



FENCING  
IRELAND

# STRATEGY

2025-2029





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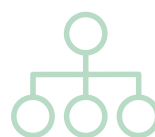
# FOREWORD

I am excited to introduce to you the Fencing Ireland 2025 – 2029 Strategy. This new strategy is a milestone as it looks beyond the next five years, looking to set the path that will grow and develop fencing in Ireland for many years into the future. It is ambitious, no doubt, respond to a changing environment both on and off the piste. Our commitment to inclusivity, growth and our community is at the heart of this strategy and will guide our efforts over the next four years.

The development of this strategy followed a consultation process with subcommittees and external stakeholders, and we are proud to share with you our joint vision for the future of fencing.

Our key objectives over the next five years include:

- › **Increasing Participation:** We aim to increase the number of participants in fencing across all age groups and backgrounds. This will be achieved through targeted outreach programmes, partnerships with schools and Local Sports Partnerships, and the promotion of fencing as a sport for life.
- › **Improving Development:** We are committed to providing the highest quality training and support for our athletes and officials. This includes investing in education, for coaches and officials, creating pathways for fencers to progress from grassroots to elite levels, and finding new ways to support our fencing community.
- › **Strengthening Governance and Infrastructure:** To support our ambitious goals, we will enhance our organisational structures and processes. This includes adopting best practices in governance, finding the right resources for the right roles, and work with our national and international governing bodies to improve the profile of Fencing Ireland.
- › **Achieving Competitive Success:** Our vision is to see Irish fencers excel at home and abroad. We will provide the necessary resources and support to help our athletes reach their full potential and represent Ireland with pride.
- › **Improving Financial Sustainability:** To grow our sport and support the goals we have set for the next four years, we need to underpin our efforts with sustainable finances, and not solely rely on government grants to support our sport. We will create independent income streams and build a marketable brand which can attract sponsorship to make our vision a reality.



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As we embark on this exciting new chapter, I am confident that with the collective efforts of our community, Fencing Ireland will continue to thrive and inspire future generations of fencers. I encourage each of you to engage with this strategy and contribute your ideas and energy. Together, we will turn this strategy into real progress. Together, we are Fencing Ireland.

**ULLA KAPPUS**

Chairperson, Fencing Ireland



# OUR VALUES

## **FUN:**

Enjoyment and enthusiasm in training and competition are essential to growth and engagement in the sport.

## **E** EXCELLENCE:

Success through continuous improvement and high standards in all aspects of fencing.

## **N** NURTURING:

Caring for and supporting the development of all fencers, from Youth to Veterans.

## **C** COMPASSION:

Showing understanding and empathy towards others, both on and off the piste.

## **I** INTEGRITY:

Upholding honesty, fairness, and honour in every action.

## **N** NOBILITY:

Representing fencing with pride, dignity and respect, acting as ambassadors for the sport.

## **G** GROWTH:

Encouraging inclusion and creating a community where everyone can thrive and succeed.

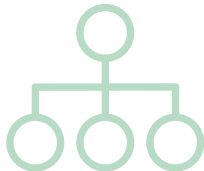
# OUR VISION

Fencing is a vibrant community of players, clubs, coaches and volunteers who succeed in their goals in the sport and who play an active role in the Fencing community, which is committed to high standards and a welcoming, and sociable approach.

# STRATEGY SUMMARY



Foster club development, increase adult and juvenile membership and emphasise lifelong participation. A coaching excellence structure and growth in the number and quality of referees will support these developments.



Define clear roles for officials that align with best practice. Increase full time staff and foster a culture of volunteerism.



Develop new pathways to support juvenile and adult athletes and international referees. Increase participation in competitions.



Explore diverse income streams. Create a new sponsorship strategy and fundraising team leveraging improved brand awareness.



# GROWTH

Foster **club development** by implementing targeted initiatives to enhance the infrastructure, resources, and support available to clubs.

- › Establish mentorship programmes for clubs to learn from experienced fencing professionals.
- › Provide financial incentives for clubs to invest in equipment upgrades and facility improvements.
- › Facilitate networking opportunities between clubs to share best practices and collaborate on joint initiatives.

Increase **adult participation** by launching targeted marketing campaigns and initiatives to attract new adult fencers.

- › Offer beginner-friendly programmes and flexible training schedules to accommodate working adults.
- › Collaborate with Local Sports Partnerships and community organisations to promote fencing as a recreational sport for adults.

Boost **juvenile participation** by implementing outreach programmes and initiatives tailored to younger demographics.

- › Establish partnerships with schools and educational institutions to introduce fencing as a school sport or extracurricular activity.
- › Develop youth-friendly training programmes that focus on fun, skill development, and character-building aspects of the sport.
- › Organise more regional youth tournaments and festivals to foster a sense of community and competition among young fencers.





Emphasise **lifelong fencing** by encouraging veterans to join the sport for the first time and providing appropriate support.

- › Create targeted marketing campaigns highlighting the physical and mental benefits of fencing for individuals of all ages.
- › Develop beginner-friendly programmes specifically designed for veterans, accommodating their unique needs and preferences.
- › Offer specialized training and mentorship opportunities for veteran fencers, enabling them to progress and compete at their own pace.

Improve **coaching standards** by developing a Coaching Excellence Structure.

- › Provide coaches with access to advanced coaching courses and continuous professional development opportunities.
- › Implement regular audits to monitor coaching quality, ensuring consistency in coaching standards across all affiliated clubs.
- › Ensure that every club has, at minimum, a Level 1 certified coach.

