

# THE SWORD

JULY 2019

**BRITISH  
FENCING**



**Youth Worlds Report pp4-7**

**Veterans in Cognac pp10-11**

**Keith Cook Feature pp15-18**

**Development Section pp20-30**





# Leon Paul

London



# WELCOME TO THE SWORD

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**Evans sixth at World Champs**  
 Photo: Augusto Bizzi

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*Gillian Donaldson Receives Queen's Honour.*

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# CADET & JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

## Photos: Augusto Bizzi

This year's Cadet & Junior World Championships took place in Torun, Poland, 7 to 13 April. Following on from last year, the schedule saw the sabre events take place first, followed by the foil and then the epee events.

## Cadet Report

The cadet event at the World Championships consists only of individual events.

### Sabre

#### Women's Individual

There were no British entries in the field of eighty-one in this event. Luca Szucs of Hungary won the title, beating Chloe Gouhin of the USA in the final. The bronze medals went to Italy's Benedetta Fusetti and America's Honor Johnson.

#### Men's Individual

There were one hundred and eight fencers in this event including Darcy Holdsworth and Rory McLellan from Great Britain. Both made it through the poule stage before McLellan lost 15-9 to Russian Nasonov in the round of 128 and Holdsworth was defeated 15-11 by Turkish fencer Ciftci in the 64. Vasyl Humen from Ukraine won the gold medal defeating Italian Giorgio Marciano in the final. Lee Dohun of Korea and America's Donghwan Park claimed the bronze medals.



Darcy Holdsworth

### Foil

#### Women's Individual

Teagan Williams-Stewart was the sole British entry in this event. She lined up

in a field of one hundred and ten, making it through the poule stage which earned her a bye through the round of 128.

A strong victory over Hungary's Luca Kalocsai followed but a 14-10 defeat at the hands of the Philippines Samantha Catantan in the round of 32 saw her exit the competition. American Lauren Scruggs won the title defeating Korean Hong Sein in the gold medal match. Margherita Lorenzi of Italy and Russia's Valeriya Rassolova collected the bronze medals.

#### Men's Individual

Great Britain's Cameron Evans, Rafael Rhys Pollitt and David Williams were amongst the field of one hundred and twenty-one in this event. All three made it through the poule stage but Williams was knocked out 15-11 by Chase Emmer of the USA in the round of 128 and Rhys Pollitt was defeated by Italian Damiano Di Veroli in the 64. A strong first round from Evans saw him earn a bye through the first knockout and he went on to beat Damil Tkach of Ukraine 15-10, America's Jun Liao 15-14 and Chinese fencer Zhang Weisong 15-11 to make the quarterfinals. Another fencer from China stood in his way of a guaranteed medal but Zu Jie was too strong, knocking him out 15-8.



#### Cameron Evans Prepares

Speaking about his results, Evans said, "I just came out and said I was going to fence my best today, and thanks to my preparation and guidance from my coaches, Anya Katkova, Renal Ganeev, and Ziemek Wojciechowski, I was able to achieve that. Thanks also to British Fencing."

Speaking after the event, Lead Foil Coach, Chris Galeslout said, "Cameron fenced

with great discipline from the start of the day. His confidence was high and grew with each elimination fight. He showed a great variety of actions, very good movement, workmanship and great timing today. Cameron and his coach Anna Katkova have been working very hard and this result is a proof of their dedication. This is a great end to a strong Cadet season for Cameron and I am very excited about how he will further develop as a Junior."



#### Cameron Evans In Action

Xu went on to secure bronze, a position he shared with Italy's Giuseppe Franzoni. Russia's Igor Barakkikov claimed the title by beating Paul Antoine De Belival in the final.

### Epee

#### Women's Individual

British fencers, Rachael Lever, Maisie McCormack and Eva Reston were part of the one hundred and eighteen-strong entry in this event. All three made it through the poules before McCormack was knocked out 15-12 by Latvian Nelija Mihejeva in the round of 128. In the following round Hanna Saito of Japan beat Lever 15-11 and Polish fencer Zofia Janelli beat Reston 15-9.

The gold medal and Championship title went to Hungarian Eszter Muhari who beat Gaia Calorie of Italy in the final. Janelli claimed the bronze medal along with Lili Buki of Hungary.

#### Men's Individual

The biggest entry in the cadet events came in the men's individual epee where one hundred and forty-three athletes fought it out. The three British entries,

# CADET & JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

## Photos: Augusto Bizzi (contd.)

Harry Baston-Hall, Jacob Foulsham and Isaac McKerr all made it through the poule stage. Foulsham then fell 15-14 to Timothy Assmann of the Netherlands in the round of 128. Baston-Hall and McKerr were eliminated in the following round by Yelnur Tulegenov of Kazakhstan 15-13 and American Isaac Herbst 15-4, respectively.

Italy's Enrico Piatti claimed the gold medal by beating teammate Dario Remondini in the final as Akseli Heinamaa of Finland and Russia's Kirill Gurov settled for the bronze medals.

## Junior Report

### Sabre

#### Women's Individual

There were four British fencers in the field of one hundred and sixteen in this event. Maia Fashokun, Caitlin Maxwell and Sophia Potter all made it through the first round but Catriona Thomson did not. Fashokun was defeated 15-5 by Japan's Jumi Wakita in the round of 128. In the following round, Maxwell went out 15-14 to Kai Tan of Singapore and Anastasia Shorokhova of Russia defeated Potter 15-12.

Russia's Alina Mikhailova won the event beating Natalia Botello of Mexico in the finals as Italian Benedetta Taricco completed the podium with Yoana Ilieva of Bulgaria.

#### Men's Individual

Great Britain's Jamie Craze, James Edwards, Baranby Halliwell and Julian Richards II lined up in a field of one hundred and forty-six for this event and they all progressed through the first round. Halliwell and Richards II both went out in the round of 128, losing 15-11 to Geraud of France and 15-14 to Bate Schaafsma of the Netherlands, respectively. Craze and Edwards made it through to the 32. At that stage Luca Fioletto of Italy beat Edwards 15-13 and Craze lost 15-8 to Arne De Ridder of the Netherlands.

Italy's Roma Lorenzo beat George Dragomir of Romania in the final to secure the title. The USA's Mitchell Saron shared the bronze medal position with Italian Giacomo Mignuzzi.

### Women's Team

Twenty-five teams took part in this event including Great Britain (Fashokun, Maxwell, Potter & Thomson). Seeded nineteenth, they lost 45-35 to fifteenth seeds, Mexico in the round of 32 to finish 20th.

Top seeds Russia lost to Hungary in the quarterfinals and the Hungarians went on to beat Germany 45-43 for the gold medal. Italy beat the USA 45-34 in the bronze medal play-off.



**GBR Women's Sabre Team (l to r: Thomson, Maxwell, Potter & Fashokun)**

### Men's Team

Great Britain (Craze, Edwards, Halliwell and Richards II) were seeded sixth in a field of thirty-one teams in this event. In the 32 they beat Brazil 45-36 before going on to beat Canada 45-44. They faced third seeds, the USA in the quarterfinals and lost 45-28. In the placings matches they beat Romania 45-39 before losing 45-33 to Spain, to finish sixth.

The event went with seeding as top seeds Italy took the title 45-39 against Russia in the gold medal match. Third seeds, the USA beat fourth seeds France 45-40 for the bronze.



**GBR Men's Sabre Team (l to r: Richards II, Craze, Halliwell & Edwards)**

### Foil

#### Women's Individual



**Lauren Scruggs – America's Women's Foil Double World Champion**

Four British fencers featured in the line up of one hundred and forty-three entries in this event. Sevil Babaeva, Bronwen Granville, Mhairi McLaughlin and Teagan Williams-Stewart all made it through the poule stage. In the round of 128 Babaeva beat Granville 15-10 and Jekaterina Solodkiha of Latvia defeated McLaughlin by the same score. Babaeva and Williams-Stewart were knocked out in the following round, losing 15-8 to Maxine Wong of Singapore and 15-11 to Romania's Rebecca Candescu, respectively.

America's Lauren Scruggs did the Cadet-Junior double, winning the title with victory over Italian Martina Favaretto. Yuka Ueno of Japan shared the bronze medal position with Korean Park Jihee.

#### Men's Individual

The entry list of one hundred and seventy-four athletes in this event included four from Great Britain. Dominic De Almedia, Connor Head, William Lonsdale and Sebastian Pallier all made the knock-out stages but Lonsdale and Pallier were eliminated in the round of 128 by Raman Bialiayeu of Belarus (15-13) and French fencer Tyvan Bibard (15-14), respectively. Fighting through to the 32, De Almeida then lost 15-8 to Argentinian Dante Cerquetti and Head went out 15-11 to Augusto Servello, also from Argentina.

# CADET & JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

## Photos: Augusto Bizzi (contd.)

It was a Russian one-two in this event as Kirill Borodachev beat teammate Vladislav Mylnikov to the title. Promising Egyptian, Mohamed Hamza completed the podium along with Japan's Rui Fujikura.

### Women's Team

Twenty-eight teams competed in this event and Great Britain (Babaeva, Granville, McLaughlin & Williams-Stewart,) seeded tenth beat Chinese Taipei 45-33 in the round of 32. A tough draw saw them face seventh seeds Japan in the next round and they lost 45-24. In the placings matches they beat the Czech Republic 45-43 and Poland 45-25 before losing 45-12 to China to finish twelfth.



### GBR Women's Foil Team

Japan went on to knock out number two seeds, the USA in the quarterfinals on their way to the silver medal. Russia beat them in the final to take gold. Korea took the bronze medal having knocked out number one seeds Italy on route. They beat France in the play-off.

### Men's Team

Great Britain (De Almeida, Head, Jolley & Pallier) were seeded sixth in a field of 33. A bye through the round of 64 was followed up with victories over Brazil 45-25 and the Netherlands 45-29. Their



### GBR Men's Foil Team (l to r: Pallier, Jolley, Head & De Almeida)

quarterfinal opponents were the number three seeds, Italy and they lost 45-32. In the placings matches they lost 45-36 to Poland before beating Singapore 45-33 for seventh place.

Top seeds Russia won the tournament beating France 45-36 in the finals and Italy secured bronze with a 45-40 victory over the USA.

### Epee

#### Women's Individual

There were one hundred and fifty-five entries in this event and British fencers Avery Louis, Alexandra Powell and Laura Sheffield made it through the first round. Maia Henderson-Roe did not. In the 128, Montserrat Viveros of Paraguay defeated Louis 15-10 and Japan's Ruka Narita beat Sheffield 13-12. Powell made it through to the round of 32 where she lost 15-6 to Hong Kong's Hsieh Kaylin.

