

# Evaluating Performance of an Elite Program

## The Australian Method

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Australia does not have a national approach to evaluation. The key stakeholders tend to measure their interests somewhat independently. Let us then have a look at some of the approaches used.

### 1. Early Days

The early measurement of programs were simply verbal opinions. As an Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Head Coach, one would sit in front of a panel of Board members every two or three years and proceed to talk up the program. No hard facts or data were used. The key to success was being a good talker, and we the head coaches became very good at it. No one asked the hard questions. For example, you have eighteen athletes on scholarship. If you reduce this number by half what effect would it have? Would the program still achieve the same level of national representatives? Would it gain more? Or would the results fall away?

The first attempts to evaluate programs in a more formal manner were frequently resisted. Coaches particularly felt that administrators were ill equipped to pass any form of meaningful judgement on their programs.

### 2. National Approach

In 1994 when Australia was awarded the 2000 Games the Olympic Athlete Program (OA) was born. For the first two years of the program all Olympic Sports received significant increases in funding. The Atlanta Games were identified as the first major “test” of performance.

An evaluation of all Olympic disciplines was undertaken at the conclusion of the Games. This was the first time Australian Sport had attempted a review of this magnitude. It produced many interesting reactions. A number of sports found it totally intimidating, questioning the competency of the review team, cancelling meetings and generally working hard at being uncooperative. A few sports embraced the idea, seizing the opportunity to make hard decisions themselves. The remainder tried to understand the process and sought to achieve the best possible outcome for their sport.

The Performance Unit of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) carried out the evaluation. The review team included expertise from the major high performance areas, Sports Science, Administration, Coaching etc. The process began with an assessment of the ten key areas by the sport and by the sports consultant from within the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).

OAP REVIEW	
SELF EVALUATION - NATIONAL SPORTING FEDERATIONS	
A	PLANNING
B	INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION PROGRAM
C	PERFORMANCE MONITORING
D	TRAINING PROGRAMS
E	HIGH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
F	SPORT SCIENCES
G	RESEARCH
H	EQUIPMENT / TECHNOLOGY / FACILITIES
I	COACHING
J	ITC PROGRAMS AND STATE NETWORKS

Once the initial assessments were completed, the sport and the ASC meet with the review team. The meetings focussed on areas where ratings varied markedly and also on areas of poor performance.

At the end of the process, the draft findings of the review were submitted to the sport and the key stakeholders (National Elite Sports Council, Australian Olympic Committee) for input before the ASC Board announced the funding outcomes.

OLYMPIC ATHLETE (OAP) REVIEW	
RECOMMENDED CATEGORIES FOR SUPPORT	
THE TWO KEY FACTORS CONSIDERED IN CATEGORISING EACH SPORT ARE:	
•	THE QUALITY OF THE ATHLETES IN THE PROGRAM
•	THE QUALITY OF THE HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAM
•	coaching and support staff
•	Training programs
•	planning for and implementation of, international competition and camps
•	the integration and utilisation of sports science.

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#### **CATEGORY 1**

SPORTS THAT ARE MAJOR MEDAL PROSPECTS AND  
ACHIEVING PERFORMANCE TARGETS

#### **CATEGORY 2**

INCLUDES MAJOR MEDAL PROSPECTS THAT HAVE  
NOT ACHIEVED PERFORMANCE TARGETS

SPORTS THAT ARE POSSIBLE MEDAL PROSPECTS

SPORTS THAT HAVE SURPASSED THEIR  
PERFORMANCE TARGETS TO BECOME MORE LIKELY  
MEDAL PROSPECTS

#### **CATEGORY 3**

THOSE SPORTS CONSIDERED UNLIKELY TO ACHIEVE  
A TOP 8 TEAM OR TOP 16 INDIVIDUAL RESULT IN  
2000

#### ***INDIVIDUAL ATHLETE SUPPORT***

*IN INDIVIDUAL SPORTS WHERE ONLY ONE OR TWO  
ATHLETES HAVE ACHIEVED QUALITY INTERNATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, CONSIDERATION WILL BE  
GIVEN FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT FOR THESE ATHLETES.*

