

## **Jerzy Kortynski**

Dear Sir /Madame,

I just found out about your Independent Sport Panel and its task for top-to-bottom examination of Australian sport. Below I provide some of my observations which could be of interest to Sport Panel.

I think that there is an urgent need for better ways to run, promote and manage sport in Australia and at least Olympic sports should be treated equally.

I am the president and Head Coach of small fencing club located at Blacktown City, Sydney western suburb. I have been involved in fencing for over 45 years in Poland and in Australia as a competitor, coach, referee, administrator and volunteer.

Generally speaking, it is a costly and time consuming exercise to be involved in sport in Australia nowadays. High cost of insurance, constantly changing rules and regulations require more and more administration time and paperwork from people running clubs. All amateur sporting clubs Australia-wide face increasing difficulties in providing their members with even the necessities. Lack of support from all levels of government makes participation in sport and training of young champions very difficult, particular in less popular sports.

In China, for example, there are over 20,000 state-supported athletes at the top of pyramid structure that makes up China's sports system. At the base of the pyramid are schools where children as young as six undergo training and dream of becoming the world champions of tomorrow. Young candidates for future champions, from the beginning of their sport adventure, do not have to worry about anything. All expenses associated with sport and education are covered by the government.

Australia doesn't provide any support even for fencers selected to represent country. Therefore it is very difficult to train young children and lead them to international successes. Families in western suburbs, including Mt Druitt and Blacktown where my club is active, can not afford to pay for training, competitions, travel and accommodation in Australia and overseas. On top of this they have to pay all costs associated with a privilege of representing NSW and Australia. For example approximate costs for fencers' overseas training and competitions organised by Australian Fencing Federation (AFF) is about \$7000 for two weeks.

I believe that my fencers have a great potential to get to the top level and represent NSW and Australia in this sport. Definitely we need more support to develop further our sports for a good being of our children and to be able compete successfully on international arena.

Unfortunately fencing is in disadvantageous position in NSW and Australia in comparison to other sports. For some reason fencing is not supported by two main sports organisations: the NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) and the Western Sydney Academy of Sport. Without support of those organisations, our talents in fencing across our Blacktown City region and NSW would miss out on critical opportunities to gain assistance in achieving the elite levels in fencing.

I attach 'Junior Elite Fencer Expenses' where I have summarised the cost of fencing for juniors wanting to represent Australia. The figure of **\$40,000** per year takes into account only a minimum of training and preparations.

I am sure you will share my point of view that this is a lot of money and big burden for families wanting their children to succeed in chosen sport and achieve the honour of representing State of NSW and Australia. Families from Sydney Western Suburbs are

particularly disadvantageous because their income is significantly lower in comparison to families from other parts of Sydney. For example at Blacktown and Mt Druitt electorates 60% have a weekly individual gross income below \$500. This gives income per year about **\$26,000**.

In Europe, USA, not to mention China, fencers train 5 days per week and have opportunity to start in competitions in all 3 weapons at every weekend in categories starting from the age of 10. Those countries organise for them camps several times during the year where fencers prepare to tournaments and major championships. Generally speaking young candidates for future champions, from the beginning of their sport adventure, receive various forms of support. All expenses associated with sport when representing country are covered by the government. They also provided support for coaches and officials. Without government support it is virtually impossible to succeed in sport at international level and even the army of volunteers will not help.

We have in fencing many volunteers, including officials, which spend year by year almost every Sunday and many Saturdays to organise and run competitions from 8.00am to 6.00pm. Officials and referees are extremely important in fencing. They are there to enforce the rules of play and to do this must be adequately trained and represent a high standard. Officials are the guardians of safety in competitions and should be payed for their effort.

### **What we need for sport of fencing?**

1. Equal rights with other sports. Fencing is an Olympic discipline and should have similar opportunities for development as other sports.
2. Support from NSW Institute Sport for fencing and other sports organisations:
  - Include fencing in NSWIS program
  - Assist in promoting fencing
  - Assist in coach development
  - Provide development opportunities and encouragement for talented young fencers
  - Assist young fencers in their progression to the elite level.
3. Assistance in fencers' development, education and career.
4. Financial assistance for fencers towards expenses incurred in trainings, travel and competitions in Australia and overseas.
5. Coverage of all expenses when representing NSW and Australia.
6. Funding for development professional referees.
7. Funding of employment of professional manager, secretary and treasure on full /part time basis. Successful sport can't be run by volunteers nowadays.

Regards

Jerzy Kortynski

## JUNIOR ELITE FENCER EXPENSES

The table below summarise MINIMUM EXPENSES sustained by JUNIOR (U/20) and CADET (U/17) elite fencer competing in one weapon: foil, sabre or epee. Senior fencer minimum expenses will be similar.

NO.	ACTIVITY	COST	WEEK		YEAR	
			Qty	Total	Qty	Total
<b>1</b>	<b>TRAINING</b>					
A	Club training (1 hour)	\$15	3	\$45	50	\$2,250
B	Private Lessons (30 minutes)	\$30	3	\$90	50	\$4,500
C	Fitness training (1 hour)	\$50	1	\$50	50	\$2,500
D	Club's membership	\$100			1	\$100
E	S/Total			<b>\$185</b>		<b>\$9,250</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>CAMPS</b>					
A	Club (5 days)	\$150			4	\$600
B	Australia (3 days)	\$1,000			1	\$1,000
C	Australian Fencing Federation (AFF) Approved Tour	\$6,000			1	\$6,000
D	S/Total					<b>\$7,600</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>EQUIPMENT</b>					
A	Maintenance	\$300			1	\$300
B	Replacement	\$700			1	\$700
C	S/Total					<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>COMPETITIONS</b>					
A	NSW Fencing Association (NSWFA) (entry fee)	\$20			10	\$200
B	AFF Circuit Cadet or Junior (incl.entry fee, travel & accomodation)	\$1,000			3	\$3,000
C	Australian Cadet or Junior Champs (entry fee, travel & accomodation)	\$1,000			1	\$1,000
D	Australian Open Championships	\$1,000			1	\$1,000
E	International FIE (entry fee, travel & accomodation)	\$6,000			1	\$6,000
E	S/Total					<b>\$11,200</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>REPRESENTING AUSTRALIA</b>					
A	World Championships (cadet or junior)	\$6,000			1	\$6,000
B	Commonwealth Fencing Championships	\$5,000			1	\$5,000
C	Asia/Oceania Championships	\$5,000			1	\$5,000
D	S/Total					<b>\$11,000</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>FENCING REGISTRATION</b>					
A	NSWFA & AFF	\$90			1	\$90
B	Federation Internationale d'Escrime (FIE) Licence	\$50			1	\$50
C	S/Total					<b>\$140</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>					<b>\$40,190</b>

1. Fencers, to be eligible for selection to represent Australia, must comply with ALL requirements laid down by AFF and MUST participate in a training/competition approved by AFF Selection Panel.
3. Selection points are only awarded for participation in competition designated by AFF ( usually 5 Australian competitions and 6 international tournaments for every weapon).
4. Selection is based on the AFF Ranking List. More points gained in competitions, higher ranking.
5. Points are specific for each weapon and cannot be combined.
6. Selected fencers are required to pay all participation costs incl. travel, accommodation, insurance, entry fees, taxes and other expenses.
7. All other expenses ( incl. equipment, physiotherapy, medical, nutrition, e.t.c.) are covered by fencers.
8. Currently elite fencers do not receive any assistance from NSW State and Australian Governments.
9. The AIS, NSWIS and other organisations do not provide any support or sponsorships for fencers.

