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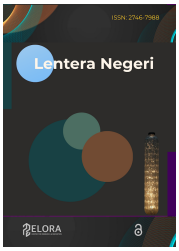

High-performance sport governance, funding, and talent development in developed and developing countries: a systematic review

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ABSTRACT

High-performance sport management is central to a nation's success in international competitions. Developed countries have long established integrated, evidence-based systems for elite sport development, while developing nations often face fragmented structures, weak governance, and limited resources. This systematic review analyzes and compares high-performance sport management models in developed and developing contexts, highlighting structural, policy, and outcome differences. Using PRISMA guidelines, 22 peer-reviewed studies published between 2013 and 2023 from Scopus, Web of Science, and SPORTDiscus were examined. A comparative framework guided thematic analysis, focusing on governance, funding, talent identification, infrastructure, coaching, and sport science integration. Findings reveal that developed nations implement centralized, data-driven models underpinned by long-term funding, robust governance, and strong institutional alignment. These elements enable sustainable elite sport systems. In contrast, developing countries often adopt ad hoc strategies, lack policy continuity, and struggle with limited access to sport science and infrastructure. Replicating developed-country models without contextual adaptation frequently results in inefficiency. The study concludes that effective high-performance sport management requires systemic coherence, strategic investment, and context-sensitive adaptation. Rather than imitation, developing nations should integrate key principles into resilient and locally grounded frameworks. By employing SPLISS, RBV, and Institutional Theory, this review contributes to advancing global sport policy discourse.

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Introduction

Governance structures, funding mechanisms, talent identification systems, coaching frameworks, and sport science integration are widely recognized as critical determinants of international sporting success. Countries that systematically invest in these components tend to achieve more sustainable elite sport outcomes, while countries with fragmented governance and limited institutional capacity often experience difficulties in maintaining competitive performance at the international level. Understanding how these management components are organized across different national contexts has therefore become an important issue in contemporary sport policy research (Alam, 2024; Bayle, 2024). Developed countries such as the United

Kingdom, Australia, and Canada exemplify how systematic and strategic sport management models can consistently yield competitive results. For instance, the United Kingdom, through UK Sport, has implemented a performance pathway model that integrates sports science, technology, and performance evaluation to support elite athletes (Clark & Mach, 2016; Green & Houlihan, 2005). In Australia, the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) was a strategic response to the country's poor performance in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. This marked the beginning of a national sports system centered on centralized training and research (Bayle, 2024; Oakley & Green, 2001). These models indicate that elite sports success is closely linked to planned and structured sport management strategies.

Conversely, developing countries continue to face various structural and contextual challenges in implementing high-performance sport management models. These include financial constraints, limited infrastructure, a shortage of qualified coaches, and weak coordination between sports and educational institutions. In many cases, approaches used in developing countries are ad hoc and inconsistent, lacking long-term policy continuity. Moreover, attempts to transfer high-performance sport management practices from developed countries have not always produced the intended outcomes in developing contexts. For example, Brazil adopted several centralized elite sport strategies and invested heavily in infrastructure before the 2016 Rio Olympic Games; however, the absence of long-term legacy planning and sustainable athlete development pathways limited the lasting impact of these investments. Similarly, Indonesia has introduced elements of centralized talent development and elite training programs, yet implementation has been constrained by regional disparities, inconsistent coordination between national and local sport organizations, and unequal access to coaching and sport science services. These examples suggest that management models cannot simply be replicated across countries without considering local governance structures, institutional capacity, economic resources, and sociocultural conditions.

The gap between developed and developing countries in terms of high-performance sport management lies not only in resource availability but also in strategic planning, governance quality, and supportive policy frameworks. Through the SPLISS (Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success) model, identified nine key pillars influencing international sporting success, including financial support, organizational structure, and talent identification and development systems. This model underscores the multifactorial nature of elite sporting success, which depends on the synergy of interconnected components. However, the effectiveness of models like SPLISS is largely contingent upon the institutional capacity of a country, which significantly differs between developed and developing nations. Previous studies have extensively examined sport management models in developed countries, including centralized sport systems, performance-based funding mechanisms, and elite sport academies. In contrast, studies focusing on developing countries often highlight attempts to adapt such models on a limited scale, yet without sustainable implementation or evidence-based evaluation (Whitley, 2025). While some comparative research exists, there remains a scarcity of systematic reviews that explicitly analyze the structural, policy, and outcome differences in high-performance sport management between developed and developing countries.

The central problem addressed by this review is the lack of a comprehensive mapping of high-performance sport management models across countries, particularly those categorized as developed versus developing. Without systematic analysis, policy-makers in developing countries may risk adopting models from developed nations without adapting them to their socio-economic and political conditions, ultimately resulting in inefficiencies and failed national sport programs (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011; Thompson et al., 2023). This study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do governance structures, funding mechanisms, talent identification systems, coaching frameworks, and sport science integration differ between developed and developing countries?. (2) Which management components are most consistently associated with successful high-performance sport outcomes in the reviewed literature?. (3) To what extent do contextual factors such as institutional capacity, governance quality, and resource availability influence the effectiveness of high-performance sport management systems?

