



Fencing-Esgrime NB
2016 Annual General Meeting
July 2015 - June 2016
Board Report

This certainly was a challenging year. The transition of an almost completely new Board, including a new President, and the hiring of a new Executive Director meant a steep learning curve for most involved. Despite this, the organization worked hard and accomplished a fair amount in a short period of time with particular focus on laying the groundwork for the future of fencing in New Brunswick.

A total of 13 policies were reviewed or newly created and approved by the Fencing-Esgrime NB (FENB) Board. The majority of these have been added to the Operations Policy and Procedure Manual.

Participation

Membership

Our total membership for the 2015-2016 season was 190 (↓11%) with 99 returning fencers, 81 first-time and summer fencers, and 10 associate members. This is the second season in a row that we have seen a decrease. With a marketing communications plan complete and a decrease in membership fees as well as other initiatives, this should hopefully turn around within the next couple seasons.

Tournaments

The Alfred Knappe Team Tournament was moved to the beginning of the fencing season (September) from its usual mid-season position. A total of twelve teams were entered into the competition - four in Cadet, three in U13, and five in the Open category. Although it is a good tournament to introduce fencers to competition, this timing proved to be too early in the season.

The NB Open was hosted in Moncton in late November and ran nine events. It welcomed 59 fencers from nine clubs located in New Brunswick, PEI, and Nova Scotia.

Eleven events ran at the New Brunswick Provincials, hosted in Fredericton, with a total of 62 participants. We wanted to put some pride back into this competition and make it different from other NB tournaments. To accomplish this, a gala event was included, special guests were invited, and custom medals were designed by our Honours, Awards, and Archives Committee lead, Evan Schriver.

New Club Support

A New Club Support section was added to the equipment policy to ensure starting clubs had access to FENB equipment. There is interest from an individual to have a fencing club in St. Andrews and efforts are being made to ensure that there will be an approved coach available. The FENB Executive Director is currently working on a new club start-up program.

Volunteer Training

Training opportunities were made for individuals to learn more about running a tournament and acting as tournament secretariat. Opportunities were offered to provide participants with more experience under mentorship.

Secretariat training began this season with a technical training session, held during the January Training camp in Saint John. A second technical training session was held in Fredericton in March at the request of the Damocles Fencing Club, with a third held during the Damocles Swordfalls tournament. Practical training was held during the Fundy Open, Swordfalls Tournament, and Provincial Championships. Overall, one person was fully certified, two others have completed their practical training, but have yet to be evaluated, and three others received only technical training. A full list of qualified individuals who can run a tournament secretariat can be obtained from the Executive Director.

The Armourer Certification section of the Technical Leadership policy was updated to outline three levels for Provincial Certification - tournament, club, and provincial - to fulfill the biggest needs for armourers in the province. FENB will work to align individuals with armoury experience to this model and offer opportunities for volunteers to learn more in the upcoming season.

Excellence

Coach Development

A coaching development clinic for Community Initiation certification was hosted in January, led by Manuel Belmonte. There were 18 participants, of which 12 were FENB members. Official certification has not yet been awarded to participants, but we are confident that those who completed the post-work and attended the clinic will receive this soon. We will continue to offer opportunities for FENB coaches to get certification and gain more knowledge and experience.

Two FENB coaches attended a learning facilitator workshop in March, hosted by the Canadian Fencing Federation (CFF).

Athlete Development

There were five athlete training camps hosted during the year focusing on various skill levels. One was held in Northern New Brunswick (Dec), two in Fredericton (Feb & Apr), and two in Saint John (Jan & Apr). The total attendance for the fencing camps was 101, with fencers coming from NB, NS, and PEI.

FENB fencers travelled to several competitions outside of the province, including the North America Cup (1 fencer), November Canada Cup and National Championships (9 fencers), Quebec Youth Circuit (12 fencers), Challenge des Nations (19 fencers), Eastern Canadian Fencing Championships (3 fencers), May Canada Cup and National Championships (14 fencers), and a New England division competition (7 fencers).

