

THE SWORD

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KRUSE WINS WORLD SILVER PP6–9

BUMPER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT PP10–19



PRESIDENT'S REPORT P4

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION PP23–24

Leon Paul

London



Congratulations Richard Kruse and Ziemek Wojciechowski
Leon Paul, supporting fencers and coaches since 1921

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Kruse wins World Silver.
 Photo: Augusto Bazzi

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Welcome to THE SWORD



Wuxi World Silver for Richard Kruse (Augusto Bazzi)

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President's Report



President Philbin

The 2017-18 season has been a busy year for international relations, as the middle of an Olympic cycle is typically when much of the work gets done within the commissions and councils of the FIE and EFC.

During the year Clare Halsted took over as Head of the FIE's Anti-Doping Education programme, and ran the Anti-Doping Education stand at the Junior & Cadet Championships in Verona. Clare attended the WADA Anti-Doping Symposiums in Helsinki and Lausanne, and is also part of the new FIE Safe Sport campaign where she has been helping to draft FIE policy.

Steve Higginson, in his capacity as President of the FIE Rules Commission, set up a new Rules Restructuring Working Group and arranged and chaired a number of meetings both in the UK and Switzerland.

Peter Jacobs, a member of the Legal Commission, was also appointed to the Rules Restructuring Working Group, and in fact is the only member not to come from the Rules Commission – a recognition of his expertise in this additional area.

Janet Huggins attended the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Verona, working in Weapon Control, and has been much involved in the *Donate Your Fencing Gear* project. She too has contributed to the Rules Restructuring Working Group.

In addition Steve Higginson, Janet Huggins and Peter Jacobs each found the time to supervise a number of World Cup events during the season.

In October 2017 the EFC Commission and Council appointments were announced and these included several new joiners to our international relations post-holder group:

- Tom Cadman – Legal & Rules Commission
- Mary Cohen – Medical Commission
- Peter Huggins – SEMI Commission
- Gillian Aghajan – Veterans Council

Tom worked on the much-needed amendments to the EFC Statutes and Rules, Mary attended the Junior & Cadet World Championships as an observer, supporting Clare on the Anti-Doping Education stand, Peter attended the European Junior & Cadet Championships in Sochi, Russia as the SEMI Commission representative and Gillian has commenced activities with the EFC Veterans Council.

Our group of FIE-qualified referees has continued to grow. We were pleased to invite two of the top international referees – Vilam Madr (CZE) and Daniel Vasquez (ESP) – to run our referee seminars which now include mock FIE exams. Overseas, Adrian Speakman, Nick Payne and Julian Rose led the way with invitations to referee at a number of major FIE events including some at World Championship and Grand Prix level.

Great Britain continues to be recognised for its strong representation on the various FIE and EFC Commission and Councils, as well as through its participation as technical officials at the major events. As one of the nine founder member countries of the FIE it is important that we continue to play our part at the heart of world fencing. Thanks are due to all our International Relations (IR) representatives, who make a valuable contribution to fencing and its future.

At home our International Relations Committee (IRC) – comprising Georgina Usher, Peter Jacobs and myself as Chair – continues to work closely with UK Sport's IR representatives regarding our IR strategy and our long-term succession planning.

Overseas much of our IR liaison takes place at the main FIE and EFC events, where there are opportunities to talk to the Presidents and General Secretaries of the other member countries, 120 of which were represented at the 2017 FIE Congress. Major events that I attended during the past season include:

- the FIE Annual Congress in Dubai, as Head of Delegation
- the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Verona, Italy, as a member of the Directoire Technique (DT) and FIE Chief of Protocol
- the European Fencing Confederation (EFC) Congress in Novi Sad, Serbia – followed by

the European Championships – as Head of Delegation

- the Senior World Championships in Wuxi, China

Georgina Usher, as CEO, attended the FIE and EFC Congresses as GBR's 2nd Delegate, along with Steve Higginson and Peter Jacobs, both FIE Members of Honour.

A particular highlight at the end of the season was the signing of a partnership agreement between British Fencing and the Italian Fencing Federation. The agreement covers a number of areas including training camps and coach education, access to competition circuits, referee development and other refereeing opportunities plus joint promotional activities. The signing ceremony took place at the British Ambassador's official residence in Rome in July. (Further information about the agreement and the signing ceremony follows in the separate report.)

In the UK I attended a number of junior, senior and veterans events at both domestic and international level, including the Eden Cup and the GLL Camden Sabre events. I also had the pleasure of presenting the Honours awards at the AGM, as well as several of the new BF Awards at the annual Awards dinner. Both of these occasions are good opportunities to recognise – and thank – the many people who give their time and skills so generously to their sport.

Finally, on a personal note – as I write this report it is 50 years to the week since I took up fencing. During this time I've participated in 28 senior World Championships and Olympic Games in one capacity or another – fencer, team manager, FIE referee, competition organiser and member of the Directoire Technique. I have enjoyed a number of high points, but few can rival the pleasure of being present to watch Richard Kruse gain his silver medal at this year's World Championships – the first GBR medal in a senior World Championships or Olympic Games during my fencing life-time. It is a fantastic achievement for both Richard and his life-long coach, Ziemek Wojciechowski. It was an additional pleasure to receive, on Richard's behalf, so many congratulations from so many countries around the world, and this is a reflection of Richard's standing in the fencing world. Richard and Ziemek are great ambassadors for British Fencing, and I congratulate them both.

Hilary Philbin
9 September 2018

Rome Report

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN BRITISH FENCING AND THE ITALIAN FENCING FEDERATION

In July British Fencing signed a partnership agreement with the Italian Fencing Federation at a prestigious event hosted by the British Ambassador, Jill Morris, in Rome.

Led by the Presidents of the two Federations, Hilary Philbin and Giorgio Scarso, the event was attended by a number of guests including Luca Pancalli, President of the Italian Paralympic Committee, Giampiero Pastore, Vice-President of the Italian Fencing Federation, Marco Cannella, General Secretary



of the Italian Fencing Federation and Beatrice Vio, 2016 Paralympic Champion (Women's Foil B). The British delegation included Pat Aiyenuro and Karim Bashir from British Fencing and Robert Morini, Head of International Relations at UK Sport. The signing ceremony took place in the beautiful Villa Wolkonsky, which is the official residence of the British Ambassador to Italy.

Speaking just after signing the agreement, Giorgio Scarso said, "Signing this agreement is very important to the Italian Fencing Federation. This is our 77th agreement with another national federation because we believe that fencing is developed through these partnerships." British Fencing's President, Hilary Philbin said, "British Fencing has a long history of friendship with Italian Fencing and we now look forward to working more closely together. I am confident that this agreement will bring great benefits to British Fencing."

The agreement covers a number of areas including:

- two-way access to national competition circuits for the top fencers
- participation for GBR national teams and coaches in Italian national team training camps

- participation in training camps for under 14s and their coaches
- opportunities for senior team members wishing to coach to take part in coach training programmes in Italy
- referee development and co-operation, including opportunities for British referees to participate in Italian refereeing training courses
- joint marketing, communication & promotion activities

BF is now working with Italian Fencing on implementation arrangements, including immediate plans for joint refereeing activities and junior training camps.

Further information about joint GBR-Italy activities, including contact details, can be found on the BF website: www.britishfencing.com.



International News

KRUSE ON WORLD SILVER

Photos: Augusto Bazzi

Thirty-four year older, ZFW fencer, Richard Kruse went into the World Championships in Wuxi, China off the back of a season that had seen him win the Cairo World Cup and defend the title he won at the Shanghai Grand Prix in 2017. His top 16 finish at the European Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, meant that he was ranked fourth in the World and thus qualified directly to the round of 64.



Richard Kruse prepares with coach Ziemek Wojciechowski

Richard claimed the individual Men's Foil silver medal – Britain's first World medal since Bill Hoskyns won silver in the individual Men's Epee in 1965 and the first foil medal since Allan Jay won the World title in 1959. We provided our summary of each fight to Richard for his thoughts and here is what he had to say.

64 vs Maor Hatoel (ISR) – Head-to-Head: 3-3

Whilst Richard settled into the fight, moving freely, it was hard to believe that this was the beginning of the medal run that followed. First he went over the back line to gift Hatoel his first point and then he received a yellow card for a minor infringement. It took a minute and 40 seconds for Richard to get himself on the scoreboard but he continued to move with freedom. Opening up the distance to go for his long attack, Richard also frustrated Hatoel on his attack by closing the distance quickly. Richard led 4-2 at the first break. At the start of the second period, Hatoel decided



Kruse has his eyes on the prize from the start of the day

to close the distance up and be a menace whilst Richard continued to try and play with longer distance. They cancelled each other out before Richard changed tactics and mixed up his attacks with counters, use of the line and parry ripostes. A last gasp surprise attack saw him lead 14-6 at the second break. At the start of the final period, Hatoel scored his seventh hit before the two stood in front of each other without moving or trying to hit each other's blades. It is unclear whether the referee called non-combativity but the clock certainly started again from one minute to go. (We're sure Richard will shed some light on the matter!) No matter. A counter with body evasion was enough to see Richard take a comfortable 15-7 victory.

Richard says: Fencing Hatoel in the L64 was quite a nasty draw because he is a tricky fencer and has taken out a lot of big names in the past. I arrived at the call room nine minutes before the fight which annoyed the competition organiser who said to me, "You can start on a yellow card for that!". I started the fight bang on time but halfway through Hatoel asked for me to be given a yellow card because I was late to the call room. I thought the organiser was joking when he gave me the yellow card but obviously not. Towards the end of the fight I had a lead so didn't need to do anything. After a period of inactivity the referee called passivity so we went to a final minute of fencing time. Hatoel needed all the time he could get so the move to passivity angered him. He who lives by the rulebook dies by the rulebook! Incidentally, when the organisers fell about an hour behind

their own schedule later on in the competition I couldn't resist making a comment to them about that.

Watch the whole fight here, <https://bit.ly/2xtGwKW>.

32 vs Timur Arslanov (RUS) – Head-to-Head: 3-1

Moving well again, Richard landed three long attacks, a parry riposte and one of his trademark stop-hits in the first period. Arslanov, predominantly reactive managed three of his own, working off the blade. In the second period, Arslanov became much more active and found the timing and distance for his attacks to draw level at 8-8. Richard came out on the attack and fashioned a counter riposte before landing another counter-attack. Clearly conscious of the Russian's attack, Richard patiently waited for the distance to close sufficiently to land a quick attack into preparation. Arslanov fought back again, landing another attack, followed by a counter and then a riposte. With the scores level again, Richard landed an attack of his own



Kruse on his way to victory over Timur Arslanov

followed by a counter, to lead 13-11 going into the final break. This had turned into a real battle. Richard knew that and came straight out on the front foot, pushing Arslanov to the back line before inviting the attack. Another beauty of a counter was followed by a long beat attack to finish the Russian off.

Richard says: Arslanov is a solid little fencer. I've had a lot of close fights with him but they've mainly gone my way. I remember breaking away from him on a few occasions by getting a two or three point lead only for him to get back into the match. Towards the end I hit him with a few counterattacks and then finally an attack against his line – which he missed.

Watch the whole fight here <https://bit.ly/2PPmO3J>.

16 vs Cheung Ka Long (HKG) – Head-to-Head: 4-0

Richard began this fight as he had the previous two. Lots of movement but Cheung was up to the task, matching the British fencer. The key to this one was the long compound attacks coming from Richard, combined with super-fast remises when the attack failed. Cheung was dangerous with his long attack but Richard's defence was solid. A high intensity first period saw Richard leading 14-6 at the break. The fight was over within 20 seconds of the resumption as Richard landed a line hit. A comfortable margin of victory but an energy-sapping three minutes.



Kruse keeps the distance close against Cheung Ka Long

Richard says: I've fenced Cheung a lot in training and have struggled with him. He's so dominant with his attacks that I knew I couldn't sit back and defend. Therefore I decided to take the match to him. I used a lot of flicks to his chest because he's a left-hander. When the pace of the match is higher then I can hit him with counter-attacks as he has to rush his preparation more.

Watch the whole fight here <https://bit.ly/2DjoSjo>.