The primary objective of this systematic review is to compare governance structures, funding mechanisms, talent identification pathways, coaching systems, sport science integration, and performance monitoring practices employed in high-performance sport systems across developed and developing countries. Specifically, this review aims to identify the structural characteristics associated with successful elite sport outcomes and examine how contextual factors influence the effectiveness of these management components. Using the SPLISS framework, Resource-Based View (RBV), and Institutional Theory as analytical lenses, this review synthesizes evidence regarding the organizational conditions that support sustainable international sporting success. Additionally, this study contributes to both practical and theoretical domains. Practically, the findings of this review can offer evidence-based recommendations for

developing countries in designing sustainable and context-sensitive elite sport systems. Theoretically, the article enriches the literature on cross-national sport management by integrating global and local perspectives on high-performance sport systems. Moreover, this study addresses the growing need for academic discourse on policy transfer and institutional borrowing in the globalized context of sport (Bayle, 2024; Houlihan & Green, 2009).

In sum, this article seeks to bridge a gap in the current literature on high-performance sport management by offering a systematic comparison of models in developed and developing countries. It is expected to make a significant contribution to the ongoing global dialogue on designing efficient, effective, and competitive sport systems that are inclusive and aligned with national development goals. To enhance methodological transparency and replicability, this systematic review was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. A structured search strategy was implemented across multiple scientific databases using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The review process included identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and thematic synthesis procedures to ensure the reliability and validity of the evidence synthesis.

Definition and Characteristics of High-Performance Sport

High-performance sport refers to a systematic and strategic approach to the development and preparation of athletes with the ultimate goal of achieving excellence at international competitions such as the Olympic Games, World Championships, or continental tournaments. This concept reflects a complex, organized, and result-oriented model in which every component of the sports system from talent recruitment to training and multidisciplinary support is meticulously developed to optimize peak athletic performance. According to (Bosscher et al., 2015; Henriksen et al., 2019; Maughan et al., 2018) high-performance sport is "the result of a combination of multiple factors including national policy, funding, athlete development systems, quality coaching, and supporting infrastructure, all synergized to create international competitive advantage."One of the primary characteristics of high-performance sport is the talent-based and long-term athlete selection process. Countries with advanced sports systems employ data-driven and objective assessments to identify prospective athletes from a young age. These programs, known as talent identification and development (TID), are designed not only to assess physical potential but also to nurture mental resilience, commitment, and the capacity to adapt to intensive training demands. In countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, talent identification processes are supported by technology and scientific interventions, including biometric testing and longitudinal performance tracking.

Another defining feature is the integrated support of sport science and sport medicine throughout the training and competition cycle. Sport science encompasses areas such as biomechanics, exercise physiology, sport psychology, nutrition, and data-based performance monitoring. The role of sport science has become increasingly central in modern elite sport as it contributes to training efficiency, injury prevention, and strategic decision-making (Bangsbo et al., 2025; Fuentes-barría et al., 2025; Taylor et al., 2012). In parallel, sport medicine provides the foundation for athlete recovery through clinical rehabilitation and fatigue management, both of which are critical for maintaining long-term training continuity. The professionalization of coaching structures and support staff also stands out as a fundamental element of high-performance systems. Coaches are not only selected based on experience but are often required to undergo standardized national and international certification programs. In addition to head coaches, support teams usually include physiotherapists, sport psychologists, performance analysts, nutritionists, and program managers who work collaboratively. This multidisciplinary team approach enables holistic and adaptive interventions tailored to each athlete's needs (Henriksen et al., 2023).

Furthermore, specialized training infrastructures meeting international standards are key components. National training centers or high-performance centers are typically equipped with modern facilities, performance tracking technologies, and athlete management systems. These facilities enable intensive training, match simulation, and direct sport science interventions. Countries such as Canada, with its "Own the Podium" initiative, and the Netherlands, with its "Centres for Elite Sports and Education," demonstrate how adequate infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting elite performance. Equally important is the support of national policies and strong governance in sports organizations. Governments, through ministries or national sports agencies, typically provide a clear policy framework outlining performance objectives, budget allocations, and outcome evaluations. A study by (Lundberg et al., 2025) found that the success of high-performance sports systems is strongly influenced by policy continuity, transparent governance, and inter-agency collaboration in implementing athlete development programs. In summary, high-performance sport represents a highly structured and multifaceted system that relies not only on the individual abilities of athletes but also on a comprehensive network of scientific, technical, and managerial support. Countries that

successfully integrate these elements tend to have a higher potential for achieving international success. Therefore, a deep understanding of the characteristics of high-performance sport is essential in designing effective sports policies and strategic management, particularly in developing countries aiming to build or enhance performance-oriented sports systems.

Key Components in High-Performance Sport Management

High-performance sport management is a complex system that requires the integration of several critical components to produce elite athletes capable of competing at the international level. These components include funding, talent identification and development, training and infrastructure, coaching and support staff, as well as policy and governance. Each of these elements plays a strategic role in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of national sport systems.

Firstly, funding is the foundational element in the administration of elite sports. Countries with consistently successful sport systems demonstrate a strong commitment to stable and substantial financial investment. This funding may originate from government budgets, private sponsorships, or national lottery schemes as seen in the United Kingdom through UK Sport. Research has shown that the volume and consistency of financial support are significantly correlated with international athletic success (Truyens et al., 2014). Developed countries such as Australia and the Netherlands have implemented performance-based funding models, in which sports with higher medal potential receive prioritized investment. This approach encourages national federations to adopt result-oriented strategies and optimize resource use (Bosscher et al., 2015). Secondly, talent identification and development (TID) is a vital component in ensuring a sustainable pipeline of future athletes. Advanced sport systems use scientifically driven TID frameworks that combine biological, psychological, and performance-based data to assess long-term athlete potential. For example, Australia's National Talent Search Program has been successful in scouting youth athletes from diverse regions and integrating them into elite training environments. In contrast, developing countries often face constraints in accessing valid assessment tools and trained professionals, resulting in talent identification that relies heavily on coaches' intuition and informal processes. This disparity limits the scalability and inclusiveness of talent development programs (Barreiros et al., 2014).

