

School of Human Kinetics  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
University of Ottawa

*EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN SPORTS ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT*



MEMOS XXV  
2022-2023

“Announcing High Quality Services for Elite Athletes in Olympic Sports Center in Riga”

Inga Zobena

Tutored by Professor Luc Vandeputte  
Faculty of Motricity Sciences  
Université Libre de Bruxelles



## **Acknowledgements**

Participating in the MEMOS program was initially a big challenge for me, and by experiencing it, I have gained invaluable knowledge and experience on how to look at what is happening around me.

I am very grateful to the general secretary of the Latvian Olympic Committee, Kārlis Lejnicks, for offering me the opportunity and support to participate in the program as a representative of Latvia. Thank you for believing in me!

Thanks to the International Olympic Committee and Olympic Solidarity for the excellent MEMOS program and the added value the MEMOS network offers. The contacts and friends I made during the program are my benefit for whole life.

I wouldn't be able to complete the program and do this research if I didn't have the data to analyze. Many thanks to everyone who agreed to find time for an interview and to participate in the survey.

The biggest thanks to my fantastic tutor, Luc Vandeputte, who helped me see the main point and achieve what I set out to do during the project. Thank you for the advice not only about project, but also for an innovative perspective on managing the company in general - I have changed my thinking. I am incredibly lucky I met you!

Thanks also to my family and colleagues for their patience and support during my studies. I couldn't do it without you!

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## **Introduction**

Olympic Sports Center (OSC) is indoor multi-functional sports facility, located in Riga – capital city of Latvia. OSC indoor area is more than 24000 square meters. It includes 50 m swimming pool, 2 small swimming pools suitable for swimming lessons from age 6 months, gym, beach volley hall, multifunctional hall, indoor football hall, 4 halls for different kinds of sports (athletics, handball, floorball, tennis, badminton), annex with offices of sports federations.

By law OSC is full profit organization. OSC 100% shareholder is Latvian Olympic Committee. OSC has no financial support from state or municipality (an exception was support during Covid-19 restrictions). OSC annual turnover is close to three million euro. Average 50% from turnover is from swimming pools department, which is most rentable part of center. OSC main clientage is private (amateur groups and individuals). A small part of customers are high level athletes.

Although the OSC as a full-profit organization has the primary objective of operating at a break-even or profit, it must also contribute to the NOC's primary goal - to provide athletes preparation for Olympic games. To cope with this goal OSC must increase the proportion of professional athletes among OSC clients. In august 2022 from more than 150 athletes only 30 physical preparation trainings were carried out in OSC.

Research aim is to find out why high-performance athletes choose other training places then OSC and what should OSC improve.

Research questions:

- What kind of specific services do other similar centers have? What is their competitive advantage?
- What is the funding structure of similar centers?
- Which are the ideal needs that a training place should provide in order to be recognized as comfortable and be a preferred place?
- Who are OSC's main competitors? Why are they chosen?
- What are the main shortcomings in OSC offerings and requirements to be recognized as one of the best?

- Is it possible to receive additional funding from NOC or state for implementation of additional services for athletes?
- Why are athletes allowed to choose training place by themselves?

The project is related to several management practice areas – marketing, strategic planning, finance management.

So far OSC's marketing activities have not been focused on attracting professional athletes. After the development of the project, it is expected that marketing tools will be identified, the application of which could increase the number of clients - high-level athletes.

Attracting high-level athletes and increasing their number in the long term includes strategic planning - many of the expected improvements that would be necessary to implement for attracting athletes are financially extensive and time-consuming, so their implementation is expected in the strategic plan.

As a result of a successful research is expected to obtain a list of recommendations what should OSC change to become more attractive to high-level athletes and to get competitive advantage comparing to other training places and action plan to implement these recommendations.

## **Review of existing knowledge**

Although achievements in high-level sport are important for every country, the training facilities provided, the training circumstances, the additional services and the way it all is financed differ drastically from place to place.

In Latvia, the main legal act that regulates sports is the Sports Law. It determines: “The Olympic movement in the country is managed and coordinated by a sports organization - the Latvian Olympic Committee.”<sup>1</sup> The "Latvian Olympic Committee", cooperating with the state, local government and its own financial resources, implements the preparation of athletes for the Olympic Games. The law determines the procedure for allocating state financial resources to sports. Although the Latvian Olympic Committee is designated as the main organization in ensuring the preparation of Olympic athletes, there are several other organizations that are directly involved in it. Latvian Olympic Union is an organization that is funded with the aim of supporting the preparation of Latvia's best athletes for the Olympic Games. It is responsible for providing the necessary financial, methodological and medical support for the competition process for Olympic athletes. Its shareholders are Latvian Olympic Committee (60%), Latvian Ministry of Education and Science (29%) and Latvian Academy of Sport Education (11%). Latvian Sports Federation Council coordinates the activity of recognized sports federations in Latvia and represents and implements their common. This organization is also involved in the distribution of funding to sports federations, which are further involved in providing training processes for athletes. All the above-mentioned organizations are involved in providing high-level training facilities for athletes, but their mutual cooperation is not always successful and aimed at achieving the best final result.

In the law it is defined that children's and youth sports are primarily financed from state funds. So the success in highest-level sport is not the major states priority, but healthy and physically active society is.

Latvia's sports policy is determined by the Sports Policy Guidelines for 2022-2027, which have been approved 31.05.2022. One of the directions of action defined in this document is the development of sports infrastructure. In the guidelines, the Olympic Sports Center is defined as one of the nine regional Olympic centers of the country. One of the action directions of sports policy is the development of sports

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<sup>1</sup>Latvian Saeima, Sports Law, Article 11, Part 1

infrastructure, where one of the tasks is defined: “Financially support the sports base of national importance, including gradually also maintenance of regional Olympic centers (by awarding grants from the state budget) in accordance with the revised database and activities of sports infrastructure objects assessment, promoting the sustainability and economic of the facilities reasonable action in developing a medium-term support plan. Strengthen the legal status of regional Olympic centers and determine the long-term goals of their activities.”<sup>2</sup> The possible support from the state budget for regional Olympic centers is planned starting from 2023. There was no such support before. Unfortunately, the total amount of budgeted grants for all regional Olympic centers is 100,000 euros per year. This is an average of 11,000 for each center, which is a small amount compared to the total expenses of the center. Unlike the Olympic Sports Center, the other eight regional Olympic centers are partially owned by municipalities. Therefore, considerable municipal funding is allocated to the maintenance of these centers. The Olympic sports center does not receive municipal funding. The only support that is given annually for specific purposes is from the Latvian Olympic Committee. For example, in 2022, funding was allocated for the repair of the fitness hall and replacement of equipment as well as for the replacement of equipment in the office building. The total funding received amounts to 200,000 euros, which is the largest support received from the Latvian Olympic Committee so far. The total expenses foreseen in the 2022 budget of the Latvian Olympic Committee are 12.3 million euros, so the support for the center is 1.6% of its budget. Taking into account the small funding and the need for the center to earn the remaining funds to cover expenses from the provision of services, it cannot focus only on applying services to the needs of high-level athletes, and they are most often not fully met. So far, no studies have been conducted in Latvia to find out the most appropriate set of necessary services for athletes, so that their needs are met and they can focus on training to achieve the highest results.

