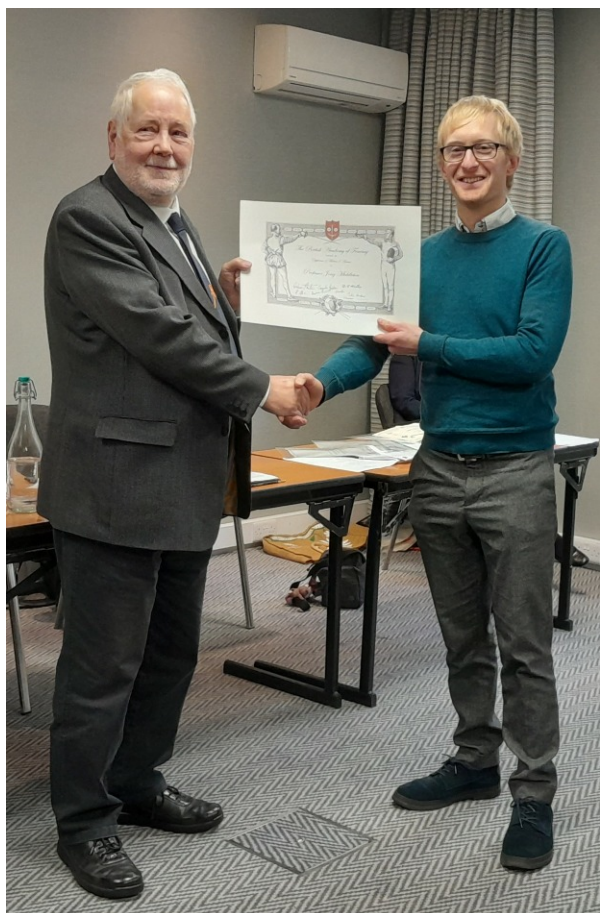
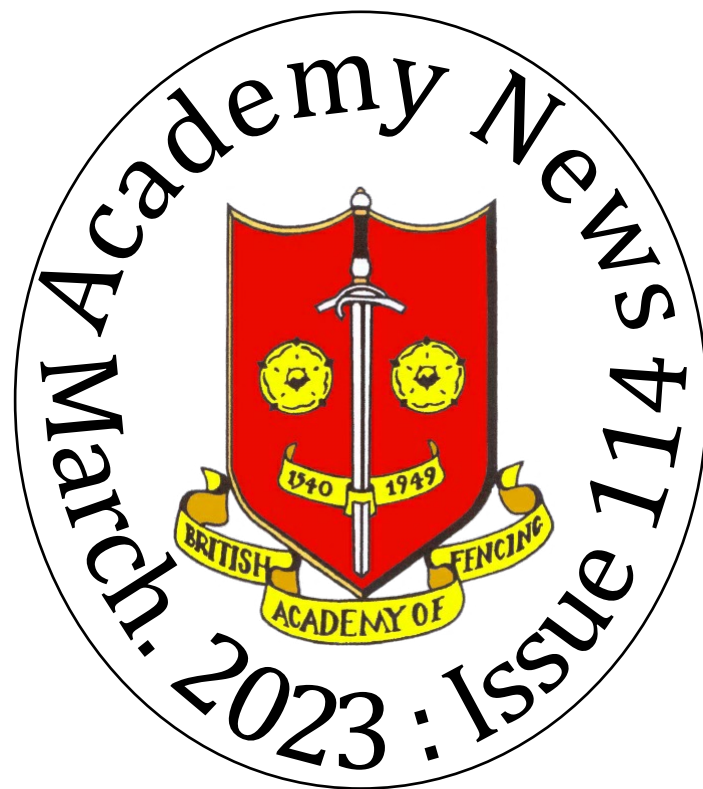


BAF AGM Saturday 14th January 2023



This years AGM was enjoyed by all who attended, especially those who received their hard earned awards. (More pictures on page 4).

The AGM was quiet, members were informed that there has been a great deal of work behind the scenes on the Academy's articles, bringing them in line with legislation, and members wishes. Maitre John Worsley, and Prof. Jackie Redikin have also worked hard over the last year to try and bring down the cost of insurance for members, as this is the largest contribution to the Academy membership costs, and we may face some hard decisions over the next few years. In all it shows that the Academy is calmly getting on with the role of training and encouraging coaches.



With the actual AGM being so short (compared to usual) we were finished in time for a late lunch, and the normal networking and reminiscing that takes place, continued at dinner.

But thoughts are moving ahead to next year when the Academy turns 75. Do you have any suggestions of what we could do to celebrate, or where we could hold our celebrations, if so talk to a member of the committee.



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Welcome to the Academy News

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Contributions to Kevin Nelson by 31st June 2023

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British Academy of Fencing

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The President 's Piece.....

Academy News is once again in your hands! I have had a fair few comments saying that it is an interesting read and how much it is looked forward to. This is due entirely to our contributors, thank you to them. I appeal to all of you to think about contributing an article, paragraph, note or question; this means that you get what you want to hear rather than hearing what we think you should hear.

We have had our AGM, as I said at the time in my welcoming sentence, 'Welcome to the 74th Annual General Meeting of the British Academy of Fencing'. This means that next year will be our 75th Anniversary. Apart from the Annual General Meeting, the Committee is hoping to arrange a Special Dinner, sometime in the Summer, for all our members.

