

What does COVID 19 Mean for Us?



Stay At Home

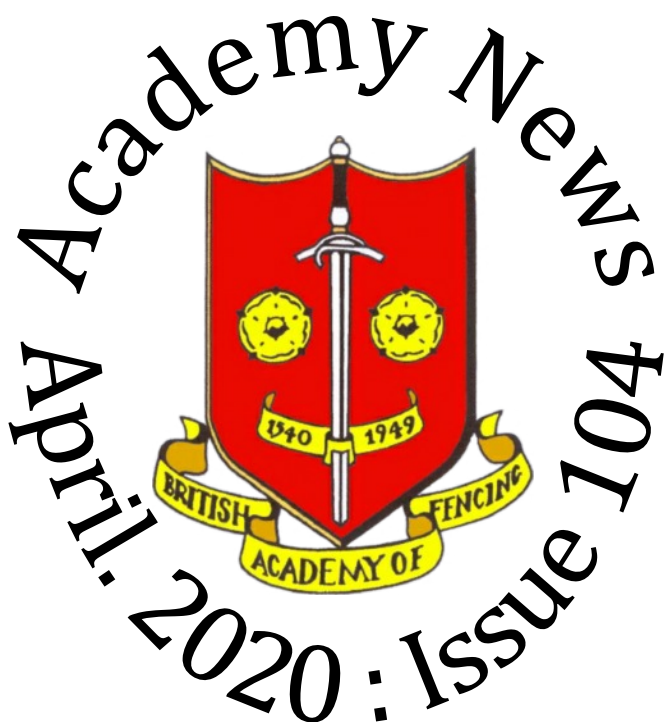
Protect the NHS



Exercise Once a Day Outside of Home

Staying 2 metres away from anyone you meet.

Or to put it in fencing terms; If you could lunge and hit someone with your weapon, then you are too close.



Communicate

Keep in contact with our fencers, and our fellow coaches. Use e-mail, a newsletter, post on social media, video call, talk to them on the phone, or even write a letter. Those who have no choice in these times but to stay at home will appreciate being remembered.

Share idea's amongst ourselves, how can we help our fencers and fellow coaches to train under these circumstances? If you have a good idea, publish it, let us know about it!

Academy News is edited by Kevin Nelson. Millfields, The Vatch, Slad, Stroud, Glos. GL6 7JZ.

Email: editor@baf-fencing.com

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

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Your Committee

President:

Prof. Peter Northam
28 Dorset Road, Birmingham. B17 8EN
Tel: 0121 429 9717
Email: president@baf-fencing.com

Vice-President:

Prof. Andrew Vincent
7 Kenyon Avenue, Dukinfield,
Cheshire. SK16 5AR.
Tel: 0161 338 4607
Email: vicepresident1@baf-fencing.com

Vice-President:

Prof. Bob Merry
6 Birkdale Close, Bramhall,
Cheshire. SK7 2LN.
Tel: 0161 440 9613
Email: vicepresident2@baf-fencing.com

Secretary:

Maitre Jackie Redikin
10 Beverley Avenue, Davyhulme
Urmston M41 0RY.
Tel: 0161 747 2679
Email: secretary@baf-fencing.com

Treasurer:

Maitre John Worsley
8 Mosedale Close, Astley,
Tyldesley, Manchester M29 7JW
Tel: 07857 625 958
Email: treasurer@baf-fencing.com

Members' Representative:

Stefan Leponis
58 Mount Drive, Nantwich
Cheshire CW5 6JQ
Tel: 07816 423 809
Email: membersrep@baf-fencing.com

Assistant Secretary:

Sally Peat
The Cottage, Nethergreen,
Parwich, Derbyshire. DE6 1QL.
Tel: 07816 423 809
Email: assistant.secretary@baf-fencing.com

Committee Member: Editor Academy News:

Kevin Nelson
Millfields, The Vatch, Slad,
Gloucestershire. GL6 7JZ.
Tel: 07845 764 532
Email: editor@baf-fencing.com

Additional Positions:

Proficiency Awards Administrator:
Maitre Donald Walker
4 The Aviares, Castle Howard
York YO60 7BU
Email: proficiencyawards@baf-fencing.com

Film & Theatre Representative:

Andy Wilkinson
The Cottage, The Common, Kinsbourne Green,
Harpenden, Herts. AL5 3NT
Tel: 01582 713052
Email: andyawilkinson@hotmail.com

Chairman, SSTT, Examinations Administrator :

Prof. Andrew Vincent
Email: vicepresident1@baf-fencing.com
Designated Safeguarding Officer
Maitre Jackie Redikin
Email: courseofficer@baf-fencing.com

International Secretary:

Prof. Bob Merry
Email: vicepresident2@baf-fencing.com

Course Officer:

Maitre Jackie Redikin
Email: courseofficer@baf-fencing.com

Membership Secretary. Marketing:

Stefan Leponis
Email: membersrep@baf-fencing.com

Welcome to the Academy News

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editor@baf-fencing.com

NEXT ISSUE: June 2020

British Academy of Fencing

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Talpa Hall

Station Road

Old Newton

Stowmarket

Suffolk IP14 4HQ



The President 's Piece.....

Welcome to this issue of Academy News. A strange one this considering we are in the midst of the Covid 19 pandemic! This has affected us all, no-one is exempt and the national lockdown has put all of our members in a precarious financial situation. Particularly those who are full-time coaches with no additional income (mercifully, very few). An excellent YouTube video to watch is by Martin Lewis of [MoneySavingExpert.com](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com) giving wise advice for the self-employed. Go to GOV.UK and look for Financial support for the self-employed: banks and building societies are offering 3-month re-payment holidays. A chat to your accountant should help.

