

REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE

**Good Practice
Report**

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Sport in Colleges

THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL

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FUNDING COUNCIL***

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to make sure further education in England is properly assessed. The FEFC's inspectorate inspects and reports on each college of further education every four years. It also assesses and reports nationally on the curriculum, disseminates good practice and gives advice to the FEFC's quality assessment committee.

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SUMMARY

Many colleges provide a range of sporting opportunities for their students. These fall into two broad categories: courses leading to qualifications in sport; and activities which students may undertake to enrich and broaden their experience of being at college.

Courses leading to qualifications in sport are growing in popularity. Over 70 per cent of colleges in the further education sector offer students some form of sports-related course leading to a qualification. Students often do well in intermediate and advanced courses and go on to further sports-related study or relevant employment.

The extent to which colleges arrange sports activities for all their students varies. In some colleges, particularly sixth form, tertiary and agricultural colleges, sport is a feature of college life. Such colleges frequently include an optional or 'entitlement' programme of sports activities in the curriculum.

There is good practice in the way colleges encourage participation in sport and promote equal opportunities, although colleges could do more to encourage women to participate in sports and sports-related studies.

Many colleges provide opportunities for students to participate in local, regional and national competitions. Sporting success is effectively publicised by some colleges and used to good effect to attract prospective students. The best sports sessions are well organised and allow students to develop sporting and inter-personal skills, and to enjoy themselves. Specialist staff who contribute to teaching and training activities are often well qualified. Students also benefit from a substantial amount of voluntary support from non-specialist teachers.

Courses leading to academic and vocational qualifications are subject to the same quality assurance procedures as other provision, but less formal sporting and recreational activity is often not subject to rigorous review. There is wide variation in the quality and extent of college facilities. Many colleges have limited or old equipment and facilities to support sports, although there is some evidence of recent improvements, particularly to support academic or vocational course provision. The more entrepreneurial colleges often make advantageous arrangements for their students to use sports facilities in the local community and generate income through letting college sports facilities. Such initiatives have benefits for all concerned.

Factors which make it difficult for colleges to develop or maintain sports provision include increasing enrolments, which put pressure on timetables and accommodation, and the need to respond to efficiency targets which puts pressure on the funding and staff time available to support sport.

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INTRODUCTION

1 This report is concerned with sports activities in the further education sector. It includes a review of provision and highlights good practice. Three hundred and thirty colleges, about 70 per cent of the sector, provided information for a survey undertaken by inspectors in the summer of 1995. Evidence was also drawn from college inspections and from data held by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Interviews were held with representatives from organisations such as the National Coaching Foundation and information was received from British Colleges Sport (BCS). The Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) helped to gather data and draft the report.

SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES

2 Many colleges provide a wide range of sporting opportunities for their students. These fall into two broad categories:

- courses for students who want to achieve a sports-related qualification
- activities which students may opt to follow in addition to their main programme of study. These activities are sometimes provided as part of an 'entitlement curriculum', primarily designed to enrich and broaden students' experience.

Sports-related Qualifications

3 Records held by the FEFC indicate that, in 1994-95, about 47,000 students in the sector were studying for sports-related qualifications offered by 334 colleges. Most of these students were aged between 16 and 18. Almost all enrolments were divided between foundation (22 per cent), intermediate (44 per cent) and advanced (33 per cent) levels.

4 Academic courses include General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) physical education and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses in physical education and sports studies. In 1994-95, there were about 10,500 enrolments on these GCE A level courses in 210 colleges. The majority of enrolments were on physical education courses. There were a further 3,100 enrolments on GCSE courses in 129 colleges.

5 In recent years, there has been considerable growth both in the number of colleges offering GCE A level sports-related courses and the number of students taking them. A comparison of GCE A level examination entries indicates that, in further education, academic sports-related study attracts almost as many students as computer studies and that examination entries exceed those in any foreign language, apart from French. In one sixth form college, enrolments to the GCE A level course in physical education have increased by 120 per cent in the last year, from 56 to 123 students. Another college reported that enrolments on sports GCE A level courses have risen from 40 to 125 over two years. Student examination entries on sports-related GCE A level courses in the further education sector have increased from 3,200 in 1992-93 to over 4,500 in 1994-95. In 1994-95, the further education sector provided 63 per cent of all entries to these examinations, with just over half from sixth form colleges. Factors influencing the growth in enrolments include:

- increased student interest in sport
- a growth in employment opportunities in the sports and leisure fields
- a greater willingness by colleges to offer academic sports-related courses.

6 Vocational provision, such as the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in sport and recreation, is available at levels 1 to 3. In 1994-95, there were about 3,000 enrolments on NVQ programmes offered by the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) and the City and Guilds of London

Institute (C&G). There were a further 2,600 enrolments on courses offered by the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC). In 1994-95, 45 colleges offered NVQ sport and recreation courses and a similar number offered BTEC national diploma courses in science (sports studies). Higher level provision includes courses such as the higher national diploma in sports and recreation management. 'Access' courses for mature students facilitate entry to higher education and some colleges offer degree level courses through franchise arrangements with universities. While some courses are entirely concerned with sports, others include sports-related units. For example, the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in leisure and tourism at advanced level includes optional units in sports coaching and fitness.

7 In addition to full-time courses, there is a large number of qualifications which are normally achieved through part-time study. These include NVQs offered by sports governing bodies or other awarding bodies, and community sports leadership and coach education awards offered by organisations such as the Central Council of Physical Recreation and the National Coaching Foundation. The further education sector provides vocational courses leading to about 100 separate sports qualifications. Example 1 shows that some of these involve substantial numbers of students in further education colleges.

