

# CONSULTATION: PROPOSED COMPETITION PATHWAY AND SELECTION SYSTEM FOR SENIOR INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

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## CONTENTS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction.....   | 2 |
| 2. Rationale .....   | 2 |
| 3. Levels of Competition.....                                      | 4 |
| 4. Squad System .....  | 5 |
| 4.1 Minimum Requirements - All squad athletes MUST:.....           | 5 |
| 4.2 Minimum Performance Standards .....                            | 5 |
| 5. Selections .....  | 6 |
| 5.1 Level 3: Grand Prix and World Cup Selection .....              | 6 |
| 5.2 Level 4: Senior European and World Championship Selection..... | 7 |
| 5.3 Level 5: Zonal Qualifier Selection.....                        | 7 |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The International Senior Management Group supported by the BF CEO and Chair recently undertook a review of the impact of the current Senior Selection policy.

Out of this review a number of recommendations arose. These included a reduction in discretion for individual selection and a need to indicate a pathway of international experience so that athletes representing GBR at the highest level get the right international experience at the right time in their career.

The result is a proposal for an updated system based on defining levels of competition, alongside a squad based system of qualification. The intention is that this will come into effect from 1st January 2019.

This proposal is being made available to the community for comment. The consultation will end on **23/4/2018**.

**ALL responses must be received in writing by email to [headoffice@britishfencing.com](mailto:headoffice@britishfencing.com) with Senior Selection Consultation Response in the subject field.**

## 2. RATIONALE

BF has a responsibility to define an international competitive pathway to encourage athletes seeking to represent GBR at the highest level get the right international experience at the right time in their career.

The basic premise of the new system is to address the current selection situation in which too many fencers with international aspirations are selected and therefore exposed too early to Senior World Cup and Grand Prix (WC/GP) events before they have gained relevant international experience. The result based evidence confirms that this is a problem across weapons and athletes without relevant international experience and performances are extremely unlikely to have developed the skills and capabilities to even make it through the WC/GP poules. This has a negative impact on motivation and performance trajectories, and these representational opportunities are often amongst the highest financial cost. The new system offers a more informed pathway to international representation which evidence suggests will produce improved results and better fencers.

## PROPOSED COMPETITION PATHWAY AND SELECTION SYSTEM FOR SENIOR INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

The proposed tiered structure is designed to create a competition structure which will encourage fencers to gain the appropriate level of experience at each level before moving up to the next level of competition. In doing so this creates a pathway in which fencers with international aspirations are directed to the appropriate level of international competition for their given standard at the right time in their performance pathway. By working up through the levels of competition the fencers will need to achieve a predesignated standard of results which will either demonstrate that they are gaining more experience and getting more piste time and therefore improving as fencers, or (in the case of fencers returning to the international circuit) demonstrate they still have the ability to perform at international level.

The additional requirements around attendance at Domestic competitions is designed to support a stronger Domestic circuit by ensuring that, where possible, all fencers with international experience and aspirations – Cadet, Juniors and Seniors – are exposed to open Domestic competition. This will increase the standard of these nominated competitions and afford the opportunity for the younger fencers to challenge the senior fencers.

The proposed system is based on defining levels of competition, alongside a squad based system of qualification.

### 3. LEVELS OF COMPETITION

| Level | Competition   | Description  | Selection req'd | Additional Notes   |
|-------|---|--|-----------------|--|
| 1     | Senior Domestic Events - GB 'Senior Selection' Events | A subset of existing ranking competitions in the UK – may include Senior Satellites and U23 EFC events held in UK  | N               | Open to all, entries directly to competition, entry limits may apply and standard BF ranking used as cut-offs.   |
| 2     | International Events – (EFC U23s circuit)             | The EFC have a series of 'U23' competitions which are typically competitions that form part of that country's domestic circuit. These are open to Senior fencers and often have associated Team Events | N               | <a href="http://www.eurofencing.info/tournaments/u23">http://www.eurofencing.info/tournaments/u23</a> .<br>Unlike FIE Satellites there is no requirement to source/fund FIE qualified referees to participate. U23 competitions do vary in terms of requirements for referees and (in the same way as we do for)<br><br>(Should results at International Satellites with a high enough entry and NIF count also be considered for entry to B squad?) |
| 3     | Senior International World Cups/Grand Prix's          | FIE Series of International Senior events  | Y               | Entries limited by FIE to 12 per nation  |
| 4     | Senior European and World Championships               |  | Y               | Entries limited by FIE to 4 per nation   |
| 5     | Zonal Qualifiers                                      |  | Y               | Entries limited by FIE to 1 per nation   |

Note - This document does not include the qualification required to compete at the Olympic Games.

## 4. SQUAD SYSTEM

In order to describe selection routes and help categorise athletes 3 squads are proposed with minimum requirements and minimum performance standards.

