



Great Yarmouth & Waveney Fencing Club

Welcome to your COVID Secure Club

It's been a while, but we're pleased to now be taking the final steps to welcome our members back to the club. At this point, it's important to make clear that although the club is reopening, you will not be returning to the club you left back in March. In order to return, both the club and the sport has had to adapt and modify, in order to make it safer for everyone involved.

These changes are as new to us as they are to you. Where possible, we have trialled these changes, but some aspects can't be trialled until the club and its members return. As such we cannot guarantee everything will work first time, but whilst there may be some disruption to your fencing our first priority has been the safety of all members, spectators and officials.

The rules and guidelines detailed below are not set in stone and we welcome your feedback as to what works and what doesn't. Indeed, as advice from the Government, British Fencing or Ormiston Denes Sports Centre changes, our rules will have to follow suit. This means that it will be quite a dynamic time for the club in the coming months. During this time, communication will be key. Our website now has a dedicated page where all of our COVID-19 guidelines can be found.

www.gywfc.co.uk/covidsecure.html

Whilst we will keep our website as up to date as possible, we will also inform you of any changes via email, social media or WhatsApp, if you'd like to be added to one of our WhatsApp groups do let us know. Furthermore, **Rob Johnson** & **Yasmin Narli** will be the club's official COVID-Officers. Our roles will not only be to enforce the club's COVID related polices, but to help communicate, inform and explain these polices and any updates to you all. We can be contacted as follows:

Emailing – gywfencingclub@gmail.com

Text/WhatsApp/Call - **Rob (07516 675051)**.

We look forward to catching up with you all in the near future!

Getting Started

Before returning there's a few things we need **you** to do:

- 1) Read this letter – this should give you all the information needed to understand how your club will be running when you return.
- 2) Confirm your contact details – this will allow the club and Ormiston Denes Community Sports Centre to support the NHS Test and Trace initiative.
- 3) Sign our COVID-19 Code of Conduct – to be done by anyone who enters the Sports Centre.
- 4) Attend a briefing session – conducted over Zoom, our briefing sessions are designed to support this letter, running through how your club will be running and allowing you the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarity. **Scheduled for Thursday 13th, 6.30 pm**. Do let us know if you can't make this date / time.

How are you?

Before getting into the details of how the sport and the club will function, we want to begin by asking how are you, and letting you know that should you want to talk to someone then the club has the ability to support you.

Want to talk about your return to fencing, your fitness or any concerns you have about returning to the club environment / how safe it'll be. Then get in contact with **Club Coach – Rob Johnson** (rj.gywfc@gmail.com / **07516 675051**). We recognise the past few months have been like nothing any of us have experienced before and that in returning to our previous activities, we're all likely to have different concerns, rational or irrational it doesn't matter. Please feel free to discuss them with Rob.

Want to talk to someone about your experiences at the club, during lockdown or in general. The club's British Fencing trained Welfare Officer – **Peter Hadden** (welfare@gywfc.co.uk / **07710 025860**) is always available. Likewise British Fencing have published a range of resources and links which you can access here - <https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/are-you-ok/>

What will fencing look like?

For the majority of time, fencers exist more than 2 meters apart from each other. However, when hitting, fencers are likely to come closer than 2 meters, which brings with it an increased risk of transmission. Acknowledging this risk, British Fencing, with approval from the Government, have modified the sport, making it as safe as it can be but still allowing people the opportunity to fence. This means that:

- Per session, fencers must be placed into bubbles of up to 6 individuals – this can be 6 fencers or 5 fencers and 1 coach providing individual lessons.
- Whilst fencing (or taking part in paired training) face coverings must be worn, should you not be able to wear a face covering then you will need to have a mask liner instead - <https://www.leonpaul.com/leon-paul-mask-shield-x-10.html>
- The amount of time you can fence each individual per session will be limited. This is capped by points (either 1 x 15-point match or 3 x 5-point matches), or time (no more than 10 minutes total per opponent), whichever is exceeded first.
- Individual lessons will last for a maximum of 15 minutes.
- Fleching, close quarters fencing, body to body contact or any action that brings you closer than 1 meter to your opponent is no longer permitted.
- No body contact, i.e. no handshakes, fist / elbow bumps at the end of a match.