Example 1. In 1994-95:

- 4,000 students were enrolled on courses leading to British Canoe Union awards
- 6,000 students were aiming for Amateur Swimming Association certification
- 4,100 students were following the courses leading to community sports leadership awards
- 4,000 students were following Football Association coaching courses
- 2,400 students undertook RSA/Sports Council certificate courses in teaching exercise to music.

8 Whilst sixth form colleges often concentrate on full-time GCE A level and GCSE programmes in physical education and sports studies, other further education colleges tend to offer a broader range of sports-related courses. Agricultural colleges, as well as offering general sports provision, frequently offer equine studies and horse management courses, significant elements of which are of a recreational or sporting nature. These colleges also provide opportunities for students to gain British Horse Society riding qualifications and follow courses related to countryside conservation, in addition to their main programme of study. Course programmes which prepare students for entry to public services, such as the police and fire services, often include the opportunity to gain qualifications such as the community sports leadership awards, St John Ambulance certificates, life-saving and personal survival awards, and sports proficiency awards.

9 In the past year, there has been rapid growth in provision for students offered through franchise arrangements made by colleges. In some cases, sports governing bodies are seeking to develop their training programmes within the framework of NVQs so that they can contribute to the national targets for education and training. Current franchised provision can involve large numbers of students and a variety of sporting activities.

10 There have been growing concerns about colleges' ability to secure the overall quality of franchised provision and provide adequate support for students, especially if arrangements make training available on a national basis. Recent guidance issued by the FEFC is intended to ensure that franchised provision is securely under the control of colleges and will achieve the quality and standards of other publicly-funded provision.

Optional Sport

11 Many colleges, particularly sixth form and tertiary colleges, offer a wide range of sports-related activities as part of a programme of optional activities or an 'entitlement curriculum'. Sometimes, students are encouraged to participate in at least one sport regularly. Example 2 shows the differing arrangements which enable students to benefit from optional sports activities.

Example 2. All first-year students in a Yorkshire sixth form college must choose at least one option from a programme of timetabled activities. Participation is optional for second-year students. Twenty-one sports and fitness activities are available and 71 hours of supervised time are timetabled each week. In a general further education college in Lincolnshire, a range of activities is available to students through clubs which operate in the evenings and at weekends. College facilities are opened specifically for this purpose. Activities include five-a-side and women's football, aerobics, trampolining, indoor hockey and badminton.

12 Optional sporting activities include both individual and team games. As well as the major team sports, activities such as climbing, orienteering, snooker, martial arts, ten-pin bowling and a variety of water sports are available. Many colleges also offer programmes leading to the Duke of Edinburgh awards. Where participation in sport is integral to college life, colleges sometimes take care to make sure students select an appropriate programme of activities. One college, for example, helps each student at induction to plan a programme designed to improve his or her all-round sporting ability. Other colleges are less proactive but still make sure that sports opportunities are made known to new students through handbooks given out at induction or introductory events.

13 Increasingly, colleges are seeking accreditation from regional or national organisations for optional sports activities their students undertake. For example, nine colleges in the South East offer a total

of 139 accredited 'units' in more than 15 sports. The units have been accredited by the South of England Accreditation Network which is made up of the Southern Access Federation and the Sussex Open College Network. Accreditation ensures that students take part in a structured programme of sports activity. This enables them to develop competence within a framework which has levels similar to those of NVQs. In many cases, students can develop their skills progressively. For example, one college offers accredited provision in nine different sports, six of which can be studied at three different levels.

14 In some colleges, timetabling pressures have reduced the amount of time when all students are free. In consequence, opportunities to form student teams and take part in college-wide activities have become more limited. Lunch breaks are increasingly being timetabled for classes in order to maximise the use of rooms, and Wednesday afternoons, traditionally reserved for sports and other non-academic activities, are increasingly being used for teaching. Despite such constraints, example 3 shows that colleges can construct their timetables in a way which allows them to provide good opportunities for students.

Example 3. In one college, the timetable combines academic programmes with coaching to county or national standards. Students with the ability to reach high sporting standards can combine coaching with their academic programme which they are able to extend to make up for time lost. In another college, sports periods are timetabled before lunch breaks so that students may continue during the lunch break. In a third college, all students have access to a programme of lunchtime activities in the sports hall and fitness centre. The sessions are well supported; there is an average weekly attendance of about 230 students.

ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

15 The proportion of full-time students involved in sports can be high. One college reported that 30 per cent of the students participate regularly in team sports. Colleges sometimes devise enterprising ways to encourage participation. As example 4 shows, some colleges have agreements which enable students to use local facilities at no cost.

Example 4. One college has corporate membership of a local sports centre; payment of a monthly subscription by the college allows students to use the centre's facilities free of charge. In another college, full-time students wishing to participate in sport get a £2 voucher each week. This allows them access to a local leisure centre at times of their own choosing. In a third college, students are entitled to a token which gives them one-and-a-half hours of free activity in local recreational centres or in the college's own fitness centre which is run as a commercial operation.

16 Participation in college sports programmes frequently enables students to enter competitions. These provide an important incentive and success is often a matter of considerable pride to students and staff alike. Example 5 shows that competitions may be organised within the college or involve teams from the local community.

