



Fencing-Escrime NB

2024–2028 Strategic Plan

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1.0 Overview

1.1 Executive Summary

The purpose of this strategic plan is to set direction for Fencing-Escime NB (FENB) over the next three years and guide the development of the sport of fencing in New Brunswick. From the strategic plan, FENB will develop yearly operational plans and goals in alignment with the strategies set forth in this plan.

The pandemic and its social impacts created many challenges in all sports including fencing over the past three years. However, post-pandemic membership growth, new fencing coaching leadership in the province, and an increased visibility of fencing through the Canada Games and Olympics is providing new momentum and opportunities for fencing in New Brunswick. The strategic plan will serve as a guide to leverage these opportunities to strengthen our organization, its clubs, and its members, and grow the sport of fencing to new levels.

This plan was developed by conducting a situation analysis, surveying our members, reviewing the strategic plans of similar organizations, and seeking input from fencing leaders in the province and the current board of the directors.

Based on the outcomes of this consultative approach, the key focus of this strategic plan is centred on increasing visibility, growing, and strengthening the sport of fencing in NB by focusing on five key strategies:

1. **SUPPORT CLUBS TO GROW MEMBERSHIP & DIVERSITY:** Enable membership growth through strong clubs & promote the diversity of fencers and interests.
2. **INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS & COMMUNICATIONS:** Improve public awareness of fencing in New Brunswick and better communications within the fencing community.
3. **VALUE SAFETY & RESPECT:** Foster a safe sport environment & promote mutual respect.
4. **DEVELOP STRONG LEADERSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE:** Enable development of strong leaders & succession while strengthening organizational infrastructure.
5. **SUPPORT ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT:** Support recreational, competitive & high-performance athletes.

This plan will launch with the 2024–25 fencing season and provide a four-year “north star” outlook for FENB. This plan and its four-year outlook will be revised as required yearly in order to adjust to the evolving and changing environment within the province.

1.2 Our Mission, Values, and End Statements

1.2.1 Mission

“To encourage people in New Brunswick to participate in and enjoy the sport of fencing, both recreationally and competitively, in a safe environment at a reasonable cost.”

1.2.2 Vision

- ❖ the spirit of **community** that fencing can foster,
- ❖ inclusive **participation**,
- ❖ the tradition of **honour** that respects and fosters the dignity and rights of others through fair play and sportsmanship,
- ❖ **excellence** by inspiring personal achievement,
- ❖ a quality of **experience** through fun, enjoyment, and satisfaction in a safe environment,
- ❖ the growth of **confidence, character**, and increased **self-esteem**.

1.2.3 End Statements

As a result of the presence of Fencing-Escrime NB (FENB), New Brunswick has:

- ❖ Fencers that possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to participate recreationally and/or compete provincially, nationally or internationally.
- ❖ Opportunities for quality, financially accessible, recreational fencing.
- ❖ Qualified coaches and officials to lead and support athletes throughout their fencing experience.
- ❖ A fencing environment that meets recognized quality, safety, technical, and accountability standards.
- ❖ A sustainable and fair not-for-profit fencing community that recognizes the contribution and value of volunteers.
- ❖ An awareness and positive perspective of the sport of fencing.

1.3 Background

The provincial fencing association was officially established as the New Brunswick Fencing Association in 1969.

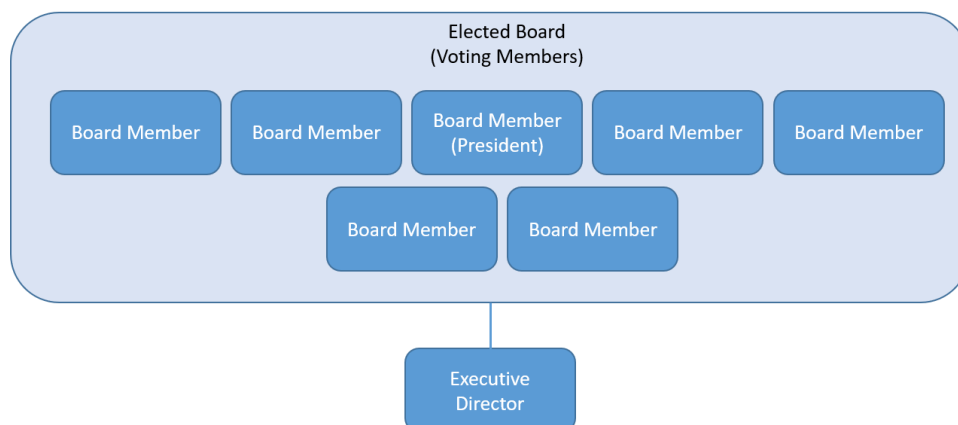
The organization is the provincial branch of the [Canadian Fencing Federation](#) with the mandate to govern the sport of fencing in the province of New Brunswick. Our objectives are to promote, develop, regulate, encourage, and improve the sport of fencing in New Brunswick as well as to represent and coordinate the interest of New Brunswick fencers.

