

Juha Westerlund

**The Role of Top-Level Sport in Finland –
A Governmental Perspective of the Present Status and Future
Trends**

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Sport Sciences
Social Sciences of Sport
Master's Thesis
Autumn 2011

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Department of Sport Sciences/Faculty of Social Sciences of Sport

WESTERLUND, JUHA:

The Role of Top-Level Sport in Finland – A Governmental Perspective of the Present Status and Future Trends

ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis, 105 pages + appendices, 5 pages

Social Sciences of Sports

Autumn 2011

Top-level sports has been through its existence a part of Finnish society which creates social content. It has its own place in a nation's history and culture. It has promoted national identity among Finnish people. This study examines the role and different faces of Finnish top-level sports during of its existence from early 1900s until today. In Today's top-level sports there are many interesting aspects from which professionalism rises the topmost. From a governmental perspective the concept of top-level sport refers to sporting events and athletes who already represent their countries or aim at international success and recognition. Moreover such sports and athletes are also publicly subsidised. Today's professionalised sport is viewed as generating both economic and social value for society, and it also has clear political value for the Finnish government. However, professionalised sport has also raised new ethical and moral questions which have directed government's participation in top-level sport.

In addition to the main research question, the second aim is to research future guidelines of top-level sport from governmental viewpoint and research what the Finnish government's motives to subsidise top-level sport might be. The data has been collected from six top-level sports strategy documents published by Finnish government and analysed with discourse analysing method. Results indicate that today's top level sport is more professionalised, however differentiated. Organisations, clubs and athletes in top-level sport are aiming for more professional activity, however the increased commercialisation sets different resources for different athletes and events. The most popular events have more extensive presence and they receive larger global attention for both media and spectatorwise. Indeed, the Finnish government is in front of the big questions when making holistic strategies of top-level sport. The focus points for the future will be in support and education of athletes' training and life-management. There is a group founded for these questions; the Finnish Elite Sport Development Group which aims to solve and develop Finnish top-level sport and secure success in future. Hence, the government is also supporting top-level sport financially by athlete, event and organisation subsidies as well as financing construction of sport facilities. In conclusion the Finnish government sees the value of top-level sport for the nation in several dimensions and it will be supported and developed as a part of Finnish sport culture.

Keywords: Top-level sport, Society, Government, Subsidy, Professionalism, Globalisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1. Aims and purpose of the study	7
1.2. The hypothesis of the study.....	7
2. DEVELOPMENT OF TOP-LEVEL SPORT	9
2.1. What is top-level sport?.....	9
2.2. Defining society.....	11
2.3. Early stages in Finnish top-level sport	12
2.4. Military sport	14
2.5. Importance of Olympics – Helsinki Olympics in year 1952.....	15
2.6. Organisational movement of top-level sport from 1960s until 1980s.....	17
3. PROFESSIONALISM IN TOP-LEVEL SPORT	19
3.1. From amateur sport into secret-professionalism	19
3.2. Professional sport	20
3.3. Commercialisation, Media and Sponsorship entry into top-level sport	22
4. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FINNISH TOP-LEVEL SPORT.....	25
4.1. Historical background of organisational development.....	25
4.2. From 1970s started era of segmentation and professionalism in Finnish top-level sport	27
4.3. Present status – role of top-level sport in today	29
4.4. Main organisations and public funding in Finnish top-level sport.....	31
4.5. Background of doping – antidoping activity (part of the top-level sport in today)....	38
4.6. Antidoping activity – organisations and funding	39
5. RESEARCH TASKS AND METHODOLOGY	41
5.1. Implementation of the study.....	44
5.2. Themes	47
6. RESULTS	50
6.1. Influencers of today’s Finnish top-level sport.....	50
6.1.1. Top-level sport as a fundamental part of Finnish sports culture	52
6.1.2. Children and youth sport.....	53

6.1.3. Coaching and education.....	56
6.1.4. Globalisation.....	60
6.1.5. Ethical and moral questions.....	62
6.1.6. Antidoping activity	65
6.1.7.Disabled sport	68
6.2. Professionalism in top-level sport	69
6.2.1. Professionalism.....	70
6.2.2. Commercialisation and entertainisation.....	74
6.2.3. Differentiation of top-level sport	79
6.3. Finnish government's role in today's top-level sport.....	84
6.3.1. Top-level sport as an content for society.....	84
6.3.2. Government's financial support.....	89
7. CONCLUSION	96
REFERENCES.....	102
APPENDICES	106
Appendix 1. Finnish top-level sport's organisations and structure	106
Appendix 2. Subsidy distribution into top-level sport in year 2005.....	107
Appendix 3. Information of the strategy documents used in the research.....	108
Appendix 4. Strategy document's central action plans.....	109
Appendix 5. Strategy document quotations	110

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to examine Finnish top-level sport's role from a governmental perspective. I will study top-level sport's position in society (society defined in 2.2), moreover its history, present state and future aspects. To signify the status of top-level sport in Finland and to indicate its future guidelines I will produce a qualitative research composed of previous literature material written about the topic area. In addition to this an analysis of top-level sports strategy documents which consists view of Finnish top-level sports present status and future guidelines from governmental perspective.

The Finnish government supports top-level sports with public subsidies. It has not always been this way, even though top-level sport has existed and been part of society for over a century. Overall, economic importance was a lot smaller in top-level sport in the early stages. The Finnish government's support is primarily financial, which is distributed to different selected sectors and participants that operate and represent Finnish top-level sport. The Finnish Ministry of Education (MINEDU), the Finnish Olympic Committee (NOC) and other event organisations are responsible for subsidy distribution and operative actions. Today, the Ministry of Education prepares an annual budget for grants and distributes subsidies forward to selected committees, organisations and institutions. Indeed, the Finnish Olympic Committee with event organisations are mainly responsible for operative actions and development of top-level sport. The NOC also makes athlete selections for main international competitions and distributes annual training-grants for individual athletes who fulfil set criterions.

The present situation of the Finnish government's involvement and financial support for top-level sport has generated conversation for and against as to whether top-level sport be supported with governmental capital. Noticeable is that all the financial support that the Finnish government distributes into sports, approximately 10% goes directly into top-level sports. In any case, the amount of indirect support is at least important for top-level sport development. Subsidies for infrastructure, youth sports development et cetera, benefits as

much or even more top-level sport in comparison to the impact of direct subsidies given to top-level sport. Against this statement it is not perhaps that relevant to study the role of top-level sport only from an economical perspective but try to identify what the Finnish government attempts to acquire from subsidising activities, how they see top-level sport's role in the present society and what might be the future development guidelines.

The Finnish government's economical support is one of the fundamental brick's in Finnish top-level sport system. However, subsidy distribution among sponsorship, TV-rights and endorsement deals enables multiple organisations and athletes to operate professionally, which is vital for gaining success internationally. However, it is perhaps more fruitful to study top-level sport's fringe phenomena from the past years until the present situation. Do for instance, heroism, patriotism and nationalism still occur in today's top-level sport? Does top-level sport offer educational value for present society, and should athletes be considered as a role model for youths still today? How Finnish sport core values democracy, equality and voluntariness occur in top-level sport? What is a political influence of top-level sport for Finnish government's decision-makers in domestic and foreign policy? Moreover, how important for the Finnish Government is Finland's success in top-level sport today?

This study's fundamental aspect and argument is that top-level sport is still an important part of Finnish society. Nature of top-level sport has unquestionably changed during the last 100 years, however it should still today consider enriching Finnish cultural, political, sociological and national content as well as advance Finland's image positively worldwide. Against this statement, I will survey the role of top-level sport in society within different time periods. The most natural way to examine field and approach present status is to produce historical literature review from different time periods in Finnish top-level sport. In addition, I find the most appropriate method to deepen and enrich this research is through a discourse analysis of the written literature produced by the Finnish Government namely – the top-level sports strategy documents, which indicate Finnish top-level sports status, vision and guidelines between years 1987-2010.

1.1. The aim and purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the top-level sport in the Finnish society. The concept of top-level sport is extremely difficult to define and definitions varies depending on the perspective it is viewed from. Furthermore, as a phenomenon top-level sport has transformed within different time periods, due to the fact that top-level sport has always had role creating content and representing ideologies of Finnish society. Moreover, the main purpose of this study is to research the position of top-level sport in today's society and attempt to untangle its future guidelines. By viewing a history of top-level sport, its connection to society within different time periods and in addition surveying today's documentation from the field, the research attempts to answer the following questions:

The main research question:

1. How the concept of top-level sport can be defined, and what is the perception of top-level sport in today's society from a governmental perspective?

The sub-questions:

2. How has professionalism changed the form of top-level sport, and how it has influenced the significance of top-level sport in society?
3. What is the Finnish Government's role and responsibility in today's top-level sport, and as a fundamental question, should top-level sport be excluded from public subsidy program?

1.2. The hypothesis of the study

The hypothesis of this study is that social, cultural and economical changes in society have influenced directly on the development of top-level sport. Aggravating, top-level sport is constantly a reflection of trends in current society. Thus, changes in society have affected top-level sport changing towards more intense and diverse direction. Moreover, it is reasonable to examine what is top-level sport's motivational and sociological as well the

economical impact in current society. Professionalism has brought commercialised and business-oriented operation modes for top-level sport which has challenged public institutions such as the Finnish Government, Ministry of Education, Finnish Olympic Committee et cetera, to consider the role and definition of top-level sport in today's and future society.

The main reason for this study was the author's personal interest to examine the development of Finnish top-level sport and its importance for society. When searching for literature on Finnish top-level sport, for the most part top-level sport was included as one part in wider and more general sport literature. Especially from sociological point of view there is very little literature which is purely concentrating on top-level sport from a governmental perspective. Another noticeable fact is that most of the literature is written in Finnish and there is an evident lack of international research on the topic. Therefore, I find the thesis beneficial due to the lack of research, which is purely concentrating on defining role of top-level sport from a sociological perspective and which is written in English.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF TOP-LEVEL SPORT

2.1. What is top-level sport?

It is not straightforward or clear to define top-level sport. Moreover, the concept of top-level sport is rather complex and its definition varies depending on the perspective it is viewed from. In other words, it is relevant to state that the definition of top-level sport has changed at the same time as the change of society. In addition the role and position of top-level sport is dependent on which aspect it is examined. However, top-level sport has different attributes which have an influence on society. Top-level sport is firstly about athlete performance at the highest level in sport but because of its nature it has also cultural, social and political impact in society. Indeed, today's more professionalised top-level sports have created new attributes and dimensions in top-level sport field. Money, media, professionalism and entertainment are examples of new attributes, which are strongly involved in today's top-level sport.

Different forms of professional sport have existed for long time period, however in 1980's professional sport started to take big steps forward in Finland. Within the last 30 year, Finnish top-level sport institutions have become even more professionalised, efficient and at the same time more segmented. Development of more competitive and demanding top-level sport has resulted in concepts of professionalism and top-level sport been integrated. As a result today's top-level sport is more professionalised in every sector, besides athletes there are several participants that earn their living by working in the top-level sport field. At the beginning of this research, I gathered numerous definitions from today's resources how different persons, institutions and organisations defined the concept of top-level sport. What is noticeable is the different persons and institutions definition on top level sport depending from their position and their perspective.

Top-level sport as a phenomenon is such a diverse concept that it is impossible to give an absolute definition for it. Top-level sport is constantly connected to trends in society and changes in human behaviour. (Lämsä 2004, 12)

Finnish Olympic Committee (NOC) defines the concept of top-level sport with the following words, “With top-level sport is meant adults and 16-18 year old athletes' national team level sport, which is aiming for success in international events and competitions. Moreover, disabled sport which is aiming for international success is considered as a part of Finnish top-level sport”. (Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio 2004, 20)

Jouko Kokkonen in his book, “Kansakunta kilpasilla” (2008, 30), explains competitive sport and its change towards top-level sport from a more “sport-oriented” viewpoint. He states that, “in competitive sport the aim is to achieve the highest possible position in as many events as possible with a combination of aiming for record breaking results. However, because of sport tactical reasons, in important competitions the aim is not to break records many times but the emphasis is more on winning”. Moreover, Kokkonen states that the term “top-level sport” became more recognised in the 1930’s when there started to emerge books and literature about top-level sport, like “Huippu-urheilun historia” written by Martti Jukola. In his own research, Kokkonen sees that the best way to compare success between countries is to examine success in international competitions. Using this type of hierarchy the Olympic Games is the most important competition. (Kokkonen 2008, 30)

Erkki Vasara in his book “Valtion liikunta-hallinnon historia” (2004, 72) indicates top-level sport’s political influence for Finnish government. He states, that in the early 1900s Finnish politicians and decision-makers started to see international sport success as a good instrument to unite nations, and as an opportunity to display Finnish society’s competitiveness internationally. From this perspective the concept of top-level sport meant international success, which produces value for Finland. Moreover, top-level sport was seen as strengthening national identity, and it possessed a somewhat nationalistic characteristics.

As mentioned above, top-level sport became more demanding later in the 1900s. Finnish top-level sport started to develop rapidly in the 80's, and development has continued until today. The development caused situations where organisations and athletes in top-level sport fields had to adapt to a more competitive environment and began operating more professionally. Organisations started to upgrade their operation modes, in other words, more professionalised activity was required in every sector. It was clear that there was a need for full professional coaching, athlete training; medical- and research work if Finland wanted to succeed in future Olympics and World Championships. (Itkonen 2008, 274-275)

However, possibly the biggest change was commercialisation of the Olympics and top-level sports, which started to occur in the 80's. This meant that sport organisations, such as the Finnish Olympic Committee, were forced to start operating with a more overall business-oriented method. This required new expertise from sport organisations which at the same time opened spots for new professional staff in the field. (Itkonen 2008, 271)

Indeed, it is impossible to give an absolute definition of top-level sport due to its influence to various individuals and institutions, which are associated with it. However, it is very clear that top-level sport's societal role and meaning has changed within different time periods since early 1900s. Today's top-level sport is more professional and sector oriented. It represents today's societal trends of more business, commercial and entertainment driven top-level sport. In organisational change of top-level sport, the Finnish Olympic Committee has taken a more hands on approach in coordinating Finnish top-level sport. It has taken responsibility in coordinating research work, anti-doping activities, athlete and coaching grants in Finnish top-level sport. (Itkonen 2008, 277)

2.2. Defining a society

According to the dictionary, the definition of society is, "an enduring and cooperating social group whose members have developed organised patterns of relationships through interaction with one another" (Merriam-Webster dictionary 2009). Moreover, society is a community, nation, or broad grouping of people having common traditions, institutions,

and collective activities and interests. Indeed, society is an ensemble of individuals with similar norms, values and standard of activities. From society's perspective sport can be considered being a part of societal content, which has role adding values and content in society with educational, economical, cultural and societal manners.

2.3. Early stages in Finnish top-level sport

Finnish sport started to gain its first organised forms at the end of the 1800-century. Development towards competitive sport was rather rapid and at the beginning of the 1900s Olympic sport replaced gymnastics as a main sport in Finland. By this time, success in London 1908 and Stockholm 1912 Olympic Games placed international success in competitive sports as an important role for Finland. Competitive sport started to become recognised for the first time in Finnish society. Moreover, from a governmental point of view, international sport success was firstly considered as an instrument to raise Finnish nation's self-esteem and raise attention as well as appreciation among other countries. Explicitly, the Olympic Games were considered the first and main measurement of success in Finnish competitive sport in the early 1900s. (Vasara 2004, 13-14, 71)

However, everything is relative and this was as well a case with success in competitive sport. Finland's success and recognition in international competitions did not automatically mean that Finnish society's functionality would have been appreciated with same manners. At least this was what most Finnish political parties and their representatives' opinion thought about the meaning of international sporting success in a beginning of the 1900-century. (Vasara 2004, 71) However, in early 1900-century citizen and governmental decision-makers started to recognise and understand top-level sport's societal and political benefits for society.

Development of competitive sport in its early steps personified and leaned a lot on enthusiastic sportsmen. Sportsmen such as Lauri "Tahko" Pihkala, who was an Olympic level athlete and who became known in his post-athlete career as a talented spokesman, writer and multi-influential person in Finnish sport, personally saw success in sport raising a nation's self esteem and representing well the Finnish society. Indeed, later on in Antwerp

at the 1920 Olympics, the Finnish Government took the same standpoint with Pihkala. At that time, successful athletes started to have a heroic reception and gain governmental recognition constantly from the top of Finnish government. Moreover, athletes started to be seen more often as requests for example came for an invitation with the President. However, still in this point a contemporary Finnish conservative regiment did not pay any Finnish athletes travel costs for international events. In other words, the Finnish government recognised but did not subsidise directly competitive sport. Anyhow, in the year 1924 governmental sport committee stated that a main criterion for public subsidies to be firstly distributed was due to sport organisations capability to bring positive international recognition and visibility for Finland. (Vasara 2004, 72) At that time, subsidy distribution was not constructive or organised at all. Governmental support was rather small and all operations had rather random imprint.

The concept of top-level sport started to become familiar in the 1930s and it gradually replaced the concept of competitive sport. A change basically meant that the best athletes started to practise more constructively, even though sport was not seen yet as a profession in Finland. From a governmental perspective, top-level sport was primarily seen as developing a nation's unity, cultural content as well Finland's reputation internationally. Successful athletes were considered as national heroes and from a government's point of view an important "tool" in promoting Finnish society. Although athletes were governmentally recognised, top-level sport was not seen as a profession and money was not an important part of top-level sport in 1930s. (Kokkonen 2008, 45, 115-118)

Rather soon the Finnish government recognised that success in international competitions caused a positive impact for the nation's unity and international visibility. Indeed, Finland had a long tradition in few sport events and success in these events was also greater internationally. Moreover, these sport events were considered as Finland's national sports as well. For Finland in the early 1900s, cross-country skiing, wrestling and athletics were core-national sports. These sport events were considered representing very well an identity of Finnish society and its citizen. Moreover, success in national sports was seen as publicly important. The Finnish government and citizens main interest and focus was on national

sports. Therefore, Finland's international success comparing to other countries were always firstly measured in national sport events. (Kokkonen 2008, 45, 148)

Moreover, national sports have a rather universal and societal phenomenon. Other countries have also their own national sports which somewhat identify their nation and society as well. National sports create a link between a sport and the nation. Most national sports possess rather long and successful tradition, and this has increased national sports societal and cultural impact on nations. Worldwide the most universal and played sport has been for a long time football. However, for instance rugby in New Zealand is a good example of what kind of impact sport can have on society. Rugby became New Zealand's national sport in late 1800 century. It was popular among the working-class people and it acted as a symbol to fight against the British Empire, who controlled New-Zeeland at that time. Furthermore, team spirit and commitment, which is needed in rugby, were also values which occurred in New Zealander's daily life. For this reason rugby had an important part in the development of the colony's national identity in the early 1900 century. (Kokkonen 2008, 48)

Indeed for Finland, the most influential national sports have been cross-country skiing, athletics, wrestling and Finnish baseball. From athletics, the most important sports have been long distance running and javelin throwing. Thus, these were also the sports which were purposefully developed and promoted during the 1900-century. For instance, cross-country skiing was one of the sport events which was purposefully promoted in the 1920-1930s. Skiing has unquestionably long historical roots in Finland, and it was also considered as representing well the Finnish nature conditions. From the perspective of a nation's characteristics, skiing demanded endurance and stamina. These were values which the Finnish government wanted to promote, in addition that skiing skills was seen also practically important in terms of national defence. (Kokkonen 2008, 149)

2.4. Military sport

Indeed, national defence and the First World War had a distinctive role in the history of Finnish top-level sport development. Incidents in the First World War led to governmental discussions as to whether all sports should be military sports and this way serve Finnish society needs at a more practical level. Proposals to develop top-level sport towards a more practical direction from a governmental viewpoint received support for and against at uncertain times after the First World War. An idea was to promote events like pentathlon, cross-country skiing, orienteering and biathlon, which were considered to serve military attributes as well. At that time the Finnish government wanted to strengthen unity among citizen and sustain a level of national defence. For those purposes top-level sport was considered as an excellent promotional tool. However, rather quickly the Finnish government stated that a level of national defence was sufficient and top-level sport's position was seen more important in educational tasks. Moreover, at that time sport's educational importance was discussed at a governmental level. Indeed, the Finnish government saw top-level sport as an important instrument in physical education at that time. Also top-level sport's role in promoting nationalism and international awareness were still seen as important from a governmental perspective. (Laine 1989, 72-77)

The desire for hosting the Olympics started to occur in the 1930s. The Finnish government and citizen felt that the duties as an Olympic host allowed Finland to display the country's functionality and visibility with international manners. Finland received its opportunity, when it was selected to host the 1940 Summer Olympics. Unfortunately the Second World War (1939-1945) where Finland also participated watered down organising the event. For a moment discussions about a more military oriented top-level sport was raised again at governmental level, but rather soon the Finnish government's and nation's glances turned to a new date for duties as Olympic host.

2.5. Importance of Olympics – Helsinki Olympics in year 1952

Finland was selected as a host country for the 1952 Summer Olympics, and Helsinki was selected as a host city. Infrastructural preparation had started already because of the planned and then cancelled 1940 Olympics. Helsinki Olympic project and its construction

functions displayed new direction of Finnish sport infrastructure which aimed for building infrastructure, for internationally representative events. In 1938 the Helsinki Olympic Stadium was completed, which was then used as the main arena in the Helsinki Olympics, which represented well the Finnish government's involvement and support in top-level sport. The stadium and several other projects were also proof of successful cooperation between the Finnish government, event organisations and Helsinki city, which were the main organisations in budgetary and operative functions in construction projects. Helsinki Olympic project was recognised also in political parts. Politicians such as Juho Kusti Paasikivi, the President of Finland between the years 1946-1956, saw the Olympic projects as an important event promoting political relationships and peace between other nations after the war years. Politicians also saw the Olympic projects as important for Finnish citizen. They considered the Olympic project as uniting the Finnish nation and bringing the concept of nationalism again into a positive disposition after the war years, which had labelled nationalism as a negative agitator in society. (Vasara 2004, 187-189)

The Olympic Project was a success for Finland especially in terms of foreign policy. Finland's position as a bridge between the east and west strengthen at least from a Finnish point of view. Moreover, the Olympics heighten Finland's integration among other nations. Thus, success of the Helsinki Olympics for Finland was perhaps more productive in political, economical and societal terms comparing to actual success in sport events. Demonstration of how important success in international top-level sport was seen from a governmental point of view was J.K Paasikivi's concern about poor sporting success at the Helsinki Olympics and Prime Minister Urho Kekkonen's recruitment was to take care of this matter. (Juppi 1995, 189)

The Olympic project had also other positive impacts on Finnish society. One of these positive influences was on the construction industry which was also important for citizen welfare after war years. Construction works did not persist only for sport facilities. In addition, to building the Olympic stadium, swimming hall and other sport facilities, construction work included development of Helsinki city centre as well. The new Helsinki airport, the Olympic dock and a telephone cable between Finland and Sweden were

consequential results of the Helsinki Olympic project. (Juppi 1995, 189) Moreover, the Helsinki Olympics was good proof that the role of top-level sport was not only its ability to offer sport at the highest level, but it had a clear political, societal and economical influence for the Finnish society. Government's decision-makers were aware of it.

2.6. Era after Helsinki Olympics – organisational movement of top-level sport from 1960s until 1980s

After the war years and the Helsinki Olympics, Finnish sport took rapid steps forward during the latter part of the 1960's. Organisational movement and especially economical development in Finnish sport took place in the 1960s. Public subsidising began already in the 1940's, with funds from Oy Tippaustoimisto AB, which became known as a Veikkaus Oy and created new possibilities also for developments of top-level sport. (Vasara 2004, 207)

Veikkaus Oy was founded in 1940 and it has throughout its existence been owned by the Finnish government. The company still has a monopoly in Finnish sport betting business and it has subsidised Finnish sport since 1940 until the present day. (Veikkaus Oy 2009) Public subsidising has been one form of involvement and interest that the Finnish government has towards top-level sport. Constructive and increased public support created new possibilities for Finnish sport, as well for top-level sport. (Juppi 1995, 207)

The time period after World War II and the Helsinki Olympics from 1945 until late the 1960s, can be considered as an era of Finnish sport policy development. Different sport organisations, committees and especially Finnish political left wing's entry into Finnish sport politics lead to changes at top-level sport. Formerly appreciated attributes such as international visibility, sport's influence on national health and discipline in Finnish sport were replaced with new guiding principles. Development of a nation's health, public sport, important societal contents education in organisation activity, as well as development of citizen's mental and ethical behaviour were the main guiding principles for a new era. Nations general well-being, social relations and equality started to seem important from a

governmental perspective. (Juppi 1995, 207-208) Sport participation came closer to every Finnish citizen's daily life. Finland's economical development created new opportunities for sport planning and new institutions in the sport field. Workplace sport, sport institutes and other new institutions defines well the spirit of time that Finnish sport represented between the 1940s and 1960s.

For top-level sport the new era meant better economical and organisational resources. Success in competitions was still seen as important, and also athletes and organisations economical benefits were considered as an important part of top-level sport. Moreover, the government's welfare and organisational development on the sports field meant better facilities and grants for athlete training. Structurally top-level sport started to have more diverse dimensions and organisations.