Example 5. In one college, there are inter-tutor group competitions and in-house leagues and competitions in seven sports. In 1994-95, 70 students participated in 'challenge ladders' and 120 in knock-out tournaments. Team colours, trophies and awards are presented at the annual sports ceremony. Another college fields three soccer teams on a Wednesday and two on a Saturday when two of the teachers play with the students in the local adult league. Netball and basketball teams compete in evening adult league games.

17 As well as playing friendly fixtures against other colleges and clubs, colleges enter a variety of regional events. For instance, in a college in the South East students can participate in international tall ships racing, while colleges in Devon provide weekend activity such as the Woodbury Challenge, which involves orienteering, rescue and endurance, and participation in the 'Ten Tors' endurance event in Dartmoor National Park. Agricultural colleges, in which team sports activities are often well developed, have their own network of competitions.

18 Some further education sector colleges participate in competitions organised by BCS. This organisation was originally formed in 1978 as the British Association for Sport in Colleges and relaunched in 1996 as BCS. It aims to encourage the development of sport and recreation in colleges and to promote high standards of performance. BCS is organised regionally and is financed through an annual members' fee supplemented by additional charges to colleges participating in events. Annual and regional competitions in 11 sports are organised for students in the 16 to 18 age range. Tertiary colleges, in particular, are well represented and achieve a high level of success. Some regions run additional competitions, for example in athletics and swimming. In 1994-95, 142 colleges were affiliated to BCS. Over the last four years, 193 colleges have been affiliated for at least one year. BCS fields national teams in soccer and rugby. These compete against European countries, and the English Schools and Royal Air Force under-19 sides.

19 Affiliation to national bodies not only provides a focus for sports training but also enables students to experience the stimulation and enjoyment of competition. For example:

- the England Rugby Football Union (RFU) Schools Union has 114 affiliated colleges; 21 entered the 1995 under-18 schools competition

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- 20 colleges, 10 of which are sixth form colleges, are members of the English Schools Basketball Association. In 1995, the under-19 boys individual schools competition was won by a team from a general further education college; a sixth form college team was runner-up
 - almost a third of the entries in the 1995-96 English Schools Football Association under-19 competition came from further education colleges.

20 Both sixth form and other further education colleges are clear that their sporting success can be a significant factor in attracting students to the college. Example 6 shows that this can have an impact on strategic thinking. However, while sixth form colleges highlight their sports provision in the drive to attract students, many general further education colleges mention it less in publicity material. When sporting success is actively publicised, it often achieves a high profile in the local press and is made into a feature of college prospectuses. Videos, display stands, students' handbooks and newsheets are also used to promote college sports provision.

Example 6. Leaflets which deal specifically with sports provision and success are distributed to partner schools for pupils aged between 11 and 16 by one sixth form college. In a general further education college, the impact of competition from local schools has resulted in a policy decision to widen the students' entitlement programme, in particular in sports-related activity. Brochures for a recently established sixth form centre in the college specifically advertise sporting opportunities available on Wednesday afternoons.

Equal Opportunities

21 Sport in colleges tends to be male dominated. Frequently, female students account for 30 to 40 per cent of those participating in sports activities and courses. Overall, female students comprised

38 per cent of those studying for qualifications in 1994-95. In the 16 to 18 age range, the figure was 34 per cent. Although some colleges make little attempt to promote equal opportunities in sport, others have flourishing women's teams in rugby, soccer and cricket and mixed teams for hockey, volleyball and tennis. Colleges could do more to encourage the participation of women in sports activity. At best, as shown in example 7, colleges take account of students' views in developing their sports programme and facilities.

Example 7. In one college, a three-week 'start rugby' course, administered by the county youth development officer, leads to a RFU certificate. The course was organised in direct response to requests from female students to learn to play rugby. At the session observed, seven of the 15 students were female. Another college has recognised that its indoor training facilities are set in an old-fashioned, masculine environment which puts off female users. This has influenced a planned £100,000 capital investment programme over the next two years.

22 Participation by part-time students is usually limited unless they are following a sport or leisure course. A range of sporting activities may, however, be offered as part of a college's non-vocational adult education programme. For example, in one further education college there are 1,000 part-time students enrolled on activities such as badminton, keep fit, tennis and indoor cricket.

23 Where colleges provide activities for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, these can include sports-related courses, competitions among local institutions making similar provision, horse-riding, courses for those interested in coaching people with disabilities, annual games events, and links with regional sports centres for people with disabilities. Example 8 shows the range of activities offered by one general further education college.

Example 8. A programme of activity is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including bat and ball skills, music and movement, aerobics, gym exercises, orienteering, beach walks, weight training and team games.

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

24 Sports courses leading to an award include opportunities for formal coaching to help students improve their technique and skill level and develop their ability to coach others. Colleges which provide award-bearing courses have access to a larger group of specialist teachers able to provide this systematic coaching. However, some colleges make good use of the expertise of non-sports specialist staff and of staff drawn from outside organisations or the community.

25 The extent to which there is coaching for sporting activities outside award-bearing courses varies, as does the degree to which they include a planned development of skills. Many colleges offer a range of optional or entitlement activities without formal coaching. The purposes of recreational activity of this kind include promoting and improving health and fitness; developing social and teamworking skills; providing opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment; and enabling students from different curriculum areas to meet.

26 Some colleges accredit sporting activity through the community sports leadership award or records of achievement. As shown in example 9, courses leading to the community sports leadership award require students to plan and conduct sports classes and to work in the community. This helps to ensure that skills development is planned and in addition encourages the development of leadership and communication skills.

Example 9. Activities leading to community sports leadership award qualifications required students to organise a basketball tournament for local schools and to teach sport to primary school children. A lesson on short tennis as a means of developing racket skills was taught by two students and assessed by the course leader. The teaching skills demonstrated by the students were of a high standard.

