

# THE SWORD

BRITISH FENCING MAGAZINE  
APRIL 2022



*Carolina Stutchbury*  
*Junior European*  
*Champion 2022*  
*#BizziTeam*

EUROPEAN CHAMPS SPECIAL  
MEDAL REPORTS PP7-11  
RESPECT PP15-16

**BRITISH  
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European Championships  
2022 Special

# PP7-22



*Images within the magazine depict moments with differing sanitary protocols.*

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Champion 2022 #BizziTeam

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# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



Putin's decision to invade Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has thrown the World back into chaos. Whilst I will not use this magazine to platform my opinions, it would be remiss of me not to add to growing condemnation of this heinous act. I'll let history decide the rights and wrongs of the decisions and motivations. That said, my thoughts are with the innocents on both sides. At the time of writing there have been more serious talks of a resolution and I hope by the time you're reading this hostilities will have ceased. Though I'm sure it will take some time for the Ukrainian people to rebuild their homes and their lives. Special thoughts are with our friends at the Ukrainian Fencing Federation, all of their members and their families. Siân has been able to capture a small insight into the situation which you can read in the coming pages.

We were fortunate to have the marvellous diversion of the best ever set of results from a Junior and Cadet European Championships - held for the first since 2020. Timed to perfection, our female contingent made a point of celebrating International Women's Day. Golden Girl, Carolina Stutchbury says it all on the front cover of this issue. A huge congratulations to her, her family and her support team

from us at The Sword - I hope you enjoy going around to the Stutchburys! What a result from the Cadet Women's Foil team too! Jaimie Cook, Alec Brooke, the Junior Men's Epee team and the Cadet Men's Foil Team - A-MAY-ZING! So much so, we were delighted to change our entire plans for this issue and fill it with reports on every event and every GB medal.

In this issue, we also applaud the off-piste actions of another group of athletes who went above and beyond in support of Ukraine and in defence of their principles and integrity. Having given up so much due to the global pandemic, you stood up once more, sacrificed your event and made us all very proud.

Take a bow - Imogen Bulman, Julia Caron, Hannah Lebor and Rachael Lever.

Something that hasn't been highlighted in the coverage of the Europeans is the great deal of work that has been done behind the scenes to make all of this possible. So I'd also like to congratulate Shelley Robinson, Ian Lichfield and Lorraine Rose for looking after the team out in Serbia - straight back to the day job for that trio!! Also, congratulations goes to the clubs, coaches, families and support staff who played their part in every athlete performance. And finally to Steve Kemp and his team - we've been tracking you for the past few issues and interrogating your approach. I'd say you've provided us with some fairly solid evidence here! Thank you.

And now a word of caution! "One swallow doesn't make a summer." These results, I'm sure, are not unexpected but perhaps the fact that they've come all at once is. Yet, as

this magazine goes to press, the Junior and Cadet World Championships are nearing their completion for this 2021/2022 season. The emerging green shoots of progress and success are continuing to show within the GBR camp. However we must be cautious not to put too much pressure on the athletes whilst also looking at the data! Yes, it's back to the data! Let's look at the USA as an example. (Putting women's sabre aside;) They started building the success we see today over three decades ago. Their results came in ebbs and flows until recent times. We should expect the same.

Finally, it's just over a year since we released our Youth special issue. Not that we're claiming any rights to the tremendous results in Novi Sad. Seriously speaking, in that issue, we looked forward to this time - a time when we would be competing again, supporting from the bleachers and from afar, being awestruck at how motivated and mature our athletic community can be. We knew there would be a time when there would be progress, improvement and growth. Siân and I have put the same dedication into using the magazine to keep searching out future hopes and emerging trends, to balance the right amount of reflection on what has happened with a sense of what is yet to come.

So if you'd like to know more, amongst other things, about fencing ecosystems, what's new in children's swordplay fiction, how British Fencing is putting itself in your service and what exactly happened at the end of Jon Willis' Iranian World Cup trip, it is exactly the right time to pick up The Sword once again. Happy reading!

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

**Submit your stories to the editor:**

**[karim.bashir@catchsport.com](mailto:karim.bashir@catchsport.com)**

# REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

For many it was both a relief and a pleasure to see the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games finally happening in the summer of 2021. The 4-yearly FIE and EFC (European) Elective Congresses, which always follow the Games, therefore took place in the autumn/winter of 2021. These two congresses always herald a period of change in all areas of fencing, but none more so than within International Relations.

The FIE Elective Congress, originally planned for Moscow, was moved to Lausanne in Switzerland and took place in November 2021. Great Britain put forward eight candidates of whom four were successful - two commission members elected by the Congress and two council members appointed by the newly-elected Executive Committee.

Janet Huggins and Peter Jacobs were re-elected to the SEMI and Legal Commissions respectively, and it is to their great credit that they each received the highest number of votes cast for their commission. I was appointed to the Fair Play Council, and Georgina Usher was re-appointed to the Women In Fencing Council and subsequently elected by her peers as President of the Council.

Of our four unsuccessful candidates, three were new nominations for whom it is always difficult first time round. However, Steve Higginson - a long-standing member of the Rules Commission and its President at the time of the Congress - was most unfortunate in having to withdraw from the Congress for personal reasons, and was undoubtedly disadvantaged by his absence. Steve's vast knowledge and great commitment will be a significant loss to that commission.

The EFC Elective Congress was held in September 2021 in Sochi, Russia. At the time it was problematic for Great Britain and other countries to attend, due to Covid-related restrictions. Last-minute arrangements were therefore put in place for a hybrid congress, to allow those countries to participate online.

Of our eight candidates, five were appointed by the new Executive Committee:

- Competition Commission - Jon Willis
- Legal Commission - Tom Cadman
- Medical Commission - Dr Mary Cohen
- SEMI Commission - Peter Huggins
- Veterans' Council - Gillian Aghajan

In addition to these FIE and EFC post-holders it is also pleasing that Caryl Oliver is continuing in her role as President of European Veterans Fencing, Georgina Usher as an FIE Safeguarding Officer, and Peter Huggins as a member of the Executive Committee of International Wheelchair Fencing.

Congratulations to all post-holders as they continue with their work. I anticipate that, around the time of publication of this magazine, Janet Huggins, Georgina Usher and myself will all be attending the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Dubai in our various FIE roles.

International Relations post-holders typically put a huge amount of time and effort into their roles over a long period of time, and I would like to take this opportunity to mark Dr Clare Halsted's retirement from her role. At the recent FIE Congress Clare stood down from membership of the Medical Commission, where she has been a stalwart for 16 years from 2005-2021.

Clare's personal contributions have focused on:

- Anti-Doping, as the lead member of the FIE Anti-Doping panel
- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code compliance
- Re-writing the FIE anti-doping rules
- Reviewing and re-writing the FIE Medical Handbook
- Representing the FIE on the IOC Trans-Gender Guidelines Group
- Working with FIE CEO Nathalie Rodriguez on producing the protocol for the testing procedure for Tokyo 2020
- Working with both Nathalie Rodriguez and the International Testing Agency (ITA) to set up the 2021-2024 education plan for anti-doping
- Running anti-doping education at the Junior & Cadet World Championships

During this time Clare has also been an FIE Medical Delegate at numerous World



Championships - Cadet, Junior, Senior and Veterans - as well as the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Clare's retirement has not yet come to pass. She is currently involved with a full handover of FIE anti-doping to the relevant members of the Medical Commission. She is also working with Nathalie Rodriguez and the ITA, helping to set up pre-event webinars for participants in the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Dubai and the senior championships later in the year in Cairo. In addition she continues to be involved with the WADA Compliance process. On behalf of British Fencing - thank you Clare!

It is always a pleasure to see effort rewarded, and I would like to congratulate Piers Gilliver on being awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours. This followed his Tokyo 2020 Paralympic achievement of an epee individual gold, a foil team silver and an epee team bronze - a full set and one of which he should be very proud. Having been in Tokyo on the Directoire Technique, it was a privilege to be there to watch them all.

Finally - I would like to offer my own congratulations to the GBR team at the European Junior & Cadet Championships in Novi Sad. Our medallists - Carolina Stutchbury, Alec Brooke, Jaimie Cook and the Junior Men's Epee plus Cadet Women's and Men's Foil teams - flew the flag magnificently for both British Fencing and Great Britain, and so too did our Junior Women's Epee team with their exemplary behaviour in their own event. I am proud of you all.

Hilary Philbin  
President

# VOICE FROM UKRAINE

## Siân talks to Senior Ukrainian Men's Foilist, Klod Yunes about being betwixt and between at a time of war



Klod's voice is rich and deep. His English is virtually flawless. Speaking fluently about the situation in his native Ukraine, were it not for a few giveaway clues like the frequent inhalation of breath and the speed of his speech, it would be difficult to tell he is in a profound state of trauma.

Trauma is the possession of the dispossessed. What they counted on but weeks ago, the Ukrainians have no longer. The country is shattered; its people adrift.

"I feel guilty that I am not there fighting," explains Klod from where he is currently staying in Poland. "But I had an order from the Ministry for me to remain here and try and help from the outside by representing my country." By now, we are familiar with 'Slava Ukraini' or 'Glory to Ukraine' - a phrase ringing with the resonance of resistance that runs through Ukrainian veins. "I wanted to fight but they said, 'Klod listen, you can hold the weapon but you are not trained in military tactics'. They said I would last five or six minutes on the battlefield."



The Ukrainians have asked that only trained military personnel take up arms against Russian aggression. Still, in our continent and in our times, it is heartbreaking to see the pull of decision-making on a successful athlete whose focus should be to train and compete. It has led to an inevitable overlap between the worlds of politics and fencing. When Russia invaded Ukraine, Klod



and his Senior Men's Foil teammates had just landed in Cairo for the World Cup. "My teammate's wife called him crying. The Russians were already bombing. It was a shock not a surprise. I knew that if I had to face a Russian fencer that I would refuse. And we did refuse in the team event."

The Ukrainians - calm in their protest - captivated the room. It was a first time event that nobody thought would ever be witnessed. As we know from what has happened since, making a stand is ultimately to make a sacrifice. Ukraine exited the team competition, their dignity intact but with a huge competitive deficit still to make up. "Our aim this season was to cover ground lost by Covid. Bonn, Tokyo and Dubai - all those were cancelled, so was Anaheim, so was Turin."

But Klod does not dwell on his fencing fate. He tells me of how 'too many emotions' are spilling over when he thinks of the four National team sabreurs who have joined the Ukrainian Territorial Army to defend their country. He tells me of family in Lviv who face shelling and air strikes, friends in 'Hero City' Mariupol who are surrounded by the Russian army unable to leave by a green corridor, captive without food, without electricity ... in complete despair. Not to mention his teammates Andrii Scherba and Andrei Pogrebniak in Kyiv - Scherba giving out medicines and Pogrebniak baking bread for people to take if they're in need.

As I speak to him, Klod has friends working on a fundraiser to help keep the Ukrainian fencing team going as much and as best as they can. "Even if peace were brought to the table now", says Klod "it will take

three years to put the infrastructure back in place where we can think about a return to normality."

Despite an urge to outline what a wrench it is for him to be away from his homeland, to describe the suffering of 21st century Europeans reduced to hunger, placed under siege, forced to flee and to leave their dearest family behind to fight, Klod's voice has faltered and stumbled. There is too much to communicate that renders words inadequate tools.

Klod however keeps going, saying his only prayer is an end to war - all war. Why must aggressors kill civilians, defenceless children and their mothers? And then there are all those from his near and dear Ukrainian fencing family, scattered in every corner of the country and beyond, putting their dreams, ambitions and aspirations on hold - and for how long, they do not know.

One of that Ukrainian fencing family is famed sabreur, Olga Kharlan. On her Instagram page, she shares a quote from Nike: 'Nothing can stop what we can do together'.

If there is a commonality between us all, it is that we fence, that we believe in fencing to shape and to make better lives through a sport rooted in good conduct and fighting spirit. Whatever our nationhood, we are brothers and sisters in epee, in foil and in sabre. Helping one another to stay part of that life is our greatest superpower.

Please share.

To support the Ukraine Men's Foil team's ambitions please visit this [GoFundMe page](#).

