

Fencing Provincial Coach FAQ

(Frequently Asked Questions)

As the fencing year marches on, the FENB Board would like to provide some more detailed information on how we plan to develop the sport in New Brunswick, and how we would make the best use possible of a Provincial Coach. There are many different concerns and interested parties. If there are any areas you still have questions about please contact us through the FENB Executive Director.

What is P-CEP?

The P-CEP grant funds the "Professional Coach Employment Program". This is one way that the government of New Brunswick is trying to help sports in the Province, including fencing.

How are we paying for this?

Through a grant offered by the Province, we are able to hire a Provincial Coach to develop coaching and fencing in the province. Other sports have or are trying to have their own Provincial Coach as well. FENB will need to raise \$15 000 or more to contribute towards the coach's salary, which is added to the \$30 000 that the Province is offering.

What can the coach do?

The Province wants to get professional coaches into New Brunswick to boost sports development. As well, they want to create environments where it is possible and reasonable to be employed full-time as a coach. As long as the Provincial Coach is working towards these goals, we will have the support of the Province.

Why do we need a Provincial Coach?

Fencing in New Brunswick could certainly use more coaches and more athletes. A fencing master can help our existing coaches improve their skills, and help us develop new coaches. As well, we can pool our resources and get some very effective training by coming together for regular training camps.

Is the Provincial Coach only supposed to develop High Performance athletes?

No, the Provincial Coach is supposed to help us have better fencers and coaches. While getting more National level results is one of the goals of the P-CEP program, it is not the only goal. In our estimation, just focusing on the few fencers who are ready to

compete at the National level would not serve our membership very well. Instead, we want to build a strong base that our competitive fencers will grow out of.

The term "High Performance" in terms of sports development refers to the highest levels of athletic achievement. Athletes who focus all their training on achieving success at the World Championships or Olympics are High Performance.

What about "coach development"?

This is an area that FENB recognizes is currently under-supported, and intends to address should we again receive funding through the P-CEP program. FENB proposes that we use a series of training camps throughout the year to give our coaches a chance to develop their skills. By working with a fencing master, by getting access to more fencers, and by collaborating with other coaches in the Province, FENB hopes to give our coaches some great opportunities to grow.

Do we have to "centralize" our training?

The P-CEP program does not require that sports development be centralized. While centralization can be of great benefit to a competitive group of athletes, that does not represent the current state of fencing in New Brunswick. The Provincial Coach will travel from a central location to the main fencing hubs in the Province in order to ensure that all regions are receiving sufficient time with the coach. By having camps in the different regions, we will reduce the financial and time burdens placed on all fencers in the province.

What if we hire a foreign coach? Will he know how we train? (CS4L, LTAD)

The coach that is hired as our Provincial Coach may well be from another country, and not familiar with our athlete development models. The details of the models will be discussed with any prospective coach, and adhering to the development model will be clearly communicated as a requirement for the position. As these programs continue to be developed and altered to fit the CFF CS4L/LTAD model, FENB can ensure that we will continue to provide information to the coach so that he or she can align with Canadian Sport for Life model.

Will the new coach be certified? (NCCP)

Different countries around the world offer different forms of certification for coaches and masters. The CFF has been amenable to accepting foreign (particularly European) certifications as equivalent credentials in Canada. FENB will work with the hired Provincial Coach as well as the CFF in order to ensure that their certifications can be matched up with the Canadian levels. Any non Canadian coach would have to work with the CFF to acquire their NCCP certifications.

What kind of skills do we want in a Provincial Coach?

FENB feels that it is important to find a candidate that can develop both coaches and fencers in various stages of development. We do not, at this time, require a high level coach who will only focus on creating National champion fencers. Not all coaches are specialists in every area; however, all fencing masters do have some experience across the range of skills that a coach might offer. We would look at hiring the most capable candidate in all areas that we find to be important.

Which weapon will the Provincial Coach specialize in?

FENB is searching for a Maitre D'Armes. Coaches trained to this level have experience in all weapons. FENB does however, understand that coaches typically have a specialization in a specific weapon, and during the hiring process will consider each applicant. FENB understands that foil is the commonly taught and fenced weapon in the Province, however we have many athletes across all three weapons.

Why are we focusing on training camps instead of regular club practices or private lessons?

Training camps are held in different regions in order to give fencers the opportunity to train without extensive travel. By bringing together our coaches and fencers, we hope to minimize the total costs for all members of FENB. It is not the intention of FENB to force fencers to travel every weekend for every training camp. They can come as they are able and willing to attend. However, by providing camps in each region, everyone will have opportunities to train close to home. Those fencers who are dedicated to getting additional training can travel to the other regions.

In contrast, when our previous Provincial Coach was travelling to regular evening practices, it was often a very inefficient use of his time. Similarly, those athletes who regularly travelled to weekday practices would spend as much or more time on the road as they were training. We would like to avoid these scenarios whenever possible.

Why are the camps in different regions? I don't want to travel every weekend.

These camps are optional. Attendance is not mandatory for fencers. They are held in different regions in order to give all fencers, even those unable or unwilling to travel, an opportunity to attend a minimum number of camps per year. The Provincial Coach, and the supporting program, will be working to give as many fencers as possible as many opportunities to train as possible.

Why does my coach have to travel?

There is no expectation that every coach attend every training camp. We are simply providing an opportunity for coaches to attend. FENB has no interest in or desire to affect the profit of clubs, or interfere with their regular practices. Should club coaches decide not to attend, that is their decision. If the club or coaches do not feel there is any value for them in working with the Provincial Coach, they are free to make that decision.

How useful/meaningful will these camps be for the fencers? What about those "competitive" fencers?

Each camp will be aimed at a specific LTAD level or levels, therefore ensuring that the training group will be roughly the same level and meaningful training can occur. It will be up to the Provincial Coach to develop adequate programs for each camp to ensure that training for each group is appropriate. Given our current population of fencers, and how we currently run camps, we will continue to need to put fencers at different skill levels together. Ideally, with more camps, we can better target the needs of each group of fencer by indicating what the expected skill levels are. Competitive fencers will benefit greatly from getting any additional access to the other competitive fencers in the Province.

This seems like it will cost a lot of money...?

We understand that the costs to families over the course of a season can add up to significant amounts. We also do not expect that the whole family will attend every training camp. Additionally, as stated before, these training camps are not mandatory. They simply provide more opportunity to fence and work with the Provincial Coach, as well as other athletes. It is up to each family to decide how many training camps they wish for their child/family member to attend. The cost of the camps is being offset as much as possible by FENB through the regular membership fees that all fencers are already paying.

As for the costs relating to funding the coach, we have taken this into consideration and have budgeted for these additional costs in our proposal to the government.

Why are we de-emphasising travel to competition outside of New Brunswick?

The Board has indicated that a smaller budget will be assigned for the Provincial Coach to travel to National and International events. However, it is important to consider the high costs of sending a coach to National level competitions. A coach is there to help the athletes perform. Currently, it is the belief of the Board that too few New Brunswick athletes are at the point where they will be able to perform at that level. As such, the cost of sending a coach to competitions outside of NB is too high considering the number of fencers who would benefit. That is not to say that the coach would not travel outside of New Brunswick. However, travel would be on a case by case basis under the consideration of the Board and the Provincial Coach to determine whether travel would be worthwhile.