Your Committee is Now,

President.	- Prof Peter Northam
Vice President 1	- Prof Andrew Vincent
Vice President 2	- Prof Graham Stretton
Secretary	- Prof Jacqueline Redikin
Assistant Secretary	- Maitre Donald Walker
Treasurer	- Maitre John Worsley
Committee Member	- Mr Kevin Nelson
Member's Representative	- Mr Adam Blight

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Chair SSTT. Prof Andrew Vincent: Chair of Disciplinary Sub-Committee: One of the Vice Presidents.

Course Officer. Prof Jacqueline Redikin: DBS and Safeguarding: Prof Jacqueline Redikin.

Membership Secretary: Maitre Stefan Leponis.

Editor of Academy Newsletter: Mr Kevin Nelson.

Examination Co-ordinator: Prof Andy Vincent.

Honorary Legal Advisor: Mrs Katy Wilkinson.

Insurance Officers: Prof Jacqueline Redikin and Maitre John Worsley.

International Secretary: Prof Graham Stretton.

Film and Theatre Representative: Mr Andy Wilkinson.

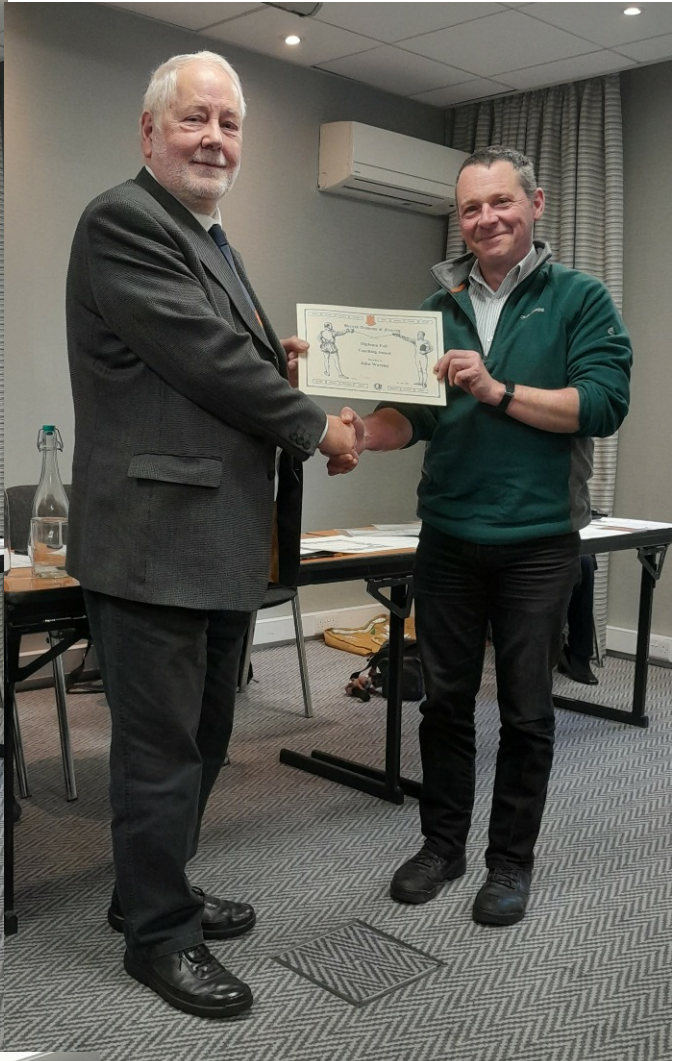
Website Manager: Prof Peter Northam.

Social Media. Prof Jacqueline Redikin.

This year we are delighted to welcome Mr. Adam Blight on Committee.

The Committee is always looking for ways to provide extra coaching courses so that our members have the opportunity to improve their qualifications. Going on courses will mean that you meet up with like-minded coaches, are able to share coaching experiences, able to discuss how problems with working at a club/school are dealt with, and much more. A good goal to consider, is to decide on taking one qualification/exam per year.

Prof. Peter Northam,
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TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

SAFETY FIRST—AND LAST

If you started fencing only this September, then everything is still rather new to you. Trying to find your way through the mass of terminology and positions can be rather trying; so what I want to do this issue is discuss that most important matter—safety.

Safety is summarised in the drawing below. You'd don't want to be on the receiving end!



All newcomers to the sport want to know whether fencing is safe and whether they can be injured.

FENCING IS SAFE—BUT FENCERS ARE NOT.

A foil and mask left undisturbed on a desk won't do anyone any harm. It is only when two people pick them up and start to use them that the chance of injury occurs.

Injuries are caused by the fault of one or both fencers. Only in rare cases does an injury take place caused by 'Fate'.

Every sport has its minor injuries and fencing is no exception. These, however, can be kept to a minimum with care in correct clothing and usage.

Please don't confuse tired and aching muscles with injuries. I know that when you get out of bed the morning after your first, or even second, fencing lesson, your legs collapse under you! Persevere—you're working slack muscles and imposing an unusual strain on them. This is not abnormal; even regular fencers have to endure this painful period when they start back after a long break from fencing.

Every sport has to have an element of danger, I believe, for it to have any physical or psychological value at all. Fencing has this.

YOU MUST NEVER FORGET THAT YOU ARE FIGHTING WITH THREE FEET OF REAL STEEL.

If your blade does not have a protective button on the end it is a most deadly weapon. Always remember this and check that not only your own but also your opponent's foil is buttoned.

The normal method is to cover the end with a plastic button. However, with time these can crack or wear away. The best method is to immediately replace; but a temporary measure can be taken by covering with a piece of insulating tape. Some Masters always tape their blades. There is nothing wrong in this except that the tape tends to wear away more quickly than the plastic buttons.

Whilst on the question of foil blades, remember a blade's life can be

one hit or many years. If a sudden strain or too acute a bend is imposed then the blade is likely to snap—usually about six inches from the button. This leaves a broken, bayonet like weapon in the hand!

