

THE SWORD

British Fencing Magazine

JULY 2016

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KARIM'S OLYMPIC PREVIEW P13
RICHARD COHEN'S HALF CENTURY OF NATIONALS P16



WILKINSON SWORD NAMED AS OFFICIAL PARTNER P5



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Individual Men's and Team Foil Selection
Photo: Andrew Matthews

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Welcome to THE SWORD

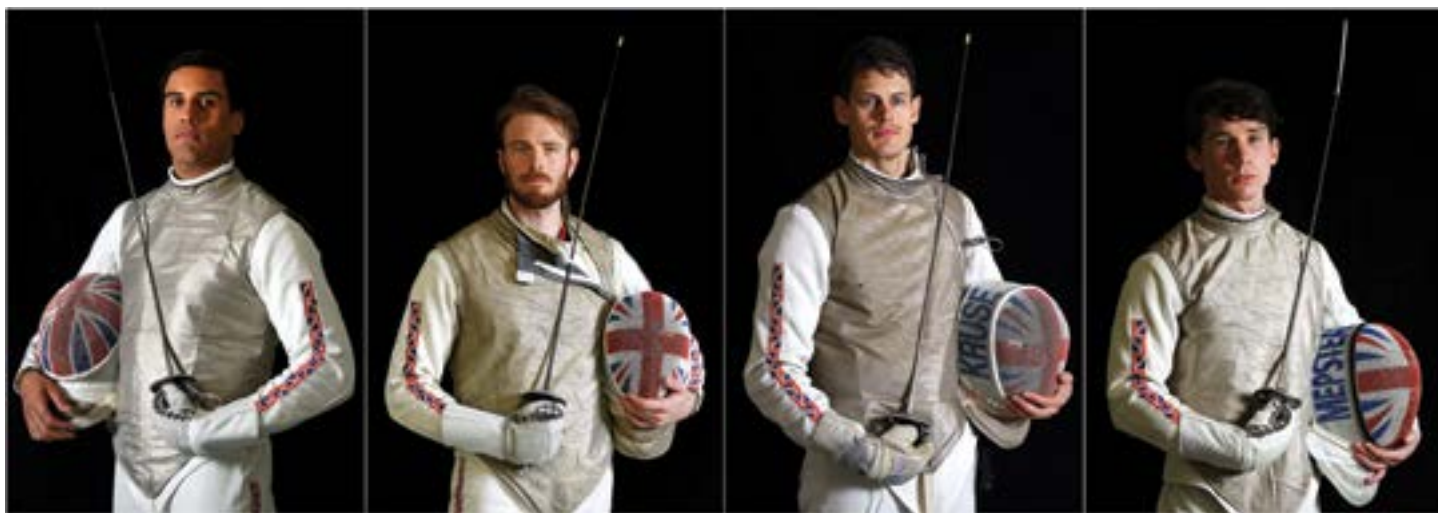


Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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TEAM GB ANNOUNCEMENT

Fencing squad for Rio 2016 Olympic Games selected to Team GB



Team GB – photos Andrew Matthews

The British Olympic Association (BOA) has announced the fencing squad that will head to Brazil this summer to represent Team GB at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. James-Andrew Davis, Laurence Halsted and Richard Kruse make up the squad and all three will compete in the individual and men's team foil events – with Marcus Mepstead named as the team reserve. All three of the team were present at London 2012, where Team GB finished sixth in the team event, with Rio 2016 set to be a fourth Olympic Games for 32-year-old Kruse. Since London there Team GB has enjoyed success at an international level with the men's foil team – which included Kruse – taking the gold medal at the inaugural European Games in Baku in 2015 and the bronze medal at the 2013 European Championships in Zagreb and Davis winning the 2014 European Championships individual men's foil in Strasbourg. The team sealed a quota spot for Rio 2016 back in February when a ninth-placed finish at the World Cup in Bonn ensured that Britain were the highest European world-ranked team outside the top four.

The selected fencers are:

James Davis (Men's individual and team foil)
 Laurence Halsted (Men's individual and team foil)
 Richard Kruse (Men's individual and team foil)

Reserve:

Marcus Mepstead (Men's team foil)

Mark England, Team GB's Chef de Mission for Rio 2016, said:

"I'm delighted to be able to welcome four familiar faces back into the Team GB fold and I am excited to see what they can do in Rio de Janeiro. They have done brilliantly to ensure that Team GB have representation in fencing at the Games. They have won medals at European level and have Olympic Games experience and that pedigree will be hugely beneficial to members of Team GB from any sport."

Alex Newton, Team GB Fencing Team Leader said:

"It's fantastic to be able to announce the team because this is the first time that we have qualified a team. We wanted to be here and targeting a medal in Rio and now that has become more of a probability than a possibility. There's a chance for a medal in the individual and the team so we feel really confident heading into Rio. It's Richard's fourth Olympics, James and Laurence's second and Marcus' first – though Marcus went to the European Games – so they all have experience of a Games. The experience that they all have is really important. Three of the team have been to the Olympics and I think that could prove hugely important. It's a huge opportunity now. They are there by right and given the field and where they are within that, there is a real medal chance."

Laurence Halsted said:

"I was selected for London but this is different because we qualified by right this time and that feels significant because we did it ourselves. It feels like the culmination of a ten year project to find a team that is strong enough to compete at this level and in the last year we have come on so much. To get the reward for the work we have done over those years is great but there is more to do. This team has got two senior guys and two younger guys and we have been pushing along at this level for a long time and we have hit our stride and now we have a team of four world class fencers so we just need to tweak it to make sure it goes right on the day."

Richard Kruse said:

"We had a very tight season to qualify and it came down to the wire and we managed to do it. Now we are preparing and to make the team is great. We've qualified a team which was unheard of in the past so it bodes well for where we are at as a nation and I am happy with where the men's foil is heading. It's the pinnacle of the sport so to be selected and be able to go out there for my fourth Games is going to be brilliant."

James Davis said:

"It's fantastic to be able to represent Team GB, we have worked so hard as a team to be here. We all get on well and we have put the

work in and that has shown in qualification. To be there by right and to qualify a team is brilliant. We know we are all good individually but to qualify as a team is incredible. We have all come together and we have the experience to do well. We have beaten some of the top teams in the world so we know we can be there. Just by qualifying and beating the best teams we know that we have a chance at the Olympics. I'm not setting any goals or expectations. I know I am good enough so I am just focusing on that first touch."

Marcus Mepstead said:

"This will be my first Olympic Games so I'm incredibly excited to be going out to Rio. It's a huge achievement for me and the team. We have been really strong this season and for me this moment has been a lifetime in the making. I've done this sport all my life so I'm so proud to have made these Olympic Games. I think for the sport it's important that we are there because we want to help it grow and we want to be competing against the best in the world. The European zone is one of the strongest so to qualify through that shows that we will be contenders and I think this is the best team that we have ever had."

A FEW FACTS

The Rio 2016 Olympic Games will take place from August 5 to 21.

Team GB in Rio is expected to be around 350 athletes from 23 sports.


Fencing has been a part of every Olympic Games since 1896.

Team GB has been represented in fencing at every Olympic Games since 1900.

Team GB are 18th on the overall medal table in fencing with nine medals (one gold and eight silver).

The last major tournament before Rio 2016 will be the European Championships in Toruń on June 20.

Team GB Press Office

There is a video playlist of each fencer and the support team interviewed on the team announcement day here. 

WILKINSON SWORD NAMED AS OFFICIAL PARTNER



Personal Care Brand to Support British Fencing

British Fencing is delighted to announce the start of a partnership with world-recognised personal care brand, Wilkinson Sword.

As part of the partnership, British Fencing will provide a comprehensive share of its rights including athlete appearances, brand exposure and bespoke events.

Speaking about the start of the partnership, British Fencing's Chief Executive, Georgina Usher, said; "We are delighted to welcome Wilkinson Sword as our first Official Partner on our #RoadtoRio campaign. The Wilkinson Sword brand has a strong historic connection with fencing and together we look forward to writing a new exciting chapter in the sport. Not only will this partnership support our Olympic squad, but it will also provide some fantastic opportunities for a new audience to connect with fencing."

World No 5 and recent World Cup winner James-Andrew Davis, said; "Sponsorship plays such an important role in achieving success in Olympic sports and this backing is a real vote of confidence in the squad as we prepare for Rio. I'm proud to be associated with such a well-known household brand."

Speaking on behalf of Wilkinson Sword, Lucy Oxley, Marketing Manager North West Europe, added; "We're delighted to be supporting British Fencing on their #RoadtoRio campaign. Our strong British heritage and historical sword making expertise make British Fencing the perfect partner for the Wilkinson Sword brand."

British Fencing's Chairman, David Teasdale, added; "With our men's foil team already reaching qualification standard we are delighted to welcome Wilkinson Sword into our partner team ahead of Rio."

14th April 2016

BRONZE FOR DAVIS IN ST. PETERSBURG

Last World Cup of the season ends with Davis Podium

Londoner, James-Andrew Davis secured the bronze medal at the final men's foil World Cup of the season in Russia. He confirmed his place in the semi-final with a fine 15-9 victory over Italy's Luca Simoncelli but could not get past hometown favourite Dmitri Rigin. The Russian beat him 15-11 to progress to the gold medal match.



Davis on the podium

Courtesy of his top sixteen World ranking, Davis did not have to participate in the preliminary rounds and looked fresh coming into the round of 64. He stormed past Bakirov (RUS) 15-5 before comfortably beating teammate, Laurence Halsted 15-7 and then reigning Olympic silver medallist, Alaaeldin Abouelkassem (EGY) 15-11.

Speaking just after the event Davis said; "I was fencing with confidence and felt that my actions were well timed and set up. It's always great to come back to the tournament where I won my first gold. The team were great as always. Thanks to British Fencing, UK Sport, the National Lottery, Andrey, Katie, Sophie, Dai and the M Team back in the USA. Job done now we move onto the team tomorrow."

Rigin faced Russian compatriot Dmitry Zherebchenko in the final. Zherebchenko claimed his first senior title with a commanding 15-6 victory.

There were two more men's foil ranking events ahead of the Rio Olympics – the Shanghai Grand Prix and the European Championships – but Davis improvement on last year's top thirty-two finish here is sure to improve his World ranking.

Speaking about the results, British Fencing's Performance Director, Alex Newton said; "Today saw another great result from James against world class opposition and he showed great confidence in his fencing. His performance, along that of his teammates, with three in the top 32, shows the continued progression of the squad. Richard having to pull out with back pain was disappointing for him and the team tomorrow but we are confident he will be fit and ready to fence again in Shanghai in a few weeks time."

14th May 2016
KB

VALENTINA VEZZALI BOWS OUT WITH SILVER AT RIO 2016 OLYMPIC TEST EVENT



A triple Olympic champion in the individual foil, the Italian fought her final match on the innovative X-shaped pistes of Rio 2016

Italy's Valentina Vezzali hung up her sword in Rio after winning one last silver medal.

Valentina Vezzali, one of the greatest fencers in history, retired from the sport in near-fairytale style in the brand-new Olympic fencing venue in Rio de Janeiro this week. At the women's foil team world championships – which doubled as the Olympic **test event** – Vezzali and her Italian team-mates fell at the final hurdle, losing out to powerful Russian opposition.

The 42-year-old missed out on qualification for the individual foil at Rio 2016. Because the International Fencing Federation (FIE) rotates the team events which will participate in the Olympic Games, there will be no women's team foil in the 2016 Olympic Games and no opportunity for Vezzali to add to her medal haul.

In her long career, Vezzali has participated in five Olympic Games and won six Olympic golds as well as one silver and two bronzes.

Rio 2016 News – 28/04/2016

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FENCINGMOB16



After the great success of the second edition, the Italian Fencing Federation (FIS) is launching again #Fencingmob to all affiliated fencing clubs in Italy and all national fencing federations and their clubs around the world. For an entire day fencing has “invaded” the public squares around the world. The second edition of #Fencingmob15 hit the goals to engage, surprise, and promote fencing in a new way.

#Fencingmob15, conceived by Alessandro Noto, FIS social media manager, plays on the imagination and creativity of individual local organizers around the world. Each organizer launches an idea, considers its feasibility, identifies a characteristic location in their city, and puts in action a giant puzzle of many individual tiles that make Fencingmob a world event. This year #Fencingmob15 had the participation of 181 cities in total, 61 more than last year, in 38 countries with 7 “new entries” compared with 2014, in all five Continents.

The goal of the 2016 edition is the same: promoting our sport in the time of the year when the new competitive season starts and this event becomes an essential tool to recruit new members.

Sunday, September 18, 2016, (any time during the course of the day) all fencing clubs in Italy and around the world are invited to join creating a Flashmob with fencing as a theme.

#Fencingmob shall be organized at a characteristic location that identifies the city where it takes place (eg in front of the Coliseum in Rome, Piccadilly Circus in London, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Times Square in New York City, the Leaning Tower in Pisa, etc.). These being public locations, we strongly recommend to apply for permits and to notify well in advance the competent authorities with all event's details (venue, time, number of participants, etc.) It is the responsibility of the local organizers to photograph and video their Flashmob.

PHOTOS: All photos shall be sent to the email address: fencingmob@gmail.com and posted by the organizers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram indicating the name of the city and using the hashtag #Fencingmob16 (eg, Roma #Fencingmob16). All photos will be published in real time on the social media of the Italian Fencing Federation (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

VIDEO: Video of the flashmob shall be posted directly on YouTube within 3 hours of the event's conclusion with the title #Fencingmob16 PLUS the name of the city, state, country (for example, #Fencingmob16 New York, NY, USA). All participating organizers are kindly requested to follow this procedure. Within 48 hours we will publish one or more summary videos of all #Fencingmob that took place around the world that day.

FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA SCHERMA

Hilary Philbin, President of British Fencing, said:

“I'm delighted to see the continuing success of this imaginative idea, and it's pleasing to see that the number of participating cities around the world has shot up to 181. I encourage UK fencers to support it again this year, as it's a great way to promote our sport to new audiences.”

Message from the chair

Herewith my July message ... written just after the Queen's Patron Lunch, at which there was a British Fencing members' table, and despite early rain it all seemed to go very well. We Brits are very good at such occasions – and certainly, we in British Fencing have been blessed to have the Queen as our Patron, down the years.

And just before this Birthday weekend, once again we showed off our sport at Waterloo, before thousands of commuters; courtesy of Network Rail, who kindly invited us back, because they think we provide excellent entertainment for their customers. This was our first "outing" with new Official Partner Wilkinson Sword, who threw themselves into the occasion and opportunity. Clearly they are going to be excellent people to work with – and will help us to keep enhancing interest in our sport.

I must thank the staff, led by Katie Dolan, our Events Manager, who as ever made this Waterloo opportunity (to sell our sport) work. The whole Chiswick team were there to play their parts; it was all very well done.

Waterloo, and events like it, are part of our task to attract more and more people to our great sport of fencing. For this aim, we shall continue to work on our communications, our PR, and our "Grow" programmes led by Gabby Williams. Social media will be a priority – and any member who has expertise to help, do get in touch with Head Office.

I should update you on finances, and sporting strategies. For the Board, the sustainability of our sport is a key objective. We look still for a headline sponsor. Members have been very helpful with ideas and suggestions, so please keep them coming – we ain't there yet!

Our parent Government Department, DCMS (Dept for Culture, Media & Sport) revealed its new strategy last December. There is lots to ponder. DCMS gave all of us new objectives to pursue, in addition to the existing targets of medals and growth. The Department also freed up Sport England to use a wider range of suppliers and partners, so it would seem that governing bodies like your British Fencing are no longer in "pole" position. In the last few weeks, and after several weeks of consultation meetings round the country, Sport England brought out its own strategy, designed to meet the DCMS policies and goals. Following soon is an "Investment Guide" for sports governing bodies.

