



"Run by Coaches for Coaches"

BAF January Lectures

A.G.M. 2020



During last years A.G.M. a number of members asked for some Continual Professional Development sessions after the close of the formal A.G.M. Thereby increasing the value of coming to the A.G.M. The committee have listened to your requests, and would like to try out this idea, at the next A.G.M. on the 4th January 2020 .

If **you** are willing and able to deliver one of these C.P.D. sessions, please contact vice-president Prof. Andy Vincent to discuss further.

The presentations should last no longer than 20 minutes each, with a 10 minute Q&A session afterward. The talk will be on a subject of the members own choice, but must not involve actual sword in hand. The presentations should be concentrating on the soft skills that are needed for coaching.

With the great wealth of knowledge and experience within the Academy, we , the membership should be able to present some interesting and varied themes.



From which we can all learn.

Academy News Smaller Size

As you can see the Academy News is smaller this issue. We have changed from A4 to A5, but hopefully without losing any of the quality. We are trialing to see if a smaller version is more convenient . This is also part of the plan to continue with a paper copy of our journal, published four times a year. Occasionally supplemented with e-mails where necessary.

Some of the advantages are : Portability, easier to carry with you, so you can lend your copy for other people to read. From an admin point of view, less handling, and lower costs.

The disadvantage is type size which has also become smaller. But a copy of the Academy News is available on the B.A.F. website to download, usually a week after you receive your paper copy.

I hope you enjoy this edition, if you have any comments please let me know.

Thankyou, to everyone who has contributed to this issue of Academy News.

Kevin Nelson, Editor Academy News

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Articles and other material are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor.

A pdf version of the Academy News can be found at www.baf-fencing.com

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Welcome to the Academy News

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by 21st October 2019 please.



Visit the Academy's web site

www.baf-fencing.com

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The President 's Piece.....

Welcome to another issue of Academy News. The 100th edition turned out to be an excellent read, thank you to all the contributors and can I encourage those who are thinking of putting some words together – go for it!

Some years ago, a BAF Advanced coach said to me 'shall I go for the Governing Body Awards or continue to train for my BAF Diploma'. My response was, 'If you want to be really clever, do both, then you can speak from a position of authority in both camps'.

My view, and it is a personal one, is that all coaching systems have something to offer. Our own Governing Body Scheme will suit some coaches, but not others. Scotland has started its own scheme and there are still other coaches following the Hungarian Scheme, not to mention coaches who have overseas qualifications; it is right that they shout loudly and are proud of their scheme. I wish them all great success. For me, the Academy scheme is the one that I prefer, obviously, and I will avoid trashing any others. That does no-one any good and stops any joint co-operation should that opportunity arise.

I have recently gone back to my fencing library! During my years of working and training for my Academy exams, the odd fencing book came out which I bought, put on my shelf and said to myself 'one day I will read that book' but never quite got around to it. Now I have some time and recently have read three books by an American and two by an Hungarian coach, it is quite striking some of the similarities between them. I had to convert some of the terminology not having heard the terms 'Invito and Tempo' before plus some French and Hungarian terms meant the opposite. Nevertheless, I am wiser for the experience, I'm now looking at some of my Polish fencing books! The point I'm trying to make, is that all systems have something valuable to offer. What I have learned is that overseas systems have to be adjusted to fit the British culture, especially our education system, funding and free time commitments. What works in one country does not convert seamlessly to ours.

I have been heard to say that my coaching knowledge is based on theft! I have stolen ideas from Senior Masters and professional coaches, in fact I will steal from any coach who I think has a good idea that I can use, or adapt. But I also share them with anyone who knows the right questions! All the coaches I know are only too willing to pass on their knowledge and help other coaches to improve and better themselves.

I have the greatest admiration for all fencing coaches, it's not an easy sport to learn let alone coach it. Belonging to the Academy 'Club' is a place where you can take advantage of the knowledge and experience of coaches who have 'done it all'. As our strap line says, 'Run by Coaches for Coaches'.

This is the time of year when schools, universities and (some) clubs shut down for the holidays. I have a load of kit to wash, repair and replace ready for the autumn term. Letters are now being sent out to the September intake and a new group of children/adults to be introduced to fencing. I am optimistic and look forward to it.

To all of you, have a restful break and see you on the circuit in the new season.

Prof Peter Northam, President, British Academy of Fencing

A Coaching Seminar in St Albans

By Maitre Tony Middleton

Having qualified as a Maitre d'Esgrime last year, I was keen to support the Academy and share my knowledge with others. So I decided to start coaching sessions in my hometown of St. Albans. This first session was offered for levels 1-3, but focused mainly on those starting on the coaching ladder. However we had a couple of more advanced coaches as well.



With a background in performance (working as a magician and studying theatre), I have always felt comfortable presenting and teaching, it is something I really enjoy. It did feel strange, however, presenting B.A.F. material for the first time; remembering when I first walked into the course at Denstone, and became aware of

the vast knowledge that sits above me, passed on by previous fencing masters. I am also aware of how important a Level 1 coach is. Their work sets the groundwork and fundamental building blocks for any new fencer. Like making a sculpture, there are very many ways to chip off the wrong bit, implanting a bad habit for the future. Plus, the relationship that people have with their first coach is often the most important. They will always remember it, and think back to those days later on.

I had two experienced Masters looking on: Prof. Lance Larsen and Prof. Liam Harrington – thank you to both for your time. So although I was excited and enthusiastic about presenting the coaching seminar, I was also a little apprehensive. Of course, as a new coach educator I wanted to inspire others to a coaching career in this wonderful sport, and make a good start with the group.

