

# THE SWORD

British Fencing Magazine

OCTOBER 2016

**RIO 2016  
FENCING**




**KRUSE FOURTH AT FOURTH OLYMPICS P5  
MEN'S TEAM FOIL SIXTH PLACE P5**



**PARALYMPIC SILVER FOR GILLIVER P6  
OLYMPIC REPORTS PP8-16**



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**Front cover image**

Kruse (GBR) v Meinhardt (USA)  
Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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## ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE BOARD



### MARK LYTTLE APPOINTED CHAIR OF BRITISH FENCING

This story can be read on BF's website  
using the following link: [\[Link\]](#)

16th September 2016

## RIO 2016 FENCING HAILED AS 'MOST EXHILARATING IN MEMORY'

The Rio 2016 Olympic fencing competition has been hailed as one of the "most exhilarating in memory" by International Fencing Federation Secretary General Frédéric Pietruszka.

Speaking on the last day of the competition, which saw France win gold in the men's team epee, the Secretary General expressed his delight at the quality of the fencing and the sheer drama on display at the Carioca Arena 3.

"London was a hard act to follow," said the Secretary General, who won men's team foil gold at the 1980 Games in Moscow. "But the duels we have seen in Rio have been every bit as dramatic: Many of the finals have gone down to the wire and I think it's no exaggeration to say the Rio 2016 fencing has been one of the most exhilarating in memory."

"Russia topped the unofficial fencing medal table with four gold, one silver and two bronze, the country's best haul in two decades.

Hungary clinched second place with two gold, one silver and one bronze, while Italy was third with one gold and three silver.

A total of ten sets of medals were won over the course of nine days of competition. It was an event that FIE Sport Director Krisztian Kulcsar spent much of the last three years helping to organise.

"This has been the greatest project of my life," said Kulcsar, the 2007 world epee champion. "And I'm very proud to say the competition went very smoothly."

"Our No. 1 goal was to provide the athletes with the ideal conditions in which to compete while putting on a real show for the spectators in the venue and the millions watching around the world. We arrived in Rio knowing London had set the bar high for Olympic fencing, and we leave feeling that we have truly done our sport justice."

### Rio 2016 fencing facts:

No. athletes: 213

NOCs: 48

Most medals: Russia (7 – 4 gold)

New appearances at the Olympics: Ivory Coast and Benin

Most successful athlete: Yana Egorian (RUS) – 2 gold

No. countries to win medals: 10 (Russia, Hungary, Italy, France, South Korea, Romania, USA, China, Ukraine, Tunisia)

No. continents to win medals: 4 (Europe, North America, Asia, Africa)

For more information, visit <http://www.fie.org>

Links: More on fencing from [Olympic.org](#)

Check out the [Rio 2016 fencing section](#)

Or the dedicated [FIE Rio portal](#)

Several VIPs, including Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and Hungarian President János Áder, dropped in to support their fencers.

His Royal Highness Albert II, Prince of Monaco, His Excellency Sheikh Saoud Al Thani of Qatar, and American sprinting legend Michael Johnson were also in attendance during the nine days.

**Rio 2016 Official Press Release**



Photo: Augusto Bizzi

## KRUSE FINISHES FOURTH IN RIO

### Kruse piped to the bronze medal by Russia's Safin

Londoner, Richard Kruse, 33, finished agonisingly close to Great Britain's first Olympic fencing medal in fifty-two years in Rio – losing out 15-13 in the bronze medal match to Timur Safin of Russia.

Earlier in the day, Kruse demolished former French Olympic fencer, now competing for Algeria, Hamid Sintès 15-4, in the round of 32. He then faced an old adversary in Andrea Cassara from Italy. With both fencers competing at their fourth Olympics, a



**Richard Kruse's coach Ziemek Wojciechowski. Photo: Augusto Bizzi.**

thoroughly entertaining match followed which Kruse won 15-12. He then took on America's World number four, Gerek Meinhardt and led from the start, going on to win 15-13.



**Kruse (GBR) left v Safin (RUS). Photo: Augusto Bizzi.**

He faced another American in the semi-finals in the shape of World number 1, Alexander Massialas. The American stormed into an 8-4 lead at the first break and never looked back, going on to win 15-9.

Kruse still had a chance of an Olympic medal facing Russia's, Timur Safin, in the bronze medal play-off. The Russian got off to a good start, landing multiple attacks to lead 9-5 at the first break. Kruse fought back in the second period, timing his counter actions better than in the first period and trailed by just one, 14-13, at the second break. Safin wasted no time in the final period to secure the bronze medal.

British Fencing's Performance Director, Alex Newton said; "Richard fenced so well all day today which makes it all the more disappointing that he wasn't able to close out with a win for the bronze medal. I would like to thank all of the people who came and supported us today – it was just fantastic to have that level of support in the arena. I would also like to thank UK Sport and The National Lottery for their funding over the last four years, which alongside the support from the BOA has ensured we are the best prepared we could be for this competition."

Italy's Danielle Garozzo, fenced beautifully in the final to upset the favourite, Massialas. Landing attack after attack, the Italian gave the American no time to breathe winning the Olympic title, 15-11.

Chief Executive of British Fencing, Georgina Usher, concluded; "It was a great day of fencing and whilst Richard narrowly missed out on a medal, his exciting performances today won many more fans to our sport."

**KB – 7th August 2016**

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## SIXTH PLACE FINISH FOR GB TEAM AT RIO

### Foil Team Finish Sixth After Quarterfinal Loss to Russia

Great Britain's Men's Foil Team, James-Andrew Davis, Laurence Halsted, Richard Kruse and Marcus Mepstead (reserve) finished sixth at the Rio Olympic Games today, after losing 45-43 to Russia in the quarterfinal.

The whole team took part in the fight with Russia as Mepstead replaced Kruse in the later stages, putting in a great performance. Despite this and a great fight back, Russia went on to win 45-43.

In the placings matches, Great Britain beat Egypt 45-35 before losing 45-38 to China and thus finished sixth.

British Fencing's Performance Director, Alex Newton, said; "The boys fenced brilliantly against Russia but unfortunately some key decisions by the referee meant an uphill battle to win the fight. As a result we are disappointed that we could not repay UK Sport and the National Lottery with a medal for the support they have provided over the last four years. Losing to the eventual Olympic Champions does not make the result any easier."

"This has been a roller coaster of a four years with a huge amount of work from a dedicated and committed support staff team and they deserve such great credit. We have for the first time in over half a century had our best result at an Olympic Games and we hope that this inspires the next generation of fencers."

Georgina Usher, Chief Executive of British Fencing added; "The match against Russia was watched up and down the country as the team battled valiantly against the Russians. In the face of a hard draw and tough refereeing decisions the team were a credit to themselves and the nation.

British Fencing pays tribute to the families, personal coaches, clubs and other members of the fencing community that have helped and supported our athletes over the years.

Russia came from behind in the final against France to take the title 45-41 in an exciting final. The USA took the bronze medal beating Italy 45-31.

**KB – 13th August 2016**

## PARALYMPIC SILVER FOR GILLIVER

### Piers Gilliver takes silver in Rio as Teammates make Quarters

Piers Gilliver took the silver medal in Rio at the Paralympic Games. Competing in the Cat A Men's Individual Epee, Gilliver stormed through the poules stages, winning all five of his fights.

Only eight fencers qualified for the knockout stages and Gilliver was ranked second to

China's Sun Gang. The Brit went on to beat Matteo Betti (ITA) 15-11 and Zainulabdeen Al-Madhkhouri of Iraq, 15-10 to take his place in the gold medal match.

Sun progressed to the final in similar fashion to face Gilliver and the Chinese fencer got the better start. Gilliver's tactic of luring his opponent in to the attack had worked well all day but Sun was ready and took an early lead. Gilliver fought back hard and with both fencers working so hard, the officials had to step in a couple of times to readjust the wheelchair frame – adding to the excitement.

Despite Gilliver's determined approach, the World Champion and World number one, Sun took the gold medal 15-13. Tian Jianquan (CHN) took the bronze medal 15-11 from Al-Madhkhouri.

Gemma Collis and Dimitri Coutya were also competing for Great Britain yesterday and made the quarterfinals of their events. British Fencing congratulates them all.

We hope to be able to have a full interview with Piers in the next issue.

KB – 14th September 2016



Piers Gilliver (GBR) left v Matteo Betti (ITA). Photo: Augusto Bizzi.

## BRITISH FENCING'S NEW BRAND IDENTITY

### OLYMPIC CHANNEL

The International Olympic Committee launched their new Olympic Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/olympic>) at the conclusion of the Rio 2016. In agreement with the FIE, they have confirmed that they will broadcast the first three Grand Prix events of the new international season as follows:

- 2–4 Dec: Turin Foil Grand Prix (Turin, ITA)
- 9–11 Dec: Doha Epee Grand Prix (Doha, QAT)
- 16–18 Dec: Cancun Sabre Grand Prix (Cancun, MEX)

For more information, please follow the Olympic Channel on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#), or log on to [olympicchannel.com](http://olympicchannel.com).



British Fencing has launched a dynamic new brand identity and visual style ahead of the opening ceremony of Rio 2016, created by London Brand Communications agency 'We Launch'.

In readiness for the increased exposure that the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio would bring, the brief was to revolutionise the sport of fencing in the UK – in a way that would completely reinvent its public perception and broaden its appeal to a wide range of audiences.

Fencing is a sport with centuries of history – dating back to when Kings and nobility used to duel for honour, and yet requires all of the skills more usually associated with the high velocity Olympic sports: speed, strength, dynamism and power. But more than that, it also rewards those with guile, strategy, grace, creativity and speed of thought.

Research highlighted that audiences (participants and fans) predominantly fell across two areas – tactical gamers and creatives. Both are attracted to the sport for different reasons, so We Launch created a set of multi-channel brand collateral that unified the core themes and celebrated the individuality and empowerment that is intrinsic to the sport.

5th August 2016

## REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Hilary Philbin**

With Rio 2016 just behind us I'd like to start my report with some well-deserved congratulations. Firstly to Richard Kruse who put up a fantastic performance in Rio – his 4<sup>th</sup> place is a great achievement and is our best Olympic result for 52 years – and secondly to the men's foil team who have raised their game so much in the past few years and were unlucky not to make it through to the semi-finals. Congratulations also to Alex Newton and her team, who have demonstrated that we now have the support team to compete on equal terms with the best nations in the world.

In addition I would like to make a special mention of Piers Gilliver who fenced so determinedly to win the silver medal in the men's epee category A in the Paralympics – congratulations Piers.

I watched all our fencers in Rio with huge pleasure and took great pride in their performance throughout – both in their standard of fencing and their exemplary and sportsmanlike behaviour. With the eyes of the world upon them the team was a credit to British Fencing and to Great Britain.

Fencing was positively and enthusiastically reported by TV and the press, with more coverage than ever before. It is pleasing to see the effect this has already had at grass roots level, where there have been numerous enquiries from parents investigating fencing classes as a result of having seen the Rio TV coverage.

Earlier highlights of the season include a bronze medal for our junior men's foil team in their World Championships in Bourges in April, and also a bronze for our senior men's foil team in the European Championships in Torun in June. With both Richard Kruse and James Davis in the top 6 of the world ranking there has been a real step change in British Fencing. These results make a significant contribution to our changing standing in the international fencing community, and I have received much positive feedback from other fencing nations.

The expertise of our officials is increasingly being recognised in major international events. I am pleased to report that a number were

invited to participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio. For the Olympics this included Janet Huggins as SEMI Delegate, responsible for supervising weapon control activities, and myself as Chief of Protocol and member of the Directoire Technique. The Paralympic officials included Peter Huggins as SEMI Delegate, three referees – Chris Farren, Duncan Rowlands and Mike Salter – and myself as Technical Delegate, responsible for planning and approvals during the 2 year run-up to the Games. (It was good to see Team Huggins flying the flag at both Games.) The fencing world also benefits from the expertise of Karim Bashir – the 'voice of fencing' on the live streaming of all the major FIE events – and one of the BBC commentators in Rio.

Our status as a fencing nation is gradually rising. Having got the ball rolling so well with men's foil, we now need to extend this to other weapons. Men's sabre has recently been included in our World Class Programme with 'podium potential' funding, and I hope that ultimately the remaining weapons will follow. Now is also the time to concentrate on the further development of our FIE referee pool. To this end I invited Claus Janka, Head of the FIE Referee Commission, to run a 3-weapon seminar for British referees at the beginning of the season. This was followed up by a visit from another Commission member, Iana Dakova, who ran a further seminar during the European Veterans Team Championships in Gillingham in May. More recently I have obtained FIE agreement to run an additional FIE foil seminar and exam in London in conjunction with the 2016 Eden Cup. With at least one, and possibly two, opportunities for 3-weapon seminars and exams early in 2017, this could give us the opportunity to qualify up to 11 more referees by next April.

As President I have continued to focus on Great Britain's international relations and I now have stronger relationships in place in the international community. This has been aided by my activities in a number of different roles including:

- FIE Chief of Protocol
- FIE Promotions Commission
- EFC (European Fencing Confederation) Competition Commission
- Commonwealth Commission for Re-entry into the Games
- FIE representative on the FIE-IWAS (International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports) Joint Council
- IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Executive Committee
- IWAS Technical Delegate for the Paralympic Games
- IWAS Promotions Commission

My role as Chief of Protocol is to help raise the profile of fencing through better presentation of the major FIE fencing events. I produced a comprehensive protocol handbook for FIE competition organisers, which enables them to organise all aspects of their event's presentation and protocol to a high and consistent standard. These areas increasingly

come under the spotlight in order to attract greater numbers of television and internet viewers as well as live audiences, which is of significant importance to fencing's continuing participation in the Olympic Games. The main protocol responsibilities are associated with the opening and closing ceremonies, medals ceremonies and the presentation of fencers and referees.

In addition I have started work on a longer project to overhaul the Supervisor arrangements for FIE World Cup events (of which there are 78 each season), due to go live early in 2017.

During the past year I represented Great Britain at a number of events overseas. These included:

- Head of Delegation at:
  - FIE Annual Congress in Guangzhou, China
  - EFC Congress in Torun, Poland
- Member of the DT and Chief of Protocol at:
  - Senior World Championships in Moscow
  - Rio test events – World Team Championship (MS & WF) and the Grand Prix (ME & WE)
  - Junior & Cadet World Championships in Bourges, France
- Supervisor at a number of FIE events including:
  - Budapest Grand Prix (WE & ME)
  - Rio Grand Prix (ME & WE)
  - St Maur World Cup (WF)

At home I attended junior, senior and veterans events at both domestic and international level, in what has been a very busy year. I am always pleased to have the opportunity to meet fencers, parents and volunteers to hear their views first-hand. I was particularly pleased to be present throughout the European Veterans Team Championships held in Gillingham in May – congratulations to Gillian Aghajan, Chair of British Veterans Fencing, and her organising committee for a very successful event.

