BRITISH FENCING

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2019

LOTTERY FUNDED | SPORT ENGLAND

HONESTY
RESPECT
EXCELLENCE

BRITISH FENCING ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

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1. DIRECTORS' REPORT

This year has seen British Fencing (BF) continue to deliver against our strategic objectives, guided by our unchanged organisation vision (a strong, successful and sustainable fencing community) and mission (to inspire and enable people to start, stay and succeed in fencing) underpinned by our core values of honesty, respect and excellence.

In January 2018 we added a fifth objective to our organisational delivery objectives reflecting the purpose of the work that we do which has a wider impact on people's lives. Thus, our objectives are to deliver:

- A pathway to International success
- A stronger, empowered community of 30,000 fencers, volunteers, coaches and supporters
- Accessible inclusive swordplay opportunities delivered via partnership programmes
- A sustainable future supported by high quality governance and infrastructure that is financially resilient
- Maximise the wider benefits of fencing and the positive impact it can have on people's lives

To deliver our objectives the Board prioritises and monitors, through agreed performance indicators seven strategic areas:

1. Leadership, Culture and Governance

The Board recognises the importance that a strong and positive culture has on the health of our sport. As such it continues to focus on furthering the BF values of Honesty, Respect and Excellence by leading BF in a supportive and professional manner and providing the community with regular updates of its work, as well as the work of the wider organisation.

The Board recognises that part of its role in leading the organisation is getting involved in the activities of BF and the fencing community. This is important to the Board as it not only allows them to provide leadership and support to BF staff and volunteers, it also gives the membership opportunities to interact with those tasked with leading our sport.

BF continues to comply with all aspects of the UK Code for Sports Governance. Whilst the Board is pleased to report this, it also recognises that maintaining and demonstrating the

high quality of governance necessary to be in receipt of public funding, requires continued and not insignificant effort from both itself and the executive team.

In light of the reduced executive resources available to BF since the 2017 closure of the World Class Programme, the Board has continued the work that it began last year to provide additional support to certain areas of the organisation. The Board Working Groups have continued to supplement the work of the executive, using their experience to guide work taking place in strategically important areas such as membership and events.

As part of ensuring that the Board has the necessary skills and experience required to effectively oversee the running of BF, we maintain a skills matrix and regularly review the combined skill set and experience levels of the Board. This enables us to identify any potential gaps and be proactive in seeking to fill these areas, either by recruiting independent members to the Board, or communicating the skills required to the wider membership during Board elections. As a result of undertaking this process, we were pleased to welcome 4 new members (two elected, one independent and one appointed) to the Board in September 2018 bringing with them a range of skills and experience.

2. Sustainability and Core Services

This year saw the continued pursuit of a more financially sustainable position for BF to enable it to deliver to its membership without reliance on external funding. The Board believes that the ongoing reductions in funding make it imperative that BF reduces reliance on external grants. As such, BF continues its efforts to generate commercial revenues to provide a future that is more financially independent. Our sustainability efforts extend across the organisation, with renewed efforts to reduce costs and improve efficiencies wherever possible, whilst exploring ways to achieve full cost recovery across the various externally funded programmes and work areas the organisation is involved in.

The Board agreed to maintain its stance on not committing significant resources to finding a headline sponsor for BF given the wider status of the sports sponsorship market for National Governing Bodies. We would like to attract sponsors for individual BF organised events, such as the National Championships, but recognise these are most likely to be tactical opportunities.

In financial terms, the Board authorised a budgeted deficit of £8k for the year. This accounted for the financial challenges relating to reduced funding whilst also recognising the need to protect the organisation's reserves. However, despite these challenges, BF

ended the year with a small surplus. This result was due to further tightening of expenditure across the organisation as well as some sponsorship income and improved commercial revenue.

Whilst the Board consider this to be a positive result for the year, it is aware that maintaining a level of financial sustainability over the medium to long term will require further work to increase income generated and carefully control expenditure across the organisation. It also recognises that, with the great results shown by our athletes recently, there may be costs associated with the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020 and any surplus made may be needed to help cover those costs associated with qualified athletes representing GBR at those Games.

3. Membership & Club Support

As mentioned in previous years, increasing membership is a vital part of BF becoming a financially resilient organisation able to deliver better services to clubs and members for years to come. During the year, membership peaked at over 11,000 members before falling back slightly at the end of the year. The Board is clear that it must continue efforts to help clubs communicate the benefits of BF membership to club participants, significant numbers of which are not currently members. In many cases these participants benefit from, yet do not contribute to, the work done by BF, the Home Country Associations and the hard-working volunteers within the sport. One important example is the work we do in Safeguarding.

Membership income for the year came in at £415,352 (up from £366,790 in 2017/18). £155,611 of this was paid on to the Home Country Associations (up from £145,030 in 2017/18) leaving £259,741 (up from £221,760 in 2017/18) available to British Fencing to support delivery of services to members.

As part of our risk mitigation planning, BF met with representatives from the Home Nations to discuss how the organisations would prioritise services to members in the event of a significant decline in funding.

England Fencing continue to fund a Development Officer for Clubs and Regions providing valuable support in the absence of public funding to support this area.

4. GBR Athlete Support & Development

2018-19 is the second financial year since UK Sport World Class Programme Funding and therefore in turn the BF World Class Programme came to an end. Much of the work to administer and support Senior athletes to represent GBR is now being delivered through a structure of volunteers supported by additional allocated resource from the executive team. The extension of the Athlete Development Programme from U20 to U23 has allowed for additional development opportunities to be offered to our Seniors.

In December 2018 it was announced that we were successful in our application for financial support from UK Sport's new Aspiration Fund investment of £192,500 to assist individual athletes and teams through qualification for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. An important part of our Aspiration Fund commitment is to actively engage and inspire new audiences and deliver social impact through meaningful engagements.

Richard Kruse made history as a result of winning Great Britain's first World Championship medal since 1965 when he competed in the 2018 World Championships in Wuxi, China. He followed this by securing the No 1 world ranking in January 2019. As a result, in February 2019, UK Sport confirmed Medal Support Plan funding for Richard.

We were successful in securing £424,000 of Sport England Talent Funding over the next two years for our Athlete Development Programme, subject to the programme meeting certain targets. Whilst the overall award represents a reduction in year on year funding, we are committed to continuing delivery through subsidised Athlete Development Camps and working with identified partners to set up area-based sustainable Athlete Development Centres.

5. Insight led, participant centred Projects and Programmes

We continue to support a variety of projects and programmes, the majority funded by Sport England, underpinned by our belief that fencing can and should be a sport that is accessible to all. Not only do our programmes bring fencing to a wider community, they also expose many to the wider benefits of sport and physical activity such as improved mental wellbeing, individual development (both physical and mental), as well as social and community development. With limited BF resources, the Board recognises that partners are vital to the successful delivery of our projects and programmes. By combining the skills of BF with the knowledge and expertise of partners like London Youth, Maslaha and The Scout Association, we have been able to bring fencing to people across the country, many of whom we may not have been able to reach or engage successfully with alone.

6. Events, Competitions and Calendars

The Board continues its strategy to bring the BF Events portfolio into a more financially sustainable position, without compromising on the quality of the experience for fencers. The Board Working Group that was set up last year is working in tandem with the executive team to create lasting changes to the finances of the Events programme. The intention is to create a programme that is sustainable enough to allow BF to continue delivering high quality events for years to come.

7. Coaching & Workforce Development

As previously reported, the Board feels strongly that high quality Coach Education is the cornerstone of building a strong fencing community that allows people to start, stay and succeed in fencing. As a result, work continues to create high quality content and increase delivery across the country. We are pleased to report that in 2018-19 more than 180 coaches accessed training, which will further strengthen our clubs and programmes providing a great fencing experience for everyone involved.

The Board was pleased to note the success of the Referee Pathway Programme and collaborative efforts with the Home Nations to increase training opportunities for these and other volunteer workforce roles.

Finally, we recognise that the key to a healthy sport is a collaborative and supportive community. This allows us all to make the most of opportunities that arise in a sport with limited resources. The staff and volunteers of British Fencing work with skill and passion for this sport and it is their work that helps make the sport better for us all. Therefore, we as a Board would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment.

1.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS AT MARCH 2019

Paul Abrahams

Thomas Cadman

Janet Campbell

Anne-Catrin Sallaba

Caryl Oliver

John Troiano

Reedah El-Saie

Yashmin Harun

Clare Halsted

Mark Lyttle (Chair)

Matthias Ossyra

Tomas Curran Jones

1.2 DIVERSITY PROGRESS STATEMENT AS AT MARCH 2019

As at 31st March 2019, 6/12 Board Directors are women (50%) and 25% of the occupied Director positions are BAME. The Board met its targets in respect of gender diversity (minimum 30% of either gender) and other identified protected diversity characteristics. The Board continues to work towards maintaining gender diversity and increasing representation from young people, BAME and people with disabilities.

As at 31st March 2019, 4/7 members of the BF Executive Team with area management responsibilities were women (57%).

1.3 GOVERNANCE PROGRESS STATEMENT AS AT MARCH 2019

In November 2016 a new Code for Sports Governance was published which sets out a range of requirements that BF and other organisations in sport must meet to be eligible for public funding.

BF became fully compliant in 2017-18. The Board regularly reviews and during the 2018-19 period took the following actions to maintain compliance:

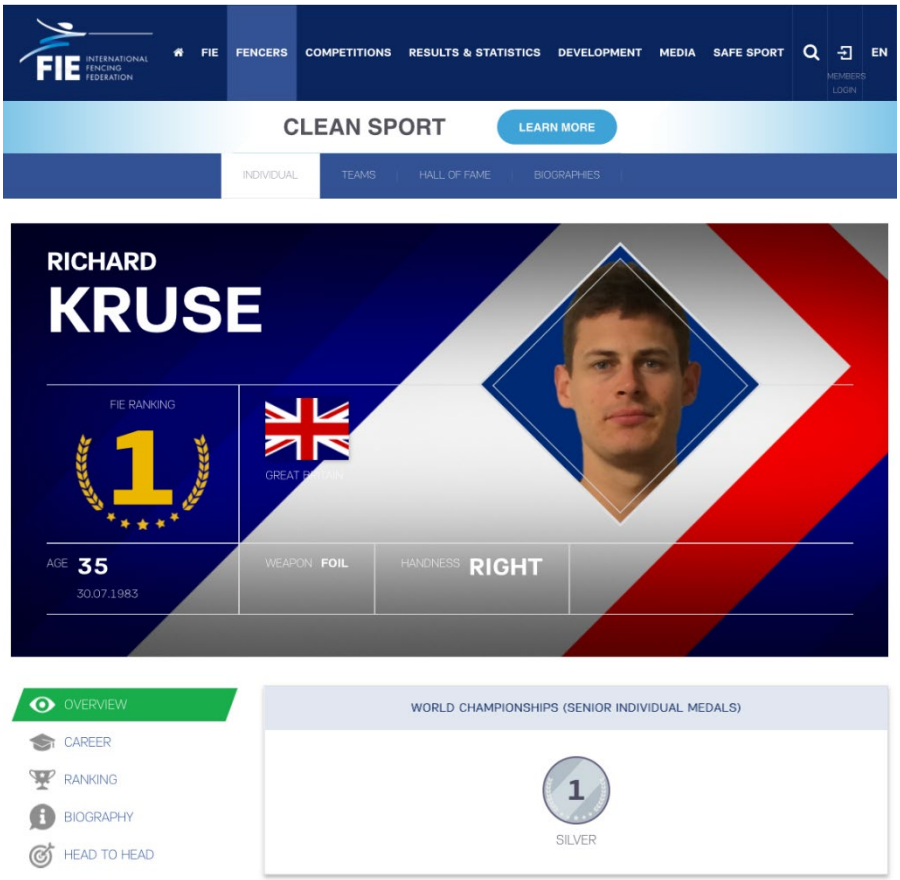
The Board updated the BF Diversity Statement and 2021 Diversity Objectives and progress is now reported on the BF website and updated annually following the AGM where Board Director appointments are confirmed.

