

# To the Point

## Special Academy Edition



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Welcome to this special edition of *To the Point*. The aim of this issue is to provide as much information as possible about the new National Fencing Academy Talent Programme which starts officially this summer.

The National Academy Programme has been introduced to help us deliver our mission of becoming a 'world leading fencing family', and has three strands:

- Talent Development
- Education
- Club Development

The aim of the Talent Development strand of the Academy is to provide an opportunity for talented fencers with desire to develop and prepare for life as an international athlete.

It is not a fencing camp, but a holistic training and education programme that seeks to give fencers the education and skills to reach their full potential as successful senior athletes. It aspires to bring together world leading experts in a range of fields, such as psychology, strength and conditioning, injury prevention, physiotherapy and nutrition, balancing education with sport and planning. It is not a one-off event, rather an ongoing national programme that will develop over the next few years. It will eventually deliver support to fencers, coaches and parents through a national and regional framework and will have support through a "virtual Academy", with resources online.

Eventually the Academy will develop athletes in three main groups:

- Academy 3 (A3): 14-16
- Academy 2 (A2): 16-18
- Academy 1 (A1): 18+

However, this summer the camp will focus on the A3 group (14-16 years). These ages are approximate, as athletes develop in different ways, and the outcome is to produce medal-winning performances at senior level, not necessarily at Junior or Cadet level.

The Academy is a training and education programme and does not replace the GB national team. However, it will bring together into one programme all the weapon specific training that exists at the moment. Eventually, the GB teams attending international competitions will be selected from those involved in the Academy.

We have run a series of road shows to explain the introduction of the Academy, and will continue to do so to ensure that we communicate effectively with athletes, parents and coaches. We have answered some frequently asked questions below

and have put even more on the Academy section of our new website, which will be launched in the next few weeks. However, if anyone has any queries or comments, please feel free to [contact me](#) directly. If you know of anyone who has not received this newsletter, please forward it to them and also let us know.

Piers Martin  
Chief Executive

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### **Q. How do I apply for the Summer camp?**

All fencers, including the 90 on the selection-by-ranking list, will need to complete an expression of interest form now and then an online application for the National Academy Summer camp. These will be available on the [British Fencing](#) website.

The deadline for the expression of interest was 15<sup>th</sup> May. However, there is a reserve list for future applicants and these will be considered and accepted or put on a waiting list. Please contact [Neil Brown](#) for the latest situation.

#### **Q. What is the cost of the Summer camp?**

The full price of the Summer Academy is £400 which you can pay in installments. At this time we require a deposit of £40 and the remaining £360 by 15<sup>th</sup> June. Whether you are an automatically selected fencer or not, please fill in the expression of interest form on the [British Fencing website](#) and send it with a deposit of £40 to headquarters. After we have confirmed your place, the balance of £360 will need to be paid by 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Funding options are available for the National Academy programme. If you would like to apply for this support, please write to [Ben Campion](#) marking the subject Private and Confidential. Your enquiry will be handled discreetly and we will provide you with further details of the application process after the expression of interest deadline.

#### **Q. Who can apply for the Summer camp?**

All fencers born in 1994, 95 or 96.

#### **Q. Where is it taking place?**

The whole camp will take place at [Nottingham Trent University, Clifton Campus, Clifton Lane, Nottingham, NG11 8NS](#).

#### **Q. What are the start & finish times?**

Check-in starts at 10am on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August. The Academy ends on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August, at 4pm after presentations.

#### **Q. Is attendance at the Summer camp compulsory for national team selection?**

No. In time we have an expectation that national teams will be selected from fencers who are part of the National Academy, This will not be the case for season 2010-11.

### London 2012 Ticketing News

#### **Sign up to register your interest**

The world's greatest sporting events are coming to London! Tickets for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will go on sale in 2011. Sign up now and you will be among the first to hear about ticketing news and other exciting events and offers.

Registering is a quick and easy process which will only take a few minutes to complete. It will also save you time when tickets go on sale in 2011.

