

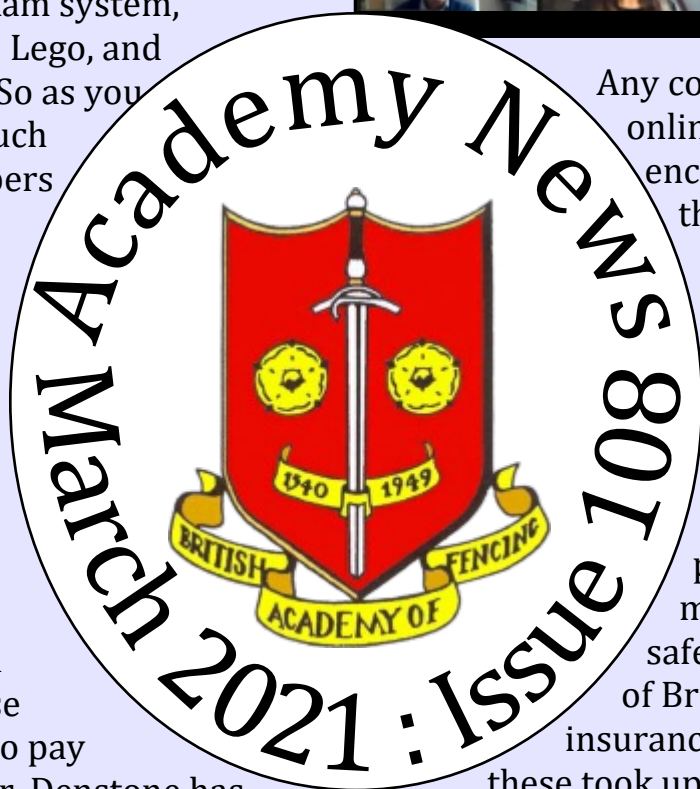
Virtual A.G.M. 2021

On 30th January the British Academy of Fencing held their first Virtual A.G.M. The members meeting and the main A.G.M were both well attended.

The members meeting started at 9.15, and finished at 10.00. Those of us who were present enjoyed the discussion, which was friendly and brief. Mostly centred around the exam system, returning to coaching, Lego, and Donald's home brew. So as you can see we have so much more fun at the Members meeting.

The main AGM meeting started on time and was well attended. A minutes silence was held for those members who are no longer with us.

The President then formally thanked those members who chose to pay subscriptions this year. Denstone has been booked for July and we hope to go ahead in a COVID secure environment.



Any coach who is running online courses is encouraged to advertise them through the Academy as it is free. Face to face courses will not be run until it is safe to do so.

There were a number of member motions placed before the membership, involving safeguarding, membership of British Fencing, and insurance. Discussions around these took up most of the rest of the meeting. The meeting finished at about 2pm.



Visit the Academy's web site
www.baf-fencing.com

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British Academy of Fencing

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The President 's Piece.....

Welcome to this issue of Academy News, the one 'after the AGM'!

I hope you and your families are keeping safe and well in this LD3 (Lock Down Three) as some are calling it.

Our Academy is a constituted democracy, where all committee posts are voted in by you, the members. Once in post, committee members are given a portfolio or job responsibility... there are no free rides. As a committee we work as a 'Team', members are encouraged to give their opinions and support each other as and when needed. It is my personal view that every Maître/Master should be obliged to take on the role and responsibility of being a Committee Member; you are the Academy, its future is in your hands. It is an honour and privilege to serve the Academy; that honours you with the title Master, which you have worked so hard to achieve.

It was with some trepidation that we decided to hold our AGM via Zoom. Would it work technically? How many could we accommodate? Would we be able to hold meaningful conversations and vote? Surprisingly it worked very well! Over 30 members attended, our Secretary, Maître Jackie Redikin used a firm hand. Seeing everybody in their home environment in casual clothes, was a lovely change, everyone was very polite and relaxed, we should do this every year! The saving of time, travelling, overnight accommodation & meals for some, this was the cheapest AGM ever. We even managed a 15 minute 'comfort break'. It was nice to see that an overseas member joined us, there is now no excuse to not attend your Academy's AGM.

All went well as the Officers and myself worked through our reports. Obviously, our coaching activities have been put on hold while this pandemic continues. But not to sit on our hands, the Committee worked through the Foil Study Guide and 'Essential Information for Members', (a 47 page document that has now been split into four), updated and made more relevant for our members (shortly to be put on our website).

During any other business, a motion was put forward by Prof. Peter Stewart to "make it compulsory for all 'working members' to be on the British Fencing Coaches Register". This was more than an hour long debate after which a vote was taken, and the motion was approved. Since then, the Committee has been informed that correct procedures were not followed, a note to that effect has been issued to all members by Maître Stefan Leponis, the Committee is now taking legal advice as to how we proceed. We will keep everyone informed.

At the end of the AGM, I reminded members that this was my final year as President. I will not be looking for re-election. My main focus as President has been to try to unite our members, to bring back the friendly and supportive quality of the Academy. To make all our courses, week-end & residential, welcoming, helpful, whilst encouraging all participants to work hard to improve their skills (including coach educators). I hope your next President will continue this process.

The Committee is ready at short notice to begin arranging coach training. This will be dictated by the elimination/suppression of the Coronavirus, the availability of suitable venues and most importantly, the wishes of the membership. I suspect that it may take some time (years) to get back to pre-pandemic levels.

Prof. Peter Northam,
President, British Academy of Fencing
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David Kirby - Obituary

What makes a coach? Are coaches remembered by the number of champions? Is this the defining criteria?

Well, David certainly achieved success. Many of his pupils reached high levels of competitive Fencing; however, coaches are not to be judged on competitive success alone. Many other attributes make a good coach.