Thirdly, training and infrastructure significantly influence the quality of athlete preparation. Nations such as Japan and Germany have developed national training centers equipped with world-class facilities, including sport science laboratories, biomechanics analysis units, and advanced rehabilitation services. These infrastructures support not only the technical aspects of training but also contribute to recovery, injury prevention, and performance enhancement through scientific integration. In contrast, developing nations often exhibit stark disparities in facility quality between capital cities and rural regions, which inhibits equitable athlete development. (Sotiriadou & Bosscher, 2017) emphasize that long-term investment in infrastructure is critical for building resilient and sustainable high-performance systems. Fourthly, coaching and support staff including sport psychologists, physiotherapists, performance analysts, and nutritionists serve as indicators of system maturity. In developed countries, coaches are expected to hold tiered certifications, possess pedagogical expertise, and demonstrate the ability to integrate technology into training processes. They often operate within multidisciplinary teams that ensure a holistic and data-driven approach to athlete preparation. On the other hand, while developing nations may have experienced coaches, they often lack access to continuous professional development and interdisciplinary collaboration, limiting their capacity to implement modern training methodologies.

Fifth, policy and governance play a central role in guiding the strategic direction of high-performance sport. Successful nations adopt governance models based on principles of transparency, stakeholder involvement, and performance evaluation. For instance, the UK Sport model operates independently yet aligns with national objectives through coordinated strategy implementation. In contrast, developing countries may suffer from institutional fragmentation, political interference, and a lack of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. (Geeraert, 2018) argue that policy success in sport is largely dependent on national vision consistency and stable institutional frameworks. In conclusion, the five components outlined above form an interdependent ecosystem that underpins high-performance sport management. Developed countries demonstrate success by effectively integrating these elements into a cohesive system, while developing nations face structural and operational challenges in achieving similar outcomes. A nuanced understanding of each component is essential for designing policy reforms and system improvements that are contextually appropriate and sustainable.

High-Performance Sport Management Models in Developed Countries

Developed countries tend to have a structured, integrated and results-oriented performance sport management system. This model is usually underpinned by significant investment in sport policy, sport

science and professional institutional governance. One of the key features of performance sport management in developed countries is the integration of government institutions, elite training institutions and national sports organizations, working within a long-term strategic policy framework. This allows the development of athletes to be carried out systematically from an early age to the international elite level, with the support of adequate facilities, coaches and technology. A more complete explanation in table 2.

Table 1. Explanation of methods used by developed countries

Country	Comprehensive Explanation	Outcomes	Conclusion
Australia	Australia has implemented a centralized high-performance system through the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), founded in 1981. AIS integrates sport science (biomechanics, psychology, nutrition, physiology) and collaborates with National Sports Organizations (NSOs) to support athlete development. It operates under federal funding and strategic planning to maximize international success.	Improved Olympic performance, consistent international competitiveness, and systematic athlete development from grassroots to elite levels.	A centralized, science-supported approach backed by federal policy and long-term investment proves effective for sustained elite sport success.
United Kingdom	The UK applies a performance-based funding model through UK Sport, primarily funded by the National Lottery. Funding is distributed to sports based on medal potential, and performance is monitored with strict accountability. The "World Class Programme" supports top athletes with tailored training environments.	Substantial increase in Olympic medals, particularly since London 2012, and improved global ranking.	Strategic, merit-based funding and rigorous performance evaluation drive excellence in elite sports.
Canada	Canada's "Own the Podium" (OTP) program emphasizes evidence-based decision-making and collaborative planning between federations, sport institutes, and coaches. Integrated Support Teams (ISTs) offer holistic services to athletes, including physiotherapy, nutrition, and mental coaching.	Enhanced medal counts at Winter and Summer Olympics, improved resource allocation, and athlete-centered support systems.	Data-driven planning and integrated services improve effectiveness in resource use and athlete readiness.
Netherlands	The Netherlands relies on coordination by NOC*NSF, which combines top-down strategy with grassroots club development. Universities are involved in sport science research to support elite training. Their system promotes both performance and societal values in sport.	Strong performances in speed skating, cycling, and other sports; recognized for innovation and athlete wellbeing.	A balanced system that values both elite achievement and social outcomes can sustain long-term success.
Multi-country (General Traits)	Developed countries tend to feature long-term strategic planning, consistent policy, high investment, professional leadership, and strong integration of sport science. Coaches are professionally trained and supported through structured certification and education programs.	Long-standing success at international competitions, effective athlete pipelines, and innovation in coaching and sports technology.	Structural integration, political commitment, and professional governance are essential for high-performance sport development.

This table provides a clear and comparative overview of how developed countries organize, fund, and implement their high-performance sport management systems.

High-Performance Sport Management Models in Developing Countries

The management of high-performance sport in developing countries is characterized by several structural, institutional, and financial challenges that hinder the development of competitive athletes at the international level. Generally, these countries adopt management models marked by limited resources, centralized governmental control, weak institutional collaboration, and underdeveloped principles of good governance in sport organizations, a more complete explanation in table 3.