27 Students also benefit if the college has links with a range of national and regional organisations and governing bodies. The benefits include additional coaching expertise and opportunities for students to demonstrate their talents to a wider audience. Links with sports development officers from the local council are sometimes particularly productive, allowing students to join courses aimed at specific sports coaching awards and with the officers sometimes helping to coach college teams. Example 10 shows that links with external organisations can also enhance work experience and widen curriculum opportunities.

Example 10. A teacher in one college with responsibility for a county RFU squad encourages student rugby players who hold a coaching award to assist with the development of young players within the county. This experience helps them gain coaching qualifications. In another college, links with the Greater Manchester Youth Games provide students with opportunities not only to participate but also to act as stewards and assistant coaches. The armed forces offer a third college weekend outward bound tuition in exchange for college services. An army youth team also provides a fourth college with facilities and instruction in canoeing, a week camp at the end of the summer term, and assault course and initiative training.

28 Example 11 illustrates that, like any other area of the curriculum, the best sports provision is well planned and effectively delivered.

This applies just as much where exercise and enjoyment provide the main focus for activities, rather than the acquisition of specific skills required to achieve a qualification.

Example 11(a). In spite of the poor weather, the pace of activity in a rugby training session was brisk and students demonstrated a high level of skill. The activities had been carefully chosen and appropriate interventions by the teacher helped to improve the students' decision-making and technical skills. The students responded well and enjoyed the session.

Example 11(b). Students in an aerobics class, working in pairs, taught each other basic step patterns which they had developed in the previous session and then refined in their free time. The students worked in a friendly but purposeful manner. The well-planned session provided good opportunities to develop confidence, communication and leadership skills.

Example 11(c). After warming up to music, 10 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities played indoor hockey. The students took part enthusiastically and showed care and consideration for their more vulnerable colleagues. One student, assisted by a walking frame, played in goal. He made tremendous, and successful, efforts to participate. The session provided students with a well-managed opportunity for physical exercise which enhanced their self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills.

Academic Achievement and Sporting Success

29 Pass rates for GCE A levels in physical education and sports studies are generally good. According to provisional results for 1995 published by the Department for Education and Employment, 92 per cent of sixth form college students entering sports-related GCE A levels passed with grades in the range A to E. This compares with an 84 per cent pass rate for all subjects. In other sector colleges, 83 per cent of students entering sports-related subjects passed, compared with a pass rate for all subjects of 69 per cent.

However, in both sixth form and other colleges, the percentage of students achieving grades A to C in sports-related GCE A levels was slightly lower than the average for all subjects. This profile of students' achievements is reflected in results for sports-related GCSE courses. In some colleges examination results for sports subjects are particularly good and, as shown in example 12, represent students' best achievements.

Example 12. All 83 students in the college who have taken sports-related GCE A level examinations in the last four years have passed, a good proportion at the higher A to C grades. Only 18 per cent of these students achieved a better grade in any other GCE A level subject.

30 Many colleges also produce good results in vocational courses with a sports element. Students on sports courses often achieve a high level of success in gaining coaching qualifications in addition to their main course qualification. A high proportion of students progress from advanced level sports courses to related courses in higher education. For example, 75 per cent of the GCE A level students in one college progressed to sports-related higher education courses. Many colleges also report a high progression rate for students on intermediate level courses into related jobs or advanced level courses.

31 Success at regional and national level often depends on the level of support provided by the college and significant success in team sports is more often found where teams are regularly supported and coached throughout the year. Many students progress to represent their county or country and play in top professional and amateur clubs, for example in football, rugby, cricket, hockey and basketball. Individual students who succeed in sports activities were often experts in their chosen sport before entering the college and progress without significant help. Nevertheless, college staff often contribute to individual students' training regimes and many students owe some of their success to

college. For instance, in one college, a student national winner of an individual medal for trampolining receives coaching from college staff, has a private coach and attends a regional centre for additional training. Other students, as shown by example 13, are introduced to a sport while at college in which they subsequently excel.

Example 13. In one college, a paraplegic student who was introduced to wheelchair tennis at college went on to represent Britain. In another college, the considerable orienteering expertise among the staff has helped four students get places in the British orienteering team. In a third college, students entered in an international tall ships race came fourth and won the award for international co-operation that is associated with the competition. The students had little relevant experience before joining the college.

MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

32 While major sports-related courses leading to qualifications are generally managed by a sports or physical education section, often within a larger department, the arrangements for the management and organisation of entitlement and voluntary programmes are more varied. In some colleges, they are managed by the sports section, or a specific faculty is responsible. In others, the responsibility lies with a liaison officer who works with the students' association or student services. Management of the provision is sometimes dispersed across several departments. Example 14 shows that effective arrangements can be made to co-ordinate activities.

Example 14. One general further education college operates a sports management group which represents all areas of the college associated with sport. It meets four times a year and organises a development day at the end of the year.

33 Entitlement and voluntary provision in sixth form colleges tends to be overseen by a senior manager responsible for all extra-curricular provision. In some agricultural colleges, the wardens responsible for residential students manage college sports provision and work with the students' association or student services. In many colleges, the extent and success of the sports provision owes much to the commitment of senior managers, including the principal, and to the dedication of a wide range of staff. Commitment at a senior level is exemplified by the contribution college principals make to the organisation of BCS.