To allay the minds of those readers who gave an involuntary shudder on reading the preceding paragraph, I will explain that this need not result in an injury. Normally, the bent blade snaps and both the end and the piece in the hand follow it off the target in the same plane so that the broken end doesn't actually touch the opponent. Just occasionally, and this is one of those occasions when fate takes over, the piece left in the fencer's hand continues in a direct line and this can hit the opponent.

This does not necessarily mean that an accident could happen. In the majority of breaks the snap is clean and would hardly penetrate provided correct clothing was worn.

Despite what some people say, I firmly believe it is wrong to allow newcomers to believe there is absolutely no danger at all provided you are properly clothed. There is an element of danger... but it hardly ever happens.

I don't think anyone has ever come up with statistics, but I can think of only a few accidents caused by fate in the thirty-three years I have been in the sport—although there have been accidents caused by reasons other than fate which have proved nasty.

To reinforce my statement that fencing is safe—but fencers are not, I quote from an article printed a few years ago in this journal by the late President of the British Academy of Fencing, the well-loved and respected Prof. R.H. Behmber. It was headed, "Is Fencing a Blood Sport?" His opening sentence was:



Mistakes: Part 3

By Nick Chapman

In part one of this series, I looked at the idea of learning through our mistakes, in part two I looked at some of the science that supports the theory. Now for the remaining three parts I intend to consider the practical implications of embracing errorful learning in our coaching, this article is focused on coaching at competitions.

Part 3 Practical application, competitions

'Lose the fight, but don't lose the lesson'.

As George Bernard Shaw put it 'Success does not consist in never making mistakes but in never making the same one a second time'.

Who we coach

How often have we each been guilty of spending our time at competitions with the fencer who is still in the event, the one who is progressing through the rounds, the one who is winning. Yes, they need us to be there to support them, to prepare them for the next fight, to hopefully keep them on the path to victory, but we are coach to all our fencers regardless of if they are winning or losing. The ones who aren't in the next round deserve our attention just as much. They need our assistance to get the most out of what has just happened by not 'losing the lesson'. Given Venus Williams (winner of seven grand slam individual titles) recollection that 'When you lose, you're more motivated. When you win, you fail to see your mistakes and probably no one can tell you anything', our time may even be more productive if spent with those who have lost.

Teachable moments

The result of timely intervention with these fencers may be more fencers progressing during the next event, especially given Shelby Foote's (historian and author) observation that 'making mistakes and discovering them for yourself is of great value, but to have someone else to point out your mistakes is a shortcut of the process'. Please note my use of the word timely, it's important that they get the message, not just hear the information. They need to receive the personalised input that allows them to benefit from their mistake but provide this too soon and they will be too emotional to take it in, leave it too late and they will no longer have the clarity of the feel of the moment for the advice to be effective. As coach you need to find that feedback sweet spot, what some refer to as a coachable or teachable moment. It will differ from fencer to fencer, it may differ from event to event (dependant on the importance of the event, and how invested the fencer is in the result), depending on style and confidence of delivery it may differ from coach to coach. You will get this wrong more often than not, but that's ok because as we have seen in the previous two articles mistakes are how we learn. Robert J Havighurst (physiologist) who popularised the phrase 'teachable moment' back in 1959 cautions us to 'keep in mind that unless the time is right, learning will not occur. Hence, it is important to repeat important points whenever possible'. As a result, I suggest it is worth returning to the content that at competitions you tried to deliver, in what you believed to be a teachable moment, in the next class or individual lesson. I once had a fencer who at the end of a competition would say 'I'm going to take a shower' there was no point in trying to give her any feedback until she had had her shower. It's not that feedback works better with clean fencers (though it might be more pleasant to deliver) its rather that (to paraphrase the 1979 film 'Alien') 'In the shower no one can see you cry'. Once she had her emotions under control, she was open to my analysis.

Positive Language

Once you have picked your moment the next challenge is language. We know we are embracing mistakes, attempting to develop productive failure, but this will be best achieved through the use of language that avoids the negative connotations associated with the word failure. It is better to use language that seeks to communicate the message in positive terms. This is especially important until your pupil has fully embraced the value of mistakes. The list in Maria Hall's article '40 invaluable lessons you can learn from making mistakes' might help you with reframing mistakes, shining a more positive light on them. As she puts it 'The secret to handling mistakes is to, expect them as part of the process of growth and development' whilst adopting 'an experimental mindset' and this is easier to achieve when free of the baggage associated with the word failure.

Zone of Proximal Development

This process of exploiting the teachable moment to greatest effect requires us to be working in the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (Lev Zygotsky, developmental psychologist). We should be seeking to provide information, or better still ask questions that lead fencers to draw conclusions, that allows them to grasp something that is within their ability to grasp, but without the intervention of another would remain out of reach. To do this well we must have an appreciation of the fencer, their current level of understanding and what they are capable of understanding. Whilst delivering this learning Zygotsky would describe us acting as the 'More Knowledgeable Other'. It is useful to remember that Zygotsky teaches that the more knowledgeable other does not need to be the coach, it simply needs to be someone that has already learned the necessary lesson. To steal an expression from a previous article, the 'relative expert'. This means peer learning can be just as valuable as coach teaching.

