

National Lottery

20 years of funding elite sport

The National Lottery was introduced in 1994 and in 1997 it began to be used to fund elite sport in the UK. The funding of elite athletes enabled larger numbers to devote themselves full time to achieving their sporting goals, as well as receive specialist treatment for injuries and access the best coaches and training facilities

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1996

Great Britain and Northern Ireland finishes 36th in the medal table at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics with 15 medals.

2000

British athletes win 28 medals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, finishing tenth in the Olympic medal table and second in the Paralympic medal table.

2002

The Manchester Aquatics Centre opens in time for the Commonwealth Games. This is one of thousands of Lottery-funded sports facilities that have benefited elite athletes, providing world-class facilities to train in and develop their talents to the full.

1997

National Lottery funding of elite sport begins. UK Sport is founded with a focus purely on elite sport.

2001

Olympic gymnast and future world champion Beth Tweddle receives World Class funding, enabling her to focus 100% on her training.

2005

Following another tenth position in the Olympic medal table and second in the Paralympic medal table at Athens 2004, London wins the right to host the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012.

2009

Lottery funding allows Manchester to host the Track Cycling World Cup, where Victoria Pendleton wins gold in the women's sprint event. This was part of UK Sport's major events programme, funded by £27 million of Lottery money.

2006

Tom Daley gains World Class funding, enabling him to develop his talents at world and Olympic levels.

2011

GB hockey players receive funding for top-level coaches, physiotherapists, psychologists and nutritionists to develop their elite performance levels in the run up to London 2012, where they win a bronze medal.

2012

Team GB wins 65 medals at London 2012 (18 more than Beijing in 2008) and comes third in the Olympic medal table. UK Sport reports that since Lottery funding began, British athletes have won 633 Olympic and Paralympic medals, and 4,600 athletes have benefited from Lottery support.

2013–17

Lottery funding continues to support elite athletes as they prepare for major games events, including Rio 2016, e.g. via a world-class preparation camp in Belo Horizonte. In the 4-year cycle from 2013–17, Lottery funding will finance elite performer development to the tune of £337 million via the World Class Programme. UK Sport (via Lottery funding) is also continuing its financing of the Gold Event Series for the decade from 2013. One of the first events to benefit from such funding will be the World Athletics Championships in the Olympic Stadium in 2017.

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