

THE SWORD

BRITISH FENCING MAGAZINE
APRIL 2020



STUTCHBURY EURO BRONZE PP6-7
JUNIOR & CADET EURO CHAMPS REPORT PP8-12
BRITISH FENCING IMAGE OF THE YEAR 2019 PP30-31

BRITISH
FENCING

Mag-Tec ZerØ

Only 46 g

8mm HEX NUT SPANNER



HEX NUT ZERO



WELCOME TO THE SWORD



4 NEWS

Covid-19 Update

Best Practice Guidance for Online Coaching

6 REPORTS

European Bronze for Stutchbury

Porec Progress for GBR as Stutchbury Shines Brightest

14 INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Wheelchair Fencing Update

16 FEATURE

The True Athlete Project Update

19 DEVELOPMENT

It's a Team Game

Making it Real

License Partner Programme (LPP)

Female Representation in Sport

Spotlight on Supporters

Fencing in St. Lucia

29 ROUND UP

The Epée Club Update

British Fencing Image of the Year 2019

32 REVIEWS

Review of "Wheelchair Musketeers En Garde" by Vivien Mills

Review of "The Devil's Blade" by Mark Alder

34 OBITUARY

Wynford Seymour 1931-2020

35 RESULTS

REPORT

P6

CAROLINA STUTCHBURY WITH
DIMITRI ROMANKOV
PHOTO: #BIZZITEAM



Editor:

Karim Bashir, British Fencing
1 Baron's Gate,
33-35 Rothschild Road,
London W4 5HT
T: 020 8742 3032
E: karim.bashir@catchsport.com

Print:

Cambrian Printers,
Llanbadarn Fawr,
Aberystwyth,
Ceredigion, SY23 3TN
T: 01970 613059

Safeguarding Hotline:

Liz Behnke, Equality and
Safeguarding Manager
M: 07526 003030

Typeset by:

JS Typesetting Ltd
T: 01656 788551
E: jstype@btconnect.com

Advertising:

Karim Bashir
M: 07855 252546
E: karim.bashir@catchsport.com

Cover photo:

Stutchbury with her European Bronze
Medal #BizziTeam

British Fencing accepts no
responsibility for the contents of
advertisements and reserves the right
to refuse inclusion.

The Sword, a quarterly magazine
founded in 1948, is distributed to all
individual and club members of British
Fencing and its affiliates. It can also be
obtained on subscription - UK £20.

Overseas airmail £26 - direct
from HQ. Contributions are
welcome. Photographs should
include the names of those
pictured and the photographer.

Views expressed in The Sword
do not necessarily reflect those
of British Fencing. No part of the
magazine may be reproduced
without permission from the
editor/photographer.

Next deadline: 18th May 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

IOC Postpone Tokyo 2020 Games Due to Global Pandemic

British Fencing

To begin with, we wanted our readership to know that we grappled with the placement of this particular article within this magazine. We are aware that everyone has been bombarded with information regarding Covid-19 and opening The Sword may offer some respite to many. However, the importance of this matter is too serious for us not to deal with it head on. Rest assured we have kept this article as short as possible and sign-posted the places where you can keep up-to-date moving forwards. The rest of the magazine has been dedicated, as always, to fencing news!

We are living in unprecedented times during which news updates relating to the Covid-19 global pandemic are hourly. The challenges faced by everyone across the World are far from over but the common thread is that we must work together to defeat this invisible enemy.

In publishing this article we are acutely aware that by the time of publication its contents may be outdated. As such we will stick to the facts and provide readers with a link to our dedicated website page which we are regularly keeping up to date.

The first case of Covid-19 was detected on 17 November 2019 (South China Morning Post) and by 10 January 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) had issued its first guidance on the "novel coronavirus". On 7 March 2020 100,000 cases had been detected worldwide and by 11 March 2020 WHO declared the virus a pandemic. Since then various countries around the World have issued "State of Emergency" declarations and travel restrictions have been imposed widely.

The response from the International Fencing Federation (FIE) - was to suspend all international activities for 30 days with immediate effect from 12 March 2020. This meant the postponement of the last five Olympic qualification events, the special zonal Olympic qualifiers and the Junior & Cadet World Championships. During the period of suspension the FIE committed to work with the organizing committees and host nations of the affected events in an effort to reschedule them. Furthermore, the FIE (along with a number of other sports governing bodies) applied to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to extend their Olympic qualification period. The IOC have subsequently announced that they will be "as flexible as possible with amending qualification rules for federations".

On 24 March 2020, the IOC announced the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. More here. (<https://tinyurl.com/qwy3ty2>)

Of course, British Fencing have been keeping a close eye on the situation and on 5 March 2020, we temporarily **suspended the handshaking rule**. On 16 March 2020 we also recommended that fencers, coaches and clubs follow the guidance issue by Prime Minister Boris Johnson that "now

is the time for everyone to stop non-essential contact with others and to stop all unnecessary travel".

On 17 March 2020, our CEO Georgina Usher and Mark Lyttle, the chair of British Fencing, sent a **message to members** about the situation and our response so far. Following on from this message, on the 18 March 2020 **we announced** the postponement of the British Senior Championships, the GB Cup and the British Youth Championships until later in the year. We also announced the cancelation of BRCs until mid-August. We are working hard to find the best solution for the whole community and we're looking forward to resuming the season later in the year.

We urge everyone to follow the guidelines which are being updated on a regular basis. We should all take responsibility for reducing the spread, protecting the vulnerable and looking after each other.

Stay safe by washing your hands regularly and practicing good respiratory hygiene.

Useful links:

World Health Organisation's Rolling Updates

UK Government Guidance

British Fencing Covid-19 Guidance (updated regularly)



Reduce your risk of coronavirus infection:

Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water 

When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands 

Avoid close contact with anyone that has fever and cough 

#Coronavirus #COVID19

Best Practice Guidance for Online Coaching

Fencing Coaches that are on the **BF Register** and meet the minimum standards are insured to provide instruction using on-line platforms provided, (as with all coaching practice):

- the instruction falls under the remit of their fencing coaching qualifications
- appropriate risk assessments are undertaken
- suitable guidance is given to participants for each session/recording (see below).

1. PRE-RECORDED CONTENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Post content on a platform where further text information can be posted alongside the video.

It is acceptable to go through all the advice as part of the recording, but you may find that this takes too long. In which case you need to upload it and signpost in the recording. For example: "Please read the information down below before starting any activity".

Read more [here](#).



Best Practice Guidance for Online Coaching - <https://www.britishfencing.com/online-coaching-guidelines/>

Advice & Guidance for Coaches - Covid 19



Advice and Guidance for Coaches - Covid-19: <https://www.britishfencing.com/advice-and-guidance-coaches-covid-19/>

The current situation has affected our coaches, their fencers and families. As always, your health and wellbeing is most important and we have provided some resources to support you.

There is a dedicated page on our website for coaches, with information about the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), as well as guidance on how to create safe and effective online coaching sessions.

You will also find information about the coach register and how to remain current with safeguarding requirements whilst social distancing measures are in place.

We will continue to update this page with new information when it becomes available. If you have a question that is not answered on the page, please let us know at development@britishfencing.com

Advice & Guidance for Clubs - Covid 19

We recognise the impact the current situation is having on you, your club and your members. Your health and wellbeing are of the upmost importance and we are here to support you.

As mentioned in our previous [message to clubs and coaches](#), this dedicated page will provide clubs with guidance and signposting for help that is available. As the situation in the UK changes, we will update this page with new developments and announcements.



Advice and Guidance for Clubs - Covid-19: <https://www.britishfencing.com/advice-and-guidance-for-clubs-covid-19/>

We may not have the answers to all of your questions yet. To help us create the best resource for you, if you have a question that isn't answered here or on our further advice and guidance pages, please contact Hannah Gavin at hannah.gavin@britishfencing.com.

Read more [here](#).

EUROPEAN BRONZE FOR STUTCHBURY

Cadet Foilist Carolina Stutchbury Shows Progress in Croatia

Great Britain's Carolina Stutchbury, who trains under Dimitri Romankov in Atlanta, USA won the Cadet Women's Foil bronze medal at the European Championships in Porec, Croatia in February. It was the only British medal at this year's Championships. At just 14 years old, this result demonstrates the continued progress shown by Carolina with time still left at this age group.

It was day three of the tournament and it began with Carolina winning five of her six poule matches. She went into the elimination stages full of confidence and ranked 21st. Carolina made light work of her Portuguese opponent Alvito in the round of 64, winning 15-5. She went on to beat Kamaldinova (RUS) 15-8 and Hohenadel (GER) 15-9 to make the quarterfinals. There she faced her toughest opponent of the day to that point, the



The Minute Break

European number 13 from Germany, Luca Holland-Cunz. Showing no signs of nerves Carolina won the match in style 15-5.

Her semi-final opponent was European number 3 from Italy, Matilde Calvanese. One of the form fencers on the day, Calvanese had previously won all of her poule fights, dropping just six hits and was the top seed for the elimination phase. Like Carolina she had not been taken to double figures on route to the top four.



Carolina Stutchbury & Dimitri Romankov

At the start of their semi-final match, both fencers employed the same tactics. They were both looking to build long attacks, whilst also looking for the opportunity to attack into their opponent's preparation. Cancelling each other out in the main, it was Calvanese that snatched the mini-advantage to lead 8-7 at the break. In the second period the Italian slightly lengthened the distance which gave her a little more time and space to choose where her final action landed. Despite clever use of the video replay system the Italian was still leading and went on to win 15-12.

Speaking about her performance Carolina said, "The day was emotionally and physically draining. Even in the bouts that were not close, I had to put in a lot of effort for every touch. I would like to thank my coach Dimitri Romankov and British Fencing for supporting me throughout my competitions."

Romankov said, "The European Championships was the culmination of many months of Carolina working hard every day in training.

"On the day, she fenced like a seasoned professional, listening to my tactical advice and immediately putting it into practice



Focused Piste-side Analysis



Darya Malysheva (RUS), Matilda Calvanese (ITA), Olga Sopit (UKR) & Carolina Stutchbury (GBR)

in the matches. Her quarterfinal match against the German fencer was excellent and she fenced exactly how I asked. We both adapted her tactics as the match progressed - holding, being patient and using the time wisely. A 15-5 victory was a great result as every point was extremely tough to earn.

It was wonderful to see all the red GBR jackets in the stands supporting her. Next up is the now postponed World Championships but we will just take it one step at a time as there is a long way to go in this sport."

ADP Lead Foil Coach, Chris Galesloot added, "It was a pleasure to see Carolina fence today. She looked very confident, disciplined and dominant. She combined strong defensive fencing with fantastic pressing and attacking gameplay. She was

very accurate today and showed great variety in her actions. I am very excited about her future in this sport. The support from the whole GBR squad today was fabulous. A great day."



Stutchbury Lands in Semi-Final



GBR Team Support

Coach Romankov's father was a World Champion and his uncle, Alexandr is perhaps the greatest foilist of all time with 10 World Championships crowns and five Olympic medals.

Carolina is on the British Fencing Athlete Development Programme, funded by Sport England: <https://www.sportengland.org/>. More information about ADP camps, programmes and updates can be found here: <https://www.britishfencing.com/gbr-fencing/gbr-development-programmes/gbr-athlete-development-programme/>.

POREC PROGRESS FOR GBR AS STUTCHBURY SHINES BRIGHTEST

Cadet & Junior European Championships 2020 Report

The Cadet & Junior European Championship took place in Croatia's seaside town of Porec, 22 February - 2 March. Great Britain fielded a full team for the event and we take a look at how they did.

EPEE

Cadets

The men's epee competition was the opening event of the Championships and the British team made a promising start. Both Alec Brooke (Knightsbridge Fencing Club) and Edward Scott Payne (Leon Paul London) made it through to the quarterfinals. Joseph Walmsley (Greater Manchester Fencing) made the round of 16 and Louis Taiwo-Williams (Derbyshire Epee Academy) qualified for the elimination stages. They returned to the piste on day four of the event, ranked second for the team event but came up against a strong Italian team in the quarterfinals. They lost that match but then beat Switzerland and Ukraine to finish fifth. Speaking about their performance, ADP Lead Epee Coach, John Rees said, "In a highly competitive field all four fenced well in the individual event. In particularly Ed and Alec fought hard and smart throughout the day. Despite our high ranking for the team event, we faced the eventual winners, Italy in the round of 8. The team showed great spirit to bounce back after the defeat to finish fifth - one of the highest placings for a Cadet Men's Epee team at a European Championships."