Table 2. Developing Countries

Country	Comprehensive Explanation	Outcomes	Conclusions	Key Limitations Compared to Developed Countries
Brazil	Brazil's high-performance sport system is highly centralized and state-funded, with significant investments made for mega-events such as the 2016 Rio Olympics. However, sport development lacked post-event planning and sustainability, with underutilized infrastructure and poor legacy management (Bayle, 2024; Filho et al., 2018)	Short-term success during Olympic events, followed by stagnation and underuse of sport facilities.	Heavy reliance on mega-event funding without sustainable post-event strategy undermines long-term elite sport development.	Lack of long-term strategic planning, absence of national sport science integration, and weak post-Olympic legacy management, unlike UK or Australia which prioritize legacy and continuity.
South Africa	South Africa exhibits uneven resource distribution, with elite sports like rugby and cricket receiving most attention. Government funding is limited for Olympic sports, and the integration of sport science remains minimal in most high-performance programs (Burnett, 2010).	Limited international success in less-funded Olympic disciplines; reliance on historically strong sports for national prestige.	Imbalance in resource allocation and lack of interdisciplinary approaches weakens overall high-performance outcomes.	Unlike developed countries (e.g., Canada), there is a lack of inclusive multi-sport strategies and centralized athlete monitoring systems that track development from youth to elite.
Indonesia	Indonesia's sport management is dominated by government and suffers from poor coordination between central and regional bodies. Talent development lacks structured pathways and is mostly informal. Coaching and infrastructure vary greatly across regions (Alam, 2024).	Elite athletes often emerge from local clubs without support from national development systems. Regional disparities persist.	Decentralization policies are ineffective without monitoring, collaboration, and unified strategic direction.	Compared to countries like Japan or Germany, Indonesia lacks national databases, biometric monitoring, and structured long-term athlete development models.
Nigeria	Nigeria faces structural challenges such as insufficient coach education, inadequate facilities, and weak integration of sport	Low Olympic medal counts; struggles in global competition; elite athletes	Institutional reform and investment in coaching, infrastructure, and autonomy are urgently needed to	Unlike developed countries such as the USA, Nigeria lacks advanced coaching certification

Country	Comprehensive Explanation	Outcomes	Conclusions	Key Limitations Compared to Developed Countries
	science. Government interference often restricts autonomy of sport federations (Njonge, 2023).	often train abroad.	improve competitiveness.	systems, performance analytics, and private-sector engagement in elite sport.
Kenya	Kenya utilizes a unique, community-driven model. Success in long-distance running is attributed to cultural values, altitude training, and support from private and international partners. The system is less centralized but functionally effective.	Consistent international dominance in middle- and long-distance running.	Localized, low-cost strategies supported by community values and targeted investment can outperform centralized state-run systems in specific sports.	While effective in running, Kenya lacks a broad national sport institute structure like Australia's AIS, which supports multi-sport high-performance through integrated science and technology platforms.

Theory and Models for Comparative Sport Systems

To better understand the theoretical frameworks and models used in comparing high-performance sport systems between developed and developing countries, this section summarizes key theories that underpin policy analysis and organizational structures. The following table 4 presents an overview of the main theories and models, highlighting their core components, relevance, and representative scholarly references.

Table 3. Theory and Models for Comparative Sport Systems

Theory / Model	Description	Key Components / Concepts	Relevance in Sport System Comparison	Reference
SPLISS Model	Framework explaining sport success based on 9 sport policy pillars.	1. Vision & organization2. Funding3. Grassroots participation4. Coach development5. Talent ID & development6. Sport science & medical support7. Facilities8. Competition9. Monitoring & evaluation	Enables systematic comparison of sport systems between countries; identifies strengths & weaknesses in elite sport policies.	(Truyens et al., 2014)
Resource-Based View (RBV)	Theory focusing on how effective use of resources creates competitive advantage.	Efficient use of tangible and intangible resources:- Infrastructure- Funding- Human capital (coaches, athletes)- Intellectual capital (science, tech)	Helps understand how countries optimize limited resources, especially relevant for developing countries with financial constraints.	(Bayle, 2024)
Institutional Theory	Focuses on the role of formal and informal institutions in shaping policies and governance.	- Formal institutions: ministries, federations- Informal institutions: culture, norms- Institutional stability & accountability	Explains differences in governance quality and policy continuity, often a challenge in developing countries due to bureaucracy, corruption.	(Houlihan & Zheng, 2015)

Theory / Model	Description	Key Components / Concepts	Relevance in Sport System Comparison	Reference
Comparative Approach	Analytical framework to study sport systems across countries using above theories.	Contextual alignment of sport policies with social, cultural, and political factors.Avoids simplistic replication of models.	Provides nuanced understanding of why some systems succeed or fail; importance of contextual adaptation for policy transfer.	(Michael, 2022)

Integrating these theories provides a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the complex dynamics of elite sport systems across diverse national contexts. By considering the strengths and limitations of each model, researchers and policymakers can develop more nuanced and context-sensitive approaches to enhancing sport performance worldwide.

The theoretical frameworks included in this review were selected based on their extensive application in elite sport policy and sport management research. SPLISS provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating the policy determinants of international sporting success, while the Resource-Based View (RBV) explains how strategic resources contribute to competitive advantage. Institutional Theory complements these perspectives by examining how governance structures, policy stability, and organizational legitimacy influence the effectiveness of high-performance sport systems. Together, these frameworks provide a robust conceptual foundation for cross-national comparison and interpretation of elite sport management practices.

Method

Type of Research

To ensure the quality and credibility of the evidence base, priority was given to peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, SPORTDiscus, and PubMed. Preference was given to studies published within the last ten years, although several seminal works were retained due to their foundational contribution to the development of high-performance sport policy and management theory. This study is a systematic review that was prepared based on PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines.

A systematic review was chosen to identify, evaluate and synthesize findings from relevant studies on high performance sport management models in developed and developing countries. This approach allowed the researcher to synthesize published scientific evidence to comprehensively answer the research question. This research is descriptive-analytical in nature, as it does not conduct direct experiments, but rather analyzes secondary data from indexed scientific journal articles.

