

**Minute of the meeting held in the Scottish Parliament.****PRESENT**

Margo MacDonald MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP, Clare Adamson MSP, James Kelly MSP, Liz Smith MSP, Bob Aitken, Allan Alstead, Kim Atkinson, Tom Bishop, Dougi Bryce, John Clayton, Gillian Cooke, Jeannie Cranfield, Ian Crawford, Daniel Gray, Jim Gunn, Duncan Hamilton, Scott Hastings, Rick Kenny, Walter MacAdam, Charlie MacKenzie, Fiona Mather, Jim McIntosh, Alan Miller, Pete Nicolson, Joan O'Sullivan, Steve Paudling, Jim Riach, Dorothy Roberts, Alan Robertson, Nick Scott, Ronnie Sloan, David Somerville, Kenny Stewart, Brian Walker, Michael Watson and Calum Wood.

**APOLOGIES**

Ron Sutherland, Annabelle Ewing MSP, Steve Paige, Mark McGeachie, Jim Moyes, Julie Mason, Andy McSweeney, Fiona Farquharson, Hayley Wotherspoon, Colin Rennie, Catherine Jamieson, Fiona McLeod MSP, Charlie Raeburn, Cameron Watt, Diane Cameron, Jane Campbell Morrison, David Carey, Lee Cousins, Ian Findlay, Jim Fleeting, Margaret Ann Fleming, Dr John Gillies, Nigel Holl, David Laing, David McColgan, Judith McFarlane, Brian Robinson, Pam Scott and Michael Chisholm.

**Previous Minute:**

Matters Arising – None.

**Round Table Discussion**

Margo welcomed everyone to the session, which she felt was a welcome look at Performance Sport and 'The Team Behind the Team'.

**Calum Wood, Assistant Institute Network Manager, sportscotland East of Scotland Institute of Sport**, began with a presentation on anti-doping policy and the link to Glasgow 2014. By way of historical context, he showed a video concerning the Alan Baxter case. Baxter had, he said, been found guilty of substance misuse on the grounds of 'strict liability'.

Calum outlined how anti-doping policy and testing would be organised at Glasgow 2014, defining which organisations and individuals have responsibility for which areas. He stated that the World Anti-Doping Agency Code had helped bring harmonisation of policies across the world and that this required compliance from all athletes, coaches and support staff.

sportscotland is funding UK Anti-Doping Agency trainers to educate athletes and required support staff as well as supporting Scottish Governing Bodies in relation to the required policies and procedures for anti-doping. A wide range of anti-doping resources are available including: workshops, web-tools, e-learning, videos, leaflets and information for parents.

Margo MacDonald asked who funded UK anti-doping programmes to which the answer was the UK Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport fund the UK Anti-Doping Agency. She followed up by asking what guidance was available in relation to food supplements. Calum stated that UK Sport provide a list of preferred suppliers (via a traceable supplier list).

**Fiona Mather, Head of Physiotherapy, sportscotland Institute of Sport**, followed Calum. Fiona gave an overview of the role of physiotherapy, and how exactly it operated in Scotland. She detailed the wider team of 'Team Behind the Team' staff at the Institute who work together in areas of expertise such as nutrition, medical support, performance lifestyle, strength and conditioning and psychology to 'support and optimise elite performance' for Scottish athletes. Optimisation of an athlete's physical potential was vital, she continued, in a country with small resources and, accordingly, a smaller talent pool, therefore maximum recovery speed for elite athletes is a priority. Currently 600 athletes are supported by the Institute in an integrated manner.

Fiona then gave sport-specific examples of how physiotherapy can work, using on-screen graphics. These demonstrated the importance of posture to swimming and movement analysis in hammer-throwing. The use of technology was becoming more central and useful, for example through a camera-testing project with the University of Edinburgh. The idea was to analyse technique and performance, and improve both in terms of

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results and injury avoidance. As Fiona noted, increased support to elite athletes reduces injury time and enables athletes to return to competition faster, thus helping athletes to perform better for longer. The Institute supports a bespoke programme of support for athletes, which is coach driven and event/performance target focussed.

In summary, the **sportscotland** physiotherapy ethos was 'prevent injury, improve performance.'

