

British Fencing



BRITISH FENCING

Annual Report

April 2015 -
March 2016







CONTENTS

Directors' Report	4
President's Report	6
CEO's Report	7
Standing Committee Highlights	9
Membership & Events	11
Development	13
World Class Performance & Talent	17

Appendix A	
Financial Statements	22



Directors' Report

This year the Board continued its work to oversee delivery against the 2024 goals and programmes for British Fencing (BF) - to achieve repeatable Olympic medal success; to grow the membership to 50,000 plus (supported by high quality, good value services, meeting the needs of members and clubs); and to deliver sustainable, quality infrastructure and governance that is financially resilient.

After a season of great performances the Men's Foil Team finally achieved a qualification place for the Rio Olympic Games in Bonn February 2016. This was the first time Britain has qualified a fencing team under the new rules brought in after 1992. Prior to this the Men's Foil Team achieved a best ever finish (5th) at the World Championships in Moscow.

This was followed by an individual silver medal for James Davis in San Jose World Cup and subsequent golds for James Davis and Richard Kruse in Bonn World Cup and Havana Grand Prix respectively. UK Sport (UKS) increased funding to the sport for the fourth year in a row, recognising the progress of the World Class Performance (WCP) Programme in establishing a performance system and also the development of the Elite Training Centre (ETC) in partnership with Leon Paul.

The Talent Programmes initially focussed on developing athletes in all six weapons. In recognition of the different performance levels, a review and refinement of the Talent Programmes has begun to ensure that support is targeted at the right level to the right athletes. Implementation of a more focussed approach will take place during 2016-2017 and form the basis of the funding submission to Sport England (SE) for the next cycle.

This year represented a significant growth in the Development team resource following the appointment of the BF Development Director in Summer 2014. In 2015, this increased resource enabled BF, with the support of England Fencing, and Sport England to drive forward a new, innovative participation programme to attract 3000 more young people into our sport. National and regional level relationships with The Scouts Association, BUCS (Higher Education) and London Youth, amongst others were established, resulting in the Sport England participation targets being met or exceeded in all areas.

A significant effort has gone into creation of a new Coach Development programme to ensure that our coaches meet industry-wide education and best practice standards. This is vital to ensure that in the future we have the coaching workforce to support both our grass roots and elite programmes.

For governance, BF maintained the "Green" rating this year from SE and UKS. Such rating remains vital to our Government and Lottery funding.

Our medium term goal was to run the organisation at break even, given a stable base of reserves. For the 2015/16 financial year BF recorded a deficit of £35,648. This was expected after the surplus of £37,560* achieved in 2014/15 and was the result of timing differences relating to the recognition of certain income streams against subsequent expenditure. The net result over two years was that we were able to achieve our medium term goal of operating at a break even and maintaining a stable level of reserves.

Despite our improved financial management, we are entering a significantly greater period of uncertainty. Public funding to support the core activities of NGBs will decrease and NGBs are expected to reduce costs and fund membership benefits from their own membership income.

This financial year was the last financial year that we benefitted from the sponsorship of Beazley. Understandably the sponsorship market is tough and with eight of the biggest medal sports currently in the market for deals – the competition is intense. We were delighted to secure a partner sponsor in Wilkinson Sword which will come into effect in April 2016.

All of this leaves us in a place where we must pay great attention to how we can support our core sport – we will do our best to maximise funding where we have aligned objectives with Public Funding bodies, but we must also recognise that the core of the organisation, supporting the core of the sport, must be self-sustaining.

For this as ever we rely on our members, clubs, coaches and volunteers, up and down the country who support and between them work to secure the future of Fencing.

*The operational surplus of £37,560 declared above is prior to the adoption of FRS102 which gave rise to an adjustment of £10,004 to revalue an investment held by British Fencing. This revised the surplus for 2014/15 to £27,556.

The 2015-2016 Board of Directors

Paul Abrahams
 Thomas Cadman
 Janet Campbell
 Clare Halsted
 Caryl Oliver
 Alp Orge (term concluded October 2015)
 Gillian Palmer
 Graham Paul
 William Pitt (left December 2015)
 Brian Speight
 David Teasdale (Chair)
 John Troiano
 Paul Wedge (appointed October 2015)

President's Report

As British Fencing President my focus is largely on international relations. After two years in the role I have stronger relationships in place in the international community, and this has been helped by my participation in a number of areas including:

- FIE Chief of Protocol
- FIE Promotions Commission
- EFC (European Fencing Confederation) Competition Commission
- CFF (Commonwealth Fencing Confederation) Commission for Re-entry into the Games
- FIE representative on the Joint Council for fencing and wheelchair fencing.