The main focus is on the organizational structures, policies and management strategies used in high performance sport systems. The method is therefore suitable for exploring systematic differences between different policy contexts and countries' institutional capacities. The validity and credibility of the study was maintained through rigorous literature selection, transparency of the search process, and systematic thematic classification and analysis.

Table 4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Category	Criteria
Inclusion	Scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals (indexed by Scopus, WoS, Pubmed)
	Published between 2013 and 2023
	Focus on high-performance sport management
	Examine developed and/or developing countries
	Written in English
	Provide empirical or theoretical information on sport management models, policies or systems
Exclusion	Non-scientific articles such as editorials, opinion pieces, or policy reports without a peer-review process
	Studies that only address recreational sports, physical education or general fitness
	Articles that do not present data or analysis on sport management structures/models
	Duplicate articles or previous versions of the final publication

Construct validity was strengthened by limiting article selection to studies explicitly addressing one or more core dimensions of high-performance sport management. These dimensions were derived from the SPLISS framework and included governance and organization, financial support, talent identification and development, coaching provision, sport science and medical support, infrastructure, competition systems, and performance monitoring. During data extraction, each article was coded according to these dimensions to ensure conceptual consistency and facilitate systematic comparison between developed and developing country contexts.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

Data were obtained from literature searches in five major scientific databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), SPORTDiscus, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The search process used keyword combinations developed based on the Boolean principle and related academic terminology: ("high-performance sport" OR "elite sport") AND ("sport management model" OR "elite sport policy") AND ("developed countries" OR "developing countries") AND ("comparative analysis" OR "systematic review").

The search was conducted on the title, abstract, and keywords. In addition, backward reference tracking was also conducted to identify important articles that may have been missed in the initial search. All search results were entered into a reference manager (Zotero) to eliminate duplication and facilitate the screening process. This strategy was designed to be inclusive yet specific, ensuring broad coverage of data relevant to the research focus.

Data Selection and Analysis Procedures

The article selection procedure followed the PRISMA flow, consisting of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and final inclusion. In the first stage, all articles found (N=22) were collected and screened for duplication. In the second stage, screening was conducted based on title and abstract by two independent reviewers.

In the third stage, articles were read in full to assess compliance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Successful articles were included in the analysis stage. For data analysis, a thematic synthesis approach was used, extracting key information from each article (author, year, country, method, model indicators and key findings) into a matrix table. The data was then categorized into key themes such as organizational structure, funding strategy, government role, and achievement outcomes. Comparisons were made between developed and developing countries, emphasizing systemic characteristics and critical success factors. The reliability of the process was maintained through interrater reliability and discussion between researchers.

To improve methodological rigor, the screening process was conducted independently by two reviewers. Disagreements regarding article eligibility were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. During the thematic synthesis stage, studies were coded according to predefined analytical categories derived from the SPLISS framework, including governance and organization, financial support, talent identification and development, coaching provision, sport science support, infrastructure, competition systems, and performance monitoring.

The coding process was iterative, allowing refinement of categories and identification of recurring themes across studies. Additionally, all included studies were assessed for methodological relevance and conceptual alignment with the review objectives. Studies were evaluated based on their contribution to understanding governance structures, funding systems, talent development pathways, coaching frameworks, and sport science integration within high-performance sport environments.

Quality Assessment

Quality assessment was conducted to evaluate the methodological relevance and conceptual contribution of the included studies. The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist was adapted as a guiding framework to assess research objectives, methodological clarity, data collection procedures, analytical rigor, and relevance to high-performance sport management. Studies demonstrating sufficient methodological transparency and direct relevance to the review objectives were retained for thematic synthesis.

Figure 1 illustrates the PRISMA screening process. A total of 22 studies met the final inclusion criteria after duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, and full-text eligibility assessment. Records excluded during screening were removed because they did not focus on high-performance sport management, did not compare management systems, or lacked sufficient empirical or conceptual relevance to the review objectives.

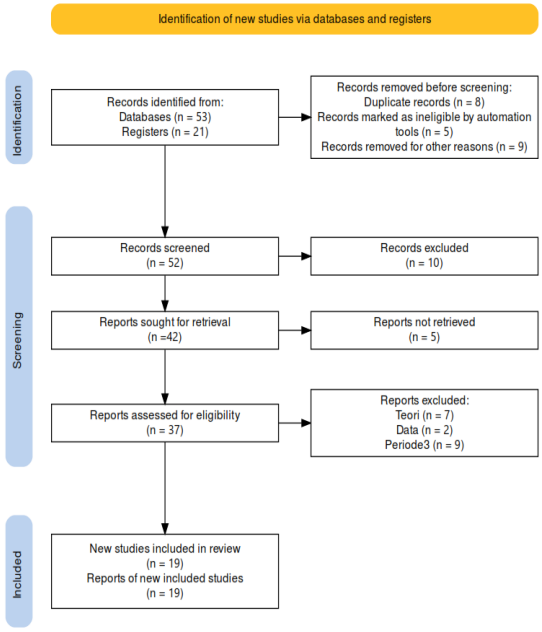

Figure 1 . Selection process using PRISMA Method

Results and Discussions

Result

Characteristics of the Reviewed Studies

The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed prior to synthesis. Overall, the studies demonstrated adequate methodological rigor, with most clearly reporting research objectives, data sources, and analytical procedures. Studies were retained only when they provided sufficient information regarding governance structures, funding mechanisms, athlete development systems, coaching frameworks, or sport science integration relevant to high-performance sport management.

