

Minutes of Meeting

Date	09 Aug 2019
Location	Zoom
Time	09:30:00
End Time	00:00:00
Present	GA, MS, JRM, GP, LCW, LEW, BD

Outstanding Actions

#	Action	Who	Status	View
810	BVF Confidentiality Agreement Every committee member to print and sign a copy of the agreement and send to Marcia by 14/11/19 (Hard copy only)	MS, MJS, LEW, LCW, JRM, GP, GA, CM, CC, BD	Ongoing	
812	Italian / German triangular GP to contact Harald Lueders and Leonardo Patti to suggest the possibility of a triangular match with GB	GP	Done	
832	GP to send GA the document regarding selection criteria for the World Championships. GA to circulate to the rest of the committee for discussion and then vote.	GP, GA	Done	
838	Selection for World Championships - 2020 It was proposed by GP that there should be a discretionary place in case of injury. The committee discussed this and felt that there should be further opportunity to look at the options and that those committee members who were not at the meeting could then have an opportunity to take part. It was agreed that GP would send proposed selection rules to GA for circulation to the whole committee. GA to set a deadline for email discussion and then call for a vote (depending on outcome of email discussion.)	GA, GP	Done	
839	BVF AWARD: LEW to order two trophies to be presented at the BVF Championships.		Done	
840	CC proposed to purchase defib total package (includes first aid and small fridge. 2nd GA 6 for 1 abstain. The total package to be held by DFO to co-ordinate with Event Managers as necessary. LEW to circulate information to committee then order package. It will be provided for use at the Age Groups. Closed.	LEW	Ongoing	

841	GA to write to a member regarding numerous complaints on social media.	GA	Done	
843	WMO: MS to search for alternative venue for 4/5 April if possible.	MS	Done	
844	PUBLICITY: LEW to write publicity for BVF to send to BF for circulation.	LEW	Done	
849	DATA CONTROL: implement a back-up to the Cloud.	JRM	Ongoing	

New Actions and Decisions

#	Action	A/D	Who
851	Treasurer - GA to contact Caroline ref current situation.	A	GA
852	AGM 2020 - Options were discussed regarding AGM. It is not possible to hold the AGM as planned this year as the Winton has been cancelled and it was decided (5 for and 1 abstain) to not hold a Zoom AGM, but to wait for the time being until the COVID-19 situation is such that an AGM can be held. (This can be reviewed in the next few months.) It was agreed that 'AGM documents' will be sent out to membership by the end of September - Chairman's report, Accounts etc. There is no provision in the Constitution for elections to take place other than at an AGM, and it was felt that membership will support this. Documents to be prepared and sent out to membership.	A	LCW, JRM, GA, CC
853	BVF International - GP has booked hotel with 28 days' notice of cancellation i.e. beginning of December. It was agreed that at this time it is not possible to predict if the event can take place, but the closing date for entries will be 30th November. By that time, we will make a firm decision. If the decision is to go ahead with the event, and it subsequently has to be cancelled after 30th November then all entry fees will be refunded, but not travel or accommodation. (This will be made clear on the entry form.) MS pointed out that there will be a 20% cancellation fee of the venue after 1st December. GP to contact EVF (Caryl Oliver) ref inclusion of sabre, as previously discussed with her. Proposed BD - 2nd LEW. 5 for 1 abstain	A	GP
854	Competitions and Event Managers for 2021 - Discussion on events for 2021 and the appointment of Event Managers. It was agreed unanimously: BVF International - Guildford 9/10 Jan - Graham Paul BVF Championships - Nottingham 5/6/7 March - Lindsay Watkiss BVF Age Groups - Manchester 26/27 March - Mike Swiffin (subject to agreement by Mike) Winton - RAF Cosford - 24/25 September - Marcia Stretch European Individual Championships - Thionville 12-	D	

