

**Nothing Left to Chance? Development of elite sport policy in Scotland  
1999-2003**

**Vol. 2**

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## **Chapter 6: Scottish Elite Athlete Study: Qualitative Phase**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and conclusions of the qualitative phase of study two, the 'Scottish Elite Athlete Study'. This qualitative study builds upon the findings of the quantitative study (see chapter 5), the aim of which was to measure the level of athlete satisfaction with the administration, effectiveness and equity of the Lottery-funded Talented Athlete Programme (TAP). The main focus of this qualitative study is a series of interviews with sportsmen and sportswomen who are recipients of Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) awards, which is a National Lottery funded programme. It was felt that an investigation and analysis of the views of elite athletes would produce a one-sided view of the extent of equity within the elite funding mechanism. In order to fully assess the extent to which the National Lottery-funded support of elite sport in Scotland is equitable, an additional series of interviews were undertaken with individuals who are key to the elite sport system in Scotland, including coaches, officials from sportscotland and other key sports bodies.

This study was undertaken in response to the gap in the knowledge base in Scottish sport identified in the Review of Literature. The aims of the qualitative phase of the Scottish Elite Athlete Study are twofold. Firstly, to complement and build upon the quantitative data gathered from the postal questionnaire, and to discuss some of the issues raised by the qualitative component of that study. Secondly, to gather information about the level of athlete satisfaction with the administration, effectiveness and equity of the Lottery-funded Talented Athlete Programme (TAP). This information will be enhanced by the data gathered from interviews with officials, coaches and administrators who are vital to the implementation and success of the elite sport programmes currently in place in Scotland and at the UK level. Where appropriate, the data and information collected from the interviews will be put into some context by comparing to data collected by the researcher from various sources, including TAP press-releases, annual reports and official documents.

The chapter is arranged in nine major sections, plus an introduction and conclusion. The introduction gives the background to this phase of the Scottish Elite Athlete Study and provides an overview of the methodology and procedures used. Contextual information about the scale of the Talented Athlete Programme, including a gender



analysis of TAP athletes and some comparative analysis with other elite athlete systems in the United Kingdom is presented in the section headed 'Scale of the Programme'. The first results from the qualitative phase of the research are presented in the section headed 'Familial contributions', where the importance of parental and/or familial involvement to elite athletes is discussed. The TAP application and evaluation processes are discussed at length in sections five through to nine. Sections five and six deal with athlete applications and the subsequent evaluation headed 'TAP application procedure' and 'TAP application assessment'. In the section headed 'Athlete performance targets', one of the major issues to emerge from the analysis of the interview data is discussed at length. Performance targeting is an extremely important aspect of the TAP programme because it provides the benchmark against which athlete performance can be assessed. Athlete perceptions about the fairness of the application procedure, including the consequences of TAP application rejection, are presented in the section headed 'Fairness of the TAP application decision-making process'.

The 'Administration and management of TAP awards' section, considers athlete views and experiences of all aspects of Lottery administration including claiming, inflexibility of award categories, subsistence funding and relationships with case officers. Many top-level athletes also receive additional services provided by Scottish Institute of Sport, which is another vital component of the elite sport support system in Scotland. Issues about selection of Institute athletes and the services the Institute provides are discussed in the 'Scottish Institute of Sport' section. The section entitled 'Impact – advantages of being a Lottery-funded athlete' considers athlete views on the overall impact of the being a funded athlete, with consideration given to both the sporting and non-sporting elements of athletes' lives. Finally, a consideration of the major findings from the study is presented in the 'Conclusion'.

### **Survey methodology**

The method of data collection chosen was in-depth, semi-structured interviews structured around a number of key themes that emerged from the results of the quantitative phase of the study. This study, which searches for a deeper understanding of athletes lived experiences of the elite sport support system, relies on the in-depth

interview strategy, which attempts to capture the meaning of experience in their own words.

The adoption of an open-ended approach to questioning allows the researcher to follow an anticipated line of enquiry, while also allowing for the individual circumstances of the interviewee, which might not be possible to anticipate in advance. However, as Warren (2002) reminds us, the qualitative interview must remain flexible and able to recognise the variety of meanings that could emerge from the interview process. From the constructivist grounded theory approach, the data gathered must be located in context. Therefore, interview questions must explore the topic but also fit with the interviewee's experience:

*“thus they may attend to the context of the specific interview, the context of the individual's life, and the contextual aspects of the study and research problem within the setting, society and historical moment”*

(Charmaz, 2002, p.679)

In order to achieve the necessary contextual mix of the research question and individual experience, two interview schedules were developed - one for athletes and another for the elites. Rubin and Rubin (1995) note that the qualitative interview uses three types of questions: main questions that begin and guide the conversation; probes to clarify answers; and follow-up questions that pursue the implications of answers to main questions. The athlete interview schedule contained a series of questions, probes and prompts on the research aims stated above that was personalised to reflect the sporting background of each individual athlete. In addition, and only where appropriate, athletes were asked specifically about the responses they had given to particular questions in the postal questionnaire, during the initial phase of the research. The interview schedule for athletes was piloted with an athlete at the University of Glasgow and was re-drafted before being used on the athlete sample. The interview schedule for the elite sample also contained a series of questions, probes and prompts on the research aims stated above. The researcher also attempted to personalise each schedule to an extent, with information gathered from various sources in the public domain, including annual reports of sporting organisations and national governing bodies, the printed news media and the Internet. The interview schedule for elites was piloted over three interviews with individuals, who were



spokespersons for sport for three Scottish political parties. Examples of an athlete and elite interview schedule, which have been anonymised, are presented in Appendix 8 and Appendix 9.

## **Sample population**

### **Athlete sample**

One hundred and twenty-five athletes, or eighty six percent, of respondents to the postal survey indicated that they would be willing to take part in a follow-up study. Because of limitations of time and distance, only home-based Scots were selected from that sample. Each respondent in that sub-set were approached again, either by email or by letter, to ascertain their continued willingness to take part in the study and twenty-five athletes agreed, but subsequently, two of the athletes had to withdraw<sup>132</sup>. The sample for the follow-up study comprised athletes from a range of sports involved in the Talented Athlete Programme, including most of the sports where athletes had reported either high rates of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the quantitative phase of the study. Unfortunately, no athletes from the sports of skiing and canoeing (satisfied group) or volleyball (dissatisfied group) indicated that they would be willing to take part in the follow-up study, so those sports are not represented in the athlete sample. Twenty-three athletes were interviewed, ten males from eight sports, and thirteen females from twelve sports. All of the athletes were recipients of sportscotland Talented Athlete Programme awards in the year 1999-2000. Sixteen athletes interviewed were still recipients of Talented Athlete Programme at the time of the interview and seven were not. Of the seven athletes who were no longer TAP athletes, four had had their application for funding rejected in the 2000-2001 funding period, two had retired from international competition, and one athlete had declined the offer by sportscotland Lottery Fund.

The researcher contacted each individual and agreed a date, time and location to meet. Two of the athletes in the sample were under sixteen years old and the initial approach by the researcher was made to the parents<sup>133</sup>. After consulting with the parents of both athletes it was agreed that the interview would be conducted with the

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<sup>132</sup> Athlete 10 and Athlete 25 withdrew

<sup>133</sup> All TAP applications and subsequent administrative contact for athletes under eighteen is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.



parents without the athlete being present. The interview concerning Athlete Four was conducted with the athletes’ father and Athlete Seven with the mother. The interviews were conducted at a place chosen by the athletes themselves. Twelve athletes were interviewed in their own home, five were interviewed at the University of Glasgow, three at their place of work and two were interviewed at a neutral location<sup>134</sup>. The remaining interview was conducted by phone as the athlete was training abroad. The interviews took place between November 2000 and March 2001. Table 6.1 provides details of age, sex and sport and whether or not they were funded when the interview took place.

**Table 6.1 Athlete Interviews Attribute table**

Athlete No.	Age	Gender	Sport	Interview Location	Funded 2000-2001
A1	21	Female	Squash	Home	No
A2	26	Female	Badminton	Home	Yes
A3	21	Male	Cycling	University of Glasgow	Yes
A4	13	Male	Tennis	Work	Yes
A5	33	Female	Curling	Neutral	Yes
A6	34	Male	Badminton	Work	Yes
A7	15	Female	Swimming	Work	Yes
A8	24	Female	Rugby	University of Glasgow	No
A9	24	Female	Badminton	Home	Yes
A11	28	Female	Hockey	Home	Yes
A12	34	Female	Duathlon	Home	No
A13	25	Male	Athletics	Telephone	No
A14	57	Male	Bowling	Home	Yes
A15	22	Female	Athletics	University of Glasgow	Yes
A16	29	Male	Athletics	Home	Yes
A17	24	Male	Sailing	Home	No
A18	38	Male	Athletics	Home	No
A19	39	Male	Fencing	Work	Yes
A20	54	Female	Bowling	Home	Yes
A21	22	Female	Golf	University of Glasgow	No
A22	38	Male	Orienteering	Neutral	Yes
A23	19	Female	Orienteering	University of Glasgow	Yes
A24	27	Female	Lacrosse	Home	Yes

<sup>134</sup>A5 was interviewed in a pub/restaurant; A22 in a motorway service station

## **Elite samples**

An additional series of qualitative interviews were undertaken with individuals who are key to the elite athlete funding system in Scotland, which included sportscotland employees, coaches and other key officials from the organisational bodies of Scottish sport. A number of interviews were also conducted with senior officials and administrators from UK Sport who are involved with the World Class Performance Programmes in order to offer a perspective on the UK element of elite sport funding. Marshall and Rossman (1999, p.113) list the advantages that can be gained from elite interviewing. Valuable information can be gained from these individuals because of the positions they hold; they can often provide an overall view of an organisation and/or its relationships with other organisation; and they are also able to report on an organisations policies, past history and future plans.

Eight elite coaches were identified and approached by the researcher. All eight contacted initially by email, replied. Seven coaches agreed to take part in the study and were contacted again to agree dates, times and locations. The interviews were conducted at a place chosen by the coaches, five were interviewed at their place of work, and two at sports stadiums after coaching sessions. The coach interviews took place between November 2001 and August 2002. Seven senior administrators/officials from various organisations, both Scottish and UK were identified, approached and invited to take part in this study. Five were contacted initially by email and two by letter. All seven individuals replied and agreed to take part in the study. The interviews were conducted at a place chosen by the interviewee's with four interviews conducted at the interviewee's place of work, one interviewed at the University of Glasgow and one by phone as they were out of the country. One was interviewed in a coffee bar. The elite interviews took place between May 2002 and February 2003. In order to maintain the anonymity of the elite interviewees it is not possible to disclose gender information, and in the case of the coaches, the sport they represent. As there are very few women at the senior levels of coaching and sports administration in the United Kingdom, and Scotland particularly, revealing information about gender is likely to result in the disclosure of some individuals. As the elite sport system in Scotland is very small information on the sport of coaches is likely to lead to disclosure. Table 6.2 provides information about the elite sample.



**Table 6.2. Elite Interviewees**

Elite No.	Position	Interview Location
E1	Admin/Official	Work
E2	Admin/Official	Work
E3	Coach	Sports Stadium
E4	Coach	Work
E5	Coach	Work
E6	Coach	Work
E7	Coach	Sports Stadium
E8	Admin/Official	Telephone
E9	Coach	Work
E10	Admin/Official	Neutral Venue
E11	Admin/Official	Work
E12	Coach	Work
E13	Admin/Official	Work
E14	Admin/Official	University of Glasgow

**Analysis of the data**

The interviews varied in length depending upon how much the respondent wished to say. The shortest interview lasted approximately thirty-five minutes and the longest just over two hours. With the permission of the interviewees all interviews were tape-recorded, and subsequently transcribed for full analysis by the researcher. One interviewee requested that the tape on which the interview was recorded be destroyed after transcription was complete. The researcher carried out this request and the tape has been destroyed. All transcripts were loaded into NUD\*IST Vivo (NVivo) a computer-assisted qualitative data software package (CAQDAS). NVivo provides a range of tools for handling data records, and associated information about them that can support a number of techniques and approaches to qualitative analysis. However, the design of Nvivo was influenced by grounded theory and clearly supports this method of analysis (Gibbs, 2002). Coding is the first step in the analytical process and from a grounded theory perspective that is at least at two-stage process<sup>135</sup>. Initial or open coding, where the text is read reflectively to identify relevant categories; and then selective coding, where the researcher uses the most frequently appearing codes to sort, synthesise and conceptualise the data (Charmaz, 2002; Gibbs, 2002). Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data and builds upon grounded theory (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

<sup>135</sup>Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) added a third step in coding, axial coding where categories are refined, developed, and related or interconnected. However, both Glaser (1992) and Charmaz (2002) argue that axial coding is unnecessary, adding complexity but not necessarily improving the analysis.

Categories or themes emerge from the focused codes, which when developed and integrated subsequently lead to the construction of an analytical framework. Following the two-step-coding process suggested by Charmaz (2002) six major categories or themes emerged from the analysis of the transcripts:

- TAP application procedure including assessment and criteria
- Athlete performance targets
- Athlete perceptions of the fairness of the application procedure
- Award administration
- Scottish Institute of Sport
- Athlete perceptions of being a lottery-funded athlete

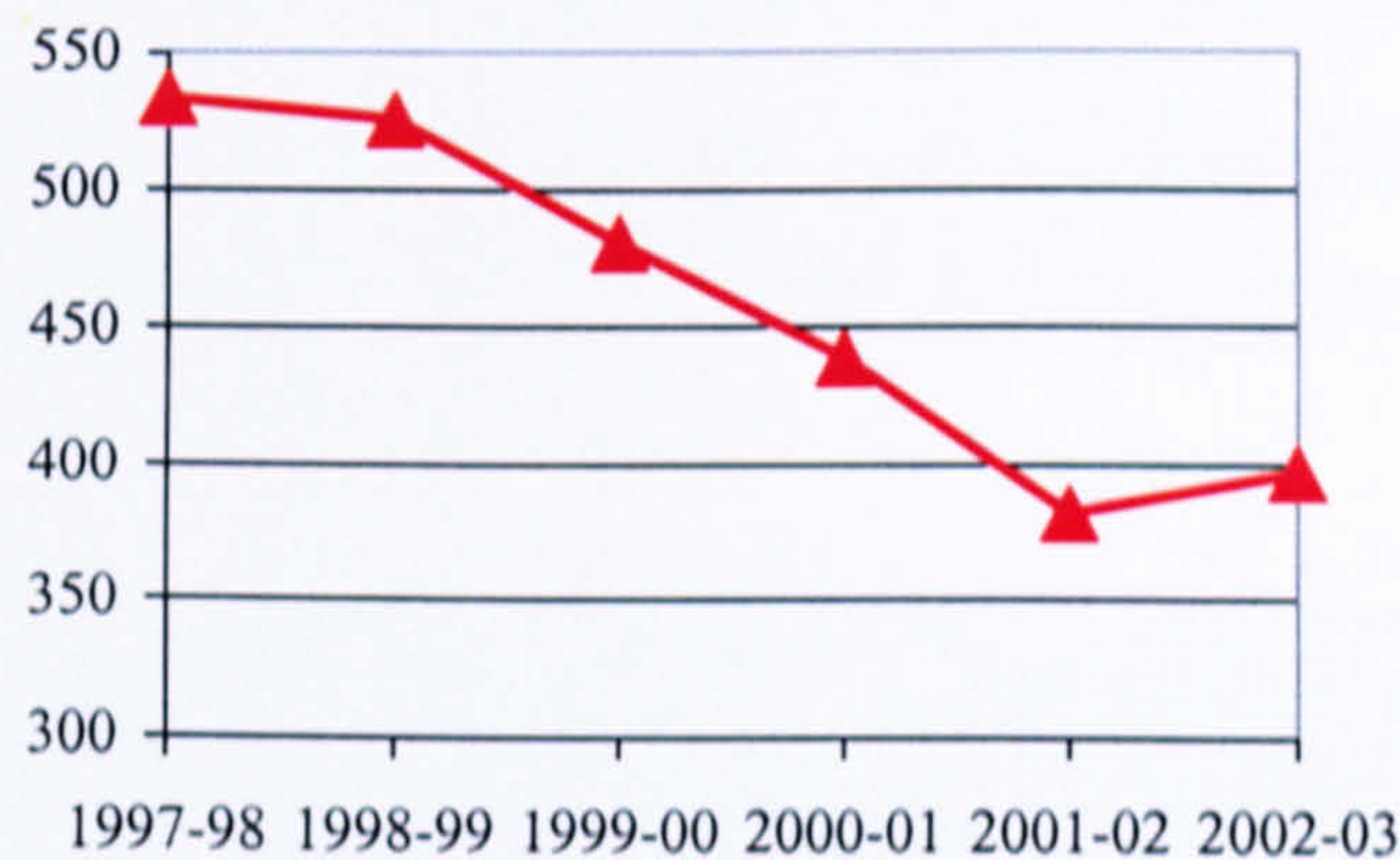
A detailed discussion of the issues that emerged in each of the six categories or themes is presented below. Before presenting the results of the qualitative study, an overview of the TAP programme with some comparative analysis from other UK lottery-funded elite athlete programmes, is presented to provide contextual information about the scale, and extent of gender equity of the TAP programme. The data presented in this section was assembled by the researcher from a number of Scottish and UK sources, both printed and electronic, and compiled into a gender audit database for further analysis.

### **Scale of the programme**

It is important to try and evaluate the impact that the massive injection of funds to elite sport has had since the introduction of Lottery funding. sportscotland Lottery Fund is increasingly directing funding at smaller numbers of athletes from a smaller number of sports. Overall, forty-nine different sports have been funded since the introduction of revenue funding to athletes in 1997, however the number of sports funded in any one year has been dropping from a high of forty-two sports in 1998/99 to only thirty-four sports in 2003/04. As the number of sports being funded has dropped, so too has the number of athletes. Fig. 6.1 shows that there has been a steady, but noticeable decline in the number of athletes being funded since funding began in 1997/98.



**Fig.6.1 Number of athletes offered Talented Athlete Programme awards 1997/98 – 2002/03**



Figures taken from **sportscotland** Lottery Fund Talented Athlete Programme press-releases 1997-2003

Explanations for the declining numbers of both sports and athletes are complex. In the overall context of declining Lottery sales, they reflect a number of related developments including improved athlete targeting and changing priorities for resource allocation, as these two extracts from an interview with a senior **sportscotland** official demonstrate:

*“I think we would see fewer sports getting funding so that and if it is fewer athletes its because we’re saying to them you didn’t meet your targets. Whereas in the past we would say well ok maybe we could still fund you so there’s a bit of that, and just trying to build in some extra discipline.”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 391)

*“Also the [named body] has gone through a process of saying well what sports can we actually ever be good at in the future or are we good at them now? And there aren’t that many that we’re, you know judo and curling, but which one’s could we be good at and then which sports could we actually have an impact on? Which, I mean we can’t have an impact on too many actually like men’s football which we’d love to it’s obviously, you know. And then the third one is which one’s are important to the Scottish people. And there is some evidence there to say that, surprisingly, sometimes athletics and swimming sometimes above above football are the one’s that people would like to see the money go toward. So I think it would be rude and wrong to ignore that...yeah and I think that those three things along with [pause] there are two others they have to do with the health of the activity and whether they stimulate participation from the wider public in that activity. All those together, but particularly the top three that we listed*



*is really what we've tried to do in terms of saying which sports can we legitimately put a large proportion of our resources to"*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 119-203)

One athlete interviewed, who was from a non-core sport, expressed concern about the detrimental effect of such a policy might have upon the next generation of athletes and, as a result, the whole elite sport programme:

*"What seems to be happening is if you're in a targeted sport that's great. But even within that sport it's very much the top few and all that that's doing, what I see, well what the danger is, is that the top few just accelerate away and the rest of them. I mean if they're pulling themselves up the gap gets bigger and bigger and it just gets more and more disheartening. So you end up with an elite group there [points to a mark on the table] and when they stop you've got a huge gap and your sort of basically starting again. You've got to make sure there's enough low enough down, wide enough to build everyone to that top level. I think it needs to be that and as I said the marginal cost of inviting five times as many people [pause]"*

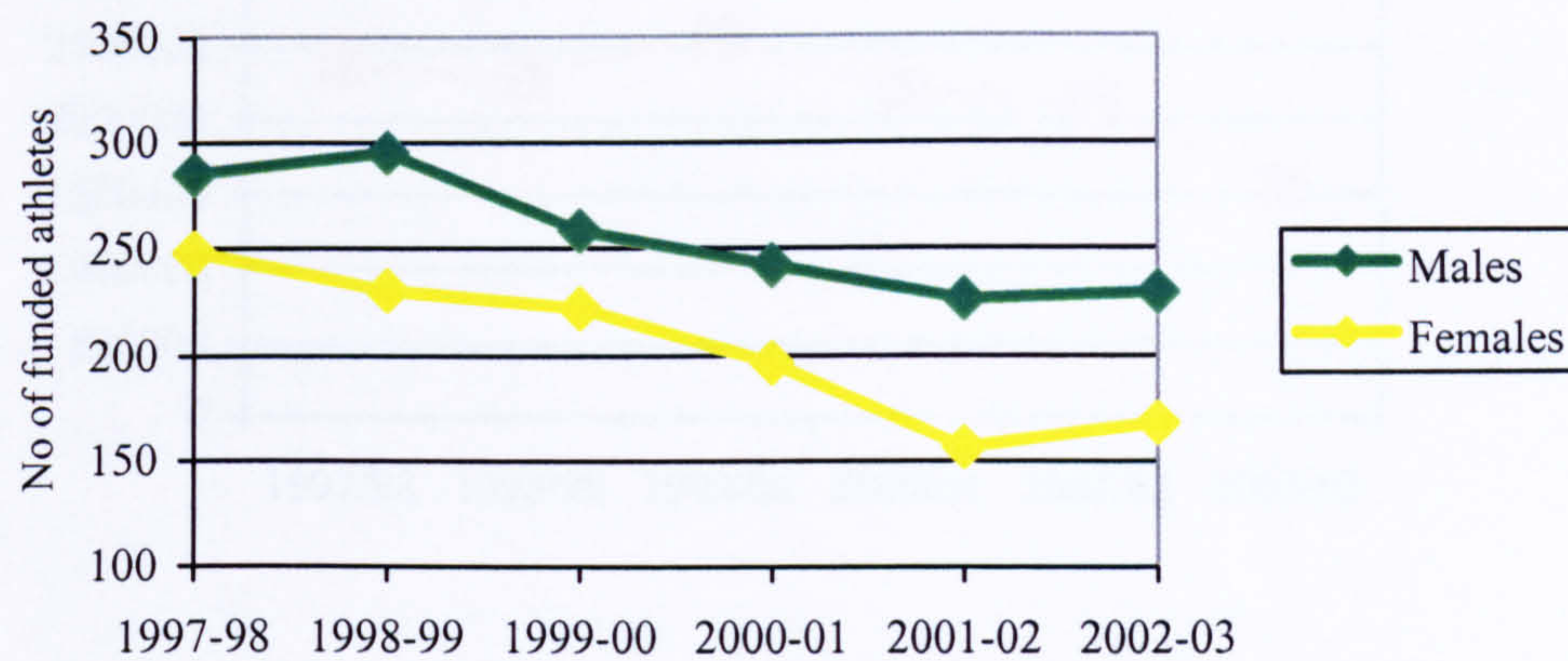
(Athlete Interview A22, Par. 342)

### **Gender analysis of TAP athletes**

All Lottery funded schemes are required to provide equal opportunity and access to both sexes and monitoring checks are supposed to be carried out to ensure that these terms and conditions are met. An examination of TAP award notification press-releases reveals that more male athletes have received award offers than female athletes in each of the six funding years since the programme was introduced in 1997. In the first four years of the programme, 1997/98 – 2000/01, the percentage of male and female athletes remained relatively constant, with approximately ten percent more men than women being offered awards. In 2001-02, the percentage of women decreased to forty percent of the total, although the numbers recovered slightly in the following year, to forty-two percent. Fig.6.2 shows the number of Talented Athlete Programme awards, broken down by gender, 1997/98 – 2002/03.



**Fig.6.2 Talented Athlete Programme awards 1997/98 – 2002/03, by gender**

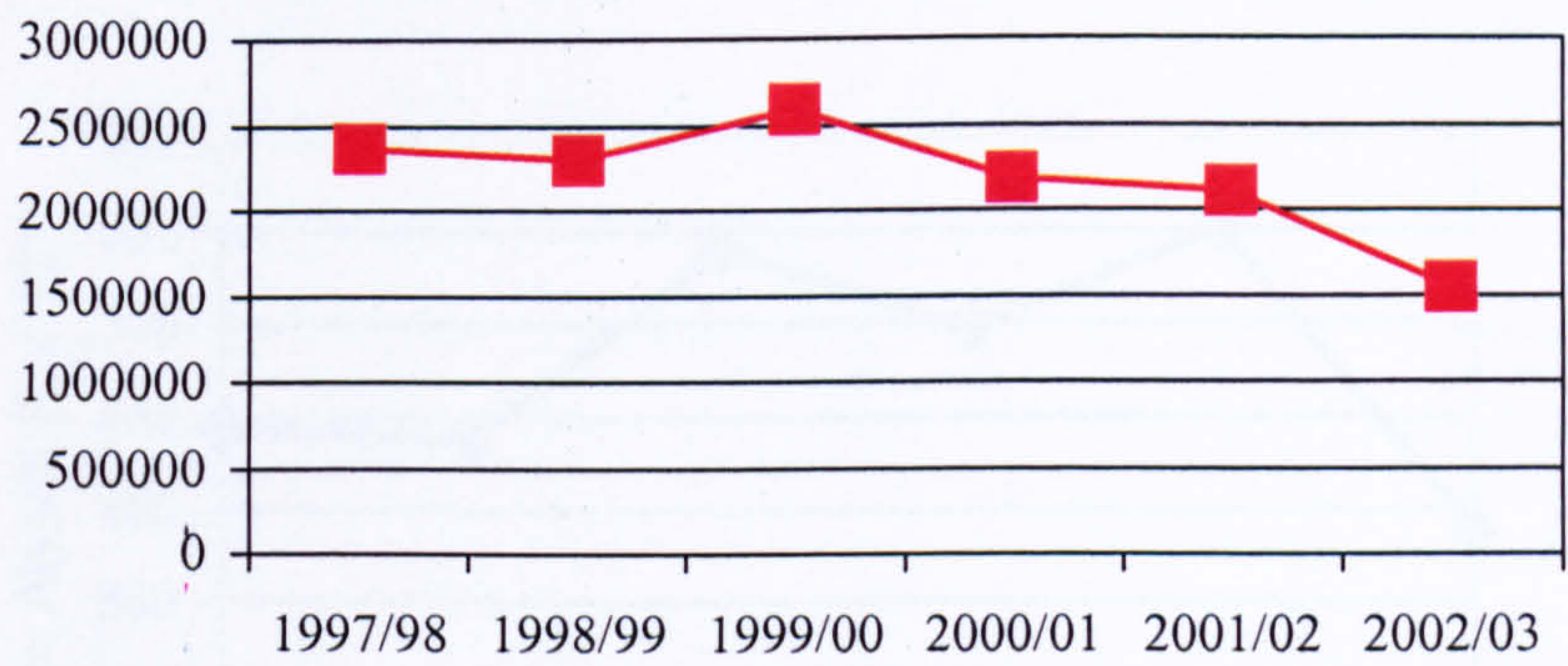


Figures taken from **sportscotland** Lottery Fund Talented Athlete Programme press-releases 1997-2003

It is unclear exactly why this shift has occurred, although it is likely to be an outcome of the need to target resources more effectively in the context of diminishing Lottery sales and less money available to the sports councils for distribution. Total lottery income for sport in Scotland has dropped from a peak of £32 million in 1998 to around £18 million in the 2002-03 funding period. In their Lottery Fund Strategy Review consultation document **sportscotland** revealed that they can only maintain current levels of investment by drawing on reserves from uncommitted funds and that it is unlikely that they will be able to maintain these levels of investment beyond 2007 (**sportscotland**, 2003b, p.6). Fig. 6.3 shows that the total amount of TAP awards offered has also been on a steady decline since the 1997/98, with the exception of 1999/00 during the build-up to the Sydney Olympic Games. That decline accelerated significantly in 2002/03 and undoubtedly reflects the drop in athlete numbers described above.



**Fig.6.3 Total awards offered in pounds sterling**

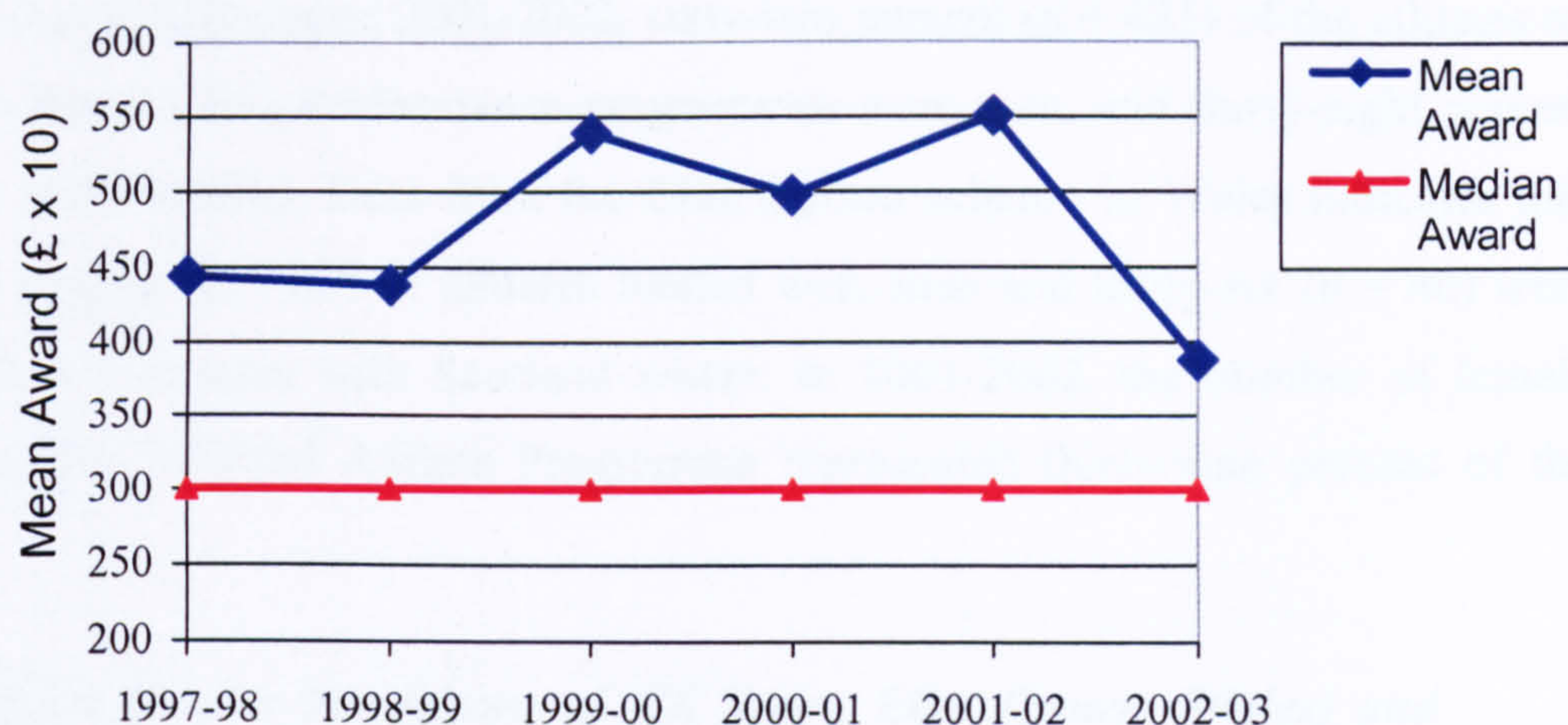


Figures taken from sportscotland Lottery Fund Talented Athlete Programme press-releases 1997-200

Fig.6.4 shows the mean and median awards offered to athletes on the TAP programme in the six funding periods since the awards were introduced in 1997. The two significant rises in the mean awards are explained by two major championships namely, the Summer Olympics in 1999-2000 and the Commonwealth Games in 2001-02. The sharp drop in the mean award in the 2002/03 funding period is dramatic, dropping from £5504 to £3866 reflects the overall drop in the total amount of TAP awards offered in 2002/03. Interestingly, the median award has remained at a constant £3000 since the introduction of funding in 1997. In each of the six funding periods since 1999, the majority of athletes on the TAP programme were in receipt of awards of three thousand pounds or less. This was an issue raised by a **sportscotland** review of the Talented Athlete Programme conducted in 1999, which questioned how inequalities in personal circumstances could be addressed by award of £3000 (lower award categories) or less or make any significant difference to performance (**sportscotland**, 1999b).



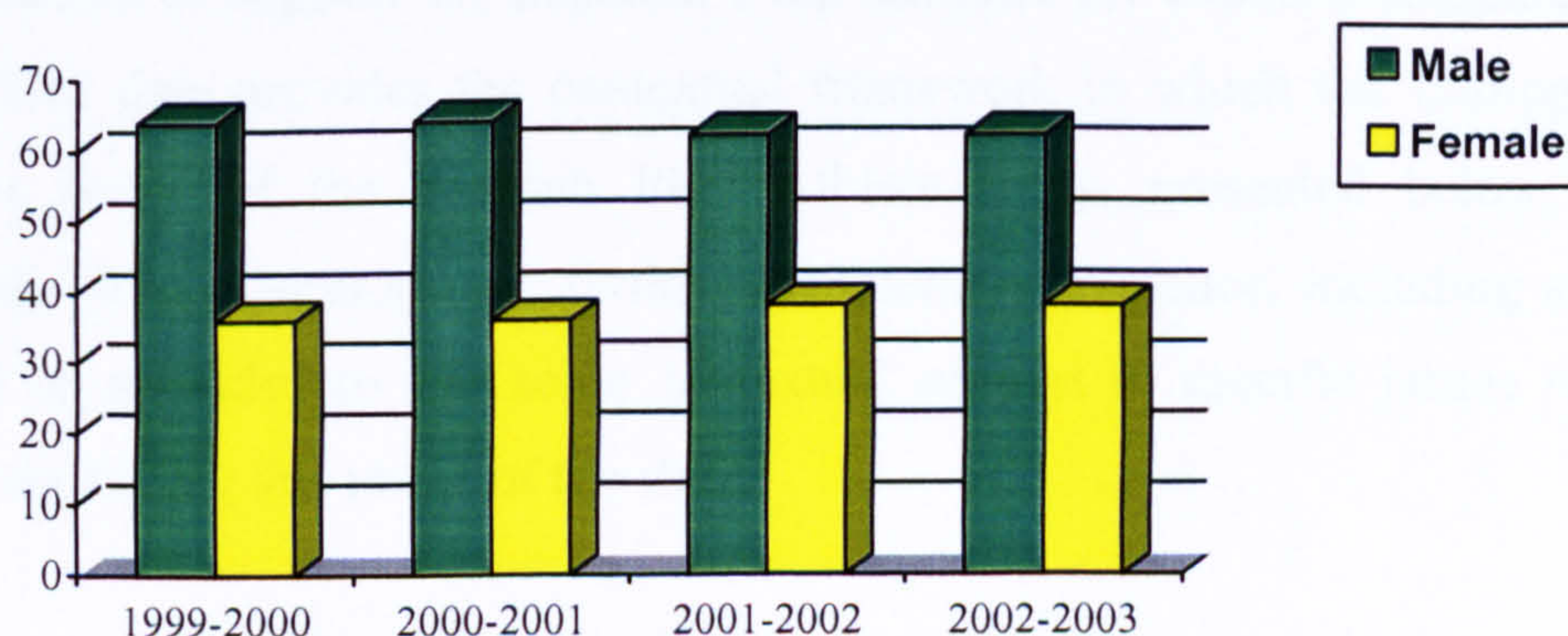
**Fig.6.4 Mean and Median TAP Awards 1997/98 – 2002/03**



Figures taken from **sportscotland** Lottery Fund Talented Athlete Programme press-releases 1997-2003

White (2003) has argued, in context of the current funding priorities of UK Sport, that funding will always favour men when distribution bodies target or focus limited resources on sports which have medal winning potential. Quite simply, there are more sports, more events and competitions available to men. This means that while funding criteria are the same for men and women, when these are applied the outcome is that more male than female athletes get funded (White, 2003). Fig 6.5 shows the gender breakdown of athletes on World Class Performance Programme since UK Sport became a distributor of lottery funding to elite sport in July 1999.

**Fig.6.5 % Gender breakdown of athletes on World Class Performance Programmes**

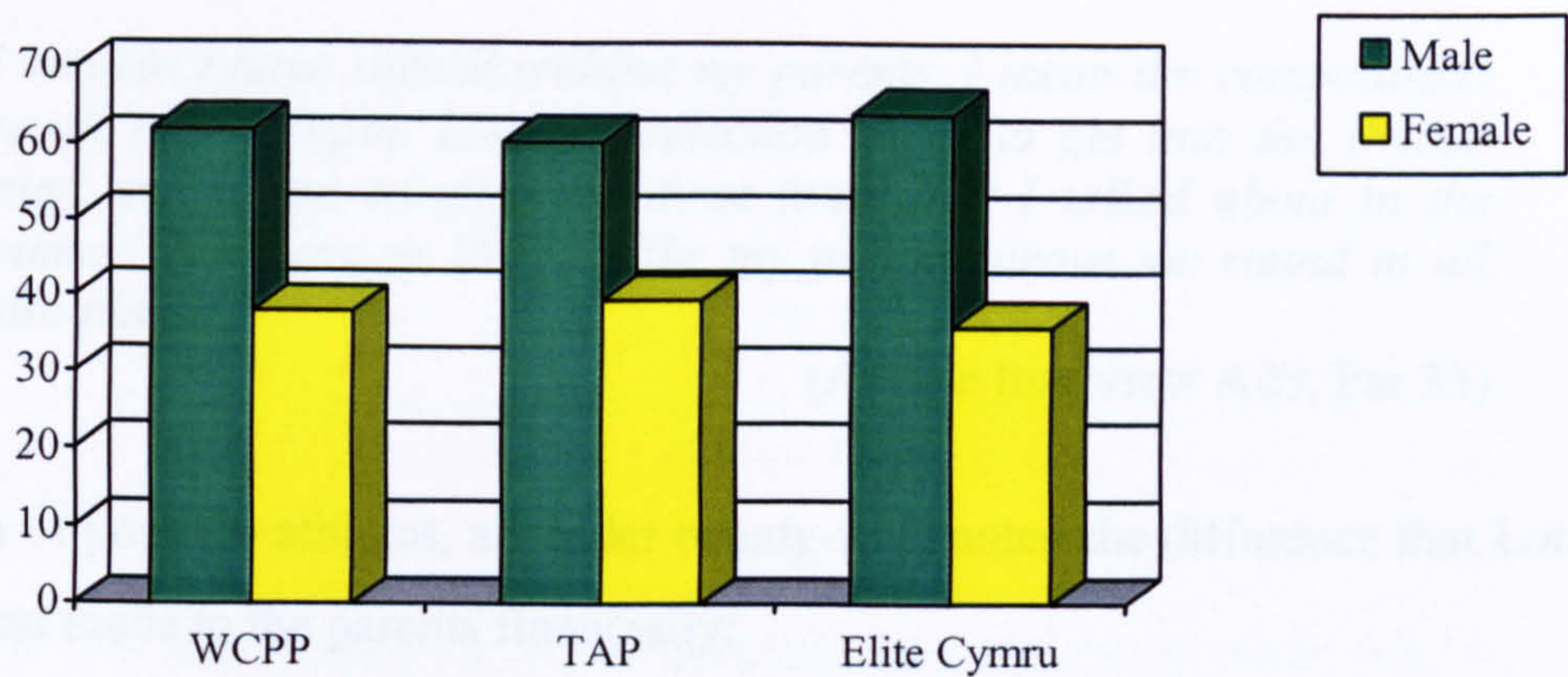


\*Data from July 99 –March 2000 (UK Sport only became a distributing body in July 1999) - Figures provided by UK Sport Lottery Fund.



A comparison of award data by gender from the Lottery-funded schemes operated by **sportscotland**, UK Sport and the Welsh Sports Council reveals a remarkably similar pattern. In the funding year, 2001-2002, sixty-two percent (n = 421) of the athletes on UK Sport World Class Performance programmes were men, and thirty-eight percent (n = 262) were women. Data from the Elite Cymru scheme in Wales indicates that sixty-four percent (n = 82) of athletes funded were men and thirty-six (n = 46) were women. This compares with Scotland where, in 2001-2002, the number of female athletes on the Talented Athlete Programme represented thirty-nine percent of the total.

**Fig.6.6 Gender breakdown of UK Sport, Elite Cymru (Wales) and TAP athletes 2001-2002**



WCPP figures taken from UK Sport Annual Report 2001-2002<sup>136</sup>  
TAP figures taken from **sportscotland** Lottery Fund press releases 1997-2002  
Elite Cymru figures from Elite Cymru Administration Officer (17.03.03)

The data presented above provides some background information about the scale of the programme of support for Scotland’s top athletes, set within a comparative UK context. This data provides the contextual framework in which the findings of the qualitative phase of the Scottish Elite Athlete study, presented below, can be understood. Where, appropriate, further documentary evidence, including statistical data, will be provided to add some contextual support to specific issues raised by interviewees during this phase of the study.