Louis Taiwo-William, Alec Brooke, Joseph Walmsley & Edward Scott-Payne

In the women's competition Patrycja Krzyzaniak (Chelsea) produced the best performance, finishing in the top sixteen. Her clubmate, Julia Caron also made the elimination stages but drew and lost to Patrycja in the round of 64. Isabella Summers (Leon Paul Epee) made the elimination stages but was unable to progress past the round of 128. Keira Papadopoulos (Edinburgh) did not make it out of the poules. Ranked 14th for the team event, Great Britain's round of 16 match was always going to be a tough one. They fell to Poland at that stage but fought back



Julia Caron, Patrycja Krzyzaniak, Isabella Summers & Keira Papadopoulos

through the placings matches, beating Ukraine, Switzerland and Romania to finish ninth. Coach Rees said, "Overall, I'm happy with the progress of this team. Keira will be disappointed to have not made it out of the poules and it was unfortunate that Patrycja and Julia faced each other. Patrycja's performance was the standout though, especially given that this isn't her last year as a cadet. In the team event, number three seeds Poland were always going to be tough. Like the men, this team fought back and I was very impressed with their priority minute victory over a strong Ukrainian team in the back table."

Juniors

The Junior Championships opened with the men's epee event. All four British fencers made it through a tough first round with Benjamin Andrews (Plymouth) and James Jeal (Derbyshire Fencing Academy) earning byes through the first elimination round. Billy Shepherd (Skipton) and Aurelio Calipa (Brixton) also made it through the first round but were eliminated in the round of 128. Jeal then fell to the European number three, Piatti (ITA) but Andrews made the quarterfinals, losing to the eventual bronze medalist, Messien (FRA). The four returned for the team event but faced a hard round of 16 match against France which they lost 45-34. A hard-fought placings match win against Estonia (45-42) saw the British team finish 12th. John Rees said, "It was great to see all four fencers make it to the DEs. Ben fenced the knockout phase with a great deal of confidence and came through a tight round of 32 fight against number four seed, Calderon (ESP). His quarterfinal match was a rollercoaster but despite the loss, Ben can be very proud of his performance and the result. As a team, we have been putting in some great performances throughout the season which meant that we had a bye through the first round. France were too strong for us but the victory over Estonia was well-deserved and the team continue to show progress - finishing three places higher than last year."



Billy Shepherd, Aurelio Calipa, Ben Andrews & James Jeal

In the women's individual event Louise Sadler (Malvern Hills) did not make it out of the poules but Rachel Lever (OPS Epee Club), Alexandra Powell (Malvern Hills) and Laura Sheffield (Brixton) did. None were able to make it past the round of 64 though. They returned for the team event on the last day of the Championships and had a bye through the round of 32 before falling to eventual silver medalists Poland. Victories of Turkey (45-36) and Sweden (44-43) saw them finish 13th. Speaking about the performances, Coach Rees said, "Despite the disappointing individual results, Louise can be proud of her performance in her first year as a Junior fencer. The team draw against Poland was always going to be a big ask but the team impressed against Turkey and Sweden in the placings matches."



Racheal Lever, Alex Powell, Laura Sheffield & Louise Sadler

FOIL

Cadets

The men's cadet foil was the opening event on day two and Jaimie Cook (Salle Holyrood) started the day in fine form, winning all of his poule fights, taking third seed into the elimination stages. Rafael Rhys Pollitt (FCL), Daria Stenbeck-Schiavo (ZFW) and Oliver Strange (Salle Paul Foil) also progressed but only Strange was able to make it to the round of 32, where he then lost. Two days later the four returned for the team event where after a round of 32 bye, they beat Spain 45-39. Facing a much higher ranked Russia in the quarterfinals resulted in defeat, 45-24 which was followed by losses to Ukraine and Hungary. Great Britain finished eighth. Lead ADP Foil Coach, Chris Galesloot said, "There is no doubt that the fencers had hoped for more in the individual and they are certainly capable of that. Our hopes and spirits were high as they had consistently performed well throughout the season. It was not to be but they immediately focussed on making up for it in the team event. The Spanish match was not plain

sailing but the team stayed strong and determined. Number one seeds Russia was too much of a hill to climb and the two remaining defeats were extremely close. All four can look back on their season with pride. Jaimie, Oliver and Rafael have an opportunity to prove themselves again at the World Championships in Salt Lake City."



Tony Conyard, Dario Stenbeck-Schiavo, Paweł Osmanski, Jaimie Cook, Rafael Rhys-Pollitt, Chris Galesloot, Oliver Strange & Keith Cook

In the women's event, Madeleine Gale (Allez Fencing) did not make it through the first round but Martha Carus Bird (Cobham Fencing Club), Carolina Stutchbury (Epic Fencing Club & ZFW) and Amelia Tsang (ZFW) all did. Tsang did not progress past the round of 64 and Carus Bird went out in the round of 32. The star performer of the entire Championships though was Carolina Stutchbury. She produced Great Britain's only medal. Making it through to the semi-finals, Stutchbury fell to the eventual winner, Calvesese (ITA) 15-12. In the team event Great Britain ranked seventh, had a bye through to the round of 16 where they beat Romania 45-31. They then lost to a strong Russian outfit followed by a close loss to Germany before beating Turkey to finish seventh. Coach Galesloot said, "Having performed so well in the first round during the season, Maddy's result was a tough pill to swallow. Amelia is young and will continue to fence in the Cadet age-group for the next three years. She will have gained valuable experience and put in a great performance only just losing 15-14 in her last fight. She has the World Championships to look forward to as well. Martha can be pleased with her victory over Sofran(ROU) who she had lost to in the

poules and can look back with pride on the individual event. Carolina's performance was excellent and we can expect more from her as she has two more years as a Cadet fencer. She was aggressive, made good tactical decisions and executed her actions with great accuracy. In her last match against last year's champion both fencers were more successful on the attack so it came down to a battle of gaining the right of way in the middle. Carolina just missed out on the final. I was very happy with the team performance. The victory against Romania set up a tough match against Russia. The team fenced well and with belief throughout. All four were involved but Russia were too strong. Losing to Germany meant we faced Turkey for seventh place but the team did not start well. Maddy came on for the seventh leg and restored belief. Amelia then put us ahead for Carolina to close out the victory. Martha supported loudly from the bench showing her commitment to the team. It was a great comeback and they should be very proud of their team performance."



Martha Carus Bird, Maddy Gale, Carolina Stutchbury & Amelie Tsang

A full report on Carolina's stunning bronze medal winning performance can be seen on the British Fencing website [here](https://tinyurl.com/uzurmww). (<https://tinyurl.com/uzurmww>)



More GBR Team Support

NEW

UPGRADE YOUR SHAVE TO GEL PROTECTION



HYDRO

New and improved to give
40% less friction*

Designed like no other razor to
protect skin from irritation.

**Upgrade your
shave today.**



HYDRO

WITH ANTI-FRICTION GEL

1 LUBE STRIP



2 LUBE STRIPS



*vs. ordinary lubrication strip

Juniors

The men's event saw Matthew Abrahams (ZFW) knocked out after the first round but Cameron Evans (Fencing Academy of Westchester & ZFW), Isaac Jolley (Chichester Fencing Club) and William Lonsdale (Louth Fencing Club) made it through to the elimination stages. Evans drew and defeated Lonsdale in the round of 64 before going out himself in the next round. Jolly made the round of 16 before losing 10-9 in a priority minute to strong Dutch fencer, Giacom. Ranked fourth for the team event, Great Britain went out to 13th seed Romania in the round of 16. Victories over Turkey and Spain sandwiched defeat to Sweden, meaning the team finished eleventh. Chris Galeslout said, "In the individual event Cameron comfortably advanced from the poules but the same cannot be said for the other three. Matthew was unfortunate to go out but stayed to support his teammates despite his personal disappointment. Another unfortunate draw saw Cameron face Will and a highly competitive fight followed which Cameron edged. He was unable to get to grips with his next opponent though. Isaac impressed a lot, taking out last year's Cadet champion on his way to the round of 16. Giacom won the Junior bronze medal in 2018 but Isaac was up to the challenge throughout but eventually went out by a single point. Drawing Romania in the team event was a little unfortunate. They don't compete much on the circuit so their ranking does not reflect how good they are. Losing to them was disappointing because the draw after that looked favourable. The Turkish match was far from comfortable but we edged it. It was disappointing to lose to Sweden next as we had beaten them comfortably earlier in the season but it was good to see that the team dealt with the disappointments of the day and outperformed against Spain in their last match."



Matthew Abrahams, William Lonsdale, Isaac Jolley & Cameron Evans

In the women's event Mhairi McLaughlan (Salle Holyrood) did enough in her first round to earn a bye through the round of

64. Bronwen Granville (Bath Swords) also progressed to the elimination stages but Phoebe Newton-Hughes (Allez Fencing) and Teagan Williams-Stewart (Newham Swords) did not make the cut. Granville went out in the 64 and McLaughlan lost in the round of 32. Ranked seventh for the team event, Great Britain narrowly lost to Turkey in the round of 16. Victories over Israel and Latvia saw them finish ninth. Speaking about their performances Coach Galeslout said, "It was tough for Teagan and Phoebe to go out in the poules as this had not been an issue during their qualifying campaign and although Mhairi finished a respectable 21st, she and the others have shown throughout the season that they can win DE fights. They targeted better performances in the team event. With a point to prove the team were extremely disappointed with the loss to Turkey. With a bye through the first placing match they had time to regroup and focus on winning their remaining matches, which they did. The team fenced with good tactics in these matches and all members played a part at some point. This was a crucial part in securing the victory by either holding off strong opponents from scoring or maximizing our own score at the right moment. I was particularly impressed with their last match against Latvia. Coming from behind and winning by a reasonably comfortable margin sets them up nicely for the World Championships."



Phoebe Newton Hughes, Bronwen Granville, Teagan Williams-Stewart & Mhairi McLaughlan

SABRE

Cadets

The women's event began on the first day of the Championships as Bethany Brierley (TMFC Sabre) started the best for Great Britain by winning all of her poule matches to make the elimination stages. She was joined there by Lexie Craze (Truro) and Amy Westwell (Russell Swords) but Bea Abram-Moore (Truro) did not make the cut. Westwell and Craze were unable

to progress through the round of 64 and Brierley lost in the round of 32. In the team event, Great Britain lost to a strong Italian side in the round of 16, beat Georgia, narrowly lost to Bulgaria and then beat the Czech Republic to finish eleventh. ADP Lead Sabre Coach, Jon Salfield said, "Bethany is just 14 years old and controlled the middle 4m well, showing great discipline and maturity for her age, all of which bodes well for her and the rest of the young cadet team. Lexie, also 14 and Amy were at their first major and despite good decision making did not convert enough opportunities created by their strong tactics. Bea was disappointed, but with the right focus, she has the potential to develop her top-class physical ability as she steps up to the Junior ranks next season. With three of the four cadets having at least one more year left at this level, the patches of strong fencing shown throughout the team day do give cause for optimism for the future. Their placing of eleventh did not reflect some of the excellent fencing this youthful and dedicated team produced. Bring on next year's European Championships!"



James Williams, Beth Brierley, Bea Abram-Moore, Lexie Craze, Amy Westwell & Nikolay Dinev

In the men's event all four British fencers made the round of 64. Samuel Adam (Truro) and Ian Ho (Brentwood) were defeated in the round of 64. Max Cromie (Truro) and Rory McLellan (Salle Ossian) went out in the next round. Ranked tenth for the team event Great Britain progressed through the round of 32 with a bye before being defeated by Romania. They went on to beat Austria and Azerbaijan in the placings matches before losing to Turkey to finish tenth. Coach Salfield said, "In the individual event Rory continued to demonstrate his potential to develop into a top Junior fencer. The excellent timing and fight strategy on show in Porec will stand him in good stead as he moves up next season. Max

continued his impressive run of 15-14 wins over the last few events. His composure and his long attack have really improved this season and he'll be looking to continue that at the World Championships. Sam was the youngest member of the team attending his first major. He showed a range of good technical actions complimented by thoughtful tactics. He was a little unlucky not to go further and will take valuable experience from this event into the World Championships and then his final Cadet season. Ian was another attending his first major and has developed quickly this year. He has good composure, strong footwork and great timing and is another good prospect as he steps up to Junior level. In the team event there were glimpses of the progress this team have made. Although disappointed with the outcome, they competed strongly and show great potential for the future as they move into juniors. Rory, Max and Sam will move on to compete in Salt Lake City at the World Championships in April, with real prospects of improved results."