In the following next two decades, between the 1970s and 1980s, a trend of more organisational, regulated and national health oriented continued in the Finnish sport culture. The Finnish government's emphasis of developing top-level sport had transferred into governmental interested in national health related sport. (Juppi 1995, 230, 252) Moreover, development meant that government's policy and decision-making in the sports field focused more in citizen physical education. In top-level sport the responsibility of organisational and operational functions transferred more for Finnish Olympic Committee and event organisations. The Finnish government still continued subsidising top-level sport but it did not participate anymore that intensively in strategic and developmental decision-making. At the same time, Finland's economical welfare and private sector's entry had enabled top-level sport development towards more professional functioning. Organisations began hiring full-time employees in several sectors and this led to a situation where top-level sport started to have more and more characteristics of professionalism in every sector.

3. PROFESSIONALISM IN TOP-LEVEL SPORT

3.1. From amateur sport into secret-professionalism

The origins of amateur rules in sports arise from 1800-century England. Amateur rules were originally classification-law which distinguishes amateurs and professionals contributing in the competitive sport. However, class distinctions were a lot bigger in many other nations comparing to Nordic countries and to Finland. Therefore, amateur rules actually were more a tool for Finnish sport organisations to gain their authority in the field, and the rules assisted to prohibit competition activity which was not controlled by official sport organisations. (Laine 1989, 306)

Moreover, the requirement activity of talented athletes in Finland was rather different comparing to the majority of other countries, and class distinction did not exist so strongly in Finnish top-level sport. The majority of Finnish athletes were farmers, working class- and middle class people. Thus, most of athletes were dependant on external funding, and therefore unofficial daily allowances and travelling expenses were known and used already in 1910s. (Laine 1989, 306-307)

As a matter of fact two traditional and successful sport events, cross-country skiing and wrestling, have a firm tradition of professionalism. In the first cross-country skiing competitions skiers were competing for money prizes, whereas wrestlers saw themselves as professionals because of an example taken from circus artists, who were collecting money for their performances. This created movement of Finnish athletes leaving into USA, which was known already in the beginning of 1900-century as the promised land of professional sport. Soon the best Finnish endurance runners at that time, such as Viljam Kolehmainen and Paavo Nurmi, were competing for prize money in the USA. However, athletes' movement to USA and other countries for money caused problems for Finnish sport organisations and government. (Laine 1989, 307-308)

Since the Olympic Games were representing amateur status, the situation with some of the best Finnish athletes earning a profit from competitions put Finnish decision-makers between the a rock and a hard place. Moreover, decision-makers knew what the situation was but they refused to examine and reveal the situation fully. Moreover, Finnish sport organisations had to balance between athletes, international sport organisations and internal politics. The Olympic Games and success from there was seen as rather important for Finnish sport organisations and for the Finnish society, and therefore it was important to protect the reputation of some athletes. However, for Finland's reputation it was politically important to cooperate and obey international rules set by organisations such as International Olympic Committee (IOC). (Laine 1989, 309-314)

The dilemma with profit earning athletes, in addition to sheltered work places which were arranged for athletes, created the concept of secret-professionalism. Similarly, in Finnish sport organisations functioning were signs of secret-professionalism. Since public funding was rather small in top-level sport, organisations had to rely a lot on private grants. Whereas, top-level sport had gained important position in Finnish sport and success of athletes was seen as important in many ways for Finnish society, the secret-professionalism allowed the best athletes practise more and sport organisations function with more efficient manners. Indeed, athletes' ambition for earning money had also entered into top-level sport. (Laine 1989, 308)

3.2. Professional sport

Indeed, all over the World top-level sport started to gain more professional characteristics, and this was also trend in Finnish top-level sport. Already in the 1950s event-organisers had started to use "brown envelopes", in which they delivered prize money to athletes without the public knowing about it. Later in the 1970s Finnish athletes started to receive stipends, which assisted to finance their practising. In the 1970s the best athletes in individual sports were the first ones for whom the Finnish government and sport organisations attempted to offer the possibility for all-year practise. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009)

Hannu Itkonen in “Sadan Vuoden Olympiadi, 2008” states, that rapid development of professional sport was set between 1980s and 1990s. (p.270) After the International Olympic Committee’s prolonged president Avery Brundage, who was known as a strong defender of amateurism, retired from the position, IOC’s attitude towards professional sport started to get warmer. Between the years 1981-1990 IOC’s approval of athlete allowances changed towards an open acceptance of professional athletes in the Olympics. USA’s fully professional basketball “the Dream Team” in 1992 Barcelona Olympics was one symbol of a new era in professionalised Olympic sport. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009)

Indeed, rapid development of professional sports did not only affect athlete’s position. It caused a situation where the Finnish sport organisations had to activate and transform their operation modes appropriate for the new era towards one which was more professionalised in every sector. Establishment of Finland’s success in international top-level sport required more efficient and organised operations from the Finnish sport organisations. Finnish Olympic Committee was chosen to take the lead in strategic and operational functions in the development of Finnish top-level sport. The Finnish government and the Ministry of Education remain decision-makers in subsidising policy of top-level sport but operationally they have more focus towards general citizens and youth sport policies. The Finnish Olympic Committee’s role as developer of top-level sport and the ministry of education as a financial mainstay was confirmed in late 1990s and 2000-century. Moreover, segmentation and the needs of Finnish top-level sport have created new professional organisations in the field. Finnish anti-doping association, Research Institute for Olympic Sport (KIHU), Finnish Olympic Committee and other event organisations operate with fully professional manners and at the same time employ several full-time employees. It was not enough that athletes practised professionally, but other employees in the field were required to possess extensive professional knowledge such as marketing, management, media and entertainment concepts. (Itkonen 2008, 275-277)

Professionalism of top-level sport led to a development where several national event organisations and their leagues started to function with more professional manners.

Organisations recruit more employees into different sectors whose aim was to increase their revenue. At the same time development allowed teams to increase the amount of salary paid to players. Today's the Finnish highest level ice hockey league, Jääkiekon SM-liiga Oy, is an example of professional sport which operates with joint stock company basis. However, it is still the only fully professional league in Finnish top-level sport. Sm-liiga Oy and its member teams have employment contracts with all players, which include pension and accident insurance system for players. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009) Finnish main soccer and basketball leagues are also examples of organisations which operate at a somewhat professional level.

3.3. Commercialisation, media and sponsorship entry into top-level sport

When professionalism entered in the 1980s into top-level sport, it occurred at the same time with a strong commercialisation of international top-level sport. The situation caused tension between the International Olympic Committee and its member countries National Olympic Committee's because of conflicting interests. Controversies of subsidy and sponsorship incomes were the main reasons for conflict. In 1985 after the International Olympic Committee had made an epic sponsorship deal with ISL marketing, the IOC composed an agreement where it wanted all National Olympic Committees to join under the same sponsorship deal. As a supplement the IOC promised to distribute 90% of sponsorship income to the National Olympic Committees. Finland and other Nordic countries were sceptical towards the agreement. Moreover, Kosti Rasinperä, Finnish Olympic Committee's general secretary at that time, stated that "I think the Olympic ideology and business operations are conflicting with help of Olympic rings". Despite some conflicts The IOC's and National Olympic Committee's cooperation agreements have remained still in today's top-level sport. . (Itkonen 2008, 279-280)

Indeed, today's top-level sport-product forms solid trinity with media and sponsors. Moreover, TV rights have been in key position in commercialisation of top-level sport, and especially the Summer Olympics' TV rights have increased enormously. In 1980 the USA paid 72 million USD for Moscow Olympics' TV rights, whereas NBC paid 894 million

USD for Beijing 2008 Olympics' TV rights. According to the IOC's announcement, NBC has agreed to pay 2 billion USD for the TV rights of the 2010 and the 2012 Olympic Games. The increased cost of the Olympics TV is evident also in Finland. Whereas, Suomen Yleisradio Oy (YLE), which is owned by the Finnish government, paid 0.3 million Euros for the Seoul 1988 Olympics TV rights, YLE paid 4.3 million Euros for the Sydney 2000 Olympics. (Itkonen 2008, 280-281)

The opening ceremonies in the Olympic Games are a good example of top-level sport commercialisation. Host countries are willing to place huge amounts of money into ceremonies only because they want to improve the country's image and international visibility. Athletes play only a minor part in those ceremonies, moreover today's top-level sport resembles more entertainment. The trend is that market forces control more and more the development of top-level sport. However, noticeable is that commercialisation has not been only negative thing for top-level sport. TV rights, sponsorship deals and other incomes has improved athletes' position in the field and given organisations the possibility to expand and develop their operations. (Itkonen 2008, 281-282)

Disquieting in today's trend is the disappearance of the Olympic ideology. Enormous prize moneys in tournaments and athletes huge endorsement deals have changed inexorably the form and ideology of top-level sport. Therefore, also Finnish top-level sport has been forced to adapt with sponsor functions. (Itkonen 2008, 282-283) The present situation opens many possibilities for every participant in the field, and from a Finnish top-level sport's viewpoint it would be crucial to be able to adapt, utilise and develop these resources in extremely competitive and developing international top-level sport.

The media's development and increased involvement in top-level sport has been one big factor in top-level sport's commercialisation. The media operates in top-level sport, but is not depending of its terms. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009) Originally the media's role has been delivering proceedings and results of sport events. However the media's development within the last decades has increased sports and media's symbiosis. The media's main purpose is to take viewers into consideration, and for this reason several sport events today

have been developed for media format. Therefore, to attract more viewers TV broadcasters have developed a more entertaining sport event concept, and in addition broadcasters' desire for financial benefits has increased the amount of commercials in sport events. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009) In top-level sport, change has affected that smaller events that have fallen behind, and bigger more "media sexy" sport event has become even more popular among spectators. The previous can be considered as a commercialisation of top-level sport, which has provided better economical resources in the field, but has as well changed top-level sport moral and ethical values.

As mentioned earlier, commercialisation has also changed the fundamental ideology of top-level sport. It is worth asking, should today's top-level sport be considered more as an entertainment than just a competitive sport. Does top-level sport still have a strong educational role in society? Expanded media coverage and development of technology has made athletes somewhat public persons, and at least sponsors and the Finnish government are interested of athletes' image among citizen. Against this statement, athletes still possess adequate role model status.

Indeed, for today's top-level sport descriptive is its business operational direction and as a matter of fact top-level sport operations are in many cases rather distant from other sport sector operations. However, top-level has an important role in generating entertainment, visibility as well other societal content for citizen. It is predictable that partially for this reason the Finnish government is also interested in success, image and the reputation of top-level sport.

4. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FINNISH TOP-LEVEL SPORT

4.1. Historical background of Finnish top-level sport's organisational development

Organisational development of Finnish sport started in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Leena Laine cited Erkki Vasara, "Suomi urheilun suurvaltana" (1989, 122-123) states, that after the First World War in the year 1919 many sport events, which were earlier operated as individual clubs, started to form organisations and associations for their events. Besides to different event organisations, there were two main mass-organisations in Finnish top-level sport at that time. Suomen Valtakunnan Urheiluliitto (SVUL) which was founded in 1906 and from SVUL in 1919 TUL (Työväen Urheiluliitto) was established were the two main organisations in competitive sport. TUL's establishment led to a situation where Finnish competitive sport split in two parts. Both organisations SVUL and TUL had several sport events included into their program. This was a beginning process of Finnish competitive sport organisation which aimed to develop and centralise competitive sport. Moreover, the previous two aspects were the main reasons for the foundation of SVUL. Since SVUL selected Finnish athletes for Olympic Games, were TUL athletes were excluded from Olympic selections and from international cooperation between 1920s and 1930s. Therefore TUL, Soviet Union and other countries socialistic sport departments organised their own workfolk Olympics, which was organised three times. Thus, tension between SVUL and TUL continued somewhat throughout the organisations existence.

Indeed, SVUL was a mass-organisation which was responsible for the development and coordination of cross-country skiing, gymnastics, wrestling and athletics - sports from where Finland wanted success as well. Over time, swimming, cycling, skating and rowing were added to SVUL's program. Furthermore, with a development and coordination of competitive sport, which was mass-organisations SVUL and TUL duty, meant the development of rule settings and operational models in competitive sport. Moreover,

SVUL, TUL and other event organisations were clear steps forwards for a more constructive development of Finnish top-level sport at a national level, and at the same time it was stated that competitive sport was appreciated at a governmental level as well. (Laine 1989, 56-59)

However, during the next couple of decades there started to raise new sports, like ice hockey which got its own association in 1929. Later, in 1939 basketball formed their own individual organisation and two years later handball got similarly its own too. Moreover, events which were under SVUL and TUL started also to form their own individual organisations, one of these the boxing organisation was formed in 1923. This led to development of individual sport events forming their own specific organisations, which took part in the development of competitive sport. Differentiation and development of individual sport organisations became common in 1930s. (Laine 1989, 122-124)

Indeed, the Finnish government's and Finnish sport organisations focus towards international sport events continued in the 1930s and the 1940s. For instance, international match in athletics against Sweden was considered as an important venue from a governmental and a sport organisations perspective in Finland. At the same time in 1930s the Finnish government's desire for their own Olympics started to increase. (Vasara 2004, 74) In the 1930s and the 1940s the government had a vast interest in competitive sport. Nationalism, international awareness and development of a nation's identity which top-level sport was considered to promote, were seen as important from a governmental perspective. Moreover, SVUL and other sport organisations were aware from secret-professional characteristics in Finnish top-level sport. However, success in international competitions was seen as rather important, that organisations protected athletes even though they condemned professionalism in top-level sport. Indeed, it can be stated that top-level sport field was rather political at that time.

Moreover, politics and sport combined again when Finland was granted duty as Olympic host. SVUL, TUL and Helsinki city were the main organisers in the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. Similarly, the three participants were also the main representatives in the event

committee. Indeed, cooperation in the Olympic project brought SVUL and TUL a little bit closer after their disagreements. (Vasara 2004, 77-78) A time period before and after the Helsinki Olympics were the last times when the Finnish government's main focus was in competitive sport. After the Helsinki Olympics, the government's focus on competitive sport started to shift into more health related sports. Thus, the Finnish government began to see a more societal value in citizen's health education than in the promotion of competitive sport.

In the political field, the Finnish workfolks support had increased after the war years, and this meant in sports organisational development, increased importance of TUL's position. Since TUL continued its upswing, it rather soon gained the Finnish government's support as well. (Vasara 2004, 136) Finnish sport's organisational development continued during the 1950s and the 1960s. However, the Finnish government's wish for a unified Finnish sport organisation suffered one setback more in 1958, when right-wing social-democrats resigned from SVUL and formed their own Työväen Urheiloiden keskusliitto (TUK). (Vasara 2004, 178) Polarisation of top-level sport continued throughout the next decades. As mentioned earlier, the Finnish government's increased interest towards general health education set standards and regulation for the government's sport policy. Therefore, top-level sport started to distinguish more and more from society's general sport policy into their own individual sector.

4.2. From 1970's started era of segmentation and professionalism in Finnish top-level sport

In the 1970s top-level sport started clearly to separate from other sport sectors. However, signs of this type of development had occurred already earlier. In 1957, Urho Kekkonen, who was Finland's president at that time, stated that "top-level sport seems to develop together with entertainment, maybe as most noble part of it". Very intensive and professional all-year training, internationalism, commercialisation as well business-oriented operation models eventually separated top-level sport from other sport activity. (Vasara 2004, 382) Indeed, the development of top-level sport created a new social phenomenon

among Finnish citizens. Entertainment and celebrity-culture, which success in sport produced, started to combine with nationalism. Moreover, top-level sport was seen as creating entertainment for citizens in addition that sport success was still considered as having a connection to national spirit and identity. (Vasara 2004, 382-383)

Top-level sport itself started to break into pieces. International and economically strong top-level sports started to separate from national top-level sports, which was run on much less financial resources. Therefore, the Finnish government's public subsidies were distributed more to national top-level sport. Moreover, public subsidies are still a prerequisite for national top-level sport and athletes in the field. (Vasara 2004, 383) Indeed, financially strong top-level sport offers and represents more entertainment characteristics, whereas "minor" sports and events, which are not so "media sexy", have sustained more traditional and original values of top-level sport.

As long as top-level sport has been a part of Finnish sport and its public image has been positive, it has been natural and obvious for the Finnish government and the Ministry of Education to subsidise top-level sport. However, today's segmented top-level sport has caused speculation as to whether the government should still be involved in the field. For last couple of decades, one of the biggest problems in top-level sport and from the Finnish government's perspective has been doping. The doping problem was recognised already in the 1960s, and in the 1980s it was raised as a topic in sport organisations and at governmental level. (Vasara 2004, 383) Moreover, the Finnish government has taken a strict line with doping cases, and antidoping activity has been part of Finnish top-level sport for over 10 years.

Indeed, today's top-level sport has caused discussion at governmental level mostly because of ethical and political reasons. The Finnish government does not want to promote dishonest top-level sport, which for instance doping represent. It is not also in the government's interest to support commercialised and business-oriented top-level sport. For this reason the government has examined its rules and principles for subsidy distribution. Moreover, top-level sport has become a political and ethical issue for the Finnish

government. Therefore, the Finnish government has stated that it supports only top-level sport, which is ethically stable and correct. (Vasara 2004, 387-388)

4.3. Present status – role of top-level sport and its main organisations in today

The Finnish Government still contribute to today's top-level sport, moreover according to the Finnish Ministry of Education top-level sport should be considered as a part of social development in Finland. For a whole period of Finland's independency, top-level sport has had an important role as an identity builder which indicates Finnish society's capability among other nations (Kivistö, Tolonen & Niemi-Nikkola 2004, 12). The importance of top-level sport for society can't be measured only with sport events, but it has different agendas and roles in society. An event in top-level sport is a marginal phenomenon it should be considered as an institute, which improves and represents Finnish society's educational, political, ethical and motivational values. All these aspects form a multidimensional societal content, which top-level sport is considered to represent society's and moreover a governmental viewpoint. Therefore, top-level sport should present values which are respected in Finnish society, moreover top-level sport should be considered as a part of a societal system.

As sport has become more professionalised, money has also entered into the sport fields and especially into top-level sports. The Finnish government's policy is not to subsidise sport activity, which is primarily aiming for profit. Haukilahti & Tolonen (2004, 16) suggest that the public subsidy distribution's primary aim in Finnish top-level sport, should be offering appropriate economical and infrastructural resources for athletes who practise all-year and professionally. Different sports which are more business and profitable based will be left outside of the government's subsidy distribution. As mentioned earlier, Finnish ice hockey Sm-League is an example of professional sport which functions in company basis and is primarily aiming for economical profit. Indeed, the government still supports Finnish ice hockey development, but subsidies are distributed into youth sport development, infrastructure et cetera. Moreover, profit-making professional ice hockey

business which Sm-League represents is excluded from the government's subsidy distribution.

Indeed, the Ministry of Education has set criteria of how subsidies are distributed in top-level sport. A central criterion is still international success. Moreover sport event's popularity and visibility internationally is taken as well into consideration in subsidy distribution. Next criteria are sport organisations functioning level in education-, coaching- and competition system development. Other criteria consists of anti-doping activity, other ethical and education activities, which top-level sport should consider representing. (Haukilahti & Tolonen 2004, 16) From the criteria it can be noticed the Finnish government's motives to subsidise top-level sport. Indeed, promotion of Finland's positive image internationally, promotion of healthy and fair values and promotion of society's national spirit and identity, are attributes which Finnish top-level sport is consider to represents and which the Finnish government wants to support as well.

Moreover, success in top-level sport is still considered to create social significance in today's society. In 2006 the Finnish Olympic committee produced research which examined the importance of international sport success for adult citizen. According to the research approximately 75% of respondents kept international sport success as crucial or comparative importance. Indeed, there was a correlation between their physical activeness and the importance of sport success. Moreover, respondents who exercised more, kept also sport success more important. However, prominent in the research was a fact that also 67% of passive exercisers kept sport success essential for society. The same type of trend has stayed almost similar for the whole 21st century. Indeed, Finnish citizens expect that Finland's sport success is gained in mostly traditional and successful sport events. Therefore, events such cross-country skiing, athletics and ice hockey are most recognised sport events in today's Finnish top-level sport. However, from results it can be said that Finnish citizen interest towards top-level sport significantly often follows success. (Finnish Olympic Committee 2006,1)

However, the research indicates that top-level sport is an important part of Finnish culture from the citizens' viewpoint, and Finnish top-level sport is still considered to have a significant role internationally. Moreover, the research's chief inspector Hannu Tolonen points out that top-level sport is one of the only cultural parts nowadays where a country is represented with a nationality mark (Finnish Olympic Committee 2006, 1)

4.4. Main organisations and public funding in Finnish top-level sport

Indeed, today's top-level sport is rather segmented. Different organisations, institutes, private sector businesses participate in top-level sport field. Therefore, it is impossible to illustrate top-level sport structure exhaustively. (KIHU Faktapankki, 2011) Figure 1. attempts to untangle and indicate different organisations which are forming today's Finnish top-level sport structure.

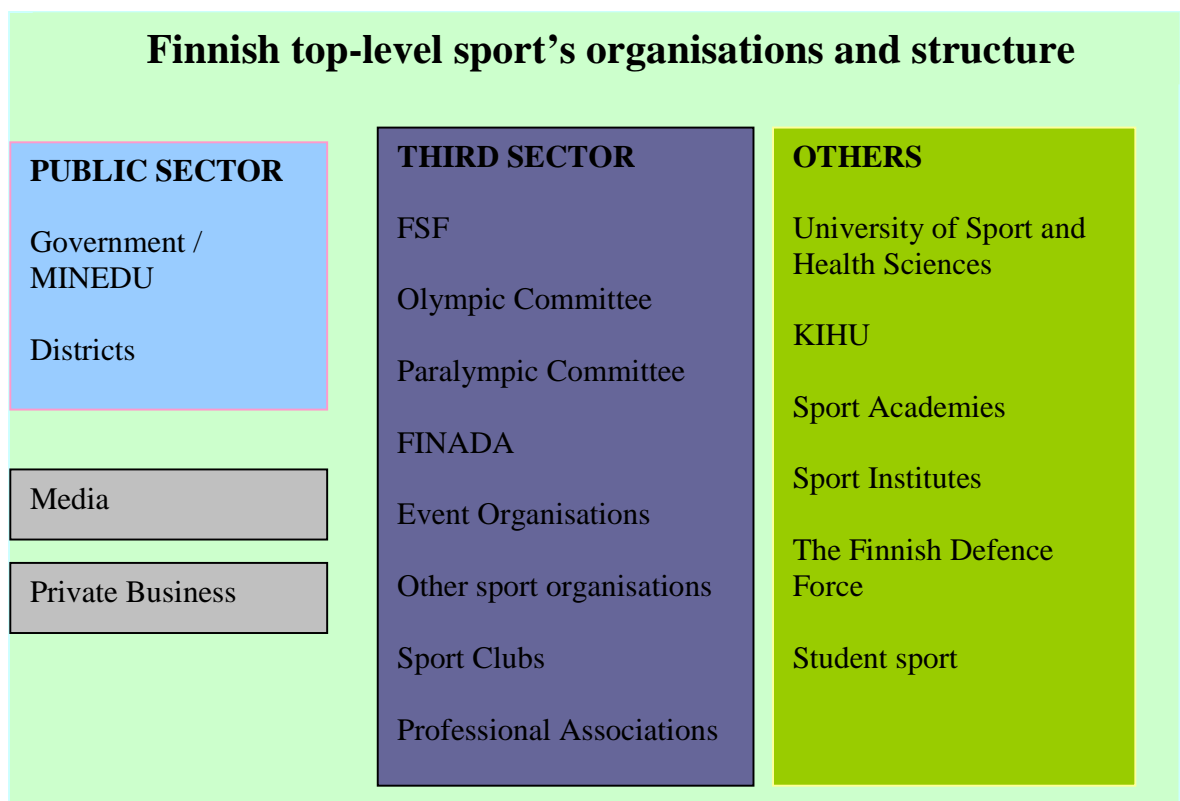


Figure 1. Finnish top-level sport's organisations and structure (retrieved: KIHU, Faktapankki 2011).

The Finnish Ministry of Education (2008), states that the amount of given subsidies into sport has increased regularly. In 1997 the amount was 78.7 million Euros, whereas in 2002 it was 84.4 million Euros. In less than 10 years, the government's support has increased with more than 20 million euros. Moreover, in 2006 the annual subsidy amount was 97.8 million Euros.