Attention to the future of the sport has been stepped up in the last decade, with the incorporation of Fencing-Escrime NB (FENB) in 2006 as a not-for-profit organization. To better focus Board members, the governance model was changed from a Management Board to a Carver Policy Board and an Executive Director was appointed. Bylaws were revised to reflect these changes.

A Board of Directors, elected by individual members, is accountable for the organization's actions and has the responsibility of establishing policies in the collective best interest of its current and future members and clubs. Decisions are made within the confines of the [Bylaws](#) of FENB and [Board policies](#) are developed following a Carver policy governance model, guided by a framework of mission and values.

1.4 Organizational Design

The current FENB board is comprised of seven elected and voting members including the president. An employed Executive Director (ED) supports the board in administering the activities of FENB. A separate Athlete Development Committee (ADC) is appointed by the board and forms an advisory committee for the FENB board. The chair of the ADC must be a board member. Additionally, there is a Coach Developer, appointed by the board, who acts as a liaison with the national association; this person may or may not be an FENB board member; however, they report their initiatives, budgets, and activities to the FENB board via the Executive Director.



2.0 Situation Analysis

2.1 Clubs

There are currently six registered fencing clubs with FENB: two in the Saint John area (KV and Fundy), three in the Fredericton area (Beaches Sabre Club East, Damocles, and UNB), and one in Moncton (Escrime La Résistance). Although which clubs are active may vary year to year, it typically has held steady at five or six in the past.

Membership by age and gender (June 2023)

Age Category	Male	Female
0-7	5	1
8-11	48	15
12-15	55	21
16-19	18	8
20+	38	17

Region	Members	Coaches	Club	Members	Coaches
Capital	90	8	BSE	29	2
			DAM	49	4
			UNB	12	2
Fundy	59	5	FFC	43	3
			KV	16	2
South-East	66	4	RST	66	4

Fencing memberships are split almost evenly between the three major cities. The [Damocles Fencing Club](#) (DAM) in Fredericton has experienced many changes in the past three years, starting with long-term head coach Barbara Daniel's retirement in 2021, followed by successor Martin Stoev's planned departure in early 2024. Fredericton also has the [Beaches Sabre Club](#) (BSE) run by Jim Stevens, and the [UNB Club](#), which operates out of UNB's Currie Centre.

In Saint John, David Collins teaches epee and sabre at the [Fundy Fencing Club](#) (FFC) along with retired club leader Rick Gosselin. Diane Raiche-Phillips teaches foil at the [Escrime KV Fencing Club](#).

Moncton’s [Escrime La Résistance Fencing](#) has seen steady growth in membership in the last few years under head coach Marc-André LeBlanc. Although not an official club since 2020, [Chaleur Fencing](#) began to offer lessons again in 2023.

2.2 Members

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Provincial:	61	82	122	117
First-time/Rec:	68	63	86	97
Associate:	12	10	9	7
School	0	24	0	68
Total:	141	179	214	289

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected membership numbers starting in 2020. Once the restrictions on gatherings were lifted in 2022, membership numbers returned to pre-pandemic levels and have now surpassed them. Provincial membership is expected to grow, particularly with the development of the HP Program and Provincial Team, and increased outreach from the Fredericton and Moncton clubs.

2.3 Coaches & Officials

There are currently **17 active fencing coaches** in New Brunswick with various levels of experience and certification: DAM (4), UNB (2), KV (2), FFC (3), BSE (2), CHA (2), and MFC (4).