<sup>136</sup>UK Sport (2002b) Road to Athens: annual review 2001/2002, UK Sport, London



## Familial contributions

The first few questions were designed to put athlete interviewees at their ease. Athletes were asked about their sporting career to date, including the importance, if any, of family members to their development as an athlete. Not surprisingly, most athletes (n = 20) interviewed said that their families had been very important to their development as an athlete.

*“I’ve been lucky in that my father was an international footballer so he knew what was required to perform at that level and he’s been very supportive in [pause] from a financial point of view any trips and things like that he was always there to [pause] money wasn’t a problem em from travelling and things like that”*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par 29)

*“I wouldn’t have started without my parents. I mean the competitions are all over Britain. Like the selection races to get into the British squad and to get selected for these tours that I talked about in the summer. You have to like, so like my parents drove me round to all these places”*

(Athlete Interview A23, Par 33)

A number of younger athletes, all under twenty-five, noted the difference that Lottery funding had made to the parents financially:

*“It means that I can really support my running myself and I don’t need to ask my parents. Dad has said it has made a difference to them”*

(Athlete Interview A15, Par 328)

Carried out shortly after the introduction of Lottery funding to athletes, *“The Development of Sporting Talent 1997 survey”* (Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998, p.30), reported that *“tangible family support”* was the main source of funding in the development of sporting talent. Evidence from this study suggests that despite the introduction of Lottery funding programmes for younger athletes such as the Junior Groups Programme<sup>137</sup>, parents continue to bear a heavy financial burden to support a

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<sup>137</sup>The Junior Groups Programme was established in 1998. It aims to support young athletes at the junior competition level and assist in the transition from junior to senior level performance. This funding is paid directly to, and managed by, the governing body.



talented child athlete. Both parental interviewees reported the difference that Lottery funding had made to them financially:

*“To have it [Lottery funding] makes a huge difference. Cause we’re now, I mean we’re in the situation now where to fund [name] programme next year we might have to re-mortgage our house to raise some money”*

(Athlete Interview A4, Par 243)

*“Yeah it’s made a difference to me. It’s reduced the costs obviously. Em it’s all down to money. The year before she got Lottery funding we ended up re-mortgage our house. I think probably most kids [pause] I work, my husband works, we both work overtime. If we hadn’t been doing that there’s no way she could have got to where she is. She couldn’t be it’s impossible. And a lot of kids I think probably do fall away probably for that reason. By the time they fund them it’s too late.”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 226)

Lottery funding is, however, only a contribution to the sporting costs of athletes and several of the athletes in the Under 25 age groups indicated that they continued to rely on additional parental contributions to pay for sports-related expenditure not covered by their TAP award.

*“My dad was paying for it and then my dad ran out of money and I had to stop using my coach”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 222)

From the responses to the initial interview questions it is clear that parental assistance is common not only during the development of their sporting career, but for some, particularly those in the Under 25 age groups, that assistance continues. While evidence from the athlete interviews suggests that parental support is primarily financial, interviews with coaches suggests that parental support is perhaps more wide-ranging. Continuing parental involvement in the sporting careers of their children was recognised by several elite coaches who are dealing with athletes on a day to day basis. Interestingly, coaches appeared to be split over this issue. In the first extract, a coach describes his attempts to include parents in all aspects of the athletes’ training and competition programme:

*“At the same time I wrote to the parents and outlined what the programme was all about and invited them into chat and most of them*



*came so [pause] so I'm quite keen that [pause] I hate the question, what's happening? If somebody says to me what's happening I think oh god I've missed something. People need to know they need to be involved. And what I also do is I invite them to testing, most of them can't come because it's during the day, but they get the test results. I phone them once a month just to say how they're going, how are they doing, is there anything that you see that he's doing that I can help with?"*

(Elite Interview E7 Section 1 Par 98)

However, the continuing parental role in the athlete's sporting career was not always appreciated by a number of the coaches interviewed as the following two extracts demonstrate:

*"Parents are the bug bare of any coaches life, well in my sport anyway. I detest dealing with parents if a kid's over 16 - but sometimes you have to"*

(Elite Interview E6 Section 1 Par 112)

*"Because I know my case officer she's always screaming the blues because the parents torture her [laughs]"*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1 Par 112)

Familial involvement was not exclusively limited to parents, and a number of the older athletes, particularly those who had children, noted the role played by partners and other family members:

*"Em, family definitely cause they need to keep the kids all the time [laughs]. I mean, I couldn't do it if they couldn't keep them cause the commitment with it being a lottery sport the commitment now is huge..."*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 20)

The importance of parental and familial involvement in the development, and continuing careers of elite athletes was evident throughout the athlete interviews, in response to a number of questions. In response to the first set of questions about the Talented Athlete Programme, one of the clear points emerging was the role that parents played in the application process for athletes in the Under 25 age ranges, particularly, but not exclusively. Responses to the questions on the TAP application process are reported in the following section.



## **TAP application procedure**

The Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) is designed to give additional financial support to Scotland's top sportsmen and sportswomen or those with the potential to compete successfully at the international level. When the TAP programme was first introduced in 1997 it was an athlete-led system where individual athletes applied to sportscotland Lottery Fund for support. That system was modified in 2001 for athletes from team sports, and governing bodies are now responsible for completing the TAP application, and identifying squad athletes. All athletes from team sports who took part in this phase of the research had experience of making a personal application. The TAP application system is still athlete-led for athletes from individual sports.

Finance is one of the most important elements in the development of elite sportsmen and sportswomen, without it many athletes would be unable to train and compete at a level that would allow them to reach their potential or to maintain national or international standings. Under the TAP programme, athletes apply for support in two categories; Sports Costs - which provide support with competition, training and coaching, sports science and medicine, clothing and equipment; and in exceptional circumstances, Subsistence Costs - which cover costs associated with general living experiences (Scottish Sports Council, 1998a). Sports costs cover expenditure on training and competition and living costs cover the expenses of top-level athletes while they are training and competing, or for loss of earnings where an athlete has to take extended leave periods or leave beyond their annual entitlement (sportscotland Lottery Fund, 2002).

All athletes interviewed were asked how they first heard about the Talented Athlete Programme, and, apart from two athletes, all indicated that their governing body told them about TAP and encouraged them to apply. Two athletes said that they had not been informed about TAP by their governing bodies. Athlete 15 indicated that they had applied on their own initiative and Athlete 18 said that they had been told about the programme by a leading Scots journalist. While the majority of athletes indicated that their governing bodies had told them about TAP, evidence collected from the elite interviews indicates that some governing bodies are much more pro-active in the application process than others. For example, as the following interview extracts with

governing body officials/coaches shows, some governing bodies contact athletes who they know have met the eligibility criteria for TAP funding directly and give advice on how to proceed:

*“The way we review the TAP funding is that I will sit down with the [personal assistant]. [Name] and I will sit down and say right, September 1st, who has made all the standards and we’ll go through all the ranking lists of all the age groups and pick out everybody who has made the Institute or TAP funding standards. We’ve got this group of people now. We send a letter to every single one of them. Do you know you are eligible for funding? Please contact [name] at the Lottery. So we don’t wait for them to contact us if they’ve made the standards, we contact them and say you’ve made the standard, you can get funding, apply.”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 48)

*“We’re quite pro-active in saying who applies. If we get an application from somebody we think isn’t up to standard what we say to them is submit it, but don’t expect to hear anything [laughs]. We ask sportscotland to send out forms to x number of people. We give them a list of names. But then if anybody phones up outside that and applies, we’ll still submit their application but it’s unlikely that they’d be successful.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 85)<sup>138</sup>

## **Athlete applications**

All athletes applying for TAP funding must complete sections 1 – 5 of the Talented Athlete Programme application form (See Appendix 10). Applicants who believe that they may also be eligible for subsistence funding must also complete Appendix 1, which requires them to provide details of their income and expenditure. Athletes must provide evidence of their current performance standard, previous achievements and planned programme. Applicants are also asked to submit personal performance targets within their application. These targets should reflect both long-term and interim performance goals, with interim targets being a measure of progress towards the long-term goal. Personal performance targets were one of the major themes which emerged from the interview data and are described in detail in section seven. Evidence from the quantitative phase of the research indicated that most athletes required some assistance filling out the TAP application form, and the data gathered from the athlete

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<sup>138</sup>Please note that Athlete 12 had been a TAP funded athlete who after retirement had taken up a post within the NGB



interviews appear to support those findings. These findings present a very different picture from that found by Martin and McGregor in the “Talented Athlete Programme Applicant Feedback Survey 1999” which reported that almost half (46%) of the respondents found the application form ‘easy’ to complete (Martin and McGregor, 1999, p.6).

Only one interviewee indicated that they thought the form was not difficult to complete, and that individual was one of the two parents on the study. All of the athletes interviewed (and the other parent) stated that that they thought the form was very difficult to fill in, particularly initially. The following comments are representative of most responses to this question:

*“We were told we would have some simple forms [laughs] eight [expletive] hours later! I don’t know what to write in here! I mean it was just awful. I had, there’s a friend who comes up who’s in the squad, who lives in London, and she comes up and stays here every squad weekend. And the pair of us, we kept saying must fill in the form, we’ll do it together, it won’t be so bad together. I mean I don’t do numbers and it was just dire.”*

(Athlete Interview A24, Par 106)

*“Aye it is it’s pretty complicated. I mean it could be, it’s like one of them, I liken it to an insurance form. It’s like one of these things where you think, oh just forget it, you know. I think that’s maybe what they try and do, you know [laughs] and only the sort of, only the bravest survive. It’s like one of them things people dae tend to go och I’m no, oh don’t bother, you know”*

(Athlete Interview A18, Par 89)

Most athletes thought that the application process became easier the more often one applied. Only three athletes indicated that the process did not get any easier. Familiarity with the process and keeping a record of previous TAP application forms was the most commonly cited response by athletes in response to questions about the application form:

*“No I would say that really the form’s not athlete-friendly but for personally it probably gets a wee bit easier cause you can look at the year before”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 110)



## **Team sport applications**

Several of the athletes interviewed came from team sports. They identified some of the unique problems faced by team sport athletes applying for TAP funding which is a system designed to fund individuals rather than teams:

*“We basically sit down as a team and say; this is what we’re going to have this is what want to do. You know you have to sit down and you have to work it out to the penny.”*

(Athlete Interview 5, Par 48)

*“We filled it, initially we filled it in as an individual em. I think that did come back as a huge [pause] bone of contention if you like as you were being treated, you know you were asked as an individual, treated as an individual and then grants came out pretty much you’re a team.”*

(Athlete Interview 11, Par 57)

Because of the complexities of funding individuals within a team sport, more of which will be identified later in this chapter, the TAP application procedure for team sport was substantially revised in 2001. Team sport governing bodies are now responsible for completing the TAP application on behalf of their sport. The team application must outline the proposed training and competition schedule for the squad, as well as setting performance targets. Identified squad athletes are now only required to apply for any personal costs and sign an agreement that they are willing to take part in the programme. A couple of athletes were interviewed after this change had been implemented and the impact on the application process is clearly apparent:

*“The second time around I filled in very little. The second time it was done I think it was almost like a collective this is the [NGB] filling it in.”*

(Athlete Interview 24, Par 134)

*“I think, I think the forms have changed and I would say our governing body has been able to give more information but at the moment any money that we have got is basically for our governing body now rather than us”*

(Athlete Interview 11, Par 61)

## **Application assistance**

Data from the postal questionnaire indicated that less than fifteen percent (14.9%) completed the application form without assistance. Only three individuals interviewed

said that they had completed the form without any assistance, and one of them was a parent. Unfortunately, all three individuals were male and so it was impossible to investigate further the finding from the quantitative phase which showed that almost twice as many men (66.7%) completed the form without assistance as women (33.3%). Clearly, most athletes find the completion of the TAP application a daunting task and seek assistance. Evidence gathered from the first phase of this research showed that most athletes sought advice from a range of individuals, with governing body officials, coaches and parents, or a combination of those, being the most commonly cited by respondents (see chapter 5. Table 5.2.6). The data revealed the influence of governing body officials and/or coaches in the application process, although evidence from the face-to-face interviews suggests that much of this assistance was with a particular aspect of the application form relating to competition schedules and technical information:

*“So we have to, we have to have help from the governing body ‘cause they have to then say: well there’s a competition on in whatever, we’ll be going wherever so [pause]... they plan the programme and they, and all our monthly meetings, we have to have dates from them.”*

(Athlete Interview 20, Par 77-79)

*“The national coach is very good actually, he’s very [pause]. I think he had a lot to do with, you know, how well we were, you know, initially funded. He helped us basically with what the planned programme should be. And also he did sort of calculate going to tournaments would cost like the flight the accommodation. Basically what he does is writes it all down and says lists the tournaments and basically has the accommodation and the flight and then he gives you the programme and you have to obviously take that information from the information he’s got on that one page. So it’s a lot of, I mean he’s put a bit of work into it...”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 90)

Data gathered from the elite interviews paints a different picture of the involvement of governing body officials/coaches in the provision of assistance and reveals that some governing bodies are much more pro-active in this area than others:

*“Yes we do help them fill it out. We have a thing that I started at the Institute where to be in the Institute they have to show their yearly plan. So we have a meeting once a year with the athlete and their*



*coach and the technical director of [sport] and myself. And we sort of, what we do is we help them fill out their TAP application.”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 71)

*“Yeah we usually, we em [pause] the forms go out and we always say to the players that if you do need help then come back to us. And nine times out of ten, because we have a good working relationship with all the players and all the personal coaches, they always come back to us, and they say I’m stuck on this, what do I need to fill in for this section. So we point them we say, ok these are your targets, you are at the level you are at, and what we’re expecting [pause] We expect you to be [pause] these are your targets over this period and these are what we are expecting.”*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.1, Par 44)

Interestingly, one national governing body representative and coach indicated that the level of assistance given to some athletes with their TAP applications is much more extensive than anything described by the athletes on this second phase of the study:

*“Oh I do every single one of them... athlete will walk in and put the form down and I’ll start talking to them [pause]... So em, you know I go through everything with them on that. Some of them I don’t need to because they are like, you know, they’ve got it down pat”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 160-164)

This individual made it clear that some very senior Scottish athletes require this intensive level of support with their TAP application in order to ensure that they receive an award that will allow them to pursue the training and competition schedule required for an athlete of their standard:

*“How long do you think it will take you to fill in the form?” [Athlete response] ‘Christ about 2 hours” [Elite 3 response] “ok 2 hours into £8000, I think £4000 an hour isn’t a bad return on that”. So you have to put it in these terms to them. So lets take the time over the next two hours and get it right”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 160)

Clearly, this individual was aware that there are athletes who will suffer, in terms of award outcome, unless they intervene. While this was the only elite interview where governing officials/coaches admitted to this level of support, it was alluded to in one of the athlete interviews:

*“I do think certain people are going to fill it in a lot better and get a lot more money and I think it does, it is influenced by how you fill the form in rather than your actual ranking and potential really. I know that a lot of girls actually got [athlete named NGB] to fill it in for them and just signed it.”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 62)

There was however, a completely opposing view expressed by one senior coach who thought that the system should be elitist and suggested that individuals who struggled with the application form should perhaps not be funded at all:

*“I don’t think it’s that difficult. I think for someone who is really planning to have world class goals, you need to have that kind of detail. Now I will say that for just an athlete it might be difficult to fill out, for an athlete and their parents. But that to me is precisely the point. And it may be against what you’re writing about yet anyone who’s just out there who’s trying to do it on their own is going to have a hard time making it. See what I’m saying? If you’re trying to say that oh some kid out in West Lothian is running around a track and oh isn’t this form too hard for him to fill out. What I’m telling you is if they don’t have that kind of concept of what their training needs to be to fill out that form then the chances are they’re going to have a very difficult time to make it at a world level. And em [pause] maybe shouldn’t be getting that money”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 71)

## **Parental assistance**

A clear point emerging from the interviews was the role that parents played in the application process for athletes in the under 25 age ranges, which is similar to the findings from the postal questionnaire (see chapter 5, p.197). Of the nine athletes interviewed in the under 25 age range (excluding the two parents), seven highlighted the role played by their parents, as did two athletes in the “25 – 30” age range.

*“I mean the first time I did it - it was a nightmare you know, me and my dad were up to three o’clock in the morning and it was me and my dad were like snapping at each other - because you don’t know what they’re looking for and like I say trying to sit down and programme what you want to do and then it says how much do you think you’ll spend going to these races and its like...I really needed my dad to help me do it cause its too daunting to do on your own, although I did it last year pretty much on my own and got him just to check over it.”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 166)



*“Well my dad you see is a banker so that was basically why he was involved because it was right how do you, you know, how do I work it all out”.*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par 125)

The role that parents play in the application process is not viewed positively by all interviewee's in this study. For example, one of senior coaches interviewed was extremely dismissive of parents and their role in this process:

*“Oh the parents fill out the forms for most of them, I mean even one's who are [pause] I've seen 21 year olds that the parents fill the form out”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1 Par 87)

An established senior athlete provides a more informed view of the potential problems that can result from applications completed by parents on behalf of their children:

*“Most young sports people don't do that sort of thing. Most young sports people get their mums and dads, who aren't familiar with sport, to fill it in. So I find myself passing photocopies to young [sport] doing it for the first time just to give them an idea of how to complete it. And what I'd like to see them, now while I'm not suggesting that the Lottery Commission to do it, I've suggested to [NGB] that it would be nice if someone should act as a co-ordinator. So when all our talented young [sport] get the forms someone's there to say this is how to fill it in to get an accurate reflection.”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 57)

Several older athletes, from sports where governing bodies are not as pro-active as those described above, indicated that they personally provide help and support to young athletes, especially those who are applying for TAP funding for the first time:

*“Yup, again [NGB] was helpful, it wasn't formalised, but they were helpful with that and we have experienced people to tell them. But yes I think it's still a minefield despite that. I know of a lot of young athletes who are not so great at filling it out. I can think of one young chap, who's from a poor area, he lives with a single parent who hasn't got time to help him, he's dyslexic, and he's not the best at filling in forms, and yet he's a very talented young [sport]. Now he's the sort of person if he didn't have someone experienced to help him. There's no formal set up, as far as I know, for someone like that. If you didn't have someone like myself to help him then, yes he would have filled in the form badly. He would misunderstand even some of the questions which*



*are well worded, he would misunderstand them and fill the form in badly”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 73)

Clearly, athletes are keenly aware of how important it is, to a successful outcome in terms of the level of award that the application form is filled out well. The complexity of the application form and the importance of good form filling skills were mentioned by a number of athletes:

*“Yes [pause] if you’re good at filling in forms...[sport] has always done very well in Scotland and in Britain. Well if you look at the British squad members [pause] every member of the British squad is at, is going to, or has been to university. There’s probably about out of thirty in the potential squad there’s probably six or eight Ph.D.’s. You know it’s a very intellectual sport and so your professional type sport. We’re very good at filling in forms, we can reason for them, we can see the need to fill them in neatly and clearly and keep copies and so on.”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 318-322)

*“Not [pause] well it is quite down to how well you fill in forms as well. Because it is a complicated form and you might be good, really good at your sport but if you fill in the form wrongly then you don’t get it. So in that way it’s not as fair as it could be.”*

(Athlete Interview A23, Par 121)

These findings support those of the qualitative study where thirteen percent (13.34%) of respondents, who offered a written response to this question, indicated that the application form was very difficult to complete but noted how important it was in terms of a successful award. The importance of form filling was also something that was noted by a number of the elite interviews:

*“I think the reason we did as well at the start is that I went to see [Lottery Fund official] and said how realistic is this for my players. And he said it’s all down to what they put on the form. So I spent a lot of time with them initially and I gave a few of them the forms back, because I was getting them with bits of bacon or coffee stains on them. And I said this is a job application as far as I’m concerned for you.”*

(Elite Interview E6 Section 1, Par 12)

Data from the postal questionnaire suggests that social and occupational profile of Scottish elite athletes is predominately middle class. Evidence gathered from the



interview data appears to support those findings and the findings of the “The Development of Sporting Talent 1997 survey” (Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998, p.30), which suggested that athletes who were more academically able and/or come from higher socio-economic groupings, but were not necessarily more athletically talented, were best able to successfully access funding.

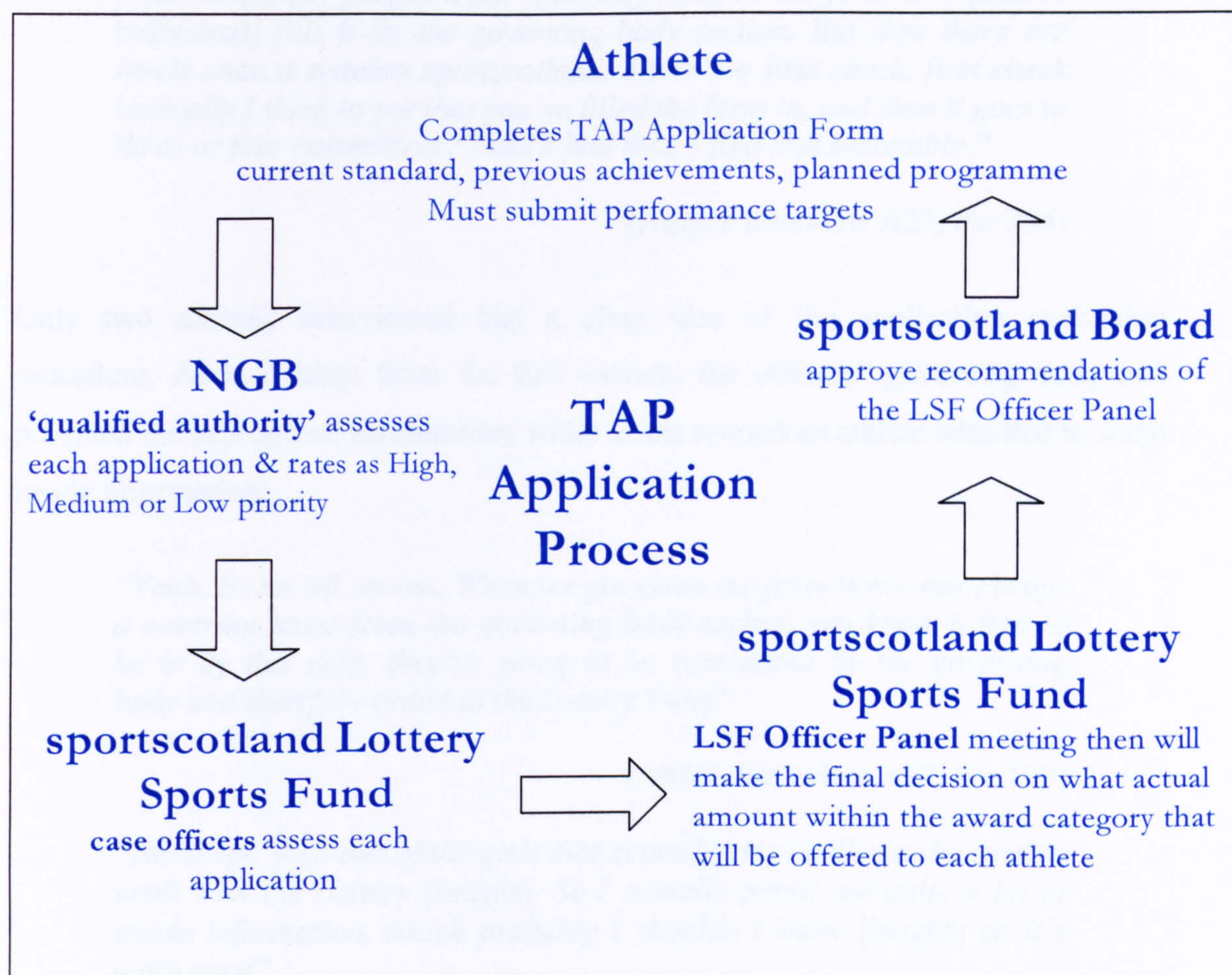
### **Personal performance targets**

The TAP application form also requires athletes to submit personal performance targets. Section 3.2 of the application form (see Appendix 10) asks athletes to set down their long term goals, and Section 3.4 asks for interim targets. Interim targets should reflect a measure of progress towards the long-term goals. As part of the TAP application assessment process, both the governing body and sportscotland Lottery Fund case officers evaluate the targets submitted by athletes. The issue of athlete performance targets was one of the major themes which emerged from the analysis of the data, and is discussed in detail later in this report under the heading Athlete Performance Targets (see p.253).

Once athletes have completed the application form they must then send the form to their governing body for endorsement. This is the first stage in a complex process of assessment that is shown in Fig 6.7 and described in detail below, under the heading: TAP application assessment (see p.238). Evidence gathered from this phase of the study shows that athletes are worryingly unfamiliar with that procedure and unclear about how decisions affecting their applications are made.



**Fig. 6.7 TAP application assessment process**



### **TAP Application Assessment**

A study of World Class Performance programme athletes found that athletes are uncertain about how decisions affecting their sport are made (UK Sport, 2000b, p.58), and evidence from the study reveals similar results. Athletes were split between those who had no idea at all and those who had a general idea:

*“No, I mean the actual Lottery Fund, the way the whole system works is a complete mystery to me. I just know the form goes in, decisions are made and they come back out and you get allocated the money.”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 109)

*“Once it leaves me. I have a general idea. Obviously it goes to the governing body. The governing body write a bit which basically the national coach writes, I would say. I know that the national coach has a meeting nearer the time. But I don’t know where it goes for the few months, I mean why does it sit there for a few months for before we get to know?”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 285)



*“I’m not even sure that I understand it I suppose [laughs]. I think, I mean in [sport] people know that they send in the form and [named individual] fills it in, the governing body section. But then there are levels once it reaches sportscotland. There’s a first check, first check basically I think to see that you’ve filled the form in, and then it goes to three or four committees? Yeah I find that, I find that incredible.”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 294)

Only two athletes interviewed had a clear idea of the application evaluation procedure. As is evident from the first extract, the athletes’ governing body had provided the appropriate information, while in the second an athlete admitted to some inside information:

*“Yeah. It was all set out. When we got given the form there was always a covering letter from the governing body saying, you know it had to be in by this date, they’re going to be considered by the governing body and then forwarded to the Lottery Fund”*

(Athlete Interview A17, Par 109)

*“No never. Well one of the girls that actually plays with me she used to work with the Lottery [laughs]. So I actually found out quite a lot of inside information, which probably I shouldn’t know [laughs] so it’s quite good”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 104)

This obvious lack of understanding among athletes about how the application evaluation process operates is puzzling because the information is available to them in the accompanying documentation sent to every athlete who requests a TAP application form. Some governing bodies particularly those who publish their selection criteria, also detail the evaluation process for TAP applications in their documentation. Clearly, most athletes do not read all of the paperwork and guidance provided. This is problematic because the lack of awareness about the process must impact on their ability to complete the application.

### **National governing body assessment**

Governing bodies are charged with assessing all the applications from their sport. Each NGB must have a ‘qualified authority’ who’s responsibility it is to rate each applicant as a high / medium / low priority in relation to all applications from that sport. Each application is assessed on the following criteria:



- Effectiveness of the applicant's proposed programme
- Effectiveness of the applicant's proposed targets
- Effectiveness of the applicant's proposed training/coaching programme
- Quality of the applicant's sports medicine / sports science support
- Assessment of the applicant's programme costs

Evidence from the study shows that the “qualified authority” varies from governing body to governing body. In some governing bodies one individual is tasked with this responsibility, while in others it is the responsibility of a panel:

*“No it's me it's my job. Basically it comes to me and I go through the TAP applications, fill the section in for the national governing body, I sign it and then my chief executive, [name], [name] also has to sign it as well yeah, and then it gets submitted to [case officer].”*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.10, Par 36)

*“It goes like this; the Technical Director of [sport] puts forth his list. Anyone can apply for TAP, absolutely anyone, and anyone does. Now the Technical Director of [sport] he puts down and says I think these people should get TAP and I think these people should not get TAP. And then they [sportscotland case officers] listen, and then TAP decide on their own who gets on their own.”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 47)

In a team sport, the governing body has responsibility for selecting squad athletes. The following interview extract with a Scottish Institute coach describes the procedure adopted by this particular sport:

*“I mean I get to see what its about and together with [Name] who's the head coach of the women's programme, then we look at selecting the athletes for the Lottery awards.”*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 51)

From interviews with governing body officials/coaches with responsibility for TAP application assessment, two distinct approaches to decision-making emerged. Some governing bodies publish, and/or make available to athletes, the performance and eligibility criteria used by the ‘qualified authority’ as the guideline for TAP application recommendations:

*“Yip [pause] the [sport specific] document was basically put together because there was no objective criteria for funding. Of course that*



*leaves an awful lot of em open criticism can arise when you have no objective standards. So that was the reasoning behind it.”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1, Par 12)

*“Whenever you are in a new situation it’s prudent to make sure that everyone does have an equal chance and we did that this time, we made pretty much straight performance lines. And people who made those performance lines got the extra resources...Up until now its been a straight time it’s what we call the Senior Elite Standard...”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 39)

The published selection criteria of both sports discussed in the interviews above, clearly states that achieving performance standards does not guarantee that a TAP award will be made. Recommendations made by the governing body might not be accepted, because it is sportscotland Lottery Fund that have the final decision on all TAP applications:

*“...and TAP didn’t always say yes, they said yes a lot of the time, but not, by no means always, and in fact I can remember the case officer saying, I realise you and [named individual], the Technical Director, are using these standards for the SIS, but I do not want to get into a situation where any kid thinks because I made these standards I’m automatically going to get TAP.”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 151)

In the following extract from an interview with a senior governing body official and coach, the procedure undertaken by the ‘*qualified authority*’, which in the particular governing body in question comprised of a panel of governing body officials and coaching staff, is described in detail:

*“We take the [title of published criteria standards] and we take a look at all the applicants and we say ‘who’s met the standard’. And you’re right, we do disregard, it’s not that we disregard, we send a letter saying ‘have you read the [published criteria standards]? Here’s a copy of it, this is the standard you must achieve in order to make yourself eligible for consideration... So now we have narrowed it down to the people who have actually made the standard. Does that mean now that they’re all going to get awards NO [interviewee’s emphasis]. What we take a look at is a high medium and low priority. Who’s a high priority, well obviously somebody like an [names three individuals] would be high priority. Em someone who has just made the qualifying, somebody who is em [pause] let’s say twilight of their years, may*



*not, or be having just made the standard this last year, maybe PB'd but haven't shown a consistency of performance. Then what we would say is that would be a low priority person. Somebody who's very young em you know, who obviously, through discussions with the selection committee, is on an upward slop. Em we don't really take background into consideration at all, its based all on performance. Em and if they put, who coaches them, have they got good coaching support, em that's another aspect that we look at.*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 36)

While it is evident from the above extract that objective criteria provide the structure and basis for decision-making in this sport, an element of subjectivity is also required:

*"I think yes you have to have clear objective criteria BUT [researcher adding emphasis that was clear from interview tape] I'll qualify it by saying em there must be some room left for subjectivity, and of course that area of subjectivity is where all the criticism comes."*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 24)

In some sports, the subjective aspect of decision-making is clearly greater than in others. For example, in sports where successful performance is not determined by objective judgements of time or distance but by subjective judgements, as in the various martial arts or individual skills and ability in team sports, the approach adopted above is clearly not appropriate or possible:

*"So it's subjective, but we also base their performances to come into account and em [pause] and I was talking to [named case officer] and it's worked out successful up until now"*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.10, Par. 32)

*"Well we have certain criteria and I think it's always [pause] a lot of it is subjective [pause]... So certainly, as far as objectivity is concerned, in fitness there are certain parameters that we can ask or demand of players... So that's certainly one criteria but not the only one. Then it's subjectivity because we then look at a range of areas like, you know, past performance, current performance, and that's club and also international, so and some times that differs because what we are looking for is some consistency, and can they step up to the next level... So past and current form, and obviously the range of skills that someone brings to the field, and on to the pitch, and that's the core skills... So certainly, when we look at selection then that becomes integral to whether someone actually makes the team or not."*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 59)



The sensitivity of this aspect of the TAP decision-making process was not lost on some officials/coaches, as the defensive position taken towards the researcher in this extract demonstrates:

*“I knew that in the first cycle, the first four years, that would be perceived as being the fairest way. It is the fairest way, whether it’s the best way I’m not sure, but so when people like you ask that question it is completely fair. But I think in the next cycle we may expand to a less em [pause] to a less [pause] we may start to take in other factors. Including potential, including those sorts of things.*

(Elite Interview E4, Section 1, Par. 27-31)

Evidence gathered from the interviews with elite officials and coaches who had responsibilities for governing body evaluation of TAP applications (n = 4), that athletes were not involved at all in this stage of the process, and were unaware of the recommendations made by the governing bodies. This appears to be confirmed by the responses of most athletes when asked if they are ever made aware of governing body recommendations:

*“I send it back to them [NGB] and then I put it, I’m, sort of at their mercy really to how, how they fill in the back three pages of my form”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 126)

However, one interviewee, a former TAP athlete, who after retirement had become a governing body official with responsibility for TAP application assessment, stated that this group often changed or amended the information supplied by the athlete and informed them that they had done so. Clearly, it is impossible to speculate as to the extent of this practice but it is likely to be widespread.

*“And quite often phoned up the athletes and said I don’t think you are realistic about either your targets, or your money or whatever... Em or we changed the forms before they went in [laughs].*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 41)

Two athletes were particularly critical of the governing body’s role in the TAP application process. Both athletes came from sports with separate men and women’s governing bodies and implied that the women’s organisations were less professional



in their approach and that this had a detrimental effect on outcomes in terms of Lottery funding and support:

*“You’ve got a very poor, well in my opinion, a very poor governing body in the women’s section. We haven’t had support from the men’s [NGB name] until this year, and that largely came on through, partly political pressure and media pressure because we lost our Lottery funding. Em other than that I think they would have been quite happy for sportscotland to take care of the women. There was no development being done in terms of grassroots or whatever it’s very poor at the moment... up until this year we’d never had a formal training programme we relied very much on paying people ourselves to write training programmes for us”*

(Athlete Interview A8, Par 22)

*“I think they’ve [Men’s NGB] got it sorted and know exactly what they want. You know, they’re there to try and get as much money out of the Lottery as possible. And you know they [Men’s NGB] are so much more professional whereas the women just say, well we’ll just try and get four people or five people, instead of just trying to get twenty!”*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 405)

These views appear to support the findings of feminist research into sex-segregated sports organisations which found that separatism institutionalised gender divisions in sport and excluded women from power, status and decision-making about access to resources (Pronger, 1990; J.A. Hargreaves, 1994). However, perceptions can often be misleading and a more detailed investigation of the TAP award data for sex-segregated governing bodies reveals a much more complex and somewhat unexpected picture. An investigation of the sports of bowls and golf, two of the most entrenched sex-segregated sports in Scotland, is presented below.

In the sport of golf, more than three quarters of the TAP awards offered to athletes over the six year period between 1997-2003 went to men (Men = 71%, Women = 29%), and not surprisingly, male athletes received over two thirds of the total amount of awards offered (Men = 69.6%, Women 30.4%). However, the average award made to men and women over the six year period is very similar (Men mean = £7298, Women mean = £7717) and a two sample t test showed that there was no statistical difference between the mean award for men and women (T-Value = -0.18 P-Value = 0.855 DF = 31). In the sport of bowls, a few more male athletes were offered awards

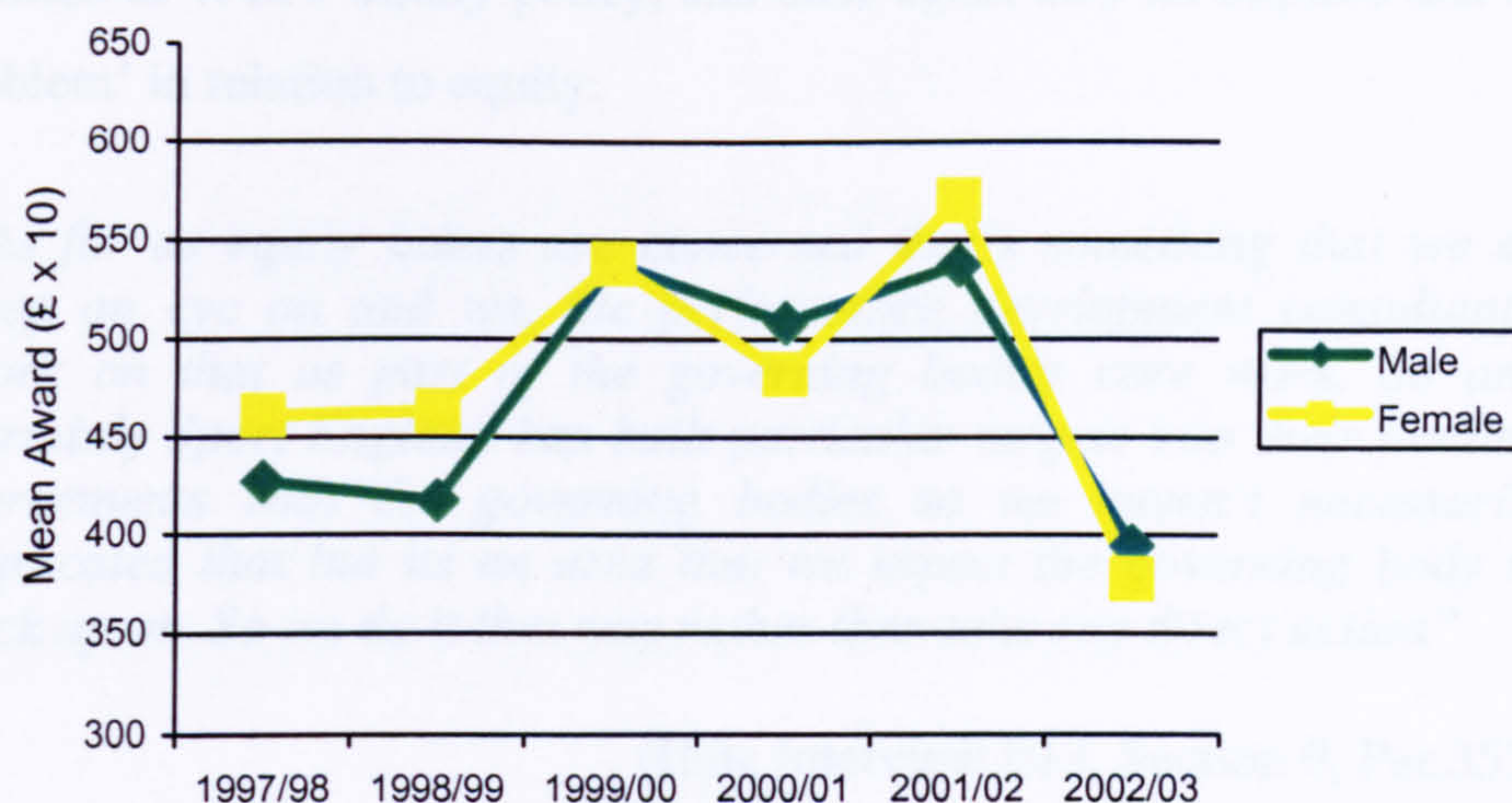


than female athletes (Men = 58.1%, Women = 41.9%) over the six year period from 1997-2003. The women however, received more of the total amount offered to the sport (Women = 54.9%, Men = 45.1%) and received on average a higher award than their male counterparts (Women mean = £17691, Male mean = £10502). However, once again, a two sample t test showed that these average awards were not statistically different (T-Value = -1.51 P-Value = 0.150 DF = 16). The higher totals for women bowlers can be explained by the fact that five of the thirteen women, who competed at the last two Commonwealth Games and also regularly competed at the World Championships, received much higher awards than the other women and indeed the men.

This data reveals a more complex picture than might have been expected from two of the most entrenched sex-segregated sports in Scotland. While more men than women are being funded, once identified as being elite, male and female athletes are awarded, on average, similar amounts of money. Once women get onto the TAP programme they appear to be treated equitably with their male counterparts. When viewed in this way, these results seem to support White's (1991) view that women's sporting organisations can lobby effectively on behalf of its members in the distribution of scarce resources. In order to assess fully the extent to which gender influences the outcome in terms of resources awarded, an analysis of the complete TAP award dataset was undertaken. To gain a picture of the average amount awarded over the first six-year award period (1997/98 – 2002/03) the total sum awarded for each person was calculated. The average award over the six years for men (n=694) was £10,344 while the average award for women (n= 580) over the same period of time was £10,120. A two sample t-test showed that there was no statistical difference between the men and women on the average award over these five years ( $t(1239) = 0.32, p = 0.747$ ). The complexity of this situation is revealed in Fig. 6.8 which shows the median TAP award in each of the six funding years broken down by gender. This clearly indicates that the average award to female athletes was higher than that received by male athletes in four of the six funding periods.



