



**WelshBoxing**

BocsioCymru

# PERFORMANCE STRATEGY

2023-2026  
Head of Performance  
November 2023



## Executive Summary

The previous two Commonwealth Games cycles has seen exponential change in the of delivery of the Welsh Boxing Performance Programme. This 8-year period has seen the implementation of a centralised Elite Programme training Monday-Thursday and a semi-centralised National Development Programme training Friday-Sunday.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic the Performance Programme has seen continuous unrest:

- Sport Wales Institute changes
- Russia / Belarus war on Ukraine
- IOC / IBA / World Boxing situation
- Multiple staffing changes

The Programme has been tested and had to be adaptable, learning new ways of working while maintaining an upward trajectory in boxer development to ensure the continued delivery of medals on the world stage. There is hope 2024-2026 will bring a period of stability as the Programme settles into its new way of working with Sport Wales, new staff members come in and bolster the programme and settle into their roles and the world governing body issues are resolved.

The four-month gap between the previous Performance Director leaving post and the new Head of Performance coming into post demonstrated the low levels of autonomy within the performance programme staff and highlighted the lack of sustainability within the systems built and operationalised over the last two cycles due to a lack of engagement with wider staff. The vision for the future of the Welsh Boxing Performance Programme is to create a culture of high performance and high enjoyment, where staff are empowered to make decisions, take ownership of their area of work within the programme and build a highly functioning, sustainable programme.

The undertaking of a programme needs analysis was the first stage in developing the new performance strategy. Identifying the areas within the spectrum of performance that Welsh Boxing currently impacts on and does well and where investment and resource was required. This needs analysis was led by the staff carrying out day to day operations and ensured an accurate representation of the current climate was gathered. On completion of the needs analysis, there was a realisation that the Welsh Boxing Performance Programme should focus on three main areas:

1. Clearer strategic intent of financial investment in the programme.
2. Better interaction with female boxers to allow us to build the potential of winning female medals at the 2030 Commonwealth Games and beyond.
3. Refocus and refinement of Sport Science and medicine practices, that can impact the performance environment.

This strategy outlines our vision and approach for the programme up until the 2026 Commonwealth Games, focusing on key areas of development, growth, and ensuring the best possible chance of delivering success on the world stage. The Welsh Boxing Performance Programme will focus on short term strategic objectives allowing the programme to deliver

success at the 2026 Commonwealth Games while having a separate focus on longer term strategic objectives creating sustainability in the excellent work delivered across the whole performance system, allowing Welsh boxers and coaches to hit the ground running into the next Commonwealth Games cycle.

## **Welsh Boxing Performance Programme**

### **The Vision**

Inspire excellence, foster success: Empower Welsh Boxers to deliver medals on the world stage.

### **The Mission**

Build a world leading, athlete centred boxing performance programme.

**Objective: Create an Elite Programme that can win medals at the 2026 Commonwealth Games and account for 10% of the World Class Programme**

The Elite Programme has delivered unprecedented success over the last three Commonwealth Games cycles delivering 15 medals and producing numerous boxers that have transitioned onto the World Class Programme and competed at the Olympic Games.

While wholesale change is not required, a refinement of our practices will be required to combat the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia/Belarus war, and the World Governing Body situation on boxer development.

The challenge faced by the Elite Programme this cycle will be the continuity of performance principles. Rather than a smooth transition post Birmingham the programme has started a rebuild with inexperienced boxers. These challenges have come in the form of an exodus of experienced boxers from the Elite Programme to GB Boxing and the professional ranks at the back end of the last cycle. While two boxers were retained post Birmingham, they were both 18 years of age, inexperienced at senior level and had spent a small amount of time in the Elite Programme. Any opportunity to keep continuity within the Elite Programme in areas such as performance behaviours has been lost. The boxers that have transitioned from the semi-centralised programme to the Elite Programme post Birmingham 2022 are far less experienced than in the previous cycle in bout volumes, training history in a performance programme setting and exposure to holistic boxer development. Consistency of delivery within the Elite programme will help combat this issue, whilst a focus should be on a strong coach to boxer ratio ensuring each boxer gets quality contact time to fast track their development. The same consideration should be considered with SSM practitioners supporting with holistic development strategies.

