

Southern Fencing Region

Report from the Chair for July 2021- June 2022

It's not possible to run events in the region without a team of people. On behalf of the region I'd like to thank those volunteers who give up their time to run the competitions, training days and the administration. The latter includes time spent liaising with England Fencing and British Fencing.

Marilyn Wheelband retired this year after many years of organising referees at regional competitions. Referees are a key factor in any competition – Thank you Marilyn for the time and effort put in to so many so many competitions successful.

Competitions

Covid dominated the 1st half of the fencing season and it was nearly impossible to organise anything until the end of February. Before then the lock downs, or the threat of a lockdown, along with exacting precautionary procedures made it impractical to commit to competition dates. When competitions restarted we were still subject to various procedures from BF and the government, e.g. wearing face masks. As volunteer organisers we were expected to implement these rules, thankfully almost all fencers and parents complied whether they agreed with the rule or not.

BYC Regional Qualifying Events (RQE)

3 separate competitions were run this year to accommodate the need to increase social spacing and the spacing between pistes.

- On 27th February 2022 there were 57 entries for the Under 12's competition held at St Gabriel's in Newbury
- On 13th March 2022 there were 97 entries in the U14,16,18 epee & sabre held at The Deanery in Swindon
- 27th March 2022 there were 63 entries in the U14,16,18 foil held at The Deanery in Swindon

Age Group	Foil Entrants/ qualifiers	Epee Entrants/ qualifiers	Sabre Entrants/ qualifiers
Women's U12	18/9	14/8	4/4
Women's U14	14/8	6/6	7/7
Women's U16	10/8	7/7	5/5
Women's U18	7/7	4/4	2/2
Men's U12	11/8	4/4	2/2
Men's U14	9/8	14/8	5/5
Men's U16	12/8	20/10	8/8
Men's u18	11/8	15/8	4/4

(ratio of entrants to qualifiers varies according to BF rules and number of byes from previous competition).

There was a lack of clarity nationally about fencers testing positive for covid on the date of the competition and whether they could be allowed to progress to the finals. BF allowed fencers to apply for a covid bye, but not all Regions supported such applications and this led to some fencers changing Region. Southern gained at least one fencer who lives just inside our region, but went to school in the neighbouring region, after catching covid and missing their previous region's RQE. No rules were broken. In fact BF facilitated regional changes this year because Sport80 had made mistakes across the country in their auto-renewal process.

British Fencing proposed a number of changes to the organisation of the BYC finals and this led to discussions with BF & other regional chairs about the BF rules for running the regional qualifiers and the finals run by BF. All the regions objected to BF's proposal that regions must send referees or face a fine – there is a shortage of referees but the regional chairs argued that this was not the way to solve that shortage. Following the cancellation of the finals last year BF proposed to remove the regional levy per fencer for this year. Other issues included the overall size of the event, its finances (not disclosed by BF) the large proportion of qualifying fencers and a planning timeline – so that regions/fencers & parents could prepare in advance. It's likely that there will be similar discussion in the future.

GB CUP Qualifiers – May 2022

Cancelled because there were too few entries. All those who entered qualified by default for the BF run GB Cup finals

Senior Championships

This year's championships were delayed and held in July 2022 (just in the next year - & covered in the 2022/23 annual report).

Development

7th May 2022 – level 2 foil referee theory course run online by Luke Deamer from England Fencing. 10 attendees. An interactive course with a theory test at the end. This is the first step to becoming a registered referee. The next step is a practical assessment at a competition.

David Bradley