Italian Federica Isola beat teammate Gaia Traditi to the Championship title as Kim Sieun of Korea and American Greta Candrea shared third place.

#### Men's Individual

Four British fencers lined up in a field of one hundred and ninety-two in this event and whilst Benjamin Andrews and William East progressed through the poule stage, Antoine Belot and Dylan Morrison did not. East and Andrews both fell in the round of 128 to Jiang Keli of China 15-12 and Germany's Louis Bongard 15-11, respectively.

Frenchman Arthur Philippe won the last individual title of the tournament by beating Davide Di Veroli of Italy in the final. The bronze medals went to Azerbaijan's Ruslan Hasanov and Gianpaolo Buzzacchino of Italy.

#### Women's Team

The last day of the Championships saw thirty-one teams competing in this event, including Great Britain (Henderson-Roe, Louis, Powell & Sheffield). They beat Singapore 45-36 in the round of 32 before losing 45-44 to eighth seeds, Switzerland in the next round. In the placings matches they lost 45-39 to Korea, 45-44 to Germany and 45-37 to Romania to finish sixteenth.



### GBR Women's Epee Team (l to r: Henderson-Roe, Louis, Powell & Sheffield)

France won the title by beating Russia 45-43 in the final as Switzerland claimed bronze with a 45-38 victory over the USA.

### Men's Team

There were forty-one teams in the final event of the competition, including Great Britain (Andrews, East, Morris and Morrison). Ranked seventeenth, they had a bye through the round of 64 before losing 45-41 to China in the next round, placing twenty-first.



### GBR Men's Epee Team (l to r: Morrison, East, Morris & Andrews). Photo: Ian Lichfield

Hungary secured the final gold medal of the event by beating the USA 45-31 in the final as top seeds France had to settle for bronze by beating Russia 45-43 in the play-off match.

Full results are available [here](#).

Thirty-four of the young athletes on the British team are also on the British Fencing Athlete Development Programme (ADP), funded by Sport England: <https://www.sportengland.org/>. More information about ADP camps, the programme and updates can be found [here](#).

# CADET & JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

## Photos: Augusto Bizzi (contd.)



The Officials

### NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Firstly, I want to say a massive congratulations to Gillian Donaldson for her award announced in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List. It has taken a lot of work behind the scenes for this honour to be awarded so well done to all involved. Unfortunately the announcement came too late for a full feature to be written for this issue. However, we have already been in touch with Gillian and she has kindly agreed to an interview for the October issue.

Secondly, I've had contact from Hugh Kernohan regarding the article about Arianna Errigo's bid for Olympic qualification in two weapons. He wrote:

The article on Arianna Errigo's bid to qualify for two weapons in the Olympics suggests it was 1980 when anyone last fenced in two.

I've just done a check on the foil and epee in Barcelona where it appears that the following eight fencers took part in both:

El-Khoury	Lebanon
van Garde	South Africa
da Ponte	Paraguay
Torrente	South Africa
Marcelo	Paraguay
Wong	Singapore
Tan	Singapore
Youseff	Lebanon

The highest any of them managed was 50th out of 70 in the epee and 48th out of 59 in the foil.

Barcelona was the last of the games under the old rules where each nation was allowed to enter three individuals and a team. There was no IOC or FIE qualifying. Each nation made its own choices about its methods of selection and standards: some were strict, others were soft. One of the whacky characters in Seoul was Austin Thomas from Aruba (an autonomous Dutch dependency of the coast of Venezuela, 20 miles long by 6 wide). He was one-eighth of their entire team, just because he managed to persuade their authorities that he should go. He scored ten hits in the epee and 9 in the foil but had a great time.

There were some better fencers who did two. In Seoul both Rob Davidson of Australia and Thierry Soumagne of Belgium fenced foil and epee but I suspect they qualified in one and were entered in the second as they were going anyway.

Moscow was odd of course, because of the effect of the Afghanistan boycott. Steve Paul, Neal Mallett and John Llewellyn made up a men's foil team and Rob Bruniges fenced in the epee team.

I don't know about the Games since 1996 (and checking the databases is a bit tedious) but I suspect you are right that if Errigo makes it it will be an unparalleled achievement. From the 80s I can only recall Stefan Ganeff and Patrice Gaille even occasionally excelling at two weapons on the A-grade circuit. Thanks Hugh.

Finally, I hope that you are enjoying the new look Sword and please feel free to contact me with suggestions, content and any feedback - good and bad!

Karim

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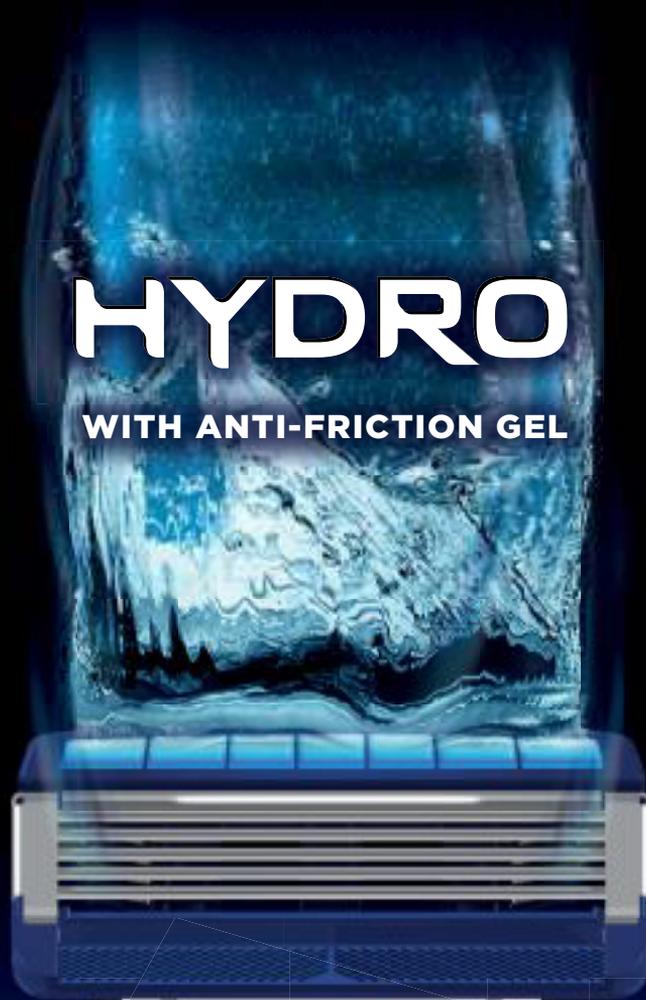


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# SICA SHOWS PROMISE IN PLOVDIV

The 2019 Under-23 European Championships took place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria 29 May - 2 June and Great Britain were represented by five athletes.

Susan Sica achieved the best result in the Women's Epee event finishing in ninth place. The day could not have started better for her as she stormed through her poule dropping 18 hits in six fights. She started the knockout stages ranked first, earning a bye through the incomplete round of 64. She followed that up with a 15-12 victory against Ana Mesic of Croatia to make the round of 16. Despite a tough battle in the next round, Sica lost 15-11 to Ukrainian Darja Varfolomyeyeva.

Elsewhere, Nicholas Howes made the top 32 in the Men's Sabre event, losing 15-5 to Russia's Ilya Semin. In the Men's Foil event Dominic De Almeida also made a top 32 finish, losing to Russia's recently crowned Junior World Champion, Kirill Borodochev. The Russian went on to win. In a tough field Alexander Lloyd was unable to make it out of his poule in the same event. It was the same story for Kate Daykin who didn't make the cut in the Women's Sabre event.

Full results are available [here](#).



Sica beats Mesic on way to top 16

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# BRITISH VETERANS TOAST EUROPEAN SUCCESS IN COGNAC

The Veterans European Championships 2019 took place in Cognac, France 29 May to 2 June and Great Britain had a lot to cheer about. With the country well represented, the British team returned with one European Champion and a total medal haul of fifteen.



**WS V4 – Susan Uff – Bronze – Vivien Frith – Gold – Silvia Brown – Silver**

The team didn't have to wait long to crown their newest European Champion. Vivien Frith claimed the Women's Sabre Category 4 title on the first day and she wasn't the only British fencer on the podium. She beat teammate Silvia Brown in the final and if that wasn't enough Susan Uff collected a bronze medal in the event too. The fourth medal of the day went to Hugh Kernohan who claimed bronze in the Men's Epee Category 3 event.

There was more sabre success on day two of the competition as Peter Baron



**ME V3 – Hugh Kernohan – Bronze**



**MS V5 – Peter Baron – Silver**

picked up a silver medal and William Osbaldeston a bronze in the Men's Category 5 competition. Day three saw another triple medal haul for the British team as John Troiano picked up a silver in the Men's Foil Category 3 competition as teammates Michael Medhurst and Paul Wedge shared bronze in the same event.

Days four and five were ladies days for the British team. First Sheila Anderson picked up the Women's Foil Category 3 silver medal. Then Kristin Payne matched her in the Women's Foil Category 5 event



**MS V5 – Bill Osbaldeston – Bronze**



**MF V3 – John Troiano – Silver**



**WF V3 – Sheila Anderson – Silver**



**MF V3 – Paul Wedge & Michael Medhurst – Bronze**

as Janet Cooksey claimed bronze. Beth Davidson made it four medals on day four by winning bronze in the Women's Sabre Category 2 event. Day five, the last of the Championships, saw Great Britain picking up another two medals. Susan Uff

and Janet Cooksey claimed their second bronze medals of the tournament in the Women's Epee Category 4 and Women's Epee Category 5 events, respectively.

Speaking shortly after the event, Team Manager, Gillian Aghajan said,

"Congratulations to Team GBR - great effort, great fencing, great sportsmanship and support for each other as well as great camaraderie! It's been an honour and pleasure for me to be TM. Proud of you all!"



**WS V2 – Beth Davidson – Bronze**



**WF V5 – Kristin Payne – Silver**



**Janet Cooksey - Silver & Bronze**

# Battersea Foil

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The Fencing School invited U14/Cadet and UNI Fencers (must be competing) for sparring and conditioning camp (separate to our Kids Camp overleaf). Copying Italian camps there are no individual lessons as these are best left to personal coaches.