Post Birmingham 2022 a real focus will be needed in developing meaningful experience for the inexperienced boxers. The strategic intent financially will be to invest heavily into competitive opportunities and sparring camps to develop the boxer's awareness and experience of international boxing whilst giving them an opportunity to develop the technical and tactical requirements of international boxing. Repeated exposure to international boxing environments will also allow the boxers to develop the psychosocial skills needed to succeed on the World Stage.

Below is a minimum delivery standard for the Elite Programme. This minimum delivery standard will align with the delivery of the World Class Programme for contact days, international tournaments, and training camps. An earlier exposure to bespoke holistic development through integrated SSSM will also smooth the transition for Elite Programme level into the World Class Programme.

The athlete to coach / practitioner ratios demonstrates how we intend to fast track the development of the Elite Programme athletes that have had their development hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Minimum Delivery Standards of the Elite Programme

<b>Performance Leadership</b>	Head of Performance – Full-Time
<b>Programme Management</b>	Performance Administrator – Part-Time
<b>Coaching</b>	
Lead Coach	X 1 Elite Programme Coach to Athlete Ratio 1:3 minimum
Coaches	X 3 Elite Programme Coach to Athlete Ratio 1:3 minimum
<b>Sport Science &amp; Sport Medicine</b>	
Performance Analysis	X 1 minimum of a part-time practitioner
Strength and Conditioning	3 sessions a week minimum as part of a periodised training plan Maximum of 1:8 practitioner to athlete ratio
Doctor	Available every Tuesday Reactive work as and when appropriate
Physio	Access 3 evenings a week Maximum of 1:8 practitioner to athlete ratio
Nutrition	Project based support. Once a fortnight minimum contact time Maximum of 1:8 practitioner to athlete ratio
Physiology	4 centralised running sessions per week as part of a periodised training plan
<b>Training</b>	
Contact days per annum	200-225 Contact Days per year
International camps per annum	Minimum of 3 International Camps per year
<b>Competitions</b>	
Domestic Competitions per annum	Minimum of 3 Domestic Competitions per year
International Competitions per annum	Minimum of 6 International Competitions per year

**Objective: Create alignment and smooth transitions at every stage of the pathway.**

**Overview:**

The Performance Pathway has been highly successful since its inception in 2017, the National Development Programme identified and developed five of the nine boxers that went to Birmingham 2022, these boxers delivered four of the six medals won in boxing by Team Wales. Of the six Welsh boxers on the World Class Programme, five have come through the National Development Programme.

This success has come from strategic alignment from the World Class Programme all the way down to entry level of the National Development Programme. Creating a principle of three performance pillars has seen huge success in boxer development. Through these three pillars of performance the World Class Programme's "The Pathway to Success" principles have been embedded.

**Figure 1:**

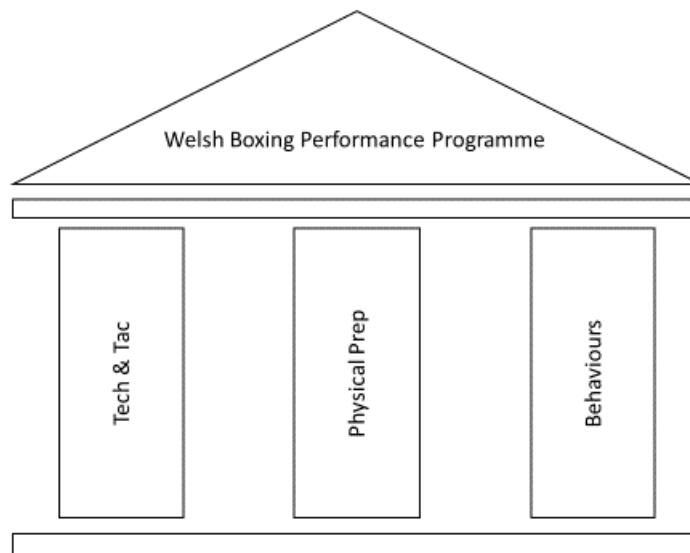


Figure 1 demonstrates the Welsh Boxing Performance Programme's three pillars of performance.

