

Sport helps define us as a nation.

It is in no way elitist. Sport is for everyone.

Yet it is something we are in danger of taking for granted.

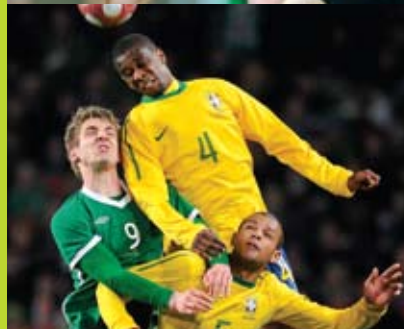
Sport does not JUST HAPPEN.

Sport needs to be planned, managed, financed and delivered. Government investment in Irish Sport commenced in 1997 – we have come a long way since then with increased access to sport and improved consistency on the international stage. Investment in sport is an investment in the health and well-being of the country.

**We need sport more than ever –
let's not make a big mistake.**

A SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT ON THE FUTURE FUNDING OF IRISH SPORT





AN OPEN LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF IRISH SPORT

We are writing on behalf of everyone who is involved in sport in Ireland; the participants at all levels, the coaches, the administrators, the volunteers and the countless people for whom sport provides much welcome relief from the difficult times we are living through.

We believe it is fair to say that sport has never been more important. Sport has a real capacity to lift everyone in the country whether they participate in any aspect of sport or merely follow Irish sport on television or through the wider media.

And we are talking about the positive effects of sport at every level not just the elite participants, important as they are to us all. What other aspect of life in Ireland gets 270,000 people to volunteer their time on a weekly basis to ensure that 1.7 million people participate in sport in 12,000 clubs, in every parish in Ireland.

It is possibly because of this input from volunteers that there is a popular misconception in some areas that SPORT JUST HAPPENS. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Sport as we know it in Ireland today, is the result of good planning, enlightened administration and financial investment particularly by the Government on behalf of all tax payers. That funding is the lifeblood of sport in Ireland and the catalyst for all that follows.

On a purely practical level, for every euro invested by Government the sports themselves invest a further two euros. Research published recently found that for every €100 invested by Government (both National and Local) the return to the Exchequer is €149.

It is the funding that drives the programmes at grassroots and schools level; the programmes that eventually lead to the elite performers that represent us all on the world stage.

We cannot overstress just how important the current funding is to the future well-being of sport in Ireland. While we fully understand the difficulties faced by the country and the pressures to make savings, it would be difficult over-emphasize just how important the impact of the €49.6 million given to sport through the Irish Sports Council is. It is the seed capital for activity and an industry worth in excess of €1.8 billion to Ireland each year.



It is essential that Government funding is maintained if we are to continue to develop sport at every level. It must be remembered only a small proportion goes to our elite performers. Over 80% of the money provided by the Government is invested in sport at grassroots level in creating the programmes that will produce top class athletes and just as importantly help improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

Such funding has never been more important. Right across the country clubs at all levels are finding that other sources of funding are drying up. They are finding it increasingly difficult to attract sponsorship, while the subscriptions normally paid by club members are becoming increasingly challenging to collect.

As you will be aware programmes like the Sports Capital Grants and the Local Swimming Pool Programme have been suspended and that is totally understandable in the current climate. While we would love to see them reinstated at some time in the future it would be disastrous for Irish sport if this was in any way at the expense of current funding.

As you will see from this document Irish sport is once again united in making this submission to you. Our single and united focus is that there should be no further cuts to the budget allocated to Irish sport through the Irish Sports Council for current expenditures.


Signed by:



Páraic Duffy, GAA



John Delaney, FAI



Patrick Hickey, OCI



Matt English, Special Olympics



Philip Browne, IRFU



Seamus Smith, GUI



Liam Harbison, Paralympics



Sarah O'Connor,
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IRISH SPORT MATTERS

TO EVERYONE IN IRELAND DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. FUNDING TO SPORT MADE POSSIBLE BY TAXPAYERS SUPPORTS:

-  1. Programmes run by sports organisations designed to introduce people to and increase participation in sport
-  2. Ensuring children participating in sport are suitably protected and their welfare provided for
-  3. Employment across the sport and leisure industry
-  4. Day to day running of national sports organisations
-  5. Qualification and training programmes for sports coaches
-  6. The running of local sports partnerships – the 32 local authority supported organisations designed to increase participation sport within their community
-  7. The High Performance Programmes of National Sporting Organisations & the Paralympic Council of Ireland
-  8. Elite & developing elite athletes
-  9. Anti-Doping
-  10. A Research Programme around participation in sport