8 vs James-Andrew Davis (GBR) – Head-to-Head: 3-0

With two Brits going up against each other in the quarterfinals, a first British medal at the World Championships in over 50 years was guaranteed. James got off to the better start, working the distance well to score three different hits, unanswered. Richard slowed down the start of his attack to score two back before luring James on and scoring with a counter. With only 40 seconds gone, this was looking to be over quickly. Mindful of the counter attack, it was now James's turn to slow down his attack and re-establish a three-hit lead. Trying to keep the distance close Richard fought back combining attacks,



All British quarter-final as Kruse faces Davis

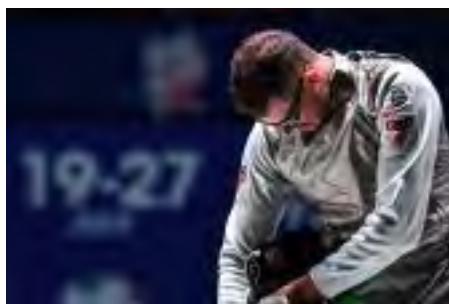
counters and one riposte but James's counter-attacks and stop-hits were lethal and took him to a 9-7 lead at the break. James then switched to being more proactive, went 11-8 up and looked in control. This seemed to spur Richard on. One counter followed by two attacks and he was level. He went on to lead by two before James landed a superbly timed attack. An attack into preparation followed by an attack saw Richard over the line, in fight that could have gone either way. The result means that Richard maintained his record of never having lost to another British fencer in a senior international event.

Richard says: Against Davis I was continually falling behind and then equalizing but couldn't really make any headway until the latter stages of the fight. From 11-all I managed to make some progress. I tried to flick Davis on the chest because, like Cheung, he's left-handed but I wasn't getting much success with that. Therefore I changed to the outside line (i.e. flank and shoulder). Incidentally this is the sharpest I've seen Davis fence all year. I ended the fight with a long attack to flank but couldn't really celebrate it because it was against a teammate.

Watch the whole fight here <https://bit.ly/2OzTuOw>.

Semis Carlos Llavador (ESP) – Head-to-Head: 1-2

The Spanish left-hander started the fight well but clearly conscious of Richard's counter-attack took his time. He defended the flick to the chest well and opened up a lead, only for Richard to start landing his attack. The first period went to Llavador, 5-4 but ended with Richard having the momentum. Another energy-draining period followed but Richard drew level at 7-7 with a well-timed attack into preparation. A couple of counters for Llavador forced Richard into a more defensive style and he landed a parry riposte but went into the second break 9-8 down. A measured approach from Richard at the beginning of the third period saw him land a counter and then a parry riposte before launching a seemingly simple attack. Richard remained patient but so did Llavador and the Spaniard drew level at 11-11 with 45 seconds remaining. Llavador stepped in searching for the blade and Richard spotted it. A successful counter at that stage was worth more than a point. Another counter followed by another of his super-fast remises



Kruse prepares for tough semi-final against Carlos Llavador



Kruse wins semi & makes gold medal match

put Richard in touching distance of the gold medal match. With Llavador having to attack, Richard waited and landed another remise to win 15-14.

Richard says: This match was incredibly draining and almost went all the way to the full nine minutes. I found it very hard to break down Llavadors defence. Towards the end of the match I decided to fence the rest of the bout completely from defence (i.e. counter-attacks, remises – I even scored with a line as well). It's incredible how much more global foil fencing has become during my time in the sport. Having world class foilists from Spain, Hong Kong and Britain just didn't feature fifteen years ago.

Watch the whole fight here <https://bit.ly/2PPn42H>.

Final Alessio Foconi (ITA) – Head-to-Head: 4-2



Kruse starts well against Foconi going 3-0 up

The final started with both fencers maintaining a long distance. Foconi was crouched over, luring Richard on. There was a minute or so of dancing around before Richard launched an attack finishing in prime to get the scoring underway. Now it was the turn for the British fencer to tease Foconi into attack and after another minute, that's just what he did. Richard was waiting and landed a closing counter without getting hit. Another counter-attack saw Richard take a 3-0 lead into the first break. A notable change in pace from Foconi in the second period saw him press and patiently build an attack to score his first hit. The Italian's tactics remained the same – press Richard into his warning area and then either counter attack into the

International News (contd.)



Kruse lands one in prime

start of Richard's attack or finish his attack. It worked well and despite Richard landing a few counter-attacks, Foconi drew level 6-6 at the second break. Richard was starting to show signs of fatigue so the break came at the right time for him. Not wanting to be pinned to the back line, Richard started pressing Foconi but the Italian was patient and waited for the moment to launch his attack. That was followed by a hit in defence on his back line and Foconi was two up and crucially, still looking fresh. Richard managed a couple more attacks but the distance, timing and execution from Foconi on the attack and counter combined with the energy he was able to exert saw the Italian to a 15-8 win and the World title.

Richard says: Foconi has changed how he fences me recently. He no longer tries to press me but rather digs in and defends. I was starting to struggle a bit with cramp just before this match because it was very hot in the venue. I knew that my only chance to win this match would be to try and score the first hit and then just defend from there. My plan worked well. I hit Foconi with a cheap shot for the first point and then grew the lead to 6-3. Foconi fought his way back in the match. Sadly, I knew that as soon as he went one hit ahead that it was over for me. Still, I can't complain because I've manage to finally get on the podium in a global championships after a career of near misses.

Watch the whole fight here <https://bit.ly/2DbwUui>.



Foconi starts to take control



Foconi defends well



Ziemek offers support in the break

International News (contd.)

men's foil event. Both made it through the poules and Marcus made the round of 64 by beating Nemeth of Hungary 15-11. Ben beat Latvian, Kuceba 15-9 before losing 15-12 to Berg of Denmark in the preliminary knockout stages. Marcus lost 15-7 to Frenchman, Pauly as James progressed to the eight, most notably beating Italian Andrea Cassara 15-10 on route.

So what next for Richard? "I will now focus my attention on getting myself in the best shape to tackle qualification for Tokyo 2020. The final qualification criteria has not been released yet but keeping my individual ranking as high as it can be will not hurt my chances."

VIEW FROM COACH, ZIEMEK WOJCIECHOWSKI

Richard gave a phenomenal performance again. However, it feels like journey to the top is continuing but at the same time that this should have happened so much earlier. Fourth place at the Rio Olympic and the quarterfinals at the Athens Olympic plus quarterfinals at the World Championships in Havana and Leipzig. On top of that three World Cup and four Grand Prix victories throughout an illustrious career, not to mention the many medals he has won at the Europeans Championships.

Unfortunately, cramps emerged again in the final which prevented Richard from winning. That said, I am very lucky to work with such outstanding and unique athlete like Richard. How many fencers continue to work with same coach right from the beginning to the pinnacle of their career?



World medal for Kruse breaks
British absene from the podium

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International News (contd.)

WORLDS 2018 REPORT

Photos: Augusto Bazzi

Women's Epee

Individual

Thirty-three year old World number one, Mara Navarria capped off a fine season by winning the Women's Epee World Championship crown. The Italian had won two titles during the season – the Tallinn World Cup and Budapest Grand Prix – as well as picking up one silver medal but had never taken a World medal. She beat Romanian legend, Ana Maria Popescu in the final. It was Popescu's third World Championship medal, having taken the bronze both in 2002 (Lisbon) and 2011 (Catania).



Octave block for Navarria against Staehli

Navarria battled her way past Hungarian Anna Kun 15-9, Auriane Mallo of France 15-11, American Katherine Holmes 15-9 and number eight seed, Katrina Lehis of Estonia by the same score to make the semi-finals. She faced Switzerland's surprise package, Laura Staehli, for a place in the final. The twenty-six year old Swiss fencer had never won a World Cup, Grand Prix, Zonal or World Championship medal and had to beat Sun Yiwen of China, (reigning Olympic bronze medallist and four-time World Cup winner) and Hungary's reigning Olympic Champion, Emese Szasz-Kovacs, to make the semi-finals. Navarria was too good for Staehli and cruised to a comfortable 15-8 victory.



Navarria lands winning hit against Popescu

The experienced Popescu showed great form throughout the tournament, taking out Italy's double World Champion and reigning Olympic silver medallist, Rosella Flamingo 15-8 and World number two, Olena Kryvytska of Ukraine 15-11 on her way to the semi-finals. There she faced Courtney Hurley of the USA for a place in the gold medal match. The American, who had picked up a silver medal at the last ranking event of the season – the Cali Grand Prix – had to beat Aleksandra Zamachowska of Poland, in the round of 32, on route to the podium matches. The Polish fencer had shown great form in the previous round by beating last year's Russian Champion, Tatiana Gudkova but Hurley edged a tight fight 15-14 and went on to make the semi-finals. Hurley had endured a number of tight fights during the day and her semi-final against Popescu was no different. The American led 13-11 with 15 seconds left on the clock but the Romanian pressed and probed to draw level with just under 5 seconds on the clock. Popescu didn't change her tactics and went after Hurley in the closing seconds. It paid off and the Romanian took the winning hit with under a second left on the clock.



Navarria beams in the glow of the World title

The final was a repeat of the gold medal match at the Doha Grand Prix earlier in the season – a match which Popescu won 10-6. Neither fencer showed their hand completely in the first period but as expected, Popescu looked for counter or defensive actions whilst Navarria picked away at the Romanian's blade to create openings. The Romanian edged into a 3-2 lead at the first break, ever so slightly edging the distance battle. In the second period Popescu continued to lure Navarria on but the Italian fought from a longer distance.

She was showing signs of employing a two-phase attack, reacting on what Popescu did off the first one. It worked and Navarria went 7-6 up only for Popescu to start pressing herself. They went into the second break tied at 7-7. Navarria came off the line with purpose in the final period but it was a ruse. She wanted to force Popescu out and crucially stole a one-point lead. The Romanian had to press – exactly what the Italian wanted and Navarria relied on her impressive defensive fencing to take the World title 13-9.



WE medallists (l to r: Popescu, Navarria, Holmes & Staehli)

Team

Ranked seventh in the World, the USA team (Holmes, Hurley C, Hurley K & Sirico) beat three teams seeded higher than them on their way to the World crown. Their biggest win on the way to the semi-finals was against World number two team, Estonia. A couple of legs of non-combativity saw them trailing 16-17 going into the final leg but Katherine Holmes fenced with great composure to take them over the line, 24-23. In the semis, they faced World number three team, Russia (Andryushina, Gudkova, Khrapina & Kolobova) who had only just beaten Poland 38-37 in the quarterfinals. More non-combativity was the order of the day and again Holmes went into the final leg trailing by one hit, 14-15. Another great anchor leg from the American saw her outscore Violetta Kolobova to take America to a 27-25 victory.



USA impressively beat Estonia



A close affair in the semis between Russia and the USA



Korea on their knees in the final



USA Women's Epee Team jumping for joy

China (Lin, Sun, Xu & Zhu), ranked first and one of the fancied teams progressed to the semi-finals with relative ease where they faced Korea (Choi, Kang, Lee & Shin) who had just knocked out France. Yet again, non-combativity came into play and Korea led 17-16 going into the final leg. Choi Injeong made no mistake, going on to take a 25-21 win for Korea. China went on to lead from the start of the bronze medal match against Russia and despite a close match took the victory 45-42.



Women's Team Epee Podium

The final was another tactical battle. Korea established the early lead – 6-3 after the first three legs – but the USA closed by one hit after the next three. At 10-12 down the USA elected to go passive for two bouts and Korea played ball. Clearly, Korea and Choi Injeong had not seen the form of Katherine Holmes

in the final legs of the American's previous matches. Holmes confidently carried the USA to gold 18-17!

Men's Epee

Individual

Twenty-nine year old Frenchman, Yannick Borel finally came of age in Wuxi by claiming the Men's Epee World Championship title. Borel has arguably been the most consistent epeeist on the scene for the past few years but the three-time European Champion had never claimed a World Championship medal until China a few weeks ago. He beat Venezuela's London 2012 Olympic Champion, Ruben Limardo Gascon in a one-sided final.



Svichkar doubles against Borel in the semis

Ranked sixth in the World coming into the tournament, Borel had ended the regular season well by winning the Cali Grand Prix and then taking his third successive European title in Novi Sad. He beat Vietnam's Phuoc Den Nguyen 15-8 before a couple of nervy 15-14 victories over Grigori Beskin of Israel and Japan's Koki Kano, followed by a more relaxed 15-5 win against Kazakh Dmitriy Alexanin, to make the top four. His semi-final opponent was Ukrainian outsider Roman Svichkar. The twenty-five year old qualifier had never taken a senior medal of any kind and beat Italy's double World Champion, Paolo Pizzo on his way to the match with Borel. Svichkar stayed with Borel early on but the Frenchman took a three-hit lead into the first break and didn't let up in the second period, taking the fight 15-11.



