

Towards Uplifting the Standard of Athletic Performance by Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

The benefits of sport to the individual participant and society are well known and widely recognized. Specifically, the social, psychological and health benefits of sport serve as a driving force for peoples' pursuit of sporting activities. Additionally, the glory, honor, recognition and rewards associated with winning in major international sports competitions have compelled many institutions and government

agencies in various countries of the world to seek and implement strategies for identifying and nurturing sport latent. At university level, sport is an important tool that contributes to the physical, psychological and social welfare of the students and entire university community. Given the pressure and stress associated with academic pursuits, sport is ideal for relieving such tensions, giving them a chance to socialize, make friends and improve concentration by being fit and healthy. In the modern world, universities have also used sports to market themselves and their academic programmes with a view to improving their students' enrollment and projecting their images to the public as superior and best institutions. In the developed world, universities have been noted to be ideal sites for preparing, building and exposing sports talent. Evidence is abundant in the developed world where university students participate and win medals for their countries in international sports competitions. For instance, in the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, 80% of the US team was composed of university students who won a total of 19 medals. At the same Games, the British team had a proportion of 52% university students. However, universities in African countries (including Kenya) are yet to fully embrace this practice and implement concrete measures for producing world-class athletes. Given the rich human resource, universities can be relied upon to tap and develop various human talents in various fields, including sports. This paper highlights case studies of performances of athletes from Universities in the developed world in major international competitions and proposes research-based measures for uplifting the standard of sports performance in Kenya's universities.

Key Words: Sports, University, management, technical factors