What will your club look like?

The answer to this will vary week to week depending on who is wanting to attend and the facilities that are available to us. Our aim is to always maximise what we are able to offer you, whilst treating all members as equally as possible.

Venue – Depending on weather some of our sessions may meet outside (either completely or in part). Should we be training outside then we have more space than can be used to physically distance bubbles of fencers. If we are in the gymnasium (our normal venue), space is limited, so at most we will have 8 fencers (2 bubbles of 4) present at a time. To maximise the number of people who can fence each week, we may at times run 2 x 1 hour sessions, instead of our usual 1.5 – 2 hour sessions. The exact format is likely to vary week on week, depending on the weather and the number of people wishing to attend that week. As time goes on, we can refine our sessions, knowing what works and what doesn't work. Again, members feedback is key here! Details on subs can be found further on.

Bubbles – All fencers will be placed into bubbles of up to 6 individuals, this may consist of 6 fencers or 5 fencers and 1 coach. These bubbles will be specific for each session and are likely to change week by week. However, we will seek to keep age groups (i.e. juniors/musketeers) together. The smallest bubble size we will place fencers into is 4.

Providing we have enough space, multiple bubbles may be present at any one time, however individuals can only fence / train with those in their bubble. Individuals can interact / socialise with those from other bubbles providing they maintain 2 meters distance at all times.

To receive an individual lesson, the coach must be part of your bubble. This will unfortunately limit the frequency that fencers can receive individual coaching. We will keep a record of who receives individual coaching and aim to ensure all members receive equal tuition across a month. Whilst a coach can only give individual lessons to their bubble, they are still able to provide general feedback and advice to all fencers.

Physical Distancing – At all times, other than when fencing or taking part in paired training, individuals must remain 2 meters apart. As a club, we will ensure that all pistes and training actives are adequately spaced, but we will rely on you as individuals to distance yourselves at all other times. This rule does not apply to those from the same household.

If you feel someone is coming too close to you or others, please give them a gentle reminder to remain 2 meters apart. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, or they do not listen, please let Rob or Yasmin (your COVID officers) or another member of the club committee know, and they will deal with this.

Face Coverings – When in the Fencing Hall, all individuals (regardless of age) should be wearing a face covering. Individuals are allowed to remove their coverings to eat or drink but should wear them at all other times. Should fencers need to catch their breath, coverings can be removed at the end of your piste, providing you are well distanced from all other individuals.

When fencing or taking part in paired training, fencers should ideally wear a face covering, but if they are unable to, then their mask must be fitted with a liner.

If we are training outside then the use of face coverings, providing all individuals remain physically distanced is optional, unless you are fencing or taking part in paired training, where the previous rule still stands. If you have any concerns regarding the use of face coverings, please direct them to one of our COVID officers prior to returning to the club.

Arrive ready to Fence – On our return, there will be no changing or refreshment facilities available to members. This means that all fencers must arrive ready to fence. It is okay to get changed in the fencing hall should you need to, providing at all times you are in appropriate sports clothing. I.e. You can be wearing shorts, but you should not go down to your underwear when getting changed.

Individuals must bring with them their own drinks and we would also recommend that fencers bring a small towel with them, however these must be kept in your kit bags when not in use. Toilets will be accessible, but should be for essential use only, i.e. avoid using these wherever possible.

Spectators – Any spectators present will count towards the maximum number of individuals we are allowed in the sports centre. As such, we are asking that only essential spectators are present in the training venue at this time. Rob will be writing to all of you who formerly were present in the hall during training to discuss new arrangements.