### **CATEGORISATION OF SPORTS FOLLOWING 1996-7 OAP REVIEW**

#### **Category 1**

Basketball	(Men's & Women's)
Canoeing	
Cycling	Track
Equestrian	Eventing
Hockey	(Men's & Women's)
Rowing	
Sailing	
Shooting	Men's & Women's Double Trap Men's Trap
Softball	
Swimming	
Triathlon	
Volleyball	Beach

This evaluation process had a direct impact on elite sports funding level for the next quadrennium.

In the subsequent review two years later the approach was modified as a detailed analysis of performance was used. Individual athlete's performances were closely monitored as were the team results.

FIGURE1 Chart 1

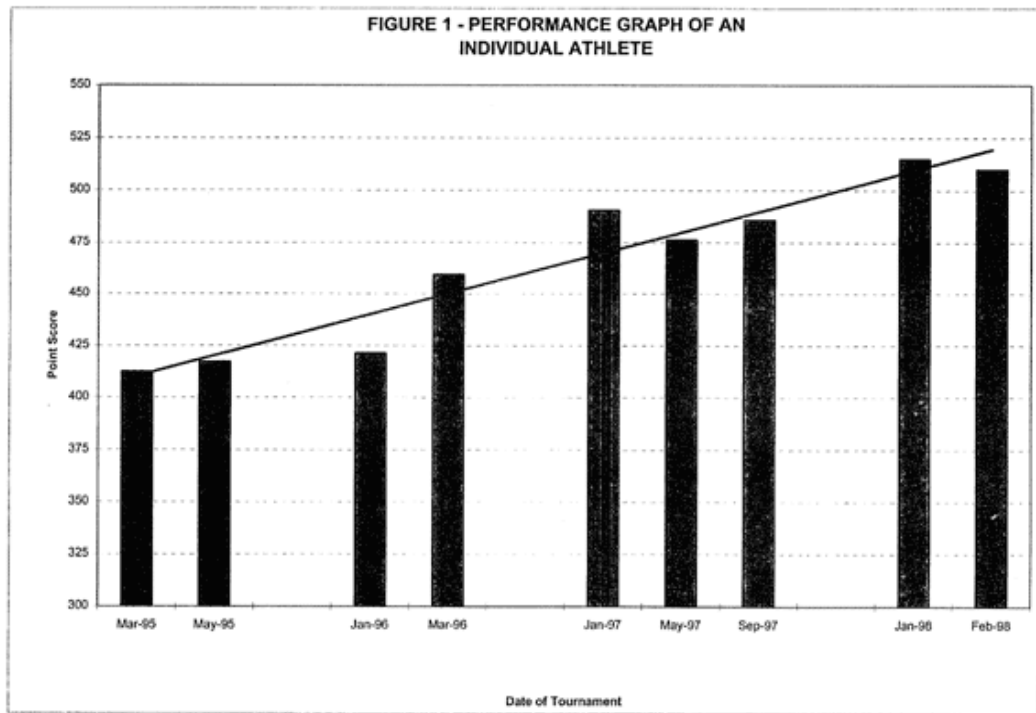


FIGURE3 Chart 1

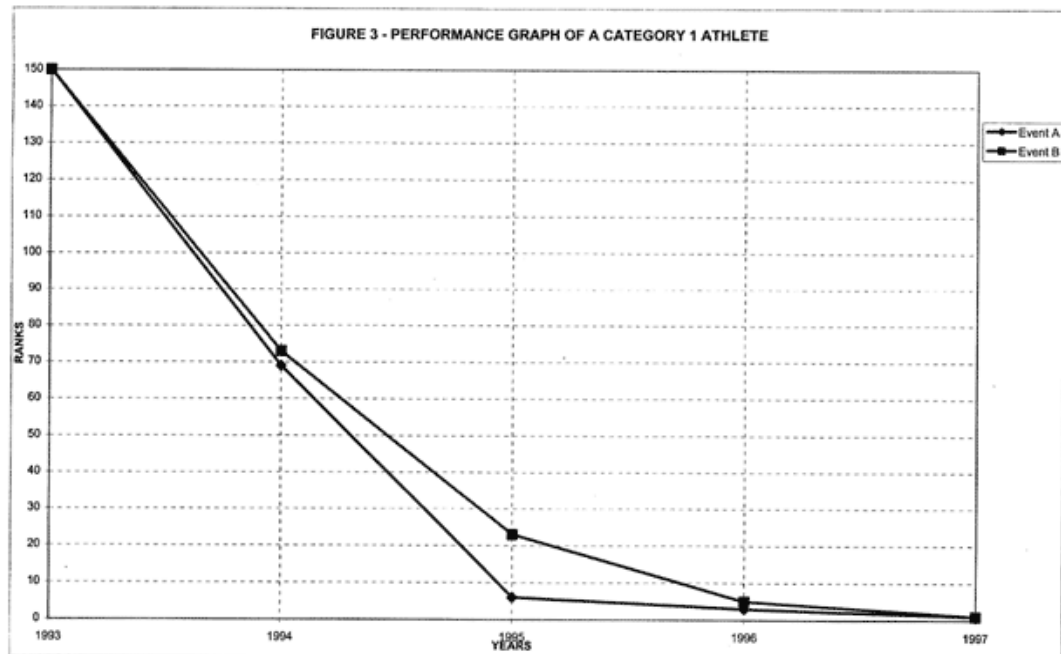
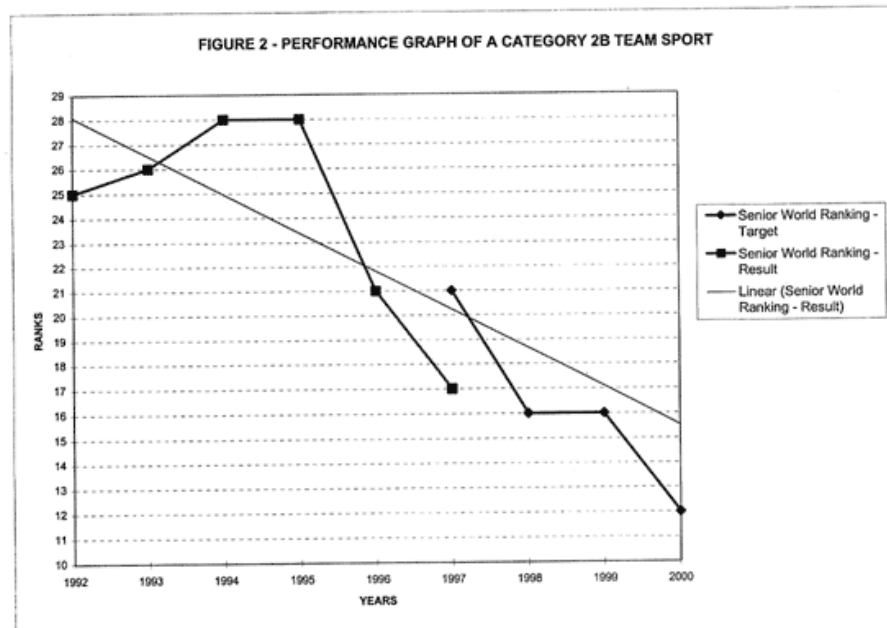


FIGURE2



Page 1

Evaluation is most effective when a sport can constantly monitor its performance and implement the necessary changes without interference from internal politics. In Australia we are beginning to see a few sports develop this ability.

## Champions Trophy Tournament – June 1999

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate each of the following items on the scales provided.

1. The environment within the team was helpful in enabling us to achieve our objective. 1 2 3 4 5  
Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Suggested improvements:

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2. The team environment was open and supportive. 1 2 3 4 5  
Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Suggested improvements:

.....

