

Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee

CWLS (2) 11-06 (p2)

Meeting date: Thursday, 13 July 2006

Meeting time: 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Meeting venue: The National Botanic Garden of Wales, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire

Team Wales: Commonwealth Games Melbourne 2006

Performance

Team Wales selected a total 142 athletes (62 women and 80 men) for the Commonwealth Game. The team, had 86 fewer athletes in comparison to the Manchester 2002 squad. This resulted from the tightening of selection standards across sports with all selected athletes and teams being judged to have the capability to finish in the top eight/quarter final in their respective events. 54 coaches, team managers and staff attended the Games in order to provide support services to athletes.

Team Wales targeted between 15 and 20 medals at the Melbourne Games. In total, Wales won 19 medals (3 Gold; 5 Silver; 11 Bronze). Despite winning a total of 31 medals at the Manchester 2002 Games, medal expectations were lowered due to four prime reasons:

1. The absence of Judo which gave Wales six medals in 2002;
2. Weightlifters were able to medal in the Snatch, Clean and Jerk and overall categories in Manchester, whereas medals were only awarded in the overall class in Melbourne;
3. Table Tennis players had to take part in Bronze medal play-off matches in the Team and Singles events unlike in Manchester where Bronze medals were awarded to both losing semi-finalists;
4. Team Wales was not competing on home soil and in many instances competing out of season with climate/humidity differences.

Taking this information into account, Team Wales would have returned with 23 medals (excluding Judo) should medal competition formats have remained the same.

Wales fell from ninth place in the 2002 medal table to 13th place in the 2006 medal table based on gold medals won. Wales placed 10th based on total number of medals won. Wales' market share decreased from 3.2% in 2002 to 2% in 2006. (Market share is measured by using a points system of Gold 3, Silver 2, and Bronze 1 point, measured against the total number of points available at the Games). However, in Melbourne, Wales over performed relative to how its macro economic

resources predicted. Relative to the other home nations, Wales was the second best performing nation in 2006 when linking market share to population. (Independent study, Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University on behalf of the Sports Council for Wales).

Jamaica, Kenya, Singapore and Nigeria finished ahead of Wales in the final medal table which was not the case in 2002. Jamaica finished 7th in the medal table with 10 Gold's and 22 medals, all of which were won in Athletics. Kenya won six Gold's and 18 medals in total all of which were won in boxing and athletics. Singapore finished 11th in the medal table with five Gold's and 18 medals. Four Gold's, four Silver and three Bronze medals were won in Table Tennis where they fielded Chinese players in every discipline. Nigeria finished 12th in the medal table with four Gold's and 17 medals. Three Gold's, two Silver's and two Bronze medals were won by EAD's. Despite finishing ahead of Wales in the medal table, results clearly highlight an over-reliance on certain sports. Comparatively, of the 14 sports in which Wales competed, 8 won at least one medal.

Wales' lack of medal winning success in Melbourne and at previous Games in mainstream team sports such as netball, hockey and rugby 7's continues to be a concern.

Key Lessons Learned

Wales is consistently over reliant on men for its medal winning success. Longer term improvements in performance and results could be developed by greater emphasis on events for women.

Improving Wales' future medal table ranking depends crucially on the quality of medals won rather than the quantity. Wales had a below average Gold medal percentage (23%) and the highest bronze medal percentage (46%) out of the comparator nations.

Wales is conscious that statistics show an over-reliance on a limited number of sports for overall medal winning success. Wales' three sport market concentration since 1950 is 56% (24% Weightlifting, Athletics 20% and Boxing 12%).

Governance

The Commonwealth Games Council for Wales was reformed in March 2005. A new Board of Directors immediately developed an operational structure including six specific working groups led by an operations team which resulted in the successful delivery of Team Wales.

There is a very close working relationship between CGCW and the Sports Council for Wales (SCW). The former is located alongside the latter at the Welsh Institute of Sport. This has significant benefits in terms of developing relationships and ensuring good communications. SCW seconded to CGCW an experienced manager to act as their Director of Operations. Additionally, SCW marketing and press staff plus sport science staff were members of Team Wales at the Games. This helped to ensure continuity of contact with relevant stakeholders both before and during the Games.

The CGCW is currently considering its staffing requirements for the lead in to Delhi in order to further build on the Melbourne experience. SCW has agreed to fund a part-time general secretary and

also to make available relevant technical staff at the appropriate time.