

THE SWORD

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British Fencing Magazine

JULY 2017



Richard Kruse winning Shanghai GP



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The Sword, a quarterly magazine founded in 1948, is distributed to all individual and club members of British Fencing and its affiliates. It can also be obtained on subscription – UK £20

Overseas airmail £26 – direct from HQ. Contributions are welcome. Photographs should include the names of those pictured and the photographer.

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Cover photo of Richard Kruse

winning the Shanghai Grand Prix 2017
 Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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KRUSE HEADS TO THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH SHANGHAI GRAND PRIX WIN

Richard Kruse in sublime form in China

Images courtesy of Augusto Bizzi

(May 2017), 33-year-old Londoner, Richard Kruse produced his best result of the season by winning the Shanghai Grand Prix. Going into the tournament ranked number 10 in the World, Kruse beat Italy's World number 9, Alessio Foconi, 15-8 in the final.

His ranking meant that he had a bye through the qualifying rounds on Saturday but began the competition by facing Benjamin Kleibrink of Germany – an opponent that he has faced many times during his career. He showed great form to beat the German 15-9 which set him up for further victories over American, Nick Itkin (15-6), Hong Kong's World number 7, Cheung Ka Long (15-11) and Italian, Lorenzo Nista (15-8) to make the semi-finals.

There he faced 35-year-old World number 6 Frenchman, Erwan Le Pechoux. The two had met eleven times during their long careers but Kruse went into the match knowing that he had an 8-3 head-to-head record over his opponent. Kruse dominated the early stages of the match but the French fencer adjusted his distance and drew level. The British fencer dug in and increased his attacking intent, going on to win 15-13 – his closest match of the day.



Shanghai Podium

Kruse faced Alessio Foconi of Italy in final. The Italian had already won the Turin Grand Prix during this season and was also on stunning form in an event that had seen both the reigning Olympic Champion, Daniele Garozzo (ITA) and World number 1, Alexander Massialas (USA) go out in the early stages.

The Brit completely dominated the early stages of the match, hitting his Italian opponent with a variety of shots that wowed the massive crowd. A late rally from Foconi was masterfully controlled by Kruse, who demonstrated that he still has more than enough to offer at the top level to go on and compete at a fifth Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020. He won the gold medal 15-9.

Speaking straight after winning, Kruse said that he was mugged



Kruse puffs in Shanghai



Kruse takes Le Pechoux in Shanghai Semi

in the city a few days before the event, adding, "The adrenaline that went through my body was unbelievable. When I came to fence here, I was ready to fight. That's the truth but you probably don't want to publish that!" Asked whether his heart-breaking fourth place in Rio gave him the motivation to carry on he said, "Maybe that was the best thing to happen to me. Had I got a medal (in Rio) then perhaps I wouldn't have had the motivation to carry on."

Chief Executive of British Fencing, Georgina Usher, added, "It's great to see Richard building on his fourth place in Rio and our congratulations go to him and his coach. This performance was one of his best to date and shows that our athletes still have what it takes to perform and win at the highest level. Unfortunately without UK Sport funding it is going to be extremely tough for Richard and fencers like him to continue competing and training. Our recent successful crowd funding campaign will allow a team to compete at the 2017 European and World Championships but we are still seeking sponsors for our athletes and teams as we set our sights beyond this to Tokyo 2020. If you can help in any way please contact ceo@britishfencing.com."

Watch Richard's heroics in the final against Alessio Focconi [here](#).

News (continued)

LOGITECH BRITISH FENCING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 REPORT

ALLEN, BEARDMORE, HONEYBONE, KRUSE, LAWRENCE & MAXWELL CROWNED CHAMPIONS



The Logitech British Fencing Championships 2017 took place over the weekend 22-23 April in SportsDock at the University of East London. The event was split over two days and hailed a great success.

22 April – Day 1

Women's Epee

A total of sixty-two fencers took part in this event. Hannah Lawrence (Wingerworth), Daniele Lawson (Malvern Hills), Rachel Barnes (Much Wenlock) and Amy Radford (Malvern Hills) progressed through the poule stages as the top four seeds. Radford fell to Hannah Nesbitt (Leon Paul) 15-13 in the round of 16 and Nesbitt went on to make the semi-final where she met Lawrence – a repeat of last year's gold medal match. Lawrence edged a tight match 15-13 to make the final. In the bottom half of the draw, Lawson was knocked out in the quarterfinals 15-8 by Lydia Stanier (Mangiaroti) who in turn went on to beat the third seed, Barnes, by the same score in the semi-finals.



Women's Epee Podium

During the first period of the final, Lawrence was more creative and took a 5-1 lead into the first break. Stanier came out for the second period with more purpose and pressed Lawrence into her end of the piste. Despite scoring a couple of unanswered hits at the beginning of the period Stanier was only able to close the gap by one hit (10-6) by the end of the second period. That lead proved crucial as time ticked away in the final period. Stanier was forced into pressing harder and Lawrence produced a professional and patient display to win her third consecutive national title 15-9. Nesbitt and Barnes shared the bronze medal position.

[Full results here.](#)

Men's Sabre

Forty-nine fencers took part in this event and Joshua Maxwell (Truro), William Deary (Truro), Curtis Miller (Camden) and Ethan Ren (Leon Paul) emerged from the first round as the top four seeds for the elimination stages. All but Miller made the quarterfinal stage. Miller's club mate Jonathan Webb knocked him out 15-11 in the round of 16. Unfortunately for the London club Webb was then knocked out by another Camden fencer, Soji Aiyenuro in the next round (15-12). In fact only one of the top four seeds (after the poules) made the semi-finals as James Honeybone (Truro) took out Ethan Ren 15-8 in the quarterfinals and Maxwell was knocked out 15-8 by club mate Jamie Craze. William Deary made light work of getting to the top four where he beat Aiyenuro 15-10 and Honeybone eased past Craze 15-11.



Men's Sabre Podium

So, with two Truro fencers into the gold medal match, everyone was expecting a tight affair. It was not to be. Honeybone dominated the tactical play early on to lead 6-0. Deary got a couple of hits back before Honeybone closed out the first period with an 8-2 lead. With no coach present, the fencers spent the minute break contemplating alone. It appeared to work better for Deary who came out for the second period with a more composed approach to his attack and scored three unanswered hits to close the gap to 8-5. A more even contest followed but point-by-point Deary continued to close the gap to

11-9 down. At that stage most of the fight had taken place in the middle of the piste but seemingly simultaneously both fencers elected to use more of the piste. The fight opened up in the favour of Honeybone and he went on to win 15-12. Aiyenuro and Craze settled for the bronze medals.

[Full results here.](#)

Men's Foil

There were eighty-nine entries in the men's foil event and the top four seeds after the poules stages were Richard Kruse (ZFW), Marcus Mepstead (Salle Paul), Ben Peggs (Fencers Club London) and James-Andrew Davis (ZFW). In the top half of the draw Kruse and Davis eased into the semi-finals where they met each other. Kruse prevailed 15-8. The bottom half of the draw did not go to seeding. Keith Cook (Salle Holyrood) took out Peggs 15-8 in the quarterfinals and Matthew Billing edged a thrilling top eight encounter with Mepstead 15-14. Billing went on to beat Cook by the same score in the semi-finals to line up a gold medal match with Kruse.



Men's Foil Podium

Clearly conscious of the threat of an in-form Billing, Kruse wasted no time in stamping his authority on the match. He led 5-1 in no time at all. However Billing worked out that he couldn't allow Kruse time to think and began to pressure the ZFW fencer off the mark. It worked and Billing got himself to within three

hits of Kruse at 8-5 down. Kruse adapted and started to be slightly more measured on his attack and allowed the distance to open up a fraction. Billing wasn't to score again as Kruse secured another national title 15-5 inside the first three minutes.

[Full results here.](#)

Watch all the gold medal matches from the first day of the Championships [here](#).

23 April – Day 2

Women's Foil

The entry for this event was thirty-four and after the poules stages the top four seeds for the elimination rounds were Ayesha Fihosy (Boston), Chloe Dickson (Edinburgh), Kate Beardmore (Fighting Fit) and Chiara McDermott (Crawley Sword). In the top half of the draw, Fihosy made light work of getting to the semi-finals. McDermott fell 15-7 in the round of 16 to Katrina Feklistova (Newham Swords) who then lost 15-8 to Katie Smith (Edinburgh). Fihosy managed Smith in the first semi-final, going on to win 15-8. It was a similar story in the bottom half of the draw with one of the top seeds, Beardmore, progressing to the medal matches. Meanwhile Dickson lost 14-13 to Heloise Hardie (Fighting Fit) in the quarterfinals. Hardie went on to make the semi-final by beating Sudderick (Edinburgh) 15-11 before losing 15-10 to Beardmore.



Women's Foil Podium

Beardmore got the tactics spot on at the start of the gold medal match with Fihosy. The Fighting Fit fencer drew fast attacks from the Boston fencer and used a combination of parries and distance to negate them. She led 12-3 with little over a minute of the match contested. Tellingly Fihosy had given away two hits for covering which would have played on her mind. That said, she staged a remarkable comeback by slowing down her attack and got within four hits at 14-10. Then, when the two got into close quarters, Fihosy was called again for covering and Beardmore took the title 15-10 on an infringement. However Beardmore won the tactical battle on the piste and was a deserving winner.

[Full results here.](#)

Men's Epee



Men's Epee Podium

There were eighty-eight entries into the men's epee field and Etienne De Burgh (Haverstock), Jamie Firth (Aberdeen City), Christopher Towl (Brixton) and Greg Allen (Haverstock) emerged from the poule stage as the top four seeds. In the top half of the draw De Burgh fell 15-8 to Luke Jones (Redhill Reigate) in the round of 32. Jones then beat Aurelien Degorce (Leon Paul) 15-14 to make the quarterfinals where he lost 15-4 to Christopher Hay (Exeter City). Hay faced Allen in the top semi-final who had progressed fairly comfortably. Allen continued his fine form to win 15-7 and make the gold medal match. In the bottom half of the draw, Marc Burkhalter (Unattached) took out Firth 15-10 in the quarterfinals before beating Matt Henderson (Leon Paul) by the same score to make the semis. Towl lost 15-8 to Benjamin Schneider (Oxford University) in the round of 32. Schneider went on to beat Owen Edwards (Wrexham) 15-12 but then lost 15-9 to William East (KRFC) in the quarterfinals. A highly tactical battle followed in the bottom semi-final which Burkhalter edged 13-9 over East.

An exceptionally high quality final followed between Allen and Burkhalter with both fencers intent on working at a very close distance. Unsurprisingly all but one of the hits scored in the first period was on or near the wrist but Burkhalter took a slender 5-3 into the break. In the second period Allen elected to operate from a wider distance. He gave a way a couple of hits as he began to employ the new distance but drew level at 9-9 by the second break. When they came out for the final period Burkhalter adopted a more attacking approach but Allen was super sharp and picked off his opponent almost at will. Allen maintained a high level of intensity throughout the closing stages and took the title 15-10.

[Full results here.](#)

Women's Sabre

The final event of the Championships saw the smallest field of all with just twenty-eight fencers contesting the women's sabre event. Emily Ruaux (Rivington Park), Sarah-Jane Hampson (Salle Ossian), Maria Chart (Truro) and Caitlin Maxwell (Truro) emerged from the poules as the top seeds and all four made it to the semi-finals. Maxwell beat Ruaux 15-10 in the first semi-final and Chart made it an all-Truro gold medal match – as in the men's event – by beating Hampson 15-9 in the other semi-final.

With both finalists from the same club there was a subdued element to this gold medal match. Maxwell, more willing to drop back into her half of the piste, calmly took an 8-4 lead into the break. When they came out for the second period, Chart started to assert her game plan more effectively but Maxwell maintained the lead and took her second consecutive national title 15-10.

[Full results here.](#)

You can watch all the gold medal matches from the second day of the Championships [here](#).



Women's Sabre Podium

#FENCINGMOB17

Alessandro Noto

A message from Alessandro Noto – Digital Marketing Consultant for the Italian Fencing Federation and founder of #FencingMob

After the great success of last year's edition, the Italian Fencing Federation (FIS) is launching #Fencingmob again to all affiliated fencing clubs in Italy and all national fencing federations and their clubs around the world. The aim is to promote our sport at the time of the year when the new competitive season starts with the aim that this event becomes an essential tool to recruit new members.

Throughout Sunday, September 10, 2017, all fencing clubs in Italy and around the world are invited to join in creating a flashmob with fencing as a theme.

#Fencingmob17 should aim to be organized at a characteristic location that identifies the city where they takes place. For example, in front of the Colosseum in Rome, Piccadilly Circus in London, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Time Square in New York City, the Leaning Tower in Pisa, etc.

These being public locations, we strongly recommend that you apply for permits and to notify well in advance the relevant authorities with all event details (venue, time, number of participants, etc.).

We asked that all local organizers share their event with us by sending photographs and videos of their flashmob.

