

Hi all,

Winter training is under way for those WFAA archers who qualified for an invitation, so now is a good time for an update perhaps. The "Ddraig" squad went well, with good feedback from those present.

It was the perfect opportunity to present new teaching methods gained from my recent trip to the NFAA headquarters in Yankton as a new approach to how we assess our archery, and new ways of training and thinking about how we shoot, was a rolled out to an unsuspecting audience.

Without exception, it was enthusiastically received. Thank you all. The next squad, in February, will be more traditional as we try to build on the good work done already. I envisage lots of questions, as archers try to incorporate the new thinking into their routines. Watch this space.

An outline of the proposed Coach Training Programme has already appeared on the website, following chats with the webmaster. However, this position to date is as follows:

The initial intention was for each IFAA member country to produce a coaching structure using knowledge and requirements unique to that country, e.g. what suits Wales may not work in Italy or Argentina. However, the International Director for Training & Coaching (Lynne Fairhall), is attempting to produce a structured course for would-be coaches, which will be the same in every country affiliated to the IFAA. A daunting task. She hoped to have something sorted early this year, but given the number of differing ideas coming forward, it may well be delayed.

In the meantime, I am starting to put a preliminary course together, based on the following premise. Nothing is definite as yet, due to the possible variables of number of applicants, cost and availability of venues etc., but broadly speaking what I am working toward is this:

Weekend 1 – Basic Certification

At an estimated cost of £25 for applicant, training to get beginners shooting. Laying out a shooting area. Demonstration of shooting form. Controlling a shooting line. Basic maintenance of equipment.

Weekends 2 to 4 – Intermediate Certification

At an estimated cost of £25 per applicant per weekend, all aspects of training to improve the archer.

There must be a period of at least 12 months between gaining Intermediate, and progressing to Community Certification. Should anyone wish to progress to this level, we will use the 12 month period to run several weekend workshops, probably at a cost of £25 per weekend, each with a specialist archery theme, one of which will be "How to run a squad", so expect to be attending next winter's squad as observer/coach.

Certification will depend upon a person's ability to safely and successfully coach archery. Some paperwork is inevitable but will be kept to an absolute minimum. I

don't care if you can't read or write, I DO care that you can produce competent archers that enjoy our sport.

The syllabus will include a "competency" sheet with tick boxes. When you've completed each aspect and been signed off, you will receive a signed certificate to prove it.

Timescale for the above is dependant upon my being able to produce a viable course structure while also running the "Ddraid" squad, earning a living and perhaps even shooting my own bow occasionally. I would love to give April as a definite start date, but until I have course work in hand, it's an estimate. Fingers crossed.

A note of CAUTION.

The WFAA needs coaches, it does not however, need coaches at all cost. It may possibly arise that a person won't have the required competency to complete the course. Should this be the case, then training may continue until he/she is competent, or advised be that perhaps coaching isn't for them. If you succeed in this course, you WILL be a coach that Wales, WFAA and YOU can be proud of.

Ray Howells

National Director of Training & Coaching

Welsh Field Archery Association