I decided to use this first coaching seminar as an introduction to the Academy's system. I thought it would help to break the session into tidy sections. We had 5 hours, so I didn't want it to become boring or repetitive. I split the seminar into 4 parts: Routine Lessons, Class Lessons, Special Lessons, and Level 1 examinations, for those who wanted to take them. I'm delighted to say that we had 6 people take and pass their Level 1, and I have already been asked about future courses towards Level 2 & 3 qualifications.

We started the day with a routine/warm-up lesson. This gave time to watch everyone and make an assessment of who should work with who, and what level they were working at. We then discussed what a routine lesson is, and what should go in it. We worked through attacks, with a variety of foot and blade preparations, parry-ripostes, and counter-ripostes. This worked well because it allowed people to develop the lesson quickly, enabling their student to move up and down the piste. The lessons quickly looked half decent, giving them confidence. Also helping to develop rapport between the coach and student. I was careful to place focus on clear blade presentation. I remember clearly the first thing I was ever told at Denstone: 'put your blade where the student can parry it!' It's obvious, but clear blade presentation is key to both the flow of the routine lesson, and implanting the correct instinct for the student: they should parry when threatened. If an opponent attacks wide, a counter-attack might be a better option. Or, they might be trying to set up a trap and hit you with a counter-riposte, or renewal.



Another common error, which I have made in the past, is giving an instruction to the pupil and not allowing them enough time to process it. For example, if you say, 'parry quarte riposte direct, parry quarte riposte by disengage, parry quarte riposte by one-two, on a lunge', and just launch straight into the phrase without a pause ; the student may not be ready. This results in both coach and pupil making a hash of it, and doesn't help the flow of the lesson. The pupil wants to feel confident in the coach's hands, and wants to be given lots of opportunities to make good hits!



Next we moved on to the class lessons, talking through approaches to teaching a class, and the Academy's preferred acronym I.D.E.A (Introduction, Demonstration, Explanation, Activity). Showing that quite often a

'Problem -> solution'

method of teaching maintains the interest of students. After all, they want to know how to beat their opponent, so showing them a solution to a situation on the piste is more likely to hold their attention than dry fencing theory and terminology. Of course it's very important to impart correct theory to students, but giving

them a reason to learn it, will more likely result in them retaining the information.

Alongside that I was careful to emphasise safety. Any coach has a responsibility for the safety of their students, and what they do will be copied either consciously or unconsciously by the class or club members. As a Fight Director, having worked in theatres and drama schools - where no masks are used - safety has always been inherent in my work. When giving a class lesson, it is very important if removing the mask to give instruction, or explain further details, that the coach emphasises that it is only for the purpose of explanation, and should not be copied by anyone. I say this every time I take my mask off in front of a class, so there is no confusion. When doing this, the coach should move slowly and keep careful control of the student's blade. This is all obvious and basic, but best communicated clearly to new coaches.



Picking up the pace of the day we then worked on Special Lessons. I began by giving a few lessons to different students, showing how a coach must adapt to more or less experienced fencers, or those of different heights! Once again the importance of blade presentation was stressed. It is easy to make the mistake of offering the blade at the wrong height relative to the pupil. I then demonstrated how a simple stroke could be worked into a more advanced lesson. Where the pupil had to consider a variety of responses as they prepared their attack, looking for the right condition and timing, for their attack to be successful. Helping them when necessary by isolating the bit that wasn't working, going through it until they could do it, and then putting it back into the exercise. To make things more interesting for all, I asked the participants to work on questions in the Level 2 syllabus.

Finally we went on to the Level 1 exams. By this time the material was significantly easier, but it did test basic knowledge. We gave them time to work through the question with their fellow candidates, and then they took their test. Everyone had a great day, and I received some very complementary feedback both from participants and from senior coaches present. I look forward to more coach education sessions in the future, and hope that enthusiasm for coaching and the Academy will continue to grow in our area.

What Makes a Good Game?

By Prof. Phil Carson

Games are incredibly good fun, accessible to all standards of fencer, great for fitness and team-building, but also present huge opportunities to coach. So what makes for a good game?

First thing is that it needs to be a game. Sounds obvious, but often we use drills where we think we are using games. In a game, both parties should have an equal and competing role. Take "tag" for example. One person has the role of trying to tag any of the other players and the other players have to avoid being tagged. A great game - one of the best warm up games for large groups of fencers and nice lead into a set of questions around the relevance to fencing and strategies for attack and defence.

A few years ago I saw a game that wasn't a game. One side were given a foil, the other side no weapon, but their job was to make the attack fall short. It was interesting. Clearly the coach had a coaching objective in mind - drawing the attack and using distance to make it miss. All the GB fencers with the foil were being suckered into doing massive step-lunge attacks - sometimes successful, sometimes not. The Italian fencers however couldn't play the game. Why? Because to them it's not a technical game in the sense of deploying a series of techniques (in this case a step-lunge attack). To them, it's a game of distance and timing. Because their preparation was so strong, the tempo moment never arrived and they always took the other fencer to the end of the piste. If the coach had used effective questioning, there was an opportunity here to get the whole group to develop a better understanding of the essence of the game of fencing and to evolve the exercise into a more meaningful game.

Not only does it have to be a game of equal and competing roles, you should try not to pre-judge what the coaching outcomes might be, or in other words, avoid letting your own knowledge getting in the way of the coaching opportunities. Let them play, watch the game develop, ask questions and adapt the game. Can any of the kids think of a better way to play it?