34 Typically, the number of full-time specialist teachers in a college is between two and five but sometimes colleges have very little sports provision and no specialist staff. Full-time sports teachers tend to be supplemented by a large number of other staff, sometimes as many as 30, in order to ensure that entitlement and team activities are well managed. While some of these are part-time teachers, others are full-time staff who work in a variety of curriculum areas and who may be timetabled to help manage and coach sports activities. For example, in one sixth form college, 28 per cent of the teaching staff are involved in the delivery of extra-curricular sporting activities. Many teachers, both full-time specialists and others, make a significant voluntary and unpaid contribution to a college's sports provision. This contribution is regarded as indispensable where a college seeks to sustain an extensive and successful programme of sports activities for its students.

35 Example 15 shows that full-time teaching and instructor staff are often well qualified; many possess relevant degree and higher degree qualifications as well as teaching and coaching qualifications.

Example 15. At one college, a small staff of one full-time and three part-time teachers holds a wide range of sports qualifications. They include Amateur Athletics Association, Lawn Tennis Association, badminton, orienteering, trampolining and dinghy sailing coaching qualifications, as well as qualifications in first aid, climbing, abseiling and caving. They all play sport at club level and some to county standard.

36 The growth in major course provision leading to qualifications has resulted in increased numbers of specialist sports teachers. However, meeting the needs of increased numbers of students on these examined courses has inevitably reduced the time that the specialist full-time sports teachers can devote to wider provision. Several colleges are also experiencing a drop in the voluntary contributions of non-specialist teachers as their time is increasingly taken up in teaching their own specialist subjects. Many colleges have reported that it is becoming more difficult to get staff to supervise evening and weekend activities and some colleges have reduced their programmes as a result.

37 To offset the burden on specialist sports teachers, some colleges are making non-teaching appointments to cover the supervision of general sporting activity and the management of college sports facilities which are open to the public. For example, one college has appointed a recreation officer to oversee the work of seven instructors. Other colleges have appointed sports officers, sports assistants and assistants in student services who carry a responsibility for supporting sports provision.

38 Sports courses leading to formal qualifications are subject to the same quality assurance procedures that apply to other college courses; relevant statistics are generally collected, students' perceptions of their experience are considered and an annual report is completed. Some provision is rigorously evaluated, as shown by example 16, but in many cases quality assurance procedures are relatively ineffective.

Example 16. The annual report for a GCE A level sports studies course included data on recruitment, attendance and retention. These data were compared with college averages and past performance. Students' perceptions were collected by questionnaire and carefully analysed. Students' achievements in external examinations were compared with their success in their other subjects as well as with national averages. A development plan for the sports section drew on the key points of the analyses in the annual report.

39 Quality assurance for optional sports provision is generally weak. In many colleges, the only way of reviewing provision is a general college questionnaire which includes one or two questions about the sports provision and facilities. In some colleges even this opportunity is not used. Nevertheless, there is also good practice, shown by example 17, where entitlement programmes are subject to the same rigour as other college provision.

Example 17. A college offering a large entitlement programme carries out an annual review of its provision, drawing on students' perceptions gathered by a questionnaire. Attendance is monitored carefully and the programme operates under the same efficiency guidelines as other provision. The sports manager presents an annual report to governors.

FACILITIES AND COSTS

40 There is wide variation in the quality of the grounds and accommodation which support college sports provision. This is due largely to differences in the extent to which local authorities provided their colleges with sporting facilities or required them to use local authority facilities before incorporation. In a few instances,

agreements on the ownership of grounds and other assets post-incorporation have not yet been reached. On average, colleges have 1.85 hectares of land devoted to playing fields (the equivalent of about two football pitches) but provision varies considerably across the country. For instance, in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, the average is only 0.63 hectares for each college while in the East Midlands it is 3.65 hectares.

41 Some colleges benefit from excellent facilities and many have a gymnasium or sports hall, changing rooms, fitness rooms, some outdoor playing facilities and dedicated classrooms for teaching sports courses. More unusual facilities include squash courts, indoor tennis courts and climbing walls, and provision for yachting. Agricultural colleges, in particular, often have good sports pitches which double as teaching resources on, for example, turf management courses. Example 18 shows that even if colleges own few or no sports facilities, arrangements to overcome this can be impressive.

Example 18. At one sixth form college there is a range of sporting facilities, including pitches for major team games, a swimming pool, gymnasium and tennis courts. Use is made of external facilities such as an athletics track, hockey pitch and a local leisure centre, where the college has 50 per cent of day-time use of the sports hall. At another college with no sports facilities of its own, there is access to an adjacent sports hall which is shared with a school and community groups in the evenings. The college also pays for the use of leisure centres, a swimming pool, athletics grounds and games pitches. Students can reclaim their fares if they use public transport to travel to facilities.

42 Weaknesses in the quality of college facilities most frequently include:

- poor accommodation for changing
- low ceilings or lack of space in gymnasia, assembly halls or other accommodation doubling as gymnasia
- sports halls with poor-quality flooring
- poorly-drained playing fields.

43 The range of equipment supporting sports provision in colleges is often extensive. However, in some colleges the quality of facilities and equipment is poor and in many it is no more than adequate. In some cases, the lack of good quality facilities prevents a college from providing adequate support for students who excel in their sport. For example, in a group of nine colleges surveyed in the Midlands, students have played at county level in volleyball, netball and tennis; at national level in cricket and basketball; and at international level in football and rounders. One student has also represented Britain in the Olympic Games for athletes with disabilities. The colleges admit that they can contribute little to these achievements because, in many instances, facilities are not up to the standard required for top-level players and athletes.