As a coaching colleague, I have known David for many years, never a close friend, but an appreciative observer and working colleague.

I first met David at a long-forgotten venue, The Granby Halls in Leicester (now the rebuilt Leicester Tigers' home). This venue was the second home of The Leicester Open Tournament, a six weapon open that filled three large halls, and at the time, this tournament, believe it or not, was sponsored by a Brewery with free beer served throughout the day. Sunday Fencing was interesting! It was also in the days of full repêchage.

David had started coaching at Evesham and Stratford and brought along young junior sabreurs to participate in this large competition. He was very enthusiastic (a trait that never lost its vigour throughout his life) and always insisted that the organisers ran a plate competition. If the repêchage was overrunning and the organisers said no, David did not take this answer at face value and set about the organisation and running of the plate competition himself. As a junior helper of the organising committee, I was often 'volunteered' to offer support. David's active determination to support and develop Fencing was born in these early days, backed up by military organisational training.

The development of so many young fencers based in and around Stratford bears testament to David's approach. Many fencers achieved great success (Louise bond Williams, the complete U17 and U20's England sabre team), etc. It is mainly the success of guiding all those young adults through to maturity using his unique benevolent pupil self-reliance approach that was most striking, which served them later in life.

David spent a season coaching at The Sydney Sabre Club and coached at Eaton, but Stratford was his spiritual home.

To aid personal development, David sought knowledge, both applied and theoretical, and began a lifetime of pedagogical research in some depth, initially studying the Hungarian system. David was never afraid to test or question methodologies and always cast doubt on 'the definitive method.'

From time to time, ill health curtailed sword in hand coaching, but his pedagogical acquisition knew no bounds.

To formalise his research, David took an MPhil at the University of Birmingham, and his published work:

Kirby, David Michael Julian (2015). From Piste to Podium: a qualitative exploration of the development of fencing coaching in Britain. The University of Birmingham. M.Phil.

David inevitably became involved with Coach Education, organising and running BF Courses from KES at Stratford. Often critical about the BF pre-course organisation David often remonstrated with BF as he always expected organisational clarity.

Despite successfully running BF coaching courses, David was always a BAF firm supporter, and I will miss his searching questions at our AGM's.

I believe that David was often misunderstood within the Academy who did not fully utilise his pedagogical knowledge.

As you would surmise, our education approaches did not always align, but we both enjoyed the debate that had one common aim - developing coaches that can develop fencers.

Please reread David's articles in the Academy News and read David's MPhil paper noted above. This action would be the best testament and reminder of our thoughtful colleague.

Prof. Graham Stretton

From the Collection of Porthos



I recently featured a pair of fine French duelling swords from the Klingenthal company. A couple of weeks ago, on the Internet, I logged into the website of an antiques dealer, and, lo and behold, he was offering two fencing epees from the same company! I bought them immediately, at a very reasonable price, and here they are. Very fine quality with 34" (86cm) blades, which have the triangular section and stiffness of the epee I used at college many years ago. They are stamped Coulaux companie, Klingenthal, which dates them to 1838. The points are rebated. They each weigh 1 lb, (454gms), and handle as well and as easily as our modern swords. The edges of the fortes and the guards show traces of nicking. The guards feature the figure eight shape used on smallswords and many rapiers. The grips are cleverly bound with different thickness of string, and the pommels are decorated with scrolls. A great 'find' for my collection!

Porthos

Sport-80 Coaching Register

Setting up your Information

The current British Fencing (BF) coaching register is being replaced very shortly, and has been updated for the last time. If you are a member of BF, to remain on the BF Coaching Register you will need to enter your details into your Coach CV on Sport-80.

Firstly you will need copies of your certificates; 1st Aid, Safeguarding, and Coaching certificates. As you will need to upload them to your Sport-80 account and await approval from BF. If you are unable to find your Academy coaching certificates apply to Jackie Redikin, the British Academy of Fencing Secretary, and ask for them in pdf format so that you can upload them easily. If you are on the old register, then you may have already uploaded these documents.

Secondly, find an acceptable picture of yourself to upload to appear on the coach finder, you also need to think about your charges for coaching (although you can ask for people to contact you, rather than entering a monetary value). Then you need to write a short paragraph on your coaching philosophy. The three of which will be displayed on your page in the new BF coaching register.

Next, you need to logon to Sport-80 to create your Coach CV. Click on the Coach CV button, and then add Coach. It will now display a series of windows for you to enter information. Enter the requested information. You will be asked if you wish your location to be displayed on the Coach Finder, if you choose 'No' then your data will not be displayed on the BF website.

Once you have entered all the information, click **SAVE**, recheck all your information, then SAVE again if needed, then you may log out. The Coach CV status will be pending approval, once it has been approved you will be on the new BF Coach Register. If you have not given permission for your location to be displayed, then you will not be visible on the Coach Finder.

If you do nothing you will not be on the register, BF are not transferring any data across.

Please note this is not a step by step instruction manual to set up your Coach CV with BF, but to give you an idea of what you need to do before you log-in.

More detailed instructions for uploading certificates can be found on the BF website, or by following the BF youtube link below, or contact BF head Office for further information.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz95SfDIVrk>

Kevin Nelson: Editor

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 reviewed and re-written, so they will not be available for the next few months.

The Foil Study Guide will be out soon.



What Makes a Team?