# GBR WORLD CLASS FOUNDATIONS SHOW STRONGLY AT JUNIOR AND CADET EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

*“Records were broken at this event - our greatest ever historic team results were matched across multiple weapons, gender, and age categories.*

*To come back after almost two years of a break forced upon us by the pandemic, and place fifth on the medals table, (combining*

*the cadet and junior results) is a significant achievement for the athletes and everyone involved in British Fencing.*



*Ian Lichfield #BizziTeam*

*Seven medals - three from team events - in a single event, further demonstrates not only how far we've come but that the plan is working.”*

*Ian Lichfield, GBR Chef de Mission, Novi Sad*

## SENSATIONAL START FOR STUTCHBURY IN SERBIA

*The first day of competition and Carolina Stutchbury puts GBR back on the map, proving her own potential and progression by seizing the Junior Women's Foil European Title.*

*The first GBR fencer to make the championship podium in Novi Sad was Carolina Stutchbury, who not only won a medal but took the European title in the age group above her own.*

*Carolina had been selected for the Junior squad of four British women taking part in the women's foil field of eighty-three while still a Cadet. Listed as 35th seed for the event, she turned the seedings on their head to dominate from the off, not dropping a single fight on her way to the Euro gold.*



*Flying through the semi-finals against Druck (ISR) #BizziTeam*

*She made light work of her first round poule, winning all five matches whilst conceding just eight hits. Ranked sixth for the knockout stages, Stutchbury earned a bye through the first fight and went on to beat Chiara Groess (AUT) 15-4, Teodora Sofran (ROU) 15-8, Antonina Lachman (POL) and Esther Bonny (FRA) 15-7 to make the medal matches.*

*She had faced her semi-final opponent, Lior Druck (ISR) in a tight battle earlier in the season in the team event in Zagreb. Taking that experience into the match and knowing the strength of the Israeli's mental game, Stutchbury started positively, taking the lead with well-timed long attacks, finishing in different lines. She then controlled the match using excellent distance and active defence to draw her opponent onto her well-timed counterattacks and parries. This led to a confidence boosting 15-8 victory and a chance to contest the European title.*

*The final was very controlled throughout. Both fencers traded hits to 9-9 each before Stutchbury experienced a technical problem with her body-wire. Showing great maturity and using the break to take control of her opponent whilst staying active in defence, she gained a small lead 12-10. With time against the Italian, Stutchbury was able to keep her composure and execute her counterattacks, with body evasion and quick remises to take the title.*

*Speaking shortly after the final, Carolina said, “It's super good to see all the work and effort me and my coach Dmitri Romankov put in over the last few months come to this. And I'm really happy to have won gold.”*



*Follow @carolina\_fencing on Insta*

## CADET BROOKE SHINES IN SERBIA

### Alec Brooke Claims Junior Men's Epee European Silver

Alec Brooke closed out his Junior individual tournament by claiming the silver medal. Brooke, still a cadet, was looking to continue his advance after two top 16 finishes on the Junior World Cup epee circuit this season.

He dropped one first round match to hold a ranking of 20 into the knockout stages. A bye through the incomplete round of 128 was followed by victories over Daniels Loginovs (LAT) 15-6 and Martin Vasicek (CZE) 15-9. He then edged two fights 15-14 against world number 11, Gergely Kovacs (HUN) and world number 17, Kirill Gurov (RFF) to guarantee himself a medal.

His semi-final opponent was Yonatan Cohen (ISR) and both fencers adopted an aggressive strategy at the start, with Brooke holding a slender lead 6-5 at the first break. The Brit continued his commitment to that strategy in the second

period but using better distance. Brooke scored a series of second intention actions and long attacks from his change of direction, controlling the remainder of the match for a 15-10 victory and a place in the final.

Both finalists had met previously in the round of 16 at the recent Belgrade Junior World Cup, and it was the 19-year-old Hungarian Keszthelyi coming out on top 15-13. With prior knowledge of his opponent's defensive strengths, Brooke started the final with a cautious strategy and went into the first break tied at 4-4. They continued to trade hits to 10-all at the start of the second period but the significant change came when Brooke reverted to his naturally



Brooke In Action

aggressive style with 30 seconds left. The Hungarian's excellent use of distance, though, and fast ripostes led to a two-hit advantage which was enough to give him control of the match. The Hungarian went on to win, 15-13.

Despite defeat, Brooke's professionally focussed approach was clear in his post-match interview. "It feels great to win the silver medal. I'm obviously happy with my performance and my result. I'm now going to focus on the Junior team event and then the Cadet events. I've got a few more years in this category and all I can do is try to improve."



The Top 4 (l to r) Brooke, Keszthelyi, Galassi & Cohen #BizziTeam

## COOK CONFIRMS CREDENTIALS WITH EUROPEAN BRONZE

### Jaimie Cook Continues To Impress With Foil Podium

Jaimie Cook ended his European Cadet career on a high, claiming the individual Cadet Men's Foil bronze medal.

Having taken bronze at the EFC Cadet Circuit event in Cabriès earlier in the season, Cook lined up in a field of 77. He stormed through his poule winning every



Cook Steps into the Spotlight #BizziTeam

match and conceding just seven hits which gave him the number one ranking for the knockout phase of the competition. A bye through the incomplete round of 64 was followed by victories over Mattia De Cristofaro (ITA) 15-11, Michael Dijkstra (NED) 15-5 and teammate Callum Penman 15-6 to make the semi-finals.

With the bronze medal secured, he faced Ambrus Budahazy (HUN), seeded 13th after the poules, for a place in the final. Cook started strongly in the first period, with a series of fast attacks and counter ripostes to take a 5-0 lead before the fencers traded hits to 9-4. However, the Hungarian's confidence in his pressing game grew, with slow developing attacks combined with ripostes. Cook went into the first break with a two hit lead but the momentum had swung in the direction of Budahazy. After the break, both fencers traded hits to 13-11 before the Hungarian returned to his tactic of slowing Cook

down, creating the timing to make four late quarte ripostes against running attacks and taking the victory 15-13.

On his performance Cook said, "I felt confident going into the individual event and was happy with my performance in the poules but I knew I would have a hard draw. I drew De Cristofaro (ITA) in my first DE fight - a fencer I'd gone out to in Budapest earlier in the season."



The Top 4 (l to r) Balint, Budahazy, Cook & Crist #BizziTeam

# BROOKE BONDS PLACE IN HISTORY WITH SECOND MEDAL

## Alec Brooke's Mission For Multiple Medals Complete

Alec Brooke ended his European Cadet career on the podium, taking bronze in the Cadet Men's Epee individual event. The medal followed the silver he'd won in the Junior individual event showing his dedication and achievement at the weapon, with the strong potential to build.

He began his day by storming to the top seed position for the elimination stages, winning every fight in his poule and dropping just eight hits. That is some going in this event. A bye through the round of 128 was followed by victories over Cristian



Brooke Flies into Cadets #BizziTeam

Corbu (ROU) 15-11, Neel Widmer (SUI) 15-9, Giacomo Pietrobelli (ITA) 15-14 and Oliver Lassik (EST) 15-5 for a place in the semi-finals.

Brooke's next opponent Alon Sarid (ISR), a right handed pommeller, had a clear tactical plan from the outset. Once Sarid gained the first point, he switched to his defensive strategy and operated with patience from a long distance, ready to retreat quickly away from Brooke's fast attacks, scoring with well-timed stop hits and counter attacks. In the first period, Brooke was given a P (passivity) yellow card when he was 4-1 down, that tactically played into



The Top 4 (l to r) Sarid, Rizzi, Brooke & Malvik #BizziTeam

his opponent's gameplan. The card forced him to take risks during the fight or face a penalty hit for passivity. By the second break, Sarid was 12-5 ahead and the Israeli went on to win the fight 15-7.

Although Brooke was visibly disappointed, his bronze medal place – his fourth EFC medal of the season – means he nonetheless finishes the season as Europe's number one Cadet Mens Epeeist.

Speaking after the fight he said, "After defeating a number of tough opponents in a difficult draw, I was gutted to lose the semi-final but of course still pleased with another podium finish."

Ian Lichfield added, "Alec has taken medals at four out of the five EFC Under 17 events that he has attended this season. This is a fantastic achievement and he, his family and his personal coach Tamas Kovacs, should be deservedly proud. Today Alec lost to an opponent whose style of fencing he had never experienced before and on this occasion could not find the answers. Alec is so determined and has a bright future ahead of him. I have no doubt this last match will act as a learning point for him."

# MEN'S EPEE TEAM CLAIM SILVER ON LAST DAY OF JUNIOR EUROPEANS

## Brooke, Jeal, Mitchell and Walmsley Excel in Novi Sad

Alec Brooke, James Jeal, Jacob Mitchell and Joseph Walmsley teamed up on the last day of the Junior European Championships in Novi Sad and fenced their way to the silver medal in the Men's Team Epee event.

Ranked eleventh for the tournament, they faced Romania in the round of 32 and led from start to finish, winning 45-33. Their next opponent was number six seeds, the Czech Republic and again a strong start saw Great Britain ease to a relatively

comfortable 45-24 victory. They moved on to face number three seeds Spain and yet again dominated going on to win 45-35.

A semi-final against number two seeds France was their reward and for the first time on the day, Great Britain fell behind, 15-6 a third of the way through the match. Brooke, Jeal and Walmsley staged a tremendous comeback in the middle three matches, all contributing to an 11-point turnaround to lead 29-27 after six legs. They completed the job and made the final 45-40.

Against Europe's number one team, Switzerland, Great Britain took a small



Team Show their Strength #BizziTeam



Crowd Pleasing Camaraderie #BizziTeam

lead after the first leg but the experience and quality of the Swiss opposition proved too much on this occasion. After the Swiss extended their lead in the fourth, there was

no comeback to be had from the Brits. They continued to work hard to break through but the defensive strategy that the Swiss team adopted made it hard to get the vital



The Team Sport Silver for GBR #BizziTeam

single hits needed to overturn the deficit. Switzerland went on to win the European title with a 45-33 victory.

Ian Lichfield, Men's Epee Coach said, "The four athletes can be hugely proud of what they have achieved today. This result equals the best result ever achieved by a British team. Beating other international teams that have taken medals at Junior World Cups this season and overturning a 10-hit deficit in the match against France, to win by 5 clear hits, shows significant progress in development of the weapon in the UK."

## CADET WOMEN'S FOIL TEAM BAG EURO BRONZE

### Elliott, Johnson, Stutchbury & Tsang Bounce Back for Bronze

The bronze medal play-off - arguably the hardest match in sport and the most important ... and what a performance it was from Megan Elliott, Isabella Johnson, Carolina Stutchbury and Amelie Tsang, to win the bronze medal in Serbia.

The team, spurred on by their individual performances, began the day ranked fourth and after a bye, quickly dealt with Spain, coming out 45-24 victors. Israel were a potential banana skin in the quarterfinals but the British quartet put in an amazing performance to win 45-33.

That gave them a semi-final match with Italy which was always going to be a tight affair, with a lot of emotions at play. Each



Onto Bronze Medal Match



Podium Secured #Bizzi

of the legs were close, with key moments swinging the momentum of the match. By the start of the fifth, Great Britain trailed 12-18 but never looked too far from the challenge as the score had been kept low. This allowed for the opportunity for one of the members of the team to take on that challenge and Tsang stepped up superbly, winning her second leg to give the GBR team a 24-23 lead. The Italians weren't derailed however and took the next two legs to gain the lead back, 35-32. In the penultimate leg, Stutchbury methodically unpicked her opponent giving Great Britain a 3-hit advantage, 40-37, going into the final leg. At 44-all, the match went into the priority minute with the Italian finding the final touch.

Spurred on by the disappointment of the semi-final defeat, the British team set out their bronze medal plan early to control the lead from the first leg. By the second

leg, Tsang and then Johnson had put the team into a commanding five-point lead which was then never closed throughout the match. By the fifth leg, the spirit of the Hungarian team had dropped and Great Britain had deservedly earned a 25-9 lead. Tsang, Johnson and Stutchbury won convincingly 45-19. This result matched their previous bronze medal performance in Budapest earlier in the season.

Cadet Women's Foil coach Dominique Szokolovics said, "We were on a mission for a medal, a mission to show Europe that Great Britain is driven by a love of competing and achieving in fencing at the highest level no matter what the age group. Each of the GBR fencers played their part, picking up where another fencer may have dropped a match. By the time those Cadet Women's Foilists took to the piste, they had all the strategies and know-how of securing their team dream. I was awestruck."



Sporting Bronze

# CADET MEN'S FOIL TEAM'S SILVER LINING

## Cook, Penman, Sosnov & Ulferts Kilpatrick Bring Championships to a Triumphant Close

The most successful major youth Championships for Great Britain ended on a high note as Jaimie Cook, Callum Penman, David Sosnov and Nye Ulferts Kilpatrick won the Cadet Men's Foil Team silver medal in Serbia.

