



**ENGELSKA / ENGLISH**

# Sport – a great start in life

Whether you're young or old, sport offers the chance to get active, give yourself a challenge and enjoy yourself alongside other people. A sports club provides a sense of community and can be a place to meet new friends. Below, we explain how sport works in Sweden and how you can become a member of a sports club.

## **OPEN TO EVERYONE**

There are around 19,000 sports clubs in Sweden, and anyone who wants to can become a member. It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from, what your religious beliefs are, what language you speak or where

in Sweden you live, sports clubs are open to everyone, both children and adults. Many sports clubs welcome both people who want to get involved in competitive sport and those who want to enjoy the sport without competing.

## **WHAT SPORTS ARE THERE?**

Over three million people in Sweden are members of a sports club, almost one in three people, which is why sport is known as "Sweden's biggest popular movement". There are sports clubs throughout the country, both for individual sports, such as gymnastics, martial arts and skiing, and for team sports,

such as football, basketball or ice hockey. Some sports are mostly played during the summer, others are mainly winter activities. Ask your neighbour, your PE teacher or a friend what sports activities are available where you live and try a few out until you find something you enjoy.

## **CLUB ACTIVITIES ARE RUN BY VOLUNTEERS**

All sports clubs are essentially not-for-profit organisations. That means there is no owner and they are not required to make a profit. Members decide how the club will run its activities and help share responsibility for various tasks. For example, running coaching sessions on evenings or weekends, selling refreshments in a café or being an official at events the club organises. Sports clubs are

different from private companies where the employees are paid a salary.

Sports clubs derive their income from membership fees and grants from municipalities and the government. But this isn't usually enough to cover the costs of coaching sessions, hire of premises or travelling to competitions, so it's important that all members, both adults and young people, help out on a voluntary basis.

## HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

Almost all sports clubs have a website or a social media presence where you can find out who to contact if you want to join. It's often possible to try out the sport a few times first to see whether or not you enjoy it. But after that you'll need to become a member if you want to continue taking part in club activities.

To become a member, you'll need to give your name, email address, postal address and personal ID number. You then pay a

membership fee. You pay the membership fee once a year for as long as you want to continue being a club member. You need to give your ID number because it may be needed in the context of insurance or grants, but it won't be used for any purpose unrelated to the sport.

Clubs have procedures to manage the personal data of people with protected identities or those with a co-ordination number ('samordningsnummer').

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The cost of membership varies depending on the sport and whereabouts in the country you live.

For some sports, you may also need to supply the necessary equipment yourself. Some people choose to buy their equipment in second-hand shops or via adverts on the internet. Another option is to ask your club if they have equipment you can borrow. There are also organisations

that can help. One is Fritidsbanken, which lends out sports equipment free of charge for 14 days to anyone who wants to try out a sport or leisure activity.

Although there is a cost to being a member of a sports club, you will get a lot in return, such as coaching sessions, travel to events, being part of a community, a safe environment and a chance to make new friends.

## MEMBERS DECIDE

Not-for-profit clubs are democratic organisations. So, as a member, you are entitled to a say in how the club operates. Once a year, the club will have an annual meeting at which everyone who has paid a membership fee comes together to discuss and decide what the club will do in the coming year and how it will use its money.

At the annual meeting, every member has an individual vote. You can use your vote to help decide who should be on the club's committee. The committee is a group of people responsible for ensuring that the club adheres to any common rules and that it does what the meeting has decided.



## Frequently asked questions

### 1. Who can join a club?

**Answer:** The aim of the sports movement is that anyone should be able to join if they want to! Currently, clubs may vary, for example in the type of coaching sessions and number of places available.

### 2. Is it safe for my child to attend a sports club?

**Answer:** We do everything we can to ensure children feel safe, and club leaders are trained to learn how to create safe environments for children. Sports clubs also adhere to a set of core values, common rules that set out how people should behave; for example, there must be no bullying, violence and racism at the club.

### 3. What do I have to pay?

**Answer:** A membership fee and in some cases the costs of coaching and equipment. By getting involved in the club as a helper,

perhaps by acting as an official at an event or by selling lottery tickets, you can help keep costs down.

### 4. Why should I join a club?

**Answer:** To give you and your family a chance to exercise or work out, feel good, have fun and meet other people. For many people, the sports club is a place where they have friends and that they look forward to going to after school or work. They can also take part, have a say and get involved, alongside other people. For some, it can even be a route to employment.

### 5. What will I get as a member?

**Answer:** Members get to be part of a community, help to decide what the club does and take part in the activities available to all members.

## Some facts about RF and SISU

**Riksidrottsförbundet (RF – the Swedish Sports Confederation)**, is the umbrella organisation representing the whole sports movement with the task of supporting and developing sport in Sweden. RF brings together a total of 70 specialist sports federations, 19,000 sports clubs and approximately 3.3 million members. There are local and regional RF representatives throughout the country.

**SISU Idrottsutbildarna (SISU)** is the sports movement's own adult educational association. SISU provides general education and training for sports clubs, developing expertise and providing impetus for people's thoughts, ideas and willingness to grow and develop. There are also local and regional SISU representatives throughout the country.



## Useful words to know

**Popular movement** – A large group of people who have a common interest and who are organised throughout the country.

**Official** – A person at a sports club who helps out, for example at an event. They might help selling refreshments or other goods, show visitors to their seats or act as a referee, making sure everyone follows the rules of the event.

**Not-for-profit** – A club or organisation that does not seek to make a profit. A sports club is not-for-profit because its members help by taking on various jobs and tasks. Sports clubs are not the same as private companies where the employees are paid a salary.

**Sports club** – A sports club comprises a group of people who play, train and compete together in one or more sports. The Swedish word for sports club

(‘idrottsförening’) is usually abbreviated to IF. But some clubs may use other abbreviations, e.g., IK (‘idrottsklubb’), IS (‘idrottssällskap’) or SK (‘sportklubb’).

**Membership fee** – To be part of a sports club, you need to become a member. You become a member by paying a fee, a sum of money that you pay to the club once a year.

**Committee** – Every sports club has a committee elected by the members at the annual meeting. The committee's role is to lead the organisation's activities until the next annual meeting.

**Annual meeting** – A meeting held once a year for all the members of the club. Each member has a vote at the meeting. During the meeting, members decide who will be on the committee and what the club's activities will be in the coming year.