The final speaker was **Gillian Cooke, World Champion bobsleigh, Winter Olympics and Commonwealth Games long-jump athlete**. Gillian described how she has worked with the Institute since 2001, first as a high-jumper, then long-jumper and recently in bobsleigh. She praised **sportscotland** for their support when, in 2009, she changed from a Commonwealth long-jump finalist to taking up bobsleigh. In 2009 Gillian won European Bronze before becoming World Champion in the bobsleigh.

The team they provide for athletes, she felt, offered outstanding assistance, always developing and responding to the needs of sportspeople. This she felt, is done in an integrated manner, and in a way which supports the changing needs of athletes on their journey from junior athletes to elite Commonwealth or Olympic athletes.

That team dealt with many facets, from psychology through periods of injury to media training following success. It remains in place, contactable and integrated when, as happens for half the year, Gillian is away from Scotland. The Institute support, she finished, knows her and how to get the very best from her.

Margo kicked-off the question and answer segment of the meeting by highlighting the importance, in an athlete, of outlook and attitude. She asked Fiona how typical is Gillian's attitude and determination for an athlete?

Fiona responded saying that Gillian is an excellent example of a very professional and highly driven athlete. Fiona acknowledged that some young athletes try to balance sport with school and exams and do not necessarily realise quite the level of demand and quite how much they will have to give up if they aspire to be a World Champion, like Gillian. The support for athletes, through these periods of transition, is vital and is a key strand of support from the Institute.

Margo then asked attendee Alison Johnstone MSP, a former athlete, how we could avoid losing talent, and find the right sport for individuals. Alison replied emphasising the importance of young people trying all sports and the range of opportunities available through quality school PE. She also noted that the social aspect of participation in sport is an important factor.

The key to developing this further was 'normalising' sport; making it part of everyday life. Alison continued that in order to combat the huge drop in participation once a person leaves school, sport needs to sell its social elements and highlight that it leads to a rounder life for all. Gillian agreed that the social side of sport was integral, pointing that even now she was still making firm friends through participation.

Margo asked whether Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) present were satisfied at the level of international competition and trips available to them; this, afterall, was an attractive social element to sports participation. Tom Bishop of Scottish Cycling confirmed that this is a key opportunity but noted that sending competitors abroad required extremely large resources.

Tom then asked to what extent the Institute team was coach-driven. Fiona answered that coach input was the key driver in Institute work. A coach set the agenda, the Institute responded with support. The Institute met annually with each sport to agree objectives, and perform 'gap analysis' to identify weaknesses. This helped work towards objectives set every two to three years.

Dorothy Roberts of Scottish Swimming spoke of what this meant from a sport's point of view. Swimming's relationship with the Institute was 'great'. They met yearly to 'look backwards and forwards.' Prior to that meeting, Swimming conducted a review with its coaches, to inform its input to the Institute. This helped Swimming and the Institute agree a Service Level Agreement. Both partners ensure that the service from the Institute support the coaches' plans, and vice versa to ensure that all aspects of the package of support to athletes are complimentary. Such smooth processes result in a strong understanding and a virtuous cycle of quality information and support.

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The discussion then moved back to anti-doping, with a question from Clare Adamson MSP about protection for young athletes from coaches who may try to 'push' banned substances to improve performance. Calum replied that while such measures were not specifically in place, there was no evidence that such a threat existed. He reminded those present that there had not been a positive test in Scotland for a decade.

Brian Walker confirmed that there are three categories of doping:

- Accidental doping
- Doping by a determined single individual
- Cultures of doping.

He reiterated Calum's statement that there isn't a culture of doping in Scotland or in Britain.

Jim Gunn of Snowsport Scotland asked why current funding for anti-doping stretched only as far as Glasgow 2014. Calum confirmed that this was the funding cycle within which funding has been confirmed at this stage.

Margo thanked each of the speakers again and all for attending.

On behalf of the Cross Party Group on Sport, Margo offered congratulations to the Glasgow 2018 Bid team for making the shortlist and wished them the best of luck for the final selection later in the year.

Margo reminded all present that the window of opportunity to volunteer at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games closes at 23.59 tonight!

**The date of next Cross Party Group on Sport was April 24<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.**

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