

British Studies Web Pages

Sport

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What is Sport?

Modern sport is more than a game. It is a large and significant industry in its own right. Sport affects society and the economy in many different ways:

Participation - around sixty per cent of Britons take part in some form of sport

Volunteering - over two million volunteers give their time to British sport - unpaid time which has been valued at around 1.5 billion pounds a year

Employment - over 750,000 Britons work in the sports, recreation and allied industries

Economy - sport-related activity contributes around 10 billion pounds to the UK industries

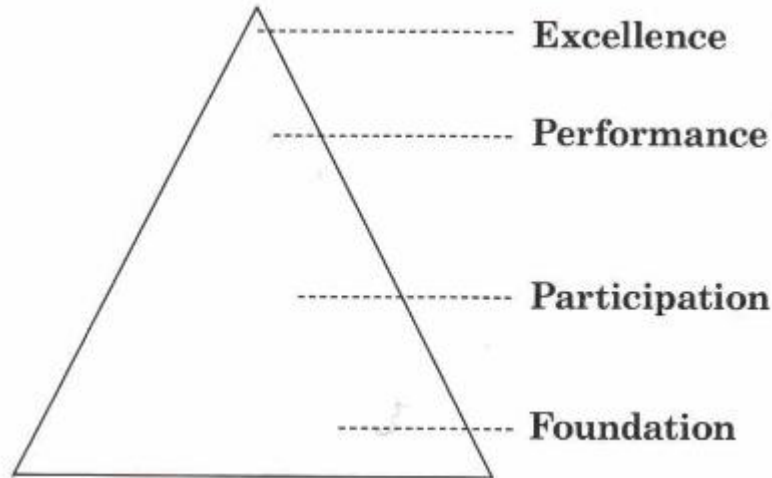
Media - around twenty-five per cent of newspaper coverage in Britain relates to sport

Sponsorship - around sixty per cent of the world sponsorship market involves sport

(Source: Sri PRIME Consulting)

The Structure of Sport

The most commonly used model to describe the sports system is the 'sports development pyramid'. The model has four levels:



Foundation is physical education and sport for young people. The main providers are schools, youth groups and, interestingly, sports clubs. **Participation** means health-related and community sport - jogging, cycling, aerobics and the gymnasium. Local authorities and private gymnasiums are the main providers. **Performance** applies to the smaller number of people who progress to compete in sport in an organised way. Voluntary clubs are the main providers in this area, with support from the public and private sectors. Finally, **excellence** covers the very small minority of people who compete at the highest level in national and international competition. Performers at this level are catered for by a wide range of organisations - sports governing bodies, sports councils and private sponsors.

(Source: Sprint - A report on the relationship between sport and society, education, the arts and gender published by The British Council, 1999)