



**SPORT DISPUTE
SOLUTIONS IRELAND**

Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland
Strategic Plan 2024 - 2029



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Introduction

Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland was established by the Federation of Irish Sport in response to the increasing prevalence of sporting litigation and the recognition, as endorsed by the High Court, that the courts are not the appropriate forum for the resolution of such disputes. SDSI is an independent specialised dispute resolution service for Irish Sport offering both a mediation and arbitration facility.

Sport Dispute Solutions Ireland is a fair, inexpensive and expeditious method of resolving disputes that remain unresolved after all the procedures owed for within the sport have been exhausted. In particular, the SDSI mediation procedure assists in avoiding more confrontational or costly methods of resolution for disagreements, conflicts or disputes with sport.

As of 2014, Sport Ireland funded bodies are required to be signed up to a dispute resolution mechanism. In many instances SDSI is provided for within the rules of a sporting body for such function.

It is a principal aim of SDSI that the mediation and arbitration processes offered by it will be cost-effective. We recognise that resources for many sports organisations and amateur athletes are scarce. SDSI therefore seeks to provide a more favourable alternative to pursuing what can be an expensive, protracted High Court action with all the potential for adverse publicity and damaging relations, such an action can entail, largely avoided. SDSI has been designed so that the parties need not be represented by lawyers, whether they are a sporting body, a national governing body or an athlete. Parties may of course choose to employ legal representation.

Arbitral awards handed down by SDSI are final, binding and enforceable in favour of and/or against the parties. The only instance in which an appeal against an arbitral award can be made is where the rules of a sporting organisation make provision for an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.

Proceedings shall be fair and expeditious. All arbitrators and/or mediators serving of the SDSI Arbitration and Mediation Panels are entirely independent, all are accredited arbitrator/mediators and have some interest in sport. The nature of sporting disputes are such that they generally need to be resolved quickly with a decision often required to determine for example, the ability of an athlete to participate in the next event which may only be days away. SDSI will endeavour to facilitate all such situations so that a resolution can be arrived at in a matter of days where required.

The SDSI Board and Federation of Irish Sport performed the organisations first strategic review ahead of implementing the 2019 – 2022 strategy. The newly commissioned strategy (2024 – 2029) will be focussed on continuing the growth of the previous strategic cycle and building upon the success of that period and strengthening the sustainability of SDSI for the future.



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VISION

“Resolving disputes in Irish sport”

MISSION

“To be the recognised independent disputes resolution service supporting Irish sport”

- ✓ **VALUES**
- ✓ **INTEGRITY** – is central to the fabric of SDSI and is demonstrated in the way all disputes processes and engagements are conducted.
- ✓ **FAIRNESS** – ensuring an open and transparent to all processes, clients and partners
- ✓ **ACCESSIBLE** – SDSI ensures that all of its services are fully accessible to those entitled to use them.
- ✓ **RESPECTFUL** – All parties involved in SDSI services conducting themselves in a respectful manner is central to the success of all processes.
- ✓ **EXCELLENCE** – SDSI strives to provide and excellent service to all users.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **AWARENESS** of Sport Disputes Services Ireland services.
2. **Continued PROVISION** of an excellent & accessible service.
3. **SUSTAIN** and develop service delivery.
4. **LEADING** best practice sports resolution services.



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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: AWARENESS of SDSI services	
ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote understanding of SDSI functions & activities as a dispute resolution body Improve profile, provision of services & information through website Deliver an annual SDSI event Participate in conferences or events wherever relevant Improved reporting Planned approach to education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of SDSI recognised by service users & funders Reduction of sports in court More stakeholders aware of the services provided Improved policies, procedures and resolution management in sector More disputes resolved internally in sports

Objective 2: Continued PROVISION of an excellent & accessible service.	
ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective mediation service delivered Effective arbitration service delivered Effective panel appointment Feedback on services provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolution of cases as appropriately Effective & sustainable Board and Board continuity Transparency in appointments Continued improvement/evolution of service delivery

Objective 3: SUSTAIN and develop service delivery	
ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of an appropriate structure Effective budget management Annual business plan in place Effective Board appointment & reappointment Review of fee structure Review of governance structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt Governance Code, relevant policies & processes Funding secured as necessary to deliver plan & services Ability to provide expert services/retain expertise Board composition & succession Appropriate constitution in place



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Objective 4: LEADING best practice sports resolution services

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective & transparent communications• Feedback from users• Benchmarking against appropriate systems• Education programme for service users• Provision of resources to sector in an accessible & understanding format• Supporting the development of panels/mentoring system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced knowledge of services• Informed continued improvement of service delivery & services available• Improved management of disputes throughout sector• More accessible service delivery• Most qualified individuals in place