Having watched the fight, having seen the lesson that needs to be learned, there is nothing wrong with identifying a fencer's friend/club mate who you know understands the given issue and encouraging them to be the 'more knowledgeable other'. You are asking them to deliver the lesson, in the teachable moment, utilising the zone of proximal development, (of course you wouldn't put it to them in those terms). The benefit of this approach is that it frees you up to observe another fight, but far more than that, it empowers the student that you have tasked with delivering the learning. If you have chosen well, it further cements the relationship between the two fencers, it comes over as friendly advice rather than formal coaching (especially useful for emotional situations such as where fencers have been eliminated). Depending on the nature of the lesson, a peer may actually communicate the information in language better received by the fencer, they may even be more receptive to their friend's emotions to be able to better judge how much information to provide and when to do it (this doesn't let you off the hook, rather than being able to judge the teachable moment instead you now need to judge the emotional intelligence of the fencer you have charged with being 'the more knowledgeable other'). It is your job as coach to facilitate progress, to scaffold learning. I suggest that does not always require direct intervention sometimes it can be achieved, as suggested above, by indirect action and on other occasions you need to be brave enough to step back and just let the lessons happen. Allow the mistakes to lead to consequences that drive realisation and therefore learning. Understanding when the lesson will be learned without your intervention might be the hardest coaching skill of all to learn.

Conclusion

At competitions your time is limited as is the duration of teachable moments. Look for them, exploit them, use all the tools available to you to achieve this (including your other fencers). Do not waste your time, or that of your students, on lessons they are not yet ready to receive. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by the success of a few at the expense of coaching all. Use language that avoids negative connotations, provide input where necessary but where possible use questions to guide the fencer to their own realisation of the answer, this is much more likely to result in meaningful learning.

A Memory

I remember vividly standing at the side of the piste at a BYC finals watching fencers warm up and perhaps more interesting watching other coaches warming up their fencers, chatting with another coach (as you do), and the conversation going something along the lines of 'Some fencers become good because of their coach, some in spite of their coach'. Whilst I still fully believe in this sentiment, I now wonder if I was ignorant of what I was witnessing. Perhaps given the research of Kapur and Bielaczyc some of those who appeared to be getting good in spite of their coaches were simply being given the space to make mistakes and were in fact being taught through 'Productive Failure' (or perhaps that's being too generous).

Pay attention to your enemies, for they are the first to discover your mistakes.

Antisthenes (Greek philosopher).

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Maria Hill, 40-things-you-learn-from-making-mistakes

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accessed 13/3/21

Manu Kapur & Katerine Bielaczyc, Designing for Productive Failure 2011

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10508406.2011.591717> accessed 17/3/21

Other quotes from www.brainyquote.com

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 Committee.

I have a light editorial touch on all articles received. 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. There have been occasions when I have suggested changes to articles, and when such changes are taken on board, the returned article is so much better for having been re-written.

Therefore I will always welcome thought provoking articles with a positive orientation from members (or non-members).

Kevin: Editor Academy News

From the Collection of Porthos



A silver hilted smallsword, probably mid to late C18th. Indistinct hall marks. Deeply hollowed triangular section blade, 31" (79cm) with faint traces of etched decoration. Moulded decoration on both shell guards and the knucklebow. Circular 'arms' with spirally fluted terminal (possibly a replacement) on the tip of the rear quillon. The 'arms' on smallswords were intended for the right forefinger only, to give a secure grip. The one on the left was for aesthetic reasons only, to make the hilt look equally balanced. However, many swordmasters of those days claimed that passing the forefinger through the right hand loop increased the chances of breaking that finger and taught their pupils to hold the sword only by the wire bound grip. In this instance they had little choice, as both loops have a pointed device which prevents passing a finger through. This is the only smallsword I've ever seen with this device. It's very light, under 1.5 pounds, but it feels less than comfortable in the hand and therefore not my choice for a fighting weapon.

Porthos

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

Beyond Repairs?

By Alan Grafton

I think it is a truth that can be held to be self-evident that without Fencers, there would be no fencing and that as members of an organisation run "...by coaches, for coaches" we probably all think that Coaches are a necessary part of fencing and, if push comes to shove (yellow card, rule t.121.2), then Referees are probably a Good Thing, too. But what about Armourers?

Now, I've always been a 'tinkerer'. As a young boy I loved taking stuff apart and (sometimes) putting it back together; 'tinkering' with stuff, or what my parents would call "messing about". I suppose it was inevitable then that, as I am intrigued by all things fence, I should drift towards "armoury work" and indeed, I have the Badge and the T-shirt.

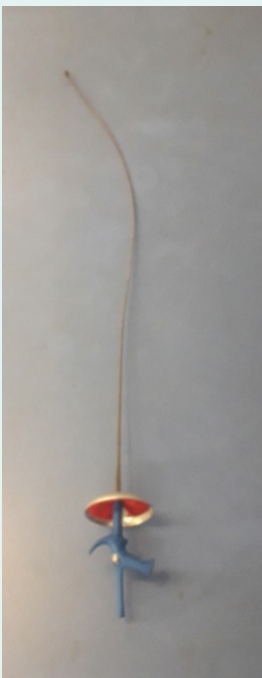
'Armoury' and 'Armourer' are uncommon words these days, unlikely to crop up in most everyday conversations and when I've used these words to inexperienced fencers, I've often been met with a bemused or a wry expression. What else though, would you call a place where 'Arms' are stored but an Armoury and who else would repair and maintain those 'Arms' other than an Armourer? (I confess, though, that I've had to specify "Fencing Armoury" at one of my schools where my workbench and storage space is across the corridor from the C.C.F Shooting Range and next door to an actual M.o.D Armoury! Still, Fencing Armoury is a step up from "Canoe Store" which is what the space was called before I arrived!)