In my role as FIE Chief of Protocol I established a new handbook for FIE competition organisers, covering all aspects of presentation and protocol. These areas increasingly come under the spotlight in order to attract greater numbers of television and internet viewers as well as live audiences. Protocol responsibilities include the opening and closing ceremonies, medals ceremonies, presentation of fencers and referees and other 'back of house' areas such as VIP arrangements. In addition I started work on a longer project to overhaul the Supervisor arrangements for FIE World Cup events (of which there are 78 each season).

During the past year I represented GBR at a number of events overseas. These included:

- Head of Delegation at the FIE Annual Congress in Guangzhou
- Member of the DT and Chief of Protocol at the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- Head of Delegation at the European Fencing Confederation (EFC) Congress in Montreux, which is followed by the European Championships
- Member of the DT at the first ever European Games, similar to the Olympic Games, held in Baku, Azerbaijan
- Member of the DT and Chief of Protocol at the senior World Championships in Moscow
- Supervisor at a number of FIE events including the Budapest Grand Prix (epee) the Moscow Grand Prix (sabre) and the St Maur World Cup (foil)

At home I attended junior, senior and veterans events at both domestic and international level. These included the Eden Cup where I invited Claus Janka, the Head of the FIE Referee Commission, to run a seminar for British referees. The season's highlight was the men's foil team event between GBR, France, Italy and USA - held in the prestigious Egyptian Hall in Mansion House. This was a spectacular success and a good opportunity to showcase British Fencing.

At the start of the year I formed and chaired a new BF Honours Committee, and at the end of the year I took over as Chair of the International Relations Committee.

CEO's Report

2015-16 represents the third year in the four year funding cycle. Whilst delivering on existing UK Sport and new Sport England (SE) funding conditions and meeting the Board approved budget, the 2015-17 operational priorities were:

- Qualify athletes for the 2016 Olympics
- Deliver on the agreed objectives of the new SE funded participation strategy
- Improve the sustainability of the core NGB
- Maintain a Green governance rating

Performance and Talent Expansion

This year saw the further consolidation of the WCP Programmes and improvements in senior performances (as listed in the Directors Report), the highlight being the qualification of a men's foil team for Rio 2016. The improved performances and Team and Individual world rankings continued through to the end of March 2016.

UK Sport increased funding to the sport for the fourth year in a row recognising the performance system that has been put in place and also the development of the Elite Training Centre (ETC) in partnership with Leon Paul.

Our World Class Performance (WCP) Programme was split into two squads the Rio and the Tokyo squad. The Rio squad, containing a team of male foilists alongside one female foilist and one male sabreur were given increased support to put them in the best position to qualify for Rio 2016. The resulting qualification of the Men's Foil team (supported by the steady improvement of all individual team members) continues to demonstrate the progression expected of a World Class Programme and helps our case to secure continuation of funding.

For the Financial year to March 2016, the Sport England (SE) funded Talent Programme put significant resources into supporting and developing athletes across all six weapons. Money was invested into providing additional coaching resource at World Cups in an effort to increase the numbers of Talent athletes achieving the necessary qualification standards and also into preparing the squads for the subsequent Cadet and Junior World Championships.

Results at World Championship Level form an important part of the Talent programme review which is designed to ensure that support is directed at the right level to the right athletes in line with the BF & SE strategies.

The success of the 15/16 approach will be reviewed with the BF Board and Sport England after the April 2016 World Championships. It is important to note that without sponsorship or membership funding for the Talent Programme, the 17-21 Sport England funding strategy will have the biggest impact on what can be delivered in future in this area.

New Participation Strategy

Supported by England Fencing, the British Fencing Development Team continue to adopt an ever more accountable and professional approach to growing participation in fencing through the SE funded programmes. Whilst the first half of the year was taken up recruiting the right skills into the Development Team, the team delivered on all its SE targets, delivering over 1000 participation opportunities and training over 100 new leaders up to March 2016.