For those aged under 14, we will collect and return your children to the outside patio area near the sports centre reception. Parents / guardians will need to meet us at this patio area to ensure we know who is going home with who. For those aged 14-18, the same will apply unless your parent/guardian completes our **Independent Attendance Form V1.0**, which will give you permission to arrive and leave the venue on your own.

Spectators are not to enter the sports centre unless invited in by a club official. All those who are invited in must follow the same rules and procedures as our active participants. This includes signing our COVID-19 Code of Conduct and registering their attendance at each session.

Seating – Seating is still available all be it limited. Users must sanitise chair after use.

First Aid & Hand Sanitisers – The club will continue to provide First Aid cover at all sessions; however, the administering of First Aid does now provide an increased risk to our First Aiders. Whilst we will be providing them with appropriate PPE we do also ask that where possible members attend with their own personal First Aid kits, i.e. plasters and other resources to self-treat minor injuries where possible.

Hand sanitisers – likewise the club will have a few hand sanitisers available at all sessions but we would again ask for individuals to provide their own where possible. We will ask all individuals to sanitise their hands prior to entering the training venue and before touching any club equipment.

How will equipment be shared?

Very little of the club's equipment will now be shared between members. For all items of clothing or equipment that the club provides we will be implementing an enhanced cleaning / decontamination schedule, which can be viewed in full on our club website (www.gywfc.co.uk/covidsecure.html).

Where you have your own personal equipment, we ask that this is clean at the beginning of each session.

Where you do not have your own personal equipment, all members will now be assigned their own jacket, plastron, (chest protector), glove and mask. Other than your mask, these will all be stored on your individual hanger and cleaned monthly by the club. Masks will now have members names written on them to aid identification and will be decontaminated after every use both by the member themselves and a club official.

Should you want added piece of mind and choose to store your assigned equipment at home this can be arranged following receipt of a £50.00 deposit.

Members will not be assigned their own sword or body wire, however these are not to be shared between members during a session. Members can collect the equipment they require from the "clean pile" and subsequently return it to the "used bags" once they are finished with it. These will then be left in quarantine for 7 days prior to being used again. Where such a quarantine is not

possible, they will be fully decontaminated prior to being returned into general circulation. Should you have any broken equipment, there will be a specific area for you to leave this. On the night repairs will no longer be possible.

Lames will also be assigned to individual members however they will not be kept on your hanger. Instead we will ask that they are left at a designated drop off point at the end of your session, where a club official will subsequently decontaminate/quarantine them as appropriate.

The main area that all members will experience kit sharing comes with using the electric pistes – we have put in place numerous mitigation steps to reduce the potential risk of transmission here however should you feel more comfortable fencing non-electric you are more than welcome to do so. Generally, each fencer will be assigned their own spool for each session and we ask that prior to plugging into your spool you sanitise your hands. Fencers will therefore travel around the venue plugged into their spool. However, only nominated official are to unplug/plug a groundwire into your spool. This is to reduce the number of people touching each item of equipment. When carrying your spool, please do this by the handle only. Nominated officials will be identified on a weekly basis.

Prior to turning on and off the scoring box, we again ask that you sanitise your hands. Any time you touch communal equipment this should be done with sanitised, ungloved hands. We will provide sanitisers near each piste, but again ask if members could provide their own to help us in this process.

How will a 'normal' club session now run?

Before you arrive

Unfortunately, members are no longer able to just turn up on a club night, we now require you to book your attendance. This not only helps us to plan sessions and assign fencers into bubbles, but importantly it helps us track and control who is entering the Fencing Hall.