For a long time, researchers have tried to clarify the main prerequisites for a country's successful participation in top-level sports. An international group of researchers conducted a project that identified nine functions (pillars) of sports policy factors influencing international success.<sup>3</sup> It is called SPLISS 9 Pillar Model. The model is based on an 40 years extensive literature review, a benchmark in more than

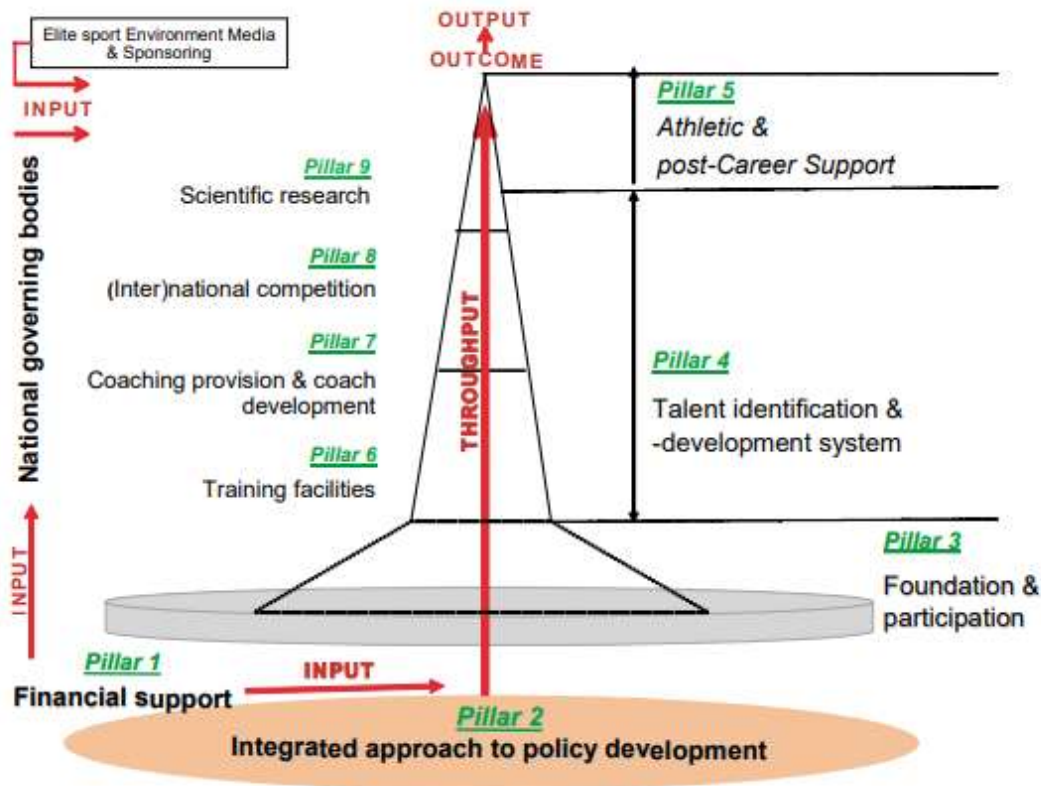
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<sup>2</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia, Sports Policy Guidelines for 2022-2027, P.25

<sup>3</sup> Veerle De Bosscher , Paul De Knop , Maarten Van Bottenburg & Simon Shibli (2006) A Conceptual Framework for Analysing Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 6:2, 185-215, DOI: 10.1080/16184740600955087

20 nations including surveys with athletes, coaches and performance directors.<sup>4</sup> The model is shown in the Figure 1.

*Figure 1 The nine pillars of sports policy factors influencing international success<sup>5</sup>*



In the model training facilities are defined as a separate pillar (Nr. 6). They play a vital role, but only together with the other 8 pillars will ensure the development, performance and satisfaction of the most successful athlete. Although the Olympic Sports Center is directly involved only in pillar 6, cooperation with organizations is important so that the athlete is provided with everything listed in the figure above. In addition, without additional support, the center cannot provide all the needs of training facilities. Investments in four other pillars in the throughput stage are essential for the development of elite athletes: training facilities (pillar 6), the provision and development of coaches (pillar 7), national and

<sup>4</sup> The SPLISS 9 Pillar model, Retrieved from: <https://spliss.research.vub.be/en/about-spliss>

<sup>5</sup> Veerle De Bosscher , Paul De Knop , Maarten Van Bottenburg & Simon Shibli (2006) A Conceptual Framework for Analysing Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success, European Sport Management Quarterly, 6:2, 185-215, DOI: 10.1080/16184740600955087



international competition structures (pillar 8), and, scientific research and sports medicine support (pillar 9).<sup>6</sup>

It is important to find out what is high-level athlete expectations of services of training facilities he would like to receive.

A study has been conducted in Switzerland that has identified different elements of high standards Training Environment. The results of the study are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1 Key dimensions and main elements of a Training Environment (TE)<sup>7</sup>*

<b>Physical infrastructure</b>
The TE provides appropriate access to facilities and equipment of sufficient quality and quantity (for a specific sport).
The TE offers appropriate access to well-prepared and state of the art competition equipment.
The TE offers appropriate solutions to collate, analyse and feedback key data from training and competition.
The TE offers access to appropriate dining and accommodation facilities.
The TE offers access to appropriate lounges and resting areas (i.e. living rooms for athletes and coaches).
If not all infrastructure elements are available in a “one-stop shopping” set up, appropriate solutions are offered to manage the daily logistics between different venues.
The TE is, in general, easily accessible via private and public transportation.
<b>Quality of the daily training process</b>
The coaches in the TE are highly knowledgeable and have a lot of technical competence.
The different coaches at the TE work as a performance focused and performance driven team.
During the daily training, athletes have enough “training partners” to push themselves.

<sup>6</sup> Veerle De Bosscher , Paul De Knop , Maarten Van Bottenburg & Simon Shibli (2006) A Conceptual Framework for Analysing Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success, European Sport Management Quarterly, 6:2, 185-215, DOI: 10.1080/16184740600955087

<sup>7</sup> Sven S. Andersen, Barrie Houlihan and Lars Tore Longlan , Managing Elite Sport Systems Research and practice, P. 132

The TE is so attractive that athletes from other countries and sport systems (would like to) visit it to experience training there.
In the TE, an effective, performance focused knowledge management and knowledge development system (and culture) is put in place. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Support services</b>
The TE offers appropriate, balanced and targeted access to state of the art recovery interventions and modalities.
The TE offers appropriate, balanced and targeted access to core, state of the art sport science support services.
The TE offers fast access to efficient solutions in case of medical emergency.
The sport science and sport medical support services are effectively integrated into the daily training process.
The technical quality of all sport medicine and sport science support services offered in the TE, as well as the competence of the respective service personnel, is very high and continuously developed.
The TE offers access to research and development opportunities for athletes, coaches and the service staff to continuously develop training practices as well as sport medicine and sport science support services.
The TE offers access to an effective lifestyle support programme for athletes and coaches.
The TE offers access to sufficient opportunities to realize athletes' (and coaches') dual career plans.
The organisation of and access to all support services offered in the TE are effectively and efficiently managed.
Newcomers in the TE run through an effective induction process that makes it easy for them to "find their feet".
In the TE an effective, performance-focused knowledge management and knowledge development system (and culture) is put in place.
<b>Atmosphere and culture</b>
Nationally and internationally, a TE has an image among athletes, coaches and managers as one of the "places to be" to become successful in a specific sport.

In the TE there is a clear performance mentality and winning mindset among athletes, coaches, managers and the whole service team.
Thanks to the personality and leadership of the coaching team, the daily training is well supervised and carried out in a way that is motivating for the athletes.
In general, athletes, coaches, sport managers and the whole service team enjoy being in the TE.
In the TE an effective, performance-focused knowledge management and knowledge development system (and culture) is put in place.
<b>Strategic positioning, development and security</b>
The TE and its long term development are anchored and represented in the strategic planning of the specific sport federation/national governing body (NGB), providing the TE a certain (financial) planning security.
The TE has a clear position in the athlete development pathway. It is clear what developmental stages athletes have to fulfil before they can start training at the TE and which steps they will follow after leaving it.
Access to the TE, meaning the selection of athletes who train at a TE, as well as the recruitment of coaches and service staff who work there, is transparent, performance-focused and well communicated.
When athletes, coaches and service staff members leave the TE, they go through an effective exit process in order to manage their experience and knowledge for the further development and improvement of the TE.
The TE is positioned in the national development strategy of a specific sport federation's performance plan so that athletes from the region and from other national TEs would like to, and can, visit it regularly to experience training there.

The focus of the Olympic Sports Center is on providing the elements of the first dimension, but the elements considered in the other dimensions are also very important for the attraction of the athlete, so cooperation with the Latvian Olympic Committee in researching the needs of athletes and fulfilling them is crucial. Other countries are better developed in this respect.

While researching the existing experience, the author got acquainted with more books than mentioned about the issues related to the training environment, but it was concluded that it is not relevant to the specifics of the study.