By Nick Chapman

I believe many of us are guilty of thinking of fencing as an individual sport with an understanding that occasionally we fence as a team, but proper competitions are individual events aren't they? Unfortunately the result is young fencers predominantly participate in individual events, they might get to fence as a team once a year when their region runs its school teams competition, no wait, my region stopped doing that over a decade ago, so some school fencers might not fence as a team until they take part in the British School Teams, and let's face it, given the entry fee, you're only going to do that if you have a very good team, therefore many kids don't get to fence as a team at all (yes I appreciate some schools still organise inter school matches, well done to them) and yes the top few in many regions get to fence at the Cadet Winton Cup, the top few in the country get to fence in the Youth Four Nations or Cadet Commonwealths, the top few in

Britain get to fence in the Cadet Europeans and or the Cadet Worlds, but that's hardly mass participation is it?

It's not much better as an adult, other than the Excalibur, the Winton and the Nationals the opportunities to fence as a team (prior to being selected for a national team) are very limited. The exception seems to be university fencing, where there is a vibrant system of matches and leagues for team fencing.

Given that team fencing is excellent sport, exhilarating and often unpredictable, one wonders why we have so few team events. Done well it can be deeply tactical and possesses all the social benefits of bonding and comradeship that are present in other team sports. I believe we should strive to embrace it far more.

I suggest there are several reasons we are in the position we are, not least of which is habit. We have quite simply got out of the habit of team fencing, as a result of not doing the events we are less likely to think of running events, so the question becomes 'why did they fall out of favour?'. Historically I think this could be blamed on the way team competitions were run and goes back to my opening comment about 'individual sport'. The first past the post system (the first team to win five of the nine, first to five fights) really was individual fencing being practiced by a loose association of fencers calling themselves a team (and, depending on the team it could be very close). The advent of the relay system totally turned this around, to be successful teams needed to work together, understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, adapt and approach the endeavour with a plan. It opened the way for far more interesting tactical encounters, in short, real team sport.

Given the thrill and spectacle of relay team fencing it might be considered surprising that it's not achieved a greater profile in grass roots fencing. I think the problem here is twofold, firstly the numbers of fencers in this country are not conducive to team fencing. People have busy lives and it can be hard to find three fencers who are free on the same weekend as you, to do a competition that is just for fun and doesn't lead to anything. Don't know about the rest of you, but I certainly noticed that after the financial crisis in 2008 people became far more choosy about what they were prepared to travel to, favouring a smaller number of more significant 'ranking' competitions over fencing more often just for the joy of fencing. Nationally we have many small clubs with fencers

distributed over six disciplines and worse still, with younger fencers split by age group as well. All adding to the problems of raising a team (let alone multiple teams, and yes, I appreciate there are large clubs and there are single weapon clubs, but as a generality...). Secondly there is the issue of time, it takes a lot of time to run a team match, first to 45 hits is quite a commitment, it makes for an event that progresses slowly, and if the numbers are such that there is a round where you're not fencing, it can really drag.

Despite the drawbacks of pace and duration I have to confess I like to offer my young fencers the opportunity to fence as a team very early in their fencing career, if possible as their first event beyond the club. I find the opportunity to be 'in it with your mates' alleviates much of the stress and removes many of the barriers that present when asking people to make that big step into competitive fencing.

One solution favoured by a like-minded colleague is to adapt the relay system. When running team events for his schools he has teams of three but instead of fencing to 45 he runs the match to 15 with each fencer only fencing once per match, thus massively reducing the time required to run the event. This system also has the added advantage of limiting the concentration period, results happen faster, progress is made, excitement and engagement is maintained (particularly relevant with young and inexperienced fencers). His system can be run with the fencers choosing the order they fence, adding a tactical element and some level of seriousness to the event, therefore credibility to the result. Alternatively, the order that fencers compete can be decided by drawing lots (numbers on cards, names in a mask etc) this makes the result a little more unpredictable as you might not get the best fencer on last. Your choice as to which system to use depends on what you are trying to achieve, both have their place.

Whilst the above has its merits I think we can go further with our corruption of the relay system. I run an annual training day where the subject is team fencing relay style. I find it a useful event with group warm up stretching, footwork and bladework class followed by a discussion of what team fencing is, how it's done and most importantly, the tactical opportunities that are available and the choices these lead to. In the afternoon attendees are split into teams to have a go. Whilst ostensibly school teams, the teams are in reality fairly random, the problem comes from the unpredictable nature of who is going to turn up. My aim is to promote participation so I encourage everyone to turn up regardless of if they have a full team, part team or are on their own. On the day I have the challenge of juggling everyone into a team, but it's worse than that because I want enough teams in each age group/weapon to ensure more than just a single match. The numbers almost never work out correctly so a little creativity is needed.

Faced with difficult numbers I got to considering teams of two. That works, using the relay system teams of two just means fighting to 20 instead of 45 (though it does mean one fencer has to fight twice in a row). The next step was to consider a team of two fencing a team of three. Surprisingly this also works, everyone fences everyone in the other team, both teams have the same goal of scoring 30 hits (yes. each fencer in the team of two gets three fights per match while the fencers in the team of three only get two fights each, but you know what, no one has ever even commented on this).

Now all of a sudden, I have the flexibility to move fencers around and find a combination that works well, giving each fencer the chance to be in a team (and not merely as a reserve) and each team the opportunity to have more than one match therefore the opportunity to experiment with tactics.

Now don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting you run a serious competition this way. If there is a title at stake (even if it's just a county title), team fencing should be done properly with full teams of three (and reserves if possible), but for a bit of fun, as an introduction to how team fencing is done, as a framework to add structure to a night of club fencing, on a training day, for a friendly school match where the numbers don't work out perfectly for traditional team fencing, it's an option (and an easy one at that).

To make it even easier I have attached score sheets for teams of two against two, and two against three.

Have fun with it, I know we always do!