In Research Institute for Olympic Sport (KIHU) publication, *Rahavirrat: Urheilujärjestöt*, cited by Tolonen, H. (2004) who engaged in top-level sport's direct subsidy distribution to given organisations. In 2005, 35 % of annual subsidies in top-level sport were directed to event organisations. The Olympic Committee was given approximately 25 % of this annual share. Other sectors were given subsidies between 5-13%. However, the anti-doping agency and Paralympics Committee have percentile increased their own subsidy revenue compared to other organisations within the last 10 years. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

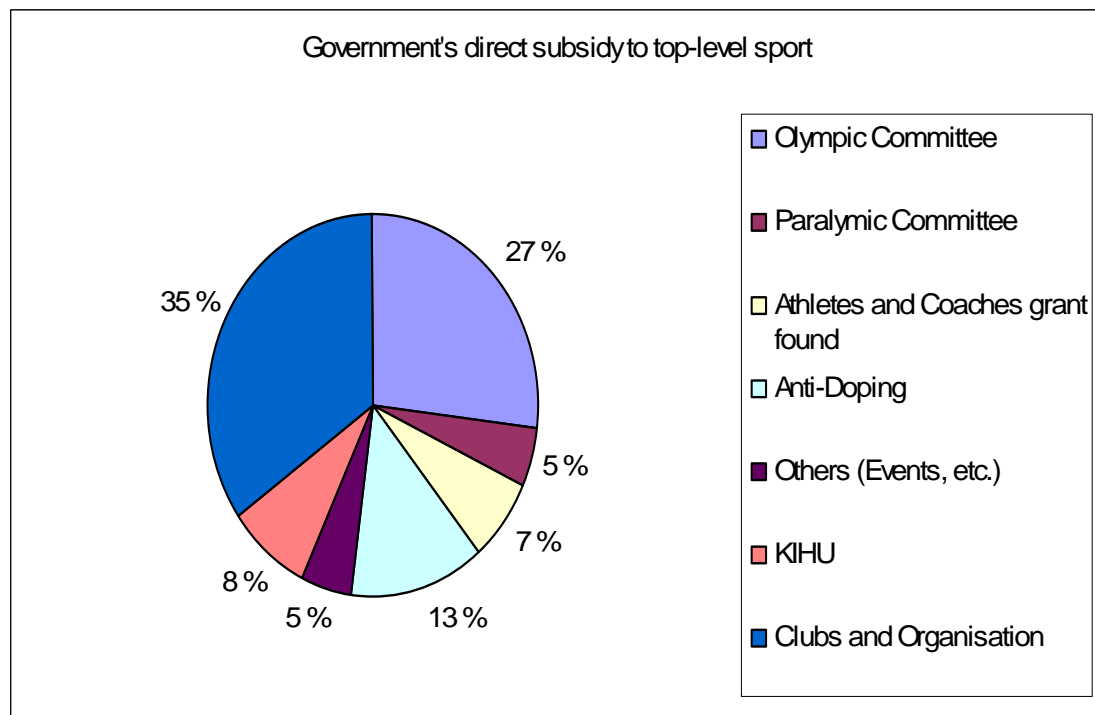


Figure 2. Subsidy distribution into top-level sport in year 2005, (retrieved: KIHU, Faktapankki 2011).

Ministry of Education (MINEDU)

In the Finnish public administration, the Ministry of Education is responsible for decision-making. The Finnish Parliament has set the act concerning physical activity. According to the act the Ministry of Education is responsible for physical activities management, development and integration in Finland. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

In top-level sport activity, the Ministry of Education is in charge of

- Financing the top-level sport
- Takes part in strategic policy and decision-making
- Elaborates circumstances
- Develop and funds coach's education
- Executes and subsidises research and development activity
- Participates in anti-doping activity, healthcare and athletes education

The Ministry of Education observes and assists the development of the physical activity as well as gives information and advisory opinions in subsidy distribution. In 2006, Ministry of Education subsidised Finnish sport activity with 97.8 million Euros from which approximately 10% was distributed directly to the top-level sport. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

Koski & Heikkala (1999, 21) argue in their publication that the Ministry of Education is the Finnish government's public organisation focusing on physical health in Finland. It coordinates and operates through governmental viewpoint and it has a remarkable role within Finnish sports organisation. It represents the Finnish sport culture in political system, other governmental offices and in Finnish society. The Ministry of Education distributes public subsidies annually into Finnish sport. With this activity, its main role is to subsidise sport organisations and coordinate sports infrastructure. The second aim is to give equal possibility for all citizens' to use public services. With this support the Ministry of Education supervises the Finnish government's interests, which are citizens' health,

employment and social well-being. However, nowadays the public sector's subsidies are also distributed more and more into children and youth activity, competitive sports and health-related activities. Distributed subsidies for the above mentioned sectors are comparative to public health-care and well-being. Moreover, from Ministry of Education aims and tasks can be seen that its interest to support in top-level sport has transferred, and therefore it is mainly the Olympic Committee's and event organisations role to develop Finnish top-level sport today. Indeed, the Finnish government focuses more on citizens' health education and their social well-being, even though it supports top-level sport economically.

Ministry of Education and sport organisations

Koski & Heikkala (1999, 21), states that the role between the Ministry of Education and sport organisations is that Ministry of Education assists in providing facilities and conditions for physical activities, whereas sport organisations' role is to complete and carry out operational activities. Indeed, sport organisations are functioning rather individually today. However, while government subsidises sport organisations, the government also has its own motives and objectives towards physical activity. For this perspective we can question the independency of sport organisations. (Koski & Heikkala 1999, 21)

Finnish Olympic Committee (NOC)

Finnish Olympic Committee cooperates with International Olympic Committee. The NOC's primary aim is to develop and support Finnish top-level sport, as well as to assure success in future Olympics. NOC's operations consist of IOC's obligations and strategic projects with sport organisations and Ministry of Education. Thus, in 2008 the Finnish government's subsidy for NOC was 3.7 million Euros. The NOC distributes most of the subsidies forward for event organisations, athletes and coaches. The rest of the annual subsidies are distributed for sport institutes, research institutes, different development and youth sport projects, which event organisations are implementing in practise. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009) The Finnish Olympic Committee has taken the lead in the development

of top-level sport within the last couple of decades. Moreover, the Finnish Olympic Committee act as a coordinator in Finnish top-level sport and its primary aim is to provide and develop Finnish top-level sport more towards professionalism in every sector. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

Finnish Sports Federation (FSF)

The Finnish Sports Federation (FSF) is sports supervision, partnership and service organisation whose main task is to promote physical activity and sports in Finnish society. FSF has 125 member organisations. According to the Finnish government's budget presentation in 2008, FSF received subsidies of 1.7 million Euros. Prior to the foundation of the FSF, the Finnish sport field was led by two politically dissenting central organisations, Suomen Valtakunnan Urheiluliitto (SVUL) and Työväen Urheiluliitto (TUL). While the FSF was established in 1993, the two-tier organisation structure was dismantled. The FSF settled more on the same level with other organisations rather than a leading position. Thus, this pronounced sports federations and professional organisations role in the field. In competitive and top-level sports SLU's main responsibilities were to create a framework for civil activity, advocacy and coordination of coaches' and instructors' primary education. Civil activity framework and advocacy seek to ensure that sports clubs functioning in society is uncomplicated, and it lays the foundation for competitive and top-level sports. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

The FSF perform many of the concrete top-level sports advocacy tasks. The FSF's task is to follow sports specific legislation and have an influence on the field. In addition the FSF sets the sports legal protection board, which is an independent appellate organisation separate from the sports organisations. Indeed, development of athletes' social and legal protection includes the FSF's responsibilities. The FSF seeks to promote athletes income periodisation and maintain funds. Moreover, the FSF has been establishing explicit Finnish Athletes Foundation. The foundation has two different types of funds: coaching- and athlete-fund. The coaching-fund is only for individual sports athletes. Athletes are able to transfer gained sports income and received sponsor income from tripartite agreement into

the coaching-fund. In the beginning of 2008 there were 581 members in the Finnish Athletes Foundation. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

The FSF has 15 regional organisations which perform SLU's tasks at a regional level. However, the regional organisations emphasis is more in children and youth sports as well in adults' fitness and physical activity than in competitive and top-level sports. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

National sports federations in Finland

The national sports federations are sports organisations which focus only to one event or sport. There are approximately over 70 sports federations in Finland. According to the Finnish sport structure, sporting persons belong as a member to sports clubs, and sports clubs belong as a member to national sports federations. The national sports federations are members of the international sports federations. Moreover, sports federations within the sports clubs are primary responsible for action in the competitive and top-level sports. Sports federations guide and support sport clubs operations. Sports federations organise international competitions and operations, for example by organising national team activity and taking part in EC- and WC-competitions. Sports Federations responsibility is also to sustain event or sport specific coaching system as well as to take care of coach recruitments. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

From the annual subsidies that the Ministry of Educations distributes to sports federations, 50% goes to children and youth sports, 25% to adult sports and 25% to top-level sports. In 2008, 4.2 million Euros was given for top-level sport operations to 74 sports federations. In addition to governments subsidise national sports federations naturally invest themselves in competitive and top-level sport. Moreover, expenditures for competitive and top-level sport vary from 0-80% between the sports federations. In 2003, 67 sports federations invested a total of more than 20 million euros into competitive and top-level sport. This was approximately 32 % of sports federations' total expenditures. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

Sports clubs in Finland

Sports clubs practise sports civil activity locally and do the groundwork for talented children on their development to the top-level sport athletes. Sports clubs activity has a strong tradition in Finland and at the moment there are approximately 7800 registered sports clubs. Moreover, approximately over one million Finnish people are taking part some way or another in sport clubs activity. Traditionally sports clubs operation has focused on competitive sports, however after the differentiation of sports culture also the promotion of physical activity has become an important task for sports clubs. According to study made in 1996 from Finnish club sports; 24% of sports clubs' aim is national level success in competitive sports. 32% of clubs operate at a previously lower level in competitive sports and 44% of clubs focus on promoting physical activity or youth education. Indeed, Finnish sports culture's differentiation has reflected in a decrease in multi-sports clubs and an increase in special clubs. In the middle of the 1990's, approximately 8% of all sports clubs had full-time paid staff and a couple of percent had full-time paid coach or sports instructor. In other sports clubs coaching and sports instruction vary, for example coaches operate without salary, as part-time paid staff or based on allowance. Sports clubs receive subsidies from municipalities directly as subsidy-money or as reduction in sport facility expenses. In addition sports clubs receive support from sports federations which organise competitions and education for sports clubs. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

Other sport organisations in Finnish top-level sport

In addition to the previously mentioned organisations there are also other considerable organisations in the field of top-level sports. These are Finnish Paralympics Committee which represents the Finnish top athletes with disabilities, Finnish Antidoping Agency focusing on activity against doping, Research Institute for Olympic Sports (KIHU) focusing on research and development in the field of top-level sports, University of Jyväskylä focusing on exercise and sports education, the Finnish defence forces' sports academy whose aim is to assist athletes with their military obligation and sports career.

Other significant organisations are the Finnish sports institutes, for instance Sports institute of Finland, Vierumäki and Kuortane Sport Resort, other sport organisations, profession-based organisations, sports academies, sports schools and students sports. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

4.5. Background of doping – Antidoping activity – (part of top-level sport in today)

Different pharmaceuticals, drugs and alcohol were the first doping substances which were used in top-level sport. From these substances alcohol was generally used to heighten performance level still in the beginning of the 1900-century. Obviously the effect of these substances was occasionally converse and even death cases transpired in top-level sport. After several negative incidents many event organisations created their own doping rules however, testing was very random and little. Later on doping problem expand to athletes' usage of stimulants, and in the 1950s amphetamine was the most commonly used doping substance in several sport events. Moreover, in the 1960s European Council, International Olympic Committee and several international event organisations such as FIFA, IWF and UCI recognised this doping problem in top-level sport. After this dope testing activity developed and in the 1970s stimulants usage was under control. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

After stimulants, hormonal doping substances entered into top-level sport. International Olympic Committee banned the use of anabolic steroids in 1974 and the use of testosterone in 1982. However, the use of hormonal doping substances was very common in top-level sport. By this time also female athletes began to get caught using doping, whereas before doping was considered more as a problem in men's sports. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

In Finland doping monitoring started in 1983, after establishing the first official testing laboratory. Moreover, today doping monitoring is very organised and it is financed with governmental funds. The Finnish Ministry of Education finances activity and Finnish antidoping Agency (FINADA), executes all operational actions in the field. The FINADA is also in close cooperation with the World Antidoping Agency (WADA), national and

international event organisations as well with corresponding panels which assist FINADA in doping monitoring. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

Finnish Antidoping Agency states that their mission is, “to promote healthy and clean sports by carrying out high-quality doping testing and expanding and developing antidoping education in co-operation with interest groups. FINADA contributes to international antidoping activities by promoting equal sports between various countries and harmonising antidoping codes and practices. Our values are ethicality, justice, quality and expertise”. (FINADA, 2009) Since the Finnish government is concerned with top-level sport educational and exemplar influence for youths and other citizen and it funds top-level sport and anti-doping activity, anti-doping activity is considered to be important part of Finnish top-level sport. In addition, agreements with international event organisations and WADA require FINADA, Finnish Olympic Committee and other national event organisations to sustain, develop and promote antidoping with common international accords. (KIHU In year 1999 founded World Antidoping Faktapankki 2011)

4.6. Antidoping activity – organisations and funding

Agency is in charge of international antidoping activity. Its responsibility is to standardise common doping rules, defend ethics of sport and minister athletes’ legal protection in doping cases. Half of WADA’s annual budget comes from the International Olympic Committee and the other half comes from several countries on different continents. (KIHU Faktapankki 2009) According to WADA statistics, in 2006 WADA conduct 4858 doping tests and its annual budget in 2008 was 27 million USD. (WADA 2009)

Finnish government subsidy for Finnish Antidoping Agency was 1.5 million Euros in 2008, an increase of 7% compared to the previous year. Moreover, government subsidy for anti-doping activity has doubled since the turn of the century. Therefore, development of antidoping activity and its funding has been one of the most progressive growing parts in Finnish top-level sport in the past years. Increased government subsidy has enabled an increased amount of testing and education activity in the field. This has decreased the amount of doping cases in Finnish sport. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

In 2002 the Finnish Olympic Committee produced a research where they studied athletes' attitude towards the use of doping. 446 athletes who received grants from the Finnish Olympic Committee took part in the research. 90% of respondents believed that doping would improve their performance level and 7% would use doping substances if it would be legal. However, interesting was that 97% of respondents thought that doping was dangerous and would cause harm for health. 30% of respondents knew someone, in person, who is using doping and 15% answered that they had been offered doping substances sometime in their career. 33% of respondents thought that events where they participate are clean at a national level but only 7% thought that events where they participate are clean at international top-level sport. (KIHU Faktapankki 2011)

Indeed athletes recognise the risks of doping usage but are also aware that doping still exists rather strongly especially in international top-level sport. For many top-level sport athletes it is their only and main source of income. In today's professionalised sport there is high competition of success and thereafter money prizes and sponsor incomes. It places certainly some athletes to spot where they might have to think of using performance-enhancing substances when aiming for success. This is the challenge for sport organisations in the field of top-level sport, for antidoping agency and for the Finnish government. Top-level sport has an important educational role still today and the government wants to sustain an image of a clean sport. Increased grants for anti-doping activity support the government's willingness for a clean sport. Moreover, there have been event organisations which have suffered from decreased annual government's subsidy because of doping cases. The Finnish Skiing Association in 2000-century is an example of this.

5. RESEARCH TASKS AND METHODOLOGY

Literature review – Analysis of completed material as a basis for research

In social sciences a quantitative research is theoretical analysis based on previous research and research own brainwork, whereas an empirical analysis is based on measurements and textual data. The empirical study basis on research theory uses numeric data and often there are statistical methods in the analysis. However in social sciences quantitative research is not only statistical research but it has a wider entity (Salminen V-M 2007, 35).

The first part of this study consists of an analysis of completed material. With completed material is meant information and statistics, which are already published and are ready and usable for modulation. This type of material statistics and figures are infrequently in appropriate form and there is often a need for editing the material to usable form. This kind of information is called secondary material. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997, 185)

In this study information is collected from country's official publications and relevant books from the topic area. For instance, the Finnish government and Ministry of Education are publishing all statistics and information related to top-level sport in official and public form. In this aspect it is somehow questionable that the information objective because of the author who is publishing material, in this case the countries' governments and their work groups are the subsidy distributors as well. However, because of the topic area, participants and nature of the information, it is very unlikely that the data would be somehow manipulated or incorrect. All material is official and false information would be illegal and it would not serve any participants. The secondary data is collected from publications and formulated again to form, which is appropriate in this research. Practically, this means linking process of different statistics and material examination from the research questions and problems viewpoint. In addition, several Finnish researchers have as well published usable material, which offers an objective view and which have been used in literature review.

Qualitative research methods – Discourse analysis

In a quantitative study numbers and calculations are often used, in a qualitative study the emphasis is more on words and interpretations. When materials and methods are elaborating behaviours, feelings, experiences or beliefs, it is efficient to use interviews, questionnaires or attitude scales in data collection. By these mentioned methods the qualitative research's emphasises is in bearing and indicating the respondents' thoughts. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997, 184)

Therefore, due to the nature of this study it is relevant to use qualitative research methods. Moreover, discourse analysis was selected as a research method to research the role of top-level sport from a governmental perspective. With a discourse analysis the aim is to analyse and examine official publications and relevant books from the topic area and attempt to answer the set research questions.

Discourse seems to be one of the trend words in the field of social science (Eskola 1998, 140; Luostarinen & Väliiverroinen 2007, 49-50; Alasentie 2011). However its definition is rather complex and not so simple to explain. Discourse can mean text or discussion and with it can be referred to the mode of speaking, to process of producing text or manner of producing text (emt. 49-50). Discourse analysis is a research trend which examines text, speech or language from different viewpoints (Metsämuuroinen 2006, 106; Alasentie 2011). Viewed holistically the use of languages can be counted under discourse analysis. In this case the discourse analysis is just mainly loose theoretical framework (Hoikkala 1990, 142; Alasentie 2011).

With discourse analysis a question "What does the text mean?" can be translated into a form of "what different purposes are produced inside the texts?" (Luostarinen & Väliiverroinen 2007, 51; Alasentie 2011). Moreover, the idea is that text doesn't reflect the reality but itself produces it (Eskola 1998, 140; Alasentie 2011). Texts does not describe directly their subject but form their own version of it. People use language in order to achieve things they desire. (Potter & Wetherell 1987, 32; Alasentie 2011) Moreover, with

discourse analysis can be examined perspectives which are forming culture. Individual people are part of the culture because they create it with their behaviour (Remes 2006, 289; Alasentie 2011).

Example of the possible truth caused by language is doping allegations in top-level sport. An athlete is charged because of doping but the tests clear them from using illegal performance enhancing drugs. Regardless of the clean test results doubt still remains – is the athlete even then clean? Thus it can be considered that accusation has created for its part truth, at least it has brought a question mark above the athlete (Eskola 1998, 194.).

Authority and authorisation are also meaningful concepts in discourse analysis because discourse is always produced by specific individuals. In general discourses are also built from the top, because of elite of cultural. Political life has better access to methods which help to make discourses natural and justified. Moreover, this and enunciation has to be taken into consideration when analysing top-level sport strategies. With enunciation is meant the authors relationship to the text. When speaking of enunciation it is important to take into consideration who is speaking, to whom narration attempts to appeal and from whose perspective text is told. In addition it is important to take into consideration what is the author's relationship to the text and how the author attempts to influence its readers with the text. When exploring strategy documents all previously written factors are important because they form an essential part of interpretation (Alasentie 2011, 33).

Moreover on the basis of discourse analysis, the language is what creates reality. However it is important to remember in analysis that the relationship between language and reality is always open to various interpretations. Thus, discourse analysis is not any new groundbreaking invention but it is more just a new perspective. (Eskola 1998, 194.) Within discourse analysis can be studied the different meanings that the text includes. It gives the possibility to examine content from a different perspective. Moreover, in this study it gives the possibility to examine top-level sport's role and purpose from a governmental perspective.

5.1. Implementation of the study

References – Finnish top-level sports strategy documents

I used six documents as a literature in this study. Primary materials are five different top-level sport's strategy documentations within the years 1994, 1998, 2002, 2004 and 2010. In addition I will use the Finnish Olympic Committee's 1987 published "*Puitesuunnitelma huippu-urheilun edistämiseksi*" which can be considered as a precursor for top-level sport's strategy documentations. I will also use selected quotes from other top-level sport related documentations published by Ministry of Education's if it is necessary.

The actual strategy work of Finnish top-level sport was started immediately after the Finnish sports structural change. Moreover, the first strategy document was released in 1994 and it was named as *Huippu-urheilu 2000. Strategia huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi*. After the first publication, the second strategy document was published in 1998 entitled *Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulle*. These documents were published by Ministry of Education, Finnish Olympic Committee and the Finnish Sports Federation. After these documents the next one was published 2002 with a name of *Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulla. Strategia huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi 2002-2006*. This document was published by Suomen Olympiayhdistys. The two last documents are memos written by workgroup of the Ministry of Education; in 2004 published *Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio* and the in 2010 published "*Sanoista teoiksi*". *Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän ajatuksia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi*.

Table 1. Information of the strategy documents used in the research.

Publisher	Name	Year of publication	Number of pages	Unofficial Translation
NOC	Suomen Olympiakomitean puitesuunnitelma huippu-urheilun edistämiseksi.	1987	34	The strategy document 1987
Minedu, NOC & FSF	Huippu-urheilu 2000. Strategia huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi.	1994	16	The strategy document 1994
Minedu, NOC & FSF	Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulle.	1998	25	The strategy document 1998
Suomen Olympiayhdistys ry	Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulla. Strategia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi 2002-2006.	2002	39	The strategy document 2002
Minedu	Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio.	2004	63	The strategy document 2004
Minedu	“Sanoista teoiksi”. Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän ajatuksia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi.	2010	67	The strategy document 2010

The strategy documents are relevant and appropriate material for this study from the viewpoint that they present always the current status and policy from the governmental perspective. Moreover from different strategy documents there can be examined containing research questions and hypothesis from several angles and from different time periods.

A quotation from the latest strategy document, published 2010 “*Sanoista teoiksi*”, gives a good example of strategy document’s content and objective:

“Work group’s aim was to renew strategic principles and operative responsibilities of different operators in the field of Finnish top-level sport aiming for international success. Moreover, the reform should be implemented so that the Finnish top-level sport is sustainable by its ethical principles, coaching expertise has high standard and coaching is internationally competitive. The work group’s task was also to evaluate Finnish top-level sport systems functionality based on present status and responsibilities. This was set to be examined by taking into consideration different challenges that the international environment sets and conduct needed proposals of top-level sports long-term development actions.” (2010, 4)

Indeed as the above quotation indicates, the strategy documents contain information on Finnish top-level sport’s status, role and guidelines from the governmental perspective. Research and analysis on different strategy documents can be done on top level sports and development actions within the time period the document is done. Moreover, the strategy documents are most likely the best written material to survey the Finnish government’s interest and actions towards top-level sport.

Indeed, the strategy documents gives an appropriate perspective of top-level sports present status and future guidelines, it’s also important to remember that we are studying top-level sport from the governmental viewpoint. Moreover, when we are viewing a topic from the governmental perspective we are at same time looking it from the outside perspective; from the societal viewpoint. Therefore, ethicality is also one of the most essential themes in the research. A quotation in the second latest strategy document *“Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio”* published in 2004, gives an insight to the Finnish governments approach to ethicality in the top-level sport.

“In the Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen’s council program there is a demand for strengthening the Finnish top-level sports ethical foundation. Sports organisations and Ministry of Education has reacted to sports ethical misconducts and have steered operative actions with the government subsidy program. The work group considers that the top-level sport, values in sport and physical activity, as well the ethical foundation is needed to

evaluate from the sports own value perspective and also from the general societal value perspective. These values are; right for fair competition, equality, multiculturalism as well the social, environmental and economical responsibilities. In addition, nowadays is paid more attention than before to sports and sports organisations role to take part in contributing societal and democratic education. The work group recognises the importance that sports and sports organisations take responsibility of educating athletes by advising them in health and well-being, development as an athlete, as well assisting them to find place in society after the sports-career. The objective is to support athletes' psychological, physical and social growth." (2004, 51)

From the second quotation it can be noticed top-level sport ethical and thereby societal dimension. Indeed, this is can be seen also as one of the main perspectives when we are studying top-level sport from the governmental viewpoint. Moreover the quotation above is an appropriate starting point for top-level sport's ethical discussion, which is opened more in the research's sub-questions.

5.2. Themes

Themes and typecasting has been categorised with aim of define top-level sports' status, role and guidelines with the best manners. Moreover, there is a typecasting based on hypothesis and set research questions. Typecasting is done so that the main research question and sub-questions are headlines which underneath are themes, which I find relevant for this topic area. The first part of the results will conclude different dimensions, which are influencers in today's top-level sport. The second part examines professionalism and commercialisation of top-level sport. The third part focuses on analysing the Finnish governments' role and involvement in top-level sport.

There is research done previously from the strategy documents by Maija Alasentie, "Urheilumenestyksen merkitys kansalliselle identiteetille globalisaation aikana", 2011. However, whereas Alasentie research focus is on analysing documents from nationalistic perspectives my research focus on larger governmental concepts. Moreover Alasentie's

research examines Finnish top-level sport success influences for Finnish nation's identity. Indeed, Alasentie's research examines Finnish top-level sport and success in top-level sport from nationalistic and community-centred perspectives. My research's focus is on analysing the top-level sport development and present state from the governmental perspective. Whereas top-level sport has professionalised, commercialised and differentiated, are these also the main topics and perspectives where my study is focusing. In a conclusion although same document is used in Alasentie and my research focus and research questions are in different topics. My study's aim is on analysing the development of Finnish top-level sport to the present day. Moreover, my focus is on analysing phenomena's which exists in top-level sport at the time and analysing of those existing phenomena's influencing top-level sport. In conclusion my study is a framework of Finnish top-level sport status which is analysed based on the governmental strategy documents.

Research's typecasting is following:

1. How the concept of top-level sport can be defined, and what is the perception of top-level sport in today's society from the governmental perspective?

1.1. Top-level sport as a fundamental part of Finnish sports culture

1.2. Children and youth sport

1.3. Coaching & education – aim for expertise

1.4. Globalisation

1.5. Ethical & moral questions

1.6. Antidoping activity

1.7. Disabled sport

The sub-questions:

2. How has professionalism changed the form of top-level sport, and how it has influenced the significance of top-level sport in society?

2.1. Professionalism

2.2. Commercialisation & Entertainisation

2.3. Differentiation of top-level sport

3. What is the Finnish Government's role and responsibility in today's top-level sport, and as a fundamental question, should top-level sport be excluded from public subsidy program?