All this means that British Fencing must work hard again at securing the private and public funding needed to continue our efforts to grow the numbers of fencers – at all ages, men & women, across the country; to win medals; and to keep getting better as a governing body. We shall continue to do our best. As ever, I ask members to keep giving us advice, guidance and support.

Let me close with congratulations to the Junior Men's Foil Team on securing a Bronze medal at the World Championships. The first ever team medal at the Junior Worlds. And of course – let's all send our very best wishes to our senior team in Rio!



David Teasdale
June 2016
Chair, British Fencing
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KARIM'S DIARY

A short report from our Special Correspondent on his travels in the run-up to Rio 2016

My travels continue today but this is a short journey – the 7.46am train from Torquay to London. I'm on my way to British Fencing's fencing showcase at Waterloo Station and the first chance to show off our new *Official Partner*, Wilkinson Sword. If my experience of the event we held in 2014 is anything to go by, this will be a long but very fun day. The joy

of watching someone holding a sword for the first time never dulls for me. The inner-child always comes out along with, more often than not, the inner-warrior!

When I wrote last the Cadet and Junior Worlds was about to get under way in France, and boy, what a tournament that was. Our

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Karim's Diary

Junior Men's Foil Team made history, claiming the bronze medal on the last day of the tournament – GB's first team medal at a Junior Worlds. A young talent from the USA also stormed on to the scene – watch out for the name Geoffrey Tourette! If he can get through the "tough" years, transitioning from a youth fencer to a senior, this young foilist is a bundle of explosive confidence and a natural sense of distance and timing.

Five days at home followed and then it was another first for me (and you!) – we live streamed the British Championships for the first time and I was joined in the commentary box by five time Olympic skier and the BBC's host of Ski Sunday, Graham Bell. As you probably know I was lucky enough to work with Graham and the BBC at the London Olympics so we quickly settled into our pattern. You can watch the gold medal matches again [here](#).

No time to go home ahead of travelling to Rio de Janeiro for the final Epee Grand Prix of the season and the World Team Championships – competitions that doubled up as the Olympic test event. Arriving well in advance of the competition my task was to assist in the activities to promote fencing in Rio ahead of the Games. I joined an enthusiastic team providing a hands-on fencing experience on the Copacabana – tough job but someone had to do it! We also celebrated 100 days to go until the start of Olympics and I teamed up with the FIE's official photographer, Serge Timacheff, to complete an unusual task! We had to find a man to build a sand sculpture with a fencing theme. I think the photo says it all really!



The fencing sand sculpture.

So to the fencing itself. The live stream allowed all of us to see the new and slightly controversial cross piste format. The idea was to create a piste formation that screamed Brazil. Initially the pistes were laid out in a diamond formation to mimic the Brazilian flag. Unfortunately the venue, Cariaco 3, is not

wide enough to accommodate that formation so the top and bottom of "the flag" were pushed towards the centre to create what we have now. In venue, spectators will not have a problem seeing the action on any piste from pretty much any seat. I can understand the concerns of the press, photographers and TV people though. Clean camera angles will be tricky – not impossible but not as simple as they are with the current layout.

With Rio qualification over it would be easy to think that this Grand Prix was a bit of a dead-rubber. Nothing could be further from the truth! Athletes from countries that had qualified teams still had to fight for their place on those teams and ranking points to improve their draw in the individual Olympic event. Russia's Tatiana Logunova produced a controlled, tactical display to upset world number 1, Xu Anqi of China, winning the gold medal match in a low scoring affair. Her teammate Olga Kochneva staked a claim on a place in the Russian team with her bronze medal winning performance and was joined in third place by Estonian, Katrina Lehis.

The men's event brought about some real drama in the final. The gold medal match between Bogdan Nikishin of Ukraine and Switzerland's Benjamin Steffen turned into a bit of a street fight! As fencers we all love the beauty of a technical hit executed perfectly but who doesn't love the occasional raw dust-up?! I know I do. Nikishin's technical approach to the match was countered by Steffen's brutal strength. As the fight progressed so did the animosity between the fencers. It was inevitable that the two would cross the line and it was Steffen who was shown a yellow card for following through with his guard to the mask of Nikishin. As the fight progressed and Nikishin held the lead, Steffen chased him down. Another guard to the face – accidentally in my opinion – and Steffen lost the fight on a red card. Nikishin's teammate Anatoliy Herey and Park Kyoungdoo of Korea were the bronze medallists. Watch short highlights [here](#).

Valentina Vezzali dominated the headlines on the first day of the World Team Championships in Rio. The event represented her swan song and the most decorated fencer in history was duly honoured as the fencers lined up for an unannounced guard of honour at the beginning of the day. With the organisers in a tail-spin I watched from the commentary box with a smile on my face as Valentina took her bow with humble serenity. The Russian's showed no sentiment in the

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Karim with Valentina Vezzali.

final as they dispatched the Italian team comfortably to take the gold medal. France beat Korea easily to claim the bronze.

The last day in Rio was pretty explosive as it was the turn of the men's sabre teams to take to the piste. Russia made it a double gold by beating Hungary 45-38 in the gold medal match. Iran made a little history of their own in Rio by reaching the quarterfinals of a World Championships for the very first time. They went on to a stunning win over the USA to face Romania in the semi-finals. The European team were too strong and went on to take the bronze medal.

Watch short highlights [here](#).

You will notice from the footage that Graham followed me out to Brazil to lead the commentary and that's because both of us have been signed up by the Olympic Broadcast Service to provide the English speaking commentary in Rio 2016. Not only were we there to get in some practice but we also had a good chance to do some reconnaissance! The venue is all but complete. It just needs some superficial work done to make it feel Olympic. I have to say that everything else is a little bit of a mess! The roads are far from complete, which means travelling anywhere took hours ... and I do mean hours. Despite Barra – the area where fencing is located – being miles away from the centre of Rio, we were urged not to walk around alone even during the day. I suspect that this is just a matter of precaution but it leaves one feeling on edge all the time. New builds are already beginning to crumble – a portion of the new coastal cycle path fell into the sea along with some users during my stay. Then there is the social, political and financial problem that will not go away ahead of the Games. So that's it in a nutshell! Despite all of this, something magical happens when the Olympics comes to town. Whilst not forgotten, I believe a pin will be put in these issues to allow for the celebration that is the Games. Under sixty days to go (as I write) and I'm excited about going back.

Moscow was my next destination and four years since my first visit. The place has changed a lot in that time. In 2012 my visit was difficult. Now there's a bit of a youth culture vibe and the place is a lot more friendly. Again the event was all about claiming places in teams and getting as high

up the individual ranking list as possible ahead of the Olympic Games. It was great to see an all-Asian men's final ahead of Rio 2016 as Korea's, Kim Junghwan took the title beating Xu Yingming from China. Vincent Anstett of France followed up his Madrid World Cup win with a bronze medal and was joined on the third step of the podium by Russia's Nikolai Kovalev. Familiar names appeared at the top of the results page for the women's event. Ukraine's Olga Kharlan stormed to an early lead in the final against America's Mariel Zagunis. The Ukrainian did just about enough in the first half to cling on for gold but take note, Zagunis has got the bit between her teeth just at the right time in this Olympic cycle! Yuliya Gavrilova of Russia and Italy's Irene Vecchi picked up the bronze medals. Watch short highlights [here](#).

It's been three days since I landed in the UK from Shanghai with the bustling streets of a massive city fresh in my mind and smells of the Orient lingering! What a brilliant place! A mix of ultra-modern and ultra-traditional shouldn't work but it does. My first experience of China was great ... but I've barely tipped my toe in the water there as I only saw one part of this city in such a huge country. I can't wait to go back. The fencing was pretty good too! Arianna Errigo from Italy destroyed America's Lee Keifer in the final. She overtook Russia's Ina Deriglazova at the top of the world rankings as the Russia surprisingly fell in the round of 64. Errigo's teammate, Martina Batini and French fencer, Ysaora Thibus claimed the bronze medals. In the men's event, the final was over in under two minutes as Alex Massialas from the USA gave us a masterclass in foil fencing. Korea's Lee Kwanhyun could do nothing as the Massialas whirlwind blew through him 15-5. Chen Haiwei of China and Italy's Alessio Foconi picked up the bronze medals. Laurence Halsted and James-Andrew Davis getting top 8 finishes also bodes well for a couple of months time. You can watch a little video I shot from the finals venue [here](#).

Off to a different venue now but one I know well – Waterloo Station. I feel lucky that my work and my passion have come together so neatly. Also that I get to introduce people to fencing and see it at the very top level. I have to pinch myself every day! Back to Devon for a week after today and then off to Torun for the European Championships. Come on GB!

Thursday, 9th June 2016

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Leeds Open 2016

www.theleedsopen.co.uk – with online entry!!!

This will be run as a complete six weapon event with those who qualify receiving BFA ranking points – full metal pistes available. The tournament is situated in the state-of-the-art sports complex; The Edge, at The University of Leeds.

Check-in closing time for all weapons is as follows:

Saturday 5th November

Men's Foil – 9:00am
 Women's Foil – 11:00am
 Women's Epee – 12:00 noon

Sunday 6th November

Men's Epee – 9:00am
 Men's Sabre – 11:00am
 Women's Sabre – 12:00 noon

Competition Format:

- There will be an initial round of pools.
- Everyone is promoted to the Direct Elimination stage with no cut after the pools.
- Prizes for the top four in all weapons, in addition prizes for best cadet and veteran.

The entry fee is £25 per weapon and £35 for two weapons (you may only enter ONE weapon per day). The closing date for entries is midnight Monday 31st October, any entries received after this date will be at the discretion of the organisers, and a late fee of £10 will be applicable.

Venue: The Edge, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT (Armoury, Allstar equipment suppliers and sports massage therapists are available over the course of the entire weekend).

All fencers must be current members of the BFA, licences will be checked and all competitors should be aware of the BFA guidelines on clothing and equipment (established 1st January, 2006) for this event. Full details available at the BFA website (www.britishfencing.com). Fencers must be over 13 years of age as of 1st January 2016

General enquires and on the day emergency number:
 07920031154/leedsopen@gmail.com

Early Bird promotion! Enter by the 30th of September 2016 and entry for one weapon is only **£15** and **£25** for two weapons.

Leeds Open 2016 Entry form (please complete in BLOCK capitals)

Name:..... Tel:.....

Email:..... Nationality:.....

Age: 13<16 17 - 39 +40 Club:.....

BFA/Licence Number:..... Current Senior Ranking (if known):.....

Emergency Contact Name & Number:.....

Sex: Men's Women's Weapon: Foil Epee Sabre

Enclosed entry fee of: £.....

All cheques made payable to 'Leeds Open Fencing'. Entry form and fees sent together to: **The Leeds Open, 22 The Green, Leeds, LS17 6QL**

All fencers must be members of the BFA and be aware of the BFA guidelines on clothing and equipment (established 1st January, 2006) for this event. Full details available at the BFA website. I accept that the organisers cannot be held responsible for any accident, injury, loss or damage sustained at the tournament.

Signed:..... (Parent or guardian if under 18 years). Date:...../...../.....

British Championships Report

photos and words by Karim Bashir

NEW FORMAT PROVES A SUCCESS AT SPORTS DOCK

The senior British Championships took place at Sports Dock, University of East London, 16–17 April. The event took on a new format this year which meant that the preliminary stage of the tournament took place on Saturday with the top sixteen fencers fighting for the medals on Sunday. The event concluded with a gala final which was live streamed for the first time.

Men's Epee

Seventy-two fencers took part in this event. Callum Johnston (Edinburgh) won the title beating Tom Edwards (Redhill & Reigate) in the final. Christopher Hay (Exeter) and Neill Tannock (Aberdeen) were the bronze medallists.

Watch a repeat of the gold medal match here. 🇷🇺



Men's Epee Podium



Women's Epee

Forty fencers took part in this event. Hannah Lawrence (Wingerworth) defended her title beating Hannah Nesbitt (Leon Paul) in the final. Jessica Gundry (Truro) and Elisabeth Powell (Kenilworth) were the bronze medallists.

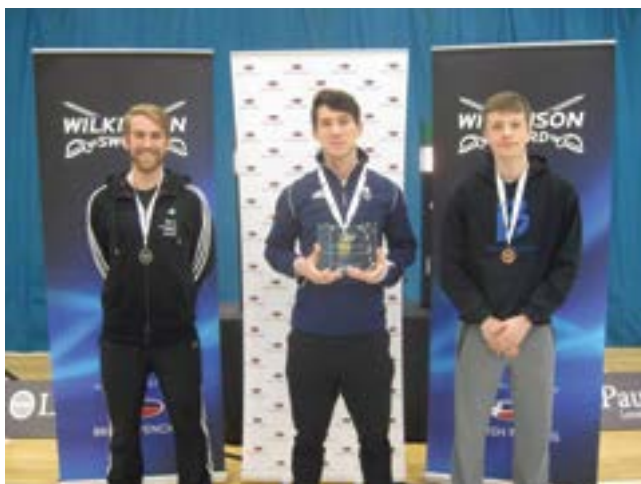
Watch a repeat of the gold medal match here. 🇷🇺

Women's Epee Podium

Men's Foil

Fifty-six fencers took part in this event and Marcus Mepstead (Sussex House) – recently nominated to fence at the Rio Olympics – beat Ben Peggs (Fencers Club) in the final. Laurence Halsted (Salle Paul) and Glen Ostacchini (Salle Boston) were the bronze medallists.


Watch a repeat of the gold medal match here. 🇷🇺



Men's Foil Podium

Women's Foil

Twenty-eight fencers took part in this event. Hannah Bryars (Truro) took the title beating Catherine Cook (Edinburgh) in the gold medal match. Kate Beardmore (Fighting Fit) and Ayesha Fihosy (Salle Boston) were the bronze medal winners.

Watch a repeat of the gold medal match here. 



Women's Foil Podium




Men's Sabre Podium

Men's Sabre

Thirty-seven fencers took part in this event. Jonathan Webb (Camden) took the title beating Will Deary (Truro) in the final. Their teammates, Josh Maxwell (Truro) and Curtis Miller (Camden) picked up the bronze medals.

Women's Sabre

Twenty-three fencers took part in this event and it was Caitlin Maxwell (Truro) who completed a hat-trick of national titles (Cadet, Junior and Senior) beating Sarah-Jane Hampson (Salle Ossian) in the final. Victoria Carson (Salle Ossian) and Emily Ruaux (Rivington Park) were awarded the bronze medals.

Watch a repeat of the gold medal match here. 



Women's Sabre Podium

20th April 2016



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Karim's Olympic Preview

From our Special Correspondent

There's not long to wait now. As you read this, there is less than month to go until the *Greatest Show on Earth* begins in Rio Di Janiero, Brazil. I'm lucky enough to be going to the Games and commentating on my second Olympic fencing tournament – this time for the Olympic Broadcast Service. I can't wait!

Here's my take on what to look out for from those qualified for Rio 2016. First let's look at the weapons that only have individual events, namely Women's Foil and Men's Sabre.

Women's Foil

Qualified athletes:

Arianna Errigo	ITA
Inna Deriglazova	RUS
Lee Kiefer	USA
Elisa Di Francisca	ITA
Ysaora Thibus	FRA
Aida Shanaeva	RUS
Nzingha Prescod	USA
Ines Boubakri	TUN
Jeon Hee Sook	KOR
Nam Hyunhee	KOR
Astrid Guyart	FRA
Le Huilin	CHN
Carolin Golubtyskiy	GER
Saskia Loretta Van Erven Garcia	COL
Aida Mohamed	HUN
Edina Knapek	HUN
Eleanor Harvey	CAN
Isis Gimenez	VEN
Liu Yongshi	CHN
Hanna Lyczbinska	POL
Anissa Khelfaoui	ALG
Noura Mohamed	EGY
Mona Shaito	LIB
Shiho Nishioka	JPN
Lin Po Heung	HKG
Nataly Michel	MEX
Irem Karamete	TUR
Malina Calugareanu	ROU
Delila Hatuel	ISR
Ping Yuan	NZL
Aikaterini-Maria Kontochristopoulou	GRE
Youssra Zakarani	MAR

Looking at the season as a whole you have to say that Errigo (ITA) and Deriglazova (RUS) are the major contenders for the gold medal in this event. The Russian had an uncharacteristic early exit (T64) in Shanghai but I put that down to a blip. The draw will play a major part in this so I'll also be keeping my eye on Di Francisca (ITA), Thibus (FRA), Nam (KOR) and I think Kiefer (USA) will get a medal.