Proficiency Awards

BAF Members:

1 - 4 Awards £3.70 each
5 - 9 Awards £3.60 each
10+ Awards £3.40 each

Approved non-Academy Coaches:

1 - 4 Awards **£4.70** each
5 - 9 Awards **£4.10** each
10+ Awards **£3.90** each

A4 Study Guides:

1 - 4 £2.65 (**£2.90**) each or 5+ £2.30 (**£2.65**) each (incl. p&p)

Figures in **RED** are for non-BAF members



Here is a game I developed that I like very much. It all started with the following game that I stole from a French club. Standing en-guard on lines at 2 metres apart, place an item (glove/ball/cone) in between the two players. One fencer has a foam sword, the other does not. The idea is to steal the item from the middle and to recover to the “en-guard” line without being hit. The fencer with the sword can only hit with a lunge, but every time they lunge they must recover to their “en guard” line.

What we then did was to develop the idea and gave each of the fencers a foam sword and starting from 4m they can both either hit the opponent or steal the glove/cone/ball by dropping their sword and collecting the item with their sword hand. The only rule was that there is no crossing the middle line. The game really “popped” and although we had never seen this game before, we were instantly struck by the coaching opportunities. When you see 7 year olds making fake attacks and taking counter-time parries so they can set up a steal - you know you are on to something.

So my top tips for making it a great game are:

- Equal and competing roles for all the participants
- Don't interrupt the play and let the fun and games evolve
- Avoid pre-determined coaching objectives
- Go with the flow and use effective questioning
- Keep it fun and grow game-sense (tactics, distance and timing) over time
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Avoid technical drills (solutions looking for a problem!)
- Have fun!**

Examination Fees

Level 1 Assessment £11.00
Level 2 to Diploma £21.00 (**£26.00**)

These are for “normal” exams - for Special exams, consult the Course Officer. Figures in **RED** are for non-BAF members

Documentation

The following documentation is available from the Course Officer Jackie Redikin.

Key Teaching Points (Weapon specific)	£7.35 (£9.4) each
Key Coaching Points (Weapon specific)	£7.35 (£9.4) each
Glossary of Terms (including Translation of Fencing Terms)	£7.35 (£9.45)
Employment Guidelines	£7.35 (£9.45)
Teaching/ Coaching Tactics (2nd Edition)	£16.80 (£21)
Examples of past written Papers for Advanced and Diploma examinations - FREE	
All prices include p & p. Figures in RED are for non-BAF members	

From The Archive

Occasionally when you read through the fencing archives you find articles that resonate with you. This article did with me, especially the introduction. When I started fencing what caught me, and kept me fencing was the sheer enjoyment of fencing, without a box, without a referee, where you admitted to being hit. Whereas now we seem to spend more time arguing about what happened, and the latest interpretation of the rules than we do actually fencing. (Mornington Crescent* - special fencers edition)

What I like about the Calpe Method is the three major principles contained within the introduction, which should be applied at all weapons.

To hit without being hit,

acceptance that you have been hit,

and the main one of enjoyment. Both for the players **and** the spectators. After all how many casual spectators actually understand what is going on when they watch us fence?

SINGLE STICK.

The Calpe Method and Rules.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The Calpe Rules aim at making the singlestick the cutting equivalent of the *épée*. The use of the point in sabre tends to restrict play with the cutting edge, to encourage the **stop-thrust* in preference to the **time-hit* with the edge. Furthermore, the modern basket-hilted stick is dangerous as a thrusting weapon. With the old hide-hilt, the stick passed through a leather tube in the hilt, so that in the case of a strong thrust, the hilt would slide forward along the stick. As the stick itself is now gripped directly by the hand (within the basket-hilt), this no longer happens. Hence the Calpe Singlestick Rule which treats the use of the point as dangerous play and penalises it by counting it as a hit against the offender, even when he offended purely by negligence in leaving his point where it was accidentally run on to.

2. A sound fencing motto is "Toucher sans l'être." "To hit without being hit," is the foundation of sound play. To evolve play on that basis these rules have been framed.

3. The joy of fencing lies in the art itself.

4. The discussion of judges not only interrupt play and waste time, but interfere with full enjoyment. Just as in verbal debate, no man is fully pleased with an argument he has put forward if his opponent does not admit its force or if he knows it is based on a fallacy, even so no **hit* is satisfactory to the fencer to whom it is adjudged, if he does not believe it good, or if it does not convince his adversary.

5. By making essential elements of each *hit*, first its acknowledgement by the recipient and then its acceptance by the striker, and by cutting out the talkers, minimum waste of time and maximum enjoyment are made possible.

6. Hearty loud acknowledgements add enormously to the pleasure of both players and make their play enjoyable to watch.

Thanks to Prof. Bert Bracewell for sending the article into the BAF archive, and Prof. Peter Northan for bringing it to my attention.

* - A game on the BBC Radio 4 panel show "I'm Sorry I haven't a clue".



Designated Safeguarding Officer

By Maitre Jacqueline Redikin

As mentioned at the AGM it was necessary for the BAF to have a Designated Safeguarding Officer. From the AGM I was asked to attend a two day course in February so that the BAF fulfilled that requirement. You may ask what does a DSO do and why do we need one. The key outcomes of the role are listed below.

- State your own values regarding child abuse and the impact of these on professional practice.
- Describe the key legislation and guidance that determines your organisation's policy for child safety and welfare.
- Decide what steps your organisation needs to take to look after the safety and welfare of the children and young people it comes into contact with.
- Identify the barriers that prevent children from reporting abuse.
- Know how to respond effectively to a child who does report abuse.
- Understand the barriers that prevent staff from reporting concerns, and how to overcome them.
- Make the right decisions about what steps to take when concerns about a child have been raised.
- Know what's likely to happen following a referral to children's social care.
- Explain the issues connected to recording and sharing information, including confidentiality.
- Show an awareness of the emotional impact of safeguarding children and identify a network for personal support.
- Talk about your organisation's overarching policy and procedures.