Barbara Daniel and Jim Stevens have been certified as learning facilitators and coach evaluators. We now run certification primarily as instructor-beginner. We are working toward getting fencers certified as competitive-introduction, as well as having Marc-André LeBlanc certified at competitive-development.

There are a handful of people who regularly referee at New Brunswick tournaments. Alexis Lague has been trained extensively outside of province as a pilot project, and several other referees have been identified as similar candidates, although the precise nature of the pathway remains

to be fleshed out. Having enough referees for tournaments remains an issue, although it has steadily been improving.

2.4 Volunteers

FENB relies on its members and families of members to carry out various volunteer duties. These are typically needed to organize and run tournaments, but may include other duties for the organization. Roles have included Board member, armourer, secretariat, registrar, floor manager, committee member, referee, canteen operator, and tournament setup and takedown. It isn't unusual to see some members carrying out more than one role at a time or have the same people volunteer for the same role multiple times.

2.5 Competitor Analysis

New Brunswick is home to many provincial not-for-profit and provincial sport branches. This makes it challenging when applying for funding and promoting the sport of fencing.

The most popular sports in North America are team sports, such as soccer, basketball, football, baseball, and hockey. All these sports have national leagues involving teams from Canada and the United States. Watching these national teams has become a regular pastime for many individuals and a multi-million-dollar industry. As a result, these sports are usually the most played and receive good funding. There are numerous other sports available to individuals looking to get in shape, socialize, and have some fun.

Fencing has often gained visibility through its inclusion in the Canada Games. The 2023 Canada Games was a success for fencing in the province and had some of the best results of any sport. This allowed us to successfully apply for a High Performance grant, and we hope to continue building on the success of the Canada Games.

3.0 Strategic Focus Areas and Objectives

The FENB Strategic Plan will centre on developing goals, actions, and targets in relation to our five key strategies:

1. **SUPPORT CLUBS TO GROW MEMBERSHIP & DIVERSITY:** Enable membership growth through strong clubs & promote the diversity of fencers and interests
2. **INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS & COMMUNICATIONS:** Improve public awareness of fencing in New Brunswick and better communications within the fencing community
3. **VALUE SAFETY & RESPECT:** Foster a safe sport environment & promote mutual respect

4. DEVELOP STRONG LEADERSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE: Enable development of strong leaders & succession while strengthening organizational infrastructure
5. SUPPORT ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT: Support recreational, competitive & high-performance athletes

3.1 SUPPORT CLUBS TO GROW MEMBERSHIP & DIVERSITY: Enable membership growth through strong clubs & promote the diversity of fencers and interests

FENB believes that membership growth will occur through strong and local clubs and an increased diversity of fencers. The independence of clubs in focusing their development based on their respective local environment and community is important. Increasing and embracing diversity in fencing is also key to strengthening fencing in the province. In consideration of these factors, this strategy focuses on establishing flexible programs to support club growth while increasing diversity in the sport of fencing.

Goal: Increase fencing membership within each club and grow the number of active clubs in the province while increasing the diversity of fencers overall.

Key Actions:

- Support & establish school & community fencing outreach programs in partnership with local clubs.
- Create targeted training, competition, and social opportunities for girls and adults.
- Create and provide promotional material emphasizing diversity within the sport.
- Establish a new club pathway program to facilitate equipment, insurance, and coaching development.
- Track member retention & satisfaction rates.

Targets:

- Grow overall fencing membership by 10% annually and start tracking retention rates.
- Implement surveys to track satisfaction rates by 2025–26 season.
- Grow active clubs from 6 to 8 by 2027–28.
- Target a +30% gender diversity target by 2027–28.
- Target +2 new outreach programs/year with 50% of the previous years' programs re-offered.

3.2 INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS & COMMUNICATIONS: Improve public awareness of fencing in New Brunswick and better communications within the fencing community

FENB recognizes that the interest in fencing will only grow with increased public awareness of the sport in the province. It is also recognized that effective communications within the fencing community is essential in retaining interest and strengthening membership. This strategy focuses on improving communications within the fencing community as well as increasing public awareness of the sport within NB.

Goal: Increase the public awareness of fencing leveraging social media and improve communications internal and external to the fencing community.