There will be no coach training days or courses being held and we have decided to cancel our flagship course at Denstone College. Denstone have agreed to accept our booking for 2021. The Committee is keeping in touch via emails as well as with the rest of the membership. The Committee is here should you wish to make suggestions of how you are dealing with the crisis.

My last two weeks of school was working with fencers with no equipment but foils. Some parents had queried my practice of sharing masks between schools, so, to be on the safe side, I kept the masks, jackets and gloves locked away. This is where a fencing coach now has to become inventive! Using teams, 'mask on glove' is a popular game, another involves taking apart a foil then, using teams, running a relay race in putting it together back (thanks Lance!). For those with a military background, 'pokey drills' with a foil (use your imagination) is fun. Any games like these need to be well supervised for safety's sake, used with caution and aimed at the level relevant to the experience of the fencers involved!

My footwork sessions always involve sword in hand, I can not only practice the footwork but also ask for blade work actions (eight positions, 3 simple attacks, 3 types of parry, compound attacks, successive parries, 1st/2nd counter ripostes, engagements, preparations, the list goes on, all with a variety of footwork). Footwork without a blade in hand is like trying to teach a footballer how to dribble without a ball. Yes, there are times when teaching footwork on its own is valid, particularly with beginners, but as they develop, footwork with blade in hand is my preferred way to go. You can turn up with a plan of what you are going to teach and then find you are not in the same venue, do not have enough equipment and not all the fencers have turned up. This is where adaptability and inventiveness come in.

So, what do we do in the present and what can we plan for the future? Each coach is different and working at different levels. There are school/club coaches, regional/national team coaches. There is no 'one size fits all' plan, I think communication is the key here. Some have developed a newsletter for their clubs, others are working on on-line video coaching content, necessity is certainly the mother of invention. Hopefully we will hear of other ways our coaches are coping. I don't think I will be back until September. So, what can I do? Well, I have already washed jackets, under plastrons and gloves, how do you wash a mask? one member tells me he sticks two masks at a time in a dishwasher, successfully! What does Leon Paul advise? Weapons repaired and cleaned, kit now in storage. All we can do now is keep in touch as best we can and wait for the lockdown to lift.

Meanwhile, I have house repairs to catch up on, a scroll saw and a wood lathe to play with plus plenty of wood!

Keep positive, and take care of yourselves and your families, follow the lockdown rules as best you can, we will see each other the other side of this pandemic.

Prof. Peter Northam, President, British Academy of Fencing

From the Collection of Porthos

This sword doesn't fit into rapiers, smallswords or broadswords. It is composite, the guard dating around 1670 and the blade around 1700. Composite swords are common. They were re-cycled even then! If a blade snapped, it would be made into a dagger, and a new blade fitted.

I think of it as a general purpose weapon, suitable for a traveller to carry so that he was at least armed if attacked. It has



a 37" (94 cm) blade with a short fuller (groove), and has engraved scrolls on the forte. It could be used for both cut and thrust. The hilt has a dark patina overall, and the very attractive guard is intricately pierced and decorated in a 'pepper pot' design. The pommel is fluted, as is the tip of the quillon. The knuckle guard splits into two scrolls which join the guard. The grip was clearly a modern, low quality replacement, and I restored it by making this grip, covered in fishskin and bound with iron wire. It's well balanced and comfortable to use, and if I had to use it in combat, I could give a good account of myself!

Porthos

The Use (Misuse) of TLA's

By Kevin Nelson

In the last few months I have received written communications from three coaches I respect which contained TLA's. I don't have a problem with TLA's, as they do actually cut down the amount of writing..... Unless of course the letters could actually mean something else. In which case they should be defined when you use them for the first time. Which if I remember correctly from my 'O' level English, should be the case with all acronyms, or abbreviations. With a TLA people will often pretend they know what you are talking about, or even just skim read the TLA without understanding its significance. Its not good enough just to rely on context for understanding.

Fencing is a sport with it's own language, and we must remember to define the terms we use, to enable the highest levels of communication, and hence understanding between us.

In case you were wondering.....

TLA : Three Letter Acronym.



Repêchege!

By Nick Chapman

For the first of this series of articles I am going with a standard but under used format, one that you would not use on a club night and probably not on a training day, but one that I love and wish more competitions would embrace.

I first came across repêchege as an alternative to Direct Elimination when taking the 'British Cadet Epee Squad' around Europe in about 2002....no, that's not strictly true, the first time I encountered repêchege was when I competed in the British Novice Championships (an event that later became the 'British Intermediate Championships' as this was considered a more appealing title, before falling out of favour and finishing, only to be resurrected a couple of years back as the 'GB Cup') but back then I hadn't a clue what was going on so I'm not counting that.

From the French repêchege meaning fishing out or rescuing, in short 'repêchege' is a system where if you lose your 15 hit fight (I hesitate to call it a DE fight) you got another fight against someone else who has also lost, the winner of this consolation fight gets reintroduced to the draw further on. Effectively you have to lose two fights to be eliminated (until you get to the last 8 where it becomes a standard DE).

Back in the 00's the Europeans seemed to favour this system for age group event's as it provides for the opportunity to make a mistake. They felt that Cadets (under 17's) were still developing and that they were more likely to get the best fencer on top of the rankings at the end of the event if they allowed some latitude for errors. They considered their cadet events to be developmental and they wanted to provide the maximum learning opportunity, the logic being that more piste time equates to more learning opportunity.

First time round we struggled with this. The British fencers were so used to 'lose and your out' that when they did lose their world collapsed (psychologically speaking), trying to get them to realise they had another chance, that they weren't out of the game was nigh on impossible. Trying to get them mentally back in the right place to take full advantage of the repêchege system was a challenge. As a result we decided that we needed a British event (Cadet nominated of course) that provided experience of this system before Cadet's encountered it abroad. This was the motivation behind the establishment of the now defunct 'Bill Hoskyns Open' which was run as two rounds of pools and DE with repêchege from 64, all in one day.