1.4 BOARD DIRECTOR ATTENDANCE

	Full Board Meetings	**Audit, Governance & Risk Committee**	**Nominations Committee**
Paul Abrahams	3/4		2/3
Tom Cadman	4/4	2/2	
Janet Campbell (Senior Independent)	4/4		3/3
Clare Halsted	4/4	2/2	
Mark Lyttle (Chair)	3/4	1/2	3/3
Caryl Oliver	3/4		
Anne-Catrin Sallaba	1/4		2/3
John Troiano	3/4	2/2	

Elected Sep 2018			
Tomas Curran Jones	0/2		
Matthias Ossyra	2/2		
Yashmin Harun	2/2		
Reedah El-Saie	0/2		
Resigned Sep 2018			
Brian Speight	1/2		
Gill Palmer	1/2		

Image FIE Website: Richard Kruse makes World Number 1 in January 2019, off the back of his 2018 World Championships Silver Medal



2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

April 2018 to March 2019 was another busy year. As Chair of British Fencing's International Relations Committee (IRC) I worked closely with Georgina Usher and UK Sport's IR representatives regarding our IR strategy and our long-term succession planning. BF submitted a successful application for the current funding period to support IR activities which allows us to continue to play an international role, working with the FIE to support and develop the future of International fencing.

I attended, as Head of Delegation, the FIE Congress in Paris in December 2018 and the EFC Congress in Novi Sad, Serbia, in June 2018. Georgina Usher, as CEO/General Secretary, attended both events as 2nd Delegate.

I participated in the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Verona, Italy, in April 2018 as a member of the Directoire Technique (DT) and FIE Chief of Protocol, and attended the Senior World Championships in Wuxi, China in July 2018.

I continued as a member of a Commonwealth Fencing Federation Commission which has the specific long-term objective of fencing's re-entry into the Commonwealth Games.

A particular highlight in July 2018 was signing a partnership agreement between British Fencing and the Italian Fencing Federation. The agreement covers a number of areas including training camps and coach education, access to competition circuits, referee development and other refereeing opportunities plus joint promotional activities. The signing ceremony took place at the British Ambassador's official residence in Rome.

At home I attended a number of junior, senior and veteran's events at both domestic and international level. As always, I had the pleasure of presenting the Honours awards at the BF AGM which included 3 new Awards – the President's Award, the Directors' Award and the Anne Hanrahan Trophy.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UPDATE

Great Britain has strong representation on many of the FIE and EFC Commissions and Councils, and our FIE post-holders in particular were well-represented at the major overseas events:

- Junior & Cadet World Championships in Verona, Italy, April 2018: FIE officials included Hilary Philbin as a member of the DT, Janet Huggins overseeing weapon control, and Clare Halsted – with assistance from Mary Cohen – running the Anti-Doping Education programme.
- FIE Commission & Council meetings in Bucharest, Romania, June 2018: FIE officials included Clare Halsted (Medical Commission & Head of the Anti-Doping Programme), Steve Higginson (Chair of the Rules Commission), Janet Huggins (SEMI Commission), Peter Jacobs (Legal Commission) and Georgina Usher (Women in Fencing Council).
- Senior World Championships in Wuxi, China, July 2018: FIE officials included Clare Halsted as Medical representative, along with Janet Huggins who was invited to run the stand for the FIE's Equipment Donation project.
- Veterans' World Championships in Livorno, Italy, October 2018: Clare Halsted attended as FIE Medical representative.

Janet Huggins and Peter Jacobs also found the time to supervise a number of World Cup events – Janet's foil and epee events taking her to France and Switzerland, and Peter's epee events taking him to France, Spain and Germany.

Our group of FIE-qualified referees continues to expand and develop. We currently have 27 FIE referees and have received international feedback that our rising standards of refereeing have been noticed. Adrian Speakman is on the EFC master list for the major European events, and he refereed the men's epee team final at the 2018 senior European Championships.

As always, thanks are due to all our IR representatives, who continue to make their contributions to the world of fencing and its future.

We are also grateful to UK Sport for financially supporting the delivery of our International Relations Strategy.

3. CEO'S REPORT

2018-19 represented a challenging year for the BF executive team as the impact of losing UK Sport World Class Programme funding resulted in a significant reduction in staff able to support our Senior GBR activities during this period.

At the end of March 2019, there were 19 members of the BF executive team in total of which 10 work part time, in some cases as little as 1 day per week.

We are extremely grateful to the various volunteers that have stepped up to support BF staff and athletes during this time and our thanks must also go to the BF Charity for the work they do in raising funds to directly support the athletes.

The launch of the new UK Sport Aspiration Fund was positive news, recognising that our best athletes have a role to play in inspiring communities and delivering social impact. This, and the Medal Support funding to support Richard Kruse started its delivery toward the end of the financial year.

Much of the work that BF undertake, particularly in Projects and Programmes, Coach Development and Athlete Development is now funded by Sport England. The BF team continue to deliver and meet the aims, objectives and targets agreed with our funding bodies. We remain well placed to maximise on whatever opportunities might present for National Governing Bodies to contribute to the Sport England objectives which in turn deliver against the government's sport strategy, "Sporting Future – A new strategy for an active nation".

To sustain these areas of work in light of expected further public funding reductions, BF is expected to seek additional sources of income. The 2019-21 award from Sport England to support BF's Athlete Development Programme represented a 15% funding reduction from 2017-19 and, as part of this, Sport England is monitoring BF's efforts to increase financial sustainability.

We anticipate that over time more and more of the work that BF is expected to do to support its members and the sport (from grass roots to elite) across the UK will not be covered by public funding. We must seek means of finding alternative sources of income. Our commercial activities are an important element of this.

In order to continue and grow our sport for social change programme we will be working with partners to identify and apply for alternative sources of funding to support and grow the work we do in this area. We strongly believe that sport has a role to play in social change, and that fencing by its very nature has a unique contribution to make in this space. We continue to be recognised as a thought leading NGB in relation to how we work with our partners and deliver to the needs of communities. In the coming year we will be setting out the BF sport for social change strategy which will set out how we will deliver on the Board objective to 'maximise the wider benefits of fencing and the positive impact it can have on people's lives.

In order to support our existing members and the sport Membership income is, and will be for the foreseeable future, the most important source of regular income. BF (and the Home Nations) continue to face the challenge of affiliated clubs that do not enforce and check BF membership. Not only does this mean non-member individuals are not covered by BF insurance, it in turn means that the clubs are not fully insured. There is significant anecdotal evidence, supported by Deloitte research from 2014, which would suggest that there are up to 20,000 fencers participating in club fencing during any year without membership. Clearly there is significant room for growth within the existing fencing community, rather than relying on a small number of competing members contributing ever increasing fees to fund all aspects of the development of the sport. BF will continue to work with Clubs and Regions to address this challenge and ensure that in time we will be able to make a sustainable investment in athlete, referee, coach and club development driven by the needs of the sport and our members.

Finally, the BF team continue to be incredibly grateful for all the passion, commitment and energy shown by all the volunteers as they continue to support the sport whether at a local, regional or national level. A special thanks in this report must go to those volunteers who play vital roles behind the scenes supporting the core administrative functions of British Fencing.

Diversity note: As at end March 2019, 9/19 members of staff were female.

4. BF COMMITTEE REPORTS

4.1 SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chair: Peter Jacobs

https://www.britishfencing.com/about-us-zone/committees-zone/safety/

The committee continued to advise BF on safety issues, to respond to members' queries and to remind membership of specific safety related requirements and rules when considered necessary.

We continued during this year to monitor and investigate incidents and accidents and assess the risks facing those involved in our sport.

A committee meeting was held on February 13th, 2019; no decisions were taken to make any changes to the Safety Guidelines. The committee discussed the risk presented by using sabre blades that did not conform to FIE standards particularly with regards to minimum dimensions of the tip. It was agreed that we should investigate ways to educate the community on how to check their own blades and warn against the use of blades that were too thin near the tip. Weapon controls should include this into their checks and for non-FIE BF Championship events, BF will ask referees to perform advisory checks in poules.

The committee also reviewed the requirement to use the second safety strap on contour masks in the UK (it being compulsory at all FIE competitions since Sep 2018). Previously the safety committee agreed that no requirement would be brought in before 1st January 2020. The committee agreed that making this compulsory is still not justified based on safety data (incidents etc). The committee recognised the desire to implement FIE standards for BF competitions to maintain consistency of BF rules versus FIE ones; the committee therefore proposed to the BF Rules Committee that a staged requirement starting at the Senior National Championships in 2020 should be considered.

To help ensure that Fencing continues to have one of the best safety records across Olympic sports, the membership is strongly encouraged to report all incidents, accidents and near misses to the Safety Committee. Forms can be found on the BF website: https://www.britishfencing.com/policy-zone/medical/.

4.2 RULES COMMITTEE

Chair: Steve Higginson

The Rules Committee had another quiet year: our one meeting in the autumn reviewed and expressed our opinions on the various proposals to be presented to the FIE Congress in December in 2018.

As ever we have also responded to requests for information and interpretation of the Rules emanating from members of BF.

Here is a summary of the main rule changes affecting fencers agreed by the FIE in December 2018:

t.74: IMPORTANT, especially for junior fencers – from the beginning of the 2019-20 season, the rule concerning having name and nationality on the back of the jacket has been tightened up and there is now no tolerance – at all stages of all FIE competitions, all fencers must have name and nationality on their backs and be wearing the national strip with national logo. Clearly the degree of tolerance allowed for some years was proving a problem – hence the hard line. Even Satellites are presumably included insofar as they are FIE competitions and, while I suspect people will be less eagle-eyed there, it probably isn't worth taking the risk.

t.124 – the FIE is determined not to be embarrassed by conspicuous unwillingness to fence (u2f) at, for example, the Olympics. There are still areas to be clarified and/or modified, though this will not happen as part of the formal rules until after the Olympics. Points to note:

- The only criterion for declaring u2f (unwillingness to fence) is that there is a whole minute without a hit being scored. However, if the referee has specifically instructed the fencers to fight properly, they may then penalise any obvious u2f as disobeying the injunctions of the referee (t.108 and t.112).
- An off-target hit on the opponent at foil counts as a hit for the purpose of counting the time – obviously a hit on the floor would not.
- The decision to penalise the fencer or team with the lower score if the scores are not equal may seem unfair to some but it guarantees that at least one of the fencers has a strong vested interest in u2f not taking place. The assumption is that any u2f is a matter of collusion between the fencers and that one fencer alone cannot unilaterally commit u2f.

- The progression through the P-yellow and P-red cards can be very complicated. As the FIE published FAQ document so disarmingly points out, the best way to avoid any hassle is not to commit u2f in the first place. Whilst fencers who like to use u2f as a tactic will no doubt try to find ways round the rule, if they do the FIE will only make sure the rule is tightened up in due course.
- A P-black card merely means the loss of a bout/match and it is 'wiped clean' as soon as the bout/match is over.

t.75: if any article of clothing becomes damaged or dangerous, the requirement to change it is outlined in t.75 and is very similar to the rule on replacing an electric jacket which is deemed not to fit.

There are new and more generous rules concerning advertising logos on fencing kit in the Publicity Code in article p.12 which might help anyone who can find a sponsor.

On a domestic front BF are looking at a staged implementation of the current FIE mask and chest protector regulations. Whilst any athlete competing internationally will already have compliant kit, domestic fencers should expect these requirements to come into force for BF ranking competitions during 2019-20.