Fig. 6.8 Median TAP awards 1997/98 – 2002/03: broken down by gender



Figures taken from **sportscotland** Lottery Fund Talented Athlete Programme press-releases 1997-2003

Clearly, Lottery distribution organisations, such as **sportscotland** and UK Sport are also undoubtedly exerting influence over governing bodies in relation to equity issues. All Lottery funded schemes are required to provide equal opportunity of access to both sexes and monitoring checks are supposed to be carried out to ensure that these terms and conditions are met. In response to a question about how issues of equity and fairness are ensured, a senior **sportscotland** official said that he was assured that the TAP decision-making procedure within **sportscotland** Lottery Fund could and would respond to any equity issues should they arise. From the following interview extract it is clear that this official's understanding of the issue of equity related only to the equal representation of men and women:

*“Well what we’re looking at are the athletes. We are looking at the athletes and we’re supporting the athletes and indeed we support two ladies curling side... so we’ve been happy enough to support them. And we’ve supported the ladies bowling as well - so we don’t see it. It may crop up in through we’ll support those athletes. I suppose if we saw an element of discrimination or anything like that we would [pause] if we saw that one lot were being favoured we might sort of say here hang on a dam minute we need an equal representation coming through [pause]. We’d do that quietly more than anything else. But we’ve not got a problem”*

(Elite Interview E1, Section 0, Par.66)



A number of UK Sport officials interviewed for this study held similar views about the robustness of WCPP equity policy, and once again they all implied that there was not a 'problem' in relation to equity:

*"As far as equity issues are concerned that's something that we do keep an eye on and we, the performance development consultants, work on that as part of the governing bodies core work. So and certainly Sport England has built particular targets into their funding agreements with the governing bodies so we haven't necessarily replicated that but its an area that we expect the governing body to pick up on. So we do it that way rather than take any direct action"*

(Elite Interview E13, Section 0, Par.355)

*"But I think what we can say without any shadow of a doubt that if there was any unfairness going on them people like me would have noticed and would have said something."*

(Elite Interview E8, Section 5, Par.14)

While the findings from both the TAP award data and the interview data present a somewhat unexpectedly encouraging picture of the extent of equity in the Lottery award distribution in Scotland, it should not be forgotten that there have always been fewer female than male athletes on the TAP programme, and that their numbers are dropping. The result of this situation is revealed when the sum of total awards offered in the six-year period was analysed by gender. The total amount of awards offered during this period was £13,048,561 of which £7,178,887 was offered to male athletes and £5,869,674 to female athletes. This means that male athletes received almost £1.5 million more than female athletes (£1,309,213) which represents ten percent more of the total amount of awards offered<sup>139</sup>.

Not surprisingly, most athletes interviewed believed that governing bodies were the most influential body in the application process. The following two extracts are representative of most comments:

*"I think your relationship with your governing body is very important because they vet your application and if you're not popular with your*

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<sup>139</sup>Figures taken from sportscotland Lottery Fund Talented Athlete Programme press-releases 1997-2003



*governing body they are obviously going to downgrade you or whatever and then that will get passed onto the Lottery”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 226)

*“I send it back to them [NGB] and then I put it, I’m sort of at their mercy really to how, how they fill in the back three pages of my form”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 126)

Most athletes interviewed were confident that their governing body was the most appropriate body to rank TAP applications, believing that they knew athletes best:

*“I think they know the sport, they know what’s needed, they know the squads, they know the individuals so they know what’s realistic. I mean our case officer works for the sports council, yeah I might know him as a person, yeah I might even [pause] he doesn’t know the sport, he doesn’t know me as well as [NGB official] perhaps or someone from the [NGB].”*

(Athlete Interview A20, Par 270)

There were however, some athletes who were sceptical of the ability of their governing body representative(s) to carry out this task:

*“I mean they’re not by any means, I mean they’re not international [sport] they’re just on the committee”*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 149)

*“No our governing body are just not on the ball really. They’ve actually just brought professionals in, marketing people and things to try and get it a bit more professional. It was, I mean it was just part-time people that were doing it.”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 63)

Indeed, one athlete went as far as to suggest that governing bodies should be removed from the application process and that athlete applications should go directly to the Lottery Fund:

*“It’s a strange way because you fill the form as honestly as possible but at the end of the day it goes to your governing body and it depends totally on what they’re going to say on the back of the form. As opposed to you filling the form in and just submitting it straight to the Lottery. And then, I mean if you could put it straight to the Lottery and*



*then if there was a query, they could get back to the governing body then. I just don't know how fair it is to do it that way."*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 133)

It would appear that there are significant differences in the levels of professionalism among governing bodies and that this impacts directly on their ability to make appropriate decisions in respect of TAP applications. As the above extracts demonstrate, this is an issue of concern for some athletes that needs to be addressed by sportscotland.

### **Lottery Fund assessment procedure**

While the input of governing bodies and coaches is pivotal to the TAP decision-making process, it is the Lottery Fund that have the ultimate responsibility. In the final stages of the application assessment process, athlete applications and governing body recommendations are sent to the Lottery Fund where the case officer for that sport reviews them. Applications are assessed according to the following criteria:

- eligibility
- performance record
- targets
- future potential
- value for money
- quantity and quality of proposed programme
- current performance standard
- relevance to existing national strategies
- financial need

From the elite interviews it is clear that case officers actively seek out expert advice, often from, Institute coaches and/or governing body personnel. All of the Institute coaches for sports that have TAP programmes<sup>140</sup> interviewed for this study indicated that they were contacted by case officers to discuss TAP applications in their sport:

*"Now what we'll do is we'll sit down with [named sportscotland case officer] and say, right Jo Blo, he's made the standard for the [sport specific], he's just tweaked over that in the standard. Maybe we need to wait another year to see where he's going, em he's just started to*

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<sup>140</sup>Not all Institute sports are eligible for TAP funding. Currently, men's rugby and men's football are not TAP funded.



*work that could interfere, or whatever. And we make judgement calls on that, and we'll say, ok I think we need to recommend that this athlete [pause]"*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 48)

This aspect of the application evaluation process was clearly something that concerned a number of athletes from Institute sports. Some athletes interviewed were unclear as to the role of the Institute Coach in the TAP award process:

*"See it's a wee bit hard to understand because I presume it does go to the Governing Body. But you've got an Institute coach who's not employed by the Governing Body now but it's the Institute coach who goes to the Lottery and makes his case for funding, or makes our case for funding. Em but what happens if what the [NGB] write, the Governing Body write, is different from what the Institute coach wants [laughs]?"*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 233)

If the application is assessed favourably, the case officer will recommend a grade of award for each athlete, which determines the maximum level of award that may be considered. The final decision on what actual amount within the award category that will be offered to each athlete is made by the Lottery Panel, which is made up of qualified individuals from both sportscotland and other Scottish sporting organisations:

*"There is a Lottery Panel, there's a Talented Athlete Panel. It consists of all of the case officers and the senior officer, whether they dealt with the case or not, and I'll explain why that is in a moment. The Chairman of the Council, at least one other member of the Council, there's me, and then there are people nominated by organisations who will have knowledge of talent and talented athletes, such as the Scottish Association of National Coaches, the Scottish Sports Association, the Sports Aid Foundation. They are people who know, it's not just representation for the sake of it. These people know about recruitment, selection, identification, nurturing of talented athletes. The organisation nominates someone to come and sit on the panel"*

(Elite Interview E1 Section 0 Par 30-31)

The recommendations of the Talented Athlete Panel meeting are sent to the sportscotland Board for discussion and a final decision. The benefits of this procedural mechanism to governing bodies is evident as the following extracts:



*“We certainly have at least one meeting with the case officer to go through each application. They read through them and sort of grade them and then we’ve got a chance to chat through them, you know em to discuss individuals. Em I think the good thing from the governing body point of view is that it’s decided by sportscotland and that takes an amazing amount of pressure off us. You know we can appeal for you or we can do this, but at the end of the day they decide how much money you’re going to get and em [pause]”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 97)<sup>141</sup>

*“Yeah I think it’s better that way. It would be very hard for a governing body to say that, who should get an award, or you know, make the final decision. I think it would be really really hard to do that. I mean we do have a good relationship and obviously, it’s a disappointment to them if the TAP award gets knocked back, but we do try to help them in as many ways as possible. We always reassure them, you know, that its not finished, there’s always a second chance, you know next year and these are targets that we need.”*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.10 Par 64)

Accordingly to a Lottery Fund official, this aspect of the decision-making process also benefits the athletes, particularly where there is a dispute between an athlete and governing body:

*“Yes, yes, well the decision is ours, not the governing body. We cannot hide behind the governing body, nor will we do it. We are the distribution body and we will make the decision. We have to, if you like defend it. But we will take account, and I say take account very strongly, of the governing body, but we wouldn’t necessarily accept everything it said or all its judgements. There may be a falling out between an athlete and a governing body, and we may say well that’s fine we are going to support the athlete. It’s difficult, cause It’s difficult to conceive of an athlete doing well without the support of the governing body, and certainly in the team sports”*

(Elite Interview E1 Section 0 Par 62)

There is a lack of transparency about the final stages of the TAP application decision-making process within sportscotland Lottery Fund. All meetings are conducted in private and no information is made available to the athlete, the governing body or put into the public domain. Once a decision has been made and approved by the

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<sup>141</sup>Former TAP athlete who had become a governing body official after retirement



sportscotland board, individual applicants are notified of the decision by letter. Successful applicants must formally accept the award and the targets and conditions attached to it. Once accepted, sportscotland Lottery Fund issue a press release detailing the awards offered to that particular sport. This includes a list of named athletes, total award offered to each athlete<sup>142</sup> and the postcode of athlete. No information is released about unsuccessful applications at an individual level. Several of the athletes interviewed were concerned about the amount of time that final decision-making process took and the lack of communication throughout:

*“Yeah I mean I think it’s fair enough the process it goes through. The governing body then the Lottery then the Lottery Sport Fund. But em there’s maybe a but of lack of communication. You know once it goes in you get a letter saying, you know we’re reviewing your application, so that’s fine. But you don’t hear for a long time”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 56)

*“I understand the reason why they check it for completion and for, you know, somebody’s filled in it with no chance at all of getting anything, weed it out at that point. And then you obviously need the final rubber stamp type committee. But there’s what three or four committees in between, what are they doing its pointless! It’s so much more administration and time and money that’s spent on which that could be spent on sport.”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 298)

In the following extract from an interview with a very established and successful Scottish athlete, the important issue of athlete performance targeting was raised. This athlete was concerned by the lack of knowledge among athletes’ about where the Lottery Fund placed their emphasis in the decision-making process:

*“We also don’t know entirely where the emphasis of the Lottery, for example, if somebody says I hope to spend money on certain competitions, and those competitions might be national titles, they might be considered less important by the Lottery Commission, I don’t know I’m just speculating. Whereas somebody might say I’m going to do the British Championships, I’m going to do the National opens, they Lottery Commission might say well these are high priority competitions we’ll fund that. Someone said I want to do such and such competition in Germany it’s not a national title that doesn’t sound like*

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<sup>142</sup>Since August 1998, no breakdown of awards is given for athletes receiving subsistence funding as well as sports costs.



*a difficult competition. It may be it's a far higher standard, likely it is. I don't know if that's significant or not, but I wouldn't be surprised if there are questions like that. Of course you should fill in the questionnaire honestly and say what you intend to do anyway. But there may be subtleties of emphasis where you may not know where the emphasis is important.*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 69)

The issue of athlete performance targeting is fundamental to the decision-making process and was raised as an issue by many athletes, coaches and administrators who took part in this study. The following section describes this aspect of the TAP application process in more detail.

### **Athlete performance targets**

One of the major themes to emerge from the analysis of the interview data was the issue of performance targets. As previously discussed, the TAP application form requires athletes to submit personal performance targets. Most importantly, athletes must outline interim targets which, they believe will be a measure of progress towards the achievement of their long-term goals. Targets are expected to be measurable in the form of scores, distances, times, overall position or placing in relation to other competitors in an organised competition. Performance targeting is an extremely important aspect of the TAP programme because it provides the benchmark against which athlete performance can be assessed on an annual basis at time of TAP renewal.

As part of the overall TAP application assessment process, the designated governing body representative evaluates the targets submitted by athletes and can comment upon them, before submitting them to the Lottery Fund for consideration. However, if Lottery Fund case officers consider the targets set to be too low, too high, or not appropriate, they will discuss with the athlete and the relevant governing body official, usually the national or high performance coach, and agree upon a more appropriate and/or measurable target.

### **Athlete target setting**

One of the major findings of a Lottery Fund commissioned study of the TAP programme carried out in 2000, was that some athletes had a limited idea of effective



target setting or how these targets should be driving their programmes (sportscotland Lottery Fund, 2001). This view was confirmed by a governing body official interviewed for this study, who stated that athletes in their particular sport had no idea about interim or long-term target-setting:

*“So they have very little concept of that and a lot of them aren’t good at setting targets over four years.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 53)<sup>143</sup>

In some sports, particularly those that have Scottish Institute of Sport status, officials and coaches had a more positive view of athletes’ ability to set reasonable and realistic targets:

*“But most of the kids put realistic and high targets because they are motivated to go for world success. And then the Lottery will call me up and say, is this reasonable, is this too easy, is this too hard? And I say, oh that’s about right or no no no it should be this. And then even whatever I say they go back to the kids and say, this is the target we are setting for you, and they have to sort of re-sign up for that”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 67)

Once again, as noted, where the level of assistance with the TAP application given to athletes by some governing bodies was discussed, the elite interviews provide a different perspective on the this aspect of the application process. Clearly, some governing bodies are much better informed about the appropriate performance standards for athletes at this level, and are more pro-active in passing this information to their athletes:

*“So we point them we say, ok these are your targets, you are at the level you are at, and what we’re expecting [pause] We expect you to be [pause] these are your targets over this period and these are what we are expecting.”*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.1, Par 44)

Indeed one governing body official and coach admitted that performance targets submitted by athletes from this sport were in fact the target that this individual had set for them:

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<sup>143</sup>Please note that Athlete 12 had been a TAP funded athlete who after retirement had taken up a post within the NGB



*“One other thing I would add to that is that each athlete has a target when they are allotted that sum of money in funding. They have a target that they have stated themselves, this is my target.”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 76)

### **Lottery Fund target setting**

Evidence from athlete interviews suggests that very few ( $n = 3$ ) were able to set targets acceptable to Lottery Fund case officers. Most athletes interviewed indicated that their targets had been changed at some point during the application assessment process. The following quote was typical of responses:

*“I remember I’d set a target for the Junior World Championships and when I got my acceptance back, and you’ve got to sign it, they had put it ten places higher than what I had set it. And so, I thought well you know that’s not my personal goal. My personal goal is the one I set.”*

(Athlete Interview A23, Par 193)

The extract above also suggests that the TAP award notification letter is the first indication that athletes have that a different or amended target had been set for them. Once again, this was a typical response with several athletes reporting a similar experience. This suggests that athletes are not in fact part of the co-operative discussion process between Lottery Fund case officers, governing body officials/coaches and athletes, described in sportscotland documentation.

Targets attached to the TAP award notification letter are extremely important because athletes must formally accept them as a condition of their TAP award. They are advised that if they fail to meet these targets they may find that their award is reduced in the following year, or indeed they may be dropped from the Talented Athlete Programme altogether. Athletes interviewed certainly believed that failure to achieve targets set for them was likely to lead to being dropped from TAP. The following extract was typical of responses to this question:

*“Whereas in the past I think, pretty much as long as I’ve met my aims that I’ve set then I’d get my funding. Cause like last year I pretty much set my aims to get to the World Students cross-country, which I did...So I did meet my aims. But this year they’ve set me target times and I think that if I don’t do these times I probably won’t get funded.”*

(Athlete Interview A15, Par 142)



This concern was more acute for athletes who felt that they could not, or were unlikely, to achieve the targets set for them. Two athletes were so concerned about the targets set for them that they contacted their Lottery Fund case officers for advice. The extracts clearly demonstrate that the athletes believed that the targets set for them were non-negotiable. Both athletes were advised by case officers to accept the award, despite their reservations, otherwise it was likely that the offer of funding would be withdrawn:

*“Before I accepted it, I phoned them up and said I’m not too impressed with this target because, logistically speaking, being at university, the tournaments I can play, I’m not going to be able to achieve this target. If I don’t spend so much time at university I can definitely achieve this target. Cause basically, the way the system works, if you play a certain number of tournaments you’re guaranteed to reach a certain stage. I said look I can take time off university and do it but I’m not prepared to do that, can you do something a little bit more realistic, allowing for the time I have to spend at university. And that was when the comment was made “oh I went to university you should be able to do that”. So em, basically I told them on the phone conversation that I probably wouldn’t achieve that target should I sign and accept? And they said look you are not going to get any money unless you agree to this target...basically, I was forced into a corner at the same time cause I’d asked them to change, yeah I’d asked them to change the target, they wouldn’t and I needed the money.”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 134 -137)

*“So I remember, I think I phoned them up and said you’ve brought it lower and they said well you can if you just sign it you can, [pause]. I can’t remember how it went but they’re not going to take any money off. ‘cause the thing was, sign this you agree that this is your personal target [pause] you’ll be funded on the grounds that [long pause] ... that you meet these targets. And I was like well I can’t guarantee that I’ll meet this target and I don’t want to have to like be owing money cause I’ve not. But they said [pause] they don’t take any money off you that you’ve spent to achieve that target so I signed it.”*

(Athlete Interview A23, Par 193)

Clearly, the concerns of these athletes were justified for a number of athletes on this phase of the research, who had experienced either a drop on funding, or had been dropped from the TAP programme altogether believed that this was due to a failure to meet targets. Indeed Athlete No. 1 (first interview extract above) was dropped from the TAP programme the following year:



*"But basically [Lottery Fund award letter] said you didn't achieve your targets and due to funding restrictions we cannot afford to fund you further."*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 158)

*"I didn't achieve last years' targets which is why £10000, or part of the reason, I imagine, why £10000 went down to £3000"*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 93)

Athletes appear to be split between those who felt that the agreed targets were reasonable or achievable and those who felt that targets were unrealistic or unachievable given particular circumstances:

*"So it was achievable but it would have been very very difficult, I would have had to had one of my very best seasons. Yes it was possible. If I'd transcribed my best results into the season, yes I could have achieved it but it was certainly not likely, that I was going to qualify"*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 101)

*"I thought that they were probably about right actually, reasonable"*

(Athlete Interview A17, Par 189)

*"See this year is crazy because they've, obviously they've taken away, well they've not taken it away they've just not given me subsistence funding [laughs]. But when you used to put in your application form you put in potential targets. Now they've got, they've not given me subsistence funding but they've still given me the target I had as a full-time athlete [laughs] right! I mean it's not to say that you can't do it but it's almost like if you can do it it's almost a justification for not giving you funding."*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 129)

*"This year for example was [pause] he had to get to the last four at the [international competition]. I mean, its ridiculous [laughs]. I said where did you get that from? Even his own performance coach at [NGB] wouldn't set him a target for one tournament... well they told me that they couldn't get any response from the [NGB] to set the targets so they had to come up with something so they looked at his programme and picked it. So I when I accepted [name] money this year, I had to say to them. I had to write into the letter of acceptance, you know, that I've had a conversation with you about this and I understand that he will not be judged solely on these two conditions"*

(Athlete Interview A4, Par 154 -158)



Most athletes interviewed believed that it was case officers who set performance targets, and several questioned the ability of case officers to set appropriate targets for their sport:

*“I think the people at the Lottery Commission don’t understand enough about the sports to be able to profile it perfectly for us. But that’s hardly surprising, I mean we can hardly expect them to be experts on all our individual sports.”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 169)

*“The case officers aren’t close enough to the sport, they don’t really, certainly at a junior level they don’t understand what’s going on”*

(Athlete Interview A4, Par 158)

*“Em I think, well it’s more up for [sport] to sort out, there is a possibility of people being, of some juniors being way over ambitious but that’s for, that’s for the governing body, the guy there to sort out.”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 110)

Athletes from team sports had a slightly different experience of target setting than athletes from individual sports. Governing bodies have a direct role in setting targets in team sports, because of the requirement for a single target to which all squad athletes can subscribe. It would appear from the following extract with an Institute coach, that the decision over team targets is a co-operative process with governing bodies seeking the advice of the Lottery Fund:

*“The national governing body says, you know we want to be sixth in Europe and tenth in the world - ok because I think [pause] my understanding is that Lottery funding is paramount to where you finish in Europe or the world. Now as an example, we have a request for Lottery, can you tell us to secure funding for the next four years do we have to achieve a sixth place in Europe or tenth place in the World Cup next year? cause we have a European Cup qualifier in 2002 and selection is an issue because if, for example, Lottery come back and say well what we want Scotland to do in the women’s programme is to finish sixth in Europe, doesn’t matter where you finish in the World Cup. Then when, as far as Lottery is concerned, or the objective, is that we need to qualify for Europe.”*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 104)



Once the Lottery Fund and the governing body have agreed a team target, evidence gathered from the athlete interviews suggests that governing bodies simply tell athletes what to put into the target box on the TAP form:

*“So there were certain parts that we left blank that were then filled in later, or we were given some statements when they were saying: what is your goal we had a team goal as opposed to [pause] I think there was a section where we had a team goal and a personal goal. But the team goal we obviously, were told this is what you write in, because we’ve got to be united in this.”*

(Athlete Interview A24, Par 130)

Two athletes interviewed were very critical of the team targets set by their governing body, suggesting that they had set unrealistically high targets in order to ensure Lottery funding:

*“[Governing body] was naïve, the targets they set for the team were unrealistic”*

(Athlete Interview A8, Par 48)

*“Em I think it’s possible I don’t think it’s necessarily realistic; it just depends on our understanding of the word realistic [laughs]. To me, realistic means that eh it’s likely or it’s possible”*

(Athlete Interview A24, Par 82)

Both of the sports highlighted above failed to meet the targets and subsequently, both failed to secure TAP funding in the following year. Interestingly, neither of the two teams in question were a core Institute sport. There are tremendous variations in the levels of professionalism in Scottish governing bodies of sport.

At the time the athlete interviews were conducted, TAP applications also required athletes from team sports to submit personal performance targets as well as their team target and this was a source of aggravation to some athletes on this study as the following extracts demonstrate:

*“Because in my targets it was to be selected for GB and Scotland were to do whatever. Now as an individual I reached my targets and I got selected for GB. But as a team we didn’t reach, say we didn’t get a medal at the Commonwealth Games, which had been. So I got penalised because the team didn’t reach their target”*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par 209)



*“They set you individual targets and then they judge you on team performances. Winning a match is a team target. You can’t win a match if the other fourteen people don’t perform or individuals don’t perform”*

(Athlete Interview A8, Par 44)

Clearly, there was some confusion among team sport athletes about which target(s) take or should take priority in the decision-making process. Changes to the team sport application procedure introduced shortly after these interviews were conducted have addressed specific issues relating to targeting. Under the new procedures, governing body representatives of each team sport have responsibility for target setting and all identified squad athletes are required to formally agree to that target as a condition of their TAP award.

### **NGB role in target-setting**

As part of the TAP assessment process, governing bodies are able to comment on the targets set by athletes in their sport, and from the face-to-face interviews with coaches it was clear that Lottery Fund case officers actively seek their advice and support on target-setting. However, as the following two interview extracts demonstrate, the level of advice sought by case officers appears to vary from sport to sport:

*“She [Case Officer] always asks me. And the thing is, I don’t know about other sports, but pretty much they just spit back what the kids put. With with [pause] with, how do I want to say this [pause] reflecting also the goals of the sport”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 67)

*“Yes because I basically, basically [case officer] comes to me and then she asks me to set three targets for each individual... Every player who does get a TAP award I know them really well and we know the level they are at and what they should be expecting to achieve. So I set three targets and that goes to the athlete and if the athletes’ not happy with that they don’t have to sign. They can come back and say, look I’m not happy with the target that’s been set for whatever reason. But you know we’ve had no comebacks and they’ve all agreed with their targets. They’re targets are challenging, yet realistic and none of the targets that we’re setting are beyond the individual”*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.1, Par 48)



Despite this level of contact and co-operation, clearly there are times where the targets that appear on the TAP award notification letter can still be a surprise, as this extract with a Scottish Institute coach demonstrates:

*“I’ll say to the case officer lets think about this one, you know. And he’s very very good, he’ll check with me and say what do you think? Some will go out and I’ll go [looks skyward] you know I get a real surprise. And every time I’ve gone oh my goodness and talked and had an appeal situation we’ve won appeals, every appeal.”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 80)

### **Effectiveness of targeting**

It is possible to measure the effectiveness of TAP athlete targeting from data released by sportscotland. Data from the latest available monitoring surveys<sup>144</sup>, shows that approximately sixty percent of TAP funded athletes (57% in 2000/01 and 60% in 2001/02) claimed to have met or exceeded their targets in the past two years (sportscotland Lottery Fund, 2001, 2002). However, a senior sportscotland official admitted that this figure was disappointing, and was considerably short of sportscotland’s own performance target that seventy percent of TAP athletes would have their award renewed because they have met targets. Indeed, in what was a candid and open interview, this official conceded that sportscotland now believed that this target was unachievable because of poor target setting by sportscotland Lottery Fund staff:

*“We can’t reach that target because we haven’t been setting the targets as predictably well as we could be”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 327)

It is somewhat surprising that six years after the introduction of TAP funding, athlete performance targeting is still so unpredictable. This is an extremely important issue when one considers that targets still appear to be the major mechanism used by the Lottery Fund in the decision making process for athletes seeking TAP award renewal. Clearly, target setting needs to be standardised across sports and this is something that sportscotland appear to be addressing finally. A new approach to target setting is

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<sup>144</sup> Athlete monitoring surveys are conducted on an annual basis by sportscotland Lottery Fund



currently being developed, one in which sportscotland's Achieving Excellence team<sup>145</sup> and the Scottish Institute of Sport are taking the lead:

*“Well we think that the Institute and the Achieving Excellence Team have a joint job of working with governing bodies to develop an overarching athlete tracking system.”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 335)

The envisaged athlete tracking system will be centralised, but one where the responsibility will be placed with the body working most closely with the athlete. For example, the Institute of Sport will have responsibility for their athletes while that responsibility for non-Institute sports will be devolved to the governing body:

*“Well the infrastructure we can help with but the actual monitoring of the athlete should be whom ever is working most closely with the athlete. Its just that we don't want people developing a system on their own little excel spreadsheet here and then [pause]. We want it to be a system that every governing body uses, maybe it's a bit tailored for each sport, and the data is shared and centralised”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 339)

A sportscotland sponsored monitoring study of the Talented Athlete Programme conducted in 1999 reported that both athlete and governing body representatives had suggested that future funding should be dependent on improving and actual levels of performance rather than specific targets which have been set more than a year before. Clearly, the introduction of the sophisticated athlete tracking system will be a more acceptable basis for TAP athlete assessment than the system presently in place.

### **Fairness of the TAP application decision-making process**

In 2001, sportscotland commissioned the management consultants' KPMG to conduct an organisational review of the organisation. One of the headline findings of that review was that a number of Lottery applicants were unclear about the rationale for decision-making and that there appeared to be some inconsistencies in the

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<sup>145</sup>The Achieving Excellence Team have responsibility for the administration of the Talented Athlete Programme



allocation of funds (KPMG, 2001). Findings from this study appear to support this view:

*“And I think sportscotland have changed the criteria, because we’ve got [sport] this year, have a lot of athletes on TAP funding this year who they wouldn’t look at last year but have got the same results. Now I think maybe because we’ve got a national coach, and the argument is if you’ve got a national coach you need athletes to work with, so therefore we’ll give these guys the opportunity. And I think they should get the money, I’m not saying they shouldn’t be getting the money, but last year they weren’t good enough to get the money.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par. 61)

While results from the postal questionnaire showed that sixty-five percent (65.6%) of respondents were satisfied that the TAP application procedure was fair, over twenty percent of respondents (21.6%) were not. Interestingly, in this phase of the study the athletes interviewed were exactly evenly split between those who thought the application procedure was fair and those who thought it was unfair. Most of the athletes who thought that the application system was fair had very little additional comment to make and most simply replied yes:

*“I’ve no reason to suspect otherwise. That’s right yeah.”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 69)

In contrast, athletes who thought that the system was unfair provided a range of comments to support their argument. The following interview extracts provide a flavour of the responses:

*“I think what I mean by that is I know, in some cases, people haven’t met their targets but they still got the same funding.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 152)

*“The objectivity of the application process could be questioned”*

(Athlete Interview A9, Par 111)

*“I think that it has had good results. I wouldn’t say that it’s altogether fair.”*

(Athlete Interview A24, Par 241)



*“Yeah so I mean probably the reason this year that I find its unfair is that at the end of last season we were better than we’d ever been before better than when we got funding the first year, better than when we got funding in the second year and you feel that if you’re still improving then it actually feels like they’ve, you’ve not seen something right through to its conclusion and I think that’s, whether it’s fair I don’t know.”*

(Athlete Interview A9, Par 117)

### **Dissatisfaction with the fairness of the application process**

Data gathered from the quantitative phase of the research indicated that athletes from Badminton, Cycling, Women’s Rugby, Skiing and Swimming had particularly high levels of dissatisfaction. While this phase of the research did not include any athletes from skiing, athletes interviewed from all the other sports mentioned above continued to be critical of the application process. There were variations in the responses to this question among and between the sports but they can be classified into two general groupings – those from core sports and those from non-core sports.

Badminton and swimming are both core Institute sports, and as such have priority in terms of funding and support. Badminton has done particularly well from the Talented Athlete Programme. From data released by sportscotland, a total of twenty-seven different badminton players were offered TAP awards totalling almost one million pounds (£960642)<sup>146</sup> in the first six years of the programme (1997 – 2003), with several athletes being consistently offered both sports costs and subsistence funding. The level of awards to badminton is put into graphic perspective when one considers that the median award to badminton players over the total six year funding period was £20,010 compared with the median award across all TAP sports which was £5799. In the year that the athlete phase of this study was conducted, several badminton players had lost subsistence funding and this has undoubtedly been a factor in the high levels of dissatisfaction from this sport. The reasons for the high levels of dissatisfaction among athletes from the sport of swimming are more complex, but are again linked to the issue of funding. Swimming is a sport where athletes are competitively mature at a relatively young age, and although it is an Institute and priority sport, funding for many of its top athletes is limited by age. This is evident when one compares the award data for swimming with those of fellow Institute sport, Badminton above. A



total of forty-four different swimmers were offered TAP awards totalling £528,850<sup>147</sup> in the first six years of the programme (1997 – 2003) which is just over half of what badminton received. The median award to swimmers over this period was £5271, which is less than the median award across all sports and almost a quarter of the average award to badminton. When this study was conducted, it was sportscotland Lottery Fund policy to limit funding of juniors to £3000, yet, as the following extract demonstrates, some athletes appear to be unaware of the award amount ceilings for juniors:

*“I don’t know, eh the first year everyone just said to me oh it’s your first year everybody gets just £3000 and I don’t know what the other grants are. I’ve no idea”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 145).

Cycling and Women’s Rugby are not Institute or core sports so the maximum amount of support to athletes from these sports is limited. For example, the total amount offered to cycling was £270,818, and to Women’s Rugby was £189,604 over the six-year period between 1997-2003<sup>148</sup>, although it should be noted that Women’s Rugby received no funding at all in the funding years 2000/01 and 2001/02. It would appear that some athletes are unaware that the Lottery Fund has a policy of targeting sports that *“will produce the greatest overall benefit”* (Scottish Sports Council, 1998b, p.11) as the following interview extract from an athlete from cycling demonstrates:

*“I feel that where maybe well you obviously don’t know the full story and its maybe not fair to sort of mention on someone else’s case but I mean you hear of swimmers who are number three in Britain or were third in the Scottish Championships I think was one of the cases and they’re getting £15000 a year and the same with a Badminton player. I was third in the British Championships and also won one of the big races against the seniors and things and that should put you in a higher ranking theoretically, and you know if you are being considered, in my opinion, to go on the World Class Performance Plan you should be, you know, more highly regarded and they just obviously, I don’t see how they can justify £3000 for the top Scottish [sport] in that discipline is I mean a help and you have to take it cause*

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<sup>146</sup>Figures taken from sportscotland TAP award press releases 1997 - 2003

<sup>147</sup>Figures taken from sportscotland TAP award press releases 1997 - 2003

<sup>148</sup>Figures taken from sportscotland TAP award press releases 1997 - 2003



*it's £3000 you wouldn't have had but I mean, [sound of exasperation] it's a drop in the ocean from what you'll need to spend really."*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 184)

Such views are not limited to athletes from non-core sports as data from the quantitative phase of this research showed. In response to the question, *How satisfied/dissatisfied are you that the TAP application procedure is fair*, almost twelve percent (11.8%) of respondent's who offered a written response to this question, indicated that they were either unhappy and/or confused about the level of award offered to them. Similar views were expressed during this qualitative phase, indeed the most common response to questions about the fairness of the TAP application system was that variations in the levels of awards to athletes could not be justified. Interestingly, unlike the above extract where the athlete identifies, and is critical of, the significant differences that exist between sports in the levels of Lottery funding awarded, most interviewees looked to their own sport to identify examples of unfairness:

*"Basically, the first year that [Named individual] got massive, massive amounts, much much more than any of the other girls in [NGB]. I don't begrudge it to her she deserves it, but massive, massive difference. And for somebody who would go on [sport specific] and wouldn't be absolutely guaranteed to beat everyone, at that point. We were all still quite close in standard. It was a massive gap in funding."*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 94)

*"I think it's crazy how some people, a couple of individuals have got like massive grants and, you know, other people got a lot less. I'm all for spreading the money, which is what they were talking about cause a lot of people got smaller amounts. These people getting £25000, em it's not that I'm saying oh I should have got more, and I don't think that at all. I think, I think some people that got these big grants and comparing them to some of the other people I see that got a lot less"*

(Athlete Interview A15, Par. 109)

*"Since 1998 the system has become fairer awards appear to be made more on a performance basis rather than because of an individual's name or reputation."*

(Athlete Interview A16, Par 41)



Athletes who had either lost their TAP funding or had their funding significantly reduced, were particularly critical. The most common response by interviewees in this group was to question why athletes of a similar performance standard were continuing to be funded while their funding had been withdrawn:

*“But I was quite surprised at some of the people who did get it. Likes of [named individual, fellow athlete] got it again for, the same for [specific event], and I cann’ae remember what else, no for [event] he got it, and I thought he hasn’ae done anything in [event]. He won the Scottish Championships again but I was second only four seconds behind, you know. So I thought surely they should still have considered me again then.”*

(Athlete Interview A18, Par 177)

Athletes from women’s rugby, one of the sports identified as having particularly high levels of dissatisfaction, experienced the loss of TAP funding in the year that the study was conducted<sup>149</sup>. The team, which had won the Grand Slam in the previous season, had its funding was withdrawn because they had failed to meet their performance targets. Although one rugby player interviewed was very critical of the governing body, whom she argued had an unrealistic performance target, she was, nonetheless, critical of Lottery Fund decision making which she believed was too performance outcome orientated:

*“In the following season they had a spate of injuries, seven or eight of the Grand Slam players retired [pause] this was not taken into account”*

(Athlete Interview A8, Par 60)

A sportscotland official defended the TAP application evaluation system currently in place, although they did appreciate that athletes sometimes misunderstood the outcomes. While accepting that, in some instances, sportscotland administration could perhaps be better, governing bodies are clearly identified as the appropriate body for communicating standards and criteria to athletes:

*“Yeah I think [pause] I think there’s been a fair amount of attention to that... I know there have been athletes that have been frustrated because they feel as though they have made their target and why, why*

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<sup>149</sup>Women’s Rugby lost its funding in the 2000/01 funding year and did not receive TAP funding again until the 2002/03.



*are they not receiving funding when they thought if they ran that speed that they would or something like that. And sometimes I think there's a legitimate well did we not publish the criteria? Usually we do it's very clear to the governing body that these are the standards and its up to the governing body to communicate that to the athletes..."*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 291)

The lack of professionalism by some coaches was also alluded to:

*"Yeah but there are also situations where [pause] I don't want to take all the blame off us because I'm sure there are incidents where we could have done more. But there are scenario's where the coach will tell us don't take that athlete because they don't have the potential, cause a lot of it is scoring but some of it is probably a bit subjective, do they have the mental grit to do this? But the coach will say no no no don't do it and then tell the athlete oh yeah you should get in you should get in I don't know what you didn't get in. So there's some of that [pause] there's a little bit coming from everywhere em which is hard to avoid but I think we should work to try and do it."*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 291)

The complexity of the application assessment process and the lack of transparency over decision-making, both within governing bodies and sportscotland Lottery Fund, contribute to the high levels of dissatisfaction found among athletes about the fairness of the system currently in place. In general, athletes were unclear about the rationale for decision-making and unhappy about inconsistencies in the allocation of funds. Athletes were particularly concerned about the length of time that this process took and the lack of communication throughout. The lack of communication was a particular issue for athletes who had their TAP applications' rejected.

### **TAP application rejection**

A number of athletes interviewed (n = 5) had been through the experience of having their TAP renewal application rejected. All athletes in this group indicated that they had been informed of this decision by letter, and that there had been no personal contact from their case officer. Failure to reach personal performance targets was the reason cited in the rejection letter for all athletes in this group:



*“They’d worded it very carefully, but basically said you didn’t achieve your targets and due to funding restrictions we cannot afford to fund you further”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 158)

*“I think I’ve got the letter somewhere, they said to me that I never achieved the targets that I’d set last year.”*

(Athlete Interview A18, Par 153)

While the issue of athlete performance targets was a major theme that emerged from the analysis of the data, it was clearly particularly relevant to athletes who had their applications rejected. Athletes in this category were split into two distinct groups – those who thought the decision was fair and those who felt that the targets set for them were unattainable. The following two interview extracts demonstrate this well:

*“Aye, I think it was pretty fair. I think I was, I was being a wee bit naughty wae them in the end cause I wasn’ae doing anything that I said I would be doing, you know.”*

(Athlete Interview A18, Par 165)

*“I think they’d decided that they didn’t want to fund me anymore and they adjusted the targets to suit that. That’s probably a fairly cynical viewpoint but that seems to have been what they’ve done to other players as well?”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 129)

Another athlete was confused by the decision and indicated that they thought the “goalposts had been shifted” because they believed that they had met the performance target set for them:

*“They said that em I didn’t finish the season third in [sport specific ranking]... I mean they said as long as you finish the season third in [sport specific ranking] and I have cause the proof is there.”*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 301-309)

At the time of the interview, Athlete 21 was considering an appeal against this decision. Athletes who have had their TAP applications rejected have the right to appeal against the decision, although worryingly, one athlete interviewed who had had their TAP renewal application rejected, was unaware that there was an appeal process:



*“Basically the letter didn’t give you any indication there was an appeal process. It seemed very final. Well I spoke to my case officer several times mentioning university and things like this and absolutely no idea there was an appeal process. I thought it was one of these closed, we’ve made a decision we’re not going to discuss it, sort of situations.”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 249)

There is a written appeal process for athletes who have had their applications for a TAP award rejected or who are not happy with the level of award offered to them. This process permits appeals on three specific grounds: that sportscotland has misinterpreted or misunderstood information on the application; that sportscotland has not applied its policies and criteria effectively; or if the athlete can provide additional information on performance standards that was not included in the original application. Most athletes indicated that they had sought the advice and support of their governing bodies when compiling the case for their appeal:

*“I did phone up and talk to, I can’t remember... I don’t know a guy in the [governing body] who was quite helpful. Like I spoke to him like how to go about filling my form in, cause I think he was involved in some of the eh, talks on it and I think he helped me with my appeal.”*

(Athlete Interview A15, Par 58)

The interviews with governing body officials and coaches confirmed that athletes sought governing body advice with appeals. Although, as the following two extracts with officials from Institute sports show, appeals are unlikely to be successful. Indeed, in the second extract, athletes are advised against appealing altogether:

*“They have to appeal on their own behalf [pause] yeah and I guess you know this is all Lottery takes place between the athlete and the Lottery, there is no, you know there’s no [pause]. Now I would say that when someone gets rejected, first of all they always come to us to get out support, and you know, we do try to support them in certain ways which is [pause]. I don’t even know what else it is we can do [pause]. We sometimes attach a letter, but actually they don’t want that, they [pause]... What they’ll say when they appeal is that the governing body supports this, but we kind of always do so it’s not [pause] Because we will have supported them in the first place if they’d got to that stage so there isn’t a lot we can do.”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 95-99)



*“Em none of, any of the athletes that have been em [pause] put back haven’t appealed. And em they’ve come back to me and we normally sit, you know, we do say, you know, [case officer] come back and been very honest why they’ve not had Lottery, why they’ve not had Lottery award, and they get a confirmation from the Lottery. And they’ve always accepted that, and [case officer] [pause] we’ve never done an appeal. And [case officer] always spoken to me [pause] ok this player, for example, doesn’t quite meet the standard that we’re looking at based on their age and the level that they’re at, at this moment. But ok I sit down and I explain for the next twelve months here’s the goals, we’ll achieve those goals and then resubmit. We will resubmit another Lottery application the next year, and em providing they have met these targets we’ll have a better indication of whether they’re going to get a TAP award or not.”*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.10, Par 52)

Given the above comments, it is not surprising that only one athlete interviewed reported a successful outcome to their appeal. The most common reason given by sportscotland for rejecting an appeal was that circumstances had not changed in relation to athlete performance records:

*“Yep, and I mean it was worthwhile putting the paperwork together and doing it but I honestly think it was a waste of time doing it cause I don’t think they were interested in reconsidering it. And they actually, if you actually look at the original reason for refusing the grounds of appeal and the final decision saying [name] wasn’t getting it. They moved the goalposts”*

(Athlete Interview A4, Par 182)

*“Yeah they said at the, that was the reasons why they turned down my appeal em and they said if you wish, em [pause interviewee reads from letter] “it also emphasises that sportscotland will reconsider your situation at any time during the coming months should your circumstances change in respect of selection or in respect of your performance record”*

(Athlete Interview A9, Par 274-275)

Athletes who have lost subsistence funding but not sports costs funding can also appeal against the decision. Interestingly, the experiences of athletes in this category appear very similar to those noted by athletes who had their TAP award rejected. Only one individual in this loss of subsistence funding group (n = 4) did appeal, and this was unsuccessful. Of the other three athletes in this group, one was unaware of a right of appeal, and the other two were advised by their governing body that any appeal was likely to be unsuccessful and did not appeal, even although they felt the



decision was unfair. It has been impossible to substantiate the findings of this part of this study because sportscotland do not release data on the number and outcome of TAP appeals. It is not reported in sportscotland Lottery Fund annual reports or on the Lottery Fund section of the sportscotland website. When a direct approach was made to the Lottery Fund to request this information, the researcher was informed that the data was not available in the public domain and the request was rejected.