As a regular at Nick's annual team competition, I can confirm just how much the kids enjoy the team format, especially when they know they will be fencing more than one team, the large number of fights they take part in the afternoon, and supporting their teammates when not fencing, means that they are engaged all day. : Kevin : Editor

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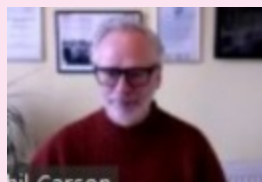
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If you would like a copy of the excel file please contact the Editor, or go to the BAF website.



Nouns and Verbs

By Prof. Phil Carson

What is the difference between a strawberry and the taste of a strawberry? Well, the former we can break down into its component parts and describe to each other. The latter though, is very much a personal experience. Does the description of the strawberry, or any of its component parts, adequately describe the sensation, the experience, of tasting and appreciating the whole fruit?

The way we process nouns and experience verbs is at the heart of a current debate across sports and coach education. On the one hand, there are those who understand skill acquisition as a rational and linear process. Like learning the piano, you learn your scales, you learn pieces, you go through grades and levels of education and after 10,000 hours or so of deliberate practice, you master your art. But there is an equally compelling argument, that coachable moments arise from directly engaging with the activity and are non-linear in terms of progression. If you ask piano teachers whether they teach scales first, they'll pretty much unanimously suggest that getting the learner to play songs they know and letting them play with the keys and from sound relationships is much more likely to lead to a sense of enjoyment and musicality.

Potentially this has significant implications for athletes, coaching and coach education. For example, do you see a quarte parry as something to be described and taught, or do you see the need to sense the finish of the attack, to perceive the distance/timing/tactical relationship as more important skills for the competitive fencer? Does it matter to you that the forte met the foible, or are you happy that the attack was thwarted with a counter attack, because the moment afforded that opportunity? The difference is significant, because the parry can be taught in the absence of a highly unpredictable and competitive attacker, but the feeling for defence and timing cannot.

The BAF has been at the forefront of this thinking and arguably well ahead of the debate. In the BAF Key Teaching Points (2nd edition), the foreword by Dr Czajkowski hits the nail on the head.

"....I have hundreds of fencing manuals....They very often omit the most important and salient principles of training a fencer, how to teach sensory-motor skills... how to develop various qualities of attention, skilful perception, sense of surprise (sense of timing) and many other important elements".

I very much agree with this statement and would encourage coaches to put more emphasis on the verbs of coaching, rather than the nouns of technique. Search out the coachable moments by playing the whole game with your fencers, rather than seeking the one right way of doing any given technique. For me, it's a question of whether you want your fencers to do the technique according to your mental representation of it, or whether you want them to become the best fencer they can be.



The New Framework for Our Fencing Development Pathway

By David Kirby

Article submitted to the BAF Academy News Oct 2020

Whenever a new idea is floated by the leadership, it could be a new achievement award system, another coaching method or just a new way of doing something, it is usually met with a good deal of comment from well experienced and knowledgeable people. But these pundits often have no more than their own opinion to back up the critique.

British Fencing have recently launched a new Fencer Development Pathway Model. This one, however, is based on evidence and research, which anyone can access. The pathway framework it's all based on is called FTEM (standing for Foundation, Talent, Elite and Mastery), which comes from the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra. It seeks to create a culture to take everyone involved in our sport of fencing and give them a clear, supported way to continue, whatever their status is, to enjoy and be able to continuously participate in fencing as they wish.