4.3 INTERNATIONAL CADET MANAGEMENT GROUP

Chair: Clare Halsted

This season (Sep 18 to Apr 19) 20 cadet squads competed in nominated European Cadet Circuit events abroad, with Manchester Foil and Camden Sabre involving many more of our fencers. Highlights were:

• CMS	Darcy Holdsworth	Silver	Camden
		8th	Meylan
• CMS	Team	Silver	Camden
• CWS	Team	Silver	Camden
• CWE	Maisie McCormack	Bronze	Copenhagen
• CWE	Eva Reston	6th	Copenhagen
		8th	Grenoble
• CME	Jacob Foulsham	Bronze	Grenoble

			6th	Copenhagen
•	CMF	Team	Bronze	Budapest (49 teams)
•	CMF	Cameron Evans	6th	Cadet World Championships
•	CMF	Rafael Rhys-Pollitt	5th	Manchester
•	CWF	Teagan Williams-Stewart	Silver (non-nominated)	Rome

Grateful thanks to the 3 volunteer squad managers, Sandra Beardmore (foil), Maggie Maynard (epee), Margie Mascolino (sabre), the other members of the ICMG and all the BF officials and coaches at the European and World Championships for supporting our cadets.

4.4 BF HONOURS COMMITTEE

Chair: Peter Jacobs

The process for proposing 2018 honours by the membership closed at the end of April 2018 and the Honours Committee met on 14th June. The awards, which are listed in full at the end of this Annual Report, were announced at the AGM in October 2018. Proposals for the next round, for the 2019 AGM, of BF honours were solicited from the membership from the beginning of January 2019.

5. MEMBERSHIP

During the 2018-19 financial year, membership reached a high of 11,131 in October (comparably the highest peak membership in 2017-18 was 10,638) and saw an average monthly membership of 10,893. Club membership also saw a year-on-year increase reaching a peak of 470 and a monthly average of 448.

End of year total membership was 10,717, in comparison to the 2017-18 total of 10,638. Overall this represented around a 1% increase in membership. Excluding the Introductory membership which rose year-on-year from 16 to 385, the underlying paid membership total dropped by 4% to 10,332.

Analysing the 10332 total in more depth there was an increase in Recreational (299/27%) and Supporter membership (47/24%), but a fall in Starter (265/29%) and Compete (371/4%).

As of 31 March 2019, the auto-renewal rate of all individual memberships had settled at 62%. This system continues to have a positive impact on the time and resource required in the office to administer renewals and continues to reduce the lag between expiry and renewal.

Membership income during 2018-19 has increased to just under £260k from just over £204k in 2017-18. The majority of this income continues to be taken up in five expense categories – insurance, The Sword, safeguarding, events and standard office/organisation running costs (rates, utilities and so on). The lack of membership funds to cover staff cost, support athlete development or drive development of and participation in the sport continues to be of significant concern and leaves BF reliant on external funding for these activities.

Mar-19	Compete			Recreational		Starter		Supporter		Life	Intro	Grand Total
Home Nation	Full	U14	U20	18+	U18	18+	U18	18+	U18		-	
England	2659	2274	1810	805	316	104	358	179	6	26		**8537**
Scotland	288	165	157	78	45	29	81	30	0	3		**876**
Wales	194	97	94	85	38	28	27	18	0	5		**582**
NI	70	41	53	3	6	0	5	7	0	1		**190**
Guernsey	38	18	28	7	18	2	12	2	0	1		**126**
Jersey	9	3	7	1	0	0	0	1	0	0		**21**
All											385	**385**
Grand Total	**3258**	**2598**	**2149**	**979**	**423**	**163**	**483**	**237**	**6**	**36**	**385**	**10717**

6. SAFEGUARDING

British Fencing is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk in the sport of fencing across the UK. Creating a safe and positive place to participate in our sport is our greatest responsibility and this commitment sits at the heart of everything that we do.

BF continued to deliver a programme of welfare courses to support the work done in this area. 20 safeguarding courses were delivered across the country with 276 participants attending. Following the Regional Welfare Officer training course run in January 2018, continued advice and to support was provided to those operating at regional and home nation level to help them in turn support local club welfare officers.

In 2017-18 a significant amount of BF time and resource was invested in a comprehensive audit of all affiliated clubs to identify where the welfare cover gaps are. This information was used to construct a programme of training to address these gaps which was run through 2018-19. However, it is evident that we need as a sport to do more to ensure we have a culture where welfare provision is as much a part of an affiliated club as coaching.

This is necessary in England in part to ensure that BF and affiliated clubs are compliant with the updated 2018 Statutory Working Together guidance. Other Home Nations have similar frameworks in operation.

The BF Board agreed that clubs that are still failing to meet minimum welfare standards with no plan in place to address this would start to face sanctions. It is our view that clubs expecting young athletes to represent them at competitions have a duty to ensure that a club welfare framework exists, and parents and young athletes have a right to expect this.

The BF website was updated to provide more information on what minimum standards need to be in place and guidance on how to put in place a welfare officer. Online resources were provided to educate the community about safeguarding and deliver additional support to those acting in formal welfare roles.

All sports clubs and sports events should have trained welfare support in place and all BF affiliated clubs must have a welfare officer in place unless they already exist within a formal safeguarding structure (eg a school club exclusively for pupils of that school will have a school Designated Safeguarding Lead). All BF licensed events must have a welfare officer in place and this is the first point of contact for anyone with concerns at an event.

Total numbers of incidents (either reported directly to BF or escalated through the club/regional /home nation structure) remain steady in number but vary significantly in

type. Poor supporter behaviour in competitive environments (eg aggressive supporting/coaching) continues to generate the highest level of poor practice category complaints. Most poor practice category complaints are dealt with through education and training. There also continue to be a steady number of incidents involving the fencing community that are handled by Statutory Authorities. These incidents are either raised from within the fencing community and escalated by BF to the relevant authority or BF may be contacted directly in the first instance by the authorities dealing with the case. In these instances, we are guided in our response by the authorities, and our initial priorities are typically to take appropriate steps to protect our community, supporting any members (individuals or clubs) affected, whilst investigations take place.

Supported by:

Child Protection in Sport Unit

NSPCC

7. CLUBS & REGIONS (ENGLAND)

Throughout the year our England Fencing funded Development Officer has continued to maintain relationships with clubs by keeping them up to date with key information and supporting club development. This was done through the Club Digest (a regular online newsletter), the establishment of a Regional Private Social Media Group (to facilitate information sharing and answer questions) and a Regional Steering Group (a group to advise and support strategic change affecting regions).

All 10 regions are currently represented on the newly created Regional Private Social Media Group. The Regional Steering Group consists of representatives from the East Midlands, West Midlands, South West and North West regions.

The Club Digest was launched March 2018 and a further 5 issues were produced in 2018-19. Engagement remains high with an average of 509 members signed up to receive each issue with an average open rate of 60%. The digest is designed to help provide clubs with information about club development and growth to help support fencing clubs. The digests have covered a range of topics including;

- Sharing of club best practice.
- Case studies that celebrate club success.
- How BF is making our sport more accessible.
- Top tips on applying for funding.
- Information on upcoming BF events and coaching courses.

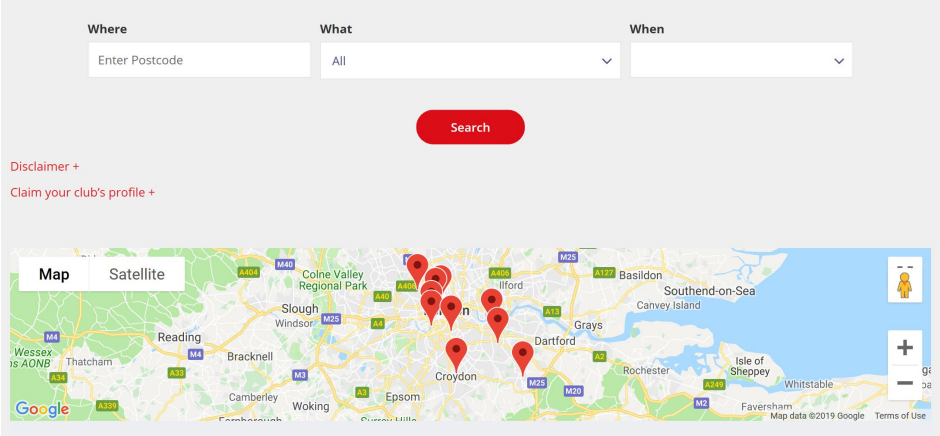
One area of focus for BF is investing in promoting opportunities for more people to participate in club fencing.

To achieve this, BF developed and launched a new Activity Finder. The online tool, powered by Fibodo (find it, book it, do it), was designed to help clubs increase and modernise their online presence. The Activity Finder also allows clubs to create a more engaging online profile to attract participants currently using the BF website to find a club.

BRITISH FENCING ACTIVITY FINDER powered by fibodo

The platform went live in September 2018 and since then over 100 clubs have started working with Fibodo to use the feature and 50% of those have updated their live profiles. BF continues to work closely with Fibodo to continually refresh and update the system so that it meets the needs of our clubs and is excited about the potential this system has to help our

clubs go further in attracting new participants. The next feature currently in development is an interactive information form to allow clubs to quickly upload new courses or sessions into the activity finder, which in turn will allow these sessions to be promoted to a wider audience.



The 'Understanding Our Clubs Survey', completed in early 2017, has shaped a lot of what BF have done with and for our clubs in 2018-19.

One such area was membership for beginners. The resulting Introduction membership, launched in April 2018, is a free, 90-day membership for all new people participating in beginner's courses with BF affiliated clubs, designed in part to ensure that these participants are properly registered and therefore covered by BF insurance.

In 2018-19 1,000 Introduction memberships have been taken out with around 600 of those converting to a paid membership. The next steps will include a case study to review participant's motivations in taking out Introduction membership and the varying reasons why they go on to renew their membership or drop-out. From this research BF hope to gain helpful insight into how to better shape both the membership offerings and the

introductory club experience and can therefore share this insight and support with our clubs to support them in retaining more of our members.

INTRODUCTION MEMBERSHIP IN NUMBERS (April 2018 – March 2019)

Current	341	Gender	F 38.5%, M 61.5%
Expired	658	Age	U18 52%, 18+ 48%
Renewed	604		

The survey also highlighted that whilst there was a healthy amount of competition for intermediate and novice juniors, there was a gap in the national competitive offering for adults. The GB Cup, a regional representation event for novice adults was created in partnership with England Fencing to address this gap. Working with the Regional Steering Group, the event was devised so that beginner and intermediate adult fencers could compete regionally to qualify for a national final. The inaugural final was held on 23rd June 2018 at the David Ross Sports Centre at the University of Nottingham and attracted over 90 participants across all weapons. 70% of competitors rated their experience at the competition highly and further feedback from the participants will allow us to improve the format of the competition in future.

BF see this event as a great opportunity to support other regional development goals. Looking forward we will continue to expand the event to have representation outside of just the England Regions and host referee seminars for those looking to progress from Level 2 to Level 3 (free to those refereeing for their region at the event).

Sport England's Clubmark initiative has continued to be another area of focus. In 2017-18 the decision was made to move away from a stand-alone 'Swordmark' Club Accreditation to using Sport England's Clubmark system supported by Sport Structures and Club Matters. So far four clubs have achieved full Clubmark status; Radcliffe Sword Club, Paul Davis Fencing Academy, Foiled Again and Roselyon Fencing Club, whilst a further five are working towards their accreditation. Sport England have announced that there will be a review of the current system towards the end of 2019, but this will not affect any current clubs enrolled in the scheme. The end of the 2018-19 season saw a change in staff for the Development Officer – England Clubs and Regions role with Josef Thomas moving on from BF and Hannah Gavin taking up the position in April 2019.

