



## **BVF Committee Meeting**

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022**

**Time: 9.30-12.30**

**Location: Zoom**

**Attendees: Carl Morris (CM), Nicola Hull (NH), Paul Ballaiche (PB), Luce Wright (LW), Graham Paul (GP)**

**Apologies: Lyn Robinson (LR), Gillian Aghajan (GA), Beth Davidson (BD), Kola Ayanwale**

### **1a Selection issues for international events as discussed at the competition and selection meeting held on 9th June 22 CM**

The view of the Competition meeting held in June was that selection events should stay the same as last year, and should be Guildford International, Age Groups and Nationals with a fencers top 2 results being used for selection ranking. (Those attending the meeting in June were CM,PB,GP,LR,GA,LW.)

- A long discussion followed with the following observations:
  1. NH voiced her concern that The Nationals were to be used as a selection event as it seemed unfair that a cat 4 fencer could be eliminated by a cat 1 fencer. She felt that the nationals did not give a fair reflection of a fencer's ability in their age group.
  2. CM said he had canvassed a lot of Cat 4 members, and most don't mind this scenario.
  3. NH felt that canvassing should take into consideration all members views and be done via a survey, so the Committee had tangible facts to base decisions on.
  4. PB felt that 2 poules should be a must at the Nationals, as seeding is not always accurate for this event, due to new members who are unseeded attending.
  5. NH queried the rationale behind the committee only using 3 competitions for selection, she felt increasing veteran competitions across the country would help encourage more entries from local fencers, encourage participation which are also aims of the committee.
  6. GP said he personally wouldn't want to do more than 3 competitions a year and PB was concerned numbers wouldn't be high.
  7. CM reiterated his view that 3 competitions with best 2 results was the optimum number for selection and whilst other systems have been suggested he hasn't had any complaints and doesn't believe there is much appetite for changing.
  8. NH voiced disappointment that despite the committee agreeing to hold a Nationals each year in the March and April committee meetings this had not been actioned for 2022.

9. CM said that those attending the competition & selection meeting felt that, amongst other organisational issues, holding the nationals in Nov 22 for selection for Oct Worlds is seen by some to be too soon. They had decided not to run the nationals until 2023 as it was felt it would get our selection competitions back in sync.
10. PB concerned that attendance would be low if not held for selection so may not be cost effective
11. NH felt the Nationals should be held annually as previously agreed and did not have to be used for selection. As a committee we should encourage participation
12. LW keen to have our competitions in Jan/Feb/March and get the nationals back to March where they have usually been held
13. GP felt that as the Worlds were in Florida and Dubai expensive places to travel the selection competitions should be held in the first quarter of next year and those attending the competition meeting had agreed.
14. NH felt this would be a huge disadvantage if one of our fencers were injured at the beginning of the year and was in favour of a better spread of events throughout the year.

**Result** Following the conversation no vote was taken, however CM confirmed three competitions would be used for selection. The competitions would be held at the beginning of the year Guildford January, Age Groups February and Nationals March. Format would change for the Age Groups in that they would move away from poule unique and would be run with poules which could be mixed age groups followed by DE's in age group seeded by poule results. For the National we will have 2 poule rounds for every weapon.

#### **Action**

- GP along with the competition committee to confirm competition dates for next year asap.
- CM to speak to Jon Willis re age group event being at LP for Feb and competition levy to British fencing.
- LR to contact Manchester about holding the Nationals. LR was looking into the use of Nottingham for the Nationals however there was agreement that this meant all competitions were in the South
- CM LW to inform members of competitions dates and venues for 2023, and an explanation why the nationals isn't happening for 2022
- Competition committee to look at Nottingham for the Winton cup 2023.

#### **1b Selection**

CM outlined the two options that were discussed at the competition & selection meeting in June

1. Take top four fencers from the ranking list
  2. Take top three from ranking list and have a discretionary place for fourth selected member should there be a strong reason not to follow the rankings
- A long discussion followed with the following observations:
    1. GP had asked the selectors for their views too and the majority of those who responded suggested 3 from rankings and one discretionary.
    2. LW was against a discretionary place due to the upset and annoyance it causes amongst fencers. This year being a good example. She felt people should support and attend selection events

3. CM noted BF do not have discretionary places and using ranking tables takes the burden off the selectors
4. PB not in favour of discretion it harms the chances of people fighting for that fourth spot
5. NH was for discretion in the case of there being a strong reason not to follow the rankings. She felt our aim should be to select our best fencers
6. GP was also in favour of a discretionary place
7. PB did feel this selection of taking the top 4 based on ranking points should only apply to the worlds not team events.

- A vote was taken re selection for the worlds based on

Option 1: taking top four fencers from the ranking list

OR

Option 2: take top three from ranking list and have a discretionary place for fourth selected member should there be a strong reason not to follow the rankings

Option 1: 3 votes

Option 2: 2 votes

**Result** Top four from ranking list would be used for selection of fencers for the worlds

### **1c A request by Marriette Mason (MM) to discuss fairness and transparency of selection and appeals.**

- CM had already shared email correspondence between MM and himself. MM had asked that selection was discussed by the committee as felt it unfair that fencers could only appeal against discretionary selection should the ranking list be incorrect. She deemed it unfair as the ranking list doesn't apply for discretionary places.