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# INTERNATIONAL UPDATE AND PROVISIONAL OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION

Photos: Augusto Bizzi

Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification is well under way now as both teams and individuals begin the year-long process to book their places at this coveted event. As always we will bring you an update from all major senior international events since the last issue. The bonus this time is that we will also give you a look at the provisional qualification status for each weapon. (Correct at the time of writing, 5 June 2019.)

## Men's Epee

Two events took place before Olympic qualification began. Kazuyasu Minobe of Japan claimed his second title of the season at the Budapest Grand Prix in March, beating Italian, Andrea Santarelli in the final. The bronze medal position was shared by Hungary's Tibor Andrásfi and Max Heinzer of Switzerland. The circuit moved on to Argentina and the Buenos Aires World Cup which Sergey Bida of Russia won. He beat Italy's Gabriele Cimini as Curtis McDowald of the USA and Hungarian, Andras Redli collected the bronze medals. Japan won the team event as Italy claimed silver from Russia in bronze.



### Three titles this season for Japan's Minobe

The first event to fall inside the Olympic qualifying period was the Cali Grand Prix and Minobe made it a hat-trick of titles in the season by winning again. Veteran Polish fencer, Radoslaw Zawrotniak claimed silver as Italian Marco Fichera shared the bronze medal position with Tristan Tulen of the Netherlands. The last event of the regular season was a massive one in France - the Paris World Cup. A whopping 369 fencers took part in the individual competition and there were 41 teams involved on the Sunday. Park Sangyoung of Korea made up for a poor season, by his standards, by winning the

individual event. He beat Nikita Glazkov in the final as Mate Koch and Gergely Siklosi, both from Hungary, shared the third step on the podium. With Olympic qualification beginning by team (see April issue for a full explanation), Switzerland could not have been happier as they claimed the team title, beating France in the final. Italy beat surprise package Spain to the bronze medal.



### Swiss team win first Olympic qualifier

The top four teams in Paris therefore occupy the top four team spots in the Olympic ranking list which means automatic qualification, provisionally! The top teams in each zone also qualify for the Games and as things stand they are Japan, Hungary, the USA and Egypt. The individual Adjusted Olympic Ranking (a ranking list formed by removing all athletes from the qualified teams and including just the top fencer from the remaining nations) shows that Park Sangyoung (KOR), Radoslaw Zawrotniak (POL), Tristan Tulen (NED), Wang Zijie (CHN), John Edison Rodriguez (COL) and Alexandre Bouzaid (SEN) currently occupy the quota places by individual ranking.

## Women's Epee

Since our last update the women's epee circuit has seen five events completed - three before Olympic qualification began and two after. Kong Man Wai Vivien of Hong Kong continued her fine form in Barcelona, taking her second title this season. Korea's Lee Hyein claimed the silver medal with Kristina Kuusk of Estonia and Poland's Aleksandra Zamachowska taking the bronze medals. In the Barcelona team event Poland followed their team silver in Havana with gold, beating Russia in the final as China took out France for the bronze. Ana Maria Popescu of Romania collected her seventh Grand Prix title at the next



### Double World Cup gold medallist, Kong

event in Budapest. She beat Korea's Kang Young Mi in the final as Choi Injeong, also from Korea and French fencer Coraline Vitalis shared third place. The fencers moved on to China and the Chengdu World Cup where Helene Ngom of France claimed her debut senior title. She beat Italy's double World Champion, Rosella Fiamingo in the final. The USA's Courtney Hurley shared the bronze medal position with Brazilian Nathalie Moellhausen. In the team event Germany were the surprise winners, beating Estonia to the gold medal. Italy defeated China for the bronze.

Olympic qualification got under way for the women's epeeists at the Cali Grand Prix and it was Sun Yiwen of China who was back to winning ways. She beat Italy's reigning World Champion, Mara Navarria in the final as Katrina Lehis of Estonia and Romania's Popescu complete the podium. The final event of the regular season was the Dubai World Cup which Korea's Choi Injeong won. Courtney Hurley built on the bronze she collected in Chengdu, with the silver medal as Russian Violetta Kolobova and Hong Kong's Kong took the bronze medals. Poland collected their second team title of the season, beating the USA in the final as Italy claimed back-to-back bronze medal victories over China.



### Poland take Dubai title

So, provisionally, the four automatic team qualifiers are Poland, the USA, Italy and China. The zonal qualification spots are currently in the hands of Russia, Korea, Estonia and Canada. The additional individual qualifiers, according to the AOR are Ana Maria Popescu (ROU), Kong Man Wai Vivien (HKG), Auriane Mallo (FRA), Sarra Besbes (TUN), Nathalie Moellhausen (BRA) and Miho Yoshimura (JPN).

## Men's Foil



### World Champ Foconi still the man to beat

There are two events to catch up on before the Olympic qualifying period began for the men's foilists. Italy's Rio 2016 Olympic Champion, Daniele Garozzo won the Cairo World Cup beating Erwan Le Pechoux of France in the final as Garozzo's teammate, Giorgio Avola and the USA's Alex Massialas collected the bronze medals. Frenchman Julien Mertine surprised everyone by taking the Anaheim Grand Prix title. He beat Italian youngster Tomasso Marini in the final. Italy's reigning World Champion Alessio Foconi shared the bronze medal position with Hong Kong's Cheung Ka Long.

As Olympic qualification began, experience showed the way as Italian Andrea Cassara claimed his seventeenth World Cup title in St Petersburg. He beat teammate Foconi in the final as Germany's Beijing 2008 Olympic Champion Benjamin Kleibrink and Le Pechoux collected the bronze medals. In the team event, the USA claimed their third title of the season, beating a game

Hong Kong in the final. Korea took the bronze medal with victory over France.

Those four teams currently occupy the automatic places for Tokyo 2020 with the zonal positions currently held by Italy, Egypt, China and Brazil. The AOR shows that Timur Safin (RUS), Kleibrink (GER), Takuma Ito (JPN), Sholto Douglas (AUS), Mohamed Samandi (TUN) and Augusto Servello (ARG) currently occupy the additional individual places.



### Three World Cup wins this season for Team USA

## Women's Foil

Again there are two events to catch up on before qualification began for the women's foilists and Inna Deriglazova of Russia won them both. At the Cairo World Cup she beat Italy's reigning World Champion, Alice Volpi as Lee Kiefer of the USA and Japan's Sumire Tsuji shared the bronze medal position. Italy won their first team title of the season in Egypt beating Russia in the final as France defeated the USA for the bronze medal. Deriglazova claimed her fourth title of the season at the next event - the Anaheim Grand Prix. Again, she beat Volpi in the final as her teammate Larisa Korobeynikova and Korean Jeon Hee Sook settled for third place.



### Six titles in eight events for Deriglazova

Olympic qualification got under way at the Tauberbischofsheim World Cup in Germany and Deriglazova was at it again in the individual event. This time she beat teammate Anastasia Ivanova in the gold medal match. Italy's rising star (and daughter of the country's Head Foil Coach,) Erica Cipressa claimed the bronze medal along with Ysoara Thibus of France. It was double gold for Deriglazova as Russia won the team title,

beating France in the final. Italy took their fourth bronze medal of the season with victory over the USA. The final event, the Shanghai Grand Prix, saw a sixth season win for the remarkable Deriglazova. She beat Volpi for the fourth time in a gold medal match this year as Arianna Errigo of Italy and Kiefer shared third place.



### Team Russia strike first in Olympic qualification

So, Russia, France, Italy and the USA currently occupy the automatic Olympic qualification spots by team. Japan, Canada, Poland and Korea hold their zonal qualifying places. The additional provisional individual places currently sit with Leonie Ebert (GER), Shi Yue (CHN), Fanny Kreiss (HUN), Saskia Van Erven Garcia (COL), Liu Yan Wai (HKG) and Innes Boubakri (TUN).

## Men's Sabre



### Oh celebrates two titles this season with Kim in Seoul

We pick up the action on the men's sabre circuit at the fourth event of the season - the Padua World Cup. The Italian home crowd will have been pleased to see Luca Curatoli secure the title beating teammate Aldo Montano in the final. Germany's Max Hartung collected his second bronze medal of the season, sharing the position with his teammate Benedikt Wagner. Korea secured the team title with victory against Iran and Italy beat Romania to the bronze medal. Budapest hosted the next tournament on the circuit and Hartung continued his fine form by beating Oh Sanguk of Korea in the gold medal match. Mojtaba Abedini of Iran and Romanian Tiberiu Dolniceanu secured the bronze medal. Korea claimed

back-to-back World Cup team gold medals as they beat Hungary in the final. It was bronze again for Italy as they beat Germany in the play-off.

Olympic qualification began at the Seoul Grand Prix which Oh Sanguk won. He beat double Olympic Champion Aron Szilagyi of Hungary in the gold medal match as Korea's Kim Junghwan and Hartung shared the bronze medals. Hartung claimed his second title of the season at the next event in Madrid. Again it was Szilagyi who had to settle for silver as two Koreans shared the bronze medal position - Kim Junho and Oh Sanguk. Italy also took their second title of the season in the team event in Madrid, beating Russia in the final. Korea beat Hungary for the bronze medal. The final stop on the tour was the Moscow Grand Prix and Frenchman Bolade Apithy won his first circuit medal since 2017 and his first Grand Prix title. He beat the USA's Eli Dershwitz in the final as Curatoli and Hartung picked up the bronze medals.



### **ITA: a brilliant mix of youth and experience?**

So Italy, Russia, Korea and Hungary currently occupy the automatic team qualification spots. The zonal qualifiers are Iran, France, the USA and Egypt, provisionally. The AOR currently has Max Hartung (GER), Sandro Bazadze (GEO), Xu Yingming (CHN), Fares Ferjani (TUN), Shaul Gordon (CAN) and Thanh Vu (VIE) sitting in the additional individual places.

## **Women's Sabre**

There have been five more events in this discipline since our last update. Russia's reigning World Champion Sofia Pozdniakova claimed the individual title at the Athens World Cup. She beat Olga Kharlan of Ukraine in the final as the bronze medals went to Kim Jiyeon of Korea and Hungary's Liza Pusztai. France beat Russia to team gold - their third in a row this season - and Italy beat the USA to the bronze medal. Belgium and the St Niklaas World Cup was the next stop on the circuit and it was French fencer, Manon Brunet who struck gold, beating Olga Nikitina of Russia in the final. Russia had two athletes on the podium as Yana



### **Velikaya scored a hat trick of titles this season**

Egorian shared bronze with Romanian Bianca Pascu.