	16 May - Gillian Aghajan World Championships - Atlanta October (dates tbc) - Gillian Aghajan		
855	Ranking System (JRM) - Discussion was held on the ranking system. The original plan when this was set up was to use it for selection. However, the current selection (ranking system) works well and feedback from membership in 2020 was positive. It was agreed that it was not productive to have two different 'ranking systems' and that the current ranking system (not used for selection) should be discontinued at the present time, but could be reviewed. The Ranking Sub-Committee to be disbanded. The committee expressed thanks to John Mason, Graham Paul, Lindsay Watkiss and Hugh Kernohan. JRM to inform. Website to be updated ref ranking.	A	JRM, LCW
856	BVF Merchandise A request had been received to be official supplier of BVF merchandise. Whilst there was no objection to this, it was felt that this could be put to tender. Committee to consider. JRM to provide details of commission received to date.	A	BD, CC, CM, GA, GP, JRM, LCW, LEW, MJS, MS
857	BVF website LCW presented various options for further development of the website. She will investigate this further and present proposals to committee.	A	LCW

Ranking Notes – JRM

Overview

This document describes how the document on Ranking has been prepared.

Ranking is a complicated issue.

Everyone seems to think it is a good idea but there are many views on how to achieve a ranking system.

The variables include:

- What is the ranking system for eg should the ranking tables be used for selection
- The competition results to be included
- How to cater for all age groups
- How to produce a points system across a diversity of events
- The period over which results are incorporated
- How to build ranking tables from the results

My aim is to deliver the design of a practical ranking system and then implement it. The design has been delegated to the Ranking subcommittee.

Organisation

The Chairman's role as I see it is to prepare the initial submission. Why? Because it is more efficient for the committee members to have something to argue over than to be presented with a clean sheet of paper and a request for ideas. That is my experience, that is the way I work.

I then ask for comments from the subcommittee.

The comments returned were sometimes compelling arguments which triggered changes in the ranking document.

Some opinions were in conflict and as Chairman I took the decision to adjudicate between them. That is what the Chairman should do.

Where arguments were in conflict but each had merit I have tried to be fair and say in the final document that there are different opinions and that a higher authority (the BVF committee) should consider them.

The process generally produces a document that is in most part agreed and a list of issues to be addressed. Another cycle and hopefully the issues are fewer and clearer.

I am used to this approach to designing a system. It gives the committee members much longer to consider the details and more time to prepare a compelling case for their proposal.

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EVF Experience

This approach was used when EVF proposed creating a ranking system in 2018.

Although the EVF ranking system was started after our BVF system, the EVF system has been in operation for a year and has awarded its first set of trophies to the top ranked fencers.

Congratulations by the way to Hugh and Beth, EVF Champions at Epee and Sabre!

Selection

The early drafts of the ranking system design suggested that the selection process used the ranking tables. This is no longer the case but during discussions the following item was noted and I think it is of sufficient merit to be added to the BVF committee agenda for discussion. Note that this is not a criticism of CM, I just think it would be better governance.

The Chair of Selectors should not be a committee member

“The Chairman of Selectors and the selectors should not be members of the Committee because it undermines the concept that the Committee delegates the executive function of selection to a suitably qualified group, and then holds them to account for the way in which they carry out the function. In other words, the Committee delegates authority to someone it thinks suitable for the task. It lets them get on with it and only intervenes thereafter if it decides (for whatever reason) that the task is not being carried out in accordance with the rules it has agreed, or that the Chairman of Selectors is acting unfairly or improperly. If the Chairman of Selectors is appointed by the Committee it is self-evident that he or she can be required to explain themselves to the Committee, and can be sacked by the Committee. This achieves the distancing of the Committee from selection but leaves it as the ultimate authority for what is done in BVF's name”.

“It is up to the Committee to decide if it wants to permit appeals against selection decisions or not. My own preference is to trust the good judgement and integrity of those appointed. If the rules of selection are approved by the Committee and published, then members know where they stand”.

The Future

If we agree to accept the ranking system as proposed, then I am prepared to maintain the system for the next year ie entering results and ensuring the software works.

Hugh has kindly offered to continue with maintaining the system so I will concentrate on improving the data entry aspect and documenting the process and its software.

Lindsay has suggested a timescale up to 2024 to develop the Selection Ranking system starting with 3 events (2 BVF events and the EVF Individual Championships) and adding new BVF events around the country. This option is worth discussing but is beyond my timeframe for me to be involved.