So, Armouries exist and so do Armourers, but what have the Armourers ever done for us, eh? Let's look at the basic and most obvious thing first:

Armourers Fix Stuff

A foil bout is under way and now there is an unwanted white light (accompanied by that horrendous screeching buzz from the LP box in the middle). Possibly a stuck tip or a break in the blade-wire; easy fix - swap for the spare weapon, complete the bout and get the broken weapon fixed later (off to the Armourer!).

But suppose the fault persists with the replacement weapon? A competent referee or fencer might be able to isolate the fault and replace the offending item (bodywire, spool or ground lead, rarely the Box, and if they can, I would suggest they're on the slippery slope to becoming an Armourer) but it will still need to be fixed later. By the way, did you know that there are about 10 points (depending on how you count them) at which a LP spool can develop a fault resulting in a white light at Foil? Some are more likely than others (a break in the B or C line at the Fencer End socket is more likely than an issue with the commutator) but an Armourer will know where to look and where to look first.



Perhaps less obvious:

Armourers can ensure an Even Playing Field

A properly Organised Weapons Control, staffed by qualified Armourers, can spot a number of "dubious" situations that might give a fencer a slight advantage (epee handle padded with a few washers to give extra length? That lame with "just a few" dead spots?) before the kit even makes it to the Piste. The referee might spot such things at the piste side but s/he has plenty of other things to think about.

Similarly:-

Armourers can improve Safety

As above, Weapons Control staffed by Qualified Armourers can spot and have the skills and equipment to test safety issues before they come to the piste; issues the referee might not notice, such as deformation in the mesh of the mask, soft spots in the blade or rough, jagged edges to the guards.

Further, away from the piste:

Armourers can make recommendations as to Kit Purchases.

Armourers work with weapons and parts from a variety of suppliers over an extended period. This gives them a greater perspective than fencers (or possibly even coaches) over the equipment that is available and over the quality of that equipment. Personally, I don't say "Don't buy from Manufacturer X" but I will offer an opinion if asked.

So, beyond repairs, Armourers bring far more to the party, but as I've noticed a tendency for fewer and fewer competitions to include Armourers or provide Armoury Services, presumably the organisers don't think Armourers are that important.

It is essential that all activities that are undertaken by members (coaches) are risk 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.



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

The MAD Game of Sabre Fencing

By Prof. Phil Carson

Performance analysis rarely features in discussions about fencing, neither does it feature as a topic on coach education courses. An effort was made in the run up to the Tokyo Olympics to create a system for GB fencers, but this was essentially a fishing expedition, using a wide net, scooping up every minnow in sight in the hope of catching a magic mermaid. I suspect the mermaid was there, but we neither had the tools nor the right kind of lenses through which to spot it. As Bartlett et al (2007) observes “It is not sufficient just to gather knowledge of the activity; it must also be theoretically focused and practically synthesised.” The data gathered was all about effect and not about cause, it was about form rather than function and overall I couldn’t see the link between the analysis undertaken and the potential for performance improvement.

I set about trying to understand how to better approach performance analysis, specifically for sabre. As Nash (2014) sums it up, “the issue is not so much how to collect the data, but rather knowing what data should be collected and how to make the best use of it”. The challenge was to frame the language and the process in a meaningful way.

Case Study

After 20 months away from competition, Kate’s first post-pandemic event World Cup level was in Tbilisi in January 2022 and at the team event six of her bouts are available on video.

- Bout 1 <https://youtu.be/xqWjqx7-0cQ?t=542>
- Bout 2 <https://youtu.be/xqWjqx7-0cQ?t=1312>
- Bout 3 <https://youtu.be/xqWjqx7-0cQ?t=1890>
- Bout 4 https://youtu.be/_wBYd7adSoY?t=150
- Bout 5 https://youtu.be/_wBYd7adSoY?t=585
- Bout 6 https://youtu.be/_wBYd7adSoY?t=1306

Although a small sample size, there is sufficient data to consider various methodologies available to: build a notational system to collect both quantitative and qualitative information; provide useful perspectives to help inform future coaching interventions; and thereby establish a system that is valid and reliable.

Relying on Bartlett (2007) I took the following approach:

1. Preparation. Complete a needs analysis to contextualise the athlete journey with particular emphasis on her psych/social situation.
2. Observing. Using the video material to give us authentic competitive situations to baseline performance.
3. Evaluation and diagnosis. Using information to zoom in to specific areas for improvement.
4. Intervention and feedback. I’ve involved the athlete at all stages of the process.

The first step was to codify each of the actions to provide a working notation. There are other actions and situations that could be included in the legend, but these adequately cover all the action in the six bouts analysed.

Notation

A	Attack
FS	Fall Short
PR	Parry-riposte
AP	Attack on prep
CA	CounterAttack

This formed the basis of a productive discussion with the fencer, that on top of the evident strengths and domination of the Middle, where the opponent takes up the attack first, we need to work on using her strength and "up-for-it-ness" to defend the situation. The discussion moved between views on the objective quantifiable data and a subjective interpretation of it; as well as the subjective qualitative data and a discussion about how useful this might be in the future.

The process of developing a performance analysis system from scratch was illuminating. Quantitative technical data only takes you so far, as Chabris and Simons (2010) might point out, if you are busy counting basketball passes, you might miss the gorilla in the room. In that sense, I agree with Engles (in Adler, 2009) about the need to avoid the fallacy of single cause, something fencing coach's are notoriously bad at. Similarly, the win/loss ratio is another common performance metric, but it would be easy to fall into outcome bias here and miss the coaching opportunities that more qualitative data might afford with a mind to continuous development.