PHOTOS: All photos should be sent to fencingmob@gmail.com and posted by the organizers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram indicating the name of the city and using the hashtag #Fencingmob17 (eg, Roma #Fencingmob17).

We will the publish all photos in real time on the social media of the Italian Fencing Federation (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

VIDEO: Video of the flashmob shall be posted directly on YouTube within 3 hours of the event's conclusion with the title #Fencingmob17 PLUS the name of the city, state, country (for example, #Fencingmob17 New York, NY, USA).

All participating organizers are kindly requested to follow this procedure. Within 48 hours we will publish one or more summary videos of all #Fencingmob17 that took place around the world that day.

For more information or any questions contact me at: alessandro.noto@federscherma.it

Once again this year and for a whole day in all five continents our aim is that fencing invades the web encouraging everyone to talk about our great sport.

Please join us and experience this exhilarating extraordinary global event !!!

Alessandro Noto
@AleNoto

Il Presidente

Federazione Italiana  Scherma
Rome, May 24, 2017

TO ALL NATIONAL FENCING FEDERATION

Dear friends,

after the great success of last year edition, the Italian Fencing Federation (FIS) is launching again #Fencingmob to all affiliated fencing clubs in Italy and all national fencing federations and their clubs around the world. The aim is to promote our sport in the time of the year when the new competitive season starts and this event becomes an essential tool to recruit new members.
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These being public locations, we strongly recommend to apply for permits and to notify well in advance the competent authorities with all event's details (venue, time, number of participants, etc.)
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For more information or any question contact me at: alessandro.noto@federscherma.it
Once again this year and for a whole day in all five continents fencing shall invade the web with everybody talking about it.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Best regards,

Giorgio Scarso



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Image of
#fencingmob
from 2015

International Round Up

Photos courtesy of Augusto Bizzi

The last events of the regular season – World Cups and Grand Prix competitions – have now concluded. At the time of writing the Zonal Championships are just a week away but will be over by the time you are reading this. Therefore the focus of this piece will be looking ahead to the World Championships in Leipzig. As such there will not be a round up of the world ranking standings in each discipline. Rather a preview of who to look out for at the season final.

Men's Epee

The Grand Prix in Budapest Hungary was the next stop on this season's men's epee circuit. Jung Jinsun became Korea's fourth different winner of a major ranking event here, taking the title by beating Kazuyasu Minobe (JPN) in the final. Another Korean, Park Kyoungdoo added to the gold medal he won in Heidenheim by sharing the bronze medal position with Andrea Santerelli of Italy.



Park Kyoungdoo (KOR)

The penultimate event leading up to the Zonal Championships was the Paris World Cup where Italy's Marco Fichera bettered the silver he won in Buenos Aires earlier in the season by taking his debut win. He beat Yannick Borel of France in the final. Koki Kano of Japan proved his bronze medal in Heidenheim was no fluke by matching that result here and he shared the position with rank outsider from Poland Karol Kostka.



Marco Fichera (ITA)

So on to the last circuit event in this discipline and a trip to Bogota, Colombia. Bronze medallist from the season opener in Berne, Bogdan Nikishin of Ukraine, returned to the podium in fine style by winning the event. He beat Fichera in the final and the bronze medals went to Edoardo Munzone (then ranked 223 in the World) and Park Kyoungdoo.

So, the stats don't lie! Borel, Fichera and Park K. made the podium three times in the season. Thus it would be foolish not to expect to see at least one of them in the latter stages at the Worlds. That said there have been eight different winners in this season's eight circuit events, five of whom did not reach the podium anywhere else. Of all of the disciplines, this one is by far the hardest to call but watch out for the Koreans – any one of them could take the title.

We haven't focussed on the team events in this series but with five different winners in the five World Cups this season, it's another tough call. However, the Koreans are a very strong unit who, this season, have learnt to operate as a team. I'd pick them to do well. France is also a strong team but sometimes the French pick an unexpected team – and often that works for them! My third pick is very much dependent on the form of one man – Ukraine and Nikishin – outsiders for gold but I wouldn't be surprised if they played a part in the medal matches.

Women's Epee



Rosella Fiamingo (ITA)

Shimookawa shared the bronze medal position.

As with the men, the women's circuit continued in Budapest at the Grand Prix, which Italy's Rosella Fiamingo won from Choi Injeong of Korea. Julia Beljajeva of Estonia and Japan's Ayaka

Last year's Olympic host city, Rio de Janeiro was the next destination and Estonia's Kristina Kuusk picked up the World Cup title there by beating Alexandra Ndolo of Germany. Another Estonian, Erika Kirpu stood on the bronze medal step of the podium with Ewa Neli of Poland.

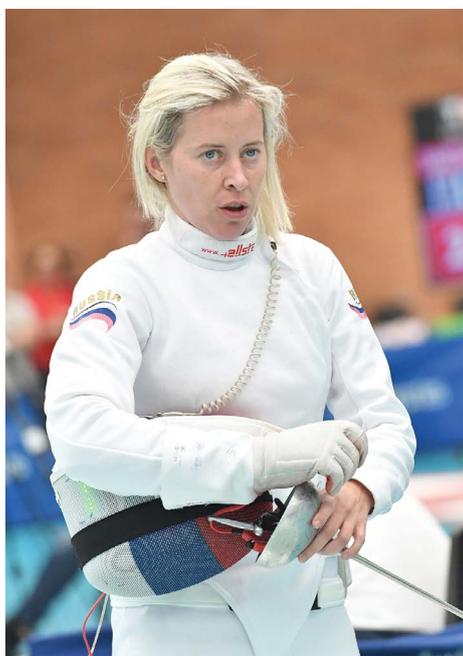
Colombia hosted the final event, the Bogota Grand Prix where reigning Olympic Champion, Emese Szasz-Kowacs of Hungary stood on the top of the podium for the first time since Rio. She beat Kong Man Wai Vivian of Hong Kong in the final who was picking up the first Grand Prix medal of her career. Alberta Santuccio of Italy and Korea's Shin A Lam were the bronze medallist.

Like with the men's epee circuit, the eight women's events produced eight different winners. However, Besbes on her day, this season, has been a force to be reckoned with. Szasz-Kowacs also looks like she's returned to form at just the right time. A third that you can never write off is double World Champions, Fiamingo. She seems to come to life at the Worlds. The other fencer of interest is Tatiana Logunova of Russia. There are suggestions that she may not be selected for her team but if she is, it may be her last chance.



Emese Szasz-Kowacs (HUN)

On the team event side China won two events this season and were the only team to claim two titles. That would make them favourite for the Worlds but Estonia are a close second.



Tatiana Logunova (RUS)

So the circuit season ends and with eight events complete, again there were no repeat winners. Foconi and Safin are the form fencers of the season but with all four of the American first team featuring on this season's podiums they are sure to feature at the Worlds. If Kruse can produce the sublime form he showed in Shanghai, he will also be feared by everyone competing.

Despite not featuring much on the individual podium this season, France has won three of the five team ranking events. They are surely strong contenders for the World title. Italy and the USA have been in a tight and sometimes contentious battle this season. If they meet at the Worlds expect fireworks! And Russia will always be contenders. Another interesting sub-plot to this season has been the confirmation that the International Olympic Committee has granted fencing its missing two medals. Men's Team Foil was due to be rotated out of the Tokyo 2020 schedule but is now back in. That will have an affect on team selection.

Men's Foil

Since our last report there have been three more circuit events to complete the men's foil season ahead of the majors. Timur Safin of Russia won the Long Beach Grand Prix in March beating Alex Massialas of the USA. Giorgio Avola and Daniele Garozzo ensured both bronze medals went to Italy. The circuit moved on to St. Petersburg in Russia for the last World Cup of the season which Garozzo won. He beat Andrea Cassara of Italy in the final as Korea's Cheung Ka Long and Safin picked up the bronze medals.



Alexander Massialas (USA)

So, on to the final circuit event, the Grand Prix in Shanghai and what a time for Richard Kruse of Great Britain to bring his A-game. He was in unstoppable form as he beat Alessio Focconi of Italy in the final (see report on page 4 of this issue). The bronze medals went to Erwan Le Pechoux of France and Russia's Dmitry Zherebchenko.



Alessio Focconi (ITA)



Richard Kruse (GBR)

Women's Foil

As with the men's circuit, the women's series continued at the Long Beach Grand Prix. A thought to the organisers who suffered a catastrophic power failure mid-way through one of the semi-finals which delayed proceedings by over an hour. Despite that, America's Lee Kiefer won the event, beating Marta Martyanova of Russia in the final as the bronze medals went to another Russian, Inna Deriglazova and Arianna Errigo of Italy.

Kiefer followed that Grand Prix win up with another gold at the next event in Tauberbischofsheim. Errigo picked up the silver and the bronze medals went to Deriglazova and Germany's Carolin Golubtyski.

The closing event was the Shanghai Grand Prix and with Kiefer not present, Martina



Arianna Errigo

Batini of Italy *stole* the gold medal from Inna Deriglazova. Ysoara Thibus of France and Russia's Svetlana Tripapina completed the final podium of the women's foil season.



Inna Deriglazova (RUS)

Looking ahead to the Worlds, on paper one would have to make Kiefer the favourite but whilst she's struggled a bit this season, with consistency, Deriglazova has still got all of the tools to do the job. What about Errigo though? Her season-long dalliance with the sabre circuit has been far from a disaster. However, she is extremely unlikely to feature in the Italian women's sabre squad. The fact that she will be fully focussed on foil in the lead up to the Championships makes her a strong favourite for the title.

You won't get good odds on Italy in the team event either. They have won all five of the circuit events this season beating Russia twice and France, Germany and the USA once each. Enough said!

Men's Sabre



Kim Junghwan (KOR)

The Seoul Grand Prix was the next stop on the men's sabre circuit and Kim Junghwan of Korea made it back-to-back titles following his win in Warsaw. He beat Vincent Anstett of France in the final as Italy's Luca Curatoli and Benedikt Wagner of Germany secured the gold medals.



Luca Curatoli (ITA)

The Madrid World Cup was the penultimate event of the season heading in to the Zonals and Worlds. Germany's Max Hartung took the title beating Eli Dershwitz of the USA and two Hungarians completed the podium – Andras Szatmari and Aron Szilagyi.

The Moscow Grand Prix was the final event for this discipline and Curatoli has surely secured his place on the Italian team for the Worlds by winning the competition. He beat Gu Bongil of Korea in the final as Kim J. and Szilagyi completed the medal winning line-up.

Kim is the form fencer going into the Worlds but Szilagyi is also on good form. That said, Curatoli picked up two medals in the last three events, which will give him great confidence. These three have got to be favourites for featuring at the business end of the tournament but you cannot write off a whole host of other fencers who are sure to play their part.

The form team this season has been Italy. They picked up two wins and three second



Aron Szilagyi

place finishes in the five ranking events but Russia are bound to challenge with Yakimenko back in their ranks.

Women's Sabre

With an early season calendar reshuffle in this discipline, it's a bumper four event round-up for women's sabre! Yangzhou hosted the fifth circuit event of the season and it was rising young French star, Manon Brunet who took the title. She beat her teammate Sara Balzer in the final with the bronze medals going to Martina Criscio of Italy and America's returning serial medallist, Mariel Zagunis.



Manon Brunet

Russia's reigning Olympic Champion, Yana Egorian topped the podium at the next event – the Seoul Grand Prix – after beating Anna Marton of Hungary. Criscio claimed back-to-back bronze medals at the event and was joined by Cecilia Berder of France in third place.

On to the Tunis World Cup, which was won by Olga Kharlan from Ukraine. Again Marton picked up the silver medal with Brunet and Egorian collecting the bronze medals.

Like the men, the Moscow Grand Prix completed the circuit season for the women. Charlotte Lembach of France bettered the bronze medal she won at the Athens World Cup by taking the title in Russia. It was a third silver medal in a row for Marton and



Anna Marton

the bronze medals went to Bianca Pascu of Romania and Caroline Queroli of France.

Looking ahead to the Worlds and with a noticeable number of athletes missing from the line-up for various reasons, you'd have to fancy both Egorian (if fit) and Kharlan for a medal. However, if Brunet and Marton can produce the top form they've shown this season and keep their cool under the most intense pressure, then they have a shot at their first World title. Keep an eye on the rest of the French team too. They have a selection headache going into the Worlds with so many of their fencers making the podium this season.



Yana Egorian

Italy have won two gold medals and two bronze medals in the five team events this season and are almost certain to appear on the podium or at least in the medal matches. France could be a contender too but no one knows whether they'll select a squad going for medals in the individual or team. Russia have won one event this season and taken one bronze medal too but without Velikaya they are severely weakened. Expect a surprise on the women's team sabre podium in Leipzig but perhaps not on the top spot!

You can look ahead to the World Championships by visiting the [official tournament website](#).