With the completion of this Olympic cycle and the subsequent re-appointment of the BF President there have been a few adjustments to the President's responsibilities. In particular, having set up the new Honours Committee, bedded in the new system and seen it through its first year, I have recently handed over the baton to Peter Jacobs who becomes the new Chair. At the same time I took over as Chair of BF's International Relations Committee, which fits in with the President's international remit.

Finally – as President it is important that I work closely with both Head Office and the Board. It has been a great pleasure working with David Teasdale, Chair of the Board, who will shortly be standing down after 6 years' service. I would like to record my personal thanks to him, along with my very best wishes for the future.

**Hilary Philbin**  
President

# Olympic Reports

## OLYMPIC REPORT RIO 2016

### From our Special Correspondent in Rio, with photos by Augusto Bizzi

The four-year Olympic cycle culminated in a fantastic spectacle in the Carioca 3 Arena in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, starting on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017. The eventful journey had a couple of last minute twists to spice it up even more. The build-up in the final few weeks centred around the results of the McLaren Report which pointed the finger at Russia's so-called "state sponsored" doping programme. The FIE blew those clouds away just days before the Opening Ceremony by stating that Russian fencers were cleared to compete in the Games.

No one guessed that there was to be yet one more twist in the tale – and a doping one at that. Mexico's, Paola Pliego was alleged to have been tested positive for Modafinil – a banned substance – during an in-competition test. With just days to go before the start of the Games, Pliego protested her innocence, appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, but time was not on her side. The failed test of her "A" sample was announced too late for her "B" sample to be tested in time, thus she was

suspended. At the time of writing, the case is still under investigation. Pliego has publically stated that she has already turned her focus to the Tokyo 2020 cycle.

On the eve of the competition, the Rio organisers in conjunction with the FIE opened the doors of Carioca 3 to the world's media. The brilliant exposé of the sport was spearheaded by American fencer, Race Imboden. A foilist by trade, the American had no issue taking on journalists in bout after bout of epee fencing. The visiting media embraced this opportunity and the resulting coverage worldwide was evidence of the sport's unique appeal. It was a brilliant platform for the start of the competition.

### Women's Epee Individual

Thirty-seven athletes took part in the first event and the home crowd were thrilled to see Rayssa Costa overcome Switzerland's, Tiffany Geroudet 15-13 in the incomplete round of 64. World number one (at the time) Anqi Xu (CHN) was the biggest casualty of the next round, going out 15-8 to France's, Marie-Florence Candassamy but the mainly Brazilian crowd were delighted by the performances of Nathalie Moellhausen, who had switched from Italy to Brazil during the Olympic cycle. Moellhausen exceeded all expectations to make the quarterfinals, eventually losing 15-12 to Lauren Rembi (FRA). The French fencer was



Szasz (HUN) left v Fiamingo (ITA)

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no match for Emese Szasz (HUN) in the semi-finals, losing 10-6. In the other semi-final, Italy's Rosella Fiamingo battled her way past Yiwen Sun (CHN) in a tightly fought contest to emerge the 12-11 victor.

In the bronze medal match, Sun had the better of the expected cagey first period, leading 4-3 going into the break, with both fencers eager to keep the distance long. Despite Rembi attempting to close the distance in the second period, Sun led 8-7 going into the final break. Rembi came out in the final period showing intent to take the fight to the Chinese fencer. With Sun maintaining her risk-averse approach, Rembi became frustrated as doubles were all she could muster. Sun went on to take the bronze medal 15-13.

The gold medal match saw double-world Champion, Rosella Fiamingo of Italy take on the 2016 European bronze medallist and in-form Emese Szasz of Hungary. In contrast to the bronze medal match both fencers were intent on keeping the distance close. Another feature of the match was the fact that Fiamingo was mimicking Szasz's crouched over on-guard position. The Italian picked up a couple of fantastic flicks around the Hungarian's upper arm but only led 6-5 going into the first break. Fiamingo came out for the second period the sharper of the two fencers and raced to a 10-6 lead displaying incredible discipline by keeping her point firmly in and around Szasz's guard. The Hungarian slowed the fight down by opening the distance which was crucial to her survival in the fight. She only trailed by one hit, 10-11, going into the second break. A thrilling final period followed. Szasz took the lead with a stunning second intention parry riposte and followed it up with the hit of the tournament – a hit to Fiamingo's wrist. A double was all that was needed to see Emese Szasz secure the Olympic title, 15-13.

Full results here. 

## Men's Foil Individual

From a British perspective, this was one of the two key events. James-Andrew Davis, Laurence Halsted and Richard Kruse lined up in a field of thirty-five. Yet again, it was a pleasing start to the day for the home crowd as Brazil's Guilherme Toldo squeezed past Austria's Rene Pranz 15-14 in the round of 64. Toldo continued his excellent form by knocking out, then World number two, Yuki Ota (JPN) in the next round. Davis and Kruse both eased past their round of 32 opponents, Mohamed Ferjani (TUN) 15-7 and Hamid Sintes (ALG) 15-4, respectively. Halsted got caught up in the whirlwind created by Haiwei Chen (CHN). The Chinese fencer fought like the clock was against him taking the fight 15-9 in a blur. All round of 16 fights at World level are tough but Davis will consider himself unlucky to have drawn fancied Russian and reigning European Champion, Timur Safin. The Brit put in a strong performance but fell 15-13 to Safin. Kruse's draw was no easier and came in the form of Andrea Cassara from Italy. The British fencer spent much of the first period in his own half of the piste but ensured that the distance between him and the Italian remained relatively close. It meant for a frantic first three minutes, often with the two fencers in close quarters. The tactic paid off well for Kruse as he went 11-5 up with a series of flicks across the body of the left-handed Cassara. Kruse went into the first break 13-10 up as the Italian kept attacking him. The British fencer came out in the second period on the front foot and took the fight 15-12. USA's, Gerek Meinhardt was next and Kruse dominated the first period, dancing up and down the piste, landing attack after attack to lead 9-5 going into the break. The American came out for the second period with more attacking intent but Kruse closed out the fight with a counter-attack to shoulder, winning 15-13, meaning that he had two chances to claim Britain's first Olympic medal in over 50 years.



Halsted (GBR) left v Chen (CHN)

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He faced another American and World number one, Alexander Massialas, in the semi-finals and started the fight in the same energetic fashion as he ended the last. Despite taking an early lead Kruse fell behind as Massialas refused to be dominated. The American led 8-4 at the first break. A more even second period followed but Massialas continued to lead with attacking flair and went on to win 15-9. Daniele Garozzo (ITA) controlled a one-sided affair in the other semi-final, taking out Russia's Timur Safin, 15-8.

So Kruse faced the Russian for the bronze medal and came into the fight moving well. Safin had also been fencing very well throughout the day and his form continued despite a slow start. His attack had been working well in his previous fights but he began to deploy an equally sturdy defence against the flowing attacks that Kruse demonstrated. The Brit was fencing well but somehow found himself 5-9 down at the first break. It was much the same at the start of the second period as Safin continued to build his lead. A hit initially awarded to Kruse was surprisingly overturned after an appeal from the Russian which appeared to spur the British fencer on. Kruse went on to display some brilliant fencing including a superbly timed second intention parry riposte, closing to 13-14 down at the second break. That break went in the blink of an eye setting up a thrilling finish. Alas, it was all over in a flash as Safin landed another perfectly executed attack to take the bronze medal 15-13.

The gold medal match saw World number one, Alex Massialas take on rising star, Daniele Garozzo – a case of the unorthodox America up against one of the most classical Italians in recent times. Their styles cancelled each other out in the early stages but the World number one asserted his authority on the match to take a two hit lead half way through the period. Garozzo continued his pressing game but crucially took more time to build

his attack. The tactical change was telling and the Italian stole the lead 12-7. Massialas, forced to change his tactics, came out on the attack but Garozzo took that in his stride, twice stealing the right of way with beats. The American clung on until the first break but trailed 8-14 when it came. When they came back out the Massialas closed the distance successfully and closed the gap to just three hits. Garozzo returned to his tactic of beating his opponent's blade and took the Olympic title 15-11.

Full results [here](#). 

## Women's Sabre Individual

Thirty-six women took part in this event and the top two seeds, Sofya Velikaya (RUS) and Olga Kharlan (UKR), progressed through to the semi-finals as expected. Kharlan was untroubled on her route to the medal matches but Velikaya had a wobble against France's Charlotte Lembach, eventually progressing 15-14. It was a surprise to some that American two-time Olympic Champion (2004 and 2008) fell 15-12 in the round of 16 to Ekaterina Dyachenko (RUS). The Russian then fell to her teammate, Yana Egorian, 15-10 in the quarterfinals. One of the *next generation* of French fencers, Manon Brunet, quietly progressed through the field taking out Hwang (KOR), Marton (HUN) and then Besbes (TUN) before facing the favourite, Velikaya, in the semi-final. The French fencer nearly made it through but just lost out 15-14 in a great match. Egorian faced Kharlan in the other semi-final and made surprisingly light work of the Ukrainian, beating her 15-9.

So the fight-off for the bronze medal was between double World Champion (2013 & 2014), Kharlan and Olympic debutant, Brunet. Experience showed early in the match as the Ukrainian immediately worked out the timing for her attacks. She led 8-4 going into the break. Brunet came out for the second



Massialas (ITA), gold medallist



(top to bottom) Women's Individual Sabre Medals, Egorian (RUS) left v Velikaya (RUS)

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half with the sole intention of attacking her opponent and brilliantly levelled at 9-9. This seemed to spur on a surprisingly flat-footed Kharlan and all of a sudden the gliding footwork returned. The Ukrainian took the bronze medal with a counter-attack followed by a block of Brunet's blade.

The all-Russian gold medal match saw the World number one and reigning World Champion, Velikaya face the 2014 World Championship bronze medallist, Egorian. Despite Velikaya's dominance throughout the season, Egorian was one of her "boggie" opponents in this Olympic cycle. Velikaya edged a rather subdued first period 8-5 but with little more than polite applause from the crowd for each hit, it did not feel like an Olympic final.

Whilst the atmosphere in Carioca 3 did not change, the atmosphere on the piste did in the second period. Egorian came out on the attack and levelled the score at 8-8 straight away as Velikaya started to show signs of tension. That said, she steadied herself as the two Russians traded hits up to 13-13. Velikaya then snuck a hit in to leave her one away from the gold medal. A series of simultaneous hits followed but Velikaya bravely chose to set up a distance trap. It was unsuccessful as Egorian levelled at 14-14 and finally the crowd came to life. Egorian elected to maintain her attacking approach but Velikaya gambled on another distance trap. Her decision proved to be a bad one as Egorian landed a long attack to become the Olympic Champion.

[Full results here.](#) 🇷🇺

## Men's Epee Individual

Thirty-eight fencers took part in this event and yet again the Brazilian crowd were delighted with the progress of one of their own through the incomplete round of 64. Athos Schwantes defied all the odds by beating Jiri Beran (CZE) 8-6 but went on to face the World number one and favourite for the title, Gauthier Grumier (FRA). The Frenchman's progress to the semi-finals was as serene as expected as no opponent got into double figures against him. The World number two, Italy's Enrico Garozzo, could not emulate his title rival, falling 15-12 to Korea's Park Sang-Young in the round of 16. Park and Grumier were joined in the semi-finals by veteran Hungarian, Geza Imre – who first won an Olympic medal (bronze) back in 1996 – and in-form Swiss fencer, Benjamin Steffen. Park made light work of Steffen, beating him 15-9 in the semi-finals but the highly experienced Imre had to delve far into his bag of tricks to take out Grumier 15-13 in a quite brilliant match.

The start of the bronze medal match between Grumier and Steffen was dictated by the Swiss fencer. His style of fencing meant that he could not allow Grumier to settle into a tactical battle so he closed the distance right up immediately and went on the attack. It worked well for him at the start but then the

French fencer adapted, opening the distance before launching his attack and picking off doubles in defence. Grumier led 8-6 going into the first break. Steffen continued his attacking approach at the start of the second period but Grumier maintained his control of the score, resulting in a more reserved approach from the Swiss fencer. Grumier was winning the tactical battle and took a 14-9 lead into the second break. Steffen looked a broken man in that break but came out for the final period with a solid and much more patient approach, scoring two unanswered hits. Grumier was not to be outdone though and scored the final hit to take the bronze medal.

The gold medal match was a battle of youth, in the form of Park against experience, in the shape of Imre. As expected Park began in quick fashion, bouncing up and down before launching his fleche attack. Imre, though, was well-prepared and stole an early but slender lead that slowed the Korean down. Level at 5-5, Park decided to go back to his attacking style but the diligent Hungarian was ready and took an 8-6 lead into the first break. Park went back to his attacking format at the start of the second period and managed to draw level at 9-9 only for Imre to re-establish a



**Park Sang-Young (gold), Imre (silver), Grumier (bronze)**

two-hit lead with some courageous counter-offensive work. Again the Korean slowed down his pace but to no avail as that suited Imre's game and the Hungarian led 13-9 going into the final break. They traded the first two hits of the final period so with Imre leading 14-10 it looked like the Hungarian was going on to get an Olympic gold medal twenty years after winning bronze. However, it was surprise to everyone that he betrayed the tactics that had got him so close and seemed intent on scoring the winning hit with an attack. Park waited patiently, scoring hit after hit on the counter to draw level 14-14. A quite remarkable final ended with Park launching a successful attack to win the Olympic title, from a long way behind, 15-14.

[Full results here.](#) 🇷🇺

## Men's Sabre Individual

There was a complete table of thirty-two fencers in this event and two big surprises early on. Italy's Diego Occhiuzzi fell to the unfancied Thanh An Vu of Vietnam, 15-12 but the bigger shock was to see, then World number one and strong favourite for the title, Alexey Yakimenko (RUS) fall 15-14 to Pancho Paskov (BUL). There was another shock in the round of 16 as one of the rising stars from Iran, Mojtaba Abedini took out Korea's Bongil Gu 15-12. Abedini went on to make the semi-finals where he faced Daryl Homer (USA) and just lost out 15-14. The other semi-final was contested between Junghwan Kim (KOR) and reigning Olympic Champion, Aron Szilagyi (HUN). The Hungarian made it back-to-back Olympic finals, winning 15-12.

Kim came out of the blocks fast at the start of the bronze medal match. He launched attack after attack against the slow-moving Abedini to lead 6-0. The Iranian realised that he had to be sharper on the attack but went into the break 8-2 down. Abedini controlled his



**Homer (USA) left v Szilagyi (HUN)**

footwork better in the second period allowing him to successfully set up his distance traps but had given Kim too big a lead and the Korean went on to pick up the bronze 15-8.

In the gold medal match, the defending Champion, Szilagyi started in fine form, taking a 3-0 lead. Despite Homer stepping up his game, the variety of footwork and tactics employed by the Hungarian took him very quickly to 8-4 at the break. When they came out for the second period Szilagyi continued to baffle his American opponent with his tactics. The Hungarian punctuated his stunning attacks with counters and lightening parry-ripostes. Homer clung on but to no avail as Szilagyi retained his title, winning 15-8.