8. EVENTS

The re-structuring of the FIE event calendar for season 18-19 meant that the Eden Cup (FIE Junior Foil World Cup) and the Leon Paul Cup (FIE Senior Men's Foil Satellite) could not be run on the same weekend. In order to retain a full portfolio of international events without incurring significant financial loss, the FIE Leon Paul Senior Men's Foil Satellite was moved to the same weekend as the EFC Cadet Sabre and the FIE Senior Men's Sabre Satellite, requiring a larger venue. A new EFC U23 tournament (a Senior domestic event for which EFC ranking points can be earned for U23s competing) for men's and women's foil was run instead on the weekend to mitigate the overall losses incurred when running FIE events and maximise the opportunity for the senior foil community to experience the high quality venue, officials and equipment.

The other significant change to the 2018-19 financial year was caused by the 2017 British Schools Teams being postponed due to bad weather, resulting in two events being held in the 2018-19 financial year.

Therefore, for the 2018-19 financial year, the BF events portfolio consisted of:

National Events

- British Youth Championships March 2019
- Cadet & Junior British Championships Sep 2018
- Senior British Championships 2018
- 2018 British School Team Championships (postponed due to snow)
- 2019 British School Team Championships

International Tournaments:

- FIE Junior Men's and Women's Foil World Cup – *The Eden Cup*
- EFC U23 Men's and Women's Foil – *The London Cup*
- FIE Senior Men's Foil Satellite – *The Leon Paul Cup*
- EFC Cadet Men's and Women's Sabre (U17) – *The GLL Camden International*
- FIE Senior Men's Sabre Satellite

In addition, the British Fencing Awards Dinner was held over the weekend of the 2018 Cadet & Junior Championships.

Overall, income from events for the period 2018-19 grew significantly to £151,832 from £116,489 in 2017-18. This was largely due to the extra events (the postponed BSTs, and the new U23 EFC events). However, expenditure also rose to £156,656 (excluding attributed staff costs) from £115,128 in 2017-18. Overall this represents a small deficit for the year in contrast to the small surplus of £3,431 in 2017-18. This was due to the loss on the re-

formatted Camden weekend (to include the FIE Mens Foil Satellite) and the lack of a sponsor for the 2018 Senior British Fencing Championships.

The new format Eden Cup weekend continued to make a loss although these were no greater than the budgeted amount (£10K excluding staff costs) which is a small improvement on the year on year budgeted losses for this weekend. Additional cost savings were made from 2017-18 by holding the events over two days rather than three. Participant numbers overall were slightly higher (486 across 4 events, vs 470 across 3 events in 2017-18) and 40% of the entries over the weekend were from women. (In 2016 the weekend was exclusively FIE Men's Foil events.)

Combining the EFC Cadet Sabre, the FIE Men's Senior Sabre Satellite and the Leon Paul Cup (FIE Men's Foil Satellite) slightly reduced the overall losses that would normally be expected. However, logistically the event put a considerable strain on the volunteers and staff to meet the standards expected from running two FIE Satellite events in different weapons on the same weekend. In addition, there is no further capacity to increase entries so the combination of events would not be long term viable option. FIE Satellites have a restricted entry fee and no entry caps are permitted so the likelihood of financial loss remains high.

Without the associated Eden Cup (FIE Junior Foil World Cup), entries for the FIE Senior Foil Satellite were down 42% to 121. The EFC Sabre Cadet entries were down 18% to 141 and the FIE Men's Sabre Satellite entries were up 16% to 88.

At National Championship level, participant numbers remained consistent overall although an increase in 14% (+53) for the Senior National Championships was offset by 3% drops in BYCs and Cadet & Junior Nationals (-64 in total). 2019 British School Teams returned to entry levels of 2017 (168), after a drop (110) for the rescheduled event in 2018.

Both entry levels and customer satisfaction increased at the Senior National Championships, which in part demonstrates that the investment of the increased entry fees is resulting in an improved experience.

New working partnerships were formed with venues such as David Ross Sports Village, providing access to a state-of-the-art facility in Nottingham for the 2018 Cadet & Junior Nationals.

The Awards Dinners dinner continued to be a popular event, however after 3 years it has been unable to get close to breakeven when all costs are taken into account. It is felt that the money raised for the Cadet & Junior Nationals (between £1-2K) could be more efficiently raised through alternative means. BF will be working with the BF Charity to

review alternative options for future fundraising events. The BF Community Awards will, in the meantime, continue to be run and awards presented at existing BF events.

A new competition for intermediate fencers – the GB Cup in conjunction with the Regions and England Fencing, has also been developed and will be launched in June 2019.

The BF Board continues to review the progress towards the stated aim of reversing the trend of increasing financial losses made by the events programme. A programme of increasing entry fees has been implemented, particularly in the area of late entries which often create logistical challenges which are expensive to overcome.

As part of these recommendations for the season starting 2019 onwards, BF will work with the Home Nations to create a qualification system for the British School Teams. The Leon Paul FIE Men's Foil Satellite will no longer run and the GLL Camden International Cadet Sabre Tournament and associated FIE Men's Sabre Satellite will be passed to a consortium of clubs, supported by local patrons and sponsors.

In closing, BF are only able to put on these events thanks to the fantastic team of volunteers who, with a hugely positive attitude, work incredibly hard and readily give up their time to make events happen throughout the year. Collectively they possess an impressive level of experience and expertise which allows us to run competitions to a consistently high and international standard. Without this team of dedicated individuals BF would not be able to deliver the events that we do.

9. GBR PROGRAMMES

The focus of the GBR Programmes for 18/19 was the continued development of an integrated pathway for fencers from cadet (U17) to senior representation. This was supported by building teams of coaches with stronger connections across seniors to cadets, re-defining the pathway strategy and starting to develop the programmes and guidance to support the fencers on their stages of the pathway.

Two funding bids were submitted to support aspects of the GBR Fencing Pathway:

1. UK Sport Aspiration Fund - to support athletes on a trajectory to qualify for Tokyo 2020 (see separate section)
2. Sport England Talent Funding April 19 – March 21

Whilst for April 2019 to March 2021 BF were awarded the maximum amount available (£425K for 19-21), it is important to note this represented a 15% funding reduction and indications are that available funding will continue to fall in the 21-24 cycle. The expectation is that athlete development programmes become more financially sustainable and less reliant on public funding.

9.1 ASPIRATION - THE JOURNEY TO TOKYO

In October 2018, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced the Aspiration Fund, a three-million-pound boost to support athletes in sports outside the World Class Programme system working towards Tokyo 2020 qualification.

This was welcome news for our cohort of athletes who are aiming to qualify for Tokyo, with the qualification period running from April 2019 – April 2020.

With support from UK Sport and using information provided by the athletes themselves, BF put in a bid in late October 2018. Alongside their qualification plan, sports seeking funding were asked to submit social impact plans demonstrating how they will capitalise on the impact of competing at the Games and engage and inspire communities. These social impact plans needed to align with the outcomes set out in the Government's Sporting Future strategy to redefine what success looks like in sport: physical well-being, mental well-being, individual development, social and community development and economic development. A key element of the BF Social Impact Plan includes a partnership with the True Athlete Project (TAP) who will implement a bespoke mentor training and engagement

programme for senior fencers to participate in, in-turn inspiring and supporting the next generation of young fencers. Between April 2019 and April 2021, The True Athlete Project will also deliver a series of 'TAP Speaks', video content which explores a social impact related topic in more depth and will be made available online to inspire wider communities.

Alongside this bid, BF applied for Medal Support Plan funding for Richard Kruse following his World Championship silver medal in 2018.

On the 7th December it was announced that BF was awarded an investment of £192,500 from the Aspiration Fund to assist individual athletes and teams on a trajectory to Olympic qualification and deliver on the social impact plans.

Following the UK Sport Annual Review process, the UK Sport Board also confirmed that BF would receive a Medal Support Plan of up to £87,000 for Richard Kruse (Men's Foil).

Following these announcements, BF worked closely with UK Sport, the athletes/teams and TAP to create detailed plans based on the investment level awarded and contracts were signed in Q4 2019, with the bulk of delivery expected in the 2019-20 financial year.

Maxine McCombie was appointed to manage the delivery of the Aspiration and Medal Support plans. This includes managing competition and training support to individuals and teams whilst also ensuring social impact targets are met through community engagements and maximising the impact that the athletes can have along their Tokyo 2020 journey.

BF further sought to maximise the impact of the UK Sport funding streams and appealed to sponsors and patrons to contribute additional funds to support athletes across all six weapons. In doing so we can increase chances of Olympic qualification and further support a culture where all fencers can inspire the nation through their qualification journey performances and have a genuine social impact in communities across the UK.

Subject to the athletes continuing their qualification journeys and engaging in social impact and social media opportunities, funding will enable:

- A Team Manager, Team Coaches in Foil, Epee and Sabre and a Sports Therapist to support the whole GBR squad at the 2019 European and World Championships
- Team Entry Fees for all weapons competing at European (2019, 2020) and World Championships (2019)
- World Cup Team Entry Fees for all weapons over the qualification period

- Grants of £500 to athletes competing in the Men's Foil Team at World Cup Team events over the qualification period. In addition, some funds have been raised to support athletes in the Men's Sabre Team along their qualification journey
- Free use of the world class training facilities at the Leon Paul Centre for GBR Senior athletes in the top 100 FIE World Rankings
- Free piste hire at the Leon Paul Centre for official Senior GBR Team training sessions (subject to availability)
- Continued tiered equipment and financial support from Leon Paul for 30 GBR athletes
- Additional Head Office administration support for all athletes and teams representing GBR (Cadet/Junior/Senior)

The focus for 2019/2020 financial year will be on maximising the qualification potential of GBR Teams and supporting qualification and medal opportunities for individual athletes most likely to qualify directly or via the zonal qualification route. Where possible Aspiration and Medal Support projects will be aligned to maximise available resources.

Alongside the qualification and performance support that the UK Sport funding enables, social impact and community engagement will be a strong emphasis across BF programmes.

BF would like to formally thank all the organisations and individuals who have made this possible including UK Sport, the National Lottery, The British Fencing Charity, Epee Club Charity, individual patrons and Leon Paul.

9.2 GBR ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (15-23)

The objective of the Athlete Development Programme (ADP) is to deliver a six-weapon programme through which every GBR athlete aged between 15 and 23 can access development opportunities that support them to maximise their potential. The ADP is not designed to replace the personal development programmes provided by clubs and personal coaches that existing and aspiring GBR athletes will be following, but to complement, help and support these athletes to make the transition between top level domestic and top level international performance and ultimately become successful senior athletes.

