

## **Great Britain Youth Trips Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

British Fencing has this season (2010 – 2011) centralised all GB trips for Juniors and Cadets in response to comments and requests from Parents. We have therefore established a new governance structure to manage these trips, along with an online system to allow athletes to register easily for trips and a logistics manager to look after the travel and accommodation. We have looked at other successful National governing Bodies to help us with good practice. These FAQs will hopefully explain how the International Structure works for Junior and Cadet Trips.

### **How will this differ from previous seasons?**

We have reviewed our committee structure and openly recruited for all positions on the International Committee (IC) and the three Weapons Committees. The International Committee is responsible for delivering the International Programme and managing the Weapon Committees. Each Weapon has someone responsible for leading an age group, these are Weapon Captains and with the Weapon Chairs and Vice Chairs make up the Weapon Committees. The International and Weapon Committees got together with others involved in youth trips for a conference on the 27<sup>th</sup> June and planned for the season, including selection policies and processes.

This will mean that all GB trips for Juniors and Cadets will be run in a uniform way across all weapons and age groups. This will help parents, athletes and coaches to know what can be expected and also to help achieve greater transparency. Each trip will have a designated Chef de Mission who will be responsible for managing each trip and the welfare of the Travelling Party (see below) on behalf of British Fencing.

For information on the International Committee and the Weapon Committees, including Terms of Reference and members, have a look at the Governance section on the British Fencing website: <http://www.britishfencing.com/governance/committees/>

### **What is the Travelling Party?**

The “Travelling Party” or “Delegation” refers to those people who are part of the official trip, including any Athletes, Coaches, Referees, Team Managers, Medical Staff, Physios, Personal Coaches or Parents. The Travelling Party sign up to either the Team Official Code of Conduct or Athlete Code of Conduct.

### **What is the role of the Chef de Mission?**

The Weapon Captains are appointing “Chef de Mission” for each of the Junior and Cadet trips. This is simply a trained Team Manager (see below) who has overall responsibility for the trip, including budgeting and planning before the trip and the delegated authority of British Fencing whilst away. All those Team Managers, Coaches, Referees and Athletes in the Travelling Party are responsible to the Chef de Mission. The Chef de Mission is supported by British Fencing staff and volunteers as well as a 24/7 contact at home in case of emergencies.

The Chef de Mission will be in contact with members of the Travelling Party to provide personalised information about the trip. This is supported by the online system which is currently for athletes only. If you have any issues regarding the trip, specifically regarding travel arrangements, speak first to your Chef de Mission at the earliest opportunity as they inform the Logistics Manager of travel requirements.

### **What is a Team Manager?**

British Fencing values the role played by Team Managers and has this year established a course which recognises this so we have now trained over 60. Team Managers (of which the Chef de Mission is one) are responsible for the welfare of Junior and Cadet athletes whilst abroad.

### **How does the online system work?**

The online trip system allows athletes to confirm or decline and pay for trips as well as providing information which is essential for the Chef de Mission. On or shortly after the selection date for each trip, the Chef de Mission will input the names of those athletes selected and those on the reserve list into the system.

Athletes selected will receive an automatic e-mail (we will personalise this as much as possible, but it will be an automatically generated mail) with details of a secure link to click. This e-mail will go to the e-mail which is on an athlete's profile, which should be the parent's e-mail for younger athletes. To ensure the e-mail address is correct, please ensure that your membership profile is up to date. We suggest that you also check your junk/spam mail and add British Fencing to your "safe senders" list.

For information on how to access your profile visit <http://www.britishfencing.com/about-fencing/new-to-the-site/>.

These links will allow athletes to confirm or decline the selection. If confirmed, they will be able to continue to pay the deposit online and also complete the necessary paperwork such as contacts, medical details, passport information and the *in loco parentis* form. This information is essential to allow the Chef de Mission to deal with any emergencies.

Finally an automatic e-mail will be sent out to remind athletes to pay the balance, again by clicking a link which goes directly through to our system.

This process is simply for confirmation, payment and ensuring we have accurate information on athletes so as to look after them on trips. It will not replace personal and direct communication from the Chef de Mission who will still contact athletes and remain the contact for athletes regarding any other matters.

### **Why do we need to pay a deposit?**

This allows us to book flights and accommodation as early as possible to ensure we get the best value possible. The Chef de Mission budgets for trips working on last year's prices and also on estimates from the Logistics Manager but we want to be able to keep these costs down as much as possible and spreading the cost allows us to do this.

### **What does the Logistics Manager do?**

In order to manage the travel and accommodation centrally, the Board approved a plan to appoint a Logistics Manager. With the sheer volume of flights, transfers and hotel rooms across the weapons we have recruited an experienced Travel Consultant (Heather Hyman) to work with us for a year to manage all logistics in bulk. By booking in greater quantity it is hoped that we will be able to leverage better deals with travel and accommodation providers which will reduce the cost of trips in the long run. It is understood that this will not happen overnight and we are doing our best to ensure that the cost of trips is reduced in the long term.