My tip: Arianna Errigo (ITA)

Outside bet: Aida Mohamed (HUN)

Men's Sabre

Qualified athletes:

Alexey Yakimenko	RUS
Aron Szilagyi	HUN
Kim Junghwan	KOR
Tiberiu Dolniceanu	ROU
Gu Bongil	KOR
Max Hartung	GER
Aldo Montano	ITA
Eli Dershwitz	USA
Nikolay Kovalev	RUS
Daryl Homer	USA
Mojtaba Abedini	IRI
Vincent Anstett	FRA
Diego Occhiuzzi	ITA
Matyas Szabo	GER
Aliaksandr Buikevich	BLR
Renzo Agresta	BRA
Joseph Polossifakis	CAN
Ali Pakdaman	IRI
Mohamed Amer	EGY
Sandro Bazadze	GEO
Tamas Decsi	HUN
Seppe Van Holsbeke	BEL
Andriy Yagodka	UKR
Yemi Geoffrey Apithy	BEN
Vu Thanh An	VIE
Sun Wei	CHN
Fares Ferjani	TUN
Ilya Mokretcov	KAZ
Kenta Tokunan	JPN
Julian Ayala	MEX
Yoandry Iriarte Glavez	CUB
Pancho Paskov	BUL

The men's sabre season has been an interesting one. Despite seeing some of the more familiar names at the tail end of competitions everyone has had a wobble at some point. Tellingly the two Italian "old guard" – Occhiuzzi and Montano – put in the performances when they needed to, overtaking their younger team mates. I think we may see at least one of them on the podium in Rio. Other medallists will come from Yakimenko (RUS), Kim (KOR), Szilagyi (HUN) and Dolniceanu (ROU) and Anstett (FRA) in my opinion.

My tip: Kim Junghwan (KOR)

Outside bet: Eli Dershwitz (USA)

Team members have not been confirmed for every entry for the remainder of the events – at the time of writing. I have shown the confirmed athletes in black. The athletes highlighted in red are "informed" guesses.

Women's Epee

Prospective entries:

Ana Maria Popescu	ROU
Simona Gherman	ROU
Pop/Dinu	ROU
Xu Anqi	CHN
Sun Yiwen	CHN
Sun Yujie	CHN
Violetta Kolobova	RUS
Tatiana Logunova	RUS
Unattached	RUS
Yulia Beljajeva	EST
Irina Embrich	EST
Erika Kirpu	EST
Choi Injeong	KOR
Shin A Lam	KOR
Unattached	KOR
Courtney Hurley	USA
Kelley Hurley	USA
Katharine Holmes	USA
Yana Shemyakina	UKR
Olena Kryvytska	UKR
Kseniya Pantelyeyeva	UKR
Marie-Florence Candassamy	FRA
Auriana Mallo	FRA
Lauren Rembi	FRA
Sarra Besbes	TUN
Rosella Fiamingo	ITA
Emese Szasz	HUN
Nathalia Moellhausen	BRA
Kong Man Wai Vivian	HKG
Nozomi Sato	JPN
Leonora Mackinnon	CAN
Tiffany Geroudet	SUI
Juliana Barrett	RSA
Alejandra Teran	MEX
Thi Nhu Hoa Nguyen	VIE
Rayssa Costa	BRA
Emese Takacs	BRA

Here's another discipline where things have not been clear this season. However I fancy an Estonian to make the podium and current form suggests that could be Kirpu. I also think that Xu (CHN), Kolobova (RUS) and Sun Yujie (CHN) will have a good crack at it. Depending on their form on the day, the Romanians, Popsecu (formally Branza) and Gherman, could also challenge.

My tip: Xu (CHN)

Outside bet: Sarra Besbes (TUN)

Men's Epee

Prospective entries:

Yannick Borel	FRA
Gauthier Grumier	FRA
Daniel Jerent	FRA
Bogdan Nikinshin	UKR
Anatoliy Herey	UKR
Maksym Khvorost	UKR
Enrico Garozzo	ITA
Paolo Pizzo	ITA
Marco Fichera	ITA
Max Heinzer	SUI
Fabian Kauter	SUI
Benjamin Steffen	SUI
Pavel Sukhov	RUS
Vadim Anokhin	RUS
Anton Avdeev	RUS
Gabor Boczko	HUN
Geza Imre	HUN
Andras Redli	HUN
Jung Seunghwa	KOR
Park Kyoungdo	KOR
Kweon Youngjun	KOR
Silvio Fernandez	VEN
Francisco Limardo	VEN
Ruben Limardo	VEN
Bas Verwijlen	NED
Kazuyasu Minobe	JPN
Jiao Yunling	CHN
Ayman Fayez	EGY
Alexandre Bouzaid	SEN
Nikolai Novosjolov	EST
Maxine Brinck-Croteau	CAN
Jason Pryor	USA
John Edison Rodriguez	COL
Jiri Beran	CZE
Abdulaziz Alshatti	FIE
Nicolas Ferreira	BRA
Guilherme Melaragno	BRA
Athos Schwantes	BRA

If his first fight goes well my hands-down favourite for this event is Grumier (FRA). If he's in the mood he is unstoppable. If not, he could go out in the first elimination fight! Elsewhere I'll be keeping an eye on Garozzo (ITA), Nikishin (UKR) and the other French fencers.

My tip: Gauthier Grumier (FRA)
Outside bet: Bas Verwijlen (NED)

Men's Foil

Prospective entries:

Andrea Cassara	ITA
Girgio Avola	ITA
Danielle Garozzo	ITA
Miles Chamley-Watson	USA
Alex Massialas	USA
Gerek Meinhardt	USA
Jeremy Cadot	FRA
Erwann Le Pechoux	FRA
Enzo Lefort	FRA

Timur Safin	RUS
Dmitry Rigin	RUS
Artur Akhmatkhuzin	RUS
Ma Jianfei	CHN
Chen Haiwei	CHN
Lei Sheng	CHN
James-Andrew Davis	GBR
Richard Kruse	GBR
Laurence Halsted	GBR
Alaaeldin Abouelkassem	EGY
Tarek Ayad	EGY
Unattached	EGY
Henrique Marques	BRA
Ghislain Perrier	BRA
Guilherme Toldo	BRA
Yuki Ota	JPN
Heo Jun	KOR
Peter Joppich	GER
Cheung Ka Long	HKG
Mohamed Ayoub Ferjani	TUN
Alex Choupenitch	CZE
Maximilien Van Haaster	CAN
Rene Pranz	AUT
Daniel Gomez	MEX
Antonio Leal	VEN
Victor Sintes	ALG

After his impressive display in Shanghai, recently, I think it would be crazy not to include Massialas (USA) as a gold medal prospect. If he shows the form he did in China, especially in the gold medal match, then he will be the one to beat. Other medal contenders include Meinhardt (USA), Ma (CHN), Safin (RUS) and Garozzo (ITA).

What about the Brits? I hear you say. Well I don't want to jinx it but both Davis and Kruse have won majors this season and Halsted reached a top 8 in China. I'll be cheering them on for sure and you've got to say this is GB's best chance of an Olympic medal for a long long time.

My tip: Ma (CHN)
Outside bet: Heo (KOR)

Women's Sabre

Prospective entries:

Yana Egorian	RUS
Sofya Velikaya	RUS
Unattached	RUS
Olga Kharlan	UKR
Alina Komashuk	UKR
Unattached	UKR
Cecilia Berder	FRA
Manon Brunet	FRA
Charlotte Lembach	FRA
Mariel Zagunis	USA
Ibtihaj Muhammad	USA
Dagmara Wozniak	USA
Aleksandra Socha	POL
Unattached	POL
Unattached	POL
Kim Jiyeon	KOR

Unattached	KOR
Unattached	KOR
Rosella Gregorio	ITA
Irene Vecchi	ITA
Unattached	ITA
Paola Pliego	MEX
Tania Arrayales	MEX
Unattached	MEX
Shen Chen	CHN
Anna Marton	HUN
Azza Besbes	TUN
Vassiliki Vougiouka	GRE
Sabina Mikina	AZE
Chika Aoki	JPN
Alejandra Benitez Romero	VEN
Thi Le Dung Nguyen	VIE
Maria Belen Perez Maurice	ARG
Rosy Felix Lara	DOM
Nada Hafez	EGY
Marta Baeza	BRA

Women's sabre is another tricky one but you have to say that the favourites for the gold medal are Velikaya (RUS), Kharlan (UKR) and Zagunis (USA). That may be a safe bet but I'd expect to see two of the three on the podium. Other medal contenders for me would be Egorian (RUS), Berder (FRA), Kim (KOR) and Gregorio (ITA).

My tip: Sofya Velikaya (RUS)
Outside bet: Vassiliki Vougiouka (GRE)

It's too early to predict what's going to happen in the team event but I do have a feeling that at the end of the event we'll see Russia top the fencing medal table.

Schedule

Date	Event
06-Aug	Women's Individual Epee
07-Aug	Men's Individual Foil
08-Aug	Women's Individual Sabre
09-Aug	Men's Individual Epee
10-Aug	Women's Individual Foil and Men's Individual Sabre
11-Aug	Women's Team Epee
12-Aug	Men's Team Foil
13-Aug	Women's Team Sabre
14-Aug	Men's Team Epee



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Birmingham International Fencing Tournament 2016

November 2015 saw us fairly convinced we would be moving to the new £55 million pound Sports facility being built at the University of Birmingham. Having done the early preparation on that basis we submitted the 2016 entry form for publication in the January 2016 edition of The Sword. It came as a bit of a shock to receive a call telling us that the building would not be handed over on schedule. Contractors were way behind on this Iconic Facility building in Sport England terms. Hasty contact with the Editor managed to pull the copy and we quickly reverted to original material using the Munrow Sports Centre for, we hope, the very last time. The Tournament, now in it's 85th year moved from Leamington Spa to the University and has taken place there each year since, apart from in 1992, when it was the first sports event in the newly opened National Indoor Arena.

With nearly 400 fencers coming from across UK and Europe to take part in this major Open event Mike Whitehouse, Chair of B.I.F.T. committee and Head Coach, Birmingham Fencing Club, said he was delighted with this entry level. Thankfully long term volunteers, and club youngsters all made the event go as smoothly as possible. Quite apart from being a national holiday period it is a very

difficult time to seek Referees due to other international and youth events happening, and we remain deeply grateful to those who do respond, often year on year, and also to the Armourers from across the UK who gave up their time to support everyone. On the move to the new venue the whole aspect of managing and taking part in the event will change with all pistes in one major single spanned sports hall. We can't wait!

Men's Foil (Saturday 26 March). 86 fencers vied for places which brought the top seeds into expected D.E. positions by mid afternoon. Challenges came from Matthew Abrahams ZFW and David Alexander Notts.Cavaliers as well as Richard Morris Cambridge. Almost in a reprise of 2015 final it was Keith Cook, Salle Holyrood Fencing Club, former Senior British Champion, Commonwealth individual silver and European bronze medalist who this time beat Matthew Billings, Sussex House 15/10 in a dramatic and exciting final.

Women's Foil. 61 Entries. Hannah Briars, Truro (and Scotland!) unhurried style held off Phillipa Mullins', Salle Boston repeated attacks to an easy victory 15/4.

Men's Sabre. 37 sabreurs fenced off the majority off their competition in the New

Gym and you can experience a flavor of this, courtesy of Mike Jacob's informal capture on <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=18JeXop2zf4> In final fights brought into the Sports Hall gave end to end challenges between Stephen Rocks, Shetland F.C. and Tom Mottishead, Romily with Stephen's win 15/13.

Men's Epee (Sunday 27 March). 83 entries. Calum Johnston, Edinburgh, held on through very close D.E. fights eventually beating David Roig Charles, Spain 15/12. Roig Charles' great delight at having taken this final so close was evident.

Women's Epee. 75 women competed, again many long close fights. Birmingham's Elizabeth Powell, Kenilworth Club, from her back line defensive position beat Abbi Matthews, Harrogate 15/10 in a well controlled fight.

Women's Sabre. 30 entries. In the final Jessica Corby, Salle Ossian F.C. beat Emily Raux Rivington Park 15/10 with some excellent exchanges.

For full results please see www.bift.org.uk

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



Matthew Billings (left) and Keith Cook

A Half-Century of Nationals

By Richard Cohen



Richard at the European Veterans Fencing Championships, Croatia 2015 (photo: Gillian Aghajan)

This April I participated in my fiftieth consecutive British sabre championships. Although this was satisfying, I know it speaks mainly of a certain obsessiveness and the good fortune enjoyed in avoiding (for the most part) serious injury or illness. The milestone also provides an opportunity to look back over a half-century of changing fashions and a roster of great champions.

The inaugural championship was in 1898 (I missed that one), and only two fencers are mentioned in the record book – the winner, W. Edgworth-Johnstone, and the runner-up, a W.P. Gate. Maybe they were the only ones who took part?

My first championship was in 1966 (it adds up, as there was no competition in 2015). The great Bill Hoskyns was the winner, defeating 6ft 5-inch Richard Oldcorn in a fight-off. "Hoskyns compensates for his lack of footwork," said the match report in *The Sword*, "by the superb economy of his hand movements, coupled with a remarkable sense of distance and timing." A sabreur without footwork! It was the only national sabre title for Hoskyns – a world-class epeeist and foilist (although he missed the world sabre final in Philadelphia in 1958 by just a couple of hits).

That first year I competed, I scraped through to the second round, then stayed on to watch the finals, and recall Bill (whom I knew, as he fenced in Somerset, where I was at school), after comfortably defeating the sabre international John Rayden, telling me, "I just

wait for him to do one of his complicated attacks, then counter-attack to head. Works every time."

Maybe so, but the next year Rayden was runner-up, losing to Sandy Leckie of Scotland (who that year won the national foil title as well) in an eight-man final. Over the years what has been called the final has veered from an eight-man poule unique, to a pool of six, to eight fencers fighting off in knockout format.



Sandy Leckie fleches against Michael Strass at the old AFA Headquarters in Hanover Square, off Oxford Circus.

Sabre in the mid 1960s really was, if not a different sport, then a distant cousin of today's weapon. Lots of stop-hits to hand (a valid part of the target) and lower arm; plenty of fleches, even horizontal ones; an epidemic of simultaneous attacks; and comparatively little footwork: a regular semifinalist of those years, the balding Michael Straus, never took more than a single step forward before lunging, and that was enough. But mainly: no electric equipment, and instead a central referee (called the "president" of a "jury") and four judges, two for each fencer.

The potential for argument, stalemate, even cheating was great, and too often realized. Early on I learned that it was not enough to land a hit: you had to act as if it were obviously your touch, and equally exercise your thespian skills to convince the judges that you had never been hit. As a witty write-up of the 1972 championships by the Polytechnic club-fencer Brian Price-Thomas commented, "The opportunity to have a thundering good moan at presidents and judges was once again offered to the British sabreur on 16 April, and it is a source of constant surprise to me that so relatively few folk avail themselves of this chance."

Those who fenced and were knocked out rarely stayed to watch the six-man final

(fights the best of nine hits), and little wonder. The Price-Thomas report concluded: "It is perhaps somewhat depressing to note that the average time spent fencing in each bout was approximately fifteen seconds. This does not allow much time for thought, with a rate of three seconds a hit!"

