

Finland. The mission of Finnish Sports Academies is to assist young elite athletes to pursue their education, while also training and competing at an elite level. There are 15 sport academies in the Finnish Sport Academy Network regulated by the Finnish Olympic Committee. In Lahti region Päijät-Häme Sports Academy (PHSA) was started as a project in 2005 coordinated by Lahti University of Applied Sciences and now it is an independent network association. PHSA helps regional top athletes to integrate studies and sports, and even work if necessary, together. There are almost 100 student-athletes, several study counsellors and coaches in action. The backup given to the student-athletes by PHSA varies from professional coaching and testing, muscle balance analysis, mental training and sports psychology, sport physician, physiotherapy and massage, training equipments and facilities to study guidance and career counselling. Lectures are also held on subjects such as anti-doping, an athlete's nutrition, media skills, sport ethics and life management. The PHSA strategic sports are basketball, judo, ski jumping and figure skating. Other PHSA support sports are ice hockey, soccer, volleyball, track and field, cross country skiing, golf and wrestling. Our values are veracity and openness, athlete-driven, co-operation, responsibility and equity. Finnish Sport Academy system helps student-athletes to play and triumph successfully. It makes dreams come true.

**161 SPORTS ACADEMIES: THE WAY TO WIN**

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The aim of this abstract is to review the policies and practices of sports academies as a part of the elite sport system in