You should still contact your Chef de Mission if you have any questions or requests regarding travel and accommodation as they liaise with the Logistics Manager.

### **What is the £20 admin charge for?**

We originally approached several travel companies with experience of working with sports. It appeared that it would be preferable to keep this money within the sport and hopefully reduce this amount over

time. The more trips we run and the more bookings made, the lower this charge will be. This amount also covers other areas of administration of the online and finance system.

### **Will there be flexibility in travel?**

Because this is GB level, the squads will travel and stay together as they are representing the British Fencing brand abroad. However, there will be instances where groups of athletes will need to travel from “hubs” – for example if half of the team live in Scotland and half near London then it makes sense to fly from two destinations. In extenuating circumstances you must contact your Chef de Mission at the earliest opportunity to arrange flexibility in travel.

### **How does British Fencing ensure good behaviour on trips and have there been any disciplinary issues in the past?**

Almost all our trips to date have been run very well. However some disciplinary cases have arisen in the past and, as a result, the Board has approved a Code of Conduct and associated Sanctions for athletes on youth (Junior and Cadet) trips. We also have a Code of Conduct and Ethics for Team Officials.

Both can be found at: <http://www.britishfencing.com/governance/generalpolicies/>.

Athletes, and indeed Team Officials, are representing Great Britain which is a great honour but which brings responsibilities too. As a representative of Great Britain athletes must behave as positive ambassadors for the sport and their country at all times.

In order to maintain good behaviour and because these are performance trips and not holidays, all Junior and Cadet trips are dry. This means that no member of the Travelling Party will be permitted to be in possession of alcohol at any time on the trip – see the Code for further information.

### **Are all Team Officials Paid?**

No. This season, all Junior and Cadet trips will be managed using one uniform policy which will provide greater clarity. This policy ensures that those volunteers who give up their time for the sport are provided for whilst away. The policy can be found on the website under <http://www.britishfencing.com/governance/generalpolicies/>.

### **Why does the Chef de Mission need so much personal information?**

Whilst it is recognised that it can be frustrating to keep being asked for contacts, medical details and passport information, this data is essential for the Chef de Mission to have on a trip especially in case an emergency occurs. The Chef de Mission destroys this data at the end of the trip in accordance with good practice guidelines and consequently it is required each time. We hope to improve the online system so that in the future some of this information can be entered online and be securely held on the British Fencing database.

### **Do I need Insurance?**

British Fencing insurance covers public liability. You will still need to take out insurance for elements such as personal accident, illness and against travel issues such as cancellations. You will need to check that the insurance specifically covers the country you are visiting and also Fencing as a sport. Most travel insurance does not cover this and so you will require specialist sports travel insurance; this is available via our insurance partners Towergate tlc through their website: [www.towergatetlc.co.uk](http://www.towergatetlc.co.uk). It is imperative that fencers do not rely on ordinary travel insurance as a claim may well be turned down on the grounds that you did not disclose your fencing.

For further information visit: <http://www.britishfencing.com/governance/insurance/>.

**What to do if I have a problem with the online system?**

Contact your Chef de Mission immediately and they will help you or if they are unable to do so, put you in contact with British Fencing.

**What happens if there is a deficit or a surplus on trips?**

Any deficit will be underwritten by British Fencing. This is of course a risk, but we hope to manage this risk by a new structure of accountability. A surplus is not expected, but any surplus would be kept transparently within the budget line and dependent on the amount would be returned or would be used to reduce further costs.

**Who goes on trips?**

These trips are specifically talent development trips for those selected to represent Great Britain. On some occasions it may be necessary for others to attend such as personal coaches, medical staff or other athletes, but these will sign up to the relevant Codes of Conduct and will agree to be part of the Travelling Party.

**These trips are expensive – is there support for athletes?**

It is our intention to drive down the costs of GB trips, however we recognise this will take time. However, we have made a pledge to support any athlete who genuinely cannot represent Great Britain or attend the Academy due to the financial burden. Please contact [headoffice@britishfencing.com](mailto:headoffice@britishfencing.com) and mark your e-mail “YOUTH GRANTS”.

**Can Parents get involved in the trips?**

Whilst these are talent development trips for those selected for GB, we recognise many parents wish to attend to support athletes either on their own or as part of the Travelling Party\*. We have appointed a “Parent Champion” – Michael O’Donnell – who is establishing a Performance Parents Group which will first look to develop a “Parents Charter” to help guide parent involvement on trips. This group will also help with communication to and from parents on issues like trips.

For further information view: <http://www.britishfencing.com/international/performance-parents/>.

**This all sounds great but doesn’t seem to be working yet!**

These changes have been introduced to make trips easier to understand, cheaper, safer and more effective as part of a talent development programme. These changes are big shifts in culture and are also using technology which we will need your feedback to get right and we recognise this will take some time. We appreciate the patience and candid feedback we are already seeing and hope it continues so that we can improve our GB Junior and Cadet trips.

12.10.10