While skilled Sport Science practitioners will not be available from Sport Wales in the same capacity, they were in previous cycles at NDP level, the four new performance support projects carried out with the Sport Wales institute will take a system wide and age and stage appropriate approach to boxer development. This will ensure that every athlete continues to get individualised holistic development. It will be crucial to ensure that at every transition stage of the Performance Pathway, boxers are as well rounded in their development as they have been in previous cycles.

Wholesale change is not required at NDP level, and this strategy will only support to reinforce the work done previously. However, with the ever-changing landscape of international boxing the Pathway needs to be innovative and adaptable to continue a production line of international ready boxers to the Elite Programme. With a reduction in lighter weight categories there will be a need to look to the heavier weight categories ensuring we are effectively identifying heavier

boxers with potential and providing suitable investment and meaningful experience to fast track their development in a country with very few heavy boxers.



Strategies	Tactics
Create an apprentice programme that sits between Development and the Elite Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early identification of potential 2030 Commonwealth Games Medallists</li> <li>• Attend more joint international tournaments Junior, Youth and Elite as a whole programme.</li> <li>• Create a smooth transition to the Full-Time programme through exposure to the environment through sparring opportunities.</li> <li>• Contract boxers earlier to stop them turning pro if they miss out on the current cycle.</li> </ul>
Smooth transitions between different programmes through solid athlete welfare processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement induction programme.</li> <li>• Implement Exit Processes</li> <li>• Athlete voice panel</li> <li>• Individual Development plans &amp; Athlete Reviews</li> </ul>
Fine tune strategic alignment from World Class Programme level to entry level of National Development Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop age and stage appropriate clear measurable KPIs (performance tracking)</li> <li>• Clear focus on technical &amp; tactical requirements of international boxing</li> <li>• Development of Performance Behaviours profile</li> <li>• Integration of SSSM disciplines through Sport Wales Performance Projects</li> </ul>

**Objective: Consistently identify and develop potential female Commonwealth Games medallists who will ultimately contribute towards our goal of accounting for 10% of the World Class Programme.**

## **Overview**

Welsh female boxers have excelled on the world stage delivering Major Championship medals at Senior and Age Grade level consistently over the last 10 years. However, Welsh Boxing have lost several experienced female international boxers since the 2018 Commonwealth Games and 2020 Olympic Games. Post the 2024 Olympic Games and 2026 Commonwealth Games there is likely to be a further exodus.

Whilst the success of female boxers on the international stage has been unparalleled for a nation of our size not enough focus or investment has been put in place to maintain the success and create a conveyor belt of talent that can produce Commonwealth Games medals and achieve a place on the World Class Programme moving forward.

Since the introduction of female boxing at London 2012, there has been a phased increase in female weight categories at the Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games as boxing moves towards gender parity in quota places in both competitions. Due to the very small number of competitive female boxers in Wales an urgent performance programme intervention is required to fast track female boxer development, providing contact time with the best available coaches, and providing more appropriate competitive opportunities.

There will be three challenges to address within this performance cycle and this strategy:

1. Create a team of female boxers capable of winning medals at the 2026 Commonwealth Games
2. Identify and develop the foundations of a group of female boxers that can deliver medals at the 2030 Commonwealth Games
3. Create a sustainable coach led female talent identification and talent development system to ensure a stream of potential female boxers through the performance pathway.

