

# Fencing – Cook dreams of competing in Paris

**Capital fencing sensation Jaimie Cook, 18, has opened up about his dream of competing for Team GB in next year's Paris Olympics.**

Speaking to the British Fencing website during the current world championships in Milan where he opened with a remarkable six victories out of six in his poule before going on to finish a highly creditable 36th in his first senior competition at this level foilist Jaimie, from Currie, said: "Whenever somebody mentions it [Paris], it feels special. It feels like it's almost a dream. Like every athlete, you go, what can you go and do? Go to the Olympics, go to the World Champs. But it's the Olympics that stand out. And if we [the team] made Paris that would be so, so cool. We have such a good chance of making it. It would be so amazing to go. I remember watching London [2012] on TV, and thinking wow. But now I'm in the team with some of the people I was watching."

To that end Jaimie has launched a fund raiser entitled "[My road to Olympic qualification.](#)"

He says: "Because I'm competing at under-20 and senior level its been an eye watering £30k to compete on the '22-23 circuit – London, Nottingham, Bratislava, Copenhagen, Bonn, Leszno, Tokyo, Bangkok, Gdansk, Udine, Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Turin, Sabadell, Talinn, Busan, Plovdiv, Acapulco, Shanghai, Budapest, Krakow, Milan.

"I am really grateful for the support I have had from British

Fencing and Leon Paul (equipment) but my family are still covering the majority of costs.

“Unfortunately this is not sustainable without asking for help. Funds raised will go towards hotels and transport.”

To date Jaimie’s gofundme page has raised over £2,340 of a £10,000 target

On his stunning rise through the ranks which he hopes might attract a corporate sponsor, Jaimie said: “I think it was when I was 14 and I won the Birmingham International I was like, okay, I can do big things here,”

“When I won the Under 17 Nationals and I started making some decent international results I knew even more was possible, even if Covid took away a bit of time.”

Already on Jaimie’s CV is a senior national title, a world cup success earlier this year, European bronze and silver medals as well as a world top four ranking as a junior.

This year, he was part of the men’s foil team that came agonisingly close to a medal at the European Games in Krakow, Poland; for Jaimie, it was his first multi-sport event.

All the while this has been overseen from the age of five by his dad, Keith, a highly accomplished international fencer in his day and the current UK national coach for under-17 and under-20 Foil.

Keith told the British Fencing website: “Jaimie won a senior men’s tournament at the age of 14, beating senior national team members. At 14, that’s unheard of. It doesn’t really happen. But he showed that he’s not fazed by someone twice his height, or at a weight that could snap him in two. It’s only about being able to go up against them on the piste, and it shows that has nothing to do with age. It’s about ability.

“2023 is Jaimie’s first year as a senior. We were planning

things, going 'what are your goals?'. The European Games were important: it was an opportunity to get in that multi-sport environment. But it doesn't happen overnight. It's the planning that you put behind that and having those honest conversations. So, I've been dad and coach, but also part of that team around Jaimie, getting him a mentor, a strength and conditioning coach, nutritionists, psychologists, all in place. And British Fencing have been fundamental to helping him."

On the father-son dynamic Keith said: "Luckily, it's a good relationship, we've got. I understand what it feels like being in that situation as well, so I can empathise with the highs and lows, and I think that does help a lot. But my job is to try and help his learning curve be as fast as it can be, and to put him in the right environment with the right people. I've said before that talent is as cheap as table salt. There's a lot of it out there, but if you're not willing to work hard, you'll just be another one that was talented."

"I do this full time, and I know how sport can change people's lives as well. I realised that I could try to treat the next generation fencers coming through to actually do bigger and better things than I ever did. With Jaimie and a lot of other fencers from Scotland, they're showing that if you put the work in, anything's possible. 15 or 20 years ago, there was nothing like this [pathway]."

"It'd be amazing to me to get Jaimie to the level I think he's capable of. That's the hard part. I want my son to do well, my daughter to do well and I want them to win lots of tournaments. But that doesn't always happen. You have to learn from making mistakes. So I like to talk about the holistic approaches. I want them to make mistakes, I want them to learn from it. You can learn more from the ones you lose. The mental side of it is so important, especially when you go into a multi-sport event like the Olympics."

“But with Paris it’s not just making the Olympics. I think it’s a medal opportunity for these guys as well.”

Jaimie is pictured after winning the senior national title in April this year – 13 years after dad Keith, alongside, got his name on the trophy!