3.1. Content for society

3.2. Financial support

6. RESULTS

In this study the result part has been broken into different themes based on typecasting set earlier. Each theme is presented in such a way that every paragraph begins with quotes taken from the strategy documents. These quotes are in Finnish which are then translated in the following paragraphs in English in addition to my analysis from the topic area. Quotes are also numbered which is designed to help the reader follow the text better. Noticeable is that all Finnish quotations haven't been use in the analysis paragraphs but they have left in the text because they create an overall depth to the result section.

6.1. Influencers of today's Finnish top-level sport

How the concept of top-level sport can be defined, and what is the perception of top-level sport in today's society from a governmental perspective? There are several indicators which are forming the Finnish top-level sport and where the focus is when developing Finnish elite sport and athletes further on. Moreover the first result part will include quotations and discussion from themes, which are in a central position in different strategy documents. Those themes are considered as fundamental aspects whereas the Finnish government is making decisions and developmental towards the Finnish top-level sport.

Underneath is a figure from the 2010 strategy document where is the Finnish government's missions, aims and action during different strategy works. The figure gives rather appropriate example of the government's actions and ideas of developing Finnish top-level sport.

Table 2. Strategy document's central action plans (Ministry of Education, 2010, 35)

HUIPPU-URHEILU 2000 (1994)	HUIPPU-URHEILU 2000-LUVULLE (1998)
<p>MISSION "A long-term development of Finnish top-level sports, as well to ensure Finland's success in international top-level competitions."</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An efficient work sharing into Finnish top-level sports. • Effective orientation of available resources. • Development of top-level sports funding and restitution of Veikkaus lottery-funds to earlier level. • Ensure top-level sports long-term development. • Success in prominent competitions in different events (EC & WC). • Ensure success in 1996 Atlanta and 1998 Nagano Olympic games. <p>REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement of set 36,6% subsidy share to Finnish sport culture from the Veikkaus lottery-funds. • Support elite athletes international sports career. • Improve professional career development of coaches. • Develop support activities for more professionalized preparation and improve training centers. • Costs of International prominent competitions. • Top-level sports constructing activities. • Develop entertainisation in top-level sports. 	<p>MISSION "A long-term development of Finnish top-level sports, as well to ensure Finland's success in international top-level competitions."</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis of top-level sports value sand social significance as a fundamental starting point. • Build success-chain from youth to top-level sport athletes. • Improve quality of elite athletes professional preparation to competitions. • Improve success in female top-level sports. • Clarify and improve efficiency of work sharing in Finnish top-level sports. • Secure resources and conditions of Finnish top-level sports. <p>REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase children and youths physical activity. • Youth's support program. • Expand base of success. • Finance of sports. • Top-level sports constructing activities. • To improve athletes pension cover. • Support athletes in professional sports career. • Improve professional career development of coaches. • Improve antidoping activity. • Launch female top-level sports program. • Develop training centres and increase them use. • Helsinki 2006 Olympic venture.
HUIPPU-URHEILU 2000-LUVULLA (2002)	HUIPPU-URHEILUTYÖRYHMÄ (2004)
<p>VISION "The Finnish top-level sports receives international success in wide range of events".</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT & ACTION POINTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve credibility and appreciation of top-level sports. • Top-level sports national work sharing and operational responsibilities. • Develop athletes and coaches support system. • Support talented individuals. • Subsidy and support coaching- and training centres. • Develop manager activity. • Improve athletes health and social security system. • Develop partnership activity. • Top-level sports national construction ventures. • Receive hosting of significance prominent games into Finland. • Develop sport-communication. • Increase children and youths physical activity. • Sports facilities amount, level and condition. • Development of coaches position and expertise. • Top-level sports support systems and professionalism. • Development of disability sports. • Ethic of top level sports – quality policies as permanent. 	<p>VISION "Top-level sports is an important part of Finnish culture. It functions in an ethical and socially responsible manners, and it is appreciated among citizen as well it is internationally successful and visible activity."</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workgroups presentation as a guideline for work sharing in Finnish top-level sports. • Top-level sports ethical basis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fair Play – Antidoping activity • Development of Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amount of coaches and education – Sport institutes and coaching center activities – Training centres • Responsibility of athletes life career and operations supporting it. • Strengthen top-level sports research and development activity. • International prominent competitions significance to Finland. • International decision making. • Top-level disability sports particular subjects. • Top-level sports special projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication – Team ball sports

6.1.1. Top-level sport as a fundamental part of Finnish sports culture

”Jotta huippu-urheilu on Suomessa kiinnostavaa, suomalaisen urheilun menestyksen takaa on löydyttävä piirteitä, joihin mahdollisimman moni suomalainen voi samaistua ja joita hän voi arvostaa.” (2002, 16)¹

”Haluamme huippu-urheilua, joka saa meidät suomalaiset tuntemaan ylpeyttä siitä, että olemme suomalaisia.” (1994, 5)²

”Vaikka huippu-urheilulla Suomessa ei nykyään ole samanlaista merkitystä kansallisen identiteetin luojana kuin joskus aiemmin, on sen merkitys kansallistunteelle yhä vahva. Pariisin olympiajoukkueen menestyksellä 1924 oli suuri vaikutus vasta itsenäistyneen kansan itsetunnolle. Vastaavanlainen tapaus koettiin vuonna 1995, jolloin lamasta toipuva Suomi juhli ennenkokemattomalla tavalla miesten jääkiekon maailmanmestaruutta.” (2004, 13)³

The successful past of Finnish sports culture seems to have a significant role in all the documents of the strategy groups. Remembering the glorious past is something that brings us together and distinguishes Finland from the other nations. According to the strategy document 2002: *“in order that the top-level sport in Finland would be interesting, there has to be certain characteristics behind the success of Finnish sports, which as many Finnish people as possible could respect and to identify with it.”¹* Success in sport creates a positive atmosphere it is closely linked to national identity. *We want top-level sports that makes us Finnish people proud that we are Finnish²* describes the attitude and expectations towards top-level athletes. Although the strategy document 2004 suggests that the role of top-level sport in national identity is decreasing it is still very meaningful for our society: *even if top-level sports don't have the same role as the creator of national identity, its significance is still strong.³*

”Kansallisen huippu-urheilujärjestelmän kilpailukyky suhteessa muihin maihin mitataan kansainvälisissä suurkilpailuissa.” (1998, 7)⁴

”Huippu-urheilu tulee olemaan entistä selvemmin kilpailua järjestelmien välillä.” (1987, 6)⁵

”Suuresta julkisuusarvosta johtuen huippu-urheilua käytetään hyväksi mm. kaupallisten ja poliittisten tarkoitusperien ajamiseen.” (1987, 8)⁶

”Kansainvälisesti urheilu on perinteisesti liitetty kansainvälisen yhteisymmärryksen edistämiseen, joskin ajoittain sitä on käytetty kansainvälisen politiikan välineenä.” (2004, 35)⁷

Internationality is one of the key elements when talking about top-level sports. Success in international competitions is something Finnish people are used to and it is also a method to measure the sports system we have in Finland. Strategy group 1998 brings up that *national system of top-level sports is measured with other countries in international major competitions*⁴ and even before that development has been seen by the strategy group 1987 when they claim that there will be more competition in *top-level sports between sport systems*.⁵ Moreover, when talking about internationality we also have to remember the political aspect of top-level sports. *Due to the great publicity value top-level sport is exploited for commercial and political objectives*.⁶ International major competitions have been a channel to influence political atmosphere. Also the strategy group 2002 describes this in their document: *internationally sport has traditionally been attached to increasing the international consensus, although at times it has been used as a tool of international politics*.⁷

6.1.2. Children and youth sport

”Laadukkaasti toteutettu lasten ja nuorten urheilu on keskeinen arvo myös huippu-urheilulle.” (1998, 4)⁸

”Menestyminen huippu-urheilussa pohjautuu hyvään ja laajasti toteutettuun lasten ja nuorten liikunta- ja urheilutoimintaan sekä kiinteään yhteistyöhön organisoidun valmennus- ja kilpailutoiminnan kanssa.” (1994, 6)⁹

”Lasten ja nuorten urheilulla on hyvin selkeä päämäärä. Saada lapset ja nuoret liikkumaan riittävästi. Tässä päämäärässä yhdistyy saumattomasti kaksi ulottuvuutta; yhtiältä terveyden ylläpitämisen ja liikunnallisen elämäntavan synnyttäminen – sekä toisaalta huippu-urheilullisen lahjakkuuden kasvun mahdollistaminen.” (2010, 10)¹⁰

”Suomalaisen huippu-urheilun menestymisen edellytykset... Suuri lapsiurheilijoiden määrä, lahjakkaat nuoret urheilijat, sekä ammattimaisesti harjoittelevat huippu-urheilijat, joiden taidot, suorituskyky, psyykkiset valmiudet ovat huipputasoa.” (1994, 10)¹¹

”Menestyminen huippu-urheilussa perustuu suurilla joukoilla toteutettuun lasten ja nuorten urheiluun sekä siihen kiinteästi liittyvään huipulle tähtäävään valmennukseen.” (1998, 8)¹²

Children and youth sports have an important role in the Finnish society. Top-level sport is dependent on the work that is done with children. *Children and youth sport that is done with quality is a key value for the Finnish top-level sports.*⁸ Groundwork is done with children and the strategy document 1998 crystallises it well: *The success in top-level sports is based on using large forces and staff in implementing the coaching of children and youth and that the coaching is aiming for the success in top-level sport.*⁹ Although top-level sport is highly dependent on children and youth sports the Strategy group 2010 is setting other important goals as it states in its report that *children and youth sport has a very clear vision, to get children and young people to move enough. There are two dimensions in this vision; the maintenance of health and to start athletic lifestyle and on the other hand, to enable the growth for the talented young people that top-level sport demands.*¹⁰

”Parasta huippu-urheilutyötä on saada selvästi nykyistä useammat lapset ja nuoret liikkumaan ja parantamaan fyysistä kuntoaan.” (1998, 17)¹³

”Suomessa, kuten muissakin länsimaissa, lasten arkiliikkuminen on vähentynyt merkittävästi. Niinpä entistä pienempi osuus suomalaisista lapsista liikkuu ja urheilee riittävästi.” (2010, 17)¹⁴

”Liikunta on joutunut nuorten vapaa-ajassa altavastajaan asemaan. Se joutuu kilpailemaan nuorten vapaa-ajasta mediayhteiskunnan ja viihdekulttuurin kanssa.” (2010, 21)¹⁵

”Suurin osa lapsista ja nuorista liikkuu huippu-urheilun näkökulmasta riittävästi – vähintään 18 tuntia viikossa.” (2010, 10)¹⁶

”Lasten mahdollisuudet riittävään ja monipuoliseen päivittäiseen urheiluannokseen vaihtelevat.” (2010, 18)¹⁷

”Lisäksi lasten ja nuorten urheilussa tulisi paremmin huomioida nykykulttuurin virtauksia ja pyrkiä ymmärtämään nuorten arvoja ja urheilemisen asemaa heidän elämässään.” (2010, 42)¹⁸

All the strategy documents are emphasising the importance of adequate amount of exercise. *The best work for top-level sport is to get more and more children to move and to improve their physical condition.*¹³ The latest strategy document is analysing also the negative trend which there has been seen: *in Finland, as in other Western countries, the amount of daily exercise has decreased significantly. Thus, the majority of children and young people are not moving enough.*¹⁴ At the same time strategy document 2010 describes the change in the society and the attitudes towards leisure time. *Physical training has been forced to a defendant’s position in young people leisure time. It has to compete with young individuals’ leisure time with media society and entertainment culture.*¹⁵ The changes in the society where children and young people are living are something that top-level sport needs to take into account and to anticipate.

”Nuoren urheilijan elämässä tehdään huippu-urheilun kannalta keskeisimmät valinnat. Tässä ikävaiheessa myös siirrytään lahjakkuuden tunnistamisesta lahjakkuuden kehittämiseen.” (2010, 18)¹⁹

”Suomi on huippu-urheilussa on väestömäärältään pieni toimija, siksi lahjakkuutta ei ole tuhlattavaksi.” (2010, 10)²⁰

”Urheilujärjestelmä huolehtii siitä, että urheiluseuralla sekä nuorella urheilijalla sekä hänen lähipiirillään on käytettävissään ohjauksen ja valmennuksen huippuosaamista ja – tietoa” (2010, 10)²¹

”Kansallisen huippu-urheilumenestyksen kaikkein tärkein ehto on, että käytettävissä on laaja ”lahjakkuusreservi”. Lasten ja nuorten liikunnan kannalta asia tiivistyy hyvin yksinkertaisesti; mahdollisimman monen lapsen ja nuoren tulee liikkua paljon, usein ja monipuolisesti. Vain siten mahdollistuu lahjakkuuden ilmeneminen ja kehittyminen.” (2010, 10)²²

”Kaikessa ohjaamisessa ja valmentamisessa keskitytään edellytysten luomiseen yksilön kehittämiseksi. Seuran tai joukkueen etu eri ikäkausitasoilla on aina toissijaista yksilön

kehittämiseen nähden. Nuorella on varmuus siitä, että hänen lahjakkuutensa havaitaan ja sitä ohjataan viisaimmalla mahdollisella tavalla.” (2010, 9-10)²³

”Kaikissa urheilulajeissa, myös joukkuelajeissa, lahjakkuuden kehittäminen turvataan ja maksimoidaan keskittymällä yksilön kehittämiseen.” (2010, 10)²⁴

”Lajiliitot ja seurat, ohjaajat ja valmentajat, sekä lasten vanhemmat, on saatava ymmärtämään, että myös huippu-urheilun näkökulmasta kaikkien yhteinen etu on lahjakkuuden jalostamisen perustan eli liikkumisen määrän ja monipuolisuuden lisääminen.” (2010, 10)²⁵

*The most important decisions from the top-level sport perspective are done when athletes are young. At this age also the transition from finding talents to developing talents is made.¹⁹ As said before top-level sport is competing with for example media society and the entertainment culture and it needs to give young and talented people an attractive career option. Many of the strategy documents are stating that Finland is a small country and the amount of talented potential top-athletes is limited. That is Finland needs to have an extraordinary sport system that enables to get the maximum out of the potential. Strategy document 2010 states that *Finland is a small player in terms of population, and that is why we have no talents to waste.*²⁰ Another factor that the latest strategy document 2010 highlights is the fact that developing and supporting talented individuals needs to be at the heart of the sport system even in team sports.*

6.1.3. Coaching & education – aim for expertise

”Pitkäjänteinen valmennus ja henkilökohtaisen harjoittelun parantaminen ovat tärkeimmät tulokseen vaikuttavat tekijät.” (1994, 11)²⁶

”Menestyvä huippu-urheilu edellyttää toimivaa valmennusjärjestelmää, joka valmentajakoulutuksen, lajihoitoisen valmennuksen, lahjakkuuksien etsinnän, valmennuksen seurannan ja ammattimaisen harjoittelun olosuhteiden luomisen avulla kokoaa yhteen huippuvalmennuksen tukitoiminnot ja varmistaa jatkuvan menestyksen.” (1994, 11)²⁷

”Huippu-urheilun tulokset koetaan myös koko suomalaisen valmennusosaamisen yhteiseksi saavutukseksi.” (2010, 13)²⁸

*Long-term coaching and improving individual training are the main factors affecting the results*²⁶ according to the strategy document 1994. It describes well the importance of coaching. Without top-quality coaching Finnish top-level sport can't succeed. Finland is a small country in terms of population so it is crucial for us to ensure a continuum in creating top-level athletes with an excellence in coaching. Coaching and its significance have even been brought to centre in the most recent strategy document.

"Suomalaisen huippu-urheilun menestymisen edellytykset.. ..Toimiva valmennusjärjestelmä. Lajijohtoinen valmennusjärjestelmä, joka etsii lahjakkuudet ja ohjaa heidät huipulle sekä laadukas valmennus ja valmentajakoulutus, joka luo edellytykset ammattimaiselle valmentautumiselle ja valmentamiselle." (1994, 10)²⁹

"Suomalaisen valmennustoiminnan perinteet ja perusta on urheiluseuroissa tapahtuvassa, pääasiassa vapaaehtoisuuteen perustuvassa ohjaus- ja valmennustoiminnassa. Tämän toimintakulttuurin ylläpitäminen on edelleen koko urheiluliikkeen tärkeä tavoite." (2004, 24–25)³⁰

"Jotta suomalaisten seuravalmentajien koulutus saadaan nuoren urheilijan kehityspotentiaalia tukevaksi ja ammattivalmentajien taso kansainvälisesti kilpailukykyiseksi, tulee ohjaajien ja valmentajien koulutusjärjestelmän olla selkeä ja toimiva." (2002, 27)³¹

To develop coaching towards a desirable direction Finnish coaching systems need to stay on top of development compared to top countries in sports. Even the first strategy document 1994 states that prerequisites for success in top-level sports are *effective coaching system that is looking for talents, directing them to the top, maintaining good quality in coaching and creates education for coaches, that creates professionalism in preparation and coaching.*²⁹

"Suomessa valmennus on vahvasti sidoksissa urheilun kansalaistoimintaan... Toisaalta valmennus, kuten urheilu kokonaisuudessaankin, on lähihistoriassa ammattimaistunut." (2010, 18)³²

"Moni ammattivalmentaja toimii osapäiväisesti tai sekavan toimenkuvan puitteissa, jossa varsinaiset valmennustehtävät kattavat vain osan varsinaisesta työstä." (2010, 19)³³

”Kansainvälisessä vertailussa suomalaisen valmennusjärjestelmän suurimpia puutteita on ammattivalmentajien vähäinen määrä. Ammattivalmentajien työmahdollisuuksien lisääminen onkin huippu-urheilun valmennusjärjestelmässämme keskeisiä tavoitteita.” (2004, 25)³⁴

”Ammattivalmentajien työmahdollisuuksien lisääminen onkin huippu-urheilun valmennusjärjestelmässämme keskeisiä tavoitteita.” (2004, 25)³⁵

”Suomessa valmentajien tehtävien, roolin ja aseman ymmärtäminen ontuu. Jopa huipulla toimivien valmentajien odotetaan toimivan edelleen pääosin pyyteettömästi lajin eteen.” (2010, 22)³⁶

”Kansainvälisessä vertailussa suomalaisen valmennusjärjestelmän suurimpia puutteita on ammattivalmentajien vähäinen määrä.” (2004, 25)³⁷

”Vähintään puolet ansiotuloistaan valmennuksesta saavia ammattivalmentajia oli Suomen Valmentajat Ry:n vuonna 2001 ja SLU:n vuonna 2002 tekemien selvitysten mukaan noin 1200.” (2002, 7)³⁸

”Vaikka valmentaminen on ammattimaistunut ja osassa lajeja ammattilaistunut, kyse ei ole professionista - ammattikunnasta, jolla olisi itsenäistä valtaa ja vastuuta muokata ammatin vaatimuksia ja luoda eettistä toimintakoodistoa.” (2010, 20)³⁹

Coaching is in transition. Professionalism in sports has led to the fact that also coaching has become more professional. *Coaching in Finland is strongly linked to the civic activity, but on the other hand, coaching has become more professional in recent history.*³² Even though Finnish coaching has become more professionalised there are several challenges however to make it a profession for those who coach full-time. *Many professional coaches are working part-time or have mixed job descriptions, whereas the actual coaching work takes only the part of time used in work.*³³ Transition towards professionalism is crucial and strategy document 2004 reveals that *in international comparison one of the major weaknesses in Finnish sporting system was the limited number of professional coaches*³⁴ According to the Finnish Coaches Association there were 1200 professional coaches in 2001 and the strategy document 2004 states that *one of the most central objectives in our sport system is to increase employment opportunities of professional coaches.*³⁵ Attitudes

towards professional coaching are also confusing due to the civic nature of its. *In Finland there is a lack of understanding the role, tasks and position of coaches and even the top-level coaches are expected to do mainly unselfish work for the sport.*³⁶

*”Kansalliselle tasolle tähtäävien urheilijoiden taustalle tulisi rakentaa asiantuntijamalli, jossa hänellä on lähiverkosto tukemassa valmentamista.” (2010, 19)*⁴⁰

*Valmennusosaamisen keskeisiä hyödyntäjiä ja edelleen jakajia ovat valtakunnalliset urheiluakatemit ja niiden yhteydessä toimivat valmentajat.” (2010, 13)*⁴¹

*”Lajiliittokohtaiseksi siirretty 90-luvulla siirretty valmentajakoulutusvastuu ei ole suurimpia lajeja lukuun ottamatta tuonut toivottua tulosta ja uusien pätevien valmentajien mukaan tulo on pienemmissä lajeissa jo vähentynyt.” (2002, 7)*⁴²

*”Perinteinen urheilija-valmentaja –yhteistyö on edelleen yleisin toimintamalli ja paras tae hyviin tuloksiin pääsemiseksi. Mutta myös toisenlaiset toimintamallit ovat yleistymässä. Osalle pidemmälle edenneistä huippu-urheilujoukoistamme ei ole enää pysyvää valmentajasuhdetta tai urheilija valmentaa itse itseään.” (2002, 9)*⁴³

*”Valmentautuminen on kokonaisvaltainen prosessi, jossa yhdistyy tieto ja ymmärrys monilta valmennuksen fysiologisilta erityisaloilta sekä lukuisat mm. terveyteen, ravintoon, henkiseen tasapainoon ja elämänlaatuun liittyvät tekijät.” (2010, 14)*⁴⁴

All the strategy documents are in agreement that it is decisive for Finland to build a coaching system, which enables knowledge and information sharing. Coaching demands wide information about physiological training as well as expertise in health, emotional balance, nutrition and other factors that are affecting the quality of life. *Finland should build an expert model that would bring a network to support coaching for those athletes who are aiming for the national level.*⁴⁰ To fulfil this need there has been a number of coaching centres founded by the Finnish government and the Olympic committee. The most recent strategy document highlights the importance of these coaching centres: *Finnish coaching is collected systematically, developed ambitiously and distributed effectively. This*

*is done by concentrating expertise in training and sport centres, and by working closely together with the professional coaching of the sport.*⁴¹

6.1.4. Globalisation of top-level sport

”Kansainvälisyys on keskeinen huippu-urheilua määrittelevä piirre. Kansat ja kulttuurit kohtaavat maailmanlaajuisissa urheilutapahtumissa.” (1998,4)⁴⁵

”Huippu-urheilu on luonnostaan kansainvälistä. Kansat ja kulttuurit kohtaavat kilpakentillä..” (1994, 5)⁴⁶

”Huippu-urheilusta tekee yhteiskunnallisesti merkittävän sen suuri suosio joka puolella maailmaa. Urheilun olemukseen kuuluu kansainvälisyys luonnostaan.” (2002, 12)⁴⁷

”Urheilun yhteinen kieli kansainvälisine sääntöineen on mahdollistanut eri maiden ja kulttuurien kohtaamisen neutraalisti kilpailutoiminnassa ja niiden ulkopuolella jo pitkään.” (2002, 12)⁴⁸

”Urheilutapahtumiin osallistuminen tarjoaa mahdollisuuden edistää kansojen välistä vuorovaikutusta, suvaitsevaisuutta, tasa-arvoa ja kestävää kehitystä.” (1998, 4)⁴⁹

”Lisäksi kansainvälisen kilpailutoiminnan kautta huippu-urheilu osallistuu aktiivisesti rauhantyöhön lisäämällä kansojen välistä kanssakäymistä, yhteistyötä ja suvaitsevaisuutta.” (2002, 16)⁵⁰

”Monikansallisista ammattilaissarjoista huolimatta ovat eri lajien arvokilpailut säilyttäneet ja vahvistaneet asemiaan.” (2004, 13)⁵¹

Internationalism is a key defining feature in top-level sports. Nations and countries meet in global sporting events.⁴⁵ Sport is international by its nature. Attendance at sporting provides an opportunity to promote interaction among people, tolerance, equality and sustainable development.⁴⁶ Top-level sport and athletes are one of the best promotional tools to promote the public image of the country or to convey an important message. Many of the top-level athletes are highly appreciated internationally and they have an opportunity

to influence matters in the society. *The great popularity around the world is what makes top-level sport significant for the society.*⁴⁷ It also allows nations to meet in a neutral environment. Strategy document 2002 describes this: *for a long time the common language of sport with its international rules enables different nations and cultures to meet neutrally in competitive actions and beyond.*⁴⁸

*”Kansallisen huippu-urheilujärjestelmän kilpailukyky suhteessa muihin maihin mitataan kansainvälisissä suurkilpailuissa.” (1998, 7)*⁵²

*”Kansainvälisen yhteistyön, asiantuntijavaihdon ja jatkuvan vuorovaikutuksen avulla varmistetaan pysyminen kansainvälisen kehityksen kärjessä.” (1994, 11)*⁵³

*”Kiristyneessä kansainvälisessä kilpailussa ainoa kestävä ratkaisu huippu-urheilumenestyksen varmistamiseen on omaleimainen suomalainen malli, joka perustuu kansallisiin vahvuuksiin ja käsityksiimme suomalaisesta huippu-urheilusta sekä näiden pohjalta toteutettuihin toimenpiteisiin.” (1998, 7)*⁵⁴

*”Olemme luottaneet siihen, että suomalaiset huippu-urheilijat menestyvät kansainvälisissä arvokilpailuissa kansakunnan kokoon suhteutettuna hyvin. Viimeisen vuosikymmenen aikana on tapahtunut selkeä pudotus tässä vertailussa. Suomalainen huippu-urheilu on valintojen edessä.” (2010, 9)*⁵⁵

*”Suomalainen huippu-urheilu on säilyttänyt kansainvälisen asemansa hyvin, toisaalta perinteisimpien lajiemme kautta ja toisaalta täysin uusien lajien kautta.” (2002, 5)*⁵⁶