The fact that athletes are not able to present their case in person was an issue for a number of interviewees. They were clearly suspicious of an appeal system that was conducted in private by a Lottery Fund committee that includes individuals who had rejected the original application. This extract from an interview with an individual who had unsuccessfully appealed a TAP decision was representative of most accounts:

*“No you have no chance to go and plead your case. The individual who is the subject of the case has no chance to go along to a hearing to talk about what they are doing. The person who is coaching them, has no opportunity to go along to a hearing and, you know, go along and help present the case. The governing body has no opportunity to go along there’s no there’s absolutely no conversation everything is in writing.”*

(Athlete Interview A4, Par 192)

Most athletes who had lost TAP funding reported that the most significant consequence was the effect it had on their ability to travel abroad to take part in competitions at the highest level:

*“Not being one [A TAP funded athlete] is so hard, especially before I was at university. Because, I mean I worked out that I probably spend well over £10000 playing [sport]. It’s crazy because of the whole travelling situation and everything else. So to be funded, it’s such a weight off your shoulders and it means you can go and play in some European events where before you couldn’t. I mean, this year I’ll, you know, I’m lucky because I am getting funding from the university, but last year I was at the [sport specific competition] in Poland and stuff and if I wasn’t getting Lottery funding then no way.”*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 577)

Both athletes who had their funding withdrawn completely, and those who had lost their subsistence funding, were critical of the fact that they were not given advanced warning. The complete loss of funding, or the loss of subsistence funding, not only



results in major changes to planned training and competition programs, but also has an immediate financial impact for some athletes as the following extracts demonstrate:

*“The funding period starts on the first of September and I found out on the fourth of September that I was not going to be funded cause I was being funded rent and everything like that. So when my money was dropped to £3000 I found out after the deadline that I was not going to be getting my rent anymore so I suddenly had to scramble to get my rent money for that month and had to go and borrow. So there was no prior warning. It wasn’t a case of ok you’ll get the results in August so that you can organise your funding for September and things like that”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 162)

*“But this year they paid the full-time athletes they paid an extra month’s subsistence, all be it about a week late. Cause we said well what on earth, you know just because we’re full-time athletes we still have like mortgages, rents to pay and stuff like that. So they paid us all for October. You see the funding should run up till the end of September but they paid us all for October. Now I came back to work before the end of October so I didn’t need anymore, but [Names several individuals] who aren’t anymore, I think they’re still paying them”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 209)

sportscotland officials are certainly aware of the difficulties experienced by athletes who experience a loss of funding, and as the following extract demonstrates, Lottery Fund officials can decide to gradually reduce funding to established athletes rather than withdrawing funding completely:

*“You know when an athlete falls off, I mean its hard, I think to cut an athlete and sometimes it would be nice if there was a softer landing mat, especially if you thought the athlete could then recover. Or there are some cases where instead of just going from the peak amount of funding and investment to nothing we’ll say we’ll slowly start pulling off unless just in case some sort of miracle that happens, but also because of the psychology of the athlete so they don’t feel completely abandoned”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 255)

Interviews with athletes who had been through the experience of having their TAP renewal application rejected provide an interesting insight into the TAP application



decision-making process, and the impact that loss of funding has on the ability to train and compete at the very highest level.

### **Administration and management of TAP awards**

This section considers athlete views on, and experiences of, the administration of their TAP award. Interviewee's commented on all aspects of Lottery administration, but focussed primarily on issues of money, such as claiming, the inflexibility of award categories, and relationships with case officers. These specific issues emerged from athlete comments to the question on the postal questionnaire: *"how satisfied/dissatisfied are you personally with the assistance you get from the Lottery Sports Fund throughout the period of your Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) award?"*

While evidence from the quantitative element of the research suggested high levels of satisfaction (66.7%) among TAP athletes with the assistance they received with the administration of their TAP award, there was a substantial group (19.2%) that were dissatisfied<sup>150</sup>. Of the athletes who chose to complete the *"any comments"* box attached to this question, forty-eight (47.8%) indicated that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' and thirty-seven (37.3%) were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'. Once again, comments regarding the inflexibility of award categories topped the list of comments made. Twenty percent of those who chose to comment on this question indicated frustration with the 'categories of expenditure' and the restrictions on moving money between categories. Comments on this topic came from all three response groups: 'satisfied' (35.71%) 'dissatisfied' (42.86%) and interestingly, 21.43% came from those respondents who indicated that they had 'no opinion' about the assistance received from the Lottery Fund.

Twenty percent of respondents indicated that they were not happy with the performance of Lottery Fund staff. Not surprisingly, the majority (64.29%) of comments on this topic came from those in the 'dissatisfied' group, although thirty-six percent (35.71%) of respondents came from respondents who said they were

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<sup>150</sup>14% of respondents to the postal questionnaire said that they had "no opinion" about the assistance received from the Lottery Fund



‘satisfied’ with assistance from the Lottery Fund. There were variations among sports with respondents from bowling, canoeing, curling golf and skiing all reporting particularly high levels of satisfaction, while respondents from badminton, hockey, women’s rugby, squash, swimming tennis and volleyball reporting dissatisfaction. The postal questionnaire responses of the athletes who took part in this qualitative phase of the research indicated that levels of satisfaction with the administration of TAP awards were very high (satisfied n = 17, dissatisfied n = 4, no opinion n = 2). However, the findings from the face-to-face interviews present a much more complex picture of athlete views.

### Categories

Twenty percent of respondents to the postal questionnaire who chose to comment on the question about the Lottery Fund’s handling of their TAP award were unhappy with the ‘categories of expenditure’ and the restrictions on moving money between categories. TAP awards provide financial support to athletes within specific categories of expenditure which include: domestic and overseas training, domestic and overseas competition, coach support, sports science and sports medicine, sports insurance, clothing and equipment. Section 4 of the Talented Athlete Programme application form asks athletes to provide costings, broken down by category, for their proposed sports programme. Athletes are then able to claim for expenses incurred against each of these categories as appropriate. Interestingly, over half of the athletes interviewed commented specifically on the fact that the figures submitted by them on the TAP application bore no resemblance to the breakdown of award categories which subsequently appeared in the TAP award notification letter. The following two extracts, one from the satisfied and one from the dissatisfied groups, are representative of most comments on categorisation:

*“Yeah, em because when you submit you’re application form they break it down into categories and you fill in the boxes. Em now they will say that when they make the award to you, that that is what you’ve asked for and in certain cases it’s definitely not. Em and last year we all said wait a minute this is too much. Sometimes we were saying it’s too much in this category but it’s not nearly enough in this”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 271)



*“Well it’s funny because I remember, you know in the sports science sections and kind of things, not claiming for that much money because I could claim it at Stirling, and yet when it came back I was getting like £400 or £500 and I’m like mmm. It was almost as though [pause] I couldn’t honestly remember filling in my form claiming for that much money because it would have been silly cause I knew I couldn’t use it. And then when I got it back I’m left with all these figures and [pause]. It just didn’t feel like it matched up totally.”*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 353)

A number of interviewees commented on the apparently arbitrary way in which the Lottery Fund allocated money into categories that did not take account of the specific needs of individual athletes:

*“Lots of money seems to be allocated where it’s not needed. Lots of money seems to be allocated to international competition. But these are the one’s we don’t pay for [paid for by NGB] ... So this money’s all tied up where it can’t be used and I can’t utilise it for competitions here. She could go down south to England to a higher-class competition that she could abroad, but the money may be allocated for abroad. And also without gaining the times that she has to do in this country she can’t [pause] she has to gain the times in the first place in order to compete abroad. So it’s kind of a wee bit of a vicious circle”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 169 -173)

*“But in cases where that’s led to anomalies [pause] one of which I think, was it last year? I had a budget of £460 for entry fees for foreign competitions. Now I worked out that I’d have to [sport] every weekend of the year plus more just to spend that. I don’t know where that came from.”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 169)

## **Claiming**

TAP awards are administered on a retrospective claims basis. Athletes have to pay for goods and services before they can submit claims to the Lottery Fund, under the appropriate funding category, to recover the money. Athletes must also obtain receipts for goods and services before making a claim. From the interview data it is clear that they must keep excellent records and adopt a disciplined approach to the administration of their TAP award if they are to successfully claim all of the money awarded to them. The following three extracts are representative of the descriptions provided by most athletes when asked about the procedures that they adopt to deal



with this administrative task. The first two are from athletes in individual sports, the third is from an athlete from a team sport where one athlete took responsibility for the whole team:

*“Probably a couple of hours. I normally spend one night or something out of the month doing my Lottery form and then I go [sport specific] and copy it all before I send it. I don’t think everybody copies it but I just like to keep a record of what I’ve claimed for.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 225)

*“I keep a book of like a sort of diary under each heading so that I know myself what I think I’ve got and what I have claimed for. I tick it off once I’ve claimed it. I also keep a photocopy of what I send them so as that should there be any problems I’ve got a copy myself. I find it’s just time-consuming. It’s not a case of being difficult it’s just a case of sit down do it, because nobody’s going to do it for you. And rather than doing on a monthly basis I’ve tended to do it every two or three months and bunch it together, because I’ll get, it will seem, I’m paying for it anyway, so it’s nicer to get a bigger cheque than lots of small ones. But they’ve always been very prompt in getting it back.”*

(Athlete Interview A24, Par 274)

*“’cause at the end of the day I keep all the receipts I do all the paperwork and when we go to fill in the forms. I basically hand them their pile of receipts to go with each one and I send all the forms, my team’s forms back in the one envelope, claim forms, all the receipts so that everything’s going in together.”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 165)

The lengths to which some athletes have to go in order to ensure that they can claim money to which they are entitled is evident in this extract:

*“The worst thing I found was getting receipts from races. Cause race organisers never [pause] I mean your entry is your receipt, your number. I mean that’s like receipt of entry really. So I just devised a little form which said I’m a TAP funded athlete I need to show evidence of. And then write down, I just wrote the race and costs and just got the race organiser to sign it”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 316)

Two athletes, including one who had subsequently become a governing body official, from a sport where most of the funded athletes were in the under 21 age groups, were



concerned that the administrative system of TAP claims was too complex for some athletes, specifically young athletes to understand and fully exploit:

*“In terms of claiming the money it’s very difficult for people who don’t have a financial background, really difficult”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 77)

*“I can imagine it confusing some people who are not quite so good with forms and matrices. I’ve been told, I’ve heard, for example, that some people in some sports don’t claim or hardly touch their claims. They don’t seem to be able, or have the support. I think [sport] suffers a bit from this. Some of the youngsters involved in [sport] aren’t smart enough to do their claims and the association doesn’t seem to be smart enough to help them or doesn’t really help them.”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 161)

Interestingly, a monitoring and evaluation study of the Talented Athlete Programme, conducted by sportscotland Lottery Fund, also found that some athletes did not have the required financial record-keeping skills required to manage their TAP awards efficiently and effectively (sportscotland Lottery Fund, 2001). As a result of these findings, sportscotland Lottery Fund announced that they would prepare and circulate guidance for athletes on essential financial record-keeping (sportscotland Lottery Fund, 2001)

### **Retrospective Claims**

The retrospective nature of claiming has direct financial implications for all athletes in receipt of TAP awards because they have to pay for goods and services before making a claim:

*“cause that’s the other problem with it, you have to spend the money before you claim it so unless you are in credit. If you can’t afford to fork out the money then, you know”*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par 101)

Most athletes interviewed thought that the time it took the Lottery Fund to process claims was satisfactory, however there were a few athletes who thought the system was cumbersome and that the delay was unsatisfactory:



*“But that’s a very cumbersome approach and it takes, it doesn’t usually take very long to get the money into your account, but they state that it can take up to five or six weeks to get the money into your account after they receive it”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 198)

*“So at the end of each month you put a claim form in, but it can be either the middle of the month now or the end of the month before you get the money back. So actually, if you spent the money at the start of the previous month you’re actually waiting two months before you’re getting any money back. So you can actually wait quite a long time, so you have to then, you know wait. So I would say that’s a bit really unsatisfactory”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 178)

A couple of athletes who competed abroad on a regular basis did note a specific problem with the increased time delay between spending money and being able to submit the claim form to the Lottery Fund:

*“The only problems were sometimes you were away for a month and a half or whatever and you can’t claim any money until you get back which was a bit of a problem sometimes but I suppose I was ok, I managed to get by ok.”*

(Athlete Interview A17, Par 231)

Many athletes expressed concern about a system that expects them to pay upfront for large items of expenditure such as equipment or overseas travel. The ability to travel to foreign competition is one of the benefits of a TAP award, however the need to pay for flights in advance was the most common problem area cited by athletes interviewed:

*“It would be nice if we could have ingress or some money up front. There are times when I struggle, where I’m desperate to get the claims in for some flights that I’ve booked”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 153)

At the time when the athlete interviews were conducted, there was no system in place within the TAP administration process that would allow athletes experiencing difficulty paying for expensive items to have part of their award paid in advance. This was clearly a problem for athletes who were either unemployed, on a low income or for younger athletes who were in full-time education. From the interview data,



younger athletes appear to manage the problem of retrospective claiming in one of two ways, either through recourse to an overdraft or to their parents:

*“And when I got my lottery money through the first year I got it I went to my local branch of the bank and said I need to have a bank account but I need to afford to pay for this stuff first because its retrospective claim, you’ve got to pay for it first you know. Its like you’re applying for money cause you don’t have money in the first place really. So how can you really afford to do it so my bank manager said no problem. I said probably the maximum claim I need to make is £600 at a time so she gave me a £600 overdraft and that was fine.”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 102)

*“Yeah. I’m lucky that my parents lend me the money and then I pay them back. Or I pay the money out of whatever money I have but I’ve not got much money so [pause]. Going away in the summer, like to a foreign competition it’s quite a lot of money and I can’t, I mean I can go into my overdraft only so much so my parents help.”*

(Athlete Interview A23, Par 337)

By the third year of the TAP programme major changes were being made to the administration of the awards in an attempt to make the system work more efficiently. The most fundamental change was to the administration of team applications where the governing body, with the written approval of their athletes, assumed more responsibility for the administration of TAP awards.

*“So our national coach will have expenses, travelling expenses accommodation all that sort of thing. So we have that individually, so instead of her saying right can you give me this individually, what our manager does is puts up an expense account and submits it to the Lottery and they pay [pause]”*

(Athlete Interview A24, Par 109)

This administrative change has had a direct and positive impact on the problems associated with retrospective claiming:

*“The likes of our airfare and things like that no we don’t fork that out, the Governing Body would do that and we would then pay them. So it’s only really our own expenses. Cause we’ve actually signed over for [Named individual] to claim for these trips abroad... She can do that only for overseas things. There’s the only thing she can do it for, she can’t do it for the whole thing.”*

(Athlete Interview A20, Par 226-230)



Some Scottish Institute of Sport athletes also indicated that the Institute was now paying for expensive items, like international travel:

*“For the likes of international travel, we’re not actually having to spend, the Institute pay for the travel, they then invoice us, we then invoice the Lottery, they give us the money back and we then give the money back to the Institute. I mean it’s such a crazy system, you know.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 177)

From the above extract it would appear that the arrangement between athletes and the Institute is not as formalised as the system developed by the Lottery Fund to administer TAP awards with team sport governing bodies. This was confirmed by an Institute coach who, in the following extract, describes the ad-hoc arrangement between the Institute and TAP funded athletes and the potential pitfalls for the Institute that could result because it is athletes who are responsible for the management of the award:

*“And the way it funds, and this will blow your mind here. The way it works at the moment is they are given a sum of money, I send them on a trip, I send them an invoice for that trip, but I don’t know what they’ve claimed in the meantime... Because if I send an invoice and it comes back partly paid and then they’re an Institute athlete and we’ve supposed to pick up the rest. The Accounts Department then go ballistic at me because they don’t like doing credit notes and we’ve just had a meeting yesterday about how we’re going to resolve this. Cause I could be invoicing all of my players for stuff and they’ve got no money in that category left which is a big problem. And also you’ve got the problem if you had some unscrupulous characters, you could get them saying ‘I’m no gonnae pay that’, once they’ve been paid by the Lottery they could just go away with the money”*

(Elite Interview E6 Section 1.1, Par 360-364)

This particular coach thought that it would be better for sport if either the Institute, in the case of Institute athletes or the National Governing Body, for non-Institute athletes, administered TAP money rather than the athlete:

*“I mean I’ve had a debate with my programme manager that I feel it should come to me. If they’re all Institute athletes then the money should come to me, if they’re not Institute athletes it should go to the*



*[NGB]... Because then it means if I make an offer to a player to go full-time and they refuse it, I can develop somebody else within [sport]"*

(Elite Interview E6, Section 1, Par. 154)

Under the present system for individual sports, if an athlete turns down an offer from the Lottery Fund, or cannot use the offer because of injury or illness that sum of money does not remain within that particular sport, but goes back to the Lottery fund for redistribution. This situation is similar to those faced by team sports in the early years of the Lottery as this interview extract with a team sport coach, conducted shortly before the changes to the TAP administration for team sport athletes were introduced, demonstrates:

*"I think it can improve and probably I think [pause] if in fact it can go to the team [pause] and award to the team rather than an individual award I think that would certainly enhance what we're able to do. I mean some players don't tap into their award if they're not selected. So there is this pot of money that isn't used or utilised. So em, you know, I understand for an individual fantastic, but you know it's recognising that in a team sport it is different. So if that could change you know, I think, you know, the opportunities are there to actually utilise the funding in much better ways"*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 209)

As a result, changes to the TAP administrative and funding process for team sports were introduced in late 2001. While awards are made nominally to athletes, the majority of the programme costs are now administered through the governing body, with individual athletes being given a personal travel and personal training allowance.

A scheme incorporating the team sport model above is one of the proposals currently being considered by sportscotland as part of the program review currently being undertaken. A consultation paper outlining details of these proposals is due for release in autumn 2003. A pilot project<sup>151</sup>, currently operating for elite athlete funding in the sport of athletics, provides some insight into the likely outcome of that review. The long-term objective of the athletics pilot is to extend access to TAP funding and elite sport services provided through the Institute network to younger athletes (under 21)

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<sup>151</sup> "sportscotland announces pilot programme for elite athletes" sportscotland press release 21/11/02 – <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/contents/newsevents/pressarchive/nov02/21-11-02.htm>



who would not have qualified for TAP funding under the previous performance criteria. A fundamental principle incorporated into the pilot, which sportscotland are keen to see extended to other sports, is that identified athletes will sign over control of the sports costs element of their funding to the governing body, or where appropriate the Scottish Institute or Area Institutes of Sport. If this model were adopted it would create a system similar to the WCPP system currently operating in England where national governing bodies administer their high performance programmes through a Performance Director. According to sportscotland this fundamental change to the TAP system would “...ensure that athletes maximise the use of funds and obtain best value for money” (sportscotland press release 21/11/02). Certainly, evidence from this phase of the research suggests that most athletes were not able to maximise the use of funds, with more than half of the athletes interviewed indicating that they were unable to spend all of the award allocated to them.

### **Inability to spend award**

Of the twenty-two athletes who discussed this issue in detail, thirteen athletes indicated that they had not been able to spend the entire allocated TAP award. The reason given by all thirteen athletes was the overly strict claim criteria and the breakdown of the award into specific categories of expenditure. The following interview extracts are representative of responses and clearly express the frustration of felt by many athletes over this issue:

*“Because there’s so many constraints about, we’ve given you this money under this budget heading. If you don’t tell them three months in advance that you’re going to change it, you can’t move it. You can’t move this money from that money. I think people’s situations’ change so quickly. You know you’ve run out of money in your international fund but you’ve got an opportunity to race in a big a big race. Why can’t you spend money that was designated for something else to go and do that? And you’ve got to be really careful throughout the year to make sure that you divert stuff into certain headings to make sure you spend it.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par. 77)

As the last extract highlights, it is possible to request that money be transferred from one category to another, although there are many restrictions on what can and cannot be moved and when. In 1999, sportscotland produced a matrix that was designed to



make the process of moving money between categories easier for athletes to understand:

*“They finally produced this matrix so you could see what you could allocate and what you could change, but before then it was pretty hit and miss, you asked if you could do this and they’d send you a letter back and say no, but wouldn’t explain why.”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 261)

Most athletes interviewed thought that the introduction of the matrix had made things somewhat clearer. However, as the following selection of interview extracts demonstrate, athletes still appear to be unclear why movement is allowed between some categories and not others, and gives an indication of the level of frustration that athletes feel about this aspect of TAP award administration. These findings both support and provide some context to the findings from the postal questionnaire, which also reported high levels of frustration among respondents with the ‘categories of expenditure’ and the restrictions on moving money between categories:

*“Its helped, it’s probably helped in that it flagged up to people oh I’d better be aware of this and where can, but again you’ve got to be fairly financially acute to move stuff around into the right heading, under the right heading. So it does help but there doesn’t seem to be any explanation as to why you can move from some headings to another. So you can’t move anything into equipment. So if a piece of equipment broke you can’t move anything, you couldn’t replace it even although you’ve got a lot of money sitting in physio but you couldn’t move it across. So I think there’s possibly a case for more individual appeals or you, know the money to be moved around on an individual basis.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 267)

It was clear from the interviews that requests to transfer funding between categories admissible under the matrix, was not automatically accepted by the Lottery Fund and that athletes had to justify any request:

*“So what they said was well the policy is you spend what is in that category then you come to us and ask us to transfer money. And they gave you a matrix which showed what you can transfer and you can’t transfer. Now we were certainly under the impression that as long as it was allowed within the matrix you could just do it. But when you try and do it they say there has to be special circumstances.”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 271)



As the following extracts demonstrate most athletes felt frustrated by this process, indeed only one athlete (first interview extract) thought this was acceptable and indeed necessary:

*“The last time I shifted stuff around in budgets I sent, probably a page and a half of A4 explaining changes to my season, why it was appropriate, and could I do it? I can imagine people just phoning, just writing in and saying I want this changed to that, and I can see why they might have a problem with that. They might think that people are taking the mick or trying to filter money off. I’ve not had any problems because I’ve always played fair with them anyway”*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 177)

*“That’s been what’s given me the most trouble. Just last year in particular it was just ken, I mean I did phone them about three or four times before they understood it. I think I had to write three letters. Cause I’d phone up the case officer and explain to him and he says right I understand, write me a letter just to confirm it. So I wrote him a letter and then they changed something wrong. And when I get the invoice at the end of the month they’ve not switched the correct categories or they’d not done it at all or something. So it took me [laughs] about three or four months to get it right. Just waiting on the invoice to see if they’d done it right after sending in the letters.*

(Athlete Interview A23, Par 977)

Only one athlete interviewed had never attempted to move money from one category to another. Worryingly, this athlete was completely unaware that it was possible to transfer funds in some circumstances and this had resulted in an inability to access a substantial amount of the funding awarded to them:

*“Aye I never finished the £900 cause it was in different sections. But this year I see I’ve got eh, ken for clothing and things and so I’ve used some of it. I’ve used some of it this year just to use it up ken. Cause if it’s nae used up it’s, you’re nae getting to shift it on to like say you was needing the travel money.”*

(Athlete Interview A14, Par 314)

The categorisation of TAP awards and the associated problems with moving money was the single biggest issue identified by athletes interviewed in this study. Clearly, the inability to spend all of the money allocated to them is a source of deep frustration for many athletes:



*“You’re given this grant £12000 and whatever pounds. Now if you can actually access that you’re doing. You know if you can get your hands on £3000 you’re doing pretty well”*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par. 357)

*“And the categories you really need the money for, run out. And the categories where you don’t particularly need the money or you couldn’t possibly spend it, just go on and on. So although I’m saying I’ve got a £3000 Lottery award, I can’t claim it. I just can’t.”*

(Athlete Interview A 24, Par. 106)

Clearly, not being able to access substantial funds is frustrating because it directly impacts upon their ability to achieve their performance targets. Three athletes interviewed believed that breakdown of the award into specific categories of expenditure was as a deliberate ploy by sportscotland:

*“I think what they do is, they’ll award me £15000, I may be wrong, but I’m sure that someone said this at the meeting. Award me £15000, well someone on £3000 will be awarded basically on my award because they’ll think [athlete’s name] should be returning, she can’t spend that much money because we’ve put it in categories, so there’s £3000 that will fund Joe Bloggs down there”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 333)

*“The reason why they won’t let you spend the money, apparently, is because they award more than they’ve got. Now you can argue from both sides. I mean if you take it down to smaller numbers say they’ve got £150000 to spend, they will give 20 people £10000 knowing that they’ll make it in such a way as they won’t spend it. Now if I was an athlete I would rather have whatever it would be £7,500 and spend it anyway, not anyway I wanted, I can see why they won’t.”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 319)

*“That’s frustrating, needless frustration, unless, unless the Talented Athlete Programme is reckoning on a say, ten percent under-spend, therefore giving out ten percent more than it actually has. And whether it’s doing that and this three-month period is actually to make sure that they have this little excess, excess of committed money over claimed money”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 214)

There is absolutely no evidence to substantiate these claims and interestingly, none of the athletes would divulge where they got the information. It is likely that this view is more widely held within the elite athlete community in Scotland.



A few athletes expressed their anger at the press releases issued by sportscotland which provide details of individual athlete awards. The information from these press releases is widely reported in the press and athletes felt that this information was misleading and presented a view of TAP funded athletes that was not accurate:

*“I mean that’s the other thing that sort of rankles a bit. I mean I don’t know if that’ll be dealt with later on, but you read in the papers and all your friends and other players and stuff come up and they’ll say in the paper like last year the Lottery are giving me £26,000, well they give you £11,120, I think it is for subsistence broken down into twelve monthly pays, and the rest is sports costs so its about £14000 / £15000 sports costs. Now if you spend some money on sports equipment or whatever you can claim it back so it never actually comes to you as such [pause]”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par. 133)

The frustration that many athletes feel over their inability to spend their entire award has lead to a number of them ‘playing the system’ in order to maximise their TAP award. Indeed eleven of the twenty-two athletes who discussed this issue admitted to this practice and one can conclude from these results that this practice is widespread:

*“I think last year I got down to [pause] I got almost all of it. But I felt as if I’d achieved a degree managing to get it [laughs]. And if this is cheating [pause] the only way to access it was by lying and cheating. That’s the only way to access the money”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 185)

*“Aye, most of the races I went to are paid for me anyway. If I was going abroad or whatever aye. Though I claimed that all through my Lottery grant. And a few times I claimed money for going warm weather training and I never went, you know”*

(Athlete Interview A18, Par 214)

Clearly, sportscotland officials are aware that such practices are common as the following extract demonstrates:

*“In some instances whilst we love to trust the athlete they are sometimes very young and you know we know they are going to a training camp in Bermuda when they should be training right here in Scotland with better coaching. So there are a few instances like that when even the Christmas presents scenario [shrugs and smiles] so it’s just really hard”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 38)



Later in the same interview, this official talked about a possible future change to the Talented Athlete Programme currently being considered by sportscotland as part of its program review. If implemented, this change, which would bring the Scottish system much more into alignment with the system currently in place at the UK level and would drastically reduce the level of athlete responsibility for the administration of their TAP award:

*“And what we’re proposing is that the TAP fund [pause] say you were to normally receive a £1000 you know, twenty percent of that would be an athlete living cost fund, which is in align with the UK system, and its only a contribution. So we’re not actually going to collect receipts. We’re just going to say from your programme that your coach has developed you are clearly going to have either travelled within Scotland domestically, and you’re going to have purchased kit, so this is our contribution to that. If you go buy Christmas presents that’s fine [laughs] cause eventually you are going to have to pay for your own travel [laughs]”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 38)

The issue of trust in relation to funding was another issue identified by athletes. In the following two interview extracts it is clear that the athletes believe that Lottery Fund officials hold a particular view of athletes as untrustworthy and that this view underpins the process developed for the administration of TAP awards:

*“... the overriding sense you get from the Lottery is that they don’t trust you and that you’re trying to scam money from them, which I’m sure is the case with a lot of people, but there must be better ways of catching these people rather than assuming everyone [pause]. Starting at the starting point we assume everyone is bad so we won’t give anybody anything or we’ll be very hard on everybody”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par. 323)

Several athletes were critical of the attitudes of case officers. Once again the issue of trust underpins these comments because they clearly believe that case officers don’t trust them to spend the money allocated to them wisely:

*“Em [long pause] the biggest problem is [pause] I think the overall impression that you get is that they don’t want you to spend the money right [laughs]”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par. 267)



*“And eh we sort of joke about it as if it’s her own money that’s she’s spending, you know that way it’s like she’s so tight with it.”*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par. 381)

The relationship between case officers and athletes is obviously crucial to the success of the TAP programme. Case Officers work within the Achieving Excellence Directorate of sportscotland, and they are the principle contact for athletes on any matter concerning Talented Athlete Programme awards. They provide support for elite athletes and act as facilitators in discussions between the Scottish Institute and Area Institutes, governing bodies and clubs. Twenty percent of respondents to the postal questionnaire who chose to comment on the question about the Lottery Fund’s handling of their TAP award were unhappy with the performance of Lottery Fund staff. Not surprisingly, the majority (64.29%) of comments on this topic came from those in the ‘dissatisfied’ group, although thirty-six (35.7%) of respondents came from respondents who said they were ‘satisfied’ with assistance from the Lottery Fund

### **Relationship with case officers**

Evidence from the face-to-face interviews highlights the complexity of the athlete-case officer relationship. While the majority of athletes interviewed said that the relationship with their case officer was good, it was clear that most were, at best, ambivalent about the relationship:

*“OK met him once at a local social function seemed like a nice guy... never spoken to him personally about Lottery matters”*

(Athlete Interview A16, Par 64)

*“There’s not much contact really at all”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 95)

The lack of contact with case officers had been highlighted by a number of respondents in the first phase of this study and was also an issue noted in a number of the athlete interviews. Several athletes indicated that they were concerned by the lack of communication and wanted their case officers to take a more active interest. The



following interview extract describes the attempt made by one athlete to establish a relationship with their case officer:

*“I did actually try to set up a relationship with them so that they would know who I was, rather than just this person at the end of the money going give me money [laughs]. I wanted them to know who I was and why I wanted the money. I always faxed them or attached notes and things for them but never got any feedback, never [pause].”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 266)

One of the most significant findings to emerge from the discussions with the seventeen athletes who discussed their relationship with their case officers at length was the number (n = 12) who felt that the case officers assigned to their sport did not understand the sport and how it worked:

*“I don’t think the case officers are entirely on top of the sport enough [pause] I think they should be out in the field, they need to go and see if these players are training and what they’re doing.”*

(Athlete Interview A4, Par 146)

Only two athletes interviewed thought that their case officers had a good enough understanding of their sport, while another three said that they had no idea how well informed the case officers were because they had never spoken to them. The importance of having a case officer who understands the sport was put into perspective by one of the few athletes who actually did respond positively to this question<sup>152</sup>:

*“Yeah she knows exactly about [sport] which helps a huge amount. Because I can’t imagine somebody being assigned to me that’s no idea about [sport]. It would just be virtually impossible.”*

(Athlete Interview A21, Par 421)

Not surprisingly, athletes from the dissatisfied group were the most likely to be specifically critical of the performance of the case officer:

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<sup>152</sup>The case officer in question had been an international level athlete in the sport that she now represents as case officer.



*“We had an idiot of a guy before that. He was just a nightmare. She’s just like night and day compared to the guy [laughs] but they couldn’t get much worse basically he just made your life miserable. Like every time you phoned up it was like “what are you phoning for” and you thought my god, what’s he going to do to me today. Is he going to bite my head off today or what? He was completely unapproachable, completely unapproachable.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 317)

When the researcher asked this athlete if they had ever complained about this individual, the athlete gave this reply:

*“You wouldn’t want to do that either ‘cause then next year you wouldn’t get funded... I genuinely think that. I genuinely think that if you created a fuss, and you created a stink you’d be out of the funding programme. I genuinely believe that. Which is really quite sad cause you think at the end of the day you could have good things to say that things could be improved. But I genuinely believe, I could be completely wrong, but I really believe if I put my, you know, they’d say bye bye to you.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 321-325)

Interestingly, this view was not an isolated one, and the level of suspicion about the role of the case officers held by a few athletes interviewed was an interesting and unexpected finding to emerge from the discussions about case officers:

*“You know when I was speaking to them I felt like I had to really watch what I do here. You know you’re frightened to stand up and say no I’m not happy with this I want to fight it but you think these are the people deciding if I get money next year and you don’t want to be too much”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 202)

Athletes were clearly afraid to criticise case officers or sportscotland publicly, because they were afraid that their funding would be withdrawn. While most athletes said that Lottery funding has removed some of the financial stresses associated with pursuing their sport, a few indicated that they would be unable to compete at the very highest level without Lottery funding. This is particularly true for the top performers who are recipients of subsistence funding.



### Full-time athletes and subsistence funding

Subsistence awards from the Talented Athlete programme, which are only considered for Scotland's '*highest standard performers*', are a contribution to the personal expenses of some of these athletes while they are training and competing (sportscotland, 2000). The size of an award is determined partly by individual circumstances, including other income, and partly by performance level. As this is a contribution, rather than a income replacement, the maximum award (combined sports costs and living costs) available to TAP athletes is only £30,000<sup>153</sup>:

Evidence gathered from the quantitative element of this study showed that at the time of the survey (2000), almost seventeen percent (16.7%) of the respondent sample considered themselves to be full-time athletes. It should be noted however, that it is that not all of these athletes were in receipt of subsistence funding from the TAP programme. It was not possible to identify the amount of subsistence awards offered to individual athletes since August 1998, when information on the breakdown of total awards into subsistence and sports costs awards was removed from the sportscotland Lottery Fund press releases which detail the awards offered to athletes by sport. Seven athletes interviewed in this phase of the research were, or had been recipients of TAP subsistence funding<sup>154</sup>, two athletes also classified themselves as full-time athletes, although had never received subsistence funding from sportscotland Lottery Fund. A couple of athletes interviewed who had applied for subsistence funding but were unsuccessful, were unclear as to why their application had been turned down:

*"Yep you have to apply for both. I mean I've applied for subsistence the last two years. And basically, you know you're not told you're not getting it. You just get your award and it's not on it so you know you're not getting it"*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 72)

*"No I applied for it every year and never got any. I don't know how that, I mean I don't know, I don't know anything their selection, we weren't given any guidelines or anything on who they select and who they give subsistence funding to. I was a bit annoyed actually, especially in, in the final year cause, you know, cause I come 23rd in*

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<sup>153</sup> Athletes who combine their sport with a career are permitted to use up to twenty five percent of a £10,000 and above Sports Costs award towards their living costs.

<sup>154</sup> One athlete in this group had only been on subsistence funding for a very short time in the run up to the Sydney Olympics in 2002.



*the Worlds I thought, you know, if I'm not [pause]. Once you get on the World Class Programme you get subsistence. So I thought well if I'm not, I'm just on the edge of it, so if I'm not getting it who is getting it? I mean, well that annoyed me a little bit."*

(Athlete Interview A17, Par 14)

Clearly, sportscotland do not provide athletes with information as to why their applications for subsistence funding are turned down. It was also impossible to ascertain how many applications for subsistence funding are unsuccessful because no information is available in the public domain, and once again a request by the researcher to sportscotland for this information was unsuccessful.

In order to qualify for subsistence funding, a number of athletes interviewed indicated that they had taken the decision to be full-time athletes without subsistence funding in order to raise their performance profile:

*"And I took the gamble a year before the Commonwealth Games to pack in my job and I got the funding from my mum and dad but I was also on the minimum funding from the Lottery. And we did so well that year - that's when we got the world ranking and we got the medal at the Commonwealth Games that we then, I got the full funding for the next year and em [pause]."*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 6)

The amount of subsistence award received by athletes who took part in this phase of the research varied according to factors such as sport, level of performance, gender, and age. The highest subsistence award received by an athlete on this study was just over £11,000<sup>155</sup> for an athlete from Badminton and the lowest was for an athlete from squash who received just under £3000 subsistence funding. Athletes who were, or had been in receipt of subsistence funding were asked whether the award received was adequate for their needs. While the response to this question was influenced by the amount of subsistence awarded, the effect on the athlete's lifestyle appears to be much more significant. For athletes who had given up work to become full-time athletes, those who had experienced a significant drop in the quality of their lifestyle were more likely to find the subsistence award insufficient, as the following two extracts

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<sup>155</sup>At the time the athlete interviews were conducted the maximum subsistence cost award was £11,130



with athletes who received the highest level of subsistence funding available demonstrate:

*“So the maximum is £11130 which is about £15,000 cause it’s tax-free. So if you were on a twenty-five, thirty grand job you’re used to a higher lifestyle than somebody of a [pause]. So I wasn’t in that sort of, bracket of lifestyle [laughs] really so. I mean there was a [pause] if you put down for everything you’re spending you are, you are cutting the loss really.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par. 237)

*“I eventually went to them and said, right here is my income £927.50 per month, here is what I’m paying out and one of them was rent which was a flat I was in before I started on the Lottery when I was working here and I noted them all down and I ended up, having taken all the expenses off, you know like the rent, direct debits, phone bill, the gas bill blah de blah, insurance’s and things like that I ended up with, I think it was £37 something and I said, and [named individual] who was the case officer, and she was quite good, she said well that’s very little and I said yeah and there’s no food on that and she was like oh”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par. 271)

Similar results were found among athletes in receipt of substantially smaller awards than the two athletes above, as the following two extracts demonstrate:

*“I was just happy to get something I could actually live off, and it was a struggle to live off it but you can do it. I mean, you can do it it’s just, you know, money’s tight”*

(Athlete Interview A9, Par. 530)

*“Basically it covers your loss of earnings but it doesn’t cover your loss of earnings if you earn too much in their [LSF] opinion there’s a ceiling on it. So for some people it is a big drop em eh and that was the same that was the same sort of thing”*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par. 299)

The first extract was with an athlete who had become a full-time athlete immediately after graduating from university, and the second with an athlete who had given up work (professional occupation) to become a full-time athlete for a limited period leading up to a major championship. The findings reported above are similar to those



reported in two studies<sup>156</sup>, commissioned by UK Sport, which found that the availability of Lottery funding was only a contributory factor in the decision-making process for athletes considering becoming full-time athletes. Access to financial resources, and the balance between income and outgoings were found to be the most important determinants of how athletes organise their life (UK Sport, 2001a). Clearly, the athletes' background and domestic situation, as well as their level of performance and funding, determine their income and any subsequent decisions on how to allocate time and resources to training and competition. This was certainly the case for a number of athletes on this study who made it clear that while training and competition are a very important part of their lives, it is only one consideration:

*"I fitted my training around my family and my work."*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par 125)

Not surprisingly, data from the quantitative phase shows that the majority of full-time athletes were under twenty-five years old <sup>157</sup>. Evidence from this phase of the study reveals some of the difficulties faced by older Scottish athletes with familial and employment responsibilities, considering a period of full-time training to prepare for a major competition. The following extract from an interview with an athlete, who has competed at World Championship, Commonwealth and Olympic levels, illustrates the dilemma that some athletes face weighing up the needs of their sport with the need to maintain the quality of life for themselves and their family:

*"I considered it at one stage. I think it was [pause] I was discouraged from doing so. I had a chat with our administrator who gave me advice. And after my chat with him and having a think about it, I decided it probably wasn't [pause] wasn't appropriate for somebody with a mortgage, a job, a wife and a daughter. I know of one [sport] who did get subsistence and lived in Hungary for a time, which is fantastic for a single young person, I would have considered that*

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<sup>156</sup>UK Sport (2000b) *"WCCP leavers: a survey of the experiences and opinions of athletes who have left the World Class Performance Programme"*, UK Sport, London; UK Sport (2001b) *"Athlete personal awards (APAs): a survey of WCCP athletes' experiences of, and opinions on, APAs"*, UK Sport, London

<sup>157</sup>Table 21: Employment Status by Age and Gender % of Total Respondent Sample shows that the proportion of full-time athletes peaked in the age range 21-25 (30.65% of the total sample), although there were significant numbers in the under 21 (11.86%) and 26-30 (14.58%) age ranges. Only 9.8% of the total sample were over 30 years of age.



