High Schools for Athletes
Research Project
Case Study One
Centre Sport-Etudes Lausanne
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Centre Sport-Etudes Lausanne

“A school without a school, a sports club without a club”

Introduction

Located in the Olympic Stadium Pontaise complex, Centre Sport-Etudes Lausanne is an athletic academy for young people between the ages of 15 to 20. Admission is predicated upon referral from an affiliated sports club or federation. Founded in 2002 in partnership with The Olympic Solidarity Commission, The City of Lausanne, The Canton of Vaud, FC Lausanne Sport and the Lausanne Hockey Club, the Centre currently has an enrollment of 30 interns, a combination of boarders and day-students across seven sports. The school charges a fee of 550 Swiss Francs a month, in return for boarding accommodation, academic mentoring and sport based training programmes.

Centre Sport-Etudes Lausanne does not describe itself exclusively as a school, but rather as preparation and development hub for talented young athletes. Each student attends a nearby high school or apprenticeship institution and studies a full, regular curriculum. The Centre therefore serves as a focused support base for tomorrow’s elite sports men and women.

Facilities

The Centre comprises of dormitories, a dining room, classrooms and social areas, and also supports a small team of administrative and pastoral staff. Students conduct the majority of their sport training and mainstream academic study off site, in their affiliated sports club and school.

Meals are provided in the Centre for all students, supervised by a qualified sports nutritionist chef. Breakfast opens at 06:30 and daytime meals are available up to 18:30 to accommodate the varying schedules of each student. Nutritional management is an important component of the Centre’s work, including for students who return home from the school on evenings and weekends.

Additional support

The core focus of the Centre Sport Etudes Lausanne is to manage a package of support around each young athlete, with a particular emphasis on ‘life after sport’. Alongside supplemental academic tutoring, the Centre offers:

- Structured packages of psychological support, with a focus on motivation, self awareness, stress management and personal wellbeing.

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- Regular seminars on topics such as preparing for a professional sport career, media management, nutrition and sport medicine.
- In partnership with the University Hospital of Lausanne, a rapid medical referral system operates to manage sport injuries.

The Centre therefore operates as an oversight body for its students, a primary coordination agent between the best external specialists in each area of a young athlete’s sporting, academic and personal development priorities.

In the words of one student, “I will never forget the years I spent at Centre Sport Etudes Lausanne, an ideal environment for my development not only as an athlete but also as a person. The future of sport needs places like this.”

Curriculum

The duration of enrollment with the Centre Sport Etudes Lausanne varies between students and is dependent on each individual’s training needs, however a minimum enrollment of one year is usually required. Students typically graduate with a high school diploma (Maturié Suisse) or a Vocational degree certificate (Certificat Federal de Capacites).

Partnerships

For the 2012-13 season, clubs and federations for seven sports are affiliated with the Centre Sports-Etudes Lausanne: ice hockey, football, basketball, badminton, tennis, fencing and dance.

The Centre also operates a ‘fan club’ for benefactor organisations of a commercial nature and, in partnership with its affiliated sports clubs, offers fan club members discounted season tickets to local handball, basketball, volleyball and football clubs. This initiative helps to maintain the institution’s position as a growing bridge between Lausanne’s network of youth sport and the wider sphere of professional sport in the capital of the Olympic movement.

Suggestions

This solution seems to work very well as a multi partnership model between the centre, host city and local schools, the obvious advantage is that the service can accommodate a number of different schools through the centre acting as an ‘athlete hub’ and the school’s ‘education partner spokes’.

For further information the centre’s website is http://www.csel.ch/

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