New Brunswick fencers placed well at these competitions with some bringing home medals:

- The top placing for New Brunswick was a 7th place finish in under 15 men's foil at the November Canada Cup and National Championships by Pierre Arseneau (DAM).
- During the Quebec Youth Circuit in Quebec, Jacob MacLellan (DAM) won gold in division 2 of the under 15 men's foil and Nicole Beuk (DAM) earned silver in under 13 women's epee as well as placed 9th in under 15 women's foil. Other results for fencers (all from DAM) included: Calum MacDonald (8th in under 17 men's epee), Leo Cui (5th in under 15 men's foil), Pierre Arseneau (8th in under 15 men's foil), Kaitlyn Gorman (6th in under 13 women's foil), Maya Sood (9th in under 13 women's foil), and Emily MacLellan (9th in under 17 women's sabre).
- Raphael Bradley (UNB) and Cameron Haigh (UNB) took gold and bronze, respectively, at the Quebec AAA Championships.
- There was a strong female performance at the Challenges des Nations in Quebec with Sophie Poitras (DAM) taking gold in under 13 women's epee as well as a 7th place finish in under 15 women's epee and Nicole Beuk (DAM) earning bronze in under 13 women's foil. Willow Wilson (DAM) placed 6th in senior women's epee and 8th in cadet epee, Maya Sood (DAM) placed 7th in under 13 women's foil, and Wendy Yano (UNB) placed 7th in senior women's sabre.
- At the Eastern Canadian Fencing Championships, Raphael Bradley (UNB) captured gold in under 17 men's sabre and finished 8th in junior sabre while Patrick Bradley (DAM) earned bronze in the Veteran men's epee.
- Wendy Yano (UNB) earned a silver medal in Veteran's Sabre at the Canada Cup and National Championships in May. Meanwhile, Raphael Bradley (UNB) had a bronze medal performance in cadet men's sabre. These are the first national medals for New Brunswick fencers since May 2014. David Themens (UNB) placed 5th in University epee.
- Cameron Haigh (UNB) took silver in "E & under" sabre during a New England division competition at Brandeis University in Massachusetts. Patrick Bradley (DAM) earned bronze in "E & under" epee while Calum Skidmore (DAM) had a 7th placed finish in "E & under" epee.

FENB awarded its trophies to the top athletes in the under 17 categories at the 2016 New Brunswick Provincials to the following fencers:

- Sean Brilliant Trophy (sabre) - Cameron Haigh
- Barb Daniel Trophy (foil) - Leonardo Cui
- Rick Gosselin Trophy (epee) - Job O'Brien

A mandate for an Athlete Development committee has been developed and approved with the primary focus on developing a program to help progress fencers in the province. The selection policy was also updated and approved for choosing athletes who have an interest in and qualify for the Athlete Development program.

Referee Development

A referee development clinic was held in January in Moncton with Thomas Nguyen. Although the ten participants learned a lot during this compact two-day workshop, it is clear that more work needs to be done to build confidence and further develop our current referees while recruiting new referees. A formal evaluation was completed during the NB Provincial competition for those who were deemed ready.

Capacity

Fundraising

The fundraising policy was revised in 2014 and we are actively seeking volunteers to participate on the committee. Fundraising will be done on a project-based level.

We received a grant from the CFF to help cover referee development costs in getting referees further trained and certified.

Equipment

Equipment was previously covered in a couple of areas in the Operations Policies & Procedures manual. These were consolidated and expanded on in a new equipment policy, which was approved in March. We are currently seeking an Equipment Manager to assist in the disbursement, inventory, and maintenance of FENB equipment.

Board, Staff, and Volunteer Recruitment

With the stepping down of Michael Ivankovic following the last AGM, minimal operations were maintained by the FENB President and Board members in the absence of an Executive Director. Thierry Bourbonnais was hired as the new Executive Director in January. Thierry is the founder and head coach of Spartiates Fencing Club in Anjou, Quebec, and the Director of Coaches for the FEQ. His experience in administration and leadership, as well as in developing successful fencing programs, are assets that we believe will help FENB address a number of its strategic goals over the coming years. Welcome Thierry!