Ranked number one for the elimination stages after their individual performances, they had a bye through the individual round of 32 and went on to beat Austria 45-19 and Latvia 45-27 to earn themselves a place in the semi-final against opponents Italy.

The first leg went to the Italians but a measured bout from Penman set up the next leg for Sosnov who by using timing and distance to execute his stop-hits, swung the momentum of the match, winning the third leg 11-5. Through the next three bouts the British team maintained

and built a lead to 30-24. Penman, in fine form, dispatched his opponent 5-0. With the momentum firmly with the British team, they professionally closed out the match 45-29, setting up the final with the Hungarians.



Head to Head with Hungary #BizziTeam

The gold medal match and the opening leg of the final saw Cook initiate an early lead. Penman secured the second against the individual silver medalist, Balint, and Sosnov increased the margin against newly-crowned Cadet Champion,

Budahazy, to 15-9. The gold medal, however, started to slip away from the British in the last three legs. A strong performance from Budahazy, winning his bout 12-3, put Hungary in front. With GBR now forced to take the fight on, the defensive strengths of their opponents proved too much. The victors, Hungary, won 45-42.

Cadet Men's Foil coach Keith Cook said, "The boys were just brilliant today and worked so hard for each other."



The Winning Moment vs Italy #BizziTeam

## Novi Sad Insights

As the Junior and Cadet European Championships drew to their close, it is worth highlighting that four GBR fencers achieved quarter-final finishes in their individual events. Julia Caron in the Junior Women's Epee (6th), Carolina Stutchbury in Cadet Women's Foil (7th), and in Cadet Men's Foil David Sosnov (6th) with Callum Penman (7th).

Chef de Mission, Ian Lichfield concluded with a broad brush stroke portrait of the the growth experienced at the championships as well as a nod to the future, saying, "The event also demonstrated that the athletes' performances weren't just about medals but supporting and witnessing the GB women's epee team doing the right thing, in the right way, through personal sacrifice to stand up for something truly bigger than sport - was very humbling."

"Recognition also should be given to the personal and ADP coaches, parents, and staff that supported the athletes in their development to get to this position. With the World Championships around the corner, our attention has now turned to the final preparations for Dubai in a few weeks' time to build on what we have achieved."



#BizziTeam

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# HONESTY, RESPECT, EXCELLENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY & TEAMWORK

## When the GB European Junior Women's Epee Team Showed The World What They Are Made Of

The Sword is not the place to continue the debate about the current conflict in Europe and we will not. Yet it is where we can highlight and commend the decision and actions of four young women who, in the face of conflicting variables - both internal and external - sacrificed their European Championship campaign, to protect their values, as well as those of British Fencing.

When we have to rely on the young to represent us in the best possible way and in the best possible faith, we assume a duty to ensure that we give them due credit for the enormity of the resonance of their gestures, to tell them how much their courage of conviction has struck the right note.

And in this case it has. It really, really has.

The decision that the GB Junior Women's Epee Team took at the European Championships was made in the complex chaos of many worlds colliding. The Russian aggression of Ukraine meant that

the purposeful venue in Novi Sad was suddenly pitched against a global moral compulsion to stand up in the name of peace.

All you may have seen at home while looking at the tableau of the day is that the Women's Epeeists 'failed to appear'. It sounds like they didn't show. They were passive. They deserted their post.

In fact, it is the very opposite which is true. These women showed up, they stood up, they had their voice - our voices - heard. They made themselves count. Their tough decision, made in the most troubling environment the world has faced in over half a century, after two years away from competition and with some facing the prospect of "ageing out" of the Junior category, is something that will be remembered for a very long time.

Imogen Bulman, Julia Caron, Hannah Lebor and Rachael Lever - take your place at the top of the highest podium. Your decision

'not to appear' for your match against your Russian opponents (who are also innocent in this situation) led to others following the path you made, not only in your event and the Championships as a whole but also much further beyond.

The medals you should have been awarded are made of a rare substance - they are made of mettle. Not only were you champions in the moral stakes, you also helped your GBR teammates compete in their own events and, for some, to win their own medals. Silver in JME, bronze in CWF and silver in CMF; these are down in great part to you. You weren't pictured in their podium photographs. Your names didn't hit the headlights on social media. You had to let the accolades belong to others. Yet, had you not made your stance, there would arguably have been potentially little for any of us to celebrate.

When we consider the nature of the timeline, it makes your action even more admirable. You had possibly last competed



The Team and Coach Rees

in Porec in the 2020 Cadet and Junior Europeans. Lockdown followed cruelly and quickly, terminating training for many months. When competition resumed, there were still so many unknowns and new realities to navigate. With uncertainty as to whether the Championships would go ahead until a few weeks before, you travelled to Novi Sad with history about to cast a dark shadow on the world. By 28th February - in the midst of the Junior competition schedule - the International Olympic Committee had banned Russian and Belarussian athletes from competing internationally. The British Fencing Board followed by condemning the Russian military operation in Ukraine and stating that no GBR fencer - either individually or in team - would face Russia or Belarus.

Within hours you were due to meet Russia in the T16. You withdrew. Italy followed your lead and withdrew in the T8. Russia withdrew in the T4. Russia then withdrew from the rest of the Junior team events and from the Cadet championships, taking no further part in the competition.

You had started a chain of events that was immediately acknowledged in a letter sent from BF's CEO, Georgina Usher.

"Representing your country is about so much more than performance and results. Today's events have demonstrated the courage needed by athletes to stand up and be counted in the wider context of the world that we live in."

Acknowledging how they had been deprived of competition due to the global pandemic, Usher went on to say, "You have put this aside to show your support and respect for the Ukrainian people and importantly the Ukrainian fencing family."

Usher continued, "Do not underestimate what you have achieved today. Your actions have led the way for others to make the decisions to show similar support .... I believe that in future you will be able to look back on your actions with pride and a clear conscience."

Steve Kemp, Head of Pathways added, "They put others before themselves, whilst exhibiting maturity and demonstrating BF's values of honesty, respect and excellence, to their own credit and to that of their country."

The recognition went beyond the bounds of our sport too. In SportsProMedia, a leading

industry magazine, in discussing the sale of Stamford Bridge (Chelsea Football Club's ground), Ed Warner said, "**Not sitting on the fence.** It took 13 days of war before the Premier League and English Football League suspended their Russian broadcast contracts - which are worth only a few million pounds a year .... Couldn't England's clubs have shown greater urgency in making their small gesture?"

"Contrast this lack of pace with Britain's junior women's epee team who, just as the war began, pulled out of a European Championships match against Russia, so cratering their own chances in the competition. This action set in place a domino effect that led to Russia's withdrawal, to the benefit of other nations but not GB. Right."

"Imogen Bulman, Julia Caron, Hannah Lebor and Rachael Lever. Remember their names."

We will.

## HELPING UKRAINE

The UK Fencing Community is trying to help in many ways. Maria Goriup, Physiotherapist at The Sport Rehab Clinic at Leon Paul told The Sword of her efforts to spearhead concrete help. She said "We're planning to take a bag of kit out to the Belgrade World Cup this week to show our support for the Ukrainian Fencing Team, so your help is needed and would be welcomed as promptly as you can after reading this. You can choose to donate money for us to buy supplies or get more information on how to help by contacting [hello@thesportsrehabclinic.uk](mailto:hello@thesportsrehabclinic.uk). Thank you!

Meanwhile BF is working with the Ukrainian Fencing Federation to help connect Ukrainian fencing families with hosts from the fencing community in the UK, under a government scheme, in a process supported by BF volunteers. BF said "By offering homes within our fencing community with opportunities to attend local clubs we hope we can better support Ukrainian fencing families during this time. If you are interested in being a Sponsor please complete this form and we will do our best to match you with those looking for a home in the UK."

# JUNIOR EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

In March 2020, when the bulk of competitive international fencing went on hold for nearly two years, athletes were being evacuated from Porec, Croatia. For now, the restrictions have been lifted and Novi Sad in Serbia hosted the latest edition of the Junior and Cadet European Championships.

SPENS, aka the Vojvodina Sports & Business Centre hosted twenty-four events beginning with the twelve Junior events.

## Junior Women's Foil

The Championships opened with the Junior Women's Foil individual event with Great Britain's Emily Beardmore, Georgia Silk, Carolina Stutchbury and Teagan Williams-Stewart included in the field of 83. All four made it through the first round - Stutchbury V5D0, Williams-Stewart V4D1, Beardmore V3D2 and Silk V2D3.



Bertini (ITA) vs Vasile (ROU)

Beardmore and Stutchbury progressed through the round of 64 defeating Portillo (ESP) 15-11 and Groess (AUT) 15-4. Williams-Stewart also progressed but knocked out Silk 15-7. In the next round Stutchbury beat Sofran (ROU) 15-8 whilst Williams-Stewart edged past Petrova (UKR) 15-14 but Druck (ISR) defeated Beardmore 15-5. Ferrari (ITA) ended Williams-Stewart's day 15-8 in the round of 16 but Stutchbury went on to beat Lachman (POL) 15-11, Bonny (FRA) 15-7, Druck (ISR) 15-8 and



Closing in on the Title



Irene Bertini (ITA) to claim the European title. Karina Vasile (ROU) shared the bronze medal position with Lior Druck.

**GB placings:** Stutchbury 1, Williams-Stewart 13, Beardmore 29 and Silk 48



Junior Women's Foil Podium #BizziTeam

## Junior Men's Sabre

The Men's Sabre individual field of 72 included four British fencers - Samuel Allen, Max Cromie, Ian Ho and Darcy Holdsworth. Ho (V4D2), Allen (V3D3) and Holdsworth (V3D3) made it through the first round but Cromie (V1D4) did not.

None of the British fencers made it past the round of 64 as Filev (BUL) defeated Ho 15-11, Enache (ROU) beat Allen 15-8 and Krajnc (SLO) knocked out Holdsworth 15-10.



Garrigue (FRA) vs Nitu (ROU) #BizziTeam



Heathcock (GER) vs Hryciuk (POL)  
#BizziTeam



Junior Men's Sabre Podium #BizziTeam

Colin Heathcock (GER) won the title beating Radu Nitu (ROU) in the final as the bronze medals were awarded to Szymon Hryciuk (POL) and Remi Garrigue (FRA).

**GB placings:** Ho 34, Holdsworth 39, Allen 45 & Cromi 58=

## Junior Men's Foil



Castanie Wins All-French Semi-Final

Britain's Jaimie Cook, Joe Donaghue, Lachlan Jarvie and William Lonsdale lined up in the Men's Foil individual event making up a field 89. Cook (V5D1), Lonsdale (V5D1), Jarvie (V4D2) and Donaghue (V3D3) all progressed through the poule round, earning byes to the round of 64.

There, Cook knocked out Walet (NED) 15-7 but Kaskow (POL) beat Donaghue 15-10, Kuchta (SVK) defeated Jarvie 15-10 and Diaz



Lombardi (ITA) On Route To Title



Muhari Wins All-Hungarian Semi-Final  
#BizziTeam

it through the first round winning five of their six matches but Walmsley (V1D5) and Mitchell (V0D6) were eliminated.



Junior Men's Foil Podium #BizziTeam

Higuera (ESP) ended Lonsdale's day 15-12. Cook fell 15-13 to Jakubowski (POL) in the next round.

Giulio Lombardi (ITA) beat Valerian Castanie (FRA) to the European title as Eliot Chagnon (FRA) and Paul De Belval (FRA) completed a French trio on the podium.

**GB placings:** Cook 21, Lonsdale 34, Jarvie 41= & Donaghue 46=

### Junior Women's Epee

The field 92 in the Women's Epee individual included Great Britain's Imogen Bulman, Julia Caron, Hannah Lebor and Rachael Lever.

Caron and Lebor progressed through the first round with four victories from five fights but Lever (V1D4) and Bulman (V1D5) did not. After both receiving byes through the round of 128 Caron defeated Grabovskyte (LTH) 15-9 and Lebor beat Romeo (SUI) 15-11. In the round of 32 Caron knocked out Salamon (HUN) 15-12 but Lebor fell 15-7 to Fransson (SWE). Caron went on to make the quarterfinals with victories



Caron vs Wetzker (GER) #BizziTeam



Lebor vs Fransson (SWE) #BizziTeam

over Wetzker (GER) 15-12 and Kosielski (GER) 15-13.