This served it's intended purpose nicely. Our cadets normally fenced in the Bill Hoskyns a couple of times in the seasons running up to making it in to the squad that travelled to Europe. As a result they had the opportunity to be better prepared. It also meant that domestically they got that extra opportunity, that extra fencing that the Europeans were so keen on. As a by product, lot's of seniors seemed to enjoy the opportunity to do essentially double the fencing for the same entry fee all in one day of competition.

Now that brings me to an important point. You need to be a brave and well resourced competition organiser to attempt to run repêchage from 64. A normal DE with a full complement of fencers is 63 fights. If you do the same with 64 fencers and repechage using the EnGuard system (there are various ways of doing it but as EnGuard is the most common software in use at British events we will stick to that) it's a whopping 139 fights. If you are going to make that work in a day I suggest you need a good supply of referees, 16 pistes and a team that will turn round the paperwork very efficiently. Alternatively you could fence a weapon that's over in seconds... so why don't more Sabre competitions use repêchage? Either way you will also need lots of patience because even after 8 years of running the Bill Hoskyns the most common questions were still 'so how does this work' and 'what round am I in now'. For some reason people really struggle with the idea that there is no 'last 16', there is the last 32 and there is a last 8, but there isn't a point between them where there are only 16 fencers and they are all in the same tableau, mind you some people struggle with the concept of winning their last 64 fight and not automatically being in the last 32. I have attached a flow diagram of repêchage from 64. If you start at A 64 (the rounds have been named as the software names them), winners follow green arrows down, and losers follow red arrows across, it all makes sense (honest). With some study you will see that it is possible to win the event by winning 8 fights in a row (2 more than in conventional DE) but it is also possible to win having had 11 fights and losing two of them.

If you study the diagram you will see it can also be adapted to run from 32 very easily (that's what we used to at the Bill Hoskyns for the Women's event). Other numbers don't work quite so well. If you are a few fencers short of the 64 (or the 32) that's fine an odd hole in the draw doesn't cause too much problem. If you are a few over the 64 (or the 32) then you are better cutting to the appropriate number, depending on how many you need to lose this may require a simple cut from the pools or a round of standard DE prior to starting the repêchage. Incidentally 48 also works nicely it effectively negates the B32 table (the same thing applies to starting with 24 and negating E16).

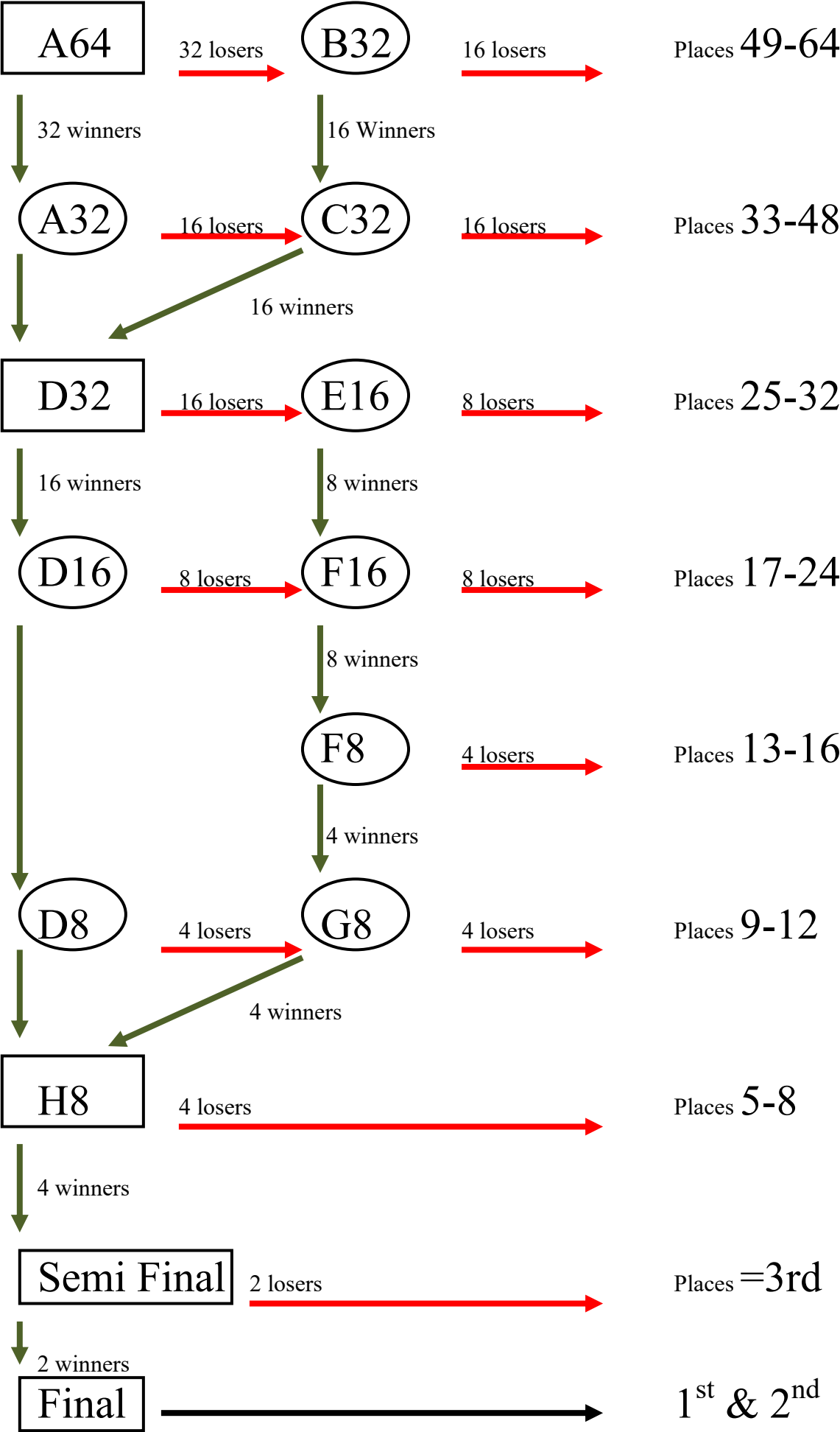
There are a few anomalies that can come up that you need to be aware of as an organiser. There is the possibility that competitors may end up fencing the same opponent more than once, this might come as a surprise, is probably not your first choice, but is not in and of itself a problem. There is an option in Enguard that allows you to 'avoid repeat fights'. Be aware that if you are using an older version of Enguard (I am assuming it's been fixed by now) this might just exclude someone from the draw, dropping them out completely despite them having won their last fight. This happened most spectacularly in a cadet international in France some years ago when despite the fencer constantly asking when his next fight was the problem was not understood until two rounds later by which time it was too late to go back. Don't let this put you off using this wonderful system, I simply mention it as, for warned is for armed.