Like the men, Olympic qualification for the women began at the Grand Prix in Seoul, Korea. Olga Kharlan was back on top of the podium, claiming her fifteenth Grand Prix title. She beat Kim Jiyeon in the final as Brunet and Korea's Seo Jiyeon collected the bronze medals. Next stop - North Africa and the Tunis World Cup. It was a second season title for Russian Sofya Velikaya who beat Qian Jiarui of China in the final. Charlotte Lembach of France and Italy's Irene Vecchi claimed the bronze medals. Vecchi was also part of the Italian team who collected the team gold medal. They beat Ukraine in the final with Korea claiming bronze with victory over Japan in the play-off match. It was title number three for Velikaya at the final event of the season, the Moscow Grand Prix. China's Shao Yaqi was the losing finalist whilst Pozdniakova and Pusztai settled for the bronze medals.



### **ITA have not missed one podium this season**

So Italy, Ukraine, Korea and Japan occupy the four automatic Olympic qualifying spots with the zonal positions currently occupied by France, China, the USA and Tunisia. The additional individual places are provisionally taken by Sofya Velikaya (RUS), Liza Pusztai (HUN), Aigerim Sarybay (KAZ), Marissa Ponich (CAN), Bhavani Chadalavada (IND) and Nada Hafez (EGY).

## **And what about GBR chances?**

At this early stage in the qualifying period there is little point in considering individual qualification. We will begin to look more closely at that situation at a later stage.



### **Mepstead, Peggs, Kruse & Davis started well**

Richard Kruse returned to the men's foil team at the first qualifier in St Petersburg, joining James Davis, Marcus Mepstead and Ben Peggs. A solid win against Belarus in the first round was followed by an impressive 45-36 victory against Japan. The team were equally impressive, albeit in defeat, against Korea who they narrowly lost to 45-43. They beat Egypt before losing to Italy in placings match to finish sixth. Hong Kong had a great day beating both Italy and France on their way to the silver medal. A strong performance from them and/or Korea at the Asian Championships in Tokyo and subsequent World Championships, could lock out two of the top four places. That combined with the USA's current dominance in this weapon could make it tricky for every European team this time around. Even at this early stage every European men's foil team will be thinking that they have to be in the top five or six teams in the World come qualification day. A top sixteen finish for both the British women's and men's sabre teams was a good start at their opening World Cups of the Olympic qualifying period. That said and assuming that neither will make the top four in the rankings, there are plenty of European teams above them. So there's still work to do.

This is why a good performance at the zonal championships is so crucial to Olympic qualification.

In conclusion, we are only at the very start of the Olympic qualifying period. There is a long way to go and there will almost certainly be some surprises along the way. We'll pick up the journey to Tokyo in the next issue.

# KEITH COOK - A POSITIVE DESTINATION



Most people in the UK's fencing community will know the name Keith Cook. You may even have started hearing about his son, Jaimie. We wanted to share the story of his tough upbringing, how fencing "saved" him and how he is now helping inspire the next generation. It is truly remarkable.

**We first asked Keith to tell us about his fencing story.**

As a young child I was angry and confused. I grew up in a chaotic and often violent home in a disadvantaged area of Edinburgh. I found school hard being dyslexic but I found my arena to shine.



**Keith Cook**

My release was sport and at the age of eleven I found fencing. Not your average sport for a child from my background but I was able to focus my frustrations through sport to reach a "Positive Destination". It didn't matter what was going on at home, where I lived or how well I was doing at school - when I was fencing I was no different to anyone else. No matter what else was going on,

I discovered that if I worked hard and surrounded myself with positive people, I could achieve anything. I found out it's ok to make mistakes. That's how we learn. I became more confident and I realised sport could teach me so much and the skills that I learnt could be transferred into changing my life for the better.

**And what a career it has been. Keith has been British Fencing Champion, is a seven-time Commonwealth medallist, European Team bronze medallist and World Cup Team medallist. Since he began coaching he won Sport Scotland's Young Persons Coach of the Year (Edinburgh) award on four consecutive occasions (2013-16) and collected the British Fencing Innovation Award in 2016. He continues to coach, mentor and considers himself to be a Modern Jedi! You can read more about his remarkable story [here](#). But he didn't do it alone....**

I am very lucky to have such a supportive wife, Jo and two amazing children, Imogen and Jaimie). Jo understood the commitment that needed to be made and



**Keith at work**

# KEITH COOK - A POSITIVE DESTINATION (contd.)

was the one who told me to be a full-time athlete, even though there would be financial pressures and an unknown future. If I didn't do it, I know I would have regretted it for the rest of my life. Luckily, I had the right people around me to make it one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Through all the highs and lows I've had, as a father and coach I try to make my children's learning curve faster than mine by asking the right questions to get a response that will get that small gain. I feel it's important to get them to step out of their comfort zone and learn from mistakes and failures. Your comfort zone is a beautiful place but nothing ever grows there. I encourage them to take that leap and that's what I did with Jaimie this year. He not only did a full season of Cadets (finishing the season ranked sixth, winning a BRC tournament and

making the top 32 in a cadet international aged just 14) but fenced the people that scared and challenged him. I didn't expect Jaimie to then win two Senior Opens in one month (Glasgow & Birmingham,) after only ever doing four Opens. Imogen is doing great but has had a few knee problems. That's all sorted now.

It's exciting times ahead as a coach developing the next generation. There is no limit if you are willing to work hard. Hard work beats talent every time, if talent is not willing to work hard. Jaimie trains 4/5 times a week and also does lots of other sports that have a positive impact on his fencing.

I don't want to just develop a fencer but the person. I focus a lot on life skills and look at different ways to enhance these skills. The goal is to make them a more confident and resilient person to deal

with stresses that life throws at you and to have coping strategies.

"The higher you climb in life, the more people will be there to criticise you. Even at your best, people will still find a problem with you." Best advice? Keep climbing and ignore the haters. Do what makes you happy.

As for my dreams; all I wanted in life when I was younger was my own garden. In my garden I wanted a tree. I wanted to see snow floating on the tree and leaves falling off it in the autumn. However, I was brought up in a council house, in a very rough area with a harsh reality check where my family were so poor. I hardly had a pair of trainers on my feet but through the twists and turns life has thrown at me, I was able to get my house and garden.....and my tree. My ambitions now are to get my own Salle, to show



Inspirational School Visit

# KEITH COOK - A POSITIVE DESTINATION (contd.)

that it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from. If you work hard anything is possible in your life.

Jaimie's Dreams? He wants to be a full-time fencer and reach the heights of the sport and has had a taste of the international lifestyle already. We have just come back from Shanghai, where he won the under-14 event and was rubbing shoulders with the Senior men's foilists on the world scene.

## We went on to ask Keith about coaching and his club.

I started working with children from 5-12 years old at schools in Edinburgh and started a company called "Fencing Fun". We started using plastic fencing equipment almost 10 years ago. I developed a grading system to encourage and motivate children to develop the technical aspects of the sport (the core skills) through distance and time games, rewarding them with certificates, stickers and grading days.

The children then move on to our main club, Salle Holyrood. This is our metal fencing club focusing on foil, creating the pyramid effect. I feel lucky having some amazing coaches like Sean Walton & Ziemek Wojciechowski showing me that it's important to have your own creative approach and to always look at bettering yourself and move with the times or be left behind. I try to have a creative approach and a focus on the goal for each athlete. I make mistakes and I don't know everything but I'm willing to learn and take advice and move with the times to develop so that my pupils can develop and evolve to reach their potential. I've had the opportunity to mentor at the School Games. I'm Youth Five Nations coach for Scotland and had a great time with the GB Cadets on the international circuit.

## And what about his mentoring work?

My wife got speaking to an organisation called Champions in Schools through the winning Scotland foundation. They want to use athletes to inspire the next generation. They gave me an opportunity to learn how to create my athletes journey story and to develop different styles to inspire and motivate others.

I then had an amazing opportunity to work with the Sky Sports Living for

sport program. Through this I met some amazing athletes and heard about their journeys through their sport and how sport has changed their life in a positive way. I became athlete mentor for the UK School Games. This gave me a platform to promote fencing and also work with the next generation of fencers, to mentor

them so that they have more clarity in their direction.

## We continued by discussing some of his experiences as a mentor.

When doing workshops with schools, community centres, young offenders institutes etc. I feel It's important to build



Any challenge can be overcome!

# KEITH COOK - A POSITIVE DESTINATION (contd.)

trust and to show empathy. I start the sessions with my Athlete Journey story, then focus on the goals and needs for each group. I feel there is a part of my journey everyone can relate to.

When working with the mentees, it's not my job to tell them what to do but give them the opportunity to express themselves, reflect on their past and have someone to listen to and then ask questions. They will then be able to have a clearer outlook on how they can achieve their goals or how they can make decisions to change their lives in a positive way.

## And the benefits?

The work changes lives. I try to give them the opportunity to give them skills to be self-sufficient so that they can deal with hurdles in life and have the confidence and resilience to be a contributing member of society and enjoy life to the full.

## And what about a "stand-out" success story?

One kind word, one conversation, one meeting can get someone back on track. My work is to inspire and motivate and to give hope, to show them that life is hard but if you are willing to work hard, anything is possible in life. In order to do this you will have to surround yourself with the right people in life. The people you surround yourself with will mould you in a positive or a negative way. You have to find the "radiators" in your life that radiate encouragement, motivation and positivity whilst staying away from the "drains" that will drain you or your ambition and confidence in life.



## Keith Coaching

I have lots of positive stories through Positive Destination. I have been able to work with pupils that have had troubled backgrounds and lost their way. I was able to mentor them and help them find a positive outlook, either through further education, volunteer roles or employment and also finding what they love. You can take a closer look at my work with St Pauls RC School, Dundee, [here](#).

## And the future?

One of my goals it to create a fencing centre to help fencers achieve their

career goals. Also to run Positive Destination sessions from there so that we can show that the skills you learn through sport can be transferred into life to reach that positive destination.

**If you have been inspired by this story and know anyone that would be interested in working with Keith, his contact details follow.**

Website: [www.positivedestination.com](http://www.positivedestination.com)

Email: [admin@positivedestination.com](mailto:admin@positivedestination.com)

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# HANNAH GAVIN JOINS THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

**Hannah Gavin has recently joined British Fencing as the England Development Officer (Clubs & Regions). We spoke with her recently and here's what she had to say.**

I joined the team at the start of April and I would like to start by thanking everyone for the warm reception into the community. I'm looking forward to meeting and working with new people as well as discovering a new network of volunteers, referees, coaches, athletes and supporters a like. For those of you that don't know, my role (funded by England Fencing) primarily is to liaise with all the regions and clubs in England to help them to drive and sustain their membership as well as maintaining and developing relationships with those regions.