THEREFORE A REDUCTION IN THE FUNDING MADE POSSIBLE BY TAXPAYERS WILL:

-  1. Reduce opportunities for people to participate in sport especially those less likely to “play”
-  2. Put children participating in sport at increased risk
-  3. Impact on the capacity of national sporting organisations to deliver sport
-  4. Cause job losses and expertise across the sports industry
-  5. Threaten the existence of Local Sports Partnerships
-  6. Impede our athletes’ chances at London 2012 & 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games
-  7. Impact on the quality and development of coaching in Ireland
-  8. Allow talented athletes to slip through the net
-  9. Reduce the effectiveness of the anti-doping programme thereby impacting on Ireland’s reputation abroad
-  10. Prevent research and analysis thereby inhibiting ongoing development of effective sports policy and improvement of current policies and procedures



IRISH SPORT MATTERS TO HEALTH

- The World Health Organisation estimates that physical inactivity costs between €150-300 per citizen per year
- Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6% of deaths globally)
- Children who meet the Department of Health & Children's guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each day are the healthiest
- Physical inactivity is estimated to be the principal cause of 21-25% of breast & colon cancers, 27% of diabetes and 30% of heart disease
- Participation in physical activity reduces depression and anxiety, enhances mood, self-esteem and quality of life
- It is estimated that in Western Europe at least 2.5% of total national healthcare costs are attributable to inactivity
- In Finland men are living 7 years longer and women 6 following the implementation of successive physical activity strategies where 64% of women and 60% of men now participate in physical activity twice a week



IRISH SPORT MATTERS TO THE ECONOMY

- Sport related spending contributes €1.8 billion to the Irish economy equivalent to 1.4% of GDP
- 38,000 people or over 2% of the total Irish Economic Employment are employed through sport and sport related activities
- Irish households spend a total of €1.8 billion on sport and sport-related goods and services equivalent to over 2% of the overall value of consumer spending in the economy
- The return to the Exchequer is €149 for every €100 invested in sport
- The economic value of sports volunteers is estimated to be between €322 and €583 million per annum
- Special Olympics Ireland Games in June 2010 created a € 9.95 million dividend for Limerick Region with the return to the exchequer from event preparation costs and the direct expenditure levels of attendees estimated to be between €1.475 and €1.77 million
- Triathlon's European Championship in July 2010 generated €10-15 million for the Athlone area
- Participation in sport equips people with “core” and “soft” skills which improve their employability



IRISH SPORT MATTERS TO TOURISM

- Sport is seen as one of the fastest growing niches of the \$4.5 trillion global tourism industry
- In 2009 the British Tourist Authority found that 3 million tourists spent £2.3 billion in the UK watching and playing sport
- In the UK a “sporty” tourist was found to spend approximately £900 per trip compared to the £500 spent by an “ordinary” tourist
- In Canada it is estimated that 38% of all domestic tourism is due to sport
- It is estimated that sport-related tourism supports almost 3,000 jobs
- The golfing community in Ireland welcomes about 150,000 visitors every year contributing approximately €110 million to the economy
- The Special Olympics Ireland Games delivered 24,000 bed nights for Limerick with the average expenditure of attendees visiting and staying in Limerick for the event was €390
- 830,000 visitors came to Ireland in 2009 to participate in hill & cross-country walking spending an estimated €494 million
- Over 13,000 people from 83 different countries took part in the Dublin City Marathon on 25th October 2010
- 114,000 cyclists came to Ireland in 2009 spending an estimated €97million
- Mountaineering Ireland was involved in the staging of over 50 walking and climbing festivals in 2010 attracting tourists from home and abroad



IRISH SPORT MATTERS TO OUR COMMUNITIES

- 2,796 people volunteered at the Special Olympic Ireland Games in June 2010 generating a social capital value of €4.7 based on the hours contributed to the preparation and operation of the event
- 270,000 people participate in some form of sport-related voluntary activity making sport the most important form of voluntary activity in Ireland
- There are over 12,000 sports clubs in Ireland with over 1.7 million members
- 560,000 adults attend a sport event weekly
- An increasing number of unemployed people took part, volunteered and attended sports activities between 2007 & 2009
- 59% of sports participants socialise regularly with fellow participants as do 53% of volunteers
- 70% of participants in sport say meeting people is their primary reason for playing
- Garda call outs in Ballymum were reduced by 49% during Late Night Leagues run by the FAI whilst in Tallaght call outs were down by 52% for the duration of the League
- The FAI runs after-school programmes where ethnic minority children learn English through Football
- The GAA's programme to combat rural isolation amongst men is being piloted in 90 clubs nationwide with the aim to have the programme in the GAA's 2,000 plus clubs by 2014