*myself, as a single young person. It just wasn't appropriate for me at my stage of life"*

(Athlete Interview A19, Par. 121)

It is increasingly recognised that elite athletes should try to achieve a balance between sport and other issues such as education, career and personal development (UK Sport, 2001a). However, two studies conducted by UK Sport<sup>158</sup> found that although athletes had been able to devote much more time to training and competition, the impact on their welfare and future career development was uncertain. Initiatives, such as the ACE UK<sup>159</sup> programme have been developed to address these issues and provide athletes with education, career and personal development guidance (UK Sport, 2001a). Evidence gathered from interviews with full-time athletes on subsistence funding suggests that the restrictions and limitations of TAP subsistence awards can impact negatively on both the sporting and personal lives of some athletes.

### **Subsistence and childcare**

The following extract from an interview with a female athlete, who has competed at the very highest levels of her sport, highlights the particular difficulties faced by our top female athletes who attempt to combine their sporting career with motherhood:

*"The rest of my team all are working full-time they don't have a family em so I find it quite hard you know, just to go away abroad for a week. There's so much to do before you go to make sure they're in the right place at the right time. The youngest one latterly, last year was getting really upset every time I was going away and I thought I can't do this. So I felt I had to have somebody, the same person permanently with them. Em but then that costs money so as I say because as the commitment's getting more and more I have to go away more and more so its very difficult."*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par. 24)

In another extract from the same interview, the athlete describes the resistance she experienced to her application for subsistence funding to cover the childcare costs incurred by her family as a result of her training and competition schedules:

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<sup>158</sup>BMRB Social Research (2000) *"A survey of athletes on the World Class Performance Programme"*, UK Sport, London; UK Sport (2000b) WCPP leavers, UK Sport, London.

<sup>159</sup>The Athlete Career and Education (ACE UK) programme was established in July 1999.



*“There’s been a bit of a fight about it this year [laughs] cause I put it to them that I really I needed subsistence. And they said; no you get subsistence for loss of earning, not to pay a childminder. So our national coach sort of put a big case forward for me and [named individual] from the Institute put a big case forward, but they’ve agreed only to pay if I’m abroad. They’ll pay something towards it. So I think in total for the year I’ll get something like £600 for the year which isn’t a lot compared to what I’ll pay out.”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par. 28)

This particular athletes’ experience would suggest that sportscotland do not consider childcare to have an economic value and clearly viewed it as a familial responsibility. Disappointingly, this situation does not seem to be restricted to the TAP programme. The WCPP Leavers study also reported similar findings, where a number of athletes suggested that the subsistence funding did not take account of expenditure on childcare (UK Sport, 2000b). When asked directly about this issue, a senior UK Sport official was surprised that it was an area of concern because there were so few people in this situation. However, she did confirm that at the WCPP level, childcare costs would have to be paid for out of the Athlete Personal Allowance (APA)<sup>160</sup> element of financial support:

*“I think you would have to accommodate that within your APA. I’ve only had one example of it in my sports and the answer was you have to manage it”*

(Elite Interview E13, Section 0, Par. 301)

The fact that childcare costs are not recognised as a legitimate use of subsistence funding by any of the distribution bodies represents a major oversight. However, from the scant literature that exists on elite sport mothers, it appears that the situation in Britain is not unique. Pedersen’s (2001) study of elite sport mothers in Denmark provides some important insights that have relevance to this study. Pedersen (2001) argues that elite sport mothers are a relatively recent social phenomenon because of

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<sup>160</sup> Athlete Personal Awards are paid directly to athletes on WCPPs. These awards are not salaries but a contribution to ensure that athletes can train and perform to the highest levels and, if they wish, work more flexibly, or indeed train full-time to ensure that as much time as necessary is dedicated towards training and competing. The awards are a contribution towards basic living costs, personal training and sports equipment costs. Contributions are calculated on the basis of personal circumstances and according to the athlete's performance level and world ranking. These awards are seldom enough to provide a sole income, however they provide substantial help towards giving athletes the flexibility they need to concentrate on their sport.



the cultural and structural conditions within sporting institutions and societal frameworks, although as she reminds us, their very presence is an expression of what an individual can achieve within and despite of these conditions.

Certainly, the total number of mothers on the athlete interview sample was small (n=3), but as the following interview extract with a senior coach demonstrates, entrenched views about the incompatibility of motherhood and elite athlete status are clearly still prevalent. While talking about one of Scotland's brightest prospect in this sport, who was a world class junior athlete and who could "*go on to be successful at the highest level*", this coach said that motherhood was likely to result in this potential being unfulfilled<sup>161</sup>:

*"She's had a baby so whether she'll ever come back to fulfil her true potential I doubt it very much...but if you're a mother and you've got motherly instincts in any way [pause] the amount of time you have to be away from home to be a top [sport] now is phenomenal"*

(Elite Interview E6 Section 1, Par 64-68)

In the context of explaining the levels of female involvement in politics, political theorist, Anne Phillips (1999, p.33) argues that women's positioning in the sexual division of labour is still the "*main culprit*". Clearly, there are parallels here with sport. As long as women continue to shoulder the main responsibility for childcare, and that responsibility is associated with the private domain, it will be harder for women than men to envisage a full-time career in sport. Pedersen concludes that the only way to ensure that the numbers of elite sport mothers' continues to increase, and not represent a temporary phenomenon, is to insist that athletes who wish to combine motherhood with an elite sports career can do things in a "*qualitatively different way*" (Pedersen, 2001, p.267). Clearly, it is not only the administrative aspects of Scottish elite sport system that must adapt and become more responsive to difference if Pedersen's vision is to be achieved.

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<sup>161</sup>According to World Ranking lists in this particular sport, the athlete in question became Scotland's highest ranked athlete in the 2003 season.



Despite the particular criticisms of the subsistence funding procedures, it clearly allows some athletes the opportunity to train and compete at the highest level. Not surprising, all athletes interviewed who received a subsistence award, irrespective of the level of award, thought that it had made a significant difference to their ability to train and compete at the highest level. The following extracts are representative of most comments:

*“I wouldn’t have got the Commonwealth medal if I wasn’t full-time. So obviously being a full-time athlete, funded is been a huge part of where I’ve got to today. I don’t think I’d be able to do it now again looking back at what I did before. Like getting up at 6 o’clock in the morning to drive to work, work all day, to train at night. I don’t think that you can really produce the goods with that kind of lifestyle.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 469)

*“Yeah it gave me the opportunity to move from being a good British athlete to certainly a world class athlete. Because when I was racing without Lottery funding everything was done on percentages... also just allowing you to work part-time yeah cause all your costs were being picked up, all your sporting costs were being picked up by the Lottery. So em by working part-time that paid all your bills.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 382-6)

Many of Scotland’s highest standard performers who are in receipt of subsistence funding are also Scottish Institute of Sport athletes. The Institute is another important feature of the elite sport support system in Scotland and its role is to nurture and support Scotland’s top athletes through the development of individual programmes to ensure that athletes fulfil their potential at the highest level. A number of participants in this phase of the study were, or had been Institute athletes and a number of the coaches interviewed were Institute coaches and their experiences are discussed in the next section.

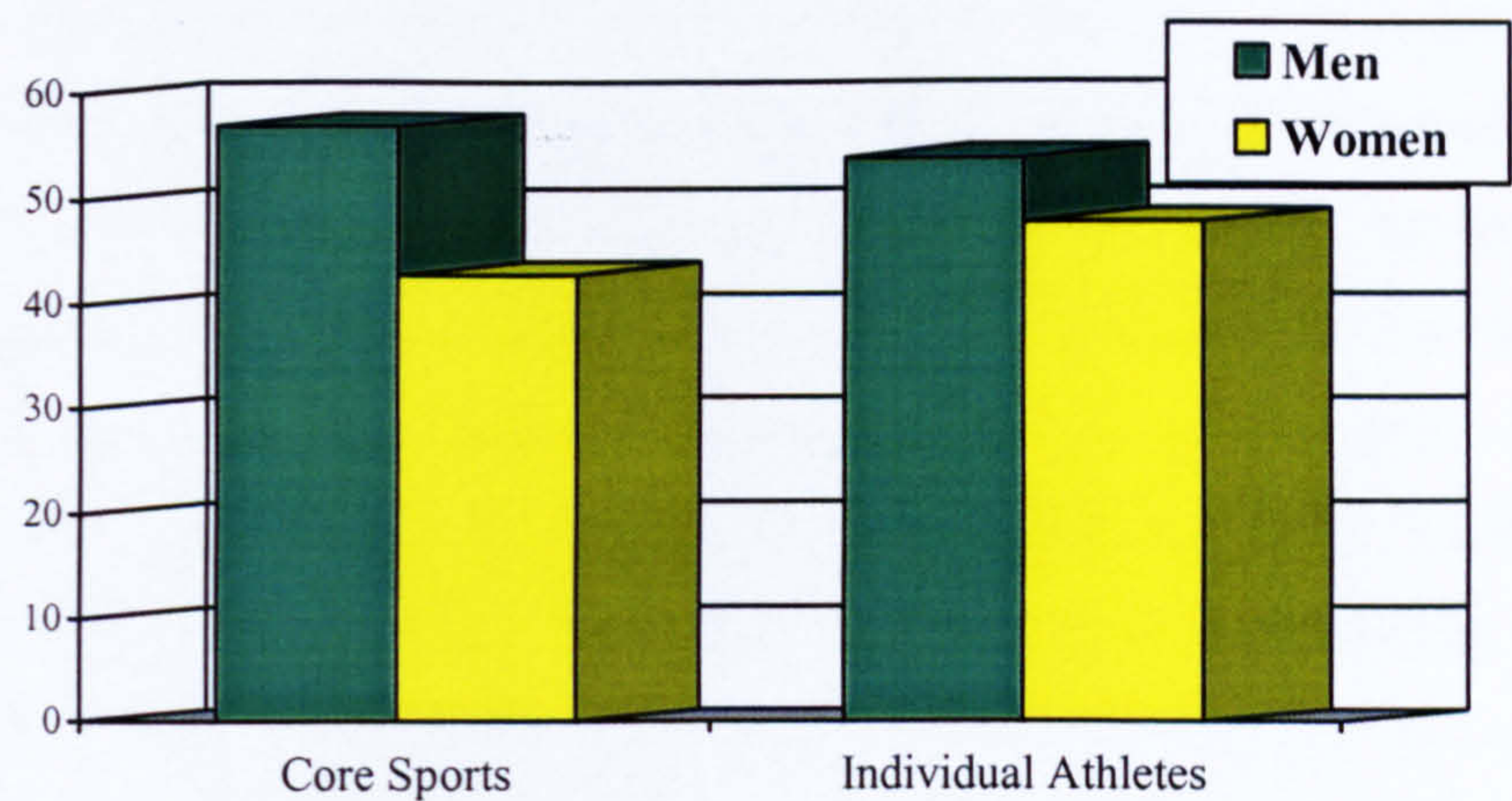
### **Scottish Institute of Sport Programme**

The Institute, which is part of the UK Sports Institute network, presently operates five generic programmes (Athlete Career and Education (ACE), Sports Science, Sports Medicine, Strength and Conditioning and Notational Analysis) and nine sports-specific programmes (Athletics, Badminton, Curling, Football, Hockey, Rugby, Swimming, Judo and Golf). In March 2003, there were one hundred and eighty nine



Institute athletes. This total comprised of one hundred and fifty four athletes from the nine core sports and thirty-five individual athletes from various sports. Fifty-seven percent (n = 88) of the athletes from the nine<sup>162</sup> core sports were male and forty-three percent female (n = 66) (see Fig. 6.9). Interestingly, the findings from the Individual Athlete show a reversal of these figures with female athletes accounting for fifty-four percent (n = 19) of the total (n = 35).

**Fig.6.9 Scottish Institute of Sport – breakdown of athletes by gender 2003**



Data taken from <http://www.sisport.com> – accessed 15/4/03

These findings do not provide a true representation of the gender breakdown of Institute athletes because these figures do not include athletes from the sport of football. At the time of writing (autumn 2003), football was in the process of inducting its first group of athletes into the Institute. Because the Institute only recognises male football as a core sport, these inductees will be exclusively male and this will significantly affect the proportions of male and female athletes on the programme. Rugby is another Institute core sport that supports only the men’s game. At present there are no female-only core sports.

The issue of supporting male-only or male dominated sports has also been highlighted as a cause for concern at the UK, WCPP level. In their response to the “*Game Plan*” strategy, the Women’s Sports Foundation highlighted the sports of rugby, cricket and football, which have received substantial funding from the Lottery Fund but where the resourcing and promotion of the women’s game limited. However, this cannot be

<sup>162</sup>Athletics, Badminton, Curling, Football, Golf, Hockey, Judo, Rugby, Swimming

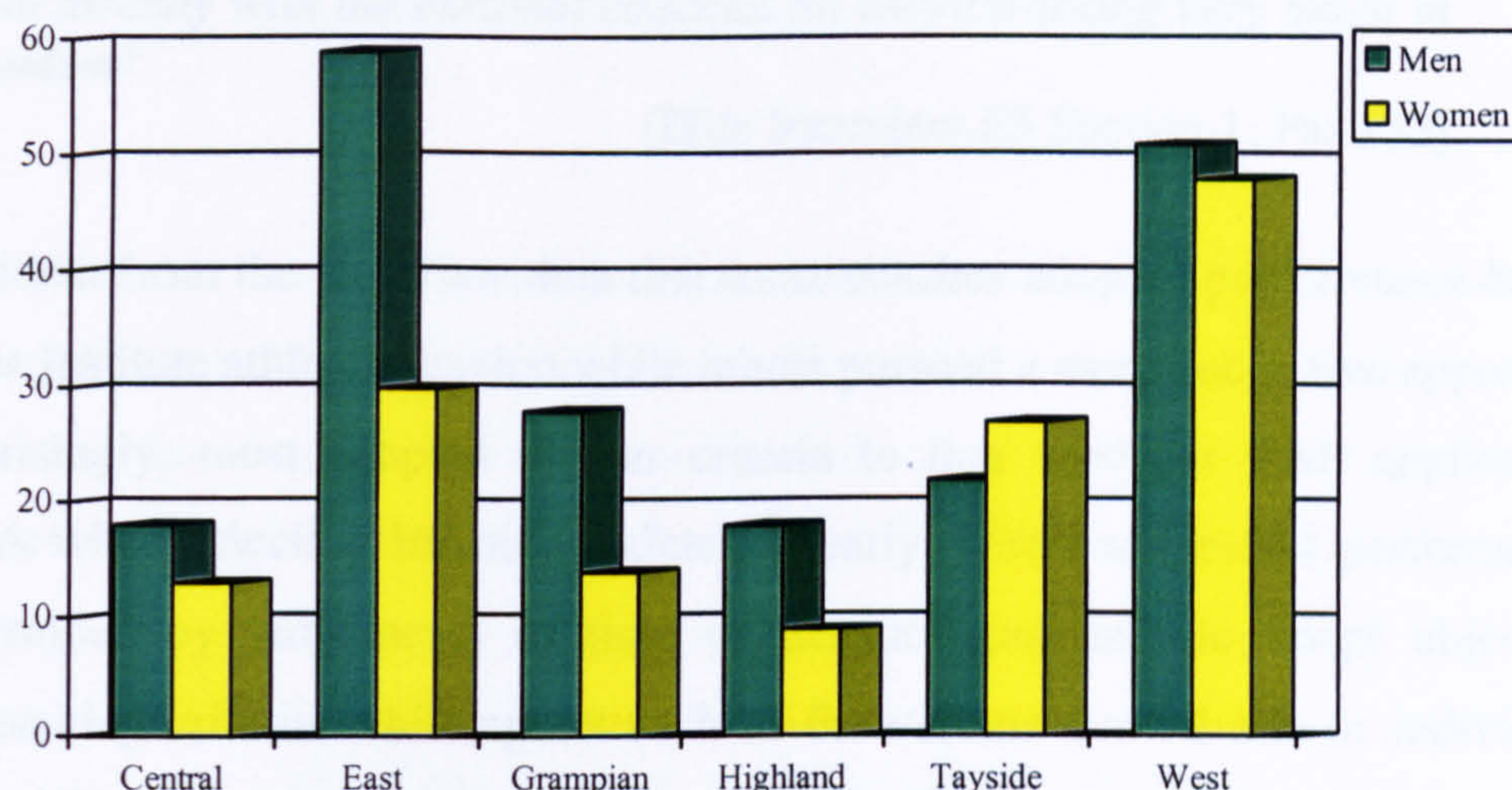


substantiated because no disaggregated statistics on resource provision for women's and men's sport presently exist, and none of these sports can demonstrate how women and men have benefited from this investment. This is major concern because funding at the UK level is still predominantly awarded to NGB's that have an established capacity and infrastructure whilst most governing bodies, particularly women's, continue to struggle.

While it is clear that there has been a significant increase in the participation of women at the elite level, these findings demonstrate that they still occupy a marginal position. What is more worrying is that because of current selection policies and the need to target the distribution of funding due to ever-diminishing Lottery resources, the trends at the elite level are being replicated at the age group level as the data from the Area Institutes show. The services provided by the Scottish Institute are complemented by those provided by the six Area Institutes (Central Scotland, East of Scotland, Grampian, Highland, Tayside and Fife and West of Scotland). The aim of the Area Institutes is to identify and work with talented young athletes, helping them to reach their potential, with the exceptionally talented young athletes progressing from the Area Institutes to the Scottish Institute of Sport. With the exception of Tayside, all of the Area Institutes has more male than female athletes benefiting from the coaching and other services available to Area Institute athletes. Indeed, in East, Grampian and Highland less than a third of athletes (33%) are female (see Fig. 6.10). If, as is the hope, the exceptionally talented Area Institute athletes progress to become Scottish Institute athletes, given these numbers it appears unlikely that there will be any significant increase in the proportion of women coming through to the top level in the short to medium-term.



**Fig.6.10 Area Institute of Sport Athletes: breakdown by gender 2003**



Data taken from <http://www.sisport.com> – accessed 15/04/03

Given the high profile of the Institute it was surprising that thirteen athletes interviewed in this phase of the study knew nothing or very little about the Institute and its programmes and services. In fact, only nine athletes said that they were well informed about the Institute and six of those were, or had been Institute athletes. Not surprisingly, the majority ( $n = 9$ ) of the thirteen athletes who were unaware of the Institute came from non Institute sports. Interestingly, five of the thirteen athletes who said that they did not know much about the Institute indicated that they had been approached by one of the Area Institutes.

### **Institute selection and de-selection**

Athletes are selected in two ways. Core Sport athletes are selected on current and potential performance, recognising past performance, including WCPP athletes and supporting potential talent. Individual athletes may be selected if they are in the top 25 in the world, top 10 in Europe, are an Olympic/Paralympic or Commonwealth Games medallist, or WCPP athlete from a sport outside the core sports (**sportscotland**, 2002d). From the interviews with Institute coaches it is clear that selection for the nine core sports is primarily the role of the Institute coach, although most indicated that they worked in tandem with key governing body personnel:

*“Well yeah I suppose that at the end of the day I have ultimate responsibility and it’s very similar to the national programmes the head coach has the final say in selection. But we interrelate with the*



*national coaches to actually say - right look you know pick our Institute athletes so it is consultation with the national governing body and directly with the national coaches. So we're working very much in tandem"*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 133)

It was evident from the interview data that some coaches adopted performance-based criteria for Institute athlete selection while others pursued a more subjective approach. Not surprisingly, most adopted similar criteria to that used for TAP application assessment when selecting Institute athletes. Clearly, where successful performance can be determined by judgements of time or distance can and do adopt objective decision-making criteria, while sports such as the various martial arts or individual skills and ability in team sports the approach adopted above is clearly not appropriate or possible:

*"I've got a player classification system which we update every year. What it is we have world class, international class, national class and Scottish class, national class being GB level. And in all those levels we've got cadet, junior and senior. Now based on where those players have performed at what level and at what age group, they form into those categories, world class international class. Now players, all those players that were considered to be Institute athletes were either world class or international class, cadet, junior and senior level"*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.1, Par. 72)

*"Yeah basically we are looking for the player who has the potential to be a senior internationalist. Not easy to measure, not easy to measure what we do is the process we set up [pause]... So what we do is, well what we did initially was we looked at each national age group list, consulted with each of the coaches of the international age group squads and in some cases, club coaches. And like from that group who do you see the youngsters who could come right through. So in the first year we selected about twenty-three ranged eighteen to twenty one. Em while we doing that, or as I was thinking about, you know selection criteria. I mean I went, I puzzled for months, you know wrote down a few things about this or that, god that's that's too rigid [pause] quite often in selection terms your gut tells you, you know it's [pause]. So having gone through the selection in the first year, we almost we take the sort of skill levels as a given. If you are in the national under age group sides you mustn't be a bad [sport] player you can't be too bad at all. But we now, and again I've consulted with the management's of each team, and we draw up a long list, we draw up a long list and say right, let's assume, let's take it for granted that these kids are pretty good [sport] players or they wouldn't be here. So let's look at their persistence, let's look at their quality training, let's look at how they*



*cope with adversity, that whole attitude umbrella if you like. Determination, dedication, adherence to training programmes and so on and we used that in addition to the abilities to select the newer ones”*

(Elite Interview E7, Section 1, Par. 66)

When the interviews with the Institute coaches were conducted<sup>163</sup> some sports had had Institute programmes for a couple of years, while others were recent additions to the Institute set-up. Interestingly, the established Institute sports were moving into a new phase in their development and many coaches indicated that they were changing direction and concentrating on fewer and younger athletes:

*“...next year’s focus not so much the exceptional talent that is there right at the moment but potential.”*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 31)

*“I’m kind of looking forward to the next phase which is [pause] well which is going to be for me, less kids and more stuff towards them. Cause what’s happened is we’ve sort of, we’ve built up the bottom of the top of the pyramid. That was the first goal to get more kids to kind of like, you know what I would call Commonwealth level. Now at the Commonwealth Games end, you know we now start to try to go for the Olympic level and the World level. And obviously, since that’s a level higher, they’ll be less kids and we’ll try to get even more resources to it. But also expanding out to you know, potential type ranges, [pause]”*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 1, Par 247)

This change of policy obviously resulted in the de-selection of a number of athletes’ from the Institute programmes, and later in the same interview this coach describes how the sport dealt with this difficult process by interviewing athletes for Institute places:

*“And then, what we’ve done is for the athletes for next year we actually had an interview process. So we’ve interviewed the athlete and said look this is our change of focus, tell us what your dreams and aspirations are, what are the barriers that could prevent you from becoming an Institute athlete. And that was a very useful exercise, so we’ve done that for fifteen of the sixteen athletes at the moment... So we’ve actually tried to better the system. We’ve said to the athlete come and meet us, here’s a range of questions that we want to ask of you. Try to get under the skin a little bit... So it’s really trying to put*

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<sup>163</sup>The coach interviews took place between November 2001 and August 2002



*the onus back on them saying you tell me why we should select you again? Not that [pause] well we want you to become part of our programme again, but you tell me have you been committed? Have you seen improvement? Can you do the programme?"*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 185)

No other Institute coach indicated that athletes were formally interviewed as part of the athlete review or selection process. A number of coaches described the processes of athlete performance review, and once again there appears to be a lot of variation between sports, with some coaches adopting a systematic review process and others using a less formal more ad hoc arrangement:

*"Well [laughs] whenever I feel it's opportune. If they're not performing or anything I'll ask for a meeting with them and just say to them, you know, 'you're not really on target here, you're not working hard enough or this is happening or that's happening'"*

(Elite Interview E6 Section 1.1, Par 344)

*"Yeah I mean all the athletes have their own individual targets [pause] I mean we do expect them to complete [pause] to make a difference they've got to complete the Institute programme, as in programme, as in they've got to do their training programme, competition programme. But basically, we when review them at the end of the year we'll review on their performances and their results, sometimes performance can have improved but the results haven't because of the level that they're at, the age that they're at, and also the weight category that they compete in. So it's subjective but also we won't keep anyone in the programme who's not producing the goods and don't feel that their potential [pause] it doesn't reflect good on us as a sport."*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.10, Par 88)

Clearly, Institute coaches play a pivotal role in the Scottish elite sport system. Not only are they responsible for the selection and de-selection of Institute athletes, from the evidence presented earlier they also play an important role in the decision-making process for the Talented Athlete Programme.

## **Institute Coaching**

At both UK and Home Country level there is a recognition that sustained international sporting success requires top-quality coaching (Sports Council Northern Ireland, 2001; sportscotland, 2002a; UK Sport, 2002c) and all of the five sports councils have



Lottery-funded programmes for national performance coaches. In Scotland the National Coach Support Programme is an application-based, lottery-funded scheme designed to help governing bodies appoint top-level coaches, who devote at least half of their time to hands-on coaching of national squads/athletes (sportscotland Lottery Fund, 2002, p.16). The appointments are usually for a four-year period linked to an Olympic or Commonwealth Games competition cycle. Presently, seventeen appointments have been made under this programme. Scottish Institute of Sport coaching appointments are funded by the Institute and not the National Coach programme. The majority of the coaches employed under both the National Coach and Institute schemes, are undoubtedly well qualified and have experience of international competition, however, few would be considered to be of world class stature.

### **Gender breakdown of coaching staff**

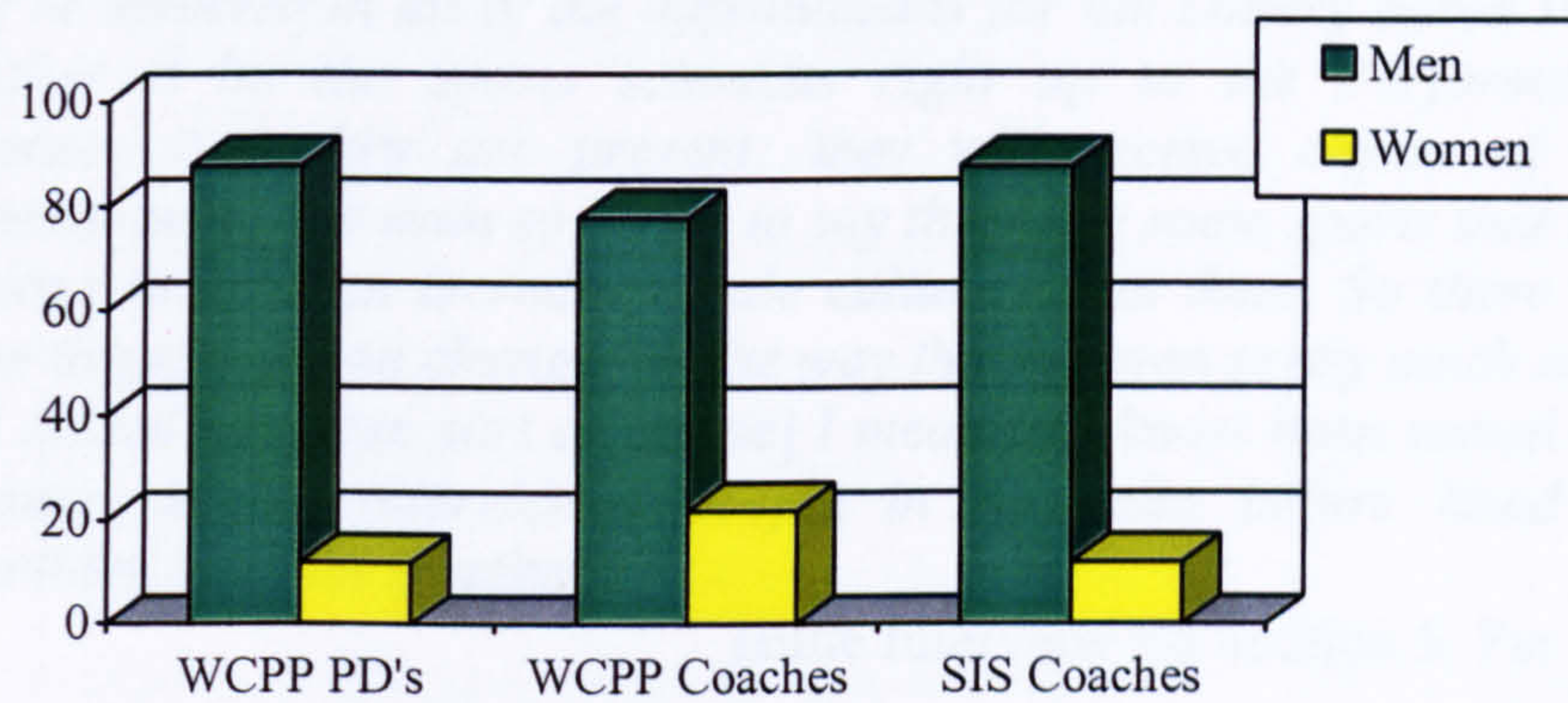
In Scotland, only one of the eleven national performance coaches, appointed by the Scottish Institute of Sport was a woman (Meg Stone), although she resigned in December 2001 after only two years in the position<sup>164</sup>. Since Stone's departure, the Scottish Institute of Sport has expanded its coaching staff considerably, however out of a total coaching staff of seventeen, only two are women - an assistant coach in curling and an apprentice coach position in athletics. Data about the coaching staff on UK Sport WCPP programmes gathered for this study reveals a similar picture to that in Scotland. Only three, of the twenty-seven WCPP performance directors appointed were women and all of them in disabled sports, and of the one hundred and five lottery-funded coaches appointed to support WCPP programmes, just over twenty percent (n = 23) were women (UK Sport, 2003). Fig.6.11 shows the gender breakdown of Lottery-funded coaching staff appointed by sports with UK Sport WCPP programmes and the Scottish Institute of Sport to run their elite level programmes in the funding year 2002 - 2003.

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<sup>164</sup>Meg Stone resigned in December 2001 after only two years in the position. A subsequent recruitment campaign resulted in no candidate being offered the position. Frank Dick, a high profile coach and an Institute Board member agreed to undertake the role of 'athletics consultant' in the interim. Dick was still in position in at the end of September 2003.



**Fig.6.11 % Gender Breakdown High Performance Coaches**



Data taken from UK Sport and Scottish Institute of Sport Annual Reports 2002-2003<sup>165</sup>

In the following extract from an interview with an UK Sport official, it is clear that the organisation are disappointed with the overwhelmingly masculine nature of appointments to WCPP coaching and performance directors posts. However, it would appear that the failure to appoint women to these jobs is perceived to be a lack of suitably qualified women:

*“One of your questions related to coaching and women coaches and all the rest of it [pause]. I think that everybody is very depressed about that area and I actually had a little chat to [another UK Sport official] in preparation for this call. We’re both pretty much of the same view that we can’t appoint people if they’re not there and [pause]... Because at the end of the day what the Lottery wants, the Lottery is not about equity the Lottery is about funding people to win gold medals for Great Britain and that’s the problem. So you can push the Performance Directors so far but you can’t push them to say, right well now you’ve got to have your quota women on your team, when they are saying, well hang on a second I want somebody who’s able to look after this this and this. And, you know, if you can find me a women who’s already got em, you know an Olympic gold medal at coaching level then wonderful. But unfortunately there are not so many people who are that, you know, come into that category”*

(Elite Interview E8 Section 5, Par 18 -23)

In another extract from the same interview, it is clear that UK Sport are aware of the some of the exclusionary tactics being adopted by certain governing bodies in order to appoint particular individuals:

<sup>165</sup>UK Sport (2003) *“Countdown to Athens: Annual Review 2002-2003”*, UK Sport, London/  
sportscotland (2003c) *“Scottish Institute of Sport Annual Report 2002-03”*, sportscotland, Edinburgh



*“I think they’re [Performance Development Managers] involved and they’re involved in all of the appointments for the Lottery based staff, whether it be the sports scientists right up to the Performance Director. And they are present; they will receive copies of the advertisement. But even so I have to say there are some sports that still manage to have an incredibly male culture about them. So there are some things you can change but the way that its been pretty much done and dusted has been sort of [pause] I mean its almost been sorted out because they’ve interviewed people in Australia before hand or something like that [laughs]”*

(Elite Interview E8 Section 5, Par 18)

UK Sport (and all Home Country Sports Councils) insists that governing bodies applying for Lottery funds have equity programmes that include procedures for the appointment of staff and that UK Sport officers are members of appointment panels. However, evidence from this study suggests that some governing bodies manage to circumvent these processes and appoint selected individuals. This appears to support the findings of a British study that looked at the appointments of coaching and other specialist staff in sporting organisations (West, Green, Brackenridge and Woodward, 2001) which also found that recruitment and selection procedures were exclusionary. West, Green, Brackenridge and Woodward (2001) show how the articulation of exclusionary and demarcationary mechanisms shaped specific patterns of women’s involvement in coaching. These mechanisms include the gendering of the coaching role as masculine and closing access to informal coaching networks. The following two extracts from an interview with a female coach appear to support these findings. Firstly, from her experiences of coaching elite female athletes she highlights how common sense or everyday representations and expectations about coaching and the role of the coach are inherently masculine:

*“I don’t think there’s discrimination in performance because more women are getting supported than ever had been. I think there’s a difficulty with women coaching. Because, I still, because of the nature of our society, there’s no role model’s in it. And plus, when you talk to athletes, both men and women, surprisingly, they want to be coached by a man. Because they think the man’s better. And em I happen to coach [...] [pause] they say, they have said to me, you coach like a man, and I’m like, what does that mean? [laughs] It’s just ingrained. What the hell, you know, tell me what a man coaches like and what a woman coaches like and I’ll tell you if I fit”*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 212)



Interestingly, Everhart and Chelladurai, (1998) found that female athletes who have been coached by women perceive less discrimination and have a greater appreciation of coaching than athletes coached by men. This finding demonstrates how important it is to engage more women in sports organisations generally, and in coaching specifically, because the lack of female role models is clearly part of the problem of the continuing under-representation of women. However, in the second extract, the same coach cautions against any moves towards the separation of male and female sport. For example, she argues against the setting up of specifically women's committee's by governing bodies, which she clearly suspects is a deliberate move by men in senior positions in British sport:

*"I don't want separation I want integration. I want women on the sports science committee, I want women on the performance end of things, I want women part of the education, part of the development integrated, not separated. Because if we are separate we throw them a bone and that's the way men down there are thinking"*

(Elite Interview E3 Section 1.1, Par 208)

While these findings are disappointing they reflect a pattern of declining female influence in the senior coaching ranks in most Western nations with elite sport systems. It is widely acknowledged that women are under-represented in coaching at all levels, but particularly at the elite level. Data from the Women's Sports Foundation (2003) shows that since the Moscow Olympics in 1980, where nine percent of coaches were women, the number of female coaches has declined to just under eight percent (7.6%) at Sydney 2000 (Women's Sports Foundation, 2003). A recent cross-cultural analysis of women in sport reported that the proportion of female coaches in high performance sport is more than ten percent in only in a very few countries (Hartmann-Tews and Pfister, 2003). The Coaching Task Force, set up by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to develop a strategy for the future direction of coaching and coach education in England, make a number of recommendations in their final report which clearly have validity in the other Home Countries. A commitment to equity lies at the heart of all the key proposals, which provide a framework for the profession that could potentially open it up to all sections of the community, rather than from the narrow base that the majority of coaches are recruited from currently (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002b).



Recruitment and development of coaches, from participation through to the elite level, must be linked to governing body equity targets with positive action schemes designed to engage and support women, individuals from the ethnic minority communities and disabled people. These proposals present an opportunity to change the culture of coaching which is inherently masculine, and characterised by interpersonal dynamics of power and control (Brackenridge, 2001).

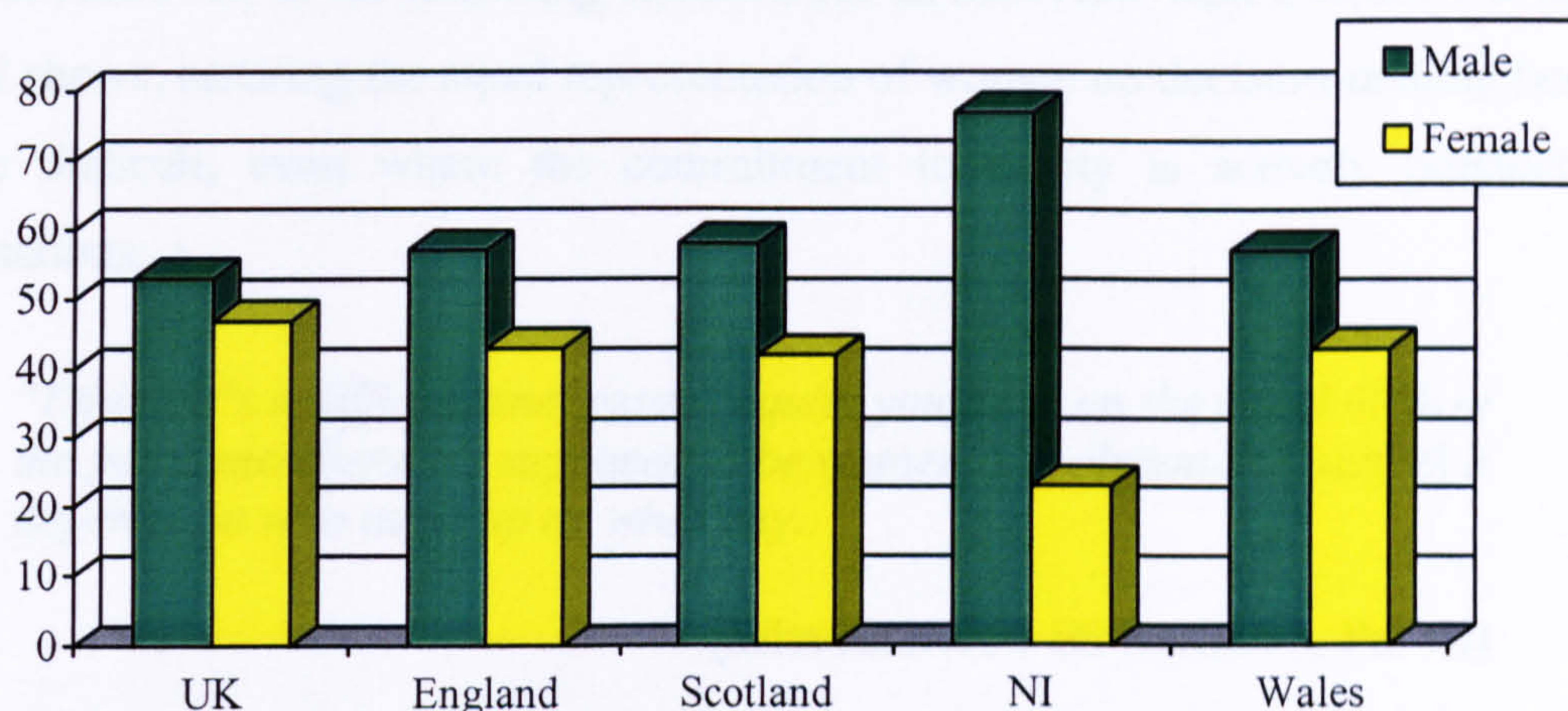
Hartmann-Tews and Pfister's (2003) cross-cultural study reported low levels of women's representation at all levels of decision-making positions in organised sport, not just in coaching. At the managerial level they report that women are grossly under-represented as paid executive officers, as board members and elected chairs. Encouragingly, women have been appointed to two of the most senior appointments to the UK Institute of Sport network; Wilma Shakespear was appointed as the National Director of the English Institute of Sport, and Anne-Marie Harrison as Executive Director of the Scottish Institute of Sport

### **Women in administration**

While the appointments of Shakespear and Harrison are encouraging, as is the recent appointment of Sue Campbell to the chair of UK Sport, and data on women in sports administration in the United Kingdom does reveal that women are visible in greater numbers than ever before, the situation is complex. Fig. 6.12 for example, shows the percentage of male and female Council members in each of the five UK Sports Councils in 2003, and while all Councils have more male than female members, for most (with the exception of Northern Ireland) that difference is negligible.