Given last issues article those of you who know me well will not find the subject of this one to be much of a surprise, and whilst it is a standard format, it is in my opinion a poorly understood and far too rarely used format. So let's have more piste time and more **Repêchage**.

Thanks Nick, I had always wondered how it worked, having heard about it from those who have been fencing a long time, but no-one could really explain it. I look forward to the next instalment.

Kevin : Editor Academy News

Direct Elimination with Repechage from 64



How the Lockdown Has Changed the Way We Coach

By Sally Peat



How strange this time is, no cars on the road, no pasta on the supermarket shelves and no fencing! We are just over two weeks into 'Lockdown' and missing our fencing families so much already and wondering when we will be able to meet up again for a bash.

We would have been flying out to Salt Lake City this week for The Worlds but instead find ourselves trying to battle with airlines for refunds. So many competitions postponed, not to mention the Olympics moving to 2021, which is, to use the over-used word of the moment, unprecedented. Only in wartime was the Olympics cancelled, once in World War I and twice during World War II. What will the ramifications of these changes to our sporting calendars be?

We do however hope and pray that this situation is temporary and with people staying

home and saving lives, we can be mindful of times to come when we will need to be fit and well enough to coach again. I have had to stop all lessons and haven't come up with an online alternative as yet. My fencers are keeping fit and exercising within Government guidelines, which for some I know involves fencing footwork in the garden. All my school classes have ceased until the next academic year but I will be ready to pick up where I left off as soon as possible.

I have been fortunate enough to continue training with my youngest daughter at our village tennis courts. She is training for the postponed Worlds, plus domestic and international competitions when we resume and I am working towards my level 4 epee. With Denstone postponed until 2021 I have more time to prepare. Thankfully, the odd penny is starting to drop and we are both seeing an improvement in our sessions, even though this makes them tougher. We are trying to stay competitive and fit with the odd strength and conditioning session thrown in.

I hope you are all staying well and isolating where necessary. I also hope you are managing to stay fit and practise at least a few fencing steps, if nothing else. I have noticed a propensity online for hanging tennis balls from things in the garden, to either hit or avoid being hit by, during training sessions. I have yet to find any of our tennis balls to achieve this as my crazy collie Star seems to have stowed them all away.

If you have any ideas on keeping in touch or practising together, albeit remotely, please let the committee know and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Take care and stay safe.

Safeguarding & Prevention

By Maitre Jacqueline Redikin



15 SAFEGUARDING QUESTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Keep student safety a priority



• DOES YOUR STUDENT RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY CONSIDER DISTANCE LEARNING?



• DOES YOUR STAFF RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY CONSIDER DISTANCE LEARNING?



• DOES YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY CONSIDER DISTANCE LEARNING?



• WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT STUDENTS ARE DOING ONLINE DURING 'LESSON' TIME?



• SHOULD TEACHERS DIRECT MESSAGE PUPILS?



• WHAT IMPLICATIONS ARE THERE WITH VARYING LEVELS OF ONLINE SECURITY IN EACH HOME?



• HOW WILL YOU MONITOR STUDENT WELLBEING ONLINE?



• WHAT CRITERIA WILL YOU USE TO RECORD ATTENDANCE?



• WHAT RISKS ARE THERE FOR STAFF WHEN FILMING CONTENT AT HOME?



• WHAT IMPLICATIONS ARE THERE WITH PUPILS AND PARENTS SHARING STAFF CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



• HOW DOES DISTANCE LEARNING IMPACT CHILDREN ON YOUR CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER?



• WHAT E-SAFETY RESOURCES SHOULD BE SHARED WITH PARENTS?



• HOW DO STUDENTS AUTHENTICATE WHO IS CONTACTING THEM?

• HOW DO YOU STAY CONNECTED WITH FAMILIES THAT HAVE POOR HOME WIFI OR LIMITED DIGITAL RESOURCES?

• WHAT SAFEGUARDING CHECKS ARE ESSENTIAL WHEN ADOPTING NEW ONLINE PLATFORMS & HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE THEY HAPPEN?