That year the entry was just 46, the same as the previous championships. These were small affairs, held at the old De Beaumont Centre at the back of Queens Tennis Club in Barons Court, a one-day competition separated from the other weapons, or even a team event. Every national championship, at all weapons, was a one-off affair, with the sole exception of 1978, when sabre shared its day with the women foilists. Yet these specialist competitions were all covered in the national press -- usually the *Daily Telegraph*, which had its own specialist correspondent, and also *The Times* -- while *The Sword* would carry individual reports, idiosyncratic, of variable length, and often very funny.

Back in that 1967 final, last place was taken by a 20-year-old student, David Acfield, my teammate at Cambridge. The following year he came third, and from 1969 till 1972 won four national titles in a row, a feat still unequalled (although Roger Tredgold also won four consecutive titles during the period 1939-49, the war years intervening; he was champion seven times in all, the record). For twenty years he played cricket for Essex as a wily off-spinner, and in 1973 narrowly missed a call-up to the England squad; but in the winter months he swapped cricket whites for fencing whites, and dominated us all. Again *The Sword*: "There is little doubt that David Acfield retains his complete supremacy in British sabre and it is difficult to see that he shall not continue to do so for several years to come unless one or more of his contemporaries should live and train abroad for a worthwhile period... In terms of British fencing, David must now be considered to have reached the ultimate in all-round ability and his further progress can only be measured in his success abroad. But that is a different matter."

And so it proved. Foreign sabreurs hit hard (or did back then), and David didn't like it: it wasn't cricket, and after the 1972 Olympics he left fencing for good, aged 25: a real loss.

Two years before, in 1970, I made my first national final, coming third, losing the chance of a barrage for first place by one hit. The next two years saw me finishing 4th, then 5th. In 1973, I lost humiliatingly in a barrage to Peter

Mather, just 18, 0-5, including four cracking parry-ripostes: it was as if he could read my mind, even if it was full of blank pages.

Fourth place was taken by a first-time finalist, Jim Philbin, soon to become one of the great champions, with five national titles. In 1974 I was to beat him in a fight-off for first place, and from then till 1987 we were neck-and-neck rivals, splitting ten championships over that fourteen-year span. Jim for some reason never had the same success abroad, but in 1977 alone, in the course of three consecutive national victories, he also won the Corble Cup, Brighton, the Phoenix Open, Leicester, Wales and Birmingham – a seven-tournament run that remains unequalled.



Jim Philbin in full flight against Eli Sekunda of Canada. David Eden referees.

This dominance meant that a number of leading sabreurs never won national titles. Rodney Craig, a fixture in the British team from 1968 till 1972, was second in the national championships for four years in succession. Richard Oldcorn, regularly our best performer overseas, reached the final poule seven times, but his best performance was second, in 1976. Over five years, 1976-80, Terry Etherton, now Lord Chancellor, came 4th, 4th, 3rd, 3rd and 5th. The Philbin-Cohen rivalry was interrupted by solitary wins by John Deanfield in 1975 and Paul Klenerman in 1981, then several victories by Mark Slade, Britain's best sabreur in the early 1980s, and by Ian Williams, who succeeded him.

The weapon was changing. Running off the back line was penalized, double attacks were not allowed to continue unchecked, and on 9 May 1987, my 40th birthday, the Corble Cup was run with electric equipment. Despite

all these innovations, I clung on to reach national finals, and in 1994 came third, just as I had done in 1970: five first places, four seconds, seven thirds, 25 consecutive finals in all. Then the decline: ninth in 1997, and soon striving to reach the last 32 in a competition that, with its move first to Bath then to the sports centre in Sheffield, was attracting a much larger field. From 2004 till 2010, entries ranged from the high nineties to well over a hundred, with 2005 seeing a record 123. In 2012 I managed 27th place, but in the last four years I have been lucky to register a single victory, and my main job and joy has been to support my daughter Mary in her assaults on the epee title.

Who has been the greatest champion? Roger Tredgold, whom I fenced as a schoolboy but never saw in competition, won seven titles from 1936 till 1955, yet he lost seven years of competition to the Second World War. Even more impressive is James Williams, who rather scorned the national championships and concentrated instead on world cups, world championships, and the Olympics. He did win national titles in 1996 and 2000 and a couple of times was runner-up, but that record does him an injustice. Superbly fit, he was the fastest British fencer I have known. He was also a superb reader of an opponent's weak spots, and there was never a fencer he did not expect to beat. But who knows if he would have overcome a Sandy Leckie, a Tredgold, or a Hoskyns in their prime? One makes those kinds of comparisons, but a national champion now would simply be too fast for his opposite number of years gone by – but for how long, if the old guard had time to adapt?

The days when a fencer could compete at the top level at more than one weapon are probably gone for good. Great rivalries are unusual now too: recent years have seen solitary victories by Chris Farren, Robin Knight, Chris Jamieson, Alex Crutchett and others, plus a couple of championships each for Nick Fletcher and David Sach. During the last decade first Alex O'Connell, then Chris Buxton (three consecutive victories 2007-9) and James Honeybone have pretty well had things their own way. And who knows? Honeybone may yet overtake Tredgold. Ten years ago an

analysis in *The Sword* reported the average age over the previous quarter century for national champions at all three weapons; for sabreurs it was 31, a figure affected by older winners immediately after the First World War, then rapidly shrinking.



Richard Cohen evades the head parry of Gary Fletcher. Three years later, in 1993, Fletcher became national champion. (photo: Graham Morrison)

My own prolonged adventure in the nationals is over. But I can remember when Brian Price-Thomas could write this (in 1978), a paean partly out of date, but I suspect still instantly recognizable: "The really professional eliminee sticks to one story regardless of which round he exits from. It... goes something like this: 'No complaints, old Boy! Judges did a good job as far as their experience went, president really on the ball...' 'Fraid it's probably anno domini, I mean it has become very physical, hasn't it? Remember when it was all technique...? No, really, Old Boy, only myself to blame, just not my day, totally off form. Hangover? 'Flu? Oh did I mention them in the changing room? No, nothing to do with it, head seemed pretty clear once on the piste, just badly off form, that's all, though since you mention it, might not be a bad idea to take a few more aspirins.' Subtle, makes the chap who has been promoted instead of you feel a bit of a cad."

Richard Cohen's new book, 'How to Write Like Tolstoy: A Journey into the Minds of Our Greatest Writers', is published in the UK by Oneworld this September.



(left to right) James Honeybone, James Williams, Ian Williams, Mark Slade

St. Andrews University Fencing Club

FENCING AT ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

In a rain-swept, picturesque corner of Fife sits a renowned, ancient town. Known as the home of golf, St Andrews is also host to one of the world's oldest universities. Famous for educating politicians, scientists, and in particular, royalty; St Andrews has a long history.

It is perhaps no surprise then that the university has one of the strongest student fencing clubs in the country and with the recent new building of the University Sports Arena the club hopes to build upon this tradition. Fencing at St Andrews is one of twelve performance sports, and has a rigorous training schedule supported by expert coaches, strength and conditioning team, sports psychology, massage and physiotherapy. This extra support allows us to welcome complete beginners at the start of the year, and have them training with our advanced fencers by the end of their first semester.

Many go on to leadership roles with less than two years experience, such is their progress (facilitated by the club's involvement with the Saints Leadership Programme – "which helps in developing students and equipping them with transferable skills that will serve them beyond the world of academia". In spite of the considerable oversight provided as a result of our performance status, the club is run by a committee of elected students, highlighting how closely integrated the "club fencing" is with our performance programme.

Everyone trains together, meaning that even casual fencers are able to practice with, and learn from, top level athletes. We aim to provide a place for recreational fencers to enjoy the sport itself, but we firmly believe that all should have the opportunity to compete if they so wish, with experience no bar to entry.

To further this, we run four teams; men's and women's A and B. Both A teams are in the respective BUCS Northern Premier Leagues, with the B teams contesting the Trophy Cup. We encourage all to try out for the B teams, and offer the more demanding A teams for those who wish to devote significant time to the sport. The A teams have an intense, weekly match schedule, which frequently involves travel all over the country.

Our isolated place on the map comes with a price; we are very remote, making a team place a big commitment, but those who do choose to travel often find it to be an incredibly rewarding part of their university experience, with the journeys building a strong sense of camaraderie among team members. We are able to draw on an international pool of fencers, reflecting the student body of our university, which incorporates a great breadth of experience and fencing styles (recent team members have come from as far afield as China, Mexico, Germany, Finland, France, Italy and the USA). As a result, we are one of the most successful sports club at the university.

THE LINK WITH SALLE OSSIAN

But we can always aim higher. Recently, we have been taking advantage of the facilities at Salle Ossian in Perth, particularly for our pre-season training week and some of our BUCS match days. Salle Ossian is one of the UK's foremost sabre clubs, and the team has benefitted greatly from the additional training and conditioning sessions. We are hoping to take this outward focus further than before, with early plans in place to start regularly attending international competitions, and perhaps set up a second varsity match with another leading university (we already have one in place with Edinburgh).

Salle Ossian is also a charity; aiming to introduce fencing to the wider community. Our club aims to emulate their success in this, particularly after the St Andrews town club was forced to close. There are plans in the works for our members to get qualified in the newly developed Scottish Fencing Coaching Awards and lead classes at both school and adult level and hopefully build new community partnerships and reform the old St. Andrews town club. We have plenty of experience introducing undergraduates to a sport not known for its inclusivity, and we hope to be able to do the same within our local community.

RUNNING OUR OWN COMPETITIONS

We also would like to provide some competitive experiences to the wider community; the fencers across Scotland and the UK. Recently our club has branched out into running our own competitions. We had great success with a two day event. A "Mixed Team competition" was held on Saturday 23rd April and on the following day a "Combat Triathlon". Our Combat Triathlon Event was run in partnership with the Scottish Saltires Modern Pentathlon Club who are very committed to "increasing sporting opportunities for the wider community" and were helpful in setting the competition format and teaching everyone involved how to shoot with the laser pistols they generously provided for the event.



Winners at the Combat Triathlon

Many were attracted to the Mixed Team event by its unusual format – one male and one female fencer per team who competed for the (cash!) prize in each weapon category, and a Master at Arms award. During set up for the event a group of dancers were practising in another part of the hall to Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet. How fitting for our event!

The Combat Triathlon competition was more involved, and we were aided by a representative from the newly formed national governing body, Scottish Pentathlon, to help keep the event running smoothly. It began with a poule unique of one-hit Epee bouts,

followed by combined running and pistol shooting. Great fun was had by all, and we look forward to making these annual events. Who knows, maybe those in the Triathlon will soon be recreating the famous beach scene from Chariots of Fire...

IN CONCLUSION

Finally, it is worth pointing out that despite all of the intense training and competition; we are still students. We aim to have fun; and all of our members seem to appreciate and enjoy the regular social events – ever optimistic in spite of the weather. We hold barbecues at the start and end of

each year, host multiple club dinners and arrange the popular trip to the pub after training. We aim to provide a well-rounded experience to complement our students' academic life and hope that the next group of incoming new students will help us sustain and build upon what we have already achieved.

If you would like to know more, especially if you are considering attending St Andrews, please don't hesitate to contact us in advance. We are always happy to talk to incoming fencers, and provide some advice about what to expect at the university. Further information available on: <http://fencing.saints-sport.com/>

European Veterans Fencing team Championships, 2016

British Veterans Fencing welcomed the European Veterans Fencing Team Championships 2016, at Medway Park, Gillingham. Great Britain hosted the very first European Championships in Loughborough in 1991, organised by Henry de Silva, which attracted 85 entries. Since then European Veterans Fencing has grown and evolved into the very successful organisation that it is today with members from more than 30 European countries. It is an honour that the 25th European Championships are being held in Great Britain, the country where it all started.

*Gillian Aghajan
Chairman, British Veterans Fencing*

Hard-fought matches in a spirit of friendship and fair play have always been the hallmark of veteran fencing events. On behalf of British Fencing I would like to thank all those involved in staging this tournament, including sponsors, organisers, referees, armourers and the all-important volunteers. This event would not be possible without their dedication and commitment.

*Hilary Philbin
President, British Fencing*



Graham Paul with Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Tourism (photo Gillian Aghajan)



Richard Hicks – Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture, Medway Council, Councillor Howard Doe – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services, Medway Council, Tracey Crouch – Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, Gillian Aghajan – Chairman BVF and Graham Paul – Men's Foil (GV) (photo Gillian Aghajan)



Womens sabre team – Gold (Emma Potter, Emma Waller, Jane Hutchison, Michele Narey, Beth Davidson) – photo Gillian Aghajan



Action photograph taken by Andy J Davison.



Action photograph taken by Andy J Davison.

News from the Development Team

Following 6 months of successfully piloting fencing projects in Universities, British Fencing are now in a position to expand this work supporting a further 20 plus Universities to attract even more students in to our sport from September 2016.


The pilot projects have provided a sound platform for the British Fencing Development Team to identify and work with a number of creative experts with the ability to adapt and craft a new fencing experience that is attractive and appealing to the student market. This new experience will now be launched at over 20 universities across England many of which don't currently have fencing clubs.

At the same time the British Fencing Development Team have been leading on a national partnership with The Scout Association and regionally with London Youth. Here we have introduced young people to the sport by delivering fun and social experiences to over 1500 young people. A key feature of this new experience to help excite and keep young people coming back week after week is the finale 'Battle' – a fun, historically themed fight between different groups.

All of the projects continue to be supported through the British Fencing Growth Strategy and jointly funded by Sport England, British Fencing and England Fencing.

ADVANCED APPRENTISHIP IN SPORTING EXCELLENCE

Our new flyer on the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence is now available. Neil Brown, our Project Officer comments as follows:

"British Fencing is pleased to be able to continue with the AASE programme for the 6th year. In this time we have had over 60 fencers who have completed the programme and 14 are in the middle of their course now. Many of these fencers have progressed onto the British team at U17 or U20 or onto other funded programmes. After many years of hard work we are delighted that the AASE qualification has now been accepted onto the UCAS Tariff for University applications. We're now inviting applications for the September 2016 start, details on the British Fencing web site at .

CLUB MATTERS

Continuing our support for Club Matters we include a copy of their May tweet sheet, which include lots of really useful links.

More from the Development Team next time.



Club Matters May tweet sheet

To continue the fantastic engagement around Club Matters on social media, we have put together a tweet sheet to be used throughout May. Please continue tweeting us as you would like – but feel free to use the pre-written tweets provided too!

May 2016

Check out how to make sure your members, players & volunteers have an extraordinary #ClubExperience <http://ow.ly/4n7ni6>

Check out these quick reference guides from @ClubMatters on marketing, finances, people & management <http://ow.ly/ZEHgV>

Are you looking for guidance around applying for #funding? Check out the new interactive guide from @ClubMatters <http://ow.ly/YHfPP>

Healthy clubs often look for new ways to develop – why not use @ClubMatters #ClubImprovementTool for inspiration <http://ow.ly/YHulq>

Just started a sports club? We recommend kick starting with @ClubMatters to help your club go for gold! <http://ow.ly/YHu7r>

Looking to improve your club? Check out the tools on offer from #ClubMatters <http://ow.ly/4n7nIB>

Thanks for your continued support, if you have any questions please email clubmatters@sportengland.org.

[@ClubMatters](https://twitter.com/ClubMatters)



Technical/Analytical

Will Miller Ph.D.

THE MEDAL KISS OF DEATH: BEING A TOP SEED IN THE HEIDENHEIM POKAL WORLD CUP, THE PARIS MONAL, THE EUROPEAN OR AMERICAS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Readers will no doubt recall that Will was the winner of the 'Fencing Travel Story Competition' (*The Sword*, January 2016, p29) – Editor

Two years ago I analysed the winners of Men's Epee World Cups over the past decade. It turned out that only three fencers had won eight events in 150 events.¹ At the time, Max Heinzer had won seven but has since notched up another.

