

***Sport 21* Background Report no. 1**

This is no. 1 in a series of background reports being prepared during 2002/03 to inform the revision of *Sport 21*, the national strategy for sport in Scotland.

**Public Attitudes to the Importance
of Excellence in Scottish Sport**

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Further Information

This Research Digest is one of a series of background reports being produced during 2002/03 by **sportscotland**'s Research Unit to provide contextual information for the revision of *Sport 21*, the national strategy for sport in Scotland.

A parallel background report uses further information from the same survey of the general public to explore *Public attitudes to the importance of sport in Scotland* (Research Digest no. 89).

These background reports – and all **sportscotland**'s research reports and summary digests – are put on our website as soon as they become available:

www.sportscotland.org.uk

For simplicity and because generally the differences were not substantial this report has not included differences in attitudes according to various socio-demographic characteristics gathered by System Three's Scottish Opinion Survey. The data exist, however, and figures for attitudes broken down by the following profiles can be obtained from the Research Unit:

- Age
- Sex
- Social class
- Marital status
- Working status
- Whether taken part in sport in the last four weeks
- Local authority region (former mainland regions plus greater Glasgow)
- Children (under 16) living in the household
- Suburban, rural or urban location of respondent's home
- Whether respondent has any long-term illness, health problem or disability that limits their daily activities or the work they can do

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Introduction

- 1 **sportscotland** has from time to time commissioned questions from the general public on their attitudes to the importance of excellence in Scottish sport. The questions were included in the regular household Scottish Omnibus Survey by System Three and were asked of adults aged 16 and over. The samples were reasonably representative cross-sections of the adult Scottish population.

International Success of Scottish Competitors

How important for Scotland is it that Scottish competitors do well in international sport?

- 2 An overwhelming proportion (90%) of the respondents in 2002 considered that it was 'very' or 'quite' important for Scotland that Scottish competitors do well in international sport (Table 1).

Table 1: Importance for Scotland that Our International Competitors Do Well

Importance	Sept 1996	May 2002
	Percentage of respondents	
Very important	55	57
Quite important	32	33
Neither important nor unimportant	5	6
Not very important	5	4
Not at all important	3	1
<i>Sample no.</i>	<i>1,041</i>	<i>898</i>

How important for you personally is it that Scottish competitors do well in international sport?

- 3 Respondents were also asked how important it was for them **personally** – as opposed to 'for Scotland' – that Scots do well in international sport. In 1996 two-thirds (66%) considered that this was very or quite important (Table 2). While this proportion is significantly lower than those who in 1996 considered it important **for Scotland** (87%), it remains a high proportion of the adult Scottish population who considered that international sporting success by Scotland was important to them.

Table 2: Importance for Individuals that Our International Competitors do Well

Importance	Percentage of Respondents
Very important	34
Quite important	32
Neither important nor unimportant	13
Not very important	11
Not at all important	10

Sample no. (Sept 1996): 1,041

How important is it for you personally that Scottish competitors do well in the following international sporting events?

- 4 Respondents were even more positive when asked about particular major international sporting events. About three-quarters considered that it was very or quite important to them personally that Scottish competitors do well in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games, and around two-thirds to three-quarters that they do well in five specific sports (Table 3).

Table 3: Importance for Individuals of Scottish Success in International Events

International Event	Success Considered 'Very' or 'Quite' Important	
	Sept 1996	May 2002
	Percentage of respondents	
Multi-sports		
Olympic Games	73	-
Summer Olympic Games	-	73
Winter Olympic Games	-	69
Paralympic Games	-	76
Commonwealth Games	74	75
Individual Sports		
Athletics: World and European championships	-	73
Rugby: World Cup and Internationals	69	70
Swimming: World and European championships	-	70
Football: World Cup/European championships	72	66
Golf: Professional tour/World amateur events	-	63

Sample: all respondents commenting on importance – around 1,000 in each case. Gaps indicate that the question was not asked in that year's survey.

Investment of Public Funds in International Competitors

How important is it to you that public funds are invested in international sportsmen and women in Scotland?

- 5 Respondents' views on the importance of international success in sport were reflected in their support for public investment in Scottish athletes at international level: three-quarters (74%) considered this to be very or quite important (Table 4).

Table 4: Importance of Investing Public Funds in International Athletes

Importance	Percentage of Respondents
Very important	33
Quite important	41
Neither important nor unimportant	10
Not very important	11
Not at all important	5

Sample no. (May 2002): 882

Priorities for Support by Lottery Sports Fund

Which of these do you think should be the priority for support from the Lottery Sports Fund?

- 6 While the above responses quite clearly show that respondents wished to see public funds invested in Scotland's international athletes, more local issues were given precedence when they had to choose from options for priority. Collectively, community and youth sport provision were the first priorities for most (93%) respondents (Table 5). This remained largely the case when respondents were asked to select their second and third priorities from the list.

Table 5: Priorities for Financial Support by the Lottery Sports Fund

Funding Area	Priority		
	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
	Percentage of respondents		
Local community facilities	28	21	18
Youth/school sport	27	22	18
Sports programmes in deprived areas	23	17	15
Develop local community sports clubs	10	16	19
Sport and physical recreation for the elderly	5	10	10
National/regional facilities	4	7	9
Support for international athletes	4	5	10
<i>Sample no. (May 2002):</i>	<i>882</i>	<i>876</i>	<i>873</i>

Form of Representation of Scottish International Athletes

Would you rather see Scottish sportsmen and women competing at international events as a member of a Scottish team; a member of a British or UK team; or representing both Britain and Scotland?

- 7 An overwhelming majority (89%) wished to see our international sportsmen and women explicitly acknowledged as Scottish, whether as members of a Scottish team or recognised as representing both Scotland and GB/UK (Table 6).

Table 6: Preferred Form of Representation of Scottish International Athletes

Representation as	Percentage of Respondents
A member of a Scottish team	55
A member of a British or UK team	11
Representing both Britain and Scotland	33

Sample no. (May 2002): 859

Conclusions

- 8 The surveys found that high proportions of the general public thought it important both for Scotland and for them personally that Scots do well in international sport generally and in the major competitions, and are recognised as Scots when doing so. They were also strongly in favour of public funds being used to support sportsmen and women competing at international level, although this was tempered by a view that funding priorities should be given to their more local concerns about community sports provision and youth sport.