Sport
in the Netherlands
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A short introduction

Annet Tiessen-Raaphorst
Koen Breedveld

Social and Cultural Planning Office
The Netherlands

The Hague, June 2007
The Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands (SCP) was established by Royal Decree of March 30, 1973 with the following terms of reference:

a. to carry out research designed to produce a coherent picture of the state of social and cultural welfare in the Netherlands and likely developments in this area;
b. to contribute to the appropriate selection of policy objectives and to provide an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the various means of achieving those ends;
c. to seek information on the way in which interdepartmental policy on social and cultural welfare is implemented with a view to assessing its implementation.

The work of the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands focuses especially on problems coming under the responsibility of more than one Ministry. As Coordinating Minister for social and cultural welfare, the Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for the policies pursued by the Social and Cultural Planning Office. With regard to the main lines of such policies the Minister consults the Ministers of General Affairs; Justice; Interior and Kingdom Relations; Education, Culture and Science; Finance; Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment; Economic Affairs; Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; and Social Affairs and Employment.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>An active country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sports policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Being active: participation in exercise and sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sports infrastructure: from gym to yachting marina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Elite sport: achievements and the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An active country</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports policy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being active: participation in exercise and sport</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports infrastructure: from gym to yachting marina</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite sport: achievements and the media</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of illustrations 47
Publications of the SCP in English 49
Foreword

Fanny Blankers-Koen, Anton Geesink, Johan Cruyff, Marco van Basten, Pieter van den Hoogenband, Inge de Bruijn, Leontien van Moorsel...: the post-war history of Dutch sporting achievement has produced an impressive series of sporting icons: sportsmen and women whose names and faces are immediately recognised by men, women and children in the most far-flung corners of the world.

Those sporting icons are the product of the wealth of sporting talent that is present in the Netherlands, people who practise their sports as members of the innumerable sports clubs that are spread throughout all corners of the country. In recent decades there has been a growing realisation that this sporting landscape is of great social significance: as a source of inspiration, as an opportunity to meet other people and as a pleasurable part of a healthy lifestyle.

In this publication the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands (SCP) has selected the most salient facts on sport in the Netherlands in order to present a picture of the Dutch sporting landscape – of the policymakers who shape the policy, of the sportsmen and women and the sports they practise, of the clubs, associations and commercial bodies that provide the facilities used by those sportsmen and women, and finally of the elite sport that forms the pinnacle of the Dutch sporting pyramid and of the media attention it attracts. My hope is that the information contained in this publication will inspire readers to immerse themselves more fully in the unique sporting landscape that graces the Netherlands.

Prof. dr. Paul Schnabel
Director, Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands
Figure 1
Participation in sport at least once a week, population of European Union, 2004

Source: Eurobarometer 2004
1 • An active country

Sport is an important form of leisure activity for the Dutch: 52% of the population participate in sport on a weekly basis, well above the European Union average of 38%. This participation, but also the sports infrastructure, for example, is determined in part by social developments in the Netherlands. In this first chapter we present a picture of the Netherlands based on the demographic profile of the population, the geographical division of the country, socio-economic developments, the way in which the Dutch spend their time, and finally the health of the Dutch population.

Demography

Since 1950 the Dutch population has grown from 10.0 million to its present total of 16.4 million (2007). Forecasts suggest that the Dutch population will peak at 17.0 million inhabitants in 2030, before starting to shrink between 2030 and 2040. In relative terms, the older age group is the fastest growing; whereas the over-50s made up 21% of the population in 1950, in 2005 this proportion had risen to 34%; it is forecast to continue rising, reaching around 40% in 2030.

The composition of Dutch households has changed in recent decades due to an increase in the number of single-person households (35% of all households). The number of couples (married or unmarried and with or without children) has declined (59%). This trend is forecast to continue in the coming years, leading to a substantial increase in the total number of households in the Netherlands (from 7.1 million in 2005 to 8.1 million in 2030).

10% of the population are of non-Western ethnic origin; by 2050 this proportion is projected to have increased to 17%. For historical reasons, the Netherlands has a particularly sizeable community of (mainly Dutch-speaking) people from Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. In the 1960s and 70s there was a significant influx of ‘guest workers’ into the Netherlands, especially from the countries around the Mediterranean Sea (Italy, Spain). In recent decades it has been chiefly Turkish and Moroccan immigrants who have sought and found work in the Netherlands. The majority of members of ethnic minorities live in the west of the Netherlands; a quarter of the inhabitants of the four largest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) are of non-Western origin.
Figure 2
Population size, by age categories, 1950-2005 (absolute numbers)

Source: CBS (StatLine)
Geographical pressure

With 480 inhabitants per square kilometre, the Netherlands is a densely populated country. By way of comparison, the population density in Finland averages 17 inhabitants per square kilometre. Good planning is therefore essential in how the scarce land resources are used. Including its inland waters, the Netherlands has a total surface area of 3.7 million hectares (3.4 million hectares excluding the water). Of this total, 94,000 hectares are available for recreation, of which 32,000 hectares are in use for sports grounds.