To register your wish to attend a session, we need you to sign up by the end of day Tuesday. To do this, simply add your / your fencer's name to our sign-up sheet. All spectators must also sign-up.

www.gywfc.co.uk/booking.html

On Wednesday morning, we'll see who's signed up and from there assign fencers into bubbles and decide the best format for the session. This will be communicated to those who've signed up by email and to all online via the link below. After Tuesday, should you wish to attend the club and you have not yet registered your interest, please check this link for any available spaces. If no spaces are available, please add your name to the reserve list.

www.gywfc.co.uk/sessionplan.html

Prior to arriving at the venue, all individuals who are entering the sports centre must have completed a Health Screen. These must be completed prior to attending every session and should be completed on the day of your session – i.e. Thursdays. Health Screens will be emailed out with the Session Plan on Wednesdays but can also always be found at the following link. No one should enter the venue if they are currently experiencing any symptoms / illnesses, even if they do not believe them to be COVID related.

www.gywfc.co.uk/healthcheck.html

If you arrive at the club venue without booking, returning a Code of Conduct or completing your health screen there is no guarantee that you will be able to fence. Please ensure you become familiar with the above processes and speak to one of our COVID officers should you have any questions.

On arrival

To help maintain physical distancing and to manage the movement of people throughout the sports centre, we must now ask that all individuals wait outside the venue, on the patio area near the reception entrance. When we are ready to begin, a club official will then come outside and invite you into the hall. This will allow our officials to make the venue ready for your arrival / allow for the previous participants to safely leave the venue before you enter.

We ask that participants arrive no more than 5 minutes before their designated start time, and wherever possible are there by their designated start time at the latest. Should you be running late, please call upon your arrival at the venue and an official will come out to collect you. Prior to being invited into the sports centre, we ask that all individuals sanitise their hands.

Individuals will no longer be able to access the kit cupboards, instead your equipment will be brought and removed from the training venue by an official wearing appropriate PPE.

The session itself

To begin with, all sessions will be slightly different. They will start with a group warm up, then progress onto a group lesson (recapping the basics) before concluding with time for members to fence. As the weeks progress, more and more time will be given to fencing, over group lessons.

This is to ensure we can control members return to fencing, not only will this be the first time most of us have fenced in 5 months, but it will also be a new experience fencing / exercising with a face covering. As such, we as a club have a duty of care to ensure members do not overexert or injure themselves. Our club coaches will be able to observe how members are getting on, so will gradually increase the intensity of training / fencing to suit the ability of our membership.

On your return to fencing, we would encourage that you focus on improving your personal performance week on week. Try not to compare yourself to how you were fencing 5 months ago, or who you were beating then. Aim to focus on the now, and overtime and with our coach's assistance your performance will return to what it was.

No announcements will be given out on club nights, with all communication occurring via email, social media or WhatsApp.

After the session

As soon as you have completed your last match / lesson, or time is called – we ask that the first thing you do is return any club equipment to the designated locations (these will be identified weekly). It is important that the first things you do is return club kit as some items will now need to be sanitised by a club official prior to storage.

Weapons & Bodywires – Please return these directly to the designated bag, making sure they are fully in the bag.

Lames – Please leave these in the designated drop off zone.

Whites – Please leave these attached to your hanger in the designated drop off zone.

Masks – Please wipe your club mask down by spraying onto the Blue Role provided, then using the damp Blue Role to wipe your mask. Leaving it in the drop off zone.

Spools – Please follow instructions provided on the night as these will change depending on the duration of the session.

Pistes – Please leave these for an official to put away.

Note – the Club Lockers must only be accessed by designated club officials until further notice.

Once you have returned your club kit (if applicable) please move away from our drop off zones to allow others to return their kit and officials to collect it. If there is a session running directly after yours please vacate the venue promptly, maintaining 2 meters distancing at all times, so that the next session can start on time. If you are under 18 and being collected, please wait for a club official to escort you out to the collection point.

Subs, British Fencing Membership & Support

Given the uncertainty of the coming months, both in the format of our sessions and the potential of local lockdowns, we have temporarily decided to suspend monthly payments, with all members being asked to only pay for the sessions they now attend. However, one thing that we have been asked to avoid as much as possible is cash payments, therefore we would request that payments are now made via bank transfer wherever possible. Should you still want to pay cash we can accommodate this but ask that you leave any cash inside an envelope which can be easily deposited without any person to person contact.