A formal Executive Director evaluation process and policy have been put in place to ensure regular feedback on performance.

Following a Board nominee's ineligibility to be a voting Board member, the Board held a Special General Meeting in January to vote in a new member for the vacant one-year term. Sherri Savoie of the Renforth club was the successful candidate. Welcome Sherri!

A Tournament Committee mandate was approved to provide the knowledge and means to run FENB-hosted tournaments. This will ensure standard and quality across all of our competitions and provide resources to the host clubs.

As always, we are grateful for the people who volunteer their time and expertise to support FENB initiatives and activities. FENB could not operate without the support of these individuals at events, at competitions, on committees, and everyday operations. Also, we would like to thank Sherri Savoie and Jim Stevens for completing their terms with the FENB Board and for their support throughout the 2015-2016 season.

Interaction

Links to various financial grants for athletes, coaches, etc were added to the FENB website. FENB can provide assistance where necessary in obtaining sport-related grants.

An Alfred Knappe Fund Policy was created and approved in March and includes an updated form. This further expands on the form that was previously available and focuses on project proposals as they relate to leadership development.

FENB held a coach and club leader forum in June to help plan the future of fencing in New Brunswick. Five of the six member clubs had representatives present for the two-day session, covering topics such as athlete development, the state of clubs, calendar of events, and leadership development. This is the first forum to occur in a number of years. The ED and Board recognize the importance of this level of discussion and would like to see it continued as an annual event.

Awareness

A Marketing Communications plan was completed to help guide the marketing efforts of FENB in raising awareness about the sport and maintaining communications with members through various channels. This includes the addition of a new Facebook page, which is currently maintained by the Executive Director. A Social Media and Communications Policy further supports these efforts to ensure appropriate and timely communication.

FENB continues to build its relationships with key stakeholders. Both the Executive Director and Board President attended the CFF AGM in Toronto. It was a good opportunity to meet the

leaders from the other PSOs as well as the CFF staff, Board, and committee members and strengthen those relationships. We were able to participate in the discussion and provide feedback on items that were important to us, such as leadership and athlete development.

Since the dissolution of the Technical Committee a few years ago, not much has been accomplished to further FENB in its risk and crisis management. The Board approved two policies to provide guidelines for managing both risk and crises. It is important that our members are aware of these policies as good risk and crisis management involves all aspects of FENB. The crisis management policy includes an incident/injury report form to keep FENB aware of any serious incident or injury occurring at an FENB- or member club-hosted events. Please bring any issues and concerns to the attention of the Executive Director or a Board member.

The Future

- Membership fees were reduced for the 2016-2017 season after being raised last season. After completing our budget, it was determined that fees could be reduced for our members while still meeting our goals for the future.
- A new strategic plan will be developed at the end of this season to direct the organization on the next three years. This plan will align with the New Brunswick sport plan and the Canadian Fencing Federation strategic plan both, of which, are being refreshed.
- There was a significant decrease in government funding for this upcoming season. The Province of New Brunswick is focusing more on athlete development and we could see changes to the funding structure in the following season. We are working to refocus on athlete development starting with the creation of an Athlete Development Committee while maintaining leadership and volunteer development opportunities.
- The NB Open was always meant to fill in a void in the competition circuit in New Brunswick. After the KV Fencing Club announced that they would like to host a tournament, it was decided that the NB Open was not needed for the 2016-2017 season.
- An equipment order was made in Sept 2016 to add new timing chips in boxes and expand practice equipment. New pistes are being priced out to replace the copper strips as well as new reels.
- We plan to do more in recognizing our volunteers for their commitment to the sport in the province.

2015-2016 Board of Directors: David Themens, Tammy Shaw-Reynolds, Sherri Savoie, Jim Stevens, Melodie Piercey (President)

THANK YOU to all of our volunteers and members!
Our success would not be possible without your support.