#### Men's Individual Sabre Medals

Full results here. 

### Women's Foil Individual

Thirty-five women took part in this event and it was no surprise to see Ina Deriglazova (RUS) and Elisa Di Francisca (ITA) smoothly progress to the semi-finals. The big shock was the departure of Arianna Errigo (ITA) in the round of 16. She lost 15-11 to Eleanor Harvey (CAN) but the Canadian went on to lose to Ines Boubakri (TUN) 15-13. Aida Shanaeva also progressed meaning that two Russians lined up for the medal matches but faced each



(top to bottom) Women's Individual Foil Medals, Deriglazova (RUS) left v Di Francisca (ITA)

other in the semis. A dominant display from Deriglazova saw her breeze past her teammate 15-3 to make the gold medal match. She faced Di Francisca who had to work hard to get past Boubakri in a fight that went to time, 12-9.

In the bronze medal match Shanaeva used a combination of some brilliant footwork and an angled finish to her attacks to lead 6-1. Boubakri adjusted her approach and started to employ smaller steps to close the gap but trailed 7-4 at the first break. Boubakri came out for the second period with an improved approach. By closing the distance she was able to start landing her attacks which led to her then being able to pick up second intention parry ripostes. She took the lead 9-8 and went into the second break 13-11 up. A failed attack from the Russian at the start of the second put the Tunisian one-hit away from her becoming the first African woman to win an Olympic fencing medal and she crossed the line with a beat attack.

The gold medal match saw two superpowers of women's foil, the reigning World Champion, Deriglazova and the reigning Olympic Champion, Di Francisca, go up against each other. As expected the fight began in cagey fashion with the Russian intent on keeping a long distance. It took over half of the first period for either fencer to score a hit and it went to the Italian. Di Francisca's patience was remarkable and she led 3-0 at the first break. Despite the low score it was a thrilling encounter. Deriglazova came out for the second period with much higher intensity and notably had closed the distance. It worked and she drew level after just over a minute. With a visible spring in her step the Russian stormed to a 7-3 lead at the final break. This time it was the Italian who came out with renewed vigour and closed to 6-7 down. Crucially though, Deriglazova kept her composure and increased her lead to 10-6 with under a minute remaining, forcing Di Francisca to press more intently. An amazing climax saw the Italian close to 11-12 down and signs of the pressure were written all of the Russian's face. With just over 2 seconds left, Deriglazova was able to cling on to that lead to take the Olympic title.

Full results here. 

### Women's Epee Team

Nine teams took part in this event and it was no surprise to see China and Romania fighting for the gold medal as both comfortably progressed to the final. China beat Estonia 45-36 and Romania beat Russia 45-31 in the semi-finals.

Russia started the bronze medal match well, leading 13-9 after the first three legs. Estonia worked hard to reduce that lead over the next three fights and did well. The score stood at 20-18 to Russia going into the final third of the match. Both teams used their substitutes in the penultimate leg which worked out well for the Russians as they led 25-21 going into the anchor leg. The chasing Estonians were

unable to find a way through and Russia took the bronze medal, 37-31.

In the gold medal match Romania started well and led the low scoring first third 9-6. The Chinese closed the gap in the fourth leg but brought on their substitute for the fifth and Romania pulled away again, leading 21-14 going into the final third. The Romanian substitute came on and did her job so Anqi Xu (CHN) faced Ana Maria Popescu (ROM) in the anchor leg, trailing 30-25. China had to chase and despite Xu scoring thirteen hits, Popescu took the Romanians to the title, 44-38.

Full results here. 

### Men's Foil Team

Eight teams took part in the final event that would feature British fencers. The British team, James-Andrew Davis, Laurence Halsted and Richard Kruse with Marcus Mepstead in reserve, faced a strong Russian team – Artur Akhmatkhuzin, Alexey Cheremisinov and Timur Safin. Cheremisinov edged a nervy opening leg over Kruse but Davis came on and outscored Safin to take Britain into the lead. A lead they kept after Halsted faced Akhmatkhuzin taking the score to 15-14. Safin outscored Kruse in the fourth followed by a similar effort by Cheremisinov over Halsted but Davis continued his good form taking the sixth 9-5. The Russians still led but only just 30-29. Safin opened the lead by a hit against Halsted



(top to bottom) Men's Team Foil Medals, Safin (RUS) left v Kruse (GBR), Lefort (FRA) left v Safin (RUS)

in the seventh before Britain brought on their substitute, Mepstead against Akhmatkhuzin. The Russian opened the lead by a further hit, so Davis came on for the anchor leg 37-40 down. Despite outscoring Cheremisinov 6-5, the Russians progressed 45-43.

They went on to beat the USA 45-41 in the semi-finals, as France took out Italy, 45-30. So the USA faced Italy for the bronze medal. The Italians took a slender lead after three bouts, 15-14. The Americans went into overdrive in the fifth and sixth legs as Meinhardt demolished Baldini 8-0 and Massialas beat Garozzo 5-1. The American lead of nine hits, 30-21, dented the Italians confidence and they went on to take the bronze medal 45-31.

The French team led the gold medal match from the start against Russia. They completed the first three bouts 14-9 up and the next three 30-25 up and looked in total control. Crucially the French team had to use their substitute in the penultimate leg and Jean-Paul Tony Helissey went down 10-3 against Akhmatkhuzin, giving the Russians the lead, 40-38, for the first time. Cheremisinov sealed the Russian gold beating Erwan Le Pechoux for a 45-41 victory.

[Full results here.](#) 

## Women's Sabre Team

Again, just eight teams took part in this event and the top two teams, Russia and Ukraine, progressed to the gold medal match. Both teams had a real battle in the semi-finals as Russia beat a game USA team 45-42 and Ukraine edged Italy by the same score.

So the USA took on Italy for bronze and led from the start. After three bouts they were 15-

11 up; a gap which opened to 30-17 after six fights. Both teams made substitutions for the seventh fight and Italy's Ilaria Bianco closed the gap by three hits against Monica Aksamit. Dagmara Wozniak and Mariel Zagunis finished things off for the USA, taking the bronze medal 45-30.

Throughout this Olympic cycle Russia have faced Ukraine for the gold medal in major events and it was no different here. The Russians took all of the first four legs, leading 30-23 after six bouts were complete. Olena Voronina was brought in for the Ukrainians but was seen off 5-1 by Yuliya Gavrilova. Yana Egorian and Sofya Velikaya completed the job for Russia, taking the gold medal 45-30.

[Full results here.](#) 

## Men's Epee Team

Nine teams took part in this event and it was no surprise to see France progress to the gold medal match. Hungary gave them something to think about in the semi-finals but the French won 45-40. It was a different story in the bottom half of the draw. Italy, having demolished Switzerland 45-32 in the quarterfinals, were in battling mood. They faced the second seeds, Ukraine in the semi-finals and shocked everyone with the comfort of their 45-33 win.

So Ukraine faced Hungary for the bronze medal which featured three bouts of non-combativity at the start. Hungary held a slender 2-1 lead at that point. Hungary's Geza Imre, saw an opportunity to do some damage in the fourth fight as Ukraine brought in their substitute, Maksym Khvorost and pushed the Hungarians into an 8-5 lead which Andras

Redli and Peter Somfai converted to a 12-9 lead after the sixth leg was over. Ukraine's Anatolii Herey sensed that something needed to be done to close the gap up and the scoring broke open. Despite Herey and Imre scoring twenty-three hits between them, Ukraine could only close the gap by one. Somfai then outscored Khvorost 6-3 handing over a five-point lead to the Hungarian anchorman, Redli. Ukraine's Bogdan Nikishin fought to the end and mustered thirteen hits to Redli's ten but time ran out on him as Hungary secured the bronze medal 39-37.

France knew they had a fight on their hands for the gold medal against Italy so a good start was crucial. They did just that and by the end of the third leg they led 13-9. The feisty Italian, Paolo Pizzo came on against France's Daniel Jerent and the two went at each other. Jerent opened the lead up by one more hit before Marco Fichera (ITA) and Jean-Michel Lucenay went scoreless in a bout of non-combativity. France's Yannick Borel then took Daniele Garozzo apart 10-5 to give the French a 30-19 lead going into the final three legs. Italy brought on their substitute, Andrea Santerelli but Lucenay outscored him 5-4. Jerent and Borel took the French over the line to the Olympic title, winning 45-31.

[Full results here.](#) 



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Komashchuk (UKR) left v Egorian (RUS)

# AN OLYMPIC JOURNEY

By Laurence Halsted

This image of our GB mens foil team huddle sums up what the whole Olympic journey was about for me. It became a consistent part of our pre and post match ritual without anyone actually deciding so, and there are now photos of it from Paris to Tokyo to Rio. These last two years were all about the team event for me. The prospect of reconnecting with James, Richard and Marcus to create a team complete with world class fencers, one that could take on the very best, was what drew me back to high level fencing. That change in perspective meant that I had a fresh challenge and a new focus to keep me motivated. As I told James on my last night in Rio, I have learnt a huge amount during those two years and I owe that to the engagement and determination of my teammates, our coach Andrey, and all the British Fencing support staff.

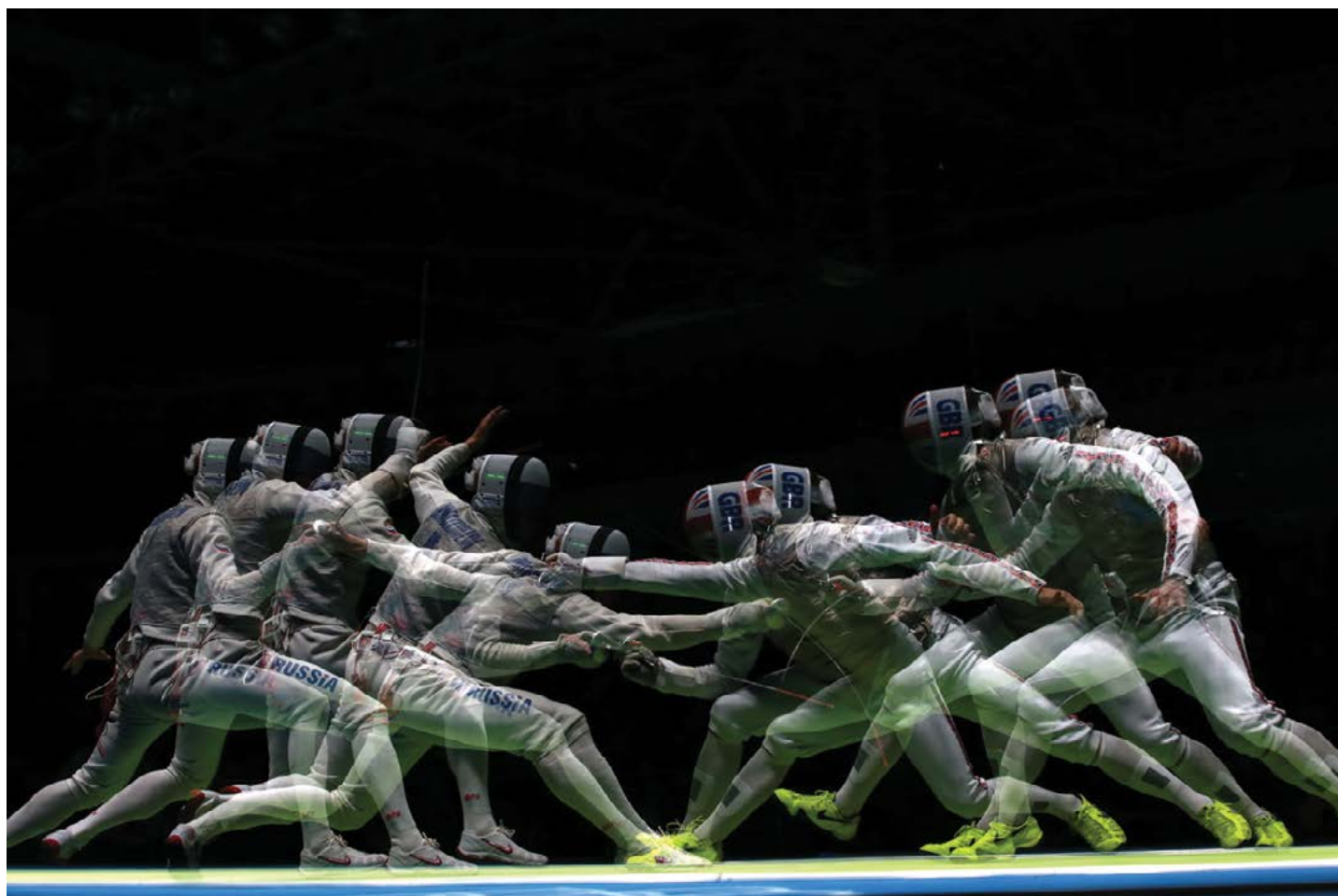
Sadly we could not end our time together on a higher note, celebrating as a team. We were instead profoundly disappointed by losing out so narrowly to Russia in the quarter-finals of the Olympics. Crestfallen was the word I found at the time that best summed up my feelings. Leading up to that match we had reached a place of real confidence, in our individual skills and as a team in our dynamic and drive. Over the previous 18 months we had beaten every one of the



Men's Team Foil Quarterfinals, Rio (photo: Augusto Bizzi)

world's best teams, and we felt that anything truly was possible on the Olympic stage. We were a team that thrived on pressure and unashamedly loved the big occasions. We all shared a deep understanding of just how far we had come as a team and as a fencing nation to bring us to that point. And when our best efforts came up just short, we felt suddenly, irrevocably deflated. That feeling stays for weeks and sometimes months. But if you have prepared correctly and can truly say

that you could reasonably have done no more, then it fades and leaves you with just the memories that you want to keep. For me those memories are the results that got us to Rio in the first place, the work we put in to try to learn and improve from every team match in every competition and the wonderful reaction and support we received all through that process into the Games and even afterwards when we had missed our goal. Then there is the wider experience of how I came to stand



Akhmatkhu (RUS) v Halsted (GBR), Men's Team Foil, Quarterfinals, Rio (photo: Augusto Bizzi)

on an Olympic piste with a realistic goal of winning the first medal for Great Britain in nearly 60 years.

Thinking back to my early fencing career days gives me an enjoyable lesson in perspective, immediately highlighting the stark difference of then and now. In 2002 when I made my first senior World Champs team, we lost to Hong Kong, at that time a team made up of professionals from the finance sector who could afford to pay their own expenses, in the last 32 of the team event. It was so bad we didn't even have to fence for places, our day was over before it really began. I was on the receiving end of a Linda Strachan dressing down that day for my laughing as an immature reaction to losing hits to fencers we considered beneath us.

