

National Squad Introduction Handbook

- Youth

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1. What do you need to do now?

- Read this National Squad (Youth) Appointment Note carefully
- Undertake your individual worksheet
- Familiarise yourself with key competition dates
- If you are considering moving to the Adult category, please familiarise yourself with the selection and rankings policy.
- Complete compulsory Sport Integrity Australia e-learning
- Contact your State Referee Director to get accredited and notify admin.hpc@fencing.org.au
- Supply Personal Photo to Portal
- If you have any queries, write to the High Performance Commission at hpc@fencing.org.au

2. Official Communication

Throughout your time on the National Squad, the AFF and the High Performance Commission will communicate with you in a number of ways. Primarily, official communication will be sent to you via email. This is where you will be informed of selection, substantive changes to the program, and other information.

This will be from hpc@fencing.org.au for all matters of substance and admin.hpc@fencing.org.au for administration matters. The HPC will also invite you shortly to an **Australian Fencing National Squad WhatsApp Community** where you can check Squad information and where information on updates will be posted.

3. National Squad Management and National Coaching Team

The National Squad and its High Performance Program is managed by the High Performance Commission. The High Performance Commission has established the National Coaching Team to work together in the delivery of the Program.

The National Coaching Team includes technical coaches and program coaches as follows:

- National Technical Directors (Foil and Sabre, and Epee) – *These positions will be filled during the 2024/25 season.*
- National Program Coaches (Strength and Conditioning, Nutrition, Mindset)
- National Assistant Coaches (Foil, Epee, and Sabre)

We will also discuss and work with you to integrate other specialist coaches you may already be working with.

You can view the **High Performance Management Structure and National Coaching Team** [here](#).

4. Individual Performance Plan (IPP)

As part of the High Performance Program, Adult National Squad Members will undertake an IPP which is available here [convert word IPP to Jotform]. You should complete your IPP during the first National Squad camp while working with the National Coaching Team including Mindset, Nutrition and S&C.

Information collated from this IPP will be used to provide you with program support and track how you are performing against your goals.

5. High Performance Program Scope and Event Calendars

The scope of the High Performance Program is ever-evolving as we seek to improve the performance of athletes. Your view of your needs is important to us. We think it's essential for you to be voicing your ideas to us throughout the program so that we can evolve together.

Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPP • WhatsApp Community • Goal-setting
Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Seminars • In person competition support (at selected European competitions) • 1-1 Mindset Coach
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodized Athletic, Strength and Conditioning Program • Engagement with National Physical Performance Coach • Athlete wellbeing monitoring
Nutritional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutritional Framework • Nutritional Program (Adults) • Nutritional Options
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Review and Discussions with Personal Coach and National Coaching Team • Distribution of Strategic Video • Performance Analysis (competition and training)
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with National Technical Director and National Assistant Coaches • Online instruction and explanation • Distribution of technical assessments and reviews • Referee Accreditation and Online Education
Camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four (4) Camps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All National Squad – 30 March to the 1 September at the AIS, and 21 to 23 March at the AIS. ○ Adults, Junior and Cadet – pre-tour camp in December and pre-Worlds camp in June (at National Centres in NSW, VIC and QLD)
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible for Selection • HPC Designated Events and Tours • Performance Review (Training/Competitions)
Mobility Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend National Squad training sessions in NSW (foil and sabre), and Victoria (epee and foil).

Event and Training Calendars

As a National Squad member (Youth) your main events Nationally will be the National **Australian Youth Circuit (AYC)**, the National Under 15/Cadet Championships, AYC Final, and potentially, for some, older events like National Junior Championships, and some of the AFC. For more information regarding the AYC please see [here](#).

We also aim to have two HPC Youth Tours throughout 2024.

You can view the full **Weapon Calendar of National Squad Events** please see [here](#). This document sets out **camps, workshops, tours** and **competitions** for all categories.