The sport that uses up most land is football. Of the total of just over 32,000 ha in use as sports grounds, more than 7,000 ha are devoted to football fields. Golf courses also occupy a lot of space (6,300 ha). People living in inner cities have relatively little access to indoor and outdoor sports facilities, and this situation has deteriorated in recent decades as high land prices have pushed sports facilities towards the peripheries of towns and cities. One of the solutions to this problem has been the introduction of artificial grass for sports fields. This enables sports fields to be used more intensively and for several sports and therefore reduces the amount of space needed. Yet despite these issues, people in the Netherlands are never very far from their favourite sports facility; a large majority (57%) live within 5 kilometres. Although three-quarters of sports participants have a bicycle, only 35% cycle to their sports club; more than half (53%) travel to their local sports facility by car.

Figure 3
Land use in the Netherlands, 2003

Source: CBS (StatLine, Land use statistics 2003)
The sport that uses up most land is football. Of the total of just over 32,000 ha in use as sports grounds, more than 7,000 ha are devoted to football fields. Golf courses also occupy a lot of space (6,300 ha). People living in inner cities have relatively little access to indoor and outdoor sports facilities, and this situation has deteriorated in recent decades as high land prices have pushed sports facilities towards the peripheries of towns and cities. One of the solutions to this problem has been the introduction of artificial grass for sports fields. This enables sports fields to be used more intensively and for several sports and therefore reduces the amount of space needed. Yet despite these issues, people in the Netherlands are never very far from their favourite sports facility; a large majority (57%) live within 5 kilometres. Although three-quarters of sports participants have a bicycle, only 35% cycle to their sports club; more than half (53%) travel to their local sports facility by car.
**Socio-economic developments**

The Netherlands is a prosperous country; gross domestic product stands at €110.4 billion, putting the Netherlands in the top 10 of the International Monetary Fund rankings based on Gross National Product per capita. 6% of the labour force are unemployed. One in 10 households have a low income; among non-Western ethnic minorities, this figure rises to 28%.

Education standards in the Netherlands are high; 26% of the Dutch population aged between 15 and 64 years are educated to higher professional or university level. At the present time, young women in the Netherlands are generally more highly educated than younger men. Measured by ethnicity, there are still wide differences in education level, although the proportion of highly educated members of the Turkish and Moroccan communities has doubled in recent years.

**Pressure on time**

The lives of the Dutch have become every busier in recent years. Whereas in 1975 the Dutch spent an average of 43.4 hours per week on tasks connected with paid work, education and household/care, in 2005 this had risen to 48.6 hours per week (for 20-64 year-olds). The fact that the lives of the Dutch have become so much more hectic in recent years is mainly the result of the increase in the number of working women; the female employment rate rose from 18% in 1975 to 53% in 2005. However, many women in the Netherlands work part-time; it has become normal practice in the Netherlands that, especially when there are children in the family, the man has a full-time job while the woman works part-time. The actual working week of men (including travel time) is 40 hours; for working women it is 29 hours.

The Dutch still perform the bulk of their work during ‘traditional’ office hours and working days (86%). Leisure time in the Netherlands is still concentrated in the evenings and at weekends. 57% of all those who participate in sport do so in the evenings and at weekends, while 43% participate during the daytime in the week. When it comes to attending matches as a spectator, the figures are even higher, with 90% of attendance taking place in the evenings and at weekends.
Health

Participation in sport and exercise is closely related to the theme of (preventive) health care. Physical exercise through sport helps people maintain physical activity in a society in which more and more functions are being taken over by machines and automated systems. A society, moreover, where people snack simply because they can or because pressure of time forces them to, and are ‘blessed’ with a food industry which cleverly responds to this trend. The result of all these developments is an increasingly distorted balance between energy intake and energy use, which manifests itself in overweight and obesity; 45% of the Dutch population aged 20 years and older are overweight and 11% are clinically obese. Men more often suffer from slight overweight, while women suffer more from obesity. There has been a particularly strong rise in recent years in levels of obesity among younger people (20-24 years). Obesity among older age groups has been a problem for longer.
2 • Sports policy

At central government level, responsibility for sports policy lies with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (vws; www.minvws.nl). Responsibility for sports policy within the Ministry lies with the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport. That responsibility encompasses all facets of sports policy, from popular sport among the general public to elite sport and from voluntary work in sport to doping issues.