By 2006 we were better routined, on the brink of genuine fulltime status as athletes thanks to winning the bid for the 2012 Olympics. We had some talent in the team and the capability of flashes of individual brilliance but we were still a far cry from being able to win crunch team matches, lacking the consistency, the necessary team processes and in short, the class. We sat 12th in the world team ranking and according to our then Performance Director, Graham Watts, we were already at the limit of our potential to maintain even that ranking. Amongst the longterm measures that Graham described were necessary at the time were a fulltime national coach and a permanent training centre. The first of those came quickly, with Ziemek's appointment, the second was realised just last year when the elite program moved in to the worldbeating Leon Paul Centre. One such measure that he might well

have added was the appointment of a fulltime performance director, which was the first step on the way to a highly professionalised World Class Programme.

From being ranked 12th in 2006 it took us 10 years to climb the rungs up to 7th and into a position to qualify for the Rio Olympics. That meant it took on average 2 years to achieve each further world ranking place, an excruciatingly slow ascent. I counted with Richard that during that period we have fenced on the national team with 15 different teammates with the search to complete the circle finally ending with James and Marcus. The journey from a team with promise to Olympic contenders was as long and arduous as the title Olympian suggests it should be. But without doubt the 10th and final year of that journey was worth the other 9 put together in terms of intensity. It's an inordinately strange and difficult thing to come to terms with, to hold such a specific and meaningful endgoal in mind through 7 competitions across 12 months. The pressure is ever present. In between competitions it settles into a place equidistant to your conscious and subconscious, but fairly comfortable. It gives you focus and drive when you need it in training, then it spikes for each event, with spikes within spikes for each match, and increasing by factors for each fight and each point. You feel it more when you're not the one on the piste, when it's not your job to focus and engage in the moment. Some events are more important than others, the World Championships are worth double the points of normal World Cups. The live competition matches are worth inordinately more than fighting for places, but equally you

know it could all come down to who won that fightoff for 7/8th place, so they have to be treated as much as possible as equally important.

Our Olympic qualification started on just the wrong footing. In St Petersburg we lost our L16 match to our major rivals for a European slot, Germany, by one point. That day we couldn't suppress our disappointment, a lesson which we realised quickly needed to be learnt, and we lost our subsequent match that day, eventually ending up 13th. Coming off the back of two 5th place finishes in the runup to the start of qualification, this was like a gut punch to our hopes.

The European Championships in Montreux followed, and it gave us both the best single match result of our entire campaign and the ignominy of losing yet again to Germany, this time for a bronze medal. However we took great heart from our performance in the quarterfinal, against Italy who had just achieved gold, silver and bronze in the individual event. We noticed how complacent they looked as the teams were waiting to be called onto the finals pistes and that gave us all the fire we needed. We beat them 45-25, winning every one of the 9 fights, a feat and a score that no one could remember seeing Italy suffer before. Regardless of losing out on a medal, that was the first time we really saw the other teams start to sit up and take notice.

Things took a sharp turn for the better at the World Championships in Moscow, and provided one of the most intense and exciting moments of my fencing career. This time against Germany (for the 3rd of 5 encounters





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during qualification) in the L16, James held his nerve magnificently to score the sudden death point against Joppich. James had started the fight two points behind and against one of the alltime greats this was proof that Britain had a truly world-class finisher of its own. With that one touch we recovered the losses of the previous two events, and by beating Korea and USA afterwards we earned 5th place and leapfrogged Germany in the world ranking for the first time, perhaps in living memory. To cement this as my own best ever World Championships I had also finished 6th in the individual event, far surpassing my previous best of a L64. Things were looking a lot brighter, but there was absolutely no room for complacency.

Here the 2014/2015 season was over but we were working on a different schedule. I had taken a midseason holiday to Cuba with my Fiancée, Helena, knowing that I needed to gather all my strength for the 18 month qualification period. My decision to come back to the international scene was taken on the proviso that I had to enjoy what I was doing. I didn't need the same things as when I was in my mid-twenties struggling my way up the ranks. I had moved to Copenhagen, where I split my training between two clubs filled with young, dedicated fencers. I knew that my biggest concern would be from getting stale from too much fencing and not enjoying it as much when I got on the piste. So I fenced just twice a week along with two or three lessons, filling in the rest of my training days in the gym and playing squash or badminton. I had already done nearly two decades of relentless training, with long camps and lessons 4 or 5 times a week. My technique felt as good as ever even with this minimalist fencing schedule, what I needed was to be fit and strong and to feel that fire when I got on the piste. This approach was right for me, but if you ask Richard he will have a very different answer. I think the key for all of us involved in sport to understand is that if the process is not generally enjoyable then no amount of success and silverware is going to make it worthwhile. If there is one thing I have learned from my time in elite sport it's that *everybody* finishes their career not being quite satisfied with their results (with perhaps Vezzali as the exception that proves the rule). That being the case you just have to make sure that you appreciate and enjoy everything else, the training, the travel, the nerves before a competition, the friendships. But I digress.

The 2015/16 season started with another bump. In San Jose the complacency that I said we couldn't afford, reared its head. Once again, having lost an agonising first round match to Japan, we couldn't raise ourselves and lost our next two matches, only at the end managing to step up a gear to win our last match and finish in a torrid 15th place. In fact this was the impetus we needed to secure in place the processes to ensure we dealt with losses professionally, something which would give us a solid foundation right through to the Carioca venue in Rio.

The Tokyo World Cup gave us another much needed boost to put a points cushion between us and Germany, as we beat Russia along the way to finishing 4th. This time the issue we encountered was that of getting carried away with victory to the extent that we were emotionally drained for our semifinal against USA. That's the beauty of the challenge of sport, just when you have figured out a solution to one problem; you find there's another one just waiting in the wings. We adjusted our strategy for not riding the wave of emotions that comes with either winning or losing.

I will never forget the atmosphere as we came into the final two team events of qualification. Our team psychologist had told us at the beginning of it all that we should count ourselves lucky to be amongst the few who get to even fight for a place in the Olympics. To just have that as a realistic goal is an achievement in itself. The feeling of being embroiled in such a high stakes, high tension battle with Germany for the final European team spot, made me realise that privilege. We were a little ahead going into Paris, but we were due to fence Germany again in the L16. They could easily overhaul us if they knocked us out and went any further in the competition. We had a small but fierce band of GB supporters to cheer us on to a four point victory, and who then did a sterling effort of their own to compete with the noise of the Stade de Coubertin cheering France on against us. Beating France in France to put us into the top 4, at nearly the peak of the qualification pressure, is another memory I will keep precious for a long time. This time though we had our surfing strategy in place and we rode atop the waves of emotion, allowing us to finally defeat Korea on the last hit of the Bronze Medal.

We arrived in Bonn for the final qualification event in a very strong position, knowing that Germany needed to come 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to overtake us. For over a year they had not gone past the quarter-finals. The only other spanner in the works was that China could also

scupper our plans if they won the whole competition, which would put them in the top 4 and oust one of the European teams down and into our final European slot. Again we faced Germany, and again we lost by a single, painful point. From that moment on I experienced a rollercoaster of emotions that I could never experience again. Our qualification was out of our hands. All the while, as we did our job professionally and won our remaining matches to finish 9<sup>th</sup>, we had to watch as Germany took a big lead against France in the quarters. By now every point for either team took on too much significance in my mind and I couldn't watch. The fencing hall suddenly felt like a very dark and difficult place to be and I tried to get away to find some space. But since the whole building was not much bigger than the hall itself and it was raining outside, the best I could do was sit in the café where I could still hear the roar of the German

crowd for every German hit. I still can't quite describe this special type of agony. Eventually I couldn't handle not knowing anymore and went back in to watch the final fight of the match. I will be forever grateful to Erwin Le Pechoux, one of the most effective finishers in the game, for closing out that last match for France before it got too close and gave me a nervous breakdown. After that all that was left was to stand arm-around-shoulder as a team, to witness a relievingly determined Russian team dismantle the Chinese in the semi-final, and with it assure our place in the Rio 2016 Olympics. I can attest that the celebrations that night as a team, surrounded by the people that worked as tirelessly behind the scenes as we did on the piste, were of entirely appropriate proportions. Enough said there, I think.

As a fencer, qualifying for the Olympics comes together with a whole new paradigm. Being incorporated into Team GB and seeing everything that is laid on for us, is truly astonishing. The level of professionalism of organisation by the BOA, from the moment you are handed your certificate of selection, to stepping off the plane back home after the Games, is something which astounded the newly inducted professional GB rugby players. We are without a doubt the best looked after Olympic team in the world. When you are out there it is like being in a different world, surrounded by sporting legends. You watch them train in the preparation camp, chat with them about your respective competitions in the elevator and see the cycling team ride their road bikes from the GB block to the dining hall. It couldn't be more contrasted to the day-to-day life of a fencer for the rest of the four years. It's crucial to try to keep your feet on the ground and go about your pre-competition routines, just as you would for any event, but it's also worth taking stock of what a privilege it is to be there. In a way it is a reward for all your hard work, not just the culmination of it all. And in my case it was not the climax of my fencing career that I was hoping for result-wise, so I must appreciate it for what it was; an extraordinary experience which was earned through drive and dedication, and will remain something I am proud of for the rest of my life.

## OLYMPIC ATHLETES MUST EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO SPEAK BEYOND THEIR SPORT

Laurence also has an article with an alternative point of view of the Olympics, published by *The Guardian* (online). The views he expresses are his own, but may well resonate with some of our readers. This article can be found using the following link:



# YOUNGEST AND OLDEST OLYMPIC AND WORLD MEDALLISTS

By Malcolm Fare

The extraordinary men's epee final in Rio between the oldest finalist for 88 years and the youngest for 53 years made me look at the age of all medallists in Olympic Games and world championships since the start of these competitions. But first, that final. How does the reigning world champion and most experienced man in the tournament, fencing brilliantly to lead 14-9 and needing just one double hit to win the gold medal, lose? My theory is hubris: Gesa Imre was so confident he could finish with a spectacular hit that he kept attacking and missing until it was too late; by the time he tried for a double, Park Sang-Young was unstoppable.



**'Park Sang-Young was unstoppable' (photo: Augusto Bizzi)**

Three weapons span more than 30 years between the youngest and oldest medallists: men's epee (34 years), men's foil (33 years) and women's foil (31 years). The record was established at the first two Olympics to hold



**Ramon Fonst**

epee tournaments – in 1900, when 16-year-old Ramon Fonst (CUB) won, and in 1904, when 50-year-old Charles Tatham (USA) took silver; mind you, it wasn't that difficult to win a medal in 1904 because the Games were held in Philadelphia and only five epeeists turned up – Fonst, who retained his title, three Americans and a German.

The next youngest epee champion was Roland Losert, 18 in 1963, then Park, 20 this year. The oldest medallist in modern times was 43-year-old Igor Tikhomirov of Canada, who won bronze in 2006. Imre at 41 is the same age as Lucien Gaudin of France when he won both foil and epee titles at the 1928 Olympic Games.



**Lucien Gaudin**

In men's foil there is a 33-year gap between 18-year-old Nedo Nadi (ITA), who won gold at the 1912 Olympics, and 51-year-old Laszlo Berti (HUN), silver medallist in 1926. Nadi, of course, went on in 1920 to set a record for the most gold medals won at one Olympics – five, missing only the individual epee which he did not enter to save himself for the team event, then considered more important.



**Nedo Nadi 1912**

Women's foil has produced a clutch of four 17-year-old medallists, two precocious Germans, Anja Fichtel and Sabine Bau, winning gold and silver respectively in 1986, with Bau turning 17 just a week before her event. The other two 17-year-olds to reach the podium were Aida Mohamed (HUN) in 1993 (silver) and Lee Keifer (USA) in 2011 (bronze).

By far the oldest woman at any weapon to win medals at Olympics and world championships was the legendary foilist Ilona Elek of Hungary. Olympic champion in 1948 at the age of 41, she won the world championship 3 years later and as a 45-year-old only missed retaining her Olympic title in 1952 by one hit, winning another silver medal in 1954 and collecting bronze the following year at the age of 48.



**Ilona Elek 1934**

There is only a 21-year gap in women's epee between the youngest, Ana Branza (ROM) bronze medallist in 2002 at 17, and the oldest, Ildiko Mincza-Nebald (HUN), 38 in 2008 when she won bronze.

Women's sabre has produced the youngest medallists at both ends of the age range. In 2006 at the astonishingly young age of 16 Rebecca Ward (USA) became the youngest senior world/Olympic champion in fencing history (2 months younger than Ramon Fonst when he won the Olympic epee title in 1900) and the only fencer to win all three individual titles (cadet, junior and senior) in one year. So far, no one older than 31 has managed to win a senior medal, a feat achieved by Yelena Jemayeva (AZE) in 2002 (silver) and Sofya Velikaya (RUS) in Rio (also silver).



**Rebecca Ward 2008**

Uncredited photos provided by Malcolm Fare.

# News from the Development Team

## PARTICIPATION BUSINESS MANAGER UPDATE

I have learnt a lot in just over 12 months in the job. To start with there is an undeniable demand for fencing out there and insight we gained initially estimated it at circa. 100,000 'Have a Go' fencing experiences each year. It is looking more and more like triple that figure and I believe fencing is a mass-market activity and the experiences I have had so far confirm this assumption.

However, it is not just a demand for club fencing, but for would be (adult and child) participants to have that first time experience of fencing and try it for a period before then making the decision to go to a club setting. The evidence is clear to see in the activity providers sector where there are hundreds of thousands of fencing experiences each year and more work is being done with these recreational providers of fencing in outdoor centres, activity providers and leisure centres to connect with their delivery and understand where and who these participants are.

British Fencing have long delivered to activity providers of brands such as PGL Travel Ltd, Butlins, Warner Leisure Hotels, Haven Holidays, Premier Sport to name a few and we are carrying on this work and further developing relationships with these providers. For the first time however we are introducing a licensing scheme, mainly for the bigger operators in the market, so they can deliver in-house training to their staff. This means we can influence what and how they deliver fencing as well as manage the quality of experience both for the coach and the participant. The licensee has the flexibility to respond to their staff needs for training and delivery and since April 2016 we have delivered over 120+ courses in six months.

During the last 12 months I am also happy to say that an intern who some of you may of come in to contact at our Head Office, has now turned into a permanent member of the development team. I am pleased to announce Satish Thakuri to the team as Development Coordinator and we are currently at the back end of recruiting his replacement. We have formalised an exclusive connection with Birkbeck College so we can go to them for our future internship needs. Satish has been a key staff member that has kept up with the daily and weekly demands of taking all of the development enquires and supporting the coordination of workforce training and courses. I know he is enthused by the opportunity ahead to further support the growth of the sport and support us in looking at ways to make British Fencing more financially resilient.

On a business front two main investments and implementations have been made to drive efficiencies. One is for our internal and external methods for administration and the other is the introduction of a sales and marketing software. The software and business processes behind them have enabled us to take online payments, raise invoices quicker and also capture more leads on those individuals or companies who want to try fencing or deliver it. This has coincided with 35 people on a single coach education course and the ability to put on and market 6 coach education courses for the month of August (including a Level 3 course with 18 booked on to it).