Improve and grow **number of referees** available nationally.

- › Create a national pool of certified referees to ensure a consistent level of refereeing across the country.
- › Launch a mentorship programme that pairs novice referees with experienced mentors who provide guidance, feedback, and opportunities for hands-on learning.
- › Launch a targeted campaign aimed at individuals who are not active fencers but have a passion for fencing.

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Establish **clearly defined roles** for board members, subcommittees, and staff to streamline decision-making processes and enhance accountability.

- › Develop comprehensive job descriptions and responsibilities for each board and staff member.
- › Regularly review and update these roles to adapt to evolving needs and ensure optimal performance.

Align the federation's practices with sporting **best practices** to enhance efficiency, professionalism, and governance.

- › Conduct regular benchmarking exercises to identify areas where the federation can learn from successful National Governing Bodies.
- › Implement recommended policies and procedures related to governance, finance, athlete welfare, and anti-doping, among others.



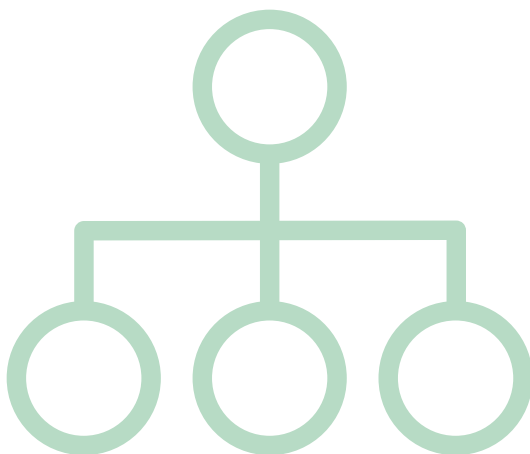


Increase the **number of staff members** to support Fencing Ireland's operations and initiatives effectively.

- › Conduct a staffing needs assessment to identify areas where additional personnel are required.
- › Secure necessary funding and resources to hire qualified individuals for key positions, such as coaching, administration, marketing, and development.

Foster a culture of **volunteerism** within the fencing community to enhance support and engagement.

- › Establish a formal volunteer recruitment and management programme to attract individuals with diverse skill sets.
- › Recognize and appreciate the contributions of volunteers through various means, such as awards, certificates, and social events.
- › Provide volunteers with appropriate training and resources to ensure they can effectively contribute to the federation's goals.



# PERFORMANCE

Develop a sustainable **performance pathway** to nurture and support athletes at all levels of competition.

- › Establish clear progression criteria and performance standards for athletes to advance through different levels of competition.
- › Provide financial assistance and resources to talented athletes who demonstrate potential for national and international success.
- › Collaborate with high-performance centres and specialised coaches to offer enhanced training opportunities.

Create a comprehensive **juvenile performance programme** to identify and develop young talents from an early age – an improved Trailblazers.

- › Implement talent identification programmes in collaboration with clubs and coaches.
- › Provide specialised coaching, training camps, and mentorship opportunities for youth athletes.
- › Establish a structured competition pathway for young fencers, enabling them to gain experience and progress in a supportive environment.





Increase national and international **competition participation** by encouraging athletes to compete at various levels.

- › Support athletes in attending national and international competitions by providing logistical assistance.
- › Foster partnerships with other fencing federations to facilitate exchange programmes and joint training camps.

Develop national and international referees through a **refereeing pathway programme**.

- › Develop a comprehensive training curriculum tailored to the specific needs of aspiring referees, covering rule interpretations, match management, and conflict resolution skills.
- › Conduct regular workshops, seminars, and webinars to keep referees updated on rule changes and best practice.
- › Implement a quality programme to assess the performance and adherence to standards of referees during competitions.



# SUSTAINABILITY AND SPONSORSHIP

Develop a comprehensive strategy to **secure sponsorship** and increase funding for Fencing Ireland's initiatives.

- › Identify potential corporate sponsors, foundations, and government grants that align with Fencing Ireland's values and goals.
- › Create attractive sponsorship packages that offer value and exposure to sponsors, including branding opportunities, event partnerships, and media coverage.
- › Cultivate relationships with key stakeholders and potential sponsors through networking events, presentations, and targeted outreach.

Enhance the federation's **visibility and brand recognition** to attract potential sponsors and supporters.

- › Implement marketing and communication campaigns to highlight the positive impact of fencing and Fencing Ireland's initiatives.
- › Leverage social media platforms, website, and traditional media channels to share success stories, promote events, and engage with the fencing community and broader audience.
- › Collaborate with athletes, coaches, and clubs to showcase their achievements and create compelling narratives that resonate with potential sponsors.





Explore **diverse funding streams** and revenue-generating opportunities to supplement existing sources.

- › Investigate grant opportunities offered by sports governing bodies, philanthropic organisations, and government agencies.
- › Develop fundraising initiatives to involve the fencing community and wider public in supporting the sport financially.
- › Explore partnerships with local businesses, fencing equipment manufacturers, and sports-related companies for sponsorships, endorsements, and product collaborations.

Establish a **dedicated sponsorship and fundraising team** to proactively seek and manage partnerships and funding opportunities.

- › Recruit individuals with expertise in sponsorship acquisition, grant writing, and fundraising strategies.
- › Provide training and resources to the team to enhance their skills in relationship building, proposal development, and negotiation.
- › Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of sponsorship and fundraising efforts, making adjustments as needed to optimise results and secure sustainable financial support.



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