



## North Rhine-Westphalia, the Sporting State

NRW is leading the pack in many respects, especially when it comes to sport. The State Government and the *Landessportbund* umbrella organisation have created a network for sport, with the shared aim to strengthen volunteer work and community activities, to promote those sports that benefit social cohesion and to upgrade infrastructure and sports facilities. The *Landessportbund*, for example, has five million members and comprises just under 20,000 clubs. In North Rhine-Westphalia, hundreds of thousands of club members and amateur athletes enjoy more than 10,000 sports facilities, amongst them numerous smaller gymnasiums and pitches as well as indoor and outdoor swimming pools. On the other side of the spectrum are some major installations such as the large and well-known football stadiums, the Mönchengladbach Hockey Park or the bobsleigh track at Winterberg.

North Rhine-Westphalia, the Sporting State, is known for a multitude of activities and initiatives in and around competitive sports. Competitive sport plays an important role because it provides incentives, generates role models and builds character.

With the '*Leistungssport 2020*' programme to produce top end young talent, the *Landessportbund*, the Olympic Centres, the Sports Foundation and the North Rhine-Westphalia Government have been paving the way for lasting and focussed talent identification and support. Areas the programme centres on include an upgrade of the cooperative system of school and competitive sport, a more consistent approach to the use of science in sport coaching, a better focus on talent-spotting and everything that relates to the balance of work, family and competitive sport.

Observed by a nationwide audience, new strategies are being tested to improve coaching and competition structures for children and teenage athletes. The key aim is a versatile basic training routine that covers every sport and helps build coordination, strength and endurance. Here, too, in this vitally important field - identifying and

developing athletic talent in a humane and ethical fashion - North Rhine-Westphalia is amongst the leaders in Germany.

At the same time, it not just competitive sport that matters in North Rhine-Westphalia. The Sporting State is committed to sport in all its varieties, which includes recreational sports, club and school sport, sport for the disabled and special integration projects for disadvantaged communities. An example that stands out is the *KommSport* project, a locally-based government programme initiated by the State Government and *Landessportbund NRW* with the aim to enable children and young people to play sports - preferably in clubs - in a way that is tailored to their individual needs. The project is directed to children with athletic abilities as well as those with extra needs.

An outstanding network of facilities, a succession of major events, considerable input from private sector and state government as well as a number of eminent figures - those things are necessary but not sufficient to ensure that North Rhine-Westphalia remains a highly visible and attractive sports hub. What is needed first and foremost is a population stacked with sports enthusiasts, a region called home by many different nationalities, where people love to play host to the world.

Where if not here? Who if not we here in NRW? Fans will travel the length and breadth of the state in order to follow their favourite sport, to see their team play. This is perhaps our greatest strength, a collective identity combined with a love for sport. The most populous state in the nation is united in diversity and always ready for the challenges of competition.

**North Rhine-Westphalia Government**

**Ministry of Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sport**

**Haroldstr. 4, 40213 Düsseldorf, ☎ (0211) 837 - 4141**