
Leading Sports Organisations: Governance, Commercial Strategy and Athlete Performance Course

21 – 25 June 2027
Vienna





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Programme Summary

Leading sports organisations through governance, commercial strategy and athlete performance is a one-week training course for chief executives, directors and board members of sports bodies at advanced level, culminating in a strategic leadership plan for their federation, club or league. Sports organisations are expected to win, grow revenue and protect integrity at once, often with volunteer boards and public funding. The approach moves from governance and strategy to commercial growth, high-performance systems, athlete welfare and change. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in sports leadership.

The Business Case

Many federations and clubs still depend on a few funding sources, informal decision-making and short-term results. Governance gaps invite integrity crises, commercial assets such as media rights and fan data remain underused, and performance programmes compete with welfare duties for the same resources. Leaders who align governance, revenue and performance build organisations that keep public trust and sustain success beyond one competition cycle.

- Commercial Revenue Diversity: Grows as sponsorship, media, ticketing and fan engagement are managed as one portfolio.
- Governance and Integrity Incidents: Reduce as board roles, ethics and safeguarding controls are formalised.
- Performance Pathway Results: Improve as high-performance investment is prioritised against clear targets.

Principles and Evidence Base

- IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance: Its principles on structures, integrity, transparency and athlete involvement frame the governance review in Session 1.
- Balanced Scorecard: Linking strategic objectives to financial, stakeholder, process and capability measures structures federation and club planning in Session 2.
- World Anti-Doping Code: Its integrity requirements inform the athlete welfare and integrity controls in Session 4.



Intended Participants

- Executives who lead sports federations, clubs, leagues or event organisations.
- Board members accountable for governance, ethics and long-term strategy in sport.
- Leaders who negotiate sponsorship, media and venue agreements.
- Directors who oversee high-performance programmes and athlete welfare.
- Officials who allocate public funding to sport and assess its returns.

The programme serves national federations, professional clubs and leagues, sports ministries and major event organisers.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate their organisation's governance against recognised good governance principles for sport.
2. Participants will be able to construct a strategic plan with measurable objectives using the Balanced Scorecard.
3. Participants will be able to design a commercial strategy covering sponsorship, media rights, ticketing and fan engagement.
4. Participants will be able to diagnose strengths and gaps in a high-performance system.
5. Participants will be able to justify athlete welfare, safeguarding and integrity controls.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise stakeholder and change actions for their organisation.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Sport Governance and Integrity

Is the organisation governed in a way that earns trust and enables decisions?

- IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance
- Board Composition, Roles and Independent Directors
- Statutes, Elections and Member Accountability
- Ethics Codes, Conflicts of Interest and Integrity Units
- Transparency, Financial Reporting and Audit in Sport

Day 2: Strategic Planning for Federations and Clubs

Where should the organisation focus over the next strategic cycle?

- Sports Environment Analysis: Participation, Competition and Funding Trends
- Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities for Sport Bodies
- Balanced Scorecard Objectives and Key Performance Indicators
- Club Licensing, Professionalisation and Operating Models
- Stakeholder Mapping: Government, Members, Fans and Partners



Day 3: Commercial Strategy in Sport

How can sports organisations grow and diversify revenue?

- Sponsorship Packaging, Activation and Evaluation
- Media Rights, Broadcasting and Digital Content Strategy
- Ticketing, Pricing and Matchday Experience
- Fan Engagement, Membership and Data Use
- Sports Events and Venue Commercial Models

Day 4: High-Performance Systems and Athlete Welfare

How does leadership build sustained performance while protecting athletes?

- High-Performance System Design and Talent Pathways
- Coaching Structures, Sport Science and Performance Data
- Athlete Welfare, Mental Health and Career Transition
- Safeguarding Policies and Reporting Mechanisms
- World Anti-Doping Code Duties and Integrity Education

Day 5: Applying Sports Leadership to Organisational Change

Is the strategic leadership plan ready for the board and partners?

- Leading Change and Culture in Sports Organisations
- Testing the Day 2 Scorecard Against Day 1 Governance Findings
- Funding the Day 4 Performance Priorities from Day 3 Revenue
- Board and Government Briefing on the Strategic Case
- Strategic Leadership Plan Completion

Methodology

The programme uses case analysis of federations, professional clubs and major events that reformed governance, grew revenue or rebuilt performance programmes. Each session pairs a short briefing with group work applied to participants' own organisations and peer challenge from leaders of other sports.

- Suggested activity: Assessing a federation's statutes against good governance principles.
- Suggested activity: Building a sponsorship and media rights portfolio for a professional league.
- Suggested activity: Reviewing a talent pathway against welfare and safeguarding duties.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a strategic leadership plan for their federation, club or league. It contains a governance improvement agenda, a scorecard of objectives, a commercial growth plan, high-performance and welfare priorities and a change and stakeholder roadmap for board approval.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is sports leadership training suitable for board members from outside sport?

Yes. It is set at advanced level for executives and board members and assumes leadership experience; sport-specific frameworks are introduced before they are applied.

Which principles does the leading sports organisations course rest on?

It rests on the IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance, the Balanced Scorecard and the World Anti-Doping Code.

How is the strategic leadership plan from sports leadership training used at work?

You can use it to brief your board, secure partner and government support and guide the next strategic cycle.