Strategies	Tactics
Pilot a sustainable and effective multi phased talent identification process to identify potential female international boxers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt current Tech &amp; Tac TID expectations to an appropriate level.</li> <li>• Give multiple assessment opportunities to female boxers.</li> <li>• Create a competitive assessment opportunity.</li> </ul>
Create a critical mass, populating the pathway with potential future Commonwealth Games medallists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a transfer programme where Welsh Qualified Boxers boxing in other nations can be assessed and offered the opportunity to join the Welsh Boxing Performance Programme.</li> <li>• Work with key stakeholders to create a system wide approach to talent development in Great Britain.</li> </ul>
Maximise female boxer contact time giving boxers maximum learning opportunity with best available coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Performance calendar for the whole programme.</li> <li>• Plan Female Development Programme camps alongside the other two programmes to ensure fair opportunity for dates.</li> <li>• Collaborate with GB, England, and Scotland to provide shared training camps, dual matches or other competition.</li> <li>• Provide a minimum of 45 contact days a year to the female development programme</li> </ul>
Create a domestic and international training and competition programme to provide programme boxers with a progressive stream of meaningful experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify current competitive opportunities.</li> <li>• Field more female boxers at domestic and international events</li> <li>• Create more competitive opportunities for Welsh female boxers.</li> <li>• Identify further sparring opportunities for Welsh female boxers.</li> <li>• Create catch weight contests at Welsh National Championships to ensure</li> </ul>
Create a team of female boxers capable of winning medals at the 2026 Commonwealth Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify if any previous female WBPP or WCP boxers could return.</li> <li>• Identify any female Welsh professional boxers that could transition back to Olympic style boxing.</li> <li>• Develop a retention strategy for current female WCP boxers post Paris 2024 Olympics.</li> </ul>

## Objective: Build a world leading coaching team

### Overview

The Welsh Boxing Performance Programme's highest area of risk is currently within performance coaching. Through this strategy and clearly defined objectives, the Head of Performance and Head of Coaching will address this risk creating sustainability and a highly effective coaching team.

1. Succession planning for leadership of the Elite Programme
2. Talent identification of potential performance coaches
3. Coach development of recruited potential performance coaches.
4. Improve the diversity of the performance coaching team by identifying, recruiting, and developing Welsh Boxing's first female performance coach.

**Figure 2:**

Name	Role	DoB	Age	Qualification
<b>Contracted Staff</b>				
Colin Jones	Head of Coaching	21/03/1959	64	IBA 3*
Zack Davies	Lead Development Coach	11/02/1992	31	IBA 2*
Connor Gething	Lead Elite Coach	05/08/1995	28	IBA 2*
<b>Session Based Coaches</b>				
Martin Anthony	Programme Coach	10/03/1973	50	IBA 2*
Mike Smyth	Programme Coach	22/02/1970	53	IBA 2*
Brian Ahmed	Programme Coach	02/09/1962	61	IBA1*
Stephen Brophy	Programme Coach	20/02/1958	65	IBA1*
Carl Stephens	Programme Coach	05/03/1968	55	WABA Club Coach Award
Sean McGoldrick	Programme Coach	03/12/1991	31	WABA Club Coach Award

Figure 2 shows the current performance programme coaches' age profile and qualification status.

Figure 2 demonstrates the risk within performance coaching. Currently there are only six session-based programme coaches within the Performance Programme this number is precariously low in relation to our key metrics of success in training and competition contact days delivery. This is compounded by the fact two of these six coaches are unable to attend international competitions as they are yet to undertake the IBA coaching qualifications. Currently only one coach within the programme has an IBA 3\* qualification. The IBA competition and technical rules state every lead coach at an Elite Major Championships must have an IBA 3\* qualification, we are in a precarious position if the Head of Coaching were unable to attend an Elite Major Championship, we would not be able to send a team. When multiple areas of the programme competing or training at the same time the performance programme has previously been unable to staff events appropriately this will only be exaggerated by the addition of the new semi-centralised Female Development Programme.