James Williams, Ian Ho, Max Cromie, Rory McLellan, Sam Allen & Nikolay Dinev

Juniors

In the women's event Ellen Robbins-Wilkinson (Marshall Fencing) was unable to progress through the poules along with Sophia Potter (Shakespeare Swords). Elsie Llewellyn (Sancroft Blades) and Hannah O'Reilly (Truru) did but both went out in the round of 64. In the team event ranked twelfth Great Britain lost to number 5 seeds, Turkey in the round of 16. They went on to beat Belgium before losing to Ukraine and Spain to finish twelfth. Coach Salfield said, "It was a generally disappointing individual day for our fencers. Although not happy with her performance the overall picture for Sophia has been a season of progress. She will be motivated to show her best at the World Championships. Ellen equally had shown improvements in her first Junior season but like Sophia, Championship nerves got the better of her. Her athleticism and focus need to be augmented by a wider tactical range and she has time in the Juniors to gain

the necessary experience. Elsie put in an excellent first round with four wins in a tough poule, displaying her strengths of strong timing and a consistent attack. The experience gained here will stand her in good stead in her next two Junior years as she continues to improve her tactical awareness and range of actions. Hannah had a mixed poule, doing just enough to go through to the DEs. She has shown a lot of improvements athletically and when she is feeling confident controls the middle 4m well. She will go to the Worlds aiming to improve on this result and implement the lessons learned in Porec. After a disappointing individual event there was real encouragement from the quality of some of the GB fencing on display in the team event. Although this didn't translate into the result the team wanted, a fierce effort in the round of 16 against eventual bronze medalists Turkey and a good win against Belgium in the placings matches saw GBR hold their heads high and finish in 12th. We showed better control of the middle 4m and more discipline all over the piste made the team competitive in every match and after our good win against Belgium the day finished with a tight defeat to Ukraine and a 45-44 loss to Spain. Special mentions go to Sophia and Ellen who turned around their disappointment from the individual to finish the day with positive indicators."



Elsie Llewellyn, Ellen Robins-Wilkinson, Sophia Potter & Hannah O'Reilly

In the men's event Barnaby Halliwell (Shakespeare Swords), Luke Haynes (Truro) and Julian Richards II (Leon Paul Sabre) all progressed through the poules but Alexander Le Maitre (Guernsey Fencing Academy) did not. Haynes and Halliwell both went out in the 64 and Richards II went one round further to finish in the round of 32. Ranked eighth for the team event Great Britain lost to Belgium in the round of 16. A bye through the first placings match was followed by defeat at the hands of Georgia and then victory against the Netherlands to finish eleventh. On the men's performance, Coach Salfield said,

"This was a strong squad, with Richards and Halliwell in particular producing some very strong results throughout the season. Julian continued his consistent run of form, with strong timing and parry ripostes in the middle 4m stood him in good stead as they have all season. Julian's consistency at strong World Cups has been impressive and he should go to the Worlds with his confidence high. If he is able to adapt tactics a little faster he'll be able to make further progress in Salt Lake City and be the one to watch next season. Luke was unlucky that one of his poule victories scratched. So he only just made the cut and was unable to progress. He has shown great fight throughout this year and will be working on a better long attack percentage going into the Worlds. Barnaby put in a strong poule performance but was unable to turnover a strong Italian in the 64, just missing out by two hits. A clever tactical fencer and a good mover, Barnaby nonetheless had a couple of critical misses on the long attack which were the difference between victory and defeat. His recent top 8 finish in Plovdiv has placed him well in the rankings for the World Championships and he'll also be one to watch. Alex stepped in at the last minute for this event and was unable to progress through a difficult poule. His height, timing and tidy technique were useful weapons but he was unable to capitalise on his priority enough and was over reliant on his counter attacks in defence. Alex is a fencer of great potential and with some small improvements can make a lot of progress."



Barnaby Halliwell, Julian Richards II, Alexander Le Maitre & Luke Haynes

A more detailed Cadet report can be found [here](https://tinyurl.com/vc233pz).

A more detailed Junior report can be found [here](https://tinyurl.com/r923tcc).

Since the time of writing the World Championships have been postponed.



SALLE HOLYROOD SPARRING CAMP 2020

What better place to be this summer sparring with Senior, Junior & Cadet Foil GB team members and giving you the best possible start to the season.

 St George's Girls School Edinburgh  August 3rd-7th  9.30am-4pm

 Residential options available
10% Discount till end of May

Bookings: www.salleholyrood.com

Limited places available



Would you know what to do in a real-life threatening emergency?

This eFAW course is part of your fencing coach requirement taught by a fellow fencer

Emergency First Aid at Work (eFAW) courses
Emergency Paediatric 1 day & 3-day Courses
CPR/AED courses

1-day (6 1/2 hours course) eFAW certificate valid for 3 years (£60 per student)



www.Evexiatraining.co.uk

Training@Evexiatraining.co.uk

07599 834694

WHEELCHAIR FENCING UPDATE

Coutya & Gilliver see out 2019 on top of the World

Jo Gilliver

After the highs of a brilliant set of performances at the World Championships in Korea - where Piers Gilliver became the newly crowned Cat A Epee World Champion and took a bronze medal in the sabre event to boot whilst Dimitri Coutya retained his Cat B Epee World Title and took foil silver, along with a newly formed men's team who took epee bronze - one could be forgiven for thinking that these fencers may have been coming down from such great highs



Piers Gilliver on Top of Podium in Amsterdam (Photo: Yuka Fujita)

and possibly not quite on the form that they had shown in Korea. How wrong we'd have been! Expertly managed by lead coach Peter Rome and supported via their EIS practitioners at Team Bath, these fencers came out onto the international stage ready and took more podium places!

The event was an IWAS World Cup in Amsterdam 14th-17th November 2019. The event carried qualifying points for the Tokyo2020 Paralympic Games. The first day of action saw both GB men & ladies take to the piste in varying disciplines and the results were as follows:

Every fencer has their own targets. So, as expected, there were a variety of results.

Day one got off to a flying start for Gilliver, until the eventual winner of the event,

Tian (CHN) stopped his progression by taking their semi-final 15-11. That left Piers with the bronze medal in the Cat A Sabre and despite any initial disappointment he was pleased to podium yet again in his new second weapon! Bling was definitely the order of the day when Dimitri Coutya stormed through the men's Cat B foil event to take the gold medal!

Our other fencers had a mixed day with Matt Campbell-Hill also contesting the men's Cat A sabre. He finished 23rd and Justine Moore, having not had a good poule, didn't make the cut and finished 29th.

On day two Oliver Lam-Watson & Joshua Waddell contested the men's Cat A foil. Josh won three of his poule matches and his first elimination fight but went out in the round of 32, finishing 26th. Relative newcomer Oli had a brilliant poule, winning all five of his matches and finished the day placed ninth.

Gemma Collis-McCann who fenced in the women's cat A sabre also had a good poule (V5 D1), won her round of 32 match convincingly but went out in the next round to finish 9th. Coutya returned to the piste for the men's Cat B epee, won all six of his poule fight and then won all of his D.E matches 15-8, until the final. It was an even more convincing match for him as he went on to beat Kuzyukov (RUS) 15-5 to take his second gold medal of the tournament!



Gemma Collis-McCann in Amsterdam Action (Photo: Giles Massart)

On day three Collis-McCann and Moore took to the piste for the women's Cat A & B foil, respectively. It was a difficult day for our ladies with Gemma finishing 28th & Justine 26th.

All of our Cat A men returned to the piste for the Epee event, with Lam-Watson finishing 36th, Campbell-Hill 34th, and Waddell 32nd. Gilliver also took part winning all of his six poule matches. An exciting run of elimination fights followed culminating on the finals piste. Gilliver went on to beat Shaburov (RUS) 15-9 to take the gold medal and his second podium of the event!

Our fencers finished the last day of competition in Amsterdam with a respectable 5th place in the Men's team Foil.

The next event for our selected fencers will be the IWAS World Cup in Eger 13th-16th February 2020 followed by a World Cup



Dimitri Coutya on Route to Amsterdam Gold (Photo: Yuka Fujita)

in Sao Paulo 11th-14th March and then the final event that carries Tokyo2020 Paralympic Games qualifying points for GB, will be the European Championships 26th-31st May. They are being held in the UK at Hatfield this year! I am sure that our fencers would love some support on their home ground. So please, if you're able, come along and cheer our fencers on - the more the merrier and it's a really good opportunity to see wheelchair fencing in competition mode!

A schedule will be available soon and for this and more info on the venue & full results this [link](http://www.iwasf.com/iwasf/index.cfm/sports/iwas-wheelchair-fencing/competitions/competition-calendar-20201/) is the place to start!

Editor's Note: Since the time of writing sporting events have been postponed around the World. We look forward to reporting on Wheelchair Fencing events once they recommence.

Introducing the new website



www.allstaruhlmann.com



Email sales@allstaruhlmann.com Call 01753 517 636

Visit 514 Ipswich Road, Slough, SL1 4EP

THE TRUE ATHLETE PROJECT UPDATE

Innovative Athlete-to-Athlete Mentoring Programme Proves a Hit Sam Parfitt - Founder of TAP

*"Advice is like snow; the softer it falls,
the longer it dwells upon and the deeper
it sinks into the mind." - Samuel Taylor
Coleridge*

It has been a wonderful start to The True Athlete Project's mentoring programme which matches seven of Britain's best senior fencers with seven young fencers, who were selected after an incredibly competitive application process.

Congratulations to Rachael Lever, Dylan Morrison, Phoebe Newton-Hughes, Eleanor Taylor, Harry Gray, David Williams, and James Jeal and a huge thank you to their respective mentors, Kat Smith Taylor, Will Deary, Keith Cook, Kate Beardmore, Ben Peggs, James Honeybone, and JJ Webb.

Training

The mentors are supported in being the best mentors they can be by two "mentor-liaisons" - British Olympians, Laurence Halsted and Anna Ward. Anna says, "Connecting the mentors and mentees has been an exciting process to be a part of. Each pairing demonstrated that they are fully committed to building their relationships. Furthermore, I was impressed by the levels of engagement and maturity of the mentees and how enthusiastic both mentors and mentees are to explore, learn, develop and grow together."

The programme is based around five key themes, which interact to nurture all-round personal and athletic growth:

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

Mentors have received a diverse array of training, including from TAP's Dr. Mike Johnson, who currently serves as the clinical and performance psychologist for special operations forces in the US Airforce. They will also receive a "Compassionate Communication" workshop with Brown University researcher Todd Larussi. The training helps mentors to listen deeply and employ a "coaching approach" with their mentees. Using a step-by-step method to identify "needs" underneath the often-complex feelings we experience, mentors will help mentees to create practical, actionable steps to overcome and be resilient to the challenges that life throws our way!

Mentors and mentees also experienced an excellent six-week mindfulness class, taught by Anne MacDonald, the former HR director at Decathlon and a special "Identity and Values" workshop with Laurence Halsted. The fencers are also in the process of building their "emotional intelligence for sport" profile with TAP's partner, Roche Martin.

Feedback

The athletes are fast approaching the half-way point to their year together and we have received lovely feedback from mentees about how transformational this process has already been.

Rachael Lever, an epeeist from Peterborough, says, "The True Athlete Project has helped me immensely to get through this season, especially given the fact that it is my first junior year and I had a very rough start. It has made me approach my fencing from different angles which has been a huge help in pushing through and improving. Essentially, I couldn't have had The True Athlete Project at a better point in time than I am, as it is helping when I need it the most. Kat has been an invaluable part of this, giving me so much extra advice and knowledge of the circuit. She has also not hesitated to do all of the activities



TAP Founder Sam Parfitt with Mentees Rachael Lever (left) and Eleanor Taylor (right)

THE TRUE ATHLETE PROJECT -
BRITISH FENCING
MENTORING PROGRAMME
2019/2020



7 MENTORS. 7 MENTEES.
14 TRUE ATHLETES

#TAPintoFencing #FencingInspires

alongside me despite her incredible schedule and we get along so well! It is hard to put into words how helpful this has been for me this season.”

David Williams, a foilist based at Millfield School, says, “The True Athlete Project is not a simple, quick fix that will help you immediately achieve world class performance but through its mindfulness classes, coaching and mentoring it produces a sustainable growth in performance as well as helping you to develop a peace of mind. I am sure you know how it feels when your head drives you crazy. The TAP programme helps me to become better at controlling exactly this and this reflects itself in achieving better results and coping with the pressure that comes from any high-performance sport.”

We are so proud of this group who are committed to the BF-TAP mission of demonstrating that a caring, mindful sporting environment can foster high performance. Sam Parfitt, TAP’s founder

says, “Just imagine the effect on society if all sports realized this was possible!”

What’s Next?

Look out for the July edition of The Sword, when we will be presenting a further update of the BF-TAP partnership, including our brand new TAP Speaks video series!

Finally: TAP is offering free places for members of the British Fencing community to the following webinars, delivered by Laurence Halsted. Limited spaces available – contact admin@thetrueathleteproject.org to reserve your space.

- 7-9pm, 17th May 2020: *The Importance of Love & Compassion in Sport*
- 7-9pm, 24th June 2020: *Harnessing Athlete Identity & Values*

Editor’s Note: Follow TAP on social media to find special discount codes for online workshops – www.thetrueathleteproject.org/sign-up

The True Athlete Project - We re-imagine sport as a training ground for compassion, mindfulness and mental well-being.