I would like to make it clear that the first point of contact for Safeguarding depends on where you are, and if you are reporting concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, or if you have concerns about another coach. As the governing body British Fencing will be your first point of contact if you have concerns about a person/coach. If the concerns are about a child or vulnerable adult then the organisation you are coaching at should take the lead. However if you need help or information about Safeguarding please contact me and I will do my best to advise you. I hope in the next addition of the Academy News to go through some different types of concerns which are not normally thought about

The course was challenging in its content and subject area. However it was important to attend and gave an in depth view about what Safeguarding covers and our role as coaches. One of the outstanding moments of the course is where they played a tape of an abuser, who was well spoken and very articulate, this was to challenge us to question any pre-conceded ideas we had about who committed abuse. You would have not believed that the person was a convicted abuser. It was hard to listen to, but proved an important point to us all.

Should you require help or information on safeguarding then please contact Jacqueline Redikin

E-mail courseofficer@baf-fencing.com

Should you need to report a Safeguarding issue then use the procedures of the organisation that you are working for. Then contact British Fencing, either through your club welfare officer, regional welfare officer, or directly.....

Equality and Safeguarding Manager, Liz Behnke for advice on 077177 40125

If you have a serious concern and you believe that a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk then in the first instance you must contact the Police or Children/Adult Services in your area.



Going Mental... Part 2

Visualisation

By Craig Jinks

Visualisation, or mental rehearsal, as a tool has been around for a while. Michael Jordan swore by it; Mohammad Ali was a fan; Jonny Wilkinson would visualise the sensation of the rugby ball leaving his foot dozens of times before laying boot on one; Wayne Rooney would check what colour kit Man Utd would be wearing the day before a game, so he could lie in bed and visualise his part of the next day's game more accurately. And so on. But what is it?

At its core, it's simply a process of creating a mental image of what you want to happen in reality, imagining a scene, complete with the images of perfect performance, to make it easier to replicate it in real life. There are a few types of visualisation, but the one I find most useful I've used for fencing, giving big presentations and preparing for difficult conversations. The hard part is getting used to preparing yourself.....

Sit comfortably (or lie down in bed), close your eyes if you wish and imagine your favourite fencing hall/salle. Not just the centre of the piste, but what else can you see?, what sounds can you hear?, what can you smell? what does it feel like through your feet? If there are spectators, fill it with people that are unconditionally supportive – even if that has to be 2,000 copies of your mum.

Then imagine walking up to the piste, plugging in and going through your normal routine to face your opponent. Who are you facing? (it might be a faceless, generic fencer, or someone that you know you are going to face and want to prepare for)

It doesn't really matter what this beginning sequence is for you, as long as it's purely positive and it's exactly the same every time. The more you do it, the more easily you will be able to slip into it.

The ref calls play and you execute the move you're thinking about perfectly. Everything about it is perfect. You do exactly what you should and your opponent reacts how you want them to. Repeat it 10 times. Every time with the outcome exactly as you want it.

Now change something slightly. You start the move as before, but the opponent does something different and you react to that perfectly, getting the touch. Repeat that one again another 10 times. And change something a second time and repeat.

There's 2 things going on as you're doing this.

1) Your muscles are actually receiving tiny electrical pulses from your brain. Not enough to move them and certainly not enough to train them (so lose any idea of working out by lying on the sofa and thinking about it) – but enough to prime the muscle for peak performance. To build a memory in the brain of exactly how it should look and feel. You're actually building in better form (as long as you know it in the first place, of course)

- 2) You're priming your lizard brain to recognise the decision point and giving it options to respond with. You are teaching yourself to recognise those tiny differences in your opponent's response and what you prefer to do about it... just quicker than you can consciously think about it. You don't need to practice 10 different ways of riposting from quarte... but if you work on visualising your favourite three, it will improve the speed of your response immensely over time.

As a bonus, the brain is less likely to jump into fight or flight mode because it's experiencing what it expects to, so think about how you can use it to deal with first bout nerves, or slow starts as well.

It takes time and practice to get visualisation to work for you. And consistency in your practice is most helpful – think 10 mins every day/every other day (morning is best). The key is staying positive... if you're imagining an audience and there's a heckler turning up, or you start imagining mistakes (or replaying recent ones), just stop and try again later when you're better able to control it. The vividness of your imagination (is it in colour or not?) will give better results, but don't worry if you can't conjure up a crystal clear image, it still helps. Some people, once they've got visualisation working for them, even introduce background music – playing a particular song/artist in the background while they're going through their visualisation practice. It can make that piece a trigger for the positive mental environment or mindset you've created, and be a valuable part of build up at the event/competition.

If you're wondering about how it works in a work context, think about running through that presentation, meeting or conversation and it going exactly as you want - then adding some anticipated, but awkward, questions and handling them with ease.

Going Mental - Recommended Further Reading:

Amy Brann: Neuroscience for Coaches (*the leadership-type coach, not sports-type*)

Hilary Scarlett: Neuroscience for Organizational Change

Prof Steve Peters: The Chimp Paradox (*Steve Peters worked with the very successful British Olympic Cycling Team around this, but the book is around general self-awareness and self management*)

Daniel Kahneman: Thinking, Fast and Slow

Frank Amthor: Neuroscience for Dummies, 2nd Edition

British Neuroscience Association Online Resource section at: <https://www.bna.org.uk/about-neuroscience/online-resources/>

Author's Note: There are plenty of sites online that refer to neuroscience in sport. As a relatively new discipline, there are some good articles out there, but also many are trying to sell you some amazing product or technique that will immediately reduce your golf handicap by at least half etc. etc. etc. Have a search, but just use it to develop your thinking.