### 4.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS - ALL SQUAD ATHLETES MUST:

- a) Be over the age of 16
- b) Have competed in the Senior National Championships (waived in certain discretionary circumstances)
- c) Attend an additional 2 Senior Selection Events\* - waived for athletes
  - a. resident outside Europe for periods of 6 months between 1<sup>st</sup> Sep – 1<sup>st</sup> Jul
  - b. FIE ranked top 50 at start of season

\*The intention is that BF would nominate 5-8 events existing ranking competitions based on NIF and standard of event (eg quality of refereeing, format etc). Depending on the feedback from the consultation this is something that may be postponed to 19/20 season, and therefore any competition above a certain NIF point level and following the approved format would count.

### 4.2 MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

| Squad | BF Ranking                  | International Results   |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|
| A     | Top 20 in BF Ranking        | Achieved a L64 in previous 24 months at Level 3 *   |
| B     | Top 20 in BF Ranking        | Achieved a L96 in previous 24 months at Level 3 * (having won a DE fight)<br>OR<br>**Achieved a minimum weapon specific qualification standard at Level 2 competition<br>OR<br>**Achieved a minimum standard at a Junior World Cup/Euros/Worlds in last 24 months |
| C     | Top 5 in BF Junior Rankings | Achieved a minimum standard at nominated Junior World Cup/Euros/Worlds in last 12 months  |

\*European and World Championship results are not included

\*\*The minimum standard will be set by the weapon selectors (in conjunction with the Talent Programme where applicable) and may vary between weapons but will not vary between competitions in the same weapon. (ie if a qualifying result is a L16, then a L16 can be achieved at any competition at that weapon)

## 5. SELECTIONS

### 5.1 LEVEL 3: GRAND PRIX AND WORLD CUP SELECTION

#### 5.1.1 INDIVIDUAL SELECTION (SENIORS WORLD CUP & GRAND PRIX) - 12 PER EVENT.

1. Two places will be filled by 'C squad' fencers based on BF Junior Ranking.
2. One place will be available at the selectors discretion based on evidenced medical/compassionate grounds. This will only be used in exceptional circumstances.
3. The remaining 9 (or more if insufficient C squad athletes exist or the medical discretionary place is unfilled) places shall be filled with 'A squad' fencers
4. Where more 'A squad' fencers exist than the number of available places, places will be allocated according to FIE ranking.
5. Where fewer 'A squad' fencers exist than the number of available places, these places will be allocated to 'B squad' fencers according to BF ranking.

Unused places are available to be used:

- by any selected Team fencers
- by any additional 'C squad' fencers
- at the selectors discretion based on evidenced medical/compassionate grounds.

#### 5.1.2 TEAM SELECTION (SENIOR WORLD CUPS ONLY) - 4 PER EVENT.

Where a coach has been appointed to accompany a team as the GB Senior Team Coach the selectors can chose to delegate authority to that coach to select the team from some or all of the selected individuals. This may be done on the day (based on fitness and current performance) or may be done in advance. From the fencers competing at the individual event, the first two A squad fencers in order of FIE ranking (subject to fitness) will be selected for the team. The remaining places will be filled at the discretion of the GB Senior Team Coach. The GB Senior Team Coach will be delegated the right to make substitution decisions.

Where no GB Senior Team Coach is travelling, selectors will select the first three A squad fencers in order of FIE ranking on the date of selection. The 4<sup>th</sup> place in the team will be selected at the discretion of the selectors from the fencers already selected to compete in the individual event.

## PROPOSED COMPETITION PATHWAY AND SELECTION SYSTEM FOR SENIOR INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

Where fewer than three A squad fencers exist, the A squad fencers will be selected and the remaining fencers will be chosen from the fencers already selected to compete in the individual at the discretion of the selectors.

Where the total number of fencers qualifying for individual selection is less than 4, the selectors may select U23 athletes who are in the top 20 of the Senior Domestic Ranking and have fenced at the National Championships to make up the team. These athletes may then compete in the individual event.

The selectors reserve the right to de-select athletes that are selected to fence for the Team but decline their places whilst accepting their individual place. Specifically includes those circumstances where a selected Team fencer would as a result be denied the opportunity to compete in the individual event, or circumstances where an athlete was only competing in the individual by virtue of being selected for the Team. De-selected athletes would be replaced in accordance with the individual selection rules and the replacements would then become eligible for Team selection.

### **5.2 LEVEL 4: SENIOR EUROPEAN AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SELECTION**

No major changes ie Minimum qualifying standard set using current International points table – ie results at World Cups/Grand Prix Individual and Teams Remaining places may be filled at reasonable discretion from A/B/C squad athletes.

Proposal for change is: Qualification standards should vary across the weapons so that it is considered feasible, rather than extremely unlikely give the current relative standard of Domestic UK fencing vs International fencing.

The selectors reserve the right to de-select athletes that are selected to fence for the Team but decline their places whilst accepting their individual place in the circumstances where a selected Team fencer would be denied the opportunity to compete in the individual event.

### **5.3 LEVEL 5: ZONAL QUALIFIER SELECTION**

No major changes from 2016 policy – to be published separately.