#### **Action**

- CM to respond to MM. The issue was now felt less contentious as world selection will not have any discretionary places.

### **1d Miscellaneous discussions on selection & selecting reserve fencers**

- PB mentioned that reserves for worlds in 2023/24 need to be made aware of their status as may have to arrange a visa.
- Committee agreed that Selection for reserves for the Worlds would be made by going down the ranking list. Selection for European teams was left outstanding and would be discussed later.
- GP felt flexibility for the world team was needed and team should not always be preselected.
- PB felt any fencer going to the Worlds should say on for their weapons team event in case needed, and if not needed for support
- Committee spoke about the need for non-fencing team captains. It was agreed that if viable European and world teams should have a non-fencing captain as there is a lot of admin involved, plus in fencing it's hard to be objective

- NH felt we should involve our members, find out who would be willing to undertake the Team Captain role. Plus we should run a Team Training event so everyone knows what is expected of them
- PB need to look at reimbursement if needed ie a fencer has to stay an extra night at an event

**Action:**

- CM LW Selection decision to be announced to BVF members
- CM and the committee to investigate the use of non-fencing team captains and training day

**2. Finalising Veteran Competition Timetable for events 22/23 CM LR GP**

**i) to include request from Kola Ayanwale to include our events on the BF calendar to reduce the clashing of competitions.**

- The committee agreed that our events should go on the BF calendar and that the competition committee would finalise dates of next year's competitions asap.

**ii) To include discussion on offering free places (Hardship fund)**

NH has continued in her quest to launch a scheme to help support fencers who are struggling financially. To kick start the initiative it was agreed that for the Guildford, Age Groups, and Nationals, 3 free spaces would be available at each event for such fencers. They would be asked to complete an online form which would then be put into a hat. The first three out would get a BVF funded entry. The committee could also look to help with requests for journey and room share.

**Action:**

- The competition committee to finalise competition dates for 2023
- KA to inform BF so dates can be included on the calendar
- NH to produce an online form so fencers can request a free competition space, she will communicate to members and remind the competition committee to mention the scheme on the entry form

**3. Winton Cup. Finalising costings and communication to be sent to members CM PB LW**

**i) To include a question on costings raised by John Mason.**

1. PB with the committee's agreement decided to keep the team entry costs at £720.00 holding it level with last year. In exceptional circumstances we may look to help teams in respect to entry costs however our priority is to help regions fill their vacant spots.
2. CM mentioned that the hotel costs were very high this year and despite the committee wanting to explore a Buffet style menu this was not cost effective so reverted back to sit down meal
3. LW reminded the committee that we were to change the order of fights, so the same teams were not always last on.
4. LW felt we should use an air horn as per the Senior Winton so all rounds started at the same time, and that there would be more fencers available at the presentation of medals given by the Winton family.
5. NH reminded the committee that we could look at having an extra match on the Saturday as this had been moved to the Sunday a few years back when the BVF used to hold an AGM on Saturday evening.

6. Mention was made of a summer team event that CM is looking to create. Different formats suggested, but no decisions were firmed up.
7. PB reiterated looking at a new venue of Nottingham for next year for the Winton.

#### **Action**

- LW to produce correspondence about the event to fencers and team captains to include decision on costings.
- CM to explore the Summer Event
- Competition committee to explore the use of Nottingham for the next event

#### **4. Increasing fencers' awareness of Veteran fencing and changing perceptions CM LW**

- i) To discuss surveying senior fencers and arranging a fencing match with the next generation of veteran fencers.
  - LW had spoken with BVF member Lindsey Bottoms (LB) about her perception of Veteran fencing and looking at what is stopping fencers joining BVF. LB has free access to psychology students who would be able to undertake research into these barriers and enabling us to see what fencers' perceptions are.
  - The committee agreed this would be very worthwhile.
  - PB mentioned opening up the Winton to a 35 plus age group
  - CM mentioned the possibility of using the new summer event as a show case for veteran fencing

#### **Action**

- LW to oversee the survey with LB
- CM to liaise with LR about using the Cardiff venue for a summer event

#### **5. AOB**

- NH asked if there had been any developments on the project BD was undertaking to increase membership. Unfortunately, it was felt this has been on hold since BD has been in Hungary for 3 months.
- NH advised that the next newsletter was being compiled for August with a deadline for articles being 5<sup>th</sup> August. CM wanted to include an article on Bob Anderson and GP on protein and muscles in older fencers.
- CM mentioned GA's correspondence from an EVF conference which included mention that entry fees for EVF events could increase
- CM mentioned that Viv Frith had won EVF Ladies Cat 4 sabre award
- CM mentioned the death of Laki Dobridis and LW confirmed we had made members aware via FB and website
- PB asked if there was any news on the Royal Navy Match with BVF and also mentioned the German match. GP informed the Committee that the German match is due to take place next in Germany and include Italian fencers. CM confirmed the Royal Navy makes contact with BVF about their match.
- PB felt there should be a report on the EVF Criterium – NH advised this was in hand for next newsletter

- PB mentioned concern over fencing kit lost in transit to the Criterium event and voiced concern for fencers attending the worlds
- LW mentioned concern over the GB tracksuits and the fact some fencers going to the worlds may not be able to get a tracksuit due to minimum order numbers. This item to be discussed in next meeting

**Meeting ended 12.45**

**Nicola Hull**  
**BVF Secretary**