

Report to the government in regards to the establishment of a Sports Commission

By the Hong Kong Sports Journalists Association

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Point 1:

The establishment of a Sports Commission.

A: The Hong Kong Sports Journalist Association agree that there is a need for a Sports Commission to replace the Hong Kong Sports Development Board to oversee the needs of sport administration and development in Hong Kong.

B: Upon the establishment of this new Sports Commission, it should be noted that they should avoid the repeat of past mistakes made by the HKSDB. ie, administration cost that could be better spent or used for the benefit of athletes.

C: This newly-established Sports Commission, apart from being manned by government-appointed officials, should also include sports experts, members of Hong Kong's International Olympic Council, and retired athletes.

D: The work of this board should be to help incorporate funds for the exclusive use to develop athletes who represent Hong Kong in both the Asian region and international multi-sports events.

E: Methods of distributing funds to athletes should be made transparent and accountable, and should be conducted in the best and fairest way to ensure athletes representing Hong Kong are given the highest priority possible.

Point 2:

Retaining the Hong Kong Sports Institute to sustain the growth and development of athletes to represent the SAR in local and international competition.

A: The HKSI should be retained but at the same time, there is the need to upgrade facilities and amenities to world-class standards, thereby giving athletes the confidence to train in a near-perfect environment, ie, the velodrome at the HKSI is not up to world-class grade and could cause injury to the athletes training there and further, by athletes training there, they can not meet the requirements needed to perform well at international level.

B: Further, the facilities at the HKSI should not be opened to the public, but instead, full-time or part-time athletes be given exclusive use of the facility to prepare for domestic or international events.

C: Education and the development of athletes: The set up of a comprehensive program supported by the government that would allow athletes to succeed both in and out of the class, thereby giving them the confidence to train while allowing them the opportunity to continue their education after their careers are over.

D: The Sports Commission (in providing funding and facilities) should be selective in events that would allow Hong Kong athletes to come away with favourable results in the international arena.

Point 3:

The establishment of a support system to help develop athletes outside sports and retirement benefits.

A: The Sports Commission should help reduce the burden of Hong Kong athletes facing the predicament to choose careers before they reach the end of their retirement. Remember, athletes spend a minimum of 10 years to develop themselves, and at the same time, they must sacrifice their study time and social life for the sake of sport.

B: While the athlete is expected to their utmost for Hong Kong in their quest for medal glory, they sometimes lose out on the commercial pluses for their efforts. Today's environment does not incorporate the needs of an athlete when he/she retires. More efforts from the commercial sector would do well to increase the confidence of the athlete preparing for major competitions.

C: When the athlete is young, he/she will sacrifice their time, energy and social time for the sake of training and preparing for tournaments or competition. Government should develop a plan that will provide documentation or a recognised method for a retired athlete in order for them to continue higher education.

D: The SAR should look at a retirement fund for athletes and should base it on the athletes international results as a method of rewarding the athlete for their abilities. This could also serve as a benchmark for athletes aiming high, the better your international result, the more funding you will receive.

E: The Sports Commission should also consider setting up of a special fund for the exclusive use of athletes in need of funding before they retire, after all, athletes do not earn income while representing Hong Kong with the exception of small funding from the SDB.

F: The Hong Kong Government should set up an secondary school for the exclusive use of younger athletes to provide them the necessary education and allow them to take courses so that they can take part in public examinations.

G: Until the establishment of this school, the government should also help

athletes improve their english, and by doing so, ensure they represent Hong Kong as ambassdors of sport.

Point 4:

The need of an internationally recognised stadia and upgrading of facilities to support and create a sports culture in Hong Kong.

A: There are two types of facilities currently in use in the SAR, the first are LSD or public facilities, and can be found in most parts of Hong Kong and the New Territories. The facilities should be upgraded to meet international requirements, the others are large-capacity venues and they too, should also be upgraded.

B: Facilities, both indoor and outdoor should have a warm-up area, proper seating for both the paying public and the media, and a designated post-event conference room that also serves as a media room for local and international jounalist.

C: Governemtn should actively participate in supporting events here. expecially for larger international tournaments, ie, Hong Kong Badminton Open.

Point 5:

Communication between the media and the Sports Commission.

A: There should be more open dialogue between the government and the media. Currently, there is not enough communication that recognises the needs of the press. The govenment should provide a simple and easy method of identifying members of the media, both written and broadcasting, to enable the media easier access to government sporting venues. ie, a press identification card would be sufficient in order for members of the press to conduct interviews.

B. setting up of a Bureau within the Sports Commission to understand the needs of the media and reduce misunderstanding between the government and the media.