Gascon lands a fleche in the semis versus Nikishin

Ruben Limardo Gascon won a silver medal at the 2013 World Championships (Budapest) but since then suffered a bad injury and then had to battle Malaria. Now fully recovered, the Venezuelan is starting to show the form that

took him to Olympic gold in 2012. He came through Egypt's Ahmad Elsokkary 15-8, Elmir Alimzhanov of Kazakhstan 14-12, Frenchman Alex Fava 15-8 and Korea's World number four, Park Sangyoung 13-10 to make the top four. There he faced World number one and 2018 European silver medallist, Bogdan Nikishin. The thirty-eight year old Ukrainian has had two brilliant seasons and was one of the favourites for the title. His comfortable progress to the top four was proof of that. Gascon played a no risk strategy against the patient Nikishin in their semi-final, resulting in two periods of non-combativity. The Venezuelan snuck ahead 4-3 with the seconds counting down but Nikishin levelled in a close quarters encounter that resulted in a yellow card for Gascon. With just over four seconds on the clock, Nikishin went for an ill-timed attack which Gascon blocked out and scored on the riposte. With no choice, the Ukrainian went for it but Gascon was ready and went on to fight for gold with a 7-4 victory.



Borel controlled Gascon in the final

In the final Gascon was busy with Borel's blade but the Frenchman had almost total control of the distance. Borel was able to land binding ripostes to the quarte and octave lines, even throwing in a few to prime. Gascon became hesitant, so Borel started to attack and led 9-2 at the first break. It only took a little over a minute for Borel to complete the victory that has been a long time coming. He took the fight and the World title with ease 15-5.



Borel celebrates with coach

Harrison Nichols was Great Britain's only fencer in this event, coming through the

poule stage with three victories from five fights. It was enough to make the preliminary qualifiers where he faced the tough challenge of Russia's Vadim Anokhin, who had won a bronze medal at the Heidenheim World Cup earlier in the season. Nichols put in a good performance but lost 15-11 to finish 117th in a field of 170.



ME Podium (l to r: Gascon, Borel, Svichkar & Nikishin)

Team

Switzerland (Heinzer, Malcotti, Niggeler & Steffen), ranked fifth for the tournament and having only won a single medal (bronze in Heidenheim) during the regular season, surprised the entire field by taking the team World title. Comfortable victories over Chile and Israel saw them match up against World number four team, Italy in the quarterfinals. It was no surprise to see Switzerland employ non-combativity, taking the fight into the final leg with an 18-17 lead. Max Heinzer and Andrea Santarelli scored 18 points each before time ran out. So Switzerland progressed to the semi-finals 36-35.



Switzerland Fleche



Steffen Flies to Swiss Gold

Their semi-final opponents in the top half of the draw were World number one team, France (Borel, Fava, Gally & Gustin) who had an equally tough quarterfinal against the USA ranked eighth. The French led after three fights only for the USA to steal the lead after six and hold on to it, going into the anchor leg 36-35 up. Yannick Borel, the individual champion, came on against Curtis McDowald and snuck an incredible 45-44 win.



Swiss Glory

Things went according to seeding in the bottom half of the draw as Russia (Bida, Glazkov, Khodos & Sukhov), ranked second and Korea (Jung, Kweon, Park K. & Park S.), ranked third, made it to the semi-finals untroubled. Korea broke away from Russia 14-8 after three legs and held on to the six-point lead until the penultimate leg. Jung Jinsun then outscored Sergey Bida 13-8 in a furious encounter handing over an 11-point lead to Park Sangyoung who took Korea over the line. Russia managed a deflated France well to claim the bronze medal 45-35.



Men's Epee Team Podium

In the final, the Koreans were determined not to allow the Swiss to use non-combativity to move the fight on. That said, they were clearly nervous of the potential damage that Heinzer could do and allowed the third leg to be halted early. The Swiss led 10-8 at that stage and maintained the two hit lead (25-23) going into the final third of the match. Two legs of non-combativity followed with the Koreans closing the gap by one hit. Benjamin Steffen faced Park Sangyoung in the furious final leg and carried the Swiss to gold 36-31.

Women's Foil

Individual

Last year's World Championship runner up, Alice Volpi capped a fine season by winning the Women's Foil title in Wuxi. The twenty-eight year old Italian who won the Algiers World Cup earlier in the season as well as

European Championship bronze, beat French rival, Ysaora Thibus in a well-contested final to claim the crown.



Riposte Volpi against Boubakri

The Italian was untroubled on her way to the semi-finals beating Samantha Cantantan of the Philippines 15-4, Russia's Adellina Zagidullina 15-6, Ukrainian Kateryna Chentsova 15-2 and Italian teammate Camilla Mancini 15-9. Her next opponent was twenty-nine year old Tunisian, Ines Boubakri who had remarkably won the last twelve African Championships. Highlights of her tricky progress to the top four were victories over French fencers, Astrid Guyart 15-14 and American Lee Kiefer 15-13. Volpi continued her dominance against Boubakri to secure her place in the final with a 15-7 victory.



Over the top from Thibus against Errigo



Face-to-face in the final

Twenty-six year old Thibus, who had won bronze at the last World Championships progressed to the top eight with comfort. She beat Flavia Mormani of Argentina 15-4, Hungary's Fanny Kreiss 15-8 and Svetlana Tripapina of Russia 15-9. The World number one, Inna Deriglazova, also from Russia, stood in her way but Thibus edged a tight fight 15-14 to secure her place in the semi-finals against World number four and double World Champion, Arianna Errigo. The Italian had made light work of her opponents on route to the top four, with only American Nzanga Prescod taking her to double figures, 15-11. Errigo's dominant performances were not an indicator of what was about to happen. It took 55 seconds for the Italian to land her first hit, at which point she was 10-0 down. Thibus was on fire combining attacks on preparation

with counter actions to establish a lead she was never going to relinquish. The French fencer won the fight 15-2.



Volpi overcome with emotion

The gold medal match started well for Thibus as she established a more direct approach than Volpi. The Italian adapted though, closing the distance as Thibus began her attack on preparation and doing better in close quarters than the French fencer. That allowed Volpi to develop her attack from distance and she went into the first break 7-6 up. In the second period, Volpi pressed cautiously as Thibus looked to develop her attacks from a longer distance. The change in tactics by both fencers cancelled each other out and they were tied at 12-12 with just over a minute to go in the period. Volpi upped the intensity but crucially drew Thibus into making actions the Italian could work off. First she offered her blade to the French fencer only to take it away and land an attack. Then a second intention parry riposte to shoulder put her in touching distance of the title. Volpi ended the fight with a brilliant parry riposte in close quarters to become the World Champion.



WF Podium (l to r: Thibus, Volpi, Errigo & Boubakri)

Great Britain was represented by Kate Beardmore in this discipline and she won two of her six first round fights to secure her place

in the preliminary knockout phase. There she beat Kitti Bitterova of Slovakia 15-13 to make the round of 64. World number one, Deriglazova was too good against her at that stage, winning 15-2. Beardmore finished 64th.



Beardmore vs Bitterova

Team

Ranked third, the USA (Kiefer, Lu, Prescod & Ross) were on fire in the team event, taking gold at a relative canter. They stormed through the field to make the semi-finals where they faced Korea (Chae, Hong H, Hong S & Jeon). The Koreans surprised Russian number two seeds 40-38 in the quarterfinals to make the medal matches. The USA proved too strong in the semi-finals, winning 45-22.



Italy can't find a way through



Kiefer – that winning moment

Both France (Blaze, Guyart, Ranvier & Thibus) and Italy (Cini, Errigo, Mancini & Volpi) made light work on route to the top four but the Italians came through their semi-final 45-29. The bronze medal match between France and Korea was a low scoring affair with the European team prevailing 35-26.

The gold medal match was a contest between the recently crowned European Champions and Pan American Champions. The Italians led 15-12 after the first three legs but America stole the lead 30-26 after six, with Nzingha Prescod particularly impressive in the fourth leg against Camilla Mancini. Prescod came on for the penultimate leg and again impressed, holding Arianna Errigo to 7-7. That meant that

Kiefer had a 40-34 lead against Alice Volpi in the final leg and she carried the USA over the line to a 45-35 victory.



Buckie Leach & Greg Massialas with the USA Women's Foil Champions

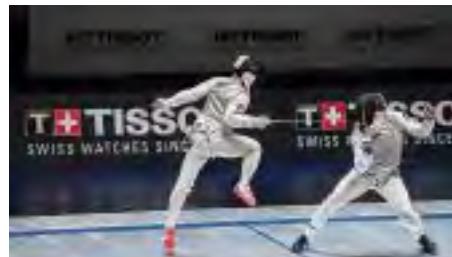


Champions' Selfie

Men's Foil

Individual

Italy's twenty-eight year old, Alessio Foconi completed another fantastic season by winning the Men's Foil World title in Wuxi. Foconi, who had won the Paris World Cup earlier in the season as well as picking up two silver medals and one bronze in ranking events, beat Britain's Richard Kruse in the final.



Foconi defends well against Heo

Foconi's day could not have started tougher as he faced Germany's four-time World Champion, Peter Joppich in the round of 64. He took that fight 15-11 before beating Michal Siess of Poland 15-1. Canadian Maximilien Van Haaster 15-12 and Enzo Lefort of France 15-8 to make the semi-finals. There he faced Korea's two-time Asian Champion, Heo Jun who had come through qualification. The highlight of his progress to the medal matches was his 15-14 victory over Italy's reigning Olympic Champion, Daniele Garozzo in the quarterfinals. Heo put up a strong fight against Foconi in the semi-finals but the

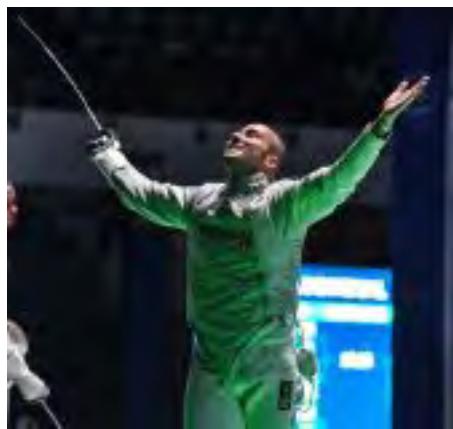
Italian secured a 15-12 victory to go on to fight for gold.

Thirty-five year old Kruse had won both the Cairo Grand Prix and Shanghai Grand Prix in the season and came into the tournament ranked fourth in the World. A full report on his performance is available on pages 6-8. His semi-final opponent Carlos Llavador of Spain had experience of competing on a major podium having secured the bronze medal at the 2015 European Championships. He beat Russia's Olympic silver medallist, Timur Safin and Italian Giorgio Avola on his way to the top four. Avola had previously knocked out American World number one, Race Imboden. Kruse was too strong for Llavador in the semi-finals and went on to win 15-11.



Foconi scores one on the back in the final

The final started well for Kruse. He led a low scoring first period 3-0 with one attack and two counters but Foconi was playing a patient game. The Italian came out for the second period and immediately began to press the British fencer back. Kruse was still able to land his counter in the early stages but then Foconi started to draw it and work off the riposte. He then started to lure Kruse into attacking and the change of tactics worked as he drew level, 6-6 at the second break. Kruse was beginning to show signs of fatigue but put everything into the beginning of the final period. Foconi was having none of it and weathered the pressure before launching a stunning attack to take the lead for the first time. With the bit between his teeth, the Italian took full advantage of a tiring Kruse, employing devastating speed on the attack and counter. Kruse was only able to score twice more as Foconi secured the title with a 15-8 victory. The win saw Foconi finish the season ranked first in the World with Kruse 18 points behind in second.



Alessio Foconi (ITA) wins the Men's Foil Title



Sheer joy



Men's Foil Podium (l to r: Kruse, Foconi, Heo & Llavador)

Team

Italy, ranked second, broke American dreams by winning the team event. The USA had been the dominant force all season, winning all five World Cup events but the team were pipped at the post in Wuxi.



Garozzo leads Italy to victory

There were no surprises in this event as the top four teams made it through to the semi-finals without any drama. In the semi-finals the USA (Chamley-Watson, Imboden, Massialas & Meinhardt) comfortably beat Russia (Arslanov, Cheremisinov, Safin & Zherebchenko) 45-29 as Italy (Avola, Cassara, Foconi & Garozzo) had an equally relaxed 45-30 win over Korea (Ha, Heo, Lee & Son). Russia then recovered more quickly to beat Korea 45-35 for the bronze medal.

