



ENGLAND FENCING

Events Report, AGM 2020

a. The 2019/2020 season in review

The 2019/2020 season, as we all know, was drastically, swiftly and cruelly cut short by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. England Fencing had, prior to the onset of the first national lockdown, set in motion plans for the organisation and delivery of the 2020 England Youth Championships, our flagship youth event; and for the organisation and delivery of the 2020 Youth 5 Nations – an international youth competition that was spearheaded by Welsh Fencing following the ejection of fencing from the UK School Games. Ireland had previously hosted the event successfully in Maynooth in 2019 and England Fencing had agreed to host the event in the summer of 2020.

Unfortunately, national and international restrictions, and the absolute priority of maintaining the health, safety and wellbeing of our members necessitated the postponement and subsequently the cancellation of both of these events. The 5 Nations are in conversation to establish the route forward for the Youth 5 Nations (and other 5 Nations events in general) in the wake of Covid-19.

b. 2020/2021 Season – Looking ahead

With respect to the EYCs, we originally announced that we would be extending the oldest age group (the Under 15s) by a year for the 2021 EYCs (up to Under 16s) to ensure that no young person missed out on their chance to compete at their “final” EYCs. This is still very much the intention of England Fencing. However, we must acknowledge that at the time of writing the announcement (in April 2020), there was a general hope that the pandemic would abate and that restrictions would ease as we moved into the new academic year. In particular, there were hopeful projections in the spring of this year that domestic competition might be able to resume in some form as early as December 2020 or January 2021. However, it now seems clear that the overwhelming focus of the England Fencing community, and indeed the wider fencing community, must centre on supporting clubs and communities through the hardships of localised and varied restrictions. Regrettably, this means that we are forced to adopt a “wait-and-see” approach to events. It is our hope that we will be able to host the EYCs in 2021, but we will be reviewing this regularly and will aim to publish all relevant information as early as possible in the New Year.

Additionally, we note that it is *possible* but neither confirmed nor guaranteed that the 2021 Cadet & Junior Commonwealth Fencing Championships scheduled to be held in India will be delayed, particularly in view of the postponement of the 2020 Olympics to 2021. As soon as



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any decision has been made and confirmed by the Fencing Association of India and the Commonwealth Fencing Federation, we will communicate this to the membership.

c. Senior & Veteran Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2022

It is with great pleasure that I can write to the members of England Fencing informing them that England Fencing has submitted a successful bid to host the Senior & Veteran Commonwealth Fencing Championships in London in 2022.

England Fencing has appointed an organising group consisting of Lorraine Rose, Ruth Robson, Savvas Neophytou, and myself. This organising group has subsequently recruited a wider team of highly experienced individuals from across the Home Nations.

We are already immensely grateful for the hard work the entire team put into preparing the bid document, and the planning they have already begun to ensure that the 2022 Commonwealth championships is a world-class athlete-centred event that operates within a reasonable and responsible budget.

Excitingly, the 2022 Commonwealth Fencing Championships will be the first to include a wheelchair fencing element as part of its main schedule. While the details of this are yet to be finalised with CFF (Fencing Federation) and IWAS, we are eagerly looking forward to hosting a truly inclusive, unique, and spectacular event in London in 2022.

We will, of course, be looking to our friends and supporters in the England Fencing community for help delivering the event. Volunteering opportunities will be published by England Fencing over the course of the next 18 months or so leading up to the competition.