An Association of Sport Performance Centers has been founded with the goal to exchange experiences and information. 96 Sports Centers from all continents are member of this association. The association does not have any members from the Baltic states. The closest to Latvia are from Finland, Russia and Germany. Mostly all these centers are offering physical infrastructure as well as many support services. Active participation in such an international association is an advantage that allows you to learn from the best experience by implementing it in your daily activities, thereby improving the set of services offered and subsequently the common daily conditions of athletes. Analyzing the clientage of the centers participating in the association, it can be seen that mostly all of them are focused on elite, Olympic and national high-level athletes, and amateurs or individual visitors cannot receive the center's services. Although the audience and range of services offered by the Olympic Sports Center is different from the majority of the association's members, the center's membership in this organization should also be considered. It fulfills the membership conditions and the membership costs are also reasonable. It is not possible to conclude from the publicly available information about the legal form of the sports centers involved in the association, but it is evident that their operation is mostly provided with state or municipality financial support.

The most important differences in the role of the state in the structure of the high-level sport organizations and system in different countries have been studied and described: For instance, France has a state dominated system, but that system is increasingly dependent upon cooperation with more autonomous regional and local public and private organizations. The elite sport systems in the UK, Australia and New Zealand are state-led, but in close partnership with national sport federations, universities and sport institutes. In contrast, in the Nordic countries elite sport, and indeed all sport, is the prerogative of relatively autonomous voluntary sport federations which dominate policy-making and the organization of the elite sport system. The state is a provider of resources, particularly finance, but keeps an arm's length distance from strategic and day to day decision-making.<sup>8</sup> Different sports organization structures can be observed in the United States: government-operated organizations, community-owned entities, non-profits, sole proprietorships, partnerships, subchapter S corporations,

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<sup>8</sup> Sven S. Andersen, Barrie Houlihan and Lars Tore Longlan , *Managing Elite Sport Systems Research and practice* , P. 4

limited liability corporations or limited liability partnerships, and subchapter C corporations.<sup>9</sup> Of the four centers that are members of the Association of Sport Performance Centers, two are owned by the US Olympic Committee, one is municipal and one is private. The last three are non-commercial in nature and receive funding annually from the Olympic Committee, donations or other sources.

Among the centers membering in the Association of Sport Performance Centers, one of the most similar to the Olympic Sports Center is the Centre National Sportif et Culturel d'Coque located in Luxemburg. Although created and owned by the state, it offers both services to high-level athletes and sports-related services to a wide range of individuals. In the further project development, an in-depth study of this center will be carried out with the aim of conducting a partial benchmarking of the experience of this center.

In general, it can be concluded that the organizations responsible for training high-level athletes in Latvia should pay much more attention to identifying and improving the main elements and factors of the overall training environment. This should be done in closer cooperation of all involved organizations, and based more on the experience and research of other countries, being aware and working to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to the provision of the training environment.

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew T. Brown, Daniel A. Rascher, Mark S. Nagel, Chad D. McEvoy Financial Management in the Sport Industry Brown, M. et al. (2021) Financial Management in the Sport Industry. 3rd edn. Taylor and Francis. Available at: <https://www.perlego.com/book/2194330/financial-management-in-the-sport-industry-pdf> (Accessed: 13 November 2022).

## **Justification and explanation of data collection techniques**

To investigate the causes of the problem with maximum quality and to answer the raised questions, several research and data collection methods have been used in the work.

In order to find out the experience of similar centers in solving the researched question, the Centre National Sportif et Culturel d'Coque located in Luxemburg and X Bionic Sphere center in Slovakia will be studied. The branch learning method has been chosen for this study. Using branch learning method, it has been studied how high-level athletes are attracted to this center, how the training process and the center itself are financed. By concluding the most important differences, it is possible to learn and make assumptions that should be done differently in Latvia in order to learn from this experience. The assumptions and conclusions made are used in next stages of the research.

Many parties are involved in ensuring the training process of high-level athletes – Latvian Olympic Committee, the Ministry responsible for sports, the municipality, the training place and the athletes themselves. In order to deeply clarify the opinion of each party on the researched issue and vision for its solution and future development, interviews have been chosen as the most appropriate research method. When creating interview questions, the knowledge gained from the branch learning from the sports center in Luxembourg is used. The use of the interview method allows obtaining the most detailed information and the opinion of all stakeholders, which is very important for conducting further research and drawing common conclusions. For interview are selected: The general secretary of the NOC, the representative of the Ministry of Education and Science, who is responsible for sports issues and four high-level athletes representing both individual sports and teams and those who base training location is Olympic Sports Center and who are training somewhere else and one of their coaches.

After collecting the results of the in-depth interviews, it has been chosen to conduct a survey, in which all athletes who are included in the Latvian Olympic Committee lists of Olympic preparation will be invited to participate (approximately 150 athletes). The use of this method will help to get the opinion of a wider group of people on the questions that will be compiled based on the data obtained in the in-depth interviews.

The application of all the methods described above will make it possible to draw pre-conclusions and make suggestions that should be improved and changed in order to attract more athletes to training in

Olympic Sports Center, as well as to improve the preparation process and conditions of athletes in general.

In general, various methods have been used for data collection, each of which is suitable for obtaining the most relevant specific information and answering the questions raised. According to the author, the choice of different methods creates optimal information and data collection, so that qualitative conclusions and recommendations can be drawn for the solution of the researched question.

After finishing the project, it is planned to form a focus group of 6-10 people, in which all parties would be represented:

- 2 athletes (representing both individual sports and teams and those who base training location is Olympic Sports Center and who are training somewhere else);
- 1 or 2 participants from Latvian Olympic Committee;
- 2 participants from Olympic Sports Center;
- representative of the Ministry of Education and Science, who is responsible for sports issues;
- representative of the Riga municipality, who is responsible for sports issues;
- chairman of the board of Latvian Olympic unit, the chief physician.

It is planned to attract an independent, experienced person to lead the focus group. During it, the participants are expected to be introduced to the research problem, the information obtained, the conclusions made and the proposed recommendations, and to invite them to discuss these issues. This will make sure that the proposed conclusions are accepted and recognized by the parties involved.

This part is very important in the effectiveness of implementation the entire research, because it introduces all stakeholders to the work done, involves all represented parties in actualizing the problem and promotes greater mutual understanding of all parties on the current issue. Bringing up the issue also promotes further interest of the stakeholders in solving the problem. The mentioned circumstances make it more likely that the proposals presented, or at least some of them, will be implemented in real life and the project will be more useful.

## **Data analysis results**

After the analysis of the survey in an overview with the results of the interviews, the main findings were determined, based on which the initial recommendations have been identified. These recommendations were used in further interviews with the Secretary General of the Latvian Olympic Committee.

### **Benchmarking of similar Sports centers**

In the initial part of the data collection, a detailed study of the Centre National Sportif et Culturel d'Coque located in Luxemburg and X Bionic Sphere center (Slovakia) was carried out. During the benchmarking, a list of services was drawn up, which are currently not offered in the Olympic Sports Center, but in one of the centers. The obtained results were used in the course of further research to conclude which of them should be considered for implementation in the range of Olympic Sports Center provided services.

During detailed study of the Centre National Sportif et Culturel d'Coque located in Luxemburg it was found that it is a state-owned center that annually receives additional state funding to ensure its operation. Therefore, the financial section is not comparable to the Olympic Sports Center in Riga.

By conducting a more detailed study of the offer of the Centre National Sportif et Culturel d'Coque, a comparison of the range of offered services has been made and a list of services that are not offered in the Olympic Sports Center or that are significantly different has been identified. Compared to the overall infrastructure, the center in Luxembourg is almost three times larger in terms of area. Accordingly, the amount of infrastructure available for each sport also differs, and it is also possible to practice more sports. Looking at the additional services that are needed by a wide range of high-level athletes, the following services are available in the center of Luxembourg, which are not available in Center in Riga:

- Physical preparation room
- Tartan Track
- Diagnostic room
- Dojo
- Multifunction room
- Hypoxia and thermal chambers



The obtained information has been used in the further phases of data collection, in interviews and surveys to find out which of these services should be included in the range of services of the Olympic Sports Center.

Research was also done on the X Bionic Sphere Centers (Slovakia) provided services. A closer examination of its services revealed that it focuses more on offering high-level training space to paying abroad athletes of various sports, but does not offer a special package of services focused on Slovakia's high-level athletes. Therefore, it was concluded that this center is comparable with Olympic Sports Center within the research question.


### **Interviews with athletes and coach**

Four interviews have been conducted with various athletes of the Olympic team and at the end an interview with the general secretary of the Latvian Olympic Committee.