Key Actions:

- Publish all events and results involving provincial fencers for any competitions within and outside the province via social media channels.
- Update and modernize Fencing-Esprime NB website.
- Develop a social media public awareness campaign to support club recruitment in collaboration with clubs.
- Implement regular surveys to gather feedback and address concerns promptly following key events (tournaments, camps etc.).

Targets:

- Communicate pre/post tournaments and real-time updates/results where possible for all FENB and outside events where FENB fencers are involved.
- Complete modernization the FENB website by the end of 2025.
- Finalize provincial schedule by end of August each season.
- Circulate tournament and camp schedule information six weeks in advance.
- Implement post-event surveys for all FENB events (camps & tournaments).
- Create provincial social media subcommittee to help develop social media campaigns.

3.3 VALUE SAFETY & RESPECT: Foster a safe sport environment & promote mutual respect

FENB puts safety and mutual respect above all aspects of competition. Every athlete, member, coach, referee, and volunteer should be able to always participate in fencing activities in a safe and respectful environment. This strategy is intended to ensure this safe & respectful environment is always maintained at all levels.

Goal: Create an environment of mutual-respect by establishing a comprehensive zero-tolerance FENB Safe Sport policy with mandatory adherence from all members and clubs.

Key Actions:

- Adopt and update a FENB Safe Sport policy on a yearly basis.
- Mandate all FENB members and clubs to agree, adopt and adhere to FENB Safe Sport policy and guidelines.
- Ensure enforcement of Safe Sport policies and provide a complaint & remediation process to mitigate any non-compliant incidents.

Targets:

- 100% members adherence to sign Safe Sport policy agreement.
- 100% club adherence to adopt Safe Sport policy at club level.
- Address any non-compliant incidents reported in a timely manner following procedures set in the FENB Safe Sport Policy.

3.4 DEVELOP STRONG LEADERSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE: Enable development of strong leaders & succession while strengthening organizational infrastructure

FENB recognizes that fencing can only prosper and grow in the province if strong leadership and solid organizational & physical infrastructure is in place for the future. This includes coaches, referees, FENB leaders, club leaders, organizers, and volunteers as well as the supporting organizational and physical infrastructure for these leaders. This strategy focuses on strengthening both leadership and infrastructure for fencing in the province.

Goals:

- Foster collaboration among club leaders, coaches, and officials.

- Create an environment to grow the number of coaches supported by a continuous development program with benchmark certifications for head & assistant coaches.
- Enable the development of certified referees within the province.
- Develop long-term plans to strengthen the organizational infrastructure for fencing in the province.

Key Actions:

- Create development pathways for coaches with specific certification targets.
- Create development pathways for referees with specific certification targets.
- Establish armourer and weapons training to improve armourer support for each club.
- Involve more people at the executive level through subcommittees to develop succession planning for the board.

Targets:

- Facilitate coach pathway by end of 2025 based on CFF/CAC guidelines.
- Head coaches from each club to attain competition introduction level of certification and assistant coaches to attain instructor beginner level of certification by 2027–28.
- Launch a comprehensive referee pathway by year-end 2025 in conjunction with CFF.
- Organize a certification armourer course within the province by 2025–26.
- Organize weapon care clinics for fencers once a year at provincial events.

3.5 SUPPORT ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT: Support recreational, competitive & high-performance athletes

FENB recognizes that fencing athletes have a diversity of interests in the sport of fencing. This strategy focuses on ensuring the development programs to meet the varying interests of athletes from high performance to recreational.

Goal: Establish and support competitive and recreational development programs to support the varying interests of athletes.

Key Actions:

- Establish a high-performance program for athletes who strive to compete at national/international levels and aspire for selection to the Canadian National Team.
- Continue to support a Provincial Team for developing athletes who aspire to pursue competitive fencing outside the province.

- Maintain a strong consistent provincial calendar in order to provide competition and training opportunities for athletes within the province.
- Create and maintain a centralized tournament/camp registration with current information.

Targets:

- Increase recreational fencing memberships in alignment with 10% overall growth membership target.
- Increase the number of HP athletes and provincial athletes in programs by 10% per year.
- Increase the number of athletes attending out-of-province competitions by 10% per year.
- Organize and/or sponsor 1–2 social events for recreational athletes yearly to foster a stronger sense of community.