The policy memorandum Tijd voor Sport (Time for Sport) was published in 2005. Its core themes are ‘exercise’, ‘taking part’ and ‘performance’. These themes are crystallized in the following goals:

1. People undertake more sport and exercise for the benefit of their health;
2. People meet each other more through sport and take part in more social activities;
3. People have an increased sense of fair play and respect for rules;
4. Elite sport is promoted as a symbol of ambition, as a source of relaxation and as a means of strengthening the national image at home and abroad.

In addition to sports policy as formulated within the Ministry of vws, other government departments also pursue policy which is important for sport. For example, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for policy on physical education lessons; the Minister of Housing, Communities and Integration is responsible for issues relating to the integration of minorities; and the Ministry of Economic Affairs takes responsibility for the policy on elite sport.

Government budgets for sports policy have grown substantially in recent decades (see figure 5), and are expected to grow further in the years ahead. The role of central government in sports policy is primarily one of coordination and encouragement.
The implementation of sports policy in practice is primarily in the hands of the 458 municipalities, among other things through the (financial) management of the innumerable sports facilities. Local authorities account for 90% of public spending on sport. In most municipalities, local sports policy falls within the welfare department, and within that in a special sports and recreation section. Larger municipalities sometimes also have a leisure economy department focusing primarily on elite sport. In addition, the 12 provincial authorities play a limited (coordinating) part in relation to sports policy.

In addition to local authorities, it is the 90 sports federations in the Netherlands which give practical form to the sports policy. These sports federations represent more than 27,000 sports clubs. The federations have joined forces in the umbrella organisation National Olympic Committee * Netherlands Sports Federation (NOC*NSF). This organisation is funded partly by the government, partly by funding from the Lotto national lottery, and partly from own funding, for example through sponsorship. As an independent legal entity it pursues its own policy. NOC*NSF is responsible for sending sportsmen and women to represent...
the Netherlands at the Olympic Games, and also acts as a sparring partner for the government in relation to sport. It sometimes also implements central government sports policy, for example as regards the distribution of central government grants for elite sportsmen and women and sports federations.

As well as the bodies listed above, there are a number of organisations which play a role in shaping Dutch sports policy. The most important include Netherlands Institute for Sport and Physical Activity (NISB), a national expertise centre specialising in sport and exercise (www.nisb.nl); the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), the umbrella organisation for local authorities (www.vng.nl); VSG, which represents the interests of local sport and recreation departments (www.sportengemeenten.nl); KVLO, the umbrella organisation for physical education teachers (www.kvlo.nl); and NL Coach, the umbrella organisation for sports coaches (www.nlcoach.nl).
3 • Being active: participation in exercise and sport

The Dutch spend an average of 2.6 hours per week on sport and physical exercise in their leisure time. This represents a marked increase over the last thirty years: in 1975 the figure was just 1.5 hours. On the other hand, the Dutch still devote significantly more time to media (newspapers, books, TV, computers), at an average of 18.9 hours per week. This chapter looks at the participation in exercise and sport by the Dutch, looking at which sports are practised and how.

Figure 6
Leisure time use, population aged 12 years and older, 2005 (hours per week)

Source: SCP (TBO’05)
Exercise

The Dutch have begun exercising more in recent decades. This increase can be derived from the ‘combinorm’, which is presented as the norm amount of exercise that is required to maintain good health. For adults, the combinorm means exercising intensively for 20 minutes three times a week and/or exercising moderately for half an hour five days a week. The number of adult Dutch inhabitants who meet the combinorm has increased from 52% in 2000 to 63% in 2005. There are no significant differences between men and women, though men are more often involved in intensive exercise than women. Older people (51% of the over-75s meet the combinorm) and non-workers (57%) are the main groups which exercise less. These figures also show that people who participate in sport also spend more time exercising (including on their sport) than those who do not participate in sport.

Figure 7
Meeting the ‘combinorm’, population aged 18 years and older, 2000, 2005
(in percent)

Source: TNO (OBiN’00-'05)
Participation in sport

Participation in sport is one of the ways in which the Dutch have increased their level of exercise: 69% of the population take part in sport. This is a considerable increase compared with 1979, when the figure was 53%. It is notable that women have caught up with men completely over a period of 24 years; whereas in 1979 half of women practised a sport compared with 56% of men, this difference had completely disappeared by 2003.