I have always been heavily involved in sport. I started as a swimmer back home in Bolton where I was county champion and also qualified for the nationals. I also studied dance, including ballet and almost attended ballet school when I was offered a place at 11 years old but decided instead to continue with my studies at secondary school. With sport being such a big influencer in my life it is no surprise that I went on to study Sport Coaching at Bath and also completed a post graduate degree at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Whilst at Bath I found a new sport, rowing. I owe a lot to joining that club as it has shaped a lot of what I have done since. My post graduate degree was part of a scholarship position with British Rowing, where I remained based in the South East working with specified clubs to help develop and grow their junior sections. This role gave me a taste of not only coaching but also an exposure to the inside workings of sports community clubs. I have been part of the club structure a lot of my life and career and have seen and experienced the barriers and challenges they face. I am excited to start to get to grips with a new community of clubs and to work with them to maintain and potentially strengthen their causes.

After completing my studies, I came to London as a Community Development

Officer at London Youth Rowing. LYR works hard to introduce the world of rowing to a new set of participants building on the influence of London 2012 Olympics, to inspire not just a new generation of athletes but a more varied one. I was with LYR for just over three years and within that time I really began to understand not just the local sports development structures and clubs but how London fitted into the national make-up with British Rowing and Sport England alike. Through my role there, I was exposed to a lot of new things including competition and events management.

I joined British Fencing from London Youth Games where I had been Sport and Systems Manager for two and a half years. LYG represents, for a lot of young Londoners, their first interaction with sport and competition. It is their primary focus to run and develop good sporting events and for me it

was a chance to develop my skill set around communication, planning and management.

My first few weeks here at British Fencing have been very exciting. I had my first true exposure to the fencing world at the Senior Championships in April and I was amazed by what I saw and it is safe to say it smashed all of my pre-conceptions. I was reminded of a tense one-on-one arena with the leveller of being behind a mask, meaning that true athletes could be unleashed. By the end of the weekend I had was fully hooked on watching the athletic displays I had the pleasure of seeing and even was starting to grasp the complexity of the sport.

I really hope to do this role justice and work to develop its purpose not just for the regions but to British Fencing as a whole. As I have said, I am looking forward to meeting more of you as we go along and definitely doing an introduction to fencing course at some point!



**Hannah Gavin Joins the Development Team**

# UK SPORT ASPIRATION FUND CENTRAL TO BRITISH FENCING'S SUPPORT FOR GBR ATHLETES SETTING SIGHTS ON TOKYO 2020 #FENCINGINSPIRES

## By Maxine McCombie - Aspiration Fund Manager at British Fencing



Following confirmation last December of the UK Sport Aspiration Fund (AF) bid, UK Sport have since agreed the detailed British Fencing (BF) delivery plan that will support both the athlete's qualification journey and the social impact elements of the fund's objectives. Over the first part of 2019, BF worked with athletes, coaches and other key support staff and volunteers to maximise the potential the AF has to support qualification chances in the weapons identified as most likely to either qualify directly or through the Zonal qualification event.

This work has formed the basis of BF's Social Impact and Qualification Plan which has been agreed with UK Sport.

Although there will be prioritised support in Men's Foil Team, Men's Sabre Team and Women's Foil Individual, BF intends to maximise the potential the AF has, to support all weapons and in doing so, help develop a culture of social responsibility across all weapons, individuals and teams, competing at the highest level.

Georgina Usher, British Fencing CEO said, "This is a really positive demonstration of support from UK Sport, that they are confident in our ability and commitment to deliver the aims and ambitions of the Aspiration Fund. BF recognises the importance of the social responsibilities that go alongside the qualification journey, that we all hope will culminate in the maximum number fencers as possible competing at the Tokyo 2020 Games."

Virginia Bailey, BF Community Projects and Programmes Manager, said, "We will be working closely with the athletes, to inspire and engage individuals and communities both within our fencing world and beyond. It is the journey that the athletes have embarked on, not just their performance, that is a source of inspiration for the wider community."

Mark Lyttle, Chair of BF, said, "We'd like to thank both The National Lottery and UK Sport for their support to help GBR fencers inspire the nation through their Olympic journey."

## QUALIFICATION SUPPORT

The Aspiration Fund is intended to provide support to athletes and teams who are able to inspire through their qualification journey performances.

Aspiration Funding is not intended to recreate a World Class Programme or to support athletes on track to medal at an Olympic Games. It has been awarded to support individuals and teams with the potential to qualify to the Games and to enable them to better prepare and compete, thus making it more likely they will be able to qualify. This will include funding for additional support staff (e.g. sports therapist/physio/coaches) at major qualification events and funding for athletes to attend preparation camps throughout the qualification season.

Athletes and teams who will receive support from the Aspiration Fund will need to continue to demonstrate that they are on track with a chance to qualify directly or through the zonal qualification event.

## SOCIAL IMPACT PLAN

Alongside their qualification plan, sports seeking funding were asked to submit details of how they will engage and inspire the wider community through the athlete's preparation for and experiences at the Games, to inspire future generations.

Athletes identified to receive support through the Aspiration Fund will need to commit to supporting British Fencing community projects that link directly back to the five government outcomes of physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and economic development. Opportunities include existing BF projects such as the partnership with the Maslaha Foundation project, [Muslim Girls Fence](#) and [London Youth](#) community projects.

Fencers have also been consulted to gather their ideas and thoughts, in an area they felt passionate about and how they would like to engage with communities and individuals in a way that would have the most impact. Proposals arising from this consultation include a project around 'overcoming adversity', working to provide positive experiences with critically or terminally ill young people, working with a mental health in sport charity and engaging with young people through appearances in local schools, colleges and universities.

Mike Stow, Aspiration Fund Project Lead at UK Sport said, "We are delighted to see that the Aspiration Fund is already starting to make a positive impact with sports. It is exciting times to work with British Fencing over the course of this project, as their athletes aspire to reach the Tokyo Olympics and inspire us all along the way by linking to some fantastic initiatives".

## THE TRUE ATHLETE PROJECT

The community engagements that the athletes participate in will further be supported by a pioneering programme lead by [The True Athlete Project](#) (TAP). TAP's mission is to improve athletic performance, nurture mental health, and cultivate a more compassionate society in sport, delivering a mindfulness-based, socially-conscious programme to support both senior GBR athletes and those further down the pathway.

Over the next 12 months TAP will be delivering an athlete-to-athlete mentor programme built around the following five themes:

- Performance
- Identity & Values
- Mindfulness
- Nature & Connectedness
- Community & Social Responsibility

Mentors will receive world-class training opportunities from the TAP team,

# UK SPORT ASPIRATION FUND CENTRAL TO BRITISH FENCING'S SUPPORT FOR GBR ATHLETES SETTING SIGHTS ON TOKYO 2020 #FENCINGINSPIRES

## (contd.)

including modules on compassionate communication and mindfulness for sport performance, so they are able to effectively support their mentee as they journey through this exciting year together. Mentees not only receive the nurturing guidance of a role model

but also a personalised mental skills programme.

Speaking about the collaboration, Sam Parfitt, founder of TAP said, "We are delighted to be by British Fencing's side for the next two years, helping to nurture happy, healthy, high-performing

athletes. This is a hugely important step in demonstrating how cultivating a compassionate culture of sport can go hand-in-hand with high performance."

For further information about the UK Sport Aspiration Fund please contact [Maxine McCombie](#)

## GOAL SETTING – HOW TO EAT YOUR ELEPHANT!

How do you eat an elephant? In small junks, of course! Joking aside, achieving big goals in life is much the same. It has to be handled in small parts. Here, we look at goal setting to achieve those big targets. Whilst it may appear that this article is aimed at those who desire success on the international stage, these principles can be applied to wanting to compete for your region and in fact, all aspects of your life.

It is 1<sup>st</sup> January and we start to think about our resolutions and goals for the year ahead. These are often trying to be healthier, losing few pounds, exercising and eating better and becoming a better version of ourselves. In sport, they could be representing a team or country.

We often fix on where we want to be – to look better, fit into summer clothes, to be at the European Championships. We do this, rather than focussing on the journey to meet our goals. Without working out the journey or working out what we need to do, we're often left making excuses and quite often we don't achieve the success/results we set.

We don't look around and reach out to seek the right support to help us on our journey. This is because we don't fully recognise the journey and what needs to be undertaken. The impact of not reaching out and getting the right support is that, maybe we are going in the wrong direction or even getting lost. A strong support system needs to be used to assist us in achieving those goals.

So, what are the strategies to reach out?

### Work collaboratively

Find the right people that can help you grow as a person and as a fencer. You

can't travel the journey alone – you will need sparring partners. Not only on the piste but sometimes you should listen to what others have to say about your ideas and/or your development need. Talking through a big fight and your concerns with a teammate can lead to a breakthrough faster than mulling it over in your head. It takes trust and a focus for team competitions and developing trust in your teammate, who next week maybe your opponent. Working together with others can lead to greater achievements and it is also a lot more fun!

### Don't be afraid to ask for help

Always remember your network and know what your end goal is in that development phases because they might be the ones who will help you to get there. They might have a fresh perspective on different ways of reaching that goal but they might also be able to flag up meaningful opportunities that you can follow.

"If you're not vocal about your goals, you'll silently accept failure."

### Write it down

Writing it down makes it real. It makes the dreams tangible. The idea of goals and targets can seem far-off and intangible when they're just floating around in your head.

Read Richie's story

Richie McCaw (former New Zealand Rugby Union captain) talked about a significant conversation he had with his uncle.

It was held at McDonald's in Timaru. McCaw had been selected for trials for the 1999 New Zealand under-19 squad and was showing his uncle the summer programme they had been given to keep fit.

Uncle Bigsy said, "Do you want to be an All Black?" McCaw answered in the affirmative, so a serviette was produced

and the pair mapped out how he was going to achieve that goal.

While in his first year at Lincoln University studying Agricultural Science, McCaw wanted to make the New Zealand U19s and Canterbury U19s squads. The following year, he wanted to make the New Zealand Colts.

From there, he would make the Canterbury U21s team and following that, the Canterbury senior team.

They figured that after the 2003 World Cup a few players would head overseas and he would make the Crusaders and everything going to plan – making the All Blacks in 2004.

Uncle Bigsy didn't stop there, making McCaw commit to being a Great All Black. McCaw couldn't summon the courage to write it out in full, so he scribbled "G.A.B." and then, under his uncle's watchful eye, signed it and later pinned it to a cupboard back home in Kurow.