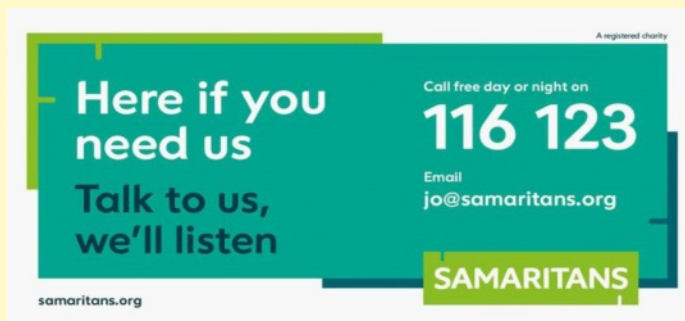
CREATED BY @LUKEREESDU

Having seen a few online coaching sessions in the past few weeks aimed at fencers I thought that it may be useful for us all to have some general good online advice about coaching/teaching. The aim is to make you think of how you provide online coaching sessions for you pupils. The panel at the side is taken from

<https://twitter.com/LukeReesEdu/status/1236876545207291905>

Covid 19 and Mental Wellbeing.

Covid 19 has changed everyone lives in some way. Not everyone can cope with these changes. You could be self-isolating, lone working at home, or be working in one of the many front line jobs which in itself brings extra pressures. Below is some information from the Samaritans.



Information on what to do if you're feeling low or struggling to cope.

It's okay. It's common to feel this way : You're not alone in feeling like this. Many people struggle to cope at one point or another and going through a range of emotions during this time is common.

You can [contact Samaritans](#) any time you like or you might also want to speak to someone else you trust like a family member, your GP or arrange to see a counsellor.

You are never alone : When people are going through a tough time they often experience negative thoughts about themselves and feel they have no-one to turn to.

Even if you don't have family or friends close by, you are never alone. [Samaritans volunteers are here for you](#) every day of the year, round the clock.

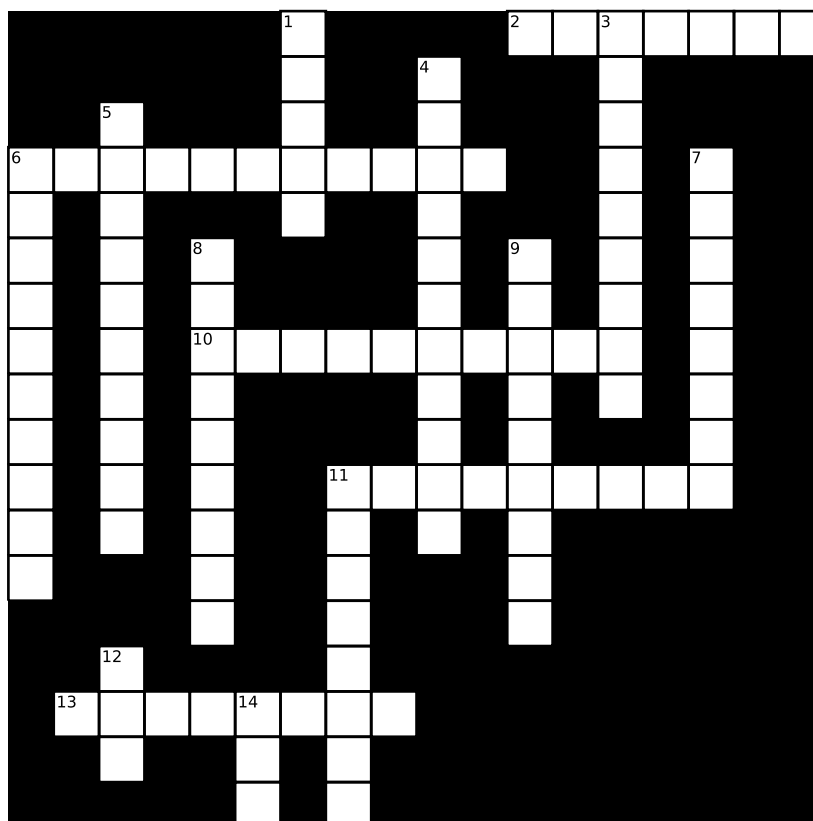
These feelings may not last forever : Everyone feels low at some point in their lives and if you're struggling to cope it may be difficult to see beyond your current situation. Talking about how you're feeling can help put things into perspective and help you to feel more positive about the future.

For more information please go to the below link

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/signs-you-may-be-struggling-cope/practical-ways-help-yourself-cope/>

Foil Rules and Numbers

From the Technical rules. All answers are rule numbers.



Across

- 2 Fencers arm, equip and clothe themselves and fence at their own responsibility and at their own risk.
- 6 Injuries or cramp
- 10 Limitation of the target
- 11 The use of the non-sword hand and arm to carry out an offensive or defensive action is forbidden
- 13 Fencing at close quarters is allowed so long as the competitors can wield their weapons correctly and the Referee can, at foil and sabre, follow the phrase.

Down

- 1 The materiality of the hit is established according to the indications of the apparatus, and when necessary by consulting the judge
- 3 However, hits which arrive off the target are counted as valid whenever, by reason of an abnormal position, the fencer has substituted this non-valid target for the valid target.
- 4 Rear Limits
- 5 Annulment of a hit
- 6 Pledge of honour
- 7 As soon as the bout has stopped, the Referee briefly analyses the movements which composed the last fencing phrase
- 8 The Referee alone decides as to the validity or the priority of the hit by applying the following basic rules which are the conventions applicable to foil fencing
- 9 Coming on Guard
- 11 Written dimensions of the piste
- 12 Fencing time
- 14 Point in line

Wordsearch : Foil Rules and Numbers



While doing an archaeological dig in his office, Bob Merry came across a photo (above) from an Easter Course at Cheltenham. He suspects it was taken by David Austin. Although he cannot be 100% sure of the date, Bob is fairly certain that it is 1994, when he was doing his Advanced Sabre and Andy was completing his Diplomas.

Have fun putting names to faces (it may help to pass the time).

Fencing in the Past

By Prof. Bert Bracewell



Recently when speaking to a pupil, I was asked what changes had I seen in my 67 years of fencing. So I propose to write a series of articles on the changes, and how they have affected our sport.