Virtually all young people in the Netherlands take part in sport. 93% of 6-11 year-olds practice a sport, and for 12-19 year-olds the figure is 90%. Thereafter, the trend is downwards: 77% of adults aged up to 35 years and 71% of 35-49 year-olds take part in sport. 55% of Dutch people aged between 50 and 64 years practise a sport. Even here, however, there has been a big increase compared with 24 years ago: in 1979 only 20% of this age group took part in sport. The increase among 65-79 year-olds is even greater: in 1979 8% of this age group took part in sport, compared with 33% today, a fourfold increase.

Figure 8
Participation in sport, population aged 6-79 years, 1979-2003 (in percent)
Branch of sport

Solo sports (sports such as fitness training which – at least when practised for recreation – do not require a direct opponent) are the most frequently practised sports in the Netherlands. 58% of the Dutch population take part in a solo sport, compared with 22% who take part in a duo-sport (sports which formally require at least one direct opponent, such as tennis) and 19% who take part in team sports (sports which are practised as a minimum with two others). The popularity of solo sport is increasing strongly; the share of people taking part in both duo-sports and team sports has remained virtually constant over time.

The list of the top 10 most popular sports is consequently headed by solo sports: swimming, cycling and fitness (table 1). 38% of the Dutch population take part in swimming, more often women (42%) than men (34%). Fitness and aerobics are also primarily female sports (21% women compared with 14% men). Cycling, by contrast, is more popular among men (23% men versus 16% women). The most popular team sport achieves sixth place in the top 10: football, which is also mainly a male sport (15% versus 10%).

Table 1
Top ten branches of sport practised, population aged 6-79 years, 2003 (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>total</th>
<th>men</th>
<th>women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>swimming</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>leisure cycling/cycle racing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>fitness/aerobics</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>walking</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>running/jogging</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>football</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>in-line/roller skating</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>tennis</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>skating</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>sailing/rowing/canoeing/surfing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SCP (AVO'03)
Sports clubs

In the Netherlands, non-commercial sports clubs are the most important framework for organised sport activities – more than schools, municipal organisations or commercial providers. There are around 27,000 sports clubs in the Netherlands (see also chapter 4). Originally these clubs were organised primarily along religious lines, with separate Protestant, Catholic and socialist sports clubs operating alongside general sports clubs. This mirrored the situation in education and culture generally. This ‘pillarisation’ is less evident today. Associational and club life are under pressure in the Netherlands, as they are elsewhere. Fewer people are joining clubs and associations, and the proportion of sport organised via sports clubs has also come under pressure in recent years. The percentage of the Dutch population who are members of a sports club has not increased as strongly as the percentage of Dutch people who take part

Figure 9
Membership of sports clubs by participation in sport and in relation to total population, population aged 6-79 years, 1979 and 2003 (absolute numbers)

Source: SCP (AVO’79-’03)
in sport. In the period 1979-2003 6% more Dutch people became members of a sports club, whereas 16% more began taking part in sport in that period. Club membership among those who take part in sport has in fact actually fallen. This applies for both men and women, though more men (55%) are still members of a sports club than women (51%). 74% of primary school pupils who take part in sport are members, while for secondary school students the figure is 71%. Adults who take part in sport are more frequently opting for a different form of participation, for example by joining a fitness centre or practising their sport on their own.

Sports clubs are generally affiliated to the national sports federation for their branch of sport. Football is far and away the most widely practised club-based sport: more than one million people are affiliated to a football club, making the national football association the most powerful player in the national sports policy (table 2). Tennis is the second sport in the Netherlands in terms of participation through an organised club, followed by gymnastics. Tennis and golf have grown strongly in popularity in recent decades, but minor sports such as bridge, athletics and more recently hockey, have also attracted new members. Gymnastics and swimming, by contrast, have lost ground as an organised form of sport. Taken together, sports federations and the affiliated sports clubs number almost 5 million members. Ignoring duplications (people who are a member of two clubs), this would mean that one in three Dutch people is a member of a sports club. That makes sport the biggest leisure sector in terms of the number of clubs and members.

In swimming, as in some other sports, there is a wide difference between the popularity of the sport in general (38% of the population, table 1) and swimming as a club sport (1%, table 2). Many people engage in swimming as a recreational sport by swimming lengths in a municipal or other swimming pool. Fitness and aerobics are largely practised in commercial fitness centres in the Netherlands. These organisations are not affiliated to the traditional organised sports structure and therefore do not appear in the top 10 of organised sports.
Football, golf and tennis, by contrast, have a relatively high degree of organisation. For football (and other team sports) this can be explained by the fact that the national federation organises the competition and therefore has many members. Sports such as golf and tennis are played at sports facilities which are generally managed by a sports club. In order to be able to play, and certainly in order to be able to take part in matches and competitions, players therefore have to join a club.