The Coaching Development Programme designed to underpin the participation and performance objectives started this year with recruitment of a new Coaching Development Manager. One objective is to make sure that the education content of the coach development pathway ensures that coaches are able to meet the needs of the 'market'. Schools, universities, youth clubs etc. expect all coaches, irrespective of sport to have an ability to understand the motivations of participants (fun, recreational, competitive). The emerging Coaching Development Programme supports coaches to better adapt their coaching style to meet these motivations and the participation environment.

Sustainable NGB

Much of the core membership service that we continued to deliver would not have been possible without the support of our Funding Partners and Beazley, the latter in their final six months of sponsorship.

The gap between the membership fee income and the direct costs of membership services remains significant, and in the long term unsustainable.

This year in conjunction with the Home Country Associations we launched a direct debit facility and a new membership scheme, two small initiatives to start to address this imbalance.

In order to help attract new sponsors (and participants) we have been working on re-branding and re-positioning fencing to reflect a modern dynamic sport. This work is expected to launch during the Rio Olympic Games to take advantage of the additional attention the sport is expected to receive.

We have also started to look at other ways to generate revenue from participation partnership opportunities.

As with any NGB, we cannot and will not be able to sustain the sport without the many volunteers who selflessly give their time and skill to support the sport, for example by running clubs, competitions, acting on committees, coaching. These volunteers deserve our continued support and thanks.

Green Governance Rating

After the significant effort in 2014-15 much of the governance work of British Fencing is entering a repeatable, 'business as usual' cycle. All the UK Sport and Sport England major governance requirements are now met, and it is now a case of ensuring that these are consistently maintained and adapted to meet future governance improvements.



COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP HIGHLIGHTS

Safety Committee

Chair: Peter Jacobs

The most significant item undertaken by this committee this year was the restructuring of the Safety Guidelines, which were approved by the Board and published on the BF website. The committee continues to monitor accidents and assess the risks facing those involved in the sport. Fortunately, fencing continues to have one of the best safety records across Olympic sports but we must remain ever vigilant.

Rules Committee

Chair: Steve Higginson

During the year 2015-16, the Rules Committee met as usual to discuss FIE rules proposals and the resulting opinions were available to the President, when casting our vote at the November 15 FIE Congress.

Peter Jacobs was invited by the FIE to join the Chair as co-opted members of the FIE Working Party to rationalise the structure of the FIE Rule Book. Whilst it is hoped that an agreement in principle on the work done so far will be obtained at the post-Olympic Congress, it should be stressed that at this stage there are no actual changes to the rules, they have merely been re-ordered.

Actual changes to the texts and/or changes to the rules arising from the very close scrutiny the rules have gone through - will be the next stage and will continue over the next season.

The Committee has continued to respond to enquiries and comments from members of BF, particularly over areas where the FIE rules cannot cover a domestic situation or where there is a question as to interpretation.

Refereeing Committee

Chair: Graham Paul

This was the first full year of the Referee Pathway Scheme. Pathway members received priority in selection for events where appropriate. Seminars were run to help developing referees and made available to both Pathway and non-Pathway referees. Moving forwards we will be looking to appoint a volunteer Referee Pathway Manager to run and co-ordinate the pathway activities. In the meantime this role is currently being performed by BF Head Office. The website material describing the syllabus and information on becoming a referee was updated and expanded.

International Relations

Chair: Peter Jacobs

BF currently has representatives on four FIE commissions and two councils, plus five EFC commissions and councils. Representatives attended the EFC Annual Congress in Montreux, Switzerland, in (May 2015), the FIE commission and council meetings which were held in Bucharest (July 2015) and the annual FIE congress which was hosted by the Chinese Fencing Federation in Guangzhou (November 2015).

Our International Relations Strategy is financially supported by a UK Sport grant approved to cover the 2015-17 period at the end of the last financial year. This funding also enabled the BF President and CEO to attend the World Championships in Moscow, a GB armourer to attend the World Championships as part of the GBR support team and various British FIE referee development activities. Attention began to be focussed particularly on the forthcoming FIE elections in November 2016 and their EFC counterparts in summer 2017.