This systematic review analyzed 22 peer-reviewed scholarly articles published between 2013 and 2023, retrieved from reputable academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, SPORTDiscus, and Google Scholar. All selected articles were written in English and focused specifically on high-performance sport management models in either developed or developing countries. The study followed the PRISMA guidelines, involving a multi-phase process of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion based on rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The majority of studies originated from developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands, where sport management systems are well-established and evidence-based. Conversely, studies from developing nations were fewer in number and predominantly discussed structural limitations, resource constraints, and attempts to adapt foreign models without adequate contextualization.

In terms of methodological approaches, most studies employed qualitative designs such as institutional case studies and policy analyses while a smaller proportion incorporated quantitative data to evaluate performance indicators or policy impacts. Thematically, the studies covered key dimensions of high-performance sport systems, including national governance structures, funding mechanisms, talent development pathways, coach education, sport science integration, and performance outcomes.

These studies were then thematically synthesized and categorized to enable cross-national comparisons of sport management strategies, highlighting both commonalities and contextual divergences between developed and developing nations.

Categories of Management Models Identified

To facilitate a clearer understanding of the structural differences in high-performance sport management systems, the identified models from both developed and developing countries have been categorized based on key components. These include management approach, institutional structure, funding mechanisms, talent development systems, infrastructure, human resources, sport science integration, governance, and alternative strategic approaches. The table below presents a comparative overview, summarizing the

distinguishing features and systemic characteristics that define each context. This classification serves as the foundation for further analysis in the discussion section.

Table 5. Categories of High-Performance Sport Management Models in Developed and Developing Countries

Aspect	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Management Approach	Centralized systems (e.g., Australia, UK) or coordinated decentralization (e.g., Netherlands, Canada)	Predominantly centralized with poor inter-agency coordination (e.g., Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria)
Institutional Structure	Integrated framework involving government, elite training institutions, and national sport federations	Fragmented institutional systems with weak coordination between central and regional bodies
Funding Strategy	Long-term, performance-based funding supported by public and private sources (e.g., UK Sport, AIS)	Event-driven or unstable funding, often reliant on government budgets or mega-events (e.g., Brazil)
Talent Identification & Development	Data-driven, systematic programs with scientific support and long-term athlete development models	Largely informal and coach-dependent processes; lack of structured pathways or technology (e.g., Nigeria)
Training Infrastructure	Advanced national training centers with sport science labs and monitoring technologies	Uneven facility distribution, limited to urban centers; poor maintenance and resource constraints
Coaches & Support Staff	Professionally certified coaches supported by multidisciplinary teams (e.g., nutritionists, psychologists)	Limited access to ongoing education and professional development; lack of integrated support services
Sport Science Integration	Strong incorporation of sport science and medicine across training cycles (e.g., AIS, UK Institutes)	Minimal integration; often unavailable outside major cities or limited to certain sports
Policy & Governance	Strategic and transparent policies with performance monitoring and minimal political interference	Governance often subject to political influence, weak accountability, and inconsistent policy direction
Alternative Approaches	Dual emphasis on elite success and social value of sport (e.g., Netherlands)	Community-based or culturally driven models effective in niche sports (e.g., Kenya in distance running)

This table 5 provides a structured comparison of high-performance sport management models across developed and developing countries. It highlights not only the organizational and systemic differences but also the contextual challenges and adaptive strategies found in varying national settings. These insights are critical for informing context-sensitive policy reforms and guiding the development of sustainable elite sport systems in developing nations.

Comparison of Key Elements Between Developed and Developing Countries

To systematically highlight the functional disparities between developed and developing nations in managing high-performance sport, the following table summarizes key elements including funding, talent development, infrastructure, human resources, science integration, and policy governance. These elements reflect both the structural strengths and the systemic challenges that define each context.

The table 6 above illustrates fundamental differences in the management of high-performance sport between developed and developing countries. Developed nations typically implement structured, data-driven systems supported by long-term strategic policies and strong integration of sport science. In contrast, developing countries continue to face significant challenges, including limited funding, uneven infrastructure, weak talent identification systems, and fragmented governance. These disparities highlight that success in elite sport is not solely dependent on individual athlete abilities but also on the functionality and coherence of the broader sport management system. Consequently, efforts to develop high-performance sport management models in developing countries must be contextually adapted and supported by sustainable institutional reforms.

Table 6. Comparison of Key Elements in High-Performance Sport Management Between Developed and Developing Countries

Key Element	Developed Countries	Developing Countries
Funding	Stable, long-term, performance-based funding from government and private sources (e.g., UK Sport, AIS)	Unstable and event-driven funding, mostly reliant on government budgets or mega-events (e.g., Brazil Olympics)
Talent Identification	Scientific, data-driven, and nationwide talent ID systems (e.g., Australia's National Talent Search Program)	Informal, intuition-based scouting with limited scientific tools and access to rural regions
Infrastructure	Advanced national training centers with integrated sport science and rehabilitation facilities	Unequal distribution of facilities, limited technology, and maintenance issues in rural areas
Coaching	Certified, continuously trained coaches working in multidisciplinary teams	Limited access to certification, professional development, and modern coaching tools
Support Staff	Full teams including physiotherapists, psychologists, nutritionists, and analysts supporting elite athletes	Scarce interdisciplinary support; roles often unfilled or under-resourced
Sport Science Integration	Fully integrated in training cycles monitoring, testing, injury prevention, performance analysis	Limited or absent integration; available only in select sports or major cities
Governance and Policy	Transparent, strategic policies with long-term visions, independent sport agencies, and monitoring systems	Fragmented governance, political interference, poor accountability, and short-term policy goals
Performance Monitoring	Systematic tracking of athlete progress, centralized databases, use of analytics for decision-making	Rarely conducted; lacks centralized systems and reliable data collection
Post-event Sustainability	Long-term legacy planning embedded in sport policy and infrastructure use (e.g., UK after 2012 Olympics)	Weak or absent legacy planning; underutilized infrastructure post-event (e.g., Brazil after 2016 Olympics)

Specific Findings Related to Model Successes and Failures

The review identified specific success factors and failure points in the implementation of high-performance sport management models across different national contexts. The table below summarizes these findings, highlighting the institutional strategies that have led to notable achievements as well as the recurring challenges that have undermined performance outcomes. These insights are instrumental for understanding what works, what fails, and why, within both developed and developing country settings.