Recommended to me but not yet read:

A. Mark Williams and Robin C. Jackson: Anticipation and Decision Making in Sport

Amit Katwala: The Athletic Brain

Committee Snippets

The committee has met twice since the last edition of Academy News.

Academy news changing from A4 format to A5 format, but to retain a paper copy, published 4 times a year. But to look to e-mail, to supplement if necessary. (*Action Complete*)

Investigate changing the AGM venue to Holiday Inn Cannock (*Action Compete - see below*).

CPD after the AGM, inviting members to present their Development ideas to the membership, but not sword in hand. With each session ideally being 20 minutes long (Max 30 minutes), with a 10 minute question and answer session after each talk. (*See front page*)

At the AGM, the members meeting to start & be completed earlier, so that the main meeting can have an earlier start, which will allow for the CPD at the end of the AGM.

Due to an increase in the cost of study guides, the committee discussed the cost of the proficiency awards system and decided that the costs would not be increased unless there is an increase in postage.

B.A.F. t-shirts - ongoing.

Dates for Denstone 2020 to be established (*Provisionally Booked*).

AGM New Venue

We have a new venue for the A.G.M. this year. It is the Holiday Inn Birmingham North - Cannock (Bridge St, Cannock WS11 0DQ). The A.G.M. will be held on the **4th January 2020**. For those who bring wives and partners, the change of location should give them a new shopping / sightseeing opportunity, while you are in the meeting.

New for this year - C.P.D. after the A.G.M. ; Could you provide an interesting, and relevant talk on some of the soft skills of coaching?



This year the plan is for a casual dinner afterwards, to encourage networking and the renewal of old acquaintances. I look forward to seeing you all there.



Future Years

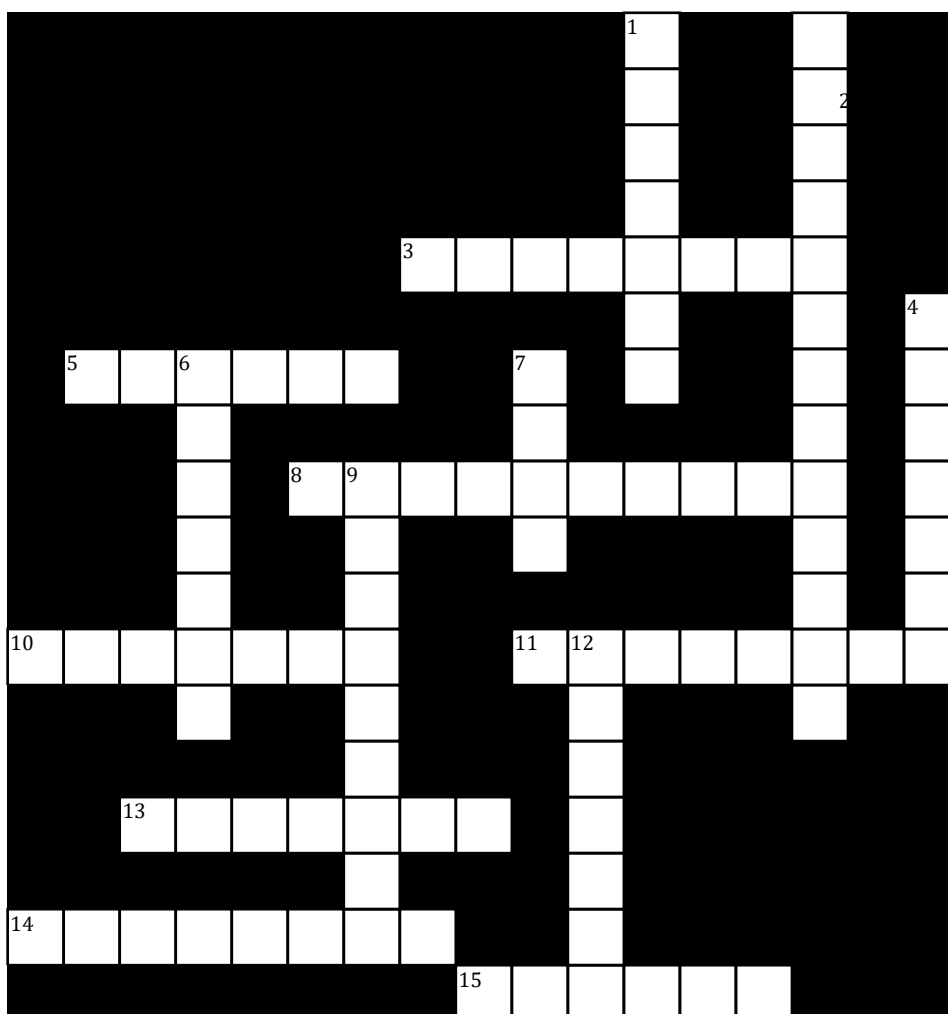
Should the dinner after the A.G.M. be a formal affair, with Dinner Jackets, speeches, and presentations?
Or more casual, with all presentations having taken place at the A.G.M.?



Does anyone has any ideas of where we could hold the A.G.M. in future years?

Talk to us ; Let us know *YOUR* views

Yellow, Red , & Black



Across

- 3 Deliberate hit not on what ? (2.5)
 5 Taking Drugs (4.9)
 8 Leaving the piste without (1.1)
 10 Missing what marks ? (2.3)
 11 Doing what without FIE conforming equipment (3.5)
 13 Back to opponent (1.3)
 14 Putting non-target in front of target. (1.4)
 15 Refusal to do what before a bout ? (4.6)

Down

- 1 No spare bodywire (1.8)
 2 Offence against ? (4.5)
 4 A yellow card is what ?
 6 A red card is what ?
 7 What not conforming to rules ? (1.14)
 9 A black card means ?
 12 not obeying the referee (1.13)

A simple crossword to introduce the penalty sheet while you are encouraging your younger pupils (and not so young) to referee. The answers are all on the penalty sheet. (2017; FIE version, as found on BF website). The numbers in Brackets refer to the penalty.