[End of Document]

Membership Report – LCW

MEMBERSHIP REPORT AUGUST 2020

Membership Summary

	Men	Women	Total
This year	421	165	586
New Members	17	1	18
Not Renewed	71	28	99

By Category

	Men	Women	Total	%
Cat 1 (40-49)	82	29	111	19
Cat 2 (50-59)	147	59	206	35
Cat 3 (60-69)	107	50	157	27
Cat 4 (70-74)	39	16	55	9
Cat 4A (75-79)	23	6	29	5
Cat 5 (80+)	23	5	28	5

By Home Country

	Total	%
	7	1
	1	0
ENG	428	73
WAL	46	8
SCO	49	8
NI	13	2
CI	11	2
IOM	1	0
None	30	5

Chairman's Report to Committee – August 2020

The recent trial Zoom meeting went well and showed that Zoom is a productive way to meet.

Please note that the start time for 9th August Zoom meeting is now 09.30 and we will finish by 12.30 at the latest.

FIE has cancelled the Veterans World Championships and EVF followed suit cancelling the European Team Championships. The Hampshire has been cancelled. Membership has been informed. Belgium has agreed to host the 2024 European Team Championships.

Important issues for the committee to consider are: the current situation with Guildford and setting a cut-off date to decide if the event can go ahead; COVID-19 Officer – who would like to take this on; Ranking system – where it is now and moving forward. Other items are on the agenda.

Gillian Aghajan
BVF Chairman

Ranking Report JRM

Overview

This document considers the Ranking System and Selection.

It has not been possible to develop a process that requires selection from ranking tables constructed from a wide range of competition results. This document proposes the separation of Selection and Ranking.

A revised Ranking System is described: ranking events are defined; point allocation is defined; membership is defined.

Ranking System

What is it for?

The Ranking tables are used to seed BVF competitions and to encourage fencers to participate.

Who is it for?

All members of BVF are included. This includes members who represent other nationalities.

Seeding for BVF Competitions

Ranking lists may be obtained by:

- Category – eg for fencers in Mens Sabre Category 2. There are 24 Category ranking lists
- Weapon – eg for all fencers in Mens Sabre. There are 6 Weapon ranking lists

and are therefore usable for Age Categorised and Open competitions.

To Encourage Participation

The Ranking System encourages fencers to participate which is compliant with the Objects of the Constitution:

“The Objects of British Veterans Fencing shall be .. to promote fencing within the Veterans age groups”

The issues to consider are:

- What events should be included?
- How to produce a points system across a diversity of events
- How to build ranking tables from the results in the nominated events.

These issues are detailed in following sections.

A trial ranking system was introduced in April 2018 and the latest ranking is based on that design.

Ranking Events

CHOICE of event is important. We want Cat1 fencers to have competitions to attract them, while the Cat4 fencers have other competitions where they fence their peers and can avoid injury. The women also need a choice so that they avoid repeatedly fencing the same small group.

The table below shows the type of events that I think should be included in the ranking system:

Event Type	Format
World Championships	Age categorised
European Individual Championships	Age categorised
BVF Championships	Open
Age Group Qualifiers	Age categorised, poule unique
BVF West Midlands Open, BVF Hampshire Vets	Open
Nominated Senior Opens	Open
Nominated Overseas Veteran Opens	Age categorised

Events are chosen by the BVF Ranking subcommittee.

Specific weapons may be specified eg F+E but not S where attendance by veterans is historically low.

More than one year's events are included. This rewards consistency, provides a wider base of data and smooths out the variations caused by the EVF Championships with the individuals one year and the team event the next year.

Events are chosen in advance and on the basis of significant attendance by BVF members AND to provide a geographical spread of events. Scottish fencers for example are currently badly served by ranking events.

The past attendance at Opens in 2017-2018 can be seen [here](#).

There are events which I think must be included as a minimum:

- BVF Championships
- BVF Age Groups
- EVF Individual Championships

European events should be promoted. If we are sending fencers to the World Championships then there are grounds for encouraging them to experience foreign competition. There is now a European Veterans Circuit with 5 events per weapon and all these events should be included.

The World Championships is a point of contention as it is a selected event. I feel that results in the World Championships should be included as the objective of the ranking system is seeding.