Kajetan McDonnell Wins Challenge Wroslavia Silver

A REPORT FROM HEAD SABRE COACH OF CAMDEN FENCING CLUB



Kajetan McDonnell won a silver medal in the U15 Boys Sabre event at the Challenge Wroslavia event on 27th March. This was a fantastic result in a strong field of 138 fencers coming from all over the world.

Kajetan started the day with 6vod in the poule stage which propelled him to 7th seed going in to the direct elimination. As a result of his high seeding he had a bye through the L128 round which meant that his first direct elimination match was against Ghaziri (ROU) – an opponent that he comfortably dispatched 15-6 in the L64.

In the L32 Kajetan found a tough opponent in Fekete Kovacs (HUN) but in a close fought encounter the Camden fencer came out the eventual winner 15-13. His next fight was against Kondratenko (LAT) and the British fencer dominated his Latvian opponent winning 15-4 for a place in the last 8.

In the quarterfinals Kajetan endured a tough fight against the strong Russian Plochnikov but after a very close match he eventually came out on top, winning 15-13.



Kajetan against Kis (HUN) in the final

The semi final bout against Horvath (HUN) proved to be an even harder match for Kajetan but with the score levelled at 14-14 each he managed to keep his head and win the all important 15th point.

On the raised piste and in front of a large international crowd the young Camden Sabreur faced Kis (HUN) in the gold medal match. This time Kajetan did not get off to a good start and trailed 1-6 in the early part of the match and despite attempting a courageous comeback in the last throws of the bout he was unable to bridge the gap in score and was defeated 15-10.

This was a wonderful result and fantastic experience for Kajetan, we look forward to

seeing him in the cadet internationals next season.

Some of Camden's other younger fencers were also in action in Poland, their placings are detailed below:

Boys U11 Sabre

38th Jasper Hyams

Boys U13 Sabre

75th Frankie Lambe-Thompson
89th Cosmo Fasanya
120th Magnus Pearce
124th Sid Sykes

Boys U15 Foil

52nd Jean-Baptiste Baigneres



Top 8 from both boys and girls U15 Sabre events

We are always looking for stories from youth internationals.

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Scotland Spotlight – Cook Dynasty in the Making

By Sean Walton

COOKS SHINE IN COPENHAGEN

Brother and sister Jaimie and Imogen Cook, from Salle Holyrood in Edinburgh, made the trip to Copenhagen to compete in the Trekanten International foil event at the end of May and brought home gold in their respective age groups.

Jaimie, the reigning British under-12 champion, fenced on Saturday, 27 May in the under 12 boys foil with 26 other fencers, mostly from the Scandinavian countries and emerged from two rounds of poules as top seed having dropped only 6 six hits. A bye into the last 16 followed and Jaimie progressed smoothly through the direct elimination to the semi-final where he defeated Sweden's Isak Kvernes 15-6 and in the final he sealed the victory against another Swede, Moltas Hojer, 15-5. Aside from his own win, Jaimie's highlights of the day included watching Olympic quarter-finalist, Guilherme Toldo, taking silver in the FIE Satellite event which was running at the same time. He also got chat to British Olympian Laurence Halsted, who now lives in Copenhagen and works as the Danish Fencing Federation's Performance Director. His one disappointment was that he didn't get to fence on the same final piste as the seniors!

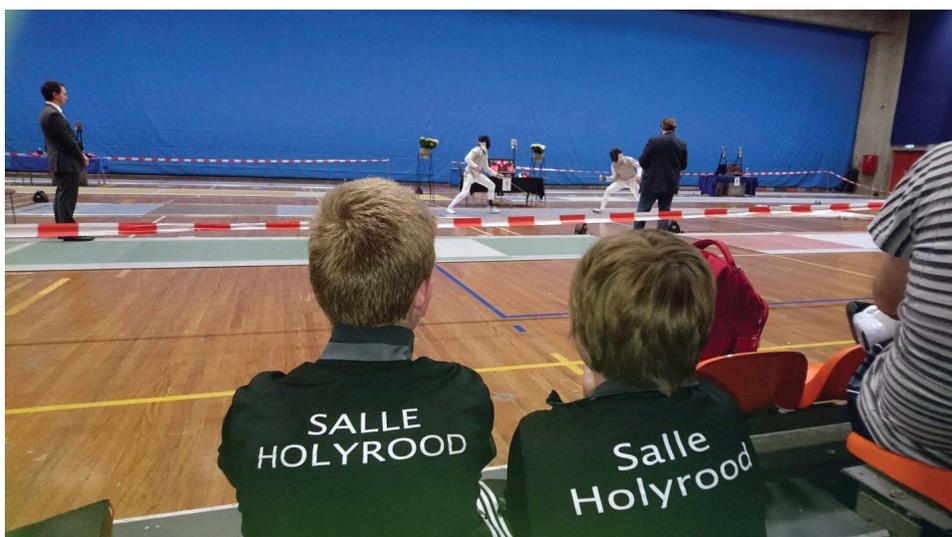
Sunday saw Imogen, a bronze medallist in the British under 10 girls foil, in action in the mixed under-10 event against local fencers and one visitor from Singapore. There is a link between Denmark and Singapore, established by former Scottish international sabreur Stewart Watson and GB's 2016 Olympic men's foil team coach Andriy Klyushin, who both coached in Denmark for many years and are now working together again in Singapore.

Two rounds of poules, in which Imogen won 8 out of 12 fights, were followed by direct elimination bouts to 10 hits. A 10-7 win in the last 16 and a nail-biting 8-7 victory against Trina Soh of Singapore in the quarterfinal before a 10-7 semi-final defeat meant Imogen took the girls title with Raffaele Fu Giugno taking the boys accolade.

Jaimie was also competing on Sunday in the European Under 14 Circuit competition with



**THE FENCING
PODCAST**



Salle Holyrood image



Jaimie on the top step of the podium

34 fencers from the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Singapore plus Jaimie as the lone British entrant. A tough, physical poule (only 1 round in this event) meant he was seeded 16th for the direct elimination and his 15-10 win in the last 32 was followed by a convincing 15-2 victory against the top seed who had perhaps benefitted from an easier opening poule. Jaimie's day was ended with a 15-10 defeat in the quarterfinals against Sweden's Marcus Broberg who went on to take the under 14 title.

The Trekanten International is a huge event with competitions for under-10s, under-12s, under-14s, cadets, juniors, seniors and veterans and the kids thoroughly enjoyed the international experience. Jaimie and Imogen's dad Keith Cook, the 2010 British senior foil champion and a team bronze medallist in the 2013 European Championships, coaches both his children with obvious delight and success as well as coaching hundreds of children at Salle Holyrood and through his grass-roots fencing program, [Fencing Fun](#). The Cook name looks set to continue to feature prominently in British fencing with Jaimie and Imogen demonstrating the same drive and determination as their father.

Sean Walton
Head Coach at Salle Holyrood

Birmingham International Fencing Tournament Easter 2017

By J.P. Whitehouse

CONGRATULATIONS TO KEITH COOK ON HIS FOIL HAT TRICK



Keith_Cook

In a re-run of last year by November 2016 we were fairly convinced we would be moving to the new £55 million pound Sports facility being built at the University of Birmingham. So the January 2017 edition of *The Sword* carried the entry form indicating the new venue. With two weeks to go to BIFT event the Centre clearly still wasn't going to be ready to be handed over in a viable state. So the Tournament, now in its 86th year from its origins in Leamington Spa, went ahead in the now decommissioned Munrow Sports Centre. The lack of facilities impacted on the running of the event and both volunteers and fencers made the best of the situation under quite difficult circumstances at times. Just to add to this I.T. issues meant late starts on both days

and we ended up running the sabre events separately to facilitate these.

Apart from Men's Sabre, all weapons were close to their operating numbers with excellent strength in depth. This meant that all matches were well-challenged and there were some surprise early exits. With over 430 fencers coming from across UK and Europe to take part in this major Open event Mike Whitehouse, Chair of BIFT committee and Head Coach, Birmingham Fencing Club, said he was delighted with this high entry level.

Holding with tradition and keeping this event over the Easter period has advantages in that more fencers from further afield travel to it, but there has always been a wish to have more referees. To aid this BIFT, in conjunction with BF/EF, agreed to host a Level 3 Foil/Epee refereeing course to enable the 'live' section of the examinations to go ahead in an appropriate environment. We remain deeply grateful to those who did respond quickly and took up this opportunity to gain their qualification and to everyone else who also helped with the refereeing throughout the weekend. Volunteering is at the core of all Sport in the U.K. and many of our local Club youngsters helped with set up etc. Likewise we place a high value on our armourers keeping all the piste hardware serviceable. The move to the new venue for 2018 will represent a whole fresh look at this event management with the chance to use the massive single span sports hall, integral screens and P.A. systems to call missing fencers. The venue officially opened on 22 May 2017 and our community club Birmingham Fencing Club has now transferred to it. Take a look at www.sportandfitness.bham.ac.uk. With high spec. technical facilities and a Costa coffee shop, what more can fencers both social and competitive need?

Men's Foil (Saturday 15 April). (NIF 213). 117 fencers vied for positions which brought the top seeds into potential D.E. positions by late afternoon. As last year Matthew Billing, Salle Boston and David Alexander, Notts. Cavaliers were in the top 5 places. To make it

an outstanding hatrick for him, Keith Cook, Salle Holyrood Fencing Club, former Senior British Champion, Commonwealth individual silver and European bronze medalist this time beat Peter Barwell, ZFW in a very edgy, close and exciting final to the last hit.

Women's Foil. (NIF 143) 67 Fenced. Kate Beardmore, Fighting Fit, beat Katrina Feklistova Newham Swords, in almost a localised tussle for the top spot. The WF high NIF showed there were no easy victories though on the way there.

Men's Sabre. (NIF 43) 38 sabreurs fenced off their competition in the New Gym and there was, unfortunately, no chance to bring the final fights into the Sports Hall to give the usual Gala aspect. Tough challenges took place throughout and the final fight between Soji Aiyenuro, Camden FC and James Edwards, Marshall Fencing, went to last hit – the sustained phrases between them held us all silent and holding our breath. Aiyenuro took the title.

Men's Epee (Sunday 16 April). (NIF 113) 91 Fenced. This time it wasn't Scotland's turn as William Grealey, Phit Fencing, held off repeated challenges from Maxton Milner, Brixton FC to beat him 15-14 despite this bout being continually disrupted by cramp issues for Milner.

Women's Epee. (NIF 120) 81 women competed, with lots of long close contests. Birmingham's Elizabeth Powell, unattached, came close in a reprise of her win last year. Victory went finally to Caitlin Chang, Harrogate 15-13 over GalaHess Sancho, Leon Paul Fencing.

Women's Sabre. (NIF 68) 37 entries. With a sports hall to themselves this event was marred by a disciplinary issue. Thankfully this was not in the context of the fights and the final went to Emily Ruaux, Rivington Park 15-13 over Briget Pleasant, Camden FC with some well executed actions.

For full results please see [here](#).

J.P. Whitehouse B.I.F.T.Sec.

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President Hilary Philbin Attends Investiture Ceremony

In the Queen's New Year 2017 Honours List British Fencing's President Hilary Philbin was awarded an MBE for services to Fencing and Sports Administration.

Speaking about the award in December last year, Hilary said: "I was delighted to receive this notification out of the blue. I feel honoured to be personally recognised, but am also pleased from the point of view of British Fencing and our sport.

Having started fencing at school I have been immersed in the world of fencing for 50 years: as an international competitor at senior and veterans level, GBR women's team captain, selector, competition organiser, national and club level administrator, national and international referee, club coach and – for a number of years – The Times fencing correspondent.

More recently, since undertaking the role of Fencing Manager for the London 2012 Olympic Games and following my 2013 appointment as BF President, I have been more involved with fencing administration at international level. I have enjoyed working closely with



Left to right: Linda McMahon, husband Jim, Hilary and father Derrick Cawthorne



Philbin MBE

the FIE on raising standards of presentation and protocol at our top international events, and also working with IWAS on developing wheelchair fencing worldwide.

Fencing, like many other sports, can only survive through the commitment of an army of volunteers who, through their enthusiasm for their sport, give their time so generously. One satisfying result of this is the friendships that are made within this group of dedicated people. With a husband and father also immersed in the world of fencing (both of them Olympic fencers and international referees), as well as most of my lifelong friends, perhaps it is just as well that I enjoy life as a fencing volunteer. Long may it continue!"

On 19 April, Hilary visited Buckingham Palace for the Investiture Ceremony and was presented with her award by The Duke of Cambridge Prince William.

Hilary, who received her honour alongside 80 others including Dame Jessica Ennis, Sir Mark Rylance and Victoria Beckham OBE, said, "It was fascinating to meet a group of people with a very wide range of skills and backgrounds who had made such different contributions within their own particular spheres. We had a fabulous day – Prince William was completely charming and very chatty. He told me that he had fenced at school, and I told him that I'd read in a magazine that Prince George is interested in fencing. He was quite surprised!"

British Fencing extends its congratulations to Hilary for her well-deserved award.