44 Colleges with a strong commitment to sport are often enterprising in their approach to maintaining or improving facilities. Improvements are frequently associated with the introduction of sports-related courses funded by the FEFC. For instance, one college in the North West has recently allocated £200,000 to provide new equipment and refurbish premises to accommodate a new initiative in sports provision. Other colleges have entered into sponsorship agreements with local companies or equipment suppliers, or have bought second-hand equipment to cut the costs of purchase. One college in the South West has an agreement with an outside contractor which runs the college fitness centre. Investment in facilities to support

specific courses, such as multi-gyms, computerised fitness testing equipment, aerobic studios, saunas and solaria, often has benefits for students who take part in sports solely for recreational purposes.

45 A few colleges see lottery funds distributed through the Sports Council as a means of developing new facilities, particularly where there are perceived deficiencies in local community provision. For instance, one sixth form college received £727,000 of lottery funding as a contribution to a £2 million project to create a variety of facilities for student and community use. Another general further education college received £592,000 towards a £1.1 million project to develop facilities which are also available to the local community. Recent changes in application procedures have increased the proportion of lottery funds available to support individual initiatives. This is expected to help colleges and their local partners establish viable projects. The FEFC has also provided funds to support the development and educational use of new sports facilities. Since January 1996, when the FEFC was able to support capital projects for the first time, a total of £5.7 million has been allocated to projects that include sports and leisure facilities. This represents about 10 per cent of the capital project funding allocated by the FEFC in the first quarter of 1996.

46 In many cases, the students' union or association makes an important contribution to the maintenance of sports provision. This can take the form of both organisational and financial assistance. However, there is growing concern about how to contribute to maintenance and replacement costs out of available funds.

47 Staff time is often paid for through part-time budgets or by a reduction in hours that would have been allocated to other teaching. Budgets also have to cover consumables, funding for the use of outside facilities, specialist coaching, team kit, travel and membership of regional or national bodies. Allocations are made for the maintenance of college indoor and outdoor facilities, and staff

such as sports centre managers or sports co-ordinators may be employed. Example 19 shows that colleges demonstrate and account for their commitment to sport in a variety of ways.

Example 19. One college estimated that sports provision costs £100 for each student a year; another quantified its investment as £12,000 a year for equipment and 27 hours a week of staff time to supervise the extra-curricular sports programme. A third college with few sporting facilities of its own spends £8,500 a year on hire costs. In a fourth college, the budget for sports-related courses is £10,000 and is administered by the head of school through team leaders. In addition, the co-ordinator for extra-curricular sport is allocated £5,000. The students' union contributes £1,000.

48 Despite such commitments, it is clear that opportunities for students can be threatened by funding constraints. In one college, all full-time students, five years ago, had one hour a week of sport scheduled as part of their timetabled provision and the college fielded teams in a number of sports and took part in local and regional events. The college claims it can now no longer afford to fund such provision and none of it remains. Some colleges only provide activities if there is no additional cost to the college. Other colleges report that the number of sporting events has declined as more students take on part-time jobs to support themselves at college. The expense of taking part in competitive sports has also reduced participation. While many colleges maintain that they would like to do more to provide sporting opportunities, few have undertaken a value-for-money review of their sports provision or are aware of its true cost. Such an exercise can reap significant benefits for students, as shown by example 20.

Example 20. Following a review, one college changed from a Wednesday afternoon block booking with its local leisure centre to a voucher system which allows more flexible participation. The cost has doubled, but participation has increased fourfold.

49 To offset the cost of sports provision, example 21 shows that some colleges let their facilities to outside groups including community groups, local authorities, schools and voluntary organisations. This is an area where there is scope for increased entrepreneurialism within the sector. Shared facilities can play an important part in building community links as well as providing valuable revenue for the college. Clubs benefit from arrangements which allow them to use the college sports halls or fitness suites. Some colleges provide club players with tailored courses in sports and recreation and help clubs deliver their apprenticeship schemes. Students benefit from opportunities for work experience and from the increased likelihood that they will continue participating in sports activities on leaving full-time education.

Example 21. In one college, the sports centre and other facilities are well used by students during the day and in the evenings. The local authority rents them at the weekend. Another college took over running the adjacent sports centre prior to incorporation. This only closes for 12 days over Christmas and aims to provide a service for the community, both for individual lettings and clubs. Income generated from lettings in 1994-95 was estimated to be around £48,000. A third college provides facilities for nine football clubs, three swimming clubs, two schools, one boys club, one youth club, the United States Navy and the local community association.

CONCLUSIONS

50 Students in further education benefit from a wide range of sporting opportunities provided by colleges. These include opportunities to gain qualifications, which are increasing in popularity, and to participate in sports for recreational purposes. Involvement in sports enriches students' lives and enables them to develop not only physical skills but also organisational skills and important qualities such as leadership, the ability to work in teams

and self-discipline. Many colleges participate in local, regional or national competitions. Success in these is a matter of considerable pride to students and staff alike. Specialist staff are frequently well qualified and, in many cases, staff who are not primarily employed to teach sports, give a substantial amount of free time to support sporting activities.