National Squad Calendar Links:

- [Women's Epee Calendar](#)
- [Women's Foil Calendar](#)
- [Women's Sabre Calendar](#)
- [Men's Epee Calendar](#)
- [Men's Foil Calendar](#)
- [Men's Sabre Calendar](#)
- [National Squad Training Calendar](#)
- [National Squad Integrated Calendar](#)
- [International Championships and HPC Designated Events](#)
- [Selection Dates Calendar](#)

National Squad training sessions will run concurrent to State Squads. For the specific schedules please see [here](#).

6. Mobility Program

Under the Mobility Program, Members of the National Squad Members will be able to travel to National Squad Training Sessions in both Melbourne and Sydney at no cost to the athlete for up to 7 days at any one time, and no more than 20 days. If a National Squad Member exceeds 20 days the State may, at their discretion, request a per day attendance fee.

Athletes must meet the following conditions when training at the National Squad Sessions in other states:

- They are current members of National Squad;
- They remain resident in their home state, and fully paid-up members in that state (condition for National Squad); and
- They advise admin.hpc@fencing.org.au prior to attending any session in Sydney or Melbourne and we will inform your nominated person.

In arranging to attend any of these interstate training sessions please contact and inform us of your plan to train admin.hpc@fencing.org.au **prior to traveling to another state and attending a session**, and we will assist you to arrange.

It is our intention to develop the Mobility Program to assist athletes who are willing to travel to National Squad Sessions in Melbourne and Sydney.

7. State Events

The continued development of fencing in Australia requires your support of State-based Events. Your involvement increases the standard and competitiveness of local and state fencing, improving your training.

8. Domestic Events (National)

For a National Squad Member (Youth) the primary focus is Domestic (National Events) including AYC, National Youth/Cadet Championships, National Junior Championships, and potentially AFC.

There is a focus on developing the competitiveness and importance of domestic competitions. As a member of the National Squad (Youth) you should compete in as many of the AFF National Competitions that are suitable for your age and your circumstances.

To obtain a National Ranking for cadet or older, you will need a **minimum of at least one domestic event**. Without fencing in one domestic event, an athlete cannot form a valid ranking. Please find a link to **National Competitions Calendar** ([here](#)).

9. Preparing for International Events

a. Withdrawals from events

The HPC assumes that if an athlete has accepted selection for a competition that they will be attending the competition. Where an athlete needs to withdraw from an event due to a change in circumstance they may do so, however, for most international events there is a cut off imposed by organisers. If an athlete withdraws after the cut off, they need to provide a medical certificate for withdrawal, otherwise they will be liable to pay a financial penalty imposed by the FIE.

10. HPC International Tour (Youth)

a. Designated tours

The HPC International Tour (Youth) is an important opportunity for young fencers to develop their experience competing in genuinely competitive international tournaments. Tours are designed to give a wider group of National Squad athletes experience of travelling as a team whole competing and training internationally.

The weapons calendars list out potential tours. We are observing the development of the international calendar and will focus on the second half of the year for a tour. We are targeting events in Hong Kong and the United States. **The HPC may designate further Youth Designated Events from time to time. This is important as the FIE calendar does not include opportunities for U15 categories to fence.**

Tour coaches and managers

The HPC allocates National Assistant Coaches to tours based on a number of considerations, including the number of minors attending a tour, their availability and the proportion of their students attending the tour.

The following tour numbers are considered for allocating tour coaches and tour managers:

- Over 5 attendees in one weapon – tour coach appointed.
- Over 10 attendees in one weapon – 2 tour coaches appointed.
- Over 10 attendees overall – tour manager appointed.
- Large proportion of attendees being minors – tour manager appointed.

Coaches with students on the tour and parents with children on the tour will not be appointed as tour managers.

How we organise tour training

We organise tour training through our contacts overseas, whether through the HPC or through the contacts our National Coaching team have. All tour training must be organised and confirmed by the HPC, particularly where training is taking place with other National Federations.