Table 2
Popularity of organised sports, top 10 membership list NOC*NSF, 1978, 1990, 2005, numbers of members (x 1000) and converted to percentages, Dutch population aged 6-79 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2005 (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB)</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1077</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Lawn Tennis Federation (KNLTB)</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Gymnastics Union (KNGU)</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Golf Federation (NGF)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Hockey Federation (KNHB)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Ice Skating Federation (KNSB)</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Equestrian Sports Federation (KNHS)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Swimming Federation (KNZB)</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Volleyball Federation (NeVoBo)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Skiing Association (NSKiV)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total NOC*NSF</td>
<td>3081</td>
<td>3637</td>
<td>4992</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: NOC*NSF
Competitive sport

The manner in which the Dutch practice sport has changed in recent decades. The popularity of practising sport as a training or competitive exercise has fallen; whereas in 1983 more than half of those who were active in sport participated in training or competition, in 1999 that had fallen to 39%. Between 1999 and 2003 there was a further slight fall in the proportion of sports participants taking part in competitions and training exercises, to 43%. Men take part in competitive sport more often than women (49% and 37%, respectively, of those taking part in sport). In addition, competitive sport is still mainly popular among the young.
Costs of participating in sport

In 2003 the Dutch spent a total of €196 billion. Of that total, €3.4 million was spent on sport. Converted into per capita expenditure, this means that the average Dutch person spent €211 on sport per year. Spending on sport (+209%) has increased more rapidly since 1990 than total spending (+170%). The €211 spent per person breaks down into money spent on tuition and membership fees (€95), sports facility rental (€29), sports articles and games (€27), sports and camping clothing (€26) and footwear (€19).

The average Dutch person’s attic, garage or cupboard will contain all manner of sporting articles. For example, 74% of Dutch people have a bicycle and 31% own ice skates. Badminton is a popular holiday sport, and 30% of the Dutch have a set of racquets at home. 25% of Dutch households also own a football.

Table 3
Total consumer spending and consumer spending on sport by private households, 1990-2003 (in euros)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total spending (EUR billion)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which spending on sport (EUR billion)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total per person</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>12,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which on sport</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS (80’90-'03)
Opportunities for participating in sport as a leisure activity in the Netherlands are provided mainly by sports clubs and commercial providers such as riding stables and fitness centres, which to some extent make use of (municipal) sports facilities. This chapter sheds more light on sport organisations, but also looks at the turnover and staffing in these sectors. For schoolchildren, the school is also an important provider of sporting activities.

**Education**

Primary school children (aged 4-11 years) receive two 45-minute PE lessons per week. At 40% of schools, these lessons are given by a gym teacher and at the other schools a regular teacher gives physical education. Children in secondary schools (12 years and older) receive physical education lessons on average for more than two hours per week, usually taught by a gym teacher. Many schools also hire in commercial sports providers or sports clubs to acquaint children with the various branches of sport whilst still at school. The government’s policy is aimed at encouraging schools and sports clubs to collaborate more, in order to create more opportunities for children to take part in sport on a daily basis in and around the school.
**Sports clubs**

There are around 27,000 sports clubs in the Netherlands. One third have fewer than 50 members, 40% have 51-200 members and just over a quarter (27%) have more than 200 members (9% have 500 members or more). The size of the club is often related to the branch of sport offered. The 170 golf clubs have an average of 1,400 members per club, while the 1,680 snooker/billiard clubs have an average of 20 members each. Over the years the number of sports clubs has fallen, while the average number of members per club has increased.

**Figure 10**

*Number of sports clubs (left y-axis) and average number of members per club (right y-axis), 1990-2005*

![Graph showing the number of sports clubs and average number of members per club from 1990 to 2005.](image)

Source: NOC*NSF
Sports clubs depend for their income largely on membership fees (48% of income) and canteen sales (26%). The main costs relate to accommodation (21%) and canteen purchase costs (15%). The income and expenditure of outdoor sports clubs are often higher than those of indoor sports clubs, usually because of management or ownership costs; indoor sports clubs generally rent their accommodation from the local authority, while outdoor sports clubs often own their own facility.

Outdoor sports clubs also much more often employ paid staff than indoor sports clubs. 23% of outdoor sports clubs have paid employees, compared with 9% of indoor sports clubs. Sports such as amateur football (73%), tennis (28%) and golf (40%) have large numbers of paid staff. A total of 13,130 persons are employed at sports clubs, though when converted to full-time equivalents this number shrinks to 3,580. Part-time work is thus common.