Anastasiia Rustomova (RFF) took the European title beating Eszter Muhari (HUN) in the final as the bronze medals went to Katharina Kozielski (GER) and Greta Gachalyi (HUN).

**GB placings:** Caron 6=, Lebor 24, Lever 75= & Bulman 81



Junior Women's Epee Podium #BizziTeam

### Junior Men's Epee

The Men's Epee individual field of 112 included four more British fencers in Alec Brooke, James Jeal, Jacob Mitchell and Joseph Walmsley. Brooke and Jeal made



Jeal Prime vs Maury (FRA) #BizziTeam

Both Brooke and Jeal had byes through the round of 128 before going on to beat Loginovs (LAT) 15-6 and Laasik (EST) 15-10, respectively to make the 32. There Brooke took out Vasicek (CZE) 15-9 and Jeal squeezed past Hamilton-Meike (HUN) 15-14.



Brooke vs Loginovs (LAT) #BizziTeam



Winning #BizziTeam

Jeal was then knocked out in the next round 15-9 by Maury (FRA). Meanwhile Brooke went on to beat Kovacs (HUN) 15-14, Gurov (RFF) 15-14 and Cohen (ISR) 15-10 before losing 15-13 to Zsombor Keszthelyi (HUN) in the final. The podium was completed by Matteo Galassi (ITA) and Yonatan Cohen (ISR).

**GB placings:** Brooke 2, Jeal 11, Walmsley 100= & Mitchell 103



Junior Men's Epee Podium #BizziTeam

## Junior Women's Sabre



Lebor and Rachael Lever. The quartet beat Austria 45-32 in the round of 32 before withdrawing to avoid facing Russia.

Hungary (Buki, Gachalyi, Muhari, Salamon) claimed gold beating Germany (Goldmann, Kozielski, Wetzker, Zittel) in the final as the Czech Republic (Aigermanova, Bielezova, Havlinova, Proksikova) completed the podium with bronze.

## Westwell in Action #BizziTeam

British fencers Lexie Craze, Melissa Jane, Nicole Saunders and Amy Westwell formed part of the field of 61 in the final Junior individual event. Westwell (V3D3) and Jane (V2D4) went through the first round but Saunders (V2D4) and Craze (V1D5) did not.



Lebor Waits #BizziTeam

## Jane & Westwell Side By Side

In the round of 64 Weber (GER) defeated Westwell 15-12 and Tranquille (FRA) beat Jane by the same score to end British hopes.



HUN On Route To Euro Title Against GER

## Aime (FRA) On Track To Title #BizziTeam

Amalia Aime (FRA) won the European title in this event beating Nisanur Erbil (TUR) in the final as Felice Berbon (GER) and Sugar Battai (HUN) claimed the bronze medals.



Junior Women's Team Epee Podium #BizziTeam

## Junior Women's Team Foil

The field of 17 teams included Great Britain's line up of Emily Beardmore, Georgia Silk, Carolina Stutchbury and Teagan Williams-Stewart. They received a bye through the round of 32 before facing Italy. Silk came on for Beardmore in the sixth leg but the team fell 45-32.

A bye through the 9-16 placings match, defeat to Poland 45-37 and victory against Turkey 45-33 meant the team finished in eleventh place.

## Junior Women's Sabre Podium #BizziTeam

**GB placings:** Westwell 35, Jane 41, Saunders 48 & Craze 53

## Junior Women's Team Epee

Great Britain lined up in a field of 20 with Imogen Bulman, Julia Caron, Hannah



Round the Corner ROU vs FRA Final #BizziTeam

Hungary (Corbu, Dinca, Sofran, Vasile) beat France (Audibert, Bonny, Pelletier, Rousseau) to the European crown and Ukraine (Budenko, Petrova, Poloziuk, Sopit) earned the bronze medal.



Junior Women's Team Foil Podium #BizziTeam



Slava! #BizziTeam

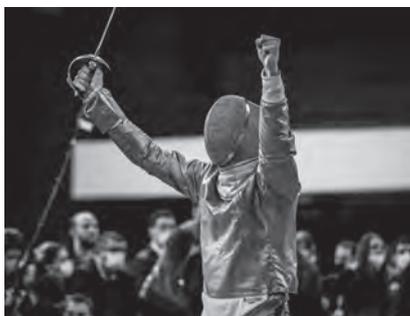
## Junior Men's Team Sabre

Samuel Allen, Max Cromie, Ian Ho and Darcy Holdsworth lined up for Great Britain in a field of 16 teams in this event. They lost 45-31 to France in the round of 16 before losing 45-34 to Romania and beating Belgium 45-38 to finish thirteenth.

Germany (Heathcock, Heathcock, Kuzmin, Meka) took the title beating Italy (Marciano, Nardella, Ottaviani, Torre) in the final. Bulgaria (Filev, Raikin, Stoychev, Zlatarov) secured the bronze medal.



GER Defeat ITA for Title



#BizziTeam



Junior Men's Team Sabre Podium  
#BizziTeam

### Junior Men's Team Epee

Great Britain's team of Alec Brooke, James Jeal, Jacob Mitchell and Joseph Walmsley were amongst a field of 22.

They beat Romania 45-33 in the round of 32 and then beat the Czech Republic 45-24,



Brooke Jumping Counter #BizziTeam



SUI Strike #BizziTeam

with Mitchell coming on for Brooke in the eighth leg. A solid 45-25 victory over Spain followed before the team came back from 15-6 down to beat France 45-40 in the semi-final.

Switzerland (Brochard, Erbetta, Hauri, Vineis) were just too strong for Great Britain in the final, winning 45-33 as the Italian team (Armaleo, Galassi, Mencarelli, Piatti) claimed bronze.



Junior Men's Team Epee Podium  
#BizziTeam

### Junior Men's Team Foil

Jaimie Cook, Joe Donaghue, Lachlan Jarvie and William Lonsdale represented Britain in the field of 17 teams in this event.

A bye through the round of 32 was followed by a 45-17 defeated at the hands of Denmark. Victories over Moldova 45-10, Israel 45-22 and Turkey 45-38 - where all four of the team played a part - resulted in a tenth place finish.

Italy (Bonato, Di Veroli, Lombardi, Martini) beat Poland (Jakubowski, Kaskow, Kwiatowski, Podralski) to the title in the final as France (Anane, Castanie, Chagnon, De Belval) claimed bronze.



GBR Team #BizziTeam



ITA Claim Another Foil Title #BizziTeam



Junior Men's Team Foil Podium #BizziTeam

### Junior Women's Team Sabre

Thirteen teams lined up for the last of the Junior team events in Serbia including Great Britain's Lexie Craze, Melissa Jane, Nicole Saunders and Amy Westwell.

Italy were too strong in the round of sixteen and beat the British team 45-18.



HUN Look On In Hope #BizziTeam



HUN Defeat FRA for Gold #BizziTeam



Junior Women's Team Sabre Podium  
#BizziTeam

They went on to lose 45-24 to Austria and 45-34 to Georgia to finish tenth.

Hungary (Battai, Beviz, Keszei, Szucs) took the last of the Junior European titles beating France (Aime, Girardin, Mouroux, Tranquille) in the final. Italy (Fusetti, Spica, Stefanello, Viale) collected the bronze medal.

Full Junior results [here](#).

# CADET EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022 REPORT

## Cadet Women's Foil

Great Britain's Megan Elliott, Isabella Johnson, Carolina Stutchbury and Amelie Tsang were part of the field of 77 in the Women's Foil individual event on the first day of the Cadet tournament. Stutchbury (V6D0), Tsang (V5D1), Elliott (V4D2) and Johnson (V3D3) all made it through the first round.



Isabella Johnson #BizziTeam



Molinari (ITA) On Way to Crown #BizziTeam

Stutchbury earned a bye through the round of 64 whilst Tsang beat Semarova (LAT) 15-9, Johnson lost 15-10 to Wojtas (POL) and Elliott went out 15-8 to Polonyi (HUN). Stutchbury & Tsang went on to beat Marosi (HUN) 15-6 and Wojtas (POL) 15-7, respectively before facing each other - a fight that Stutchbury won 15-4. Papp ended Stutchbury's day in the round of 8 15-14.



Cadet Women's Team Podium #BizziTeam

Jazmin Papp went on to claim silver losing the European title to Matilde Molnari (ITA) in the final as Sofia Giodani (ITA) and Alisa Isbir (TUR) claimed the bronze medals.

**GP placings:** Stutchbury 7, Tsang 11, Elliott 36 & Johnson 43

## Cadet Men's Sabre

The field of 69 in the Men's Sabre event included four British fencers, Thomas Heath, Ryuki Hiyama, Henry Martin and Zachary Woodward. All of them made it through the first round - Heath (V4D1),



Guilley Leaps Forward #BizziTeam



Heathcock (GER) and Coach #BizziTeam

Hiyama/Martin (V3D2) and Woodward (V3D3).

Heath was the only one to make it through the round of 64, beating Lazar (AUT) 15-11 as Kusak (POL) beat Hiyama 15-10, Ozturk (TUR) knocked out Woodward 15-8 and Martin was forced to withdraw. Kral (CZE) ended Heath's campaign 15-10 in the next round.



Cadet Men's Sabre Podium #BizziTeam

Colin Heathcock (GER) claimed the title beating Lucas Guilley (FRA) in the final. Frigyes Godo (HUN) and Tolga Aslan (TUR) picked up the bronze medals.

**GB placings:** Heath 21, Martin 35, Hiyama 39 & Woodward 41

## Cadet Men's Foil

Jaimie Cook, David Sosnov, Callum Penman and Nye Ulferts Kilpatrick lined up for Great Britain in a field of 77 in this event. In the first round Cook won all his fights to claim top seed for the direct elimination whilst Sosnov (V5D1), Penman (V4D2) and Ulferts Kilpatrick (V4D2) also progressed.

Cook earned a bye through the round of 64 whilst Sosnov defeated Vlastic (CRO) 15-8, Penman beat Tzovanis (GRE) 15-8 but Lancaric (SVK) edged Ulferts Kilpatrick



David Sosnov in Action #BizziTeam



Cook vs Budahazy (HUN) in Semis  
#BizziTeam

15-14. In the next round Cook went through 15-11 against De Cristofaro (ITA), Sosnov and Penman joined him beating Cobanoglu (TUR) 15-10 and Vaaben (DEN) 15-9, respectively. All three continued through to the quarterfinals as Cook took out Dijkstra (NED) 15-5, Sosnov beat Helmy-Cocoynacq (FRA) 15-11 and Penman defeated Pradel (FRA) 15-13. Cook made it through to the medal matches beating teammate Penman 15-13 as Sosnov was also eliminated 15-13 by Balint (HUN).



Cadet Men's Foil Podium #BizziTeam

Cook's day ended in the semi-final 15-13 at the hands of Ambrus Budahazy (HUN), who went on to claim the gold medal beating his teammate Almos Balint in the final. Numa Crist (FRA) shared the bronze medal position with Cook.

**GB placings:** Cook 3, Sosnov 6, Penman 7 & Ulferts Kilpatrick 34

### Cadet Women's Epee

The field of 97 in this event included British fencers Millie Andrews, Charlotte Lattanzio,



Lebor vs Kravets (ISR) #BizziTeam



Kravets (ISR) vs Conrad (UKR) #BizziTeam

Hannah Lebor and Lauren Ryder-Garcia. Lebor (V3D2), Ryder-Garcia (V2D3) made it through the first round of poules but Andrews (V1D4) and Lattanzio (V0D5) did not.

Lebor earned bye through the round of 128 but Ryder-Garcia went out 15-4 to Marx (GER). Lebor went on to make the round of 16, beating Sont (ROU) 14-13 and Mortecrette (FRA) 15-11 before losing 15-12 to Kravets (ISR).



Cadet Women's Epee Podium #BizziTeam

In the end Alexandra Kravets (ISR) claimed the silver medal losing to Greta Gachalyi (HUN) in the final as Sofiya Prosina (LAT) and Emili Conrad (UKR) collected the bronze medals.

**GB placings:** Lebor 14, Ryder-Garcia 65= Andrews 83 and Lattanzio 91

### Cadet Men's Epee

Alec Brooke, Cador Beautyman, Liam Kew and David Perkins lined up for Britain in the Men's Epee field of 110. Brooke (V6D0), Liam Kew (V3D3) and David Perkins (V3D3) went through the first round but Beautyman (V2D4) did not make the cut.