International Cadet Management Group

Chair: Clare Halsted

This season (Sep 15 to April 16) 18 cadet squads competed in nominated European Cadet Circuit events abroad, with Manchester Foil and Camden Sabre providing opportunities for many more of our fencers. Highlights were Caitlin Maxwell's sabre gold in Godollo and silver in Meylan, Sebastian Pallier's foil gold in Manchester and Dominic De Almeida's foil silver in Florina, with Maxwell ending the season 6th in the EFC ranking.

Full teams went to the European and World Championships but results were poor. The only team to make a L8 was women's foil in the Europeans. However our team in the new six weapon World Championship team event deserve a mention for their hard fought for 10th place out of 23 countries.

Heartfelt thanks are due to our 3 volunteer squad managers, Nickie Bailey (foil), Maggie Maynard (epee), Margie Mascolino (sabre), and the other members of the ICMG for all their hard work through the cadet season.

Honours Committee

Chair: Hilary Philbin

Following the 2014 AGM the Honours Committee is now established and running. The committee consists of 12 people, including 8 Vice-Presidents and 3 co-opted members. The new system focuses entirely on the membership, with all nominations coming direct from members. The committee aims to recommend awards in a wide range of categories, while ensuring that there is consistency of award levels and criteria. These awards will be made annually and announced at the AGM.

The first batch of new awards were announced in October 2015 and are listed in full at the end of the Annual Report.

Home Countries Working Group (HCWG)

The HCWG spent the majority of the year working on designing and developing a sustainable and financially viable membership scheme that would help secure the future of the sport and all HCWG organisations. This was launched in March 2016.

The next area of work will be evaluating the senior competition and associated ranking structure in the UK. Similar to the membership project, any resultant recommendations for change will be put to respective country's Boards for agreement.

Note: The HCWG group formed in 2014 and is made up of the Presidents/CEOs of Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales. The objectives of the group are to:

- Create a financially viable and sustainable relationship between the HCs and BF.
- Improve communications between the organisations.
- Improve/define the relationships, expectations and interfaces between the organisations.

Grow Group

The joint England Fencing/BF Steering Group met regularly throughout 2015/16 and continued to support and monitor the progress made in delivery of the Sport England Funding conditions and development of the new Growth Strategy.

MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

Membership

Over the reporting period, total year-on-year membership remained constant (9583 as at March 2016) and reflecting the broader ten year trend.

The Home Countries Working Group spent most of the year working on a new membership model to replace the one unchanged in price and structure since 2002. The new model was designed to spread the cost and benefit of key services more fairly across the participating community.

This is particularly important as much of the growth in participation in fencing is coming from the recreational sector. Having an appropriate recreational membership offering is important to avoid increasing competitive or affiliated club membership fees to subsidise the cost of benefits (eg insurance, safeguarding) recreational fencers receive.

The new membership model launched in March 2016. The new category of recreational membership is aimed at fencers that do not compete but wish to be insured to participate at club level and in other recreational fencing activities.

Membership income came in at £170K (1K less than 14/15), once the Home Countries recharge had been taken into account. As before, the majority of this income was taken up in four expense categories – insurance, the Sword, safeguarding and standard office/business running costs. The lack of membership funds to cover any staff cost or support athlete development is of significant concern; simply increasing membership fees is not the answer.

A Direct Debit facility was introduced in late 2015 which should, over time, reduce the administration required to manage offline renewals.

Alongside a strategy for growing the membership, future commercial opportunities (including sponsorship) must be fully explored to find alternative income to enable BF to provide the level of support that participants, clubs, volunteers and parents increasingly expect.

Workforce

BF completed a project to bring all the registered workforce lists up to date and in line with industry expectations.

This information is now being used to identify areas where BF can help grow, support and upskill this workforce. As a result additional free training opportunities were offered throughout the year at British Fencing events.

BF continues to place great emphasis on our commitment to Safeguarding. We ensure that all registered volunteers working with children have the right level of checks and training in place appropriate to the sporting environment they operate in.

As part of our ever growing commitment to being a safe and welcoming sport for children to enjoy, all British Fencing clubs and competitions that allow children to participate must have a nominated welfare officer.

Coaching

The number of coaches on the BF register fell from 521 to 494 as the year finished in March 2016. This was predominantly due to their failure to renew Safeguarding and Protecting Children training, which is required to be renewed every three years.