James Craig

## FENCING A SPORT, 'A GAME' AND 'A STUDY'

British Fencing has been funded by Sport England to increase the number of people engaging with our sport. Through research conducted by both Sport England and British Fencing we know that people have different reasons for engaging with activity. To support this goal, we have begun to look at Fencing as 'a game' and as 'a study'. By packaging Sabre:Lite as a board game we have successfully engaged groups who refer to their fencing experience as "a game [they] play".

In parallel to 'playing the game', university groups have begun to explore Historical European Martial Art (HEMA) as their way into swordplay and fencing. At St Mary's University in Twickenham a group of dedicated students gather weekly to train and to study historical techniques. This group of students who are new to swordplay are now leading the way for the creation of a competitive university tournament, and have begun to discover FIE Fencing.

Both these initiatives are encouraging students who wouldn't normally consider Fencing and Swordplay to give it a try and who knows, perhaps Sabre:Lite the game will be available in shop near you soon?

Sabre:Lite game concept:



## GOOD PRACTICE IN COACHING

By Liz Behke Equality and Safeguarding Manager

Could anyone argue with the idea that we want our children and young people to be safe in our sport?

Nearly everyone gets the idea of physical safety. We check our equipment, make sure the space that we are working in is physically safe, but how many of us think about the idea of emotional safety?

What do I mean by emotional safety in a sports club? We have it drummed into us that children should have fun when they play sport. If they want to have fun and achieve then they need to feel comfortable in their environment. Every child is different and responds differently, some need pushing, some need cajoling and some need space and time. There are lots of different ways that we can help them to meet their potential. Our job is to find a way to meet their needs, and not think that our preferred way is always the right way

Imagine turning up to a training session in a sport that you love, but you feel intimidated by your coach or your peers, or you are being bullied, or you feel that you don't have a voice. How likely are you to be able to perform to your best or want to stay?

If you look at the Coaches' Code of Practice which has been put together by Sports Coach UK, they highlight four key areas for good practice:

- Rights
- Relationships
- Personal Responsibilities
- Professional Responsibilities

So what do these mean in reality?

Let's look at Rights first. This is about recognising that everyone has a right to be involved in fencing at whatever level and we need to respect that right. That sometimes means that we will have to signpost them to another club to meet their needs. Perhaps because you want to develop champions and they want to fence socially, or the other way round and you don't have the skills to meet their needs.

The relationship that you have with your athletes is paramount. From a safeguarding perspective there are two key words – trust and respect. Where else do parents simply hand their children over to a complete stranger and leave them to get on with it. Think about the impact that you have on a young person and their personal development. Trust is enormous in sport. Because you wear that 'coach's hat' people trust you. But that trust can be abused. The coach who puts their needs first is abusing the trust. Taking it to

a more extreme level, grooming is all about trust. Remember, it is not just the individual who is groomed, but the whole environment and everyone who is in that environment. It is slow and subtle and people don't see it happening.

Respect has to be earned. Just because you are a coach doesn't mean that you have the right to respect. It is also important to recognise that it is a two way thing, with both parties respecting each other. If you look at coaching relationships that break down, it is nearly always because the respect isn't there.

There are many aspects that a coach is responsible for, but if you are not taking personal responsibility for your own actions then how can you expect to be a good role model. If you turn up late, look scruffy, swear, bully or are hung over, what message are you sending out to your fencers? Quite simply you are condoning that behaviour and you can expect them to start to do the same thing. Do not underestimate the influence that you have over them.

The last area is the need to be professional. This is closely linked to personal responsibilities and can mean many things to different people, but one important aspect is the need to keep your qualifications up to date. This doesn't just relate to the technical aspect of coaching, but the wider aspects too. This includes keeping your safeguarding training current. Safeguarding is not a tick box exercise, but is part of everything you do in your club.

These four points are just one area of coaching, but they do make a massive difference in being a coach and an excellent coach. Remember they are the reason why you are coaching, not you!



Liz Behnke

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## PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION ON SABRE BLADE RUPTURES DURING FENCING

By T. Coppola, C. Guarnaschelli, A. Mazzarano

[Centro Sviluppo Materiali SpA (a RINA Company), via Castel Romano 100, 00128 Roma – Italia]

*This paper has been edited for publication in 'The Sword', anyone wishing a copy of the original unedited version should contact Andrea Mazzarano on [a.mazzarano@c-s-m.it](mailto:a.mazzarano@c-s-m.it). – Editor*

### Introduction

Steel is used in many aspects of our daily lives, as well as in sports like fencing, that we tend to take it for granted. The use of steel in modern fencing weapons is quite sophisticated, particularly when it comes to fencers' safety and to technical performance. From a metallurgical standpoint a compromise between the best microstructure that can be produced for a particular cost has to be achieved. Sabre fencing which is often characterized by sudden explosive actions requires high standards of metallurgical production in to the manufacture of blades, which also need to be priced so that they can be readily replaced several times during the fencing season.

In recent years there have been some instances where individuals, or their protective kit, have been punctured as a direct result of an unexpected blade breakage (1). A medium level fencer can change 10-15 blades a year, while an elite fencer can change up to 40-50 blades in the same time period (2). It has also been suggested that blades may have a shorter life when bouts take place during winter months.

Following some recent breakages, concerns have been expressed about athletes' safety and we have been studying broken sabre blades in order to get a clearer understanding of how we might improve manufacturing processes, to make these blades safer. We have been looking in particular at the thermal treatment of blades during manufacture, the microstructure of the metals produced and studying what mechanical properties are necessary in order to sustain the rigors of modern sabre fencing.

All of the sabre blades analyzed were made from carbon steel and different manufacturers have developed their own approaches to blade

characteristics such as weight, flexibility, toughness, etc. Just why blades break depends on a number of factors, such as the geometry and microstructure of the blade, its weight, and the speed and style of fencing that the blade is subjected to.

A deeper investigation, beginning with a statistical survey, is now under way in order to better understand the specific causes of blade breakages. The aim of this is to determine the best performing microstructures in the metal and the resulting mechanical properties, which will lead to safer blades.

The information which follows, which we hope you will not find too technical, contains our preliminary results.

### Rules frame and activities

Sabre blades, as well as all the other material used during a fencing competition, are subject to the requirements set in a reference book "Rule for Material" (3), and in particular in Annex A, for our purpose, are indicated the mechanical properties requested (see table 1).

**Table 1. Mechanical characteristics of steel after thermal treatment**

Rp 0.2 (MPa)	Rm (MPa)	A %	Z %	KCU (J/cm2)	KIC (MPa·m <sup>1/2</sup> )	HV
≥ 1900	≥ 2000	≥ 7	≥ 35	≥ 30	≥ 120	≥ 500

For blades "post mortems" S2000 branded manufactured by three different suppliers are so analyzed in order to determine the chemical composition, microstructure and hardness.

### Chemical composition

In table 3 the chemical composition is shown, identified for the 4 different blades.

**Table 3. Chemical composition (% weight)** (please note that Table 2 has been omitted by the authors in this version)

Blade	C	Si	Mn	Cr	Ni	Mo	V	S	P
1	0.62	1.72	0.68	0.18	0.27	0.034	< 0.01	0.002	na
2	0.61	1.69	0.80	0.22	0.10	0.042	< 0.01	0.001	na
3	0.58	1.68	0.79	0.22	0.20	0.027	< 0.01	0.012	0.016
4	0.52	0.30	0.65	0.92	1.37	0.22	0.13	0.003	0.013

The first three blades are similar in composition, while the fourth shows a significant difference for lower amounts of carbon and silicon, and higher amounts of chromium, nickel, molybdenum and vanadium.

## Microstructures and hardness

In table 4 are shown the results obtained in terms of microstructure and hardness, while in figures 4 – 7, are shown the micrographs of the four blades.

**Table 4. Microstructures and hardnesses observed**

Blade	Microstructure	Hardness HV10
1	Retained Martensite	400
2	Bainite	260
3	Perlite	308
4	Retained Martensite	530

It is clear that from the safety point-of-view the best blades are those able to guarantee, at the highest possible level, a fracture surface similar to that shown in figure 3, which can be obtained with brittle steel.

However, the blade must also guarantee a high ultimate tensile strength, in order to withstand its dynamic regime as set out in table 1. Such test procedures should also take into account the kind and local intensity of applied stresses, typically a bending, and of the resistance of the steel in such stress situations.

## Discussion

During fencing bouts blades can be subjected to very high levels of stress. In sabre, a very high quantity of energy is transferred to the weapon by the fencers. In such conditions the rupture of blades can happen quite frequent, and may become very dangerous when the surface fracture is not fully orthogonal (which we refer to as 'anomalous' – it has a jagged end) to the blade axis itself. This is typically shown in figure 1 where the broken blade behaves like an arrow.

In these particular conditions, such is the speed of the attack from a heavy athlete with a rigid arm (see for example figure 2), that the jagged point can pierce all of the safety garments.

In the same conditions, a blade broken with a fracture surface strongly orthogonal (optimal), is much less dangerous. It should be noted that both the broken blades shown in figures 1 and 3 come from the same supplier.



**Figure 1. Sabre blade with “anomalous” rupture**



**Figure 3. Sabre blade with “optimal” rupture**

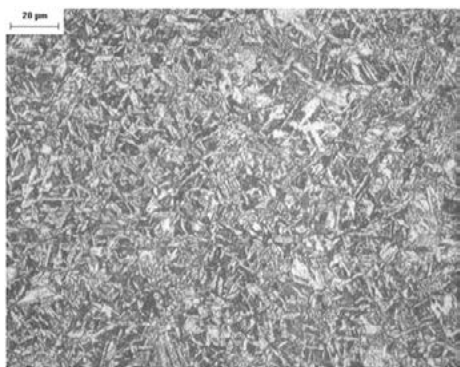


**Figure 2. Example of outstretched arm attack**

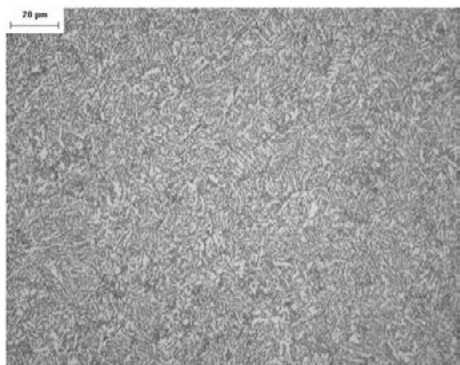
Geometry plays a significant role in terms of determining the intensity of the stress transferred to the final part of the blade itself, in the region where typically the rupture is observed.

In the case of a material without a surface defect (ideal situation for new blades only), it has been demonstrated that the resistance to rupture is not just an intrinsic characteristic of the material itself, but also depends on the kind of stresses applied (5). In the case of sabre blades, the final section is rectangular, with a high ratio between width and thickness. As demonstrated in (6), such section, when bent, shows a lower level of resistance to tensile stress.

Internal defects, such as oxide micro-inclusions, due the small section, can also induce the rupture. The behavior of the steel can also be influenced by the speed of the applied deformation. The speed of application of the stress in presence of a



**Figure 4. Microstructure of sample 1. Martensite and bainite. Hardness 400HV**



**Figure 5. Microstructure of sample 2. Bainite. Hardness 260 HV**

defect (internal or on the surface) impacts not only the toughness (similar to the effect of lowering the temperature in the ductile-brittle transition curve), but can also modify the propagation way of the crack, from plane (figure 3) to the unsafe one (figure 1).

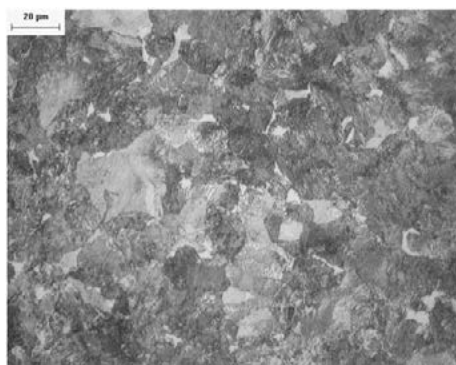
Finally, the continuous bending-unbending treatment of the blade to maintain its straightness during the bouts systematically reduces its mechanical characteristics, introducing work hardening and, as a consequence, reducing the life of the blade itself.

All of this highlights the difficulties in evaluating the real in-service behaviour of the blade.

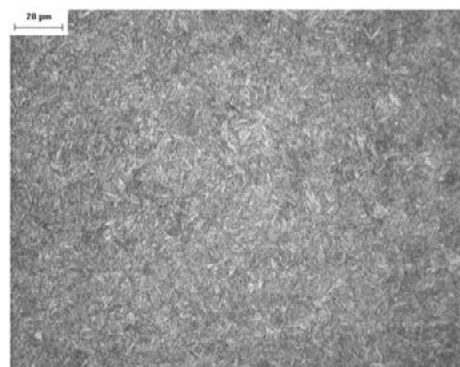
## In conclusion

Due to the diversity of chemical composition, microstructure and hardness measured on the four blades, it can be concluded that suppliers are experimenting with different solutions relating to the issues of fencer safety, blade life and price.

A statistical analyses already started, taking into account the life of the blade, the kind of rupture, the characteristics of the fencer and the microstructures observed, should help us to design safer weapons for athletes.



**Figure 6. Microstructure of sample 3. Fine perlite + ferrite. Hardness 308 HV**




**Figure 7. Microstructure of sample 4. Martensite. Hardness 530 HV**

## Notes:

- (1) Minutes of the SEMI Commission Meeting, Lausanne – 5/6 July 2014, item 9b p5
- (2) Vincenzo Castrucci, Società Sportiva Lazio Scherma Ariccia (Rome – Italy), private communication
- (3) RULES FOR COMPETITIONS BOOK 3. MATERIAL RULES Application 1st Jan 2016
- (4) Blades broken during training at Società Sportiva Lazio Scherma Ariccia (Rome – Italy)
- (5) T. Coppola, L. Cortese, P. Folgarait. The Effect of Stress Invariants on Ductile Fracture Limit in Steels, Engineering Fracture Mechanics, 76 (2009), 1288-1302
- (6) T. Coppola, L. Cortese. Experimental Numerical Procedures for the Identification of the Limits of Ductile Fracture, XXXVII AIAS 2008, Rome, 10-13 September 2008 (in Italian)


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# Interview

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID TEASDALE – 16<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2012



**David Teasdale**

I was very pleased to be asked to interview David Teasdale on the occasion of his planned stepping down as Chair of British Fencing (BF), as I felt sure that he would have an interesting story to tell. David began our talk by thanking me very much for what I was doing with *The Sword*. We had met only briefly a number of years back, on a particularly stormy weekend in Dundee at a Scottish Fencing AGM; but had not had the opportunity, despite me becoming Editor of *The Sword*, to talk since. David recalled that he had had quite a scary journey getting to Dundee – the weather had been particularly bad – but like all meetings of this kind, he had found it very “interesting”; or as he put it in his own words:

‘You go prepared for the unexpected, but it was just full of interesting stuff, which is what it’s meant to be. To try to understand what things were like then, I should explain that some people might describe my time as Chair as “a period of unrest” – unrest, if you like, being a symptom of the changes that were happening in the whole sector at that time, which we in British Fencing were part of. There were elements of this at that Scottish Fencing AGM, but it was much easier than the British AGMs from the same period.’

