

The East German Sport Miracle

The project

This research project went back to the 'template' behind all modern day advanced state's elite sport systems by looking behind the 'miracle' of East Germany. Based on original Stasi and Communist Party archival sources (in German), the team evaluate the significant factors behind the GDR's rise to sporting supremacy.

What did the research set out to achieve?

- To show how the elite sport development in most modern states - including the UK, Canada, Australia, etc. - is in part based upon the East German model
- To put forward the idea that most successful states in elite sport share similar characteristics despite varying cultural, historical and political backgrounds (apart from the USA).

What impact will it have on the Olympics, sports industry and society?

This research will into feed in to debates about the ingredients needed for international elite sport success, especially around the time of the 2012 Olympics. East Germany was a forerunner in the use of sport for political means, something that has been on the increase among a wide variety of countries in the past 30 years. The motivation for East Germany politicising sport in order to gain international legitimacy and prestige is similar to those countries seeking to promote their image via elite sport success and the staging of sports mega-events.

The research team

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