A recruitment drive was carried out in 2022 by the former Performance Director, however when coming into the post the Head of Performance and Head of Coaching decided the applications were not appropriate to continue that process and alternative talent identification of coaches will need to be undertaken. A previously successful strategy has been to identify former Welsh GB Boxing Programme boxers and former Welsh Commonwealth Games boxers to transition into the coaching team. This approach has been highly successful for two reasons:

1. Performance Programmes are still very new in the sport of boxing. Those that have previous experience as athletes within performance programmes can transfer their knowledge into coaching quickly.
2. The technical and tactical demands of international boxing differ greatly from domestic boxing. The knowledge developed as an athlete competing at this level can be transferred into coaching quickly.

A staffing restructure will need to take place in the coaching team. In the previous cycle the Assistant National Coach role moved to Lead Elite Coach where their responsibility was to lead the Elite area of the WBPP under the guidance of the Head of Coaching. This staff member left, and the Head of Coaching took back day to day leadership of the Elite Programme. The Coach Education Lead moved into the performance coaching team however a clearly defined role and job description wasn't in place.

A new look coaching structure will see the Head of Coaching line manage all coaching staff. The Lead Development Coach title will change to National Development Coach to bring the job title in line with the HR pay bandings. The other coach will become National Assistant Coach to the Head of Coaching on the Elite Programme. A new coach will be recruited for support across the whole performance programme called National Programme Coach.

Figure 3:

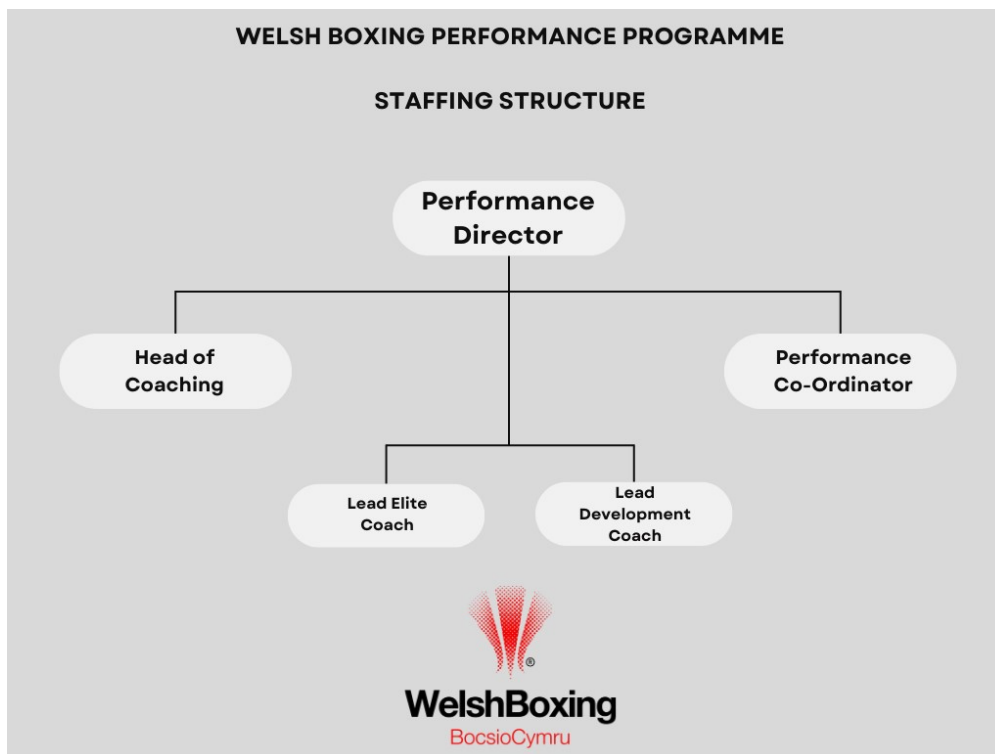


Figure 3 is the 2018-2022 Performance staffing structure.