Coaches Spotlight – The Next Generation



Shakespeare's Swords Fencing Club

We recently caught up with Henry Talbot from Shakespeare Swords who was “encouraged” to do a coaching course by his club. Somewhat reluctantly he agreed but since then he hasn’t looked back. Here’s what he had to say to us:

1. What do you do when you’re not coaching?

Revising or babysitting. I’m still at school sitting my A-levels in all 3 of the sciences – to be honest I’m still not 100% sure why I chose those subjects but they’re interesting and I definitely enjoy learning about them. Exams are just around the corner so I’ve decided (or perhaps my mum’s decided!) that I need to knuckle down and start to actually prepare for them. As for the babysitting remark: having a sister who lives a minute up the road, who has three kids, apparently means I’m always available to come up and look after them all. I complain but I never say no when my sister asks, half because I’m perhaps slightly scared of my sister and half because I love my nibblings – they’re adorable and always fun to play with. I swear I’m not a biased uncle!

2. Favourite post training session meal?

That has to be Spaghetti Bolognese! I have 3 siblings who are all over 10 years older than me so my mum would cook a lot to feed all four of us. Now that I’m the only one left at home, my mum still cooks as though my siblings are still there so my portion sizes at home are huge! There is nothing better than coming home after a training session to walk through the door and find a colossal portion of Spaghetti Bolognese waiting on the table, the smell is to die for!

3. What would you do if you didn’t have fencing?

To be honest I’m not entirely sure. My first thought would probably be another sport. Since I could hold a bat or a racket and hit a ball my parents encouraged me to take up sport. I’ve always enjoyed physical activity and I think I was bound to end up continuing on through my life following that path. I was extremely lucky in the fact that I had some excellent coaches throughout my sports, each with new and innovative ideas. The reason I didn’t stick with many of them was due to

schoolwork and the greater time commitment I put into fencing. Perhaps I would have gone down a tennis or table tennis route having performed quite well in those sports when I was younger.

4. What do you do to relax?

I guess I do what most other 18 year olds do: listen to music, lounge around reading and watch movies. I’m definitely into action and adventure with fantasy playing a large role in my tastes, the classics such as ‘Lord of the Rings’ or ‘Indiana Jones’ are high on my list of all-time favourites! I read an awful lot, any of my friends would tell you I was a veritable bookworm when I was younger, devouring any book that had a good adventure in it. Any sword fighting I found would always be a bonus!

5. How/why did you get involved in coaching?

A coaching course based on the new course introduced last year was run at my local club (Shakespeare’s Swords, Stratford) in which I didn’t particularly have a choice about attending! I’m honestly glad I did and the skills I learnt there were invaluable when I decided to continue my coaching and began volunteering at Shakespeare’s and I’ve done a lot of work with Scouts and Explorers groups, predominantly coaching Sabre.

My fellow coaches have all been very encouraging, constantly helping me to review the sessions I run and let me watch and assist them in coaching in the sessions they run themselves. It’s helped me to come up with new ideas about the lessons I give and gain experience very quickly.

6. What is your philosophy on coaching and its relationship to education?

I believe a coach should make their sessions as fun as possible for the students they have. If the students aren’t interested they won’t learn anything. They’re more likely to misbehave or even make the learning environment unsafe which completely undermines the whole point of coaching in the first place. As someone who’s still at school I know first-hand how tedious it can be to try to learn something when I’m bored out of my mind! It feels like you’re simply smashing your head into a brick wall. At Shakespeare’s we’re constantly trying out new ideas, taking pedagogic risk, trying crazy ideas to keep the fencers interested and fencing – not just standing around like gormless zombie’s with no idea what to do.

7. Describe a typical training session

When I first read this question I must admit I didn’t like it. It implies that the sessions I run are repetitive or always follow a particular structure. I would agree there is a general idea



Henry Talbot Coaching

Coaches Spotlight – The Next Generation *(contd.)*

I follow but that's really where the similarities end. If I kept the sessions I run the same my fencer's will soon become very bored and I won't be able to teach them as effectively as I would like. I constantly challenge myself to come up with new ways of coaching, different games, restrictions and competitions for my fencers to experiment with to learn from. I don't believe in a typical training session because when I do, I've become lazy in my coaching.

8. What is your philosophy on discipline?

My philosophy is that the only reason students misbehave is because what they're currently doing isn't keeping their interest so they do something that does. Unfortunately that something might be quite dangerous – especially in fencing. My belief therefore, is that if you can keep your students interested while learning, discipline becomes almost unnecessary. Sure there have been times where kids have gotten over excited or are simply messing around for the sake of it but a quiet word away from the others is, in most cases enough. The only time I have ever shouted at someone was when they were sampling waving their sword around in the face of another student who wasn't wearing a mask. Anything that could cause serious harm to a student needs to be dealt

with swiftly and efficiently. That is perhaps the only appropriate time to actually shout at a student. If you treat your student with respect, you'll tend to find they will mirror that attitude to you.

9. How do you plan on improving as a coach from year to year?

I'm taking my level 3 fencing qualification later this year which should both help to improve my skills and allow for more opportunities in the next few years. I'm taking a year out after I finish my A levels to coach at Shakespeare's Swords and the surrounding schools of Stratford before heading on to university (If my grades allow!). I'd like to study sports science, specifically coaching, when I go to uni as it'd make use of my A-levels and combine it with my knowledge and deep interest in sport. This further education should allow me a stronger and more vast understanding of sports coaching and allow me to apply the latest and innovative ideas into my own sessions. The experience I gain from coaching at Shakespeare's is invaluable now and I'm sure this will only increase as I take on further responsibility and begin to work more full time as a coach.

10. What is your favourite practice?

I'm not sure what this question actually



Talbot Coaching

Biography

Name – Henry (Charles Williams) Talbot

Age – 18

Hometown – Evesham

Club – Shakespeare's Swords

Weapon – Sabre

School – Prince Henry's High School

means. Practice implies you simply do the same thing over and over again which is in a broad way of course you do but if you were to look at a session specifically little things will always change and when you fight someone in fencing; it's always changing and always progressing. You never have the exact same fight twice, so why train like you do? Practice is boring and learning by this definition simply doesn't take place. So instead we try to have less practice and more learning, whether that's through discovery or through simply small changes.

11. Who is your greatest role model either personally or as a coach?

I've never thought about who specifically would be my greatest role model. I've simply never needed one. It might sound arrogant but it's really not. From an early age I've always been surrounded by those who are better than me or those who I have emulated or even admired. I'm not ashamed to admit that there are those better than myself, else how would I learn? How could I possibly improve if I don't have that challenge or example of how to be? Having a single role model is too limiting and trying to pick a greatest just doesn't seem like something I am able to do.

12. What one piece of advice would you give to yourself when you started coaching at 17?

I would say to myself, "confidence is key". Having the confidence to speak in front of a group of people of any age has helped me in much more than just coaching. If I believe that I have the technical skill and knowledge to back up what I'm attempting to get my students to learn then my job becomes a thousand times easier. I have eleven years of experience competing as a fencer; my technical ability is high enough all I need is the confidence to use it.

Coaches Spotlight – The Next Generation *(contd.)*

13. What is one word or phrase that you hope former players use to describe you?

Fun. I always remember those who've I've found fun and enjoyable to be around and I hope that I can reflect that in my own coaching.

14. Describe the top five priorities in your life in rank order and explain why.

- 1) A-levels: I'd rate this first as I feel revision has taken up a lot of my life and I need to work hard if I want to get the grades I need for uni!
- 2) Coaching: Seeming as I'm going to be working as a professional coach for the next year I'm going to say it's pretty high on my priorities to get as much experience as I can.
- 3) Family: I've always loved looking after my nephews and nieces and more keep coming so I'm spending more and more time with my family and I feel it's important to always be there for them.
- 4) Friends: I'm about to finish school which means I'm not going to be seeing my friends on a regular basis so I'm probably going to be working hard to make sure I can stay in touch and meet up as often as possible.
- 5) Hobbies: I'm pretty sporty so most of my hobbies are very active. I'm a member of my local tennis club and I swim and volunteer for my local swimming club which I really enjoy and I hope to carry these hobbies on into the next phase of my life.

15. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a coach?

My main strengths would have to be my technical ability and the conditioning my body still has. I'm still fresh out of actually competing in fencing and my fitness and conditioning along with my actually technical usage are still at a high standard (not sure how long that will last though!). This allowed me to overcome my lack of experience of coaching when I first started simply because I could spot mistakes more by instinct than actual conscious thought. Now I'm a lot more experienced and I simply use my technical ability to deliver high pressure, high standard lessons to our more elite fencers at Shakespeare's Swords. However I'm not as naive as to think I have even close to enough experience to believe myself to be at the highest class of coaching. This would be my biggest weakness as I'm still meeting situations I have never seen before and had to work through solving it that may take longer than it should or perhaps even have a negative effect on what I want to achieve. All I can do is learn from such events and hope to deal with them better the next time they occur.

16. How has coaching affected your life?

Coaching has helped give me the confidence to achieve and try out new things that before I never would have dreamed of doing. It's given me direction on what I wish to do as a career and has allowed me to meet new people and introduced me to a whole range of possibilities for the future. Organisation and planning have

rubbed off into my daily life from coaching and has been very useful to apply for revision and school in general. Coaching has helped me to open up more and allowed my personality to really develop and grow and I will always be thankful for the opportunities provided to me through coaching and the coaches I work with.

17. What are your best and worst memories in coaching?

My worst memory in coaching would have to be standing in front of a class of kids and simply being unable to remember what I wished them to learn. The embarrassment I felt was unbelievable and I honestly felt like quitting then and there. There is nothing more soul crushing than having 15-20 kids staring at you while you awkwardly attempt to bumble your way through an explanation all the while wishing you could simply run out the hall! Luckily I didn't and I managed to get through it and after looking back on it, I feel very silly to say the least. Ever since I've always properly planned my lessons and made sure I have a good idea of what I want my pupils to learn. In contrast my best memory would have to be when I had a taster session for a Scouts group and as I was about to leave I was approach by many of the kids and asked if I could come back and do a session again. Nothing is more rewarding than being told that your session was so fun and so engaging that almost all the students were excited at the idea of doing it again. That made me proud to be a coach.



The logo for British Fencing Shop features the word 'BRITISH' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. Below it, 'FENCING' is written in a larger, bold, blue, sans-serif font. A white diagonal slash cuts through the letters of both words. At the bottom right, the word 'SHOP' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

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Clubs & Regions

A ROUND UP FROM JOSEF THOMAS

Late October 2016, I started my role as the Development Officer – Clubs and Regions (England), to act as a bridge between British Fencing, England Fencing and the Regions and their clubs. Although I sit within the Development Team at British Fencing, the role is funded by England Fencing therefore I am focused on the 10 English Regions and their clubs. An outline of the objectives of the role are:

- Help drive insight led participation growth;
- Linking our clubs to support and grow our community fencing programmes;
- Encourage the sharing of best practice, market insight and learning across the community;
- Assist Clubs (within England) with broad strategic development to become sustainable and financially resilient.

Supporting the core fencing community through Region and club development is of huge importance to British Fencing and England Fencing as we move into a new 4-year Sport England funding cycle. In November 2016, I first met with the England Fencing board to discuss priorities over the coming year. There was one factor that stayed with me, and still does to today – crucial to the success of the role, is to visit the Regions and clubs to understand and identify what support they require and how I can align those to the strategic outcomes of British Fencing and the new Sport England strategy, *Towards an Active Nation*.

At any one moment, there are over 300 affiliated fencing clubs (within England) to British Fencing, therefore it is an unattainable target to visit each one. I started by meeting the Regional Chairs and to this date, I have formally engaged 7/10 to discuss each individual Region in more depth. From presenting at the Eastern Region Big Fencing Weekend, to visiting The Kings School Canterbury and in the first instance meeting the newly appointed chair of the East Midlands.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the Regional chairs that have welcomed me into their Regions and look forward to working with you in the coming months.

On the recommendations of the Regions, I ventured across the country to understand how fencing clubs operate from membership bases, how they source funding and links

they have created within their communities. I have been welcomed to Paul Davies Fencing Academies half term camp, a day with Cambridge Swords and evening sessions with Bath Swords and Newham Swords, plus many more.

The important question: what have I discovered from those visits? It is very apparent that all clubs operate in various ways to meet the need and demand of their individual members and their communities. Every club is completely unique, the committees and coaches that run our fencing clubs have an untapped wealth of knowledge, skills, and creative practices, all of which have a tremendous impact on their individual clubs and surrounding areas. The sharing of these ideas and approaches can only benefit our sport at a grassroots level.

There are 3 main areas I'd like to direct clubs:

1. Club Digest

The Club Digest aims to share best practice through case studies that celebrate club success. Information on how British Fencing is making our sport more accessible, top tips on applying for funding and information on upcoming British Fencing events and coaching courses.