Tour Communications

The HPC will communicate any tour updates via the admin.hpc@fencing.org.au email. It is your responsibility as an athlete to respond promptly to tour communications – this is important as the HPC requires information to assist with booking accommodation and travel arrangements for tours.

Prior to the tour starting a WhatsApp group will be set up with athletes (over 18), parents, coaches and tour manager (if applicable) to manage day to day communications on the tour.

b. Applying for personal coaches for tours

Athletes may apply to have personal coaches accompany them on a tour, where tour coaches have been appointed by the AFF.

Athletes are responsible for the costs of their personal coach attending the competition/tour and will still be liable for tour costs including tour coaching and, where applicable tour management levies.

Personal coaches must follow the [International Representation and Tour Rules](#) when coaching in a tour.

c. Withdrawals from tours

Where an athlete withdraws from a tour they will be refunded their deposit, minus a \$160 administration fee.

11. Fencing International Events as a National Squad Member (Adult)

If wish to be considered to represent Australia you must be over 13 years of age and apply to change your status from National Squad Member (Youth) to National Squad Member (Adult). To be considered for selection for an International Event you will need to do this at least one month prior to selection. You may request this by writing hpc@fencing.org.au

You may find further information about the Selection Policy [here](#), and further information about Selection generally [here](#).

12. National Squad Camps

Camps for all of the National Squad are held twice a year, at the beginning of the season and prior to Junior and Cadet World Championships and Asian Championships. These camps are for all weapons and are located at the AIS.

For athletes under 18 parents should accompany their children to the camps.

13. Refereeing Accreditation

All members of the National Squad are **strongly encouraged** to develop the skills necessary and apply for a National referee accreditation.

We have a strong focus on the development of refereeing skill sets for fencers. In particular, the **understanding of priority** for the priority weapon National Squad Members. This is fundamental to a fencer's ability to compete and understand the perspective of the referee in seeing priority. Part of this is understanding the continuously evolving convention.

If you are not currently accredited at National level, please consult with your State Referee Director as to your readiness for National Accreditation and notify the AFF of your desire to be accredited.

We encourage the accreditation assessment to occur at AFC and AYC tournaments. You can register your interest to be assessed at any of these events. This can even occur on the day you are fencing but must occur one round later than your elimination, or in another event on the same day, and at the discretion of the Head Referee for that tournament. You will need to register your interest in advance when the AFF Operations Manager calls for Expressions of Interest.

14. Personal Photo

Please ensure that your AFF Portal has a headshot photo of the following proportions:

File type: jpeg

Aspect: 355px x 469px (portrait) (minimum size)

Size: Long edge 469px

If you do not have a photo in the AFF Portal then none will be able to be uploaded to the website as a National Squad Member.

15. Financial Payments

All National Squad fees are to be paid by Direct Debit, and the details to be provided for the Direct Debit are contained in your Athlete Agreement.

If you would like to pay your National Squad fees up front instead of by Direct Debit you are eligible for an 8% discount on your fees – please reach out to financeofficer@fencing.org.au to arrange an upfront payment.

If you have an outstanding debt >30 days owed to the AFF, a financial block will be placed on your profile and you will be unable to register for domestic and international competitions/tours.

Financial Hardship

If you are experiencing financial hardship you may apply to the HPC for a payment plan to put in place. Acceptance of a payment plan is in the HPC's sole discretion and factors such as previous outstanding debts and size of debt will be taken into consideration. If you wish to apply for a payment plan due to financial hardship please email admin.hpc@fencing.org.au with supporting documentation.

16. Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) Education

The AFF has recently implemented SIA's suite of National Integrity Framework (NIF) policies, and athletes on the National Squad are required to complete the online education courses listed below. <https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/login/index.php>

Anti Doping Courses

- Anti-Doping Fundamentals
- Annual Update
- Whereabouts

Integrity Courses

- Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport Induction
- Competition Manipulation & Sports Gambling
- Introduction to Illicit Drugs in Sport