To register please visit [www.tickets.london2012.com](http://www.tickets.london2012.com) or call 0844 847 2012.

#### **Q. I'm on the list of pre-selected fencers; do I still need to apply?**

Yes.

#### **Q. What is included in the cost?**

The package includes the entire week from start to finish, including accommodation, food, training, cost of the venues, coaches, expert consultants and staff. Resources include training diaries, equipment for strength and conditioning training, National Academy T-shirts and polo shirts. The Academy will also fund the resources available to athletes and coaches on the Academy website. The cost is comparable to a short international trip, where fencers might only get a few fights and receive none of the additional benefits. Any surplus remains within the Academy and will be used to keep future costs down.

#### **Q. Why is this course better value than the international course I might normally attend?**

This course brings together top experts in many areas of athletic and fencing development and accurately addresses the issues we have identified as barriers to British fencers' long-term success.

#### **Q. I'm a fencer not on the pre-selected list; how are selections made from the applicants?**

We are looking for fencers who have the talent and desire to succeed at the highest level. So firstly we will look for a combination of: fencers who are high in the rankings but have some reason for not being in the selected top few, fencers who are developmentally young for their age so have not had as good results as their peers yet, and fencers who show drive and ambition. We are also looking for recommendations from coaches.

#### **Q. Why aren't selections being made entirely from the ranking list?**

Success is long-term. It has been proved that it takes 10 years to produce success and our aim is to have world-class senior fencers. Our selection process is aimed at addressing three problems with using the ranking lists for selection to this programme:

- Relative age effect. 40% of national team athletes in any sport are often born in the first quarter of the selection year. See some fencing research [here](#).
- Early maturers. In age-group sport it is often the case that the 'biggest' wins, so those who are physically bigger earlier have a temporary

advantage. But research shows that late maturers are more likely to succeed at the highest level (partly because they spend more time in the growth and development period for optimal skill acquisition). However, these athletes often give up due to lack of short-term success.

- Frequent competitors. Those who compete often, perhaps because they can afford to travel to all the events, also have an advantage. It is likely that there are talented fencers who do not understand the competition and selection system.

So there WILL be some selection based on opinion and a judgement on a fencer's potential for future success. At the introductory day on 20<sup>th</sup> March, we discussed with coaches ways of writing a fair system for doing this. In reality, it is probably impossible, but we are looking to include in excess of 1000 fencers in the next few years so it is unlikely many talented fencers will be missed.

**Q. I missed the introductory day in March; can I still apply for the Summer camp?**

Yes, but selections will take attendance into account.

**Q. How many fencers and staff are there?**

Approximately 120 fencers and over 40 staff, which gives a ratio of 1 to 3.

**Q. What other fencers are going to be there?**

At the moment we are still waiting for applications from any fencers in the age group; those on the pre-selected list will be accepted if they apply by the closing date.

**Q. Who are the staff at the camp?**

We have openly recruited expert fencing coaches and specialists in the fields of sports science, medicine, athlete lifestyle education and coach education. A full list will be on the British Fencing website.

**Q. Are any of the staff on the camp professionals acting in their professional capacity?**

Yes. Most of the fencing coaches are professionals and most of the consultants are working in their professional roles. The remainder are volunteers.

**Q. Will every adult on the camp have been Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) cleared on behalf of British Fencing and undertaken safeguarding training?**

Yes

**Q. Who are the fencing coaches?**

The course is staffed by experts in several areas of fencing training. A list of the fencing-specific coaches will be on the website shortly. They will be supported by a range of other experts.

**Q. Will all the coaches be registered?**

Yes

**Q. Can a coach come to observe?**

Yes, we encourage this. There is an open invitation for all coaches to attend this camp, although any participation is conditional on being on the England Fencing coaches register. Any coaches will be fully under the direction of the academy coaches.

**Q. I'm a parent; can I help by volunteering for the week?**

Yes. If you have done the British Fencing Team Manager training day, there is an application form for

this role on the [British Fencing website](#). There is also an opportunity to assist with the day-to-day running of the camp. Everyone who helps must have a British Fencing CRB and have done a Safeguarding and Protecting Children (SPC) course in the last 3 years.