**Fig.6.12 % Male & Female Council Members in Five Sports Councils**



Data taken from Sport Council websites<sup>166</sup> – sites accessed 10/3/03

However, data from the Sydney Olympics presents a somewhat less encouraging picture that is, given the data for coaches, probably more representative of the true state of women's influence at the elite levels of sports administration. Team members, comprising managers, coaches and officials working with the Great Britain team, under the auspices of the British Olympic Association, came from the wide-range of national governing bodies that are Olympic sports. Only one of the twenty-five team managers was a woman and of the one hundred and eighty one officials accompanying the team, only twenty-six percent were women. Despite some encouraging signs in the United Kingdom, sports feminists (Fasting, 1989; M.A.Hall, Cullen and Slack, 1989) have argued that quantitative change is not enough and that it is essential that women are fully integrated and accepted as equals in decision-making processes. Under-representation means a lack of influence in the policy-making processes of sporting organisations, and this is undoubtedly a contributory factor in the continuing dominance of male norms, values and orientation in sport. A few exceptional women who hold powerful positions cannot solve the problem of inequality. Fasting (1989) has argued that women are needed in approximately equal numbers, and in mixed organisations, it is essential that they are present at all levels

<sup>166</sup>Sport England <http://www.sportengland.org/about/members.htm>  
 Sports Council for Wales [http://www.sports-council-wales.co.uk/council\\_members](http://www.sports-council-wales.co.uk/council_members)  
 Sport Council of Northern Ireland: <http://www.sportni.org/info/council/council.asp>  
 sportscotland: <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/contents/aboutus/people1.htm>  
 UK Sport: [http://www.uksport.gov.uk/council\\_members/results.asp](http://www.uksport.gov.uk/council_members/results.asp)



of management in order to make a distinctive contribution to sports policy and practice. However, as the following extract from an interview with a senior UK Sport official shows, assuring the equal representation of women on decision-making bodies can be difficult, even where the commitment to equity is actively pursued by organisations:

*“I think it’s a difficult one [pause] equity you have on the panel 40% of the panel members are supposed to be women, but obviously [laughs] it depends on who turns up on what day.”*

(Elite Interview E8 Section 5, Par 14)

### **The role of the Institute coach**

All of the Institute coaches interviewed indicated that their role was to work with and develop individual talent, even for coaches from team sports. However, it was clear that there was no one “Institute” way of coaching. Some coaches for example, worked exclusively with elite athletes only, while others also worked with talented young athletes at the potential level:

*“...the Scottish Institute gave me that opportunity to, I guess, have autonomy, work with elite athletes”*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 11)

*“My role as the Institute is to look after the elite side and one thing that I’ve got an overlap in terms of I work for the Institute but I also take care of the young players. So the next generation of Institute athletes I look after them. And the way [sport] is anyhow we can’t sort out my role so I look after Institute athletes only.”*

(Elite Interview E9 Section 1.6, Par 12)

Some Institute coaches also took on a role that was more akin to that of WCPP performance director. These coaches were not only responsible for athlete selection and direct coaching of elite athletes, but were heavily involved in governing body activities including evaluation of TAP athlete applications, coach education and making competition schedules and arrangements.

Institute athletes interviewed as part of this study were evenly split in their opinions about the support received from the Institute coaches. Half the athletes interviewed



stated that the main advantage of being an Institute athlete was access to the Institute coach, while the other half indicated that they got very little support from the Institute coach:

*“I’d say access, obviously to the national coach.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 430)

*“you need to be an Institute athlete, with us you need to be an Institute athlete to get access to the national coach that is the biggest thing.”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 307)

*“I definitely think he’s got his favourite people. So he [pause] because it’s his decision at the end of the day who’s in the Institute and everything else”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 152)

*“So I really don’t have a lot of contact with him either, just at meets”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 222)

Apart from the athletes who thought that access to the Institute coach was an advantage, overall, most Institute athletes interviewed in this phase of the study were ambivalent at best about the other services provided by the Institute and the advantages of being an Institute athlete:

*“But if I ran out of Lottery money em then the Institute would pick up the tab.”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 303)

*“It hasn’t. It’s just a T-shirt to [name] that was it. She went once to Inverness or something it was a kind of hello meeting. But that’s it apart from an odd letter coming through. There’s no contact, there’s nothing.”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 214)

Most athletes interviewed felt that athletes who were not already TAP funded benefited most from being Institute athletes:

*“[sport] as a whole is getting a lot of support from them. We personally aren’t because we’re TAP athletes so we get funding so it’s basically the same and that’s fine. But on the other hand they are there to provide services with psychology, physio, all the bits. But I mean*



*we've got our team coach, we've got our psychologist so the services they can provide we don't really need"*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 132)

*"[Pause] well if you're not on Lottery Funding they pay for your travel to training and they pay for certain trips out of their budge. If you are on Lottery Funding, obviously, you pay your travel to training. They do, they provide a fitness coach but then he's based in [sport specific] and you're expected to travel there which is time-consuming for a start, which could be time better spent here at a gym you could do, you could do exactly the same work here in this area without having to travel...So the set-up for the Institute's good but there's too much travelling and I don't think they can expect you to do it unless your full-time and got subsistence."*

(Athlete Interview A9, Par 449)

The view expressed above was mentioned by a number of the Institute athletes who were not full-time athletes. Clearly, a number of the core Institute sport programmes were designed for athletes who are able to devote a considerable amount of time to their training and, as the following extract demonstrates, this was a cause for concern to some athletes:

*"I mean again for a programme that's to be geared towards individuals and taking, you know, taking into account lifestyles and everything else you basically don't have a life because they're expecting eight sessions a week. You're travelling to Grangemouth and Glasgow cause you know, being a team game you need people together"*

(Athlete Interview A11, Par 429)

Interestingly, a contradictory view was put forward by the Institute coach for the same sport as the above athlete. Very few athletes in this particular sport were full-time, and clearly the coach believed that the programme put in place for Institute athletes was one designed to fit into a 'balanced' lifestyle:

*"We've tried to put a programme in place that fits into their [pause] a balanced lifestyle. Now strength and conditioning we're saying that you can do that within your own city, hometown, or region ok? So if someone lives in Stirling, there's a gym here, they can come here. So we're not expecting them to travel to Edinburgh ok because within the network there are strength and conditioning supervisors set up in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. The individual sessions that I take with the players again are done within their city. I will travel to Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow [laughs]."*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 181)



Clearly, the standard of Institute performance planning and training programmes and the expectations of the Institute coaches are high and Scottish elite athletes are being exposed to a different, much more professional approach to training and competition which requires athletes to display a very high level of commitment. A number of Institute coaches indicated that they believed that some Scottish athletes were not capable of grasping the opportunities that being an Institute athlete offered and unwilling to dedicate themselves to the levels of training and commitment required to become truly world class athletes:

*“Well there is a contract that they have to sign to become a member, but I also sit down with them and tell them it’s no going to be easy, it’s going to be very hard, cause they’re no used to training to the level they have to train. Most of them will sit and tell you they’ll do it and very few do work as hard as they should.”*

(Elite Interview E6 Section 1, Par 240)

*“I think this, in some respects, what Australia’s taught us too, you can have all this money and all these facilities and then people sort of want to take, take, take, take, take. And again, I think it’s the attitude of the athlete that’s the most important, because suddenly when you are asking them to deliver and contribute back, then that’s the sign of a good athlete.”*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 217)

It is evident that the expectations of Institute coaches are high and this is, in part, due to the fact that all core Institute sports have measurable performance targets which coaches are responsible for delivering.

### **Institute core targets**

The application of performance targets to core Institute sport programmes means that there will always be conflict between achieving short-term success and putting in place a strategy or programme that will deliver sustained success over the long-term. Like TAP performance targets, Institute programme targets are set after a period of consultation involving Institute coaches, Institute of Sport staff and governing bodies of sport officials, although the ultimate decision on programme targets is the responsibility of the Scottish Institute of Sport Board. Most Institute coaches interviewed indicated that their performance targets were tough but achievable:



*“But we have our goals and we have quite a high targets and we do expect to achieve them as a governing body, not just as an Institute sport, but as [NGB name]. So we put ourselves under our own pressure”*

(Elite Interview E10, Section 1.10, Par. 136)

Only one coach thought that the performance targets set by the Institute Board were unrealistic:

*“But sometimes they’ve got no concept of that, which is worrying, especially the Board. I think when you do something like that and the Board doesn’t understand. But also they don’t understand that the structure that’s in place in your sport at the minute isn’t conducive to producing champions”*

(Elite Interview E6, Section 1, Par. 184)

From the coach interviews it was also clear that the general quality of coaching in Scotland was another factor likely to impact on the ability of sports to achieve programme targets and deliver sustained long-term international success. Three of the six coaches interviewed thought that the standard of coaching within their sport was good and that personal and/or club coaches were fully involved in Institute programme and athlete development:

*“So the personal coaches have been involved with the Institute coming in and doing the notational analysis for example, analysing the players performance. The personal coaches are fully involved with that and get to understand and by doing that helps to develop the personal coaches, tells them what to look for, and showing the data and the stats on their individual athlete. And em like some of the personal coaches are working with Institute athletes are also part of like a performance coach group that work with me on training weekends, so their very much involved in that”*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.10, Par. 108)

However, the other three coaches said that the standard of coaching in their sport was very poor and that this was a real problem:

*“But really we’ve got very few top class coaches”*

(Elite Interview E6, Section 1.1, Par. 248)

Irrespective of the quality of the coaching, all six coaches indicated that the co-operation of personal and/or club coaches was vital to the success of the Scottish



Institute of Sport. Clearly, where that co-operation is not forthcoming, it is likely that the athlete is unlikely to become part of the Institute set-up:

*“I mean if they’ve got somebody who’s coaching them who is a blank wall and you just can’t get past that blank wall and you can’t help them and they’re convinced that what they’re doing is right and don’t want interference from anybody, they see it as interference, there’s no point in working with that person. All you can do is keep chipping away at the coach because that athlete’s not going to make huge improvements. So if the coach is open, they want input, they’ll sit down and discuss their programme with you that’s they kind of person we’re looking for”*

(Elite Interview E3, Section 1.1, Par. 36)

*“Unfortunately yeah, I mean I need the co-operation [pause] I mean as much as parents and boys would want to be part of it, it has happened, the club have dictated that they don’t want to be part of it.”*

(Elite Interview E12, Section 1.1, Par. 74)

A couple of coaches said that they had attempted to counter reluctance from other coaches by selecting other, less-highly rated individuals to join the Institute programmes in order to show how tailored, specialised coaching and services at this level can make a significant contribution to the develop of an athlete:

*“I may have selected a player for say, at [Name] for the squad or for the group. If [Name] don’t give me that player I may have to go and select a player, say from [Name]. But then I’ve got to bring this player up to the standard that the [Name] guy would have started or even beyond. And then [Name] think how come we didn’t get him as a player. That’s what I hope to do. It’s a similar situation to the [sport] programme whereas some of the club coaches did not want to give [Name] their best [sport]. So [Name] had to take maybe the third or fourth one down but within six months [Name][sport] had better times than the clubs number one.”*

(Elite Interview E11, Section 1.1, Par. 386)

In Scotland where, for many sports, the achievement of targets is dependent on the performances of a small number of elite athletes, failure to meet performance targets is a distinct possibility. This is particularly true for the core Institute sports where the impact of UK Sport World Class Performance programmes means that many athletes leave Scotland to live and train and this severely limits the opportunity for Institute coaches to work with Scotland’s top athletes. The following interview extract with an



Institute coach describes some of the problems faced by coaches trying to operate in a devolved elite sport system, where they have to work with athletes who are funded by the UK rather than the Scottish athlete funding system:

*“I’m sitting down to do these review meetings with athletes an athlete may be funded from the lottery at the UK, but he’s still an Institute of Sport athlete. So none of the funding is coming from Scotland it’s all coming from the UK. Fine with me BUT (speaker’s emphasis) if I’m putting a programme together for this kid and this person wants to go warm weather training, I’ve got to know that in elite level athlete category down south he gets £2500 for warm weather training. Well we can’t double fund so if an athlete comes to me and says can you pay for me to go to Lanzarote for week where’s your UK funding? Where are we with that? Well you know I’ve got £2500 and do I pay it out of my UK? But if an athlete to me and says I want to go to South Africa for six weeks, they use the £2500 from their UK, then they come to me in May and say ‘in preparation for the [sport specific] trials in June - I would like to spend the week before the trials in Lanzarote but I don’t have any money’ that’s when I’ll tap into my own budget and support, once the Lottery money has been used”*

(Elite Interview E3, Section 1.1, Par. 92)

The success of the UK elite sports system will ultimately be judged by Olympic successes, and clearly that requires the co-operation of all the Home Country sports councils and institutes. In that context, the relationship between Scottish Institute coaches and WCPP performance directors, is undoubtedly a vital element in the pursuit of sporting excellence. The need for more integration between the elite programmes of the Home Countries and the UK programmes for sports that operate on a UK basis was highlighted by the Elite Funding Review Group (2001) in the following recommendation:

*“It is recommended that clear guidance is provided by UK Sport to UK wide posts about the level of consultation and communication required with Home Country Governing Bodies of Sport about the performance and development plans for their athletes and individual sports, and how these are integrated into those of the UK/GB NGB performance programme.”*

(Elite Sports Funding Review Group, 2001, p.14)



## Relationship with WCPP counterparts

When asked about the relationship with their counterparts on the UK World Class Performance Programmes, most Institute coaches were strangely ambivalent. The following extract was representative of most responses:

*“The role, you tell me what the role of the PD’s are cause I’m still trying to figure it out [laughs]. Anyway, how can we put this [pause] as a matter of courtesy we inform the UK of what we’re doing with the TAP, who the TAP funded athletes are. As a matter of courtesy they let us know who the elite and international funded athletes are on the UK lottery programme”*

(Elite Interview E3, Section 1.1, Par. 92)

Only one coach indicated that they had a close and co-operative relationship with the WCPP performance director, and interestingly, this was in one of the few sports where there are a relatively high number of Scottish athletes on the UK level WCPP programme:

*“I have a good working relationship with the GB national coaches and [name/Performance Director]. You know we speak regularly, we e.mail regular...We have more of an input with the World Class Performance players in Scotland than what GB do. We have probably about eighty to ninety percent of the input in what they do. We run all [pause] we design and run all their training programmes, and then they’ve got their personal coaches doing the hands-on, their own mat specific coaching and training”*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.1, Par. 96)

Even where the relationship between the coaches appears to be more co-operative, it is clear that in some sports, particularly those which regularly compete at an UK rather than Home Country level, Scottish Institute programmes are driven by WCPP standards and expectations:

*“We’ve got to tie in with the GB programme so it’s all a bit difficult we can’t run our own sort of World Class Performance Programme, everything we do has to go through GB. So [pause] it sometimes overlaps and puts a lot of demand on the players ...we know the GB programme inside out, the competition that they go to, the selection criteria, and basically we just fit in with that.”*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.1, Par. 88-92)



*“There’s a Great Britain [sport] technical committee and I’m on that, as is the coach of Wales and the coach of England and em [pause]. So in other words, nothing happens without us knowing about it ahead of time, but in return for that we have to support the GB programme so”*

(Elite Interview E4, Section 1, Par. 199)

It was clear that in some sports the devolved nature of elite sport provision had led to a distinct rivalry between programmes as the following extract demonstrates:

*“He just gets pissed off once in a while cause [Name] who this year [pause]. Well we made it into a little joke [laughs] cause two years ago it was I don’t give a rats ass about [Name], who was, you know, down there a little bit and got more money than the people up here. Well this year he beat those people and our Lottery was kind of, see that [laughs].”*

(Elite Interview E4, Section 1, Par. 211)

Coaches from Olympic sports which are organised and compete at Home Country level, were very aware of the inherent conflict of interest that exists between the need for success at Home Country level and producing a UK or Great Britain team capable of winning Olympic medals:

*“We’ve got three tournaments next year. The last thing we want is to then be funded with a GB programme that says well we want five or six of your players when we are saying, hang on we’ve just come back from the Commonwealth Games and we’re preparing for the World Cup. You know our programme is very important and it also means, you know, for Lottery we have to have results just as GB has to have results. It’s a dilemma.”*

(Elite Interview E5 Section 1, Par 205)

From an UK perspective, where Olympic success is the over-riding issue, the negative impact of Home Country priorities on the prospects for international success is clearly a source of frustration as this extract from an interview with a senior UK Sport official demonstrates:

*“...there’s no question that having separate home country programmes, particularly where home countries qualify as the same country and come together as GB is nonsensical and the performance director is finding it extremely difficult to pull it all together. Particularly when the funding is devolved so a GB Performance Director which just has a very little performance directorate with very little funding has to rely on the strength of the home country*



*programme funded by the home country sports council and it doesn't work."*

(Elite Interview E13 Section 0, Par 371)

This dilemma is discussed at length in the Westminster government's sports strategy review document "*Game Plan*" (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, 2002). While recognising the political sensitivities around this issue, the review nonetheless, recommended a simplification of the devolved funding structure. UK Sport was identified as the most appropriate body to take responsibility for high performance funding for all sports that compete at UK level in any competition (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, 2002, p.132). Clearly, this recommendation would be one of the most difficult Game Plan proposals to implement, and it is not surprising that that none of the initial ten sports identified as being suitable to pioneer the one stop planning process<sup>167</sup> are in this category. The impact of a move towards a more integrated approach to funding for Olympic sports which compete internationally at Home Country level, is likely to make the decision-making process about funding for these sports, as recommended by the Game Plan strategy difficult. Not only would such a move require a significant transfer of funding from the Home Country sports councils to UK Sport, but also a significant transfer of power and authority from governing body officials at the Home Country level:

*"On the one hand although we all sign up for a successful GB at the Games if that then means that a number of home countries are going to lose x million per year for their own national programme [pause]. They are going to be very reluctant to give that up. So I [pause] that's almost a case where the funding agents are going to have to take the tough decision to say this is how it's going to be. And it will be pretty uncomfortable."*

(Elite Interview E13 Section 0, Par 375)

*"I'm not convinced again that there is enough critical mass for a Home Country environment frankly and I think this is one of the other things that is exceedingly difficult in sports like Hockey, Badminton, Table Tennis who have all these people who want to retain their blazers and be important bigwigs for three years of the four where they can strut around in their blue blazers and be frightfully important and of course our performance at the Olympic Games suffers. Now the*

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<sup>167</sup>"Ten sports to pioneer one stop planning" UK Sport Press Release 27/10/2003  
<http://www.uksport.gov.uk/template.asp?id=1607>



*question is which is it most important is it the Home Country environment or is it the Olympic Games?"*

(Elite Interview E8 Section 5, Par 93)

The "Game Plan" strategy makes it clear that several factors need to be balanced when considering this situation and concludes that any proposals must take account of Home Country priorities, requirements and aspirations (2002, p.129). In the current political and sporting environment, devolved representation in sport might be seen as a trade off for the Home Countries between increased cultural identity and lower probability of international success (2002, p.129).

### **Scottish Institute of Sport success**

The Institute's vision 'Creating Winners' for the current four-year funding period (2003-2007) is driven by the following commitment: "*We aspire to WIN*"... *first and foremost, our athletes will be successful in world competition*". Certainly, the Institute has had some high profile successes in the first four years of operation, and some Scots do reach the highest levels of achievement as the Olympic and World Championship successes of Scotland's men's and women's curling teams in the past five years demonstrate<sup>168</sup>. Indeed, Rhona Martin, gold medal winning skip of the British women's curling team, stressed the value of the support her team had received from the Scottish Institute of Sport stating that:

*"Without that support we would not have gone to the Olympic Games. The Institute gave us a great chance of winning a medal. It does help when you have access to a range of services such as those provided by the Institute and it gave us an edge over our competitors"*

(UK Sport News 25/2/2002)

(<http://www.uksport.gov.uk/template.asp?id=860> – accessed 25/2/02)

A senior sportscotland official admitted, while it might be possible for sportscotland and the Scottish Institute to claim that they had made a contribution to the success of

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<sup>168</sup>Team Macmillan won the Men's World Champion in 1999

Team Martin won the Olympic Gold Medal in 2002

Team Lockhart won the Women's World Championship in 2002. It should be noted though that this team was not supported by the Scottish Institute of Sport, but by the Area Institute network.



this team, it was not possible for either body to claim that they had made a significant difference to that successful outcome:

*“Exactly so it’s not to dismiss how important it is it’s just very hard at the end of the day at that level to say we made a difference. I think right now I mean the Institute would be hard on itself too to say they hadn’t made a difference here and there but they had here and just by assessing the overall package. I don’t think the money alone does it no.”*

(Elite Interview E14, Section 2, Par. 383)

One athlete interviewed was angered by the Institute’s claim’s regarding another athlete from the same sport:

*“[Laughs] that’s quite interesting cause em certainly quite a few of the recent Sports Institute presentations have introduced [Name] as one of their World Champions. Now as far as I know [Name] has had minimal contact with them. So suddenly here we are the Scottish Institute, this is one of our top athletes’ look what we’ve done. And it’s like hang on a minute what have you actually done?”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par. 340)

Performance results suggest that very few Scottish athletes are capable of making the transition from being a top Scottish or even UK level athlete to being a world or Olympic champion which leads one to question whether or not the Institute’s vision is realistic in the short to medium term. Indeed, Ron Maughan (2002), a respected Scots sports physiologist, argues that such successes are in fact the exception rather than the rule, and are probably disproportionately numerous for a country with fewer than five million inhabitants. A full-time Institute athlete makes a similar point in the following interview extract, where Lottery fund and Institute targets are perceived to be unachievable within the short to medium timeframe:

*“I mean Lottery funding is tremendous in that it gives you the chance to be a lot better than you could otherwise have been. But being a lot better than you could otherwise have been will not make you world champion unless there was something, you know, unless there, I don’t know, unless there was something really major holding you back or something. It’s not going to turn you into a World Champion in a couple of years [pause] even in four you know.”*

(Athlete Interview A6, Par 262-3)



Whether or not the Institute's vision as a body capable of 'Creating Winners' is realistic it undoubtedly puts a significant amount of pressure on coaches and athletes to deliver that successes. Most of the Institute coaches interviewed believed that renewal of their contracts was dependent on success and certainly athletes are aware that they must make their programme targets if they wish to retain their Institute status. Clearly, pressure is an inevitable aspect of any elite sport system, as the following interview extract with one of the Scottish Institute of Sport coach makes clear:

*"We're not doing this for people to have nice lives, we're doing this for people to win, and when someone wins someone else loses. I think that's something that people have to learn around here is that this isn't to perpetuate legends and people who [pause] this isn't to perpetuate things that already are, that hasn't obviously worked. You know the pressure is for someone to get good, somebody's got to get good, this is what it's all about."*

(Elite Interview E4 Section 2, Par 255)

### **Impact - advantages of being a Lottery-funded athlete**

This section considers athletes' views on the impact of the Talented Athlete Programme, both on their sporting performance and on the non-sporting elements of their lives. As has already been discussed in the section on the effectiveness of targeting analysing athlete performance is potentially very complex, however the results presented in this section are athlete perceptions of the impact of TAP and the results suggest that overall, athletes were very positive. All of the twenty-three athletes interviewed were, to varying extents, positive about the impact of TAP. Nine of the twenty-three athletes interviewed, including athletes from the sports identified as having high levels of dissatisfaction about the TAP programme from the quantitative element of the study, felt that being a TAP funded athlete had made a significant contribution to their performance, while three stated clearly that it had not:

*"Yeah it gave me the opportunity to move from being a good British athlete to certainly a world class athlete because when I was racing without Lottery funding everything was done on percentages"*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 380)



*“It just gave me extra wages, but it didn’ae make me a better athlete because it didn’ae make me like going and spending this £3000 I was gonn’ae run a half second quicker”*

(Athlete Interview A18, Par 329)

Most athletes interviewed were more specific about how the TAP programme has impacted on particular elements of their performance or lifestyle. The following section looks at these elements in more detail.

### **Positive impacts**

Not surprisingly, most athletes highlighted the financial advantages of being TAP funded. As the following interview extracts show that these benefits were as much psychological as they were material, in that they removed some of the financial stresses of pursuing top level sport:

*“I think yes, cause when you have the financial help it eases everything in your own mind cause you don’t have to worry where, you know, can I afford this trip. Can I afford to take two weeks off my work, because I don’t get paid when I’m off my work. That’s why its been such a great help cause you don’t have to worry about things. And I know, I mean personally I’m ok, I have a husband, but one of the girls is on her own [pause] and that’s why, she finds it the same as me, she doesn’t have to worry. She has the money for it.”*

(Athlete Interview A20, Par 360)

*“Made a huge difference financially I’m unemployed and would probably have given up a few years ago if the Lottery hadn’t come in”*

(Athlete Interview A16, Par 82)

The final extract above with one of the more established athletes’ indicates that the introduction of TAP funding had allowed this individual to extend their sporting career longer than would have been possible without funding. This particular issue was mentioned by all of the athletes on this phase of the research that were, or were coming, to the end of their sporting career (n = 4):

*“I think probably the biggest difference is that it’s allowed athletes to stay at the top probably a bit longer. I think that’s the major difference. It will be interesting to see actually if gets more athletes to the top. I suspect that those athletes who would have got to the top will get there anyway. But I think it allows more people to stay there once they get there.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 388)



The most common response from athletes on the benefits of being TAP funded was that it gave them the opportunity to train and compete more frequently and, for some athletes, the opportunity to train and compete abroad:

*“So if I didn’t have Lottery we wouldn’t be able to go abroad. And in [sport] we need to get abroad to get experience because the depth isn’t there in Scotland to get it here. So we have to get to [country] where it’s just better. So, you know, without them it just wouldn’t happen”*

(Athlete Interview A5, Par 140)

*“It allows you to play more foreign tournaments [pause] and then you start getting to finals and winning tournaments and different grades of tournament’s outwith Scotland. And I definitely wouldn’t have had that opportunity if the Lottery, you know, hadn’t been there [pause]. And it allows you to get a world ranking. You can, you know, play good tournaments get a ranking and go to so many more tournaments. You can train so much more, you know. Obviously, it helps you with the medical side of it, the sports cost side of it, equipment that kind of stuff.”*

(Athlete Interview A9, Par 510)

In the final extract above an athlete also mentions the benefits of having access to sports medicine services. TAP provides support for sports medicine such as physiotherapy and massage, and this was another advantage noted by a number of athletes:

*“And when I get injured I don’t hesitate going to the physio and like since last year I’ve started having regular massages [pause] so that sort of thing. Just that I’m, I don’t think about, I’m able to go warm weather training and get physio and do all that sort of thing without worrying about how much it’s going to cost.”*

(Athlete Interview A15, Par 328)

A number of athletes talked about the motivational aspects of being recognised as a TAP athlete:

*“Proud, nice to be asked [pause] recognition that you are an elite Scottish athlete”*

(Athlete Interview A16, Par 82)



Conversely, the de-motivational aspects are evident in the following extract with an athlete who felt that the award received was not appropriate for an athlete of his standard:

*“...it doesn’t give you confidence at the start of your preparation for the year and they insult you by giving you it. It sounds ungrateful to say they insult you by giving you £3000 but to me it’s as an athlete you need to have confidence in yourself and you believe that your worth more than that.”*

(Athlete Interview A3, Par 233)

### **Negative impacts**

While much of the evidence presented in this section has focused on the positive elements of being TAP funded, nonetheless, some athletes did highlight some negative characteristics. Interestingly, full-time athletes or athletes in full-time education were the most likely to report negative aspects. In the following extract a full-time athlete describes the problems experienced when attempting to combine education with high-level, competitive sport:

*“No but they won’t let you, they don’t like you to be seen, if you’re getting full funding they don’t like you to go to college or anything. I mean I only go one and a half days, I go on my rest day on a Wednesday and a Monday morning. I’m only allowed to go one and a half days a week, but it’s a full-time course that I’m doing, but I do it in my own time. So they don’t want to be seen as doing that. And you’re not allowed to earn any other money, you know you can’t do any part-time coaching or anything like that. So the Lottery and the Institute seem to be sort of against each other because on the one hand the ACE Programmes are saying great go to college and do this and that, but you’re wouldn’t want to go to college if it was going to affect your funding. Cause that was one thing I had to check out before I went to go to college was it going to affect my funding, cause if it was going to affect my funding it would be the college that went.”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 373-377)

While only one athlete on this study raised this particular point, research conducted by UK Sport on Athlete Personal Awards (APAs) reported similar findings. That study reported that some athletes felt that funding officials had put: *“pressure, or an expectation or requirement, on them not to take-up education and to remain a full-time athlete so as to maximise their performance.”* (UK Sport, 2001b, p.30). A number of athletes who were in full-time education were critical of the failure of the



Lottery Fund to fully appreciate the multiple pressures that students can be under when attempting to combine studying with an elite level training and competition schedule:

*“I’d found that I was sort of more or less prejudiced against because I was at university, everyone else was full-time. I mean the only other person who’s at University I’m playing is [named individual] and she’s actually going off and playing a lot in her term time because she’s only at the start of her university career. I was never prepared to do that I always said that I would only play during vacation times. So I’d only play tournaments at Easter time and during the summer. So it was kind of a bias ‘cause I couldn’t choose the tournaments I played, so I couldn’t sort of work the numbers, work the rankings in a certain way. So I always said to them that was what I was going to do, but they didn’t really like that. I sort of mentioned it to them a few times, look I’ve got university I can’t do this, and it was basically, I was told on the phone “we were at university too that’s no excuse”. It was actually my case officer, rather than, you know the person who’s supposed to be promoting you to the Lottery, who said it. I don’t know what degree she did [laughs]”*

(Athlete Interview A1, Par 26)

Despite some negative comments about specific aspects of the TAP programme, from the interview data it was clear that the overall impact of the TAP programme is positive. While most athletes commented that the present system was not perfect, they were appreciative of the assistance given and were mindful of the pre-Lottery situation. The final two interview extracts in this section are typical of most responses about the impact of being a TAP funded athlete:

*“I think I’ve taken it as a privilege, you know there is a certain amount of status with it that you are at that level, considered to be an elite em with the headaches that have come with it there have been huge benefits that’s where some people tend to forget that previously you were paying for x, y and z whereas now it readily there but I still think that things need to be ironed out to fulfil the potential of what it can offer people”*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 470)

*“So obviously being a full-time athlete, funded is been a huge part of where I’ve got to today. I don’t think I’d be able to do it now again looking back at what I did before. Like getting up at 6 o’clock in the morning to drive to work, work all day, to train at night. I don’t think that you can really produce the goods with that kind of lifestyle. But no I wouldn’t be where I am today if it wasn’t for the Lottery. I mean you*



*can slag them for as long, as much as you like, if they don't do that, they don't do that, some petty things but at the end of the day [pause]"*

(Athlete Interview A2, Par 470)

## **Conclusion**

Data gathered from this phase of the research confirms most of the major findings from the postal questionnaire, although a more complex picture of athlete views emerges. These findings have been enriched, and put into a wider context, by the views of other individuals who are key to the elite sport system in Scotland, including coaches and officials from sportscotland and other key sports bodies.

Findings from this phase of the Scottish Elite Athlete study confirm that athletes are generally positive about the impact of the TAP programme and appreciative of the assistance given. It is clear, however that there are elements of the present system of support which are problematic and specific issues with both the TAP and Scottish Institute of Sport programmes were highlighted. Most disappointingly, the evidence suggests that the Scottish system of elite athlete support is not genuinely equitable and available to all with potential. A full discussion of the findings from both Study one and Study two, including consideration of possible policy development in this area is presented in Chapter seven.



## **Chapter 7: Considerations**

### **Introduction**

The overall aim of this research was to examine the present system of elite sport support in Scotland and consider whether or not it is effective in terms of delivery to athletes and assess the extent to which it was fair and equitable in terms of outcomes. Two separate studies, utilising a multiple methodological approach, were undertaken in this research. Study one, reported in chapters three and four, discussed the historical and formal policy development of the elite sport support system in Scotland. Study two, known as the Scottish Elite Athlete Study, and reported in chapters five and six, employed both quantitative and qualitative measures and presented data showing how elite sport policy operates in practice and identified problem areas. Several findings contribute to answering the questions set out in the aims of this research. Discussion of the findings from the two studies is presented in following section, which also includes recommendations for further research

### **Discussion**

#### **TAP decision-making process**

The complexity of the TAP application assessment process was evident from interviews with governing body and sportscotland officials with responsibility for this issue. Athletes were concerned about the length of time that this process took and the lack of communication throughout. Clearly, there is a lack of transparency about the decision-making process both within governing bodies and sportscotland Lottery Fund. The related issue of athlete performance targeting, which is fundamental to the decision-making process, was a major issue raised during the qualitative phase of this research. Performance targeting is an extremely important aspect of the TAP application process because targets are the major mechanism used in the decision making process for athletes seeking TAP award renewal. Athlete opinion was split between those who felt that targets were reasonable or achievable and those who felt that targets were unrealistic or unachievable given particular circumstances. Worryingly, athlete-monitoring surveys show that targets are not being set predictably, and that there are significant problems standardising target setting across all sports. The development of a sophisticated athlete tracking system, which can measure improving and actual levels of performance, is urgently required to ensure



that athletes seeking TAP award renewals are assessed accurately and fairly across all sports.

Athletes were evenly split between those who thought the application procedure was fair and those who thought it was unfair. Interestingly, levels of dissatisfaction were higher than one might have expected from the results of the quantitative phase. In general, athletes were unclear about the rationale for decision-making and unhappy about inconsistencies in the allocation of funds. The results from the postal questionnaire identified particular sports as having high levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the fairness of the application process, and most of those sports were represented in the qualitative phase. High levels of dissatisfaction appear to be linked directly to levels of awards. For example, a number of athletes from badminton had lost subsistence funding in the period that they were interviewed and this was undoubtedly a significant factor in explaining the high levels of dissatisfaction from this sport. Similarly, in women's rugby, funding had been withdrawn completely at the time when this study was conducted. The reasons for the high levels of dissatisfaction from swimming are more complex, but in general they can be explained by the fact that athletes appeared to be unaware of sportscotland Lottery Fund policy that sets award ceilings for juniors to £3000. A number of athletes outwith the previously identified "dissatisfied" sports also thought the system was unfair because of unjustifiable variations in the levels of awards to athletes both within their own sport, and between sports.

### **TAP as middle class**

The major finding from the quantitative phase of study two, was that TAP athletes tended to come from middle class backgrounds, were well educated and employed in the professional or managerial and technical sectors. This was confirmed in the face-to-face interviews, and was most clearly evident when athletes described their experiences of completing the TAP application form. Almost all commented on the complexity of the application and the importance of good form filling skills. This was confirmed by a number of governing body officials and coaches who stated that they regularly helped athletes with this process, and indeed, that some athletes required an intensive level of support with their TAP application. Disappointingly, it appears that athletes who are more academically able and/or come from higher socio-economic



groupings, but not necessarily more athletically talented, are best able to successfully access Lottery funding. Clearly, although TAP is an athlete-led application system which is, in theory, open to all, equality of opportunity is not a guarantee of equality of outcome.

### **Administration of TAP**

The administration of TAP awards was another area where athlete responses appear to confirm the view TAP as 'middle-class'. Most significantly, the retrospective nature of the claiming procedure means that athletes must have the ability to pay for goods and services before making a claim. This is particularly problematic for athletes on a limited income or, in the case of younger athletes, for parents who do not have an income large enough to be able to temporarily support their child's sporting expenditure. It was also clear that athletes with good administrative skills and the ability to keep records and receipts for the goods and services they purchase, were better able to exploit their TAP award to the maximum. The categorisation of TAP awards and the associated problems that athletes' experience moving money was the single biggest issue identified by athletes interviewed in the qualitative phase of the study. Clearly, the inability to spend all of the money allocated to them was a source of deep frustration to most athletes interviewed. Indeed, this frustration led a number of athletes to 'play the system' in order to maximise their TAP awards.

Subsistence awards, which are only available to the highest level performers, were another aspect of TAP award administration highlighted during the interviews. All athletes who had received a subsistence award thought that it had made a significant difference to their ability to train and compete at the highest level. However, it was clear that there are a number of restrictions and limitations on these awards which can impact negatively on the sporting and personal lives of some athletes. One particular athlete highlighted the difficulties she experienced when attempting to claim subsistence funding for childcare costs. Interestingly, this was the only specifically gender-related issue raised by athletes during the study.



## **Gender analysis of Scottish Elite sport support system**

Despite the lack of specific gender-related issues being raised by athletes during the qualitative phase of the research, documentary evidence collected by the researcher to provide contextual information for the study, suggests that women still appear to occupy a marginal position in the elite sport support system in Scotland. There is a misconception that women have achieved equity in sport, particularly as athletes, because of their increasingly visibility, however there is strong evidence that women are less well represented as athletes. More worryingly, recent TAP award data shows that the numbers of female athletes is actually dropping. The reasons for this decline in numbers is unclear, although it is vital that further research into this situation is undertaken quickly to ensure that equity policy initiatives are being enforced and any existing barriers to women's involvement at the elite level are removed. Indeed, the lack of information available about athletes who are unsuccessful in their TAP applications, or indeed about athletes who do not apply at all, was one of the major limitations of this study. Clearly, this is an area that requires further investigation that could reveal a completely different picture of the extent of gender equity and provide information which might help to explain the lack of ethnic minority athletes on the TAP programme. However, the gender analysis of the data and information collected was not wholly negative, and some positive findings did emerge about women's involvement as athletes.

When the TAP award data is examined in more detail and in conjunction with data from the Scottish Elite Athlete study, a more complex picture of gender equity in Scottish sport emerges. While more men than women are being funded, encouragingly, and somewhat unexpectedly, the TAP award data reveals that once identified as being elite, female athletes appear to be treated equitably with their male counterparts and are, on average, awarded similar amounts of money. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that overall, more male athletes are funded through TAP. In practice, this means that over the first six years of the programme, male athletes received almost £1.5 million more in awards than female athletes which represents ten percent more of the total amount of awards offered. Data from the Scottish Institute and Area Institutes of Sport confirm this less encouraging picture of gender equity, revealing, once again, that there are more male athletes with Institute or Area Institute



status than females. Disappointingly, the data also shows that women are grossly under-represented as coaches and administrators on Lottery-funded programmes.

From the interview data it was clear that senior officials in sports administration are aware of the overwhelmingly masculine nature of appointments to Lottery-funded programmes, and coaching posts in particular. This situation has been recognised as a cause for concern at the highest levels of sport and government, and recent initiatives, such as the establishment of the Coaching Task Force and the UK Co-ordinating Group on Women in Sport (UKCGWS), are a direct response aimed at addressing these specific issues. The UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport (UK Co-ordinating Group on Women in Sport, 2003), published in November 2003 is based around three strategic objectives of participation, performance and leadership, each with specific and measurable, time limited targets to be achieved by December 2005<sup>169</sup>. A commitment to equity lies at the heart of all the key proposals of the Coaching Task Force, which made a number of specific recommendations aimed at opening up the profession for women. Both strategies, which have been endorsed by government at both the national and devolved levels, are aimed at those agencies with the greatest responsibility for sport in the UK, namely the sports councils. It is essential however, that all equity policy initiatives in sport are developed within a culture of intervention and real debate about the nature and extent of discrimination in sport. Successful policy interventions require national sporting organisations, such as sportscotland, to educate governing bodies of sport about the complex and subtle ways in which gender and other social divisions operate in sport and within sports administration.

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<sup>169</sup>**Participation:** increase participation by women and girls in a wide variety of sports, physical recreation activities and in physical education. Target – 5% increase from 38% to 43%;

**Performance and Excellence:** enable women and girls with sporting ability to achieve excellence in the sport of their choice. Target – increase the number of female athletes receiving funding from 476 to 506;

**Leadership:** increase the number of women leaders at all levels and in all capacities in sport and physical recreation. Target – an increase in the number of women on strategic sports boards and committees from 23% to 30% (UK Co-ordinating Group on Women in Sport, 2003)



## Scottish Institute of Sport

In addition to the Talented Athlete Programme, the Scottish Institute of Sport, is the other key element of support in the Scottish elite sport system. There were a number of Institute athletes interviewed as part of the qualitative study and they were asked about the services provided by the Institute and the advantages that this gave them. Surprisingly, athletes were ambivalent about their Institute status, suggesting that access to the Institute coach was the only advantage that Institute status gave them over their TAP funded colleagues. This was the most unexpected finding from this phase of the study. Investment in the Scottish Institute of Sport by sportscotland, through the Lottery Fund, has been considerable, and plaudits for the services provided by the Institute and recognition of its successes are numerous in the annual reports and other papers produced by both sportscotland and the Institute itself. However, evidence gathered from both the qualitative and documentary evidence phases of this study suggest that athlete views about the effectiveness of the Institute is not unique, and there appears to be a degree of scepticism among the wider sporting community about the role of the Scottish Institute.

Documentary evidence from the “*Sport 21*” review and Lottery Fund strategy consultations’ suggest that opinion about the levels of funding allocated to the Scottish Institute is divided. For example, during the Lottery Fund strategy consultation in 2003, the issue of Institute funding was specifically raised by a number of sportscotland partners during discussions about the suggested proportions of funding to be allocated to the three areas of investment: Widening Opportunities, Developing Potential and Achieving Excellence. Several partners suggested that other, commercial sources of funding should be sought, while others suggested that the Institute should be supported by mainstream Executive funding (sportscotland, 2003b). Interestingly, the government at Westminster is currently proposing a completely different approach to the future funding of the English Institute of Sport (EIS) network. The “*Game Plan*” strategy suggests that service provision should be separated from fund distribution and recommends that once the EIS network becomes fully operational, funding should gradually be transferred to governing bodies and athletes, who can then buy services to meet their needs. The intention is that the EIS will become a market-led system, thus ensuring an efficient and innovative service



that is responsive to customer needs (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, 2002).

