

# Sport Policy in UK: The Reforms, Policy Priority and its Effect to Sport Sector during 2000 to 2012

Weerakoon Ranjan

Lecturer, Department of Sport Science and Physical Education, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

## Abstract

The governments of United Kingdom have introduced and amend several sport policies under their governing periods. The purpose of this report is understanding and examining UK sport policy reforms and its affect to country's sport sector during last decade (from 2000 to 2012). This study is used basically secondary data and were collected by using purposive sample method according to the selected themes. While this period governments have more concerned about the development of elite level sport rather than community sport. However, it has been changed and has given attention to develop mass sport participation and community sport in mid of this decades due to 2012 London Olympic. However governments got their more attention for elite level sport development as well as gave fewer attentions for community sport as support for elite sport during this decade. The more details have been discussed in below regarding UK sport policies.

**Keywords:** Community Sport, Mass Sport, Sport participation, sport polices, UK sport

## Introduction

Governments investing money on sports, expects outcomes such as national prestige, active participation of the public, nation building and to promote healthy life style among community. Furthermore some countries have invested capital resources on sport for political reasoning as well. During the cold war, East Germany invested on elite sports in order to exhale its capitalists rival sporting nations and project its identity as the "Perfect Communist State" in every aspect. While nations like Australia and Canada have used international sporting success to highlight themselves as "sport nations". UK government has invested resources on sports for increasing mass sport and physical activities participation, to build up national proud through the elite sport success, whereby increasing mass sport participation and selecting the future elite sportsman, and to creating sport role model whereby attractive youth generation to particular sport, and higher level of sport performance lead to encourage people's healthy behavior (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). The UK government has expected to achieve these objectives through the sport, where upon, governments have created and implemented different types of sport policies according their political ideology from past to present (Bloyce, Smith, Mead, & Morris, 2008). In this paper is analytically discussed how the policy changes and its effect of sport sector at UK in 2000 to 2012.

## Policy reform and its effect to sport sector

The labor government introduced new sport policy for the UK sport sector in 2000 which named "Sport for future all", that focused on enhancing elite level sport through developing grassroots level sport and implementing talent identification program, where upon looked forward to construct world class sport facilities by getting support from National lottery fund, established special sport colleges and also make relationship between NGBs and UKSI, there of implemented sport talent identification and school level sport development (Houlihan, 2000, Green, 2007). There had been much more emphasized invest in elite level sport and achieved higher level performance in Sydney Olympic 2000, that helped to legitimize central government support (Green 2007a). Thereafter, there had been a rationalized funding for elite sport as well as increased cooperation between home country sport councils and NGBs by the policy of "elite level funding review" in 2001, where by more focused to world class caching, caching education and talent identification and development system (Green, 2007).

The game plan strategy was the key policy reformed in UK sport policy evolution which was started to implementing since 2002, where by plan to introduced new sport policy focusing elite level sport and mass sport participation. According to the game plane, government sport policy makers have expected to increase sport participation by 70% present in 2020 among the UK population including school level, youth generation and higher performance sport, for that government used twin-track approach which was concerned mass sport and elite level performance ((Grix & Carmichaelb, 2012). Furthermore government wants to promote feel good factor among their masse and build up national image through elite sport success and grass roots participation (Grix & Carmichaelb, 2012), This policy was created a symbolic link between sport education and health policy as well as plan to addressed broader social problem such as obesity, crime, and social cohesions, rest of that it was clearly mentioned organization, administration, and funding from work of sport sector (Green, 2007). Moreover game plane strategy was introduced the take up of sport opportunity for age 5-15 years old children as well as build up link among physical education school sport and club (Mackintosh & Liddleb, 2014). Where by

government was established new organization for the sport development which was long term athletic development (LTAD) that was worked with cooperate NGBs and other sporting agencies which main responsibilities were developed community through the sport and encourage people to take part for sport, from that tried to get socio-economic benefits which has done by promoting elite level sport, for example Andy Marry's success in Wimbledon tennis competition which inspired the young people to take part in tennis and also team GB Cycling success at the Beijing Olympic that effected to increased cycling membership of clubs (Grixa & Carmichaelb, 2012). Structure of English sport was reorganized and developed focusing on objective of game plan and providing fund for development of regional and local level sport as well as gave greater attention to created coherent system for elite level sport development (Green, 2007). There was established collaborative system for sport governance to the sport development which was basically delivered on intra school, inter school, district and national (Mackintosh & Liddleb, 2014). Furthermore government has changed complex organization structure as well as improved staff skills and management system. As a result of the game plan strategy, sport officials have autonomy for getting decision on their organization and they have chance to work as small government (Bloyce, Smith, Mead, & Morris, 2008). After that public delivery agreement which was introduced in 2007 and signed between the treasury and DCMS (Department of culture, Media, and Sport) regarding delivering funds for the sport sector, it was highlighted the creation of world class system for physical education and sport in the run up to the 2012 Olympic game as well as putting structure to competition and teaching sport in place. Apart from that DCMS had to take part in increased engaging, encouraging, extending, and inspiring the younger generation for take part sport. They have delivered sport and physical activities throughout the 1 million people under the this agreement, apart from that public delivery agreement which was narrowed implementation to increase sport participation on three moderate session in a week at least once 30 minute (Grixa & Carmichaelb, 2012).