51 The quality and extent of sports provision are not uniform within the sector. Some colleges, either through lack of facilities, commitment or expertise, have not developed extensive sports provision. In some cases, colleges have allowed sports opportunities for students to decline in the face of increased enrolments and timetabling constraints, and the pressure on funding, accommodation and staffing experienced throughout the sector. Nevertheless, other colleges are responding constructively to such pressures and have made participation in sports an important feature of college life. Good practice in the provision of sport often involves ensuring that:

- sporting opportunities are widely publicised to students and that appropriate guidance and advice is available to help students choose sports they will enjoy
- timetables are constructed so that students and staff can participate in team games and other sporting activities regularly
- due account is taken of the wishes of students and the encouragement of equal opportunities when developing facilities and opportunities
- students benefit from well-organised coaching and have opportunities to gain nationally-recognised certificates and awards

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- students have the chance to enter competitions and become involved in sports activities in the local community
 - arrangements are made to accommodate the training needs of students who have outstanding abilities
 - sporting success is recognised and widely publicised
 - students have easy access to local facilities which supplement those offered by the college
 - sports activities are subject to the same planning, quality assurance and evaluation regimes as other aspects of college provision
 - opportunities to generate additional income for the college through hiring out sports facilities are fully exploited.

PEN PORTRAITS OF COLLEGE PROVISION

Example 1. A general further education college with a good range of courses

This general further education college serves an urban area characterised by social deprivation and high unemployment. It provides a wide range of courses in sport and recreation leading to formal qualifications in sport and leisure management, sports coaching, and exercise and fitness. It has well-developed links with a variety of organisations. Over 600 of the college's 6,000 enrolments are in sports-related courses at foundation, intermediate, advanced and higher levels. There are plans to increase the level of team sports activity, which is presently low.

Full-time courses include a GNVQ in leisure and tourism at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, GCE A level sports studies and the first two years of a BA leisure management course. The GNVQ course provides options for students to specialise in either sport, exercise and fitness, or travel and tourism and opportunities to gain sports leadership awards as well as a variety of coaching awards. Access courses in sports studies and physical education which can lead to degree level work are provided for adults.

Part-time courses include sports coaching awards, national coaching foundation awards in subjects such as nutrition, strength and speed, and safety and injury. A range of fitness courses, accredited by the London YMCA, is also offered. There are higher national and national certificate courses in leisure studies and modules in sports leadership, skills for sport and first aid. Some modules are accredited through the open college network and can be mixed with coaching awards to form courses tailored to suit individual need.

The college offers students a variety of patterns of attendance. For example, courses leading to coaching and YMCA awards are offered one day a week, by block release, through weekend and evening classes, or in summer schools. Courses are run at the main college site and at other college centres. The number of part-time students is substantial; over 200 students were enrolled on YMCA or national coaching award courses in autumn 1995. The courses attract adults employed in health clubs, the self-employed and people who are unemployed.

There are close links with organisations ranging from the London YMCA to local sports clubs. The college is a member of a local area network for coaching education and is establishing a teaching base at a local sports and leisure centre in partnership with the city council. This initiative will provide GNVQ students with practical experience of working with local primary school children.

The sports and fitness facilities are available to the public. The well-equipped fitness suite is open to the public in the evening and at weekends. Local sports clubs hire the sports hall for evening use and it is used extensively at the weekends for sports coaching awards. Income from these activities amounted to over £5,000 in the autumn term 1995. The facilities are also made available free of charge to all college students during lunchtimes when activities are supervised by qualified coaches.

A sports development officer and a fitness facilities co-ordinator have recently been appointed to increase the use of college sports facilities and to increase student participation in sports activity. Team and individual sports are being developed and internal competitions between different courses have been introduced. College teams are now competing in the BCS competitions in three sports and there are plans to compete against local colleges.

Example 2. An agricultural college with good team sports provision

This agricultural college is notable for its range of team sports and the number of competitions in which it operates. Over 1,000 of the college's 1,700 enrolments are full time. Many of the full-time students either use residential accommodation provided by the college on campus or are in nearby lodgings. About 370 students follow higher education courses.

The college lists a number of aims for its commitment to sport. These include producing good team spirit, developing skills, encouraging leadership and commitment, widening students' experience and facilitating the development and accreditation of core and coaching skills. The college recognises the value of its sporting programme and associated facilities in attracting students and encourages tutors to ensure prospective students are fully acquainted with the college's strengths in these areas of provision. Sporting success is given prominence in local newspapers.

Teams play regularly in eight major sports. Some of the teams operate in more than one league. For example, the soccer team competes on Wednesdays in the Northern Area Services League against teams drawn from military establishments and against other agricultural colleges on Saturdays in the Northern Colleges Sports League. The college's equestrian team competes in the British universities equestrian competition, holds regular riding events at the weekends and also holds two British Horse Society events annually at levels up to advanced level. The students' timetables are freed on Wednesday afternoons in order to facilitate participation.

The college regularly sends several teams to weekend fixtures in the Northern Colleges Sports League. Teams also participate in some whole weekend events and some teams compete abroad. For example, the equestrian team has recently competed in Paris and the soccer team in Germany.

Students receive regular practice and coaching from qualified coaches. The soccer team has a football coach running its Monday night training sessions, the rugby league team benefits from coaching provided by a former professional rugby league player and the hockey teams use the coaching expertise provided by the region's sports development officers. Links with these officers are productive. For example, students have gained coaching qualifications in hockey, rugby and dance through attending courses organised by the officers.

In addition to the major team sports, there are good opportunities for students to participate in individual and small group activity, for example climbing, juggling, aerobics, clay pigeon and other shooting activities. The college estimates that about 30 per cent of the college's full-time students are involved in sport. The college achieves some notable successes: in 1994 teams from the college were either the winners, finalists or semi-finalists in national sevens competitions in rugby, hockey and soccer. The college also had success in the national clay pigeon shooting competition, where students won the women's competition and were finalists in the men's competition. Individual successes include fifth place in the national climbing championships.