Please make any bank transfers to: **Account Number: 48779183** **Sort Code: 09-01-28**

| | 1 hr Session | 2 hr Session |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Musketeer | £3.00 | £3.00 * |
| Junior | £3.00 | £4.00 |
| Student | £3.00 | £4.00 |
| Senior | £3.00 | £5.00 |

* Musketeer sessions are only scheduled to last for 1 hr per evening.

Please note that the session duration above, is that which is set by the club on our Session Plan.

To make payments via bank transfer easier and to save members having to transfer small amounts of money weekly. We are proposing that members instead pay for a small block of sessions, i.e. 4 at a time. The club will then keep track of your attendance, and at the end of each month, members will receive a receipt for the sessions they've attended, detailing how much money they have left in their "club account" or how much they owe the club. At all times, any unspent money remains that of the member and can be returned to you at any time.

British Fencing Membership

In order to fence at the club, all individuals require a personal membership to British Fencing. At this stage we would recommend that members only purchase Recreational memberships, as when the next competitions will be is still uncertain. This is unless your membership is tied to your national ranking / qualification, in which case I would advise that you maintain your Competitive level.

Many of you will be coming to renew your memberships shortly and are likely to have lost up to 5 months worth of your previous membership. Unfortunately, British Fencing will not be offering any

extension to their memberships, as such, the club committee have made the decision to cover part of the cost of your next renewal, depending on how many months you've lost.

COVID-19 Support Fund

We know that the past 5 months have affected us all differently. As club, we do not want anyone to not be able to return to the club because they can not afford to. As such, we have started a Support Fund, where we can help cover the cost of your fencing should you need it. Any requests for support will be confidentially reviewed by the Club Treasurer and Parent's Rep. Please do let us know if cost is an issue preventing your return to the sport. Pat's contact details are provided below.

Coaching

As stated previously, the frequency of individual coaching you will be able to access is likely to decrease as coaches now have to be bubbled with their group of fencers for that particular session. However, we will aim to ensure that on average members receive an equal share of coaching. If you feel this is not occurring, please do mention this to a club official.

Many of you have expressed interest in receiving lessons from Paul Stimpson still. Paul is a Professional Fencing Coach who we pay to attend club sessions. Usually he will try to accommodate any member who wants a lesson, however under these new guidelines, the number of lessons he can offer will be limited. As such, we have made the temporary decision, that should you wish to book a 10 minute lesson from Paul, you will now need to pay £5 to do so. We will communicate in advance which sessions Paul will be attending so you have the opportunity to book into the "Paul Bubble".

On occasion, you may be placed into the "Paul Bubble" without booking it. This will have been done to help accommodate all those who wished to attend on that night. If this is the case, you will not be charged any extra, but you are still welcome to receive a 10 minute lesson from Paul.

And Finally

Thank You for taking the time to read through this letter, sorry that it is several pages in length but as you can tell we had a lot of information to communicate to you. As we said at the start, this environment is new to us all, and over time we will find the best way to make it work, however our first priority will always be the safety of all who attend GYWFC.

If you have any questions, hopefully they can be answered at the Club's Zoom briefing, but also feel free to send any questions / concerns in writing to one of the following. Remember, should you wish our Club Coaches & Welfare Officers are available to have 1:1 chats with you.

Thank You and See You Soon!

Rob & Yasmin

COVID Officers – Rob & Yasmin - gywfencingclub@gmail.com

Coach – Rob – rj.gywfc@gmail.com / 07516 675051

Welfare Officer – Peter Hadden - welfare@gywfc.co.uk / 07710 025860

Club Treasurer – Pat Johnson – aandpjohnson@hotmail.co.uk / 01493 602240