Table 4
Income and staff of sports clubs, by indoor and outdoor sport, 2003 (in euros, percentages and employment volume)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of organisations</th>
<th>Income (EUR million)</th>
<th>Paid staff</th>
<th>Number of organisations (%)</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
<th>Employment volumea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indoor sports</td>
<td>12,680</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,540</td>
<td>520</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outdoor sports</td>
<td>14,230</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9,580</td>
<td>3,050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total sports</td>
<td>26,910</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13,130</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Excluding water sports clubs and professional football.
b Employment volume: hours worked in reference week converted to full-time equivalents of 40 hours.

Source: CBS (so'03)
**Volunteers**

85% of sports clubs use volunteers. A total of 2 million hours per week are worked by volunteers for sports clubs, the equivalent of 50,000 full-time jobs. More than a quarter of the Dutch population aged 16 years and older perform voluntary work. One in 10 is active as a volunteer in sport, performing activities as trainers, helping with maintenance or helping out in the canteen bar. For many clubs, recruiting and holding onto volunteers is a major concern. Therefore, there is a growing trend for clubs to begin using professional (paid) staff.

Men perform voluntary work more often than women, including in sport. In particular, men are more often involved in club management than women. Almost one in five young people aged 16-19 years are volunteers in sport. A relatively high proportion of 35-49 year-olds (14%) are also active as volunteers in sport. Thereafter, the performance of voluntary work in sport decreases with age; only 5% of people aged over 65 are still active as volunteers.

**Figure 11**
*Performance of voluntary work in general and in sport, population aged 16 years and older, 2003 (in percent)*

![Bar chart showing performance of voluntary work in general and in sport, population aged 16 years and older, 2003 (in percent)](chart)

*Source: SCP (AVO'03)*
Commercial providers

As well as more than 27,000 sports clubs, there are over 3,200 commercial sports providers in the Netherlands, such as riding stables, sports academies and sailing and surfing schools. Together, these commercial players generate total income of €314 million. This means that the average income per organisation (€96,000) is almost three times as high as an average sports club (€35,500). As with sports clubs, tuition fees generate a high proportion of the income. However, in contrast to sports clubs, a substantial proportion of the costs consist of wages and social insurance charges. One in three commercial providers employ paid staff. A large number of commercial providers (84%) also have staff who are not on the payroll, in most cases director-owners. This equates to 3,290 full-time equivalents.

These figures do not include 2,000 fitness centres. The fitness sector generates turnover of approximately €630 million – approximately double that of other commercial providers (€314 million, table 5).

Table 5
Income and staff of commercial providers, 2003 (in percentages, euros and employment volume)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number of organisations</th>
<th>income (EUR million)</th>
<th>paid staff number of organisations (%)</th>
<th>number of persons</th>
<th>employment volume(^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>riding stables</td>
<td>1190</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sports academies</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sailing and surfing schools</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>3275</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Employment volume: hours worked in reference week converted to full-time equivalents of 40 hours.

Source: CBS (so’03; sw’03)
**Sports facilities**

Sports providers such as sports clubs and commercial providers use sports facilities (halls, grounds, etc.). Many of these facilities are owned by the municipality or a commercial organisation. More indoor sports facilities (1,618 in 1988 increasing to 2,160 in 2003) and commercial yachting marinas (694 in 1988 increasing to 815 in 2003) have been added in the last 20 years. The number of swimming pools (770 in 2003) and outdoor sports facilities (4,000 in 2003) has remained virtually unchanged.

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**Figure 12**

*Number of swimming pools, outdoor and indoor sports facilities and yachting marinas by operator, 2003 (in absolute numbers)*

Source: CBS (szs’03, sw’03)
The management of swimming pools and indoor sports facilities has increasingly shifted from municipalities to the private sector in recent years. In 1988 64% of swimming pools were managed by municipalities, compared with 30% in 2003. More and more municipalities are outsourcing the day-to-day work involved in running a swimming pool to a commercial organisation or foundation. A similar development has occurred with indoor sports facilities: in 1988 38% were in private hands, a figure which had risen to 54% by 2003. This applies to a much lesser extent for outdoor sports facilities (which are generally barely economically viable); more of these are still run by municipalities: this applied for 78% of these facilities in 2003.
Table 6
Income and staff of sports facilities, 2003, in absolute numbers, euros and employment volume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>number of organisations</th>
<th>income (EUR million)</th>
<th>paid staff number of persons</th>
<th>employment volumea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>swimming pools</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>8,670</td>
<td>4,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yachting marinas</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other facilities</td>
<td>6,160</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>4,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>7,745</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>18,170</td>
<td>9,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Employment volume: hours worked in reference week converted to full-time equivalents of 40 hours.