Given McCaw's genius for openside flank play, the chances are he would have made it whatever the circumstances but Uncle Bigsy's role should not be minimised. With McCaw's signature, he had effectively signed his first contract, which owed everything to intrinsic motivation and nothing with monetary reward. McCaw first played for the All Blacks in 2001.

While committing your aspirations to paper may seem like a meaningless or insignificant step towards achieving them, doing so can be a symbolic motivator. Sharing your goals with family and friends may help to propel you forward in your journey.

We're all in teams at home, social life, work, school and university, and whether we recognise it or not, our teams play a role in enabling us to do what we do. You could keep a record of your progress and then share these notes with your friends and colleagues?

# BRITISH FENCING'S NEW COLLABORATION WITH THE TRUE ATHLETE PROJECT

## By GBR Olympic Fencer Laurence Halsted and Sam Parfitt, Founder & CEO of TAP

### Discovering a New Path, Post-Rio - Laurence

I first heard about The True Athlete Project (TAP) in autumn 2016 when I was contacted on Twitter by the CEO and founder, Sam Parfitt. Sam had read [an article](#) that I had written for The Guardian in the build up to the Rio Olympics, on why athletes should use their elevated platforms to make a positive difference in the world. This message resonated with TAP's guiding philosophy that a true athlete trains their mind and body in order to help others and make the world a better place and Sam asked if I would like to collaborate on any of the programmes that they had in the pipeline. I had just returned from competing in Rio, with the sure knowledge that I was drawing a line under my competitive career and it turns out that this period, right after an Olympics is the perfect time to approach an Olympian with talk of new, collaborative projects! I had been exploring possible paths post-Olympics for some time and I was already in my first role as Performance Director at Denmark's largest fencing club, Trekanten. But I still had the gap to fill where my own fencing had been.



Laurence with mentee Souleyman Bah



Like many of the other 'elder' Team GB athletes from Rio, I was in a period of introspection around my retirement; considering what had gone before and how it would set me up for - and match up to - what was still to come. I am hugely grateful that my wife, Helena, had the wherewithal to push me to plan for life after the Olympics, all the while I was training for it, as that meant I never suffered the sudden sense of disorientation or loss, that many retiring athletes can find themselves experiencing. When the time came, I felt ready to pursue life off the piste (even if it was only just off to the side of the piste,) and it even felt like an exciting step, though it came wrapped up with plenty of reflection.

It really is a fascinating process to reflect on the changes and adaptations that take place throughout a career in elite sport. Richard (Kruse) and I often mused that we couldn't have been luckier with the timing of our fencing careers; being juniors at a time where, how shall I put it... there wasn't a lot in the way of external regulation around our trips and then turning seniors in time for London 2012, Olympic funding to kick in and everything moving towards full professionalism. But alongside that, there was another interesting progression happening for me. I started out as a classically nervy, inconsistent and aggressive cadet and junior, banking way too much of my ego and self-esteem on my results. I eventually transitioned to being a far more consistent, emotionally stable performer with easily as much drive and fight as before but derived

from a much healthier, more positive and therefore more potent state of mind. My opponents were no longer enemies to be destroyed (and feared) but more like compatriots to test myself against. I had a clear vision of what kind of athlete, competitor and teammate I wanted to be and that gave me plenty of opportunities to be proud of myself, regardless of the result I achieved in each competition.

I am sure that every senior athlete who looks back on a long career notices the changes in them from when they were a junior but I was struck just by how much my attitudes and my perspective had shifted. The question that then arose for me, which was especially relevant considering my new role as a Performance Director, was how much of my more mature performance mindset could be passed on to a much younger athlete and be put to use for their benefit. Could I help cadets and juniors skip over much of the unhelpful, stressful, negative mental pitfalls and experiences that I waded through and get quicker to the kind of mindset, that I know from experience, to be much more effective *and* far more enjoyable?

So this was the kind of question on my mind when Sam contacted me about a potential collaboration. Amongst other initiatives, he mentioned the mentoring programme that TAP had recently been piloting; matching elite athlete mentors with young, ambitious athlete mentees. I quickly signed on to become a mentor and within a month had come on board the TAP team, in a voluntary role, to assist in developing the mentoring programme itself. The thing that grabbed me about the chance to be a part of the programme team was the same thing that makes being a mentor so fulfilling; it helped me rediscover and fully realise all the things that I had learnt on my journey as an athlete. I uncovered this huge reservoir of knowledge inside me, on all kinds of performance-related topics and it felt great that I would be able to explore and pass it on to others who were just starting their journey. On top of this, I would get a chance to test my theory that my later-career mindset could be at least partially adopted by a much younger athlete and it would unleash more of their potential - and sooner than in my case.

# BRITISH FENCING'S NEW COLLABORATION WITH THE TRUE ATHLETE PROJECT

(contd.)

Fast forward two and a half years and the mentoring programme has just completed its first full pilot cohort of relationships, with some phenomenal successes along the way and culminating in receiving the World Olympians' Award for its innovative approach to social change. The holistic nature of the programme attracted an incredible group of ten elite athlete mentors, with 17 Olympics / Paralympics amongst them. The mentoring relationships were matched across sports and across borders, with 15 disciplines and 7 countries represented in the group. One stand-out highlight was when the whole group of 20 mentors and mentees plus the TAP team took part in a 6-week online 'mindfulness for sport performance' course, led by the psychologist who developed the programme. It was such a buzz to see this group, spread across the globe and united by their love for sport, discussing openly and with curiosity the inner workings and failings of their minds. It is immensely powerful and healthy for a young athlete to hear an Olympic legend talk about their own doubts and difficulties, revealing their humanity.



The feedback we have had from mentors and mentees alike has been astounding and the positive impact of these relationships has surpassed everything we could have hoped for at this stage. I am excited to see what this programme can grow into and one part of that is with internal cohorts, such as the one that TAP will run with British Fencing, with some of the nation's top fencers mentoring younger fencers. My experience shows

clearly that both the mentors and mentees chosen for this programme will find it equally inspiring and as with some of our pilot cohort, perhaps even transformational.

## A Socially-Conscious Approach to Athlete Development - Sam

What if we reimagined sport as a training ground for compassion, mindfulness and mental wellbeing?

What if we reimagined the idea of an athlete as someone who trains mind and body in order to help others and make the world a better place?

The True Athlete Project is a charity formed of Olympic and Paralympic athletes, mindfulness teachers, clinical and sport psychologists, coaches and social policymakers. We recently received the World and GB Olympians' Association Partnership Award for our innovative approach to the use of sport as a vehicle for social change.

Every member of the TAP team believes sport has the potential to empower individuals, inspire strong communities and forge a more compassionate society. However, far too often, sport misses its chance to change lives. Far too often and at every level, the experience of

sport is disheartening, even harmful. The joy of sport gets lost and sport's powerful social change-making potential disappears. This is critical. I was recently asked to speak on the suicide of a young athlete and the appalling mental and physical health crises in this country are well evidenced. Sport *can* play a positive role in these crises but only when it is delivered with care, in a way which lifts people up, and inspires people to keep playing.

Our mindfulness-based approach aims to do just that. We support athletes to experience improved mental wellbeing, resilience and confidence, and to learn new skills for life which can be applied to any challenge that comes their way. We aim for young people to experience the life-changing moments of joy and profound personal growth that comes when sport is not simply a physical pursuit, measured by winning and losing, but rather a secure, compassionate, and meaningful space for learning about oneself and developing ways of being happier and healthier.

This philosophy reflects British Fencing's vision for a new, whole-person, socially-conscious approach to athlete development and so the [partnership](#) between the two organisations was a



Sam Parfitt

# BRITISH FENCING'S NEW COLLABORATION WITH THE TRUE ATHLETE PROJECT

(contd.)

natural fit. Together, we have designed two separate initiatives which aim to support fencers in Britain over the next two years:

- An internal, athlete-to-athlete mentoring programme, based on [TAP's flagship, global mentoring programme](#). Elite fencers will be paired one-to-one with their mentee and journey together through five modules: Performance, Mindfulness, Identity & Values, Community & Responsibility, Nature & Connectedness. This promises to be an exciting year for both mentors and mentees, as Laurence's testimony above shows! As part of this programme, fencers will produce a *TAP Speaks* video, which showcases their impact and TAP will be providing regular opportunities for the wider fencing community to share in the learning, including online mindfulness sessions.
- A holistic athlete education programme to support the work of Athlete Development Programme (ADP) coaches and volunteers, with the goal of creating a shared understanding and language around a new kind of compassionate, athlete-centred development programme. This will include delivery across 10 ADP camps, including dynamic, "In the Zone: Mindfulness for Athletes" sessions for athletes.

We invite you to follow along, using the hashtag #tapintofencing and to get in touch if you have any questions about how to get involved: [sam@thetrueathleteproject.org](mailto:sam@thetrueathleteproject.org) / [laurence@thetrueathleteproject.org](mailto:laurence@thetrueathleteproject.org)



Sam coaching tennis



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to have your say...

# FEMALE FOCUSED COACHING COURSES

By Virginia Bailey - Projects & Programme Manager at British Fencing

Earlier this year over fifty women took part in a number of Core Coach courses delivered as part of the growing rollout of the Muslim Girls Fence project. Muslim Girls Fence is a collaboration between Maslaha and British Fencing aiming to challenge misperceptions of and raise aspirations among young Muslim women, in the light of the complex discrimination experienced by this group, on the basis of both faith and gender.

Over the last 12 months we have introduced the project in Doncaster, Bradford, London and most recently Birmingham. The focus of delivery across these four cities is to target inactive women in areas of deprivation who may struggle to access sport and physical activity.

A key element of the project is to ensure that we have a skilled and local workforce to deliver engaging sessions, that meet the needs of the women we are working with. To enable this to happen, we have engaged with a number of organisations and community groups, who have a track record of working with local communities and providing opportunities for women to take part in sport and physical activity.

**maslaha**

**“This is one of the best coaching courses I have been on!” Bradford participant.**

**“You ladies were marvellous and honestly it was not only a pleasure to have met and worked with you all but an honour. You have amazing enthusiasm for the project and it’s infectious. I went away full of energy and wanting to really dedicate myself to this.” Bradford participant.**



The two-day Core Coach course has been adapted to ensure that not only are the workforce competent to design, lead and deliver fencing for the participants we are targeting through Muslim Girls Fence, but that they are also fully aware and supportive of the project outcomes. Incorporating workshops and discussions that cover topics such as engaging women in sport (with a focus on BAME communities) understanding the importance and relevance of monitoring, evaluation and learning, as well as marketing and communication.