Clothing : Foil, the jacket was short for both men and women made of good cotton material, breeches, I along with others often bought naval white trousers from the "Army & Navy" stores, these were excellent. Sow up one side of the front flap, cut them down, and hey presto a pair of breeches for 50p.

Socks : These were mainly cotton and wool and covered the foot and ankle. Then one day in Berwick market, a trader opened a case ; 5 pairs of socks for 5 shillings. A new material, Nylon, worn under other socks these solved the problem, unfortunately they were bright yellow, orange, pink, lime green, and mauve. I caused a sensation when turning up to fence in these vivid socks; men just did not wear these types of colours!

Shoes : We wore what we called guppies, flat plimsols as worn by school children. These had no padding and one learnt to lunge correctly or a bruised heel resulted. However shoes for sport arrived from Hungary, with green soles, well padded and excellent value. One fault, they were stuck together with fish glue, and after a days fencing session they smelt terrible, but still our cat lay next to them in paradise.

Gloves : Best Leather gloves with canvas sown on for a cuff. Chamois Leather gloves which went hard after a competition, or you could get beautiful leather gloves from Germany. However a dealer who knew little about fencing ordered 250 pairs. It took a long time to sell 250 left handed gloves.

With these items a fencing bag, like a guitar case, mask, a foil (French handle of course) , spare blade, packet of red buttons, I fought in National events.

Ladies Clothing : was identical, but with pockets to hold the breast protectors, heavy metal objects, and many girls did not bother with. So before a competition a man had to tap the front of the ladies jacket to ensure they were protected. Remember the definition of a hit was travelling focused with the point and character of penetration, not as today expected to protrude out the back.

At my first competition run by Latista, I was given this job, somehow, despite being very red faced at seventeen asking mature ladies could I do the required tap. Ladies breeches were baggy, some wore divided skirts.....those were the days.

Masks : Small bib, no safety strap on the back, but fencers did not duck to dislodge the mask. Then as now safety was important, but the style of fencing resulted in fewer accidents.

Bouts were the best of 7 for ladies, and 9 for men, ladies 5 minutes, men 6 minutes, but if a lady fought a man her first hit counted double.

The target was then as now, ladies above the hip bones, one did not attack ladies low. When they eventually had to fight the full target, and wear the present type of jacket, they did not want equality.

(Picture from October 1976 issue of Fencing)

What to do ?.....Keep Fencing !!!

I mostly run grassroots clubs, and I want to keep as many of my members fencing as possible through the crisis. So we will still have working clubs at the end of lockdown. I am writing a weekly newsletter, with suggestions, links to videos, for practice, games and fitness, & of course a puzzle for the kids or adults to have a go at. The following piece is an extract of one of those suggestions.

Kevin Nelson



I am lucky enough to have an electronic target that I can use for practice. Which has 5 sensors for me to hit, that light up at random (Favero EFT-1)- but most of you will have seen it before, and had a go with it yourselves, trying desperately to get top score. But hopefully by using it I am starting to improve my aim..... That is as long as my target stays still. I have added an arm, so that I can also practice a beat or a parry where my sequence includes more than one hit.

What can you do? If you have a your own kit, then you should make a lunging pad to practice with. What is the purpose of the lunging pad ? Well to start with, its to stop you damaging your foil, or your wall when you are practicing at home. It is also to help improve your aim. Does it actually have to be a pad ? No It could be a ball or series of balls hanging from a string, see picture of impromptu lunge pad made up of 4 balls.

What can you do with a lunge pad?

You can just hit the target in any order to practice your footwork.

If you mark your target with coloured crosses or use coloured balls, then someone you are isolating with can call out a colour for you to hit.

You can hit the balls or crosses in a sequence, either as a renewal (i.e. Lunge with the first hit, and then go onto the next hit without a beat or a parry action), or after the first hit take a parry, before you "riposte" with the second hit.

With footwork of 3 or more actions in (i.e. step, step, lunge) get them to call out as you start the step.

Sabreurs, you need to find an old mask, and hang it somewhere to hit, or use a post of some sort (but remember to pad it a bit), but you can still practice hitting, with someone calling out your target Head/Flank/Chest/Cheek/Arm.

Add an arm to your lunge pad to improve those wrist hits. Remember to use those fingers when you are trying to hit, if you have a spare weapon, can your arm hold it? to allow you to beat before you make the hit. Can you change which side the arm is, so you can practice against a left handed target?

Epeeists, don't forget to add a leg and foot to your lunge pad, and hang your tennis balls at different distances.

But when you set it up check that your target heights are realistic. Get down on-guard, is the target at the same level as you?

How do you make a lunging pad? It just basically a board with some padding on it, that you can hang on a wall. My first lunge pad was a piece of off-cut chipboard, covered with some leftover cushion flooring. The board to protect the wall, and the cushion flooring to protect my foil.





Editorial

I don't know how many of you out there felt like I did in the weeks before Lockdown. My clubs and schools were growing in number. The investments in fencing equipment that I had made over the last 3 years were improving my offering as a school/community fencing coach. Numbers were increasing, as was everyone's enjoyment.

Then everything went haywire, as the schools were uncertain about what to do, some planning to stay open during Easter, some waiting for a government decision, and for me it involved a great deal of communication with teachers, then some schools cancelling with under 24 hours notice., Others expecting me to work right to the end.

After hearing that the virus has a 72 hour life outside of the body, I started a policy of cycling through my masks, so that there was at least 5 days between use, and washing the gloves each time they were used. It certainly increased the amount of work that I was doing, even though I was going to less schools. Then came the announcement that all schools would close.....and so they did.

With sadness I closed my satellite clubs, and then the venue of my main club decided to close. I was in overdrive trying to sort these things out, and then suddenly, I had nothing to do..... Not a good place to be..... For several days I felt depressed and let down, even when help was announced for the self employed, it still took me a couple of days to recover. Part of that recovery was communicating with friends in the fencing/coaching network, and looking forward and trying to organise a future where we could fence again. (Goal Setting, comes in useful here).