The crossword was created on-line using Armoured penguin.



For all the latest information on courses
 go to the Academy web site at www.baf-fencing.com



Practising

By Donald Walker

More years ago than I care to recall, I was a young work study officer. For those of you who are younger, google it. I had not long started fencing when I found myself in a bout of loose play with the best fencer in the club, Donnie McKenzie. Donnie was at that time the Scottish number one and would soon become the British number one. To a raw beginner this was a challenge and for about twenty minutes I threw everything at him, bar the kitchen sink, trying to hit him. I finally got a hit, through luck not judgement I suspect. On the train going home that night I used the tools of my trade to analyse our bout and I realised that for twenty minutes he had replied to every attack with a circle sixte parry and varied his ripostes to different parts of the target. When I finally hit him with a double, he said "Nice hit" and went onto practise something else.

My point is this: As coaches we all give lessons and hopefully our pupils learn from them. But do they practise afterwards? In many clubs the pupils get lessons then go on the box, there is no loose play as such. They are then in a competitive environment as they are trying to win. By that criterion they will not be practising their skills. I'm not saying they won't improve as there will be some. Even in clubs that allow loose play, put two young fencers together and the first thing you'll hear them say is "first to five" or a variation of the same.

I tell my fencers the above story and I also tell them that while trying to perfect a stroke they have to accept being hit. Mostly it falls on stony ground, but the ones who take it on board have all become better fencers. One of my Epeeists went out in the first round of a competition and was rather annoyed about it, but took my advice about practising. The following year he won it. Unfortunately the year after he discovered girls and his fencing went on the back burner.

To illustrate with a different sport: A friend of mine who loves Golf had a very bad slice. His club's professional showed him what he was doing wrong and then stood and watched him hit 5 buckets of balls on the practice range, correcting where needed.

Ours is a competitive sport, but I feel we don't put enough emphasis on practise. Donnie did, that's why he was the best for so long.

How are you Advertising your Club this Year?

How do you advertise your club? How do you get new members? What events have you been to this year? just to advertise your club? To let local people know you exist?

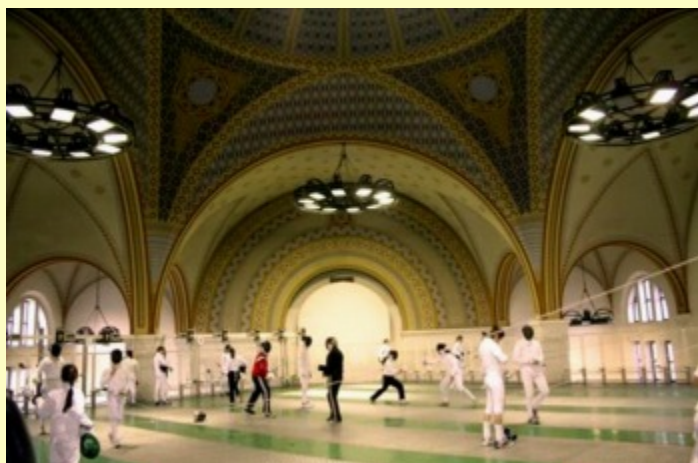
Write in and let us know what you are doing, share the information, as we all need to promote fencing.

This year I attended the Gloucestershire school games on the primary school day, as part of the activity village. I took some plastic foils with me, and gave very short taster sessions, with limited space to about 200 kids (in groups of 4 to 10). From which we have had quite a few enquiries. I am sure the badges that I give away to each attendee helped. Kevin.

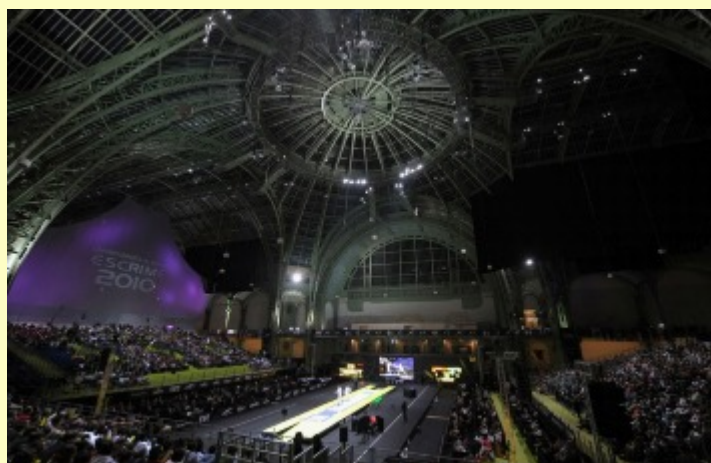


Iconic and Picturesque Fencing Venues from Around the World

By Prof. Andy Vincent



Honved fencing club, Budapest Hungary



Grand Palais, Paris, France
2010 World Championships



Palermo, Italy – 2019 Italian Championships

Do you have any photographs of similar interesting and photogenic fencing arenas? If so we would be happy to include them in a future edition.

Please send them to the editor Kevin Nelson

University Collaboration Part 1

Introduction & Media

Over the past two years I have slowly been involved in my local University, my first contact was with their media department. Individual students would contact my club in the hope of finding someone to photograph in the university studio. Some of the photographs have been quite good and are useable for advertising the club.