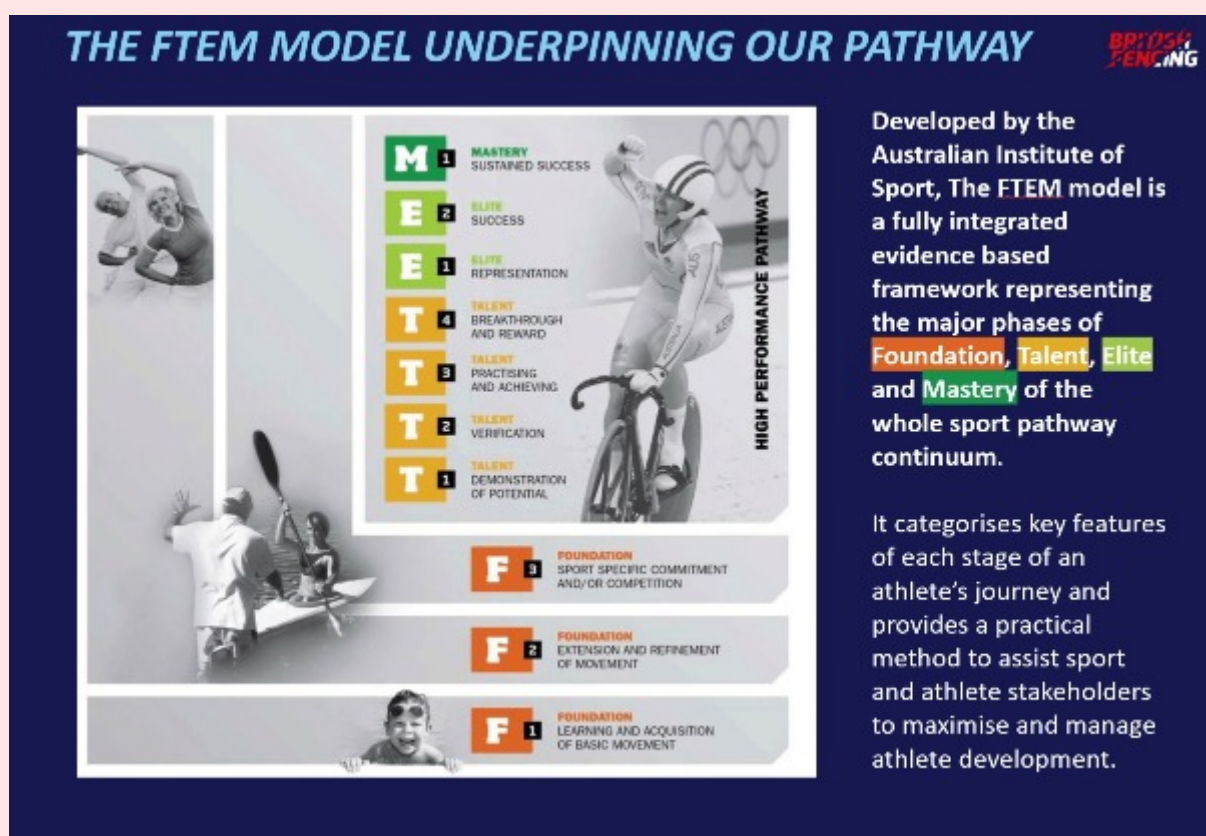


Figure 1: The FTEM Model underpinning the new BF Pathway

The guiding principles for this redesigned pathway model were that it should be athlete-centred. That means it needs to have the interests of the fencer at heart. It's not a forum for coaches to prove themselves. It is based on the research underpinning the FTEM model, which comes from world renowned coaches, academics and experts in learning, development and training design. "The content of each component is based on the Weapons Framework which contains the detailed specific research, models and content to support the pathway," says BF in the news section of the website on 1st Oct 2020.

Although there is a lot in the Pathway geared toward talent development of fencers and the unashamed journey to Olympic success, there is a great deal that takes in the participation aspect of the sport, and thus for the standard coach, a solid framework to generate a good income, or wonderful satisfaction from voluntary coaching in clubs, schools and universities.

It is a highly complex model, and the research is mind-blowing. Every aspect of personal development is covered. To follow some of through would be an excellent exercise in CPD. The article on the impact of engagement in sport at university and the likely salary uptake for the graduate came from here. It is well worth dipping into, for example the section on youth sport - not just elite athletes, but players - is full of leads for the inquisitive (and acquisitive) coach or any age. The experts who put it together in BF have done us a great service it would seem, and all we have to do is make good use of it.

Further Reading, Books, Blogs and Articles

1. <https://www.britishfencing.com/athlete-development-programme-zone/the-fem-framework/>
2. <https://www.britishfencing.com/bf-publishes-new-athlete-development-pathway-model/>
3. https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/kb/athlete-pathways-and-development#international_practice
4. https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/kb/athlete-pathways-and-development#junior_sport_framework_australian_context

Committee Contribution

The committee met on Sunday 28th February; the meeting was overshadowed by the discussion surrounding the consequences of the vote on Prof. Peter Stewart's motion.

- As a public limited company, any change to the constitution of the company, including matters that would affect the employment of members, as this motion would do.
 - a) Would require a vote on the 3-2-1 system (Constitutional vote)*.
 - b) Requires a 75% majority. #Neither of these happened at the meeting, the vote was taken on a single vote per person, and did not achieve a majority of 75%.
- The committee recognised the strength of feeling amongst members and is currently looking further into this very complicated issue, and taking advice.

* - It could be voted on by a single vote, but it would require a 3-2-1 vote to allow that to happen.

- This is standard practice for any limited company

It is essential that all activities that are undertaken by members (coaches) are risked assessed and the risk assessments are written down and dated. In order to comply with our insurers requirements, Academy members must ensure that they follow the NGB's (British Fencing's) guidelines when coaching and specifically those relating to health and safety. All equipment used must conform to the standards and specifications set by British Fencing.

For all the latest information about the Academy
go to the British Academy of Fencing web site at
www.baf-fencing.com



Memories Of Bert

I first met Bert Bracewell when I went for a come and try at Meadowbank Sports Centre, back in 1980. I was hooked from the word go! Bert not only imparted the technical and tactical side of fencing, his lessons were fun and he was tremendously encouraging. I had only been fencing a year when he got me to sign up to my first coaching course. He taught not only the material required, but his own particular coaching ethos. What he considered good, and bad practice, and the standards that a coach should set him or herself. He had a great sense of humour, a fund of fencing stories and a streak of mischief a mile wide. As I started seriously training to be a coach he gave unsparingly of his time to me and many others. He ran coaching courses all over Scotland and also courses on Fight Direction as he was a qualified Fight Director. He promoted the British Academy of Fencing to all aspiring coaches as the standard to aim for. When I passed my diploma foil he was the first person I phoned to tell and he was delighted for me. He was a Gentleman in all senses of the word and he will be sorely missed.



Donald Walker

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS): Fourth Grant.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension>

The UK Government announced on 4th March 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September with a fourth and fifth grant. HMRC will contact customers who may be eligible for the fourth SEISS grant from mid-April to tell them how they can claim.

The fourth and fifth grants will take into account 2019 to 2020 tax returns and will also be open to those who became self-employed in the 2019 to 2020 tax year. This means that some customers may be able to claim, even if they were not eligible for previous grants.

To qualify, you must have filed your 2019-20 Self Assessment tax return by 2 March 2021, at the latest. The UK Government will pay a taxable grant which is calculated based on 80% of three months' average trading profits, paid out in a single payment and capped at £7,500 in total. The value of the grant is based on an average of your trading profits for up to four tax years between 2016 to 2020, where available.

The grant will be available to claim by late April. As with previous grants, trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to non-trading income in order to claim the fourth SEISS grant.

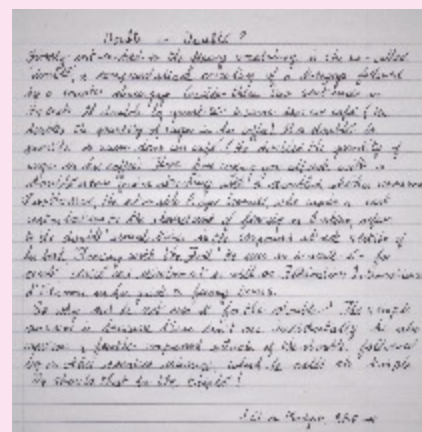
Eligibility for the fourth SEISS grant will depend on whether you experienced a significant financial impact from coronavirus between February 2021 and April 2021.