There has been an increase in the number of trained BF coaches and leaders operating outside the traditional club/school environments. BF have started to create more comprehensive register that will include this newly trained workforce. The register will enable us to better meet the development needs of new and existing coaches, linking coaches appropriately to strengthen the club network and providing better information about our trained workforce to fencing providers.

Events

For the 2015/16 financial year, the BF events portfolio consisted of

- Five levels of National Championship: British Youth Championships, Cadet British Championships, Junior British Championships, Senior British Championships and British School Team Championships
- Four International Tournaments: Eden Cup Junior Men's Foil A Grade, Leon Paul Cup Men's Foil Satellite, GLL Camden International Cadet Sabre Tournament and the Inaugural Valerie Degorce International Youth Trophy U14 EFC Circuit event
- Level 4 School Games

Feedback on the organising team built up by the Events Manager over the past 2 seasons continues to be overwhelmingly positive.

The other major change for this year was the addition of the Valerie Degorce International Youth Trophy EFC U14 Circuit Event. A headline sponsor was found for the tournament which ensured the event did not make a loss.

The events portfolio as a whole continues to lose money even before staff costs are taken into account. This is partly due to the international events where there is limited ability to affect income levels due to entry fee limits set by EFC and FIE.

With the financial losses currently being experienced British Fencing must both seek additional financial support through sponsors and look to increase operational efficiencies without compromising quality of experience for volunteers and participants alike.

Further sponsors are being sought, as well as slightly altering competition formats through partnering smaller events with other larger events to offset cost (e.g. in 16/17 we will be having a Men's Sabre Satellite tournament alongside the Camden International Cadet Tournament). With the exception of the Eden Cup/Leon Paul Cup (which is dictated by the FIE), all events for next season will be held at the same time of year. This consistency is expected to help maintain entries.

Work will continue to deliver the first Annual Awards Dinner in April 2016. By generating income through sponsorship and ticket sales we hope to ensure that the Senior National Championships will remain affordable for athletes whilst retaining a high quality flagship event. Other commercial income opportunities are also being explored in conjunction with the Participation Business Manager.

DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

2015/16 saw a shift change in BF's approach in order to deliver against the Sport England funded sport development strategy, outlined in the 14/15 Annual Report. We continued to make significant changes in the way the BF Development Team works to ensure we are best placed to meet funding requirements and ultimately shape the future of community and grass roots fencing.

The approach was (and continues to be) driven by drawing from the professional insight and research collated in 2014/15, where BF established a much deeper understanding of the fencing participation market and its 'customer', i.e. 'the fencer' or 'potential fencer'.

For the first time we have created a team of industry leading sport development professionals to bring the knowledge, skills and credibility to work with industry partners (eg County Sport Partnerships, BUCS, Universities, London Youth, Street Games, The Scout Association) to maximise the opportunities to increase participation in our sport. The priorities for this team included

- Developing a fit for purpose, industry standard coaching development framework
- Deliver sustainable and empowering participation programmes
- Standardise leisure market activities
- Identifying commercial opportunities to create an ongoing sustainable financial infrastructure
- Establish greater influence over the quality of fencing experiences in England.

Coaching Development

In 2015/16 the design of a new BF Coaching Development Framework started, drawing on professional support and guidance from Sport England and other expert coach developers working across a variety of sports and coaching organisations.

The Framework has undergone extensive community consultation, focussing on a smaller group of educators willing and able to invest the necessary personal time to upskill to meet industry standard. This is necessary to ensure that our courses start to produce coaches with the skills that employers and participants expect.

The Framework will be designed to empower and support a network of coaches and leaders to grow the sport at a grass root level, as well as deliver coaching excellence at every stage of the coach pathway which is central to a highly successful world-class fencing programme.

The Coaching register will be restructured to support the new Framework and provide clubs, schools and other fencing activity providers greater detail on the education and training that coaches have undertaken.

97 separate coach development courses were delivered through British Fencing, training a total of 1049 individuals.