The most interesting one was from a media student who needed to produce a video advert for her final year 3 project. Her brief was to produce an advert with three different sports, showing a smart shoe. The shoe would record your activity, while actually taking part in the sport, and also enable you to work virtually

with a partner, & V.R. headsets (unfortunately it doesn't actually exist). The first part of the video was shot at club, and then for the second part the two fencers went off to the Uni. to perform in front of a green screen, which is meant to simulate the virtual world, in this case on the moon. All enjoyed the process, which took about 2 fencing hours to produce a 15 second clip (and an unknown amount of editing time).



Fencing on the Moon

Proficiency Awards & D of E

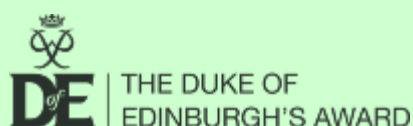
As the Duke Of Edinburgh's award system gets more popular in state schools. I find that I am getting a greater number of requests to assess my pupils for their awards. Mostly the request is for physical section. The BAF Proficiency awards, are ideal for this purpose, with our Bronze, Silver, Gold awards. They fit ideally into the D of E system, and the required timescales.



Recently as the scheme has grown locally, I am getting requests for the Volunteering section, and for the past two years have taken on a succession of 14 & 15 year old fencers to help out in my U10 session. So far this has been an incredible success on both sides. With the fencers taking part growing into their leadership skills, always very hesitantly at first, but by the end of their involvement confidently taking warm-up sessions, refereeing, and working with individuals. Going away better fencers for having done a little teaching.....



With the e-DofE website assessing them has never been easier, just get them to provide their DofE number, put it into the assessors web page <https://www.edofe.org/assessor/> confirm their identity, and type in a small report on them.



If you have the opportunity to assess your fencers I would urge you to do so, as it will help develop them as young people.

Kevin Nelson. Editor Academy News



Running a Level 1 FES Course Part 2

After the first session, my new 'gang' of coaches went off seemingly happy and clutching paperwork to read and digest, and hopefully, to practice coaching in their own environment. The real test for me was, will they come back!

Great! Second session, all came back and so we continued looking at the Level 1 syllabus, building up a sensible routine lesson with emphasis on giving smaller signals to our pupil, moving from easy to hard, from simple to complicated. At this point I need to remind you that the group were not beginner fencers and most had a coaching qualification, so we could move quite quickly through the work and then I just stood back and watched. I have learned through bitter experience not to jump in at the first mistake a new coach makes, but to allow them to try to work through the problem and then only step in when asked or if they were getting seriously lost. Another session down and off they went.

The following sessions went similarly with fine tuning blade work, choosing variations of footwork: moving past the 'stand up' coach position to a more competitive fighting position. At some point a coach needs to put any action under the sort of stress that is met in a fight, but it has to be done sensitively, the fencer has to go away with a definite sense of success.

At the last session (and all had completed the course) I informed them that they had passed their Level 1. We had a debrief, I gave them the syllabus for Level 2, got Richard Burn to take photo's of the team (thank you Richard) which is now on the Academy website and told them I was always available should they need any help or advice.

At the risk of embarrassing myself, here are a few comments from the candidates:

"I enjoyed the course immensely, and learned an enormous amount not only about Sabre coaching but about coaching in general. Your style was relaxed and easy going but very informative and effective. By far the best Coach course I have ever attended."

"Thanks very much for the course. I really enjoyed it, and have already had some opportunity to help out at Redditch. I think that going back to the basics will help my fencing, as much as it will help those I coach in the future."

"As I said, I really enjoyed the course, and found your observations on how to deal with those we coach and how to maintain their interest as useful as your technical advice and demonstrations. In the future, I think it is likely I will do further coaching levels, but would like to use and consolidate my Level 1 knowledge first."

"I chose to take the Level 1 course to help give me a better understanding of fencing epee and to help improve my own technique. Professor Northam is brilliant, bringing patience, wit, and expertise to his teaching others how to teach the mechanics and intricacies of fencing. He makes the syllabus fun while guiding potential coaches through the many variations in how to give a lesson. I would highly recommend this course to those who wish to learn to coach and to those who would like a deeper understanding of their chosen weapon."

"Just want to say it's been a pleasure being taught and learning new skills by you as always. Many thanks for being our coaching master".

I hope this two part-article has given you the confidence to run a Level 1 coaching course yourself ; myself and the Committee are here for help and advice. Good Luck!

Prof Peter Northam
British academy of Fencing



Thinking Ahead!

By Nick Chapman.

Here I go again with another corruption of the scoring system favouring one approach, therefore promoting practice of a specific aspect of our sport and calling it a game. Whilst I have nothing against reactive fencing (I am more often than not guilty of it myself), I do like to try and get my fencers to have a plan. However having a plan is just the first step I want them to have an evolving plan, to use what has just happened to inform their judgment on what could be about to happen, and hopefully to see how they can use what has just happened to turn a repeat set of circumstances from a hit against, into a point in favour.

In order to achieve this they need to think about far more than just what they executed badly, mistimed or failed to do. Identifying these things and learning from them is important, after all recognising a mistake is the first step to rectifying it, but in a fight situation it is not enough. I want my fencers to think about how what has just happened is going to affect the choices their opponent is going to make, how in turn this is going to affect the next phrase and therefore what they need to do to score the point.

I have a couple of games that incentivise this kind of thinking by rewarding sequences of hits.

The first game is an 'accumulator'. First to 15 points, score a hit get a point, score a second hit before being hit and the second one is worth two points, third hit in a sequence is worth three points etc. Each time they land a hit they are then pressured to try and score the next hit as it carries a grater reward, equally, get hit and it becomes more important to score the next one to interrupt the opponents' progress and prevent them getting the grater reward. The system rewards fencers who can build sequences of hits. Now given a better fencer and a lesser fencer this may not foster the tactical thinking that I am looking for as the better fencer can simply use their superior technique to repeatedly exploit a single weakness in the lesser fencers' style, however given two fencers of a similar ability (and with a little coaching input) it can encourage fencers to start thinking. Please note, this game is about sequences of hits 'without being hit' so at epee a double is never the next hit in a sequence but rather the first hit in the other fencers sequence.