Analyzing the results obtained in the athletes' interviews, it was concluded that it is necessary to study the opinion of the coaches as well. Therefore, interview was also conducted with a coach. Analysis of the data obtained in the interviews has been carried out by coding the data and sorting into themes. An inductive approach has been used mostly in the data analysis. Before analyzing the obtained data, a specific hypothesis that needs to be proven is not defined. The information obtained in the interviews helps to establish a hypothesis for further proof.

In the question about the previous experience at the OSC and the things that are fixed and satisfying in the offer, most of the interviewed athletes mentioned the gym, which is very satisfying after the renovation, which was also confirmed by the coach interviewed.

It should be noted that one of the athletes mentioned that he has not been to the OSC for several years and he does not know about the services currently available there for high-level athletes. In two other interviews of athletes, it was also revealed that they partially do not know the information about OSC services available to them. After conducting the interviews, it allows us to put forward a hypothesis:

 High-level athletes are not sufficiently informed about OSC services available to them.

This hypothesis will be tested in the course of further research by conducting a survey.

On the question of the place where the training is held (if it does not take place in the OSC), the interviewed athletes mentioned different places, but several mentioned the Latvian Olympic Unit, which was also discussed during the further interview.

Most of the interviewed athletes, as well as the interviewed coach, mention the quality and range of services (all interviewed), availability of medicine and rehabilitation (all interviewed), location and availability of parking (4 out of 5 interviewed) as the most important factors in choosing a training place. Some also mentioned the availability of catering services, the possibility to regularly change training times according to their wishes and air quality as important factors. All interviewed athletes admitted that the choice of a coach plays an important role in choosing a training place. The interviewed coach admitted that as an additional factor in choosing a training place, coaches have the opportunity to organize amateur and children's training groups there, which is more profitable than training professional athletes.

In the further course of the interview, in-depth questions were asked about the need for the medical and recreational services at the training site. Three out of four athletes admitted that it would be necessary to have access to the medical services currently offered by Latvian Olympic Unit at the place of training. All the athletes admitted that the offered recreation services would be very important in choosing a training place. At the moment, several of the interviewed athletes answered that they choose to use Latvian Olympic Unit services for general physical training in the gym mostly because physiotherapy and recreation services are available there. Based on this information, two hypotheses have been put forward for verification in further research:

- ✚ By offering additional recreational services at OSC, it would be possible to increase the amount of training of high-level athletes.
- ✚ By offering medical services in the OSC facilities, it would be possible to increase the amount of training for high-level athletes.

In the interview, the athletes were asked about innovative services seen in the world or known, which they would recommend for inclusion in the OSC offer. Two out of four athletes mentioned that a thermal and hypoxia room for training would be useful in their opinion. The interviewed coach admitted that such a space would be useful in certain sections of the training process, but only in cooperation with the doctors supervising the athletes and only after the doctors' recommendations. The coach interviewed

suggested looking at the possibilities of supplementing the gym with equipment that measures training achievements, so that the performance of athletes and their dynamics can be digitally recorded.

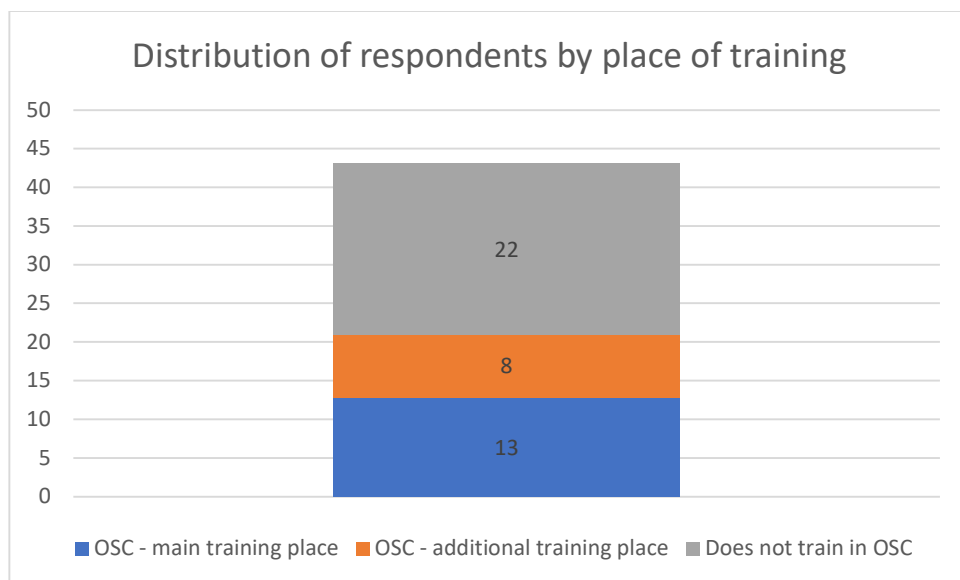
After the interview analysis, the main findings are:

- 1) After the renovation, the gym available to the athletes for physical fitness training satisfies them. In cases where a different gym is chosen for training, it is due to other circumstances.
- 2) Factors influencing the choice of place are location, accessibility, availability of parking, wide range of services.
- 3) The coach has a decisive influence on the choice of training place.
- 4) In the Olympic center, recreational services, especially ice baths, would be very useful after training.
- 5) Athletes would like the availability of medical services at the training site.
- 6) Among the innovative technologies, several athletes consider the thermal and hypoxia room to be the most useful and necessary.

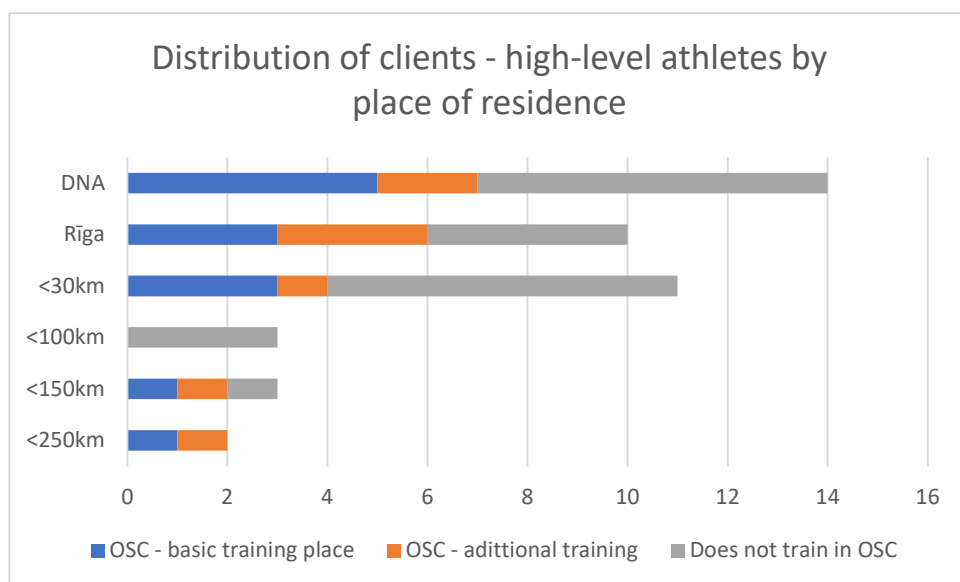
### **Survey**

After obtaining the interview data, a survey was drawn up, in which all athletes included in the list of the Olympic team were invited to participate (up to 150). 43 respondents filled out the survey questionnaire. When analyzing the data obtained in the survey, the measures of central tendency procedure is used.

Out of less than 150 athletes who were invited to participate in the survey, 43 answered the questions. According to the answers received, it can be seen that almost half of the respondents (21 out of 43) use OSC for daily or additional training. The distribution of respondents can be seen in the table.