Some BF Open events should be included. The younger ie Cat1 fencers generally attend these and it is essential to include them in the ranking system. Events are chosen which have had a reasonable number of veteran fencers attending.

It is intended that other BF Open events and a second BVF Age Groups event will be added in the future with a view to extending the geographical spread of ranking events.

The list is reviewed at regular intervals by the BVF Ranking subcommittee.

There is a limit to the number of events that can be included – the Administrator has to process the data.

Note that attendance at events is a CHOICE. There are sufficient events that a BVF member may attend the type of event they want to attend; there is no requirement to attend. One fencer can accumulate points from the BVF Championships, Age Groups and the WMO whereas another may choose to travel the capitals of Europe and compete on the EVF circuit.

Note that the committee does not have a consensus on the events to be included so this is the Chairman’s selection.

Ranking Points

The following table shows the suggested events and associated points:

Event Type	MaxPoints	Age Cats	Multiplier
World Championships	100	Y	1.5
European Individual Championships	100	Y	1.2
BVF Championships	50	N	
Age Group Qualifiers	100	Y	
European Veterans Circuit Events	100	Y	
Nominated Senior Opens (Birmingham, Welsh, Scottish, Elite Epee) Grade 1	50	N	
Nominated Senior Opens (Merseyside, Cambridge) Grade 2	40	N	
West Midlands Open, Hampshire Vets, Veterans Elite Epee	40	N	

Age Categorized Competitions

EVF have introduced a Ranking System with an algorithm that awards points as follows:

- a) Position points from MaxPoints for the winner to 1 point for the last ranked on a log scale
- b) Rounds bonus – 10 points for each round that the fencer survived
- c) Podium bonus – more points awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places.

The points system is available to view on the [EVF website](#).

The points allocated follow a set of rules eg 2 last 8 scores must be greater than a 5th place + a 9th place ie 2 last 8’s is better than a best last 8 and a best last 16.

Placings for age categorised competitions are taken straight from the published results. If an event allows foreign or non-BVF entries and the top placed BVF member is third then he/she gets points for 3rd place.

This algorithm will be used for all Age Categorised competitions in the BVF Ranking system.

The regular EVF Circuit events are allocated a MaxPts value of 100.

The EVF Championships have a multiplier on the points calculated of 1.2.

It is proposed that the Veteran World Championships have a multiplier of 1.5.

Open Competitions

These include the BVF Championships, The West Midlands Open and any other British Fencing Open events that do not distinguish age categories.

How can we allocate points for competitions that are not age categorised? Here are some suggestions:

Each weapon final ranking is filtered to 4 Age Category lists. Each category list is then allocated points independently.

Two sets of points are allocated:

- a) Points based on the position in the competition from MaxPoints down to 1
- b) Points based on the position in the age category

The age factor rewards older fencers who do well in an open competition. A multiplier of the fencer's age/40 is proposed to boost the points earned based on the position in the competition.

The points for position in the age category are calculated as $3 * \text{number of fencers below}$. So if there are 5 Category 3 fencers the fencer coming 3rd will get $2*3 = 6$ points.

Sub-set of Results

Fencers are not expected to do every competition but they are expected to choose a minimum number to accumulate points.

The seven (7) best results are taken from a set of events over 2 years.

(My original number was 5 but I am persuaded that 7 is likely to encourage participation.)

The period of 2 years is to smooth out the irregularities in competition entries due to the EVF pattern of Individual Championships one year and Team Championships the next.

Implementation of a Ranking System

I have written the ranking software with the aim to make collection of data quick and easy, to cut and paste results from the event website, do a minimum amount of processing and import the results into the Ranking database with a click of a button.

I am prepared to administer the Ranking System for a further year. Part of the Ranking System project is to document the entry of results so that a third party can take over.

The system will be accessed from the BVF website and anyone will be able to see the ranking tables.

John Mason

WEBSITE OPTIONS – INITIAL THOUGHTS

LCW

Why do we need a new website?

The website we have is functional and not broken. It is however, in my opinion, dated and relies heavily on manual administration. The thoughts in this document are not a criticism of JM and the enormous amount of work which has gone into the current website is to be applauded.