The 2021 objectives of the GBR ADP are to:

1. Put in place a sustainable world leading ADP which produces robust and resilient GBR senior athletes
2. Achieve an average Junior GBR Team World Rankings of top 10 by 2021
3. Maximise athlete development opportunities for athletes aged 15-23 through an aligned delivery structure which includes Club, DiSE (formally known as AASE), GBR Development Centres, GBR Development Camps and Home Country Development programmes
4. Provide opportunities to GBR athletes to support a lifelong and meaningful participation in the fencing community

In 2018-19, the programme delivered activities for athletes through:

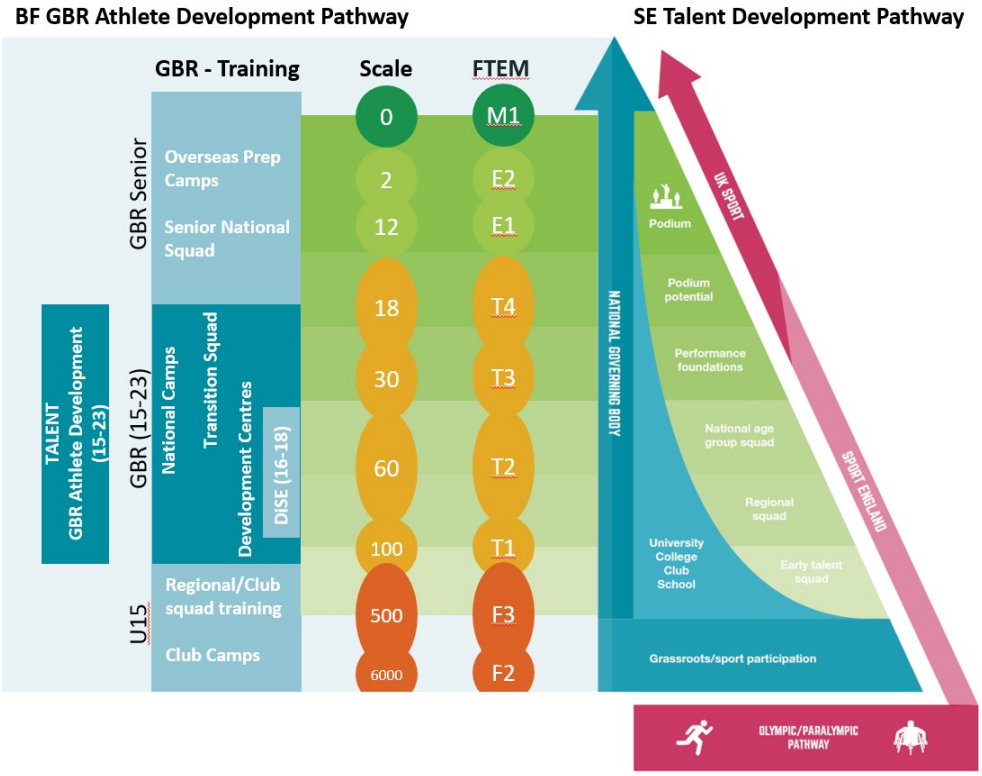
- GBR Development Centres
- GBR National Camps (approx. 5 per year)
- DiSE (formally known as AASE)

GBR National Camps and DiSE are delivered through ADP Camps

In 2018-19 we progressed the objectives as follows:

1. Put in place a sustainable World Leading ADP which produces Robust and Resilient Senior Athletes

Much of the work on this area has been in defining the athlete development pathway and aligning it with a formal world leading athlete development model (in our case the FTEM model was selected as the most appropriate to fencing) and demonstrating how it sits alongside the Sport England and UK Sport models, which are themselves based on industry best practice. This also enables us to maximise the opportunities available to access resources and support from these organisations.

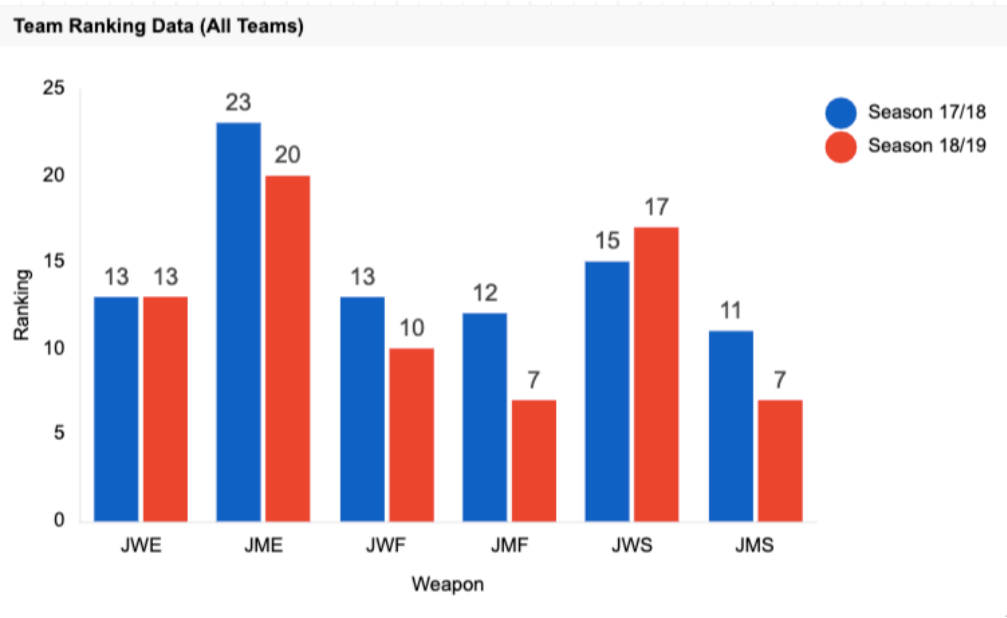


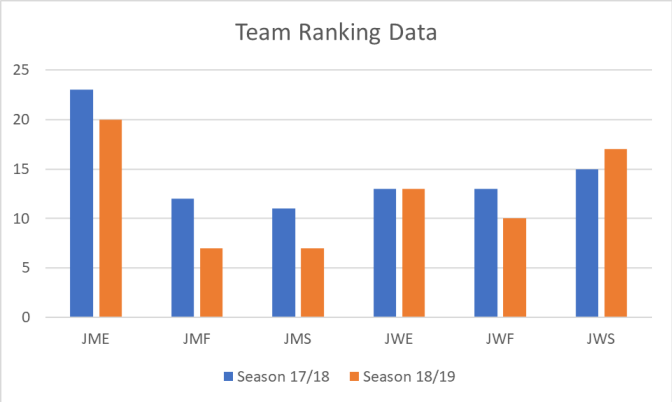
The majority of the work within the GBR Programmes is funded by Sport England Talent Funding, which creates a significant financial sustainability challenge for BF. 18/19 represented Yr. 2 of the 17-19 funding award worth £500k over 2 years. Part of our Sport England 19-21 submission included our sustainability commitments, which included plans to increase financial contributions from those participating whilst still trying to keep the cost affordable to all. This will be underpinned by a trajectory of reduced year on year expenditure.

A key aspect of our pathways is the understanding that, to create robust and resilient Senior fencers, we need to provide additional support through the transition period as they graduate from Juniors. Hence ADP covers up to U23. This extended period of support sits alongside the concept of 'dual career' which allows athletes to independently finance their fencing, rather than relying on parents or public funding, neither of which can be expected long-term.

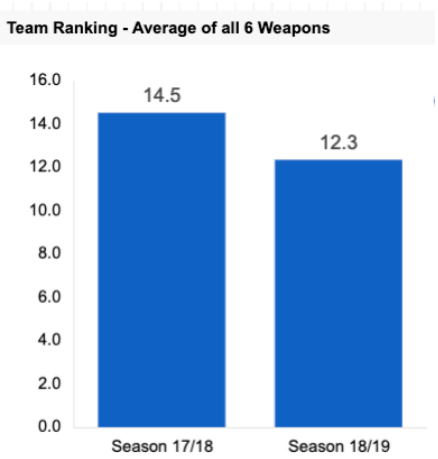
2. Team World Rankings

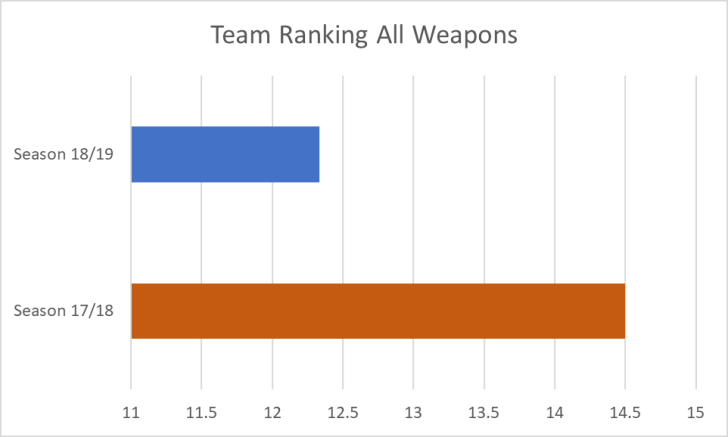
Overall 18/19 was a year of improvements in Team Rankings with 5 of the 6 weapons improving their team ranking. 2 teams JMS & JMF being in the top 8 rankings and JWE and JWF being in the top 16 rankings.





The average Team ranking improving by 2.2 ranking points:

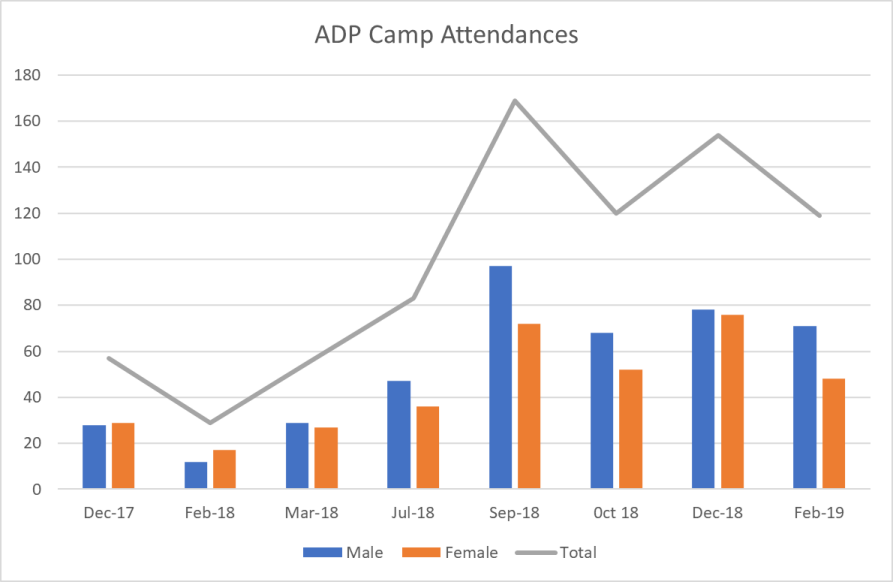




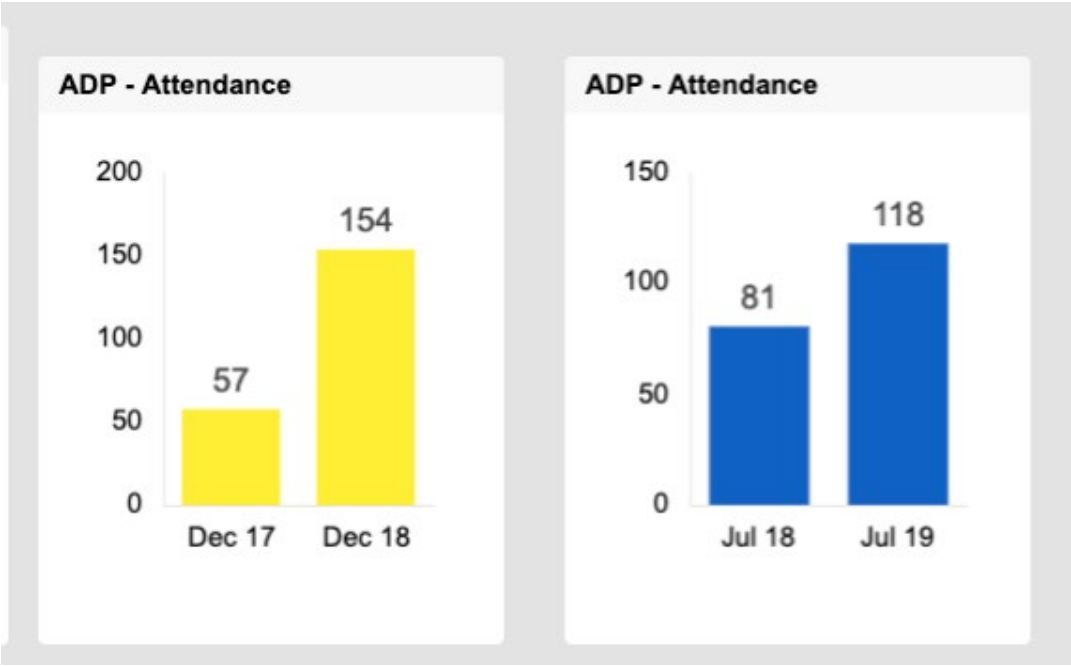
3. Maximise Athlete Development Opportunities

Over the course of the year a series of ADP Camps provided opportunities for athletes to receive high quality coaching, sparring and education opportunities.