Extract from the HMRC Help & Support e-mail sent to those who have already claimed some of the SEISS grants. Kevin : Editor.

Double or Doublé

By J.Clive Magdin

Firmly entrenched in the fencing vocabulary is the so called “double”, a compound attack consisting of a disengage followed by a counter-disengage. Consider these two sentences in French. Il double la quantité de sucre dans son café. (He doubles the quantity of sugar in his coffee). Il a doublé la quantité de sucre dans son café. (He doubled the quantity of sugar in his coffee). Therefore saying you attack with a double means you’re attacking with a doubled, which is nonsense. Furthermore, the estimable Roger Crosnier, who made a vast contribution to the standard of fencing in Britain, refers to the double several times in the compound attack section of his book “Fencing with the Foil”. He uses an acute – é – for coulé, croisé, and dérobement, as well as Fédération Internationale d’Escrime in his guide to fencing terms. So why did he not use it for the double? The simple answer is because there isn’t one. Incidentally, he also mentions a further compound attack of the double followed by another counter-disengage, which he called the triple... or should that be triplé !



Bibliography

1. Fencing With The Foil : Roger Crosnier : Faber & Faber : 1951

Note, I have included the original text which was sent as a scan, but I do regularly receive, contributions through the post, so if you feel like writing an article, don't feel that you can only submit it through e-mail, I am happy to receive postal contributions as well: Kevin Nelson. Editor.

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.

The British Academy of Fencing recognises the title of Fencing Master (Maître d'Armes) to apply to fencing coaches who have passed the Academy's Diploma Examination, (Written Papers and Practical Examinations) in all three weapons, or those who hold equivalent coaching qualifications accepted by the Academy Committee.

Ch-ch-ch-changes

By Craig Jinks

We've all been coping (or not) with a lot of change over the last year. That, at least, is nothing new... Heraclitus first said 'the only constant is change' in something like the 6th Century BC.. so that sense of never-ending change has been around for a while. This past year has been right up there, though, and I wouldn't be surprised if most of you have wished for the roundabout to just stop for 5 minutes. And that's just us... how can we help our students and members cope with the changes around our sport right now?

Change (change management/change facilitation as it's sometimes referred to) is my day job... and there are a couple of simple things that might help us all think about that change and help ourselves and our clubs through this time.

I could happily bore you all for days about change methodologies, when they do/don't work and horror stories, but I'd be the first one to switch off. Instead here's a quick intro to my 2 go to models and ways you could use them. They won't have you managing change in 5 minutes, but they can help to think about what might help/work for you. Often just the simple step of thinking through how people might respond to a change will help you spot and avoid many potential bumps in the road before you've even started.

Those models are 1) **ADKAR** and 2) **Nudge Theory**...

ADKAR [ADKAR Change Management Model Overview | Prosci](#)

One of the most widespread change models around in business at the moment is the Prosci ADKAR® model. Now there's a fair amount of learning behind using it properly, but at its heart, it's a fairly simple and intuitive model and can really help understand how individuals may be reacting or engaging with a change.

ADKAR is a mnemonic and breaks down like this:

A – Awareness:

Does the person understand why things need to change and why the old way is no longer appropriate?

D – Desire:

Why would that person want to get on board with this change? often simply 'what's in it for me?'

K – Knowledge:

Do they understand how to do things differently? Do they need training etc.?

A – Ability:

Do they have time and space to practise and embed the new way of doing things?

R – Reinforcement:

Are they being reminded of and recognising the benefit of the new approach? This is the key to sustaining any change.

So how do I use that?...

Think about the audience for your change. Who is going to be most impacted? Is that all of your members?.. only a couple of sections of them?

Now start at Awareness and put yourself in their shoes...

- Do they understand why the change is happening? Yes... great, now move to Desire.
- Do they understand what the benefit for them is? Yes.. Etc. etc.

As soon as you get to a point where the answer is no (or on a sliding 1-5 scale a 3 or below) then stop... that's the bit you need to work on.

It also helps immensely in advance of changes just to think through those 5 steps.. have you got the engagement/communications/approach right for all of the groups that will be impacted by the change you're proposing?

Nudge Theory

Nudge Theory is rapidly growing in popularity and sees much wider use than just in business – governments love it. Popularised in the 2008 book 'Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness (Thaler & Sunstein), I'd summarise it as understanding how people make decisions and using indirect encouragement to make the choices you want. Sounds Machiavellian on the surface, but when you can encourage healthier eating in a canteen through simply putting the healthy option at eye level, versus banning any junk food – you start to understand how you can encourage the behaviours you want without having to restrict choice (which would have most Brits hunting for a way around any restriction).

How can this help?

The EAST model, created by the Behavioural Insights Team that began within Cabinet Office is a simplified way of thinking about Nudge.

[BIT-Publication-EAST FA WEB.pdf \(behaviouralinsights.co.uk\)](https://behaviouralinsights.co.uk/BIT-Publication-EAST_FA_WEB.pdf)

E – Easy: What can you do to make the change the easy route for people?

- Break the message down into simple steps (see Hands-Face-Space)
- Change your defaults – Want to move people on to online payments? Set that as the default, but have an opt out option. Most will stay with the default as it's the easiest approach
- Take out any hassle factor. Make people have to log into accounts and sign up for a new service to streamline how you manage your clubs... many will not bother. Give them the new accounts and make switching as simple as checking their details and most will do so.