Figure 4:

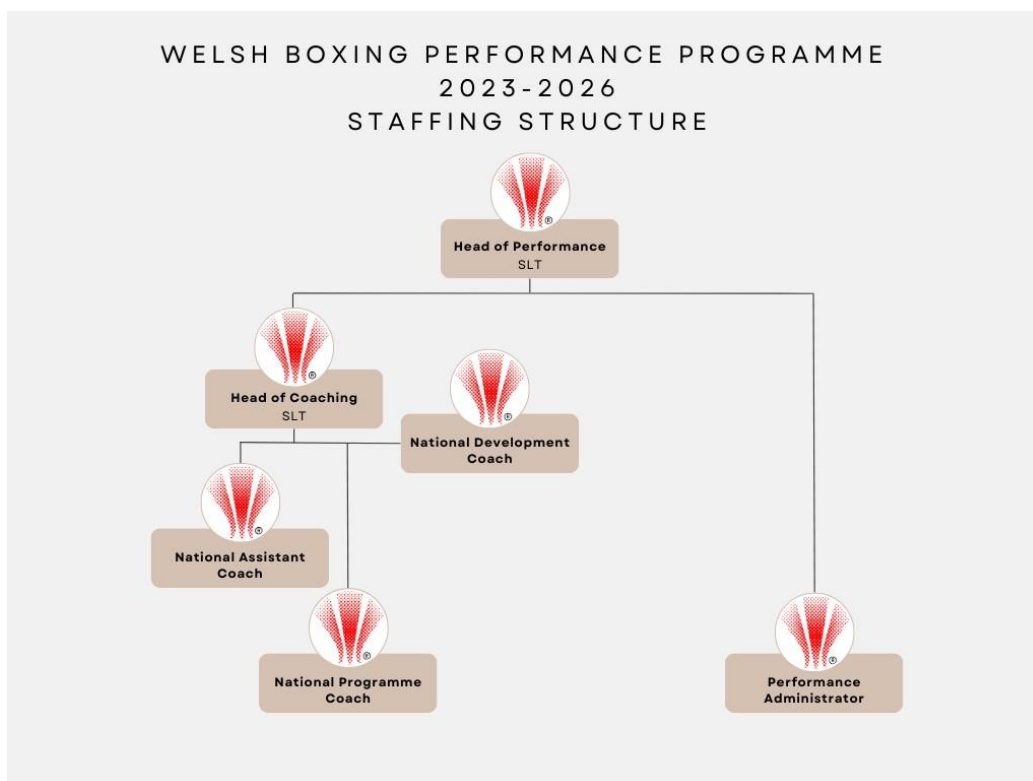


Figure 4 is the 2023-2026 Performance staffing

Strategies	Tactics
<p>Ensure every session-based coach is IBA qualified.</p> <p>Ensure all contracted coaches are IBA 3* qualified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a working partnership with IBA Director of Development</li> <li>• Head of Performance to support coaches with application process.</li> <li>• Provide suitable support to all coaches completing IBA qualifications e.g., access to the National Boxing Centre for assessments, or time off work to complete courses</li> </ul>
<p>Re-populate the Performance Programme coaching pool.</p> <p>Identify, recruit, and develop WBPP first female coach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Performance and Head of Coaching to identify potential athletes that can transition into coaching.</li> <li>• Put on WABA coaching qualifications for Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games team.</li> <li>• Work with GB Boxing to access the UK Sport athlete to coach transition programme.</li> <li>• Head of Performance and Head of Coaching to identify first female performance coach.</li> <li>• Continue to scout for coaches at club level that could transition into performance coaching</li> </ul>
<p>Succession plan of coaching leadership role of WBPP Elite Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plot all current WBPP coaches on a performance x potential matrix with HoC.</li> <li>• Identify potential candidates for the leadership role with the Elite Programme</li> <li>• Identify potential external candidates that would be attainable considering salary etc.</li> <li>• Work with potential internal candidates to identify their areas of development against the current HoC job description through; quarterly line management meetings, appraisals, or annual reviews for session-based staff.</li> <li>• Provide 1:1 bespoke coach development support for internal candidates.</li> <li>• Retain the Head of Coaching in some capacity post 2026 CWG to ensure a smooth transition</li> </ul>
<p>Launch the apprentice coach programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify coaches from both the current coaching network in Wales and current or former international boxers who show an aptitude for performance coaching.</li> <li>• Provide bespoke 1:1 coach development support.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for apprentice coaches to attend camps and competitions with experienced international coaches</li> </ul>

