Guide to International competition levels, Age category selection, and faqs

Competition Levels and Selection

There are several stages of competition in an athlete’s progression as they move through their journey in international competitions. A key part of the Academy Pathway is to ensure fencers get the right opportunities at the right time for their level of experience, age and development.

* Academy Youth Trips
	+ Range from U10 to U15
	+ Selections made by Academy Coaches
	+ Include Challenge Wratislavia and the Riposta Youth Series
	+ Appropriate for Travelling Squad fencers ready to move up to International Squad, International Squad, and certain Caps Squad fencers
* EFC U14 Circuit
	+ U14 only
	+ Selections requested via British Fencing (or other NGBs) to those in the top 50% of the U14 National Rankings
	+ EFC License required
	+ Previously organised via Home Nations, particularly England Fencing
	+ Appropriate for International Squad and Caps Squad fencers
* EFC U17 Circuit
	+ U17 only
	+ Selections made by British Fencing based on U17 National Ranking
	+ Early season events: top 15 fencers on ranking are selected, with 5 additional discretionary places (usually 16-20 on the rankings)
	+ Late season events: top 10 fencers on ranking selected, with 5 additional discretionary places. Fencers in their final year will not receive discretionary selections.
	+ Appropriate for Caps Squad fencers
	+ Very large step up from Youth/U14 level in terms of intensity and difficulty
	+ Some EFC U17s are not nominated by BF and discretionary selection can be requested
	+ British EFC License Required
* U20 FIE Circuit
	+ U20 only
	+ Selections made by British Fencing based on U20 National Ranking
	+ Top 8 automatic, with 4 additional discretionary places (usually top U17 fencers)
	+ Appropriate for U20 Caps Squad Fencers
	+ Much of the international opposition is professional at this age category, and it is a large jump in quality from U17
	+ British FIE License Required
* U23 EFC “Fencing For Everyone”
	+ U23 only
	+ Selections made by British Fencing -highly variable
	+ Some events are nominated as U20 events
	+ Generally weaker and smaller than U20 FIE events, but with some top-tier opposition
	+ British EFC License Required
	+ Appropriate for U20+ Caps Squad fencers
* U23 EFC Circuit
	+ Senior Event (counts for EFC U23 Ranking)
	+ Requested discretionary entry
	+ Strength highly variable
	+ British EFC License Required
	+ Fall largely outside of the development pathway for youth fencers
* Senior Satellite World Cups
	+ Senior Event
	+ Requested discretionary entry, unless nominated as a selection event
	+ Strength highly variable
	+ British FIE License required
	+ Nominated events are key selection events
	+ Appropriate for U20+ Caps Squad fencers
* Senior World Cups/Grand Prixes
	+ Senior Event
	+ Selected by British Fencing
	+ Top 8 automatic, 4 additional discretionary
	+ British FIE License required
	+ Highest level of competition outside of Major Championships

Age Categories

* Age categories are based on the season and birth year. It is not possible to age out of a category mid-season
* The start/end dates of each season are immediately after the World Championships of that age category, or the Senior World Championships, if there is no World Championships for that category.
* U14s are eligible through the season finishing in the year when they turn 14 (ie a fencer born in 2000 would have been eligible through the 2013-14 Season)
* U17s (Cadets) are eligible through the season finishing in the year when they turn 17 (ie a fencer born in 2000 would have been eligible through the 2016-17 Season)
* U20s (Juniors) are eligible through the season finishing in the year when they turn 20 (ie a fencer born in 2000 would have been eligible through the 2019-20 Season)
* U23s are eligible through the season finishing in the year when they turn 23 (ie a fencer born in 2000 would have been eligible through the 2022-23 Season)
* There is a lower age limit of 13 at most U20 and higher events, both domestically and internationally
* At younger age categories particularly, as there can be a gap of nearly 12 months between someone born in Jan/Feb compared to Nov/Dec, this can have a significant impact on performance, which should be accounted for when assessing development.

FAQs

* How does my fencer get selected for Academy Youth Trips?
	+ Recommendations are made by the coaches based on criteria including experience, training load, behaviour and development milestones.
* What about England Trips?
	+ Home Nations no longer make U14 Selections. This is now handled by British Fencing
* How does my fencer qualify for GBR Teams?
	+ Fencers need to compete at nominated British Ranking Competitions to accrue enough points to be in the selection zone in the rankings. Please contact the Pathway Manager (Bryn) in order to discuss specifics for your fencer.
* How do I get the correct international license for events?
	+ These are applied for via the Sport80 portal. Please contact Bryn for help navigating.
* What equipment is needed for international competitions?
	+ All regular fencing equipment is required (full whites, electric jacket, glove, mask, wires, sabre, long socks etc). However, events after youth level (including all U17 EFCs) often require the higher 800N FIE safety standard for whites/gloves. Exact details can be found in the information packs for each youth trip.
* Should my fencer be fencing in multiple age categories?
	+ This is a tailored decision based on the individual needs of the athlete, and will be discussed in season planning meetings.