In the gold medal match, the Italians did not mess around. They established the lead 15-14 after three legs, opening it up to 30-23 going into the crucial final three legs. The Americans fought hard but Foconi, Cassara and Garozzo saw the match out 45-34.



Italy beat the USA



Men's Foil Team Podium

Keith Cook joined James-Andrew Davis, Marcus Mepstead and Ben Peggs to form the British team. They comfortably beat Singapore 45-29 in the round of 32 before losing 45-26 to France. In the placings matches they beat Hong Kong 45-35 and Hungary 45-38 before losing 41-40 to Egypt to finish tenth in a field of 26.



GBR Men's Foil team

Women's Sabre

Twenty-one year old Russian, Sofia Pozdniakova stunned the field by winning the Women's Sabre World Championship title in Wuxi. She had never claimed a senior medal in her young career and defeated teammate Sofya Velikaya in the final. The other main feature of the event was that none of the World's top nine fencers made it to the podium in an event that Russia dominated.

Having come through the qualifying rounds, Pozdniakova comfortably beat Singapore's Ywen Lau 15-8 before beating American World number eight, Dagmara Wozniak 15-8 and

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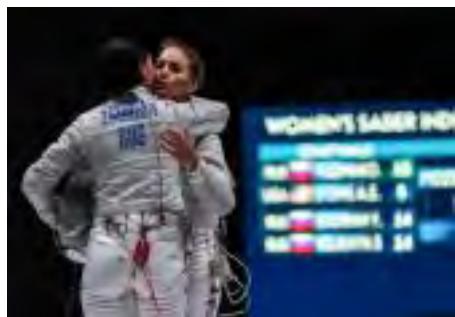
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World number nine, Irene Vecchi of Italy 15-12 before booking her place in the semi-finals with a 15-12 win over Shao Yaqui of China. Her next opponent was twenty-seven year old Pan-American silver medallist, Anne-Elizabeth Stone of the USA. Stone made comfortable progress through a favourable draw before edging past Theodora Gkoutntoura of Greece 15-14 to secure her place in the top four. Pozdniakova, sensing a big opportunity, dominated the semi-final against Stone, winning 15-6.



Pozdniakova beat Stone in their semi-final



Velikaya kisses Egorian having won their semi-final



Pozdniakova takes Women's Sabre gold

In the other half of the draw, Sofya Velikaya was looking to complete her comeback from a lengthy post-Rio break. The two-time World Champion (Catania 2011 & Moscow 2015) was coming off the back of winning both the Moscow Grand Prix and European Championships earlier in the season. She eased past Diah Permatasari of Indonesia 15-6 before beating Chika Aoki of Japan 15-13, Poland's Alexandra Shelton (nee Socha) 15-7 and World number two, Cecilia Berder of France 15-13. Her next opponent was teammate, Yana Egorian, whose form had recovered in synchrony with Velikaya's return. However, despite what looked like a great draw, Egorian won her last three fights 15-14 against China's Yang Hengyu, Iryna Shchukla of Turkey and Yang's teammate, Qian Jiarui to

make the podium matches. If the first semi was a walkover, the second was far from it, although it didn't look that way when Velikaya went into the break with an 8-4 lead. Egorian fenced superbly in the second period. She stayed close in defence, luring Velikaya to finish before stepping away and making her miss. The tactic saw her briefly take the lead before Velikaya dug deep to draw level. At 14-14 it was anyone's match but Velikaya held her nerve to take the victory on the attack.



Podium (l to r: Velikaya, Pozdniakova, Stone & Egorian)



Russia strike three (l to r Veilkaya, Pozdniakova, Egorian & Christian Bauer)

Despite her relative lack of experience, Pozdniakova showed no signs of nerves against Velikaya in the final. In fact she began the fight with supreme discipline in attack, kept it simple and professional. By contrast, Velikaya looked almost too relaxed and somewhat static. Pozdniakova took advantage and went into the break with an 8-4 lead. With no coaches on the sidelines, one can only wonder what was going through the young fencer's mind. There was no doubt that a more difficult Velikaya would be out for the second period. Sure enough, Velikaya came back out with more intent, scoring the first four hits unanswered to draw level. In a strange way, that seemed to take the pressure off Pozdniakova finding her distance and rhythm again, scoring the next four with a variety of hits. With the momentum with the younger fencer at 14-9, it looked like Velikaya's dream return was over. Again, she dug deep and began moving better. She started landing her long attacks and evading Pozdniakova when defending. At 14-13 down, the momentum was with Velikaya but on

another long attack, Pozdniakova reached out and landed a stop-cut and with a victorious scream, took the World title.

Team

Number two seeds, France (Berder, Brunet, Lembach & Queroli) won the team event but had to come from behind against China to win their quarterfinal 45-42.



Brunet Blocks out Russia

Korea (Choi, Hwng, Kim & Yoon) eased through the early stages to face France for a place in the final. Again, France found themselves behind but an impressive seventh leg from Caroline Queroli put France ahead before Manon Brunet and Cecilia Berder completed the job, 45-42.



The French Champions

Russia (Egorian, Pozdniakova, Sheveleva & Velikaya) had to reign in the USA in the quarterfinals but an impressive 7-2 finish for Sofya Velikaya over Mariel Zagunis saw them over the line 45-42. Their semi-final opponents, Italy (Criscio, Gregorio, Gulotta & Vecchi), also endured a tough quarterfinal battle against Hungary. They trailed the Hungarians from the third leg but Irene Vecchi outscored Liza Pusztai 11-2 in the penultimate leg and despite a brave fight-back from Anna Marton, Rosella Gregorio took the Italians to a 45-44 victory. In the semi-finals, Russia led throughout before Vecchi came on again in the eighth leg. This time she took Yana Egorian apart 10-4 to give the Italians a one-hit lead going into the last. Sofya Velikaya fought back and edged the Russians to a 45-44 victory.

The Italians started the bronze medal match well against Korea, leading 15-9 after three legs but Yoon Jisu impressed in the fourth. She put the Koreans ahead 20-18, a lead they never relinquished, taking the medal 45-40.

In the gold medal match, France took the lead early over Russia, leading 15-8 and 30-19. Cecilia Berder impressed the most, dropping

just one hit in her first two matches. Berder knew she needed a comfortable lead before going on for the anchor leg against Velikaya. Caroline Queroli and Manon Brunet opened the lead by a further two points before the ninth leg and Berder took France to gold 45-35.



Women's Sabre Team Podium

Men's Sabre

Individual

Thirty-four year old Korean, Kim Junghwan came through the field to win the Men's Sabre World Championship title in China. The Rio 2016 Olympic bronze medallist had won silver at both the Seoul Grand Prix and Asian Championships earlier in the season and went one better by beating America's Eli Dershitz in the final in Wuxi.



Dershitz win semi against Kim Junho

Ranked ninth in the World, Kim eased through the field beating Polish fencer Jakub Ocinski 15-12, Romania's Tiberiu Dolniceanu 15-11, Luca Curatoli of Italy 15-10 and then World number one teammate Gu Bongil by the same score to make the top four. His next opponent was last year's bronze medallist, Kamil Ibragimov. The Russian's progress was highlighted by a 15-7 victory over recently crowned European Champion, Max Hartung of Germany and last year's Hungarian Champion, Andras Szatmari, who he beat 15-9. Kim edged an extremely tight semi-final over Ibragimov 15-13 to secure his place in the gold medal match.

Twenty-two year old Dershitz has established himself in the senior ranks over the past two seasons and came into the event ranked third in the World. His draw was as tough as expected at this level but he came through Dmytro Pundyk of Ukraine 15-4, China's surprise entry, Yan Yinghui 15-12, German Benedikt Wagner 15-14 and double Olympic Champion Aron Szilagyi of Hungary 15-11. His next opponent was another Korean and another Kim – Kim Junho. He beat Vincent Anstett of France 15-12 and Iran's Ali Pakdaman 15-14 on his way to a guaranteed

medal. The semi-final between Dershitz and Kim Junho was no less thrilling than the first but the American snuck through 15-14.



Kim Junghwang on top of the World



Sporting in victory & defeat



Men's Sabre Podium (l to r: Dershitz, Kim Junghwan, Ibragimov, Kim Junho)

A seesaw final began with Dershitz having the upper hand. He took the fight to Kim before the Korean settled to establish the lead himself. Dershitz fought back with patient attacks and strength in defence, moving the fight out of the middle but Kim held an 8-7 lead at the break. Kim's tactics in the second period were clear – keep the fight in the middle. He pushed ahead further only for Dershitz to employ the "Korean hop" against his Korean opponent to draw level at 10-10. Kim stuck with his tactic, using varying footwork off the line to either land his

attack or make Dershitz's miss. On the two occasions the American managed to break the fight out of the middle, Kim opened the distance in defence. One spectacular stop-cut and two parry ripostes saw Kim Junghwan secure a brilliant World title.

Great Britain was represented by four fencers. Curtis Miller did not survive the poule stage but Will Deary, James Honeybone and Jonathan Webb did. Deary fell 15-8 to Enver Yildrim of Turkey in the preliminary qualifier as Webb defeated Teddy Weller of the Virgin Islands 15-13 to make the round of 64. Honeybone won all of his first round matches to progress directly to the 64 where he lost 15-13 to Hungarian Csanad Gemesi. Webb also lost out there, 15-8 to Luca Curatoli from Italy.

Team

Number one seeds, Korea (Gu, Kim Junghwan, Kim Junho & Oh) lived up to their billing as favourites for this event by claiming the gold medal – and with some comfort.



Korea on their way to victory over Italy

They ploughed through their early matches to face surprise package, Georgia (Bazadze S, Bazadze B, Mardaleishvili & Retchia) in the semi-finals. The Georgians took out the World number four and five teams, USA and Iran on route to the top four. Korea were too strong for them at that stage and went on to fight for gold with a 45-34 victory.



Kim Junghwan celebrates second gold with the Korean team

In the other half of the draw, Italy (Berre, Curatoli, Montano & Samele) cruised to the semi-finals to face Hungary (Decsi, Gemesi, Szatmari & Szilagyi) who had a tough match against Germany in the quarterfinals. The Hungarians trailed throughout but Aron Szilagyi came on for the last fight and beat Matyas Szabo 9-3 taking them to a 45-43 victory. The semi-final between Italy and

Hungary was a great match. Hungary led 15-14 after three legs but the Italians fought back brilliantly to lead 30-22 after six. Despite, Csanad Gemesi, Andras Szatmari and Aron Szilagyi all out-scoring their Italian opponents in the last three legs, Italy had a big enough lead to secure a 45-42 victory.



Men's Sabre Team Podium



GB Men's Sabre Team (l to r: Webb, Miller, Salfield, Deary, Honeybone)

Hungary made no mistakes in the bronze medal match, leading from the off and easing to a 45-36 victory over Georgia for the medal.

Korea continued their fantastic form in the gold medal match, leading Italy by 10 points after six legs. It all looked to be over as Luca Curaoli came on for Italy in the anchor leg, 14 hits down against Oh Sanguk. A quite remarkable finale was to follow as Curatoli came on and scored 13 hits. A nervy Oh just about carried the Koreans over the line, 45-39, but what a finish.

Great Britain (Deary, Honeybone, Miller & Webb) were ranked fifteenth for the team event and beat Egypt 45-38 before losing 45-22 to Italy in the round of 16. They went on to lose 45-44 to China, before beating Japan 45-43 but then losing by the same score to Ukraine to finish fourteenth.



Men's Foil Podium (l to r: Kruse, Foconi, Heo & Llavador)

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With your support, British fencers will be able to enter competitions all over the world to give them the best chance to qualify for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The British Fencing Charitable Fund was set up in 2015 with the objective of providing financial and other assistance to enable participation in fencing at all levels. The Trustees, Paul Wedge, John Troiano and Tom Cadman have been the driving force behind the creation of the Charitable Fund. All three Trustees have been involved in the sport from a young age and they were lucky enough to enjoy a good level of success over the years. Each of them came to the sport by chance and were given time to nurture by those that love the sport. The Charitable Trust has been created by them to help support upcoming UK fencing talent.

While the Charitable Fund is a separate legal entity from British Fencing, its trustees are appointed by nomination from the Board of British Fencing. The charity aims to work closely with British Fencing to ensure that, where possible, the charity's priorities align with those of British Fencing. However, the trustees will always act in the best interest of the charity.

The trustees receive no remuneration and apart from minor administration costs to support the website, all donations received are applied to causes selected by the trustees. In addition to being registered with the Charity Commission, the charity is also recognised by HM Revenue and Customs. Gift Aid can be claimed on all donations received. The registration number for Gift Aid is EW42958.

