

Report on the 2018 Commonwealth Senior and Veteran Fencing Championships to the ACTFA AGM held on Saturday, 9 February 2019

The genesis of the idea to host the 2018 Commonwealth Senior and Veteran Fencing Championships (known as CFC18) began after the 2015 Nationals. Yes, that long ago. It was recognised then that what we were doing at the Nationals in the AIS Arena could be taken to the international stage. A bid was produced, late in 2016, and accepted by the Commonwealth Fencing Federation early in 2017 - the game was a-foot.

Arrangements with the Australian Fencing Federation were completed in early 2017, and an Organising Committee established, in 2017 which met regularly - monthly, fortnightly, weekly, daily, and hourly. CFC18 was held over 10 days (from Tuesday, 20 November 2018), the first three for training and the last 6 days the actual competition days (from Friday 18 November 2018 to Wednesday, 28 November 2018), plus the bump-out day.

At this time, I want to acknowledge the support and motivation provided by Evelyn Halls at this early stage, she encouraged us to stick to our guns and utilise the resources available to us at the AIS. CFC18 was a success because of what we could provide at the AIS Canberra.

A lot of work was done by the Organising Committee (or should I say the 'do whatever it takes committee'), of Gordon Christie, Helen Smith, Chris Nonis, Neil Kinsella, and Garry Webster. Each one brought unique talents, Gordon keeping the spend under control, Helen keeping the Commonwealth fencing family under control, Chris keeping AFF under control, Neil doing whatever it takes, and me just under control.

Simon Hamm was appointed as the Event Manager in late 2017. Simon then took on the many tasks needed to make the event happen, and believe me there were many, requiring at times quick thinking and a lot of plan Bs. Simon ran the war-room, aka G & H's lounge, where it all came together.

Then the time came when the all the Referees, DTs, Fencers, Volunteers, Banners, QFA scoring boxes, venue dressed, Equipment Control, were all in place for CFC18.

Now for the numbers.

- The CFC18 budget was just under \$140,000, and for the first time in Australian Commonwealth tournament history, a modest profit was made.
- 14 Commonwealth nations were represented.
- There were 432 entries across all categories, Foil, Epee, Sabre, Men's and Women's with roughly equal numbers of Seniors (215) and Veterans (217). There were over 100 Australian veteran fencers registered.
- 64 teams competed for Commonwealth glory, split between 43 Senior and 21 Veteran teams.

- We had 5 members of the DT, 2 international non-Commonwealth referees, and 16 Commonwealth referees.
- 90 gold medals were awarded, 66 silver and 78 bronze.
- We had 52 people volunteer over the 10 days, contributing a combined 1,290 hours of work.
- There was a total of 43 different videos produced, with 9,700 combined number of views.

There are a number of key people to thank for their support and dedication, these are:

Marie-France Dufour – who was head of the DT and at the last minute, CFC18 Referee Director.

Denise Dapre - Commonwealth Fencing Federation DT representative, this was Denise's last Commonwealth Fencing Championships.

Alex Donaldson – AFF DT representative who managed the excellent Results Team.

Jeff Gray – Head of Technical Operations, who kept our equipment running

David McFadyen – who managed the Equipment Control and Call Room so well. And by the way drove the truck full of Queensland equipment to and from Canberra.

Leon Thomas – for working hard keeping the Equipment Control running smoothly.

Kayt Spanno – for producing great CFC18 merchandise.

Davide Wheeler – for producing the wonderful CFC18 medals, and ironing 234 of them.

QFA – for lending us their pistes and boxes which made the event look spectacular, and was all returned in working order (a minor miracle in itself).

Kia and Andreus – our two international non-Commonwealth referees.

Now to talk about our volunteers – all 52 of them. We had people from ACT, ACTFA, Australia, and Commonwealth fencing communities coming together and volunteering over 1,300 hours for CFC18. Our "Red Shirts" did everything from picking up referees, setting up training halls, setting up the fencing venue, doing equipment control, assisting the DT, controlling the crowds, looking after fencers and the public, feeding everyone, carrying medals, and playing national anthems.

And in closing, I would like to thank once again my colleagues on the CFC18 Organising Committee – Gordon Christie, Helen Smith, Chris Nonis, Neil Kinsella, and also Simon Hamm as Event Manager.

Garry Webster

AFF Director and member of the CFC18 Organising Committee

9 February 2019