**IN 2010, €49.6 MILLION
OF IRISH TAX PAYERS
MONEY WAS PUT INTO
IRISH SPORT...**



...SO WHAT RETURN DID SPORT GIVE ON THAT INVESTMENT...

- The Camogie Association established 25 new clubs in 2010 adding to the existing 540 nationwide
- Swim Ireland has delivered aquatic qualifications to over 500 people during the course of 2010 with over 22,000 teaching hours provided
- The Irish Ice Hockey Association ran a recreational ice hockey play-off weekend in which 100 people partook to introduce people to the sport
- Mountaineering Ireland saw a 10% increase in both club and individual membership during 2010 and now has 145 clubs and over 10,300 members
- Triathlon Ireland membership increased by 46% over 2010
- Horse Sport Ireland in conjunction with the Association of Irish Riding Establishments launched an Affordable Introduction to Riding Programme in September with 60 schools involved in the pilot programme to date
- The Irish Wheelchair Association launched a Best Star Schools Inclusion Programme Resource Pack to facilitate the inclusion of students with a disability in school sports activities
- The Local Sports Partnership Network have provided 11,023 sports clubs with information and advice in the area of funding with a further 3,598 clubs assisted in the delivery of their activities
- Cricket Ireland established a Connacht branch due to the growth of the sport in the West of Ireland
- The Irish Underwater Council held 130 training courses during 2010 whilst 96 of their Search & Rescue Unit who voluntarily assist in the recovery of missing persons were awarded with Long Service Medals
- The first ever women's team qualified for the Bobsleigh at the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver
- Karol Doherty finished 8th in Adaptive Rowing at the World Rowing Championships despite only taking up the sport 18 months ago – he discovered the sport through a programme run by Donegal Local Sports Partnership
- Athletics Ireland have reached 80 "Fit4Life clubs" with approximately 5,000 recreational runners affiliating with the association whilst they have worked with 180 "Little Athletics Club" ensuring that 8,000 young people between the ages of 5 and 10 got a fun introduction to the sport
- The IRFU ran programmes in 1,152 primary schools and now have 61,000 players involved in underage rugby
- The FAI oversaw the participation of 25,000 primary school children in small sided games in May & November with a further 20,000 children taking part in Summer Soccer Schools during July and August
- The GAA have a relationship with 2,190 primary schools facilitating the roll-out of their County Games Programmes, Camp Programmes and Academy Programmes
- The Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland delivered an introductory programme to over 1,000 children in 35 schools establishing links between those school and 25 pitch and putt clubs
- Gymnastics Ireland are growing their membership by 1,000 – 1,500 each year and now have 1,000 accredited coaches nationwide



...A RETURN TO EVERYONE

- 10,000 children involved in Swim Ireland's Child Learn to Swim Programme launched in June 2010
- 3,000 players partake in the FAI's Football for All Programme across 13 different disability groups
- 25,000 girls took part in GAA summer camps
- 300 children in 9 schools took part in the Irish American Football's inaugural Flag Football competition
- 1,500 took advantage of South County Dublin's Link2BActive programme which provides access to sporting facilities at reduced rates for people who are unemployed
- 2,000 boys and girls school teams take part in Basketball Ireland's Secondary Schools Competition
- 15 coaches going through Tennis Ireland's Level 3 Coach Qualification – the first programme of its type ever run in Ireland
- 600 girls in 30 different schools introduced to golf through Junior Golf Ireland's Girls Golf Programme
- 1,189 primary school teachers and 1,536 childcare practitioners provided with Introduction to Sport Training as part of Buntús training programme
- 112,056 people took part in 744 sports development programmes delivered by Local Sports Partnerships nationwide
- 12,000 young people and adults took part in sailing, jet skiing and powerboating courses run by the Irish Sailing Association
- 500 participants representing 24 countries in 12 different sports took part in the European Transplant & Dialysis Games held in Dublin in August 2010
- 80 male job seekers signed up to a "Pens and Perspiration Programme" run by Waterford Local Sports Partnership which provided them with opportunities to access and try out local physical activity opportunities whilst providing them with job seeking skills
- 1,825 athletes, 806 coaches, 2,796 volunteers and 9,000 families and supporters took part in the 2010 Special Olympic Ireland Games