We deliver a variety of programmes for all sports and all levels of sport – from primary school children to Olympians.



www.clubevent.co.uk

ClubEvent

The easiest way to organise events for your Club or Team

ClubEvent enables you to manage events; competitions with hundreds of participants, regular coaching sessions, committee meetings or social evenings all at the touch of a button.

If you rely on emails or posted paper forms, ClubEvent will transform your event management!

Existing system

"I receive entries by post and email, it takes me a while to respond and it can be a pain extracting the correct information from people. I build a spreadsheet, which only I have access to, and get quite hassled as the competition approaches. It's hard to update entrants with changes, and I always forget at least one of the changes someone has asked for."

ClubEvent

"When someone enters, I get a ping on my mobile, which I love. All information is collected easily, in a format I can use. People can update their own data and send comments, which all go to one place. I can contact one person, or all entrants with a push of a button. Others that I give access to, can do all this too. When the competition approaches, I export the spreadsheet with all data on it, and I can even export the comments, so I don't miss any changes."

Running your first competition with ClubEvent is easy and you'll be amazed at the extra time you can devote to your sport, rather than administering it!

Organise your Club

- Import existing contact records
- Tag contacts; e.g. senior, junior, A team, B team
- Invite contacts to 'closed' events
- List events on your own website
- Post on Facebook, twitter or WhatsApp

Ticketed events

- Create your own ticket types
- Collect ticket information, e.g. bow type, peg, class
- Take payment by credit card, or
- Cash, cheque, bank transfer; you decide!
- Automated reminders for events

Designed for you!

- We run clubs; we want to help you run yours
- Free for small clubs; 10 active events, 20 invitees, free ticketed events
- Get serious for £44 per year
- Collect payment by credit card for another £33 per year. Payment charges 2% + 20p

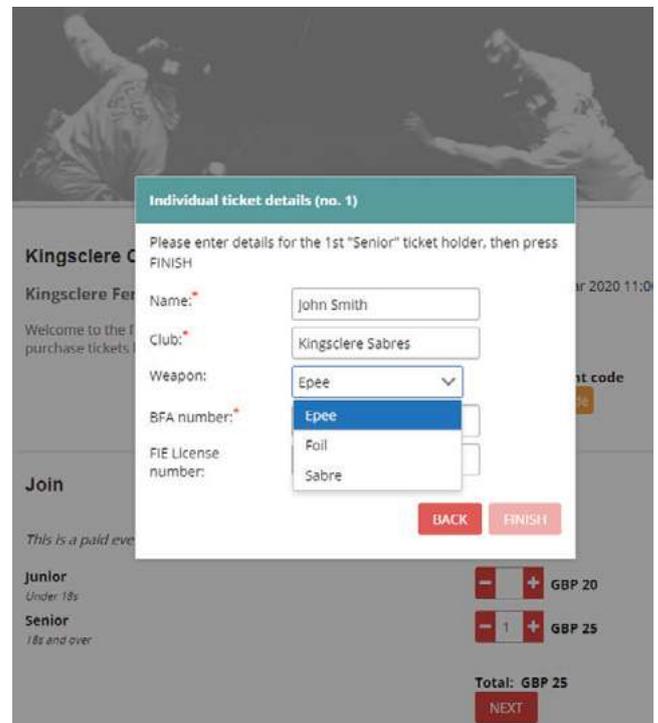


Image showing ticket purchase for an event

Sign up to our Newsletter: <https://www.clubevent.co.uk/newsletter/>

IT'S A TEAM GAME

Fencing is an Individual Sport but High Performance is a Team Game

Rob Cawdron - Projects Officer-Pathways Development

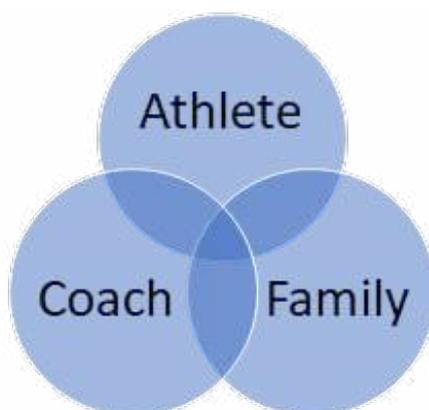
In the Leon Paul blog on 9th October 2019 Ben Paul talked about how he was inspired by a speech that Olympic silver medallist and 2015 World Champion, Yuki Ota gave. He was struck by a line from the speech saying that it wasn't enough to just do the training. In order to succeed at the top an athlete needs the whole package of support - a team.

In this sport, we get used to doing things on our own. When we compete on the piste it's one versus one, even in a team match. So it can be very easy to believe that in order to succeed at the top level in fencing we can do it on our own - we've just got to do it better. But let's for a moment look across at another sport, comparable with our own, tennis. Andy Murray is the most successful British men's tennis player of the open era. In 2016, he became the only tennis player, male or female to win two Olympic singles titles but Andy Murray is not a one-man band.

In 2015 Sky News talked about the team behind Murray's success, coaches Amelie Mauresmo and Jonas Bjorkman, his mother Judy Murray, his wife Kim Murray, fitness trainer Mark Little, physios Mark Bender and Shaun Annun, agent Matt Gentry and manager Simon Fuller. A nine-person team, with Murray at the centre leading. A high performing athlete looks less like a lone

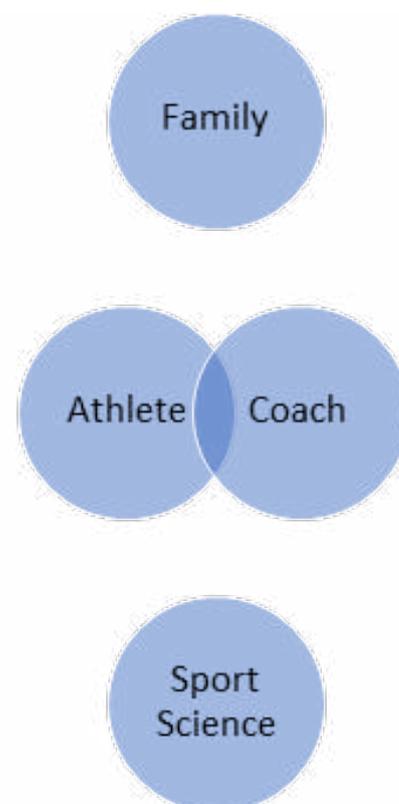
wolf, taking on the world and more like the CEO of a company, setting a direction, recruiting the right people, specifying roles and getting everyone moving in the same direction. What are the implications in this for athlete development and what are the jobs of coaches and significant others in helping?

At the start of a young athlete's journey everyone is learning. The coach, the athlete and the family make up a tight decision-making unit, with the family and the coach providing authority and guidance. The wellbeing of the athlete is at the heart of everything.

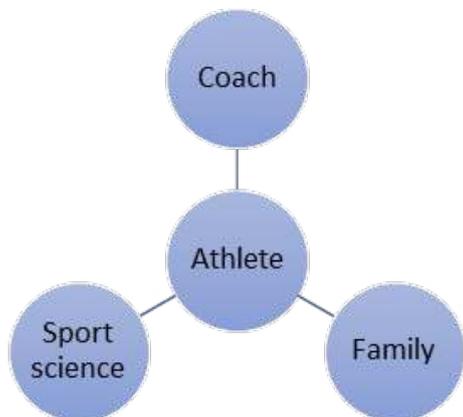


As the athlete becomes more invested and committed, the nature of the training changes, maybe sports science and medicine become a part of training. This might be accompanied by selection to an age group international squad. At this point, the relationship with the family changes. They take a step back from the front-line of decision making, continuing to offer support and guidance as needed. The coach and athlete operate as something closer to a master/apprentice, with the coach

looking to prepare the athlete to be the leader in their own training as they get older.

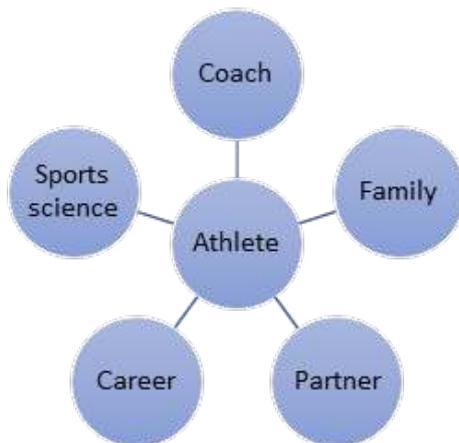


Everyone moves away from home eventually and athletes are no exception. Moving away from home, whether it be to university or elsewhere is a time of big change. This is where all the work the coach has done in the previous stages, to prepare the athlete to take control of their training begins to pay off. The athlete is now responsible for setting their own goals, managing their time and working out what they need from their training. It's a big job and can mean lots of trial and error to get the balance right. That's ok! This is a good time to try different things out, get it wrong, learn from it and try something different. The language changes here. Expect to hear less of the coach saying "We're going to work on this" and the athlete starting to say "I need to improve in this area". The athlete is now an entrepreneur, trying to set up their own business in high performance.



After years of practice, some painful experiences of getting it wrong, lots of commitment and more than a bit of luck, an athlete has the experience to achieve high performance. The athlete is now not just setting goals for themselves with the support of others. They are setting goals for the entire team and managing them as they all work towards achieving them.

Under the leadership of the athlete, the team becomes more inter-connected with all members of the team knowing what the rest of the team is responsible for and how they all fit together. With the team now showing the characteristics of a high performing team, athletic high performance is possible.



There are questions for everyone involved in developing young athletes into high performers coming out of this. What are coaches doing to give athletes the skills they need to be able to become the leaders of teams and able to take on the world? What does the training of these skills look like? What about the family? What's the right balance between giving the athletes the support they need but also allowing them to grow and develop?

The Athlete Development Team is here to help at all stages of the process. If you want to learn more, contact athletedevelopment@britishfencing.com.



RAF OPEN 2020

Hosted by the Royal Air Force Fencing Union at RAF Cosford's Wooden Gym (WV7 3EX) on...

SAT 27TH & 28TH JUNE

Entry/weapon: £25 standard or £35 late from 5JUN

Six Trophies, Men & Women's Tri-Weapon Tournament, Professional Photography, Live Streaming & Social Media Coverage, Merchandise & Retailing, Food & Beverage, Published Results & National Ranking

ALSO ATTENDING:



For more info & to enter head to SPORT80 or find us on...



MAKING IT REAL

Bringing Competition to Training

Rob Cawdron - Projects Officer-Pathways Development

For coaches working with competitive athletes, being able to translate training into competition successfully, is something of a gold standard. Coaches speak of wanting to be able to replicate the intensity, emotion and pressure of the competition environment, to make it feel real for athletes and to allow them to become used to being in that space. But how do we do it?

The first thing we need to understand is what makes fencing in a competition different to fencing in training. The key difference is that in competition the results matter and there are consequences for good and bad performances. Winning a domestic DE fight means advancing to the next round, having an opportunity to keep going in the competition, maybe fight for a medal or move up a few places on a national ranking. At international competitions, winning one extra point can be the difference between going through the poules into the DE and being cut from the competition - day over! More than that, all of this is recorded in black and white and increasingly online for everyone to see. An athlete can look at a competition and see where they placed relative to their peers, who they beat, who they were beaten by and by what scores. All of this adds up and is part of what makes that competition environment feel so different.

Once we understand this the next question is, how can we apply this to the training environment? Or how can we make our training sessions matter more and raise the stakes of the activity being done? To find out a bit more about this, we're going to leave the sport of fencing behind and take a journey across the Atlantic. Anson Dorrance of the University of North Carolina's Women's Soccer Program is a legend of American sports coaching, famous for his attitude to competition and for having possibly the most unwieldy sounding title ever, "All-time winningest coach in NCAA soccer". Dorrance describes one of the most important moments in his coaching career as being an opportunity to watch the UNC basketball coach Dean Smith run his practice. He was struck by how anything that a player did was recorded - how many shots they took, how many shots

they missed/scored, how many times they successfully dribbled round an opponent - all of this was recorded. However, it was not just recorded. It was then shown back to the players who were ranked according to their performances. Suddenly, everything that happened in training was meaningful. Suddenly everything mattered. Dorrance took this back to his women's soccer program and developed what he called the "Competitive Cauldron", where all the games that are played in training, whether it be 1v1, 5v5 or 11v11 are recorded, fed back to the players, then kept and used as a tool for players to benchmark themselves against.