A – Attractive: Not only like the Desire of ADKAR, but also attract attention

- Does the message grab your attention, or is it hidden in the 2nd page of an email after a huge introduction?
- Are there rewards or sanctions that will make people sit up? 'Click this link and register, or you can't compete' will work with regulars at competitions, but may have the opposite effect on occasional competitors. 'Register now and get £5 off membership' is one that works in plenty of situations.

S – Social: Does it feel like most people are already doing it?

- You've all seen adverts or reminders from HMRC suggesting that 85% of people pay their tax on time. That's because it has a huge effect on payment rates.
- Especially strong when linked to networks with which people identify (85% of people vs 85% of sports coaches – if you're in that bracket it has more of a nudge effect).

T – Timely: When is the most effective time to tell or remind people?

- When are people most likely to be receptive? Reminders to pay subs will have most impact if reminded just after a club AGM or just before the local competition, but note that there's often a gap between intention and behaviour – so more than one reminder.
- That '£5 off if you register' thought above... now try that just before renewal time and the take up will be considerably higher.

EAST is a powerful model to shift behaviours... but it can lead to short-term behaviours that fall away if not reinforced.

At the end of the day, there's no silver bullet to help people through change. Start with some thought about how they will be impacted and, using some of the above, how you can tailor the message or engagement with different groups to the best effect. You will see a difference, I promise you.

The real art comes in making the target group feel like it's not an imposed change, but something that they decided to evolve themselves, and have agency in doing so. But if I told you how to do that, there wouldn't be any need for Change Professionals, would there?...



Craig is a valued member of my coaching team at Cotswold Fencing Club, not a member of the Academy, and I am very grateful to him for his contributions to the Academy News. Kevin: Editor.

Benefits of Academy Membership 2021

By Prof. Peter Northam.

I was recently asked 'What are the benefits of Academy Membership?' I believe the following are what I and others consider are the main benefits and attractions of being a member of the Academy.

- A world class coaching system concentrating on 'sword in hand' skills.
- Professional and Excellence are the two words that describe the standard of our system.
- Academy Newsletter. A physical copy that can be taken anywhere and shared.
- A Website loaded with information and a Facebook page for general chat
- Insurance for security and peace of mind, with a schedule available to all members upon request.
- Access to a vast and outstanding body of fencing resources and documentation covering all coaching levels (1-5), Key Teaching Points, Key Coaching Points, all weapons, Theory & Terminology etc.
- Proficiency Award. Bronze, Silver and Gold, all three weapons, Study Guides, Badges and Certificates for you to train your pupils.
- Coaching Courses that you can run to train the future members of the Academy.
- Coaching Courses of World class standard that you can attend at reduced rates.
- Exams. Take exams and become a Maître in one or two weapons or Professor at all three weapons.
- Attend the AGM. Have your say, vote, meet and network with other coaches.
- Support and encouragement in all aspects of your coaching career.
- The opportunity to work with some of the best fencing Masters in the Academy.
- Challenges, at all levels, to understand what underpins coaching and how to improve the structure of class and individual lessons.
- Networking with other coaches at all levels, for advice, tips and work.
- Practical advice and know-how from experienced coaches using realistic scenarios and a focus on performance coaching.
- Belong to a close-knit coaching community that helps and supports each other.

I would be delighted to hear from other members of what, in their opinion, does being a member of the Academy give to you.





I can't do that... Yet!

By Kevin Nelson.

When I was teaching in secondary school, I found that many kids would use the word can't, when really what they meant was won't, and pointing this out to them seemed to help, (although by secondary school there is an issue of learned helplessness, and an acceptance by the learner that they need to be spoon fed, thereby not taking part in the learning process). But its not the whole story, even though I was encouraging them to work harder to understand, it is still a change imposed from outside, and therefore likely to fail without constant attention.

Recently while restructuring the way we coach within my club I have come across the power of **Yet**. When my fencers learn something new or difficult and become demotivated because they don't master it straight away. They claim they can't do it, and we have been encouraging them to say **Yet** afterwards, helping them to evaluate their performance, and questioning them "are they better than when they started the exercise?" To which the answer is usually yes. This engages the thinking muscles, and encourages the fencers to push themselves, so that the motivation for change comes from within, not without. Thus enhancing the empowerment of their own learning.



As always with these types of psychological improvements to my coaching, I understand the practical application, and see the improvements by observation, but without the theoretical understanding of why it works. So researching this further...

The key elements have been put forward by Carol Dweck, a Professor at Stanford, following years of research, and have culminated in the pedagogic practice of growth mindset. Which in short implies that what we believe about ourselves affects how we learn.

- People with a fixed mindset believe that these qualities are inborn, fixed, and unchangeable.
- Those with a growth mindset, on the other hand, believe that these abilities can be developed and strengthened by way of commitment and hard work.²

So those people who do well and are identified as having talent or intelligence, generally have a fixed mindset, which will often not cope well with failure, and have a tendency to give up and/or ignore advice, becoming self-convinced that it is beyond their ability.

Whereas those with a growth mindset understand that failure is a way to learn how to become better. It becomes about the experience, and the process of how to get there. Its about accepting that **you can change yourself**, and improve yourself through hard work, you might not achieve your aim, but you will be better than you were before.

So how do we encourage a growth mindset, in the words of Carol Dweck.

“Here are some things we can do. First of all, we can **praise wisely**, not praising intelligence or talent. That has failed. Don't do that anymore. But **praising the process** that kids engage in, their effort, their strategies, their focus, their perseverance, their improvement. This process praise creates kids who are hardy and resilient. “¹

What questions can **you** ask next time you hear a 'can't' from one of your fencers?

i.e. 'You can't do it yet... is that because you need more practice? or because it won't work against this opponent?' Allow them to answer, and then how do we focus on their answer; so that both you and they will recognise progress?

