



FENCING-ESCRIME NB
2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
July 2012 – June 2013
BOARD REPORT

As a volunteer-led non-profit sport organization, it would be an understatement to say that Fencing-Esgrime NB had a very busy year behind the scenes. With the hiring of its first full-time employee, scrambling to correctly handle the unfamiliar, mandatory process before being allowed to hire from outside the country, coping with the mid-year replacement of our part-time executive director, the unavoidable resignation of two board members after the normal transition of the fall AGM, it was a year of change. All of this occurred while our Canada Games squad training and selection was in full-gear. With the introduction of our first provincial coach in October and the focus on Canada Games, the year also brought many opportunities and challenges for our members at all levels.

Athlete Development

🗡 Training

- With the presence of Xavier Boulet, our full-time provincial coach, and Jim Stevens also providing additional individual lesson work to the squad in sabre, our top fencers took part in weekly centralized training with fencers from other clubs and received two private lessons per week for the preparation of the Canada Games team. This quality of instruction has made a significant increase in the technical-tactical skills of these fencers and increased their confidence at competitions, especially in the Atlantic region.
- Four provincial training camps were offered between September and December. In addition to the Canada Games squad, seventeen other fencers participated in one or more of these camps. Two weekend training camps were offered in March and April leading up to the National Championships. In addition to the Canada Games squad, thirteen other fencers participated in these camps.
- An intensive week-long residential summer training camp was held at Rothesay Netherwood School. An invitation was extended to fellow athletes throughout the Maritimes. 24 fencers participated.
- The Final Selection for the 2013 Canada Games Team was completed in June. The following team was selected: men's foil – Will Dobson, Ryan Downey, Brent Wishart, alternate; men's epee – Scott MacGregor, Nigel Sood, Zach Leger, alternate; men's sabre – Cedric Richard, Jeff Probert, Alex Bischoff, alternate; women's foil – Meghan Lynch, Zoe Richard, Emma Rees, alternate; women's epee – Willow Wilson; women's sabre – Emily Creamer.

🗡 The CFF Instructional Program

Green armband assessments were offered to the Canada Games Squad and 4 fencers achieved this level this year:

Will Dobson (Fundy) – foil

Alex Fullerton (Damocles) – foil

Ryan Downey (Moncton) – foil

Meghan Lynch (Fundy) - foil

🗡 Travel to competitions outside region

- FENB organized a team of fifteen NB fencers to compete in a Quebec Circuit competition in Montreal in early December. NB fencers also competed in the Lobster Pot tournament in Maine (October) and the Tri-Sword tournament in Halifax. In the second half of the season, the emphasis was on competition exposure with provincial trips organized to the Canada Cup in Kingston (6

fencers), Challenge des Nations in Quebec (12 fencers), National Championships in Gatineau (22 fencers) and the Pomme de Terre tournament in Massachusetts (5 fencers).

- Twenty-two fencers traveled to the National Championships in Gatineau Quebec, our largest contingent ever, with the following results: Will Dobson – bronze, under 15 men’s foil and Wendy Yano – top 8, open women's sabre. Top 16 performances included: Willow Wilson, 11th, under 15 women's epee; Scott MacGregor, 12th, cadet men's epee; Alex Bischoff, 12th, cadet men's sabre; Alex Fullerton, 13th, under 15 men’s foil.

***T* Tournaments**

- Two new reels and floor cords were purchased at a cost of \$1,444.
- The NB Open competition was organized in Hillsborough with support from the Moncton Club. There were 100 entries over 10 events with fencers from PEI, Nova Scotia and Maine as well as NB.
- The Alfred Knappe Team Tournament was again co-hosted by the UNB and Damocles Clubs and involved 12 open teams and 6 under 15 teams.
- The Provincial Championships was held in Shediac with great support from Marc and Annette LeBlanc and a large contingent from the Ottawa Fencing Club.
- **Wheelchair Fencing**
We provided a letter of support to the Canadian Paralympic Committee for the Damocles club’s successful application for a GO NB grant to purchase the necessary specialized equipment required for a wheelchair fencing program. Our provincial coach has experience coaching wheelchair athletes.

Technical Leadership Development

***T* Coaching**

- A development workshop was held in mid-September in Renforth with two new participants, Jeff Probert and Cedric Richard for sabre coaching, and three developing coaches, Diane Raiche-Phillips, Elena Redkina and Michael Dobbelsteyn. The theme was how to use and evaluate the CFF Instructional Program at the yellow and orange levels.
- A second coaches development workshop was held in early March with Diane Raiche-Phillips, Elena Redkina, Rick Gosselin from Renforth club and Jean-Pierre Frenette from Chaleur club.
- The introduction of a Provincial Coach allowed for a focussed approach to athlete development with an emphasis on technical-tactical skills, particularly in the use of teaching methods that encourage fencers to think tactically and to find solutions independently.
- Although Xavier Boulet has a Fencing Master's diploma from France, he does not yet have equivalent Canadian certification. He received an exemption from the Canada Games Council to be a Canada Games coach and has completed the NCCP ethics module. He will need to be assessed by a National Coaching Institute (Montreal) to attain Level 4 NCCP certification. The process has not yet been clarified.
- The Renforth and Damocles clubs have coaches certified at Aide-Moniteur level or higher. The UNB, Chaleur and Moncton clubs have coaches recognized at the Community Stream level.