*”Jos kansainvälisessä kehityksessä halutaan pysyä mukana, kansainvälisen aikuismenestyksen säilyttäminen ja lisääminen edellyttää lajista riippumatta yhä suurempia henkilö- ja talousresursseja huippuvalmennukseen.” (2002, 11)*⁵⁷

*”Suomalainen urheilu on eristäytynyt. Emme ole osa huippu-urheilun kansainvälisen kehittämisen valtavirtaa, emmekä koe, että sinne tulisi pyrkiä...Huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi tarvitaan kansainvälistä vertailupohjaa ja peiliä oman järjestelmän ja osaamisen kehittämiseksi.” (2010, 21)*⁵⁸

Besides the nations unifying element, top-level sport has highly competitive nature. *The competitiveness of top-level sport systems compared to other countries is measured in international major competitions.*⁵² Finland has succeeded in international competitions incredibly in its history. The development of top-level sport has accelerated and Finland has to take serious actions to remain in the progress. All the strategy documents are raising the issue. *International co-operation, exchange of expertise and continuous interaction are needed to ensure staying at the top of international development.*⁵³ And furthermore, *at the intensifying international competition, the only sustainable solution to ensure our success in top-level sport is to create a unique Finnish model, which is based on national strengths and our perceptions of Finnish top-level sport and the measures taken on the basis of these.*⁵⁴ Even the most recent strategy document calls for actions: *we have relied on the fact that compared to the size of the nation Finnish top-level athletes have succeeded well in international major competitions. There has been a clear drop in this comparison during the last decades. Finnish top-level sport needs to make decisions.*⁵⁵

*”Suomen arvostetaan kansainvälisesti urheilukulttuurimaana. Arvokisat, joita Suomessa järjestetään usein ja monissa urheilumuodoissa, tunnustetaan tärkeäksi tavaksi tuottaa yhteiskuntaan elinvoimaa, moniarvoisuutta ja yritteliäisyyttä.” (2010, 15)*⁵⁹

The vision of the most recent strategy group 2010 is giving Finland a clear direction where to aim. *Finland is internationally appreciated as a country of good sports culture. Major competitions that are held often in Finland in various sports are recognised as an important way to create vitality in society, diversity and entrepreneurship.*⁵⁹

6.1.5. Ethical & moral questions

*”Huippu-urheilijoiden henkilökohtaisen vastuun rinnalla koko järjestelmältä odotetaan yhteiskunnallisesti hyväksytyjen arvojen ja nuorten kasvun tukemista. Tämä tarkoittaa muun muassa tasa-arvon ja suvaitsevaisuuden edistämistä sekä päättäväisiä toimenpiteitä urheilussa kiellettyjen aineiden käytön väkivallan ja muiden huippu-urheilun lieveilmiöiden estämiseksi.” (1998, 5)*⁶⁰

”Huippu-urheilun eettisenä lähtökohtana on yhteiskunnan ja urheilun kasvatuksellisten arvojen noudattaminen urheilijan uran kaikissa vaiheissa.” (1998, 5)⁶¹

”Huippu-urheilun eettistä perustaa on hyvin pitkälle arvioitu pelkästään antidopingtyön perusteella.” (2004, 35)⁶²

”Nuorten idoleina huippu-urheilijoilla on suuri vastuu.” (1994, 4)⁶³

The role of top-level sport for the society is undeniable. Top-level athletes and their achievements are followed carefully and their actions are closely linked to the society itself. Top-level sports and the actions athletes and all the other actors are taking are describing the present status of the society. *Alongside the personal responsibility of top-level athletes the whole top-level sport system is expected to follow socially accepted values and to support young people in their growth. This means promoting and supporting equality and tolerance and to take determined measures to prevent the use of banned substance and other side effects in top-level sports.*⁶⁰ Moreover, *the ethical basis of top-level sport is to follow the values of the society and the educational principles of sport at all stages of an athlete’s career.*⁶¹

”Kansainvälisessä huippu-urheilussa on viime vuosina ollut monia epäterveitä ilmiöitä. Ne ovat nakertaneet urheilun positiivista julkikuvaa kansainvälisesti. Suomessa urheilun eettiset ongelmat ovat lähinnä liittyneet sopupeleihin ja dopingiin.” (2004, 10)⁶⁴

”Huippu-urheilun olemukseen kuuluva kilpailu, paremmuuden ja jatkuvan kehittymisen pyrkimys, sekä urheiluun liittyvät taloudelliset arvot aikaansaavat jännitteitä ja ristiriitoja tavoitteen, keinojen ja urheilun perusarvojen välille.” (2002, 13)⁶⁵

”Kilpailutahdin kiihtyminen ja rahapalkintojen kasvu on siten osaltaan vaikuttanut dopingin käytön houkuttavuuden lisääntymiseen.” (2002, 14)⁶⁶

The ethical dilemmas that athletes in top-level sport are facing are global. *Internationally there have been many unhealthy phenomena in top-level sports during recent years. They have damaged the positive public image of top-level sport internationally. The ethical problems in Finland have mostly been related to fixed games and doping.*⁶⁴ The reason why

top athletes and top-level sport are facing so many ethical dilemmas are to some extent understandable due to its competitive nature. Strategy document 2002 reflects this aptly: *the competitive essence that belongs to top-level sport and the efforts to the continuous development and superiority as well as sport related economic values are creating tension and conflicts between objectives, means and basic values of sport.*⁶⁵ The monetary awards and the economical dependence on those can also attract athletes to choose ethically questionable methods to achieve success.

*”Kansainvälisyys ja urheilun julkisuusarvo on kuitenkin mahdollistanut urheiluliikkeen ja suurten tapahtumien hyväksikäytön myös erilaisten poliittisten päämäärien ajamisessa. Olympiakisojen boikotointia ja terrorisointia olympiakisojen aikana on käytetty kansallisen ja kansainvälisen politiikan tarkoituksena.” (2010, 12)*⁶⁷

*”Urheilun perusarvoja uhkaaviksi tekijöiksi ovat kehityksen myötä nousseet boikotit, väkivalta ja doping.” (1987, 8)*⁶⁸

The international nature of sport and enormous global competitions are also factors affecting the ethical problems of sport. All the strategy documents are describing the situation and the most recent one summarises it well. *Internationalism and the publicity value of sports have enabled the abuse of sporting movement and large-scale events to promote political objectives. Boycotting and terrorising the Olympic Games has been a tool to target national and international political objectives.*⁶⁷

*”Toisaalta mitä lähemmäksi aikuisten kilpa- ja huippu-urheilua tullaan, sitä suuremmaksi muodostuu miesten osuus toiminnasta.” (2010, 40)*⁶⁹

*”Sukupuolten tasa-arvo on ollut liikunnassa ja urheilussa tavoitteena aina 1990 puolivälistä lähtien, jolloin opetusministeriön asettama työryhmä esitti toimenpideohjelman tasa-arvon edistämiseksi.” (2010, 40)*⁷⁰

Another important ethical question is gender equality. Gender equality is an important topic in society and it also affects top-level sports. Many of the strategy documents are

discussing about gender equity and it has been a long-term goal also in top-level sport. *On the other hand, the closer we get to the adults competitive and top-level sport, more essential and recognised becomes the men's activity in top-level sport.*⁶⁹ Professionalism and the opportunity to create profession by doing top-level sport are not the same for both genders, but there are several plans to improve the present status of women's top-level sport. *Gender equity has been a goal for physical education and sports from the mid 1990s, when the task force appointed by the Ministry of Education presented an action plan to develop equity.*⁷⁰ Significant is that many of the strategy documents are stating that with relatively small investments in women's top-level sport Finland could achieve better success.

*"Huippu-urheilun kiihtyvässä kehitysvauhdissa esille tulee alati uusia eettisiä kysymyksiä ja huippu-urheilujärjestelmällämme on oltava nykyistä parempi valmius niiden ennakoimiseen ja ratkaisemiseen." (2002, 27)*⁷¹

*"Urheilujärjestöt ja opetusministeriö ovat reagoineet urheilun eettisiin rikkeisiin ja opetusministeriö on ohjannut toimintaa valtionavustuspolitiikallaan." (2004, 51)*⁷²

*The intensifying pace of development in top-level sport will raise new ethical questions and our top-level sport system needs to have better capability to predict and to resolve those.*⁷¹

Finland has responded to this demand and according to the strategy document 2004 *sports federations and the Ministry of Education have responded to the ethical violations of sports and the Ministry of Education has directed activities with governmental subsidy policy.*⁷²

6.1.6. Antidoping activity

*"Urheiluvilpin nykyaikaisin muoto on suorituksen tai suorituskyvyn keinotekoinen parantaminen eli doping." (2002, 13)*⁷³

*The most modern form of cheating in sport is the improved performance or the capacity to perform artificially, i.e. doping.*⁷³ Doping is probably the largest ethical problem in elite sports, which is why this study is processing doping in a separate subsection.

"...huippu-urheilumme imago sai kansallisesti vakavan kolhun, jonka seurauksia koko suomalainen urheilu joutuu osaltaan maksamaan." (2002, 12)⁷⁴

"Suomalaisten mielikuva huippu-urheilusta on juuri nyt hyvin varautunut ja mielikuvan muuttaminen voi kestää vuosia." (2002, 12)⁷⁵

First strategy documents 1994 and 1998 are not taking doping and the negative aspects of top-level sports that much into consideration and Finnish people experienced top-level sport as an important and positive part of society. The doping scandal that Finnish athletes caused has changed the atmosphere. Strategy document 2002 describes the situation one year after the scandal: *our top-level sport received nationally a strong punch, the consequences of which the whole Finnish top-level sport has to pay.*⁷⁴ Strategy group also understood that the consequences are long term and therefore stated: *Finnish image of top-level sport is very reserved at the present, and it might take years to change it.*⁷⁵

"Suomalainen huippu-urheilukeskustelu on tämän vuosituhatosen alusta lähtien ollut mollivoittoista. Doping, väkivalta ja sopupelit likaavat modernin urheilun ideaalia – tasa-arvoista kilvoittelua voitosta. Koska Suomessa ei ole ammattiurheilua ennen 1990-lukua juuri ollut, tyhjänsivät urheilun kaupallistuminen ja ammattimaistuminen yhdessä skandaalien ja suomalaisen urheilun rakennemuutoksen kanssa kaikki vanhat hyvät huippu-urheilun perustelut julkisesta keskustelusta. Huippu-urheilun merkitys ei ole rakentunut uudelle, muuttuneelle perustalle." (2010, 25–26)⁷⁶

"Suomen antidopingohjelma ja –toimenpiteet ovat maailman parhaita, mutta silti usko puhtaaseen urheiluun on heikentynyt." (2002, 5)⁷⁷

The change in attitudes has been slow and currently the scandal of 2001 is still dealt with in court and is still causing media coverage. The most recent strategy document 2010 describes almost a decade afterwards how it has affected Finnish attitudes towards elite sports: *The discussion of Finnish top-level sport has been unfavourable from the start of the millennium. Doping, violence and fixed games are contaminating the modern ideal of sport – equal competition for victory. Because there was almost no professional sports before*

*1990s in Finland the commercialisation and professionalism of sport together with the scandals and the structural changes took the bottom out of all the good old justifications for the top-level sport from the public discussion.*⁷⁶

”Suomi on toiminut aktiivisesti kansallisessa ja kansainvälisessä antidopingtyössä, ja antidopingtoimintamme on kansainvälisessä vertailussa erittäin korkeatasoista ja arvostettua.” (2002, 14)⁷⁸

”Suomen kannalta keskeisin tavoite lähitulevaisuudessa dopingin vastaisessa työssä on kansainvälisen antidopingtyön ja testauksen lisääminen, yhteistyön tiivistäminen ja testauskäytäntöjen ja sanktioiden yhtenäistäminen eri maissa ja eri lajeissa.” (2002, 13–14)⁷⁹

”Vaikka dopingaineiden kehittyminen näyttää kulkevan antidopingmenetelmien kehittymisen edellä, on testausmenetelmien kehitys nopeutunut ja vilpin käyttäjä jää yhä todennäköisemmin kiinni.” (2002, 13)⁸⁰

On the other hand, the work Finland is doing for anti-doping is highly appreciated. *Finland has been actively taking part to the national and international anti-doping work and the work we are doing for anti-doping is at a high level and highly appreciated in international comparison.*⁷⁸ Many of the strategy documents are stating that it is also crucial for Finland to stay at the forefront of the development. *Central objective for Finnish anti-doping in the near future is to increase international anti-doping work and testing, intensify co-operation and to unify testing methods and sanctions in different countries and sports.*⁷⁹

”Liikuntajärjestöjen valtionavustusten ehtona on antidopingsäännöstöön sitoutuminen ja aktiivinen dopingtyö. Valtionavustusta saavien valtakunnallisten urheilujärjestöjen antidopingtyö otetaan huomioon arvioitaessa urheilujärjestölle myönnettävän avustuksen määrää.” (2004, 37)⁸¹

Finnish government is also taking actions to prevent the use of doping and to support the work that is done for anti-doping. *The conditions of governmental subsidy for sports organisation is to commit to the anti-doping regulation and to take part actively in anti-doping work. The anti-doping work that the national sports organisations that receive*

*governmental subsidies are doing is taken under consideration while evaluating the amount of grants.*⁸¹ While looking at the subsidies government is giving to the top-level sport, it is noteworthy that the amount of anti-doping work is receiving is one of the highest grown by percentage.

6.1.7. Disabled sport

*”Vammaisurheilu on kehittynyt tavoitteelliseksi ja määrätietoiseksi huippu-urheiluksi. Huipputasolla menestyäkseen vammaisurheilijat tarvitsevat kokonaisvaltaisen urheilulle omistautumisen lisäksi ammattimaiset resurssit, taustaorganisaatiot ja olosuhteet vastaavalla tavalla kuin muut huippu-urheilijat.” (2004, 57)*⁸²

*”Vammaisurheilun asema huippu-urheilun kentässä on selkiytymätön. Vammaisurheilun arvostusta ja toimintakykyä tulee lisätä vahvistamalla Paralympiyhdistyksen roolia vammaishuippu-urheilua keskeisesti koordinoivana tahona.” (2002, 27)*⁸³

*Disabled sport has developed into goal oriented and determined top-level sport. To succeed in top-level sport, disabled athletes need in addition to comprehensive dedication to sports also professional resources, organisations and circumstances equivalent to all the other top-level athletes.*⁸² Disabled sport is part of Finnish top-level sport and it is following the same trends as all the other elite sports, but the field is more challenging. Strategy document 2002 describes the situation further: *disabled sport has an indefinite status in the field of top-level sport. The appreciation and the ability to function needs to be increased by strengthening the role of Paralympic Association as a party that coordinates disabled sport centrally.*⁸³

*”Suomi on ollut yksi vammaisurheilun menestyjämaista, mutta tulostason, välinekehityksen ja vammaishuippu-urheilun ammattimaistumisen myötä suomalaiset arvokisamitalit ovat harvempien urheilijoiden varassa.” (2004, 20)*⁸⁴

*”Vammaisurheilussa ei Suomessa ole ammattilaisurheilijoita.” (2004, 20)*⁸⁵

Professionalism has changed top-level sport, but disabled sport has not developed at the same pace. *There are no professional athletes in Finnish disabled sports.*⁸⁴ The success in disabled sport has been good, but is mainly due to a few elite athletes that are exceptional. *Finland has been one of the most successful countries in disabled sport, but Finnish major championship medals are dependent on fewer and fewer athletes due to the result level, development of equipments and the professionalisation of disabled sport.*⁸⁵

"Vammaishuippu-urheilijoiden tarvitsema valmennuksellinen tieto-taito löytyy jo tänä päivänä pääasiallisesti lajiliitoista." (2004, 31)⁸⁶

"Yhteistyö eri huippu-urheilutahojen kanssa ja vammaishuippu-urheilun kehittämisen ja tutkimustoiminta on vasta alussa." (2004,31)⁸⁷

"Vuonna 2010 muun muassa Suomen Vammaisurheilu- ja liikunta (VAU) neljän aiemman järjestön yhteenliittymä hyväksyttiin uutena valtionapukelpoiseksi järjestöksi." (2010, 38)⁸⁸

"OK tukee ja kehittää erikseen sovittavalla tavalla vammais- ja opiskelijaurheilua." (1994, 7)⁸⁹

*The knowledge of coaching that top-level disabled athletes require can already be found today mainly in sport organisations.*⁸⁶ The challenge has been to distribute and to exploit the information that elite sport has. According to the strategy document 2004 *the co-operation with various parties in top-level sport and the development of the research and development actions of disabled top-level sport is only in the beginning.*⁸⁷ One significant change for the development of disabled sport is the reorganisation of its structure. *In 2010 Finnish Sport Association of Persons with Disabilities (VAU), consortium of four earlier organisations, was accepted as a new organisation to receive governmental subsidies.*⁸⁸

6.2. Professionalism in top-level sport

How has professionalism changed the form of top-level sport, and how it has influenced the significance of top-level sport in society?

6.2.1. Professionalism

"Huippu-urheilu muuttuu entistä ammattimaisemmaksi." (1987, 6)⁹⁰

"Huippu-urheilu on menestyvissä maissa kokopäivätoimista, järkiperaistä ja tehokasta eli ammattimaista toimintaa." (1994, 5)⁹¹

"Huippu-urheilu on ammattimaista toimintaa niin harjoittelun, valmentamisen kuin johtamisenkin suhteen." (1994,5)⁹²

"Ammattiurheilulle kokonaan omistautuneiden urheilijoiden lukumäärä on viime vuosina kasvanut." (2004, 34)⁹³

"Yksilöurheilun ammattimaistumisen varjossa myös suomalaisissa joukkuelajeissa siirryttiin amatööriurheilusta puoliammattilaisuuteen." (2004,12)⁹⁴

As we discuss about top-level sports and its current status, professionalism is one of the most central themes. All six strategy documents indicate that top-level sports have become more and more professional. Moreover already in the first 1987 published documentation there is a quote; *Top-level sports becomes more professional.*⁹⁰ Because top-level sports has professionalised, there is a need for more professional activity in all sectors of Finnish top-level sports; *In successful countries top-level sports is full-time, rational and effective, moreover professional activity.*⁹¹ These strategy documents itself are good proof of more professionalised activity in the area. *A top-level sport is professional activity in training, coaching and management level.*⁹²

"Ammattilaisuuden yleistymisen on lisännyt taloudellista panostamista huippu-urheiluun ja tuonut uusia työpaikkoja sekä mahdollisuuksia päätoimisen urheilun ja urheilija-uran rakentamiseksi." (1998, 13)⁹⁵

”Kansainvälinen huippu-urheilumenestys vaatii kaikissa lajeissa ammattimaista ja päätoimista valmentautumista. Ammatillisuus on useimmille huippu-urheilijoille ainoa tapa tavoitella kansainvälistä huippua.” (1998, 13)⁹⁶

One of the most crucial changes in more professionalised top-level sports has been the increased importance of the economy. As we discuss professionalism, we are talking about an extensive phenomenon. Moreover, the phenomenon for example reflects on paid fees and salaries to athletes, as well as increased amount of full-paid staff around the top-level sports. *Penetration of professionalism has increased financial investment into top-level sports and it has brought new vacancies and opportunities for building full-time sports or athletes career.*⁹⁵ Indeed, professionalised and enhanced top-level sport has increased the requirements of athletes and staff. *International success in top-level sports requires in all events professional and full-time preparation. For most of the athletes professionalism is the only way to reach towards international success.*⁹⁶

”Viime aikoina erityisesti ammattiurheilu ja ammattiurheilijat ovat saaneet runsaasti huomiota.” (2004,21)⁹⁷

A professional top-level sport is also dominant in the media. *Lately especially professional sports and professional athletes have attracted plenty of attention.*⁹⁷ For more and more athletes top-level sport is a profession and they are getting sustenance from it. This has led towards the direction that competitive sport is done more with commercial terms. Success is important for athletes, citizen, nations and sponsors. Top-level sport and professional athletes' significance has become broader. Indeed, the better athlete is, the more significant he is for interest groups.

”Yksilölle, huippu-urheilijalla, valmentajalle, urheilujohtajalle huippu-urheilu tarjoaa mielekkään elämänuran...” (1994,5)⁹⁸

”Nykyaikainen huippu-urheilu mullistui 1990-luvulla. Ammatillisuus syrjäytti amatörismin, urheilijoiden vapaa liikkuminen maasta toiseen avasi ovet globaalille ammattilaisurheilulle.” (2010, 30)⁹⁹

”Huippu-urheilu on mielekäs ja rikas elämänura.” (1994, 5)¹⁰⁰

Noteworthy is that professionalism is also in many ways a positive phenomenon in top-level sport. Athletes’ professional attitude and preparation is seen nowadays as a more respected and valuable career option. *For individual, top-athlete, coach and sports director top-level sport offers a relevant life career.*⁹⁸ This has also opened the window for individuals around professional sport to practice their profession without geographical borders. Moreover professional sport is global product in today. *Modern top-level sport revolutionised in the 1990s. Professionalism deposed amateurism and athletes’ freedom of movement country to country opened doors for global professional sport.*⁹⁹ From nations and governments perspective this has created a challenging situation where professional athletes are representing professional clubs before nation. Moreover competitive sports is a very global phenomenon.

”Huippu-urheilun ammattimaistuksessa on turvattava huippu-urheilijan opiskelun ja valmistautumisen tasapaino.” (1994, 11)¹⁰¹

”Huippu-urheilijaksi pyrkivien nuorten ja aikuisten elämän kokonaisvaltainen edistäminen sekä uramahdollisuuksien kehittäminen ovat urheilun ammattimaistumisen myötä entistä tärkeämmässä roolissa.” (1998,16)¹⁰²

”Ammattiurheilulle kokonaan omistautuneiden urheilijoiden määrä on viime vuosina kasvanut. Lähivuosien aikana onkin odotettavissa uuteen ammattiin hakeutumisen suhteen uudenlainen, vaikeampi tilanne.” (2004, 34)¹⁰³

”Urheilujärjestelmä kantaa vastuun urheilijan ammattiin valmistautumisesta – sen mahdollistamisesta ja siihen kannustamisesta. Urheilijan opiskeluun tukemiseen on räätälöityjä toimintamalleja, jotka antavat mahdollisuuden huippu-urheilu ja opiskelu parhaalla mahdollisella tavalla.” (2010, 11)¹⁰⁴

”Huippu-urheilija ei jää yksin. Huippu-urheiluun ja siihen omistautumiseen vaatimaan panostukseen liittyy riskejä. Urheilujärjestelmän on kehitettävä myös tästä näkökulmasta kykyään kantaa vastuuta huippu-urheilun uravalinnan tehneiden elämönhallinnasta.” (2010, 11)¹⁰⁵

As said earlier, all the strategy documents indicate more professionalised top-level sport in every sector. All documents also indicate that professionalism is indeed an extensive phenomenon and it has influenced all elements around top-level sport. However in the latest documents there is more discussion about sport as a respected career option and more discourse of individuals' comprehensive life career around top-level sport. *"As top-level sport becomes more professionalised there is a need to guarantee the balance of education and preparation of top-athletes."*¹⁰¹ (1994) *"Comprehensive life management and career development of youth and adult athletes aiming for the top-level has gained a more important role in professionalised sports."*¹⁰² (1998) *"The amount of athletes dedicating full-time for professional sports has increased lately. Moreover, in the coming years there is an expectation of new and more difficult situations of individuals seeking new professions."*¹⁰³ (2004) *Sport system carries the responsibility of athletes' graduation for profession – making it possible and encouragement of it. "There are tailored operational models which support and give the opportunity to combine top-level sport and studying in the best possible manner."*¹⁰⁴ (2010) *Top-athlete can't be left alone. "There are risks in the dedication and investment in top-level sport. The Finnish sport system must also be developed from this perspective where it carries the responsibility of athletes' life management who have chosen top-level sport career."*¹⁰⁵ (2010) Moreover from the chronologically set quotations above, there can be seen the government's and Finnish sport system's genuine concern of life management of individuals around more professionalised top-level sport field. In the earlier document the situation has been understood but in the latest documents it has been made a requirement.

"Ammattimaisen urheilun voidaan katsoa Suomessa alkaneen merkittävämmässä määrin 1960–70-lukujen vaihteessa." (2004,12)¹⁰⁶

"Suomessa kuitenkin myös ammattilaisurheilu pohjautuu kansalaistoimintaan." (2004, 21)¹⁰⁷

"Liiketoiminnallisin ja ammattilaisuuden periaattein toimivia seuroja oli hänen arvionsa mukaan marginaalisen pieni määrä kokonaisuudesta." -Risto Nieminen (2004,14)¹⁰⁸

”Harva suomalainen huippu-urheilija tai huippuvalmentaja saa huippu-urheilusta toimeentulon itselleen tai perheelleen. Kansainvälisesti menestyneimmät huippu-urheilijat voivat eräissä lajeissa turvata valmentautumisensa ja elämisensä yhteistyösopimuksin, mutta valtaosa kansallisista mitalliehdokkaista tarvitsee lajijärjestönsä ja seuransa tukea.” (1994, 14)¹⁰⁹

”Silloin sodanjälkeiset suuret ikäluokat nousivat huipulle. Itse asiassa 1970-luvun yksilöurheilun suomalaistähdet olivat ensimmäisiä, joille pyrittiin tarjoamaan mahdollisuus ympärivuotiseen täysipäiväiseen harjoitteluun.” (2004,12)¹¹⁰

Indeed, *the professional sport in Finland began more substantially in the middle of 1960's and 1970's.*¹⁰⁶ From there professional sport has revolutionised and globalised as well as differentiated coming to the 2000-century. Today professional sport has its place in top-level sport. Professional sport activity is more professional in all sectors and there are more and more individuals working full-time around it. Professional sport adapts more business models into top-level sports and concepts economy, globalisation, sponsorship, media are predominate factors in professional sport. Individual athletes have a professional responsibility to represent firstly themselves and organisations paying their salaries and fees, even though the representation of the nation is seen as important. Moreover, professionalism has differentiated field of top-level sport. Different athletes and sports have a different status in society. Indeed, remarkable is that according to strategy documents *in Finland the basis of nearly all professional sport is on civil activity.*¹⁰⁷ Also according to Risto Nieminen; *“There are only a small marginal number of organisations which are operating with business model principles and professional basis.”*¹⁰⁸ However professional sport is a global phenomenon which is also practiced in Finland according to the resources we possess.