After this came the ruling coalition government (conservative and liberal party), which focused sport policy to performance and excellence very much, as well as shaped sport's finance governance and development, thus has established a tangible and measurable objective that responsible has gone to two arm's length organization (sport England and UK sport) that has implemented under the policy theme of "Playing to win: a new era for sport" in 2008 (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). Moreover this policy was inspired a generation to take part in 2012 Olympic and Paralympics game (Trimble, Buraimo, Godfrey, Grecic, & Minten, 2010), for success of the policy objectives government has pumped more money to elite sport (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). There after coalition government has much more narrowed the sport policy on elite level sport as well as separated responsibility of promote physical activities from subject area of sport; in this policy reform's main objective was enhanced efficiency of sport organization (Collins, 2010). Coalition government has introduced new concept for sport as "big society" in 2010 which has expected to inspire people to take part in sport and London Olympic 2012, to increase lottery money for sport and ensuring voluntary and community sector project as well as to prevent the funding of politicized project and encouraging competitive sport in school (Devine, 2012). Thus under the localism act (big society) provisioned money for the sport sector to create sport life as habit until 2015 (Mackintosh & Liddleb, 2014).

## Conclusion

United Kingdom has implemented certain policy reforms for sport development in recent past decade which have focused elite sport development while others have implemented for community sport development. The policy priorities have been changed from time to time according to the political ideology and situational circumstances. However governments have more focused elite level sport on their policy reforms after the 2000. Thus governments have been promoted community sport through the elite level sport development and success. The remarkable policy reform was "game plan" strategy in 2002 which was projected sport activities for next one and half decades as well as it has been changed role of sport managers, they have autonomy to work within their organization on their own way. There has gone to more priority to development of elite sport during this decade as example Sporting future for all, game plane, playing to win: a new era for sport, Elite sport funding review etc..., on the other hand policy makers have been focused mass sport participation as a sport society due to bidding and holding 2012 London Olympic therefore sport manager's role has more focused to elite sport development and London Olympic. After that policy makers have changed their policy priorities for community sport development under the localism act due to Olympic legacy plan in 2012. However governments got their more attention for elite level sport development as well as gave fewer attentions for community sport as support for elite sport during this decade.

## References

- Bloyce, D., Smith, A., Mead, R., & Morris, J. (2008) 'Playing the Game (Plan)': A Figural Analysis of Organizational Change in Sports Development in England', *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8(4), pp. 359-378, [Online]. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20/> (Accessed: 10

- February 2015).
- Collins, M. (2010) 'From 'sport for good' to 'sport for sport's sake' – not a good move for sports development in England?' *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2(3), pp. 367-379, [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2010.519342/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).
- Devine, C. (2013) 'London 2012 Olympic legacy: a big sporting society?' *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 5(2), pp. 257–279, [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2012.656674/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).
- Green, M. (2004) 'Changing policy priorities for sport in England: the emergence of elite sport development as a key policy concern', *Leisure Studies*, 23(4), pp. 37-41, [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0261436042000231646/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).
- Green, M. (2007) 'Olympic Glory or Grassroots Development?: Sport Policy Priorities in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, 1960–2006', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 24(7), pp. 921–953, [Online]. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09523360701311810#.VOwLvnF-x4/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).
- Grix, J., & Carmichael, F. (2012) 'Why do governments invest in elite sport? A polemic', *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 4(1), pp. 73-90, [Online]. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).
- Houlihan, B. (2000) 'Sporting excellence, schools and sports development: The politics of crowded policy spaces', *EUROPEAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION REVIEW*, 6(2), pp. 171–193, [Online]. Available at: <http://epe.sagepub.com/content/6/2/171.short/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).
- Mackintosh, C., & Liddle, J. (2014) 'Emerging school sport development policy, practice and governance in England: Big Society, autonomy and decentralisation', *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 3(13), pp. 3–13, [Online]. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2013.845237/> (Accessed: 10 February 2015).