...So, now, I hope this article has caught your interest to look into growth mindset further, and to perhaps use it within your clubs, praising the process of learning/improving, and not just the winning, or maybe just looking at yourself and accepting that **I can't do that ...Yet, but I can work towards it.**

Bibliography

1:https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve/transcript?language=en

2:<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-mindset-2795025>

Further Reading

Mindset - Updated Edition: Changing The Way You think To Fulfil Your Potential : Dr Carol Dweck : ISBN 147213995X : 6th Edition : Published 12 January 2017

Tiddlywinks... Memories of David.

I have known David Kirby for the past few years, and over that time he has been a good mentor. I have been a regular attendee at his Stratford coach education sessions, and although David could “talk the hind leg off a donkey” and loved a good argument (as befits an MPhil), he was also a good teacher who tried to lead you to change, not enforce it. During the time that I knew him, David's poor health had already reduced what he could do sword in hand, so he concentrated more on the theory of how to teach. David's passion for encouraging us to become better coaches through thinking about what we were doing, & challenging accepted wisdom, enabled us to gain better understanding of why we were doing it. This was, and still is a fantastic example to me, I will sorely miss him and his help and advice.

Kevin Nelson.

TAKE ONE, ACTION!: Andy Wilkinson

Review by Prof. Peter Northam



As it says on the front cover, this is the memoir of a Film Sword Master, Film & Theatre Director, Actor, Writer and Radio Executive.

Any one of those roles would be enough for a single lifetime career and here we have six! This is the journey of Andy Wilkinson and how he fulfilled his ambition to become, first of all a Film Sword Master, which then developed into his other roles.

What came across to me was the dedication and tenacity required to open 'barred' doors. Very much a question of getting to know people, making contacts, studying the subject of action film from all historical perspectives and perseverance. In an industry where work is hard to come by, it is no wonder there is 'hostility' towards newcomers. Andy explains to us how he worked his ticket and the process, in some detail, of how to make a film. This is not a story of someone who came in at middle management but of someone who came in at the bottom and worked his way up. Academic qualifications are important but nothing can replace hands-on practical skills and experience.

A large part of his work involved the art of Fencing and he was extremely fortunate to find two Fencing Masters who not only produced fencing champions but also worked in the dramatic field,



this was Professor Roy Goodall and his wife, Professor Angela Goodall, both senior Masters of the British Academy of Fencing. Here marked the main boost to Andy's rise to success. With their collaboration and guidance, Andy not only learned classical fencing and started his own very successful fencing club, the Cutting

Edge Fencing Club, he now had the opportunity to study the dramatic skills of acting and directing.

The rest of his journey you will have to read yourself, it is fascinating on many levels. He lists the process of directing a film, from writing the script, to selecting actors, to on set discipline and finally post production. He also provides a comprehensive list of films to study, and an excellent fencers guide to fencing strokes and tactics. All told with anecdotes in a friendly and engaging way.

This is an easy book to read but a hard one for a 'newbie' to assimilate quickly. It is not an 'I've read that so I know it all' book, it is a study guide to come back to over and over again. I recommend this book to all those who wish to become Swordsmen in the sport of Fencing but also those who are interested in the film and theatre industry. It is an excellent starting point!

Take One, Action! : ISBN 9781913551353 : £9.99 : <https://www.bookguild.co.uk/bookshop-collection/non-fiction/art/take-one-action/>



Stefan Speaks

The thought of your Members' Rep.

She sits in the corner; trying to draw air out of a room which seemed to have plenty just a few minutes ago, once thoughts can be expressed she wants to know what gave me this crazy idea, I point out to my pupil (via the miracle of the internet) that she chose the music "Got the Time" by Anthrax, not me.

So where did I get the crazy idea: well in lockdown we have all watched various videos from the plethora of exercise gurus out there, but have you done the exercises that the FIE promote on their website? It's in the form of a pdf from the vtfmc. So as it was on the FIE website I had a go; yup it should have a subtitle of how to feel old and none bendy!

But after the warm up there is an interesting segment on shadow fencing to music, the idea being that different types of music will change your footwork rhythm etc. So my question to you is what is your selection of music with different tempos? and what songs suit which weapons best? I shall leave you to your own experiments, choose wisely!

Because you might choose as my pupil did something with way too many beats per minute, or a song that you know so well that you stop concentrating and start dancing and singing. Classical music might be better but watch out that you don't start conducting the orchestra with your foil! Maybe a metronome (phones have them as apps) might be a safer option.

<https://static.fie.org/uploads/24/123941-Covid-19%20Fencing%20Video.pdf>

or go to the FIE website and search for vtmfc workout (it is a pdf not a video)

The AGM brought with it some constitutional challenges after a motion from the floor was carried. Please keep abreast of the issue and options the committee have. And... just because for example you are a hobby/volunteer coach with only a level 2 at the moment, this **DOES NOT mean you cannot voice your opinion or vote.**

Make sure you know what the issue is, the options available and should we be holding an EGM. Come online to that EGM (date to be arranged) by zoom and vote... If you have not used zoom before and would like to practice beforehand please contact me and I can help you.

If you have no Internet or are on dial up still etc, please make sure I know this (contact me by phone, text or post).

I send out information at times by email if you have changed your email address or have not received any of my emails please contact me.

Stefan Leponis : Your Members Rep

Tel: 07816 423 809

Email: membersrep@baf-fencing.com

B.A.F. Residential Course 2021

26th July to 31st July 2021

The next residential course will be held at Denstone College and it would be a pleasure to have you there 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.

The Denstone course this year will be organised following all the COVID restrictions that are in place at the time of the course, and will be fully risk assessed.

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



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	

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