6.2.2. Commercialisation & Entertainisation

”Huippu-urheilu on kansainvälistä viihdettä ja sitä käytetään yhä enemmän kaupallisessa mainonnassa.” (1987, 6)¹¹¹

”Kriitikot väittävät, että urheilun arvopohja – varsinkin olympismin hengen mukaisesti rakennettu – on murtunut yhteiskunnallisen kehityksen ja erityisesti median ja markkinoiden tunkeutuessa urheiluun. Erityisesti kansainvälinen huippu-urheilu on ammattimaistunut. Toiminnan logiikka ei ponnista enää entisenkaltaisesta pyyteettömyydestä ja yhteisöllisyydestä. Media ja markkinat suuntaavat huippu-urheilua entistä voimakkaammin.” (2010, 24)¹¹²

While professionalism is mentioned in every strategy document, at the same time commercialisation of top-level sport is discussed in each document. The first preliminary document, 1987, concludes that *top-level sport is international entertainment, which is used, increasingly in commercial advertising.*¹¹¹ A similar discussion is taking place also in other strategy documents. There is a discussion that top-level sport is commercialised and globalised but the document doesn't comment or discuss about the topic in greater depth. Only the latest documents discuss the phenomena of how commercialisation and entertainment has influenced top-level sport. *Critics argue that the basic values of sport – especially a spirit built around the Olympics – has fractured social development and especially in the media's and markets' penetration into sports. Especially international top-level sport has professionalised. Logic in activity doesn't bounce from the former modesty and sense of community. Media and markets are ruling top-level sport more increasingly.*¹¹² Moreover in the latest strategy document the phenomena of commercialised top-level sport and its negative and positive influences is taken up in the discussion.

”Urheilun julkisuuden ja taloudellisten intressien voimakas kasvu on muokannut huippu-urheilua merkittävästi 1990-luvulla.” (2002, 16)¹¹³

”Urheilulajien erilaisuutta voidaan kuvata myös tällaisella jatkumolla harrasteurheilusta ammattilaisurheiluun. Ääripäiden keskeinen ero tiivistyy maantieteelliseen tai kaupalliseen tapaan organisoida kilpailut. Viihteellistyminen, kaupallistuminen ja ammattimaistuminen houkuttelevat lajeja kohti ammattilaisuutta, mutta kansallisesti vain harvat lajit saavuttavat ammattilaisuuden vaatimukset.” (2010, 32)¹¹⁴

Sport is often seen as an activity that is based on ancient traditions and it has remained unchanged over the times. (Tervo 2003, 89). In reality society has shaped top-level sport, and as mentioned in earlier parts top-level sport has always been a reflection of the prevailing values and phenomena of the current society. In today's society top-level sport is strongly influenced from economical and international aspects which are changing and differentiating the form of top-level sport. More generally it can be said that different social, political and cultural processes in local, national as well as global level has influenced the change of top-level sport. *Sport's public and economical interests' strong growth has shaped top-level sport significantly in the 1990s.*¹¹³

"Huippu-urheilussa näkyvimpiä muutoksia ovat olleet urheilun ammattimaistuminen, yhä laajeneva medianäkyvyys sekä kaupallistuminen." (2002, 8)¹¹⁵

"Huippu-urheilijalla on selvä kaupallinen arvo" (2002, 13)¹¹⁶

"Urheiluviihteen onkin arvioitu olevan maailman nopeimmin kasvava viihde- ja elämysteollisuuden osa-alue." (2004, 13)¹¹⁷

Increased commercialisation is particularly evident in top-level sport. In 2002 strategy document indicates that *the most visible changes in top-level sport have been the professionalism of the sports, expanding media coverage and commercialisation.*¹¹⁵ Commercialisation has generated a sports market from which many participants are interested. This has brought a new dimension where in addition to sport success also economical result has become an important factor. Inside the sports especially series, clubs and individual athletes are aiming for the best possible economical result. Moreover, *the elite athlete has a clear commercial value.*¹¹⁶ Outside the sports different sponsors and other participants are attempting to gain a benefit from the sport. These are for instance private companies, media, government and politicians et cetera. *Sport entertainment is estimated to be the world's fastest-growing area in entertainment- and experience industry.*¹¹⁷

”Huippu-urheilu on kasvava ja näkyvä viihteen muoto. Se tarjoaa elämyksiä ja kokemuksia huippu-urheilijoille ja katsojille.” (1998, 5)¹¹⁸

”Huippu-urheilun viihdearvo on korkea, ja tiedotusvälineiden vaikutuksesta, erityisesti televisionäkyvyyden kasvun vuoksi, urheiluviihteen kaupallinen arvo on noussut jyrkästi 1990-luvulla.” (2002, 12)¹¹⁹

”Huippu-urheilusta on viime vuosina yhä selkeämmin tullut merkittävä osa kansainvälistä viihdeteollisuutta.” (2004, 10)¹²⁰

”Populaariviihteen merkityksen kasvaessa 1990-luvulla osasta kansainvälistä huippu-urheilua tuli yhä selkeämmin kansainvälistä viihdeteollisuutta.” (2004, 13)¹²¹

Top-level sport has attracted economic operators mainly because it attracts a major spectator group. Sport’s role is significant in media’s entertainment selection. Top-level sport’s popularity is based on its ability to create continuous excitement, new heroes, beautiful athletes and spectacular performances. (Kotkavirta 2004, 38). *Top-level sport is growing and a visible form of entertainment. It offers experiences for top-level athletes and spectators.*¹¹⁸ Moreover sport is unique entertainment for its spectators. It offers drama which is genuine and difficult to predict. Indeed it is also considerably inexpensive and easy for spectators. For this reason media houses and networks are interested in broadcasting top-level sport. *Top-level sport’s entertainment value is high. Moreover, because of the media impact, especially increased visibility in television has sport entertainment’s commercial value raised rapidly in the 1990s.*¹¹⁹

”Sponsoroinnin kokonaissumma oli Suomessa vuonna 2000 yhteensä 77 m€, josta urheilun osuus oli 51 m€.” (2004, 32)¹²²

”Sponsoroinnissa yhteiskuntavastuun merkitys on kasvanut. Siksi urheilusponsoroinnissakin painopiste on entistä enemmän nuorisourheilun tukemisessa.” (2004, 33)¹²³

”Myös muutamat yksittäiset huippu-urheilijat ovat perustaneet henkilökohtaisesti osakeyhtiöitä oman urheilu-uransa tukemiseksi ja oman markkina-arvonsa hyödyntämiseksi.” (2002, 13)¹²⁴

As top-level sport has globalised and become visible for large groups of people, it has opened the door for effective advertising and promotion. Sponsoring has increased also in Finland and sport is the most popular target for sponsoring. *The total amount of sponsoring was 77 million Euros in year 2000, of which sports share was 51 million Euros.*¹²² Noteworthy is that society's general economical situation set also limitations for sponsoring. Moreover the recent economical depression has caused a decrease also in sports sponsoring. This has led to a situation where many athletes, series and teams are in a difficult economical situation which has influenced on sport content and its development. Therefore, it can be said that professionalism and commercialisation has set the rules and limitations to top-level sport in many ways. Today's top-level sport is more dependent on media, sponsoring and other economic influencers. Sponsors and other economic influencers are shaping top-level sport. Moreover there can be seen already the difference where sponsors are representing more societal and ethical values. *In sponsorship the importance of social responsibility has grown. Therefore also in sport sponsoring the priority has changed more into supporting youth sport.*¹²³

*"Urheilun voimakas viihhteellistäminen voi tuoda mukanaan myös kielteisiä piirteitä." (2002, 12)*¹²⁵

*"Myös viihteen ehdoilla muokatut suljetut sarjajärjestelmät ovat huippu-urheilun perusluonteen eli avoimen kilpailun ja paremmuuden selvittämisen vastaista." (2002, 12)*¹²⁶

Commercialisation has brought many positive aspects into top-level sport. It has brought new resources, visibility and status for top-level sport. However it has also brought more negative issues. The 2002 strategy document indicates that *Sport's rapid commercialisation can bring also negative characteristics.*¹²⁵ Indeed, increased economical interest has caused a decline in top-level sport independency. *Indeed with commercial terms shaped closed series systems are against the top-level sport's basic nature of open competition and finding who the best is.*¹²⁶ Top-level sport has had to make a compromise in its commercialisation. It could no longer operate fully in terms of sports. Moreover commercialisation has shaped top-level sport into a direction where there is more entertainment. The most popular events have gained a position where they receive higher

media attention and attract the most economical resources. Hence, this has gained the differentiation and inequity between events in top-level sport.

”Vuoden 2001 Lahden tapahtumat aiheuttivat yritysyhteistyöhön notkahduksen sekä joidenkin yritysten vetäytymisen urheilun tukemisesta. Tapahtumien seuraukset ovat näkyneet urheilun sisäisessä jaossa, jossa painopistemuuksia on ollut.” (2004, 32)¹²⁷

Another negative issue has been performance-enhancing substances. Professional sport and athletes’ economic dependence has increased the use of doping. This has created a dilemma in moral and ethical aspect as well as from a commercialisation perspective. *Year 2001 Lahti incident affected a dip in business collaborations as well some of the companies withdraw from supporting sport. Consequences of events have indicated in sports internal distribution, whereas there have been changes in priorities.*¹²⁷

Commercialisation has shaped top-level sport where it represents more modern society’s values and trends. The most recognised changes are globalisation, professionalism, entertainment, economic-orientation as well differentiation of top-level sport. Media, sponsorship and TV-rights has brought new resources into top-level sport. Technology has enhanced globalisation whereas more and more people have access to follow and take part in following top-level sport. This had led to situation where as the most popular athletes and sport events gain the most of the economical resources and visibility. Moreover, minority sport event attempt to practice operations professionally in a more competitive field of top-level sport but they are in many ways an unequal situation compared to the most recognised and popular sport events. Significant is that commercialisation has brought business- and entertainment-oriented models into top-level sport. This has inevitably changed the original form and values of top-level sport.

6.2.3. Differentiation of top-level sport

”Suomalaisessa urheiluelämässä ja erityisesti huippu-urheilussa on tapahtunut viestinnän näkökulmasta kaksi merkittävää muutosta; huippu-urheilun kehittyminen kohti ammattimaisempaa

ja viihteellisempää toimintaympäristöä ja lajien yhä selkemämpi jakautuminen markkina- ja yhteiskuntavetoisiin lajeihin.” (2004, 33)¹²⁸

”Suomalainen huippu-urheilu on vastaavalla tavalla aiempaa pirstoutuneempaa.. Suomi ei talousalueena ole riittävän iso ylläpitämään laajaa liiketoimintaan perustuvaa ammattilaisurheilua.” (2004, 10)¹²⁹

”Huippu-urheilussa markkina- ja yhteiskuntavetoisten lajien ero on korostunut. Osassa lajeja lajitoiminnan kansallisen ylläpitämisen ja kehittämisen mahdollistaa lajin kiinnostavuus harrastajien, yleisön ja median keskuudessa, ja siitä mielenkiinnosta johtuva tulovirta. Osassa lajeja toiminnan kehittäminen ainoastaan yhteiskunnan merkittävän tuen tai urheilijoiden henkilökohtaisen taloudellisen panoksen turvin.” (2002, 9)¹³⁰

Sport and in particular top-level sport is changing continuously. Differentiation is a significant change in top-level sport. The differentiation of Finnish top-level sport accelerated in the 1980s and it was even more driven by the depression of the 1990s. Studies have shown that sport and top-level sport are divided into two different cultures. The purpose of sport is to exercise and to enjoy it. Top-level sport has other objectives, make good results and to succeed. Strategy document 2004 describes the situation: *From the communication point of view there has been two significant changes in Finnish sport and especially top-level sport; the development of top-level sport towards more professional and commercial environment and clearer separation to market- and society-driven sports.*¹²⁸ We can no longer discuss about top-level sport as a single entity because the differentiation has changed it into a multidimensional environment.

”Ammattiurheiluun ja liiketoimintaan pohjautuva osa huippu-urheilua on eriytyvässä liikuntakulttuurin sisällä omaksi kokonaisuudeksi.” (2002, 13)¹³¹

”Eri lajien kiinnostavuutta säätelee lajin itsensä, yleisön ja median luoma lajin ”markkina-arvo”. Media ja taloudelliset tekijät ovat yhä voimakkaammin mukana huippu-urheilussa, ohjaamassa huippu-urheilun ja huippu-urheilijoiden kehityksen suuntaa.” (2002, 12)¹³²

”Suomalainen huippu-urheilu on jakautunut kahtia; markkina- ja yhteiskuntavetoisiin lajeihin.

Varsinaista liiketoimintaperusteista huippu-urheilua on Suomessa lähinnä jääkiekossa ja moottoriurheilussa. Yhteiskunnan tuki ei viimeisten kymmenen vuoden aikana ole merkittävästi kasvanut.” (2004, 32)¹³³

Top-level sport has become today a prominent business and entertainment field. The most remarkable trends globally have been the commercialisation, professionalism and the globalisation of top-level sport. Commercialisation has been present all the time but intensity, number of linkage and the frequency have increased significantly during the last three decades. *Professional sport and the part of top-level sport that is built on business are differentiating to their own environment within the field of sport.*¹³¹ Commercialisation is the first especially visible phenomenon of top-level sport. Through commercialisation top-level sport is used as a tool of business that is aiming for the best possible financial results. Sporting arenas are named after sponsors, top-level athletes are earning more money and countries are consuming great amounts of money to get permissions to organise international major competitions. It is only a few leagues, events or organisations that don't have commercial activities. *The attractiveness of a sport is regulated by the “market-value” created by the sport itself, the media or the public. Media and the financial resources are increasingly more involved in top-level sport; guiding the development of top-level sport and athletes.*¹³² This has influenced the distribution of Finnish top-level sport. *Finnish top-level sport is divided in two, market- and society-driven sports. Motor sports and ice hockey are mainly the actual business based top-level sports. The subsidy of the society hasn't significantly grown within the last ten years.*¹³³

”Television roolin kasvaessa yhä merkittävämmäksi sekä urheiluviestinnän että – talouden kannalta, urheilutapahtuman viihteellinen arvo korostuu perinteisen tulosurheilun kustannuksella.” (2002, 12)¹³⁴

”Markkina- ja televisioystävällisemmät lajiliitot parantavat talouttaan ja suosiotaan samalla kuin toiset perinteisistä menestyslajeistamme kurjistuvat kiinnostuksen ja valtionavun vähentyessä.” (2002, 5)¹³⁵

”Markkinapainotteinen ohjaus on mahdollistanut eräille lajeille, kuten jääkiekolle voimakkaan kasvun.” (2004, 29)¹³⁶

Another phenomenon that is closely linked to the commercialisation is entertainment. Top-level sport has become more and more visual, in order to attract more viewers. *The entertainment value of sport is being emphasised at the expense of traditional performance sport due to the increased importance of television for the sport communications and economics.*¹³⁴ Good financial results requires the interest of the public, without it sport is not profitable. The publicity and the supporters will determine the directions of the activities. *Market and television friendly sport organisations are improving their economy and popularity while other traditional sports are suffering with the decrease in interest and state subsidies.*¹³⁵ Entertainment has a substantial impact on the development of different sports. Strategy document 2004 describes that *market oriented control has allowed some sports like ice hockey a strong growth.*¹³⁶ Ice hockey is a functional example of a traditional Finnish sport that is strongly influenced by entertainment and commercialisation.

”Urheilumanagerien ja –agenttien olemassaolo huippu-urheilijoiden tukihenkilöinä koetaan jo lähes yhtä luonnolliseksi kuin valmentajan rooli. Managerin tehtäväkenttä vaihtelee urheilija- ja lajikohtaisesti.” (2002, 10)¹³⁷

”Huippu-urheilijoiden taustalla toimii valmentajan ohella yhä useammin eri alojen asiantuntijoita, ja samalla osa jo huipuille päässeistä urheilijoista pyrkii irtautumaan seuransa ja lajiliittonsa järjestelmistä.” (2002, 5)¹³⁸

After the 1980s marketing has become one of the key concepts of sports. Major competitions are not only about winning medals. The prices for television rights, marketing products and services and sponsorship outcomes have an almost equally important role. Noteworthy is that the differentiation in commercialised sports has changed the structure. Commercial values are more representative than athletic values. As an example of this we can mention that Kimi Räikkönen is connected to Ferrari and Red Bull more often than he is seen as a representative of Finland. Another phenomenon that is related to the commercialisation is the presence of sport managers. *The existence of sport*

*managers and agents as support personnel for top-level athletes is viewed as almost as natural a role as coaches. The tasks of the manager vary by sports and athletes.*¹³⁷ As a result of professionalism the pursuit of success has become increasingly more difficult and the competition is harder. This has affected that sometimes athletes are using ethically the wrong means to achieve success.

”Naisurheilijoidemme taso ei ole pysynyt kansainvälisen kehityksen vauhdissa yhtä hyvin kuin miesten. Naisurheilijat kohtaavat edelleen urheilijan uralla sellaisia yhteiskunnallisia ja sosiaalisia hidasteita ja esteitä, jotka vaikeuttavat täysipainoista suhtautumista ja panostusta urheiluun.”
(2002, 12)¹³⁹

The differentiation of top-level sport includes also gender equity. Women’s top-level sport is not in the same level as men’s. The opportunities for both genders are not equally good. Almost all the strategy documents describe this as a concerning issue. *The level of our female athletes has not kept pace with the international development of men’s. Female athletes are still confronting societal and social barriers and impediments in their career, which are hindering the full attitude and effort in sport.*¹³⁹ The most recent strategy document claimed that with relatively small investments in women’s top-level sport Finland could achieve greater international success.

The differentiation in top-level sport is also affected by cultural elements. Traditional and successful sports have a better position in society. Finnish people are expecting success in ice hockey, javelin, cross-country skiing and ski jumping. The intensifying competition and the difficulty to reach success has led to the fact that the Finnish government has to decide if it wants to invest in traditional success sports or whether it wishes to seek success in a broad top-level sport front.

6.3. What is the Finnish Government's role and responsibility in today's top-level sport, and as a fundamental question, should top-level sport be excluded from public subsidy program?

6.3.1. Top-level sport as an content for society

"Huippu-urheilu on osa suomalaista kulttuuria, historiaa ja yhteiskuntaa. Huippu-urheilu voi jatkossakin olla rakentava ja innostava vaikuttaja suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa. Suomalaiset arvostavat huippu-urheilu menestystä." (2010, 50)¹⁴⁰

"Tuoreimman liikuntagallupin mukaan yli 75 % suomalaisista pitää Suomen kansainvälistä menestymisestä urheilussa erittäin tärkeänä tai tärkeänä." (2002, 11)¹⁴¹

"Urheilun merkitys ja asema suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa perustuu ennen muuta hämmästyttävän menestykselliseen urheiluhistoriaamme..Selvitysten mukaan huippu-urheilun suosio ja menestysodotukset ovat edelleen Suomessa korkealla. (2002, 11)¹⁴²

"Huippu-urheilulla on näkyvyytensä ja suuren julkisuutensa ansiosta yhteiskunnalle ja koko liikuntakulttuurille tärkeä erityisrooli. Huippu-urheiluun panostaminen ja resurssien hakeminen perustuu sen kansainväliseen ja yhteiskunnalliseen merkitykseen." (1998, 22)¹⁴³

"Huippu-urheilun kehitys ja kiinnostavuus on johtanut urheilun autonomian heikentymiseen. Huippu-urheilu heijastaa yhä vahvemmin yhteiskunnan kehitystä ja ilmiöitä." (2002, 11)¹⁴⁴

Finland has long traditions in top-level sport and it has experienced a unique success in the past. *Top-level sport is part of Finnish culture, history and society. Top-level sport can continue to have a constructive and inspiring role in Finnish society. Finnish people are appreciating the success of top-level sport.*¹⁴⁰ Strategy group 2002 describes the importance of top-level sport as follows: *According to the most recent Sport Gallup over 75 % of Finnish people considers that the succession of Finnish athletes in international top-level sport is important or very important.*¹⁴¹ And moreover, *the position and the meaning of top-level sport are based primarily on the amazing success of our sport history. Studies have*

*shown that the popularity and success expectations of top-level sport are still high in Finland.*¹⁴²

*”Huippu-urheilun merkitys sisäistetään. Samalla osataan arvostaa huippu-urheilun positiivisia seurausilmiöitä; liikunnanharrastuksen leviämistä ja sen terveysvaikutuksia, urheilun sosiaalisia vaikutuksia, nuorten urheilun kasvatuksellisia mahdollisuuksia, tasa-arvoisuutta, huippu-urheilun tuomia taloudellisia virikkeitä jne.” (2010, 13)*¹⁴⁵

The vision of the strategy group 2010 gives a representational image of top-level sports role for the society. *The meaning of top-level sport is internalised. At the same time we are able to evaluate the positive phenomena of top-level sport spread of physical activities and the positive impact on health, the socialising effect of sport, the educational impact on young people, equity and the economical impulse.*¹⁴⁶

*”Huippu-urheilu innostaa meitä myös omaan liikkumiseen. Urheilijat ovat positiivisia roolimalleja lapsille ja nuorille.” (2010, 13)*¹⁴⁷

*”Urheilijat ovat esikuvia urheileville lapsilla ja nuorille. Menestyneiden urheilijoiden esimerkki houkuttelee osaltaan nuoria mukaan liikuntaharrastuksen pariin.” (1998, 5)*¹⁴⁸

*”Urheilijat voisivat toki inhimillisyydessään ja niin halutessaan edistää merkittävästi yhteiskunnallisesti myönteisiä asioita kuten terveitä elämäntapoja, suvaitsevaisuutta tai lasten ja nuorten liikuntaa ja liikuntaharrastusta.” (2002, 12)*¹⁴⁹

*”Huippu-urheilu herättää tunteita ja luo merkityksellisyyttä ja elämäniloa. Huippu-urheilijoiden suoritukset innostavat ja inspiroivat arjen keskellä.” (2010, 15)*¹⁵⁰

As mentioned above top-level sport spreads physical activities and inspires people to exercise more. *Top-level sport inspires us to exercise. Athletes are positive role models for children and youth.*¹⁴⁷ Sport has a significant impact on public health. Increased physical activity can enhance wellbeing and reduce health care costs. Individual athletes can have a substantial role to inspire children and young people to move. In today’s society top-level sport needs to compete with entertainment culture in a changed environment. Children are

exercising less and less and for the Finnish top-level sport it would be crucial to ensure that the conditions for finding and developing talented young people would be at the best possible level. *Athletes are role models for children and youth that are involved in sports. The example that successful athletes are giving is attracting young people to get involved with sporting activities.*¹⁴⁸

*”Haluamme huippu-urheilua, joka saa meidät suomalaiset tuntemaan ylpeyttä siitä, että olemme suomalaisia.” (1994, 5)*¹⁵¹

*”Huippu-urheilu on oleellinen osa suomalaista kulttuuria ja yhteiskuntaa. Urheilu aikaansaa aitoa ja ainutlaatuista yhteisöllisyyttä.” (2010, 13)*¹⁵²

*”Jotta huippu-urheilu on Suomessa kiinnostavaa, suomalaisen urheilijan menestyksen takaa on löydettävä piirteitä, joihin mahdollisimman moni voi suomalainen voi samaistua ja joita hän voi arvostaa.” (2002,16)*¹⁵³

Sense of community and national identity are closely linked to top-level sport. *We want top-level sport that makes us Finnish people feel proud that we are Finnish.*¹⁵¹ According to all the strategy documents the importance of top-level sport for the national identity is an essential criterion why we should succeed in elite sports. It also connects people in the era of globalisation. Strategy group 2010 reflects the situation: *top-level sport is an essential part of Finnish culture and society. Sport creates a real and unique sense of community.*¹⁵² It could even be argued that national identity is one of the prime motivators to develop international sports and Olympic Games. Sport is one the rare things in modern society that is able to connect a large and complex crowd into an entity. Strategy document 2002 says that *behind the success of Finnish top-level athlete needs to be found features, in which as many Finnish people can identify with and which can be appreciated.*¹⁵³ Top-level sports impact for national identity is so self-evident that all the strategy documents are taking it for granted.