The British Fencing Charitable Fund has set up their new website which can be found at <http://britishfencingcharity.org.uk> and they continue to fund GB athletes through a series of grants and awards to individuals and teams.

In support of the charitable fund's activities, British Fencing's #FundFencing campaign first gathered momentum immediately after the loss of UK Sport funding, raising over £18,000 for the GB athletes in 2017, in response to the funding cuts. To support the charity further, a new wave of #FundFencing was planned by British Fencing in 2018, with the objective of assisting our athletes in their training towards Tokyo 2020.

The new campaign wave hit the headlines in July 2018 when the BBC's Katie Falkingham



'Give Us the Power' (Photo: Celine Ramseyer)

covered the 'lack' of donations. The piece also highlighted a case study on James Davis' struggle to compete under financial pressure, just as he made the last 8 in the individual mens' foil event in Wuxi. The coverage from the BBC, paired with Richard Kruse's triumphant silver medal, helped bring awareness to the new campaign and donations increased to just under £3000 by August 2018.

Sensational PR coverage aside, #FundFencing was actually created to spearhead a number of campaigns that will support GB athletes' dreams come true by entering the 2020 Olympic Games and all the competitions between now and then. In 2017, we asked for your help to support our athletes, reeling from funding cuts. Now, in 2018, with help from social media and the kind support of the fencing community, the initiative has begun to

gather new momentum with extra fundraising tools in place.

To launch the new wave of fundraising, students from the University of Arts, London, produced 'Give Us the Power', a short film featuring Jonathan 'JJ' Webb and Curtis Miller. Produced by Celine Ramseyer and directed by Helen Uleksin, the piece depicts Webb's fencing kit flickering on and off, as if he is losing the power to compete against his opponent. The film attracted a massive wave of support over social media and has increased traffic to the fundraising page. You can watch the film here, <https://bit.ly/2xxz6X2>.

A new Facebook page has also been set up for the Charitable Fund that allows anyone to set up their own fundraiser for an individual athlete, team or the whole charity through Facebook fundraising tools.

With your kind generosity, you'll help pay for entry fees, travel costs, training fees and accommodation but most of all, you will allow fencers to concentrate on being athletes and reduce the worry of sourcing funding, that will enable them to train for longer and be the best fencers they can be!

Here's how you can help:

- Set up your own Fundraiser and appoint the Charitable Fund to receive the funds via Facebook
- Donate via the #FundFencing campaign on Facebook or via the British Fencing website
- Share the campaign via social media with the hashtag #FundFencing

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Harrison Nichols on Imperium Investment Funding

Harrison Nichols: "Imperium Investments funding will boost my training in an important year"

This year is proving to be one of opportunity for Harrison Nichols, 21, who has been selected for the Commonwealth Fencing Championships which will take place in Canberra, Australia, 23-28 November 2018. Harrison took the fencing U23 British Fencing Epee National Champion title in London for the second year running. He has also just received a grant from Imperium Investments to support his training.

Speaking to *The Sword*, Harrison explained, "Receiving this grant from Imperium Investments is great support in an important year for me. The funding allows me to accept training opportunities without financial stress. I was invited to attend the training camp in Tauberbischofsheim run by the DFB Epee Group, where the Olympic athletes are trained. It is an honour to attend this camp as it's mostly reserved for the German national team. It is beneficial to train with such skilled fencers and to receive such high level coaching."

Harrison added, "This funding is going to help my training immensely. Being an athlete can be a surprisingly expensive lifestyle, especially for a student. The costs of seeking adequate recovery and nutrition, as well as the costs of travelling to training three to four times a week can add up very quickly. I am grateful that this support helps to alleviate these financial struggles and allows me to prepare for my competitions to the best of my ability. Recently, I have also begun to work with a personal trainer who has given me a programme to improve my strength and flexibility. I believe I will see big improvements in my game and this wouldn't have been possible without this funding."

We asked how challenging it is for a young person to train at such a level, as well as pursue studies. Harrison said, "Balancing training with the rest of my life can sometimes be difficult. I have found that being organised and disciplined is the key. When I was finishing my dissertation earlier this year I planned my days out and tried to stick to a schedule as best as I could. You can get a surprising amount of work done in a day if you don't procrastinate. The last thing you want to happen is to be distracted by the work you have to complete when competing. I'm also very lucky to have friends that understand I sometimes have to miss out on things. As a teenager I struggled more with finding a good balance between my social life and training but I think I have improved recently. Even when I was most busy with my university work and training I always found some time to have fun with friends. It's an important part of life."

Dmitry Leus, who runs Imperium Investments and is a former international fencer himself, spoke of his pleasure at being able to support a promising young British athlete. "We are delighted to back Harrison. We have a lot of faith in him and his commitment and ability. The fact that we could help him with his trip to Tauberbischofsheim in particular is very meaningful for me. They allow just a few people from abroad to join, which is why we are so thrilled for Harrison. I have been fencing myself since childhood and I know how important these openings are - when there is an opportunity in sport that can change the course of your life. I know Harrison will really embrace the chances that are coming his way and he'll give his all."

After sponsoring the 2018 GBR U23 European Championships squad, British Fencing worked with Imperium Investments to establish a longer-term sponsorship opportunity with Harrison Nichols. Georgina Usher, the Chief Executive Officer of British Fencing, said, "without a funded world class programme it is important that we help connect our British athletes up with sponsors where we can. This support from Imperium Investment gives Harrison and his coach the ability to create a realistic long term training plan with the confidence that financial support to follow it is in place."

Imperium Investments also offered financial support to Paul Sanchez Lethem, the UK's top ranked British male fencer, as he was also invited to attend the Tauberbischofsheim training camp. Imperium's commitment to supporting the work of British Fencing also includes the new Imperium Academy in Brixton providing starter lessons with the Brixton Fencing Club for local state school children free of charge. Once the children have finished the starter lessons, they will be invited to join the regular club sessions again free of charge.

If you or your company is interested in supporting a GBR fencer please contact headoffice@britishfencing.com or call 020 8742 3032.



Georgina Usher, Dmitry Leus & Harrison Nichols

British Fencing Image of the Year 2018

By Sophie DeVooght

In August 2018, British Fencing began its search for the 'British Fencing Image of the Year 2018', with a social media campaign across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Photographers were invited to submit fencing related images to three categories, 'Teamwork', 'Inspiration' and 'Fencing Fun'. Over 60 images were submitted with the hashtag #BFImage2018. The three categories were judged by fencer, James Honeybone and Neil Freeman from Nikon School UK.

The category winners were announced on World Photo Day, August 19th on the British Fencing website and social media.

ACE photography won the 'Teamwork' category with their triumphant image depicting the joy of working as a team.

Augusto Bazzi's uplifting image of Salle Ossian Fencing Club fencer Mark Alvares-Peres was hailed as the winner of the 'Inspiration' category.

Millie Brody's image of her fencing against her chicken, Margot, won the 'Fencing Fun' category and attracted some witty caption comments on Facebook.

The overall winner was revealed at the British Fencing Awards Dinner on September 8th in Nottingham. The image that the judges decided most depicted British Fencing's mantra 'Be You, Be Different' was captured by Millie Brody. Millie won a £149 voucher



Winner of the Inspiration category – Augusto Bazzi (nominated by Salle Ossian)

for Nikon School UK workshops and is a keen photographer and fencer. On winning the prize she said, "The photo was taken in our back garden when my husband, Jason Brodie and I were doing some fencing practice one evening, as we had our first ever competition coming up that weekend."

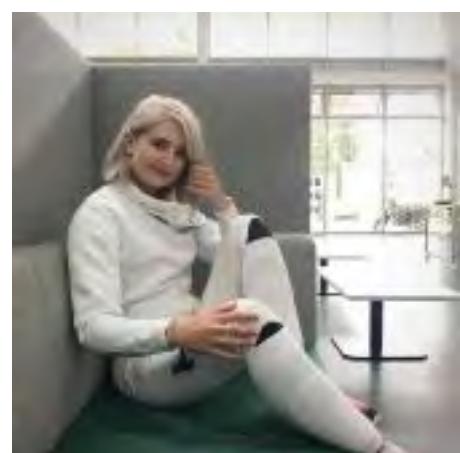
"Jason decided to have a break and a cup of tea, leaving me to practice. However, I wasn't

alone for long, Margot (the most fearless one of our chickens) suddenly took a great interest in the tip of my Epee and kept trying to peck it, possibly thinking it was a bug! I've always had a great interest in photography and saw this as a brilliant photo opportunity with the sun setting in the background whilst I duelled with Margot. So I set my phone on timer and managed to capture the comical moment. Jason and my club members at Northampton Fencing Club found it very amusing."

She added, "I've now been fencing for 2 years...and that's against humans not just chickens!"

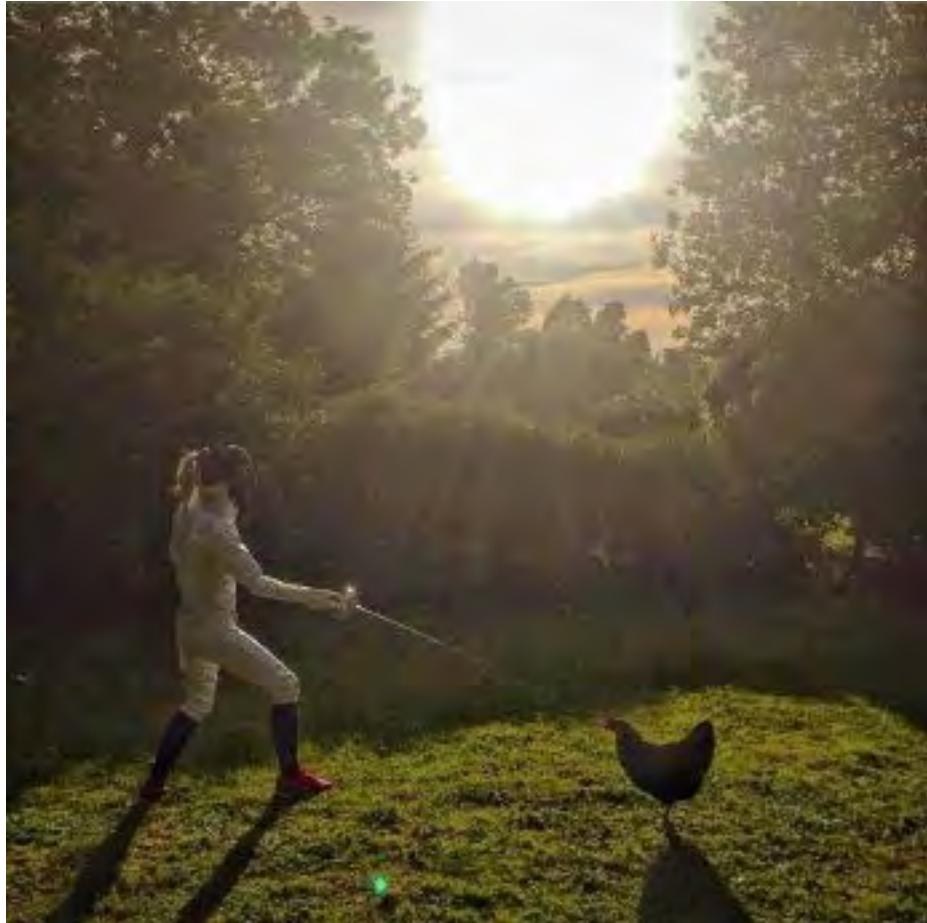


Winner of the Teamwork category – ACE Photography



Millie Brody

British Fencing Image of the Year 2018 (contd.)



Winner of the Fencing Fun category and overall winner – Millie Brody

The British Fencing partnership with Nikon School UK has created some fantastic opportunities for photographers including a workshop at Leon Paul, London in June where photographers captured elite fencers Kate Beardmore and James Honeybone in action. The next Nikon School UK photography workshop at Leon Paul is planned for November 13th, 2018. Photographers will have the opportunity to work with two highly skilled athletes, learning how to take both action shots and static portraits. Nikon School trainers will help guide the delegates through everything they need in order to come away with some fantastic fencing images. They'll cover how to shoot controlled action shots, static sports portraits and composition, using high shutter speeds and how to use both speedlights and continuous lighting sources whilst on location.

Did you see the entries to the British Fencing Image of the Year 2018 competition on social media? Search for #BFimage2018 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to see all the images.