Rizzi (ITA) vs Malvik (NOR) Semi #BizziTeam



Cadet Men's Epee Podium with Coaches  
#BizziTeam

Brooke received a bye through the 128 but was the only GB fencer to make it through as Markkula (FIN) defeated Kew 15-9 and Voelund (DEN) edged Perkins 14-13. It was another medal-winning day for Brooke as he went on to make the semi-finals with victories over Corbu (ROU) 15-11, Widmer (SUI) 15-9, Pietrobelli (ITA) 15-14 and Lassik (EST) 15-5. He claimed the bronze - after losing 15-7 to Alon Sarid (ISR) - a position he shared with Alexander Malvik (NOR). Sarid lost out in the final to Jacop Rizzi (ITA).

**GB placings:** Brooke 3, Perkins 67, Kew 69 & Beautyman 88

### Cadet Women's Sabre

The field of 57 in this event included another four British fencers, Eleanor Blackledge, Bethany Brierley, Lexie Craze and Melissa Jane. They all progressed to the elimination stages - Craze (V4D1), Blackledge (V4D2), Brierley (V2D3) and Jane (V3D3).



Lexie Craze #BizziTeam

Craze and Blackledge earned byes through the round of 64 and Brierley joined them with victory over Theodosi (GRE) 15-11 but Jane went out, losing to Nitschmann (GER). Blackledge wasn't able to go further, losing to Cermen (TUR) 15-12. Craze made the round of 16, defeating Kozłowska (POL) 15-8 before losing 15-11 to Chabrol (FRA).



**Cadet Women's Team Epee Podium**  
#BizziTeam

Linares Urbina, Lozano Porras, Torrego Alvarez in the final as Israel (Cohen, Freireich, Kravets, Yizhaki) clinched the bronze medal.

### Cadet Women's Team Foil

The 17 teams in this event included Great Britain's Megan Elliott, Isabella Johnson, Carolina Stutchbury and Amelie Tsang. All four played a part as they went on to claim the bronze medal, beating Spain 45-24 and Israel 45-33 before narrowly losing to Italy 45-44 and going on to beat Hungary 45-19 in the bronze play-off.

It was gold for Italy (Bibite, Collini, Giordani, Molinari) who beat Turkey (Anbarlilar, Ay, Durkan, Isbir) in the final.



**ITA vs TUR Final** #BizziTeam



**Cadet Women's Sabre Podium** #BizziTeam

Anna Spiesz (HUN) took the final Cadet European title beating Martina Giancola (ITA) in the final as Tiziana Nitschmann (GER) and Maria Alexe (ROU) completed the podium.

**GB placings:** Craze 9, Blackledge 20, Brierley 31 & Jane 34

### Cadet Women's Team Epee

Millie Andrews, Charlotte Lattanzio, Hannah Lebor and Lauren Ryder-Garcia teamed up for Great Britain in a field of 23 for this event. They lost out 45-27 to Ukraine in the round of 32 as all four British fencers played their part in finishing nineteenth.

Italy (Cristofolletto, Orso, Treglia, Zogno) struck gold, beating Spain (Gomez Lopez,



**GBR Team**



**ITA vs ESP Final**



**Italian Job Done** #BizziTeam



**Cadet Women's Team Foil Podium**  
#BizziTeam

### Cadet Men's Team Sabre

Thomas Heath, Ryuki Hiyama, Henry Martin and Zachary Woodward formed the British team in the field of 14 for this event. They lost to Spain 45-34 in the round of 16 before beating Belgium 45-35 and the Czech Republic 45-41 to finish ninth.

Hungary (Godo, Hanzely, Pech, Vajda) claimed the European title, beating France (Coudrec, Guilley, Pogu, Scelles) in the final as Romania (Cidu, Enache, Gheorghe, Radu) completed the podium.



**HUN vs FRA For Gold** #BizziTeam



**Cadet Men's Team Sabre Podium**  
#BizziTeam

### Cadet Men's Team Epee

Twenty-five teams took to the field in this event including the Great Britain foursome of Cador Beautyman, Alec Brooke, Liam Kew and David Perkins. They lost out to Greece 45-37 in the round of 32 to finish twentieth.



**HUN vs ITA Final** #BizziTeam



Forza Italia #BizziTeam



Cook vs HUN Final #BizziTeam



Cadet Men's Team Epee podium  
#BizziTeam

Italy (Galassi, Mastomarin, Pietrobelli, Rizzi) beat Hungary (Farkas, Horvath, Ko, Pelle) to the European title as Israel (Baruch, Liman, Sarid, Segal) finished with the bronze medal.

### Cadet Men's Team Foil



Sosnov In Close Quarters #BizziTeam



Cadet Men's Team Foil Podium #BizziTeam



CMTF GBR Team with Medals #BizziTeam

Jaimie Cook, Callum Penman, David Penman and Nye Ulferts Kilpatrick teamed up for Great Britain in a field of 17 for this event and had a bye through the round of 32. The quartet were all involved in the effort to claim silver on the last day in Novi Sad. They beat Austria 45-19, Latvia 45-27 and Italy 45-33 before losing 45-42 to Hungary (Bagdany, Balint, Budahazy, Horvath) in the final. France (Crist, De Belval, Helmy-Cocoynacq, Pradel) claimed the bronze medal.

### Cadet Women's Team Sabre

The last event in Serbia was the Women's Team Sabre as Great Britain - Bethany Brierley, Eleanor Blackledge, Lexie Craze and Melissa Jane - lined up in a field of eleven. A bye through the first round was followed by defeat to France 45-38. A win against Spain 45-44 followed by a loss to Germany 45-41 results in a sixth place finish.

Hungary (Bognar, Domonkos, Kovacs, Spiesz) claimed the final European title in Novi Sad, beating Romania (Alexe, Benciu, Mitrus, Stan) in the final as France (Chabrol, Manga, Martinez Almansa, Patrice) completed the podium.

Full results: [European Cadet Championship \(fencingtimelive.com\)](https://www.fencingtimelive.com)



GBR Team & Coaches #BizziTeam

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# AT HOME WITH THE STUTCHBURYS

## Siân is Balancing Probabilities with Junior European Champion Carolina Stutchbury

*I never fail to be in awe of fencers who get up and train, who train and train and train some more, of fencers who compete and compete and - win or lose - compete again. The money, the time, the travelling is always extraordinary. But that goes another several notches up again as I meet GBR Cadet, Junior and Senior Champion Foilist Carolina Stutchbury.*

*Carolina, along with her parents Martin and Joanna, live in Atlanta, Georgia in the US. To compete for Great Britain means a lot of transatlantic flights, a lot of juggled online school work, a lot of jet lag and a lot of so many other things but that hasn't stopped, or even slowed, this 16 year-old from taking a Cadet, Junior and Senior grand slam of domestic titles this season as well as becoming the European Junior Women's Foil Champion.*

*First, as the video screen flickers to life, it is Carolina's mother who is sitting there looking back at me. Joanna's smile is wide and warm and she makes me feel at ease immediately. My first question is to ask her what kind of considerations she has when it comes to parenting Carolina. "Ooh" sighs Joanna "there is no one word, really. Carolina just gets on with it. She just does everything herself. She qualified for the US Maths Olympiad in the top 2% in the country. She sat it while she was in the UK. At midnight ..."*

*Carolina bursts into the room, and I go straight in with congratulating this 16 year-old, last-year Cadet on sweeping the tableau to win the JWF European title in Novi Sad, Serbia. She had made it look effortless, easy even. Carolina contradicts*



*Carolina in Action #denpollitt*



*GBR Golden Girl #denpollitt*

*brightly, with a low giggle "To be honest, I was super-scared as my coach wasn't there. We'd missed our plane the day before and I'd had 2-3 hours sleep. I'd had to do my Covid test and equipment check on the morning of the competition and although I won my first poule fight, I felt I wasn't moving right."*

*To understand Carolina, it helps to chat to her as equally about her maths studies as it does her fencing. Her favourite mathematical discipline is problem-solving. She explains that it gives her an appetite to try and keep on trying, never giving up. "When the odds are stacked against me" she says "I fence better. I know that the likelihood on paper of me getting six points in a row is not very high, but to keep getting one point at a time to move on and get the next point - well that's a different kind of probability."*

*Is she a precision-planner when it comes to her fencing then?*

*"No, I'm more open-minded. I just look forward and work towards the next thing which for me now is Cadet and Junior Worlds in Dubai in April. In the summer I think I'll probably try some senior tournaments."*

*Carolina did compete for GB in her first senior World Cup in Saint Maur France*

*in December 2021 where she made the second day of the individual. At the moment, whatever she turns her focus to seems to be working out well. However, what is very liberating about Carolina is her ability not to imprison herself in a timeline of attainment where, say, one result follows on from another, and if it is not as great as the last, then it is viewed in terms of loss and failure. She talks me through her Junior win but focuses more on how she did better against an opponent she had previously struggled with, or on her favourite move of the whole tournament which was a flèche flick in her very first direct elimination bout.*

*Carolina marks this sentiment as a key factor in her bronze medal win in Cadet Women's Foil Team at the Euros. "I am just not the kind of person to get upset at*



*Novi Sad JWF Semi*

losing or if someone in my team loses their match. I hate to lose but if I fixate on it then it will carry on affecting me negatively, but if I choose to learn from it then I can take it as a positive.”

Carolina recounts how exciting it was to win that bronze team medal with everyone else in her team. After an extremely closely-contested semi-final against Italy where GBR conceded 45-44, Carolina and her teammates didn't dwell on what had been but came bouncing back with vigour against Hungary to make the podium with a 45-19 victory.

In the CWF individual, Carolina finished in the top 8 after being knocked out - again - by the narrowest of margins 15-14. “Looking back I didn't do anything wrong in that match and after being down against my opponent, I brought it back to 14-13 which I am proud of.”

When she won the Junior individual, Carolina says that everyone told her that she was very quiet and they couldn't hear her celebrating. She is a little bemused at that, saying “I did scream but it was just that everyone else was screaming more loudly than me!”

I bet they were. I ask her if she feels the burden of now being the golden girl and a role model within the sport in Britain. It turns out that Carolina has already very quietly assumed this mantle. To expand, Joanna softly interrupts with her broad, generous smile. “In lockdown, they had closed all the fencing halls here and so Carolina - who was doing a bit of maths tutoring at a local centre - took fencers to the park and ran them through fencing fitness and all their preparations while their parents just sat in their cars separately and watched. She did these sessions for everyone between about 7 and 16 years old.”

Joanna tells me how proud she is and I realise during our entire time talking, her gaze and her smile has been concentrated on her daughter. She remarks that “I don't worry about the long-term. Each day is new, each day is different. As long as Carolina continues to enjoy her fencing, then we will keep going to support her.”

Carolina has the same, unadorned work ethic, saying modestly “I am a ‘fencing try-hard’. Whatever I enjoy, whatever I love, then that is what I will dedicate myself to.”



### Happy to be Holding Title

I wonder silently to myself whether it is just a question of Carolina ‘trying hard’ when it comes to competing. I do, though, wonder out loud whether there is anything that Joanna says to Carolina when she's fencing, by way of focus or support. They both look at one another with a knowing giggle. Joanna says “Yes I say ‘slowly, slowly, patience’ in Polish. Sometimes she just goes at too much of a pace!” A little verbal urging is something that doesn't bother Carolina. From what she says to me about working with her coach, Dmitri Romankov at Epic Fencing Club in Atlanta, he too injects his coaching and support with emotion. Indeed the Stutchburys seem to embrace a kind easy openness. Even on the video call, they have afforded me such a heartfelt, cosy welcome, allowing me to get an intimate snapshot of their family life and workings, it is as though I had been invited round to sit on their comfiest chair. And Carolina's observation earlier about love and dedication and working hard takes

me back to something her dad, Martin said to me at the outset when we were on a transatlantic telephone call.

He told me that in becoming a parent for the first time, he was - like so many of us - in a bit of a panic so he took up reading studies on child rearing and psychology. In one paper he came across, the study showed that children who are told that their achievements are down to sheer hard work and effort will always go on to do better than others in their peer group who are told accolades are down to them being clever or talented. In other words, praise what the individual does by applauding the effort rather than the outcome.

In the short term, by the time this article is published, you will have probably seen Miss Stutchbury competing very successfully at the Junior and Cadet Worlds - following a time spent chilling out after Euros, listening to music and hanging out with her friends as well as picking up with her school work, tackling studies specific to problem-solving while training for the tournament.

