignment with the national strategy for sport - Sport 21; 2003-2007. Stirling was the only university in "the top tier described as follows:

Stirling University, a near-maximal example of university and elite sport agencies operating in harmony. This manifests itself in the hosting of the Scottish Institute of Sport, the Central Scotland Institute of Sport, and several SGBs; specific facilities development relating to identified national needs; the provision of sports science and medicine services to national sports programmes, the delivery of sports bursary programmes in line with Institute and SGB strategies; and specific-accommodation given to the sporting commitments and requirements of elite athletes. (Tunnicliffe 2006, p. 12)

Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence

In November 2006 it was reported that Jack McConnell, First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, had come up with the idea of a dedicated Scottish University for Sport and he intended to present it for approval at the annual conference of the Labour Party in Scotland later that month (Herald 4th November 2006). It was widely assumed that Stirling would be awarded the title. Some of the other Scottish universities took umbrage at the idea of a coronation for Stirling and it was not until May 2008 that the new First Minister, Alex Salmond, could formally announce that Stirling would henceforth be known as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence (Scottish Parliament 14th May 2008). Simultaneously the Scottish Funding Council announced that it would allocate 500,000 to Stirling because:

We saw a chance to build on Stirling's unique position amongst the UK's leading sports universities and create something special for Scotland. (Scottish Funding Council 15th May 2008).

Stirling will be the hub of a national network of excellence to support elite sportsmen and women studying at Scottish universities and colleges. The Scottish Funding Council appointed Grant Jarvie to chair a Shadow Council to work out how the network could make best use of the allocated funds. They have agreed to focus initially on three sports - women's football, hockey and swimming, in a programme to be known as Winning Students which will be managed and co-ordinated by Stirling. Winning Students will work closely with the relevant governing bodies of sport. Women's football is the fastest growing sport in Scotland and Scotland is ranked fifteenth in the world: A Scottish Football Association women's national football academy will be established at Stirling, starting in 2009. The best fifteen Scottish players will embark on a high performance football/education programme. A tri-partite funding and resources package will include the SFA, the University, and the Funding Council. Stirling will also host the Scottish Funding Council-funded swimming programme but plans for hockey are still being discussed.

CONCLUSIONS

The notion expressed by consultants of Stirling existing in harmony with other elite sport agencies sums up the unique contribution the University has made and continues to make to Scottish sport. The sports scholarships programme has created a relationship with governing bodies or sport which has proved to be mutually beneficial over the past twenty eight years. The University has acted jointly with these bodies in planning and developing outstanding facilities for sport. This has been achieved while the University has pursued its legitimate goals of developing programmes of teaching and research in Sports Studies. The combination of education and sport has been very popular. The Department of Sports Studies has made remarkable progress in the past ten years as shown by recent RAE results. The University can claim that its efforts in sports development have brought considerable benefits to other universities. It is all the more remarkable that until very recently these efforts have been made without direct support from government. The decision of the Scottish Funding Council to establish Stirling as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence and to inject a substantial sum is therefore very welcome.

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