Sustainable and Empowering Participation Programmes

In 15/16 we met the SE agreed target of bringing 1000 more young people into the sport (against our target of 3000 for 15-17) This was achieved by working through identified stakeholders with credible track records in engaging participants and (eg The Scout Association, BUCS, London Youth) as well as building a greater sphere of influence across local, regional and national stakeholders in sport (eg Street Games, County Sport Partnerships). BF are now working across England, in all 10 regions delivering these participation programmes in addition to our Coaching Development and leisure market standardisation work (see page 16 for a visual representation).

In response to our 14-15 work on participant insights, needs and passions, we tried and tested new products such as 'Sabre:Lite' (for the HE sector) and 'Battle' (for the youth sector) with a select number of universities and youth groups in England.

Fencing has a unique ability to empower and inspire young people. In partnership with the Maslaha Charity we designed and tested a 'Muslim Girls Fence' programme for young women in East London who typically face additional barriers to participating in sport.

2016/17 will see the refinement of these products to ensure they are ready to scale and a position to be shared with additional providers who wish to work with BF to engage more young people in fencing.

Leisure Market Standardisation & Commercial Opportunity

The appointment of our Participation Business Manager has enabled BF to build contractual relationships with seven Leisure Operators (including Fusion Lifestyle, Everyone Active, Places for People) and eight Activity Providers (including PGL Ltd, Premier Education Group, Kingswood).

This step change in the way we work aims to instil a level of quality assurance across the wider fencing market, and create a portfolio for BF and its members that is sustainable, financially resilient and supports growth within our sport.

These initiatives form part of the wider plans to identify a broader set of commercial growth opportunities. As we look to continue to grow and quality assure the sport it is critical for the NGB to become less reliant on public funds and more financially sustainable.



Next Steps

As the new Government funding cycle comes in to effect (2017-21) and in light of the new Government Strategy for Sport, ***Sporting Future***, and subsequently Sport England's Strategy ***Towards an Active Nation 2016-21***, BF will be placing importance on and prioritising partnership work to help drive growth, customer reach & satisfaction, as well as quality provision across our sport in clubs and regions.

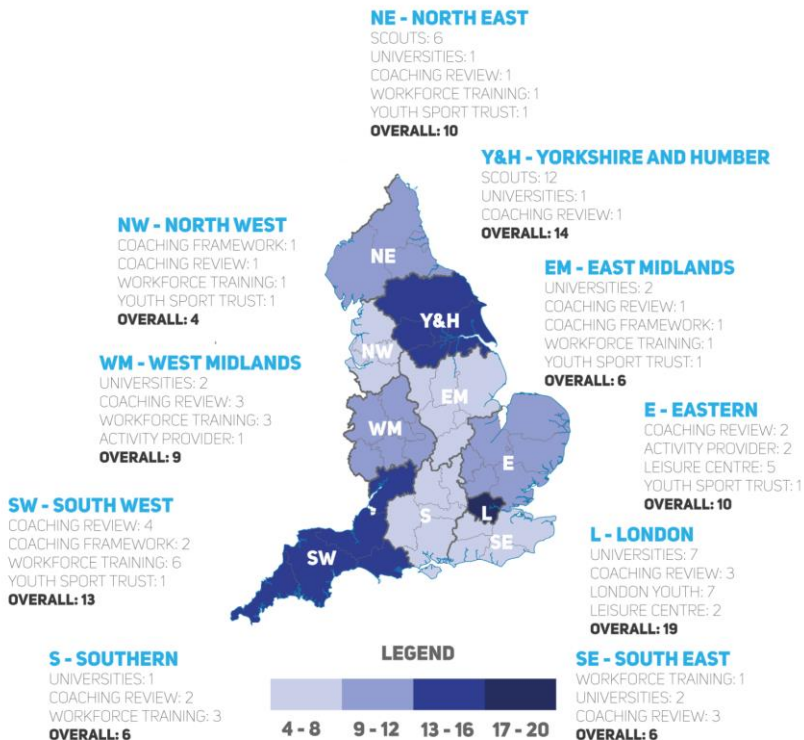
To respond to the Sport England strategy we will be working closely with England Fencing and other sports industry and fencing market providers to maximise use of knowledge, intelligence and resources for the benefit of fencing. Our sport could have a significant role in delivering to the overall strategy for sport, provided that we recognise and can demonstrate the impact fencing can have on peoples' lives, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.



