

Abstract

Sport for all?

Survey and Analysis of Financial Support for Sport

The *Riksdag* (Swedish parliament) grants funds for the state support that is channelled into sport organisations and associations via the Swedish Sports Confederation. The county councils and local authorities make cash contributions of various kinds, subsidise the costs of premises, etc.

Our survey of the financing of popular sports has been carried out in such a way as to elucidate the importance of public support for various sports, for different categories of people engaging in sports and for activities outside the scope of the Swedish Sports Confederation.

The combined income of all sports organisations and associations in 1992 was SEK 6.2 billion; in addition, there are subsidies for costs of premises amounting to SEK 3.3 billion. Sport is also supported indirectly through tax reliefs and voluntary work.

The primary financier is the public sector, which accounts for almost two-thirds of the income and other support received by sport.

The principal objectives of public-sector backing are to support the educational and socially formative function of sport, to promote keep-fit and broadly based sports, to contribute to public health — but also to encourage elite sport.

Our findings indicate that the forms of public-sector support result in problems.

The government grant is inflexible and favours established sports. Since the grant is distributed by the Swedish Sports Confederation in a fairly static way, it is mainly established sports that are encouraged. New keep-fit activities have nonetheless been established, but the present government grant entails competitive disadvantages for such

activities that are not organised in the confederation. One indirect consequence is that men are often favoured in relation to keep-fit sport. In this context, we would also like to point out the incongruous middle position occupied by the confederation, simultaneously serves as a grant-distributing state authority.

Substantial equity is owned by the associations. The extent of their equity capital is such that the scale of state support for the organisations is questionable.

Administration costs in popular sports are high. We estimate that administration costs at central and association levels amount altogether to around SEK 0.5 billion.

The effects of state support are unclear. In essence, the focus and form of support may be considered to entail distortion in favour of the long-established sports, whose primary emphasis is on competitive and élite activities.

Our investigation leads to the conclusion that the current state grant for popular sports should be re-examined. One possible solution is for support for broadly based sports to be hived off and administered by the local authorities.