It is a busy schedule for sure but before our video call comes to an end, she tells me, with characteristically simple clarity, that it is a modus operandi that she has learned to count on. “I just always carry on moving forward because that way I reckon something will probably work out.”

I think she's probably right and, the odds are, something most probably will.



# FENCING ECOSYSTEMATICALLY

Investigating how to make the  
fencing engine go faster - automatic,  
hydromatic or ecosystematic?

By Siân Hughes Pollitt



Joint Pentathlon & Fencing Camp at Bath Uni

Steve Kemp's idea of embarking on a conversation is to ask outright, "28 or 32?"

The sauce of the man.

However he doesn't mean me. He's referring to which Olympics the fencer he's talking to might have in mind: Los Angeles 2028 or Brisbane 2032?

Steve counts on any one athlete being able to identify their destination, then figuring out how to construct the road map to get there, or as far along as they can hope. So too, the ADP can shape surroundings - effectively moulding a bespoke ecosystem with every single fencer performing and interacting as part of an interconnected community. Stronger individually; stronger as a team.

Interest piqued, I chat to Ian Lichfield. My earliest memory of Coach Lichfield was at the 2014 BYCs where he'd been coaching a U12 male foilist. Along the tableau, his fencer got knocked out - only to patiently remain at the piste after everyone else had gone - to listen to Ian run him through a full debrief on the match.

Ian summons up precisely what he said to that U12 that day and why. His fencer had been outwitted by a left-handed opponent - something they'd been finding tricky. "Debriefs are very powerful" suggests Ian. "There's nothing worse as a fencer than not understanding why something hasn't worked. If, as a coach, you storm off from the piste, or just walk away, you're conveying a negative message. If you stay with the fencer, you can help them reframe - relay what there is to learn from losing. That's information they can build on."



Andrews Translates Learning #BizziTeam

How do the fencers themselves see it? Junior Women's Foilist, Amanda Mond tells me that out of all her competition trips, the stand-out was Timisoara JWC in November 2021. In great part, she says, this was down to the fact that Steve Kemp took the opportunity to debrief all GBR athletes after the individual event. For Amanda, Steve noted how well she was operating with her club-mate, Georgia Gardner. He commended both of them for being one another's support system, acting as each other's rock. "Just taking the time to run us through some positives and encourage us to keep doing stuff that was working gave me the best sense of team I had ever experienced", confirms Amanda.

Ian stresses the importance of being honest with the athletes and the athletes being honest with themselves as a pivotal catalyst in transforming any training or competition room into a constructive learning habitat. While such places need to act as safe spaces they should still chime with the demands of fencing as a sport with, as Ian terms it, 'appropriate stretch and challenge'.

Enter Pentathlon GB. Having failed to win medals at Rio 2016, this five-discipline sport felt compelled to undertake its own 'cultural health check'. In other words, they'd reflected on what kind of stretch and challenge they needed to introduce to make necessary gains and had concluded that they had to work more as a team. This is when their current Performance Coach, Michal Janca, came on board, and in February 2021, ADP epee athletes paired with pentathletes preparing for Tokyo to stage a training camp steeped in a team ethos, where they shared the inner workings of their own game to advantage their opponent, in a never-ending loop of improvement and self-improvement.

Michal talks of the natural contradiction in trying to retain your own skills and strategies with the need to be more open to enhancing your opponent's fencing so that they in turn will enhance your fencing too. But as he stood and watched the training unfold, the rewards of cooperation were evident. "At the camps with BF, I have seen breakthroughs that have come about by having a larger group of epeeists fence



Amanda & Georgia with their favourite BF Mascot

together. Ours is a small sport; pentathletes know one another and roughly know their opponent's response. That can mean they fixate on the opponent, rather than on what they need to do to hit whoever they're fencing with the right move at the right moment."

Exposure to different sparring partners, thereby adjusting to unknowns and bettering technique, added to which athletes share what it takes to get better - all this is key. It certainly boosted Kate French - Pentathlon GB's women's gold medalist in Tokyo - who set a new world record for pentathlon fencing after the camps with 31 wins out of 35 intensely pressurised one-hit matches.

What did our BF fencers get out of it? First, it was getting through the doors at Bath University - a facility rooted in world class values, with world class behaviours, producing world class performances. Picking up on the merits of the exercise, Senior Men's Epeeist, Ben Andrews agrees that fencing - then via an elite lockdown exemption - with athletes that went on to win gold, was such a bonus; while also feeling they helped contribute to the Olympic success. Going on to explain how at first he was sceptical about whether a one-hit pentathlon fencing regime would improve his own game, he reveals the experience gave him fresh perspectives - particularly when the athletes were sharing insights on how to get the hit. "It reminded me what the main goal should be. We should be using the domestic circuit to see the bigger picture - to grow the level for international competitions."

Even more compelling is when Ben mentions how the athletes begin to access an inner environment - a headspace where they can take these newly-acquired behaviours wherever they travel. At an ADP camp in Manchester soon after, the epeeists drove the culture in a more testing

direction. Team matches were held where the fencers had to choose an opponent, then tell their rival what they were using to hit them.

Ben says this sudden switch could prove a bit gnarly to start with if the two athletes weren't buying into the idea together at the same time. But - he continues - if one athlete stuck with it, staying open and honest, the other invariably adapted. "If you generate answers for someone's best move, you can use that internationally, guaranteeing that you'll not be getting hit twice with the same touch because you've learned to adapt. You can then bring that rapid reaction intensity back to the domestic circuit and so on." Ben finishes succinctly, "We can only start to leapfrog if we help each other."

From the coaches point of view, Michal and Ian both told me about the benefits of single-hit pentathlon fencing. Really when we think about it, all fencing is single-hit fencing. Sure, we know that when the score is 4-4 in poules or 14-14 in DEs, that one hit is a life or death touch. "But so it is during the entire match - at 3-3, 7-7, 9-9 - that one hit will help you get ahead, draw you nearer to the winning line," emphasises Ian. "If you process the fight hit-by-hit, then you can reset at every point. It is training in the art of being focussed."

Overall, the spirit of helping teammates, combined with the ability to adapt, fosters development, according to Steve. Recalling Timisoara, and more latterly the Zagreb JWC, he pays tribute to what fencers can achieve when allowed to unleash their inner architect and design a world of their making. In Zagreb, Steve was struck by how the women foilists decided not to leave the room, even when they'd been eliminated. "Whatever their own performances, they stayed to the end. That's resilience - that's character - to have a bad day yourself but

be able to switch it off to support your squad."

Impressed by the fencers' steadfastness, Steve pinpoints how the ADP are seeing cleverer behaviours lifting one and all. "It's not just about being selfless, about showing commitment to team, these athletes are elevating themselves to a greater level of understanding about what's happening piste to piste, fight to fight. They're acting as one another's coaches. The fencers themselves take control and steer the day in the direction they want, making intelligent choices that benefit the individuals and the collective."

Steve views this as the trick of interconnectedness. Joining forces - with nobody sacrificing individuality yet still lending their power to the endeavour; this means everyone enjoys greater growth. ADP athletes have started to make the effort and begun to see the proof.

Amanda pops me over a selfie of her, Steve and Georgia in Zagreb, with the accompanying message: "Steve wants you to know this was taken at 4am before he could put on his make-up"... Always the truth-bomber, Steve is correct: I cannot detect even a hint of eyeliner. What I do see clearly, though, is that he's absolutely beaming while Amanda and Georgia are looking for all the world like they're Euro-tripping with their favourite mascot - all of them having that very specific, very lovely kind of blast known as fencing.

No wonder they're radiating happiness; it must feel pretty awesome living the fencing life with like-minded peeps in an ecosystem of your own combined creation.



Sharing Tips

# MISTER TRIANGULAR TRUTHS AND A VISION OF FENCING LAND

## Siân talks to BF's Head of People and Culture about the geometry of transformation

The title of this article doesn't say so much about Dusty Miller, British Fencing's Head Of People and Culture but rather more about You Lot who'll fall for a wacky headline any day of the week. But now I've got you ensnared, please stay awhile. You'll emerge - we will all emerge - better-informed for it. Honest.

You find me, not for the first time, in search of Dusty and I am wandering around the colossal parallel kingdom otherwise known as The English Institute of Sport at Bisham Abbey. I head for the distinguished Gothic lodge house. When I say who I'm looking for, a group of guys repeat back at me "Dusty Miller?" then one shouts "That's me!" Hilarious. Turns out they're all rugby players.

Three buildings later, the unflappable Dusty comes to collect me from the reception of the National Sports Centre where he has been grafting the day long. Charged with bringing about positive change within the sporting worlds he operates in, what Dusty is working with as pertains to our jolly old sphere of swordplay is a community somewhat divided - a bunch of folks who talk about the NGB in the third person, always as a separate entity.

What he wants to change it to is a more united front. "If BF get this right", asserts Dusty "we can bring about a language change where 'they' becomes 'we', 'I' becomes 'us'. It's all about the idea that we at British Fencing are 'in service of' the participant, the coach and the parent. We are fencer-centred, development-driven and competition-supported so that we can build an environment which produces a lifelong enjoyment of the sport - together."

Somehow, while waxing lyrical, Dusty has gone from being seated at the little round table in the meeting room to standing by a whiteboard. 'Please God, don't draw me

a diagram' I think to myself as he starts to scribble numbers, capital letters and lines all over the shop. I don't know about you, but I feel compelled to guess what these letters stand for before he's even started to explain, like I am in some version of Fencing Journalist Blockbusters ("I'll have a 'P' please Dusty").

"Starting Cadets", Dusty expounds with a whoosh of the black marker pen "and the ADP want the athlete to come into a Foundation stage and work to get to a standard where they are having a good time and reaping the benefits. It might be the first time they're training outside their club and we'd like the coaches and parents to stand by that philosophy too."

Dusty continues to detail how the foundation level gives way to the Cadet's next season and the next tier: Experience, where the fencer may have graduated to doing one or two European competitions in the calendar. By the Cadet's third season in the ADP, experience is transforming into Performance. The fencer will typically be performing at their peak and will need more support from their coach and

from their parents. The same principle is then repeated in Juniors: Foundation, Experience, Performance - thereby socialising the athlete into the right kind of rhythms and routines so that they can be a better fencer.

He then starts sketching out a dreaded diagram, it's a triangle with letters at each of its angles. I start to wonder whether if I were to shout for help from the rugby players, they'd come and rescue me, or at least provide enough of a distraction by laughing loudly at their own jokes so I could nip out of the side door down the long corridor, down another long corridor, down some steps, down some more steps then out of the turnstile gates out into the ...

I decide to stay put for the geometry lesson.

It turns out that the triangle is actually a more than logical and cute little expansion on the 'in service of' theme. At one angle is the ADP in the form of an ADP coach, another is the personal coach, the third is mum and dad, and the fencing athlete is within the triangle itself.

"From my perspective", Dusty clarifies "the most important community helping the athlete is their personal coach. Athletes perform; coaches do not. We need to work on how we can come together to provide the best possible experience so that we can help guide the fencer to discover the performance in them that we know they have."



He goes on, bringing in The Support Network of Mum and Dad who Dusty feels are key to enabling their fencers to 'thrive rather than just survive'. "With parents, it's about how we can work to co-create meaningful experiences within the sport so that the athletes develop fortitude, resilience and ..."

Apologies. We're not going to know what Dusty's third key athlete attribute is, because I am interrupting, and not with one question but several.

First I ask him, if the fencing community is already somewhat divided, how achievable this strategy will prove to be. Dusty drops rather a fantastic wisdom bomb at this point. "We need to maximise the emotional drivers to bring about transformational behaviours. If we persist in transactional behaviours only negative behaviours will show themselves." What he is saying is that the more we go for a constant push-pull approach, where the I is pitched against the You, where if I give you something, you have to give me something in return... that will end up in limited selfish experiences that will never be to the ultimate nurture and benefit of the fencer.

I also ask if the ADP is already assembled ready and waiting, to welcome personal coaches, parents and the athlete into this working scenario. Dusty confirms that BF is starting to have conversations with ADP coaches and to project structure onto what already exists. He does point to what has been working well so far. The green shoots of the field previously ploughed have started to show at the Cadet and Junior European Championships in Novi Sad. Dusty acknowledges that there are many more fields and territories to furrow but that BF have "to hold firm to the tiller, and stay with conviction on the path they are trying to plot while still trying to respond dynamically to athlete development."