In 2016/17 we will;

- Embed the learnings of our new products in to the clubs and the regions, of which will be activated by a new Regional Liaison Officer (England), funded by England Fencing
- Continue to professionalise our approach with leisure operators and market providers to ensure safe and quality fencing activity in leisure settings
- Engage a further 2000 young people through BF led youth and HE participation programmes
- Build on our evolving partnerships within the industry, for example; BUCS, The Scouts Association and other uniform groups, London Youth and partner youth organisations, cultural groups, County Sport Partnerships
- Nurture existing and new relationships with organisations working with 'hard to reach' groups to build on our Muslim Girls Fence Programme
- Fully test and roll out the new BF Coaching Development Framework,
- Start to explore relationships with a mix of swordplay suppliers to broaden the fencing experience, i.e. HEMA, Historical Re-enactment, light sabre, traditional fencing, etc
- Design and deliver a Road2Rio newsletter
- Launch a new 'Explore Fencing' website and accelerate Developments social media activity and profile
- Develop a commercial strategy that attracts the required level of income over the next funding cycle (2017-21) to give less reliance on public funds and more focus on self generated, commercial income.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM REACH ACROSS THE REGIONS



Key

British Fencing Participation Partners

Scouts: no. of new scout groups delivering a British Fencing led participation experience

London Youth: no. of youth clubs in London delivering a British Fencing led participation experience

Universities (BUCS): no. of universities delivering a British Fencing led participation experience

Youth Sport Trust: no. of young fencing leadership projects delivered via the British Fencing and Youth Sport Trust partnership

Activity Providers: no. of activity providers formally delivering a British Fencing led participation experience

Leisure Centres: no. of leisure centres formally delivering a British Fencing led participation experience

Coaching & Workforce Engagement/Consultation

Coaching Review: no. of activities observed and analysed as part of the review of & recommendations made for the new British Fencing Coaching Development Framework

Coaching Framework: no. of trial courses delivered to help design and build the new British Fencing Coaching Development Framework

Workforce Training: no. of courses delivered to up skill and establish the new British Fencing Coaching Development Team

WORLD CLASS PROGRAMME

Performance

The British Fencing (BF) World Class Programme is designed to provide fencers, who have the identified talent and commitment to succeed at the highest level, with the support they need to maximise their potential. The highest two levels of the WCP, Podium and Podium Potential, are funded by UK Sport through the funds generated from the National Lottery. Up until December 2015, the Programme was also supported by BF's main sponsor Beazley. This continued support from Beazley during this year has allowed the Programme to deliver added benefits to those athletes competing at the highest level to enable them to have the equivalent of 'Podium Level' support despite in the main being a Podium Potential funded programme by UK Sport.

This year saw the further consolidation of the WCP Programmes and improvements in senior performances. The annual performance review of the Programme by UK Sport in November 2015, again recognised the continued development of the performance programme structure alongside the improvement in results and overall world rankings. As a result, fencing was awarded an increase for the final year of the Olympic cycle (April 2016 – March 2017). Fencing is the only sport to have received a year on year increase by UK Sport during this Olympiad.

This additional award, alongside some small project specific funding, increased the investment in the WCP by £113, 875 to £3.666 million over the four-year cycle. This is in addition to resources being provided directly by UK Sport for Athlete Performance Awards (APAs) and medical insurance.

The overall funding from UK Sport to British Fencing to deliver the World Class programme (including the athlete APAs) for the four-year cycle to the end of March 2017 is currently £4.298 million.

Talent

Over the past year the Talent Programmes have been further developed and refined. The two talent programmes, Talent and Talent Identification and Confirmation (TIC) have become the main route for athletes seeking to progress their fencing and move on to one of the UK Sport funded programmes.

The Talent programmes have received £250,000 from Sport England over the last year to support the further development of the Talent Pathway. In addition to supporting the Talent Coaches across the six weapons, the funding has enabled training camps to be delivered focusing on physical and tactical development. In addition, significant support was provided at World Championships in April 2015 and the European Championships in March 2016.

A new Talent Pathway Manager was recruited in September 2016 with the responsibility for further developing the Pathway and ensuring that we are able to meet our goal to deliver consistent junior world medallists by 2020.