*”Huippu-urheilu ja kilpailussa onnistuminen – menestyminen - kuvaavat myös kansakunnan elinvoimaisuutta ja kykyä luoda edellytyksiä yksilöllisellä kehittämiselle.” (2010, 24)*¹⁵⁴

”Suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kansainvälisestä menestyksestä vastaavat yhä ratkaisevammalla taholla ammattilaisurheilijat, joiden menestys luo myönteistä Suomi-kuvaa maailmalla.”
(1998, 13)¹⁵⁵

”2000-luvulla kansallisen urheilunkulttuurin yhteiskunnalliset merkitykset tiivistyvät kasvatukseen, terveyden edistämiseen ja yhteisöllisyyteen. Näihin arvoihin myös huippu-urheilun on otettava kantaa.” (2010, 25)¹⁵⁶

Top-level sport has also substantial global visibility and meaning. It is a key factor while measuring the competitiveness of the country. *Top-level sport and succeeding in competitions – success – are describing the vitality of the nation and the ability to develop conditions for the individual development.*¹⁵⁴ First strategy documents are illustrating that international competitions in top-level sport are reflecting the competitiveness of the whole society. The most recent ones are substantially more restrained, but the demonstration of competitiveness is still an important criterion for Finnish success in top-level sport. Another important dimension in international top-level sport is to spread positive image of Finland. *Professional athletes are even more responsible for the international success of Finnish top-level sport, and their success is creating a positive image of Finland internationally.*¹⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that the international major competitions are not the only channel in top-level sport to demonstrate the positive image of Finland. Elite individuals in different sports are also creating a positive image with their personality and achievements. As an example of the individuals we can mention Teemu Selänne, Kimi Räikkönen and Tanja Poutiainen. Whereas extraordinary individuals and the success in top-level sport create a positive image, there is also a negative aspect. The pursuit of success with negative means or mistakes done by individuals can give a poor image of Finnish people and our sporting system and morals.

”Huippu-urheilijat ovat aikamme suuria vaikuttajia ja nuorison idoleita. Huippu-urheilun on tunnettava vastuuta koko urheilun kehityksestä ja oikeiden esikuvien antamisesta.” (1987, 6)¹⁵⁷

”Tulevaisuuden hyvä tavoite olisi kohtuullistaa urheilijoille asetettuja imagoaateita ja tuoda urheilijoita esille myös inhimillisinä, jopa erehtyvinä ihmisinä.” (2002, 12)¹⁵⁸

*Top-level athletes are the big influencers of our time and idols for youth. Top-level sport should recognise its responsibility to develop the whole field of sports and to create the right role models.*¹⁵⁷ The earliest documents are describing top-level athletes as unconditional role models for Finnish youth. Some of the athletes are even having an unreal image. After the scepticism caused by the doping scandal in 2001 Finnish top-level sport has aimed to give a realistic picture of the athletes. *A good objective for the future would be to modify the expectations set for athletes' image and to bring out the athletes, as humans, can even make mistakes.*¹⁵⁸ However many of the athletes have a prominent status and they have to acknowledge its importance. Top-level sport is perceived as an exemplary action and its role for the society is justified with the positive values and objectives for identification it is giving. The values that are connected to top-level sport are perceived as important for the society. Fairness, healthiness, sense of community, courage and persistence are values that are highly appreciated in our society.

*"Huippu-urheilulla on positiivisia taloudellisia vaikutuksia suomalaiselle yhteiskunnalle esimerkiksi kilpailutapahtumien taloudellisen vaikutuksen, työllistävyyden ja tuotekehityksen kautta." (1998, 4)*¹⁵⁹

According to the strategy document 2002 *top-level sport has a positive economic impact for the Finnish society through the economic impact of competition events, employment and product development.*¹⁵⁹ however the importance of top-level sport for the Finnish economic may be questioned. It has a positive affect through major international competitions, but perhaps the most important factor is that top-level sport is a profession in today's society. It creates new employment opportunities and it is seen as an equal profession like a construction worker. Political aspect is present in global competition events, but the role of elite sports for the Finnish politics is minor. Elite athletes are however in a position to contribute to socially significant issues due to their visibility if they wish.

6.3.2. Government's financial support

"Suomalainen liikunta- ja urheiluelämä perustuu pitkälti julkisen sektorin ja liikunnan kansalaistoiminnan väliseen työnjakoon, joka esitetään liikuntalaissa: Yleisten edellytysten luominen liikunnalle on valtion ja kunnan tehtävä. Liikunnan järjestämisestä vastaavat pääasiassa liikuntajärjestöt." (liikuntalaki 2§) (2010, 28)¹⁶⁰

"Edellytykset menestyvälle huippu-urheilulle luodaan riittävän laadukkaiden ajantasaisten kunnallisten liikuntapaikkojen myötä." (2002, 26)¹⁶¹

"Paikallisissa ja valtakunnallisesti tuetuissa uudisrakentamishankkeissa tulee mahdollisuuksien mukaan huomioida ja varmistaa kilpa- ja huippu-urheilun vaatimusten täytyminen." (2002, 26)¹⁶²

"Valtio ja kunnat luovat liikuntapaikkarakentamisella edellytyksiä sekä huippu-urheilulle että muulle liikuntatoiminnalle. Valtio rahoittaa huippu-urheilua veikkausvoittovaroista lähinnä tukieissaan huippu-urheiluorganisaatioita." (1998, 6)¹⁶³

The role of the government in top-level sport is significant. One substantial part is to support and finance the construction of sport facilities. The Finnish sports law defines that *government and municipalities are responsible for creating general conditions for sport. And the sport organisations are responsible for arranging opportunities to exercise.*¹⁶⁰ The planning of sport facilities is crucial for top-level sport. Without up to date facilities Finnish top-level athletes don't have adequate chances to train professionally. *Conditions for top-level sports are created with municipal sport facilities that are up to date and of sufficient quality.*¹⁶¹ Building sport facilities is not only for top-level sport, but it allows athletes better conditions to practise their profession on a better level. *If possible, locally and nationally supported new construction projects should ensure and take into consideration that the requirements of competitive and top-level sport would be fulfilled.*¹⁶²

"Valtakunnallisen liikuntapaikkasuunnittelun tavoitteena on luoda yhteiskunnallisesti merkittäville ja menestyville lajeille edellytykset valmentautua ja järjestää kansainvälisiä arvokisoja." (1998, 18)¹⁶⁴

”Kotimaassa järjestettyjen arvokisojen järjestämisestä aiheutuneita tappioiden kattamista on tuettu erityisellä tappiontakuujärjestelmällä.” (2004, 28)¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, Finland needs to have professional and modern sport facilities if Finland wants to arrange major international competitions. *The goal of national sport facilities planning is to create conditions that enable socially significant and successful sports to prepare and to organise international major competitions.*¹⁶⁴ Finland has had a reputation as a reliable arranger of international competitions and the public sector is financing activities that would facilitate major competitions. The possibility to arrange international major competition is recognition of the international position of the country. Global visibility will guarantee the interest of the public sector also in the future. *The government is supporting the losses that arranging international competitions in Finland might cause with its special loss guarantee system.*¹⁶⁵

”Huippu-urheilun kehittäminen ei ole mahdollista ilman merkittäviä ja oikein kohdennettuja resursseja. Tuki on kohdennettava aiempaa selkeämmin kansainvälisen tason urheilijoiden ja sinne nousevien nuorten urheilijoiden tukijärjestelmiin sekä lajiliitoille ja vammaisurheilujärjestöille.” (2004, 60)¹⁶⁷

”Valtion liikuntabudjetti muodostuu lähes kokonaan veikkausvoittovaroista. Valtion liikuntabudjetti pieneni 1990-luvun laman seurauksena. 2000-luvulla valtion avustukset liikuntatoimintaan ovat kasvaneet merkittävästi. Vuoden 2000 yhteensä 80 miljoonan euron liikuntabudjetti on kasvanut vuonna 2010 jo 130 miljoonaan euroon. ”(2010, 37)¹⁶⁸

”Valtio ei tue taloudelliseen voittoon tähtäävää ammattilaisurheilua.” (2004, 3)¹⁶⁹

”Kilpa- ja huippu-urheilun tukeminen on osa valtakunnallisten liikunta- ja vammaisurheilujärjestöjen tulosperusteista avustamista. Lajiliitoille osoitetusta valtionavustuksesta 25 % määräytyy lajiliiton laskennallisesti kilpa- ja huippu-urheilukriteerien perusteella.” (2004, 27)¹⁷⁰

The development of top-level sport is not possible without substantial and properly targeted resources. The support needs to be targeted more clearly than before to the support systems

*for international level athletes to the young athletes aiming as well as sporting organisations and disabled sport organisations.*¹⁶⁷ The most recent strategy document describes the situation of the government's subsidies for sport: *National sport budget consists almost entirely of lottery funds. The government's sports budget has decreased as a result of the recession in the 1990s. In the 2000s government's subsidies for sport activities have grown significantly. In 2000 the sports budget was 80 million Euros which has already increased to 130 million Euros in 2010.*¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the subsidy for top-level sport has also grown substantially and in the 2010 the government was giving subsidies for top-level sport for 12.4 million Euros.

"Valtion tuen kokonaiskasvun pysähtyttyä 90-luvulla lajiliittojen toiminta ja ennen muuta liittojen kasvu- ja kehittämissyrkimykset ovat perustuneet yhä vahvemmin harrastajamäärien ja ulkopuolisen rahoituksen määränmuutoksiin. Tämä markkinapainotteinen ohjaus on mahdollistanut eräille lajeille voimakkaan kasvun, mutta toisaalta aiheuttanut osassa lajiliittoja kehitystoiminnan pysähtymisen ja muutamissa lajeissa taantumaa ja sen kautta kansallisen kehitys- ja ohjauskyvyn merkittävän heikkenemisen." (2002, 7)¹⁷¹

"Toimintamenoistaan suoraan kilpa- ja huippu-urheiluun liitot käyttivät noin 21,4 m€ eli 33 %." (2004, 27)¹⁷²

"Menestyvä huippu-urheilu perustuu hyvinvoivaan seuratoimintaan ja vapaaehtoistyöhön." (1998, 6)¹⁷³

"Huippu-urheilun taloudellisen tuen ohjauksessa on syntynyt tarve arvioida perinteisten ja uusien lajien merkitystä ja painoarvoa yhteiskunnallisen tuen suuntaamiseksi tarkoituksenmukaisesti. Valtion liikuntarahoituksen tulosohjauksella tulisi nykyistä paremmin varmistaa myös pienten ja keskisuurten lajiliittojen toimintaedellytykset ja kansalaistoiminnan elinvoimaisuus ja monimuotoisuus." (2002, 9)¹⁷⁴

Finland implemented a change in sports structure in the 1990s and at the same time Finland experienced a massive recession. These factors have a significant role in the development of Finnish top-level sport. The purpose of the change in Finnish sports structure was to create a less hierarchical system in which the sporting organisations would play an

important role. The meaning of this was to return to old model that had top-level sport in the centre. According to the strategy group 2010 this change remained unfinished due to the recession in the 1990s. The recession meant that the government wasn't able to give enough support and sport organisations had to struggle for their existence, which led to reinforced lobbying and selfishness. This also affected differentiation in top-level sports since some of the organisations and sports were able to create external funding and some organisations even declined.

"Valtion rooli suomalaisessa urheiluelämässä on kasvanut urheiluliikkeen eriytymiskehityksen myötä. Valtio ohjaa urheiluliikkeen toimintaa normi-, resurssi- ja informaatio-ohjauksella." (2010, 37)¹⁷⁵

"Huippu-urheilu on muodostanut 25 prosentin laskennallisen osuuden lajiliittojen valtionavustuksen kokonaispotista." (2010, 38)¹⁷⁶

"Valtion tuki huippu-urheilulle osoitetaan pääasiallisesti kolmen kanavan kautta.

- 1. Lajiliittojen tulosperusteinen valtionavustus (huippu-urheilun osuus)*
- 2. Valtion urheilija-apurahat*
- 3. Eri tahoille ja organisaatioille myönnettävät muut erityisavustukset huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi antidopingtoiminta mukaan lukien." (2010, 38)¹⁷⁷*

"Huippu-urheilu on ainakin suurimpien kaupunkien hallinnoissa irtautunut kilpaurheilun ja muun liikunnan yhteydestä. Huippu-urheilun taloudellinen tuki on monissa kaupungeissa siirretty osaksi markkinointia, kaupungin imagon ja näkyvyyden hankkimista." (2010, 39)¹⁷⁸

"Apuraha on tarkoitettu urheilijoille, jotka sitoutuvat pitkäjänteiseen sekä ammattimaiseen valmentautumiseen ja joilla arvioidaan olevan menestymismahdollisuuksia tulevissa urheilun kansainvälisissä arvokilpailuissa." (2010, 38)¹⁷⁹

"Valtion kolmas huippu-urheilun tukipaketti koostuu erilaisille huippu-urheilun tukioorganisaatioille tai huippu-urheiluun liittyvien toimintoihin myönnettävistä avustuksista." (2010, 39)¹⁸⁰

”Valtion taloudellinen tuki huippu-urheiluun on kasvanut merkittävästi vuodesta 2005 lähtien. Vuonna 2005 huippu-urheilun tukemiseen (pois lukien lajiliittojen tuki) käytettiin yhteensä 7 miljoonaa euroa. Vuonna 2010 summa on 12,4 miljoonaa euroa.” (2010, 39)¹⁸¹

”Huippu-urheilun tukeen osoitetun määrärahan reaalikasvu johtuu lähinnä antidopingtoiminnan, urheilijoiden ja valmentajien sekä Paralympiakomitean valtionavustusten kasvusta.” (2004, 29)¹⁸²

”Lajiliitoille osoitetun avustuksen lisäksi huippu-urheilujärjestelmien suorat tulot sekä sponsoritulojen määrä ovat huomattavasti suurempia muissa pohjoismaissa.” (2004, 42)¹⁸³

According to the strategy group 2010 *the significance of the Finnish government in sports has grown due to the differentiation of sports. The government controls the activities of sporting movement with its standard, resource and information guidance.*¹⁷⁵ The recent strategy group explains that *top-level sport has formed a 25 percent share of the total amount sporting organisations are receiving from the government.*¹⁷⁶ *Government subsidies for top-level sport are mainly addressed through three channels: 1. Result-based subsidy for sporting organisations, 2. Government subsidies for top-level athletes, 3. Special allowances for different organisations for elite sport development (including anti-doping actions)*¹⁷⁷ The individual subsidy is intended for an athlete that has committed to long-term and professional training and has been evaluated to have realistic chances to succeed in major international competitions in the future. Some of the subsidies that top-level athletes receive are from their communes. *In the largest cities top-level sport has exited from competitive sport and other physical exercise. In many cities the economical support of top-level sport has been transferred into the marketing and creating visibility and image of the city.*¹⁷⁸

”Työryhmä on lisäksi analysoinut suomalaisen huippu-urheilun nykytilaa. Vertailu vision ja nykytilan välillä ei anna kovin kehuttavaa kuvaa suomalaisesta huippu-urheilusta.” (2010, 46)¹⁸⁴

”Huippu-urheilun työryhmän toimintajärjestelmän tärkein tulos on urheilun arvostus suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa. Tämä edellyttää ammattimaisen toiminnan lisäksi eettisten

periaatteiden soveltamista sekä miesten ja naisten roolien ja toiminnan arvostuksen näkymistä myös konkreettisina tekoina.” (2010, 43)¹⁸⁵

”Urheilijan tulee olla huippu-urheilutoiminnan kehittämisen keskiössä. Urheilijoille tulee tarjota parhaat mahdolliset edellytykset kehittää omaa lahjakkuuttaan aina maailman huipulle saakka.” (2010, 42)¹⁸⁶

”Huippu-urheilun johtamiseksi tarvitaan taho, jolla on kentän valtakirja johtaa, resurssoida ja ohjata suomalaista huippu-urheilun kehittämisorganisaatiota.” (2010,40)¹⁸⁷

”Yksi työryhmän ehdottoman muutoksen keskeinen tavoite on se, että huippu-urheilun tukijärjestelmä kykenee organisoimaan huippu-urheilijaa tukevan toiminnan niin, että urheilijat kokevat saavansa parhaan mahdollisen osaamisen ja taidon urheilu-uraansa edistämään.” (2010, 43)¹⁸⁸

Strategy group 2010 has analysed the present status of Finnish top-level sport compared to their vision. *The comparison between the vision and the present status is not giving a much praised image of Finnish top-level sport.*¹⁸⁴ In order to catch the difference Finland needs to take action and to develop a strategy for the future. Strategy group 2010 was working at the background for the Finnish National Elite Sports Development Programme, which was founded to renew Finnish top-level sport strategies. The goal for the program is to have an ethical foundation for Finnish high performance sports and an internationally competitive coaching system. *The most important result for the Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program is to increase the appreciation of sports in the Finnish society. This requires besides professional activities also the use of ethical principles as well as the appreciation of men’s and women’s role and activities also in concrete actions.*¹⁸⁵ Another important element in the actions of the program is to have athletes at the centre of the development. The most recent document highlights that *athletes need to be in the centre of the top-level sport development. We must provide the best possible conditions for the athletes to develop their talents all the way until the top of world.*¹⁸⁶ A key objective for The Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program is to organise background systems

for the athletes so that they can experience that they are receiving the best possible know-how and skills to promote their sporting careers.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine Finnish top-level sport's present status and future guidelines from a governmental perspective. In the literature review the aim was to open up different stages of Finnish top-level sport and gather information for research questions and to the analysis part. My preliminary assumption was that social, cultural and economical changes in society have influenced directly on the development of top-level sport. Moreover today's Finnish top-level sport is more divided to multiple dimensions and underneath the concept of top-level sport has several layers. Indeed, top-level sport represents history, national and traditional values, however also new dimensions such as professionalism, globalisation and commercialisation.

Indeed, according to the strategy documents top-level sport has changed. Perhaps the biggest change has been professionalisation, commercialisation and entertainment of top-level sport. Today there is an increase in the amount of professional athletes and clubs that are operating with more business-oriented methods. The strategy documents indicate that money is increasingly directing trends and actions in top-level sport. This has admittedly changed and shaped traditional standards and values of Finnish top-level sport. However, the strategy documents do not take much of a position in discussion how professional top-level sport's set of values has changed. Moreover, only the latest document there is more discussion of changes also from a rather negative perspective such as how the Lahti 2001 doping scandal influenced to whole field of top-level sport. In other words the Finnish government and its strategy group recognise the existence of unhealthy phenomena, such as doping, fixed games et cetera. It is worth questioning that who is responsible for setting and treasuring the healthy values of Finnish top-level sport. Moreover who is for example responsible for doping control or other questions in fair game? Are the athletes, clubs and leagues responsible or is it governments and other organisations duty to finance and organise these types of actions?

Professionalism and commercialisation has brought also many positive aspects to top-level sport. It has made it even more visible and recognisable for media and spectators. At the same time it has brought increasingly financial support to top-level sport through sponsorship, TV-rights and other subsidies. Perhaps the only negative aspect there is, is that money is channelling more into media-popular events. This increases the differentiation of top-level sport and puts different sports and events into an unequal position. Thus, this puts also the government in a position where they have to analyse how and which events and athletes they want to subsidise. Should the Finnish government only focus to develop and support the most traditional core events of Finland such as cross-country skiing, wrestling and track & field? Intensified international competition creates limitations for a small country such as Finland to succeed in a wide range of event in top-level sport. The second question is that should the media popular event be excluded from public subsidising? This basically means only ice hockey and SM-league which collects the biggest sponsorships and TV-rights deals, and is able to operate fully professionally and make a profit. On the other hand ice hockey is one of the events where Finland is able to succeed internationally and moreover it catches the Finnish people's attention and creates pride.

The most essential question is how the governmental resources could be used and channelled more efficiently to top-level sport. The question is not that should top-level sport be governmentally supported and subsidised. Moreover, top-level sport is seen as a fundamental part of the Finnish sport culture and will be supported and developed as a part of sport culture as well. For better and efficient support of top-level sport as a conclusion of the latest strategy document, the Finnish government, Ministry of Education and more specifically The Finnish Olympic Committee set a group: Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program which focuses on renewing the strategic and functional responsibilities of high performance sports aiming for international success. Their vision is that: *the athlete is at the centre of all actions and all actions aim for excellence. Also Finnish top-level sport is internationally successful and Finnish people value top-level sport.* Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program and its vision is proof of the government's will to develop and take top-level sport into consideration. Moreover from

the vision it can be seen that the Finnish Government's desire for international success in top level sport is appreciated among the Finnish people.

The answer to the main research question of defining the concept of top-level sport is rather complex. Today's top-level sport is differentiated as a result of professionalisation and commercialisation. Instead structure and organisations of Finnish top-level sport are aiming for more coherent operation models, where organisations are in cooperation and operating the same methods towards the same goal. Finland requires also one transparent roof-organisation for a top-level sport, which can develop Finnish elite sport in the long-term. There the Finnish Olympic Committee and the Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program will be in a key position guiding and developing the top-level sport in Finland. Moreover, the trend seems to be in athlete career management, and as top-level sport is seen as a profession like any other profession as well. Indeed the concept of top-level sport seems to gather around factors such as children and youth sport, coaching and education, internationality, professionalism, commercialisation and entertainment.

It is somewhat obvious that top-level sport represent its time from societal perspective. In today it represents globalisation, professionalism and commercialisation. However top-level sport's traditional values such as nationality, the importance of sports in itself seems to remain as characteristics of today's top-level sport. Indeed, from the Finnish government's perspective top-level sport is seen as important and valuable for society in multiple dimensions. For this reason it is also subsidised and developed as a part of Finnish sport culture.

Perhaps the most essential and fruitful topic for discussion is the differentiation of today's top-level sport. Professionalism and commercialisation sets several ethical, economical, sociological as well as political dilemmas around top-level sport. Moreover, the strategy documents somewhat doesn't discuss or conclude the dilemma of differentiation in today's top-level sport. This reflects perhaps the most in the latest strategy document whereas the aims of developing Finnish top-level sport are undeniably controversial with the nature of professional sport. Furthermore, even though children and youth sport are the bases for

successful elite sport in every level it cannot be the centre of strategy for developing Finnish top-level sport if the nature of professional sport and its nature are not taken into consideration. Moreover, the nature of professional sport is controversial with children and youth sport. Professional sport aims for making a profit in every sector, both economically and result-wise. This sets the biggest dilemma with the content of strategy documents which doesn't separate and conclude the nature of professional sport. Indeed, the differentiation of top-level sport is undeniable in today and it places different sports in an unequal position. The most popular sports in spectator- and sponsor-wise are receiving the most attention and this way are economically, politically and socio-economically in a more appreciated position. However, this doesn't change other minor sports' role and nature of practising their event also in top-level. The situation still sets different rules and limitations to practise top-level sport. Athletes in the most popular events are receiving bigger salaries and are able to practise and live a life of a full professional athlete, whereas the minor sport athletes are in a position where we were before professional sport. As a conclusion the strategy groups should make a clear definition what is professional sport and what is the nature of it. Now the strategy documents conclude only doping as a dilemma in top-level sport. Profit driven top-level sports with its good and negative sides are part of professional sport. Fixed games, doping and environmental causes of mass events and building construction are the negative phenomena of professional sport. Sponsorships, TV-rights, athlete salaries and professional staff again are positive spin-offs of professionalised top-level sport. These topics should be separated and concluded in the strategy documents as they are in reality as well. Fully professional sport should be developed by its principles. For instance gambling is part of professional sport and it should be recognised and developed as a part of professional sport.

Another interesting topic to discuss is the importance of success in top-level sport for the Finnish government and in which range of events we are aiming for success. Moreover, interesting is to discuss what are the focus points of the Finnish government in supporting and subsidising top-level sport. Content of strategy documents, governmental intent and subsidising should always be in line. There is somewhat of a change in strategy documents whereas the first documents concluded that professionalism and international success

aiming top-level sport should be practised in every level of top-level sport. However in the latest documents there is more of a discussion that how and what aspects of top-level sport should be subsidised and supported. Moreover there is a discussion of having possible core-events where to focus and putting governmental effort to gain international success. The reality is that gaining international recognition comes harder and harder in professionalised top-level sport and a small country like Finland has difficulties to succeed in a wide range of events. However at same time there are more discussions of putting athletes into the centre and building a roadmap for them to succeed. There are obvious attempts to develop top-level sport's supporting elements for example coaching, facilities and economy, so that they would serve and support athletes better. The Government has a remarkable role in this aspect and the Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program is a good example of the government's will to develop and increase their efficiency in the field of top-level sport.

The role of top-level sport with its political and national content adding value for society has remained the same within the different strategy documents. Drastic change has been the professionalisation of top-level sport and phenomena caused from the change. However strategy document doesn't conclude those phenomena. This creates difficulties to set and create mutual guidelines for development of Finnish top-level sport. The next strategy document should conclude the field of top-level sport which its differentiation and other changes more detailed for the reason of creating more clear rules to develop Finnish top-level sport. At this point there is no change between in strategy documents. After the conclusion it would be easier for the government to analyse its position and actions in full professional sports.

Indeed, the main research question of the definition of top-level sport in today is answered with 7 categories on the results section which are based on the strategy document's priorities defining and developing the Finnish top-level sport. However, the definition of top-level sport is still somewhat more complex. The change in top-level sport in Finland and globally has been remarkable. Commercialisation and globalisation are modifying top-level sport's ethical, economical and sociological status. This phenomenon should perhaps be more clarified in governmental actions in the field of top-level sport and it should set

guidelines for the government's involvement in the field. In conclusion the Finnish government's role in supporting and subsidising is somewhat self-evident because top-level sports has a political value, it creates international visibility, it is sociologically enriching by sports events, sports idols et cetera. Moreover, it is questionable how the Finnish government involves in the field of top-level sport and what is its responsibility in the field. For this question top-level sport with its transformation should be taken more into consideration in the strategy documents.