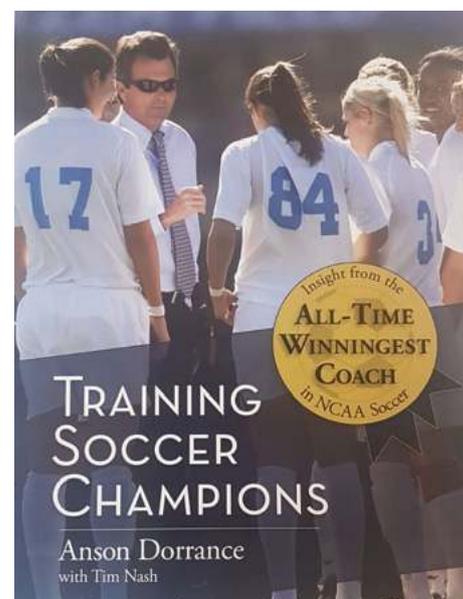
However, the tool is only as good as the way it is used. Just recording and sharing the scores is not enough and if used clumsily could undermine and demoralise athletes. So, what are the keys to using this information to inspire and motivate a positive attitude to competition? In his book "Training Soccer Champions", Dorrance goes into more detail about how the rankings are used. "The coaches don't talk about the charts too much because we don't want everything to be oppressive... We just put the charts up on the wall...The only time we talk about the charts is in player meetings and we ask them if they would like to be more competitive in that particular area. If they say they would, then it's their goal to improve. Not ours". Illustrated in this short quote is the real heart of creating that positive competitive environment. Everything is recorded and it matters but it is the athlete setting the goals and choosing how they wish to improve. Dorrance goes on to illustrate the importance of how all of this is framed with an anecdote about a former athlete. "We do a lot of one v ones here...In Carla's first year she didn't win a single game...It was a very difficult transformation for Carla to go from where she was as a freshman to what finally happened as a senior. Her senior year, she did not lose a single one v one game". The framing here is all important. The measure of success is how the athlete has improved compared to their previous self, not compared to their team-mates.

It is one of the great challenges for the competitive coach - how to foster the competitive attitude and drive but in such a way that it becomes a positive force for self-improvement.

In summary then, training can be made to matter more by beginning to record and track scores over time, not just in matches but in all kinds of training activities done. However, the role of the coach is key. The motivation to compete and to improve must come from the athlete. It can't be imposed top-down by a coach or anyone else. Also crucial is how to frame the push for improvement. As coaches we want the athlete to be measuring their success against their own previous performances, not comparing themselves to others.

What methods do you employ to help get athletes used to competing and ready for the competition environment?

Training Soccer Champions by Anson Dorrance is available from Amazon for £19.95. (<https://tinyurl.com/wxvfjev>)



LICENSE PARTNER PROGRAMME (LPP)

An Evolution

James Craig - Commercial Manager

The LPP has been 5 years in the making and includes organisations such as Centre Parcs, PGL Travel Ltd, Kingswood Inspiring Learning, Premier Sport and Little Musketeers. From 2016 to 2019 the LPP was a process that British Fencing (BF) took an organisation through, allowing them to deliver a format of the Core Coach programme that could only be used inside their organisation.

In 2019 the LPP was expanded to allow organisations to work with BF in two different ways, so we could contract out certain BF rights, add-on products and/or services. One new version was licensing an organisation to deliver BF's newly developed Primary School Resource Pack (PSRP), which is a product designed to complement our existing MiniSword and Go/Fence Achievement Awards.



The PSRP includes 36 lessons that are Ofsted aligned and address a primary school's challenge of building or exploring a young person's resilience and self-efficacy (and the notion of sporty versus non-sporty). It is clear to BF that one consistent and unique selling point of fencing is that it is a leveller and each student can experience success immediately due to the variability of results that you find in

fencing. It also has the appeal of holding a sword which engages the whole class immediately. For example, a student may have poorer physical literacy but when put against a student who has good physical literacy, they can still land a hit or defend themselves, as the gross motor function to wave one's arm is almost innate when an object comes flying at you at speed. The PSRP has been market-tested in over 30 schools, over two years, with 1,000+ pupils and multiple positive testimonials.

The second new variation of the LPP is to provide the rights and association of British Fencing to an organisation so they can be recognised as an 'Official Training Partner'. This designation means that they will have gone through up to 5 days of training enabling them to deliver a one-day Core Coach course to teachers, deliver the PSRP and upskill their own staff internally. Teachers trained up can deliver fun have-a-go fencing experiences to their pupils as our Core Coach resource includes example games.

In 2019 BF had its first two Official Training Partners sign up. First was Crown Hills Community College, who are a large secondary school in Leicester. They have committed to a 5-year partnership with us and have big ambitions for fencing, believing an effective partnership working with BF will help them deliver upon their school's values of aspiration, success and



Photo Courtesy of Crown Hills

commitment. The delivery initially will focus on the city of Leicester and their feeder primary schools. Crown Hills have also dedicated a Monday morning for up to 12-16 of their gifted and talented students, which is an additional investment they have made. Chris Buxton (Head Coach at King Edwards School in Stratford-Upon-Avon) is leading the coaching on Monday within curriculum time and leading an early morning clinic.

The second partner was LudoSport UK who signed a 3-year partnership that will enable them to respond to a school's swordplay need. LudoSport UK is a franchisee of LudoSport International, a light sabre organisation that operates in ten countries internationally. LudoSport hosts the World Championships for light sabre, considered to be the largest competition of its kind. LudoSport UK already provide light sabre experiences and through BF can now deliver the PSRP within Gloucestershire and the City of Bristol.



Onboarding organisations to deliver the PSRP is an investment of time and resources from the organisation and BF. BF will initially focus on working with a limited number of organisations ensuring we have aligned values and objectives and retain the internal capacity to adapt and respond to the needs and challenges as we grow the delivery network together. The PSRP is designed as a commercial proposition with quality assurance visits, training and equipment all forming part of the license arrangement, currently aimed at delivery organisations with a capability and network to deliver to 10 or more schools. For more information on becoming a PRSP delivery partner please contact james.craig@britishfencing.com.

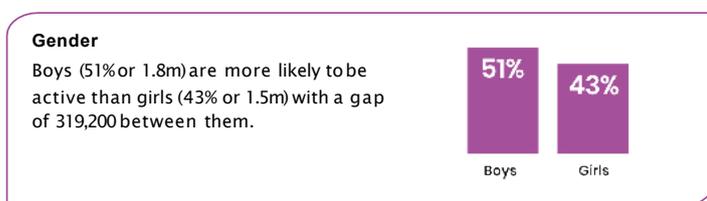
FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN SPORT

How to Increase Female Participation

For over 10 years the Sports sector has consistently identified females as an underrepresented group and a target group. A change has started to take place with more profile given to women's sport and campaigns such as "This Girl Can".

The "This Girl Can" research shows there are a mix of practical and emotional pressures stopping many women from being as active as they would like.

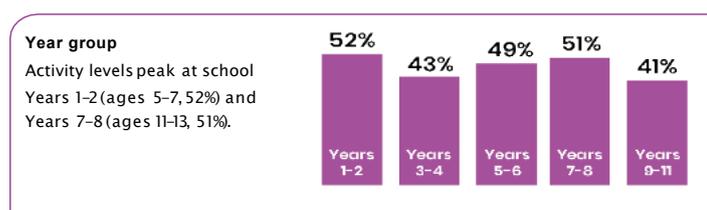
Young females (10-17 years old) perceive more barriers to being active than young males. A large proportion of young females want to do more activity. In fact, 71 per cent of young females (10-17 years old) want to be more physically active.



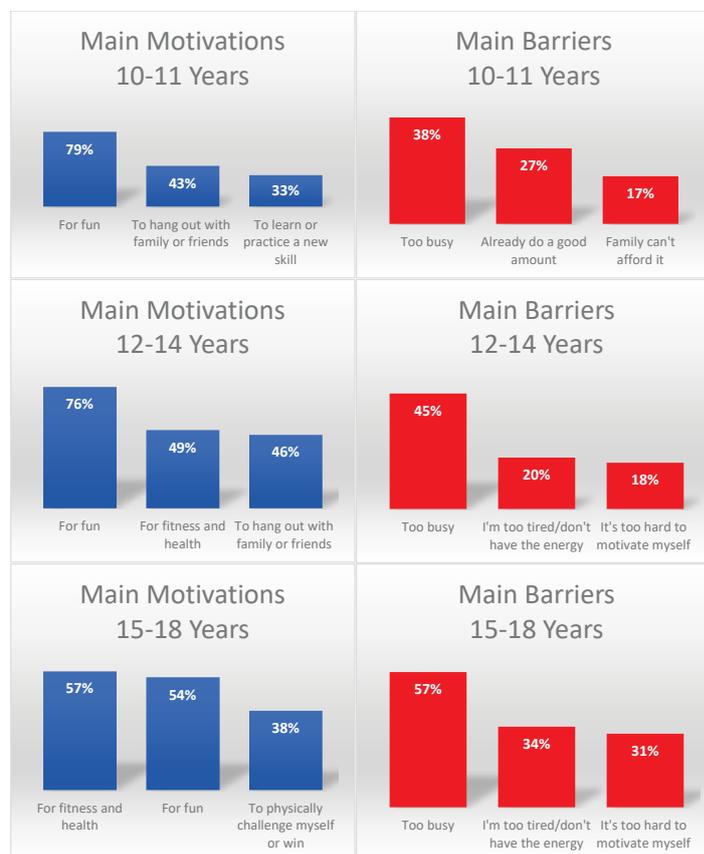
Girls and young women include many diverse individuals with different and evolving needs and different activity levels.



Different groups of young females participate in different ways. Females in their teenage years are significantly less active. Within the sector they quite often change their activity profiles and preference as they get older.



Motivation and Barriers



To build on these developments, retention in sport is key to creating growth. It is essential that the needs of girls and young women are understood, so high quality experiences and opportunities can be provided that help in the development of their skills and confidence contributing to a lifelong love of fencing and retention in sport. Fencing has a unique set up with a thriving veteran circuit which provides the opportunity to maintain participation when other sports have a natural drop off.

In reviewing a range of quantitative and qualitative research themes have emerged regarding what girls and young women are telling us are their motivators, influencers or barriers to participating in sport.

"I want to have fun and socialise."

The opportunity to have fun and socialise with friends and family while participating in fencing is a primary motivator for girls and young women. As well as being a motivator the influence of friends can also be a barrier to participation. Some girls and young women see sport as taking time away from socialising and drop out because their friends do. As a result, they feel they have no one to take part in fencing with.

While the number of young women who identify “fun” as their primary motivator for taking part is maintained between the ages of 10–14, it declines in the secondary school years and studies show that “fun” is still important because young women are more likely to participate if they perceive activities as fun.

Reflective Questions:

1. How might you adapt your sessions to increase connections in your groups?
2. How might you co-design activities to ensure that you understand what “fun” means to the fencers and that what is on offer is fun?

“I want to feel safe to participate. I don’t want to feel judged.”

Young women become more conscious of their bodies, their ability and the opinions of others in their teenage years and this often affects their desire to participate.

Research has shown that fear of being judged by others, particularly peers, underpins many of the barriers that girls and young women identify in their sport and fencing experiences.

At primary school the way judgement manifests itself has been shown to be a barrier. Whereas in secondary school, teasing and not being picked for teams in secondary schools becomes a factor. Judgement becomes more internalised or subtle. Young women reported feeling more self-conscious about not being good enough or about how they looked.

Fear of judgement relates to a number of factors. Appearance and ability are two key factors.

Many young women report that they don’t like others seeing their body while they are exercising. They also feel shy exposing their body due to sport clothing requirements. They feel they might be judged for being overweight or underweight.

Girls and young women want to be able to participate at a level that suits their ability.

What young women think counts as sport is their perceived ability at that activity and the potential to embarrass themselves in front of their peers. As a result, the perceived lack of ability can influence their desire to take part.

Reflective Question:

1. How might you create a supportive and welcoming environment where girls and young women can feel confident and safe to participate?
2. How may you explore confidence, failure and judgements to understand their concerns?

“I want to feel confident doing what I’m doing.”

The organised and competitive nature of traditional sport can be highly influential in shaping girls’ and young women’s perceptions of sport. This factor becomes more influential when sport becomes an activity they have to compete in, be measured and meet standards – and some young women thrive in this setting. They love the physical challenge and to win. For some it is no longer for fun and they can become anxious.

Anxiety can be linked to multiple concerns including:

- not feeling or being as good as other people and not knowing what to do when others already have well-developed skills
- looking like the odd one out or being different
- not wanting to let others down
- fear of being last or left behind

Providing girls and young women with the opportunity to challenge themselves at a level that suits their ability is important. For some this will be in the traditional fencing context at the appropriate level and for others it will be without the rules, routine and pressures of competitive fencing.

Reflective Questions:

1. How might you structure a session so participants at different levels are challenged but can still achieve?
2. Have you considered how you might provide opportunities for those interested in the pathway to compete, extend and challenge themselves?

“I want activities to fit around my other commitments.”

Girls and young women don’t participate in sport and fencing in isolation. They do so alongside multiple other commitments and interests – and this can be a barrier to participation.