So remember your own mental health at a time like this, it is important to socialise with people, especially in a job like ours. Just remember you are not alone.

I would also like to apologise for any mistakes in this issue of the Academy News, as it has been put together much quicker than usual.

Best Wishes, to you all, & Stay Safe, Kevin.

Remember to Take your Kit out of your Fencing Bags and Wash it!



I am currently going through all my kit that I use for fencing and making sure it is washed and dried before I put it into storage ready to be used again.

I suggest that you all look in your fencing bags and separate the clothing items (jacket, plastron, breeches, socks), and give them a wash, who knows maybe for the first time, before putting them away again.....for who knows how long?

Members Advertise in the Academy News for Free

A “Normal” (for now) Club Night

By Prof. Bob Merry



It's Friday night at Bramhall Sword Club and the coaches, Bob, Andy and Pesh, have no more lessons to give, so they can now concentrate on a little coach education, before having a few drinks and the usual banter. But this isn't a normal club night. The threesome are each in splendid isolation in their individual ivory towers and this is a virtual club night, via WhatsApp. Pesh needs to finish off his Level 3 Sabre, so the coach education is focused on him. A couple of exam questions have been selected for analysis and Bob starts by asking a number of questions designed to test Pesh's understanding of the problems set by the particular exam questions. Once satisfied by this, there follows a discussion on how the question could be answered, with contributions from everyone, until a reasonable plan has been formed and Pesh can write up his notes and practise his blade movements in front of the mirror. Obviously, the practical, sword in hand, skills will have to wait until a later stage, but a good amount of groundwork has been done. It's time now for a few drinks and general chat. Almost like the real thing!

For small groups of three or four, WhatsApp is very convenient, with enough space on a smartphone or tablet screen to accommodate the videos of the various participants. For larger groups, Zoom seems to be a good alternative, although a bit more fiddly to set up a meeting. Also, under normal circumstances, as Zoom seems to be more aimed at the business sector, meetings are limited to 40 minutes on the free version, although, on a recent meeting with former works colleagues, this restriction was lifted. Whichever of the many sharing platforms you choose, this seems a great way to stay in touch and continue with fencing related activities.

(Picture taken before restriction came in place).

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	

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

Fencing After the Pandemic.

By now we are all aware of the COVID-19 pandemic that has gripped the world. The National lockdown measures imposed by the government, to reduce the rate of coronavirus transmission, have altered our way of life in ways that we couldn't have imagined at the beginning of the year.

Being forced to stay in your own home and only leaving to get food or other necessities, only going to work if you can't work from home and that's if you're lucky enough to still have a job. Having to keep two metres apart from other people to avoid infection, no handshakes, hugs or kisses. That's the reality of life in the UK for the moment.

It's no wonder that virtually all sports clubs in the country have closed overnight, at least for any meaningful training purposes. The repercussions this will have on our sport are difficult to predict at the moment, but it's safe to say things will not be the same again. One thing is certain, this pandemic will pass and things may not get back to how they were previously but a certain amount of normality will return.

The big question is, when it does, what will the future hold for many of our fencing clubs? I've been reading a number of articles on the internet and in some publications that suggest the country is more than likely heading for a recession. The longer the lockdown period is extended the more likely this outcome is. The consequences are, people will have less disposable money, meaning they are less likely to spend it on non-essential items like fencing lessons or any other sporting activity for that matter. But this effect is not likely to be felt evenly across the country, the more affluent areas may still have enough earning potential to keep supporting community sports clubs, while in less affluent areas sports clubs may die away as membership numbers do not recover.

What does this mean for our fencing clubs? Many clubs may be in for a difficult time, low numbers equals low income, but outgoings will remain the same. I would urge coaches and clubs that are based in similar geographical areas to work together, if necessary merge clubs or share premises to ease the financial burden. As a sport we need to work together to support and help each other. Although there are a number of initiatives being launched at the moment to support both clubs and self-employed coaches there is no indication how long these measures will be in place.

Check out British Fencing's COVID-19 information page for all sorts of help and advice. It really is an outstanding source of information for coaches and clubs, and not just for fencing specific information. I urge all coaches to make use of it.

Best wishes to members of the Academy.
John Worsley
Treasurer.

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

During the current crisis, the study guides are being re-written, so they will not be available for the next few months.

Observations, Learning and Thoughts from the FIE Coach Programme, Sabre

by Prof. Phil Carson, BAHons), MBA, BAF

In this lockdown period I think it's important to enjoy some of the benefits, including time for learning and reflection. I'm going to give myself the challenge of writing and sharing several articles on sabre coaching. I'm extremely grateful to Beth Davidson for permission to use her video footage of the 2017 FIE Sabre Coach Course held in Budapest. This is without doubt the best video online resource I can find on the internet at the moment.

1. Direct Hits (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rhcy5hsEJos&list=PLW90Qerjy9W3kizilIfQ6wokHKCpTU05Y>)

The Hungarians start lessons with what they call "preparatory actions". By this we simply mean exercises that help calibrate the fencer in relation to distance and timing.

Notice how close the coach and fencer stand at the beginning of the lesson. The most important aspect of fencing is timing and this can be established from a close distance. Note also that the coach corrects hitting from the shoulder in preference to extending from the elbow. The two consecutive hits is introduced early on. This is an important rhythm, both in terms of distance and timing, but also to ensure the fencer is cutting correctly with the fingers.

Having established the correct timing, the coach then gets the fencer to do two hits to wrist and two to mask. The forward target, the wrist, is the distance from which the final hitting action to body is made. So we aren't seeing an attack and a series of renewals here. We are seeing a method for building up a sense of moving the point through distance towards the final hit.