Table 7. Specific Findings Related to the Successes and Failures of High-Performance Sport Management Models

Country	Success Factors	Failure Factors	Key Lessons Learned
Australia	Centralized system (AIS), integration of sport science, long-term funding and policy continuity		Government-supported and science-based systems enhance sustainable elite sport success.
United Kingdom	Performance-based funding (UK Sport), strict evaluation, strong coach development and athlete support systems		Merit-based investment and performance monitoring yield consistent international success.
Canada	Data-driven approach (Own the Podium), integrated support teams (ISTs), evidence-based planning		Collaborative and athlete-centered planning improves efficiency and outcomes.
Netherlands	Balanced focus on elite and social sport, grassroots club development, academic integration		Combining high performance with societal values contributes to holistic system sustainability.

Country	Success Factors	Failure Factors	Key Lessons Learned
Brazil	Large-scale investment for Olympics, centralized system	Lack of legacy planning, underutilized facilities post-2016, no sustained development strategy	Mega-event success is temporary without post-event strategies or institutional continuity.
South Africa	Strong performance in selected sports (rugby, cricket)	Uneven funding, weak interdisciplinary integration, limited support for Olympic sports	Selective investment leads to imbalance; inclusive strategies are needed for broader international competitiveness.
Indonesia	Emerging elite talent from regional clubs	Poor national coordination, inconsistent talent development, inequality in coaching and infrastructure	Decentralization without strategic alignment limits system integration and scalability.
Nigeria	Natural athletic potential and diaspora athlete success	Inadequate coach education, minimal sport science integration, political interference in federations	Institutional reform and coach development are critical to improving elite sport performance.
Kenya	World-class success in long-distance running; strong community and cultural support	Limited national infrastructure, lack of diversified elite sport development	Low-cost, community-based models can be effective for specific sports, but broader national support is required.

Discussions

Interpretation of Main Findings

The results of this systematic review reveal significant structural disparities in high-performance sport management between developed and developing countries. Developed nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada employ centralized, evidence-based, and performance-driven management systems supported by long-term policies and robust sport science integration. These countries have established comprehensive frameworks including data-driven talent identification, elite training centers with scientific facilities, and multidisciplinary support teams. Conversely, developing countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, and Nigeria often rely on fragmented systems, informal talent scouting, inconsistent funding, and weak institutional coordination. Many of these nations attempt to adopt models from developed countries without adapting them to local contexts, resulting in ineffective implementation. This divergence highlights that success in elite sports is not solely dependent on athlete talent but on the systemic capacity to sustain structured, science-supported, and policy-driven management. Consequently, any effort to improve sport performance in developing countries must go beyond emulating foreign models and instead focus on building institutional capacity and governance structures tailored to local realities. The findings underscore the importance of contextually appropriate approaches in designing effective high-performance sport management systems (Bayle, 2024; Thompson et al., 2023).

Contextual Factors Influencing Management Models

The ability of a country to successfully implement high-performance sport management models is strongly influenced by its sociopolitical and economic context. Developed countries benefit from stable governance, long-term national sports strategies, and well-coordinated institutions. These environments enable the development and sustainability of elite sport programs supported by transparent funding mechanisms and continuous performance monitoring. In contrast, developing countries often experience political interference in sport governance, short-term policy cycles, and fragmented institutional arrangements. For instance, Brazil's Olympic investment strategy lacked post-event planning and legacy management, while Indonesia struggles with coordination between national and regional agencies. Moreover, the reliance on state budgets in the absence of diversified funding sources exacerbates the vulnerability of elite sport systems in these nations. The uneven distribution of infrastructure and limited access to sport science also reflect broader developmental disparities. These contextual constraints suggest that transferring models from developed countries without proper adaptation may be impractical. Instead, policies must be rooted in the existing capacities and constraints of each country. Effective high-performance sport systems require a clear alignment between strategic goals and institutional capabilities, which are deeply embedded in a country's broader developmental ecosystem (Green & Houlihan, 2005; Houlihan & Green, 2009; Houlihan & Zheng, 2015).

Practical Implications for Developing Countries

The findings of this review offer several practical insights for policymakers and sport managers in developing countries. First, rather than replicating the sophisticated models of developed nations, developing countries

should selectively adopt core principles such as structured talent development, performance monitoring, and integration of sport science tailored to their unique contexts. For example, Kenya's success in long-distance running illustrates how culturally embedded, community-supported, and cost-effective models can yield international success in specific disciplines. Developing countries can also leverage partnerships with universities, NGOs, and the private sector to create regional training hubs and sport science initiatives. Additionally, establishing low-cost, scalable athlete tracking systems and improving coaching certifications are feasible entry points for institutional reform. National policies should emphasize long-term vision, inter-agency collaboration, and accountability mechanisms. Strategic investment in a few prioritized sports disciplines with strong competitive potential can also optimize limited resources. Most importantly, policymakers must recognize that sustainable high-performance systems require coordinated governance, consistent funding, and professionalized sport administration. Thus, meaningful reform must begin with context-aware planning and incremental capacity building, rather than wholesale adoption of external models.