Thus, it can be seen that top-level sport and foremost the Finnish top-level sport is in a transition point at the moment because of professionalism, commercialisation and globalisation in the field. Interesting will be the Finnish governments and the Finnish National Elite Sports Development Program set guidelines and action plans for Finnish top-level sport. Hence, it will be intriguing to see progress in action. Moreover, there is room for further research on Finnish top-level operations models and its functionality, and compare it to instance other Nordic countries, which represent similar societal model.

REFERENCES

Alasentie, M. (2011). Urheilumenestyksen merkitys kansalliselle identiteetille globalisaation aikana. Finland: Jyväskylä

Eskola, J. (1998a): Johdanto eli näkökulmia tieteelliseen kirjoittamiseen. Tampere: TAJU.

Eskola, J. (1998b): Yhteiskirjoittaminen ja ”yhteis” kirjoittaminen tieteellisen tuottamisen prosessina. Tampere: TAJU.

Itkonen, H. (2007). Sadan Vuoden Olympiadi, Suomalaisen olympialiikkeen historia. Finland:Porvoo

Haukilahti, T. and Tolonen, H (2004). Liikuntajärjestöjen tulohjauksen kehittäminen - Liikuntajärjestöjen avustusjärjestelmätyöryhmä IV. Helsinki: Ministry of Education.

Heikkala, J & Koski, P. (1999). Reaching out for new frontiers: the Finnish physical culture in transition in the 1990s. Finland: Helsinki.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. (1997). Tutki ja kirjoita. Finland: Helsinki

Hoikkala, T. (1990): Teun A. Van Dijkkin diskurssianalyysi. Helsinki: Painokaari Oy

Huippu-urheilu 2000. Strategia huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi (1994). Huippu-urheilun tehostamistyöryhmä. Opetusministeriö, Suomen Olympiakomitea & Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu.

Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulle. Strategia huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi (1998). Suomen Olympiakomitea, Opetusministeriö & Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu.

Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulla. Strategia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi 2002–2006 (2002). Suomen Olympiayhdistys.

Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio (2004). Opetusministeriön työryhmämuistioita ja 83 selvityksiä 2004:22.

Juppi, J. (1995). Suomen julkinen liikuntapolitiikka valtionhallinnon näkökulmasta vuosina 1917-1994. Finland: Jyväskylä

Kokkonen, J. (2008). Kansakunta kilpasilla, Urheilu nationalismin kanavana ja lähteenä Suomessa 1900-1952. Finland: Helsinki

Kotkavirta, J. (2004). Urheilun moraali ja etiikka. Finland: Jyväskylä

Luostarinen, H. & Väliverronen, E. (2007): Tekstinsyöjät. Yhteiskuntatieteellisen kirjallisuuden lukutaidosta. Retrieved on 14.2.2011 from: <URL; <http://www.vastapaino.fi/vp/ekirjat/tekstinsyojat.pdf>>

Lång, M. and Oravainen, T. (2006). Liikuntatoimi tilastojen valossa - Perustilastot vuodelta 2004. Helsinki: Finnish Ministry of Education.

Lämsä, J. (2004). The site of origin of the KIHU, Faktapankki. Retrieved on 27.2.2009 from:

http://www.kihu.fi/faktapankki/faktaalueet/tulostus.php?id=91&otsikko=Rahavirrat_urheiluj%E4rjest%E6t

Lämsä, J. (2004) Huippu-urheilu Pohjoismaissa. Selvitys Suomen, Ruotsin, Norjan ja Tanskan liikuntapolitiikasta, huippu-urheilujärjestelmistä sekä urheilun rahoituksesta. Helsinki: Finnish Ministry of Education.

Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (2009). The site of origin of the Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. Retrieved on 9.3.2009 from: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/society>

Metsämuuronen, J. (2006): Laadullisen tutkimuksen perusteet. Helsinki: International Methelp

Potter, J. & Wetherell, M. (1987): Discourse and Social Psychology. Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour. London: Sage.

Remes, L. (2006): Diskurssianalyysin perusteet. Helsinki: International Methelp

Research Institute for Olympic Sport (KIHU). The site of origin of the KIHU, Faktapankki. Retrieved on 9.3.2011 from: <http://www.kihu.fi/faktapankki/>

Salminen V-M, (2007). Qualitative and Quantitative research methods. Lecture material of University of Jyväskylä.

"Sanoista teoiksi" Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän ajatuksia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi (2010). Opetusministeriön työryhmämuistioita ja selvityksiä 2010:13.

Suomen Olympiakomitean puitesuunnitelma huippu-urheilun edistämiseksi (1987). Suomen Olympiakomitea, valmennusvaliokunta.

The Finnish Ministry of Education (2008), Liikuntatoimi tilastojen valossa -Perustilastot vuodelta 2006. Opetusministeriön julkaisuja 2008:2.

Tervo, M. (2003). Geographies in the making: Reflections in sports, the media, and national identity in Finland. Finland: University of Oulu

Tolonen, H. (2004). The site of origin of the KIHU, Faktapankki. Retrieved on 27.2.2009 from:

http://www.kihu.fi/faktapankki/faktaalueet/tulostus.php?id=91&otsikko=Rahavirrat_urheiluj%E4rjest%E6t

Tolonen, H. (2004). The site of origin of the KIHU, Faktapankki. Retrieved on 27.3.2009 from:

http://www.kihu.fi/faktapankki/faktaalueet/tulostus.php?id=44&otsikko=Rahavirrat_valtio%20ja%20kunnat

Vasara, E. (2004). Valtion liikuntahallinnon historia. Finland: Helsinki.

Vasara, E. (1989). Suomi urheilun suurvaltana. Finland: Helsinki

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Finnish top-level sport's organisations and structure

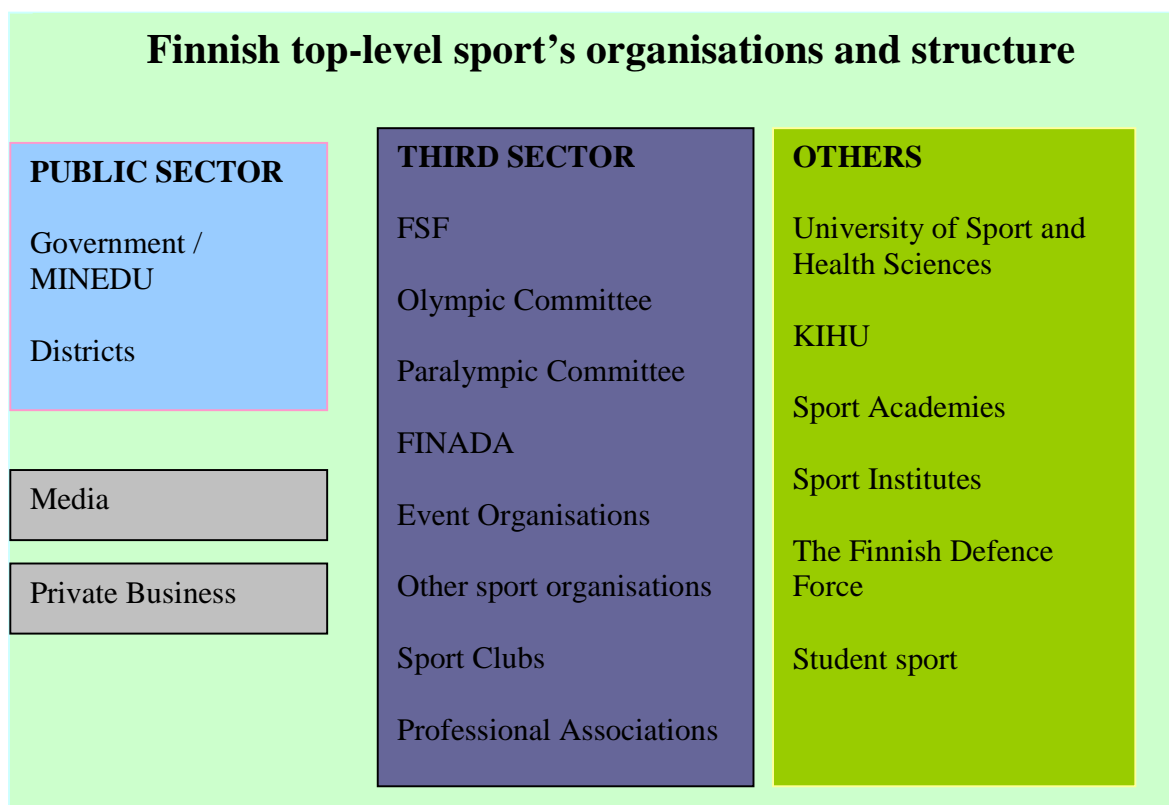


Figure 1. *Finnish top-level sport's organisations and structure*

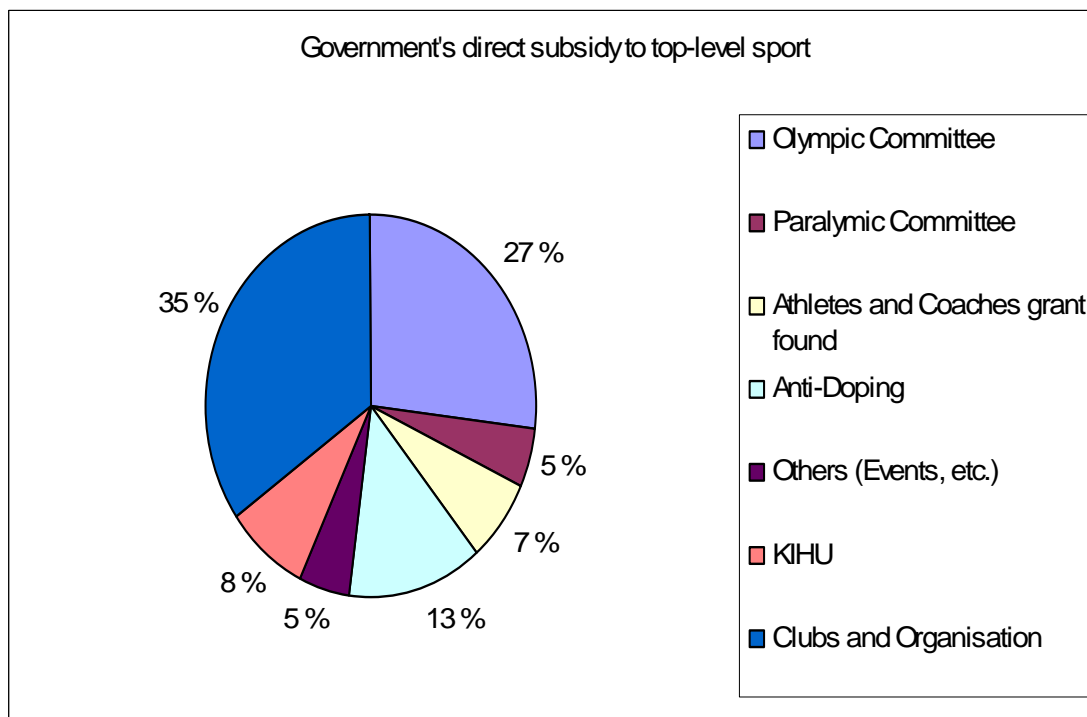
Appendix 2. *Subsidy distribution into top-level sport in year 2005*

Figure 2. *Subsidy distribution into top-level sport in year 2005*

Appendix 3. Information of the strategy documents used in the research

Table 1. *Information of the strategy documents used in the research.*

Publisher	Name	Year of publication	Number of pages	Unofficial Translation
NOC	Suomen Olympiakomitean puitesuunnitelma huippu-urheilun edistämiseksi.	1987	34	The strategy document 1987
Minedu, NOC & FSF	Huippu-urheilu 2000. Strategia huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi.	1994	16	The strategy document 1994
Minedu, NOC & FSF	Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulle.	1998	25	The strategy document 1998
Suomen Olympiayhdistys ry	Huippu-urheilu 2000-luvulla. Strategia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi 2002-2006.	2002	39	The strategy document 2002
Minedu	Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio.	2004	63	The strategy document 2004
Minedu	“Sanoista teoiksi”. Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän ajatuksia suomalaisen huippu-urheilun kehittämiseksi.	2010	67	The strategy document 2010

Appendix 4. Strategy document's central action plans

Table 2. Strategy document's central action plans

HUIPPU-URHEILU 2000 (1994)	HUIPPU-URHEILU 2000-LUVULLE (1998)
<p>MISSION</p> <p>"A long-term development of Finnish top-level sports, as well to ensure Finland's success in international top-level competitions."</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An efficient work sharing into Finnish top-level sports. • Effective orientation of available resources. • Development of top-level sports funding and restitution of Veikkaus lottery-funds to earlier level. • Ensure top-level sports long-term development. • Success in prominent competitions in different events (EC & WC). • Ensure success in 1996 Atlanta and 1998 Nagano Olympic games. <p>REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement of set 30,6% subsidy share to Finnish sport culture from the Veikkaus lottery-funds. • Support elite athletes international sports career. • Improve professional career development of coaches. • Develop support activities for more professionalized preparation and improve training centers. • Costs of International prominent competitions. • Top-level sports constructing activities. • Develop entertainisation in top-level sports. 	<p>MISSION</p> <p>"A long-term development of Finnish top-level sports, as well to ensure Finland's success in international top-level competitions."</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis of top-level sports value sand social significance as a fundamental starting point. • Build success-chain from youth to top-level sport athletes. • Improve quality of elite athletes professional preparation to competitions. • Improve success in female top-level sports. • Clarify and improve efficiency of work sharing in Finnish top-level sports. • Secure resources and conditions of Finnish top-level sports. <p>REQUIRED DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase children and youths physical activity. • Youth's support program. • Expand base of success. • Finance of sports. • Top-level sports constructing activities. • To improve athletes pension cover. • Support athletes in professional sports career. • Improve professional career development of coaches. • Improve antidoping activity. • Launch female top-level sports program. • Develop training centres and increase them use. • Helsinki 2006 Olympic venture.

HUIPPU-URHEILU 2000-LUVULLA (2002)	HUIPPU-URHEILUTYÖRYHMÄ (2004)
<p>VISION</p> <p>“The Finnish top-level sports receives international success in wide range of events”.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT & ACTION POINTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve credibility and appreciation of top-level sports. • Top-level sports national work sharing and operational responsibilities. • Develop athletes and coaches support system. • Support talented individuals. • Subsidy and support coaching- and training centres. • Develop manager activity. • Improve athletes health and social security system. • Develop partnership activity. • Top-level sports national construction ventures. • Receive hosting of significance prominent games into Finland. • Develop sport-communication. • Increase children and youths physical activity. • Sports facilities amount, level and condition. • Development of coaches position and expertise. • Top-level sports support systems and professionalism. • Development of disability sports. • Ethic of top level sports – quality policies as permanent. 	<p>VISION</p> <p>“Top-level sports is an important part of Finnish culture. It functions in an ethical and socially responsible manners, and it is appreciated among citizen as well it is internationally successful and visible activity.”</p> <p>AIMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workgroups presentation as a guideline for work sharing in Finnish top-level sports. • Top-level sports ethical basis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fair Play – Antidoping activity • Development of Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amount of coaches and education – Sport institutes and coaching center activities – Training centres • Responsibility of athletes life career and operations supporting it. • Strengthen top-level sports research and development activity. • International prominent competitions significance to Finland. • International decision making. • Top-level disability sports particular subjects. • Top-level sports special projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communication – Team ball sports

Appendix 5. Strategy document quotations

“The conditions of success for Finnish top-level sport are... A large number of child athletes, talented young athletes, as well as professionally trained elite athletes, whose skills, performance and mental skills are top class.” (1994, 10)¹¹

“Success in top-level sports is based on young and children sports that are carried out with large forces and it is closely related to coaching that is aiming for the top.” (1998, 8)¹²

“Most of the children and young people are moving enough from the perspective of top-level sport - at least 18 hours a week.” (2010, 10)¹⁶

“The opportunities for children to practise adequate and varied amount of sports are varied.” (2010, 18) (2010, 18)¹⁷

“In children and young people sports the contemporary cultural trends should be considered better and the aim should be to understand the values of young people and the role that sport has in their lives.” (2010, 42)¹⁸

“Sport system will ensure that the sport club and young athletes as well as their related parties have access to mentoring and coaching excellence and information.” (2010, 10)²¹

“The most important condition for the success in nation top-level sport is that there is an extensive “talent pipelines”. When it comes to children and young people it contains in a simple way; as many children and young people exercising much, often and varied. Only in this way the emergence of talent and development can be enabled.” (2010,10)²²

“All the guiding and coaching focuses on creating the conditions for the development of the individual. The advantage of a club or a team is always secondary in relation to the development of the individual. Young athletes have to have assurance that their talent is noticed and guided by the best possible way. .” (2010, 10)²³

“All sports, including team sports, talent development is ensured and maximised by focusing on individual development.” (2010, 10)²⁴

“Sport associations and clubs, instructors and coaches as well as parents must be made aware that even in top-level sport point of view the common interest is to increase the amount and the diversity of the movement.” (2010, 10)²⁶

”A Successful top-level sport requires a functional coaching system that gathers all the support functions such as training for coaches, talent search, the control of coaching and the creation of professional training facilities to ensure continued success.” (1994, 11)²⁷

”The results of top-level sport are considered as joint achievements for the entire Finnish coaching.”(2010, 13)²⁸

“The tradition and the base of Finnish coaching are in the coaching of sport clubs that is mainly voluntary. To maintain this culture is still an important goal for the whole sport movement.” (2004, 24–25)³⁰

“ So that the training for the Finnish club coaches would support the development of young athletes potential and the level of the professional coaches would be internationally competitive level, we need to have an educational system that is clear and functional.” (2002,27)³¹

“In international comparison the major weakness in the Finnish coaching system is the limited number of professional coaches.” (2004, 25)³⁷

“Professional coaches that have at least half of their incomes coming from coaching are around 1200 according to the investigations of Finnish Coaches Association in 2001 and SLU in 2002.” (2002, 7)³⁸

”While coaching has become more professional and in some sports it is professional, it is not a profession, which would have an independent authority and responsibility to edit the professions ethical standards and to create ethical conduct.” (2010,20)³⁹

“Coach training responsibility that got transferred to Sport Associations in the 90s has not given the results desired with the exceptions of the largest associations and the number of new qualified coaches in smaller associations has even declined.” (2002, 7)⁴²

”Traditional athlete-coach co-operation is still the most common approach and the best guarantee for good results. But also other models are getting more in common. Some of our most succeeded top-level athletes dont have a permanent relationship to a coach or the athlete is coaching himself.” (2002, 9)⁴³

”Preparation is a holistic process, which combines knowledge and understanding of many specific areas of physiological training as well as numerous factors that are dealing with nutrition, emotional balance and quality of life. (2010, 14)⁴⁴

“Attendance at sporting events provides an opportunity to promote interaction among nations, tolerance, equality and sustainable development.” (1998, 4)⁴⁹

”In addition through international competitions top-level sport is actively involved in peace work by increasing the interaction between nations, co-operation and tolerance.” (2002, 16)⁵⁰

"Despite multi-national professional series have major competitions sustained and strengthened their position." (2004, 13)⁵¹

"Finnish top-level sport has retained its international position well on the other hand through most conventional sports and secondly through wholly new sports. (2002, 5)⁵⁶

"If we want to keep up with international development it requires increasingly larger human and financial resources to sustain and to increase the success in international adult sports." (2002, 11)⁵⁷

"Finnish sport is isolated. We are not part of the mainstream of international top-level sport development, and we don't feel like we should aim there...The development of top-level sport requires international reference base and a mirror to develop our own system and skills. (2010, 21)⁵⁸

"The ethical basis of top-level sport is highly evaluated only on the basis of the anti-doping work." (2004, 35)⁶²

"Top-level athletes have a great responsibility as idols of young people." (1994, 4)⁶³

"The accelerating pace of competition and cash prizes has contributed to the increased the attractiveness of doping." (2002, 14)⁶⁶

"The factors threatening basic values of sports are boycotts, violence and doping." (1987, 8)⁶⁸

"Finnish anti-doping program and the operations are best in the world, but still the believe int the cleans sport is diminished." (2002, 5)⁷⁷

"Although the development of doping methods seems to be above testing methods, is the development of testing methods accelerated and fraud users are more likely to be caught." (2002, 13)⁸⁰

"Olympic committee is developing and supporting disabled and student sports in separately agreed ways." (1994, 7)⁸⁹

"The number of professional athletes devoted to professional sports has increased within the last couple of years." (2004, 34)⁹³

"The professionalism in individual sports is affecting that also Finnish team sports have changed from amateur sports into semi-professional sports." (2004,12)⁹⁴

"Top-level sport is a meaningful and rich life path."(1994, 5)¹⁰⁰

"Few Finnish top-level athletes or top-level coaches receive subsistence from sports for themselves or their families. In some sports the most successful athletes internationally are able to secure their training and living with sponsorship agreements, but most of the national medal candidates need a support from their sport association or their clubs." (1994, 14)¹⁰⁹

"Then the post-war generation rose to the top. In fact the 1970s Finnish individual sport stars were the first ones, to whom Finland aimed to provide the opportunities to train year-round full-time training. (2004,12)¹¹⁰

"The diversity of sports can also be described by a continuum of professional sport to amateur sport. The main difference between the extremes is intensifying in geographical or commercial way to organise the competitions. Entertainisation, commercialisation and professionalisation are attracting sports towards professionalism, but nationally only a few sports can reach the standards of professionalism. (2010, 32)¹¹⁴

"In recent years top-level sport has increasingly become an important part of the international entertainment industry."(2004, 10)¹²⁰

"The growing importance of entertainisation in 1990s caused that international top-level sport became more and more clearly part of international entertainment industry." (2004, 13)¹²¹

"There are also some individual top-level athletes that have personally set up limited companies to support their own sporting career and to support the exploitation of their market value." (2002, 13)¹²²

"Finnish top-level sport is similarly fragmented more.. Finland as an economic area is not big enough to maintain professional sport that is based on business." (2004, 10)¹²⁹

"The difference between market- and society driven sports has become more clearer in top-level sports. In some sports the maintenance and development of national sport are enabled by the interest of people, public and the media, and the revenue stream resulting from the interest. In some sports the development of the sport is only conducted by substantial help from the government or by athletes personal financial contribution." (2002, 9)¹³⁰

"In addition to the coaches in the background of top-level athletes are more and more experts in various fields and at the same time some of the top-level athletes are seeking to break away from their club and sport association systems. (2002, 5)¹³⁸

"Top-level sport has an important role in the society and in the whole sports culture due to its great visibility and publicity. Applying and investing resources in top-level sports is based on its international and social significance. ." (1998, 22)¹⁴³

"The development of top-level sport and the attraction of it has led to a weakening of the autonomy of sport. Top-level sport reflects increasingly the development and the phenomena of the society." (2002, 11)¹⁴⁴

"Athletes could choose in their humanity to contribute in socially significant aspects such as healthy lifestyle, tolerance or the physical exercise of children and young people." (2002, 12)¹⁴⁹

"Top-level sports evokes emotions and creates relevance and joy of life. Top-level athletes inspires us in everyday life." (2010, 15)¹⁵⁰

"In the 2000s the national sport culture and social meanings are related to education, health promotion and sense of community. Top-level sport has to adopt to these values." (2010, 25)¹⁵⁶

"Government and local municipalities are creating conditions for the top-level sports and other physical exercise by creating construction of sport facilities. Government is funding top-level sport mainly through professional sports organisations with its lottery funds." (1998, 6)¹⁶³

*"Government is not supporting professional sports that is aiming for economic profits." (2004, 3)
169*

"The support of competitive and top-level sports is part of national result-based assistance of sport and disability sport organisations. 25 percent of the state subsidy that is addressed to sport organisations is determined by the competitive and top-levels sports criteria's." (2004, 27)¹⁷⁰

"When the overall growth of governments support stopped in 90s the actions of sporting organisations and above all the development efforts are based increasingly stronger to the changes of external funding and number of amateurs. This market-oriented control has enabled a strong growth for some sports but on the other hand it has caused the stop of development and in some sports even recession." (2002, 7)¹⁷¹

"Sporting federations used about 21,4 m€ (33 %) of their operating expenses directly to competitive and top-level sports. (2004, 27)¹⁷²

"A successful top-level sport is based on affluent club activities and volunteer work. (1998, 6)¹⁷³

"In the Financial support guidance in top-level sport has emerged a need to evaluate the meaning and importance of traditional and new sports in order to direct the social support appropriate. By the result-based subsidies of the government it should be ensured better that the small and medium sport federations are vibrant and diverse. (2002, 9)¹⁷⁴

"The scholarship is intended for athletes who commit themselves to long-term and professional training, and who are evaluated to have chances of success in the future international major competitions." (2010, 38)¹⁷⁹

"The third subsidy package of government for top-level sport consists of the grants to support top-level sport related activities and organisations." (2010, 39)¹⁸⁰

"Governments financial support has grown significantly since 2005. In 2005 to support top-level sport was used 7 million Euros (excluding the support for sports federations). In 2010 the total is 12,4 million Euros. (2010, 39)¹⁸¹

"The growth of the support addressed to top-level sport is mainly due to the increase in the support of anti-doping activities, athletes, coaches and Paralympics' committee." (2004, 29)¹⁸²

"In addition to the support allocated to sport federations also the direct revenues of top-level sport systems and sponsorship revenues are considerably higher than in other Nordic countries." (2004, 42)¹⁸³

"To manage top-level sport we need parties that have the permission to manage, control and to resource the Finnish top-level sports development organisation." (2010,40)¹⁸⁷

"One of the absolute key objectives of the changing group is that the support system of top-level sports is able to organise the actions that support top-level athletes so that they feel that they have the best possible expertise and knowledge of sports to promote their careers." (2010, 43)¹⁸⁸