During the course, the opportunity to explore topics around barriers, motivations, role models and influencers created an opportunity to share learnings and best practice from other projects, both involving sport and other activities. Through these conversations, relationships have been formed and project ideas born that have led to a movement of women driven and motivated to make a difference in their local community.

Post course, we are offering continued support to all the women that have taken part in the training, which is being shaped by the needs of those women. Our aim is to ensure that all the women on the course continue to feel confident and supported so that they can build their skill level and carry on offering fencing in their communities.

This work is funded by Sport England.



**100% of the participants either ‘agreed’ (38%) or ‘strongly agreed’ (62%) that the course met the learning outcomes they expected to gain from the course**

**100% of the participants either ‘agreed’ (31%) or ‘strongly agreed’ (69%) that the course met their personal learning outcomes**

**100% of the participants either ‘agreed’ (23%) or ‘strongly agreed’ (77%) that the course provided them with information they can apply through delivery**

# COMMERCIAL UPDATE

## By James Craig - Commercial Manager at British Fencing

It's been a busy and productive year since my last update. The partner licensing work discussed in previous articles is developing quickly. One option for partners is to take organisations through a process enabling them to deliver a Primary School Resource Pack (PSRP), that aligns to our MiniSword and Go/Fence Achievement Awards. The other option, which currently sees two new partners coming on board this year, is a license agreement where we recognise them as an Official Training Partner. They are then trained to deliver a one-day version of Core Coach (to teachers only) as well as the PSRP. Centre Parcs and Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre are also committed to the internal license partner programme now and join PGL Travel Ltd (4<sup>th</sup> year renewal), Kingswood (3<sup>rd</sup> Year renewal) and Premier Sport (3<sup>rd</sup> Year renewal).

In terms of partnerships, we are working on a further announcement but I am pleased to say that we have begun doing some early work with Woods Silver Fleet, who have a fleet of three yachts on the Thames River and two prominent piers in central London. They act as an Official Sponsor providing hospitality, meetings and we are working together on a joint corporate hospitality experience. Lastly Pulseroll, who provide a vibrating training and recovery product, became an Official Supplier, sponsoring prize giveaways at the Senior Nationals Championships this year. We look forward to the opportunity to work with Pulseroll more closely, whilst being able to offer fantastic discounts to our members Pulseroll is a partner full of potential for the future and we thank them for their support so far.

Premier Sport as an Official Delivery Partner in Primary Education has



come to a natural end after two years. The partnership saw an increase in awareness and participation in the Primary Education sector. We will still be working with them on the internal licensing partner programme. Some highlights for me during their time as an official delivery partner have been:

- In 2015 35,031 experiences were provided and two years later in 2017/18 we saw it rise to 47,761 fencing experiences
- The attempted and successful Guinness World Record of 300 primary school children fencing in the same lesson

We have also had international interest in our work from a couple of countries, including South Africa. Our Coaching Development Manager, Steve Kemp flew out to support Jonathan Katz in Cape Town at the end of April 2019, to deliver an ITCF (Level 1) and a Coaching Fencing (Level 2) course, as part of a wider Memorandum of Understanding, signed between South Africa Fencing

Federation and British Fencing. British Fencing look forward to seeing where things might go but we are certainly enthused by the prospect of welcoming them as an international partner, so watch this space for more news.

I would like to give a big thank you to Official Suppliers, Pixel Creative Technologies and a new supplier Caged Fish. The former has gone above and beyond, to help us develop a 'Games App' we have been working on. The app will support Core Coaches with games and video content, in an easy to access manner, as well as 4 or 5 games that anyone can access. The idea is to introduce some very light touch and accessible games, that non fencers can try for themselves or deliver to children. The new supplier, Caged Fish, have worked hard on refreshing the look of the app (soon to be unveiled) as well as producing an illustration style and templates for how we present the content in the app. Please look out for the launch of the app this summer.

Finally, we want to communicate more about what we do and how we do it. We have invested in training to help us get in front of and behind the camera and provide meaningful video content to our fencing community. We hope this "behind the scenes" access will help communicate what we do and engage our audience/membership, so we can listen and respond to the needs they have and what is important to them. We are excited to be working with V21 on a testimonial video (Core Coach), which will highlight the unique selling points to encourage more activity providers to consider fencing, as well as contextualise and showcase the sport and activity of fencing.

# UNIVERSITY FENCING IS GROWING!

**By Ian Stewart  
– Participation  
Programme Manager  
(Education) at British  
Fencing**



**Lucy Shardlow**

**It is not easy to set up a new university club. Most sports facilities at universities are oversubscribed, fencing kit is a huge cost when starting from nothing and coaching can be expensive. That hasn't deterred the University of Cumbria who, thanks to a very driven student, have managed to grow a thriving club in a little under a year. We spoke to that student Lucy Shardlow, to hear about the fencing journey in Cumbria.**

"Getting into the University of Cumbria was amazing as it meant that I could continue to work with the other clubs that I had started in Cumbria. I knew there was no fencing club at the university. Knowing this meant that I was determined to get the club up and running quickly.

I was invited to the University Fencing Officer course (UFO) at Leon Paul Fencing Centre to help develop my coaching skills and game-play specifically for universities. The British Fencing coaching course took us through methods of

game-play, planning lessons and how to coach effectively. I got to meet people from other clubs and had British Fencing coaches take us through the weekend's course. I had such a great time on the course as it allowed me to make connections with other clubs and start some possible inter-club events for our fencers.

When it came to discussing setting up the club, I had the pleasure to meet Donna Salter, part of the University of Cumbria Student Union team. When I put the idea of a fencing club to Donna she seemed ecstatic. I had everything planned out and the club was ready to be set up after our first meeting.

I really could not have done any of this by myself on the campuses. So Donna has been the most amazing help, getting me ready to set this up and sort out my committee. I could not have asked for a better person to assist me through this time and just to think she does this for more than one club - so what a woman!

To help me get started British Fencing's Ian Stewart helped me gather the equipment that I needed and was able to send me seventeen full kits from British Fencing to start the club up, which was a massive help. Along with shared lamés from Herdwick Fencing Club and a box from Austin Friars, I had the basics that I needed to start the club.

We began the first session with fencing games as well as some drills. Everyone started to improve in such a short space of time. Shortly after we were all in our element, getting to know the basics. Second week in and we had a visit from a journalist from BBC Radio Cumbria Sports, who made a three-part interview series about the club including how I got the club started, the fencers' experiences so far, hopes for the club in the future and to get the word out about fencing in the local area.

Looking back, I can see now how confident this experience has made me, as well as how my whole club has improved in just one year. Since then, I have expanded the club to both campuses in Cumbria and have organised for my University club to go fencing with me and my coaches at the Herdwick Fencing Club in Bothel.



Over the next year I would like to introduce foil to the club, giving my fencers a wider range of weapons to pick from, as many requests have come through that they would like to learn a little about a new weapon. I have also started to organise a competition to raise funds for the club as we go into our second year, to help buy equipment and pay for longer hours in the hall.

I could not have achieved any of this without the support of my fencers. They have hardly missed a lesson and have provided many a great laugh throughout the first year of the club. And Donna Salter, who is just an all-round amazing woman - I have many skills to learn from her and her team skills to learn from her and her team. Thanks as well, go to British Fencing and Ian Stewart, in particular, in helping me to get this off the ground with coaching and constant support.

**"It's been so exciting to watch Lucy get the Fencing Club established and see her getting students involved. UCSU are very proud and thrilled to have been able to support her. She's been proactive and as an incredibly determined individual, she's seized every opportunity she can to promote the Fencing club and recruit new members. Her passion for fencing is clear and judging from the reactions of other students, infectious!"  
Donna Salter, UCSU.**

# THE FEAR OF RE-INJURY

## Guidance for athletes, coaches and support teams

Early in 2019, the Athlete Development Programme Coaches and staff were discussing the progress of the two injured male sabreurs - one cadet and one junior. They both had significant injuries. One required surgery to the hand, the other, a musculoskeletal issue in the groin/leg. The first part of the conversation was the timing of the physical recovery - will they have the time for the injury to repair, return to training and have sufficient competition to get "match fit". This process can be monitored and the recovery progress assessed. Using physical rehabilitation techniques and/or the input of physiotherapists and other professionals can help increase the speed of the physical recovery but what about the psychological recovery?

During an update conversation with the parents of the cadet fencer, questions were asked relating to fencer's recovery. Now he is back in training and working at competition level, does he trust his body to work at full intensity? The answer was that "the leg seems fine but he's been holding back a bit in training. It will be fully tested at the next competition week."



The question actually was relating to **kinesiophobia** or the fear of re-injury. The negative thoughts associated with the consequences of the injury - more time away from the fencing, not making the major championship, potential for surgery and also the fear of injury itself.

If left unchecked, there are the potential psychological impacts:

- the lack of confidence in the injured site and a lower pain tolerance, which can lead to avoidance behaviours
- not doing the personal rehabilitation work, exercising and
- fencing at a lesser intensity

There is also the physiological response 'muscular guarding' which describes the subconscious protection of the injured site by adapting the natural movement. The compensation in the movement can be helpful to protect the injury initially but the unintended consequence is potentially a reduction in performance in the longer term.

Injuries can be traumatic events and when it is part of a competition, or a re-injury, it is not unusual to respond negatively. The fear-avoidance injury model (above) shows how easy it can be to fall into the fear of re-injury cycle. Your thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours can all contribute to being stuck in the loop. This can be compounded by over-analysis and heightened awareness of the injured site.

To reduce or overcome the fear of re-injury there are a number of strategies that can be used to help. Understanding the nature of the injury, how long does it normally take to recover, what are the best ways to recover, how can you take more control of the situation?

Taking control means pacing and grading yourself to get back into training and then competition. Listen to both your body and mind and be aware of when you might be being over-sensitive to pain.

Recognise and challenge any negative thoughts. Standing up to our negative thoughts or self-talk can make us stronger and more aware of who we are because we have to step back and really look at what these negative thoughts truly mean.

Finally, identify who else can help you. Do you require specialist support with recovery- physiological or psychological? Perhaps you could try to speak to someone who has dealt with a similar injury?

# ARE YOU REALLY READY FOR COMPETITION

## A Guide for Athletes (...and coaches, parents...and everyone)

The picture below was taken at the Cadet and Junior World Championships in Torun. If you look closely you will see that the athletes and officials are in the centre and spectators are in the stands or around the outside of the track area where the pistes were laid.