I'm in agreement with Glazier (2010) when he states "Performance analysts must focus much more on the processes of coordination and control underpinning the performance outcome and not just the performance outcome itself." Defining the notational system above has added a qualitative aspect to the mix, but it brings with it issues of the interpretation, validity and reliability. To that end I ran the system past three other performance coaches who like it very much and see it as a step up from simple win/loss quantitative data. However, each of us had a conversation about what the three A's meant. Our definitions were different and we surmised that other coaches might struggle with an expert eye view of the action. There also remains a danger that "If the value recorded for a performance variable depends on subjective observer judgement too much, it could render the variable invalid" (O'Donohue 2014).

Despite the flaws, we liked the approach because: we had data we didn't have before; there was common ground between coach view and the athlete's view: it allowed for productive discussion: it was responding directly to the needs of the athlete; it was a good first step towards a performance system for fencing. It is a MAD game, but maybe the MAD system helps make more sense of it and for coaches, a platform for deciding on coaching interventions.

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Coaching Courses and Examinations

To put some myths to rest.

Coaching courses do not have to be run by full fencing masters. Anyone can organise a coaching course. However, it is important that the person delivering the training, as in any other discipline, has the appropriate knowledge, experience and skills. The level of knowledge, experience and skill required will be dependant upon the type and standard of training being provided.

However, for assessments and examinations there are a number of rules set down by the Academy.

Level 1 assessments may be conducted by either a Level 4 (Advanced) coach, a Provost, Maître d'escrime or a full Master. The qualifications held by the assessor must be in the same weapon that is being assessed. There is no minimum qualification for the coach undertaking the training of an individual for a Level 1 award.

An application to hold Examinations for Level 2 through to Diploma must be made to the Secretary of the Academy. It is then for the committee to consider the application and form the necessary boards. The Secretary of the Academy will also be able to advise on the costs of setting up examinations.

All assessors and examiners must be current members of the Academy.



For further guidance please contact Prof. Andy Vincent.

Proficiency Awards

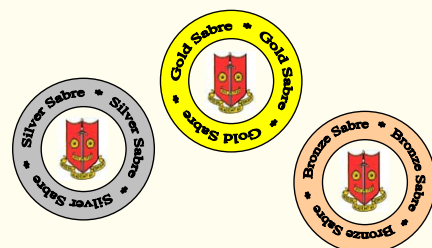
BAF Members:

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

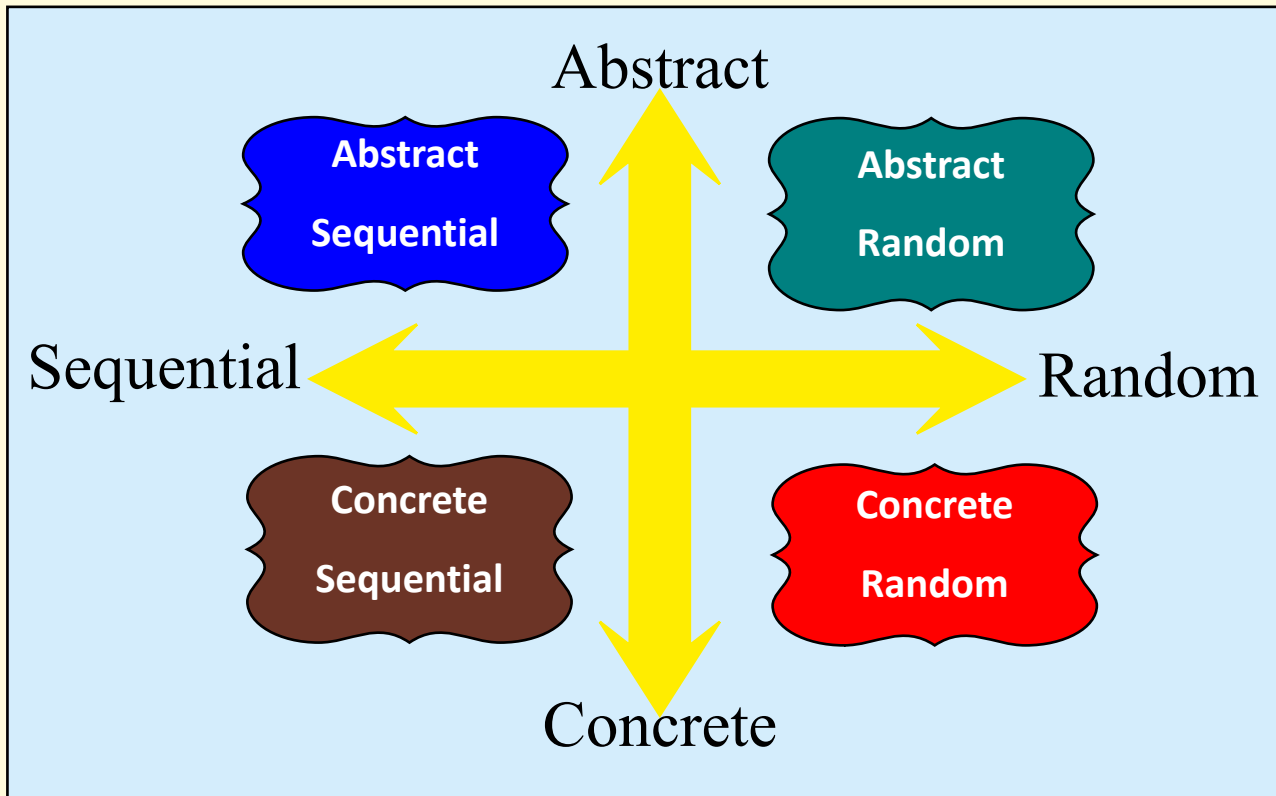
The study guides are being reviewed and re-written,



Mind Styles: Gregorc's Analysis.