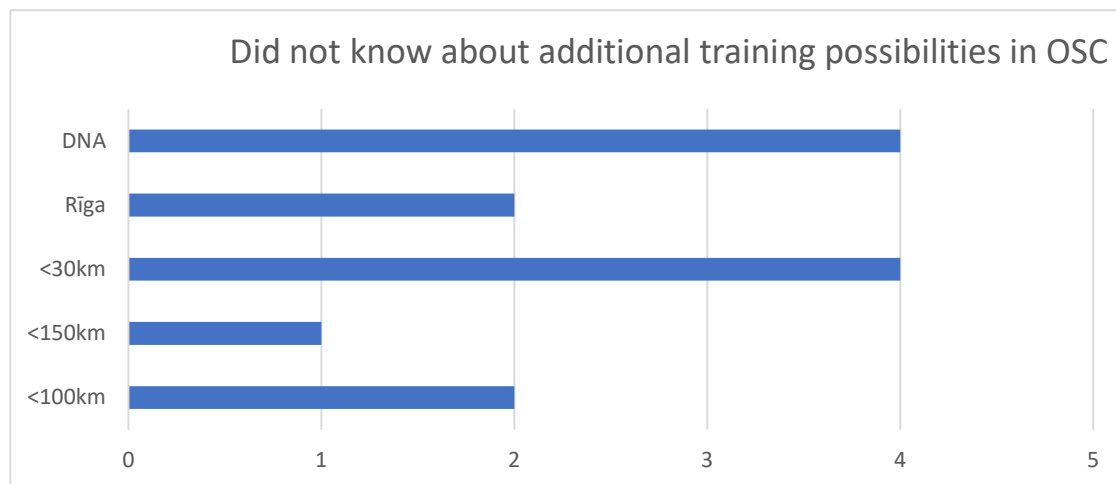


Analyzing the distribution of respondents by place of residence, it was concluded that most of the athletes who use OSC for training live in Riga or within a radius of 30 km from Riga or have refused to indicate their place of residence in the survey. The distribution of athletes by place of residence can be seen in the table.



\* DNA – Did not answer to question

In response to the question whether OSC is used in addition to training, 13 out of 43 athletes admitted that they did not know about such a possibility. The distribution of these athletes by place of residence can be seen in the table.



\* DNA – Did not answer to question

The table shows that most of these athletes live in Riga, 30 km from it, or have not shared information about their place of residence. This allows to make an assumption that by preparing additional information for athletes, it would be possible to increase the number of athletes using OSC services. This is a recommendation that should definitely be implemented as it could potentially increase the number of clients with a minimal investment of funds.

In the survey, athletes were asked to rate how important various factors are when choosing a training location. The table ranks the factors according to the number of athletes who recognized them as important for choosing a training location.

Factor	No. of respondents admit, this factor is important
Appropriate facilities and inventory of good quality and quantity	40
Training facilities costs	37
Location close to residence	33
Parking available	30
The training place is easily accessible by public transport	24

Access to high-end/state-of-the-art equipment, innovative technologies available	22
The opportunity to train together with other athletes of the appropriate level	22
In the event of an emergency, emergency medical assistance is quickly available	22
Coaches recommendations for choosing a training place	21
The services of a physiotherapist/sports doctor/rehabilitation procedures are available at the place of training	19
Recommendations of the sports federation in choosing a training place	14
Catering services are available at the training place	10
Resting areas are available in the training place	10
Accommodation services available at or near the training site	9

According to the data listed in the table, it can be seen that almost all athletes recognize it as essential appropriate facilities and inventory of good quality and quantity and costs of training facilities.

However, it can be seen that more than half of the respondents have recognized most of the factors as important.

When asked about the necessary improvements in OSC services or infrastructure, almost every respondent had a different recommendation. Suggestions that were repeated in more than one response were:

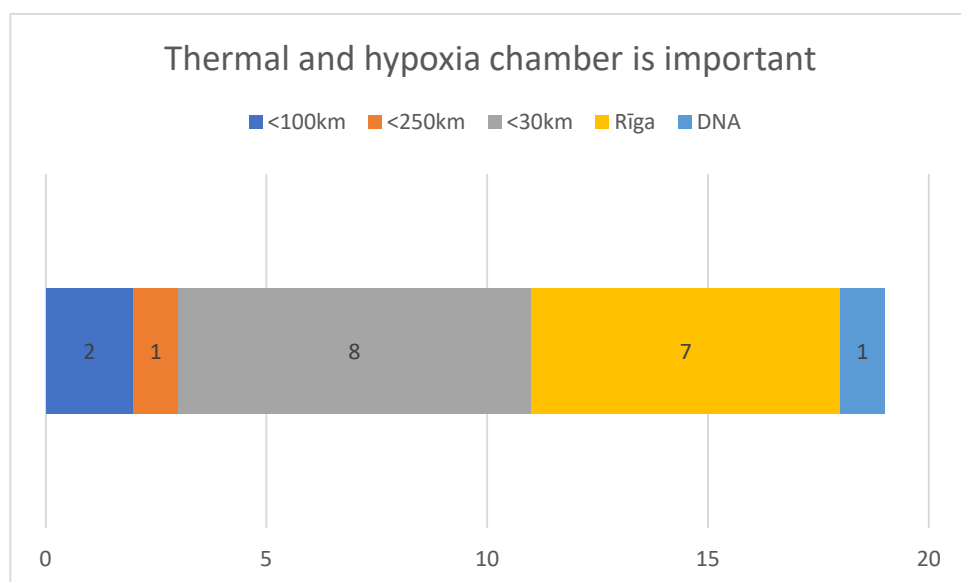
- ✓ To improve and supplement the range of services that would be more appropriate for athletics athletes;
- ✓ Provide recovery and medical services.

Since the need for recovery and medical services was also identified in the interviews with athletes and coaches, these services are identified compared to the center located in Luxembourg, and these services are recognized as important by 19 out of 43 survey participants, the need for additional services is considered significant. These potential improvements will be mentioned in further recommendations.

The survey respondents were asked to evaluate various innovative services if they were to be implemented in the OSC:

1. Hypoxia and thermal training chamber
2. Interactive sports simulators;
3. Hyperbaric room;
4. Augmented reality services;

Among them, the hypoxia and thermal training chamber was recognized as the most important. 19 out of 43 athletes recognized it as potentially important or very important in choosing a training location. In order to clarify whether there is a high probability that these athletes would become OSC clients after introducing this service, an analysis of their distribution by place of residence was carried out, which can be seen in the table.



\* DNA – Did not answer to question

It can be seen that the majority (15 out of 19) live in Riga or 30 km from Riga. This allows us to conclude that the necessity and importance of this service has been recognized by the athletes in the OSC target audience. I would like to ask for advice on how detailed the interview analysis should be described here.

After the survey analysis, the main findings are:

- The majority of respondents that the most important factors in choosing a training place mentioned adequate facilities and inventory of good quality and quantity, location close to residence, available parking and costs of facilities.
- 13 of the 43 respondents didn't know about additional training opportunities in Olympic Sports Center.
- Among the necessary improvements, the respondents mention recovery services.
- Of the innovative services, a hypoxia and thermal chamber is considered by 19 of 43 respondents to be important or very important when choosing a training place.

### **Interview with Secretary General of the Latvian Olympic Committee**

After the analysis of the survey in an overview with the results of the interviews, the main findings were determined, based on which the initial recommendations have been identified. These recommendations were used in further interview with the Secretary General of the Latvian Olympic Committee.

The interview revealed:

In Latvia, funding for high-level athletes is small, and most of them adjust their training to their full-time work. The possibility of choosing a training place allows the athlete to more successfully incorporate training into the rest of the daily rhythm. A strict determination of the training location by the NOC or sports federation would not be possible due to this specificity.

He considers the proposal to the OSC to create a thermal hypoxia room for the organization of special climate sports training to be considered after consulting with the medics supervising the athletes. As a result of positive consultations, the OSC would receive support from the NOC. There is no direct Latvian NOC funding possible for these changes, but he supported the possibility of seeking funding with the support of state and Olympic solidarity programs.

He considers the proposals for the provision of medical services and recreational services in the premises of the OSC as very reasonable and necessary. In order to offer medical services, the idea of completely moving Latvian Olympic Unit to OSC premises has already been proposed and started to be discussed. It is a long-term and expensive project that needs to be financed. By proving the need and benefits, it would receive the support of the NOC.



