

## What do we preserve and what do we not?

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I work as an archivist at the National Archives in Stockholm, Sweden. I am responsible for sport archives and the questions from researchers. My half hour of work I spend at the Swedish Sports Confederation as an archivist and there I am responsible of the archive. I give guidance to other sport associations in Sweden on how to archive and not.

At the National Archives more or less all sports are represented and the archives are of overall good quality. The fact that the different sport clubs during many years were gathered under the same ceiling in a big “the sport's house” in Stockholm has been a big advantage for the preservation of their history. As they were sharing the same archival space as the Swedish Sports Confederation the organisations were able to take part of the guidance and expertise from the archivist who was employee at the Swedish Sports Confederation.

These archives were moved from the “sport's house” to the National Archives in 2003 which means that we now have good coverage of the sport history of Sweden. Some of the archives have been neglected and exposed to “the violence on archives” that I will discuss below.

### Violence on sports archives

There are many facts that we can call violence against the archives: the first part is the secretariat personnel who sometime is ignorant and show lack of interest to work with archives and storage them in substandard places.

Without expertise and guidance the risk is big that the archives fall in oblivion, not to be tended or entirely saved. This is what happens if someone for several years shows lack of interests for or doesn't understand that the archives are unique material and is impossible to find somewhere else.

This is the situation in most secretariats and this is one of the biggest problems for today's and the future's researchers.

An employee without interests for the archive and an archive scope that does not follow laws and rules is a big challenge for an archivist. It is almost impossible to take care about rests that have been saved without hatches in the material.

One can also speak about the economic threat against the archives. Most sport clubs have economical problems and the archive is often the last thing on what they spend their money.

Although one chooses to deliver the archive to an archive institution it often happens that one thins out the archive so considerable that in the end it is difficult to have a continuous picture of how the activity has functioned. One chooses to save minutes, but throws the basis and they thin out in its association register without realizing that this is the frame of the whole association.

In general I give the advice that an archive should consist of:

Records

In and outgoing correspondence

Diaries (if one uses such a system)

Registers

Documents arranged by topics – for example investigations, documents concerning personnel, grants, courses and conferences, equal sport, internal organisations and projects

Accounts

Statistics

Prints – for example the own magazine, press cuttings and different printed matters

Videocassettes or compact discs – productions of different games or meetings

Other documents – the ones that do not fit sort by the other sections

By saving these documents it is possible to follow how the organisation functioned. As for the records it is not only the record that is interesting but also the documents that led to how and why they decided the things you can read in the record. The correspondence, as well as the diaries, is interesting because you can follow the daily work at the organisation.

By looking at the registers you can see how big the organisation was and follow how it grew or not.

By the documents arranged by topics, accounts and statistics you can see how the organisation worked in projects, attended courses, worked for equal sport, worked internationally and how many were employee.

The prints are very important for many reasons. It is an easy way to get to know an organisation and the best way to find results and dates. If the organisation has a magazine it is very important to save every issue.

Videocassettes or compact discs are a brilliant way to find information *if* the organisation has enough money to copy them into modern technique, something that is not very common.

Other documents can be gifts from old members, as press cuttings and photographs. These are things that were not produced by the organisation, but are important for their history.

What is preserved or not?

The things I have mentioned above are usually saved by the organisations, but not always in the way and in the amount that I wish.

As I mentioned I find a record without the “background material” and the appendixes quite worthless. A decision made by a committee without information why the decision was made is not valuable for the researcher.

The things that are not saved, usually results from national and international competitions and championships, are often what is the most important for the history writing. To be able to follow how and why the associations participated in different championships tells us so much more than just the results.

### A collection of admission applications

At the National Archives, we have a fantastic collection of admission applications from a majority of associations that applied for membership to Swedish Sports Confederation during the decades 1930 and 1940.

In these admission applications, one can scan how and each association edified and which sports they would perform.

One can also scan memberships, chairmen's names, their first regulations and the data that the organisation was formed. This material is invaluable and a fantastic source for a started research. We have scanned these and by this fall they will be available on the Internet. This is made to avoid yet another factor that is dangerous for the archives, namely the fact that we archivists are very late in copying the originals to more modern formats. Those documents that are most sought-after should be, as far as possible, converted into data or to film so that the originals as far as possible stand unchanged.

### The future researches

In order to meet today's youth and the future researchers we must begin to intend ahead and to meet both their requirements and their needs. Today's researcher sets higher requirements on a more free production of and is more time pressed than yesterdays' researchers. Now, essays and dissertations will be typed on shorter time than before and researchers in the future will require both that the material will be sent via mail and that they can visit our archive institutions during the evenings.

### The biggest threat in modern times

This is a big danger for the archives – the fact that we become available for a small, privileged group of researchers that have free time in the day and are able to spend their time with this material during longer time. These researchers will become fewer and fewer ahead since their time pressed schedule will require more of them during shorter time.

At the National Archives, we have, as I mentioned above, most sports represented with their central organisation. However, the archives stand before the biggest threat in modern times. The fast development of databases and the Internet leaves many organisations powerless before how they will be able to save its archives and when this will happen.

Today, the whole associations' activity happens more or less digital. All information exists to retrieve via the homepages and the association registers lies today in databases. Nowadays everything happens via the computer and changes are seldom saved, since there is a constant flow in the databases. This threat is an unresolved problem that tomorrow's researchers will stand powerless before.

And the ones to stand to reply are we, the archivists. We can only notice the problem but not resolve it.