These are the reasons why I feel a new website would bring value to BVF:

- This is our 'shop window' to attract fresh blood. We want to present a contemporary, interesting, visually appealing face to potential members.
- A different structure (ie pages and subpages) could be simplified to make it easier to use.
- A new website would be fully compliant with all the latest website requirements
- Ease of administration should be paramount.
- We could have membership management which provides rolling membership renewals (eliminating admin). Membership details will also be kept securely, according to GDPR and managed by members themselves rather than BVF.
- We could have a shop for themed merchandise – maybe make some money?
- We could have an event management system with online payment.
- A fresh design would allow news posts to stay available forever, attracting more traffic to the website. We could also have a blog.
- Search Engines will hit on a more up-to-date website which has changing content and uses the latest technology.

The current website has many of these systems, but they are heavy on manual administration.

OPTIONS

1. Do nothing

Advantages

- Functional
- Features have been specifically written for BVF
- Cheap
- The status quo is maintained
- It can be administered by a competent person who has some knowledge of coding

Disadvantages

- Dated look
- Inward looking (for members) with limited appeal for passing traffic
- Visually 'wordy' without many images apart from homepage
- Very heavy on admin

- We are tied into using systems just because they exist without questioning their suitability e.g. minutes system; membership management with manual payment; entry management with manual payment
- No ability to have archived posts (news articles etc) to enhance searches and for interest

2. Keep the current website and give it a total overhaul

Advantages

- Cheap
- Simplified structure would enhance use
- Would give a fresh feel
- Would maintain the bespoke functionality
- Could incorporate more outward facing information

Disadvantages

- The look will never be totally up to date
- I am unsure of compliance with all the latest demands, but possibly it could be brought in line.
- Inaccessible to assistive technology
- Someone will have to be fully invested in it and the result will never be 'up to date'.

3. Fully bespoke website

Advantages

- Every feature that now exists could be incorporated
- Fresh and contemporary design
- Fully compliant

Disadvantages

- It won't keep pace with technology
- Every change will be chargeable
- The design belongs to the designer and you can't take it with you
- It will need updating in a few years
- Expensive option (at least £3000, probably more, plus monthly maintenance)

4. Sports Club Management System

There are specialist suppliers now of websites for sport clubs. Their services can include: content pages; news articles; blog; forum; membership management; event management; shop; emails to members and more.

Advantages

- Fully compliant
- Keeps pace with the latest trends
- Ease of use for administrators and visitors

Disadvantages

- There will be some features which cannot be moved e.g. ranking system (could be overcome by linking to current website)
- Expensive (£1200+ annually – haven't done extensive research)
- Tied into a company over which we have no control
- Some members won't change from the current system and will be lost.

Conclusion

Much more research will need to be done if we decide to change the website. There may be different options available. However I think it should be at the forefront of our minds, particularly if we want to increase the size of our membership.

Lucy Wright 8.8.2020

Guildford International Report

GRP

I am planning for the event in 2021, but we have no idea currently whether the event will take place. We have booked 2 halls (20 pistes) and accommodation in the Premier in for 25 people. The venue and accommodation booking have to be confirmed or cancelled 28 days before the event.

I will set an entry closing date at the beginning of December, after which we can make a decision on whether the event should go ahead.

This year we lost a considerable sum of money because the decision was made to allow fencers to pay on the day. This also caused a large organisational issue. This was decision was made without me even being informed. For 2021 we will insist on payment upfront, probably using paypal to reduce costs. If we cancel the event before the 28 day cutoff, all monies should be refunded. However if we have to cancel at the last minute (due, say to a sudden Covid spike in Guildford), then we will refund the balance after paying expenses.

The competitions for this Autumn have already been cancelled and we are quite likely to add European ranking sabre competitions to the event.

I would expect entries will be down on last year due to Covid. This year, on Saturday, we had 225 entries for the epee which started at 9am and finished around 8pm, run on 16 pistes. Next year we will have 20 pistes, and could start at 8am, and finish much later as the centre closes at 11pm, This would give us the capability of a much larger entry. (225x20/16x14/11). In principle about 350, although I am not suggesting that we will get anywhere near this number.

On Sunday we had entries for foil and sabre, totalling 122, I would be confident that we could easily cope with 3 times this number if it were necessary.