Finding time to be active around school commitments, paid work, family responsibilities socialising with friends and other commitments can be a challenge. In a qualitative study of young women, sport was noted to be a time-consuming activity particularly when involved at a competitive level.

Many young women wanted to participate but didn’t have the time and imagined they would return to physical activity once they had finished secondary school. However, data suggests that once individuals drop out numbers never return to previous rates. So, retention strategies are a key determinate.

Reflective Questions:

1. How might you support girls and young women to stay engaged during life transitions, for example moving to secondary school, examination times or the change of seasons?
2. How might you encourage young people to design and deliver experiences themselves to help keep up with changing needs and time commitments?

Some Top Tips

- Use Insights – ongoing evaluation and continuous feedback to enable improvement and ensure the activity continues to meet the fencers’ needs
- Locally Led – encourage partnerships and collaboration across schools, clubs, coaches and other organisations
- Physical Literacy Counts – encourages fencers to value and take responsibility for being physically active

In summary, female sport participation is based on a number of factors which differ between individuals. A greater understanding of their personal, social and environmental needs and constraints is required to maintain engagement in sport and physical activity.

With this in mind how will you adapt and change your delivery to meet their needs and wants of those taking part?

SPOTLIGHT ON SUPPORTERS

The Importance of Volunteers

Hannah Gavin - British Fencing Development Officer (Clubs & Regions)

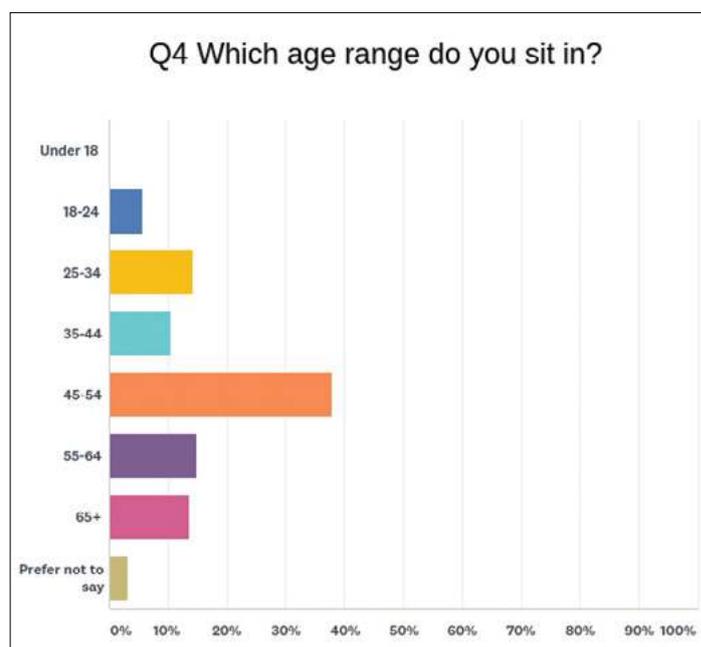
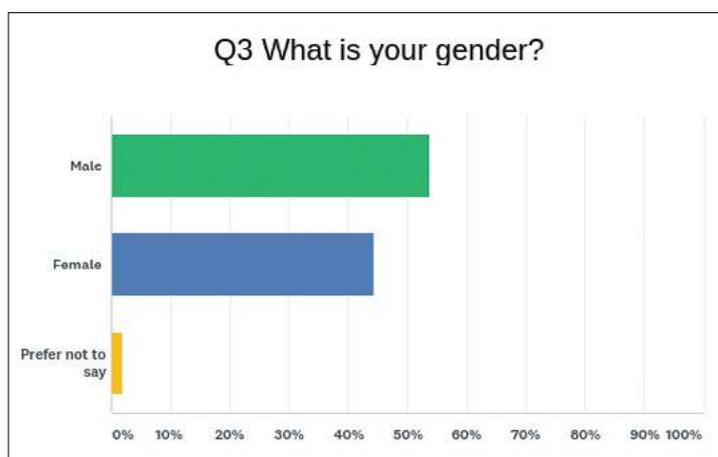
Reflecting on the summer of sport in 2019 brings flashes of exciting times. The Lioness' taking charge at the Football World Cup in France and the Roses' being equally dominant in the Netball World Cup a little closer to home. There was also a brilliant weekend in June that not only had the eyes of the world on Wimbledon but also Lord's where England's men had an historic and quite frankly nail-biting win against New Zealand to take the World Cup title. We were also more importantly treated to our own slice of sporting success from Marcus Mepstead in Budapest at the World Championships in July.

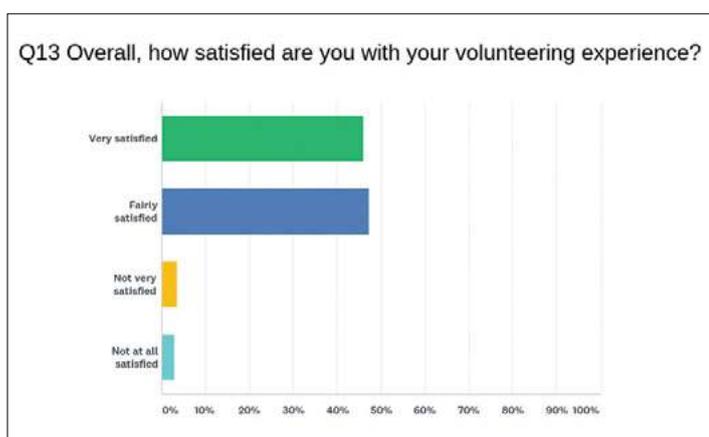
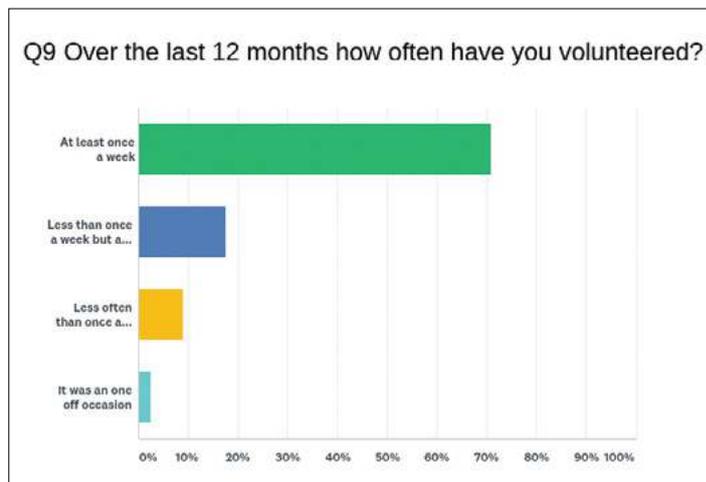
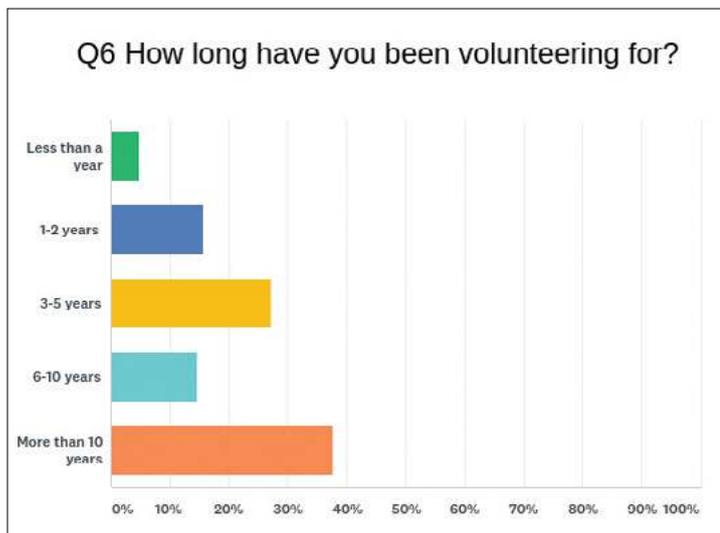
It seems like 2019 was a year not only for the success stories but for the supporters. Fans of sport have definitely been reaping the benefits of their commitment and have been treated to excellent and diverse displays of sporting prowess at these so called 'mega-events'. Credit, of course, goes to the athletes, coaches and staff that make all this possible but we must not forget that the lifeblood of these events is undoubtedly the volunteers.

A little further down the participation pathway it is easy to see that volunteers are also the backbone of any sport's grass roots. In fencing they are our coaches, competition organisers, armourers and committee members amongst considerably more. Without them many of us simply would not be able to do what we enjoy. It is no secret that sporting bodies are constantly trying to understand and develop what they can do to help and support volunteers better. Volunteers' Week at the start of June 2019 gave British Fencing the chance to show a small glimpse of what our fencing volunteers do. Since then we have run our volunteer's survey which was aimed at getting to know the community better. The survey was designed to give a space to anyone who gives up their time to help participants and members get involved. It doesn't matter if it is once a week or once a year - every experience matters. We also wanted to understand the motivations behind why people volunteer. According to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) one of the key reasons people volunteer is to give something back to an organisation that has impacted on a person's life, either directly or indirectly. Others want to have a vehicle which allows them to spend quality time away from work or a busy lifestyle.

Following the completion of the survey we have been working with the NCVO to unpick and understand our results. It was fantastic to see how enthusiastically the survey was taken in and a pleasing number of responses were received that are providing us with some excellent insight into our supporter community.

The survey in numbers;





What's next?

The importance of volunteers of course we know and there is ample information around recruiting, rewarding and retaining them in the volunteer zone on our website; notably The Sport and Recreational Alliance and the NCVO. More recently we have been working with the NCVO, one of the leading bodies on volunteering, to refresh and improve how we look at our volunteering culture.

This has pushed us to uncover a more in-depth view at the range of roles that fencing requires and has helped us to understand further what is required of those roles. From this, it is hoped that a clearer outline of the responsibilities between both volunteers and British Fencing will become apparent and will also potentially highlight

areas that could be handled more efficiently. From a club and regional development point of view, the work we are doing now will hopefully also provide a framework that can better help clubs in their own recruitment and training of volunteers, specifically for fencing and a fencing club's demands.

Supporter memberships

Did you know that British Fencing also has a Supporter Membership, specially designed for those who do not compete or fence recreationally but are active in their fencing community? The membership is available to everyone, not only volunteers but parents, coaches and fans as well. Benefits include reduced price training, public liability and access to specific accreditation for major events. Find out more about our memberships [here](https://tinyurl.com/vpw6aw6). (<https://tinyurl.com/vpw6aw6>)

Do you have any volunteer stories you would like to share? We are always keen to shout about what our community does. Please send anything you are doing to us [here](mailto:hannah.gavin@britishfencing.com). (hannah.gavin@britishfencing.com)

Equally, do have any thoughts or comments on the article? If so, please send them via [e-mail \(hannah.gavin@britishfencing.com\)](mailto:hannah.gavin@britishfencing.com)

Do you have a regional/club story you want to share?

Submit your stories to the editor:

karim.bashir@catchsport.com

FENCING IN ST LUCIA

British Fencing Partners With Sacred Sports Foundation

Rob Bruniges

After an eleven hour flight, I arrived in St. Lucia. The sun was shining and the Caribbean breeze soon blew the cobwebs of the flight away.

I was met by Nova Alexander, Executive Director of Sacred Sports Foundation (SSF). SSF is a charity that provides a range of educational and sporting opportunities for at-risk children in St. Lucia and St. Vincent. Activity leaders and staff are often recruited from amongst the young people who have previously taken part in the program, as well as young unemployed islanders between the ages of 22 and 25. SSF's philosophy of study and self-improvement is central to what they do, building confidence and improving a wide range of personal skills, helping them to realise their potential and the role they can play in inspiring and positively influencing other young people from the communities they live in.



Students from Sacred Sports Foundation

With no fencing federation in St. Lucia to turn to for support and SSF keen to introduce fencing into their offer, they approached BF earlier this year to explore ways of sharing best practice and working together. This was also a great opportunity for BF to learn from a small but impactful organisation with years of experience and success in working in the sport for social change space. Following a number of initial

conversations driven by a shared passion around the positive impact that fencing can have on young people's lives, an adaptive and engaging coaching framework was developed. BF then approached me to be involved. With no federation, clubs or coaches but a passion and drive to establish all of this and more, I was very honoured to be asked to be part of this.

Once acclimatised and settled in, our journey to turn a group of young sports coaches into fencing coaches began. With no prior fencing experience from any of the candidates, I started their fencing journey by giving them the opportunity to learn to fence over two days, with all of them progressing through their BF grade 1 foil award. What impressed me the most was the support they offered each other throughout and despite my demanding near perfect execution of all the moves they all passed with flying colours. The whole group was highly engaged and their previous coaching experience really showed. One of the candidates even asked where the nearest club to Peckham was so they could attend a club whilst visiting family in London! SSF's philosophy of study and self-improvement was evident through their learning styles and engagement in the fencing and the coaching course.