Within the context of this study, these questions about the Institute's function and level of funding are interesting because they provide a context in which to explore an alternative to the present system of delivering services to Scottish elite and talented young athletes with potential. Indeed, this was another specific area of concern raised by a number of sportscotland partners during the Lottery strategy review, who argued for greater investment in "*rising talented athletes as they strive to become elite athletes*" (sportscotland, 2003b p.17). It is argued that a relatively small shift of emphasis in funding levels from the elite end to the support of talented younger athletes could potentially create an elite sport system in Scotland that offers more equality of opportunity not only for athletes, but also coaches.

### **Talent development**

Performance development in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom is mainly provided through clubs, affiliated to national governing bodies, and in the education sector through schools (Hartmann-Tews and Pfister, 2003). Traditionally, school sport has provided the base of the competitive, organised sport, however, evidence suggests that school sport has been in decline since the mid-1980s and no longer provides an effective base for the successful development of an elite sport policy at junior level (Sport Industry Research Centre, 2003). Consistent success at world class level depends on well-structured talent development programmes, and the findings of both the Cunningham Review of elite sport provision and the "Game Plan" strategy suggest that there is a gap in provision between the grassroots and high performance level.

Evidence gathered for this study from a number of sources suggests that this gap in provision is also apparent in Scotland, although the situation is somewhat different, and in many ways, more encouraging than that in other parts of the United Kingdom.



Recent developments, such as the establishment of Junior Groups Programme<sup>170</sup> and particularly, the Area Institute of Sport network<sup>171</sup>, are going some way towards the development of an elite sport pathway in Scotland. However, it is clear that key problems still need to be addressed if the gap between participation and performance is to be successfully bridged.

Randak (1998) argues that the Sport's Council's Development Continuum model (The Sports Council, 1993) (see Fig. 7.1) is intrinsic to the view of sports participation and development advocated in "*Sport 21*" and provides the framework for the co-ordination of efforts and resource allocation. This model presents a simplistic and holistic, continuum view of sports development which provides a logical and progressive approach for all bodies identified as having responsibility for certain areas of sports development (Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby, 2002). However, little empirical evidence exists on the effectiveness and accuracy of this particular model in the academic literature. Indeed, very little research has addressed the issue of how elite athlete's progress to elite status, and currently there are no practical models of talent development in the literature supported by empirical evidence (Tebbenham, 1998; Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby, 2002). Supporting talent development models with empirical evidence is vital given the considerable resources allocated to talent development by organisations like sportscotland.

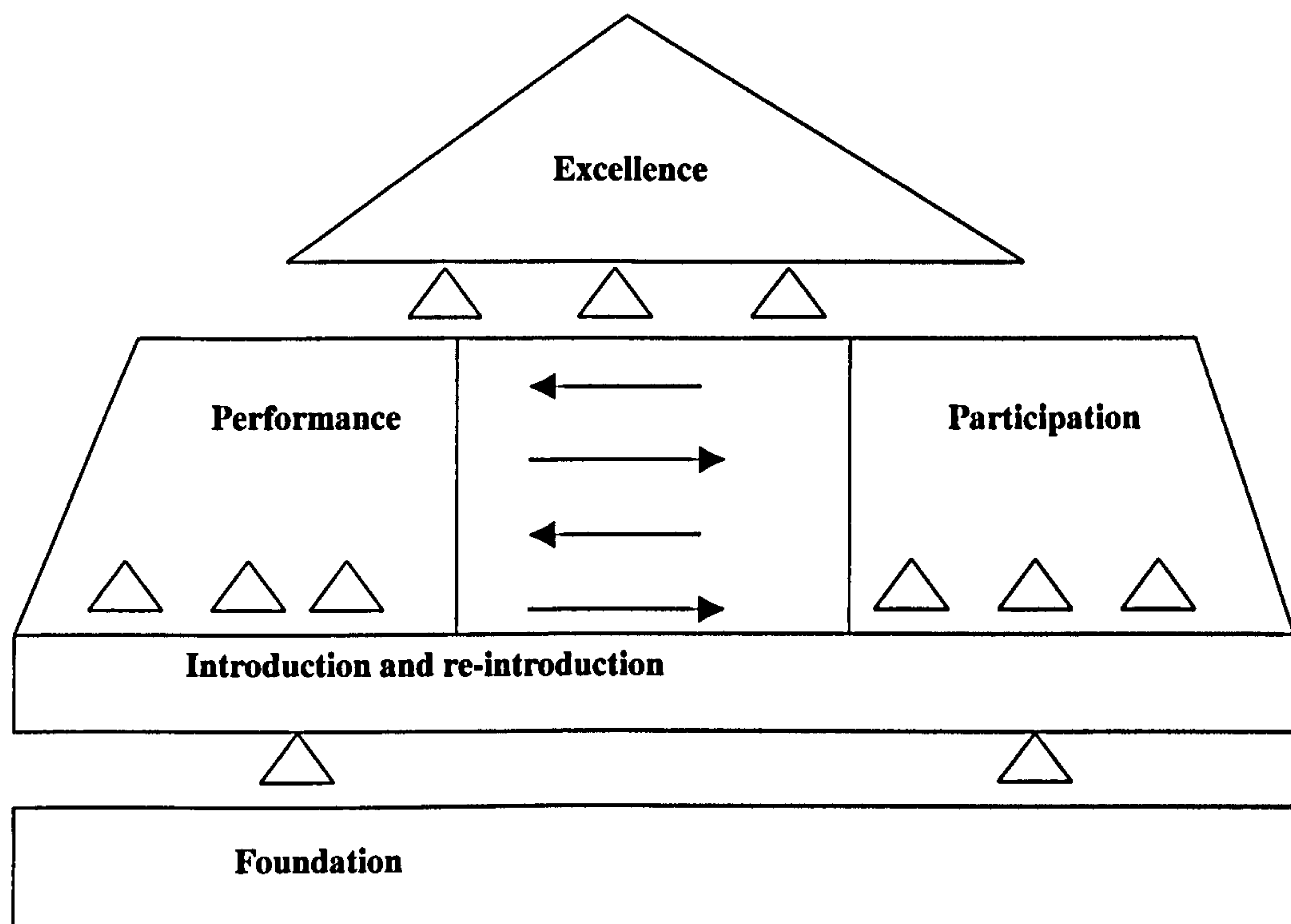
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<sup>170</sup>The Junior Groups Programme, established in 1998, aims to support young athletes at the junior competition level and assist in the transition from junior to senior level performance. The Junior Groups programme underpins the Talented Athlete Programme and aims, in the longer term, to act as a feeder programme for TAP. To date, sixty-six athletes had progressed through the Junior Groups Programme onto the Talented Athlete Programme Findings (sportscotland, 2002d).

<sup>171</sup>There are six Area Institutes of Sport: Central Scotland, East of Scotland, Grampian, Highland, Tayside and Fife and West of Scotland, which provide services to Scotland's talented young athletes, and complements the work of the Scottish Institute of Sport. The aim of the Area Institutes is to identify and work with talented young athletes, helping them to reach their potential. Exceptionally talented young athletes can progress from the Area Institute to the Scottish Institute of Sport.



**Fig. 7.1 The Sports Council Sports Development Model**



Adapted from The Sports Development Continuum (Randak, 1998)

One study, which attempted to examine the effectiveness of talent development models currently in use in the United Kingdom, suggests that the Scottish Sports Development Continuum model does not accurately represent the development pathway in sport, or acknowledge the transitions that athletes make as they progress through the system (Tebbenham, 1998). Evidence suggests that transitions are extremely significant for successful progression in sport and affect future success (Sinclair and Orlick, 1993; Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998; Tebbenham, 1998). Positively, the Scottish model incorporates developmental pathways that includes partnership initiatives with bodies outwith the traditional sporting network of clubs and governing bodies, such as schools, local authorities and the higher and further education sectors. This is designed to limit the number of talented children lost to sport because they do not have access to traditional sporting structures. However, one of the failures of the “*Sport 21*” strategy, acknowledged during the review process for the updated strategy during 2002-03, was that opportunities to develop partnerships were not acted upon. For example, it is acknowledged that school sport co-ordinators do not presently fully engage with the wider sport community, where they could do much to bridge the gap between school and clubs. Conversely, clubs



and national governing bodies have not actively engaged with the community, where they could clearly take a more pro-active role. In the context of elite sport, partnerships with the higher and further education sectors were not systematically developed or exploited until the creation of the Area Institutes of Sport.

Evidence gathered for this study, from both the documentary evidence and qualitative elements, appear to confirm the view that the model of talent development intrinsic to the “*Sport 21*” strategy is less than robust when critically examined. In 2001/02 sportscotland Lottery Fund undertook a review of the Junior Groups Programme which found that the impact of the programme on senior squads and teams had not yet been fully established, and highlighted the lack of coherent pathways for the development of athletes in some sports (sportscotland, 2002d). The importance of financial support for talented junior athletes is evident in the following extract from an interview with a former athlete who now has responsibility for junior development in a particular sport. It illustrates how the Junior Groups Programme encouraged some potentially talented athletes to remain in the sport until they reach the required standards to qualify for Talented Athlete funding:

*“I’m looking at our juniors coming through and realistically [sound of phew] you’ve got one or two coming through then that’ll be success. But I think those one or two would [pause] now have a good opportunity to come through. Whereas two or three years ago we’ve certainly have had juniors come through that we haven’t been able to support as well as we would have liked to and we might have lost them. Or not lost them, they never realised their potential as a junior and are now struggling as seniors. Whereas I think if they’d had a little bit more support as juniors and actually, you know, won a British Champs or had got used to winning as juniors, they’d have more chance now as seniors”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par 412)

The lack of coherence among and between the different, Lottery funded, elite sport programmes identified by the Junior Groups study, is confirmed in the following interview extract with a senior sportscotland official from the Achieving Excellence Directorate. When asked about the development of an elite sports pathway, this official admitted that it was not something that the Achieving Excellence Directorate was looking at specifically, and indicated that this was perceived to be a role for the Area Institutes:



*“...not really looking there. I think that maybe [pause] I hope we don’t miss out on a generation of twelve-year olds, I hope that the Area Institutes are able to pick up enough that we keep our medal count relatively high over the next few years”*

(Elite Interview E14 Section 2, Par 223)

### **Area Institute of Sport Network**

The Area Institute programme received an initial, four-year Lottery award of £2.4 million, which expires at the end of the financial year 2003/2004. sportscotland’s continuing commitment to the Area Institutes is recognised in the Lottery Fund strategy for the period 2003/2007<sup>172</sup> which confirmed a £4 million award (sportscotland, 2003b, p.26). However, Lottery funding is only part of the total funding package for the Area Institutes and they must raise a percentage of their overall operating costs from local partners. The contribution from partners can be in cash and/or services in kind. Local partners vary from Area Institute to Institute but generally, partners include local authorities, higher and further education institutions, governing bodies and business. The following interview extract with an Area Institute manager gives an indication of how this ‘jigsaw’ of funding operates in practice:

*“We got £50k from the Lottery last year and we got £100k - £50k pays the salary of myself, [named individual] the administrator and some office costs, the other £50k basically goes into programme money. I’ll come on to that again in a second, but to answer your question [pause] we get that £50k and we’ve managed to scrape up about another £20k odd from the local partners. And I managed to get the local authorities, in general, not all of them, to put in £300 per athlete depending how many athletes from their local authority were in the [named] Institute. So that enabled us to deliver a little bit more than we normally could have. We’ve probably raised in the region of £80k odd thousand pounds including the £50k Lottery money and that’s given us an opportunity to give the athletes a little bit more back.”*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 69)

However, the necessity of acquiring partnership funding and/or support within a local or regional setting has given Area Institute’s a distinct sense of local identity that appears to be working to their advantage:

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<sup>172</sup>sportscotland Lottery Fund (2003b) *“Raising our game: sportscotland Lottery Fund strategy 2003-2007”*, sportscotland, Edinburgh,



*“But at the end of the day, you know we need to look at the way we need to develop, locally. We work in the environment every day, we’re used to it we understand the weak links, the strengths. If that was to just become [pause] if we were just to become part of the SIS we would lose that effectiveness at a local level, you know. A lot of our partners I think would walk away not from the point of view that they don’t agree with what we’re doing but I think the fact that they just didn’t feel like they were involved. They wouldn’t care about it, they wouldn’t be passionate about it, you know. The strength in the [Area Institute] is that when we work with local partners we get them involved in the whole process. They buy into the vision of what we are trying to do, they feel as if they are making a difference to what we do, and they are”*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 61)

Area Institute managers and administrators clearly have to acquire a great deal of local knowledge about the sporting infrastructure in their particular regions in order to establish links with local partners who could assist them in the delivery of service to talented athletes:

*“I think it’s very important in our pathway within the [named Area] Institute of Sport that [pause]. If we are not seen to be connected to local authority sports development issues or [Local authority funded School of Sport] or governing body development issues then theoretically, nobody really cares about us, you know. We need people to make sure that the [named Area] Institute is the pinnacle in their pathway for an athlete in the [named area] of Scotland.”*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 21)

With this knowledge of the local sporting infrastructure and an established system of support and services for athletes, Area Institute’s are perhaps best placed to fill some of the gaps evident in the talent development model embodied in “Sport 21”. Through the provision of training facilities, coaching, sports science and sports medicine support, and athlete career and education advice, area institutes could successfully bridge the gap between performance and excellence and so prevent the loss of so many young athletes at the crucial transition phases of athlete development. Links between schools and clubs are crucial, for example, to the development of girls into elite performers. Research shows that girls drop out of sport in huge numbers in their early teenage years. Area Institutes, with clear, properly enforced, equity policies can ensure the equitable provision of services and coaching for girls, which could help prevent the loss of so many young women to sport and significantly increase the



chances of young women reaching the elite levels of performance. The transition between school and higher education, is another point where many talented young performers are lost to sport<sup>173</sup> (Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Education and Skills, 2000). The higher and further education sectors have a key role to play in supporting and developing elite student athletes, and clearly, this transition point could be managed more effectively and sensitively where universities are already active members of the local area institute network.

Clearly, the role outlined above presents an enhanced vision of what the Area Institute's could deliver that would require significantly more funding than is presently allocated to this programme. Under the agreed allocation for Achieving Excellence investment, the Scottish Institute of Sport will receive £16 million pounds (100% of its operating costs) of Lottery funding over the four year period 2003-2007. Based on the latest figures from the Scottish Institute annual accounts for the year ending March 2002<sup>174</sup>, over one third (34%) of these funds will be allocated to staffing costs, while only thirty percent will actually be spent on the programme of support to Institute athletes. At present there are one hundred and eighty nine athletes receiving support from the Institute, the majority of whom are already in receipt of Talented Athlete Programme or World Class Performance funding. In contrast, the Area Institute network (six Institutes) has been allocated a total of £4 million pounds over the four year period. The following extract from an interview with an Area Institute manager provides an indication of the levels of frustration felt by some individuals working with potentially elite athletes over the vast differences in funding between the two programmes:

*“... they've got 200 athletes, they've got a staff of about twenty or thirty staff, you know. We've got 80 athletes and we've got 2 administrators, myself and [named individual] and various part time coaches, I mean you couldn't call them staff at the moment, you know because they're not on contracts as such apart from one or two of*

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<sup>173</sup>Between the ages of 16 and 21, 70% of the young athletes who have been identified as talented will drop out of performance sport in the UK – (DCMS, 2000b, p. 14)

<sup>174</sup>Extract from the Scottish Institute of Sport Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 March 20002 – Revenue £2456811, Operating Expenses: Staff Costs £838111, Programme Costs £756479, Other Operating Costs £690, 251



*them. So you know [pause] I think you've got to question [long pause]."*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 306)

Clearly, this particular Area Institute manager believed that the Area Institutes were capable of delivering the services to elite athletes just as successfully as the Institute and indeed, felt that successful Area Institutes were a threat to the existence of the Institute:

*"I think obviously again the threat there was if we start to deliver services to SIS athletes there's no need for an SIS. And I think that was always the danger [laughs] that when we came on [pause]."*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 281)

While it is important to ensure that both talent development and support for high performance athletes are organised in a way that meets the need of each particular group, it could be argued that current levels of investment might be better focused and utilised more efficiently. Documentary evidence and evidence gathered from the qualitative study, suggests that there is a possible duplication of function between the Scottish Institute and the Area Institutes. In a country as small as Scotland, which has a limited number of truly elite athletes, one could argue that a two-tier system of support for elite and potentially elite athletes is an extravagance that cannot be justified within the current social justice policy agenda.

Interestingly, in the original concept of the Scottish Institute of Sport network, Area Institutes were expected to play a significant role in the local delivery of services to elite Institute athletes, as well as to their own athletes with potential. In practice, however, there has been very little integration of the two programmes and indeed there is evidence to suggest that in some sports, the Institute has made separate arrangements with local partner agencies to deliver Institute programmes to athletes locally, completely bypassing the Area Institute system:

*"It was made clear to us that we shouldn't be involved with elite athletes"*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 277)



*“SIS are trying to say that em [pause] they want to set up their own physiologists, their own psychologists, their own medics, their own team, and that would effectively [pause] and that [Area Institute] would deal with the level below. And essentially I’m part of this level here [points to the Area Institute level on diagram] therefore when an athlete moves up I would hand them on to some [professional role] at SIS and when they dropped down they would get dropped back to me again. I think that’s just bloody stupid”*

(Elite Interview E11, Section.1, Par. 53)

It would however, be inaccurate to suggest that there is no contact between the two programmes. From the interviews with Institute coaches, it was clear that some were quite actively involved with the Area Institutes, as the following interview extract demonstrates:

*“We’re already working with the Area Institute athletes, they’re part of our system. So they’ll have the same type of template that we use for the Institute athletes for setting up their training programme and that, we’ll use the same template. So when they do become Institute athletes in the future it’s just a smooth transition, and there’s no great changes they’re already in the system”*

(Elite Interview E9, Section 1.1, Par. 116)

However, from the interview data it was clear that the levels of contact and co-operation between Institute coaches and sports scientists and the Area Institutes varied enormously among sports. Clearly, the model described in the interview extract above, needs to be applied across all sports if the vision of a talent development pathway, capable of providing a consistent stream of successful athletes has a chance of being realised. It is argued that a better-funded Area Institute programme is best placed to provide the coaching and support to young athletes with talent, locally. More and better interventions at this stage of athlete development would prevent the loss of so many athletes during the critical “transition” phases identified by Tebbenham (1998) and could allow more athletes from a more diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds, to reach the very top levels of sport than is the case presently. This view is also evident in the following interview extracts with a governing body official and a service provider to one Area Institute, who question the effectiveness of the Scottish Institute programme, but acknowledge the crucial role



that Area Institutes could play in bridging the gap between performance and excellence:

*“I’m not sure. I think the regional centres, I think, will be a good use of Lottery money cause I think it bridges that gap between [pause]. Whether it [makes a phew sound] whether the Institute is the best use of money I’m not sure.”*

(Athlete Interview A12, Par. 348)

*“Where I’m not sure [pause] SIS is developing a different perspective and I’m fighting very hard, not necessarily as a [position], but just part of the [Area Institute] to say the strength that of what we have is that the ACE co-ordinator, the sports science, the [Commercial partner] that work with [Area Institute] will care for you all the way from you being selected to [School of Sport] all the way through. And my great objective is actually to work with kids in here [points to a diagram drawn of the Area pathway] and see them make it through to there [indicates the peak of the diagram drawn], and if necessary with a few hiccups down and then backtracking and up as they go. Now that, to my mind, is what we’re trying to achieve but in SIS’s vision statement they have a different perspective and that worries me and I’m fighting that furiously.”*

(Elite Interview E11, Section.1, Par. 49)

The results from the Scottish Elite Athlete study show that elite athletes in Scotland still predominately come from white, middle class backgrounds, are well educated and those who are employed, tend to be in the professional or managerial sectors. Clearly, even after seven years of TAP funding, the road to elite athlete status is more difficult for those who come from less affluent and/or culturally diverse backgrounds. These findings were put into context during the qualitative element of the study, where a parent described the struggle faced by families who have to support a talented junior athlete:

*“The year before she got Lottery funding we ended up re-mortgage our house. I think probably most kids [pause] I work, my husband works, we both work overtime. If we hadn’t been doing that there’s no way she could have got to where she is. She couldn’t be it’s impossible. And a lot of kids I think probably do fall away probably for that reason. By the time they fund them it’s too late.”*

(Athlete Interview A7, Par 226)

Interestingly, a number of elite athletes interviewed during the study expressed their concern about the lack of support available to juniors, and were clearly concerned



about the likely effect on the future development of the elite sector in their sport if the support system to juniors was not revised. This comment is typical of the views expressed:

*“It’s taken me 20 years to get to this level and I don’t want others to have to go through twenty years to get to the same level as me, or even ten years. If we can shorten that learning process by 50% you’ll increase the number who make it and keep them up and they’ll probably carry on even further.”*

(Athlete Interview A22, Par 358)

The Coaching Task Force found that talented young athletes are often lost to sport because they are not identified effectively, are poorly coached and have access to very little support services (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002b). Research shows that coaches are critical influencing factors in the development of young talented performers (Balyi, 2000), and Area Institutes are obviously aware of the how vital the coaching is element is to the success of their programmes:

*“So our coaches have to lead our programmes, we have to make sure those coaches get the best support possible to do it.”*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 17)

Disappointingly, it is this particular aspect of the current Area Institute provision that is lacking and greater investment is needed to provide the network with the capacity to expand and improve the quality of coaching for talented young athletes:

*“I think the weak link that we have is the coaching staff, who we need to be working with the athlete and their individual coach, that link isn’t as strong as it should be at the moment. Except in sports like the swimming and the hockey and to a certain extent the badminton programmes. Whereas the other programmes we only have small retainers for some of the coaches... So that is why we need this input and investment into the coaching staff cause that’s going to be a huge part of the job is the rapport and making sure that each athlete and their individual coach understands that we play an integral part of their programmes. We deliver a lot of what they can do but there has to be accountability from both sides to make it work”*

(Elite Interview E10, Section.1, Par. 165)

Any plans to significantly increase the investment in talent development programmes would undoubtedly require the recruitment of coaching staff. This would provide an



opportunity to recruit from sections of the community presently under-represented in coaching. Current evidence suggests that women, disabled people and those from ethnic minority communities are significantly under-represented in coaching, particularly at the performance and elite levels (Women's Sports Foundation, 2003). Recruiting coaches from a wider cross-section of the community has a number of potential benefits for sport. The deployment of female, disabled and ethnic minority coaches would provide important role models for athletes', which has undoubtedly been a significant factor in their under-representation to date (Everhart and Chelladurai, 1998). A significant increase in the number of female, and other previously 'excluded' groups would also provide an identifiable, coaching career pathway that would enable more coaches to acquire the necessary skills and competencies to allow them to move into coaching at the high performance level. The need to equip coaches from currently under-represented groups with the skills that would allow them to progress within the elite sport coaching system was confirmed by a senior UK Sport official:

*"I think it needs to come first at the potential level. I mean if the women are good enough or the men or anybody from the ethnic minorities are good enough then I think, I don't think, I really honestly don't have a feeling that people are going to say, no you can't do it because you are black. People are going to say, no you can't do it because I don't trust you to deliver a team that is capable of winning x gold medals."*

(Elite Interview E8, Section.5, Par. 27)

Over time, the significant increase in the number of suitably qualified and experienced female coaches, for example, would present a challenge to the current view of the coaching role as masculine, and offers the possibility of a different coaching culture than the traditional autocratic masculine style most commonly seen in operation today. Indeed, evidence suggests that female athletes who have been coached by women perceive less discrimination and have a greater appreciation of coaching than athletes coached by men (Everhart and Chelladurai, 1998). It is important to note, however, that efforts to address women's under-representation in coaching and administration must acknowledge that there are group differences between men and women (and similarly between ethnic groupings). As Phillips (1999) reminds us, because women are differently positioned in the sexual division of labour any strategy premised on simply ignoring gender differences must result in a



reinforcement of the status quo. Strategies must be devised that explicitly recognise gender as a salient characteristic if the proportion of female coaches and administrators are to rise. Changing the people who formulate and deliver elite sport policies provides a promising platform from which to change traditional patterns of sport.

Clearly, these suggestions for an enhancement of the Area Institute programme would require an extensive restructuring of the present system of elite sport support in Scotland. Most significantly, it would require a net transfer of funding from the Scottish Institute of Sport to the Area Institute of Sport network. There are a number of ways that this could be accomplished. For example, a simple redistribution of funding from the Institute to the Area Institute network, find an alternative funding source for the Institute, either from the commercial sector or directly from Scottish Executive core funding, that would release significant Lottery monies for redistribution. Alternatively, and most radically, remove the Institute of Sport from the elite sport support system altogether, and use the Area Institute network to provide both talent development and elite athlete support locally.

If the results of a recent public opinion survey on the importance of success in Scottish sport is correct, a change of emphasis in elite sport funding with a turn to more local distribution of funds might also find wider support among the general public. Results from the Scottish Opinion Survey, conducted for sportscotland to provide contextual information for the Sport 21 review process, show that support for international athletes was seen as substantially less important than programmes closer to home. Although the overwhelming majority of people surveyed thought important that Scottish athletes do well in international sport and that public funds should be used to support Scottish athletes who compete at international level, this support was tempered by the view that funding priorities should be given to more local concerns. The overwhelming majority of respondents (88%) wanted community and youth sport to have the first priority for support from the Lottery Fund (sportscotland, 2002e) (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2).



**Table 7.1: Importance of elite sport**

	Importance for Scotland that international competitors do well	Investing Public Funds in International Athletes
Very important	57 %	33 %
Quite important	33 %	41 %
Neither important / unimportant	6 %	10 %
Not very important	4 %	11 %
Not at all important	1 %	5 %

Taken from “*Public attitudes to the importance of excellence in Scottish sport*”, sportscotland, July 2002

**Table 7.2: Priorities for financial support by Lottery Sports Fund**

Issue	Percentage Respondents
Local community facilities	28
Youth/School Sport	27
Sports programmes in deprived areas	23
Develop local community sports clubs	10
Sport and physical recreation for the elderly	5
National and regional facilities	4
Support for international athletes	4

Taken from “*Public attitudes to the importance of excellence in Scottish sport*”, sportscotland, July 2002

Any change in the emphasis of funding through National Lottery funding programmes in Scotland even one as small as that proposed above, must, nonetheless, be aligned to and in step with, UK-wide programmes for elite sport development. Evidence presented to support the “*Game Plan*” strategy suggested that the current devolved funding structures and systems for elite sport were not optimal for delivering sustained international success (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, 2002). While recognising the need to take account of individual home country priorities and aspirations, the “*Game Plan*” strategy called for steps to be taken to rationalise, simplify and better co-ordinate the funding and service delivery of high performance sport in Britain. The strategy proposed that UK Sport should take the lead responsibility for high-performance funding, including talent development, for all sports that compete at the UK level and Home Country sports councils should take responsibility for devolved sports (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, 2002, p.133). The recent UK Sport



announcement<sup>175</sup>, that ten sports had been identified to pioneer this one-stop planning process, initially for high performance level sport only, shows that the political and sporting will exists to support this proposal. Clearly, current policy developments signal further moves towards a more “*unified, systematic and customer-led approach*” (Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Cabinet Office, Strategy Unit, 2002, p.147) for elite sport funding. Within this policy context, Home Country sports councils might have to reassess how they measure their contribution to international success. That contribution could be premised on increasing the number of Scottish athletes on UK teams and the acknowledgement that achievement at the highest level is attributable to support by Scotland at an early stage:

*“I think em they have to start capitalising on the fact that they have their winning voice or the publicity comes from the fact that Scotland have supported and developed fifteen people that are in British teams or whatever. And that way the individuals in British teams will acknowledge the support they got from Scotland when they were coming through”*

(Elite Interview E11, Section.1, Par. 133)

It is important that the limited financial support available to sportsmen and sportswomen in Scotland is directed in the most efficient way possible. In the context of elite sport provision, results from this study show that the promotion of the equality agenda must be more actively and vigorously pursued if the commitment to equality of opportunity and access is to be realised. Efforts need to be focussed earlier in order to make sure that athletes, irrespective of their gender, socio-economic and cultural background, are not lost to sport at the vital transition points. A better-funded and supported Area Institute network, providing well-structured programmes of support to young Scottish athletes with potential, could make a significant contribution to that agenda.

Jarvie and Maguire (1994) argue that effective power in sport means getting the political or social conditions right and that this requires the production of knowledge about how sport works, who make decisions about sport, what is going on, who is involve and why. This research has attempted to contribute to that intellectual and

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<sup>175</sup>UK Sport Press Release 29/10/03 - <http://www.uksport.gov.uk/template.asp?id=1595>.



policy agenda by producing knowledge about the Scottish elite sport support system: how it works, how decisions are made and most significantly, what the outcome of that system is for the individuals that are supposed to benefit from it.

While it is clear that social and economic inequalities are bound up with group difference and the structures of social life, it is through politics that differences can be made (Phillips, 1999). Political and legal arrangements can provide the enabling conditions for change. A commitment to equality and social justice lies at the heart of all Scottish Executive policy and as a non-departmental public body funded by the Executive, sportscotland, are expected to integrate that commitment into all aspects of their decision-making, spending plans and service delivery. The revised Sport 21 strategy recognises that this commitment must be made more explicit:

*“Promoting equality and social justice will underpin all aspects of the future development of sport in Scotland, and will be pursued across all areas. The approach will also seek to promote equal opportunities and fight discrimination due to gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, or on any other grounds”*

(sportscotland, 2003a, p.12)

As the results from this study show only too clearly, the promotion of the equality agenda must be more actively and vigorously pursued if the commitment to equality of opportunity and access is to be realised. The key findings of this research suggest that there are too many gaps in the present system of support for talented and elite athletes to be able to claim that Scotland is *“a country where sporting talent is recognised and nurtured”* (Scottish Sports Council, 1998b, p.7). Clearly, there is much still to be done if this vision is to be realised for *all* Scotland’s talented athletes, irrespective of their gender, cultural or socio-economic background. Only then, can Scottish sport genuinely claim that *“nothing is left to chance”* and Scotland can be considered *“a country achieving and sustaining world class performances in sport”* (Scottish Sports Council, 1998b, p.7).



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## Appendix 1: Responses by National Governing Bodies of Sport to British Academy of Sport Consultation Document.

(Adapted From: Great Britain. Department of National Heritage & The Sports Council (1996) *"Sport: raising the game- the first year report"*, London, Department of National Heritage

National Governing Body	Single - Site Academy Option	Network Option	Other Preferred View
<b>Association Football</b> Football Association (FA) England			The FA would like to see either a National Football Academy being developed around the existing FA National Football School at Lilleshall.
Football Association of Wales (FAW)		The FAW wishes its training provision to be provided principally on a networked basis and at a regional level	
<b>Athletics</b> British Athletics Federation (BAF)		BAF considers that a "network approach" would offer the sport its best form of support	
Athletic Association of England (AAoE)		The AAoE prefers the Academy to provide training facilities at specific venues throughout the UK	
<b>Badminton</b> Badminton Association of England (BAoE)		Prefer its national squads and top performers to train at a number of different venues throughout the UK	
<b>Basketball</b> British & Irish Basketball Association (BIBF)	Strong desire to see Basketball fully integrated within the Academy		
Scottish Basketball Association (SBA)	SBA supports the views of the BIBF		



<p><b>Basketball Association of Wales (BAW)</b></p>		<p>The BAW would prefer to develop existing facilities throughout the UK rather than at the Academy</p>	
<p><b>Canoeing</b> British Canoe Union (BCU)</p>		<p>Existing national training base at Holme Pierrepont to become part of a network of sports specific academies</p>	
<p><b>Cricket</b> Test &amp; County Cricket Board (TCCB)</p>			<p>Cricket Academy, Independent of the British Academy of Sport situated at Lords</p>
<p>Welsh Cricket Association (WCA)</p>		<p>Need for good youth development programme based at regional centres throughout UK</p>	
<p><b>Cycling</b> English Schools Cycling Association (ESCA)</p>		<p>Cycling would however make use of generic services provided by the Academy</p>	<p>Further development of the Manchester Velodrome - The National Cycling Academy</p>
<p>Scottish Cyclists Union (SCU)</p>			<p>Supports the view of the development of Manchester Velodrome, which would ideally stand alone as the National Cycling Academy</p>
<p><b>Gymnastics</b> British Amateur Gymnastics Association (BAGA)</p>			<p>National Gymnastics Academy to be further developed around the existing facilities at Lilleshall National Sports Centre</p>
<p>Scottish Amateur Gymnastics Association (SAGA)</p>			<p>Supports the development of existing facilities at Lilleshall</p>
<p><b>Hockey</b> Hockey Association (HA)</p>		<p>The HA and AEWHHA agree that it should be</p>	



<p>All England Women's Hockey Association (AEWHA)</p> <p><b>Judo</b> British Judo Association (BJA)</p> <p>Scottish Judo Federation (SJF)</p> <p><b>Lawn Tennis</b> Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)</p> <p><b>Netball</b> All England Netball Association (AENA)</p> <p><b>Orienteering</b> British Orienteering Federation (BOF)</p> <p><b>Rowing</b> Amateur Rowing Association (ARA)</p>	<p>The BJA would like to develop a facility for Judo at the Academy</p> <p>The Academy could provide a home for a National Netball Academy</p>	<p>based around an integrated network of regional hockey academies co-ordinated from a central hub</p> <p>The SJF prefer to see Scottish Judo practised on a regional basis with a small Academy co-ordinating the development of sports specific facilities throughout the UK</p> <p>LTA wishes to see a tennis specific network of centres of excellence developed throughout the country as an integral part of the proposed network centres of sporting excellence</p> <p>The BOF would prefer to see regional or local sites near suitable high quality terrain being developed for orienteering excellence</p> <p>View of the ARA is that primary training facilities for the sport should only be provided by the Academy if it is located at existing centres of rowing excellence at either Strathclyde Park, Holme Pierrepont National Water Sports Centre or at the course presently in development in the Thames Valley Area</p>
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<p>Scottish Amateur Rowing Association (SARA)</p>			<p>SARA supports the view of the ARA</p>
<p><b>Rugby Union</b> Rugby Football Union (RFU)</p> <p>Welsh Rugby Union (WEU)</p>		<p>Neither the RFU or the WRU see the Academy site as providing dedicated primary training facilities for its sport. The RFU is strongly opposed to the creation of more national training facilities over and above those already provided throughout England</p>	<p>The WRU would prefer to see a Welsh National Rugby Academy established in Wales rather than making use of the Academy for training purposes</p>
<p><b>Sailing</b> Royal Yachting Association (RYA)</p>		<p>The RYA believes that the Academy should be a small cost-effective co-ordinating venue providing a lead and support to a network of sports specific facilities throughout the UK</p>	
<p>Royal Yachting Association Scotland (RYAS)</p>		<p>The response of the RYA Scotland mirrors that of the RYA, in that it sees most of the sport's sail training takes place in first class waters available at regional centres throughout the UK</p>	
<p><b>Squash</b> Welsh Squash Rackets Association (WSRF)</p>			<p>The only response received from squash was made by the WSRF who wish to see Welsh squash make greater use of their existing national training facility at the Welsh Institute of Sport</p>
<p><b>Swimming</b> Amateur Swimming Federation of Great Britain (ASFGB)</p> <p>Amateur Swimming Association (ASA)</p>		<p>The ASFGB and the ASA's preference is for the National Swimming Training Centre at Loughborough University to be</p>	



Scottish Amateur  
Swimming Association  
(SASA)

supported by a regional  
network of competition  
and training centres  
based at five locations  
throughout the UK

The SASA would not  
wish to see swimming  
included within the  
primary training  
facilities located at the  
Academy..

It is considered  
important that the  
Scottish National  
Swimming Academy is  
integrated into any  
academy network

SASA supports the  
need for the  
identification and  
development of a  
Scottish National  
Swimming Academy.



## Appendix 2: Postal Questionnaire



### University of Glasgow Scottish Elite Athletes Study



1. **Sex** - tick ✓ as appropriate

Male ☐ Female ☐

2. **Sport** – what sport do you specialise in

3. **Age in Years**

4. **Ethnic Origin** - tick ✓ as appropriate

White	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black – Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black – African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black - Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. **Nationality** – tick ✓ as appropriate

English ☐ Scottish ☐ Welsh ☐ Irish ☐

Other (please state)

---

6. **Are you registered disabled** - tick ✓ as appropriate

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. **Marital Status** - tick ✓ as appropriate

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>	Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cohabiting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Widow	<input type="checkbox"/>		

☞ **Please turn over**



8. Accommodation - tick ✓ as appropriate

Owner            ☐      Rented ☐      Rent-free      ☐  
(e.g. living with parents)

9. Qualifications - tick ✓ highest level attained

Degree/ Professional Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	Highers/ A-Level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diploma (HNC/HND)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Standard Grade/ O-Level /GCSE	<input type="checkbox"/>
NVQ /SVQ	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (e.g. Coaching)	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>		

10. Employment Status - tick ✓ as appropriate

Employed full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employed part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full-time athlete	<input type="checkbox"/>		

11. What type of secondary school did you attend – tick ✓ as appropriate

Private ☐      State ☐      Other ☐

12. Occupation - Please write full title of present or last job

13. Income - Please tick ✓ main source of finance

Wages (Personal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family / Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lottery Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sponsorship	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (Please state) \_\_\_\_\_

☞ Please go to next page – over half way there ☞



14. Family involvement in sport, if any - please tick✓ all that apply

	None	Recreational	Competitive	Elite	If Elite, Which Sport?
Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sibling(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

15. Occupation of parents - Please write full title of present/last job of your parent (s)

Father:

Mother:

16. Lottery Funding – Who, if anyone, helped you complete the TAP award application form? Please tick ✓all that apply

Parents☐ Coach ☐ Governing Body ☐ LSF Officer ☐ Other ☐

Any Comment? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Lottery Funding- how satisfied/dissatisfied are you that the Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) application procedure is fair? Please tick ✓

Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ No opinion☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐

Any Comment? \_\_\_\_\_

☞ Please turn over - almost finished ☛



**18. Lottery Funding-** how satisfied/dissatisfied are you personally with the Lottery Sports Fund’s handling of **your** Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) application?  
Please tick ✓

Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ No opinion☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐

**Any Comment?** \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Lottery Funding-** how satisfied/dissatisfied are you personally with the assistance you get from the Lottery Sports Fund throughout the period of your Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) award?

Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ No opinion☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐

**Any Comment?** \_\_\_\_\_

**20. Lottery Funding -** did you receive a Talented Athlete Programme award in 1998?

Yes ☐ No ☐

*Thanks very much for filling this in! ☺*

If you would be willing to be part of a follow-up study please put a tick ✓ in box no. 1 ☐

If you would like a summary of the final results of this study please put a tick ✓ in box no. 2 ☐

**If you ticked ✓ either or both of the above boxes please fill in the contact box below.**  
Please be assured that this information will be seen only by myself and used only to contact you for either the follow-up study and / or to send you the final results of the study.

Name

Address:

E.Mail Address :



### Appendix 3: Covering Letter



#### University of Glasgow Scottish Elite Athletes Study



Dear Talented Athlete

My name is Kay Munro. I am a researcher at Glasgow University. I am conducting a study of Scottish elite-level sportsmen and sportswomen who are recipients of Talented Athlete Programme Lottery funding from sportscotland (Scottish Sports Council).

The purpose of this study is to examine the current mechanisms for distributing National Lottery awards to elite sportsmen and sportswomen in Scotland. I want to know what you think about the administration of the Talented Athlete Programme and the equity and effectiveness of Lottery funding in your sport.

Enclosed is a short questionnaire, which will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is intended to gather some background information about you and find out what you think about the Talented Athlete Programme. I hope that you will take the time to complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope. The information you provide will be part of a national study, which although completely independent of sportscotland, might hopefully influence future policy.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire does not require you to disclose any information that might identify you personally, and your name will not be attached to any final results. While sportscotland may be interested in the policy implications of this study, they will not be given any information that identifies you as an individual.

I also intend to conduct a follow-up study, which will consist of short, one-to-one interviews with a number of people who reply to the questionnaire. The aim of this follow-up study is to discuss, in more detail, issues raised by the questionnaire. If you would be willing to take part in this follow-up study please tick box 1 at the end of the questionnaire and complete the contact box. While this obviously requires you to identify yourself, please be assured once again of complete confidentiality. The information you supply will be seen only by myself, and will be used only to allow me to contact you to arrange a meeting. Your name will not be disclosed or attached to any results.

I appreciate your willingness to help me with this research project. If you would like a summary of the completed study please tick box 2 and the contact box at the end of the questionnaire.