Eight seems a very small number. It made me wonder about the predictability of outcomes in epee competitions. What are the odds, for example, that the number one seed at a World Cup will win the competition?

This is further complicated by the randomisation of pairs for the top 16 in the World Cup events. i.e. 1 and 2 can swap places in the last 64 DE tree, and 3 and 4 etc. Even so, being a top seed is like a medal kiss of death.

Looking at eleven Heidenheim Pokal competition outcomes, a top four seed only has an 11% chance of achieving a medal. In these competitions, only one fencer who entered the Heidenheim Pokal as a first seed ever won: Gauthier Grumier in 2016. Kautian Faber came close in 2012, winning silver after having been seeded first.

I also examined the seeding by segments further down the competition list in case the consistency of outcome was more reliable there; it gets better. Yet there are also several curious patterns in the data.

As the aggregated results of eleven Heidenheim World Cups might be anomalous, I widened the analysis to include a comparison with eleven Paris Monals. Then, because the results of these two might be skewed by the World Cup formula, I examine seven European championships, and nine Americas championships.

Before we start, a note on the data. Entry rankings were especially provided by the FIE, and for this I especially thank Nathalie Rodriguez (CEO) and Marina Shturbabina (IT

Manager) who provided the relevant xml files in the middle of launching the FIE Rio Portal.

Links to all the competitions data is in the appendix.

THE WORLD CUP FORMULA

As we will see below, the two-phase World Cup formula does make a difference to outcomes.

If you don't know about the World Cup competition formula, it works like this: the 16 top FIE competition seeds go directly to the top of the 64 direct elimination (DE) tree without fencing any poules. Everyone else fences in poules usually two days before.

The top 16 winners of the poules event are placed in the 17-32 positions in the 64 DE tree. Then the remainder of the poule fencers are drawn into a direct elimination event and they fence down to 32. These last 32 fencers form the 33-64 portion of the 64 DE on the final day.

Consider the following Heidenheim Pokal chart. It shows the average variation between

start seed and end place across eight-seed segments in all eleven competitions.

Note that, on average, all segments seeded in the 64 tended to lose places in the final ranking. How is this possible? For example: while five fencers in a segment may drop a lot of places, three fencers may moderately improve their position, but the average movement will still be negative. The standard deviation line indicates the range of change within each segment. We can see that the variation within the segments is less amongst the top seeds and increases further down the seeding list.

This pattern is replicated in another World Cup event, the Paris Monal World Cup (now titled the "Challenge Réseau Ferré De France"). Here they are side-by-side:

The data averages are an extraordinarily close match: even the standard deviation pattern matches up. The low standard deviation for the top 16 seeds is partly because they cannot fall below 64th place – which would affect overall averages – whereas lower-ranked fencers could feasibly fall to the bottom of the competition.

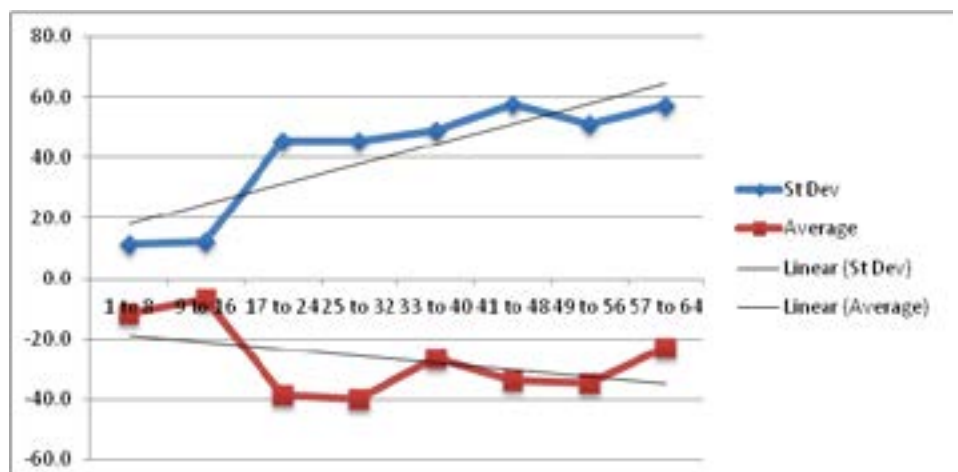


Chart 1: Heidenheim Pokal: average end-result movement by seeding segment

1. "ANALYSIS of 150 VICTORIES in MEN'S EPEE WORLD CUP EVENTS 2003–2014", available at <http://tinyurl.com/hgxj4cy>

AVERAGE OUTCOMES BY SEEDING TIER

To look further into the competition outcomes, the following table compares the percentage of fencers who:

1. equalled their seeding or bettered it in the final outcome;
2. placed within -10 or better of their seeding, or;
3. placed -20 of their seeding or better.

Note that of those seeded one to four in the Heidenheim Pokal and Paris Monal, only 7% and 14% respectively maintain or improve their seed rank. Bizarrely, in these World Cup events, being seeded in the 5-8 positions increases a top seed's consistency, at least relative to the adjacent segments.

The higher consistency of the top seeds in the Americas Championships reflects, in all likelihood, a more graduated field, especially at the top of the seeding.

The following four charts graph the data above. First, the Heidenheim Pokal:

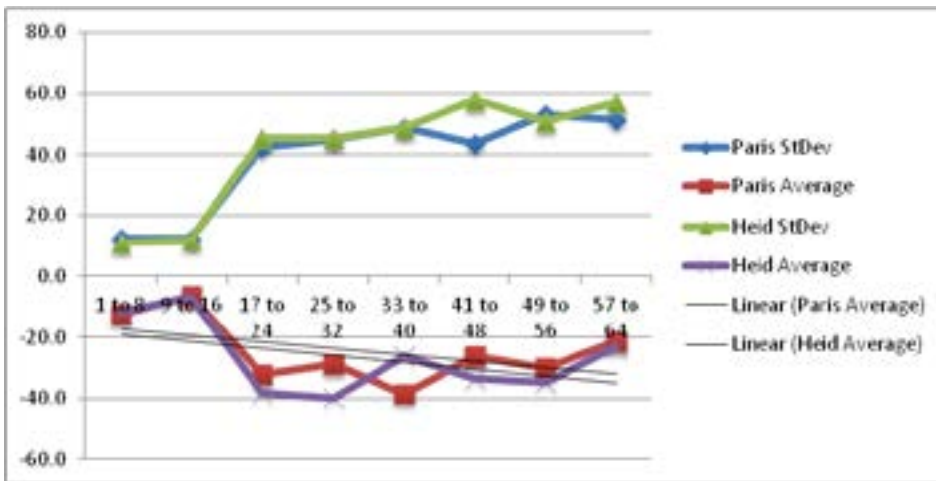


Chart 2: Heidenheim Pokal and Paris World Cup: average end-result movement by seeding segment

Compare the pattern of the above charts to the same analysis of the Europeans and the Americas championships below, neither of which use the World Cup formula. Note too that the average movement trend-lines of these two competitions are the opposite of the trend-lines for the two World Cup events.

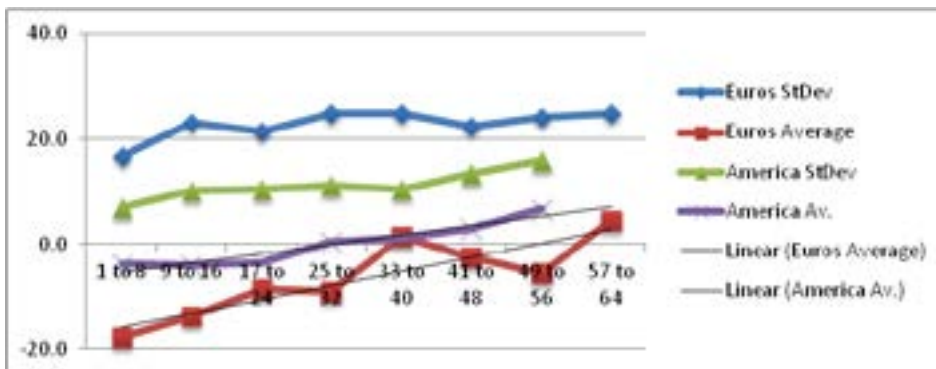


Chart 3: European and Americas' Championships: average end-result movement by seeding segment (the lack of 57-64 places in the America's is due to the historically smaller competitions.)

However, the far right of these two competitions is so high most likely because they both have smaller fields than the World Cup events – and so the lower ranked seeds cannot fall too far.

Even so, the trendlines for the World Cup and non-World Cup formula events go in different directions. The numbers, too, suggest that, overall, fencers at the non-World Cup events have outcomes more consistent with their initial seedings.

CORRELATION OF SEEDING AND OUTCOMES

To see if the trends above are reliable, I examined the correlations of seedings and outcomes.

A correlation is simply a measure of the match in pattern – in this case the initial seeding versus the final outcome. When a correlation is 1, it is a perfect match. Zero means no matching pattern of data, and 0.5 is mildly positive. Correlations on smaller sets of a data – such as for the last 16 places below – are less reliable.

Table 1: Correlations averaged across all four competitions.

Seeding	Europeans	Americans	Heidenheim	Paris
T128	0.64	0.68	0.55	0.55
T16	0.11	0.55	0.19	0.16
T33 to T128	0.49	-	0.36	0.31

Shown here are the aggregated, averaged patterns of seeds-versus-outcomes. In both regional championships, the correlations of the T128 seedings and the outcomes is fairly positive, but less so in the World Cup Events. The similarity of World Cup correlations is striking.

The Americas Championships' data is problematic as several of the earlier competitions had insufficient entrants for the calculations. Even so, the match in correlations on the T128 between the two different types of competition suggests there may well be an impact from the World Cup formula.

The trend-lines are particularly interesting. The two World Cup events have similar trend-lines; in the main because of the World Cup formula, where the top 16 necessarily will place in the 64. Moreover, they are likely to win their first DE then, if they lose the next, place in the 17-32 range – which helps account for the nearly 80% of the 1-4 seeds who lost no less than 20 places.

Now for the Zonal Championships. The European Championships data, while having many top fencers similar to the two World Cup events, show even trend-lines that might be expected when all fencers must face poules. The Americas Championships, by contrast reflects an especially uneven field, where top fencers more easily dominate lower seeds.

Interestingly, in all of the competitions there is a dip in performance in the 9 to 16 seed outcomes and a jump in the 17-40 range. This likely reflects the second DE fight, where the 9 to 16 seeds potentially meet seeds in the 17-24 range – and appear, on average, to lose.

If the top 16 seeds in the World Cup events faced poules, how many would remain in the 16 for the DE? A look at the fate of the top 16 seeds in the poules at the Europeans is suggestive.

The European Championships poule results above suggests that many fencers in the top 16 of World Cup events would not occupy that place had they faced DE seeding by poules – here 57%. (The Americas, as noted above, has a more graduated field and this shows in the higher consistency of the outcomes for top seeds.)

Even so, no matter the type of competition formula the data suggests that, to a greater-or-lesser extent, an initial seeding in the top 16 is a medal kiss of death.

Table 2: Athletes' Consistency – average % of fencers maintaining their seed position by seeding tiers.

Seeding	Europeans			Americas			Heidenheim			Paris		
	Same or better	-10+	-20+	Same or better	-10+	-20+	Same or better	-10+	-20+	Same or better	-10+	-20+
1 to 4	18%	46%	61%	36%	83%	97%	7%	50%	80%	14%	55%	75%
5 to 8	11%	39%	50%	50%	86%	97%	23%	48%	70%	25%	52%	64%
9 to 16	14%	25%	32%	25%	44%	46%	19%	35%	35%	16%	38%	38%
17 to 24	25%	29%	36%	19%	36%	47%	15%	36%	38%	22%	34%	39%
25 to 32	45%	55%	71%	39%	68%	82%	22%	34%	38%	31%	42%	51%
33 to 40	45%	59%	77%	40%	71%	79%	23%	27%	38%	34%	40%	51%
41 to 48	57%	70%	77%	42%	65%	76%	36%	48%	58%	24%	38%	47%
49 to 56	46%	63%	80%	-	-	-	33%	38%	45%	31%	42%	49%
57 to 64	43%	54%	66%	-	-	-	32%	34%	43%	36%	48%	52%

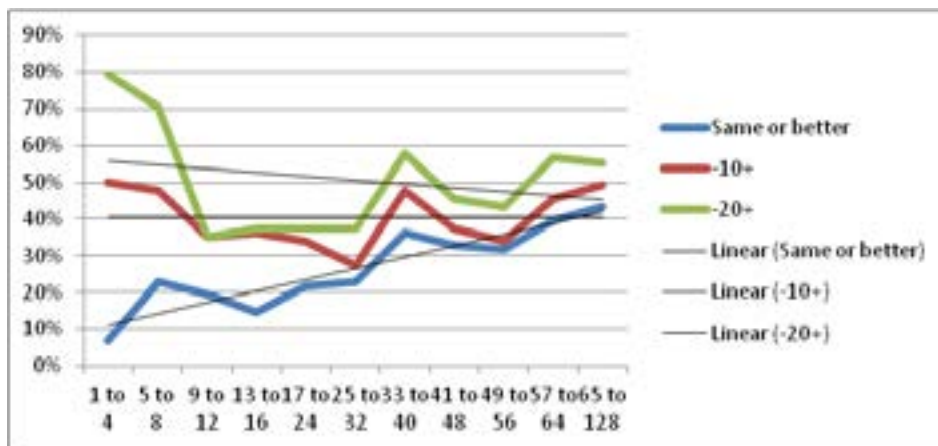


Chart 4: Heidenheim Pokal: % of fencers who maintained their seeding rank, by seeding segment

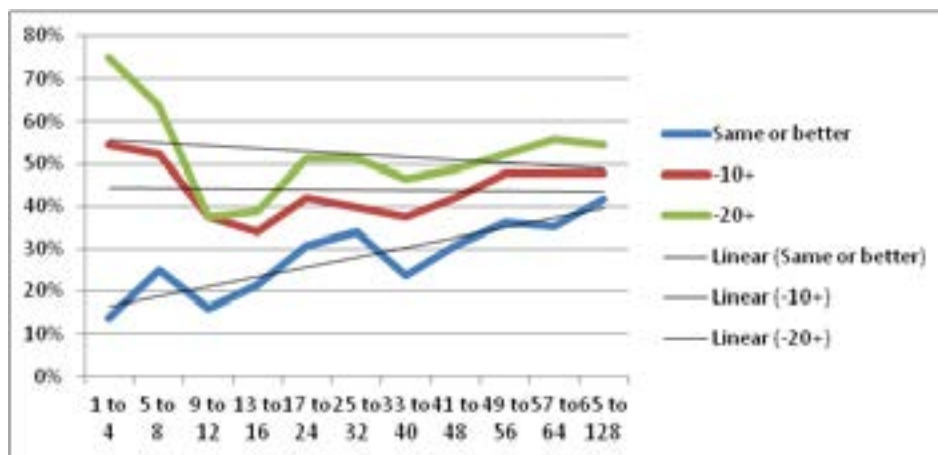


Chart 5: Paris Monal: % of fencers who maintained their seeding rank, by seeding segment

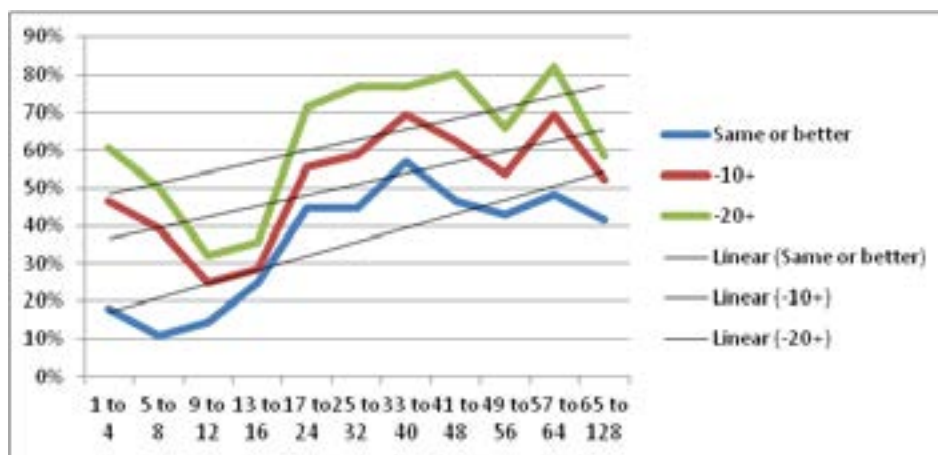


Chart 6: European Championships: % of fencers who maintained their seeding rank, by seeding segment

FROM WHICH SEED SEGMENTS DID THE TOP 32 RESULTS COME FROM?