I began the interview by asking him a fairly straightforward question:

*Can you start by telling us some of the background on how you became Chair of British Fencing?*

‘Well, my working life has been a mixture of the three sectors: public, private and voluntary. I did twenty years as a civil servant in Whitehall, where one of my roles was as the senior Government advisor on sport for most of the 1980s. After that I went back to a business life, experienced the usual highs and lows, which period ended with ten years setting up and running a sports marketing agency called Goodform – which is still going strong: it remains one of the top agencies. As Goodform, we did a small piece of work on the BF membership scheme. So I knew bits about the fencing world, when BF came under pressure from Sport England (SE) and UK Sport (UKS) on governance.’

‘This was before Government and its agencies introduced red-amber-green ratings, but certainly, BF wasn’t meeting its governance targets. My Chair post then came about because both UKS and SE delivered a rather stark message to the BF Board that there could be no public funding without big improvements in BF’s governance and other associated matters, starting with an Independent Chair. The then Board agreed, and the post was advertised. I applied and, what feels like a long time ago, was interviewed by a Panel of Board Members and UK Sport’s CEO, Liz Nicholl (still in her post today); I was successful and started work on the 1st March 2011.’

*Can you tell us a little about these underlying concerns?*

‘The underlying message here was the same for all sports bodies. Unless they were willing to adopt high standards of governance, then there wouldn’t be any funding. Now, at that point in time, every sport governing body knew that the future was going to get bigger and better if you could get into a position to benefit from the new government funding. The Lottery was growing in importance – I’m going back 6/7 years here – and British Fencing was

perceived to be a pretty small and primarily “amateur” organisation.’

‘But we weren’t the only sport governing body given tough warnings by SE/UKS. There was here a Government mission driven by the belief that if a body was well governed, well managed, had a planned strategy and if the right people were put in place, then it was more likely to get results. If it wasn’t well governed and well managed, then it wasn’t likely to have a decent strategy, it wasn’t likely to employ the right people and it wouldn’t get results. This was the funding theory and approach across sport generally.’

*How did you feel about all this and what happened next?*

‘I’ve described it (inaccurately) as “the worst job I’ve ever had” – only in the bad times! Sometimes, the Board and the Headquarters were in an unhappy place. There were strongly held and differing points of view from factions within, and also outside the Board, that were often difficult to resolve. The upcoming ‘Home’ Olympics in 2012 brought unique pressure that only made the situation worse.’

‘It was in August of 2011, after much reflection, that I realised, in order to make the necessary changes, to stabilise and grow the sport, the Board itself would have to change. There had been little adjustment for some years, despite the new leadership, standards and organisation all round us. While the Board had gone to the membership to change the Articles so that there could be this new phenomenon of an Independent Chair, it didn’t give me any powers and it didn’t give me any kind of job description, I was just left to get on with it.’

‘I had quite a lot of Chair experience to draw on (I was already then chairing two other organisations – which soon saw very little of me!) but BF was in a state quite unlike any other I’d known. In order to achieve the standards set for funding, there needed to be clear leadership and vision at the top, and in order for this to happen, significant changes to the Board and the organisation were needed. Over the next few months I pondered and discussed how to achieve this in the face of a somewhat reluctant Board and in the end found what might be termed the leverage to start the changes.’

### *What exactly do you mean by 'leverage'?*

'Interestingly, no one has ever asked me much about that. As Chair, I could not change Board members, who were all elected by the membership for a defined period. I gave them what amounted to an ultimatum. I made clear that, without major change on the Board and in its operation, it would be impossible for me to perform my role and therefore I would not stay as Chair; and they knew that without the independent Chair, our sport would be unlikely to get its share of the new funding and support available. The issue here wasn't me. The issue was that, in my role as Independent Chair, I kind of represented the future funding. This was my key bit of leverage. And the increasing pressure from the stakeholders inevitably forced the Board to acknowledge that the governance needed to change.

'During this time members were also showing quite a significant level of dissatisfaction in the way the sport was being run – there were pressures over Olympic selection, the Olympic tickets expenditure, the budget deficit, for example. The administration of BF was pretty challenging for a while, and for example the AGMs were pretty contentious. You can always tell when an AGM is going to be difficult because a lot of people turn up! At one point we had 120 (approx.) people there and I would say that we averaged maybe 100 people per meeting over the next two or three years. These meetings were the chance for everyone to have their say, and at times the debate was ... noisy.

'Outside the Board's travails and discussions, I had started perhaps my best initiative, which was going out to meet the members whenever possible, around the country (like my Dundee trip); I usually called these "Roadshows". That's where I could listen to the range of views, understand members' priorities, and of course get out my messages – that this was "your sport", that the Board and HQ were trying to provide leadership in changing times, and that we needed to get people to stand for Board election who were willing to take on Director responsibilities, working together as a team – in particular, to persuade UKS and SE to give us the funds to build up the sport. I also used *The Sword*. I'd started

doing my "Message from the Chair" piece. I gave examples like we needed new skills, including marketing, legal and accountancy, to strengthen the Board and its performance.

'Over a period of 2 or 3 months, the Directors had lots of meetings, which were relatively well focussed, in order to move forward. The impetus for radical and structural change increased – I recall one of the many reports on our condition and needs brought this comment from one Board member; "Well, we've got no do-nothing option here, we can't ignore this. What are you going to do about this Mr Chair?

'Changing the Board was at last agreed. We made a plan; that after the home Olympics Games (London 2012) the whole Board would stand down'.

### *So the elections happened next?*

'For reasons of stability the elections were spread over 6 months. We had a block of new Board members in October 2012, with the other group coming in April 2013. Over those two elections eighteen people stood for the nine vacant places (one Director just recently elected stayed on). The numbers seeking election showed that we'd managed to set a good part of the agenda – for change. Luck was with us, we got some really committed Directors with relevant expertise. Ever since then we've managed to keep up a very high standard of Board vigilance and leadership. The current Board is very good, with some outstanding individuals and a good balance'.

### *How did independent directors come about?*

'As soon as I had been appointed, SE and UKS were arguing for independent directors, to provide vital balance, but it took two General Meetings to get the concept agreed. The members weren't impressed with our original arguments. By then we'd got John Troiano (who's just been re-elected after completing a four year term) and I remember a particular meeting when John stood up and spoke in support of the innovation and critically swayed the meeting. The Articles were changed to provide for independent directors, whose impact has been substantial'.

### *So what followed next?*

'When the new Board came in, and our first CEO had also stood down, we recruited a (part time) interim CEO, highly experienced, he'd been the CEO of British Cycling and had overseen major improvements for them. While he undoubtedly had an immediate and positive impact in his first 6 months to a year, the part time nature of his employment caused other issues, for example there was too much work to do in two days a week. After his stint we looked for a full-time CEO and I (and the Board) felt strongly it should be a fencer: this was the best way, at this point in time, to unite the membership. Georgina Usher's appointment has been key to our further development. She's put the Management Team together over the last two years, strengthened the world class programme, the finance and development functions. Georgina has led well in organising the skills and resources we needed.

'So, finally, this is a good time to change my leadership. Because the job that I was brought in to do (as Chair), is now completely different. There's a strong united Board, with a very good Management Team. Which BF will need for the big challenges ahead'.

### *Which are?*

'The biggest challenge is that the public funding that inspired my original appointment and drove the changes in the Board and everything else, is now subject to new strategies from both Government and SE. We're going to have to work harder to get funding and justify it. The key for our sport, like I believe all the others, is sustainability. We've got to work harder at generating our own income. That's probably the biggest single challenge facing the new Chair and the Board. It's also driven by our loss of a terrific sponsor in Beazley which we've only managed to replace recently with one lower level tier sponsor. The challenge for the Board going forward is continuing the growth in the sport – to do the things we need to do, like winning medals – all with a less certain income stream.'

"British Fencing under David's leadership has made real progress, both on and off the piste. He has helped to assemble and retain a fine leadership team, both in the governing body, and the world class performance programme specifically. His commitment to improving the sport's governance during his tenure should be commended, and the opening of the high performance centre at Hendon is a significant achievement. We believe that David leaves British Fencing the better for having been involved and wish him the very best." **Rod Carr at UK Sport**

'I'd like to give my personal thanks to David for the time and commitment he's dedicated to fencing. He took the role at a difficult time in the sport, but under his leadership British Fencing has gone through significant governance and leadership changes. It is now an insight-led, strategically-driven organisation with a good understanding of the fencing market. David leaves British Fencing in a stronger position and should be proud of those achievements.' **Nick Bitel, Chair of Sport England.**

It is ironic that David steps down from the worst job he has ever had, having achieved so much success. He certainly did have an interesting story to tell.

**Editor**

# Round Up

## THE WINTON CUP – 9/10 JULY 2016

By the Winton Cup Team (all photos provided by the Team)



General View, Winton Cup 2016

Last year we started the Winton Cup by marking the passing of Sir Nicholas Winton. This year we were lucky enough to have Carol and Peter Winton (Bobby Winton's son and daughter) join us for the Sunday, to chat to our fencers, share albums and memories and make the Winton Cup presentation. Having Carol and Peter there was lovely, it was great seeing them chat to folk, not only those who have memories of their father and uncle but also to the new generation who were so interested in the history. We look forward in them becoming regular visitors in future years.

The competition was set up by the Winton brothers in 1950 to provide fencers with an opportunity to be a team, as well as encourage the development of the sport throughout the UK. Placed at the end of the season, it was to encourage fencers to work with each other and to be enjoyed – something which is still considered to be the heart of the event.

The current invitee list is the 10 England regions, Wales, Ireland, two sides from Scotland, Combined Services and the Channel

Islands. For a while enough teams entered to run as two divisions, the Winton and the Southcombe Cups; (both of which were fought for over the same weekend at the same location). We are slowly building the numbers of teams entering again.

The Winton events have allowed fencers to develop, to enjoy their sport, to show how important working together is. Often over the years you see the team winning is the one that works best together, not necessarily the one with the highest ranked fencers.

The Cup may no longer be the domain of the best competitors (although it always draws a number of high level fencers who are available), but it is one that is for all who enjoy competing and who enjoy fencing. It allows fencers from all over the country and at all stages of their fencing to compete. It is an event that should be actively encouraged and used as an example for folk to get involved and stay involved.

You only need to look through the quotes we received to see what those who were there thought of the weekend.

The teams attending are amazing at helping; we setup the morning before we start and then clear away at the end, everyone helps (well almost!). England Fencing kindly provide most of the pistes but all the boxes are provided by the teams. We have one armourer, Nicole Kelly, and Gill Stone who sits in DT who freely give up their weekend for the competition. And we have two other volunteers involved, Jim Lockyer who does all the advance scheduling and event computing and Rochelle Dazeley who deals with bookings and acts as dogsbody for anything else that needs to be done.

The Winton Cup proved to be such a success that the Cadet Winton was set up some 20 years ago and in 2008 the Vets Winton.



(from Top) Southern, SW, NE

# Round Up (continued)

## Winton Cup 2017 date for the diary is 8/9 July

Facebook link is: <https://www.facebook.com/WintonCup> we would welcome any Winton Cup comments, stories and/or pictures added to this site.



(top left clockwise) NE, E, SE (winners), West Mids

## The Winton Cup 1950 - 2015

Year	Winner	Year	Winner	Year	Winner
1950	Northern	1975	South East	2000	South East
1951	E.Mids	1976	E.Mids	2001	South East
1952	Southern	1977	North West	2002	South East
1953	South West	1978	E.Mids	2003	South East
1954	South West	1979	W.Mids	2004	South East
1955	South West	1980	Wales	2005	South West
1956	E.Mids	1981	Southern	2006	South West
1957	Southern	1982	Southern	2007	Southern
1958	Southern	1983	Wales	2008	No Event
1959	Southern	1984	Southern	2009	Wales
1960	Southern	1985	W.Mids	2010	Wales
1961	Southern	1986	South West	2011	W.Mids
1962	W.Mids	1987	South West	2012	South East
1963	E.Mids	1988	Wales	2013	South East
1964	South West	1989	Yorkshire	2014	South East
1965	South West	1990	Scotland West	2015	South East
1966	South West	1991	Wales		
1967	E.Mids	1992	Yorkshire		
1968	South West	1993	South West		
1969	E.Mids	1994	Scotland West		
1970	W.Mids	1995	Scotland West		
1971	North West	1996	South West		
1972	E.Mids	1997	Eastern / South East / South West / Wales		
1973	South West	1998	Wales		
1974	North West	1999	Wales		

## Some interesting statistics:

Region	Total Wins
South West	15
South East	11
Southern	10
Wales	9
E.Mids	8
W.Mids	5
North West	3
Scotland West	3
Yorkshire	2
Northern	1
Eastern	1

Region	Most in a Row
South East	5
Southern	5
South West	3
Wales	3
Scotland West	2
E.Mids	1
W.Mids	1
North West	1
Yorkshire	1
Northern	1
Eastern	1

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# THE MALTA OPEN 2016 – EXCEPTIONAL IN MORE THAN ONE WAY!

By Jim Pilkington

In *The Sword* last year we commented on how the Malta Open is an exceptional competition in that, while limited in numbers, it attracts fencers from many different nations. This year it proved to be exceptional in another way. Two months before the event it was fully subscribed and we had, regrettably, to turn entries away. Now compare that with the scene in the UK, where 14 days before, organisers are having sleepless nights with just a handful of entries! In Malta we ended with 15 different nations and managed to accommodate 37 entries in the Men's Epee, even though we were limited to just 4 pistes. From GB there were the highest number of entries for 15 years, with a total of 26. Harry Peck (Brixton) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running won the Men's Epee followed by Max Milner (entered as from Ireland being at Dublin Uni, but wearing GB stripes!) in 2<sup>nd</sup>. In 6<sup>th</sup> place was



The Table of Trophies

Seb Lee from Plymouth Uni and then we come to the vets with Mike Bradbury in 12<sup>th</sup> and Jim Pilkington at 15<sup>th</sup>.

In Men's Foil, Max Woollard (Salle Paul) took the trophy and this is first time for 10 years that it has been won by a GB fencer, with the

other Max from Dublin in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, followed by McKinley Bex (Salle Paul) in 3<sup>rd</sup>. Best vets were Nick Woollard (13<sup>th</sup>) and Dave Atkins (14<sup>th</sup>).

**The best GB entrant in Men's Sabre was a Vet!** Dave Atkins at equal 3<sup>rd</sup> having had a disastrous poule, ranked 15<sup>th</sup> but took out number 2, Neboj Sreckovic (Serbia) in a closely fought fight by 15/13. Fencing apart, the highlight of the Men's Sabre was the final with David Taylor (NZ) performing a traditional war dance in place of the customary salute. It didn't quite subdue his Italian opponent Filippo Carlucci though, who won 15/11.

