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## **Membership structure changes and implementation of a CFF licencing system**

For the past two years the CFF Board of Directors for has been reviewing options to adopt a new membership structure. The general concepts for this structure were presented to the provincial branch members at the 2005 CFF AGM.

### **Current Situation**

The CFF's relationship with fencing participants is indirect. The CFF Board feels it would be beneficial to forge a direct relationship with all who participate in our sport.

The CFF Branch Members (Provincial Sport Organizations) collect participant data and pay a branch membership fee based on the number of fencers ranked on the CFF domestic ranking the previous season. Branch members were assessed a fee in the 2005 / 2006 season based upon membership in the 2004 / 2005 season.

Furthermore, the membership data is retained by the branch members and no National records of the participants in fencing across Canada exists, be they athlete, coach, referee or volunteer. Confusion exists when the term 'member' is used, as this could be interpreted as the 'Branch Member' (province) who comprise the representation at the CFF General Meetings and approve the ongoing operations of the organization or the 'General Member', who is historically a domestically ranked fencer.

The CFF Vision is 'to be the best Sport System.' The disconnect between the CFF and the participants in fencing has resulted in only about 5% of participants in the sport being registered with the national body. To be able to develop the 'best Sport System' the CFF must be aware of all its participants' needs and demographics.

The CFF Mission includes increasing participation, improving the quality of fencing activities and developing excellence in athlete performance through the development of resources and tools to provide an effective system. To achieve these strategic objectives, we must know who is in the sport and be able to work with the branch members, coaches and clubs to deliver consistent quality programs from coast to coast.

## **New Membership Structure**

The strategy to develop membership is based upon the following key principles:

- Membership growth is the result of retaining existing members and attracting new members.
- Growth requires investment in strategies to develop new members and to provide a consistent quality product to all participants.
- Tracking membership – who stays, who joins, demographics of membership, patterns of growth, sex, language preference, etc. – is essential to evaluating growth, reporting participants to our funding partners and the success of development tools.
- Everyone, the CFF, Branches and Clubs, benefit from membership development and all the partners need to collaborate on strategies for growth.
- Members are fundamentally responsible for developing their sport. Fees are an important way of ensuring the organizations capacity to develop the sport.

With these principles in mind, the CFF has moved to a branch membership (province) and participant licence whereby every participant in the sport from coast to coast holds a CFF licence in addition to their branch and club memberships as follows:

### **Membership Goal:**

The CFF is committed to working with Branch Members to ensure that all participants buy a branch membership and a CFF licence. The CFF wants to provide value in the form of benefits and services for membership fees and to maintain an accurate national database of all fencing participants.

### **Branch Members:**

Each Branch Member will be assessed an annual fee of \$250 payable before October 1st of each year. A Branch Member, who pays their fees after this date, will be charged an additional late fee of \$250. The membership period will be August 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Each branch member will be entitled to one (1) vote at any CFF General Meeting provided that fees are received a minimum of 21 days prior to the meeting.

Branch Members who are in default of payment or choose not to pay their annual fees may participate in CFF General Meetings, but forfeit their right to hold a vote at the meeting.

**CFF Licence Holders:**

All participants in the sport of fencing will hold a CFF Licence for the current licence period which is concurrent with the Branch Membership year.

For the 2006 / 2007 season, an annual licence fee of \$10 per participant will be collected by the CFF.

**Registration Process:**

- All registrations shall be done electronically through an online registration system.
- The CFF will host the registration system on its website.
- As each participant enters the registration system, they will choose their province of membership. On the selected page, the participant will self-identify their licence criteria (Athlete, coach, referee, volunteer, friend, etc.) and provide their personal data as required. A \$10 CFF licence fee will be assessed. The participant will then identify a membership category as defined by the respective provincial branch. The Branch Fees will be deposited directly to the bank account of the branch, whereas the CFF will only receive the licence fee.
- All participants will be aware that they are registering and paying fees to both the Branch Member and CFF. Branch and CFF logos will be included on the provincial pages for the online registration system.
- As participants register, the data required for CFF purposes will be periodically synchronized with the National membership data-base. Each Branch Member will receive a copy of their respective members registered.
- The data collected by the CFF will be enhanced over the scanty data received currently. All data received will be treated according to the Privacy legislation enacted in Canada.
- All participants must hold a CFF licence prior to participation in fencing activities.

**National Database**

The CFF will maintain a national database of all licence holders. There will be a single class of licence. All participants who register to take part in CFF competitions, high performance, development, or any designated programs must hold a valid CFF licence.

Participants providing personal data to the CFF and Branch Members when they register will do so on the understanding that the information is required for the sole purpose of the CFF and its Branch Members. Such data will not be released to any

third party without the express written permission of each licensee. This is consistent with current Privacy Legislation.