2. County Sport Partnerships

In the recent 'Understanding Our Club Survey' 65% of clubs were unaware of their County Sport Partnership. Creating strong relationships with their County Sports Partnerships (CSP) should be a priority for clubs as they have better local knowledge of funding, additional courses such as first aid and safeguarding and will be able to offer local networking opportunities.



CSPs are networks of local agencies committed to working together to increase

the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity. CSPs deliver Sport England programmes such as Sportivate and Satellite Clubs on a local level.

There are 44 (CSPs) across England which are committed to 'Improving Lives by Growing Grassroots Sport and Physical Activity.'

3. Clubmatters

The final topic I'd like to draw club's attention to is Club Matters, an online portal created, driven and updated by Sport England. Club Matters offers free support, learning and guidance on all aspects of running a club. It is your first port of call for any supportive materials in these categories:



Club Finances – Budgeting, generating income, managing cost, tax and funding advice.

Club Management – club structure, managing risk, committees, policies and procedures.

Club People – volunteers, coaches, members and inclusivity.

Club Marketing – market research, marketing strategy, sponsorship and social media.

It's been a fantastic start to my role here at British Fencing, I'd like to thank all those I've worked with in the last 6 months and look forward to supporting our Regional structures and clubs in the coming months and beyond with some exciting new projects that will grow the sport at grassroots level. If you would like to feature in the Club Digest or would like to get in touch, please do so via the email below.

Email: Josef.thomas@britishfencing.com
Josef Thomas – Development Officer (England Clubs & Regions)



Bath Swords

Events Update

By Amy Grant

It has been a busy start to the year with three national and two international competitions between February and April.

The British School Team Championships were held in February at Millfield School for the first time. A record number of entries made for a busy weekend and it was fantastic to see a number of schools enter teams for the first time and such a range of schools feature on the podium.

It was exciting to have the support of Logitech for the British Fencing Championships and for the finals to be shown on our [YouTube channel](#) live. National Champions consisted of a mix of previous and new winners demonstrating the competitiveness currently in our sport. One highlight of the weekend was hosting the U14 EFC Valerie Degorce International Youth Trophy and for these young fencers to be able to watch the Seniors in finals action – very inspiring!

The following weekend we hosted the British Youth Championships in Sheffield – a three day competition attended by over 1100 fencers, the biggest event in our calendar – and the Cole Cup which saw 15 countries represented.

These events are only made possible with the fantastic support of our volunteer team who give up their time event after event to make them happen. Thank you to everyone who worked on and supported each of these events. They take a tremendous team effort to bring together and make them happen.

Amy Grant – British Fencing Event Manager

FOIL FENCING

This is a foil specific session. No epee No sabre.

NEW SATURDAY SESSION

Every Saturday: two sessions (14:00-15:30) & (15:30-17:00)
At holiday times and low season, there will only be one session.

CENTRAL LONDON

Venue: Penfold Street, London NW1
Facilities: Changing rooms & showers.

ELECTRIC SPARRING SESSION

This is an electric sparring session only for competent electric fencers with full kit. There will be a mix of freestyle sparring and poules based on your club ranking. There will be: No group training sessions, No Beginners, No lessons. You can sign up to these separately. Ask for session details of our other programmes.

LOTS OF PISTES

There are many pistes available both wired and wireless. Depending on how busy the session is there will be 6-16 pistes available.

OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND

This is including half terms and school holidays. On rare occasions if this session is cancelled, we will provide an alternative session in the week.

Free Guest Session

Your first session is free.
Thereafter £25 per session or you can sign up to membership.

The Fencing Academy

Supporting Fencers achieving their potential



The Academy Zorro Club London is introducing the new Saturday session open to all.
email@fencingacademy.org

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The Reflective Coach – Communication

By Lynne Melia

DON'T THINK ABOUT A PINK HIPPO!

Remember, not at all. You're doing it, aren't you? Stop! Right now!

I recently studied a postgraduate taught module on reflective coaching practice, and really enjoyed it. Our focus was on identifying something in our own coaching habitus that we felt was maybe not best practice, or that might be holding our athletes back. Fencing coaches, perhaps more than those in other sports, often work in isolation, so *critical* self-reflection is important to avoid stagnation. Jones (2006) states "ten years of coaching without reflection is simply one year of coaching repeated ten times". Whilst most coaches are aware of the importance of reflection in practice, often this is the first thing to fall by the wayside when one gets busy or tired. One can con oneself that one is reflecting, but often what is happening is "technical" or "practical" reflection, when what is necessary is "critical" reflection (van Manen (1977) cited in Cassidy et al., 2004, p.24).

Are you still thinking of that pink hippo?

I am going to stop talking about reflection now – Norman has that covered in his article in the last issue of *The Sword*. Through the study module, one theme kept cropping up – communication. This is not really surprising – it is a key part of coaching. From these discussions, I have isolated seven things that might help in coaches' attempts to be more mindful in their communication with fencers.

1. Positive language.

I am not talking about constantly telling fencers that they are great, or not pointing out when something is wrong. What I mean here, is positive instructional language. Avoid telling your fencers what NOT to do, in favour of telling them what TO do. None of you would be thinking about a pink hippo if I had not mentioned it.

Similarly, under pressure, we tend to remember the last thing we heard, so saying in the minute break (because none of us talks to our pupils outside the minute break!), "Don't parry quarte", may well result in you throwing up your hands in despair moments after the fight



restarts because your fencer has "not listened" or "done the opposite of what I told him/her to do". Sound familiar? Try instead "change your parry", or "take counter sixte when you are attacked". You may find yourself saying "I love it when they do as they're told!"

Sounds simple and obvious – naturally. But it's harder to do than you think, sometimes. I'll shut up about the pink hippo now.

2. Praise!

We all know the importance of praise. BUT, a colleague of mine told the group that he had found that praise had become almost a verbal tic. So many coaches get into a habit of rewarding any action with a "good" or "nicely done", and he had caught himself saying "good" and then giving a correction.

First of all – what is communication?

Boiled down, it is the "act of transferring information from one place to another" (skills you need.com). Sounds simple, doesn't it? There are several different categories of communication – Verbal, Non-verbal, Written (including graphics and charts). These can all be broken down into various smaller, more detailed, sub-categories.

The desired outcome of any communication is understanding – particularly in a coaching context. It is not enough for a coach to "deliver" information and assume that those in front of him or her have even received it, let alone, understood it. Good communication is a two-way, negotiated process.

On a similar note, I had some lessons from a foreign Sabre coach several years ago. Generally, what I heard most in the lesson was "Again!", but when I did get that "Very good!" I felt soooo proud! If praise is too easily won, it becomes cheapened. So vague, value-laden praise is out, to be replaced by meaningful, concrete feedback in the form of positive comments, or, where things went wrong, an explanation of, or question about why they went wrong and how they can be corrected (Cross and Lyle 1999).

Video a lesson and see how many times you reflexively praise. Or ask a colleague or parent to count the number of times you repeat a phrase.



Also think about your fencers' reaction to praise. Some love to be singled out in a group, and visibly "grow" when you praise them for a well-executed action. Others cringe at being singled out. For some fencers a quiet word as you pass them is better.

3. "Do or do not – there is no "try".

Yoda – life coach extraordinaire. He may not be real, but he's right in this. "Try" is a word I avoid using in my coaching if I can, as it implies that failure is an acceptable option. When a child is asked to try and do something, they hear "you probably can't do it, but have a go". If you simply ask a fencer to do something, they may do it well, they may do it badly, but they will have done it. Thus, expectations are raised, and raised expectations result in raised performance. People can become quite polarised about this, so I shall just leave it here and walk away, possibly whistling.

4. Avoid repetition.

What? Pardon? Do you know you've said that three times now?

How can we avoid repeating ourselves?

A quick anecdote you will probably recognise:

This happened about two years ago. Oscar (not his real name) was preparing, along with several other of my fencers, for the British Youth Championships. He needed some new kit. Mum had spoken to me about it and Dad came to collect him. I produced a club jacket that I thought was the correct size and suggested that he try it on and show Dad to see what he thought. I was a little exasperated with Oscar that evening, as I had spent the whole 90 minute session repeating instructions and it had come home to me that I do this a lot when, earlier that evening in response to a question on the whiteboard about "how many fencing related words beginning with "R" can you think of?", one of the other fencers had written "repeat – what Lynne did at least 3 times tonight every time she spoke!" Everybody had a laugh about it when we checked the whiteboard for answers and I had decided that I needed a quiet chat with him about listening later on.

Oscar was about 2 metres from where we were standing, packing his kit bag. It was not particularly noisy – everyone was either changing or packing away boxes. Dad said to

Oscar, waving the jacket at him, "Try this on for size, O!"

No response. I nudged him with my foot and told him that his Dad had just spoken to him – he genuinely had not heard – or had not processed what he had heard. He apologised and tried on the jacket. We discussed it a bit between the three of us and I wrote down the size needed and the details for the supplier. Oscar went back to packing his bag but as he turned away, his Dad spoke to him again, to ask if he thought that he needed a lamé jacket and breeches as well. Again, he had "switched off" and did not respond. His Dad got very annoyed and snapped at him to pay attention when people were trying to help him. I had a little light bulb moment – Oscar needs to be consciously focusing on something to process it. All the little things came together and I was no longer annoyed with him, but with myself for not realising sooner. Even when performing a simple task, Oscar is oblivious to his surroundings. I had watched him trip over things or stand in the way of people moving benches and never put all the details together.

Over the weeks that followed, I consciously reminded myself to attract his attention before any instruction or question. I started group communications with "Listen!" or "Right!" and single communications with a name – doing this to most people so as not to single Oscar out, although it was obvious that his lack of attention had become a bit of a joke within the group. I also wait until I have eye contact, particularly with Oscar. If I forget (and I do), and have to repeat myself, it is the subject of a gentle, good-natured joke between us, but has ceased to be the frustrating "barrier to learning" (Bishop, 2011, p.32; Maxted, 1999) that it used to be.

5. Question!

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I LEARN." (Attrib B. Franklin).

Whilst it might take longer to get there, *Problem Based Learning* is possibly the best way to facilitate deep learning and understanding (Jones and Turner, 2006). When a problem crops up, or even when teaching a new stroke, I ask the fencers what they should do. Depending on the group, they either come up with ideas there and then in a large group, or they split up into smaller groups and investigate the problem I have set them (e.g. Every time I attack my opponent, s/he parries and hits me with a riposte). What can I do? Yes, they are re-inventing the wheel and I could just show them a first counter riposte, or a compound attack, but if they have solved the problem themselves, they will have ownership of the move and I can show them how to do it well. This is not always possible, but for me, over twenty years of coaching, it has proven the best way to embed learning securely.

The potential problem with PBL is the length of time it takes to build enough trust within

the group for all members to contribute ideas. If a group is not particularly comfortable doing this, it helps if the sharing session is more coach-led. I vary the way in which I group students for these exercises, as well as the structure of the feedback/discussion part of the session if there is any reluctance on the part of any students to share ideas. Some coaching groups work best if the sharing is done in smaller groups or even pairs, rather than as one big feedback session for everyone. Whilst this is more time consuming and often repetitive for the coach, it can be of huge benefit to newer or quieter members of a group, where directed questioning can effectively "scaffold" the learning; the smaller the group, the easier it is to manage or navigate the "Zones of Proximal Development" (Vygotsky, 1987, p.209).

6. S is for silence!

Another problem for me personally, is that it is easy for my passion for problem solving and for my sport to get the better of me, and I join in too enthusiastically when fencers are feeling their way through an idea. Jumping in and steering the talk, as often happens (sometimes necessarily) in a classroom or other learning environment, can derail a train of thought, or can stifle the creativity PBL is searching for (Cross and Lyle 1999; Kidman and Hanrahan 2011). I therefore decided to make more and better use of silence within my coaching sessions. Other things I recognise in my sessions from my reading is the chaotic nature of coaching (Bowes and Jones, 2006; Jones, 2004), particularly in a sport where training sessions may span several age/ability groups as well as three weapons.

This is when your non-verbal communication skills come into play. What you say is important, as is how you say it. More important is what you don't say, and how you don't say it! Your body language is all-important in fostering the accepting atmosphere that is key to PBL, fencers sharing ideas, and fencers feeling able to ask questions if they have not understood something. How do you encourage a fencer who is groping towards verbalising a new concept? You need to demonstrate your openness to his/her idea, your acceptance of a question that they may be hesitant to ask. It's all very well saying that "the only stupid question is the one you are afraid to ask", if your body language says differently when someone asks the question that the whole group were hoping would be asked. I saw a great t-shirt the other day, that said "I am not responsible for what my face does when you talk!" If you are a coach, then I am afraid that you have to be.