## Discussing the evidences

Following the completion of all parts of the study and the separate analysis of each part described above, the main findings and recommendations that were identified and confirmed by several research methods are listed. They are listed and described in the cross-analysis table:

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Benchmarking - Sports center in Luxembourg</b>	<b>Interviews - athletes</b>	<b>Survey - athletes</b>	<b>Interview - Secretary Generale NOC</b>
Need for additional information to athletes about available services	Not detected	Observed 3 out of 4 interviews	13 out of 43 athletes admitted that they did not know about additional training possibility. 6 of them liv in Riga or < than 30 km from Riga	Supports additional information campaign
Need for recreational services in OSC	Recreational services are offered in this Center only for athletes (free of costs for athletes)	All the athletes interviewed recognized this need	19 out of 43 rated it as very important.	Supported from NOC. Will help to find funding if needed.
Need to offer medical services in OSC	Medical services are offered in this center only for athletes (free of costs for athletes)	3 out of 4 athletes interviewed recognized this need	19 out of 43 rated it as very important. 1 athlete mentioned this in suggestions.	Supported from NOC if the need is proved and invention real. Very high costs. Will help to find funding if needed.
Thermal and hypoxia chamber	Offered only for athletes (free of costs for athletes)	2 out of 4 athletes mentioned as suggestion	19 out of 43 athletes recognized it as potentially important or very important in choosing a training location (15 from Riga or < 30 km from Riga)	To be considered after consulting with the medics supervising the athletes. In positive result OSC would receive support from the NOC.

According to the table, there is reason to believe that all the hypotheses established after the interviews have been confirmed.

It can be seen that almost every one of the recommendations (conclusions) is confirmed in all or most of the data collection and analysis sections, therefore they are considered the main findings and conclusions, which will be offered for implementation evaluation in the further part of the work with an action plan.

The listed recommendations also show the relevance of the SPLISS model mentioned in the opening part of the paper to the research question. Olympic Sports Center directly provides only pillar 6 of the model, but the recommendations show the connection of the athlete's training place needs with pillars 7 and 9. The recommendations confirm that meeting the needs of athletes is possible only in cooperation with other organizations that provide the rest of the needs mentioned in the pillars – Latvian Olympic Committee, Latvian Olympic Unit, coaches.

## Recommendations

Analyzing all the obtained data, four main recommendations have been identified. Some of them are easy to implement and do not require any kind of large resources from the company or any other party. For the further implementation of the recommendations Nr. 2 – Thermal and hypoxia chamber and Nr. 4 – Medical services, support from the shareholder - NOC, as well as Latvian Olympic Unit doctors, who are responsible for the medical side of the athletes' preparation process, is critical. These recommendations require substantial resources, both financially and in terms of space, planning, implementation and operational human resources.

All recommendations with a simplified action plan are presented in a table.

Priority	Recommendation, Actions	Shareholder support	Lead	Resources	Time-scales	Critical success factors
<b>1</b>	<b>Inform athletes about available services</b>	●●●				
	1.1 Prepare and present information to athletes about OSC's available services through various channels		Head of Communications department	Printed communication (layout, printing services) e-communication (content, design)	07/2023	Contacts of athletes, Cooperation of other organizations in the transfer of information, Formal approval from Latvian Olympic Unit to cooperate
<b>2</b>	<b>Thermal and hypoxia chamber</b>	●●				
	2.1. Consulting with the medics supervising the athletes (Clarify needs, frequency of use, duration, room size)		Board	Connection	09/2023	Support from medical staff (required by NOC)
	2.2. Consulting with neighboring countries about relevance, benefits, success, failure, occupancy data (Lithuania, Poland)		Board	Connection Figures Statistics Travel expenses if visit in person is needed	11/2023	Willingness to cooperate and share information, Positive experience
	2.3. Contact different suppliers in order to clarify approximate costs, room demands, maintenance costs		Board		12/2023	Quality suppliers who want to cooperate with Latvia

2.4. Get the endorsement from NOC board			Board	Calculations of the costs, evidence of necessity, potential occupancy calculations	01/2024	Evidence of necessity
2.5. Find funding (different possible sources – State, Olympic Solidarity, European Union programs)			Board in cooperation with NOC	Evidence of necessity, Calculations, Co-financing	06/2024	Appropriate funding program, Compliance with the criteria to receive financing, Qualitatively prepared documents
2.6. Carry out procurement procedures and conclude contracts for the performance of works			Jurisconsult	Qualitative information about the equipment's required parameters	08/2024	Interest of suppliers and contractors
2.7. Find and adjust appropriate room in the building			Head of the technical operation and maintenance department	Suitable room in the building, Workers carrying out customization work	12/2024	Qualitatively performed works, Involvement of technical department employees and system maintainers
2.8. Hire and train the staff or enter into a cooperation agreement with Latvian Olympic Unit			HR manager, Board	Employees with appropriate education, Expert who conducts quality training	12/2024	Skilled HR, Latvian Olympic Unit willingness to cooperate
2.9. To reveal the new services and to inform athletes and other potential customers about the availability of the service			Head of Communications department, Board	Printed communication (layout, printing services) e-communication (content, design)	01/2025	Contacts of athletes, Cooperation of other organizations in the transfer of information, Appropriate communication channels to reach customers who are interested in the new service
<b>3</b>	<b>Recreation services</b>	<b>●●●</b>				
3.1. Consult with doctors from Latvian Olympic Unit about needs and specifics for inventory and room			Board	Connection	09/2023	Support from medical staff
3.2. Identify potential suppliers and calculate potential costs			Head of the sports hall organization	Knowledge of required inventory	11/2023	Quality suppliers who want to cooperate

			department, Board			
3.3. Find funding (different possible sources – State, Olympic Solidarity, European Union programs)			Board	Evidence of necessity, Calculations, Co-financing	04/2024	Appropriate funding program, Compliance with the criteria to receive financing, Qualitatively prepared documents
3.4. Find and adjust appropriate room in the building			Head of the technical operation and maintenance department	Suitable room in the building, Workers carrying out customization work	06/2024	Involvement of technical department employees and system maintainers
3.5. Carry out procurement procedures and conclude contracts for equipment			Jurisconsult	Qualitative information about the equipment's required parameters	06/2024	Interest of suppliers and contractors, Availability of quality equipment
3.6. Hire and train the staff or enter into a cooperation agreement with Latvian Olympic Unit			HR manager, Board	Employees with appropriate education and experience	08/2024	Skilled HR, Latvian Olympic Unit willingness to cooperate
3.7. Reveal the new services and to inform athletes and other potential customers about the availability of the service			Head of Communications department, Board	Printed communication (layout, printing services) e-communication (content, design)	09/2024	Contacts of athletes, Cooperation of other organizations in the transfer of information, Appropriate communication channels to reach customers who are interested in the new service
<b>4</b>	<b>Medical services</b>	<b>●●</b>				
4.1. Consult with doctors from Latvian Olympic Unit about needs and specifics for inventory and rooms			Board	Connection	09/2023	Support from medical staff
4.2. Find appropriate rooms in the building, make rebuilding project			Head of the technical operation and maintenance department, Board	Rooms in the building, Engineering company doing the redesign, Experts consultations	02/2024	Money for redesigning project and consultations, The possibility of freeing up a sufficient amount of space
4.3. Contact different suppliers, building companies in order to clarify approximate costs			Board	Knowledge of required inventory	04/2024	Quality suppliers who want to cooperate, Adequate knowledge of the nuances of the required equipment

4.4. Write business plan	Board	Cooperation and support of managers of all parts, Data for calculations	09/2024	Sufficient knowledge to prepare a business plan, high-quality and reliable data
4.5. Get the endorsement from NOC Executive Committee	Board	Persuasive business plan, Presentation	10/2024	Qualitatively prepared documents, Support from Latvian Olympic Unit
4.6. Find expensive funding (different possible sources)	Board in cooperation with NOC	Evidence of necessity, Calculations, Co-financing	03/2025	Appropriate funding program, Compliance with the criteria to receive financing, Qualitatively prepared documents
4.7. Carry out procurement procedures and conclude contracts for equipment and building works	Jurisconsult	Qualitative information about the equipment's required parameters	05/2025	Interest of suppliers and building companies, Availability of quality equipment
4.8. Rebuild and equip the premises	Head of the technical operation and maintenance department	Limited provision of other services during reconstruction, Technical staff	11/2025	Qualitatively performed works, Involvement of technical department employees and system maintainers, Works completed and deliveries made on time
4.9. Hire and train the staff or enter into a cooperation agreement with Latvian Olympic Unit	HR manager, Board	Employees with appropriate education and experience	11/2025	Skilled HR, Latvian Olympic Unit willingness to cooperate
4.10. Reveal the new services and to inform athletes and other potential customers about the availability of the service	Head of Communications department, Board	Printed communication (layout, printing services) e-communication (content, design), Opening event	01/2026	Contacts of athletes, Cooperation of other organizations in the transfer of information, Appropriate communication channels to reach customers who are interested in the new service

●●● – Full support

●● – Will be supported if necessity will be proven

● – Support is weak

### **Inform athletes about available services**

The implementation of this recommendation is the simplest. Actions for its implementation have already been initiated. The head of the communication department has been given the task of creating easy-to-understand visual material about all services and additional services that are available at the center for high-level athletes included in the Latvian Olympic Unit list. Material will be developed for distribution in printed format, as well as athletes will be digitally informed through various channels. There is a verbal agreement with Chairwoman of the Board of Latvian Olympic Unit on cooperation in placing and sending materials.