By Kevin Nelson

Gregorc's Mind Styles (or Thinking Styles) used to be called Cognitive Predilections when I studied for my PGCE. The basis for this learning style is how our minds perceive and order the information they receive.



In Gregorc's mind styles he has split the differences in the way that our minds process information, into two continuums :

Perception, which goes from Concrete to Abstract
Order which goes from Sequential to Random.

"After almost 3 decades of phenomenological research, Gregorc confidently proposes that there are differences in the way people both perceive (Let in, grasp) and order (organise, store and reference) data. These differences in mental operation are the result of possessing common mental qualities to different degrees." ¹

The important thing is that these styles are a continuum, so everyone has all four of the styles, but generally will have a inclination to one or two of them.

Imagine plotting your personal position on each of the four radiating lines, join the dots up, and inside the shape is your Mind Field or comfort zone. There are many websites that ask a list of questions allowing you to create your mind field.

Now to look at the practical use of this model, and how it can inform our lesson plans. By using the predilections, we can think about what sort of lesson might suit our fencers. We should always remember that we might not be able to reach every fencer, as our own mind style might prevent us, and that any group is likely to made up of all four styles.

Learners with Dominant Mind styles of...

Concrete Sequential - Like structured activities, hands on, clear rules, attention to detail. Fencers strong in this style may tend to be organised, productive, and perfectionist⁵.

So.. Group lessons involving fencing by numbers²; guided individual lessons with a strong technical content.

Abstract Sequential - Like structured research, the theory behind a concept, working alone. Fencers strong in this group may be precise, conceptual, and opinionated

So... Use of scenarios; individual lessons where the coach explains how and why each move works.

Abstract Random - Like unstructured group work, brainstorming, go off at tangents to make personal connections. Fencers strong in this category may be spontaneous, adaptable, and sociable.

So... group lessons with only a rough objective; give them a scoring box and let them go; use of games on the box^{3,4}

Concrete Random - Like open ended practical work, experimentation, competitive with self. Fencers strong in this style may be curious, hands-on, and impulsive.

So...Use of scenarios; the silent individual lesson, allowing them to experiment to find their own solution, but without telling them your answer.

Many websites create a table of learning characteristics, for the styles containing both likes and dislikes.

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- 2: R. Crosnier: Fencing with the Foil: Faber and Faber Ltd. (Out of Print)
- 3: N. Chapman: Academy News: Pontoon: Feb 2019 Issue 99
- 4: N. Chapman: Academy News: Lets Play Cards Nov 2019 Issue 102
- 5: I. Thornton: Theory Behind the Model Gregorc's Mind Styles model provides an organized way to consider how the mind works :<https://slideplayer.com/slide/7856110/>

I would like to apologise to members for taking so long to publish this edition of the Academy News. Spring term has been exceptionally busy, as I have introduced another new school to fencing. I hope that you enjoy the articles within, and remember I am always looking for new authors to express their opinions, and share their knowledge.

Best Wishes, Kevin Nelson. Editor Academy News.

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.

Continued from page 5

“When I started fencing, some 40 years ago, accidents and injuries were rare; in fact, one could almost say unheard of.” Nevertheless, it is also a fact that, since the advent of the electric weapons, accidents have become more frequent and one goes to competitions with the fear that blood may be spilt. This is because fencing has become rougher and the younger generation feels that they are being soft if they enforce the regulations. He ended his excellent article with, “In conclusion, I would like to see all safety precautions rigidly enforced at all levels, and the rules tightened up, as they will have to be if we are to make our sport safe again.”

These were the words of a man who had taught fencing all his life. A sword must be treated with respect and used properly if injuries or accidents are to be avoided.

Obviously the newcomer will want concrete advice to back-up my warnings of possible mishaps.

Prof. R. Goodall
“The Fencing Master” September 1975

The safety standards for fencing uniform have changed since Prof. Goodall’s day, so I have not included his advice on what to wear while fencing, but it can be seen that personal safety has always been an important component in our sport.

But just as a reminder, the current uniform regulations can be found on the British Fencing website under “British Fencing Standards and Guidelines for Safety in Fencing”

https://www.britishfencing.com/uploads/files/july_17_approved_safety_guidelines.pdf

Kevin Nelson: Editor Academy News

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

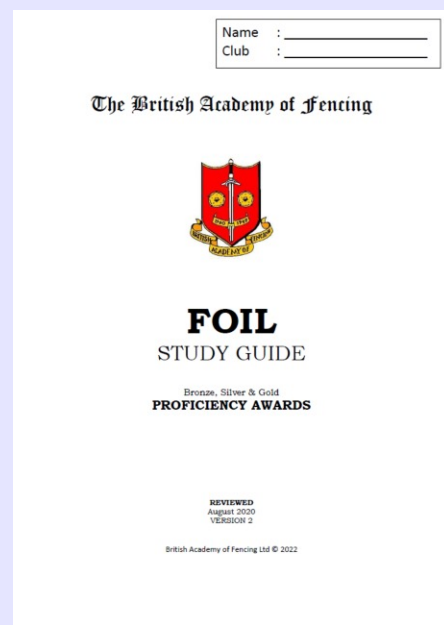
Foil Study Guide

The Foil Study Guide Version 2 is now available. It has been completely rewritten, which is why it has taken so long, and there have been some minor changes made to the syllabus. Changes reflect the character of the weapon, rules update, introduction to refereeing, a more pupil centred approach, as well as including some new photo’s. The cost has increased to £7.50 which includes postage.