Source: CBS (SZS’03, SW’03)

Together, sports facilities generate income of more than €1 billion. This converts to average income of €135,000 per facility. Sports facilities employ a total of more than 18,000 staff in 9,520 full-time equivalent jobs. Sports facilities also employ a large number of people who are not on the payroll, such as the owners; these fulfil the equivalent of 1,900 full-time jobs. The employment volume at all types of sports facility has increased markedly since 1988, from 4,130 full-time equivalents in paid staff and 680 full-time equivalents for staff not on the payroll. The large-scale privatisation of swimming pools increased the employment volume of staff not on the payroll from 50 to 410 full-time equivalents in the period 1988-2003.
The Dutch are proud of the sporting achievements of their elite athletes. Sporting achievements achieve a higher score (83%) in terms of national pride than achievements in the fields of science and technology (82%) or arts and culture (72%). Accordingly, the Netherlands has a series of elite athletes about whom the Dutch can be justifiably proud. One of the best known, from immediately after the Second World War, is Fanny Blankers-Koen. During the 1948 Olympic Games in London, this ‘flying housewife’ won four athletics gold medals. In 1999 she was voted athlete of the century by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

In the 1970s Dutch football was at the height of its success. Feyenoord won the European Cup and the Club World Cup in 1970, a feat which was repeated by Ajax in 1972. The Dutch national team reached the final in two successive World Cup competitions, in 1974 and 1978, with Johan Cruyff in the team in 1974. Unfortunately the Dutch team failed to become world champions at either attempt. The national team did win the European Championships in 1988, the era of Ruud Gullit and Marco van Basten. In that same year psv won the European cup, an achievement equalled by Ajax in 1995. Since then, only Feyenoord has managed to win another international championship, landing the UEFA cup in 2002.

Ice-skating is a very popular sport in the Netherlands, in which the country has been one of the top achievers at international level for many decades. In 1972 Ard Schenk became triple Olympic champion at the Winter Olympics in Sapporo, and the Dutch have achieved regular success on the ice in succeeding Olympics. Among the most striking of these successes were the triple gold achieved by Yvonne van Gennip in Calgary in 1988 (1500, 3000 and 5000 metres), the double gold won by Gianni Romme (5 and 10 kilometres) and Marianne Timmer (1000/1500 metres) at the Nagano Olympics in 1998, and the double gold (5 and 10 kilometres) and silver (1500 metres) won by Jochem Uytdehaage in Salt Lake City in 2002. At the Turin Games in 2006, Marianne Timmer repeated her 1998 achievement by winning gold in the 1000 metres event. In 2007, Sven Kramer and Ireen Wüst became world champions all round and world champions in separate distances.

In 1928, the Netherlands organised the ninth Olympic Games in Amsterdam. The games produced six gold medals, nine silver and four bronze for the national Olympic team. Since then sporting success has been achieved in many Olympics; one of the most striking was the Olympic gold for judo won by Anton Geesink in Japan in 1964. The Olympic gold won by the men’s volleyball team in Atlanta...
in 1996 is also still fresh in the memory of many Dutch people.

The Sydney Olympics in 2000 were the most successful in Dutch history. The best performance was recorded in the swimming events by Pieter van den Hoogenband (two gold and two bronze medals) and Inge de Bruijn (three gold and one silver). Leontien van Moorsel was a success in both road and track cycling, winning triple gold and single silver. These sportsmen and women again achieved gold in Athens in 2004, where the national team achieved a total haul of 22 medals.

Figure 13
Dutch Olympic medals, 1988-2006

Source: www.sport.nl
Other sports in which the Netherlands can boast major international successes include hockey (men's Olympic gold in 1996 and 2000, women's world championship in 2006), tennis (Richard Krajicek, Wimbledon 1996) and cycling (Jan Janssen and Joop Zoetemelk each won the Tour de France, in 1968 and 1980, respectively). In the Paralympics, Esther Vergeer has earned the nation's pride with her success in wheelchair tennis.
Achievements of top Dutch sportsmen and women

The achievements of top Dutch sportsmen and women are measured on the ‘Topsport index’. This index of elite sport is calculated on the basis of the position occupied by Dutch sportsmen and women among the top eight in a European or world championship or at the summer or winter Olympics. As the upward trend of the graph shows, the achievements of top Dutch sportsmen and women have been steadily improving over the years.