### **Thermal and hypoxia chamber**

This recommendation is very interesting and has great potential for the company if further research and implementation is successful. Such space is not offered anywhere in Latvia and it would make OSC a unique service provider, which would be its competitive advantage among other similar service providers. The proposed product could be interesting not only for high-level athletes provided by NOCs, but also for private customers interested in testing innovative services or preparing for various private or commercial competitions not related to Olympic sports.

There are limitations of the study to fully explore this recommendation. The research summarizes suggestions that mostly come from athletes. In further research, it is necessary to identify the opinion of sports doctors and the latest research and the most modern practices of other countries. Only after researching all the listed factors and obtaining confirmation of the usefulness of implementing this recommendation, further work should be carried out to identify the necessary parameters and dimensions of the room in order to meet the needs as much as possible. Only after clarifying these factors will it be possible to calculate the approximate cost of the project in order to look for different financing options. There is a risk that in case of high costs, it will not be possible to find sufficient financing or the possible benefit will not be worth the investment.

Since the author has received a promise of NOC support, if the need for the implementation of this innovation is properly proven (relevance, potential occupancy, approved by medical staff from Latvian Olympic Unit), after the completion of the project, it is planned to continue the activities indicated in the

action plan to carry out further research and, hopefully, in case of a successful further development, also real implementation.

### **Recreation services**

This recommendation is relatively easy to implement. The most realistic and logical solution would be to form cooperation with Latvian Olympic Unit specialists, which would ensure the provision of the service in OSC premises. The OSC would provide the facilities and inventory, which requires finding funding, which is relatively small and could bring a relatively large benefit in increasing the scope of the other services provided by the OSC. Potential risks could be Latvian Olympic Units reluctance to cooperate or inability to find funding. The research carried out in the project was limited to general needs research. In further research, information should be obtained precisely for the needs of equipment and room arrangement. This will allow you to estimate the exact costs and look for funding.

Given the NOC's promised support, the identification of potentially vacated and adapted premises for this project and consultations with medical personnel have already begun.

### **Medical services**

This is the most complicated and expensive of the suggestions. The provision of full-scale medical services in the OSC is possible only in close cooperation with the Latvian Olympic Unit, possibly by partially or completely moving this organization to the premises of the OSC. This requires support from all OSC and Latvian Olympic Unit stakeholders. The implementation of this service requires both huge financial resources and a lot of OSC premises, which are currently used for various other sports needs and would need to be released. Such a decision would significantly change OSC's strategic plan, and the impact of such a change of strategy on the company has not been studied within the framework of this project. A business plan would need to be developed to implement changes of this magnitude. There are quite high risks that after estimating the total costs of the project, it will be concluded that an investment of this size is not useful enough compared to the potential benefits.



## **General conclusion and limitations**

The project reflects the results of previous studies found in the literature on the expectations of high-level athletes from the training place. In the further course of data collection and analysis, it was found which of these expectations are fulfilled in the sports center in Luxembourg and are also important for high-level athletes in Latvia.

The interviews revealed that the latest improvements made by the OSC have been observed and positively recognized by the athletes. This shows the interest of athletes in the center and the suitability of the improvements made so far and encourages further development in directions more focused on meeting the needs of high-level athletes.

The author was surprised that a significant part of the athletes living in Riga or nearby are not sufficiently informed about the free services available to them at the OSC. The implementation of the recommendation that would deal with this has already been started during work, however, such lack of awareness among athletes shows problems in communication between athletes and the organizations that ensure their preparation process.

The need to improve communication is also evidenced by the low response of athletes in filling out the questionnaire. Only 43 out of 150 athletes participated in the survey, which is also one of the limiting factors of the conducted research.

The research focus was on the necessary improvements to the main OSC, which is located in Riga, however, the answers to the questionnaire indicated the need to improve the services provided in other training places in Latvia as well, therefore, outside of this project, it would be very important to conduct research on athletes for the further development of high-level sports. needs that can possibly be met with minimal financial resources.

The main suggestions made after the research are directly or indirectly related to medical services or require the involvement of doctors, therefore the most important thing in the implementation of the action plan for the further implementation of the recommendations is the successful cooperation with the Latvian Olympic Unit, which provide medical services to high-level athletes. In the event of a failed relationship or collaboration, implementation of recommendations will be difficult or even impossible.

In case of successful further cooperation with Latvian Olympic Unit and finding sources of funding, there is a potential for successful further development of OSC in the direction of high-level athletes, which would be significant for the development of high-level sports in general.

The interview with the Latvian Olympic Committee General secretary confirms the Committee's conceptual support for the proposals and support in the search for funding, if the need for the proposals will be sufficiently substantiated in cooperation with doctors.

Initially it was planned to conduct an interview with a representative from the Ministry of Education and Science, which is responsible for sports, but due to the changes and political reasons occurring during the data collection, this was not possible. However, the interview with the general secretary of the Latvian Olympic Committee confirms that, in his opinion, direct financing or support from the state of the Olympic centers is not possible in the future, but partial state financing for the implementation of one of the recommendations is possible indirectly - through the Latvian Olympic Committee.

After the completion of the project, it is planned to continue the activities indicated in the action plan. Further development of the project will take place during the further research indicated in the action plan. In case of successful development, some or hopefully all of the recommendations are expected to be implemented.

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## **Summary**

In Latvia, Olympic athletes prepare in various sports facilities that are not strictly defined by the state, municipality, Olympic Committee or federations. There are 9 regional sports centers in the country, which are fully or partially owned by the Latvian Olympic Committee. They are all full-profit organizations that are not publicly funded. One of them is the Olympic Sports Center, which is located in the capital Riga and is 100% owned by the Latvian Olympic Committee.

Most of the clients of the Olympic Sports Center are private. Only a small part of the clients are professional athletes.

During the MEMOS project research has been carried out to find out what should be improved in the offer of the Olympic Sports Center so, that it is suitable for high-level athletes and they would choose to train in this center.

In the course of the work, the information available in the literature on the previous experience and research on the needs of athletes was studied. The practical research includes a comparison with other similar centers, interviews of athletes, a survey of Latvian high-level athletes. After collecting the obtained results, an interview was conducted with the general secretary of the Latvian Olympic Committee.

After the results have been compiled, a cross-analysis has been carried out, resulting in key recommendations. In general, the author has provided four main recommendations, the detailed implementation plan of which is reflected in the recommendations section.

The implementation of the simplest recommendation has already been started in the course of the research. In order to try to implement the other recommendations, the implementation of the first points of the plan reflected in the work has been started.

## Résumé

En Lettonie, les athlètes olympiques se préparent dans diverses installations sportives qui ne sont pas strictement définies par l'État, la municipalité, le comité olympique ou les fédérations. Il existe 9 centres sportifs régionaux dans le pays, qui appartiennent entièrement ou partiellement au Comité olympique letton. Ce sont toutes des organisations à but lucratif qui ne sont pas financées par l'État. L'un d'eux est le Centre sportif olympique, situé dans la capitale Riga et détenu à 100 % par le Comité olympique letton.

La plupart des clients du Centre Sportif Olympique sont des particuliers. Seule une petite partie des clients sont des athlètes professionnels.

Au cours du projet MEMOS, des recherches ont été menées pour savoir ce qui devrait être amélioré dans l'offre du Centre sportif olympique afin qu'il soit adapté aux athlètes de haut niveau et qu'ils choisissent de s'entraîner dans ce centre.

Au cours des travaux, les informations disponibles dans la littérature sur l'expérience antérieure et la recherche sur les besoins des athlètes ont été étudiés. La recherche pratique comprend une comparaison avec d'autres centres similaires, des interviews d'athlètes, une enquête auprès d'athlètes lettons de haut niveau. Après avoir recueilli les résultats obtenus, un entretien a été mené avec le secrétaire général du Comité olympique letton.