Dusty also highlights the green shoots of change in parents who praise their children's application rather than their achievements and in the coaches who go on courses so they can be a better functioning cog of the coaching wheel. He pays tribute to Steve Kemp who as Head of Pathways is, Dusty affirms "laser-focused and passionate in creating an environment that is in service of the growth of fencers and coaches, working round-the-clock to

have conversations that will bring about a level of understanding of what BF are trying to achieve in a community that is often so keen to disprove him."

It is clear where Dusty's emphasis lies. The concept of: 'In service of' is distinct from 'at the service of'. Being at someone's service means being there to help them temporarily or periodically. In service of, as ex-Naval Lieutenant Dusty Miller knows from experience, is being there. To help. All the time.

Then I cut to the chase. "Do you think that we all forget that we should be working for British Fencing - not in terms of the NGB - but more in terms of working for fencing in Britain, and the entirety of that community?"

"Yes", replies Dusty "I do."

But he does add a particular emphasis: that fencing is "full of people who care", and he is hoping that we can all get on board to spend a lot more 'us time' together, than 'me time' alone. It's crucial because there's a great deal to go at. The senior fencing space needs attention and that is why, and has been why, you'll have heard less about the ADP being some kind of bespoke kids club and more of the long-term integrated pathway through fencing that excites stakeholders like UK Sport, and again be

more conducive to identify as a cohesive community than a collection of separate parts.

Dusty returns to the common factor in this thinking - that of 'World Class Foundations'. He says that we all should want these, at every level, all the time. It is what will make us all better coaches, parents and athletes who are at the top of our game and know how to turn challenges into a wealth of learning that can enrich us going forward into every ambition we have in the sport.

By now, I've forgotten myself and am quite relishing the unpacking of which personal pronoun to lead the conversation with, as well as one of my only remembered forays into geometry where I haven't stuck up my hand to ask to go to the loo. The added value I can personally offer to any given subject is never mathematical, but I gear up and press Dusty to elaborate on the perfect fencing trinity and the qualities of his thesis. Is the triangle equilateral, isosceles or obtuse?

"Just a simple triangle" replies Dusty with a smile. "No need to overcomplicate it."



# HEY SISTER, GO SISTER!

**A mindset, a value or a viewpoint? Beth Davidson tells The Sword about her search to define and refine the soul of On-Guard Sister**

**On-Guard Sister; Pronoun; Girls / Ladies / Women ready to fence!**

On-Guard Sister inherited its name from a group of Muslim women, who were coming together for a boxing project called Knock-Out Sister, looking to try a new sport; so they contacted me about fencing. Their ambition was more than just participation. It was a want to also lead activities and offer classes to their community in Newcastle. Suitability, cost, and availability of formal British Fencing courses meant a different tack was needed and funding was secured to design a leadership programme split into 4 sessions that followed my MAD-ER system of Movement, Attack, Defence - Environment and Rules. Each fencing skill had a game attached to develop technique while understanding tactics, with rules being gradually introduced at each stage, adapting to the environments the group would be working in.

We didn't think we were doing anything revolutionary but the enthusiasm of this group and their ability to teach a traditionally perceived complex sport was a revelation. We all thrived in a space devoid of judgement, and I was encouraged to reflect on my personal and others' judgments of me as a fencer and coach. It created big questions about gender experiences and opportunity in fencing.



The Sisters Set Forth

My own weapon, women's sabre, was the last weapon to become a World Class sport and in the UK we have only had our own weapon ranking events since 1998.

North East Region England Fencing applied and were successful in a funding application to Sport England's This Girl Can grant to evolve to the next stage, partnering with Gurlington Fencing Club led by Mumtaz Khan who started life with British Fencing's Muslim Girls Fence. The aim was to bring the two groups together and fence, creating a valuable connection from local in-house skills development to the wider competitive environment. I wanted to work alongside another female fencing coach so there was the potential to share the process and replicate best practice in other clubs. ADP and West Fife coach, Lorraine Rose joined the rest of the 'Sisters' and we set a date and a venue ... then the pandemic hit!

The impact of lockdown not only stopped our ability to deliver the project, but I also lost connections with those original Northeast Sisters. So as soon as we were able to open our salle doors there was a big recruitment drive. Female only fencing sessions at Durham Fencing Centre were tentatively advertised, not knowing if we could establish a new group in time! To our surprise the classes were filling, a mixture of friends and work colleagues, from mixed ethnicities, all looking for something new and an activity just for themselves. The programme was also growing in other ways. A women's group GRACE from Oldham found out about On-Guard Sister from coach Mumtaz and wanted to be involved.

Our next big decision was the format. Competition? Training day? Foil, epee or sabre? Gurlington Fencing Club were training with foils. We didn't have enough funding for referees - making foil and sabre intimidating to self-officiate. Epee became the logical choice! The next challenge was equipment. Combining resources from the NE Region, Muslim Girls Fence and Manchester Fencing Centre there was enough kit to wear; but weapons and body wires? We had enough for each piste. So that was the solution; place two epees with body wires attached into the spool so each



fencer could pick up, clip on, and wrap the wire around the arm.

For many new to fencing or generally in sport, the word 'competition' presented a lot of bad memories of school sport's days. So an event that didn't conjure potentially negative feelings was important. This was to be a day of fencing with others of similar experience and learning to apply skills and tactics without fear of losing. This now became a 'Spar Day!' The timetable was simplified to self-refereed poules of four or five with three minutes of play and three to swap over, all controlled by a gong. The Spar Day format was flexible to allow for any childcare duties or visit the temporary Prayer Room - crucial inclusive requirements.

In essence, it was a celebration of women who represented their community and personality, escaping from the family, work, and day to day stresses ... and who got to fence!

Website <https://onguardsister.teamapp.com/>



A New Fencing Community

# A STORY TO TELL

## Getting to the point with Olympic fencer and children's author Eloise Smith

By Siân Hughes Pollitt

We are familiar with the saying that 'everyone has a book in them', and it is true of GBR Olympic Women's Foilist now turned children's novelist, Eloise Smith who is certainly made of the write stuff.

Eloise started fencing - aged 7 - with Ziemek Wojciechowski, saying that both the discipline of the sport and the influence of her coach taught her to plan, realise and execute her aims, ambitions and dreams in a purposeful, straightforward way.

By the time she was 11 or 12, Eloise was competing. By 14, she had declared her designs on competing at a future Olympics. Aged 18 she went to study English at Oxford, graduating at 21, then jetting off to Sydney in 2000 having qualified to represent GBR at the Games of the XXVII Olympiad by the time she was 22. A rollercoaster of a life spent working in advertising and becoming a mother ensued with Eloise starting to write her debut children's novel twenty years later in the spring of 2020.

That book is now about to hit the shelves on 5 May. 'Sister to a Star' tells the tale of polar-opposite twins, Evie and Talullah. Evie is feisty and non-conformist. Meanwhile her twin Talullah is the other side of the coin, fitting more with the female teenage stereotype.

"Tallulah" says Eloise "is the kind of girl to feel happy in a silver tutu. She's won a part in a Hollywood movie and enjoys the glamour and the attention. Meanwhile Evie is a wilder, more visceral character who has taken up fencing and doesn't fit our social norms of femininity."

Eloise confirms that she's chosen to pen children's books because, as this kind of fiction is there to always teach something, you have to be responsible about your messaging as a writer. Plus, when a child herself, reading proved to be Eloise's secret special friend, allowing her a chance to escape. Thirdly, the fact that children are ruthless when it comes to the remotest



possibility of being bored by fiction kept Eloise on her author's toes. "I too am an impatient reader so it means I am an impatient writer. I write stories like I live life and how I want life to be, like a drama unfolding at pace."

I have read extracts of the novel. The text is delightfully dynamic - the words dancing and colliding in a feast of adventurous fun for the reader. Although aimed at the 9-12 years age group, I (some 40+ years north of that), could happily lose myself in it as the story is packed with fencing set pieces, fencing-based movie stunts and daredevil duelling as Evie develops into "a true swashbuckling cut-and-thrusting, chandelier-swinging fencer."

Fencing in bucket-loads, the story of Evie and Tallulah also delves into the theme of sibling rivalry. The book's dedication is "To siblings everywhere. Because together the world is less lonely, and the shadows less dark." - a key message that Eloise expands by addressing the flip-side of unity: that of the natural envy that can accompany any rivalry or competitiveness. As the character Evie battles with the green-eyed monster, her grandmother tells her, 'Jealousy is a terrible thing, Evie. It'll steal anything you let it'.

And if you have an appetite for Evie's gran's wisdom, then prepare yourself for 'Monsieur'. The fictional Maestro of 'Sister to a Star' is as Eloise observes "as French as a croissant in a beret." Running 'Monsieur's Academy of Stunt Fencing', his fencing school is 'where the crème de la crème learn the fine art of movie fencing'. Monsieur drops many a shrewd nugget of maestro gold, such as 'Just be the best you. Don't worry about everyone else'. My particular favourite is his pithy 'A parry like that would not put off a mosquito'.

As we talk about the book, Eloise has been peppering her conversation with some personal details. She has two children, ages 8 and 10, whom she takes to fence with Ziemek at his club ZFW. Given the characters in her book are twin sisters, I



assume she has daughters? “No, I have two BOYS!” she says emphatically.

The penny drops. Eloise hasn't written this book with her own children in mind. She has translated her own lived experience onto the page.

“Yes”, she muses. “It was in some respects a strange and lonely road doing all my fencing when I was growing up. Sometimes I would ask myself ‘Am I the odd-one-out or a hero?’; and there is an element of trying to connect my understanding of being a woman with sword-fighting.”

Hence the twin protagonists - the two sides of the same coin, allowing Eloise to examine conflicting yet complementary aspects of the female persona yet still inject a huge amount of excitement into a plot that urges its readers to ‘love more and fight less’ - unless, that is, your famous twin has just so happened to have been kidnapped from the studio lot ... Spoiler alert! I am about to reveal too much.



The writing of ‘Sister to a Star’ certainly rings with Eloise’s sheer joie de vivre. I remark that not once in detailing her life and achievements to me has she ever mentioned the word ‘pressure’. Whenever I catch her slightly off guard in our Zoom interview, Eloise turns her face to gaze out of a large sash window to her right, providing moments for me to study a writer whose specialty is always to be observing others. The light from the window illuminates her face, and I see her eyes searching through her memories and thoughts.

Eloise turns back to the screen, replying with idiosyncratic immediacy, “It’s because fencing is just so much fun. It is a great gift to be able to feel really alive as I am when I’m fencing.” She continues. “It’s why we like crazy TV and exciting books because we are throwing ourselves into drama and



excitement. I suppose pressure is really just about living and testing yourself.”

Those words are true of what Eloise practices as much as she preaches. When she sets about telling me about the Sydney Olympics, her reminiscences are spritzily compelling and engaging. “Brilliant, brilliant ... accumulations of dreams ... my heroes ... food hall the size of a football pitch ...free ice-cream” - I’ve got the picture: she had the time of her life.

But while she was competing at those Olympics, she was also on the phone to the tutor on her then-upcoming course in Advertising Copywriting, asking if there was anything she should be doing in preparation. The tutor was naturally quite sanguine - surprised even - and told Eloise not to worry.

She laughs, knowing this is classic Eloise behaviour. “It’s how I’m made” she counters happily. “To me it’s about purpose and the next thing.” Some years ago, she tells me, she had gone to see her line manager for her appraisal. Eloise took with her some cupcakes she had baked, all iced with her personal goals of what she wanted to achieve within the next three, six, twelve months and so on ... I feel for her boss, I exclaim, who must have been rooted to his chair - petrified.

Eloise gurgles with laughter, reassuring me that her boss was only the tiniest bit weirded out, and adds that it made it easier for him to agree with everything she was saying and for him to know not to stand in her way. It’s an attitude and work ethic that she credits in great part to Ziemek who she describes as ‘one of the biggest influences on my life’, and as having been the guardian and the mentor to her ‘passion and drive’.

By now, I am used to sliding between the interior and exterior worlds of Eloise Smith and another - rather significant - penny

drops. Could the Monsieur of ‘Sister to a Star’ be a fictional re-imagining of a certain Polish fencing master? Might the Academy of Stunt Fencing and some of the sweetly bizarre fencing training rituals have echoes of the original Salle Paul, situated above the old Leon Paul shop in Holborn?

The parallels are of course crystal clear; Eloise has paid the most beautiful homage to her long-time coach while creating a rip-roaring read for us all. I return to the Real-Life Episode of the Cupcakes, asking her if she were to offer up a batch to Ziemek, what would she ice on the top?