Theoretical Contributions to Sport Management Literature

This review makes a significant theoretical contribution by integrating multiple frameworks SPLISS, Resource-Based View (RBV), and Institutional Theory to analyze high-performance sport management systems across countries. The SPLISS model provides a structured lens to evaluate key policy pillars such as funding, coaching, and talent development. The RBV framework highlights how nations convert tangible and intangible resources into competitive advantage, particularly relevant for resource-constrained contexts. Institutional Theory complements these perspectives by examining the formal and informal structures that influence policy continuity and governance. Together, these models underscore the complexity of elite sport systems and caution against oversimplified policy transfers. This study reinforces the need for a "context-based" approach in cross-national sport policy analysis, wherein local norms, cultural practices, and institutional maturity significantly shape implementation outcomes. Moreover, it expands theoretical discourse on policy borrowing by demonstrating that policy success is not solely dependent on model design but on institutional alignment and systemic adaptability. By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, this review advances a more holistic understanding of how elite sport performance is influenced by governance ecosystems, strategic resource use, and organizational capacity.

Study Limitations

Despite its comprehensive scope, this review faces several limitations that warrant acknowledgment. First, the body of literature on high-performance sport management is disproportionately concentrated in developed countries. As a result, empirical studies from developing nations remain underrepresented, often descriptive in nature and lacking in rigorous outcome evaluation. Second, the reliance on English-language, peer-reviewed publications may have excluded relevant sources from non-English-speaking or grey literature domains, particularly from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Third, most included studies employed qualitative methodologies, limiting the availability of longitudinal or statistical data to assess long-term policy impacts. Fourth, national contexts vary widely within the "developing country" classification, meaning that generalizations may oversimplify the diversity of sport governance systems. Lastly, although the PRISMA framework enhances methodological transparency, subjective judgments in study selection and thematic synthesis may introduce bias. Future reviews could address these gaps by incorporating multilingual sources, expanding geographical coverage, and applying mixed-methods designs. Overall, while the present review offers valuable insights, its findings should be interpreted within the constraints of the available evidence and the evolving nature of global sport policy research.

Recommendations for Future Research

To strengthen the empirical base of high-performance sport management, future research should explore more diverse and in-depth case studies, particularly within developing country contexts. Longitudinal studies that track policy implementation over time are crucial to understanding the sustainability and outcomes of elite sport systems. Mixed-methods approaches that combine qualitative interviews with quantitative performance indicators would offer a more comprehensive assessment of institutional effectiveness. Additionally, comparative research should examine countries that have successfully transitioned from low to high-performance systems, identifying critical success factors and scalable innovations. For instance, Kenya's targeted success in athletics or South Africa's selective development in rugby and cricket can offer useful models for cross-sector learning. Future studies should also analyze the role of non-state actors such as private sector sponsors, international federations, and educational institutions in shaping national sport policies. Moreover, developing a global performance benchmarking tool for sport systems could facilitate more standardized cross-country evaluations. Finally, research agendas must prioritize context-sensitive policy design, ensuring that theoretical models are tested and refined in real-world governance environments.

Such efforts will help bridge the gap between sport management theory and its practical application across diverse sociopolitical landscapes.

Conclusions

This systematic review reveals substantial structural disparities in high-performance sport management between developed and developing countries. Developed nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada implement centralized, data-driven, and policy-supported sport systems with strong integration of sports science and professional governance. These systems are characterized by long-term strategic planning, systematic talent identification, elite training facilities, and multidisciplinary support teams. In contrast, developing countries like Brazil, Indonesia, and Nigeria often operate under fragmented systems, ad hoc funding mechanisms, informal talent development processes, and limited institutional coordination. These findings highlight that elite sport success is not solely determined by individual athletic talent but by the coherence and sustainability of the national sport management ecosystem. From a practical standpoint, the study underscores the importance of context-sensitive adaptations for developing nations. Rather than directly replicating sophisticated models from developed countries, policymakers in developing contexts should selectively adopt core principles such as structured athlete development, performance monitoring, and scientific integration tailored to local resources and institutional capacities. Kenya's success in distance running, supported by community-based and low-cost strategies, exemplifies how locally adapted approaches can yield world-class results. Effective reform must begin with strengthening coaching qualifications, establishing functional regional training hubs, and promoting inter-agency collaboration under a unified national vision. Theoretically, this study contributes to the field by integrating three analytical frameworks: the SPLISS model, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Institutional Theory. The SPLISS model provides a comprehensive assessment of policy pillars necessary for sporting success, RBV emphasizes the strategic utilization of resources, and Institutional Theory explains the influence of formal structures and sociopolitical norms on policy implementation. Collectively, these perspectives offer a more holistic understanding of how elite sport systems function across different national contexts and reinforce the need for policy alignment with institutional realities. Nonetheless, the study is not without limitations. The literature remains disproportionately focused on developed countries, with relatively limited empirical data from developing contexts. Furthermore, the reliance on English-language peer-reviewed publications may exclude valuable regional insights. Most studies reviewed also lack longitudinal data or outcome evaluations. Future research should address these gaps by conducting in-depth, mixed-methods studies in developing nations, examining policy implementation over time, and exploring the role of non-state actors in shaping sport systems. In sum, building effective high-performance sport systems requires more than borrowing successful models it demands critical adaptation, institutional development, and sustained strategic commitment.

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