Despite the lack of some resources their motivation and enthusiasm for education and self-improvement was amazing. Quite often I couldn't understand what was being said by some of the candidates as they often spoke in their local dialect but I could see from their responses that they were getting the content across and their creativity and sense of humour was evident in everything that they did - 'Grandma's Footsteps' was turned into 'What's the time Mr. Rasta Man'.

Part way through the trip we touched base with the team at BF back in the UK, sharing learnings and possible future opportunities

to collaborate together and there was a genuine feeling of commitment from all sides to continue the conversations, share learnings and develop the team of coaches in St. Lucia further.

Over my two weeks in St. Lucia I worked with groups from the north and south of the island, some needing more encouragement than others to build their confidence but once they did, I found them really engaging and thinking creatively. For example one of the girls decided to teach foot work by putting it into a song, which I must admit almost had me in tears. When it came to the end of all the training I felt so overwhelmed I was actually in tears. I didn't realize it would affect me quite so much but I'm so proud of all of them, what they've achieved and I'll really miss them until the next time we visit. We are already planning our next trip and SSF have secured funding to deliver a programme called 'Breaking Barriers' which is a basic fencing and self-empowerment programme targeting both St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, tackling gender-based violence and stereotypes through building female self-confidence and empowerment.

British Fencing thanks Rob Bruniges for his enthusiastic commitment to this project.



Rob Bruniges in St. Lucia



Group of Youngsters from the Island



Sacred Sports Foundation Inc is 😁 feeling fantastic at Vieux-
Fort, St. Lucia.

24 June · 🌐

Cannot thank British Fencing and 3 time Olympian and fencing coach Robert Bruniges (fencer) enough, for partnering with us to help our sport for development aims in bringing the sport of fencing to St. Lucia. This week we are in the South, next week the North. #partnershipsforgeals #youthdevelopment #ssfmentorsrock



Great Response from SSF about the Course

THE EPÉE CLUB UPDATE

The “Call to Arms” Answered

Lawrence Burr OBE - Vice President



THE SWORD
Round Up

Avid readers of *The Sword* will recall two articles published in 2017 outlining not only how the Epée Club was formed and describing its present responsibilities towards advancing the disciplines of the *épée de combat* in the modern world but also how it was prepared to support British Fencing to bring épée out of the financial desert following the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games. The previous Chair of British Fencing, David Teasdale, had spoken in 2016 of the limited opportunities available to National Sporting Bodies to support disciplines that did not meet the performance criteria set by UK Sport and the hard decisions that the British Fencing Board had had to make when deciding which weapon disciplines they were to concentrate upon in the absence of major sponsors. Inevitably, épéeists found themselves with a difficult path to tread in order to deliver World Class performances in a weapon that was more popular than ever around the world and one in which more and more countries were participating.

The Epée Club had therefore issued its “Call to Arms” in 2017 for all épéeists and their supporters throughout the UK. It aimed to improve the opportunities open to our épéeists and their coaches in the clubs and training salles throughout the UK and provide a fighting fund to ensure that our épée teams could compete overseas, gain the necessary international experience, train together and allow coaches to be with the GB teams at all levels when competing.

Their first step was to establish **The Epée Club Charitable Fund** with money from the existing private members of The Epée Club, to register the fund as a Charitable Instrument so as to benefit from Gift Aid and then to pass out the word to all parties interested in the promotion of épée to see whether they would be prepared to help financially. This methodology had the advantage that The Epée Club Charitable Fund would be separate from British Fencing [which has its own Charitable Fund] and would allow its Trustees to concentrate solely upon épéeists.

The next step was the creation of a **British Epée Development Committee** to oversee how these funds were to be administered

and what targets they should be aiming towards. The committee comprised of members of the Epée Club, the Charity Trustees, the BF Epée Coordinator and the BF Epée coach. Together, they developed a 5-year plan to place GB épéeists back on the international circuit. The plan was to subsidise training sessions for the Senior and Junior épée teams using ADP coaches, paying for World Cup team entries, ensuring the presence of a team coach at such competitions and encouraging entry to European competitions that were easily accessible from the UK.

At the same time, a new **Epée Club Charitable Fund** website was launched to give full transparency over the funds being made available. Have a look at it on here. (<https://www.epeeclubcharity.org.uk/>)

We were delighted when British Fencing then recognised The Epée Club as an accredited **Supporter of British Fencing** under their Partner banner together with a dedicated page about the Epée Club on the BF website. Even better, was having Sophie DeVooght, the Media and Communications Officer, heralding our positive results across the BF social media platforms as they happened.

All GB épéeists competing in World Cup Teams now also wear the Epée Club logo on their clothing and their team captains send back competition results and a review of what they have achieved. A good example was from Paul Sanchez Lethem after Heidenheim in January this year who only narrowly missed beating Japan 45/38 – they are currently 5th in the World rankings. Paul said, “The support from the Epée Club in these difficult early days has made our resolve and commitment to the sport of fencing and the Men’s Epée Team stronger than ever!”

In line with the **Epée Club Charitable Fund’s** aims, the Trustees were delighted to announce in early December 2019 the provision of a budget of £15,000.00 for épéeists in the 2020 season. The announcement across the BF Website included the following;

“It is therefore with great pleasure that the Trustees can now announce the sum

of £15,000.00 has been allocated for 2020 to support a range of initiatives including the provision of ADP coaches to travel with Cadet and Junior teams, team entries for Senior World Cups, squad training sessions with high quality épée coaches and an épée coach development course in the Spring of 2020.”

Those training sessions at both Brixton Fencing Club and the Lansdowne Club and ably organised by Marie-Pauline Mackinnon and Paul Sanchez Latham have already provided a much needed boost in confidence for our GB épéeists. Linking these with the knowledge that their World Cup entries are being covered and having coaches provided through this funding, has shown that our teams can now compete on a more level playing field (or piste!) with their international counterparts.

All of this would, of course, not be possible without the incredible generosity of our donors to the **Epée Club Charitable Fund** who have faith in the abilities of our young GB athletes to achieve podium success in this highly competitive field. These donors – many of whom remain anonymous – have answered this “Call to Arms” and allowed the Fund to look forward to a bright future for GB épée. Nevertheless, there will always be a need to maintain this financial support beyond the five-year plan to the next Olympic round where our aim is to see one or more GB épéeists qualify in their own right. An aim that is both achievable and worth investment. They deserve the support of every épéeist in the country and their supporters.

You can be a part of all of the above! If you would like to donate to the **Epée Club Charitable Fund** please go to www.epeeclubcharity.org.uk under “How to support us”. All donations are used exclusively for the promotion of épée without any overhead administration and staff costs.

Speaking about the Fund, British Fencing’s CEO, Georgina Usher said, “On behalf of BF I would like to thank the Epée Club and its



Heidenheim Men's Epée Team Supported by the Epée Club Fund - Elliott Grover, Paul Sanchez Lethem & Phil Marsh. (Photo: #BizziTeam)

members for all the support that it has shown over the last few years.”

“Working with the Epée Club we together identified a number of areas for the Epée Club Charity to support as part of our wider programmes to develop our athletes and coaches.”

“The costs of sending athletes and teams to compete for GBR in pursuit of Olympic qualification continues to rise every cycle. Ability to self-fund is often restricted by the significant number of training hours required to perform at World class level. Whilst fencing is extremely fortunate to receive public funding for some aspects of our Athlete Development Programme, the reality is that many of our elite athletes struggle with the financial burden that comes with competing for GBR on the FIE circuit.”

“We cannot then begin to underestimate how important it is for the future of our sport and the Olympic ambitions of our athletes that we continue to receive support from patrons, sponsors and charities, such as the Epée Club Charity.”

“In closing I would like to thank every individual that has contributed to the Charity and in doing so supported the future of GBR Epée fencing.”

BRITISH FENCING IMAGE OF THE YEAR 2019

Congratulations to the Winners and Everyone that enter

Sophie DeVooght - Media & Communications Officer

Fencing images from all over the UK and beyond were entered into three categories of 'Fencing Fun', 'Inspiration' and 'Teamwork' at the end of 2019. After scrutinising the images, the final category shortlists and winners were decided by a panel of judges. Images were submitted via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag #BFImage2019.

Guest judge and winner of the 2018 competition, Millie Brodie, received a Nikon School UK workshop voucher as grand prize and has since become an ambassador for British Fencing, introducing her love

of the sport to new fencers and young women. She said after winning, “I've only been fencing for two years but it's become a huge passion and if I can do anything to help encourage people to try the sport, I'm definitely up for that.” Millie went on to attend the Nikon School UK workshop where she captured fencers in action at the Leon Paul Fencing Centre, “I had a really fun day, and learnt a few new skills too!”

Curtis Miller, GBR sabreur and guest judge, recently discovered a passion for photography. “At the end of last year I started to do a bit of photography.” He explained. He takes inspiration from his travels on the Olympic qualification journey for Tokyo 2020. “It's great to be outdoors, you don't have to spend much. You can go to nice locations, find a nice spot and try and be as creative as possible.”

Do you have a winning photograph? British Fencing Image of the Year is now in its second year and is growing in popularity with photographers and fencers alike. Entries for the 2020 competition will open later in the year.

Category Winner: Teamwork
David Barbour



"The photo was taken at the Foundation for Scottish Fencing's Tri-Weapon cup, a three-weapon team event with a foilist, epeeist and sabreur in each team. I could have chosen any photo from the Tri-Weapon Cup, the camaraderie within all the teams was heart-warming. I was walking behind my son Rhys Barbour, with teammates Rory McLellan and his older brother Sam McLellan when they were saluting the opposing team. Rhys and Rory have been thick as thieves since they met competing abroad with the Scotland team with U13s and as Rhys is a foilist and Rory a sabreur they never get the chance to compete together, with the exception of team events like the Tri-Weapon Cup. The opportunity arose at the right time just as I was passing behind them to take the photo. It just captured a moment in time with close friends and siblings competing together and is one of my favourite photos. Believe it or not although two of the team are sabreurs, they are the current Tri-Weapon Cup holders. Seeing Sam McLellan (a sabreur) doing epee is a sight to behold!"

Category Winner: Inspiration
Graham Hales



"I have been into photography for over 30 years and love taking sport and action photographs. I was at the Leon Paul

Fencing Centre to photograph fencing sport action pictures with Nikon School when I heard about the competition. I captured Curtis in this great atmosphere with the lighting and I thought this would be a fine picture to enter as it caught some of the essence of this sportsman."

Category Winner: Fencing Fun
Leon Paul Fencing Club



Overall Winner:
Hanene Basson



"I'm a veteran foil fencer. I started a little over 2 years ago so attend the competitions and have lots of time to take photos of other fencers. This photo was taken at the Wellington Open 2019. Both John Dawkins (Veteran) and Jorge Waterfield (Cadet) are such good and agile fencers. They have very interesting fencing moves and are good subjects for photos.

Their different age groups, as well as different fencing techniques really fit in with the theme, "Be you. Be different!"

The category winners will receive prizes including PermaJet's award-winning Photo Lustre 310 paper and products from Pulseroll, one of British Fencing's Official Suppliers.

The overall winning photographer will receive a grand prize including a £149 voucher valid for Nikon School UK photography workshops.

The overall winning image will also be printed by PermaJet, a new supporter of the competition for 2019-2020.

With thanks to the judges:

Neil Freeman from Nikon School UK
Jon Willis, British Fencing Personality of the Year 2018
Curtis Miller, GB Men's sabre fencer
Millie Brodie, Winner of the 2018 competition

The competition was supported by:

Nikon School UK
Pulseroll, Official Supplier
PermaJet

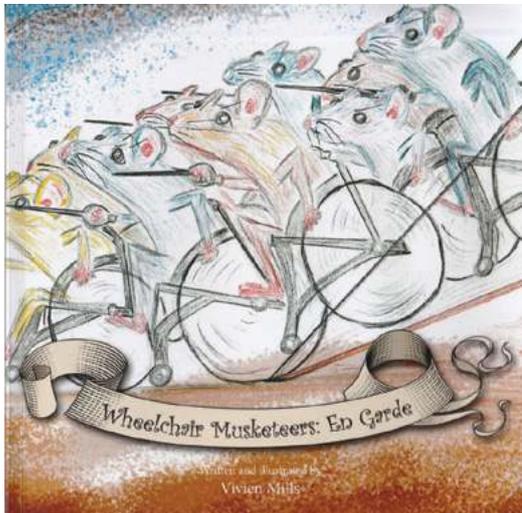
Are you interested in fencing photography? If you always capture the action at your club, or have experience in event photography, you're welcome to volunteer at British Fencing events. Please contact eventsadmin@britishfencing.com

BOOK REVIEW

WHEELCHAIR MUSKETEERS: EN GARDE

Written and Illustrated by Vivien Mills

Lawrence Burr OBE



It is not very often that one gets the opportunity to review a children's book and especially one that involves fencing. So when Vivien Mills, current Secretary to the British Disability Fencing Association Board, sent us an illustrated paperback, I really needed to get some extra help. So step forward Lucy, my 9 year old granddaughter with an all consuming reading habit whose mission - which she choose to accept - was to give me an honest appraisal of the "Wheelchair Musketeers: En garde".