Yours in sport



#### **Appendix 4: Comments in response to Question 16**

**“Who, if anyone, helped you complete the TAP award application form?”**

Please note that all information that might identify individual sportsmen and sportswomen (name, age, sex, sport) have been removed in order to ensure the anonymity of respondents

**“Incredibly long and difficult form Do it myself”**

**“National coach gave bad advice, have had a lot of problems”**

**“They all helped”**

**“Difficult to project a year in advance costs/priorities - easier to list past performance on which award should be based”**

**“Done it myself”**

**“Friends”**

**“Difficult without help”**

**“My partner helped me - he is involved with making applications with the \*\*\* (Governing Body)”**

**“Very helpful, male”**

**“Governing Body not helpful”**

**“Governing Body Coach”**

**“Did it myself”**

**“Little individual flexibility within the team members to reflect individual requirements”**

**“\*\*\* (Governing Body), with LSF did all the ground work - then we filled in the personal form”**

**“Not Applicable”**

**“Understandably lengthy/complicated!”**

**“Quite longwinded”**

**“Nightmare! Do you make a basic application or put all your needs knowing you have no chance?”**



**“Nobody”**

**“First 2 years = nightmare forms. Have improved but still = a lot of work”**

**“Forms are poorly designed, vague questions which can be interpreted several ways”**

**“Mainly all to them (Governing Body)”**

**“Why do you need to do it each year when your grant can only go down?”**

**“National coach”**

**“Wife as athlete is blind”**

**“I help other \*\*\* (sport) complete their applications & am responsible for the \*\*\* (Governing Body) applications”**

**“Need more advice”**

**“Team mates helped. Fairly complicated and time consuming but very worthwhile”**  
**“Just with progress”**

**“You cannot do it on your own - too complicated”**

**“1st year governing body, 2nd and 3rd year completed myself. Only help with filling in targets to reach”**

**“Didn't really know much about it (all new)”**

**“Mainly done myself, own initiative”**

**“Help would have been nice”**

**“Application forms very difficult”**

**“More information required”**

**“Takes ages to fill in”**

**“I filled in my own application form for the first 2 years”**

**“Very long winded and time consuming”**

**“Needs simplified. Not enough going to athlete”**

**“Application form completion is very time consuming that an athlete/student does not have available”**

**“I struggled through it myself”**



**“My wife (personal secretary)”**

**“Mainly self, final check with NGB coach”**

**“Difficult process”**

**“Done myself”**

**“Communications between governing body and lottery fund laboured and frustratingly slow”**

**“Coach gave good support and advice on how to complete application for maximum award”**

**“Getting advice from LSF officer was very helpful”**

**“National coach”**

**“Not all relevant information known by governing body, so form filled in to optimal benefit”**

**“After 1st year became easier”**

**“Having been a management consultant”**

**“Unnecessarily bureaucratic”**

**“Mainly myself”**

**“With the first form - do it myself now”**

**“Team members”**

**“Coach has influence in what competitions to put down but a lot of self work involved especially in finance category”**

**“Advised by fellow players”**

**“Very long and complicated form”**

**“Myself”**

**“I found it a bit complex, as this was the first time I had completed the form. I benefited greatly from the assistance of the above-mentioned people (Coach, GB)”**

**“Good positive encouragement and advice (GB)”**

**“All that paper work”**

**“No help”**



**“Very time consuming”**

**“Completed it myself”**

**“Took a long time & needed help from coach”**

**“I received no help”**

**“Would be helpful if you could be sent your previous years application”**

**“No one”**

**“Much more help this year than previous years”**

**“Large complicated form, but it should be considering the size of awards”**

**“Excellent support but need more expertise on completing form”**

**“Done as a squad”**

**“Me & that’s it”**

**“The form was ambiguous and unclear in some sections”**

**“No one”**



## **Appendix 5: Comments in Response to Question 17:**

**“How satisfied/dissatisfied are you that the Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) application procedure is fair?”**

Please note that all information that might identify individual sportsmen and sportswomen (name, age, sex, sport) have been removed in order to ensure the anonymity of respondents

**“Can be hard to fill in and predict with much accuracy what you will do next year”**

**“Complex and detailed info required - not easy for someone without form filling skills plus very time consuming”**

**“This year was better but the last two years have been very unfair”**

**“I may have my facts wrong but I do believe that some athletes have received max allowance from TAP at the same time as receiving large amounts of sponsorship”**

**“Different sports need different balances of fund allocation (e.g. \*\*\* (sport) requires up to 10 training sessions per week compared to less in others but grant is inflexible”**

**“In a team sport, such as \*\*\* (sport)- we should be considered as a team, but with individual goals also”**

**“The application form is very much geared towards individuals competing in individual events not team sports”**

**“Very slow, I live in \*\*\* (abroad) and it takes about 2 months just to get mail”**

**“Should be partly means-tested”**

**“Parental means testing should be of significance”**

**“Was interviewed by you - if you heard my tirade!”**

**“I found I was only eligible if I was a member of the British Junior Team but the applications were examined before the selection races, therefore because I wasn't in the British Jnr Team in 1998 I was rejected funding for 1999 when in fact I was selected for the British Junior Team in 1999 but still had to finance it totally myself”**

**“Needs to be sport specific”**

**“Athletes of similar standard awarded very different amounts”**

**“Appears to be no real logic/thought behind awards made. Appears to be more a case of 'pot luck' as to awards received, than a specific criteria applied across the board!”**

**“Can't put it into areas you think it should be spent”**



**“Lottery funding is based on results in the past but doesn't support the up and coming athletes i.e. athletes who have no previous results”**

**“Not fair that the whole squad didn't get it only the ones that won the gold medal got it”**

**“A lot seems to depend on how you fill in the form”**

**“Objectivity could be questioned”**

**“Feel my age is being held against me”**

**“Application procedure prejudice against team sport athletes”**

**“Aggrieved that governing body takes all the money”**

**“Lack of flexibility”**

**“As world no. 1 and \*\*\* (event) world champion I shouldn't have to work F/T. Also I should have been named in the Scottish Institute of Sport”**

**“Purely replacement of salary does not take into consideration lost opportunities in career, and lower priority for promotions as a result of sporting commitment”**

**“Criteria by which level of award is decided, and maximum awards per category at each level, should all be known in advance, to enable us to apply for money in the most relevant categories, which could well change depending on the total amount available”**

**“Don't seem to stick to guidelines in some cases!”**

**“It is totally geared towards individual athletes and not the team”**

**“Don't know a lot about our sport, competitions we play, level of play, travel involved, split between seniors, youths, boys. Should give x amount of monies to the governing body and they should distribute on a fairer basis”**

**“Not specific to requirements of each sport e.g. allowance of £200 for equipment. A cricket bat costs nearly £200”**

**“Has no patience! Wants results quickly, otherwise you are dropped. Doesn't take into account illness, your job restrictions etc. and unforeseen personal”**

**“Strand 1 & team sports receive much greater funding. Are the committees who make the final decisions aware of the world standards in young age groups? Must invest more heavily in young talent & not put 25k plus awards to athletes over 30 i.e. badminton - Parental Comment”**



**“Officers only awarding money on the basis of our application forms. No research/interviews are given”**

**“No consideration is given to full time athletes. Employment status does not affect the amount received”**

**“There seems to be no fixed categories for different levels of award”**

**“Seems to have favourite sports”**

**“Selectors are ill-informed to the complexities of progression to the top of individual sports”**

**“Form seems very complex at time of completion”**

**“It’s a great help”**

**“Needs more flexibility on categories of funding awards. It can be very dependent on how your governing body support your application”**

**“Don’t know the procedure after application is made”**

**“Changes in this year's application have made it less of a nightmare. Last years took 8 hrs of my time and many more of the \*\*\* (GB) representative”.**

**“Quite longwinded”**

**“Confusion a little on my money dipping from 1998-1999 when a huge improvement in my performance occurred & junior skiers money improved”**

**“Funding category is difficult to establish due to amount of training/coaching required”**

**“Perhaps there should be more funding of potential athletes - i.e. those athletes who have been identified as potential winners but need additional finance to make it, rather than having to get onto GB teams first especially now the gap is growing in the standards between lottery and non lottery funded athletes”**

**“Covers all relevant information”**

**“Helped me get equipment, go to tournaments etc.”**

**“We were not told the criteria in which you gain an award/or not as the case may be”**

**“\*\*\* (event) got awarded more money than \*\*\* (event) even though \*\*\* (event) entry fees and running costs are more and \*\*\* (event) win more money than \*\*\* (event)”**

**“There needs to be more emphasis placed on Governing Body report and useless personal information (saves time!)”**



**“We know nothing about the procedure - Parental Comment”**

**“The division of funds into specific categories makes it very difficult to operate along the English/British funded athletes/programmes”**

**“Just difficult & awkward”**

**“Scottish scheme is very strict in its distribution of funds compared to the British one”**

**“I believe that recommendations are made by the SAF to the LSF and I believe that these are fair now although there was much dissatisfaction about award when the programme started in 1999”**

**“Too slow”**

**“Should be paid monthly”**

**“No award to team manager - team share his costs”**

**“I don't know how it is allocated”**

**“Long but necessary form to complete in order to provide all relevant information for assessment process”**

**“This is my first experience of the programme”**

**“Its not fair that non-Scots can become 'Scots' and receive lottery funding at the expense of Scots. It holds back Scottish talent”**

**“Not entirely sure of the application procedure - do you just mean the form?”**

**“Categories either contain too much money in one area & not enough in others”**

**“Satisfied - Although some athletes miss out when they should receive”**

**“Complicated form to put in”**

**“How would I know exactly what the "application procedure" is after I fill in my form”**

**“Although I ticked satisfied there are areas that need changing i.e. the decisions on what money goes where in the various categories”**

**“Team Application”**



## **Appendix 6: Comments to Question 18:**

**“How satisfied/dissatisfied are you personally with the Lottery Sports Fund’s handling of your Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) application?”**

Please note that all information that might identify individual sportsmen and sportswomen (name, age, sex, sport) have been removed in order to ensure the anonymity of respondents

**“They put more money than asked in some categories that you cannot spend while others are less than you spend e.g. equipment / petrol money”**

**“Except it is an administrative nightmare! Appreciate receipts required but feel genuine costs of any kind should be met rather than rigid adherence to categories of expenditure”**

**“In 1999 I had to appeal twice against the decision not to award me Lottery Funding. I was eventually successful”**

**“More movement of funds within grant would be useful”**

**“However, I do find the form filling in very tedious and it is so difficult at the start of the year to predict where you will spend your money and yet it is so difficult to change your category allocation later”**

**“1st one was satisfied; this recent one dissatisfied - there seems to be little understanding of our sport by our administrators”**

**“Major problem is that you don't hear whether application is successful - and if so to what extent -far enough in advance of the end of the current year”**

**“Very speedy in returning information”**

**“Very helpful”**

**“Too bureaucratic”**

**“Was told I need to achieve higher world ranking despite need to attend university. Bad handling of my injury time”**

**“Money shifted without permission and not paid for CSF in Aus/NZ”**

**“I found I was only eligible if I was a member of the British Junior Team but the applications were examined before the selection races, therefore because I wasn't in the British Jnr Team in 1998 I was rejected funding for 1999 when in fact I was selected for the British Junior Team in 1999 but still had to finance it totally myself”**  
**“Too much reliance on world ranking rather than results”**

**“Appear to make decisions, without be fully informed of all the facts”**



**“The person handling my case didn’t have a clue or a care for my needs. They also did not understand my sport”**

**“Too difficult to access funds”**

**“Difficulty in getting a new form to fill in”**

**“Unit relied on incorrect information from unreliable sources”**

**“With my new claims officer”**

**“Reached targets, goals but funding level was not increased to help me move forward”**

**“Individual targets are set however award is judged on entire team performance and results”**

**“Could have been considered more because of specialised position (GK) e.g. equipment”**

**“ \*\*\* (event) got awarded more money than \*\*\* (event) even though \*\*\* (event) entry fees and running costs are more and \*\*\* (event) win more money than \*\*\* (event)”**

**“They don't seem to be concerned with my personal circumstances”**

**“Too many forms”**

**“I was promoted to UK level, then demoted back to Scottish - took 5 months to get back into system - 5 months of no support”**

**“Stereotypical red tape administration. If the person whose handling the case if even there - always at lunch”**

**“The limitation on charging categories in the last three months of the programme causes problems when the national body changes its programme with almost no notice”**

**“Encouraged to appeal by \*\*\* (GB) for more funding. However a total waste of time and effort. I felt no sympathy or that they even looked at my appeal properly?”**

**“Hassle to apply individually when team things”**

**“Generally efficient”**

**“Jobs Worth' rigid approach by staff, out of line with objective to make support painless”**

**“They have been very understanding regarding late applications. Which I am very grateful to”**



“I'm not happy with the way they allocate money to certain categories even if you didn't apply for money in that category”

“Request for coaching fees reduced, yet coaching identified as main category for this year. No funding allocated for coach's travel, accommodation etc.”

“Sometimes bad communication & documentation of verbal agreements/conversations etc.”.

“Categories within award too inflexible”

“No longer on TAP. Now on World Class Performance – but had to put in several applications in the past. The 1st one was very badly handled, but the rest were fine”

“Takes too long change over between renewals get no money in for two or three months when renewing - although application forms are sent out before”

“Long but necessary form to complete in order to provide all relevant information for assessment process”

“Don't care if you are not paid on time - numerous times they haven't met payment date - then I was left with no money - they seem to make athletes life difficult”

“\*\*\* (GB) has had its funding withdrawn after 6 years because we didn't win \*\*\* (LSF target) last year, after saying in our form that we were going to. Of course we were going to aim to win, otherwise why bother? Do the Lottery want us to aim low?”

“When I filled in my expenditure section of my questionnaire, I put thought into how much I spend and how (e.g. Travel/ Accommodation) etc. And NO attention was paid to them. The ratio's we have received are badly wrong. The athletes suffer and I'm not the only one”

“Very slow to respond to changes in circumstance/performance level”

“Forms very long winded and had to fill out every year even although they had all the relevant details”

“Case officers have always been very helpful”

“Dissatisfied with the length of time it took to process the application, and the lack of information available during this period”

“Age of application restricts award i.e.\*\*\* (Respondent) is \*\*\* (world ranking) & receives £3000 per annum. Other sports - athletes who have not attained so high a standard received much greater awards” - **Parental comment**

“Seem to change the 'goal posts' when it suits them”

“No effort is taken to get to know us or our sport. A personal service would be better”



**“They did not take into account the amount applied for and spent previously. In categories when awarding money to certain categories”**

**“Satisfied this year not previous year”**

**“Too many forms & paperwork”**

**“Is getting better”**

**“Funding level is not disclosed until 2-3 weeks into the funding period - how are you meant to plan when you have no idea of financial assistance”**

**“They did not look at the areas where I spent money the previous year and put too much money where I didn't need it & not enough where I did”**

**“Inefficient to handle team sports as individuals. Allocation of funds in strange categories”**

**“Team application therefore personal situations not taken into account at all - e.g. equal funds allocated to each player regardless of travel situation costs etc. Therefore some players underspend their funds where others could use their allocation if allowed”**

**“Complex forms”**



## **Appendix 7: Comments to Question 19:**

**How satisfied/dissatisfied are you personally with the assistance you get from the Lottery Sports Fund throughout the period of your Talented Athlete Programme (TAP) award?**

Please note that all information that might identify individual sportsmen and sportswomen (name, age, sex, sport) have been removed in order to ensure the anonymity of respondents

“The 'categories of spend' are not tailored to the individual sport or the age of the athlete”

“Show little interest in helping the athlete if circumstances change. Try to keep their money”

“Except for 'categories of expenditure' which are far too rigid - restrictions on moving between categories appear to be getting stricter”

“Although sometimes it is very hard to actually speak to case officer”

“Covers some of expenses any help is better than none”

“The few dealings I have had with them have been very helpful!”

“It has made a tremendous difference, it allows me to train full time”

“Not consistent treatment of allowable expenditure”

“I don't get any support”

“Award is enough in total to allow you to compete full time but LSF break it into so many small categories and won't allow you to transfer so there are a lot of shortfalls in essential spending areas”

“All claims have been successful and speedy”

“The award is too restrictive regarding how award is spent”

“Immediate responses”

“Helpful within the criteria of the award”

“Target based takes no account of injury”

“Don't have very much contact”

“Every bit helps!”



**“Have only been on scheme since Jan”**

**“Not approachable for accessing funds”**

**“Claiming the money takes an excessive amount of time e.g. correct receipts, claiming under correct budget heading etc. look at either set amount of money to be spent as athlete sees fit, or credit card to charge all expenses on”**

**“I'm a new applicant for 2000 so have had little time to find out”**

**“Difficulty in paying money out and then having to wait to get paid back”**

**“Limits can be slightly low on some sections and slightly too high on others”**

**“Satisfied once problems were ironed out “**

**“No problems at all!”**

**“No support or guidance provided by LSF case officers”**

**“Could have been considered more because of specialist position (GK) e.g. equipment”**

**“Not very personal and payment dates not reliable”**

**“Had very little contact”**

**“The system of splitting the grant into very specific headings results in an inability to claim it all”**

**“The time we spend on form filling is tedious but we are happy that the fund is administered sensibly”**

**“With an expenditure of £18900 (estimated) I would not be able to train and compete without the help of Lottery Funding. This years award £7500 - a considerable shortfall to be met by my parents”**

**“Every claim has to be backed up with receipts. More trust, easier claims, category allocation. £200 foreign competition each month and a share of funding make things easier”**

**“Few personal costs met by lottery. E.g. club etc. - no other award agency will assist you if you are lottery funded. Better off last year without lottery funding. Received money from university sport schemes “**

**“Reasonably satisfied”**

**“Objectives obscure - funding should concentrate on loss of earnings”**



**“They have always given me advice on the layout of claims, kept me up to date with any adaptations made within its system”**

**“I haven't really needed any assistance but the few times I have contacted them I've been unhappy with the response”**

**“Scores improved considerably last year with lottery funding yet award reduced this year, so unable to build on progress made to date”**

**“Re 18 Above, Should be more flexible”**

**“But the breakdown of allocation of money sometimes limits what you can do - not enough money for stuff you really need and a lot for non-essentials”**

**“Don't seem to know sport very well - they don't understand the situation of teams - standards etc.”**

**“Haven't had any reason to contact LF, but all claims have been dealt with satisfactory”**

**“Obviously satisfied with financial assistance but they make our lives so hard! This year they have halved some of the categories and they are not willing to move more money into categories that would help me in my programme”**

**“No worthwhile explanation for the withdrawal of funding', and we weren't told last year our lottery funding would be taken away if we \*\*\* (LSF target)”**

**“Allowance for travel costs is still inadequate”**

**“\*\*\* (LSF Officer) is rude and uncooperative. \*\*\* (LSF Officer) was nice though!**

**“I had a few queries regarding claims - didn't always find the staff too helpful”**

**“Award you - and make it difficult to use award to full advantage”**

**“TAP officer very difficult to get a hold of (always on holiday/leave)”**

**“ Not enough experience of it so far” “No assistance other than funds”**

**“Don't categorise the allocated money as requested (i.e. allocate £200 for abroad comp. When you've said you're not planning a trip”**

**“Requires much greater funding to access overseas training & competition on regular basis”**

**“Difficult to get hold of case officer. Seems at times disinterested”**

**“No effort is taken to get to know us or our sport. A personal service would be better. No help given in the following areas: financial management, writing sponsorship**



letters, information about access to grants, access to free sports science and fitness testing”

“Period only started cannot comment”

“Case officer was rarely available - but case officer has recently changed”

“Hard to contact and sometimes unsympathetic towards the needs of my sport”

“Would be good to get a newsletter/information pack containing sports information and any national centres or places where you can get discounted sports science assistance”

“Overly rigid structure. Spend then claim - slow repayment”

“Helpful with any problems encountered”

“Still could do better”

“The funding is much appreciated, however I feel there is a need for national (i.e. GB) funding to be addressed as a whole rather than two separate (& often different levels of assistance and support to different sides of the separate border”

“They have been very helpful in the past but recently I have had some difficulties”

“The lottery funding was a huge help to my training and the trips that I could make to represent Scotland”

“Without ability to move funds about, some funds remain underspent & others over I am extremely satisfied and grateful for the funding which is the first I have ever received for my \*\*\* (sport)”

“Irrelevant information required”



## **Appendix 8: Example of Athlete Interview Schedule**

**Athlete Name:**

**Date/Time:**

**Location**

**Q1** Can you tell me a little bit about your sporting career to date?

Prompt: What is your goal for this season?

**Q2** The postal survey showed that for most people, the support of parents, or some other significant person, that it was almost impossible for people to make the jump to elite. Was that the same for you?

Prompt: Was that support financial or more generally?

**Q3** Who do you consider to be you're personal support in your sport?

Prompt: Like your coach or coaches, parents' etc.

**Q4** I wonder if I can ask you how you first heard about the TAP Programme

Prompt: Did anyone approach you officially and say you should be applying for Lottery funding?

**Q5** In your response to the postal questionnaire you said that the Endurance Coach and the Governing Body had helped you fill in the TAP application form?

Prompt: What sort of assistance did you get/need from them?

**Q6** Do you think the TAP form is a difficult form to fill in?

Prompt: Do you think the information that the Lottery Fund send out with the form is very helpful?

**Q7** Do you think it gets any easier the more times you fill it in?

Prompt: Because you've done it before, or because the form has changed?

**Q8** You said on the questionnaire that you had no opinion as to the fairness or not of the TAP Application procedure. Do you genuinely have no opinion?

Prompt: Are you happy that you can make a good case and get a good result, in terms of award, by completing the application as per instructions?



**Q9** You said that you were satisfied with the way the Lottery Sports Fund handled your application? Are you aware of the procedure that the application goes through when it reaches the Lottery Fund?

**Prompt:** You did however comment that you found the form filling in tedious and difficult to predict. Do you really think that athletes really understand how the application system works?

**Prompt:** Do the Lottery Fund issue you with any guidance on the application procedure?

**Q10** Can I ask you about the targets attached to your Lottery award - are those target times realistic and achievable?

**Prompt:** Are you aware of the criteria used to set targets?

**Prompt:** Are those criteria for TAP funding accurate and reflect the state of performance levels in Scotland?

**Q11** Do [Governing Body] contact you directly every year and say it's now time to fill in your Lottery form?

**Q12** I wonder if I could ask you a little bit about the procedure that occurs from you filling out the TAP form to you actually getting the award notice. Do you find that period smooth or have you ever had any problems?

**Prompt:** Has your competitive season ever begun before you get notification of your award?

**Q13** Not that I want to pry into your personal financial situation but how do you cope with the retrospective aspect of the funding system?

**Prompt:** Do you get financial assistance from anyone else?

**Q14** Can I ask you if there was a discrepancy between the amount you applied for and the amount you were actually awarded?

**Prompt:** Do you apply for more than you know that you are likely to get it?

**Prompt:** Have they ever given you any feedback as to why they've only given you £3000 when you actually applied for x amount?

**Q15** How important do you think other people are in the application process?

**Prompt:** Who do you think are influential?

**Q16** Do you think that the TAP application process works for you or do you think it could be administered differently?



**Q17** One of the most commonly cited frustrations cited by athletes from the postal questionnaire was the allocation of awards into categories - Has that been you're experience?

Prompt: Have you ever had money allocated to a category that you had not applied for?

**Q18** Can I ask if you've ever been able to spend all the money you've been awarded?

**Q19** I wonder if I can ask you a little bit about other services that are coming on stream now like the Scottish Institute.

Prompt: Do you know about the Regional Institute network?

**Q20** What kind of effect has the employment of [Named national coach] had on your training?

Prompt: What effect, if any does that have on your own coach?

Prompt: Have any changes to your training programme been suggested for example?

**Q21** Do you know if [Named Institute coach] has a role within the [Named governing body] or any responsibilities for TAP?

Prompt: Who in [Named governing body] deals with TAP athletes?

**Q22** Do you apply for funding to pay for your coach?

Prompt: Do you ever pay for your coach's accommodation and travel if he comes with you to big events?

**Q23** Can I ask you about the relationship you have with your case officer. Is it good is it bad is it indifferent?

Prompt: Are they helpful with any problems, enquiries that you have?

Prompt: Do you think the Lottery Fund understand that you are a full-time final year student as well as an athlete?

**Q24** Do you think your case officer understands [athlete sport]?

Prompt: Do you know if they have an [athlete sport] background?

**Q25** I'd like to ask you what it means to you to be a Lottery-funded athlete?

Prompt: Do you think it's made you a better athlete?



## **Appendix 9: Example of Elite Interview Schedule**

### **Preparation for Interview**

**Name:**

**Position:**

**Date and Time of Interview:**

**Location:**

- Q1** I know that you were the [previous job] prior to the SIS job – what attracted you to the Institute job?
- Q2** [Named sport] has done reasonably well from the Lottery programmes? - Some [named sport] players are receiving high levels of TAP funding (although not as many perhaps as in the first couple of years?) & many of them are or have been able to train full-time – does this make your job easier?

### **TAP & SIS Selection**

- Q3** TAP Selection Process what is your role in this process?

**Prompt:** Is there a [Named Sport] TAP Application Panel? – Are you on it? – Who else is on it?

- Q4** Are [Named sport] players and their coaches aware of the procedures and processes of selection?

**Prompt:** Can and do you use performance-based criteria when considering TAP selections? - Do you think this is the fairest way to operate the TAP selection system?

- Q5** The TAP application form is not the easiest thing to complete, especially for first-timers or the younger athletes, do you or someone at the governing body provide assistance with that?

- Q5** I understand that any athlete can apply to be considered for TAP funding – if the [Governing Body] do not recommend a particular athlete – would they be informed at an early stage?

**Prompt:** Ultimate decision can be seen to be being made by LSF and not SBU BUT do the usually accept your recommendations on the whole?

- Q6** How about appeal procedures – do you, or the governing body help athletes with that?



**Q7** I know that athletes attach targets to their TAP applications – do you assist with these?

Prompt: How influential are the individual coaches?

**Q8** Do you also have input into the targets attached by the LSF?

Prompt: Do you think that LSF targets are fair and achievable?

**Links between TAP and SIS – is it integral to your plans?**

**Q9** SIS Selection Process – who, apart from yourself is involved in this process and what criteria do you use?

Prompt: Do the Performance Directors on the WCP have any input?

**Q10** Can and do you use performance-based criteria when considering SIS selections? - Do you think this is the fairest way to operate

Prompt: Are athletes aware of what criteria you are using?

Prompt: Does the Board of the SIS basically rubber-stamping your decisions or do they ever object to particular individuals?

**Q11** How do the “additional funding” available from the SIS assist with athlete training and competition programmes affect TAP funding?

**Q12** I assume that you develop annual plans or programmes for SIS athletes – can you explain how these are developed and what they entail?

Prompt: Are athletes expected to formally accept these plans?

**Q13** What role do personal coaches have in this process?

Prompt: Is your relationship with personal coaches vital to the success of athletes?

**Q14** SIS athlete performance assessment – can you explain how this is done and are athletes involved & able to contribute to this process?

**Q15** Can I ask you a little about how your performance is evaluated? I understand that you are given targets by the SIS Board and are also expected to present your programme to the Board of the SIS

Prompt: do you feel under pressure to produce results?

Prompt: Will the Commonwealth Games or the Olympics be your big test?

**Overall view of the Lottery Funding Programmes at the elite level in badminton?**



**Q16** Do you think that all of the present programmes (TAP and SIS) are effectively administered and can produce continuing international success?

**THANKS ETC**



**LOTTERY  
SPORTS  
FUND**



## **Lottery Sports Fund**

Talented Athlete  
Programme

**Name**

**Sport**

**Reference no. (office use)**

**Application form**



# The Talented Athlete Programme

## Application Form: Introduction

The Scottish Sports Council welcomes applications for funding under the Talented Athlete Programme. As the first stage in the application process talented athletes, with the cooperation of their appropriate recognised governing body officials, are invited to complete this Application Form. Before you begin to fill in your application, please read the form from start to finish, taking particular note of the advice notes provided down the left hand column of each page. You should also read in full the accompanying document, *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*, taking especial care with the guidelines and code of ethics.

### Contents

Section 1	About You
Section 2	About Your Sport: Your Sports Record
Section 3	About Your Sport: Your Planned Programme
Section 4	Money Matters: Your Programme Costs
Section 5	Declaration
Section 6	Governing Body Assessment
Appendix I	Your Income and Expenditure

### Completing the application form: talented athletes

Talented athletes applying for funding should complete Sections 1 to 5 of the Application Form. Once you have done this to your satisfaction, please send the Application Form to your governing body who will complete Section 6 on your behalf. For a complete list of recognised governing bodies, please refer to *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*. The completed application will be forwarded by the governing body to the Scottish Sports Council Lottery Sports Fund.

All relevant sections of the Application Form must be completed. A curriculum vitae or equivalent will not be accepted, and the application form should be completed using black ink and BLOCK CAPITALS.

### Completing appendix I

Talented athletes who believe they may be eligible for subsistence funding should complete Appendix I. For guidance on eligibility please refer to the guidelines in *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*.

Please send the completed Appendix I to the Scottish Sports Council Lottery Sports Fund at the address given in the margin.

### Completing the application form: governing bodies

Recognised governing bodies will receive all individual applications from talented athletes applying for funding within your sport. Please complete Section 6 of these applications and send the forms to the Scottish Sports Council Lottery Sports Fund at the address given in the margin.

For further information  
on the work of the  
Scottish Lottery Sports  
Fund, please contact:  
The Scottish Sports Council  
Lottery Sports Fund  
Caledonia House  
South Gyle  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DQ  
Tel: 0131 339 9000  
Fax: 0131 339 5631



# About You

If any of your personal details change while you are on the programme please notify the Scottish Sports Council Lottery Sports Fund.

1.1 Surname

1.2 Forename(s)

1.3 Title (Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss)

1.4 Date of birth

1.5 Address for correspondence

Postcode

1.6 Telephone number

1.7 Daytime telephone number

1.8 Fax number

1.9 Current employment status (tick as appropriate)

School pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part time employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part time student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Registered disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.10 Previous Talented Athlete Programme applicants

Lottery Reference Number

Award details

10 If you have previously applied for Talented Athlete Programme funding, please quote your Lottery Reference Number and give details of any award received.



# About Your Sport

## Your Sports Record

In this section we are asking for some details on your sports performance to date.  
If you need to use additional sheets please cross-refer to this section as appropriate, eg. 2.5, 2.7, etc.  
Please note, you must complete this section – a curriculum vitae or equivalent is not acceptable.

### 2.1 Your sport

### 2.2 Your specific discipline/event

### 2.3 Your performance category (tick as appropriate)

Junior

Senior

Other

### 2.4 Your governing body

### 2.5 Your last 12 month's performance record

2.3 If you fall under any other competition category, please specify.

2.4 Please refer to the accompanying document, *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding* for a list of governing bodies recognised by the Scottish Sports Council.

2.5 Please supply a detailed record of your performances in important domestic and international competitions over the last 12 months to date. If appropriate, please give age-group or specific competition categories – for example, under-18, under-23, B International, etc.



## About Your Sport

### Your Sports Record

2.6 Please give details and dates of your outstanding performances in competition each year for the last five years. If appropriate, please give age-group or specific competition categories – for example, under-18, under-23, B International, etc.

## 2.6 Your five year performance profile

➤ 7 Please give date and details of what you regard as your best ever performance, even if it fell outside the last five years.

## 2.7 Your best ever performance

2.8 Please circle yes or no to indicate whether you have ever been banned or suspended for an anti-doping offence. If yes, please give details, including date of any offence, type of offence and any action taken.

## 2.8 Your anti-doping testing record

Have you ever been banned or suspended from sport for an anti-doping offence?

Yes

No

### Details



**2.9** Please give a brief summary of your typical weekly training and coaching programme. This may include details of in-season and out-of-season sessions – such as strength training, speed, skills, national squads, specialist coaching – but must indicate the number of coach contact hours within the total number of hours per week.

**2.9 Your typical weekly coaching and training programme**

	In-season (type)	Coach Hours	Total Hours	Out-of-season (type)	Coach Hours	Total Hours
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

**2.10** Please specify any training camps which you attended during the last 12 months, giving number of day's duration and types – for example, altitude, acclimatisation, etc.

**2.10 Your training camps**

Location	Date	Duration	Type

**2.11** Please give names and qualifications of any specialist coaches who you use on a regular basis. You may also include information on types of service provided.

**2.11 Your coaching support**

Name	Qualification	Service

**2.12** Please give names, qualifications and types of services provided by any sports science or sports medicine specialists who you use on a regular basis. For guidance please refer to the accompanying document, *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*.

**2.12 Your sports science/sports medicine support**

Name	Qualification	Service



# About Your Sport

## Your Planned Programme

In this section we ask you to give details of the programme you intend to follow with the support of Lottery funding.

If you need to use additional sheets please cross-refer to this section as appropriate, eg. 3.3, 3.4, etc.

**3.1** Please state what stage you have reached in your Talented Athlete Programme – for example, second year of three, new applicant, etc.

### 3.1 Your Talented Athlete Programme stage

**3.2** Your long term goals should be what you aim to achieve by the completion of your programme.

### 3.2 Your long term goals

**3.3** Please specify your competition programme over the next 12 months, giving the official name of the competition, and wherever possible date and venue. If appropriate, please give age-group or specific competition categories – for example, under-18, under-23, B International, etc.

### 3.3 Your next 12 month's competition programme



3.4 Please outline your personal targets which you feel will help you to measure your progress towards achieving your long term goals. These targets may be seasonal or annual. Where possible, targets or goals should be in the form of scores, distances, times, overall position or placing in relation to other competitors in any organised competition.

## 3.4 Your interim targets

Year		
Year		
Year		
Year		

3.5 Please give a brief review of your typical weekly training and coaching programme. This may include details of in-season and out-of-season sessions – such as strength training, speed, skills, national squads, specialist coaching – but must indicate the number of coach contact hours within the total number of hours per week.

## 3.5 Your next 12 month's typical training and coaching programme

	In-season (type)	Coach Hours	Total Hours	Out-of-season (type)	Coach Hours	Total Hours
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

3.6 Please specify any training camps which will form part of your training programme. Please include number of day's duration and types – for example, altitude, acclimatisation, etc.

## 3.6 Your training camps

Location	Date	Duration	Type



## About Your Sport

## Your Planned Programme

**3.7** Please give names and qualifications of any specialist coaches you intend to use as part of your programme over the next 12 months. You may also include information on the type of services provided.

### 3.7 Your coaching support

[illegible]

**3.8** Please give names, qualifications and types of service provided by any sports science or sports medicine specialists who you intend to use as part of your programme over the next 12 months.

### 3.8 Your sports science and sports medicine support

[illegible]

3.9 What are the key differences in the programme you intend to follow over the next 12 months and beyond from the programme you followed over the last 12 months. For example: additional coaching; sports science support; increased level of competition; increased training time. In your view how will these changes help you attain the long term goals you identified in 3.2?

### 3.9 Key changes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or printed text on the paper.



# Money Matters

## Your Programme Costs

In this section we ask you how much the sports programme you identified in Section 3 has cost you over the last 12 months, and how much your planned programme over the next 12 months will cost you. Please refer to the guidelines in *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*, for information on how expenses for travel, accommodation and daily allowance are calculated. Daily allowance includes costs incurred for meals, drinks, etc.

Domestic costs are those incurred in the United Kingdom and Eire or your country of normal residence. Overseas costs are those incurred outside the United Kingdom and Eire or your country of normal residence.

Please note, these are costs incurred by you, not your governing body.

- 4.1 Domestic competition costs should refer to competitions identified in your sports programme in Sections 2 and 3.

### 4.1 Your competition costs

	Domestic Costs Last 12 Months		Overseas Costs Next 12 Months	
Entry fees	£		£	
Travel	£		£	
Accommodation	£		£	
Daily allowance	£		£	
Totals	£		£	

- 4.2 Costs should refer to training and coaching identified in your sports programme in Sections 2 and 3.

### 4.2 Your personal training/coaching programme costs

	Domestic Costs Last 12 Months		Overseas Costs Next 12 Months	
Access to facilities	£		£	
Coaching fees	£		£	
Travel	£		£	
Accommodation	£		£	
Daily allowance	£		£	
Totals	£		£	

- 4.3 In addition to coaching fees, your sports programme might include costs incurred by your coach to travel to training sessions or to reside with you during competitions. If you support these type of costs, either partly or in full, please give totals in the boxes provided.

### 4.3 Your coach support costs

	Domestic Costs Last 12 Months		Overseas Costs Next 12 Months	
Travel	£		£	
Accommodation	£		£	
Daily allowance	£		£	
Totals	£		£	



# Money Matters

Your Programme Costs

**4.4** Please identify the type of service used – for example, sports psychology, physiotherapy, specialist coaching, etc. – and the cost of the treatment.

## 4.4 Your sports science/sports medicine

Support service	Last 12 Months	Next 12 Months
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
Totals	£	£

**4.5** Many athletes insure themselves against sports accident and injury and theft or accidental damage to their equipment. If this applies to you, please identify the costs in the boxes provided.

## 4.5 Your sports insurance costs

	Last 12 Months	Next 12 Months
Health insurance	£	£
Equipment insurance	£	£

**4.6** Please supply details and costs of the equipment and clothing you use to support your sports programme.

## 4.6 Your sports clothing and equipment costs

Details	Last 12 Months	Next 12 Months
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
	£	£
Totals	£	£

**4.7** Please include income from any grants or sponsorship you receive to take part in your sport, and any performance-related prize money or appearance fees, but not remuneration for employment in the sports sector, such as a wage for a sports development officer.

## 4.7 Sports programme-related income

	Last 12 Months		Next 12 Months (estimate)	
	Details	Income	Details	Income
Sponsorship/grant aid		£		£
Appearance fees/prize money		£		£
Other		£		£
	Total	£	Total	£



# Declaration

To make this application valid the applicant must sign the statement contained in 6.1 below.  
If the applicant is aged under 16 at the time of applying, then the application must be countersigned by a parent or guardian (as appropriate) and witnessed by another individual.

## 5.1 Applicant's declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the guidelines and the code of ethics provided in the accompanying document, *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*.

I also confirm that the information supplied on this form is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature		Date	
Name			
Address			

## 5.2 Minor

Where an applicant is a minor (aged under 16 years at the time of applying) the application form must be countersigned below by a parent or guardian and witnessed by another individual.

Parent's/guardian's signature		Date	
Name			
Address			
Witnessed by (signature)		Date	
Name			
Address			

## 5.3 What to do now

When you have completed this application to your satisfaction you must send the Application Form to your governing body of sport. For a complete list of governing bodies recognised by the Scottish Sports Council, please refer to Appendix I of the accompanying document *The Talented Athlete Programme: Applying for Funding*.



# Governing Body Assessment

In order to make an accurate assessment of the information presented in this application we require verification from the applicant's governing body.

The expert guidance of the governing body is essential, but it must also be impartial. The governing body should recognise an official who should complete this section on behalf of all applicants from its sport.

Please complete this section in black ink using BLOCK CAPITALS.  
Please note: all information provided by the applicant must be treated in the strictest confidence.

6.1 Please give the name and details of the designated governing body official responsible for assessing all applicants from the sport in this funding year.

## 6.1 Your designated governing body official

Name		Position
Address for correspondence		
Daytime contact number		Office contact number

6.2 Please give your assessment of the likely effectiveness of the applicant's proposed competition programme as specified in Section 3.3, including comment on the quality of the competitions identified by the applicant.

## 6.2 Your assessment of the effectiveness of applicant's proposed competition programme


6.3 Please give your assessment of the likely effectiveness of the applicant's proposed targets as identified in Section 3.4, including comment on how realistic and challenging those targets are.

## 6.3 Your assessment of the applicant's proposed targets




# Governing Body Assessment

**6.4** Please give your assessment of the likely effectiveness of the applicant's proposed training and coaching programme over the next 12 months as specified in Sections 3.5 and 3.6, including comment on the quality and experience of the coaching personnel identified in Section 3.7. Please compare the applicant's proposed programme with their programme over the last 12 months as specified in Sections 2.9 to 2.11.

**6.4** Your assessment of the effectiveness of applicant's proposed training/coaching programme

**6.5** Please give your assessment of the quality and experience of the sports medicine/sports science personnel identified by the applicant in 3.8.

**6.5** Your assessment of the quality of the applicant's sports medicine/sports science support

**6.6** In your view, are the costs identified by the applicant in Sections 4.1 to 4.6 realistic? Please comment.

**6.6** Your assessment of applicant's programme costs

**6.7** The applicant has been asked to show only those costs borne personally. However, if there are any additional costs relating to the applicant's programme borne by the governing body, please identify and give costs.

**6.7** Governing body contribution to programme costs

Programme item		Cost	£
Programme item		Cost	£
Programme item		Cost	£

**6.8** How would you prioritise this application in relation to all applications expected from your sport?

**6.8** Your rating of applicant (please tick)

High

Medium

Low



## Governing Body Assessment

6.9 Please note, the designated governing body official must be the same person identified in Section 6.1

### 6.9 Governing body declaration

**First Signatory** (to be signed by designated governing body official)

I agree to keep all information detailed in this application form confidential.  
I confirm that the applicant is of the standard stated and that he/she\* has supplied accurate information regarding his/her\* current position within our sport.

\* delete as appropriate

Signature

Name

Position

Date

**Second Signatory** (to be signed by governing body Chairman or equivalent)

I agree to keep all information detailed in this application form confidential.  
I confirm that the above named official is authorised to give comments on behalf of the governing body, and that this governing body will assist where necessary the Scottish Sports Council Lottery Sports Fund Unit in monitoring successful applicants throughout the funding year.

Signature

Name

Position

Date

### 6.10 What to do now

Completed assessments should be sent to:  
The Scottish Sports Council  
Lottery Sports Fund  
Talented Athlete Programme  
Caledonia House  
South Gyle  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DQ