



**ULSTER UNIONIST
MINI-MANIFESTO MAY 2005**

Building Our SPORTING FUTURE



At both elite level and in our local communities, **Northern Ireland is passionate about sport**. We celebrate and support participation, just as much as we salute championship achievements. Participation in sports provides better health outcomes for people of all ages. It also teaches important values – volunteerism, cooperation, leadership, teamwork, meeting challenges, pursuing excellence. Alongside this, 8 out of 10 people from across the community say that it is important that Northern Ireland achieves international sporting success.

Ulster Unionists advocate an agenda for sport in Northern Ireland that will both encourage excellence and success at elite level, as well as promote and support participation in sports by people of all ages and all backgrounds across Northern Ireland.

Ulster Unionists
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Our Sporting Future: Ulster Unionist Pledges...

Implementing the Northern Ireland Soccer Strategy:

It was an Ulster Unionist Minister in the Devolved Administration who set up the taskforce which produced the Soccer Strategy and provided an investment of £8million for Northern Ireland soccer. Ulster Unionists are committed to initiatives which will secure a sustainable long-term future for soccer in Northern Ireland. We will continue to support implementation of the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Soccer Strategy, which must be carried forward in a close working partnership between DCAL and the IFA.

The enduring and widespread popularity of football in Northern Ireland is testimony to sport's ability to unite communities. Ulster Unionists support the IFA and Community Relations Council programme 'Football For All' as a means of ensuring that sectarianism and racism have no place in Northern Ireland football.

Promoting Sports in School:

1 in 5 children in the UK today are clinically obese. This illustrates the importance of the health benefits of sporting participation and PE in school. Parents and teachers are also aware of the social benefits that flow from sports and PE, promoting values that prepare our children and young people for life. Ulster Unionists support the recommendation of the Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland that PE remains a mandatory component of the curricula for all key stages. It is essential that resources and investment are secured to ensure this.

Sport in schools, however, is about more than PE. The commitment of teachers and schools, which is central to after-schools sporting activity, must be recognised. Building links between schools and local sporting clubs is another way of providing children and young people with additional access to sport and to those committed to passing on sporting skills. Ulster Unionists will support initiatives that seek to build on and increase these partnerships.

Bureaucracy gets in the way of Sport:

The enthusiasm of those involved as both professionals and volunteers in sport can be hindered through the unnecessary bureaucracy and red-tape in Government-funded sporting programmes. Sports Development Officers should be freed from deskwork in order to work directly with local communities, schools and sporting organisations to promote both participation and excellence in sport.

Many of our sporting clubs and organisations throughout Northern Ireland rely on the dedication of volunteers. Every effort must be made by Government and statutory bodies to reduce the burden of red-tape on volunteers.

Sporting Talent of People with Disabilities:

The sporting achievement of Northern Ireland's Paralympians is both a source of pride and a reminder of the sporting potential of those with disabilities. Disability Sport Northern Ireland – representing disability sports groups and clubs – should receive funding proportionately equivalent to the disability sports bodies in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Ulster Unionists propose recognising the sporting talent, commitment and enthusiasm of people with disabilities through an annual Northern Ireland event – which would also promote greater participation by people with disabilities in our sporting life.

Partnership with Local Government:

It is in partnership with local government that sporting bodies have been enabled to attract world-class sporting events to Northern Ireland. Coleraine Borough Council's support for the NW 200 and Milk Cup, Carrickfergus Borough Council's support for the Rugby 7's tournament and Belfast City Council's support for the International Cricket Council's Trophy Ireland in July 2005 are stunning examples of what can be achieved when local government works in partnership with sporting bodies. In addition to the sporting benefits, such events have economic and tourism benefits – and they portray a positive image of Northern Ireland's place in the international community.

Ulster Unionists will continue to support partnerships between local government and sporting bodies, and urge similar projects.

Ulster Unionists back the London Olympics 2012 Bid...

If London's bid to host the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics is successful, Northern Ireland and the other regions of the UK stand to reap economic and sporting benefits. Ulster Unionists strongly support the London bid. It is vital that the Regional Steering Group set up by DCAL prepares a powerful case for Northern Ireland's involvement if the London bid is successful.



Local government in Northern Ireland, the hospitality industry and our sporting bodies have a proven track record in hosting world-class sporting events – because of this Northern Ireland should be a strong contender as a host for preparation camps for Olympic teams.



Our Sporting Future: Ulster Unionist Pledges...

Implementing the Northern Ireland Soccer Strategy

Promoting Sports in School

Reducing the burden of red-tape on Sporting Volunteers

Recognising the Sporting Talent of People with Disabilities

Partnership with Local Government

Backing the London 2012 Olympics Bid

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