After a week, I was poised ready to write down her words of wisdom. "Confusing" was her answer to my first question as to how she enjoyed reading it. "I liked the drawings" was her second response to the layout of the book. "Can you tell me what a Balestra is?" came as I was trying to explain to her that the mice were all given names that we used when being taught to fence. After demonstrating what I thought was a perfectly executed Balestra on the kitchen floor and, once she had stopped laughing, she looked at me very quizzically and said, "so all the mice became fencers - but in wheelchairs?" Nicely summed up I thought and then let her return to the world of Harry Potter once more.

So, yes - it is a story about mice who fence but in wheelchairs and who are given the honour of being Musketeers (why not "Mouseketeers", my wife added helpfully?) to protect the Kingdom of Mouseland against the evil rats. There are shades of Beatrix Potter here alongside allegories and maps from Tolkien (although Dumas may not have been amused), all supported by strong positive messages that disability does not define the person (or mouse). An adventure story that is woven through with fencing terms - each new mouse character is given a fencing move as their name in the ranks (e.g. Prime, Seconde, Tierce, Forte, Allez etc). Every mouse has been faced with a differing injury that has led him/her to be braver and more resolute in the face of adversity and this leads them all to find companionship and encouragement with one and other in the final chapters. Viv has explained that all the mice are, in fact, taken from real characters in the world of the BDFA - it is up to the adult reader to fit faces and names to the whiskers on the mice!

As Viv Mills explains on the cover, the origins of the book go back to the time after the 2012 London Olympics when funding for Wheelchair Fencing was withdrawn by UK Sport, a move which devastated many of the talented and professional fencers at the time. As an income generator for future competitions, Jo Gilliver, the mother of our World Champion and silver Olympic medallist Piers Gilliver, showed Viv a photo of a mouse in fencing kit sitting in a wheelchair that she had made as a good luck mascot. This sparked the idea of a children's book and so, five years on, here it is.

There are inevitable difficulties in writing such a detailed adventure story with its twists and turns whilst keeping the attention of the young reader. The illustrations are beautiful but there are times when the 6-line stanza rhyming verses become somewhat challenging - in some instances reading like something from the pen of William McGonagall - and children would certainly need the help of an adult in picking up the rhythm. Good for a bedtime story though and in particular for those children who are facing life challenges of their own.

Personally, I would like to have seen mention of the British Disabled Fencing Association and not just British Fencing in the potted history of fencing at the end; keen eyed readers will note the website of The Sabre Trust displayed on the back cover which supports disabled fencers with grants - such an inspiring organisation.

So, all in all, an engaging adventure tale(tail?) upon which I will let the King of Mouseland have the final say;

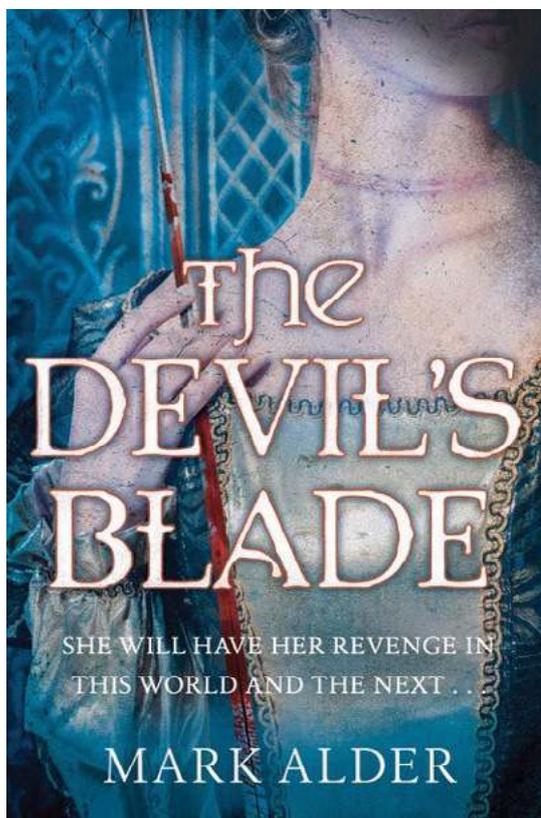
"The moral of this final tail
Take care of youngsters and the frail.
Be strong in the face of adversity,
Caring honest and you will see
With friendship, truth and loyalty
You'll build a fair society."

Available through Amazon Books priced £7.00. All proceeds go to support the British Disabled Fencing Association.

BOOK REVIEW

THE DEVIL'S BLADE by Mark Alder

Lawrence Burr OBE



I love a good romping novel, particularly when it involves a bit of saucy Sword and Sorcery - a genre that has come into particular prominence of late. So, here we have a new addition to the plethora of such volumes, made all the more interesting as it spins a tale around a well-known colourful historical character from the 17th century - the infamous Julie d'Aubigny otherwise known as La Maupin, a French bisexual opera singing sword fighter who lived and loved her way around the court of Louis XIV - the Sun King.

Her intriguing life has been the subject of much conjecture over the years with tales of how she killed ten men in duels, wore men's clothes, was the lover and protégée of the great fencing master Séranne, had to be pardoned twice by the King for duelling and was the darling of the Paris Opéra. She also embarked on numerous same-sex love affairs, finally ending broken hearted after the death of Madame la Marquise de Florensac and dying two years later in a convent. She was immortalised in an 1835 novel "Mademoiselle de Maupin" by Theophile Gautier, in a more modern novel "Goddess" by Kelly Gardiner in 2014 and vividly researched by our own Richard Cohen in his book "By The Sword".

So what does Mark Alder's 365 page tome add to the story of this remarkable woman? Frankly - not that much, as Mark has chosen to take Julie d'Aubigny along the supernatural path conjecturing how she makes a pact with the Devil to help her take revenge on the ten members of a Devil-worshipping aristocratic sect who had killed her lover and ruined her chances of singing at the Opera. So, in return for delivering the souls of each man to a somewhat garrulous and effeminate Devil, Julie is given fencing lessons by him/her/it - one soul for each lesson. I must admit that I have had a variety of fencing coaches over the years but none really compare to this Devil's method of instruction - "his blade is a pen writing a calligraphy of

threat in the night air in front of her. It dances, bobs, thrusts, withdraws, menaces, demurs, boasts, offers, denies, and her own blade is bewildered." If this is the sort of fencing at the Brighton Fencing Club where Mark Alder (aka Mark Barrowcliffe) trains, then this is the club for you!

The plot is long and somewhat tortuous with each of the ten members of the Trédicim being finally dispatched by Julie in increasingly ferocious duels; some more salacious than others "Julie puts her hand to her dress, wipes a little of Bissy's blood. Then she puts her fingers to her mouth and licks, tasting the iron and the salt. She feels a thrill go through her, an erotic shiver". Never saw that happen in the last GBR Senior Women's Epée Final!



I do like the great mix of touches taken from the old Dennis Wheatley novels such as "The Devil Rides Out", the banned poems of Charles Baudelaire in "The Flowers of Evil" combined with the tales around the "Phantom of the Opera" and the Indonesian film noir "The Devil's Blade" where only the sword forged from a meteorite can slay the devil and save the day! But - spoiler alert - I will leave you to imagine how the pact between Julie d'Aubigny and the Devil is finally completed at the end of the book and who triumphs with a dextrous flourish and a razor-sharp iron blade ready to sing again. But maybe the Devil will have the last laugh and Julie will finally become the Devil's Blade?

If this novel does anything, it should encourage readers to investigate further the life of this wonderful, colourful heroine of France who maybe has paved the way for women to be accepted as equal to men on the fencing pistes of today.

The Devil's Blade is available now as an Amazon Kindle edition @ £8.99 and published in Hardback in April 2020.

WYNFORD SEYMOUR (1931-2020)

Swansea Fencing Club



Wynford was born in the Swansea valley and moved to Swansea where he pursued his fencing career. Very sadly, he recently lost his battle with cancer.

He established the Swansea School of Fencing in 1957 and also gave private

lessons at his home. He had a concrete strip in the front garden and a large room indoors when the weather was inclement.

Fencing was Wynford's passion. He dedicated his life to coaching and inspiring youngsters to enjoy the sport and achieve a high standard.

Wynford specialised in all three weapons - foil, épée and sabre. He produced club members who have represented Wales and Great Britain, a testament to the great man who had tirelessly given so much to so many. Respected on the fencing scene near and far by fencers young and old.

After retirement from his nursing career at British Steel he was able to spend more time fencing at his own level, subsequently taking part in Welsh and British Veterans competitions.

Even at the grand age of 87 he would put his students through their paces during training on club nights, wearing them out one by one with his vigorous coaching and training, and he was as fit as a fiddle and a force to be reckoned with. Take him for granted or let your guard down for a split second and he would hit you before you saw it coming.

It just goes to show how good a healthy life of fencing kept him fit and active.

Swansea Fencing Club is still active and thriving with a strong membership and we all appreciate the part that Wynford has played in this.

It is a very sad day for all who knew him and our thoughts and condolences go to his family - Wynford will be greatly missed.

Level 2 coach required for Saffron Walden Swords fencing Club

Saffron Walden Swords fencing Club is based on the north Essex/Cambridge border and meets every Saturday morning during term time from 9.30 -12.30. The club has been running since 2009 and has fifty members and an expanding youth membership. We are about one hour and ten minutes' drive from London or 45 minutes by train from Tottenham Hale station.

The club has a strong team of volunteers that assist with managing the club, but with our current coach and chair stepping down in the summer we are seeking a new permanent level 2 coach from September 2020. This position is for the main club coach who would provide coaching for individual and group lessons from 8 to Adult and contribute to the planning of short and long term planning and strategy for the club. A two weapon coach (Foil/Sabre) would be ideal; however Foil only coaching would also be acceptable. Start date, pay and travel expenses can be discussed.

If this opportunity would suit you then please contact club chair David Aronsohn for further details at aronment@yahoo.co.uk.



RESULTS



The up-to-date 2019-2020 season latest results are now listed online and can be [accessed here](#)

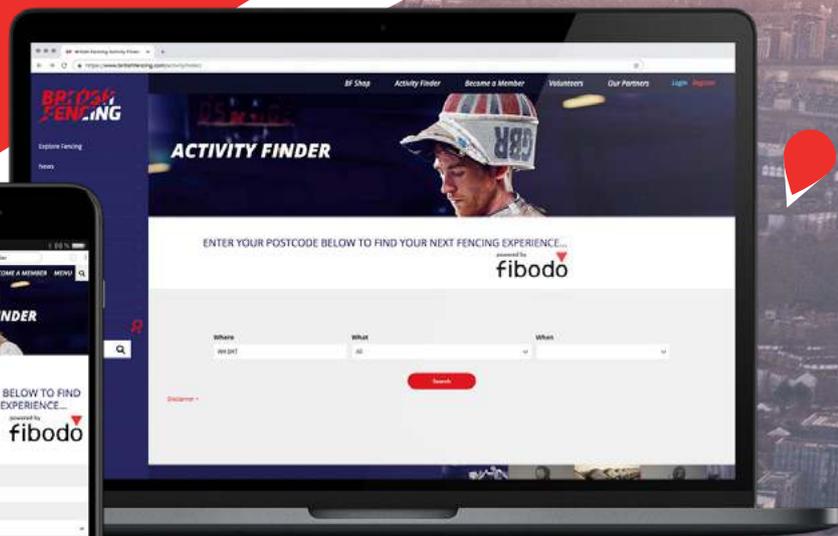
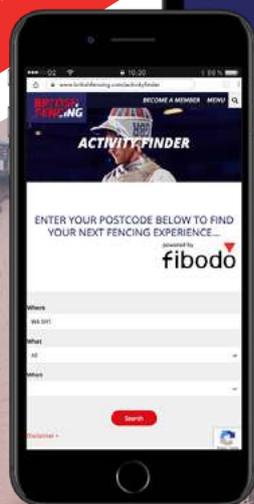
Please forward all your suggestions for additional online fencing results to: events@britishfencing.com



BRITISH FENCING

FIND YOUR CLOSEST CLUB OR FENCING ACTIVITY

Just enter your postcode on
British Fencing's brand new,
exciting **Activity Finder**.



Powered by **fibodo**,
now you can find, book
and do **beginner courses**,
discover **turn up and fence sessions**
and **make contact directly**, all from the
British Fencing website.

**BRITISHFENCING.COM/
ACTIVITYFINDER**

powered by
fibodo