### **Membership Fees:**

- Each Branch Member may have as many or as few membership categories as it so chooses.
- Each Branch Member may set its own fee and this fee may differ from Branch to Branch, however, the CFF licence fee is the same for all participants.
- For the 2007 / 2008 fencing season and beyond, the CFF will reflect anticipated licence revenues and its targeted allocation into CFF programs in its annual budget to members. For the current fencing season, the budget has been set and submitted to Sport Canada.

### **Payment of Fees:**

- Fees are paid by each participant through the online registration system.

### **Proportional Representation:**

- At CFF General Meetings, the allocation of votes to Branch Members will be determined using a proportional allocation based on the total number of registered CFF licence holders in the membership period.
- Branch Members will be allocated one (1) vote for each block of five hundred (500) licence holders registered to that Branch in addition to the one (1) vote awarded for payment of Branch Member fees. For example, the following indicates votes allocated to a Branch based upon licence holders:
  - 499 licences            1 vote
  - 500 licences            2 votes (1 Branch and 1 proportional)
  - 4,800 licences        10 votes (1 Branch and 9 proportional)
- To have the right to vote, Branch Members must pay their branch fee a minimum of 21 days prior to any CFF General meeting

## **Implementation Framework:**

The full benefits from the Licence based membership system and its linkage to competition management for all Canadian competitions, both domestic and national, will take time to develop and grow. The following identifies the timeframe as planned:

### **2006 / 2007 Fencing Season**

- All licence holders will receive a simple membership card with their licence number, name and licence categories. This will be in essence similar to the current FIE licence card.
- A national membership database will be established with capacity to report to the provinces their respective participants.
- CFF to implement web-based competition ranking and results system.
- In addition to the open rankings, the CFF will implement national domestic rankings for cadet, junior and masters events in Canada.
- Coaches and Referees active in Canada will be identified and automatically become members of the Coaches Association or the Referees Association.

### **2007 / 2008 Fencing Season**

- National licensee database complete and automated into the registration system.
- National licensee database available for download into enguard for competitions
- National database and registration system capabilities expanded to allow the CFF to issue smart cards for membership.
- Smart card programming and reader software developed to allow athletes to swipe themselves into competitions and for automated validation of current licence status.
- CFF to provide smart card readers and developed software to Branch members for implementation for domestic competitions.
- Integration of licence, competition, results and ranking systems with automation and smart cards for use in 2008 / 2009 season globally within Canada.

### **2008 and Beyond:**

- Opportunities for ranking additional age group competition categories depending upon membership demographics.

## **Common Questions and Answers**

### **Why is the CFF changing to a licence system for participants?**

The licencing system will address two key needs.

- 1) Proper collection of data of all fencing participants. The information is required for the CFF to determine its participant demographics in order to develop the appropriate programs and tools. It is also essential when reporting to our funding partners and will put the CFF in a stronger position to take advantage of marketing opportunities to support our programs.
- 2) Membership fees to offset the cost of program delivery to all our participants.

### **How will the licencing system impact membership?**

There are an estimated 18,000 participants in the sport of fencing in Canada. This contrasts to less than 1,000 competitive members we can account for today. We are an Olympic Sport and should proudly reflect all the participants in our great sport.

### **How does this affect CFF revenues?**

Currently the CFF charges its Branch Members a fee of \$53 per ranked athlete. These fees are assessed on the number of ranked athletes in the open domestic ranking of the previous year. The Branch Members will no longer be responsible for CFF membership fees; instead the individual participants will be responsible for a \$10 licence fee.

The CFF is taking a risk in moving to a licence system, in that to maintain an equivalent income from licences, there will need to be an increase from the current 1,000 competitive members to a minimum of 5,000 licence holders. With the co-operation of our Branch Members working as a team, we are anticipating between 10,000 and 15,000 licences in the 2006 / 2007 season and an increasing participant base beyond that.

With decreasing government support for our sport, we need to be innovative in finding alternative means to finance the delivery of national programmes. The licence fee meets this objective and gives the organization greater ability to meet the needs for ongoing program development within Canada.

### **Who needs to register?**

Anyone taking part in any CFF activity must be registered. This includes, athletes, coaches, referees, armourers, administrators, etc. Any referee or coach who does not purchase a licence will not be eligible for selection into CFF programs.

### **Are there multiple fees if I am an athlete and a referee?**

There is only a single licence fee. The participant may check off as many categories as required, but a single flat fee will be assessed. The information is required for the CFF to determine its participant demographics in order to develop the appropriate programs and tools.

CFF Board of Directors and Staff