***T* Officiating**

A new referee development program that was initially led by Andre Arseneault involved a group of six parents and a UNB fencer in two theory clinics in conjunction with two provincial training camps held in December. As a result of these clinics, Moira Rees and David Woolley provided excellent referee service at three competitions in the second half of the season including the Provincial Championships.

Membership

The final membership count for the 2012-2013 season was 202, of which 75 (37%) were First-Time members. This is an increase of 3 members over the previous season. We continue to have concerns that some clubs are failing to ensure that all of their fencers are registered each year with FENB, which is in violation of the obligations to be a club and jeopardizes insurance coverage for their coaches and fencers. This is also unfortunate because the provincial government distributes grants to sports based upon their participation rates. For every fencer not registered with the provincial organization, this is funding lost to another sport.

At the end of December, the Fundy club closed its doors after seventeen years and its members are now served by the Renforth club. There were five active clubs in the second half of the season. The Moncton club struggled to maintain its once a week program because the coach, Marc Landry, was transferred to Saint John and was only able to travel to Moncton twice a month. All other clubs are offering beginner and fundamentals instruction at least twice weekly.

Focus on Sustainability

Your board identified sustainability as the top priority for its attention this year. The first two areas being addressed were financial and organizational sustainability. For the short term, a committee worked successfully last year to raise the money necessary to cover some of the costs for Canada Games training. Like all non-profit sport organizations, to stay solvent and be affordable, while offering quality programs, we need volunteer leadership to develop regular annual fundraising programs to augment grants and fees. Our increased staffing costs and the need for additional space for provincial training programs both require more money than fees provide.

As part of building a strong, sustainable organization that will have documents that are available to everyone, we created the basic structure of an Operational Policy and Procedures Manual. Pulling together the policies already in use and researching what other sport organizations use, we built an outline of the components needed for a provincial sport organization and began filling in the gaps. To this end, significant progress was gained in the review and drafting of Operational Policies. The following policies were reviewed, modified or added:

- Membership (modified)
- Code of Conduct for Members (modified)
- Disciplinary Action (new)
- Appeal Process (new)
- Coach Code of Ethics (new)
- Officials Code of Ethics (new)
- Anti-harassment policy (reviewed)
- Conflict of Interest (new)
- Language (new)
- Provincial High Performance Program (outline developed)
- Group travel standards (new)
- Fundraising (new)

In addition, other references like forms, checklists and job descriptions have been included. We hope that this manual is developed and serves as a clear permanent reference on the website for members, club leaders, volunteers and staff.

Financial Results

Our income statement this year shows an excess of revenue over expenses of \$10,172. This is due to several things: tournaments yielding \$2,000 over expenses; interest and HST refunds of \$2,500; Damocles contribution of \$3,750 towards the provincial coaching position; and recording the entire

\$30,000 government grant in our first year of the provincial coach program. While this looks very encouraging, it does not reflect what future income statements will look like. We need to add about \$18,000 in revenue next year via additional fees and/or fundraising to cover planned expenses. The Canada Games fundraising effort this past year showed that it is possible to do this, but a plan and an ongoing group has not yet been set up. We continue to seek whatever grants might be available and applicable. Our 2013-14 Funding Model I and Long Term Athlete Development grants will be \$22,200.

Recognition of Volunteers

On behalf of all fencers in the province, we thank the people who volunteer their time to help FENB and clubs deliver programs and run tournaments. There is no way that our members could participate in the sport “at a reasonable cost” without these generously donated hours. Thank you.

At the risk of missing someone, we want to make note of those who put in extra effort for the benefit of FENB: our membership registrar and Atlantic youth ranking coordinator, Mark Dobson; Bill Preeper, our website administrator; board members Andre Arsenault and Deb Buckley who needed to resign mid-year and Kim Fullerton who stepped in to fill the gap; Lise Piekarski, Denise Ferreira, Karen Wishart and Kathy Wallace who were key in the success of our fundraising this past year for Canada Games; Annette and Marc LeBlanc for secretariat and armoury support of NB Open and NB Provincials; and our Canada Games selection committee Andre Arsenault, Diane Raiche-Phillips and Wendy Yano. Last, but certainly not least, we thank Barbara Daniel who volunteered time and energy well beyond her executive director role.

Future

Sustainability of our sport remains a primary focus for the coming year.

Building upon the funding we are receiving for a provincial coach, we need to continue to develop our provincial training program, gaining the most for everyone - fencers, home clubs and provincial team – and increasing our technical skills across the board. The need for a larger facility to accommodate a centralized provincial team program is both a challenge and an opportunity.

The Sport and Recreation Branch of the provincial government is the single largest contributor of annual funding to the operations of FENB. Each year, the government requires FENB to submit an assessment form and related documents in order to receive this annual funding. In addition to the ongoing Policy work, the Board must develop our next four-year strategic plan as part of our commitment to the government and to build the sport.

We have accomplished a lot with what we have but we could do so much more with additional skills! We would like people to step up and volunteer to share the load of our part-time executive director/technical director. We need someone who will take the lead to start an ongoing fundraising program, a writer who will describe our events and tournament results and get them out into the news world, a referee development coordinator who will schedule training opportunities, a treasurer who will help with cash flow planning and reporting, an equipment manager to ensure tournament equipment is in good working order and to handle rental requests, and a social media manager to develop and promote our presence in the social environment. We need more skills than in our current capacity. We hope people will step up for the sake of the sport. It's a great sport!

2012-2013 Board of directors: Lee McLean, Melodie Piercey, Bill Preeper, Kim Fullerton