**Q. What kit do I need to bring?**

Full electric fencing kit as suitable for a British open event: 350N jacket, breeches and mask, 800N under-plastron. No FIE blades needed. Also kit for strength and conditioning training (i.e. gym kit and indoor trainers suitable for running). A full equipment list will be made available for all those going to the camp, but will not be more than you usually take to competitions or events of this kind. An equipment list will go on the British Fencing website.

**Q. How will the fencers be supervised?**

We have a group of team managers who are there just to supervise and look after the welfare of the fencers. All have suitable qualifications and knowledge for this role.

**Q. Can a fencer come on a daily basis?**

No. This opportunity is for the entire week.

**Q. Is every fencer paying the same basic cost?**

Yes

**Q. Will there be any refund if the fencer has to withdraw either before commencement or during the camp?**

Anyone who withdraws up to a month before will have a full refund, a 50% refund in the last month, but no refund after the start of the camp.

**Q. Can I pay over the phone and is there a surcharge for this?**

You can pay over the phone for a £2 surcharge.

**Q. What is the cost of accommodation?**

The cost of the accommodation is included in the overall package.

**Q. What is the cost of food?**

The cost of the food is included in the overall package.

**Q. Are there be any additional costs?**

No, apart from some optional clothing.

**Q. Where is the accommodation?**

On the university campus.

**Q. Do I need to bring any additional snacks or drinks?**

All food is included, but as with any training camp, competition or event of this nature, athletes should always bring their own individual performance nutrition. Further education on this area will be supplied during the week.

**Q. What will the fencers be doing on a daily basis?**

Fencers will be introduced to the programme when they arrive and it will not be the same for each athlete. Each day will have elements of talent development, such as strength and conditioning, education, fencing training, fun games and activities.

**Q. Will the fencers be taken or be allowed to go off site at all?**

There are no plans nor expected need for fencers to go off site at present.

**Q. Will fencers have any free time?**

Yes, in addition to some planned activities.

**Q. Will entertainment be provided either on or off site?**

This is a Talent Camp and as such entertainment will be part of the overall programme. All activities will be on site.

**Q. Will parents be able to attend, as they have been able to at the pilot days?**

Parents will be invited to attend certain sessions and further information will be available on this soon.

**Q. What risk assessment will be undertaken for the camp?**

A full risk assessment will be undertaken by our Logistics Lead.

**Q. How will my details be stored and who will have access to them?**

British Fencing is bound by the data protection act. So your details will be stored on British Fencing computers and not shared outside the organisation. Access to these will be for the purpose of ensuring the welfare of all fencers and will only be available to view by those who need the information for this purpose.

**Q. Why is the Academy starting at Filton College in Bristol?**

The project at Filton College is a pilot to help us set up the National Academy framework across the country. This is a project for college age fencers (aged 16-19) who are enrolling on a full time course at [Filton College](#). Further details on this are available from [Neil Brown](#).

**Q. I can't open the documents on the British Fencing website; what do I do?**

Contact the British Fencing office.

**Q. What feedback will there be after the camp?**

All those involved with the camp will have the opportunity to contribute to a comprehensive review following the camp.

**Q. How will this programme continue in the future?**

The Academy will expand across the age groups and with Regional Academies across the country. How this happens will depend on feedback and evaluations received. We look forward to your feedback.

**Q. How is all this information on the National Academy being communicated?**

This is a new programme and setting up new programmes inevitably takes time. We are looking to make major step changes to the way our fencers and coaches train for long term success. We will communicate as best we can using: the new website, *To the Point*, *The Sword*, [Twitter](#), regional and national road shows, notice boards at competitions and update bulletins for the fencers on the camp.

**Now a Question for you...**

**Q. How can we improve our communications about the National Academy?**

Please contact [Neil Brown](#) on 07590 046892.

**British Fencing**