Order your copies now....

From Maitre Donald Walker

proficiencyawards@baf-fencing.com



New B.A.F. Members Representative

Adam Blight

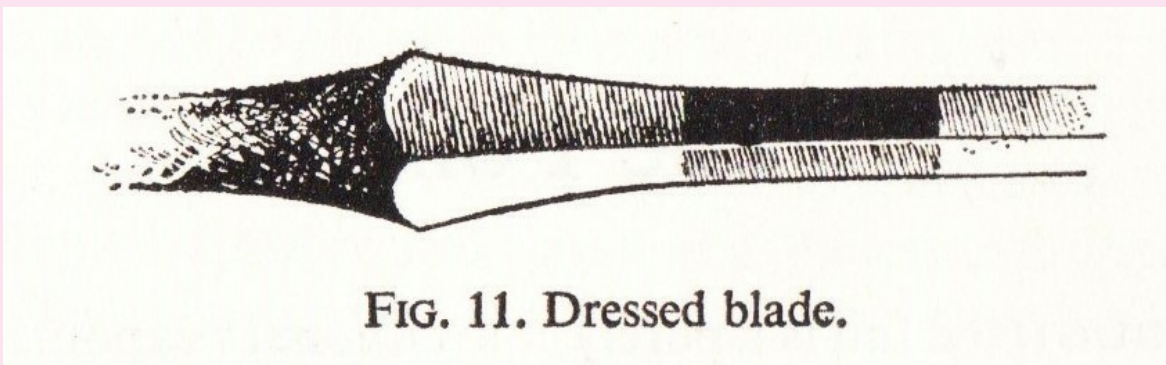
My Name is Adam Blight and at the British Academy of Fencing AGM in January I was honoured to take on the role of Members Representative. I hope with this role to play an active part in developing communication between members, the committee and all within the Academy. Our organisation is, as we know, run by coaches for coaches and for that reason we should be ideally suited to act with the best interests of coaches at heart. I came to see many years ago that the place of coaches in our sport is in many ways somewhat distinct and different from that of all other participants, be they fencers, parents, referees etc. and for this reason coaches should work together. I hope that Academy members will be keen to put forward their perspective and if there should ever be any issues of concern, I shall be happy to take these up.



I have been a full time professional coach for almost 30 years. Over that time I have coached, it seems to me, in almost every conceivable setting from secure youth offending units to World and Zonal Championships coaching at different times for GB, the Republic of Ireland and for Taiwan. I have also served as part of the coaching team for British Fencing's Athlete Development Program. And more recently worked for the Netflix series Bridgerton putting together a fencing scene. I take great pleasure in having taken many young fencers on a journey through this sport and passing on the many benefits that fencing has to offer.

Dressing A Blade.

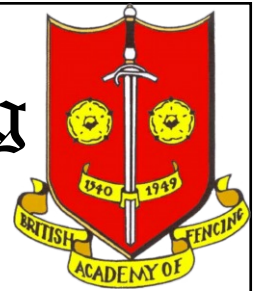
When your club is asked to put on a fencing display, demonstrate fencing or to fence on stage dressing the blade is a good way of making the blade more visible to those who are watching. When used in bright or artificial light the blade will flash as it moves. One way of achieving this is to polish the blade at 2 to 4cm intervals across and along the blade.





British Academy of Fencing

Historical Notes



The British Academy of Fencing is an organisation for fencing coaches in Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Its origins go back to 1540, when King Henry VIII issued a signed Bill (or Warrant signed by the Sovereign and directed to the Lord Chancellor for passing Letters Patent under the Great Seal) under the title "Masters of ye Noble Science of Defence". This still exists at the Public Records Office (C.82/770)

This Bill gave Masters a monopoly of teaching fencing in England and empowered them to commit to goal any offender who taught without being a member of the Guild.

When Henry VIII died in 1547 his monopoly lapsed and it was not renewed so far as research can prove. However, the Ancient Masters seem to have recovered their lawful privileges from a sympathetic James I. On July 1st, 1605, he granted them a Warrant (Rymer's Feodera Vol. XVI. This Warrant was abolished when James I was forced to pass the Monopolies Act 21 Cap III in 1623/24.

During the Restoration the body fell into ill-repute because of the so-called "Masters" who did not ply their prizes (a traditional examination which required the fighting and defeating of their betters). These swordsmen merely gave themselves the title "Master" or "Professor" and were, in fact, nothing more than paid prize fighters with swords and were the forerunners of pugilists. From then on decline was rapid and to all intents and purposes the Body ceased to exist, even though some Fencing Masters managed to earn a living in the country.

In 1903 the Guild was reformed under the title "The London Academie d'Armes and again in 1931, under the title The British Federation of Fencing Masters".

During the last war it hibernated, but in 1949 the Ancient Guild of Fencing Masters was refounded as "The British Academy of Fencing". The inspiration for this venture came from the late Charles de Beaumont and it was implemented by Professor Roger Crosnier, Professor Leon Paul and Mr J D Aylward. The Academy's first President was Professor Leon Bertrand.

The Academy of today is a progressive organisation and changes are constantly taking place. By the maintenance of a carefully structured system of courses and examinations, the Academy provides teachers and/or coaches of fencing with the opportunities to qualify through Level 1 to Level 5 (Initial, Basic, Intermediate, Advanced and Diploma) Awards with Foil, Epee and Sabre. Members may choose to study and be examined at one/two weapons up to Level 5 (Diploma) and use the title Maître, or complete all three weapons at Level 5 and use the title Professor.