7. Listen!

As stated earlier, I took time to focus on the quality of my interactions in training sessions, but, especially in the high-pressure environment of competition, where a coach is given one minute mid fight, to talk to

a fencer. When your fencer is winning, that minute is about reinforcement and encouragement. When your fencer is losing, that minute can turn the fight around – with the goal of improved quality of interactions in mind, for both training and competition. Almost counter-intuitively, I have found that, having developed thinking fencers (see above!), asking "What's working?", "What's not working?" or "Why are you getting hit?" is much more productive than just telling them what I think is going on. If the fencer really has no idea, by all means tell them what you're seeing. Generally, they know. Or they will say something like "I'm getting hit when..." And you can suggest a reason why that might be happening if they can't.

In summary, there is no "one size fits all" approach to coaching, and these ideas are all things that have come out of my own self-reflection – my own shortcomings as a coach, if you will. I am sure that many people will disagree with me on some of the things I have said, but hope that my insight into my own failings might encourage you to perhaps pull out your metaphorical mirror and have a look at your own habitus.

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On Piste/Off Piste

An Interview and Feature with Jon Willis

10 years ago Jon Willis won the Men's Epee Heidenheim World Cup making him, at that time, the first British World Cup winner for 26 years. This result was the first in a mini gold run for British fencers over the last 10 years with World Cup golds for Richard Kruse (4), James David (2) and Jon Willis (2). (Correct at the time of writing.)

An epee fencer and artist, Roland McMorran, captured the moment just before the start of the 2007 Heidenheim semi-finals on canvas for Jon, a story he tells below.

"When I see all my kinsmen, Krishna, who have come here on this field of battle, Life goes out of my limbs, and they sink, and my mouth is sear and dry; a trembling comes over my body, and my hair shudders in horror..." (Bhagavad Gita, Penguin Classics, Juan Mascaró Translation)

The "Fun Bus" shadowy demeanour left a wake of propitious darkness behind it on that first nights drive – destination Tauber. I didn't know, at that point that I would be to paint Jon Willis' portrait. To me he was simply a precise managerial individual, who was thankfully nonetheless relaxed, who understood the requirement for sports to be a matter of love, and not simply of the over rigorous training of the body. I overheard a discussion between Jon and a certain old German fencing partner – why, when they were taller, quicker, stronger, more skilled than he, could he still defeat them... Jon was speaking about a conviction, a 'fighting spirit' – in the Eastern sense of the word.

Painting a person isn't about their skin, flesh and blood; it's about the reasoning and sensuous psyche that inhabits those things. Wearing a face has a sensation to it, and the question is the relationship between this organic layer and its inhabitant. Further to this the influences that act upon a portraits birth pangs are the various and debatable histories of the client, the unflinching barely concealable present and the song lines of the future.

Knowing little of all this, and distracted by his over packed schedule of power lifting and the cruel workload at our trusty British based manufacturer of fencing goods, Jon, possibly foolishly for both of us, agreed to post me some scrappy old bits of newspaper photocopy to work from. Thanks Jon.

How simple it would be to paint the victorious moment, I mused, as Napoleon chose to so many times before. But such a decision

would teach us little of sport, and our shared humanity. It would also be a form of lie – victory or loss are known to take form before the fight even begins. The richness of victory when sport is at its greatest, is equalled in the richness of the defeated. Ulrich Robeiri became the world champion, but I suggest that he did so exactly because Jon defeated him in the Heidenheim final those years ago. What I am trying to say, is that sport is not a selfish act, victory and loss are part of a private poetic present that touches all aspects of our lives. Come victory or defeat, they form us for better or worse, and at its best, in life's great struggle, the real victory is to discover how to fight not for the victory of medals, but for the un-defeated heart... We all know our favourite, magnificent moments from sport, and these moments occur again and again in our daily lives, really not such a different challenge as when on the piste.

The painting is of the moment before, when destiny questions the individuals who must inform each other's futures.

"On the field of Truth, on the battle-field of life, what came to pass Sanjaya...?" (Bhagavad Gita, Penguin Classics, Juan Mascaró Translation)

On a separate full length canvas, we have Jon Willis. Although he is full length, he is painted at a smaller scale, somewhat distanced from the occasion. We see concern, we sense a certain shock at the situation, but nonetheless there is a certainty, a solidity behind the veil of nerves. I didn't paint Jon as the great champion over others, I painted him as a human, afraid, but who, on that day found victory in his heart.

"Be one in self harmony, in Yoga, and arise, great warrior, arise." (Bhagavad Gita, Penguin Classics, Juan Mascaró Translation)

Article by Roland F A McMorran,
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One summer I was organising the Haverstock training camp held in Tauberbischofsheim, Germany. The majority of fencers travelled to the camp by road. The 18-hour journey was on a large coach we fondly named the 'Fun Bus'. It was on this journey I first met Roland in person, he's a very polite and very tall left handed epee fencer with long hair and a soft voice giving the accurate impression of a gentle giant. We soon got chatting about life

and all things fencing however with over 100 fencers attending the camp our paths rarely crossed.

On one of the times they did, probably at the ice-cream shop in the centre of town, he asked if he could paint a picture from my fencing past. On my return to the UK I dug out a few old photos from the Heidenheim World Cup victory and sent them to him. I heard nothing for ages until sometime later he paid me a visit at Leon Paul and set up the two paintings in the conference room for viewing.

He chose not to paint one of the many action or celebration pictures I sent him but rather a rare moment of calm in what was a crazy day, the presentation of the final 4 fencers to the crowd before the semi-finals. He captured all the emotions I was feeling at that time as the 4 finalists were presented to the German crowd. It was my first World Cup Final and I was a little unsure what to do. I had seen many finals before but having never been a part of one I was unsure where to stand. I unintentionally ended up standing a little away from the other 3 experienced finalists as they chatted and joked amongst themselves. I felt very alone stood on the finals piste in front of everyone. I remember telling myself not to show my fear or worry with what turned out to be limited success as you can see from Roland's painting!

Once the fencing started I was fine and got lost in the fight, but the moments before were some of the loneliest moments I have experienced as an athlete. I went through the full range of emotions that day and sometimes you forget about the uncommon emotions you don't associate with winning a World Cup but with Roland's paintings as a constant reminder of them it's like having a complete memory record of the day.

I fell in love with the paintings straight away as they instantly brought back the emotions I described above on of what turned out to be the defining moment of my competitive fencer career. I knew I had to have them and Roland, being a gentleman, let me purchase them for a very fair price. They now hang in the living room of my London flat with the Heidenheim trophy close by. It's hard to believe it was 10 years ago, so much has changed between then and now but that moment will always stay with me and Roland's paintings help to remind me of that amazing day.

Jon Willis
 Director of British Epee

Hydration for Fencing Performance

PHYSIOLOGICAL DEMANDS OF FENCING



Dr Lindsay Bottoms – Research Lead for Sport, Health and Exercise at the University of Hertfordshire and former International fencer

As we are all aware, fencing is a high intensity, intermittent sport and therefore requires the ability to produce energy for explosive movements such as lunging, as well as be able to recover quickly to repeat these movements throughout a fight and also throughout a competition. Previous research by my research group have found in epee that during a poule fight, the work to rest ratio is 9:8s with a fight lasting approximately 2 min, whilst in a DE fight it is 11:10s lasting on average 5min30s. This is important for training, which should be targeted between 2 and 3 minutes with a work to rest of 9:8s as well as longer sessions of 5-6 min at a work to rest ratio of 11:10s. According to other authors, in foil, these rest to work ratios appear to be in the region of 5:15s for 3-5 minutes. We previously found, the energy expenditure for an epee fight was in the region of 10-12kcal, which is similar to values reported by others for foil (8.8 – 12kcal).

An issue we have with fencing is our ability to control body temperature. Our body has a thermostat just like our central heating in the house (it is called the hypothalamus). We aim to keep our body temperature at around 37°C

when at rest. During exercise, because our muscles are very inefficient at using energy for muscle contraction, 75% of energy is lost as heat. This obviously places a large demand on our hypothalamus to control the temperature. If we were not able to lose heat, we would only survive exercising for about 15 minutes before we had to stop. Thankfully, our body has ways of dealing with the heat. Firstly, we increase muscle blood flow to help carry heat away from the muscles to the core and secondly we increase skin blood flow to help take heat to the surface of the skin (hence why we become red in the face). This heat at the skin is then lost through conduction, convection and radiation (hopefully you are remembering your physics here). The issue we have in fencing, is that we are covered from head to toe in fencing kit, which means we struggle to lose heat in this manner. We therefore, have to rely more heavily on sweat evaporation, hence we sweat a lot. Even this mechanism is compromised as a lot of the water is absorbed into the clothing and is restricted in the amount of heat lost. It is therefore, imperative that we try and remain cool during competition. Once our body temperature rises above about 38.5°C exercise will become harder and fatigue will be induced more quickly. Being a skill based sport, fatigue can have huge consequences on our performance. This is an area I will be exploring over the next few years with my PhD student, to try and find ways to prevent such large increases in body temperature and help maintain performance. Another issue with large sweat rates, is that we are more likely to develop dehydration. If we lose more than 2% of body weight in sweat, our skill will significantly deteriorate. Again, in a skill based sport this can have serious repercussions on performance. It is therefore important that we maintain hydrated throughout a competition. One way to determine how much fluid you need to ingest, is by weighing yourself before a competition and monitoring how much fluid you are ingesting during the competition and then weigh yourself after. If you have lost weight, you have not drunk enough fluid. You can estimate your sweat rate from this, and it will give you an idea of how much fluid you should drink during a competition. For example, if you weigh 70kg before the competition and you drank 3L of fluid during 8h of competition, then weighed yourself after and you were 68kg, you have sweated approximately 5L over 8h. This would mean you would want to drink approximately 625ml every hour.

What should I drink to hydrate?

Sports drinks are often ingested by sports people as a way to prevent dehydration and also to provide the body with fuel for exercise. It is common to drink sports drinks containing carbohydrate and electrolytes such as Lucozade Sport. In a sport such as fencing, which has a high thermoregulatory demand and thus high sweat rates, replenishing fluids is important to be able to maintain performance throughout a competition. When we sweat we lose crucial electrolytes (body minerals and salts) which can be replaced through drinking sports drinks. Electrolytes also assist with retention of water, and therefore help to prevent the onset of dehydration. Carbohydrate helps provide fuel for the body and mind. However, in fencing this is not so important, as we have sufficient muscle glycogen to provide fuel to supply our muscles throughout the duration of competition. As mentioned earlier, each fight is burning approximate 10-12 kcal. In total for the first round of a competition, this is about 60-72kcal and for winning a competition this is going to be higher around 300kcal. Therefore, we do not replace carbohydrate much above our normal calorie intake. Recent research by my research group has now shown that swilling a carbohydrate drink around in the mouth and spitting it out improves fencing performance. It is thought that there are carbohydrate receptors in the mouth which are stimulated with carbohydrate mouth rinsing and improve motivation and thus performance. This enables the performance benefit of carbohydrate by delaying fatigue without ingesting a lot of extra calories. I am not suggesting we all go on to a fencing piste and start spitting out carbohydrate, but instead of drinking a 500ml bottle of Lucozade Sport, you could just take a mouthful and hold it for 5-10 seconds and then ingest it. Then use your own homemade sports drink with fewer calories and salt to maintain hydration (see recipe below).

Recently, some sports drinks have had caffeine added to them. Caffeine was removed from the world anti-doping association (WADA) banned list in 2004 but remains on the monitoring list to detect patterns of misuse in sport. Consequently interest in the beneficial effects of caffeine on sporting performance has increased. Caffeine has generally not been added to sports drinks because of its possible diuretic effect,

Hydration for Fencing Performance (contd.)

Thermoregulation:

- Fencing kit causes an increase in core temperature
- Increase in core temperature causes an increase in heart rate
- Could cause detriment to performance, in particular to skill
- Cooling could prevent this from occurring
- Need to ensure hydration as high levels of sweat rate
- Foilists suffer with too much sweating causing kit to become live...

University of Hertfordshire **UH 25**



How to make your own sports drink

You can easily make a homemade sports drink by including the following ingredients:

- 500ml of water
- Pinch of salt
- 15g of sucrose (granulated sugar)
- Sugar free squash drink

You can add 3mg of caffeine powder per kg of body weight if you wanted to (if over 16). Also, you can increase or decrease the sugar content, depending on what you are wanting to achieve with the drink. If you wanted to perform the mouth rinsing, I would include 30g of sugar per 500ml of water. If you are wanting just to replace fluids, I would include no sugar (in particular for training). If you want to replace some fluids and some calories, I would include 15g per 500ml.

Dr Lindsay Bottoms

which could potentially have negative thermoregulatory (temperature control) effects in a sport such as fencing. However, contrary to popular beliefs, caffeine has now been shown not to result in water-electrolyte imbalances or hyperthermia. Therefore, adding caffeine to a sports drink, could improve fencing performance even more so by reducing fatigue and maintaining skill. This is exactly what we found when we undertook a research study in to the benefits of caffeine on performance. Caffeine had a tendency to improve the lunging accuracy of the fencers following fatiguing exercise. This improvement in skill was likely to be a result of reduced perception of fatigue by the fencers with the caffeine. In a competition this could have significant outcomes on performance, and could be the difference between winning and losing a fight. However, before you rush out and buy your caffeine drinks for fencing there are points to consider. Too much caffeine can be detrimental to performance due to the fact it can cause tremors and heart palpitations. If you are not a regular caffeine drinker, caffeine may have a more pronounced effect. Either way, if you decide to include caffeine in your sports drinks try it out in training before you drink it in competition. Also, fencers under 16 are advised not to include caffeine in their drinks as the negative effects can be exaggerated.