My second game addresses the problem the last game suffers, namely fencers of differing skill level. To achieve this you need a game where fencers are incentivised to achieve sequences of hits but are in effect competing against themselves. 'Inflation', Fencers try and create sequences of hits, each time trying to achieve one more in the sequence than they did last time. Fencers pair up and fence until one of them scores two hits in a row, then move on to new opponents. In the new fight the fencers may be trying to achieve different goals. The one who scored two in a row is now trying to score three in a row, whilst their opponent is trying to score one more in a sequence than they did in their last fight (in this case that could be 2 in a row or 3 in a row depending on how they did in their first fight). The fight is over as soon as one of them achieves their goal. Repeat with new partners, each time each fencer is trying to achieve one more in a row than their previous personal best of the session.

Members Advertise in the Academy News for Free

Academy News is a **service to our members** and we offer the chance to **advertise for free** on its pages, whether it be for an **event, a course, your club, or indeed anything**. There is **no charge to members** and you don't even have to supply any artwork, although it would be very helpful if you did. Simply send the Editor, Kevin Nelson (kevin.nelson@baf-fencing.com) the details of your event for inclusion in future editions.

As things progress the goals become more appropriate for the level of the fencer trying to achieve them, the less experienced fencer just trying to put together a sequence whilst the better fencer is trying to put together ever longer sequences. This provides a game for a mixed ability group that is individually tailored to the ability of each fencer. Once again some coaching input will help fencers to maximise the value they take away from the session. Personally I like to wait till I have fencers who have been stuck with the same opponent for some time, scoring several hits and then being interrupted by a hit from their opponent, that's when I find they are most receptive to ideas of how to escape the situation. Also once again the unique scoring system in Epee requires an additional rule, in this case I allow the double but it ends the fencers sequence, so if it's enough to get them to their goal that's fine, if not their opponent is now one hit into their new sequence.



Stefan Speaks

The thought of your Members' Rep.

I looked at my notes and I didn't like them. They were scruffy with only partial ideas, research needed and lots of crossing out. No matter which way I looked at them if they were a view, or a plate of food no one was going to photograph them for their Instagram feed. I assuredly wasn't going to get a captivating BAF article out of them and I was very short of time. My article started to resemble Schrödinger's cat! "What have you been doing" I hear you silently fume, whilst dunking your rich tea biscuit into your cuppa. (watch out..... oops that's your biscuit lost to the depths of your mug). Well over the last few months I had spent 35+ hours sorting out a list of emails for all the fencing clubs in the UK, not as easy a task as you might think (because no there is not a list anywhere that I could find), plus I wrote a multidimensional (hmm that Schrodinger chap again) searchable database system whereby I can email them every now and then to let fencing folk know of the upcoming courses we are running in their area.

See I had a valid excuse which was good. As there was no way I could tell Kevin that my dog had eaten the article* because he would point out that she has never chewed anything that wasn't hers, she is a good dog and I should go get her a treat.

All I could glean from my notes was that at the end of my article I should ask for your help. (Have you finished choking and mopped up the tea you spat out?)

Yes, that's right **YOUR** help, now as you know membership renewal is due at the start of October, so August will see me sending out renewal information. Part of that information is a form that you need to fill in and return to me with your details (and payment). Now one of the important bits is your email address, this lets you receive enthralling BAF info and exciting opportunities via the world wide web (aka "the internet" yes it has an alias and somewhere probably a mask and cape).

So, to help me and yourself when you choose your weapon to fill in the form be it fountain pen, biro, ballpoint, gel pen, quill or rollerball pen please unlike my scruffy only partially legible notes could you make sure your info is beautifully clear and unambiguous. Thank you.

Now what the heck can I write an article on.....

(* - Yes I Know she would never take a byte out of your work - Kevin)

B.A.F. Residential Course 2019

12th August to 17th August 2019

The next residential course will be held at Denstone College and there are still some places left should you wish to join us.....



The British Academy of Fencing's residential course is open to all fencing coaches irrespective of whether they are members of the BAF.

British Academy of Fencing Members : £444 Non Academy Coach: £499

This fee includes full board (breakfast, lunch and evening meals), tuition and course documentation. Examination fees are extra.



For further details,
contact the Course Officer,

Jacqueline Redikin

courseofficer@baf-fencing.com



Manchester Coaching Courses

Courses are being held in the Manchester area, on a monthly basis. The course is for all three weapons from levels 1 to 5. For further information, please contact Jacqueline Redikin via courseofficer@baf-fencing.com

Exploring Traditional Fencing Coaching Methodology

Thursday 8th August 18:00 - 21:00

A practical master class lead by

Jonathan Katz

With sandwiches on arrival

At Levi Fox Hall, King Edward VI School, Chapel Lane, Stratford upon Avon, **CV37 6BE**

Sandwiches, drinks and light refreshments included

Cost: £15 in cash or cheque payable to Shakespeare's Swords

or by bank transfer to ac no: 31480502 sort code 40-43-19 *Reference: BFCPD080819[Name]*

To book your place email David Kirby at dmjksabre@gmail.com

Also at Stratford upon Avon and bookable through <https://www.britishfencing.com/upcoming-courses-2/> from 5-6th August (BF L1), 7-10th August (BF L2), and 6-10th August (BF L3).

& Safeguarding and Protecting Children on the evening of 5th August.

Plus a 1st Aid Course on 11th August. To book email David Kirby at dmjksabre@gmail.com