We know that the top seeds, on average, don't make the medal table at these two World Cups, or at the Europeans. So, where do the winners come from?

The tables below show the top 32 results in ranking tiers, giving the percentage sourced from each initial seeding tier. For example: for the quarter finalist losers placed 5-8, a percentage of these initially may have been originally seeded in the 1-4, a further percentage in the 5-8, others in the 9-16 and so on. The point of interest is where most were initially seeded – these are highlighted below.

The unevenness of the Americas Championships field is telling here with 50% of the T4 placeholders being originally seeded 1 to 4.

CONCLUSIONS

The similarities in patterns noted in the two World Cups and the Europeans may be due to factors other than the World Cup formula itself. Yet the latter has an undeniable impact on average outcomes. What the European Championships and the two World Cup events have in common is a less-graduated field, i.e. there are far less elite fencers at the Americas Championships. A more closely matched field likely drives the uncertainty in the outcomes of the top seeds.

The World Cup events showed slightly more consistency in the outcomes of top-16 seeds than the non-World Cup events examined; the World Cup formula does protect top seeds from losing places. On top of this, close to 70% of the top eight will only fall 20 places at most (see charts 4 and 5), whereas in the Europeans the figure is close to 55% (chart 6). Even so, the "Same or better" consistency of the top 16 is very low in all three of these competitions – below 20%.

What is quite pronounced in the World Cup events (and only slightly less so in

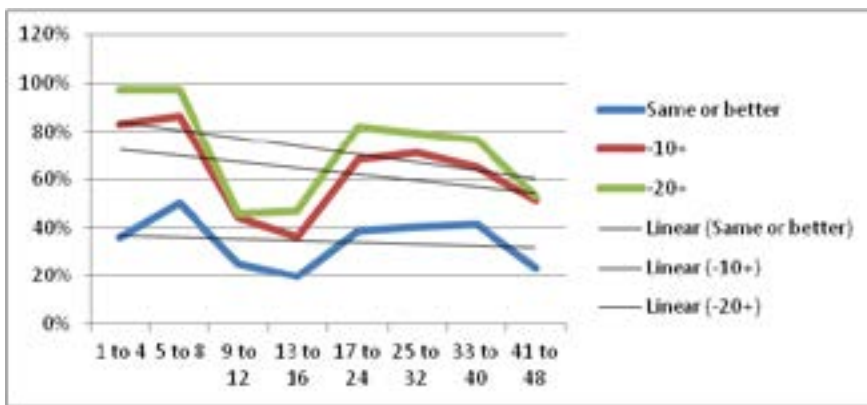


Chart 7: Americas Championships: % of fencers who maintained their seeding rank, by seeding segment

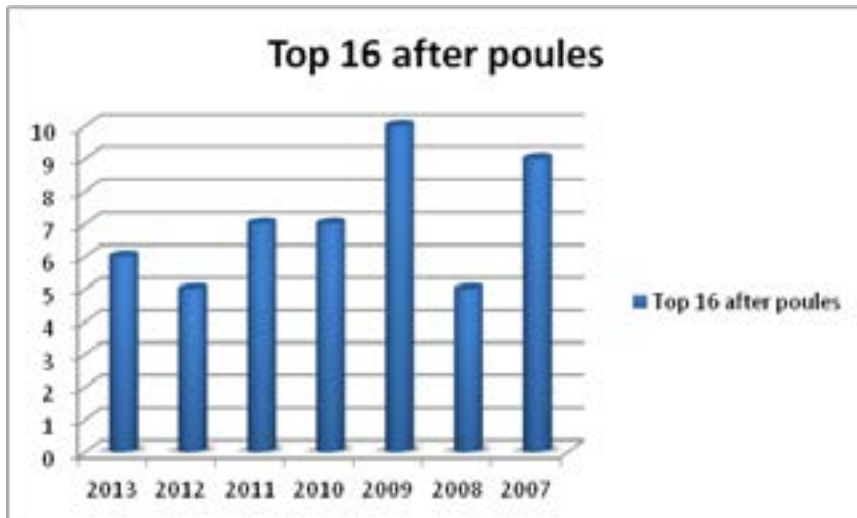


Chart 12: European Championships: how many top 16 seeds remained in the 16 after the poules.

the Europeans) is the better-than-trend performance in the 17 to 40 seeds. This is obvious in the high percentages in the "Seed 17- 32" column of Tables 3, 4 and 5 above. A high proportion of these seeds end up in the final 16 results.

Anecdotally, it is sometimes heard at competitions that top 16 seeds do not feel as "on fire" as their opponents who have fought in the poules. Yet, one would expect a 48 hour gap in the World Cup events to discount this.

Yet, it may be that the poules function as a superior training day that hones the lower-ranked fencers; particularly those fencers ranked 17-40 who are in top condition and can benefit from the additional workload of the poules.

Also, there is status in being given a bye: a public recognition of a fencer's prowess. This may lead to over-confidence in the top 16 seeds that impacts on performance. An altogether different analysis, however, would be required to validate this proposition.

Table 3: Start Seed Positions for Average Ranking of T4 across four competitions.

Fencers Placed 1-4 started in what Seed Tier?						
T4 Result	Seed 1-4	Seed 4-8	Seed 9-16	Seed 17-32	Seed 33-64	Seed 65-128
Paris T4	18%	14%	23%	20%	25%	0%
Heidenheim T4	11%	23%	16%	30%	20%	0%
Europeans T4	21%	11%	18%	25%	25%	0%
Americas T4	50%	19%	19%	11%	0%	0%

Table 4: Start Seed Positions for Average Ranking of T8 across four competitions.

Fencers Placed 5-8 started in what Seed Tier?						
T8 Result	Seed 1-4	Seed 5-8	Seed 9-16	Seed 17-32	Seed 33-64	Seed 65-128
Paris T8	11%	16%	20%	16%	36%	0%
Heidenheim T8	9%	18%	18%	25%	30%	0%
Europeans T8	7%	14%	14%	29%	32%	4%
Americas T8	28%	25%	22%	25%	0%	0%

Table 5: Start Seed Positions for Average Ranking of T16 across four competitions.

Fencers Placed 9-16 started in what Seed tier?						
T16 Result	Seed 1-4	Seed 5-8	Seed 9-16	Seed 17-32	Seed 33-64	Seed 65-128
Paris T16	10%	13%	20%	28%	28%	0%
Heidenheim T16	14%	7%	18%	33%	28%	0%
Europeans T16	13%	14%	16%	23%	27%	7%
Americas T16	6%	13%	44%	26%	11%	0%

Table 6: Start Seed Positions for Average Ranking of T32 across four competitions.

Fencers Placed 17-32 started in what Seed tier?						
T32 Result	Seed 1-4	Seed 5-8	Seed 9-16	Seed 17-32	Seed 33-64	Seed 65-128
Paris T32	7%	4%	11%	18%	26%	28%
Heidenheim T32	7%	3%	6%	15%	27%	33%
Europeans T32	8%	4%	16%	24%	38%	10%
Americas T32	1%	5%	19%	47%	28%	0%

POSTSCRIPT – AVERAGE AGE OF FENCERS BY FINAL RANKING TIER

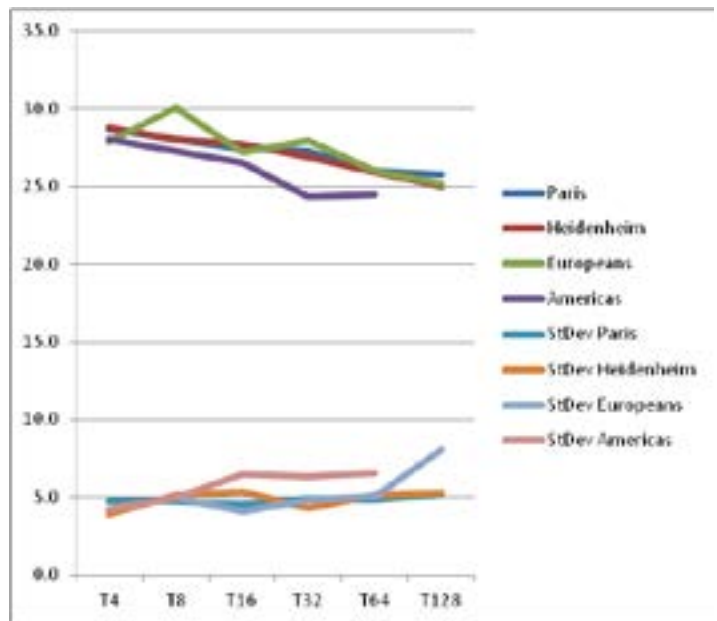


Chart 13: Average age by result tier for each competition, and the standard deviation of age for each

Table 8: Average age by result tier for each competition, and the standard deviation of age for each.

Age by Result Tier	T4	T8	T16	T32	T64	T128
Paris	28.7	28.0	27.4	27.3	26.0	25.8
StDev Paris	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.9	4.8	5.3
Heidenheim	28.8	28.1	27.8	26.9	25.9	25.0
StDev Heidenheim	3.9	5.1	5.3	4.3	5.1	5.3
Europeans	27.9	30.1	27.2	28.0	26.0	25.2
StDev Europeans	4.2	5.0	4.1	4.8	5.1	8.1
Americas	28.0	27.3	26.5	24.3	24.5	
StDev Americas	4.2	5.0	6.5	6.3	6.6	

APPENDIX – NOTES ON THE DATA

List of Competitions Examined

The data was provided by Nathalie Rodriguez (CEO) and Marina Shturbabina (IT Manager) at the FIE. Feel free to download the spreadsheets I have created. Please do not manipulate them to discover different information in the data (or check my results!).

1. Heidenheim Pokal World Cup events: 2016, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005. (Note the data for 2015 did not have start seeding data and could not be included in this instance.)

Heidenheim Pokal spreadsheet download link: <http://tinyurl.com/juq4pbq>

2. Paris Monal World Cup events: 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005.

Paris Monal spreadsheet download link: <http://tinyurl.com/zz5cb76>

3. European Championships events: 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007.

Europeans spreadsheet download link: <http://tinyurl.com/javdaus>

4. Americas Championships events: 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007.

Americas spreadsheet download link: <http://tinyurl.com/hk532ge>

Comments on Method

The analyses of data for respective competitions have been aggregated across all years to help smooth out any anomalies. For example, while not an “anomaly”, Jon Willis’s Heidenheim Pokal victory in 2007 was certainly trend breaking –being FIE-ranked 46 at the time. The nearest to that was Stefano Carozzo in 2011, after winning with an FIE ranking of 37.

The analyses generally focus on the top 64, as those fencers will have reasonably reliable FIE rankings, be in good training shape and know each other’s fencing well. This helps minimise some degree of the pure chance that can affect fencing outcomes (and which makes it such an interesting sport!).

Medical/Science

Dr Jorge Esteves, Dr Oliver Thomson,
Nuno Koch Esteves

PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS TO RETURN TO COMPETITION AFTER INJURY IN FENCING

Fencing injuries share commonalities with other combat sports and sports with rapid change of direction activity. They include abrasion, contusion and penetration injuries and musculoskeletal problems such as sprains, strains and overuse injuries (Harmer, 2011). Despite the growing popularity of fencing, research on the epidemiology (prevalence and causes) of fencing specific injuries is still scarce. Available research evidence demonstrates that 60% of all injuries are acute and 40% overuse or chronic (Moyer & Konin, 1992; Carter et al., 1993; Jäger, 2003). The majority of fencing injuries are similar to sports such as football and basketball, particularly involving sprains and strains in the lower extremities; however, their prevalence is significantly lower than for those sports (Harmer, 2011).

The physical factors associated with sports injuries are relatively well-researched. However, the psychological impact of an injury on the athlete is equally important and deserves attention. Traditionally, it was assumed that physical and psychological recovery occurred at the same time; however, researchers and clinicians have recently recognised that physical and psychological readiness to return to sport following injury do not always coincide (Forsdyke et al., 2016). Apart from pain, sports injuries are associated with negative psychological responses such as tension, low self-esteem and emotions such as depression and anxiety (Arden et al., 2013). Negative emotions are a constituent of the pain experience, so a close relationship between brain processes related to pain and emotions is expected. Arguably, pain is an emotion which requires the presence of a bodily sensation with qualities like those reported in bodily tissue-damaging conditions (Price, 1999). Pain and emotion share common adaptive responses to survival-relevant environmental challenges to ensure survival. Pain's main functional significance is to alert the organism that its body integrity is threatened, to attend to the source of pain and possibly avoid it. Emotion's functional significance lies in the detection of motivationally relevant sensations that may trigger avoidance or approach behaviour (Wieser & Pauli, 2016).

An estimated 40% of all musculoskeletal related fencing injuries are chronic or overuse (Moyer & Konin, 1992; Carter et al., 1993; Jäger, 2003). In the field of chronic pain, there is evidence that clinical conditions such as chronic low back pain are associated with anxiety, fear-avoidance, depression and altered emotional processing (e.g., Pincus et al., 2002; Esteves et al., 2013). Considering the role of psychological and emotional factors play in musculoskeletal problems, it is critical that athletes, clinicians, coaches and parents understand the role that these may play in a successful return to sport after injury. Fear of movement and anxiety are particularly important factors that need attention. Although the healing of for example a hamstring injury may have been successfully achieved, fear of re-injury may have a negative impact on the athlete's full recovery and successful return to competition. Imagine for example a sabreur who on return to competition following a hamstring strain is constantly 'hit' on preparation and finds it hard to adjust their 'fencing distance' to pre-injury levels. The underlying problem may not necessarily be a technical or tactical one, but instead an unconscious fear of re-injury who prevents them from executing an explosive lunge. Without an effective intervention to address the problem, the athlete is likely to become anxious, de-motivated and potentially depressed, all contributing to poor performance and sense of unfulfilment. In fact, Arden and colleagues (2013) have found that positive psychological responses such as low fear, motivation and confidence are associated with a higher returning to sport after injury.