What does this mean for training?:

- Train with full kit even in lessons...
- Heat acclimation prior to a big competition could potentially be beneficial
- Implementing a cooling strategy between direct elimination fights
- Determine sweat rate to ensure proper hydration strategy

University of Hertfordshire **UH 25**



Letters to the Editor

A LETTER FROM BRITISH FENCING MEMBER, JUHA AGREN

Dear Editor,

After challenging your opponent to duel was not acceptable from the 19th century onwards, the sport of fencing evolved, using weapons and technique that were based on duelling. Fencing became part of the Olympic programme from 1896 onwards and started generating worldwide appeal.

In 1936 Olympic fencing moved on with modern technology when electric scoring apparatus was introduced for epee. In 2017 fencing scoring apparatus is still largely based on 1930's technology. There are wireless systems delivering signals to scoring apparatus instead of cables, but the apparatus itself has the same principle as in the 1930s.

During 2000's there have been several calls to drop sports with minor television appeal from the Olympics. Fencing has been mentioned among other sports. The Olympic Games is the main publicity opportunity for fencing. What other times are there when fencing would feature in the main stream sports television and press? None, even the world championships do not get main stream coverage.

Current youth has lived all their lives in a world where digital technology is taking over many areas of life. The main issue for fencing to continue to gain coverage in the future is to utilise current technology and to think how the sport would look better on television. The fencing community would need to get feedback from people who do not play the sport to find out how it is perceived. If the sport does not interest people outside its own circles, there cannot be mass appeal.

One important issue for mass appeal is that it is not easy to see what happens on the fencing piste and how points are scored. For the uninitiated, there are two people charging at one another and then lights are flashing. The referee waves hands to indicate a point or deny a point. But how was the point scored?

Other martial arts and boxing have won millions of followers around the world in recent decades. For these sports, there is no difficulty for a spectator to see when an athlete scores a point. For fencing to continue as a televised Olympic sport and to gain following, there should be current technologies that help viewers to easily see how points are scored so that they can live the match with the athletes.

Juha – Eastern Region



Thanks for your comments Juha. I spoke to Alex at Leon Paul to get an answer about the advancements in scoring technology and he replied:

There have been significant improvements in scoring technology since the advent of electric fencing. We have seen big improvements in portability with the advent of battery powered machines. From a spectator point of view there have been improvements in displays in the form of score and time and in some cases flat screen TVs. In the very near future Leon Paul will release affordable portable wireless fencing which we believe will revolutionise the sport.

I agree with your overall view that that the fencing community has to do as much as possible to promote the sport. A lot has been done since London 2012 to increase the availability of live fencing using modern platforms such as YouTube. It is now possible to watch all nine Grand Prix events live plus a handful of World Cups. However we have to be realistic about how mainstream fencing will be in its current format. It is a complicated sport with complicated rules. To even begin to think about making it mainstream we would have to consider changing the rules to make it more understandable (as Taekwondo did before those Olympics in London – a kick to the head became the shot to go for). So the question is, can the fencing community handle that?

Editor

Dear Editor,

The Sword is currently covering topics around a review of coaching but one thing seems to be ignored i.e. the cost of becoming one.

It concerns me that potential coaches may be put off by the cost of both the additional coaching kit and the cost of courses. I appreciate that British Fencing has no control over the cost of coaching equipment but four years ago I undertook a Level One weekend course to add to my existing qualifications. Whilst on the course, I was told by someone that they and others had paid about 60% what I had. I did not pursue this as it seems that a deal had been done so that there were enough course members to make it viable and I really wanted to do it. However not only was it unfair but I question why the cost was so high in the first place.

In this review of coaching, the cost must be a relevant factor and set at a level all can afford as I doubt if many coaches are sponsored by their club.

Regards,
John Sones



A response from Steve Kemp, British Fencing's Coaching Development Manager:

I understand your experience was a number of years ago, and before my time in this role, so it is difficult to comment on your experience. At this time any course cost differences are either by an early bird booking offer, or there are subsidised places via funded projects to targeted groups.

As a coach, I do appreciate how much coaches invest in sport – lots of investment in travel,

volunteering, becoming a coach, organising coaching and competitions, as well as the continual development as a coach. So we do endeavour to keep the costs down. The Level 1 Introduction to Coaching Fencing course is still approximately 25% lower than the Fast track Level 1 was in 2015.

Compared to other sports, fencing courses are competitively priced. The challenge moving forwards as external funding is reduced is to keep the costs as low as possible, whilst increasing the quality of the coach development experience, and the quality assurance to do this. This will not be easy, but with insights from the fencing community, courses can be put on, where they are at capacity, which is one method of keeping cost stable.

Many thanks
Steve

Book Review

The School of Fencing by Domenico Angelo

So, who does not have at least one of Angelo's prints hanging somewhere around the house? I must admit to having at least 4 complete plates given to me by various relatives to "enhance" my love of fencing. So it is always fun to look at an affordable facsimile of Angelo's original "L'Ecole des Armes" first published in French in 1750 and then reproduced 25 years later as "The School of Fencing" as an instruction manual with black and white plates. Angelo had by that time established himself as a highly sought after master of fencing and horsemanship, teaching the small sword to the aristocracy at Carlisle House in Soho Square. Thus his book, complete with its 25 engraved plates demonstrating illustrative poses in the more classical French style, became THE manual to possess. This may well have infuriated the French who now had a native Italian in England teaching the French style with an English sub text!

So what we have here is an entertaining modern version of this classic, edited by Jared Kirby from New York with fascinating appendix notes from Maestro Jeanette Acosta- Martinez who is deemed to be the foremost expert in the French small sword. I loved reading about her clarifications of Angelo's texts which obviously omitted some crucial details which could only be taught by him at his School (for a fee!). One of these was the method of holding the weapon. It got me thinking whilst watching a foil competition last weekend why all foilists now only use a pistol grip – where is the "sentiment de fer", I ask? Angelo would have been horrified at such barbarity with the successor of his beloved small sword!

This edition was recently published by Greenhill Books back in 2005 and has been republished again this year (On sale through Amazon at £16.58). So should you rush out and add this to your library? My answer would be – why not? Although not imbued with the colourful plates of the original French version, this is a really interesting read in which to dip in and out. I actually found myself standing with a foil in my hand emulating the parries of low carte, seconde, tierce and the flanconade – try that latter move on your opponent in your next fight – devilishly difficult, but scores a hit every time. Maybe the old masters can still teach us a thing or two!

Lawrence Burr – Vice President of The Epee Club



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Round Up

PROMOTING A LOCAL CLUB IN THE COMMUNITY: ST ALBANS FENCING CLUB FENCING DEMONSTRATION IN LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRE

ST ALBANS FENCING CLUB



We had talked for a while about getting out and promoting the club, and had even started a conversation with the local market. However, the club was approached by one of the shopping centre/precincts in St Albans and that proved the impetus needed to get things moving. We met up with them to discuss how things would work and they were very straightforward

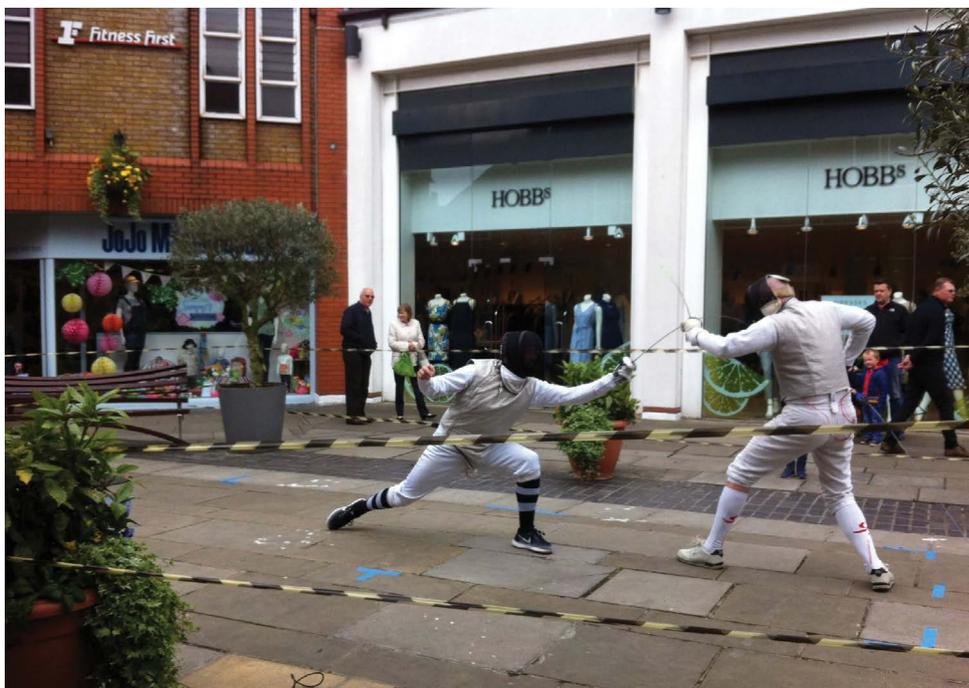
and helpful. H&S was not really an issue as we are covered by our insurance and we were not allowing people to fence with proper weapons. Our approach was pretty relaxed; it was the first time doing something like this, so no need to put pressure on ourselves. The most important thing was to have fun and get out there, which we did, with help from the sun gods and lots of great club members pitching in to make it a success.

Club banners and flyers were printed for the next Beginners course. Getting the general public involved was what we wanted to do, so we brought along some foam sabres and got people to have a go with those (and had a go ourselves!). Next time, it would be good to get more of that happening. We also tried to do the Coin Challenge that the FIE Channel do with the fencing pros, but we did not have their fancy pole / GoPro technology so it was a bit of a Heath Robinson type affair, something for another time perhaps.

This was all about being visible in the community. There was a Beginners course to publicise but that was very much secondary. So, it is hard to say what the impact will be. However, the posts on Facebook performed well. The club's Facebook page only has 129 Followers, however, in the last week as a percentage of Likes our Engagement (actions by those who saw the post) outperformed pages that we use as comparators like Sydney Sabre/Fighting Fit/ZFW/PDFA. This is all organic, next time we may do some paid promotion, as the Beginners course will be a bit closer then.

Our learnings would be: Get a bigger banner for the Beginners course/Get people involved somehow. It makes it more fun and you can't fence forever!

Giles Rhodes
St Albans Fencing Club



BATH SWORD CLUB RECEIVES SPORTEENGLAND GRANT

EST:1948

Bath Sword Club



Bath Sword Club have recently been awarded a grant of £9974.00 from Sport England to fund outreach coaching work in Bath and the surrounding area. The club received invaluable support from the local sports partnership Wesport who introduced us to the Sport England Small Grants scheme and helped us put our project proposal together.

Although our club is well attended we are aware that within the surrounding area, Bath is one of the few places where people can engage with our Sport. The club has a good

record of taking this opportunity to schools and youth groups within the city but would very much like to offer this to the wider predominately rural areas. To this end we are intending to offer a number of taster sessions around the Wesport area with the view to establishing smaller satellite clubs which could be supported with coaching, coach education and equipment from Bath Sword Club and ultimately become self funding.

Tim Miles
Lead Coach Bath Sword Club

Round Up *(continued)*

NEW FIE UNIFORM LOGO LAUNCHED

Brand identity expanded to cover new international kit

British Fencing is proud to launch its new FIE uniform logo.



Based on the new brand identity of British Fencing, the design was developed with input from the British international fencers.

This replaces the current "strip", designed by former British international epeeist, Jo Maynard, in 1999. Commenting on the new patch she said, "It is an honour for any artist to have their work used in such a high profile environment for eighteen years. Whilst I will be sad to see the strip go, it is exciting to see the development of a new dynamic GBR identity."

Speaking about the new kit, current international fencer James-Andrew Davis, said, "It will be exciting to be among the first athletes showcasing the new patches at the 2017 Senior World Championships."

The FIE has approved the design for use from 15 July 2017. Prior to that date athletes must use the existing strip.

Patches are available from Leon Paul now.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FENCING EMPHASIZES 'FENCING TOGETHER, UNIVERSAL FENCING'

(Source: FIE)

The International Fencing Federation (FIE) announced the theme for the 2017 World Fencing Day will be 'Solidarity', to be recognized on Saturday, September 9.

'Solidarity among the strong and the weak is an undeniable reality whether between continents, federations, or athletes,' according to the FIE statutes. 'This vision must become real, and our common, singular motto is "Fencing Together, Universal Fencing".'