Two opposing trends need to be taken into account in this interpretation. On the one hand, there are more honours to be won because of the large increase in the number of medals available. On the other hand, the number of countries and participants has also increased, which reduces the likelihood of achieving a good performance. The above index does not lend itself international comparison. Based on several other methods, however, the Netherlands has occupied a position in recent years between 8th and 14th place in the international sport rankings.

Figure 14
Elite sport index, 1985-2006

Source: NOC*NSF
Spending on elite sports

Public spending on top-class sport has increased since 1998 (€21 million) to €42 million per year. The share taken by the Ministry of vws, in particular, has increased greatly. In addition to these public funds, money has also flowed into elite sport from sponsorship, the sale of television rights and federation membership fees from affiliated clubs. At national level this money is invested in the NOC*NSF Top-sport (Performance) programme; in 2004 this investment amounted to €21 million. Sports federations themselves invest €19 million in elite sport. Altogether, therefore, a total of around €80 million per year goes into funding elite sport in the Netherlands.

Figure 15
Public spending on elite sport, 1998-2004, in millions of euros

Source: Report on Sport 2006
Media attention

Sporting events receive wide attention from the Dutch media. Major sporting events, such as the World Cup football in Germany and the Olympic speedskating competitions in Turin, are a permanent fixture in the lists of the most watched programmes on television. In 2005 Dutch television broadcasters devoted a total of 2,600 hours to sport, 4.4% of total TV broadcasting time. The Dutch spent an average of 1,183 hours per year watching television, of which 106 hours (or two hours per week) were spent watching sport. In percentage terms, sport accounts for 9% of total viewing time – double the percentage of total broadcasting time devoted to sport, and an indication that sports programmes attract more viewers than other programmes. This applies in particular for the main media sports in the Netherlands, football and speedskating.
Yet not everyone watches sport on television. Roughly half the population aged between 6 and 79 years follow sport weekly via radio or television. This proportion has remained fairly constant over time, even though the number of people participating in sport in the Netherlands has increased. Men follow sport more frequently via radio and television than women (63% and 34%, respectively). This ratio, too, has undergone little change over time.
Spectators

Roughly one in three Dutch people attend one or more sporting contests during the course of the year. Here again, this applies more for men than for women (41% versus 28%). Professional football attracts around 5 million spectators each season. More than one in 10 Dutch people go to a stadium to watch a professional football game. This figure reflects a slight increase, strikingly enough mainly among women (from 3% in 1983 to 5% in 2003, compared with 17% and 19%, respectively, for men).

Figure 17
Following sport via media or by attending football and other matches, Dutch population aged 6-79 years, 1983-2003 (in percent)

Source: SCP (AVO’83-’03)
In this publication the Social and Cultural Planning Office has sought to present a brief picture of sport in the Netherlands. Sport is a source of active or passive entertainment for many Dutch people; active in the sense of taking part: 10 million Dutch people are actively involved in sport; passive in the sense of following the achievements of elite athletes via the media or by attending matches. The Netherlands is proud of the achievements of its elite athletes.
We are also proud of the data collection on participation in sport that was used for this publication. This information is also used to compile the Report on Sport (Rapportage sport), a biennial publication which provides interested readers within and outside the world of sport with information on trends and developments in sport. The most recent Report on Sport appeared in 2006 and can be downloaded from www.scp.nl, though is unfortunately only available in Dutch. The next Report on Sport is scheduled for publication at the end of 2008. Statistical material which becomes available before that date will be posted on the website www.rapportage-sport.nl.

The information contained in this publication was supplied by various organisations. More information can be found on the websites listed below.

- Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands (scp; www.scp.nl)
- Statistics Netherlands (CBS; www.cbs.nl)
- TNO (www.tno.nl)
- W.J.H. Mulier Institute (www.mulierinstituut.nl)
- National Olympic Committee* Netherlands Sports Federation (NOC*NSF; www.sport.nl)

An appendix to this publication can be downloaded from www.scp.nl. It contains more detailed tables (with breakdowns by age), as well as a number of technical notes on the figures used, for example on how participation in sport was measured.
List of illustrations

p. 12  Amateur football field © Hans van der Meer / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 17  Nordic walking © Jiri Bůller / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 24  Swimming lesson for children © Arie Kievit / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 26  Rotterdam Marathon 2005 © Pim Ras / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 29  Gym class © C. Barton van Flymen / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 35  Tennis instruction © Klaas Jan van der Weij / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 39  Leontien van Moorsel at the 2000 Summer Olympics © Pim Ras / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 42  Watching the European Cup 2004 © Peter Hilz / Hollandse Hoogte
p. 45  Elderly leisure cyclists © Gerard Wessel / Hollandse Hoogte
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