“I would decorate the cakes with his characteristic advice. Ziemek would say ‘If not you, then who?’ and ‘If not now, then when?’. These phrases have always lived with me. Another one is ‘1% talent and 99% perspiration’.”

She has many more to add from her back-catalogue of memories and I’m expecting her to come out with them as she again casts her gaze to the window; but this time it’s because she has a cab waiting to take her on to her next meeting/job/task/thing. This GBR fencing Olympian, Creative Director, Author, Woman and Mother has left me with enough material to write a book. But, given the way she can tell a story, I think it best to let her take it from here.

**SISTER TO A STAR is a story of sibling rivalry, sword-fighting and skulduggery. Published by Chicken House Books, it is available for pre-order on Amazon, Waterstones and The Book Depository. Visit [www.EloiseSmith.net](http://www.EloiseSmith.net)**



# KISH IT ... PART III

*Jon's quest for easy World Cup points on the Beautiful Island of Kish and it's semi-final time at the Iranian leg of the circuit. Following five months of rehab from hip surgery, being escorted at gunpoint at immigration and a magical mystery tour of all the sporting venues on the island in a taxi, might Britain's No. 1 epee fencer and self-styled international jet-setting playboy's luck be turning the corner?*

*After disposing of half the Armenian team and the World No. 8, a semi-final match against the Portuguese left-hander, Joao Cordeiro, was next. We knew each other well from the World Cup circuit with Cordeiro being a committed fencer who had no problem starting an argument in an empty room.*

*The referee - a local lad with a vague understanding of the rules - loved showing the world his oversized referee cards which he rarely kept in his inside jacket pocket. I picked up an early yellow for corps-a-corps despite being about a meter away from*

*my opponent. No point in arguing, a simple raise of the left eyebrow and a little shake of the head was all that was needed; plus, it was only a yellow ... that wouldn't come back to cause problems at the end of the fight, would it?*

*Fast forward to the start of the third period with the scores level at 7-all. Pushing Cordeiro back, trying to make him fêche at me so I could use my trusted sixte-riposte, the first forty seconds saw no hit scored. The referee calls halt for passivity. He issues Cordeiro a yellow card, me a red card, changes the score on the box to 8-7, declares the fight over and the Portuguese the winner. Cordeiro comes over and says he's sorry for the initial yellow card as he didn't think it was corps-a-corps, then tries to shake my hand and leave the piste. "You know this is not the rule, right?" I ask. He replies with a wink that Cristiano Ronaldo would have been proud of. Trying to speak with the referee to explain he had made a mistake was itself a mistake. With no resolution I call for DT.*

*Out walk several men in suits and sunglasses channeling their inner Reservoir*

*Dog. The Head of the DT comes over to me, confirming that the referee was correct and that the fight is over. Trying to keep my cool with the now bored Iranian crowd booing and hurling abuse in my direction, I explain that firstly it wasn't passivity because we were within distance and 60 seconds hadn't passed plus even if it was, you move to the extra minute of fencing and establish*



*priority before you restart (this was 2010, the rules were different back then). "My Friend, my Friend" he starts "the fight is over; you must leave the piste."*

*"I'm not leaving the piste" I maintained "I want to see the FIE observer."*

*At that point, the FIE observer walked out of the VIP room to see what the fuss was about. I explained the situation to him. He looked confused "but those are not the rules!" he said. "I know" I gasped "Please tell Huey, Dewey & Louie over there!" With that the FIE observer marched over to the three suits and pointed out the error of their ways. The head of the DT then returned as casually as you like to the piste to update me on the situation. "My Friend my Friend. The referee has just remembered the rule, there was no passivity and we must continue the match."*

*Cordeiro was found and brought back to piste. There was no more messing around and much to the amazement of the crowd, I scored the next two hits and ran down the clock to win on time. I have never enjoyed a post-fight handshake more!*

*The other semi-final was a much more straightforward affair with home fencer Ali*



Yaghoobian seeing off Joaquim Vaideira. Yaghoobian was a serious fencer and had been kicking around the world top 50 for a few years. The stage was now set for the final to take place once a group of small Iranian children wearing very colourful traditional dress had finished dancing out of step with one other for about ten minutes.

I was delighted to be fencing my third World Cup gold medal match about six months after hip surgery. With all that had happened over the previous few days behind me, I felt relaxed and confident. The first hit of the fight went to my Iranian opponent and the crowd went crazy; a wall of noise hit me with people chanting "Ali. Ali. Ali." If we had been outdoors they'd have been letting off flares. I upped my game, scoring the next hit with a well-timed bind through octave. I let out a loud shout to celebrate, clenching my left fist in front of my mask only to be met with stone-cold silence and tumbleweed blowing across the piste.

The fight continued and I found myself in 'the zone'. Yaghoobian was moving in slow motion and everything I did produced a red light. The crowd lost interest and I ran out winning 15-9 with a classy riposte, again through octave. I took off my mask, gave Ali a hug and thanked him for a good match. He is a top guy and we went on to become friends, often warming up together on the second day of World Cups before going off to fence our L64 matches.

With the fencing done there were only the TV interviews, drug testing and medals to navigate. A TV presenter started off an interview by asking me my name and where I came from. "Jon Willis from Great Britain" I answered. "Thank you" he replied and walked off. I was then ushered in front of a second TV camera where a young reporter asked me what I thought about the Beautiful Island of Kish? I told him that I thought it was lovely and I would recommend it to all my friends back home in the UK - and hopefully both of them would come and visit one day. It was a wrap.

Having completed my media duties the organisers told me that they wanted to do anti-doping and then medals. Joaquim Vaideira overheard and rushed over. "No no!" He protested, "Can we do medals then doping; we have a flight to catch." I should explain, I had a bit of a reputation on tour of not being the fastest guy when it came to producing a sample. In my defence, it's hard to go when someone is watching you.



His fear was well-placed: I'd been fencing all day in a hot country. The odds of a quick in-and-out were not high. I tried to convince the organiser that we should do medals first to aid my Portuguese cousin make his flight. Sadly, it seemed they were paying the doctor by the hour; I was grabbed by the arm and dragged off. "Don't worry" I shouted back "I've got this, you shall go to the ball!"

Under the most intense pressure to perform in the heat whilst dehydrated and knowing your mates will have to rebook their flight if you fail. I stepped up to the challenge. I produced 90ml exactly at the first time of asking, not a drop more, not a drop less! I was in and out in well under ten minutes, this still remains my PB to this day!

Fencing medal ceremonies are the same all over the world. The hall is always empty unless a Frenchman wins in Paris, and I was presented with a smart looking trophy, a bunch of flowers and ten crisp new Benjamin's in a presentation folder that opened the wrong way to a westerner. We then stood to attention as 'God Save the Queen' was played at four-times its natural speed - honestly, an improvement!

I returned to my fencing bag, starting to pack my kit up as I chatted and laughed with my two travel buddies. An Englishman, Irishman and Australian deciding who was going to pay for dinner that evening and I was losing the argument roughly 2-to-1. I picked up my fencing bag in one hand and my bunch of flowers in the other and made for the exit. Three of the young dancing girls from the delightfully awful half-time show were walking in the opposite direction. They resembled three Russian dolls, a small one, a medium one and a big one. It was then I had an idea. In what I thought would be a nice gesture, I handed my bunch of flowers to the smallest of the

three girls who was aged about 7 or 8. I was hoping that this would go some way to healing the wounds between our two countries, after all, the biggest of changes can come from the simplest of deeds.

Sadly, it turned out there would be no Nobel Peace Prize for me, as the big girl snatched the flowers from the little one who then looked at me and burst into tears. Scared that I was going to be once more taken away by the authorities - this time for making a small child cry, I did what I believe any man would have done in that situation. I looked at the small girl, tears running down her face, and with a sympathetic expression Hugh Grant would have been proud of, mouthed the words 'sorry' then picked up my bag and ran to the safety of the hotel transfer bus waiting outside.

We reached the airport first thing the next morning, leaving Iran and spending the day in Dubai before splitting up the brotherhood and heading back to our homelands. I can still remember the feeling of relief some twelve years on, sitting on the small turboprop plane with several people standing in the aisle, as we took the short hop over the water back to the UAE with my 1000 USD in my pocket and 32 world cup points added to my world ranking.

The Iranian event was subsequently cut from the World Cup circuit. So, while I never got the chance to return to the Beautiful Island of Kish for further adventures, I remain to this day the reigning Champion of the Kish Island Men's Epee World Cup.



# 2022 HONOURS NOTICE FOR THE SWORD

## Nominations for British Fencing Honours and Awards 2022

### Lawrence Burr, OBE

*It is time to get your skates on and start looking around to see who you think really deserves to be given credit for making you and/or your club, the best in British Fencing. This is the place to start!*

*The British Fencing Honours nomination system focuses entirely on the membership with all nominations coming directly from current members. The Honours Committee acts as selectors with the object of recommending awards in a wide range of categories whilst ensuring that there is consistency of award levels and criteria. Awards are conferred annually and presented at the AGM by the British Fencing President.*

*Nominators are to be aware that their nominee(s) are expected to be British Fencing members who have demonstrably upheld the values of British Fencing ie honesty, respect and excellence. Mention of this is to be made in their application. If the nominee is involved with an active club, that club must be affiliated with British Fencing and be following minimum British Fencing standards with regards to coaching and membership. Nominations for those contributing to clubs should also relate to clubs that meet current BF Safeguarding and Welfare standards.*

*Fencing coaches and others paid for their involvement in our sport will only be considered for an award if they have enhanced the world of UK fencing beyond what might reasonably be expected as part of their paid employment, and which, in the case of those paid by a club, also benefits fencers who are not members of that club.*

*Further to our desire to recognise members who have shown particular prowess in rising to the challenge of keeping clubs and their members engaged across all age ranges during the pandemic, we would also welcome their nominations as we did in 2021.*

*To make a nomination, please complete the application form on the BF website or Facebook page giving as much detail as possible for your reasons in making the recommendation.*

*Please note that for the 2022 awards, your nominations must arrive no later than **27th May 2022** (you must be at least 18 years of age to make a nomination).*



# RESULTS



The 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](mailto:events@britishfencing.com)



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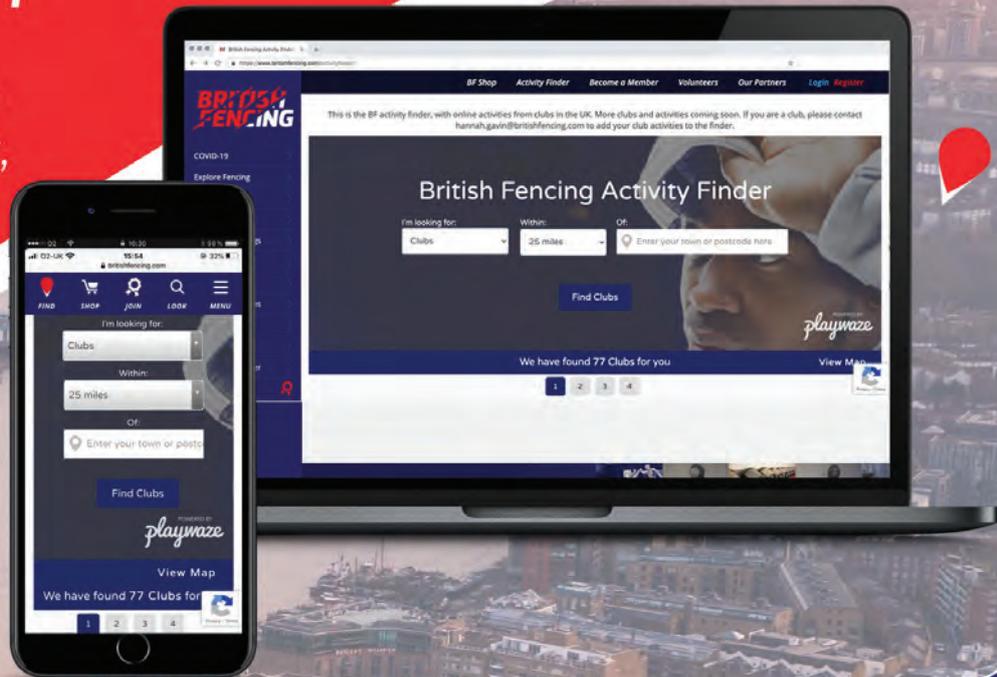
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