3. The team environment encouraged critical analysis and freedom to express my point of view. 1 2 3 4 5  
Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Suggested improvements:

.....

4. I received sufficient feedback from the coaching staff about my on field and off field behaviour. 1 2 3 4 5  
Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Suggested improvements:

.....

5. Feedback from coaching staff was relevant and helpful to me. 1 2 3 4 5  
Rarely Sometimes Most of the time

Suggested improvements:

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INDIVIDUAL ITC PROGRAM GROUP SCORES AND HPM REVIEW SCORES		
1999 ASSESSMENT RESULTS	Maximum Score Available	Self-Assessment Score
1. Leadership	180	
2. Strategy, Policy and Planning	80	
3. Information and Analysis	90	
4. People Development & Management	200	
5. Stakeholder Focus	150	
6. Processes & Deliverables	200	
7. Organisational Performance	100	
Total score:	1000	

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1. Leadership	180	
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At the government level the purchase provider model that is rapidly being adopted in this country demands that Institutes and Academies of sport develop sophisticated evaluation techniques.

DRAFT OUTPUT SPECIFICATION				
Department of:	Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing			
Output ID:	4.4			
Price (\$'000)	XXXXXXXX			
Output Title:	Elite Athlete Development			
Description:	For the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) to identify, support and maximise the development of Elite Sporting Talent in Queensland.			
Output Class:	Queensland Academy of Sport			
Outcome:	All Queenslanders have the opportunity to participate equitably in the social, cultural and economic life of the State.			
Measures:	Targets 98/99	Actual 98/99	Target 99/2000	Actual 99/2000
<b>Quantity:</b>				
Number of QAS Athletes:				
▪ International level	165	165	170	
▪ National level	102	102	110	
▪ Development level	273	273	300	
Number of Sports Programs				
▪ Brisbane	20	20	21	
▪ North Queensland	6	6	8	
<b>Quality/Effectiveness:</b>				
<b>Organisation and Program Development</b>				
Standard of performance at the National/International level:				
▪ Number of sports that medal each year at World Championships	6-8	6-8	6-8	
▪ % of Australian medal tally at the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games	15-20%	15-20%	15-20%	
▪ % of Academy athletes represented on National Teams	15-20%	15-20%	15-20%	
▪ % of Academy athletes represented on State Teams	70-80%	70-80%	70-80%	
Ranking of Academy against other State Institutes/Academy	Top 4	Top 4	Top 4	
Support services are of World standard and coaches and athletes are satisfied with these services:				
▪ % clients satisfied with Athlete Career and Education Program	90%	90%	90%	
▪ % clients satisfied with Performance Enhancement Centre	90%	90%	90%	
▪ % clients satisfied with the Information Centre	90%	90%	90%	
▪ % Coaches satisfied with the Sports Program Management area.	90%	90%	90%	
▪ % QAS programs evaluated on an annual basis	95-100%	95-100%	95-100%	

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And finally it is important to ensure that our successes are evaluated as vigorously as our failures. Understanding what we are doing well is critical and is all too frequently ignored. The weak sports are usually easier to identify. The successes are more like to assist us in our quest for excellence. The final slide identifies the common elements of successful high performance programs. It was published as a result of the first OAP review of 1996.

#### **SUCCESSFUL HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS**

- A pool of talented, committed athletes
- Expert coaching from highly qualified, innovative coaches
- State-of-the-art sports science and medicine support
- Regular national and international competitions at appropriate levels
- An holistic approach to the athletes' development, including a balance between the sport and non-sport (education, career, social, family) aspects of their lives.
- Adequate training venues and equipment. Relevant to this is the ease of access to all the facilities where athletes live, train, eat, recover and receive medical support.
- Good talent identification and development systems with a network of feeder programs
- Supportive administration which provides maximum support to create an environment which assists the coaches to manage the program and carry out their jobs effectively
- **These programs are:**
  - *Athlete centred, coach driven and Administrator-supported*
  - *Founded on rigorous and continuous evaluation*
  - *Have a commitment to excellence.*