There have been several key developments in the delivery of ADP camps in the year 2018-19 and athlete satisfaction levels have correspondingly increased.



Numbers have steadily increased over the last 12 months and the programme is near capacity. (NB: September 2018 Camp was compulsory for Team Selection)



The camps still average towards the lower end of the 15-23 age bracket, with large numbers of cadet (U17) fencers, as such it will be one of the aims of ADP camps over the next year to engage more with junior (U20) and U23 fencers.

October 2018 saw the full integration of the DiSE programme into the ADP.

DiSE is a Level 3 qualification designed for fencers who have the realistic potential to achieve excellence and are seeking to perform at the highest level. The programme covers all areas of training, enabling participants to develop as an athlete and fencer, and gain a UCAS-recognised qualification on completion. All 16-18 yr. olds who have completed their GCSE year and are ranked in the top 40 (for their age on any national ranking list) are eligible to apply for this BF programme. Priority will be given to fencers who are already part of the Athlete Development Programme.

Three of the five ADP camps in 2018-19 included elements of the DiSE programme, as this is a more sustainable delivery model. Content such as nutrition and season planning are applicable to a wider group of athletes and sparring and technical sessions can then be focussed on smaller groups with more similar ability levels.

DiSE continues to grow, with the 2018-19 cohort having 43 enrolled on the programme and 43 still on the programmes from previous intakes.

Regional GBR Development Centres were run in Truro and Bath. The centres provided team matches, high quality sparring and sport science support. A third centre was run in London. Driven by the needs of local ADP fencers, they identified a suitable time, and venue where coaching and sparring could take place, with a number of Foil athletes using it as

preparation for the European and World Championships. This time limited centre was an effective use of coach and athlete time and is a possible model for the future.

In more practical news John Rees and Jon Salfield joined Chris Galesloot as the ADP weapon leads. These three coaches are now driving the training programmes at ADP camps, based on the developing the BF weapons framework and the needs of the athletes based on their personal athlete profiles. The coaches are also responsible for building the teams of coaches that deliver at competition, development centres and on the development camps.

9.3 GBR PERFORMANCE COACH DEVELOPMENT

During 2018-19, the focus was on embedding the Positive Coach Behaviours in the weapon coaching teams. These behaviours were developed as part of a PhD research project on talent environment and in conjunction with ADP coaches and BF Staff, and are underpinned by the BF Values of Honesty, Respect and Excellence.

Whilst there remains an underrepresentation of female coaches at a GBR level, each weapon team has a greater representation.

Year	Male	Female	Foil (m/f)	Epee (m/f)	Sabre (m/f)
17/18	20	3	8/2	6/1	6/0
18/19	22	8	10/2	4/4	8/2

Phase 2 of the Developing People Programme (DPP) involved 12 GBR coaches and BF Coach Developers engaged in a six-month programme applied performance mentoring programme. More information can be found in the Coach Development section of this report.

"British Fencing's Developing People Programme has given me the opportunity to improve the interactions I have with the people who I work with, both in a coaching and coach development setting. Dusty and Steve have put together a well-structured, thought provoking and evidence-based programme, which is progressive and has been easily applicable into my daily coaching. The expertise in the room was an invaluable aid to learning, given the blend of Talent Coaches, Coach Developers, and BF Staff on the programme."

"The Developing People Programme has been a fascinating journey to understand the impacts of coaching beyond having a sword in hand! I feel as if I am better equipped to support rather than challenge and challenge instead of supporting! The process forces you to reflect and practice, not to be scared of feedback from peers as well as scrutinise the rhetoric that stops positive cultures or mindsets growing. It was a valuable experience that has informed all that I do and an opportunity to share expertise alongside others in fencing."

10. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

10.1 REFEREE DEVELOPMENT

Background pre 2018

In 2014 BF recognised the need to train more internationally qualified referees to support the GBR teams, both from a domestic and international perspective. The FIE and EFC both impose minimum referee requirements on athlete participation and insufficient GBR qualified GBR referees existed to support these requirements.

In 2015 BF, supported by funding from UK Sport, established the BF International Referee Pathway Programme (IRPP) to train up the next generation of international level referees.

Within 2 seasons, through working with a group of active top level domestic and FIE referees, (both within the UK and internationally) the programme resulted in 3 mock FIE exams and training courses being delivered, 7 EFC C licences and 9 FIE licences being awarded and an increased level of officiating by GBR referees in EFC and FIE competition finals.

However, not enough Level 3 qualified referees were being developed to enter the programme and continue this rate of progress. In addition, with growing numbers of fencers competing at major tournaments in the UK, including Nationals and BYCs, there were insufficient skilled Level 3 referees to create the competitive experience we would wish for our community.

As a result, in 2017-18 BF set up a Referee Working Group. The aim of the group was to improve referee development by articulating a clearer pathway for referees to progress their career to top domestic/international level, underpinned by an improved exam structure and syllabus which included improvements to the level, consistency and frequency of referee training and assessments.

2018-19 - Training and Development

A steering group of Home Nation Refereeing Representatives was created to review and support the work of the Referee Working Group. Their purpose was to work collaboratively to ensure consistency of the rollout of resultant referee training and education, monitor its

progress and impact and ensure alignment with L1/2 referee development in their respective Home Countries.

The BF Refereeing Manager took on the task of co-ordinating the planning and running of the proposed Level 3 continual assessments and exams.

The Level 3 & 4 exam structure and syllabus was updated and a pilot level 3 exam (theory, video and practical assessment) was run at the 2018 Cadet and Junior National Championships.

Selected competitions have been approached to run future L3 assessments for the 2019-20 season.

BF is currently working on delivering additional Level 2 + seminars and examiner's seminars at BF events.

Looking forward to the 2019-20 season there is already a Level 4 (Mock FIE) and Level 3 seminar and exam planned, along with a domestic developmental seminar later in the season.

2018-19 – International Qualification & Selection – European Fencing Confederation

In April 2018 the EFC notified BF that GBR referees had achieved a further EFC foil C grade and 2 epee C grades.

In June 2018 the EFC updated the process for being awarded the EFC C License, which is a pre-requisite qualification for being put forward as a candidate for FIE examinations. Referees must be observed at 5 competitions over 2 seasons and meet a minimum standard at each competition to achieve a C grade. Referees that fail to meet a minimum standard in two consecutive competitions will not be able to referee for the rest of the season.

For the 2018-19 fencing season, the EFC created a new Referee Master list from which all European Championship referees were selected. Adrian Speakman was the only GBR candidate selected by the EFC for this list. He was subsequently selected to referee at the 2018 Senior European Championships, the 2019 Junior and Cadet European Championships in Foggia and the 2019 Senior European Championships.

Daniel Hazelwood was selected to referee at the 2019 U23 European Championships.

2018-19 – International Qualification & Selection – International Federation – The FIE

There were no FIE exams in the period Apr 2018-March 2019. The next set of exams (the last before the Olympics) will be October 2019 and BF have two epee candidates entered.

For the 2018-19 season Adrian Speakman was selected by the FIE for the FIE Referee Master List from which referees are selected for the major FIE events including Senior World Cups, Grand Prixs and World Championships. Adrian was subsequently selected for several World Cups and refereed several finals.

Stakeholder Funding

Most of the funding to support the development of international level referees comes from the UK Sport International Relations Programme. In 2018-19, training was focused on GBR candidates on the Referee Pathway Programme who were intending to sit FIE exams in the next 1-2 years. In addition, financial support was made available to existing GBR FIE qualified referees to further their careers as they seek Grand Prix listing and ultimately Senior World Championship and Olympic selection.

10.2 TEAM MANAGER DEVELOPMENT

In 2018-19, the new International Team Manager (TM3) training was piloted at an ADP camp in Manchester and received positive feedback. As a result, the current Domestic Team Manager training was refreshed to make it more relevant and updated for the current safeguarding legislations.

In 2018/19 a new process was established for volunteers wishing to become Performance Team Managers (PTMs). These PTMs are the Team Managers that accompany Junior GBR teams to nominated competitions. They must first attend this course and then shadow a Lead Performance Team Manager (LPTMs) at an event. 6 new PTMs travelled internationally this season.

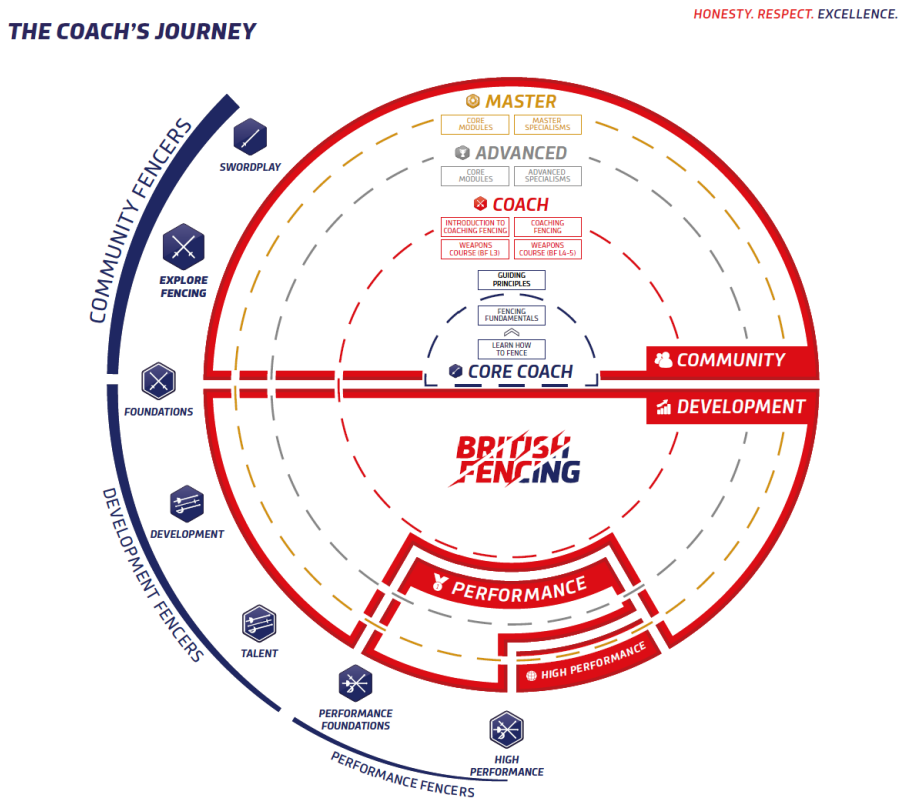
In total, 5 Team Manager training sessions were delivered this year including one delivered to a cohort of volunteers wishing to team manage travelling Home Nation squads for England and Wales. This resulted in 13 new qualified Team Managers.

10.3 WELFARE DEVELOPMENT

There have been 20 welfare courses run across the 2018-19 financial year delivering to a total of 221 BF members and 55 delegates from outside fencing. Two additional BF members were cleared as UK Coaching Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport tutors, providing additional capacity to deliver training in the north of England and Wales. There is still a need to train more in-house Time to Listen tutors to enable more cost-effective delivery to support the development of Welfare Officers across the country.

10.4 COACHING DEVELOPMENT

The BF Coaching Framework (launched in 2017) was designed to empower and support a network of coaches and leaders to grow fencing at a grass roots level, as well as deliver coaching excellence at every stage of the coach and fencer pathways. Elements of the coach pathway system linked to community fencing are now well established within the activity provider sector and continue to grow within the club and Athlete Development areas of the fencing community. In the performance coaching space, BF designed and delivered the first cohort of a new performance mentoring programme.