Link to Nikon School UK workshop: <https://nikonschool.co.uk/course/7760/nikon-school-experience-fencing-photography/9975>



Correction

In the previous issue of this magazine on p31, we stated that (of the competitors) only Jason Scrimshaw had previously won the Birmingham Open Men's Epee event. This was incorrect as Calum Johnston also won the discipline in 2016. Our apologies for this oversight.

Get noticed!! Your advertisement could go here.

Email the editor: karim.bashir@catchsport.com

How to use MailChimp to make your emails GDPR compliant



MailChimp

James Joy of Fencers Club London tells us what MailChimp is and how he uses it to communicate and manage the club's distribution lists.

Fencers Club London
Raising The Game

1. What is MailChimp and why should we use it?

MailChimp is an email marketing system, which on the face of it does not sound like something your club needs. However, it does far more than generate pretty looking emails for selling stuff.

Most, if not all, email accounts have limits on the number of emails you can send within a given time frame. This is for a couple of reason. Primarily, it is due to the way spam filtering now works, and secondly to help maintain your account security.

Spam filtering looks at a load of parameters when trying to judge spam or legit. The first thing they do is compare where the email has come from against a blacklist. These lists shared between email system contain a list of mail servers, domain names and email addresses that for various reason have been added.

If a system detects you are sending out a lot of emails in a short space of time, this can trigger spam filters and add you and/or your system to a blacklist – which from personal experience are a nightmare to then get yourself unlisted from. Whilst you may not have had an issue so far, if the limits are changed or you add extra email addresses to your list, you can all of a sudden hit these limits.

Hence, most email system spam checks email before they are even sent, to prevent their whole email system from being blacklisted. This can then activate the second element, as the system can then assume your account has been hacked and automatically deactivate your account – which is another nightmare situation to resolve.

From my own experience of maintaining email system, spam is a massive problem and accounts for 50% or more of total email traffic. Hence, the very stringent checks on the systems now is so very easy to fall foul of.

MailChimp maintains some very high standards and checks to prevent their email system from being used and abused by spammers, so emails sent via their system are far less likely to be blocked. So can prevent

you from the world of pain of being blacklisted or having your account blocked?

2. How does MailChimp work?

MailChimp is an online system so no software is required.

As it is designed for email marketing some of the terms they use are a bit marketingese. However, there are two elements to MailChimp. Firstly, *Campaigns* – these are these email? Don't understand what he is trying to say here you want to send or have sent. Secondly, *Lists* – the database of email addresses.

When you set up a *Campaign*, you pick a *List* you want to send it to and their system then processes and sends the emails. These are sent as individual emails and appear to have come from your email address, so replies, etc. are still sent to you.

The *List* can just be a list of email address. However, you would be missing a trick here, as they can contain additional information, known as *Fields*, that you specify. As an example you can consider a *List* of members, categorised by, for example, names, membership type (senior, junior, etc.), age groups, nights they attend and so on.

Whilst setting up a *Campaign* you can use these fields. It initially targets the email, for example only sends to senior members, as well to personalise the emails in the *Campaign*.

The actual *Campaigns* are created with a drag and drop builder, that allows you to insert pictures, text, buttons, etc. to create a much more engaging email than the usual text email. This is very easy to use and no special skills are required. They have some great prebuilt templates, examples, help and tutorials as well.

3. How does this help with GDPR?

Firstly, you don't need to keep a *List* as a document or spreadsheet that sits on your PC or in your email account – that you will need to update and maintain, then email out to others for them to update. These documents

risk being exposed somewhere in their journey around, so you may need to submit a data breach notice. Also, you don't have the issue of who has got the most up to date version as it exists online and you are all working off the same list.

Emails are sent individually so no risk of carbon copying (CC'ing) people, rather than Blind Copying (BC'ing) them, thus exposing your entire email list to all recipients, which you now have to report as a breach.

The *List* interacts with the campaigns and the recipients. If an email bounces, it is removed (unsubscribed) from the list, no further emails are sent. At the bottom of every email, you send via MailChimp, are the options to people to update their details as well as unsubscribe from the list, which is a GDPR requirement. Therefore, your *List* should always be up to date and accurate – another GDPR requirement.

There are also a number of ways of adding people to the *List*. You can publish a link to the subscription form, either a prebuilt standard one or customised one, import them in from your existing document, or enter them individually.

To help with the grey area of consent, if you have not already gained this, you can enable an additional function that then sends them an email to inform them have been added to the *List*, that then requires them to confirm they do actually want to be on it. Great, if you are not sure the *List* you are currently using is 100% accurate or if you have not previously gained consent.

The reason I say consent is a grey area, is, on the one hand, you need to be able to show they have consented to receive emails, on the other you can email them without consent if you have a legitimate reason to do so. Therefore, emailing them information to say the club is closed or session has been cancelled would, in my eyes, be a legitimate reason. Whilst informing them you are running a camp, competition, etc. may be viewed as marketing, thus require consent. Therefore, I would suggest you get opt-in consent somewhere along the way so using the MailChimp additional option may be a good way of doing this.

4. What are the cost and limitations?

In most cases, it is free to use, as the free account is limited to less than 2,000 recipients and sending less than 12,000 emails a month (so 6 emails a month to 2,000 people at a time). So no real reason not to use it.

The emails are very easy to customise, personalise, etc. so you can do far more, a lot faster and easier than you can with your standard emails. I have found personalising emails increases the responses you receive and MailChimp does this for you with little to no additional effort.

Using the *List*, it tracks the emails and user interactions and reports on these. You can see the open rates, number of clicks, etc. which is great when you have sent an email to say the club is closed and someone complains they turned up – as you can check and usually find they did open the email!

Emails are a lot more engaging as you are no longer limited to text. Images, buttons, backgrounds, etc. are all very easy to do.

Sending attachments can be problematic especially if they are fairly large, and can

cause the dreaded spam filters to kick in again. In most cases, the reason you are sending an attachment is because you can't get all the information in a nice format in the email, which you can now with MailChimp. However, attachments via MailChimp are sent as a link so the emails are still small, and people just open the link from the email.

Emails, depending on your design, are mobile compatible so people don't need to pinch, zoom and scroll to read the content.

You can have multiple users access the same account. You set up the main account and can then add other users to it. Therefore, you can have several people working in the same campaign at the same time. You can also then remove people that no longer need access, without the need to change the password and then inform those that still need access that the password has changed. Limiting the chances of exposing the data.

The campaigns can be linked to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. Therefore, when the email is sent it is also posted to these as well, so there is no need to do this separately.

MailChimp offers a load of integration with other systems for automatically updating

list. Therefore, you can, depending on the system you use, link your membership list to MailChimp so when you add or remove people they are also added and removed from MailChimp.

The only real limit is the email address can only appear once in the list. Therefore, if you have a family on your list they only get one email, which in most cases is a good thing anyway. However, it does cause an issue with customised email and targeting. If you may have this issue, then you just need to put a bit more thought into your list setup.

5. Are there any alternatives?

Yes, there are loads of them. However, MailChimp is the market leader, been around since 2001 so ancient in internet firm terms. Most others charge and are nowhere near as comprehensive or integrated.

British Fencing would like to publicly thank Fencers Club London and James Joy for sharing this article with us and the fencing community. If your club has something to share, please contact josef.thomas@britishfencing.com.

12 ways parents can encourage their young fencers Author: Igor Chirashnya

When it comes to being the parent of a fencer, everyone wants to see their child win the match. That sounds simple and straightforward, but in reality it's not so easy to know how to give your child that support.

The first thing parents need to realise is that the key is to ENCOURAGE your child in fencing, NOT TO PUSH them into getting better at the sport. The difference is that encouragement is allowing the motivation to spring from inside your child, where pushing your child is forcing your will onto them.

The goal of sports is to develop good qualities in our children that will long outlive the time that they spend actually playing the sport!

Poor sports parenting puts undue pressure and stress on kids. It's counterproductive as it leaves children not liking fencing, being burdened with feelings of failure and taking negative feelings into other parts of their lives. What parents give to kids while they're training on the piste stays with them well beyond.

If you want your child to come out of their fencing experience as a winner, (by winning we mean feeling good about themselves and having a healthy attitude towards

competition, NOT that they get a bunch of medals,) then they need YOUR HELP! You are a central, critical, important part of the athlete-coach-parent team that is what makes fencing work.

Keep in mind that no one wins unless everyone wins. These dozen tactics will help fencing parents to become more skilled in youth fencing, because there is no handbook for fencing parents that's got all of the answers!

1. Change the way you define success and failure. Success is not defined by winning and losing
2. Understand that competition is the best training partner
3. Provide support, but don't coach
4. Encourage your child to compete against herself/himself
5. Build your fencer's self-esteem in every interaction
6. Give your fencer the gift of failure
7. Challenge instead of threatening
8. Avoid comparisons at all times
9. Instill perspective
10. Recognise that your child is not their fencing performance

11. Keep your dreams out of it who's point is it or who's win is it?
12. Help make fencing fun for your young fencer

To read more about each of the 12 Ways Igor highlights read his full blog here, <https://academyoffencingmasters.com/blog/12-ways-parents-can-encourage-young-fencers/>.



That question? “Should we be encouraging our fencers to play up?”

There is often a time when a young fencer based on some good performances in domestic competitions has a good position in the rankings list. It is a logical assumption they are ready for the challenge of “playing up” (i.e. competing in a higher age group).

THE CHALLENGE OF PLAYING UP

Every parent wants the best for their children. Life experiences that enable growth are important and so many believed that playing up, having that international experience would be a good thing for the person development. But there is the “what if....”.

What if it didn't work? What if the challenge of fencing with older, bigger fencers was too great for the fencer, they scored very few hits and their skills and confidence went backwards?

Challenging oneself is important for effective development. In this case, it provides a fencer with the opportunity to test their technical and tactical skills, to develop their mental and behavioural skills and attitudes; these like commitment and self-evaluation, are key to fencers reaching their potential.

Taking aside the time and cost investment, a challenge too far outside a fencer's ability or reach can negatively affect their confidence and ultimately, hold them back or even lose them to the sport.

Taking on a challenge of playing up, should be carefully considered by the fencer, their parents, and their coach(s). There are a number of examples of the athletes being guided into the right level of competition to stretch them, none more so than boxing. In boxing the impact of the wrong level competition is potentially life changing!

Overcoming Challenge Is a Skill

It's easy to think that better performance is the result of a young fencer's serendipitous encounters with challenge; that they naturally grew from the experience. Strength through adversity equates to character building!

Overcoming a challenge is about having the right attitude - the understanding of the attitude that the best athletes innately exemplify and where everybody else struggles.

What is clear is that while facing challenge is important, the specific skills to overcome them need to be taught/learnt, which when achieved can help young athletes make the most of their sporting experiences.

Growing from Challenge: The Reflective Learning Cycle

Like all good experiential education, the skills and attributes to overcome and grow from challenge can be developed using a progressive, integrative and reflective learning cycle.

THE REFLECTIVE LEARNING CYCLE OF CHALLENGE

1. The learning cycle begins with the development of the right skills for the stage of maturity and level of experience of the fencer.
2. Then, the fencer tests their skills in a dynamic environment encompassing realistic challenges.
3. Supported by the coach, and or parent in a constructive review, the fencer receives structured feedback and feed forwards for use and refinement when tackling future challenges.

So, with this in mind, let's examine Zach's opportunity to fence at a higher competition.

- a. Identify the potential challenges
 - Bigger, stronger, faster fencers
 - More skillful and tactically aware opponents
 - Less time from the word “Fence”
 - More pressure to play well
 - More mistakes made
 - New and different environment
- b. Identify the skills and attributes required by Zach to overcome the challenge of

playing up and assess his current level of ability for each of them

- Commitment – what does commitment look like in the new environment and can Zach adhere to it?
- Quality practice – does Zach have the skills and level of interest, and opportunity to practice more so that he can be competitive?
- Goal setting and self-reinforcement – what should Zach's focus on during his performance and how does he know he's getting better?
- Resilience – how well does Zach bounce back after he makes a mistake?
- Self-regulation – how does Zach react emotionally when things go wrong?
- Creating and using support networks – how good is Zach at developing new relationships with the older fencers in the squad

Once the key skills have been identified and Zach's ability has been assessed, an informed decision can be made on playing up.

For example, despite being a big/tall child for his age and how good Zach is technically, some work might need to be done to improve his resilience and self-regulation skills before going ahead with the move up.

On the other hand, you may choose to go for it, if Zach's skills stack up, after which the next stages of the cycle, review and refinement, can begin.