Some of the sporting activities involve students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include fishing and horse-riding, where some horses have been bought specifically for the use of these students.

The college's two full-time student services managers oversee the sporting activities. They are assisted in this by the college wardens who provide coaching assistance and help to supervise student teams; by the students' association which operates a sports committee upon which all sports team captains sit; and through the support of many of the college's staff. The sports committee allocates finance for sports through a bidding system which takes into account such issues as start-up costs and the number of students

participating. Students confirm that sport is taken seriously in the college, is well managed, that teachers and other staff provide considerable support, and that financial support is good. For example, teams are provided with team and training kit, equipment, travel costs and free laundry.

There are good facilities for sport on the college campus and outside facilities are used to complement these, for example for swimming, sailing and ice-skating. There are good quality pitches for rugby, soccer and hockey in the college grounds; excellent changing room facilities in new accommodation; a good-sized sports hall; squash courts; and a fitness room which has been equipped with a range of fitness equipment provided second hand and at low cost. The equestrian facilities include a stable yard which can accommodate more than 70 horses, an outdoor floodlit horse-riding area, an indoor arena and a cross-country course of national standard.

Example 3. A sixth form college with thriving academic and extension programmes, and good practice in team sports

This sixth form college of over 1,300 full-time and 480 part-time students has an expanding and successful GCE A level sports course, and a considerable commitment to both competitive sport and to its extension programme in which sport figures significantly. The college enrolled 56 students to the two years of the GCE A level physical education course in 1994 and 123 students in 1995. A high percentage of the students on this course obtain high grades.

Sport is a major activity in the college's substantial extension studies programme, which aims to develop students' social, physical and intellectual qualities, and to encourage their enjoyment and personal success so that they will continue to participate in sport after leaving college. There are 18 sports-related activities available in 46 supervised timetabled sessions each week, each lasting 50 minutes,

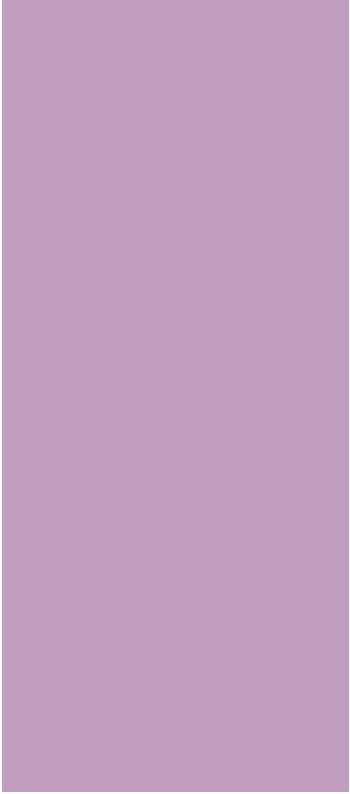
with options available during nearly all timetabled periods of each day in order to maximise choice and opportunity. The college estimates that over 500 students participate in this programme, some for more than one period. About 45 per cent of these students are female. Some activities provide opportunities for students to gain accreditation for the skills and knowledge they acquire, for example through community sports leadership awards and college-devised courses leading to open college accreditation. Students gain accreditation, for example, in rugby or football coaching, umpiring, life-saving, and swimming. Some of these certificated courses are taught by the region's development officers, with whom the college has close links.

In addition to the extension studies programme, college teams compete regularly in nine major team sports. More than one team is fielded in several sports. For example, there are often up to three soccer teams; mixed, female and male hockey; and two female netball teams. These teams play against other colleges and schools on Wednesday afternoons. Teams, sometimes strengthened by college staff, play in local adult leagues outside college time. For example two soccer teams play on Saturdays, and three netball teams, a cricket team and a basketball team play in the weekday evenings. All teams receive coaching and a timetabled period is kept free of other teaching for this purpose.

College teams enter a variety of competitions such as the England Schools' competitions and others sponsored by commercial organisations such as the Midland Bank and the Daily Mail. The college estimates that about 200 students participate regularly in competitive team sports. Students' achievements are good. Individual students have achieved regional and national recognition, and college teams often do well in regional and national competitions. For example, the female hockey team frequently reaches their area finals and some soccer players have had England trials.

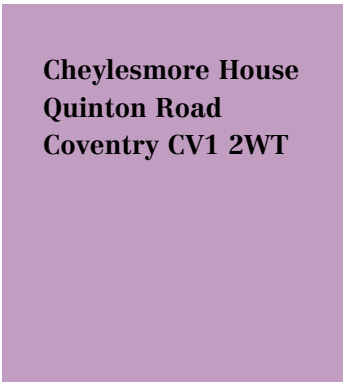
The college makes a considerable commitment to sports provision, which is managed along with the academic sports courses through the department for physical education and recreational studies. There are five full-time specialist teachers. Four part-time specialists and 10 teachers of other subjects provide additional support. About 46 hours a week of teaching time are allocated to the extension programme and team sports. It is estimated that the full-time specialist teachers each provide about four hours and other staff about three hours a week of unpaid extra-curricular support in order to ensure activities are properly managed.

Sports facilities are good. There are rugby, soccer, hockey and cricket pitches, netball and tennis courts on site, and a gymnasium and swimming pool in the main college buildings. In addition, the college pays for regular use of a local sports hall, as well as other facilities such as an athletics track and an all-weather hockey pitch. Equipment levels are good. Resources are maintained from budgets managed by the director of physical education and recreational studies.



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