Courses & Resources

Building on the BF Coaching Framework principle of flexible modules, in 2018-19 the Core Coach course evolved to include versions for the education sector, uniform groups as well as the activity provider network. Working with targeted activity providers the Core Coach course has been integrated into the activity providers training schemes.

Course Delivery

Course Delivered (External)	16/17	17/18	18/19
Integrated Core Coach	62	72	83
Standard Core Coach	60	58	46
Needs Led Core Coach	27	14	13
Total	149	144	142

Course Delivered (Clubs)	16/17	17/18	18/19
Introduction to Coaching Fencing This is aimed at coaches delivering group coaching to beginner/ in communities, schools and clubs	11 (98)	12 (124)	11 (112)
Coaching Fencing (L2) FES Course This is aimed at coaches providing lessons to intermediate fencers, most often in schools and clubs	6 (53)	9 (63)	6 (49)
Weapon Course (L3) FES Course This is aimed at coaches providing different lesson formats, based on the fencer need at a competitive standard	1 (16)	3 (21)	2 (13)
Additional Weapon Course This is a shorter course aimed at Coaching Fencing L2 candidates to qualified in another weapon	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10)
Total (Courses, attendees, average attendees per course)	18 (167) 9.2	24 (208) 8.6	21 (174) 8.2

2018-19 has seen a slight drop in courses delivered and recruitment onto courses. This is partly due to officer time being reduced in this area, and staff changes in the administration of courses.

Smaller numbers moving from ITCF to CFL2 is not unusual. This can be for a number of reasons including available coaching opportunities or they have decided that coaching is not something the individual wishes to undertake in the long term. The area where additional insight needs to be developed is the lack of transition to weapon specific level 3 courses (WSL3). There are several anecdotal insights including cultural, working to the minimum standard required rather than being the "best" coach they can become, historic poor development experiences in the sport and fear of judgement.

Internal Verification and Quality Assurance (IV&AQ) has taken place on 2% of Core Coach courses and 62% of other courses (ITCF, CFL2, WSL3). This is down from 2017/18 and is an indication of our confidence in a more settled and competent Coach Development workforce, monitored through attendee feedback.

Licensed Partner

The Licensed Partner Training programmes continues to expand and now include 2 new partners Multi Sport Pro and Centreparcs, along with existing partner, Little Musketeers who are now delivering higher technical level courses. The demand by our Licensed Partners for BF annual refresher programmes continues to grow and develop, as the Licensed Partners recognise the impact on their delivery by maintaining and improving standards.

Coach Digest

The Coach Digest is a quarterly newsletter sent to coaches and over the last year the number of coaches on the mailing list has increased by 14% with over 800 coaches receiving articles on coaching, good news stories and coach course information. The open rate of the coach digest is currently averaging 53%. Range (52%-54%)

Coach Developer Workforce

28 of the 35 BF Coach Developers delivered one or more courses last year and continue to be a strength of the framework. On the anonymous post course feedback survey, it indicates high satisfaction levels of delivery, with a good level of consistency across the Coach Developer workforce over the last two years, due to the appointment of the appropriately skilled coach developer to the appropriate course.

About the Coach Developer(s) who delivered the course Score (0/10)	17/18	18/19
Had a good knowledge of the subject matter	9.8	9.8
Used a range of learning materials	9.2	9.2
The Coach Developer engaged well with the group	9.5	9.5
Made good use of examples	9.5	9.8
Allowed opportunity to discuss topics	9.8	9.5
Allowed opportunity to contribute and/or learn from other participants	9.8	9.8
Answered all your questions effectively or agreed a follow up query	9.8	9.8
Overall	**9.5**	**9.6**

In further developments, 5 of the current Coach Developer workforce are developing in to the "trainer role" a role in development of other Coach Developers across the fencing delivery sector.

Coaches Register

The number of coaches on the coach register at the end of March 2019 was 621, a 5% year on year increase. The ratio of male/female coaches was 485/136 representing a 79%/21% split with no change from previous year.

Work has continued on a comprehensive Coaching Register. The information displayed on the register can now be viewed on the BF membership platform and dates and certificates can be loaded directly into the platform by individuals, providing control over the personal data they wish to share with BF. The web-based coach register platform is expected to go live later in 2019 and the old, manually produced coach register will be phased out in 2020.

The new register will recognise the wider role, skills and qualifications of the coach and provide better information about our trained workforce to our partners and fencing providers. The register will be a key information source in the upcoming Coach Accreditation schemes, which will be used at the BF-run events and international competitions.

Performance Coach Development

A situational analysis of performance coach development was undertaken in 2018 and several areas requiring attention were highlighted as critical to the performance pathway.

Areas of importance included:

- A connected, skilled and knowledgeable team of coaches in each weapon, connecting through the pathway from cadets (U17) to seniors
- Coaches that have trust in each other, which means we are adaptable to change and challenge

To address these areas, the Developing People Programme was designed and delivered. Phase 1 launched with 35 coaches exploring the Coach/Athlete relationship and themes of trust. Phase 2 of the scheme delivered to 14 candidates, a mix of GBR Coaches, Coach Developers and BF Staff. This programme ran over 6 months. The candidates applied the learning from phase 1 (the Coach/Athlete relationship) and explored a number of theories on performance mentoring. With support from a personal mentor, the candidates subsequently applied the learnings in mentoring situations over a 6-month period. Finally, the programme came to its formal conclusion with a Knowledge Transfer event, with each candidate sharing their experiences and an area of mentoring research they had undertaken.

"I have felt an improved sense of belonging with a wider group of colleagues. Further, I've had interactions with colleagues who attend the DPP at subsequent events. Some of these activities probably would not have happened previously, a number of them were at a deeper interpersonal level, and a few shared more personal concerns building on the rapport established on the DPP"

2019-20 will see the launch of a new Mindfulness programme for ADP coaches and fencers, supported by the work of The True Athlete Project. In addition, BF will be developing an on-line learning and development portal for coaches and ADP fencers and recruiting and delivering to cohort 2 of the Developing People Programme.

11. PROJECTS & PROGRAMMES

During the period of 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, Core Market investment from Sport England successfully supported and enabled BF to develop and strengthen its portfolio of Projects and Programmes (P&P) with partners such as London Youth, the Scout Association and BUCS. Driven by insight, partnership working and continuous evaluation BF's Core Market work during 2018-19 has continued to develop opportunities that speak to the 'Alternative' and 'Leading Edge' tribes, as identified in BF's 2014 Crowd DNA research.

BF engaged a total of 3,850 young people through its programmes. Out of these 3,850 participants, 2,803 took part in one-off events and the remaining 1,047 took part in a sustained programme of fencing activity. During this period the retention rate (based on attendance at a minimum of 60% of sessions) across the portfolio has increased from 59% in 2017-18 to 67% in 2018-19.

We have attributed this success to the following factors:

1) **Strong and effective partnerships** - BF prides itself on its honest, open and collaborative approach in all its partnerships that contribute to our P&P portfolio. For example, our partnership with London Youth continues to grow from strength to strength, encouraging us to try new approaches to engage a youth market that historically would not think about a sports offer for its young people, but have taken the creative 'sell' of fencing to engage its young people in the sport. Our work with the Scout Association has allowed us to test LED Sabre in a space where we are trusted and respected to introduce an external provider. Our relationship with several Scout Districts has also allowed us to continue to test and improve our Leadership in Fencing offer to the Explorer age group (aged 14+) to ensure we get the fencing offer right for Scouts.

2) **Co-creation with partners and target audience** - Closely connected to the partnership approach is our belief in co-creation with our target audiences. Our portfolio has developed as we continue to work closely with young people to develop programmes such as the Art of Fencing, which put young people at the centre of designing and shaping their own programme.

3) **Insight led and continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning** - The BF Monitoring and Evaluation tool has proved a very useful method of not only collecting data from our portfolio of P&Ps, but also providing insight into the people taking part. We have introduced a range of qualitative methods of data collection to gather the story behind the numbers and understand in more detail why projects have worked and equally, were they struggle and how we can improve them.

4) **An adaptable Coaching Framework** - Following the introduction and success of the new BF Coaching Framework in 2016, we have taken the Core Coach Course and Leadership in Fencing Course and adapted them to meet the needs of the various target audiences and partners we are working with. Adaptations include new and additional content, (e.g. focusing on engaging women and girls) to varying the time frame the course is delivered in (e.g. Leadership in Fencing Course has been tested over a day, two half days and 3x 2hr sessions).

Upskilling a suitable workforce to sustain activity, has continued to be a key focus of BF's delivery during 2018-19. 227 youth workers, Scout Leaders and University volunteers have completed training in Core Coach, ITCF and Sabre:Lite and the Leadership in Fencing Award.

BFs work in Higher Education through the Sabre:Lite programme has continued to grow in popularity with 38 students trained across 14 Universities and nearly 600 students took part, with a record retention rate of 61% of participants attending at least 60% of the sessions made available to them. The growth and success of this project has been attributed to a thorough recruitment process, continued development of the Sabre:Lite University Fencing Officer (UFO) training which had an overall satisfaction score of 94% and finally, continued post course support being provided throughout the year.

"The weekend was really useful and also a lot of fun, more than I expected! I didn't expect so much practice time which will definitely improve our sessions next year and the feedback was really informative."

BF's social responsibility initiative, Muslim Girls Fence (MGF) has continued to grow, with over 50 women from across Bradford, Doncaster and London trained to Core Coach level. A key area of success has been the adaptation of the Core Coach course; working closely with Maslaha and using national and local insights, we have tailored a course that not only equips participants with the fencing skills needed to safely and confidently deliver fencing, but also provides the opportunity to understand in greater depth the motivations and barriers around women in sport.

"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 infections, I went away full of energy and wanting to really dedicate myself to this."

12. SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMERCIAL

One of BF's core objectives includes providing services that are financially resilient. This will enable BF to continue to serve the sport and its members in the future, even if public funding and sponsorship declines. In order to achieve this in the long term, it is essential to generate revenue from sources other than membership.

Therefore, the primary purpose of BF's commercial activities is to generate revenue for the organisation that can be used to support the ongoing development of our sport and make BF more financially independent, reducing reliance on external funding.

In 2018-19 the Commercial Department continued to work towards it's three 2021 objectives to support the overall BF Strategy:

Diversify - Build a diverse portfolio of commercial partners

Engage - Generate a wider and deeper customer base

Sustain - Generate revenue that supports the organisation and reduces its reliance on external funding.

Diversify

During 2018-19, BF's portfolio of commercial partners has continued to grow. At the end of the financial year, formal relationships were in place with 13 partners an increase of 5 partners from 2018-19.

Our primary commercial offerings in the partnership space are Education and our Licensed Partner Programme (LPP). Additionally, we have several bespoke official partner agreements which cover elements including sponsorship (e.g. Wilkinson Sword) and Value in Kind agreements such as Pixel Creative Technologies (digital products) and Woods Fleet (collaboration on corporate products and offer of hospitality services to BF).

The Licensed Partner Programme (LPP) is designed to formalise our relationship with organisations involved in the delivery of fencing, whilst allowing BF to add value beyond the provision of one-off training courses. This added value includes access to knowledge experts that will help organisations better support their own coaching staff, the opportunity to build bespoke tools to support their coaches and ultimately create better fencing experiences for their participants. As at April 2019 there were 5 organisations in the LPP, with Centre Parcs and Little Musketeers new for 2018-19. As part of these programmes, BF directly delivered

around 50 courses and supported 83 courses delivered under license (up from 72 in 2017-18).

BF's Education offerings are based on our leading-edge Coach Development system, endorsed by industry leaders and stakeholders launched in 2017. This system is designed to create a modern coaching workforce that meets best-practice education standards whilst inspiring and developing all coaches. Education is also delivered to organisations outside of the LPP, and in 2018-19 37 such coaching courses were delivered.