The FIE is promoting worldwide participation in its theme, encouraging fencing country federations, zonal confederations, athletes, schools, clubs, and others to join in the festivities and activities. Numerous top-ranked, elite FIE fencers will be kindly requested to serve as ambassadors to World Fencing Day, helping lead via social media, multimedia, and personal appearances.

Whether demonstrating fencing in a public area and giving kids a chance to try fencing themselves in the FIE 'Have a Go' program, or helping to collect donations of used, good-quality fencing equipment and organizing donating them to those who cannot afford it, the goal overall is to bring as many people together around the world to experience the sport. The FIE will support the various events around the world with digital marketing materials, short videos, branding, and ensuring localities have what they need to make the day a success.

National federations, along with clubs in their regions, will be encouraged to use the Solidarity theme to develop and engage in social media campaigns, produce local news stories, involve athletes and club owners, and communicate with schools and municipalities.

There will be a media workshop at the 2017 Senior World Fencing Championships in Leipzig, Germany in July (date to be announced) for national federations and FIE athletes, and World Fencing Day will be addressed in the meeting. Information will be posted regularly on the FIE Facebook page, website (www.FIE.org), and via other social media.

#FencingDay
#AllForFencing

For more information about World Fencing Day or to participate or contribute, please contact Maria.Ntanou@fie.ch at the FIE main office in Lausanne, Switzerland.



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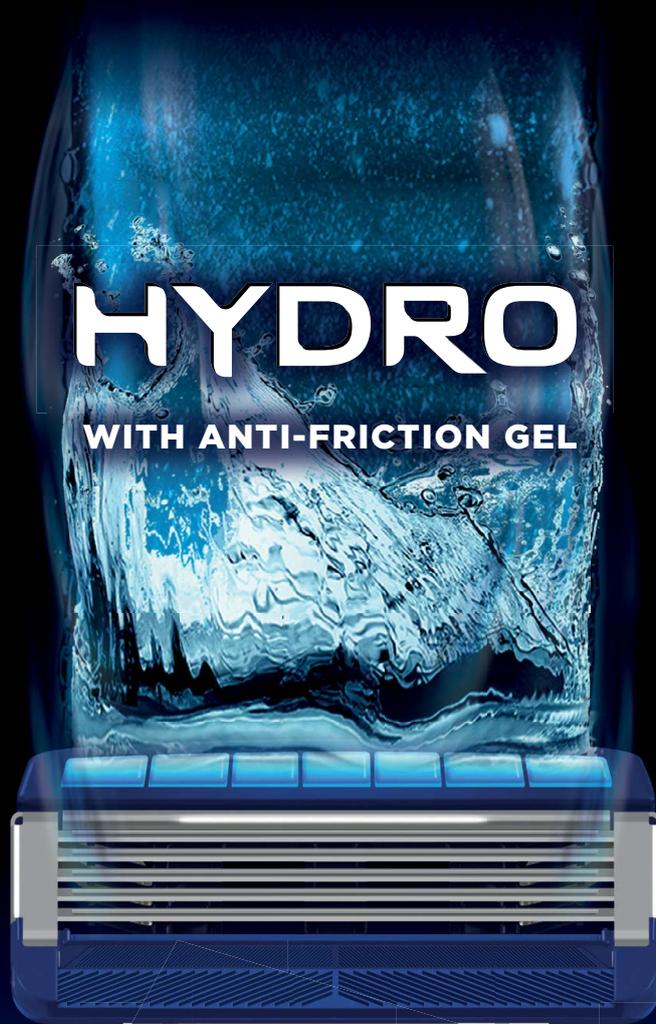


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Photo: Augusto Bizzi

Please forward all your suggestions for additional on-line fencing results to: amy.grant@britishfencing.com



Obituary

Dr Graham Ayliffe MD, FRCPath, Bsc Emeritus Professor of Medical Microbiology, University of Birmingham

March 1926 – May 2017

Born in Hambrook, Gloucestershire, England, Graham ultimately became Emeritus Professor in Medical Microbiology, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom until his death on 22 May 2017. From school in Bristol to National Service in the Royal Navy's health laboratory, he joined Bristol University studying Medicine from 1948-54. It was whilst at University that he started to fence. The lengthy degree course for medicine gave Graham ample opportunity to hone those skills on campus, and, over a relatively short time he gained his full colours following his success in the inter-university matches.

Within the locality the Phoenix Fencing Club helped to provide further opportunities to train during his final years at University and he continued to fence there. Throughout his fencing career Graham's concentration on well-executed movements carried out with elegant accuracy served him well. This is evidenced by his continued rise through the rankings.

Following graduation, he joined the Pathology Dept. of Bristol Royal Infirmary and during this time in the Bristol area he represented Gloucestershire at county and the South West at regional level. Later, he was to represent the West Midlands in similar competitions.

When he moved to the Hammersmith Hospital's Bacteriology Dept, London, in 1959 he trained at Salle Behmber, a well known and successful fencing club at the time. By the '60's he was competing in national level events with great success and represented England in the Quadrangular match in Dublin in 1960.

His pinnacle of competitive success must be regarded as that of winning the Leamington (now Birmingham) International Tournament at epee in 1967. The Tournament itself had been started in 1934 as the first ever international event outside London, and in '67 was still run by Birmingham Fencing Club. (It was handed over to the West Midlands Region in the mid '70's).

He moved to Birmingham in 1964 for his post at the City (then Dudley Road) Hospital in the Hospital Infection Research Laboratory. He joined Professor Edward Lowbury's team, and together with other colleagues, they would

go on to publish what has become the U.K.'s hospital hygiene standard for infection control and is still current reference material today. This work was finally recognised by the World Health Organisation in 2009.

Graham quickly became involved with Birmingham Fencing Club (BFC) which at that time was based at the Tally Ho Tennis Club. The Fencing Club dates back to the 1860's and his interest in the historical side of fencing, as a European martial art, meant that the Club's timeline from the moment he joined is all held in archival material now. His joining B.F.C. coincided with the delayed move to the University of Birmingham. With the sport centring on individual training, his Coach there was Prof. Henry Faubert, who had been coaching at BFC since the 1930's.

Graham's personal interest, by the time his own family were part of the scene, meant that he spent some time coaching locally and setting up taster sessions for Scouts.

BFC continued to do well. Graham was well established as Honorary Secretary by this time, but by 1976 many of the long standing members who had been running the Tournament as well as having responsible roles in the running of the Club were moving away from the area or retiring from active fencing. It was about this time, that Joan & I first came in contact with Graham and had the "pleasure" of being hit by this neat and very accurate epeeist.

Between 1977-80 numbers started to drop significantly mainly due to a national training squad running locally on the same night. Graham kept the identity of the club alive for the next few years, then, following an offer from the late Hilary Hammond in 1986, he re-organised the Club to allow it to be run in association with the University's own fencing club.

The Club restarted at the University with Graham as Honorary President in that year.

When you consider the rate of technological change which was occurring over the 70 plus years of Graham's fencing, his interest did not wane. He was keen that we embraced these changes and this was reflected in the running of the Tournament, although he was

no longer directly concerned with delivery. The character of the event had changed over the years, however it still retained its reputation as one of the top U.K. competitions and from having competed in it himself he continued to be an ardent supporter, regularly presenting the prizes to fencers from all over the world in his role as Honorary President of Birmingham FC. He showed an active interest in the Veterans movement which was just gaining momentum, but decided that, competitively, his pace-maker was 'having none of it'.

As he started to look back at the development of the club, and the mass of books and Minutes he had collected, the idea of documenting those into a book covering the Club and the Tournament gained ground. The book was finally published in 2003, with a launch at the Council House.

In recent years, he changed his fencing evening to the less competitive of the two so that he could continue to enjoy the social side of the sport as well as continue to have exercise.

Over the last 15 years, Graham oversaw several positive changes in his fencing club. We went from 1 session per week to 2 adult sessions with regular beginner courses, and one very active Junior session per week. He continued coming to the fencing club regularly and was fencing up to 18 months ago. It seems no time at all since we celebrated his 90th birthday with a huge cake and lots of good wishes.

The club has just moved to the latest 'new' Sports and Fitness centre of the University of Birmingham which he was so keen to see. It is my regret that he never got to visit our new home. Graham, throughout all the 40 plus years I have known him, never stopped helping others enjoy the sport. He was always supportive, no matter what fencing level you were and he was always there for you. Graham's honesty and integrity showed throughout the whole of his fencing career and his sportsmanlike attitude both on and off the piste were exemplary.

Finally, I would just like to say, It has been my honour and privilege to have known Graham.

M.A. Whitehouse

Obituary

Lorna Beevers (née Andrews)



Lorna Beevers (née Andrews) passed away peacefully on Friday 17 February 2017 after a brave two year battle with cancer. Lorna is survived by her husband Martin Beevers and her children James, Nicholas, Andrew and Madelaine and five grandchildren.

Affectionately known as 'Mrs B' to many, Lorna was a successful fencer in her own right and later a constant source of support and humour for her children on the British fencing circuit. Lorna always looked back with particular fondness on her games maker support for the London 2012 Olympic fencing competition.

Lorna will be sadly missed and our deepest condolences go out to her family at this time.

Performance fencing

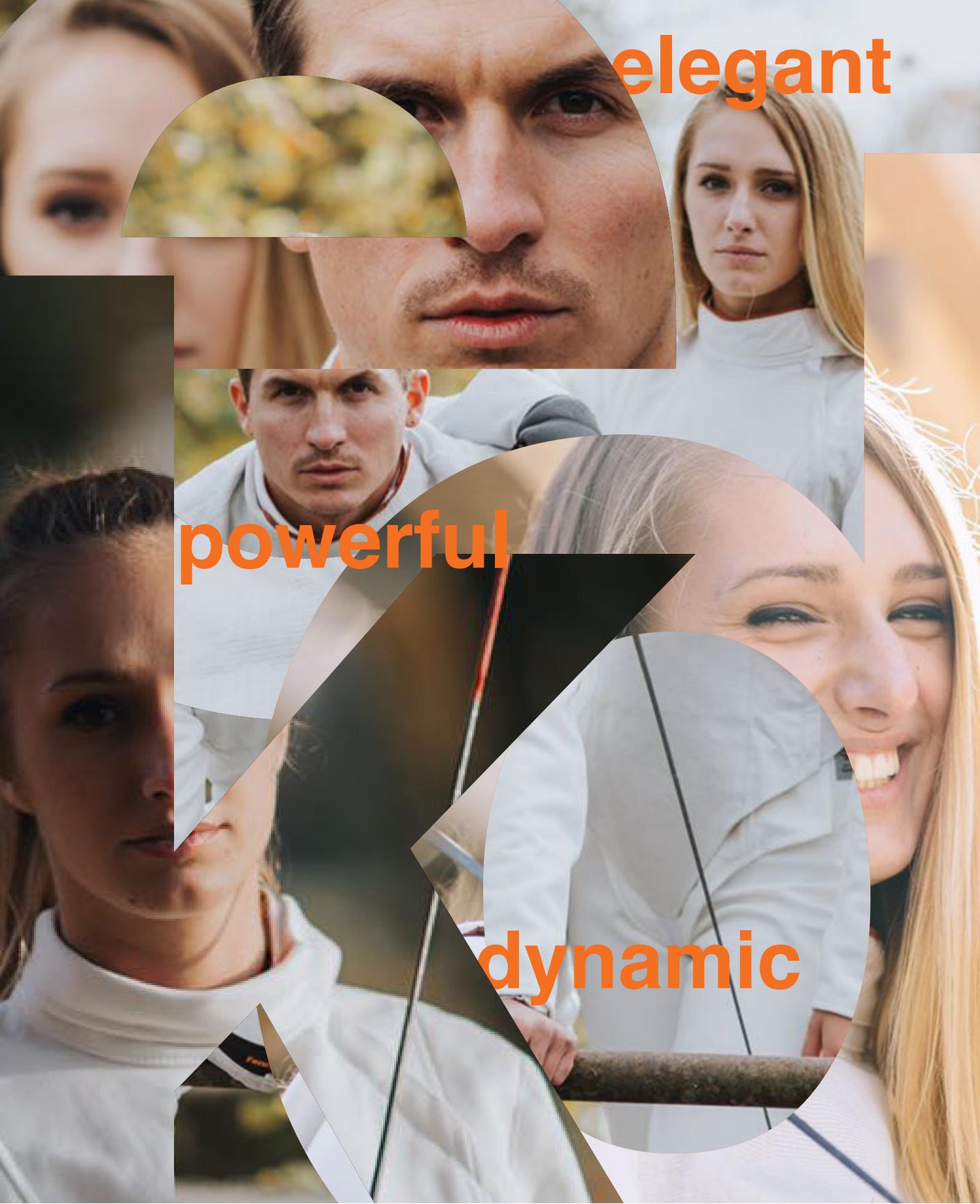


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