**Objective:** Create an athlete centred Performance Programme through individualised holistic development and welfare processes underpinned by sport science and medicine

**Overview:**

The last two Commonwealth Games cycles have seen the Elite Programme supported by a multi-disciplinary team of Sport Wales sport scientists. This bespoke 1:1 integrated support provided vital in achieving two highly successful Commonwealth Games

Sport Wales have now changed their model for athlete support services providing only project-based support, to create a culture of systemic change further down the pathway. This new way of working will create better performance behaviours and more holistically developed athletes in the longer term meaning there is less bespoke performance interventions required. However, in the short term there will be athletes on the Elite Programme that require bespoke.

**What it takes to win model:**

**At a Commonwealth Games boxers need to be able to win 5 times in a 7- or 8-day period to win a gold medal.**

This requires boxers to be physically and mentally robust and able to make weight everyday they compete. If safe weight making practices aren't adhered to and boxers aren't physically robust the boxers won't be able to deliver the level of performance required to win a medal at a Commonwealth Games or transition onto the World Class Programme.

Over the course of this Performance Strategy Welsh Boxing will engage in four specific performance projects with Sport Wales to underpin the "what it takes to win" model:

1. Safe weight making and weight management.
2. Athlete centred environments and performance behaviours.
3. Athletic development – physical prep & periodisation
4. Individualised holistic development plans for every boxer on the pathway.
5. A coach led rebuild of the Athlete Management System (Smartabase), creating sustainability and autonomy for coaching staff when making performance decisions.

Medical support and sport science disciplines don't lend themselves as easily to project-based work (e.g., Physiotherapy and Performance Analysis) but still play a role in delivering performance on the international stage, the Head of Performance will identify and recruit sport science and medical practitioners to provide more bespoke and day to day operational support.



Strategies	Tactics
Every boxer on the performance programme is physically robust ensuring training durability and tournament durability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure National Development Coach, National Assistant Coach and a number of the session-based programme coaches complete UKSCA Level 3 Strength and Conditioning Trainer Qualification, through Sport Wales to ensure strength and conditioning sessions can continue to be delivered across all areas of the performance programme.</li> <li>• Carry out tissue capacity testing and movement competency screening to ensure athletes can tolerate the training volumes needed, ensuring tournament durability.</li> <li>• Qualified UKSCA coaches to design relevant training interventions if necessary.</li> </ul>
Holistically develop athletes. Instil a culture where physical prep is the norm at every level of the pathway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate every athlete around benefits of physical prep to technical and tactical performance.</li> <li>• Instil <b>Autonomy, Focus and Intent Model</b> in all boxers through education and training behaviours.</li> <li>• <b>Autonomy</b> – Every boxer takes personal ownership for meeting required standards and achieving improvements, underpinned by Smartabase.</li> <li>• <b>Focus</b> – Boxers apply the necessary mental effort to master exercise techniques consistently and effectively.</li> <li>• <b>Intent</b> – Boxers apply the necessary physical effort to achieve optimal adaptation.</li> </ul>
Create a coach lead environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a needs analysis on sport science and medicine with performance staff.</li> <li>• After budgeting to meet our key metrics for success. Identify surplus budget that can be used for sport science and medicine support.</li> <li>• Recruit identified sport science and medicine consultants as necessary.</li> </ul>
Rebuild AMS ensuring it is coach led and user friendly for athletes and underpins the delivery of the “what it takes to win model”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete situational analysis</li> <li>• Engage coaching staff to ensure re-build is coach led.</li> <li>• Influence boxers younger</li> <li>• Solid feedback processes</li> <li>• Automated IDPs</li> </ul>