Une fois les résultats compilés, une analyse croisée a été réalisée, débouchant sur des recommandations clés. L'auteur a fourni quatre recommandations principales, dont le plan de mise en œuvre détaillé est reflété dans la section des recommandations.

La mise en œuvre de la recommandation la plus simple a déjà commencé au cours de cette recherche. Afin d'essayer de mettre en œuvre les autres recommandations, la mise en œuvre des premiers points du plan reflété dans les travaux a été lancée.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Athlete interview transcript

Interviewer (I): Good afternoon! Thank you for agreeing to the interview! Do you agree that I will record this interview so that it can be transcribed later?

Athlete (A): I agree, I have absolutely no objections.

I: Please tell me about your experience at the Olympic Sports Center so far, about the trainings, how much they have been. What is liked and what is not?

A: Practically, the Olympic Center has always been the home of Latvia's top athletes. It has been so since the beginning. When I came to live in Riga at a time when I was just starting to practice beach volleyball, I, together with Arnis Tunte, the current general secretary of the Volleyball Federation and my manager, started attending training sessions at the Olympic Center under the leadership of Viktors Lacis in the gym, where really good professionals worked and the facilities were also fresh at the time. Now, of course, they are also fresh, but they are renewed. The main thing here is the atmosphere, several sports are combined in one room. You can meet your idols every day - You can meet Porzingis, VEF basketball players, various national teams. It seems to me that it is the most important thing that such a young person, who comes here and is trained, has the motivation to do sports. So that it is not only read somewhere in books, newspapers, but within reach.

I: What has been missing in the Olympic Sports Center?

A: As a professional athlete, I can't say at all. Availability - I can't complain. Both the pool and the weight room are available to the average person, of course for a fee. As professionals, Olympic team, A, B, and C athletes, we have access to a variety of programs that are free here - both the pool and the weight room. So I can't say it's not freely available. And for ordinary people, games, training, gymnastics, the swimming pool, the boxing gym are available to absolutely everyone. I have also taken my son here for exercise. So I believe that the Olympic Center is accessible to absolutely everyone.

I: Do you use the mentioned offer for the gym and swimming pool to provide physical training on a daily basis? Or are you using this service somewhere else?

A: I use the gym elsewhere because I have a trainer there and he only works there. Before that, we and the team mostly used the service at the Olympic Center - both the weight room, the arena, and beach volleyball.

I: Does our offer need any improvements to be selected? What are the factors that make you choose another place to go to the gym?

A: The gym here has always been at a sufficiently high level, only the size is small for the big teams. But I see that both Promethey, VEF and LU basketball players know that beach volleyball players also visit the hall here. In this case, it is not the place's fault, but the fact that the athlete's everyday life is organized. Therefore, I immediately go to Čiekurkalna, where my trainer works, but others can be seen here.

I: Where do you currently practice beach volleyball?

A: Right here at the Olympic Sports Center, all of them. Only we don't train here when we go abroad, or we will continue training outside in warmer weather.

I: What are the essential things that should be provided in a sports center at a high enough level to be called the best training place to choose?

A: Logistics - there is a very good parking lot here, for the use of which there is a special offer. Also the fact that everything is available here - both a swimming pool, which also includes a sauna, as well as catering, as well as an arena where you can run on a harder surface. I have everything I need for my sport. Of course, the athletics sector is a different story, it is a painful topic for Latvia, in Riga there is only the Daugava Stadium for athletics to train, so the athletes travel to other places to train. But in general, everything is available here and very handy. There is also a children's corner with ottomans and coloring books, as well as a quiet area in the cafe and a small shop, so I often take the children to practice. Children can see other athletes here and it becomes more interesting for them as well.

I: Is there room for improvement in terms of available inventory?

A: The size of the gym could be bigger, but the equipment is very good. Every day I consider whether I have everything I need. If there was a lack, it would already be solved.

I: Does everything seem sufficient in terms of support staff?

A: Cleanliness in the Olympic Center is at a high level.

I: Where do you use the services of a physiotherapist?

A: The physiotherapist is at the same “Kaizen” where I attend physical training, but mostly I visit the specialists of the Latvian Olympic Unit, who are paid for me as an athlete at their center in Mežaparks.



I: Is the location of the Latvian Olympic Unit advantageous for you?

A: Yes, after training at the Olympic Center, I can go there. If this service was available here, it wouldn't change much for me. In general, it would definitely be more beneficial for the athletes - everything here would definitely be wider and everything together. I can cite the example of Daugavpils, there is a medical diagnostic center together with the Olympic center. Right next to everything and combined. I believe it is a good model if it goes along with the economic factor. A Recovery Center accessible to all would be very helpful.

I: If there were opportunities to expand the services, what would be the things that should be improved to be able to say that this is a perfect place to train even compared to the world experience.

A: One of the largest measures is the USA - all innovations are developed there first.

A large arena would be necessary for athletics. The hall could have bigger stands, but it is nothing. The new sand courts after relocation are one of the best beach volleyball courts available.

I can mention that in many places there are rooms available for training, where the air temperature and humidity can be regulated. You can enter parameters from the country where you are going to train and better prepare and get used to it. It would be interesting for many sports.

I: Who currently chooses your training place - it's only your decision?

A: My manager is also the manager of the beach volleyball courts at the Olympic Sports Center. There is a certain branding - if the hall supports you - you are the face of its advertising. But sometimes we also go to other halls to train if other athletes invite us to join training.

I: Are you satisfied with the way in which athletes are currently funded?

A: Yes, I've never had a problem before. Everything satisfies me.

I: Thank you for your time! The information I get from the interview will be very useful to me.

## Survey for Latvian Olympic Unit Athletes

### 1. How important are the options provided for you, when choosing a training place?

	Completely unimportant	Not important	Evaluated, but it does not matter when choosing a training place	Important	Very important in choosing a training place
Appropriate facilities and inventory of good quality and quantity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to high-end/state-of-the-art equipment, innovative technologies available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catering services are available at the training place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accommodation services available at or near the training site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resting areas are available in the training place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location close to residence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The training place is easily accessible by public transport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parking available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunity to train together with other athletes of the appropriate level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Completely unimportant	Not important	Evaluated, but it does not matter when choosing a training place	Important	Very important in choosing a training place
The services of a physiotherapist/sports doctor/rehabilitation procedures are available at the place of training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the event of an emergency, emergency medical assistance is quickly available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendations of the sports federation in choosing a training place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coach's recommendations for choosing a training place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training facilities costs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 2. What are the most important factors in choosing current training place?

- ☐ Coach's opinion
- ☐ Range of available services/quality of inventory
- ☐ Additional services
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Training costs
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## 3. My basic training place is:

- ☐ Olympic Sports Centre

3.1 Since how many months / years?

3.2 How often do you train in this training place?

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Several times a month
- ☐ Less than once a month

☐ Other (please specify)

3.1 Since how many months / years?

3.2 How often do you train in this training place?

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Several times a week
- ☐ Several times a month
- ☐ Less than once a month

**4. What is missing in the Olympic Sports Center to be chosen as a basic training place?**

- ☐ The location is not suitable for me
- ☐ Not suitable for my sport
- ☐ Would choose if the following improvements were made:

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☐ None of the above

**5. Do you use the services of the Olympic Sports Center in additional training? (swimming pool, gym)?**

☐ Yes

5.1. How often do you train in this Olympic Sports Centre?

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Several times a week

☐ Several times a month

☐ Less than once a month

☐ No, did not know about such possibility

☐ No, but would use if improvements were made to the services offered

☐ No, I am not interested

**6. What would need to be improved in the services offered by the Olympic Sports Center so that it can be considered one of the best training places for high-level athletes?**

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**7. How important are the propositions if we add innovative services at the Olympic Sports Centre?**

	Completely unimportant	Not important	Evaluated, but it does not matter when choosing a training place	Important	Very important in choosing a training place
Augmented reality services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive sports simulators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hyperbaric room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thermal and hypoxia chamber	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. Are you satisfied with the existing system of training place provision and selection process?**

- ☐ Yes, I am satisfied
- ☐ No, but I don't have any suggestions for improvement
- ☐ Changes would be needed:

**9. Represented sport**

**10. Place of residence**

**11. Age**

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55+

**12. How often are you training abroad?**