From GB in Women's Foil and Epee we just had youngsters. In foil Katie Work (3<sup>rd</sup>), Kyle Abay (5<sup>th</sup>); in Epee, Anna Hills (8<sup>th</sup>) and Siobhan Regan (14<sup>th</sup>) and all them from Lancaster University, ably captained by Owen Birch (17<sup>th</sup> in Men's Epee).



The Medal Winners



The Italian Team Making a Presentation to Juan Formosa, President FIE Malta

So the message for next year if you wish to take part in this enjoyable event is put in your entry early in 2017 (you will get cheaper flights as well). Dates are 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June. Further detail on flights and accommodation etc will appear on the Salago website.

*More from Jim Pilkington in 'Letters to the Editor'*

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## GUINNESS WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT – LEICESTER FENCING CLUB

By David Istance-Tamblin and Lee Garner

Back in late May 2016, during a very pleasant club committee meeting in the back garden of our Chairman's house, the Leicester Fencing Club were throwing random ideas about on how we could possibly use the Rio 2016 Olympics to promote our club and fencing as a whole, and one of our Junior Committee members (Kaytlin) had an idea: "why don't we try to raise money by having a sponsored fence? Perhaps we could even break a record!" We all laughed at the naivety of youth, but as the laughter died away we asked: "could we break a record?"

### We began planning

Our first task was to find out exactly what world records were currently in place that we could have a go at breaking, but a search on the 'Guinness World Records' website quickly proved to be of limited use; as it showed records such as the longest sheep fence, largest meat pie and the first woman to ride in the Grand National (FYI – it was Charlotte Brew). In fact, we could only find one record relating to the fencing we were looking for, which was the longest

span of an Olympic competitor (40 years by Dr Ivan Joseph Martin Osiier, fencing for Denmark).

We were all more than a little surprised at this. Later investigations found that only 30% of the Guinness World Records are published on their web page and only 10% ever printed in the annual. We then decided to contact Guinness direct and ask them for advice. They told us that the correct record for the most people in a team fencing match was 50. We had our target!

# Round Up (continued)

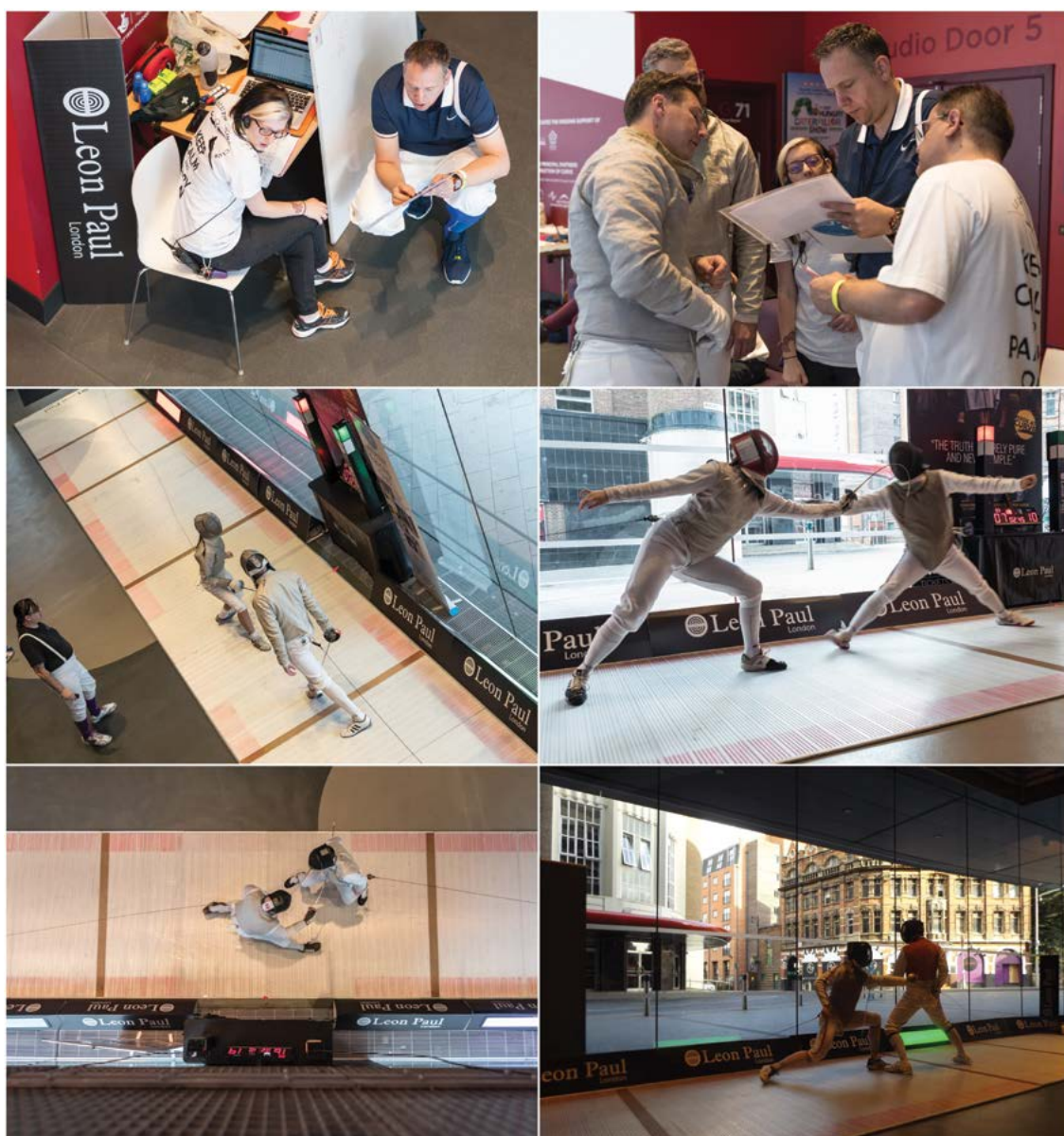
The attempt had to be done during the Olympics for maximum impact and so we had just over two months to deliver this massive undertaking. Only one member of our committee had any experience in organising a competition, so his advice and input was vital; but on top of all the normal requirements for an event that complied with both British Fencing and FIE rules, Guinness imposed their own set of restrictions that we had to follow, or our record attempt would be invalid.

As we all know, fencing as a sport has its own unique set of rules and procedures, many of which to a non-fencer can seem odd, to say the least; but the Guinness rules did not

take any of these into account. Some were confusing, some were impracticable and a few were directly in contradiction to rules of the sport. So, over the next few weeks and right up to a few days before the attempt was due to take place, many frantic emails (the only method of communication Guinness would use) were sent and received as we attempted to educate Guinness in the finer points of fencing etiquette, weapon choice, target areas, team competition format, subs and piste dimensions; until finally, we had agreed with them an acceptable format and the level of evidence we would have to submit to them for review, for them to validate our record claim.

## We found a venue and recruited some fencers

We had initially been in negotiations with a local shopping centre to help us host the event, as we wanted to make it as open and accessible to the public as possible, and our plans were well progressed, when the centre had to pull out of the attempt due to a premises issue. This was obviously a major disaster to us as with only a few weeks to go we had nowhere to run the event, but with help from the local city council, we were put in touch with Curve Theatre, who offered the use of their premises for nothing. This literally



Assorted Photographs

saved the whole event from being scrapped at the last minute and we can't thank them enough for all their help leading up to and throughout the event. Our team then got in contact with Leon Paul who kindly loaned us a full sectional piste, scoring box, tower lights, ground repeater lights and all the other bits, and pieces needed to make the event look and feel really special.

So, we now had a piste, a location and a competition format that Guinness agreed with. The only thing we didn't have was any fencers!

It was always acknowledged by the clubs organising team that we were working to extremely tight deadlines and that to hold the event during the Rio Olympics would be great. It did mean that due to the holiday season many fencers who would like to take part were unavailable. The record as set by Guinness was 50 fencers so we set ourselves a target of 72. Firstly, we contacted everybody at our club, and then went out to local clubs in the county, then region and finally the U.K.; asking not only for fencers, but also officials, witnesses, judges and general helpers. Social media played a vital part and Twitter and Facebook were extensively used to drum up support. British Fencing also helped in publishing the event but right up to the last week before the event was due to take part, we were still a few short of the current record of 50, let alone our target of 72. Fortunately, a last minute campaign of emails, phone calls and emotional blackmail, yielded results. We had enough people to go for the record.

## We ran the event

So, at 6.00am on the morning of Sunday the 14th of August, we started setting up the event; with lights and space for the fencers to warm up, to rest and to change, and at 9am we had the honour of Sir Peter Soulsby, Leicester City Mayor, to begin the very first bout, which began a series of team relay matches lasting over 11 hours.

There were many Guinness conditions imposed on us to achieving the record. Firstly, we had to have at least 52 fencers participate in the event. Then, in order for them to be considered a participant they must have fenced for a minimum of 10 minutes; which, as I am sure you have noticed, does not fit neatly into a team fencing format. But the biggest restriction imposed from Guinness was that in order to maintain the nature of a single continuous match, we only had two minutes between individual bouts and this included switching between teams; and like cats, fencers had a tendency to wonder off or get easily distracted and not be in the right place at the right time. Only the use of lots of 'vocal encouragement' (shouting) and many frantic phone calls to fencers to find out where they had got to, or to ask if they could turn up earlier than planned to cover a MIA (missing in action) fencer, kept the record attempt on track.

However, by noon it became apparent we had a problem with the rota we had set up, as it was starting to break down. Only the intervention of Rebecca, our club secretary,

working for the next 8 hours at the computer, and her team of dedicated fencer wranglers / helpers, calculating the time individuals had fenced and setting up new matches, whilst others ran around gathering up new fencers as they arrived and gave those times for their matches, saved the day.

In the end, we had so much support from all over the country, not only from the fencers who came from near and far, but from coaches and officials who filled the all-important witness roles vital for the Guinness World Record confirmation process, that this attempt would not have been possible without; and when all the dust had settled, we had accounted for 63 fencer that we believe have fulfilled the Guinness requirements for a new Guinness World Record.

We are now awaiting Guinness's assessment of our evidence and they will determine whether or not they consider our efforts on the day sufficient to break the world record. This process can take up to 12 weeks, so it's going to be a nail biting time until November but as soon as we have a response from Guinness we will let everybody know.

Our world record attempt has been a hugely enjoyable event and I firmly believe we would have still done what we have done, even if there was not the prospect of becoming a Guinness World Record holder. It has also been an incredible learning exercise for the clubs committee and I feel we are stronger as a club because of it.

We would encourage other local clubs to look at running these kind of events, as without them, we are in danger of being marginalised as a sport and would offer these sage words of advice to individuals or clubs planning something similar :

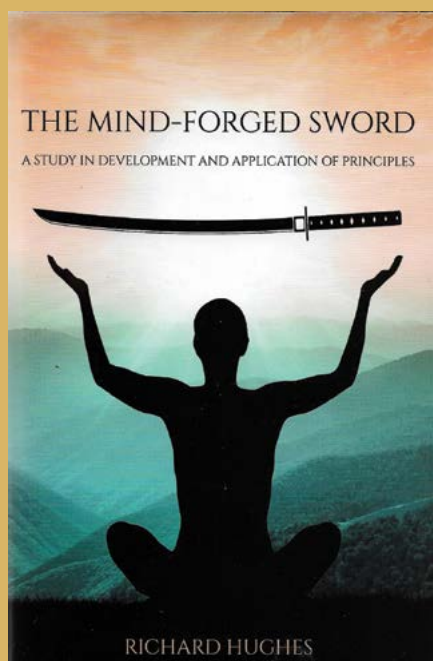
1. You never have enough time to plan. We did all of this in about 6 weeks but even if we had had 6 months I suspect we would still have wanted more time.
2. Get as many people from your club involved as possible. The bigger the organising group the bigger the pool of expertise and experience you have to call on.
3. Get British Fencing involved as soon as possible. They have a dedicated team of people that can help with publicising your event or offer help and advice.
4. It always costs more than you think, so make sure you have sufficient financial resources and controls in place.
5. Don't make assumptions. Just because we know the difference between sword types for example, others may not.
6. Always have a plan "B" for critical issues, like venues.
7. The value of a thorough risk assessment cannot be underestimated.
8. If you don't ask, you don't get. You may be surprised by the generosity of local businesses or other organisations to help you out.
9. A "dry run" may often throw up problems you hadn't foreseen.
10. Don't limit the size of your ambitions to the size of your club.

As a final note, the Leicester Fencing Club would like to say a thank you to the British Fencing, Curve Theatre, Leicester City Council, Tesco's for all the free water and energy bars, all the local businesses that supported us, the Exchange Bar for offering fencers free pizza's, all the fencers, officials, Amy on the registration desk, local media for their interest (including BBC Radio Leicester), and everybody else who we have forgotten, as without them none of this would have been possible and to warn them that we are already planning the next big event for the club for 2017!

# Reviews

## THE MIND-FORGED SWORD: A STUDY IN DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES (PP 212)

By Richard Hughes



The writer is skilled in the martial arts. His book aims to teach how take principles from a wide range of situations, then apply them to new situations. He develops this method by

studying two books in detail: *The Book of Five Rings* by Miyamoto Musashi, a famous samurai of feudal 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan; and *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, a general in the Wu army from the Chinese 'Warring States' period, in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. His book is divided into two parts: Part I, which focuses on how to fully derive and refine a principle; and Part II, on how to apply these principles in combat. *The Book of Five Rings* is a book of strategy and to be used by foot soldiers and generals alike, the lessons of which can be taken out of martial arts and applied to other areas. *The Art of War* is a military treatise which has implications beyond just battlefield tactics. Hughes believes that studying these two books and learning from them has lead him to a deeper understanding of the sometimes chaotic nature of martial arts, as well as of the path to victory; to forge a weapon with his mind, which he refers to as the 'Mind-Forged Sword'.

There is a great deal of detail contained in this book, certainly too much to do justice in this short review, but the reader will get a flavour of some of the content if we look at a few examples. In Part I, in the chapter entitled 'Holding Down a Pillow', the act of attacking rapidly to set opponents of balance, as well as fencing situations, wider implications are also considered, which including a business narrative, where in a bidding situation a rival company unexpectedly offers incentives, leaving a rival unbalanced and unable to respond quickly. In 'Knocking the Heart

Out' the aim is to demoralise the enemy at the outset, and in the business analogy the response is that of a better offer, to stifle the opponent's ability to react. In Part II, Seven forms of the sword are explained, called respectively: 'Offence', 'Defence', 'Duellist', 'Evasion', 'Suppression', 'Balance', and 'The Free Form'; where he attempts to apply the previously discussed principle into combat situations. These are intended to be learned sequentially ('Offense, is followed by 'Defence' and so on). Although each form is distinct, for teaching purposes, all need to be understood effectively for a swordsman to be truly effective. Early on it is suggested that it takes an attack to bring an encounter to a close, since defence (in this martial arts context) is used primarily to deflect the attacker's blade; not intending to make finishing moves from this position. Then, both offensive and defensive styles are mixed. The fourth breaks the cycle created by the three previous forms, attempting to interrupt the rhythm and timing of the conflict. Next, the opponent's useful actions are suppressed, not allowing them to make an effective play. The sixth form is about ruining the opponent's technique and in the seventh form all the previous techniques and tactics may be freely used together.