The first movement in the lesson is at 2min 20secs. Now this is pretty crucial, this idea of hitting AND THEN moving on the final action. The technical term for this is "shaping", where the coach is building up to the final action which is likely to be a lunge. The hit timing here is inside the lunge. The end of the lunge is simulated by a step (after the hit).

At 2min 40secs the distance element is added. Think of the touches to wrist as distance. Again note the timing of the hit to head in relation to the final body movement.

Wonderfully simple, and terrific building blocks of distance and timing for what comes up in more advanced future lessons.

Always happy to take any questions on prof.carson@yahoo.co.uk

Thankyou Phil for Sharing this, I have watched these video's before, and they are very good. : Kevin : Editor Academy News

Committee Contribution

- Nothing to report as no meeting has taken place since the last edition was published.

Letters

Ref. Formatting - Nick Chapman - Issue 103 : Feb 2020

To get a top fencer, you need a pyramid with a strong wide base. Fencing is like say, badminton and swimming in that it can be highly competitive or a social bit of exercise and interaction. We need to offer far more opportunity to enjoy fencing for different people, as opposed to just competing.

Competitions need to be worth the entry fee and the cost of travelling. So, for the majority of fencers, there should be lots of social non-elimination events, in addition to the usual championships for the elite. It is easy to think up formats, but it is good to share ideas. Basically the "poole unique" is a good start.

In Somerset each summer Sue Benny organises a foil and epee competition, based on "poole unique", maximum number of fencers 25, self-organised & self refereed by the competitors. It has always been well supported.

In my youth (before electric foil) in Devon we had a mixed double competition - but it was really disappointing. The women fencers in a poole at one end and the men in a group at the other. When finished the scores were put together - you never met the other half of your pair, till it was time to say goodbye!

Now in Devon we have some good competitions e.g. For epee - team relay format, one man, one woman, and one reluctant beginner. Poole unique mixed doubles - team relay format, poule unique. We may have "Adult & Child", children fence to 5, adults take on that score, and then fence to 10.

Valerie Morrish.

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.

Please note that articles published reflect the viewpoint of the individual authors in our knowledgeable and diverse academy, and the viewpoints expressed in articles are not necessarily those held by the British Academy of Fencing SSTT.

I have a light editorial touch on all articles received. So far all of which have been published. I am aware that sometimes there may be differences of opinion between members. If you have such a difference, you are always welcome to submit your own viewpoint in an article, as long as it contains reasoned arguments in favour of your viewpoint. Learning to coach is a process of evolution for each individual, and exposure to different viewpoints should encourage self reflection. I will always welcome thought provoking articles from members.

Kevin: Editor Academy News



Stefan Speaks

The thought of your Members' Rep.

Life changes fast. Life changes in the instant. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends.

The early evening news on tv, tells of a virus... in China... virus is in the UK... lockdown.

To save lives no fencing

Who knows what the relaxing of the lockdown will look like but it is unlikely we will just blithely go back to doing everything exactly as we were before (that includes fencing clubs and competitions), until a vaccine or an effective early treatment to cure those with the virus is found, of that there is no doubt.

We as coaches will need to make sure risks of catching/spreading this horror are minimised, when people attend our clubs or Academy events. I would really like to hear peoples views on what we as the Academy and as coaches could possibly do in this regard. One thing I think may change is attitude to club kit. Club kit is renown for not being washed often, and that will have to change, masks will also have to be cleaned between uses as will many other bits of kit. If you run a club that lends out a lot of kit you now have time to think and decide a plan of action.

During lockdown and its gradual easing you should remain vigilant so you can react in a timely manner to new rules/regulations etc by the government and governing bodies but know that it is ok to mentally take a break and disconnect from the huge amount of information that is around.

Maybe now is the time to go back to your fencing roots and practise/exercise alone as a fencer rather than a coach, and mentally remember your 'why' (the reasons why you became a coach) or look over some of the academy exam questions to keep your brain active.

If you run a club stay connected. You are likely an important and valuable part of your pupils lives and thus maybe one of only a few people they are willing to talk to about their fears, insecurities, achievements in lockdown and well being right now. As much as you can reach out or create a place where they have an avenue to share what is going on with them and above all LISTEN.

Apart from sharing all the exercise/training videos out there make sure you have fun stuff too as pupils motivation will be affected, more so as time goes on. Maybe organise so your club members can watch the same film (from the safety of their homes) maybe an old black and white one that might be new for them, then discuss between you all on some internet platform what you thought of the film and how the fencing was done/portrayed.

If you need to talk fencing but you have bored everyone around you then do remember that the committee are happy to have a chat/reminisce, you just have to pick up the phone.

And finally can anyone help me avoid the obvious outcome from the ominous statement "as there is no fencing tonight/this weekend, you can do something useful" ?

This article sadly replaces my fantastic and riveting article on the 2020 ParaOlympics which will not be published this year.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO KEEP FENCING ALIVE DURING LOCKDOWN?

WRITE AND TELL US ABOUT IT!

SHARE WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

membersrep@baf-fencing.com

editor@baf-fencing.com

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT



DENSTONE 2020

It with regret that due to Covid19 the British Academy of Fencing have taken the decision to cancel this years course at Denstone. I would like to thank all coaches who paid their deposit and expressed interest in the course. All coaches who paid a deposit will get their money back. The course will be run next year at Denstone.

Take care at this time

Jackie, Course Officer

Members Advertise in the Academy News for Free

Academy News is a service to our members and we offer the chance to advertise on its pages, whether it be for an **event, a course, your club, or indeed anything**. There is **no charge to members**. It would be very helpful if you could supply with me the artwork that you would like to see published. Simply send me (Kevin Nelson) the details and I'll see you get a mention.

editor@baf-fencing.com