In recognition of the different performance levels a review and refinement of the Talent Programmes has begun to ensure that support at the right level to the right athletes are offered. The implementation of the new focus will take place during 2016-2017 and form the basis of the funding submission to SE for the next cycle.

Elite Training Centre (ETC)

Following a successful grant submission to Sport England and UK Sport for a dedicated Elite Training Centre, and after a short and efficient build project, we moved in to the new centre on 1st April 2015. The ETC is a joint arrangement with the Leon Paul Fencing Centre and has enabled us to hire their excellent training facilities for a dedicated and significant proportion of time whilst also developing our own dedicated ETC. The ETC includes space for the support staff and coaches to work, on-site medical and treatment room, S&C gym and kitchen and relaxation space.

As a result of the partnership with Leon Paul and the investment we now have one of the best training centres in the world. However, we will continue to look for ways to further develop and grow the centre as the success of the programmes and the number of athletes continue to grow.

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt. Hon. John Whittingdale MP, formally opened British Fencing's Elite Training Centre.



Notable Results

The Men's Foil Team achieved a best ever finish (5th) at the World Championships in Moscow 2015 which further improved their chances of Olympic qualification as a Team. This followed their gold medal winning performance at the inaugural European Games in Baku. The Team also won a bronze medal at the World Cup in Paris in January 2016, further consolidating their chances of qualifying for the Games. Qualification for the Games was secured at the World Cup in Bonn in early February 2016.

In addition to the success of the team individual performances also continued to improve. James Davis won Gold at the Bonn World Cup to follow on from his silver from San Jose earlier in the season.

Richard Kruse won silver at the Grand Prix in Turin, with Laurence Halsted producing a lifetime best to achieve a Last eight at the World Championships in Moscow. We finished the season with three athletes in the top 30 and two in the top 10 of the World rankings for the first time ever.

The Men's Sabre squad has, under the direction of Pierre Guichot, started to develop and progress throughout the year.

The focus over the last six months of the year was to further develop the squad and raise the performance levels for the remainder of the season with a real focus on the World Team Championships to be held at the end of April 2016.

Looking Forward to 2015/2016

Following the Men's Foil team qualification for Rio, from April the focus will be on ensuring we have the best prepared team heading for the Games. With the additional financial support from UK Sport we are confident that the Team will be the best prepared they can be for the Games in August 2016.

The early part of 2016 has seen us developing our new WCP Strategy for the Tokyo cycle. The draft submission was submitted in February with the final strategy in March. The initial feedback is positive but we will need to wait until after the Rio 2016 Games for a decision from the UK Sport Board.

The launch of the new Sport England strategy later in 2016 and the review of the Talent Programmes following the junior world championships in April will start to refine and reshape the direction of the Talent programmes and our submission for funding for the next four years.



The GB Men's Foil Team for Rio 2016

BF HONOURS

2015 BF Honours were announced at the October 2015 AGM and awarded as follows:

Gold	John MASON
Silver	Richard BONEHILL (posthumous)
Silver	James DAVIS
Silver	Pierre HARPER
Bronze	Iain ABERDEEN
Bronze	Anthony KLENCZAR
Award of Merit	Connie ADAM
Award of Merit	Stephen DOMEK
Award of Merit	Chris GREGORY
Award of Merit	Robert KIRBY

BRITISH FENCING 2015-16

The Board

Paul Abrahams

Thomas Cadman

Janet Campbell

Clare Halsted

Caryl Oliver

Alp Orge (term concluded October 2015)

Gillian Palmer

Graham Paul

William Pitt (left December 2015)

Brian Speight

David Teasdale (Chair)

John Troiano

Paul Wedge (appointed October 2015)

The Senior Executive Team

Georgina Usher, Chief Executive Officer

David Moseley, Finance Director

Alex Newton, Performance Director

Gabby Williams, Development Director

WITH THANKS TO

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- Sport England
- UK Sport
- Beazley
- Leon Paul
- England Fencing
- London Youth
- Skills Active
- Lolly Rewards
- S&G College
- Yew Consulting
- English Institute of Sport
- Maslaha Charity

Images courtesy of:

PA Sport (p20)

Getty Images (p3, p14)

Rehmat Ryatt (p2, p14)

APPENDIX A - FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The full financial statements can be found here:

http://britishfencing.com/uploads/files/bfa_final_accounts_2016.pdf