This is an intriguing book and may be of particular interest to HEMA (Historical European Martial Arts) enthusiasts.

Editor

## FIE LAUNCHES SWORDPLAY MOBILE GAME

The FIE has recently produced a new mobile fencing game called 'FIE Swordplay'. The Sword is looking to recruit a young volunteer reviewer who can write a suitable evaluation of this new game for our readers. Please send an e-mail to Ed or Karim if you wish to be considered. Applicants under 18 years of age will need the usual parental approval.



# Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

## An Appeal on Behalf of the Grace Orphanage in Kathmandu

I wish to brief you about happenings in Nepal. I travel there twice a year on business, and linked to that business is the support of the Grace Orphanage in Kathmandu. On my trip in April, I was asked to bring some fencing gear and give the children an afternoon of fencing. This I did and by the end of the afternoon, one 13 year old in particular was fencing foil with an understanding that in the UK it would take me 6 sessions to reach!



### The children at the Grace Orphanage.

Wishing this to be followed up by something long term, I made contact with the president of the FIE in Nepal, Sunil Shrestha. I had very good meeting with him and have been given to understand that there are 3 'clubs' in Kathmandu and one in Pokhura (about 80 miles to the West). Fencing in Nepal started in 2007 and it is still very much a new sport. Of what they are desperately short is equipment. As you may be aware, Nepal has a very low GDP and the average wage is around £1.50 per DAY and the minimum wage just over £40 per MONTH. Their fencers do compete elsewhere in Asia, but within Nepal little has happened and they have yet even to have a National Championship.

To me there seems a similarity to that of Malta 20 years ago, when realising they were an isolated community, they asked GB if we would come out and compete and widen their experience. It has now grown to a truly international event and this year in foil and epee it is already fully subscribed. So in much the same way as my business Salago has for the last 15 years helped Malta, by part funding the event and promoting it in GB, I feel we could do a similar package for Nepal. In Malta it is a weekend of fencing plus a holiday – in Nepal we could create an even more enticing



### Sunrise over the Himalayas

package of a competition plus a 5 day trek in the Himalayas and/or a visit to the Jungle Safari in South Nepal. (The daytime work of the Chairperson of the orphanage is organising treks).



### Trekking in the Himalayas

As far as the children of the orphanage are concerned, the clubs in Kathmandu are for specific groups of people, but Sunil is quite open to the creation of a Juniors Club that would provide for the children plus any other juniors from the community. To take that further though they will need equipment. Indeed, it is the lack of gear that is also a major problem for the existing adult groups. To meet this situation, I am intending to appeal to our clubs and individual fencers in the UK, for any unwanted gear, perhaps gear that in the UK, no longer meets our safety requirements. Salago would then air freight it out to Nepal.

Sunil also indicated a third area where help is needed, that of coaching. They would be unable to pay any fee, but would provide accommodation, food and transport within



### Training at one of the clubs (they meet from 6am to 10am)

Nepal. So just on the off-chance that there is a UK coach who would fancy a 2 or 3 month break away from our miserable weather, I will be appealing for a coach.

What strikes me of relevance here, is that both Malta and Nepal have had a long relationship with our Country and we now have an opportunity to give something back and help make Fencing a National Sport for Nepal.

My intention to make my appeal though The Sword, Facebook and direct to UK Clubs. I hope that you will have no reservations about what I am doing (but am open to your comment) and be able to give the idea your support.

With regards,

Jim Pilkington

<http://www.salago.co.uk/acatalog/Sponsorship.html>

*I hope that the members will do all they can to support this very worthy cause – Editor.*



Dear Sir,

## News from the Isle of Man

This last year has been an improvement on last year – our worst ever. Because of the Education Authorities, we were unable to hold our School Championships, or the Schools' League. There has been an increase in membership, with four active clubs covering the island; there have been several open events, an Island Championship, and we are on Facebook and the Internet.

A School from England visited us and we hope more schools will come. Four week introductory courses have been held in schools, with, at the end, 'An Attainment Certificate'; which has resulted in more recruits. There is also to be a competition for those with less than one year of fencing. For the first time since 2003, the Senior Championships were held. Robin Davenport, the winner in 2003, was again the winner, after a barrage with another left-hander. We would like to invite Foil School Teams U10, U12, U14, O14; representative from Scotland, England, Wales, N. Ireland and C.I.'s, then rotate around the regions.

Lastly, it was promised that the Chair of British Fencing would visit the I.O.M. We are still waiting from 1939, the last visit.

Sincerely,

Henry de Silva

<https://www.facebook.com/IsleofMan.FencingAssociation/>

Dear Henry,

*It was nice to talk to you recently on the telephone and thanks for this update on how things are in the Isle of Man. The current Chair is stepping down soon, so I don't think that it will be possible to arrange the visit you have suggested. If you allow the new Chair a little time to settle in, perhaps you can try again. Also, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for agreeing to write a report on Veterans' Fencing, which I hope will be ready in time for the next issue.*

Best wishes,

Ed Rogers (Editor)

# 46th WELSH OPEN 12/13 November 2016

Sport Wales National Centre,  
(formerly The Welsh Institute of Sport),  
Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, CF11 9SW

## Event Details

Sat 12th November	Latest Report Time
Men's Foil	9.45
Women's Epee	11.45
Women's Sabre	1.30

Sun 13th November	Latest Report Time
Men's Epee	9.45
Women's Foil	11.45
Men's Sabre	1.30

- Consistently one of the premier events in the British Fencing Calendar
- Qualified referees
- Armoury (personal armoury may be charged)
- Leon Paul stand
- All events in the main hall from at least Tableau 8
- Seated spectator area in the main hall and overlooking balcony
- Monetary prizes for top four fencers in each event
  - o 1st Place: £150
  - o 2nd Place: £75
  - o 3rd Place: £50
- Sport Wales National Centre is located within Cardiff City Centre parkland close to Cardiff Castle and Cardiff City Centre
- Less than 1 mile from Cardiff Central station
- Restaurant facilities on site. Some on site accommodation

**This event is open to fencers aged 13 or over before 1st January, 2016.**

### Entry Fees:

- £25 one weapon, £40 two weapons

Payment received after the closing date (5th November) will be liable to a £10 late payment admin fee. Organisers reserve the right to close entries at any point after the closing date.

### Entry:

- Online at <http://www.welshfencing.org>
- You can enter online and pay online, via PayPal, using either PayPal or your Debit/Credit card
- You can enter online & pay by cheque
- You can submit a postal entry, paying by cheque (entry form on Web site)

**Sport Wales National Centre:** Tel 0300 3003123

Web: <http://www.sportwales.org.uk/about-us/sport-wales-national-centre/about-us.aspx>

### Welsh Fencing

Web: <http://www.welshfencing.org>

Fencers should ensure that they have the appropriate and full level of membership of their national body. Membership will be inspected before the competition at registration. All clothing and equipment must conform to British Fencing regulations, under plastrons must be worn (specification, minimum 800N).

Welsh Fencing conforms to the BFA safety regulations. For full details, please go to <http://britishfencing.com/governance/guidelines>

# Archive Corner

## ROYAL VISIT 1951

**By Graham Morrison, with editing and photographs by Malcolm Fare**

'Dear de Beaumont', started the letter of 28th June 1951 from Clarence House to the then head honcho of the Amateur Fencing Association. The letter, penned by the Comptroller, Lieut.-General Sir Frederick A. M. Browning KBE, CB, DSO, acknowledged receipt of the programme and seating plan for the proposed Festival of Britain International Foil Competition at Chelsea Town Hall that July.



### Festival of Britain Fencing Programme, 1951

Technically, the Foil Club was to run the event in cooperation with the AFA for the benefit of the AFA's Olympic training fund. Ticket prices were from 30/- to 5/- (30 shillings to 5 shillings or £1.50 to 25p in new money).

It was earlier in May that Charles de Beaumont invited HRH The Princess Elizabeth to the event, but negotiations were put on hold until after the King and Queen of Denmark's visit. Princess Elizabeth accepted, as did Prince Philip (subject to his return to Britain in time). Princess Margaret, however, was unable to attend. Others of note invited were the Ambassadors of France and Belgium, the great and the good of the AFA, and a diverse bunch of international fencing luminaries.

In the event, the French ambassador was represented by Comte Etienne de Crouy-Chanel, and the Belgium Ambassador was represented by Lt-Colonel F. Delelienne, both of whom were presented to HRH The Princess Elizabeth along with the local MP, Chairman of the LCC (London County Council – for Londoners too young to remember what preceded the GLC), and their wives.

Lord Leveson-Gower (also Vice-Admiral The Earl Granville) had been advising de Beaumont on etiquette and how to deal with General Browning. Granville was President of the AFA and Governor of Northern Ireland at the time. But maybe his under-stated influence helped too; he was Princess Elizabeth's uncle, his wife being Lady Rose Constance Bowes-Lyon, elder sister of Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon known later as The Queen Mother.

It was Earl Granville who pointed out that the French Ambassador took precedence over the Belgium Ambassador due to the dates of their accreditations to the Court of St James, unless of course one or both the Ambassadors were unavailable and sent a representative when the order could change.

Princess Elizabeth was delighted to accept, and it was agreed that the Royal party would arrive during the interval. By the end of June, Browning wrote to de Beaumont that Prince Philip would be back in Britain and wished to attend. By the same letter, Browning informed de Beaumont that he had altered the seating plan. The plan was settled with Princess Elizabeth sat central, flanked by Granville and the Mayor of Chelsea.

A little appreciated fact is that in their boroughs local mayors take precedence over all except the monarch.

It seems that in this case the protocol was 'adjusted'; prophetic perhaps. September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1951 saw crowds outside Buckingham Palace awaiting news of the King's lung operation. George VI had appointed five Counsellors of State to act on his behalf during his illness, Princess Elizabeth amongst them. The King was reported as 'doing well', but in February 1952 he died of lung cancer and Princess Elizabeth became Queen.

We call it the 'Press Accreditation' process now, but in this more civilized time "Buckingham Palace Passes" were issued for the event. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1951 Buckingham Palace informed de Beaumont by letter that there would be two accredited correspondents – one from the Press Association and one from the Exchange Telegraph, Mr. R. Gomer Jones and Mr. L.A. Nickolls respectively. Additionally, one photographer from the 'Daily Graphic' and one from P.A.–Reuter Photos Ltd



**Princess Elizabeth and Earl Granville at the Festival of Britain Gala Final, 1951**

received accreditations. The photographers were asked to attend the Town Hall before 7 p.m. to give time for them to be informed of their positions.

The event up to and including the quarterfinals took place between 7.30 and 8.30 p.m., just before the Royal party arrived. Following the presentations and between the finals, there was a ladies' (no 'women' then!) match between Mary Glen Haig and Gillian Sheen, a sabre match between Lord Leveson (Earl Granville's son) and Pierre Turquet, and an epee fight between Bert Pelling and Ron Parfitt. For those short on fencing history Gillian Sheen is Britain's only fencing Olympic gold medalist. Princess Elizabeth presented the prizes, and the evening ended with, obviously, the National Anthem.

But it would not be the world of sport if there were no malcontents, and sure enough correspondence ensued between de Beaumont and a concerned AFA member who had received letters and word from "no less than three" malcontents as to various issues including the timing of their Royal Highnesses' departure. De Beaumont parried them all successfully. The surfacing of a few malcontents is no big surprise really; in the writer's varied experience of organizing events in the wider world, there is always one ...

On the success of this event, we refer to a letter to Mary (later Dame) Glen Haig from the Anglia Sword Club thanking MGH for such a successful event and for securing good seats for them. But the final word must be from General Browning.

*Après la bataille* the Comptroller, General Browning, writing on Clarence House notepaper to Lord Granville, passed on The Princess Elizabeth's and The Duke of Edinburgh's most sincere thanks for a "very pleasant evening ..." It seems also that their Royal Highnesses were "much impressed" with the standard of fencing, the excellent arrangements, and the kind hospitality.

It would be interesting to explore the prospects of the BFA reprising the occasion and in such a civilized manner and, *dans ce cas*, devoid of the current brash tabloid headline-seeking sleaziness.

William Leveson-Gower, Vice Admiral The Earl Granville, KG, GCVO, CB, DSO. 1880–1953, AFA President 1946–53.

Charles Louis Leopold Alfred de Beaumont, 1902–1972, AFA President 1956–71

## Note:

'Comptrol' is an obsolete word (Shorter Oxford Dictionary).

The term/title 'Comptroller' is a variant of 'controller' by erroneous association with the French 'compte', meaning 'calculation', or its late Latin source 'computus'. It is restricted mostly to some financial and legal positions in government and the Royal Households.

## BOBBY WINTON PRESENTING 1951



Many thanks to Rochelle Dazeley for sending in this photograph of Bobby Winton presenting the Winton Trophy to Frank Bond in 1951. Can anyone please provide the names the other people in the photograph?

E-mails please to the Editor.

## THE POINT

*'The Point', the magazine of Scottish Fencing, (now sadly no longer in existence), used to include a small item called 'Archive Corner'. I got in touch with its last editor, Neil Melville, and asked him if he would like to share a few of his favourite extracts with us, and this is what arrived:*

The following item from the *Acta Dominorum Concilii Scotiae*, dating from 1652, clearly predates the conception of 'Smallsword'. It refers to a fight between a Forbes and a Kennedy over drainage (!) in Ellon, Aberdeenshire:

**'Kennedy had a prodigious great two handit sword, cruell, barbarous, ane horrid twa handit sword, ane extraordinar hideous weapon of offense, and not to be carried but on a design of mischief.'**

*I think that weapons testing in those days probably left much to be desired.*

I have come across what is clearly a very early reference to the Meadowbank Tournament in the *Chronicle of Lindsay of Pittscottie* (early 16<sup>th</sup> Century):

**'This prince (James IV) mak proclamations out throwe his realme, quilk (whoever) was abill for justing or tornament to come to Edinburgh...sum to rin with speir or battell-axe...sum to feight witht the touhandit suord...handbow, corsebow and collvering (primitive type of musket).'**

Could this be the origin of the term '6 weapon tournament'?

Thanks Neil – Editor.

# Results

The up-to-date 2015–2016 Season Latest Results are now listed on line and can be accessed using the following link:\*



Photo: Augusto Bizzi

Please forward all your suggestions for additional on-line fencing results to: [katie.rhodes@britishfencing.com](mailto:katie.rhodes@britishfencing.com)



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