For the first round poules NO coaches (or spectators) were allowed into the track area. And during the Elimination bouts only accredited coaches (one per individual athlete or two per team) were allowed at the end of a piste.

For some athletes (and coaches/parents!) it came as a bit of a shock that someone was not able to stand at the end of the piste to provide ongoing tactical advice, fix weapons, administer food/drink etc.

Those fencers that have prepared for this environment, now have a potential competitive advantage, other sports may describe this as marginal gains.

So, how as coaches can we help our fencers in these situations? We need to create competitive and training environments for them which can help them develop the skills and resilience they may need if they find themselves fencing at a European or World Championships.

There are six fundamental requirements that will make a difference - and every athlete can do them at every level:

1. **Kit (weapons and clothing):** GBR athletes are expected to turn up with fully functioning kit, compliant with current FIE rules and understand how to test, diagnose and fix basic weapon issues with tools they have brought themselves. They should also be able to get kitted up by themselves and pack their own fencing bags.

2. **Nutrition:** GBR athletes are expected to be able to manage their own food and drink intake, and poor performance is

a potential consequence of getting this wrong!

3. **Competition format:** The athletes should know how a competition is run. They should be able to read and understand poule sheets and tableaux and be ready for their next bout at the best level of readiness. They should not have to rely on a coach or parent.

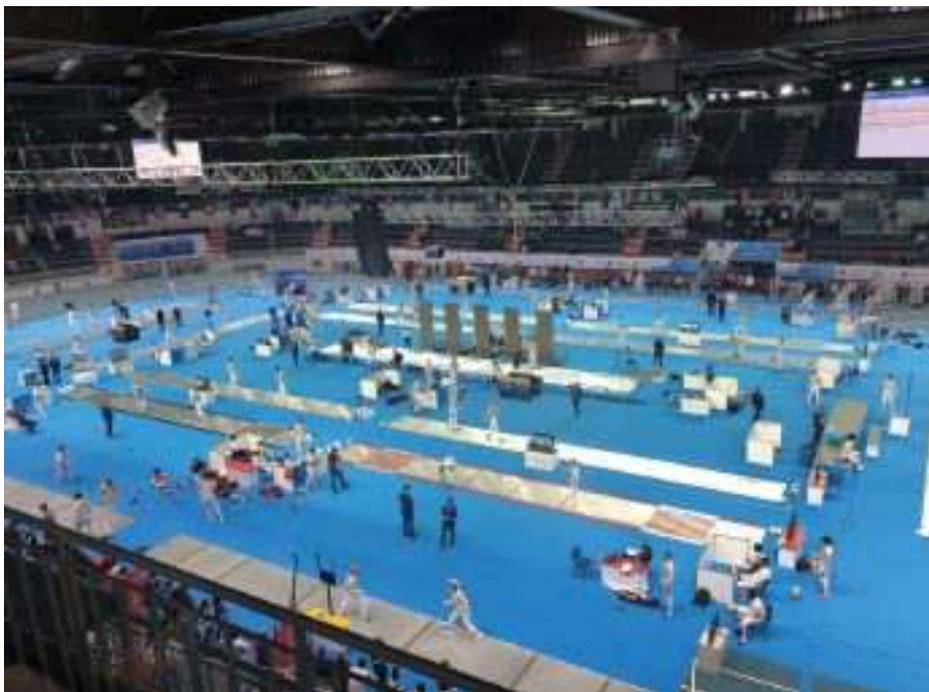
4. **Independence:** Athletes should not need a parent or coach at the end of the piste to feel OK to fence. It is becoming increasingly common that poules take place in areas where supporters and coaches are not permitted at the end of the piste. And ideally GBR athletes should also be able to focus on the match they fence in without the last question to the coach (or distracting thought in their head) being 'Where's my mum/dad?'

5. **Understand the rules of fencing:**

This sounds obvious but far too many athletes are unaware of rules and particularly penalties. This can lead to athletes losing hits and arguing unnecessarily with FIE referees and officials. The [rulebooks](#) are available in English, in PDF format and as an app on the BF website.

6. Finally **Personal Accountability** for their own behaviour as performance athletes, supportive teammates and in doing so, act as ambassadors and role models for the sport, inspiring others with their actions. How you are seen by others can make a difference.

All these little details put together can create a competitive advantage or at least not give competitive advantages to an opponent.



Field of Play in Torun

# BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

The senior British Championships took place at SportsDock at the University of East London on the weekend of 13-14 April. Many thanks to all of the officials, referees, armourers and volunteers who gave up their time to make the event so successful. Here we celebrate the champions and medallists!



Gold: Susan Sica  
Silver: Mary Cohen  
Bronze: Rachel Barnes  
Bronze: Kerenza Bryson



Gold: Teagan Williams-Stewart  
Silver: Chloe Dickson  
Bronze: Kate Beardmore  
Bronze: Chiara McDermott



Gold: Caitlin Maxwell  
Silver: Maria Chart  
Bronze: Alia Itzkowitz  
Bronze: Sophia Potter



Gold: James Frewin  
Silver: Philip Marsh  
Bronze: Tom Bennett  
Bronze: Harrison Nichols



Gold: James Davis  
Silver: Ben Peggs  
Bronze: Jai Birch  
Bronze: Kamal Minott (not present for photo)



Gold: William Deary  
Silver: Jonathan Webb  
Bronze: James Honeybone  
Bronze: Curtis Miller

You can watch a re-run of the Women's Epee, Men's Foil & Women's Sabre gold medal matches [here](#).  
The Men's Epee, Women's Foil & Men's Sabre gold medal matches are available to view [here](#).



# OBITUARY

## PROFESSOR STEVE PAUL 1954 — 2019

Epeeists the world over have been devastated by the news of the death of Steven Paul after a fall whilst on holiday with his family. Steve was one of the UK's best epeeists of the last 50 years and had epee fencing deep within his blood from the moment he was born in September 1954. His father was an Olympic fencer, his mother an Olympic medal winning sprinter and he was grandson to Leon Paul.



In his youth, he qualified as a Maitre D'Armes from the Institute National des Sport, Paris and was a graduate of the Ecole Nationale des Maîtres d'Armes from whence he went on to become the Assistant to the then UK National Coach, Bob Anderson.

As an individual epeeist, he shone on the international circuit where his speed, technique and tactical skills saw him competing at 8 World Championships and being selected for the 1980, 1984 and 1992 Olympic Games. He was the last British fencer to compete at two weapons at an Olympic Games when he fenced in the epee and foil team in Moscow in 1980. His titles included being three times British and Australian Epee Champion and a Gold and Bronze Commonwealth medallist. One of his proudest moments was carrying away the coveted gold medal at the prestigious Martini International 'A' grade in 1981 in a thrilling final against the Swiss champion Evequoz - the first British win since Bill Hoskyns in 1962.

His unbounded enthusiasm for the sport saw him taking up a variety of coaching appointments over the years including being coach to the Australian Pentathlon team at the Seoul Olympic Games and Lead Coach at various UK fencing salles including the renowned Lansdowne Club. Steve was one of the founders and President of one of the UK's most successful Epee Clubs, Haverstock Fencing Club, where he brought his unique style, hard work and sense of fun most memorably to the legendary footwork and fitness sessions. He coached many of our leading world ranked epeeists amongst them Georgina Usher, our current CEO. In 2005, Steve helped found and became Chair and Head Coach of the Tunbridge Wells Fencing Club and was the driving force in growing the club and attracting many young children into the sport.

He was invited to become a member of the Epee Club in 1991 and was a popular figure at many of the Club competitions and dinners. A natural bon viveur and raconteur, Steve also worked in the film business doubling for Pierce Brosnan in the James Bond film 'Die Another Day' and training Orlando Bloom in preparation for 'Pirates of the Caribbean'.

In 2015 Steve was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. He responded to this with his typical indomitable fighting spirit and good humour, continuing to live his life as full as feasibly possible and refusing to allow the condition to define him. He reluctantly gave up coaching at the Lansdowne as his symptoms deteriorated, but he continued to direct proceedings and find ever more creative ways to help at his club in Tunbridge Wells and still found the energy to support the sport in his role as a BF Epee Selector.

His book on Epee Fencing published in 2012 remains a best seller and is a great tribute to his fencing experiences over the years. It demonstrates his ability to encourage fencers, both young and old, in not being afraid to push themselves to become the best. His last words in that book are very much how he lived his own life: "It is not enough to just believe in your dreams... you have to live them."

Steven Paul did just that and that is his epitaph, written large.

Lawrence Burr OBE  
Vice President, The Epee Club

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# RESULTS

The up-to-date 2018–2019 Season Latest Results are now listed on line and can be accessed using the following link:\*



Photo: Augusto Bizzi

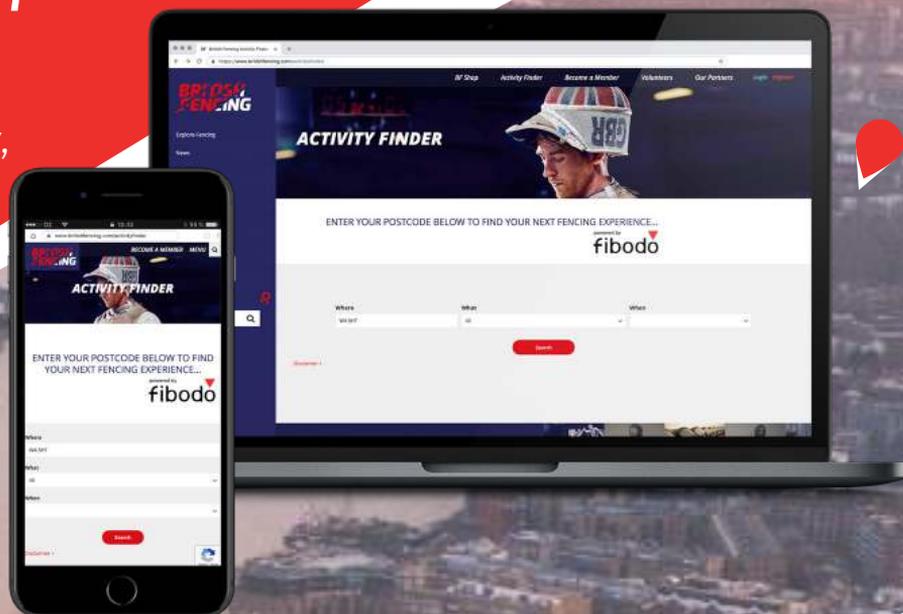
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