Fear is a prominent emotional response at the time of transition back to sport and attention to this emotion should therefore be given. Building the athlete's confidence in the injury body part through the use of goal setting strategies regarding returning to sport are likely to positively assist that transition (Arden et al., 2013). Athletes who successfully returned to sport after injury, report an associated dissipation of this fear upon testing the injury body region by returning to play (Johnston & Carroll, 1997). Based on findings from available research

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and on the biopsychosocial model of care (body and mind), Goom (2012) proposed a number of strategies which athletes can follow and that we endorse in the context of fencing:

1. Improve your understanding of your injury and its healing process;
2. See exercise as a critical part of the healing process – low intensity exercise and progressive loading of the injured body part stimulates healing;
3. Manage fear of re-injury – two key areas are understanding your injury and pacing yourself;
4. Place yourself in control – find strategies that assist recovery including self-massage, self-taping, home and gym exercises all combined with self-pacing;
5. Set goals – SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed) enable you to build your confidence, help with motivation and give you a way of measuring your progress;
6. Seek support from fellow athletes – this helps with relatedness and feeling connected with other athletes in a similar situation;
7. Envisage success – use positive mental imagery and imagine yourself fencing and competing and how much you will enjoy it;
8. Have a plan to manage setbacks – it is critical that you understand that occasional injury setbacks may occur, so have a number of strategies to manage them, e.g., ice packs, supportive tape or a foam roller;
9. Manage your mental health – find ways to assess and manage your stress, anxiety and mood. These may include the

use of questionnaires such as the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and strategies such as mindfulness meditation. Seek help from your GP, family and friends;

10. Lean towards the positive – think positively about your return to play.

Injured athletes are emotionally vulnerable, and their emotional integrity may be questionable during rehabilitation. An athlete's psychological readiness to return to sport is a consequence of fear, anxiety, confidence in performing well and remaining uninjured. It is therefore critical that injured athletes are physically, psychologically, socially, tactically, and technically ready to return to play (Forsdyke et al., 2016). This is particularly important in a sport such as fencing in which emotional processing and regulation play a key role in the outcome of a competition.

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Round Up



BRITISH FENCING AWARD WINNERS



Andrey Klyushin

Congratulations to the following winners at the inaugural British Fencing Awards:

- Athlete of the Year – James Davis
- Young Athlete of the Year – William Deary
- Fencing Personality of the Year – James Honeybone
- Region of the Year – North East
- Innovation Award – Keith Cook/Fencing Fun
- Performance Coach of the Year – Andrey Klyushin
- Development Coach of the Year – Anthony Conyard
- Official of the Year – Lorraine Rose
- Club of the Year – Shakespeare's Swords
- Unsung Hero – Pat Aiyenuro
- Lifetime Achievement Award – Bert Bracewell



Anthony Conyard with 'Tony's Tigers'



Lorraine Rose



James Davis



James Honeybone



Pat Aiyenuro



William Deary



Keith Cook



Bert Bracewell

Round Up (continued)

Waterloo Station #readytoduel Pop-Up

Thousands See Fencing at Waterloo Station

On, Thursday, 9 June, British Fencing teamed up with Official Partner, Wilkinson Sword, to provide passers by a hands-on experience in fencing at Waterloo Station.


The second event of its kind, courtesy of Network Rail, saw thousands of people stop to watch fencing at a specially designed "pop-up" stand. Those interested were able to try the sport in different forms, from foam sword fencing, to playing a fencing-based reaction game and even getting a lesson from the volunteer coaches on hand.

Fencers, coaches and volunteers from London and neighbouring counties gave up their time to provide demonstrations of all three weapons and talk enthusiastically about the sport.

Raising the profile of the sport is a crucial part of the sponsorship package with Wilkinson Sword. Speaking about the event, their Marketing Manager, Lucy Oxley said; "... high footfall = more people seeing this beautiful sport up close. Our aim to involve the public through both traditional and new methods could not have worked better. I particularly liked the green screen photo booth which gave the public a chance to fence a dragon, a knight or even James-Andrew Davis."

British Fencing's Development Director, Gabby Williams, added; "Every member of staff got involved in a first class day of activity. This kind of access to people who don't usual get to see fencing is invaluable."

Katie Dolan, British Fencing's Event Manager, concluded; "A lot of work went into making this event happened and it has paid off. My thanks goes to all of the support that I received from my colleagues and all of the hard-working volunteers who not only gave up their time but also made the whole event a great deal of fun."

To see highlights of the day please visit .

KB – 13th June 2016

Record Numbers on the Piste as Lewes Fencing Club Celebrates its 5th Birthday



There is much to celebrate at Lewes Fencing Club this month as the community-run sports Club reaches its 5th birthday. The Club, which was founded in 2011 by four local volunteers, has seen its membership grow year on year and is now welcoming over 40 fencers to its regular Sunday morning session at Lewes Leisure Centre. It may now be the biggest fencing club in the South East.



Lewes Fencing Club celebrate their 5th birthday with Head Coach, Gerad Harmer.

The Club was established to make fencing affordable and accessible to local people and attracts men, women and children from Lewes as well as Brighton, Hastings, Haywards Heath Worthing, Newhaven and Uckfield.

The Club benefited from a Sports England 'start up' grant and this investment has enabled it to build up a stock of high quality equipment and specialist clothing so that beginners can try the sport first before buying their own kit.

Gordon Mankelov chairs the club and explained the approach "We're delighted with the success we've had so far. We've been able to attract people who have never fenced before, as well as those with plenty of experience. I think we appeal because our members are enthusiastic and friendly and are willing to help and share their knowledge. We look forward to seeing the Club grow even more over the next five years."

The Club has an experienced coaching team, led by British Academy of Fencing Level 3 Head Coach Gerad Harmer. As well as offering beginners' courses and advanced training, the Club also supports and runs competitions and social events.

Anyone wanting to find out more about Lewes Fencing Club should visit the website at www.lewesfencingclub.org.uk

Monday 23rd May 2016

The Club offers classes, courses and one-to-one tuition every Sunday at Lewes Leisure Centre in Mountfield Road, Lewes from 10am – 12 noon. It also runs a 'piste only fight night' on Wednesdays from 6.30pm – 8pm at Southover School gym.



Lewes Fencing Club members in action

Round Up (continued)

We Are The Secret Fencing Parents ...

Becoming Fencing Dad

Fencing Child took up the sport at the age of 9 when, with all the swimming badges said Child was interested in achieved, we found that there was a club just round the corner from where we live. While a seemingly obscure pursuit, it chimed with Fencing Child's enjoyment of swashbuckling films and toy swords.

Fencing Child took to it well and it wasn't long before the coach was thrusting an LPJS leaflet under our noses and suggesting that it was time to start entering tournaments. It took us a while to bite as (ironically given what was to come) we couldn't envisage spending our weekends travelling to distant parts of the country for fencing competitions. Then there was one quite locally and we went along, not at all knowing what to expect. We entered a hall where ferociously serious-looking warm-up exercises were being undertaken by competitors of Fencing Child's age.

Fencing Child's first opponent was someone we later discovered to be a leading light nationally. Fencing Child attacked intrepidly and avoided a whitewash but the opponent's light flashed with rapid inevitability five times and we stood there wondering if all the entrants were like this and what on earth had we let Fencing Child in for. It turned out they were not, and the tournament ended in a medal – and of course led on to travelling over an increasing and in the end almost limitless radius.

The features of tournaments took shape. The barked commands of some coaches, uncompromising in their standards and their mission to win, and their shouts either of triumph at a hit or of exasperation at their charges or the referees. The tears of the defeated, Fencing Child included, that at times make you pause and wonder whether in the name of enjoyment and sport you are participating in some form of borderline cruelty to ones so young.

One particular feature that has struck me is the demarcation between fencers who enter only competitions in their own backyard and the travelling circus which rolls into every town and, London events excepted, blitzkriegs the locals. Fencing Child and fellow travellers

are like pros on the tennis circuit, staging familiar contests in sports hall after sports hall. At one LPJS I was asked by a clearly local parent, 'Where are these from?' as she watched a fight involving Fencing Child and a regular opponent. I named the two different and equally distant parts of the U.K. and she said in surprise, 'So you travel around the country to these events?' 'Oh yes,' I replied, 'these two are part of the tour.'

A consequence is that you develop an arcane expert knowledge about fencers of your child's age, gender and weapon. Quite early in all this I correctly predicted at the start of the day the not-obvious winner of a tournament and found myself contemplating running a betting stall near the refreshments table or devising some kind of ranking system that took into account who was at different LPJS events and incorporated the BYC and EYC. I then found out that such a ranking system did exist, at least in England. Its webpage immediately joined LPJS, Sport 80 and the Fencing Forum on the Favourites list – being a Fencing Parent can be a dangerously addictive pastime. In studying the rankings I saw the NIF-heavy significance of some tournaments missed because of pre-booked holidays and event tickets and realized that henceforth such things must fit around competitions and not vice-versa.

Every so often the remarks of non-fencing people (i.e. virtually the whole population) remind you that you are in a very small bubble and that fencing hardly ever registers in everyday life – the work colleagues who variously expressed incredulity that anyone could work as a fencing coach (which Fencing Child might like to do) or commented, 'Don't they look young?' when looking at a photo of a medal ceremony, making me see how very young they did look and getting back into proportion rivalries I had built into Graf/Navratilova or Federer/Nadal dimensions; the visitor to Fencing Child's grandparents' house who saw a similar, proudly-displayed picture and said in wonderment, 'Fencing- that's posh.'

But as long as Fencing Child still feels the fun of brandishing a sword and finds satisfaction in trying to get better at it, you'll see me at the end of the piste, flinching with every move Fencing Child makes in trying to break through the opponent's defences or ward off their attacks, staring at the box willing the right light to come up and holding my breath as the referee adjudicates when two appear. 'En garde, are you ready...?' Am I ever!

Fencing Mum's Guide to Tournaments

Ok, so you may know your foil from your fencing socks (never, ever by the way put the latter, if coloured, in with the rest of the kit when you wash it, as no amount of colour-restore will resolve the problem and, as you may by now know, fencing kit is not cheap) but do you know the things that really matter? Listen and learn from one who has found out the hard way.

At your first tournament, nothing marks out a rookie fencing parent more quickly than one who has turned up with insufficient layers of clothing. The other parents, who appear to have dressed for a quick trek across the frozen tundra while dressed as a convention of Innuits, know what they are doing. Learn from their experience. Sports halls, especially first thing in the morning, are very cold places to hang around and, unless you are very fortunate, nobody will be turning the heating on any time soon. The kids are ok – they are bounding about getting hot but you, on the other hand, will find that your only source of warmth is a polystyrene cup of some tepid liquid of indeterminate colour, and that's if you're lucky-Starbucks it aint! If you're not lucky, you may find that liquid refreshments pitch up some way into the tournament or even not at all, as happened to us on one occasion.

For all of the above reasons, your first essential parental purchase is a large flask and a stiff drink. Leave the stiff drink at home for your return, fill up the flask with hot drink of your choice and give yourself a pat on the back. Whatever happens over the course of the tournament, you will deal with it all so much better with the comfort of a strong tea or coffee to get you through. One last tip, should you decide to disregard the above advice and rely upon the kindness of caterers to provide you with tea or coffee, collect up your change before you go. You will not be thanked for proffering a ten or twenty pound note in exchange for a coffee. And don't expect your name written on the cup.

Take food. Lots of it. You may hit the jackpot and find refreshments on sale that you would be happy to eat at home. Treasure the experience. More usually you will find unexotic, honest fare. The good old cheese toastie, tuna mayo sandwiches and nearly always enough tempting cupcakes, chocolate cake and confectionery to sink a fencing salle.

Needless to say, the younger children love this and rush around sugared up to the eyeballs with no discernible ill effects. You, on the other hand, will feel truly terrible the next day if you over-indulge, especially if you follow it up with that earlier-mentioned stiff drink at home afterwards.

On arrival, you may find yourself in a scenario which would cause palpitations for anyone who deals in the dreaded Health and Safety. There is no point in even trying to count the number of trip hazards represented by wires, metal boxes, carelessly positioned fencing bags and temporarily discarded equipment at the ends of the piste. Small children dressed as a cross between stormtroopers, dentists and beekeepers mill around with pointy metal things or sprawl exhausted on the floor stabbing at ipads or phones. Adults generally scatter tensely round the edges of the hall, except for two or three who are in the middle, signalling like demented traffic police in the Champs Elysees (those are the refs - more on them later). Add to this the clash of metal, beep of the boxes and occasional testosterone-fuelled shouts and maybe you will want to sink a few preventative paracetamol along with your coffee.

After the shouting, the running about, disputes with the ref and occasional temper tantrums - I'm talking about the parents here, believe it or not - you may want a nice sit down. Well, tough! You aren't going to get one buddy; not unless you've brought your own chair (second essential parental purchase, if you don't count the paracetamol) because this is a TOURNAMENT, not a nice day out. Get with the programme. Count yourself lucky if there are two or three hard wooden benches barely higher than a gnat's kneecap for the parents to scarp over for however many hours they are there. However big the venue, the

amount of seating available is in roughly inverse proportion to the number of parents present. The off-piste tussles over seating are every bit as fiercely contested as anything taking place on piste, but without medals for the winners and no protective clothing other than the multiple layers already mentioned. Sharpen those elbows and take a leaf out of the German tourists' book on poolside sun-loungers unless you wish to remain vertical all day! If you do splash out on a mobile, canvas seating - device, otherwise known as a deckchair, you should do so in the knowledge that docking spaces for them round the hall are few and far between (outlawed altogether in some venues) and things can get a bit territorial - like garden nesting sites in spring time. Just saying.

Back to the earlier mentioned refs; they come in all shapes and sizes and have an interesting line in hand gestures, most of which will be totally incomprehensible to you at the start. There are the professional, battle-hardened, Genghis Khan-type refs who have seen it all before, many times. You may not agree with their decisions but you will be left in no doubt as to what they are. On occasions there are the hapless parent referees who, in a moment of inexplicable madness, have agreed to step into the breach following a no-show from another ref. They will not make the same mistake twice when they rapidly learn that refereeing is a difficult and largely thankless task involving a high degree of complexity mixed with a sprinkling of parents and coaches who think they could do the job better (some of them may even let the ref know this publicly) but have more sense than to volunteer. Keep refereeing as a spectator sport; this is not a job for sissies! If any blood is to be spilled on piste, it will be that of the referee. My advice is, don't even think about going there.

Up next, the loos. A seldom mentioned but indispensable part of the whole experience for fencers and parents alike. Some venues are awash with lovely clean ones while others bear a distinct resemblance to the loo in 'Trainspotting.' You never know what you will get, so if you are of a faint disposition, you would be well-advised to pack some anti-bacterial hand gel, and get some jabs at the GP's to ward off anything nasty that may be lurking there. Take your own loo roll as the chances of finding one in some venues are significantly less likely than finding life on Mars. You have been warned.

The parents. There is so much to say here but I shall stick to the salient points. You are either a coach or a parent (or somebody who has taken leave of their senses since, surely, nobody else would voluntarily attend a tournament) but what you need to understand here is that although you may be a fully paid-up member of the parent club, this in no way bestows upon you the title of fencing parent. Not until you have spent hours contorting your limbs upon the previously mentioned benches, kitted your child up before having to do it all over again, twenty seconds before child's first fight because you forgot about the body wire, spent so many hours with your face stretched into what you hope is an encouraging and reassuring expression that it aches and your child asks if you are feeling well, congratulated, through clenched teeth, a fencer who has just beaten your own child, exchanged baffling small talk about right of way (something you previously thought was about footpaths) with more knowledgeable parents while pretending to understand what they say - well then, and only then, my friend, have you earned it and you can begin to think of yourself as a fencing parent.

Secret Fencing Mum at the BYC

The B.Y.C. (British Youth Championship for the uninitiated) deserves a whole article to itself. It is of course a tournament but that simple description fails to do it adequate justice and is much like saying a Rolls Royce is a car or Las Vegas has quite a lot of slot machines. If you are a recent fencing parent, B.Y.C. will, for a short time annually, become the three most important letters of the alphabet imprinted on your eyeballs at any club your fencing child attends. There will be no escape as coaches sidle up to you a la Flash Harry seeking to fence (ha! ha!) certain dubiously acquired goods. Pen in hand, they ask casually if you have considered entering the Qualifiers. You say quite reasonably that

you will think about it and get back to them; they look like a reproachful Labrador deprived of a biscuit and talk mournfully of a lack of support from club members. Before you know it, your child's name is on the list. Text book example of 'attack, parry, riposte' in action. More old-school coaches will have no such truck with these softly, softly approaches and instead adopt a more rigorous approach where any child (including siblings if they don't move fast enough) will find itself a conscript before they have chance to so much as wheel their fencing bag over the toes of the assembled parents on club night. No matter if it will be Granny's birthday party on that date, a school trip, a revision weekend or moving house. Get things in proportion, this is fencing. Cancel the open-heart surgery, tell Granny she must postpone her birthday to a more sensible date - how dare she be so inconsiderate? Nothing short of death will get you out of this one. And even then there are some coaches

who would deem a one-to-one with the Grim Reaper to be letting the side down. Badly.

