

# NSW Head Coach Report

## Structure and Organization in NSW Fencing

As we reach the end of 2009, it is maybe a good time to look back at what we have achieved and what we still need to do. In the past months I attended the U15-U17 and U20 national competitions and I've found this experience very important for the plan to rebuild and improve NSW fencing system and our level of achievement.

Young fencers U17 are our future, that's why I considered their competition extremely indicative of the state fencing level, but more than anything I've been totally convinced our job is to develop NSW fencing following two complementary tracks:

1. Structure and Organization ( system).
2. Technical Development ( coaching fencers and coaches).

After open nationals I'll be working on the squads program and structure for next year based on the experience of the past few months and I will be outlining my plans to take fencing forward.

While I take responsibility for the overall coaching program, I am supported by a strong team of coaches and assistants. Our squads sessions need more than one coach to work well and we have developed a strong team with Richard Emmerick, Jeff Gray, Angelo Santangelo, Arash Karpour, Joe Salemi, Anthony Watts, Michael Howard and Hugh Cotman all doing a great job in keeping squad training sessions focused and motivation for the fencers.

A structured training program should have a stronger impact on our fencer's technique and tactics. Of course will be fully respected and helped the work those athletes are doing with their private coach, who will always remain the main teacher and role model for a fencer.

### Some key points:

- The school system is already very functional. We'll evaluate it constantly creating a stronger connection with clubs.  
Also sabre and epee have been introduced in the system to create a real option for our future fencers in all 3 weapons.
- Some clubs may start focusing on one weapon only. It is our duty to support those clubs on their courageous choice. In two years only we'll have an increasing number in epee and sabre (hopefully of high quality too).
- We're growing new coaches and working on new approaches to coaching with some experienced ones. The focus is on "open fencing way". Fencers should constantly improve if they have stronger (classical/modern) basics.

- We're updating referees with courses and open seminars. The level of refereeing isn't that bad but we can do better and with the help of Head Referee the process (through minimum 4 clinics per year) will be faster.
- We created a "super 4" camp.  
A mix between a camp, a competition and a recreational time for school and club fencers and their parents.  
Also an opportunity for young coaches to be in charge of a simple structure.  
A level 1 coaching course will be started and completed by 2009.
- U 17 mini-squad.  
The young ones need a strong direction: technically, tactically and mentally.  
Plus advice on how to manage their career in non professional sport (at the moment).

I have been thinking a lot about how we can achieve all this and talking to people – I will have more to say soon on my plans for the year ahead.

Let me say one more thing. I'm very happy about what we've been able to do in such a short time, thankfully to people who believe in our project and give freely of their time and knowledge.

My job is and it will be more and more, to create, organize, coordinate and especially coaching, both fencers) and coaches.

We'll make sure one of the NSW staff will always be at any competition, but not necessarily always myself – because it would be impossible and for the growth of other coaches too.

A new selection system will be done, where staff coaches will be involved to assure fencers an impartial but technical point of view.

Thanks also to my NSW executive members for their constant support.

Antonio Signorello  
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