Photo taken by Karen Saunders.
Location: Nikon School UK Photography Workshop, Leon Paul Fencing Centre.
Athlete: James Honeybone

During the year we formalised the relationship with another non-sport partner, Nikon School UK. This resulted in three specialist photography workshops and a 'British Fencing Image of the Year 2018' competition.

PGL Travel Ltd are in their fourth year in the LPP and now have a total of 25 licensed trainers. In the fourth year they forecast to deliver training to 550 coaches (37.5% increase) who will in turn be able to deliver more introductory PGL fencing experiences to young

people. In 2018 PGL delivered fencing to c.90,000 unique participants (up nearly 20% from 2016).

Whilst Premier Sport are no longer acting as an Official Delivery Partner in Primary Education, they remain a member of our LPP and we continue to work with them to increase awareness of fencing as an activity for schools and young people. Over the last two years of the partnership, their delivery of fencing experiences grew by 36% to 47,761 per year and they continue to grow their base of 430+ coaches who are now trained to deliver fencing as part of their multi-sport primary school offering.

In 2019-20 we are continuing to seek opportunities to grow our coach education offering. We have recently signed a five-year partnership agreement with Crown Hills Community College. This is our first ever 'external' LPP which will allow them to deliver Core Coach training to their staff and local schoolteachers. They will also be equipped to deliver BF's new Primary School Resource Pack, an add-on product aligning to BF's Minisword and Go/Fence Achievement Awards.

As our reputation for best practice education and insight-led experiences continues to grow, several international organisations have expressed interest in our BF coach education framework and associated products and services. This includes work with the South African Fencing Federation as well as organisations in St Lucia and China. This presents a number of exciting possibilities for BF and we intend to continue developing these relationships as we move through 2019-20.

Engage

Many of the opportunities for growth in engagement throughout the year came through increasing use of technology. This is a trend that we expect to continue as it enables us to engage efficiently with many people at relatively low cost.

Much of the work has focused on launching the new website, increasing our active presence on Social Media (for more information please see the separate Media & Communication report below) and our partnership with fibodo to deliver an online activity finder.

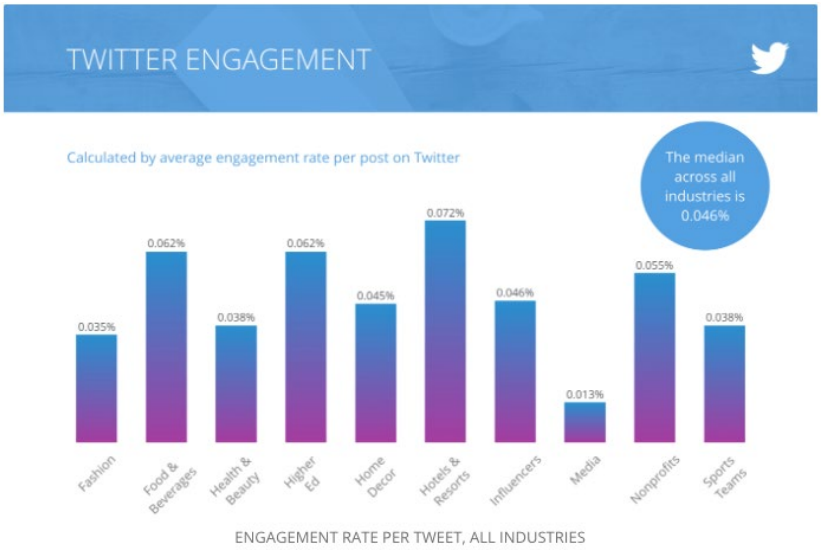
In terms of engagement, BF's Facebook page has seen a 75% year on year increase in our Total Reach[1] and Total Impressions have increased 34%[2].

[1] The number of people who had any content from your Page or about your Page enter their screen. This includes posts, check-ins, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page and more. (Unique Users)

On Twitter, BF maintained an average 1.48% engagement rate in 2018-2019 against an industry standard benchmark of 0.038% (sports teams) or against the median of 0.046% (median of benchmarked industries) based upon the 2018 benchmark report for Twitter (see table graphic below).

Overall across the five leading social media channels BF had over 25,000 followers by 31st March 2019.

Since June 2018 (when the activity finder and new website launched) nearly 26,000+ page views have been had on www.britishfencing.com/activityfinder and 9,000+ of them are 'unique page views'.

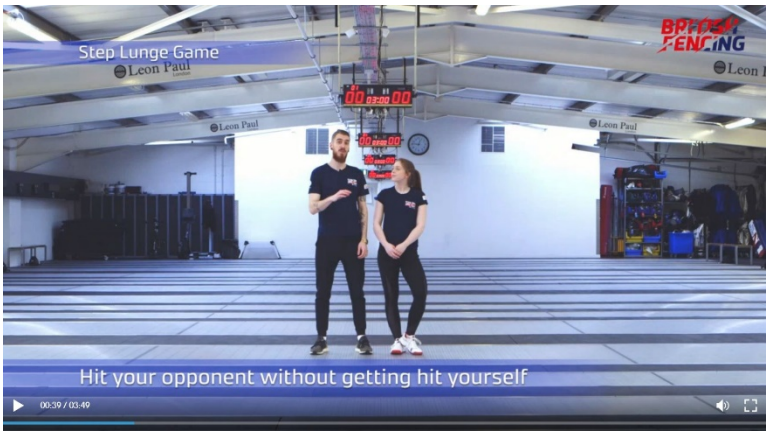


Source: from rivaliq.com/blog/2018-social-media-industry-benchmark-report/

Looking forward to 2019-20 we will continue working with fibodo to improve the functionality of the activity finder, making it easier for clubs to get the most out of the tool, increase their visibility and ability to advertise, sell and take payment for their activity sessions online. Working with fibodo, we will launch a new app that new and existing participants can use to book fencing sessions directly on their mobile devices, providing an improved experience for consumers and our clubs.

[2] The number of times any content from your Page or about your Page entered a person's screen. This includes posts, check-ins, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page and more. (Total Count)

Work continues on the Explore Fencing app, with much of the video content now complete. This is expected to go live in 2019, providing another educational resource for both coaches and participants.



Finally, BF will be improving communication about what we do and how we do it. Staff training and a small amount of equipment will enable the executive team to provide more meaningful video content to our fencing communities. This 'behind the scenes' access is intended to help members and stakeholders understand more about what BF do whilst also engaging with new and existing online audiences. A testimonial video is also planned to highlight the unique selling points of BF's coach education product, 'Core Coach', and encourage more activity providers to consider fencing as an activity to deliver.

Sustain

2018-19 delivered a 25% net surplus increase year on year. In the year ahead BF will continue to pursue an increase in revenue and net surplus growth whilst also putting processes in place that give us the capacity to scale over the long term to handle more partners and more business.

Over time we expect public funding to continue to fall and, as mentioned at the beginning of the section, it is vital for BF to increase its commercial offerings to provide future financial resilience.

In closing; the year has seen significant commercial growth as we further develop the products and services we can offer, providing a positive contribution to the sustainability of BF. This work will continue into 2019-20 with the overall unchanged objective of further growth through successful scalable products and services, thus providing a diverse and sustainable financial contribution to BF.

13. SOCIAL MEDIA

At the end of 2017-18 the shift towards more of a social strategy for communications resulted in the creation of the role of a Social Media Coordinator for 2018-2019, replacing the previous Marketing and Communications Coordinator role. The part time role of Social Media Coordinator was filled in June 2018.

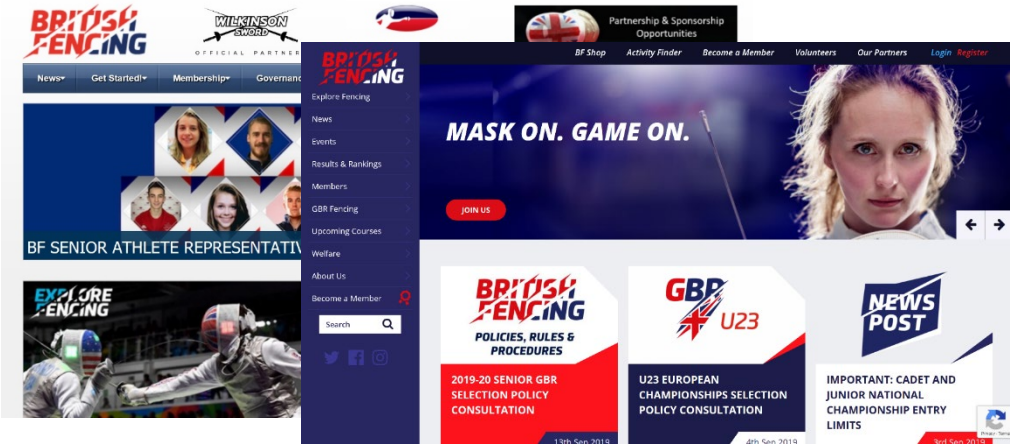
The 2018-19 Social Media objectives included:

- increase engagement and interaction across British Fencing social media channels
- increase engagement with key pre-defined user segments
- increase social following with a target of 30,000 by 2020 across all social platforms
- understand British Fencing's audience by placing content on the most appropriate communication platforms

In addition to supporting the existing and future fencing community, the Social Media objectives also included increasing engagement across communication channels and partner activation support to help support and grow the British Fencing family of commercial partners

To achieve these objectives a digital strategy was developed, underpinned by the "Be You. Be Different" brand message.

In June 2018 a new website was launched in beta mode based on the new brand, which set out a platform for improved communication. Website Zones (Club, Coach, Referee, Events etc) were designed and created for specific communities of interest underpinned by a search function to allow for quick access to content of choice. The website continues to be a key focus for improvement into 2019-20.



BF continued to provide full reports on major events (European and World Championships) and individual press releases were created for significant international (FIE) medal achievements. A regular round-up report on competition results was posted on social media. The Sword magazine continued to be published quarterly in digital editions including in depth reports on major Championships (European/World).

BF supported specific social media campaigns of stakeholders including UKAD Clean Sport week, UK Coaching Week and Volunteer's Week, and BF continued to provide general amplification of the activities of stakeholders such as Sport England, the FIE, BUCS, Muslim Girls Fence, Scouts, Sportsaid, NSPCC CPSU and Women in Sport.

Partner activation included the launch of the British Fencing Image of the Year competition, judged by partner Nikon School UK, which invited submissions of images from the fencing community and beyond which conveyed the 'Be You. Be Different' British Fencing message. The winner was announced at the BF Awards Dinner 2018 and received a voucher for a Nikon School UK workshop.

Photo taken by Millie Brodie.
Location: Nikon School UK Photography Workshop, Leon Paul Fencing Centre.
Athletes: James Honeybone and Kate Beardmore

Further digital innovation included the launch of the Be You, Be Different podcast, sponsored by British Fencing partner Pulseroll. Continued partner activation, improved website appearance and a further increase in social engagement with more video content is anticipated for 2019-20.

14. BF HONOURS 2018

Long Service Trophy

Peter Smith

Paul Sibert

Simon Warwicker

Alex Simpson

Stephen Deary

Stephen Domek

Helen McNab

Rodney Francis

Directors Award

Joe Gibbons

Silver Medal

Stephen Glaister

Bronze Medal

Jim Pilkington

Peter Barrett

Award of Merit

John Evers

Tim Miles

Steve Morley

Tankard

Vivien Frith

Graham Paul

Paul Wedge

15. WITH THANKS TO

BOA

BUCS

BF Charity

Comic Relief

Eversheds Sutherland

GLL

Leon Paul

London Youth

Maslaha Charity

National Lottery

NSPCC CPSU

Scout Association

Sport England

Sports Aid Foundation

UK Coaching

UK Sport

Wilkinson Sword

Youth Sport Trust

The patrons that support our GBR athletes and teams.

And all the volunteers that give their time so generously to support BF and our sport.