AT A TIME WHEN IRELAND'S STOCK HAS NEVER BEEN LOWER INTERNATIONALLY OUR SPORT STARS CONTINUE TO BE AN IMMENSE SOURCE OF PRIDE TO IRISH PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD

- 2 years before London 2012 Ireland has won 19 medals in international competition across a variety of sports – in 2006 this figure was 9
- Graeme McDowell's thrilling final round at Pebble Beach to become US Open Champion
- Ireland selected to host final leg of Volvo Ocean Race 2012 beating off stiff competition from other cities around Europe
- Derval O'Rourke winning a silver medal at the European Athletic Championships
- Katie Taylor becoming World Champion for the third time and International Female Boxer of the Year for the second time
- Grainne Murphy winning a European Silver Medal at her first ever senior championships
- Padraic Moran winning a gold medal at the World Boccia Championships
- Tipperary overcoming the legendary Kilkenny team in the All Ireland Hurling Championship
- Cork winning the All Ireland Football Championships
- Wexford being crowned All Ireland Camogie Champions
- Dublin showing real resilience to win the All Ireland Ladies Football Championship
- Madeline Perry winning the Australian Open Squash Championships & reaching a career high ranking of 5th in the World
- 5 medals at European Senior Boxing Championships finishing second to Russia in the overall medal table
- All Ireland's hockey teams are competing in the "A" Division of European competition for the first time ever
- Munster & Leinster reaching the semi-finals of the Heineken Cup and Leinster also reaching the Magners League Final
- Connacht reaching the semi-finals of the Amlin Cup only to lose to Toulon on a sell-out night at the Sports Ground
- Derek Burnett taking silver at the European Clay Pigeon Shooting Championships
- 3 of our 4 participating athletes winning medals at the IOC sanctioned World Combat Games
- Dan Martin winning the Tour of Poland, his maiden UCI Pro Tour stage race
- U17 Girls Football Team – European Championship Finalists & World Cup Quarter-Finals
- The Irish effort of Graeme McDowell, Padraig Harrington, Rory McIlroy & vice-captain Paul McGinley at the Ryder Cup
- Peter O'Leary won the gold medal for the Star Class at the Skandia Sail for Gold Regatta the biggest event on the World Cup Series beating 5 Olympic Gold Medallists in the process
- Leona & Lisa Maguire – youngest ever members of the European Curtis Cup Team
- 23 year old Nigel Callender becoming the first Irish person ever to win the British Bouldering Championships
- Aileen Morrison bronze medallist at Triathlon World Cup event in Hamburg – Triathlon Ireland have 3 athletes qualified for London 2012 up from 1 representative at Beijing 2008
- 15 year old Bertram Allen winning the European Pony Show Jumping Championship 2010 & the Irish Team winning the Aachen Nations Cup
- 18 year old Ciara Mageean 1,500m silver medallist at the World Junior Athletic Championships
- 20 year old Craig Breen being selected as one of six best young rally drivers by the world motorsport governing body, the FIA
- Louk Sorensen becoming the first Irish player in the modern era to qualify and win a round at a Grand Slam Championship whilst U-18 players Sam Barry and John Morrissey made it into the Top 100
- 18 year old Ryan Burnett winning gold at the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in Singapore
- Mark Rohan winning a gold medal at UCI Paracycling World Road Championships a year after taking up the sport
- Irish Surfer, John McCurry being awarded the International Fair Play Diploma for excellence in sportsmanship
- Irish Judoka Lisa Kearney winning silver at the GB World Cup making qualification for London 2012 a real possibility
- Irish Gymnasts winning bronze at the European Junior Tumbling Championships

Without exception those individuals and teams that we are so proud of have all benefited from the funding that government puts into Irish sport.



“I ALWAYS TURN TO THE SPORTS SECTION FIRST. THE SPORTS PAGES RECORD PEOPLE’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS; THE FRONT PAGE HAS NOTHING BUT MAN’S FAILURES.”

Earl Warren

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