France holds third place in the Global Cup rankings of Greatest Sporting Nation (2021), a distinction awarded each year based on the results of international competitions in 77 sports. At the Olympic Games in Rio, France took 42 medals. It won 33 in the Tokyo Games and 54 at the Paralympics. In 2024, Paris will host the Olympic (July 26 - August 11) and Paralympic (August 28 - September 8) Games.

More than 35 million people in France (that is, two thirds of those 15 or older) engage in a physical or athletic activity at least once a week: walking, swimming, cycling, skiing, football, hiking, running, tennis, etc.).

The growth in athletic activity in France over the past 30 years has been accompanied by increased consumption of sporting goods and athletic services. The number of licenses issued by sports federations has also increased for all sports: 113 federations are recognized by the Ministry of Sports, enabling 16.4 million persons to engage in structured athletic activity. Health and relaxation are the primary motivations.

INSEP, France’s national institute of athletic assessment and performance, oversees the training of high-level athletes in cooperation with sports federations and with the goal of ensuring the academic and professional success of athletes.

Three national postsecondary schools have specialized missions in horseback riding, water sports, and mountain sports. They are, respectively, the Institut Français du Cheval and de l’Équitation, the École Nationale des Sports de Montagne, and the École Nationale de Voile et des Sports Nautiques, and the École Française du Cheval et de l’Équitation.

“Sports & Athletics” degree programs and university certification programs prepare students for sports-related occupations at all levels.

International

France is a great nation for organizing sporting events. In the past six years, France has hosted athletic contests in every sport. In 2016 the nation hosted European championships in football (for the third time, which is a record in itself), badminton, cycling, paralympics, archery, and triathlon. France hosted Europe’s championships in track and field and BMX cycling in 2017 and in women’s handball in 2018. World championships hosted by France include rock climbing and women’s squash in 2016, and, in 2017, sea rowing, canoe/kayak slalom, men’s handball, and men’s squash.

The country hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2018 (when France took the cup) and the women’s World Cup in 2019. It will host the rugby World Cup in 2023. The following year will see the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games. France also hosted the Olympic Games in 1900 and 1924 and the FIFA World Cup in 1938 and 1998.

Each year, other world-class competitions are organized—among them the Tour de France (cycling) since 1903, the French Open (tennis) since 1925, and the Grand Prix of Formula 1 racing since 1950.

Among many French champions enjoying worldwide reputations are the figure skating team of Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron, who have been European champions five times and world champions four times, most recently at the Beijing Winter Olympics, where they took home gold medals. Quentin Fillon Maillet has won five medals in the individual biathlon, including two golds. Julian Alaphilippe was the world’s cycling champion in 2020 and 2021. Others are Bernard Hinault, five-time winner of the Tour de France (as well as three in Italy and two in Spain); basketball player Tony Parker, who holds four NBA titles and led France to the European championship in 2013; skier Jean-Claude Killy, winner of four Olympic medals; Marie-Josée Pérec, Olympic double medalist in the 200- and 400-meter events; Alain Prost, winner of four world championships and 51 Formula 1 Grand Prix; and Teddy Riner, ten-time world champion in judo (including twice at the Olympics) and five times European champion.

France’s teams in a variety of disciplines have won world championships and Olympic medals: track and field, biathlon, fencing, soccer, handball, swimming, and more.

French brands of sporting goods and apparel are sold on all continents: Le Coq Sportif, Decathlon, Lacoste, Lafuma, Oxbow, Salomon, Vuarnet.

Useful links

• CNSNM (national center for Nordic and cross-country skiing): http://cnsnm.sports.gouv.fr
• DRJSCS (regional offices for youth sports and community cohesion): http://drdjscs.gouv.fr
• ENSM (national school of mountain sports): www.ensm.sports.gouv.fr
• ENVSN (national school of sailing and nautical sports): www.envsn.sports.gouv.fr
• FRANCE, Ministère de la jeunesse et des sports: www.sports.gouv.fr
• IFCE (French riding institute): www.ifce.fr
• National federation for vocational training in sports, recreation, and tourism: www.apprentissage-sport-animation-tourisme.com
• National Sports Agency: www.agencedusport.fr
• National sports and recreation federation: www.profession-sport-loisirs.fr
• Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympics Games: www.paris2024.org
• Directory of sports federations: www.sports.gouv.fr/annuaire-des-federations

Sources: Ministry of Sports
The MSc is awarded within the framework of a program accredited and delivered by a member of the CGE (the accrediting agency for France's Grandes Écoles).

List of MS programs:
www.cge.asso.fr/formations-labelisees/liste-formation-ms

Programs Taught in English:
Approximately ten Master 1 and Master 2 programs: Sport Leisure and Event Management, Sports Sciences and Health and Performance, Sciences in Sport and Tourism Management, International Sport, Sports Federations, Sports Photography, etc.

www.campusfrance.org > Students > Studying in France > Finding your program
www.esc-clermont.fr
www.audencia.com
www.estaca.fr