- c. Review Zach's performance of playing up
- d. Provide feedback and feed forward to Zach to help him improve

In Summary

Challenge in youth sport is essential. It's what every young fencer grows and develops from. But overcoming challenge shouldn't be left to a ranking level or chance. Instead, psychological skills and attitudes should be developed in a systematic and reflective way to prepare the fencer to take on progressively more difficult challenges, overcome them and learn the most from their experiences.

Correction

In the previous issue of this magazine on p31, we stated that (of the competitors) only Jason Scrimshaw had previous won the Birmingham Open Men's Epee event. This was incorrect as Calum Johnston also won the discipline in 2016. Our apologies for this oversight.

This Girl Can

written by Michael Hawkins

'I'm a Woman'.. 'Phenomenally'..
'Phenomenal woman'.. 'That's me'.

These lines, taken from the late Maya Angelou's poem Phenomenal Woman and narrated by her, play over a video for the #thisgirlcan campaign (<https://bit.ly/2mkaBq5>) which is encouraging girls and women to play sport, using "real" women role models.

The video, aims to encourage women of all ages, colour, shapes ability and sizes to take up a sport and its message is that you don't have to be a world beater or No 1 in your club. You can do some form of exercise because it makes you feel good, or because you want to do that belt up, become fitter, raise money for charity.

Being 'a bit rubbish at sport' is ok. What is important is overcoming beliefs like, 'I'm too fat' or 'I'll make a fool of myself' or 'No way I'll wear Lycra.'

Scottish Fencing support this campaign wholeheartedly and are highlighting women in fencing. As a male fencer at Elgin Duellist Fencing club, up in Moray, I'm well qualified to write on this issue! However, I also edit our club's Newsletter, The Duellist and in our current issue we featured two of our female fencers, Fleur Hamelin-Stewart, 35 and Lara Summerscales, 12. Plus a quarter of our members are 'girls' and these 'girls' can and do fence and derive great enjoyment from holding a weapon in their hands. Their stories then, relate to the #thisgirlcan campaign.

Gentle, 12 year old Lara wrote:

"I have been fencing for a few weeks now, and I have really come to enjoy it. I like going to Elgin Duellist Fencing Club because, not only is everybody really friendly and encouraging, but the amount of things you can learn in a few weeks is amazing!"

I now know lots of different parries for lots of different attacks. I'm still working on my riposte though. My favourite thing is fencing with the electric box. Every time you hit your opponent, the box beeps, and it tells you if you were off target or not. It's a really clever piece of equipment and you have to wear special jackets for it. Even though I really love fencing, I still have a long way to go before I become an expert!"

I love the innocence in her words as she describes the electric box – a functional

item for most of us but for her it contains an almost magical quality. Lovely.

By contrast, French born, 35 year old local teacher, Fleur Hamelin-Stewart arrives every week, surrounded by her brood, toddler at her feet, young son marching ahead. She won the admiration of everyone by entering last year's Highland Open after only a month or so of coaching. Writing in The Duellist she said:

"October 1st 2017. It's my 35th birthday and day two of the Highland Open Fencing Tournament. With only a few sessions of fencing behind me and a vague recollection of the lessons I had when I was ten years old... I am petrified. The other, much more experienced fencers will destroy me. Why did I agree to this? The real question is why would I not?"

"I started fencing at the club because of my 9 year old son Reuben. He took part in a plastic fencing taster session at primary school and really enjoyed it. When he asked me if he could join the club I instantly agreed, as I suddenly recalled how much I liked fencing when I was young. As I took him to his fencing lesson I realised I could join too. Next lesson, there I was, standing proudly by Reuben's side (re) learning the en garde position as well as lunging."

"Fencing with Reuben is also a great way to spend some good quality time together. It is also very precious to have something special to both of us that we can really get excited about. At the end of the day though, I suspect the only reason Reuben loves us fencing together is to wield a weapon at me."

"I am proud to be part of this club and I am glad I can share this passion with my son. Each bruise is a trophy. Each session is an opportunity to grow, not just our skills but also our bond. So what is there not to like? Come and play "walk the plank" (a club training game) or "musketeers" with us. If anything, fencing is fun!"

Now in our eleventh year, our wee club has always reached out to all in our community and is very affordable. Courtesy of grants and fraternal support, we are able to offer all equipment and weapons. Head coach and founder, Robin Paterson, has created a club that is ultra-inclusive and is about each fencer doing what they can on the piste.

Another of our phenomenal women, Lindsay Cant, 22, has been with the club since it started. Then 14, she has never wanted to fence for Scotland but she has turned up most weeks and is now our plastic fencing coach,



Fleur & Reuben

Lara

going into all local primary schools, delivering plastic fencing sessions.

The message from Fleur, Lara and Lindsay is on point, *"If anybody tells you you can't, you absolutely can: we can and do."* Fleur goes to the heart of the matter saying, *"We women often feel ashamed of our bodies. I did after childbirth and we worry we will be judged by men and especially by other women. This campaign helps cut through the shame and judgment issues."*

I hope the #thisgirlcan campaign continues to be successful and we see more phenomenal women on pistes throughout the UK. Before ending with some more Phenomenal Women verses we extend an invitation to you all, male or female, to visit us should you be in Scotland.

It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
The palm of my hand,
The need for my care.
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Michael Hawkins
Elgin Duellist Fencing Club, Moray, Scotland

ELGIN
Duellist Fencing Club

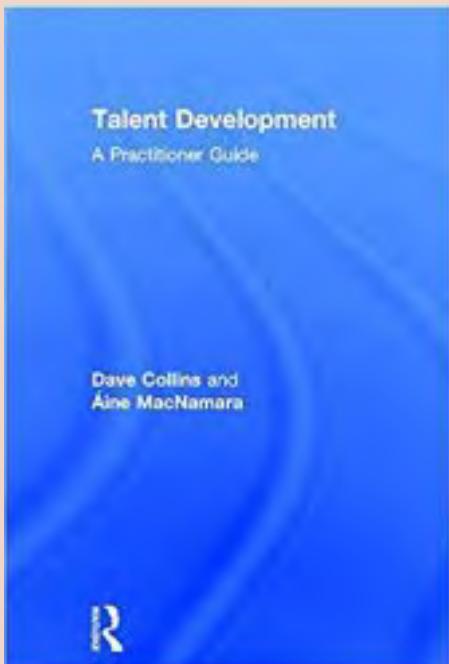
Scottish Fencing

Book Review

By David Kirby

Talent Development: A Practitioner Guide by Dave Collins & Áine MacNamara

ISBN 978-1-138-67253-6 Published by Routledge, Abingdon, 2018



OPS

Dave Collins and Áine MacNamara's book, *Talent Development: A Practitioner Guide*, (rrp £29.99) was written by this very knowledgeable and well-qualified pair. It is aimed specifically as a guide for parents and coaches, who are involved in developing sporting talent from the very beginning to elite senior levels. It does just what it says on the tin, and should be of great interest to all fencing coaches (Collins and MacNamara, 2018). In its 200 odd pages the authors take the reader on the exciting journey of the developing fencer, dropping advice on all aspects of their preparation, and there is an enormous amount of that advice!

Their blurb on the back says it's a "clear and concise road map to work from", and that seems a good description. The authors say they are "helping people to achieve" and that the "book is aimed at the people most concerned with talent development, namely coaches and parents." Well, they hit that target (p.xv).

To begin they explain what talent development (TD) is all about: talent is the output of the TD system, not an input. They stress that the parents' and coaches' need is to create an environment where the athlete can develop and ultimately display their new-found talent for the sport (p.31). At the recruitment stage of the squads and pathways, the scout should be seeking potential, and so, by definition, they don't yet have the talent! It's important to remember that all the authors comments and advice are backed with evidence and research – and years of experience as players, coaches, coach developers, sport psychologists, and parents themselves. It's from this they rebut many of the cosy coaching myths that have come un-evidenced into

the coaching fray, like LTAD, learning styles, NLP and others, so there's a chunk up front on what you should not do (p.59). The authors encourage coaches and parents to act as "critical consumers" (p.13) to discern what may be the next unsupported fad in sport coaching. They also empower the reader to question received wisdom, and genuinely seek what is best for their athlete.

And there's a whole lot more on how you might create the environment for your athlete to learn their sport. They always qualify their methods and ideas with "...it depends". It depends on the individual participant, the coach, parent, school, club, peer, and myriad more effectors; what they do point out is the individuality of the people involved.

They describe their framework from the beginnings of physical literacy, to the idea of agility, and of 'have-a-go-ness' as Dave calls it. This gives the clear pathway underpinned with evidence, from early childhood through adolescence, and all laced with that essential ingredient – Enjoying it! But all this is underpinned with the neuroscience that shows how people learn skills, right down to the myelin sheath on the nerve fibres of the brain (p.27).

The style of the book is an easy read; it is written in good English for the modern reader, coach and parent. They pack a great deal into it, but it is no less informative for that. Despite being written by senior academics (Dave is a Professor, no less). Each chapter deals with a category of athlete and these progress from early childhood through to adulthood. The book generally takes the academy system in British soccer as its example, which is a good comparator. It doesn't make this out to be the best way to do it, indeed Dave and Áine are quite critical of much of the academy system, but they also draw many positives.

The subject that could have been explored more than it was, is the section at the end on Professional Judgement and Decision Making. As the work is about the development of coaches, it's a shame this isn't given greater prominence. But it is mentioned (p.191) and one can always seek further reading – except that this is the one chapter that has no references! Otherwise, all the chapters have a short and useful reference list, many being accessible books and web pages. Often the academic papers cited are freely available as well.

Talent Development introduces the idea of biosocial coaching and learning, and its importance in an athlete's development. This is a subject which is long overdue in many governing bodies' coach development so is very welcome here.

It also discusses the concepts (in a readable form for non-academics!) of the psychological characteristics for developing excellence (PCDEs). These include subjects like commitment, distraction control, coping and goal setting. These ought to strike a chord in all coaches and parents of any level of participating athlete, especially fencers. The authors put these characteristics in perspective, and show how they can enhance a coaches' efficacy in use, and thus a fencer's effectiveness (p.77).

Book Review (*contd.*)

By David Kirby

Life skill learning is never far from their minds all through the book, and the section on concerns and considerations for parents and coaches (p.85, ch7) is a good illustration. Here they show that focus control is a useful life skill, learned on the sports arena, but equally applicable in the exam room, for example. In the same chapter, Dave comments on children generally and writes from the parent's perspective, because he is one. They are very strong on addressing the individual's needs (p.139).

Importantly, Dave and Áine have useful sections for both coaches and parents on some under explored topics, for example that smoothing the path for your fencer may not be the best development strategy. They also have a relevant advice on goal setting included in the same chapter (p.176, ch14), which may seem a non sequitur, but they draw them together in an interesting way. Furthermore, on pathway management, they offer solid counsel and encouragement.

Altogether, this is both a good read and highly informative. Much you may say you knew already, but it is the way the authors pull it together into this workable framework, which is so powerful. It is aimed directly and unashamedly at the coaches and parents developing the individual athlete and fencer, and makes it so well worth buying. It should be on the reading list for all Talent Pathway Managers and Coaches.



David Kirby

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Round Up

Welsh Fencing achieve Level 1 Standard in Safeguarding



Welsh Fencing are pleased to announce that we have successfully achieved the Level 1 Standard in Safeguarding & Protecting Children. This followed a detailed review of our Policies and Procedures by the Child Protection in Sport Unit. Safeguarding is an important role in any National Governing Body; achievement of this standard demonstrates that Welsh Fencing provide a safe, effective and child-friendly environment for fencing in Wales. We would like to thank Sport Wales and CPSU for their continued support in achieving this standard.

Richard Lawrence (National Support Officer for Sport Wales)

"I'd like to congratulate Welsh Fencing on being awarded the Level 1 of the Safeguarding in Sport Standards. This is an important accreditation and a fantastic achievement. I'd also like to thank everybody involved and the volunteers in particular, who dedicated their time and skills to help achieve this milestone. I look forward to continuing to work with Welsh Fencing and hope for more success in the future."

Cerri Dando (Child Protection in Sport Unit – Development Officer (Wales) for NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit)

"The Child Protection in Sport Unit is pleased to award Welsh Fencing with Level 1 of the Safeguarding in Sport Standards. The CPSU recognises that a lot of work has been undertaken by the organisation to ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are now in place. The CPSU looks

forward to working with Welsh Fencing in the future to further progress safeguarding in the organisation and achieving the Level 2 Standard."