If you are a battle-hardened fencing parent then those three letters will represent hope, fear, redoubled efforts and the prospect of an adrenaline-fuelled day 'Up North'. First, your child will need to attend the qualifiers at which (the clue is in the name) you qualify for the B.Y.C. if in the top four. Straightforward, you might think, and so it is in certain regions. In other regions, however, your child will need to be a veritable D'Artagnan (or D'Artagnanne!) and fight through numerous bouts while you chew your fingernails to the quick and furtively locate the Kleenex and chocolate required to restore post-defeat equilibrium - they'll be at the bottom of the fencing bag, by the way, buried under spare kit and a snarl of body wires that your child has carelessly shoved in there in direct contravention of your earlier orders. You may

Round Up (continued)

find **you** are in much greater need of these supplies than your child since, unlike you, said child will not be expected to maintain a brave face should it all go pear-shaped. They can let it all out; you on the other hand must keep it all **in**, even though your blood pressure has zoomed up into the stratosphere and you may be facing a long journey back home. You will have to go through it all again next year. No one said being a fencing parent was easy.

Supposing your fencing child succeeds – what then? Good question. Wait for the entry list to arrive and good luck with working out where your child will be seeded at the start of the day. It will help if you're a whizz at Sudoku. Fencing Dad was sure he had the measure of the seemingly impenetrable seeding system after hours spent pouring over the entries from a previous year. It was like Bletchley Park all over again with Fencing Dad cracking the Enigma Code. In fact I can't imagine what took those slackers at Bletchley Park so long; they should have had Fencing Dad on the team. Unfortunately for him, just like poor old Alan Turing, he got little thanks for his efforts and an audience for his brilliance was only obtained by bartering certain domestic tasks (possibly over-sharing here!) in return for a listening, if not strictly willing, ear. Entrenous, I was just as baffled when he'd finished as before he started but I think it did him good to get it out of his system. On completion of his explanation, involving multiple bits of paper with crossings out, he seemed to feel


he had assumed Deep Blue status and was virtually ready to print out the still-to-be-decided poule sheets.

When the day itself dawned, Fencing Dad's face was a picture of chagrin after surveying the poule lists but he took it on the chin. It appeared that he had not taken certain things into account. Don't ask me what – something about devolution or Brexit or was it regional separation? Fencing Child, oblivious to this, industriously completed warm-ups while Fencing Dad struggled to come to terms with the new reality. Fencing Dad, unlike me, is usually an extremely optimistic part of the team, maintaining an upbeat outlook about Fencing Child's chances. Fencing Child up against older, bigger child with a rack of gold medals? No problem, Fencing Child just needs to focus. Drawn against last year's medallists? No worries, Fencing Child will prevail. Fencing Child has broken both arms? Piece of cake, just splint them up with the spare swords and body wires and Fencing Child will be good to go. Ok. I made that last one up! So when he described the poule as 'tough', I translated this into 'Fire up the car and pray for a power cut'. I stifle an urge to shout, 'Help! I'm not a celebrity but please get me out of here anyway!'

The poules over, and the next lot of sheets up on the notice boards, the scenes can be more akin to a rugby scrum as children jostle to see whom they will be up against for the D.E. Any parent is ill-advised to go near at this moment


– they will be felled like a hapless gazelle being brought down by a pride of excitable lions. Jubilation, despair and resignation fill a small corner of the stadium- and the children are pretty excited too! Emotionally exhausted parents at this point run hither and thither ferrying fuel supplies from one side of the stadium to the other, like wildebeest on their vast annual migration across the plains of Africa, dodging the pistes as best they can and clocking up an impressive mileage in the process while children sit around like cuckoo chicks in a nest, opening their beaks and waiting to be fed. (Yes, I know, I've been watching a bit too much David Attenborough recently.) Don't expect **you** are going to get time for lunch by the way; you are merely fulfilling the role of factotum as you risk a hernia lugging a heavy fencing bag from one place to another and ruefully wondering if you should have encouraged them more with their swimming. After all, how much can swimwear and a pair of goggles weigh?

The time passes, the competition unfolds, stars wane and others soar, bags are quietly packed, tears are wiped, competitors trundle away and bit by bit the huge space empties and quietens, apart from occasional roars until that final, appropriate, gladiatorial clash of metal in the huge Steel City arena where reputations are forged and medals hammered out. B.Y.C. just letters in the alphabet now. The hopes, the dreams, the B.Y.C. all over for another year.




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SOFA DODGER

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One Woman's Quest to Try 100 Different Sports and Fitness Classes in a Year



'That is me under there!'

This book tells the story of the Sam Taylor, a mother of three, who describes herself as more of a 'SofaDweller' than a 'SofaDodger'; who tried 100 different sports and fitness classes in the course of a year. There is an accompanying website which can be found on <http://www.sofadodger.co.uk>, which allows people to search for local activities or sports that they might be interested in; as well as providing a free service to help instructors, sports clubs and venues promote their activities. I won't list all of the different activities that she tried but they include a number of activities that I had not previously encountered, including: Powerhooping, Insanity, Tang Soo Do, Krav Maga, Coasteering, BarreConcept, TyreFit, Parkour, Buggyfit, and Wakeboarding. Imagine my relief when I discovered that Fencing was on the list.

For this Sam went to Truro Fencing Club where, after meeting up with coach Jon, was given an introduction to the clothing, equipment and safety aspect needed before learning the basics of sabre fencing. I will let Sam tell you how she got on after this, in her own words:

'The lesson culminated in a first to five point fight, where I could put all my learning into a bout. To outside observers, it must have looked like a toddler attempting to swat a fly. Jon watched me for a few moments (most probably, stifling a grin under his mask) and then swiftly and deftly stepped in to tap me on the head. Jon was very kind and patiently waited for me to get it together enough to tap him for a couple of points, which he sweetly congratulated me for. The whole situation suddenly seemed hilarious and I dissolved into a fit of giggles, as I tried to parry and then remember I had to attack as well as defend. My feet and brain started their own bout, which neither won.'

A brief bio of Truro Fencing Club, written by Louise, is included on pp301-302.

This is a fun book, with 'fun' being the operative word. Sam has successfully tried out all of these 100 activities within the course of a year and for this she is to be congratulated. Her fearless approach to trying out new sports and fitness classes is a lesson to us all. Sofa Dodgers of all ages, looking for new sporting-related interests, will find much to choose from, including fencing.

Editor

HOW TO WATCH THE OLYMPICS: AN INSTANT INITIATION INTO EVERY SPORT AT RIO 2016

By David Goldblatt & Johnny Acton

The first edition of this book was well received:

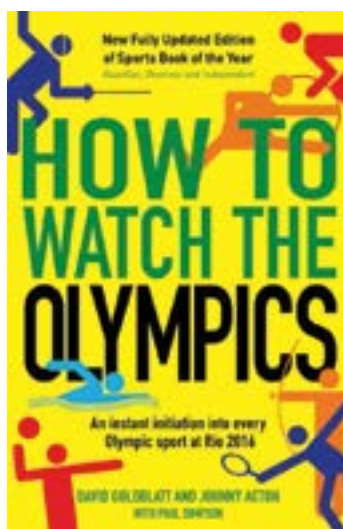
'The perfect event-by-event primer for sport's biggest occasion.' – Independent

'A handy and witty guide to the finer points of competition.' – Independent on Sunday Sports Books of the Year

'A tour de force of brilliant writing, historical colour and sporting vignette.' – Observer

This new edition has been freshly updated for the 2016 Games in Rio, including fresh material from London 2012. Whilst the previous reviews referred to the entire book which contains the full range of Olympic sports, I want to concentrate on the 'fencing chapter' on its own (15pp).

The authors explain that at Rio there will be individual contests for epee, foil and sabre,



for men and women. In the team events, in keeping with the FIE's rotation of events at the Olympics, men will contest foil and epee; women, epee and sabre. Some of the main contenders are mentioned in this book, as well as past champions – all helpful stuff.

The reasons why people watch fencing is tackled next, arises from its popularity

in literature and the cinema, and the fact that it is a European martial art. The story of fencing, essentially a short historical account, is excellently done and helpful for the uninitiated reader wishing to enjoy some background material on this fascinating sport. Fencing basics includes an explanation of how penalties are awarded, the three weapons, electronic scoring and team fencing. The finer points include an explanation of the rules of priority (foil and sabre) as well as the fact that there are no rules of priority at epee. Some technical terms are explained: attack, parry, riposte, remise and redouble. These are sufficient to get a reasonable understanding of what fencing is about. The basic character of the three weapons is briefly touched on and the fencer's protective kit explained.

This 'chapter' is helpful, informative and well written, and should be an invaluable guide to those wishing to watch the Olympic sport of fencing.

For up-to-date information on fencing at the Olympics see 'Karim' Olympic Preview' on p13.

Editor

Archive Corner

BFA CENTENARY DINNER, 2002

By Keith Smith

2002 was a good year for British Fencing. Laurence Halsted was the reigning Junior European Men's Foil Champion, and Richard Kruse had come second and the Great Britain Women's sabre team won the bronze medal at the same championships. At the Cadet and Junior World Championships, we had six fencers in the top 8 across all three weapons. Louise Bond-Williams won a Silver medal in the Junior Women's Sabre and David Riseley was 5th and Richard Kruse 7th in Men's Foil and Tristan Lane was 6th in Men's Epee. At Cadet level, Chrystall Nicoll was 6th in Women's Sabre. The Junior Men's Foil team was 4th at the world championships and overall Great Britain was ranked 9th out of 50 countries competing on the medals table. The Royal Armouries Challenge was held with £7,000 of sponsorship and prizes on offer and at the Senior World Championships, James Williams made the top 16 in Men's sabre and Louise Bond-Williams reached the top 8, which was out first top 8 at this level, since Fiona Macintosh had made the top 8 at the Barcelona Olympics. The British Champions of that year were James Beevers, Quentin Berriman, David Sach, Camille Dato, Georgina Usher and Louise Bond-Williams in a competition with 550 entries and 90 teams.

2002 was also the centenary of British Fencing, and so it was decided to hold a birthday party. It was masterminded by Janet Cooksey, took the form of a dinner and dance and was held at the New Connaught Rooms in London. Over 450 guests attended the black-tie event and it raised £ 2700 to support younger fencers. British Fencing was honoured to have the FIE President, Rene Roch, the European Fencing President, Jenő Kamuti and the Chairman of the British Olympic Association and IOC member, Craig Reedie as guests of honour. During the dinner, Joe Eden; who had run and help fund Under 20 Fencing for many years was awarded the FIE Gold Medal and Mary Glen-Haig (former BFA President and IOC member) was made a Member of Honour of the FIE. During the dinner we had a parade of champions, that included Gillian Sheen (Olympic Champion in 1956), Bill Hoskyns (World Champion 1958) and Allan Jay (World Champion in 1959), Caz Walton (Paralympic Champion in 1988), Rob Bruniges (Junior World Champion in 1976)



The parade of champions included Gillian Sheen (Olympic Champion in 1956), Bill Hoskyns (World Champion 1958) and Allan Jay (World Champion in 1959).

as well as Peter Jacobs (World Student Champion) and Janet Cooksey and Graham Paul (both Veteran World Champions). A tombola was held and first prize donated by Sir Rocco Forte was a four night stay at the Astoria hotel in St. Petersburg.

As a highlight of the evening we had a friendly match with Hungary. This was a home and away relay format of sixty hits. The GB team was Kate Gardner, Quentin Berriman, Chrystall Nicoll, James Beevers, Georgina Usher and James Williams. The match drew the attention of all the guests and after Hungary had taken a lead of ten hits all seemed lost, but the GB team fought back, with James Beevers pulling back three hits and Georgina Usher a further two. James Williams took to the piste for the final fought with a deficit of 47-52. With great leaping attacks and much crowd pleasing showmanship, James scored eight hits to level the score at 55-55. Finally the Hungarians won 60-58, but it had been a great match and a real advert for fencing.

As part of the centenary celebrations Malcolm Fare produced his excellent book, "A Century of Fencing", which looked at and illustrated

the previous hundred years of fencing in Britain.

It is interesting to look at the finances of the time. Sports Aid granted us £10,000 per year to support younger fencers, Catherine Nicoll (a BFA Director) ran in the London Marathon to raise money and raised £6,000 for younger fencers, UK Sport Funded the BFA £140,000 per year and Sport England, £50,000. The BOA granted us £36,000. 2002 was also the beginning of an upturn in results, with Richard Kruse making the top 8 in the 2003 World Championships and then the top 8 in the Athens Olympics in 2004, along with Louise bond-Williams making the top 16 at the same event. This was the era before the much increased public funding that the BFA now receives and the BFA had to really rely on volunteers to make things happen. The Centenary Dinner was a celebration of British Fencing and involved clubs selling tickets, many volunteers giving of their time to make it happen and it was agreed to try to hold events like this in the future. It was thus very pleasing to see that the BFA held their Awards Dinner as part of the British Championships in 2016.

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

Sussex Open: 17th/18th September 2016

Sussex Open: 17/18.09.2016

Venue: Portslade Sports Centre, Portslade, East Sussex, BN41 2WS

More details at <http://www.sussexfencing.org.uk>

*** Medals for L8, Best Veteran, Best Cadet ***

Events	Latest Report Time
17th September	Address:
Men's Epee	10:00
Women's Epee	11:30
18th September	
Men's Foil	09:00
Women's Foil	11:00

Entry Fee: £20 per weapon, £35 for two (Late entries £25 per weapon)

Payable To: Sussex County Fencing Union

Entries To: Brian Causton, Brightsands, Falmer Road, Rottingdean BRIGHTON BN2 7FQ, or online via PayPal: sussexfencing@gmail.com (include name, weapon and BFA No.)

Closing Date: 11th September 2016

Notes: BFA membership checked on-line, late entrants must bring proof of BFA membership with them

Entry Form

Sussex Open: 17/18.09.2016

Event(s):

.....

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Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Tel/Email:

Club:

BFA No:

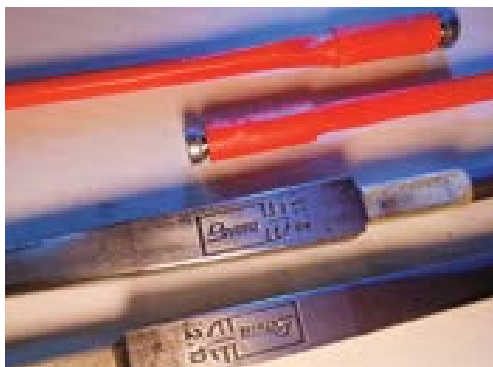
U18?

Veteran?

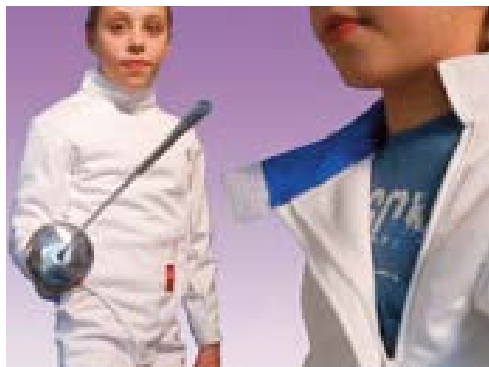
Signed: **Date:**

(Parent/Guardian if U18)

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MASKS 350N

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 foil stm .. £74.99

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