Dr. Jonathan Katz Appointed BASES Fellow

Congratulations to Dr. Jonathan Katz who has recently been recognised as a Fellow of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES). Jonathan has been involved in fencing since the late 1970s as a fencer, coach, coach developer and sport psychologist to a range of individual athletes and squads to youth, senior and veteran fencers. His contribution has included support to regional, national and international fencing in both training and competition settings. He was also Team England Head Coach at the 2010 and 2014 Fencing Commonwealth Championships.



Jonathan Katz

Jonathan's work extends beyond the fencing family, working both in the professional environment as well as being national lead for psychology for the British Paralympic Association. He has been a member of BASES for over 20 years and was accredited in 2000.



Safeguarding – Cerri, Mark and Richard

FIE President Usmanov IOC Commission Appointment



Alisher Usmanov

(Source: FIE) The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has published a list of its 26 commissions. The president of the International Fencing Federation (FIE), Mr. Alisher Usmanov (RUS), has been re-conducted as a member of the Olympic Channel Commission, after initially joining in 2015 and being re-appointed annually. The Olympic Channel Commission advises the IOC Session, the IOC Executive Board and the IOC President and provides guidance throughout operation of the Olympic Channel. The Olympic Channel Commission is supported by Olympic Broadcasting Services and IOC Television and Marketing Services.

Buenos Aires to host Youth Olympic Games

The third edition of the Youth Olympic Games will take place 6-18 October in Argentina's capital city for athletes aged 15-18. In the first time in Olympic history an equal number of male and female athletes will take part. Whilst no British fencers will take part in the event, the fencing schedule runs from day one to day four across seven events.

For much more information head to official [Buenos Aires 2018](#) site and watch everything at the [Olympic Channel](#).



Obituary

JOAN MASON – 1928–2018

British Fencing is sad to announce the passing of Joan Mason who died at home at the end of June. Joan was well known and much loved in the fencing community where she dedicated and enormous amount of her time as a volunteer, particularly in the Southern Region. She was Secretary of the section for a remarkable 30 years until 1998 but was recognised for her long service to fencing with a British Fencing Award of Merit in 1979. She was further recognised by British Fencing with a bronze medal in 1989 which was followed by a silver medal in 2006.

Her funeral, which took place on 24 July was well attended including representatives from the local fencing community. British Fencing has received a number of tributes from members keen to share their memories, some of which follow.

Rochelle Dazeley, says:

It is with a sad heart that I am writing something about this lovely lady. A lady who could be very stubborn and annoying but always very supportive and encouraging.

In fencing terms, she came late to the sport but threw herself in:

- She helped run Salle Eton from its early days, only retiring in her eighties. In 1985 the club hosted a junior foil event for around 300 youngsters from all over this country and Europe, which lead to the formation of the Leon Paul Junior Series. She was also involved in setting up the Slough Open
- She was involved with the Southern Region for many years starting as Secretary then Chair and then President
- On a national level she spent many years on the Foil Committee. Joan was also one of the little group that always made refreshments when British Fencing hosted A grades and was still helping well into her 70s

Not only was Joan an excellent volunteer herself, she was very good at getting folk to volunteer to do something and once hooked, you mostly stayed!

She was always encouraging fencers, and supporters, to get involved and to excel at whatever they wanted to do.



Joan Mason

She especially believed in getting people to use opportunities for their development, not only as a fencer, but also referees and other voluntary roles.

When I set up the Development Days in the region she was very supportive, turning up to help when she could.

Harry Jones remembers her receiving the Ann Smith Award on two occasions and how proud she was of them as they were for 'Contribution to Youth Fencing'. She was also recognised by BF.

Joan also believed in the importance of enjoying being involved. The Bucks, Berks & Oxon's Christmas Team Foil Competition had been a serious competition for many years but then some Christmas spirit was introduced – out came the tinsel and the competition received a new lease of life. It is still very popular and continues bringing the fun element into fencing.

Joan was a wonderful support to my son and to many other young fencers who went on to represent their county in fencing. Not only did she help them, she encouraged them to give back to the sport in terms of their support to others around them.

Joan will be missed. There will not be another like her, but her legacy can be seen and carries on.

Keith Smith says,

I was very sad to hear of the passing of Joan. She was one of fencing's unsung heroines who was fiercely loyal to fencing, extremely hard working in the Southern Region but also at National Level and who was always cheerful and calm.

I remember her running a splendid British Youth Championships in the Southern Region and of course the Slough Open. She was a great supporter of Youth Fencing and at every event would always come to say hello and ask how could she help.

Joan was very happy to give her views and argue them forcefully, but logically, honestly and always without any personal rancour, whatever the final outcome. She was of the generation of volunteers who would turn their hand to anything that was needed.

I always valued her dedication, hard work, her cheerful personality and friendship. During my time as an active referee, British Fencing Board member and then as President, I always knew that I could count on Joan.

Allan Skipp says,

During the early 80's Joan was a pivotal member of the Slough Fencing Club, later to become Salle Eton and she had been a prime supporter of the club since Harry Porter had established fencing at Slough College in 1964 under the name of Salle 64.

After Harry's untimely death, Ken Pearson became coach and Joan provided secretarial support and continued to organise courses and competitions on behalf of the Southern region which she had done for many years.

I became coach at Slough Fencing Club after Ken left to become National Coach in South Africa and with Joan's support, we established the Slough Open fencing competition.

We also organised a number of children's competitions which attracted young fencers from France, Holland and Germany and this developed into the Leon Paul Series.

Joan had the ability to gather and encourage a group of volunteers to organise and run

Obituary (*contd.*)

competitions, and she represented the Southern region on many committees for many years, both regional and national and I think it would be correct to say that fencing in the Southern Counties would have been much depleted without her energy and enthusiasm and she will be sadly missed.

Marilyn Wheelband says,

I first met Joan when I moved to the Southern region in 1977 after I had graduated. She was a lovely woman who always put fencing and the Southern Region first.

She always came along to competitions to help run them and support the fencers. During the time that I organised our Senior Winton Cup team, she attended to cheer us on and meet all the fencers. She then attended the Region's meeting to put our ideas forward and help with the regions organisation.

I was on the Southern Region committee for many years along with Tony Finch and Simon Routh-Jones. We used to meet at Joan's house in Datchet to thrash out any problems, discuss policy and organise competitions. She was always welcoming with tea and biscuits.

When I started a family, she was interested in my girls and how they were growing up. Every time we met, she came over to chat and was genuinely interested in how you were doing. Joan will be greatly missed.

David Oakden says,

My abiding memory of Joan was her welcome the first time I went to Salle Eton and little did I realise that it was to begin a long

association and involvement with the club and that I would count Joan as a good friend. Under her guidance as the chairman and with Harry Jones as coach, Salle Eton's adult and junior sessions were providing support and encouragement for competitive and social fencers to enable everyone to develop at a rate that suited them. Joan's influence always ensured a warm and friendly atmosphere within the club.

Joan was a remarkable lady in so many ways for her commitment and standing by her principles to develop and expand the club and the award of Clubmark was a fitting endorsement of her achievements. But seeing her in action with the youngsters, involving them in organising the sessions, encouraging good standards, refereeing their own matches and working together was Joan at her best. And it didn't stop at youngsters. Before I knew what she was about, as a social fencer, I became involved in the club, coaching, local competitions and enjoying a long association with fencing. They don't make them like Joan any more.

James Roberts says,

I first met Joan when I was nearly 8. I went to Salle Eton because that's where my sister Sarah was fencing and I wanted to join in.

I remember Joan being very kind to the new fencers as well as being very supportive. She would always help get you ready or explain what was happening. As we became more experienced fencers she would push us more. Getting us into competition, making sure we were training properly etc. The quality of

fencers that came out of Eton during that time is testament to how well the club was managed through Joan and the committee and coach.

When I left college, she suggested I become a coach. The club supported me along the way with Joan providing opportunities for me to work in the club helping to run beginners' courses.

Later I became a full time coach at the club and still am. In the last few years we have had some major issues, one being losing our venue which we had been in for many years. Together, Joan and I managed to find the Singh Sabha Sports Centre where we fence now and to many of our fencers it's actually an improvement over the old Salle.

As Joan's health in general started to deteriorate she stood down from her long-standing position as Chairman of the club and we made her our Club President.

Without doubt, Joan held the club together through some very difficult times. Her dedication to Salle Eton was second to none. She would be there every Monday and Friday, taking the register, talking with the parents and assisting the new fencers. She had a very strong work ethic that she passed onto a lot of her fencers. The club and I will miss her greatly.

In her memory Salle Eton Fencing Club has already started a Development Program in her name, to help youngsters with what they may need to progress. We believe Joan would approve of the club giving back to its fencers and helping them in any way possible.

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Results

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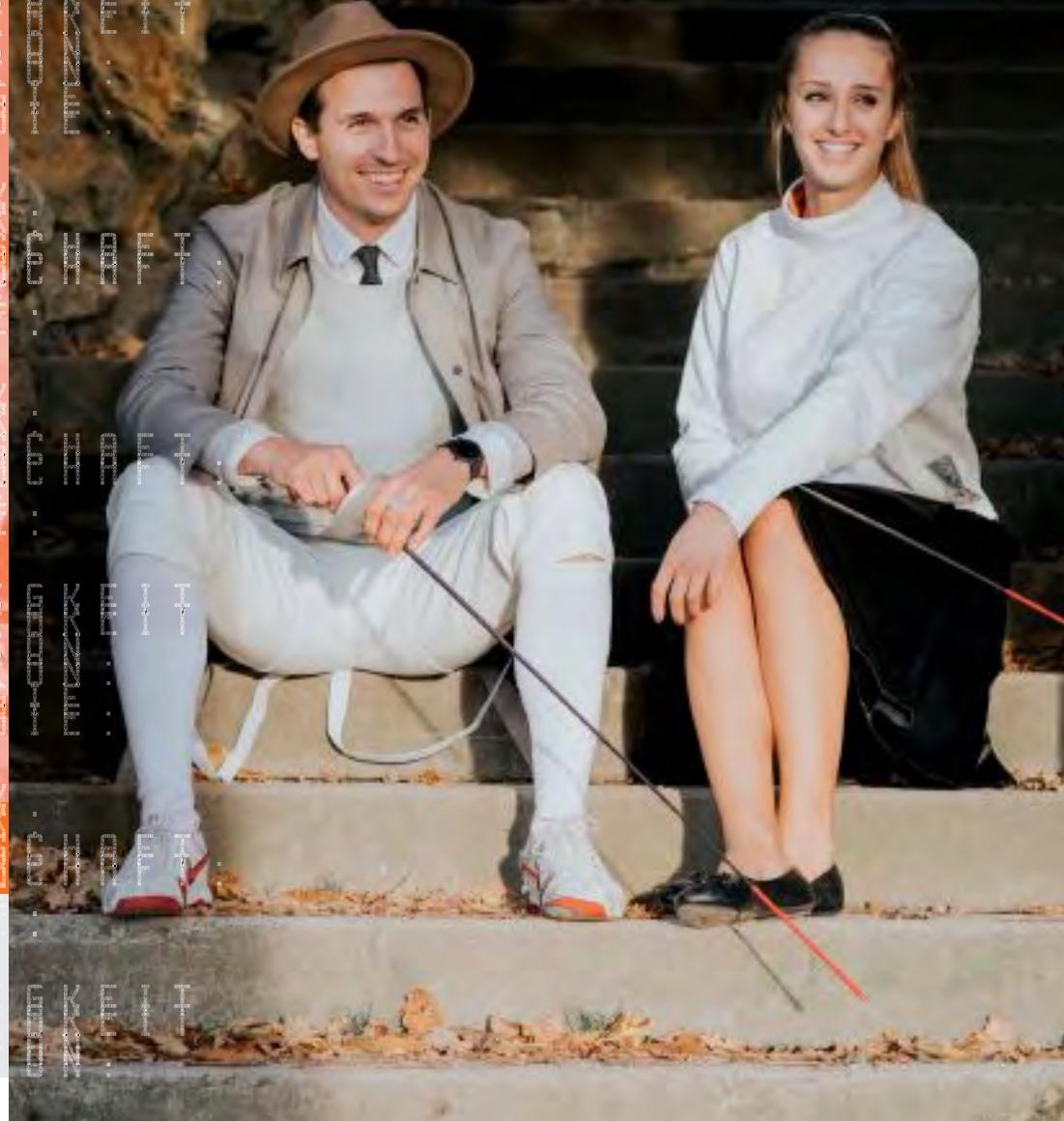


Photo: Augusto Bazzi

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



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